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NATION

Rahul alleges PM Modi is not only 'scared' of Trump but is also being 'controlled' by big business



GAMES

Washington, Arshdeep star in India's T20I series-levelling win against Australia



Cinema Bollywood showers love on Shah Rukh Khan's 60th birthday

Edit The beginning of a geopolitical duel in the Asia-Pacific region



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ANGELS OF MUMBAI

Dr Ismat Gabula is transforming public spaces into havens for readers. Turn to the Mumbai page to find out how.

SEE MUMBAI

JD(U) candidate Anant Singh arrested for Mokama murder

Dheeraj Kumar
PATNA

A Patna court on Sunday remanded JD(U) candidate from Mokama, Anant Singh, and his two associates to 14-day judicial custody in connection with the murder of gangster-turned-politician Dular Chand Yadav, who is supporting Jan Suraj Party candidate, from the seat.

Former MLA Singh and his two aides, Manikant Thakur and Ranjeet Ram, were arrested late on Saturday night in connection with the murder.

The were produced before the court of the Chief Judicial Magistrate (CJM) in Patna. "The court sent Singh and two others to judicial custody for two weeks," his lawyer Naveen Kumar told reporters. Later, they were taken to Patna's Beur Jail.

Police are likely to take them on remand after the election process is over, sources added.

Sharing a video of himself being escorted by the cops on Facebook, Singh wrote, "Satyamev Jayate! I have complete faith in the people of Mokama!! That's why now the people of Mokama will fight this election!"

Patna SSP Kartikeya Sharma told the media that Singh was found to be the main accused in the murder case during the investigation, following which he was arrested from his residence.

"On 30 October, there was a clash between two groups of competing candidates. Stones were pelted resulting in injuries.

▶ **Contd on** | Nation

ATTACK ON OPPN | In Bihar, Modi says RJD forced its INDIA bloc partner to declare Tejashwi as CM nominee 'at gunpoint'

'Sindoor hit Pak, gave Cong sleepless nights'

Dheeraj Kumar
PATNA

PM Narendra Modi on Sunday asserted that RJD compelled Congress to declare its leader Tejashwi Yadav as chief ministerial face of the INDIA bloc at gunpoint and also claimed that "jungle raj people" were heading towards a record defeat in the Bihar election.

Addressing an election meeting in Ara, the PM said that the country was proud after the success of Operation Sindoor, but the Congress and its ally RJD did not like it. "The explosions took place in Pakistan, but the Congress royal family spent sleepless nights. The naamdars of Pakistan and Congress are yet to recover from the shock of Operation Sindoor," he remarked.

"RJD's jungle raj is identified by katta (gun), kroorta (cruelty), katuta (bitterness), kusanskar (superstition), kusashan (misgovernance), and corruption. Nitish Kumar and the NDA government have brought Bihar out of that difficult era," he said.

Modi said a scuffle is going on



between RJD and Congress. He said there was "goondagardi" (goondaism) in a "closed-door room" where RJD forced Congress to declare the chief ministerial face of the opposition alliance. The PM, however, did not take the name of Tejashwi while pointing out at Congress-RJD 'rift' over CM face.

"I am telling you an inside story. A game of goondagardi was played out in a closed-

door room a day before the deadline for withdrawing nominations. Congress did not want to declare RJD leader CM face of the opposition alliance for Bihar polls but RJD forced it to do so at gunpoint," he said.

"Congress was not heard in the manifesto and campaign as hatred has increased so much between RJD and Congress that after the election,

they would break each other's head. Remember, such people cannot work for Bihar's development," he added.

Without naming Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, PM accused him of calling Chhath festival a drama, and asserted that people would not forgive him for insulting the festival.

▶ **Contd on** | Nation
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ISRO's 'Bahubali' rocket puts heaviest sat in orbit



PTI
SRIRAHIKOTA (AP)

The heaviest communication satellite to be launched from the Indian soil onboard a new generation, homegrown 'Bahubali' rocket was successfully placed into the intended orbit on Sunday, ISRO said.

The communication satellite CMS-03, weighing 4,410 kg was flown on a LVM3-M5 rocket enabling the Indian space agency accomplish this rare feat. CMS-03 is a multi-band communication satellite and would provide services over a wide oceanic region including the Indian landmass,

according to ISRO.

The satellite was placed in the desired Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO). It is also a replacement to the GSAT 7 series, launched in 2013.

ISRO Chairman V Narayanan said the launch vehicle successfully injected the communication satellite in the required orbit. The "4410 kg satellite is precisely injected," he said. In his address from the Mission Control Center post launch, he described the LVM 3 satellite as 'Bahubali', in an apparent reference to its heavy-lift capability.

He recalled that the rocket's previous launch was

the "most prestigious Chandrayaan 3 which brought pride to nation." It achieved "yet another pride" on Sunday after succeeding with the "heavier satellite". All the eight LVM 3 launches, including its experimental mission, have been successful, logging a 100% success rate.

The satellite was designed to provide communication services for at least 15 years and is "yet another shining example of Atmanirbhar Bharat" (self-reliant India), Narayanan, also Secretary, Department of Space, added.

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15 RETURNING FROM TEMPLE DEAD IN RAJ ROAD CRASH

Agencies
JAIPUR

At least 15 people died and two others were injured when a tempo traveller carrying devotees rammmed into a stationary trailer truck in Rajasthan's Phalodi on Sunday, police said.

The incident occurred near Matoda village on the Bharat Mala Highway, they said. "Fifteen passengers died, while two others sustained serious injuries. The injured were first taken to a hospital in Osian for primary treatment and later referred to Jodhpur," Jodhpur Police Commissioner Om Prakash said.

▶ **Contd on** | Nation

TN PARTIES SEAL SIR FIGHT IN SC

N Chithra
CHENNAI

A multi-party convention chaired by DMK president and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin, which met in Chennai on Sunday, resolved to approach the Supreme Court challenging the Election Commission's decision to roll out the second phase of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of elec-

toral rolls in the state.

The meeting was attended by the representatives of the ruling DMK, its allies including the Congress and Communists, and a host of other political parties. The principal opposition

▶ **Contd on** | Nation

Mass stabbing on train in UK, no terror angle

Agencies
HUNTINGDON

British police said on Sunday that a knife attack on a train which put 11 people in hospital was not a terrorist incident, adding that two men, both British nationals, had been arrested.

Counterterrorism police had helped with the initial investigation after the mass stabbing of passengers on a train in eastern England on Saturday. "At this stage, there is nothing to suggest that this is a terrorist incident," Superintendent John Loveless from British Transport Police told media on Sunday. The two men arrested on suspicion of attempted murder were a 32-year-old male, a Black British national, and a 35-



year-old British national of Caribbean descent, Loveless said. Both were born in the UK, he added.

The arrests were made by armed police after the train made an emergency stop at Huntingdon around 130 km

north of London.

Of the 11 people hospitalised, four have since been discharged and two patients remain in a life-threatening condition, police said.

▶ **Contd on** | Nation

As TVK skipped the meet, its chief Vijay said DMK was using the SIR issue to divert people's attention from graft charges

tional rolls in the state.

The meeting was attended by the representatives of the ruling DMK, its allies including the Congress and Communists, and a host of other political parties. The principal opposition

party AIADMK, its ally BJP, actor Vijay's TVK and a few others chose to boycott the meeting. While AIADMK and BJP support the SIR, Vijay's party is opposed to it but did not want to be on the DMK

bandwagon.

As the Election Commission has not accepted the request to schedule the SIR of electoral rolls in Tamil Nadu till the 2026 Assembly election was over, it has been decided to approach the apex court, Stalin said. Assembly election, as per schedule, is due in the state by April 2026.

▶ **Contd on** | Nation

Iran prez vows to rebuild N-sites with more 'vigour'

Agencies
TEHRAN

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian announced on Sunday that his country will rebuild its nuclear facilities "with greater vigour", as he reiterated Iran's unwillingness to build a nuclear weapon.

"Destroying buildings and factories will not create a problem for us, we will rebuild and with greater strength," the Iranian

president told state media.

In June, the US launched strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities that Washington says were part of a program geared towards developing nuclear weapons. Tehran maintains that its nuclear programme is for purely civilian purposes.

"It's all intended for solving the problems of the people, for disease, for the health of the people," Pezeshkian said in reference to nuclear activities.

His announcement comes in an apparent challenge to US President Trump, who has threatened to bomb again if Iran attempted to restart its setback programme.

The US alleged Iran's deliberate programme to acquire nuclear warheads and attacked the nuclear facilities in June during the 12-day war with Israel.

▶ **Contd on** | Nation

AP
WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump's razing of the White House's East Wing to build a ballroom has put some news organizations following the story in an awkward position, with corporate owners among the contributors to the project — and their reporters covering it vigorously.

Comcast, which owns NBC News and MSNBC, has faced on-air criticism from some of the liberal cable channels

personalities for its donation. Amazon, whose founder Jeff Bezos owns The Washington Post, is another donor. The newspaper editorialized in favor of Trump's project, pointing out the Bezos connection a day later after critics noted its omission.

It's not the first time since Trump regained the presidency that interests of journalists at outlets that are a small part of a corporate titan's portfolio have clashed with owners. Both the Walt Disney Co and Paramount

The refurbished Lincoln bathroom



have settled lawsuits with Trump rather than defend ABC News and CBS News in court. "This is Trump's Washington," said Chuck

Todd, former NBC "Meet the Press" host. "None of this helps the reputations of the news organizations that these companies own, be-

cause it compromises every-

body." None of the individuals and corporations identified by the White House as donors has publicly said how much was given, although a \$22 million Google donation was revealed in a court filing. MSNBC's Stephanie Ruhle said the donations should be a concern to Americans, "because there ain't no company out there writing a check just for good will."

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Trump's ballroom & media conundrum

offgrid



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FIR against oppn leaders for 'vote theft' rally sans nod

Poonam Apraj
MUMBAI

The Azad Maidan Police have registered an FIR against several opposition leaders for allegedly violating prohibitory orders by assembling without permission during 'Satyacha Morcha' in south Mumbai on Saturday. Organised by the Maha Vikas Aghadi, the rally was held against alleged irregularities in the voter lists. Police officials said the protest was carried out without proper permissions. Despite the restrictions, nearly 20,000-25,000 people participated in the rally, which began near Azad Maidan and moved through parts of south Mumbai. The FIR has been lodged under section 223 (disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant) of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita along with the Bombay Police Act.

Clear illegal hawkers in a wk: Locals give ultimatum to BMC

Vow to put up stalls outside A ward office if civic body fails to take action

COLABA CAUSEWAY

Devashri Bhujbal
MUMBAI

Despite the Bombay High court orders and repeated complaints by the Colaba residents, the BMC has been failing to address the hawkers' menace at the Colaba Causeway. The residents have written to the civic body, issuing a one-week ultimatum for the "immediate removal" of illegal stalls and encroachments. Otherwise, the locals warned they will resort to symbolic protest and put up stalls outside the A ward office.

In a letter, dated October 31, addressed to the assistant municipal commissioner of A



Rampant encroachments have made the footpaths unwalkable and unsafe for pedestrians, say locals

Ward, the citizens group, led by ex-corporator Makrand Narwekar, alleged that over 50% of the stalls at the Colaba Causeway are illegal. The rampant encroachments have made the footpaths completely unwalkable and unsafe for pedestrians, they asserted. "In case no visible

action is taken within a week, we will be compelled to put up stalls outside the A ward office to draw attention to this long-standing issue," said Narwekar in the letter.

Bella Shal, a Colaba resident said, "We have given the BMC one week's time, from the date of letter's receipt, to

act against the illegal structures. We urge the civic body to take immediate and strict action against these encroachments and make the footpaths walkable for the public."

Recently, a group of residents had approached the Colaba police station as the vendors stalked one of the citizen activists after she questioned them. Apart from the encroachment, the residents have been complaining against the "rowdiness" of the hawkers. Locals lamented that the growing encroachments have turned one of south Mumbai's most popular shopping stretches into a chaotic and unsafe zone. "People are forced to walk on the road because the footpaths are fully occupied by hawkers," said Mary Mody, another Colaba resident.

Treated wastewater use to be mandatory under new policy

Recycled water could be used for gardening, toilet flushing, vehicle washing and firefighting purposes

Ravikiran Deshmukh
MUMBAI

If things go as planned, housing societies and industrial estates might soon be required to reduce the use of freshwater and instead use treated wastewater for gardening, toilet flushing, vehicle washing, and firefighting. This could soon become the norm, thanks to a comprehensive policy — Safe Reuse and Management of Treated Wastewater, 2025 — announced by the state government.

The policy directs all Municipal Corporations and Class A Municipal Councils to adopt measures to reduce the use of freshwater for various purposes. Aiming to ease the strain on water resources as part of long-term planning, the state government said that using treated wastewater will help secure freshwater for broader environmental interests and offer social and financial benefits for all.

The policy outlines setting up wastewater treatment plants through a public-private partnership (PPP) or Hybrid Annuity Model if bulk buyers come forward. If both models prove unviable, such projects can be developed with investments from the concerned civic bodies and the state government.

According to the policy, treated wastewater — once declared fit for purpose — will be made available to thermal power plants, industries, and



Representative pic

IN BRIEF

1 The move aims to ease the strain on water resources as part of long-term planning

2 Policy outlines setting up wastewater treatment plants through public-private partnership or hybrid annuity models

3 Mumbai alone generates as much as 2,632 million litres per day of sewage

freshwater demand.

The policy recommends using wastewater treated by secondary treatment for non-potable purposes, while water treated through tertiary processes can be made fit for drinking. The Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation has been directed to initiate discussions with industrial units within its areas to set up wastewater treatment plants and source treated wastewater from nearby civic bodies.

Additionally, data centres will be approached to use treated wastewater for their operations. Similarly, it will be recommended for construction work, road cleaning, garden watering, public toilets, and firefighting in cities. The cost of treated wastewater will be decided in consultation with the Water Resources Regulatory Authority. The Water Resources Department has been instructed to coordinate with the Urban Development Department before supplying water from its projects to civic bodies.

Aqua Line pax count doubles after new stretch launch

The city's first underground metro — Line 3 or Aqua Line — has witnessed a remarkable jump in ridership following the opening of the final stretch connecting Acharya Atre Chowk to Cuffe Parade.

October 9 Final stretch becomes operational

38.63 lakh October ridership

1,41,024 Daily average

October 16 1,82,461 pax; highest single-day footfall

Ridership before launch of final stretch October 1 to 8 5.3 lakh pax passengers

66,000 Per day average

Numbers more than doubled after launch of final stretch

Metro officials attribute surge to enhanced reach to key residential and commercial areas

Text: Kamal Mishra



The completion of the final phase has transformed commuting patterns. We are witnessing sustained high ridership since day one after the start of the final phase — Senior officials

Unseasonal rainfall likely to continue this week as mercury drops below normal



Vijay Gohil

Devashri Bhujbal
MUMBAI

Mumbai has been witnessing unseasonal rainfall for the past 15 days and it is likely to continue this week. The drizzle continued on Sunday, with the India Meteorological Department attributing the

vagaries of weather to depression over the Arabian Sea and the associated cyclonic circulation.

The unexpected rains have brought much-needed relief from heat. On Sunday, the Colaba observatory recorded the maximum temperature of 27 degrees Celsius, which is 7.3

degrees below normal. The Santacruz facility registered the maximum temperature of 29 degrees, which is 5.7 degrees below normal.

In the period of 24 hours, starting Saturday 7pm, the weather stations recording the highest rainfall included: Pali Chimbai, Bandra (43 mm), Supari Tank, Bandra (40 mm), Cooper Hospital (37 mm), the Marol fire station (33 mm), Kandivli workshop and Paspoli, Powai (30 mm), the Colaba fire station (26 mm), Worli seaface (22 mm), and the Bhandup Complex and the Nariman Point (22 mm).

As per the 48-hour forecast, the skies will be generally cloudy with occasional light to moderate rains in the city and suburbs. The maximum and minimum temperatures will be 31 degrees and 24 degrees, respectively.

The entire state is expected to continue witnessing rainfall and thunderstorms this week. A yellow alert on separate days has been sounded for several districts.



Saiman Ansari

MSRTC warns officers over roster bias

Kamal Mishra
MUMBAI

The Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) recently issued a circular, warning all divisional controllers and senior officers across the state over alleged bias in duty allocation. Any divisional controller or supervisory official found guilty of bias or manipulation in the duty roster system will face action, warned the circular issued by Dr Madhav Kusekar, MSRTC vice-chairman and MD. The directive comes after multiple workers' unions complained of favouritism and irregularities in daily duty allotments at several depots. Allegations suggest that certain drivers and conductors were being consistently given preferred or "special" duties based on personal equations. To curb such practices, the MSRTC has instructed all divisional officers to conduct regular inspections and audits of depots.

Over 30,000 MSRTC drivers

Mumbai Central depot renovation faces scrutiny

The newly-built AC rest house for drivers and conductors and a new reservation office has come under the scanner after serious concerns were raised over the quality and handling of the project. The workers' union has demanded a detailed inquiry into the alleged irregularities and substandard work. Although the renovation was completed months ago, the facilities have remained unused.

Thousands say no to Sunday leisure for 'Run & Ride' event

FPJ News Service
MUMBAI

Leaving the Sunday cosiness, thousands of cyclists and athletes joined the 'Sri Sathya Sai Run and Ride — Sundays on Cycle' organised by the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation (SSSSO) to commemorate the birth centenary of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. The SSSSO has also embarked on the Sri Sathya Sai Prema Pravahini, a nationwide Rath Yatra traversing across India.

Over 4,500 participants joined the event supported by the ministry of youth affairs and sports through the FITIndia programme. They gathered near the Bandra Fort to join three categories for both running and cycling.

Dubbing the event as a "movement connecting hearts through action", SSSSO All India President Nimish Pandya said, "As we celebrate 100 years of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's birth, we continue to carry forward his message of selfless love, unity and service.



Today, Mumbai came together not just to run or ride, but to reaffirm these eternal values."

Union sports secretary Hari Ranjan Rao said that events like these beautifully align with the vision of Fit India and youth empowerment. "It is inspiring to see the SSSSO uniting citizens under one mission — promoting fitness with compassion, discipline with devotion and strength with service."

Lakshmikant Sharma, national youth coordinator and national-in-charge of Sri Sathya Sai unity run, said, "This is the 15th event out of the 60

planned across India. Despite the heavy rain and the fact that it was a free event, it was heartwarming to see such a massive turnout."

Other dignitaries included Rajan Navani, chairman and MD, JetSynthesys, Pandurang Chate, Sports Authority of India regional director and Vishwas Nangre Patil, additional DGP (ACB), Maharashtra. R Mukundan, MD and CEO, Tata Chemicals, Nandakumar Tirumalai, CFO, Tata Chemicals, actor Dilip Joshi and Narayan Sethuraman, Sanmar Metal Matrix MD were also present.

'Flat cannot be commercialised without committee nod'

Q. Our society secretary is not conducting the managing committee's meetings. Can the other members requisition the secretary or chairman to conduct the meeting? If the chairman is also favouring the secretary, what are the former's powers in this regard?

Prasanna Sekharan, Matunga

A. It is the secretary's responsibility to conduct meetings regularly to ensure that the society is managed well and more so to comply with the Maharashtra Co-operative Societies (MCS) Act, rules and bylaws. If the secretary fails to convene the meetings, the chairman is empowered to convene them and issue the notice and agenda for the same.

Other committee members can also requisition for a meeting. On a requisition of one-third members, the secretary should convene a special

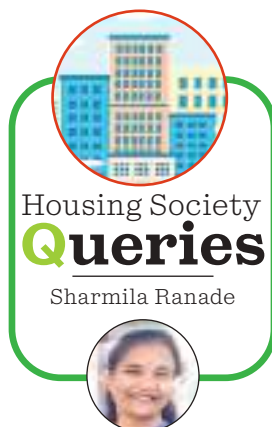
meeting within seven days from the date of receipt of the requisition. Otherwise, the chairman is empowered to convene the meeting.

However, if both of them fail to convene the regular or special meetings and also don't issue the notice and agenda for them, the housing federation, with which the society is affiliated, may call for the meeting upon receipt of a request from the members. The members present have to elect one among them as a chairman, who will preside over the meeting in the absence of the elected chairman. (Refer bylaws 132, 133, 135)

Q. Can treasurer be removed by the managing committee or it requires the general body's approval?

Farokh Sahi, Dadar

A. Treasurer is one of the society office-bearers appointed by the managing committee. Hence, it can remove any office-bearer,



including treasurer, by moving a no confidence motion. One-third of the committee's total strength have to move a no-confidence motion against the treasurer. A special meeting should be convened in the presence of the district deputy registrar or any other designated officer not below the rank of assistant registrar upon receipt of notice from one-third members. To pass a no-confidence motion, assent of minimum two-third of the

committee members, who are present in the meeting and entitled to vote, is required.

With the minimum of two-third majority passing the no-confidence motion, the treasurer shall cease to be the office-bearer and there is no requirement of the general body's approval for the removal of office-bearers. The general body elects the committee members, while it is the committee's prerogative to elect the office-bearers among themselves.

In case, the no-confidence motion fails to gather the required support, another such motion cannot be brought against the treasurer, secretary or chairman, as the case may be, unless a period of six months has elapsed from the date of proceeding the motion. (Refer bylaw 125)

Q. One of the committee members owns four flats

in different names of his family members. They rent the flats for hostel service. Is it allowed to run a hostel in a residential society?

Minni Singhal, Sion

A. Firstly, he is not entitled to be a committee member. Section 154-23 of the MCS Act provides for the disqualification of the committee and its members. It inter alia provides that if a committee member carries out a business of letting, subletting and selling flats in the society, he gets disqualified. The person is not eligible to be re-elected, re-co-opted or re-nominated as a member for five years.

Running a hostel is a commercial activity which cannot be done without the society's approval. Bylaw 75(e) provides that a member shall not use the flat allotted to him for the purpose other than that mentioned in the letter of allotment without the committee's written con-

sent. If the flat is allotted for the residential purpose, commercial activity cannot be done therein.

Your committee should verify whether the member has obtained a change of user from the municipal authorities and that the society has granted its written consent to run the hostel service. If that's not the case, the committee can seek written explanation from the member and the matter maybe escalated to the general body for necessary action after giving him an opportunity to hear.

The general body may direct to restrain the member from commercially using the residential property and may consider filing a complaint with the municipal authorities, if needed.

The questions are answered by Sharmila Ranade, a legal expert associated with Mumbai Grahak Panchayat. The questions, in brief, may be sent to fpjchs@gmail.com

Patients briefly evacuated after fire on Nair premises



Several patients admitted at the BMC-run Nair Hospital were briefly evacuated after a fire erupted on Sunday. "The blaze erupted behind the G building and was confined to the scrap. The incident was reported at 11.24am and the flames were doused at 11.37am," officials from the BMC disaster management cell said. The fire broke out due to welding work at the

small plot between two buildings where scrap is dumped, said Pradeep Narkar from municipal mazdoor union. Although the fire was put out immediately, there was dense smog, he said, adding that admitted patients were brought outside for around 45 minutes as a safety measure.

Text and pics: Devashri Bhujbal

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MAKEOVER | Traffic cops are asked to deploy more manpower

Goyal orders WEH traffic fix; wetland beautification

Devashri Bhujbal
MUMBAI

To address the traffic menace on the Western Express Highway (WEH), MP from Mumbai North and Union Minister for Commerce and Industries, Piyush Goyal, instructed the BMC to take the initiative and resurface the bridges built by MSRDC at Vakola, Aarey, and Vikhroli. He also directed the traffic police to deploy additional manpower to ensure smooth traffic movement and stop the movement of heavy vehicles on the WEH during rush hours.

Goyal held a meeting on Sunday at the BMC's R-Central ward office to review infrastructure projects in North Mumbai and civic services. The meeting was attended by the BMC Commissioner, MMRDA CEO, Mumbai Suburban Collector,



Traffic on Western Express Highway —File Photo

Joint Commissioner of Mumbai Police, and senior officials from SRA, MHADA, SGNP, and other organizations.

Some of the projects reviewed by Goyal included a detailed project report on the beautification of 10 lakes, setting up sewage treatment

plants at Dahisar and Poisar rivers, repairing pipelines wherever necessary to ensure uninterrupted water supply, building eight new public toilets, and ensuring that the BMC-run Bhagwati Hospital is ready for patient services at the earliest.

He also directed the BMC

Goyal instructs BMC to resurface bridges at Vakola, Aarey, and Vikhroli

Heavy vehicles are banned on WEH during rush hours

Meeting includes BMC, MMRDA, police, and SGNP officials

Projects include beautifying 10 lakes

Sewage treatment plants planned for Dahisar and Poisar rivers

and the Collector's office to take strict action against encroachments on wetlands. Last week, activists highlighted that three trucks had unloaded debris to resurface a large plot inside the SGNP forest. Following this, the authorities removed the debris.

Dadar fish market vendors protest Airoli relocation

Devashri Bhujbal
MUMBAI

The BMC's market department has decided to shift the Dadar fresh fish market vendors, currently operating on Senapati Bapat Marg, to a plot near Airoli check post in Mulund East. This relocation is temporary, as the permanent shift is planned for the redeveloped Crawford market building. The decision follows the failure of a previous plan to move the vendors to Wadala.

"The permanent relocation for the Dadar fish vendors will be Crawford market. Till then, we have decided to shift them to Airoli," said Alka Sasane, assistant municipal commissioner of BMC (Markets). The move to vacate Senapati Bapat Marg comes after protests by Dadar East residents, led by Swarajya CHS, who highlighted increased traffic chaos since the Elphinstone Bridge closure. The fish market, they claim, exacerbates the congestion. Local MLA Mahesh Sawant supported the residents' agitation.



Dadar fresh fish market

However, the fish vendors are resisting the BMC's decision, insisting on staying at their current location or moving directly to Crawford market. "We have a court order protecting us. The BMC proposed shifting us to Airoli in 2021, against which we approached the High Court. The court asked our choice, and we agreed to Crawford market. There is no question of shifting to Airoli or Wadala," said a representative of the Dadar fish market vendors' association.

Sources indicate the BMC's market department plans to issue eviction notices this week, giving vendors 15 days to vacate, with potential

actions under the Municipal Corporation Act if they fail to comply. Tensions are high, as vendors from the nearby Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj fish market are unwilling to share space with Dadar vendors at Crawford market. "There is infighting among Dadar and CSM fish vendors. Finally, we took a call to shift Dadar fish vendors to Airoli," a senior BMC officer said.

A Dadar fish vendor stated, "We do not intend to create problems for residents of Swarajya CHS. We can shift to our original spot where the market building was located. If not, as promised in court, we will shift to Crawford market."

Banquet hall owner booked for dog attack

FPJ News Service
MUMBAI

The Oshiwara police has registered an FIR against Tejas Jogani, owner of Spanish Villa, for allegedly exhibiting negligent conduct with respect to an animal.

According to the police, the complainant, Heena Sayyed, 28, an event planner residing in Mira Road East, was bitten by a pet dog at the Spanish Villa banquet hall in Jogeshwari West on October 31.

Sayyed was at the venue, which hosts weddings and other events, for work when Jogani's dog allegedly attacked her, causing a deep injury to her right hand. She was taken to a nearby hospital for treatment.

Sayyed alleged that the dog was roaming freely without a muzzle and that Jogani failed to help her after the incident. The police registered the case under Section 291 (negligent conduct with respect to an animal) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.



Blue Frog set to revive live music in Ballard Estate

The best news on the music front is the proposed reopening of the hugely popular live world music venue, the Blue Frog. It opened in Lower Parel some years ago and was an instant hit. Before it could take root, the owner Mahesh Mathew declared bankruptcy. The good news is that the joint is going to be relocated to an yet-to-be revealed place in Ballard Estate. Apparently the Maharashtra government's decision to let shops and restaurants remain open all night and the move to have an international cruise terminal at the waterfront has prompted Mathew to opt for a second innings. In any case, Ballard Estate, which despite its beautiful heritage office buildings, is dead as a dodo at night except for sailors getting themselves drunk silly at Harish and other bars. Hopefully Blue Frog will jazz up the place from March 2026 onwards.



Steps of faith

Devotees take part in the 12th Dindi procession from Dadar Flower Market to Wadala Vitthal Temple on Kartiki Ekadashi, organised by Sant Krishnadas Maharaj Satsang —Vijay Gohil

Bom Dia brings global flavours to Matunga's culinary scene

One of the better things to have happened to the gourmet scene is the opening of Bom Dia, which is Portuguese for good morning. It is situated diagonally opposite the iconic Cafe Madras on Bhaudaji Road, Matunga. It's well lit with the ground floor selling takeaways like cakes. The real action is on the first floor where a spacious restaurant welcomes you, shutting out the din of traffic outside. The menu offers a wide variety of choices in cold and hot beverages like cortado coffee and Indian, Asian and Italian food. You can settle for the usual paneer kofta, lehsun Palak, dal makhani, kulchas etc or opt for sushi, open sandwiches, satay et al. The ambience is pleasant and cosy. However, the pricing is very much on the higher side which may discourage repeat footfalls. It will be interesting to see how the owners Manjrekars sell a totally "hatke" cuisine to Matungaites who have been reared on idlis, dosas and wadas dished out by Cafe Madras, Cafe Mysore and Anand Bhavan.

City's street light woes dim its world-class dreams

Mumbai is aspiring to be a word-class metropolis. But how can it do that with a sharp deterioration in basic services like street lights. The other day I went to Mazgaon to attend Kali Puja at night and I found several streets were plunged in darkness. Power outages, an unheard of thing in the past, are now common in SoBo. The flyovers at Lalbaug and Parel are permanent areas of darkness. In the suburbs too non-functional street lights are common. It makes walking at night a highly risky exercise. In the tunnels on the Eastern Freeway darkness is a routine feature. The indifference of the authorities is simply shocking.

TAILPIECE

There is so much talk about "vote chori" these days that one would think that democracy is not about honest voting but taking part in a bank robbery. (Compiled by S Balakrishnan)

Fake BARC scientist got crores for espionage

Poonam Apraj and
Amadhat Kharade
MUMBAI

The Mumbai Crime Branch has uncovered that Akhtar Husaini, the fake Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) scientist arrested from Versova, Yari Road, and his brother Adil Husaini, arrested in Delhi, allegedly received massive foreign funding in exchange for sensitive nuclear information.

According to sources, the probe has revealed that the Husaini brothers received crores of rupees from the US, Iran, and Iraq directly into their bank accounts. The funds were reportedly given in return for classified details from BARC and other nuclear research



File Photo

Akhtar Hussain

facilities. Investigators now suspect that the brothers were involved in espionage activities, and evidence is being gathered to support these claims.

It has also emerged that Akhtar allegedly provided information and photos of what he claimed was an Iranian nuclear site to US contacts, for which he received large payments. However,

upon verification, US agencies found that the images were not of a nuclear site but rather of a tourist location. Investigators have also found leads suggesting Akhtar maintained contact with individuals in Pakistan. Crime Branch sources revealed that the brothers had been receiving foreign funding since 1995. Initially, they were paid in lakhs for supposedly providing secret blueprints of BARC and other nuclear plants, but after 2000–2001, the funding increased to crores. Investigators discovered that many of the bank accounts through which the funds were received had already been closed by the accused.

A senior Crime Branch officer confirmed that a private

bank account belonging to Akhtar Husaini has been traced, and the branch has formally requested transaction details from the bank to determine the exact amount of foreign funding received. Efforts are also underway to retrieve records of the closed accounts. Further investigation revealed that, under Adil's instructions, another accused, Munazir Khan, created multiple fake identity documents, which were stored on his laptop. The purpose behind these forged documents is also under scrutiny. Mumbai investigators are preparing to coordinate with the Delhi Police Special Cell to cross-examine both brothers and verify details obtained during interrogation.

WHERE BOOKS BLOOM IN PUBLIC GARDENS

Pooja Patel

Driven by a deep commitment to promoting education, Dr Ismat Gabula and her husband Abbasali believed that reading was the most effective way to inspire learning and share knowledge. On a trip to Kashmir, they met children and communities eager for access to books. When they returned to Mumbai, they collected and sent donated books to Kashmir — a gesture that was met with overwhelming gratitude. Donors, eager to see where their books had gone, received heartwarming photographs from the children. The response was so enthusiastic that over 220 kilos of books were eventually sent to Kashmir, despite the logistical challenges of transporting them.

As donations continued to pour in, they began to wonder how they could extend this initiative closer to home. "Why not Mumbai?" they thought. The city's residents were eager to share their books. The idea soon took root in a BMC garden near their home — a vibrant space frequented by people from all walks of life: children, senior citizens, and families alike.

"With the encouragement of a lot of people, my husband and I co-founded the Gabula Foundation in 2022, and our first Library4All was set up in the same year. The concept was simple yet powerful — to place free,

ANGELS OF MUMBAI
Presented by adani



ANGEL: Dr Ismat Gabula, co-founder, Gabula Foundation



ENDORSER: Anchal Jhaveri, founder, Light & Magic Photography

At a time when mobile phones and digital distractions have taken over, I often feel that people are reading less. That's why Dr Ismat's effort to make books freely accessible feels so meaningful. The free libraries she has set up are designed for those who may not have the means to buy books — a simple yet powerful idea.

open-access libraries in public gardens where anyone could take a book, read a book, and leave a book," shares Dr Ismat Gabula.

The library box has been thoughtfully designed —



The NGO has set up 48 libraries in Mumbai and 189 across India

bright, weather-resistant, and accessible to readers of all ages. Each door opens independently, shelves are arranged at different heights for various book sizes, and posters around the box invite people to participate.

"The collection includes light reading material for children and adults, along with motivational and cookery books. "Religious, political, or controversial content, as well as magazines and newspapers, are deliberately avoided to keep the space inclusive and focused on reading for pleasure," adds Dr Gabula, who is also a radiologist.

The response from the public has been overwhelmingly positive. Over time, the NGO has set up 48 libraries in Mumbai and 189 across India. "The initiative also requires ground-level engagement. Garden watchmen have been educated about the project — taught that visitors were free to borrow books and that everyone was welcome to read.

Volunteers now act as guardians, checking the libraries periodically to ensure they remain in good condition and accessible to all," shares the 65-year-old.

Anchal Jhaveri, founder, Light & Magic Photography, shares, "At a time when mobile phones and digital distractions have taken over, I often feel that people are reading less. That's why Dr Ismat's effort to make books freely accessible feels so meaningful. The free libraries she has set up are designed for those who may not have the means to buy books — a simple yet powerful idea. Placing these libraries in public parks, schools, and community spaces ensures that everyone, regardless of background, can experience the joy of reading. It's such a thoughtful and genuinely impactful initiative."



Scan the code to watch the video. If you know any heroes, write to us at angels@fpj.co.in.

Out on bail, man robs teen near Metro

Mumbai: On October 31, a 16-year-old girl, S.S. Raut was robbed near Mogra Metro Station in Jogeshwari. The accused, Bhola Shelke, 25, a murder accused recently released on bail, pushed her while she waited for the elevator and snatched her mobile phone. Despite her resistance, Shelke fled, but bystanders and a police patrol team caught him nearby. Shelke, who served five years for a murder in Kalyan, was en route to a court hearing. He was remanded to judicial custody. The victim sustained minor injuries to her thumb and elbow, treated at Jogeshwari Trauma Care Centre.

Woman killed in truck-bike collision

Mumbai: A 50-year-old woman, Harsha Kothari, died in Malad West on Saturday after a cement mixer truck hit her bike at the Link Road-Inorbit Mall signal at 12:45pm. Her husband, Hiren Kothari, 42, was riding with Harsha as the pillion rider when the truck collided during a right turn, causing her to fall under its wheels, resulting in fatal abdominal injuries. Hiren and their daughter sustained minor injuries. The Bangur Nagar police registered a case against the driver, Kamlesh Kumar Yadav, for reckless driving and issued a notice.

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Man loses ₹50 lakh in shares scam

FPJ News Service
MUMBAI

A 53-year-old consultant from Navi Mumbai was allegedly duped of over Rs50 lakh in an online share investment fraud. According to the police, on August 22, the complainant received a message from a woman claiming to provide training and information related to share market investments. On September 18, she sent web links asking him to fill out forms and download a trading app. Following her instructions, the complainant began investing through the bogus app. Initially, he invested Rs1 lakh and saw a notional profit of Rs10,000. The scammers later told him that investing Rs50 lakh would yield substantial returns. Between September 19 and 29, he transferred Rs50.17 lakh. The app showed his earnings had grown to Rs86 lakh. However, when he tried to withdraw his funds, the fraudsters demanded another Rs50 lakh, claiming it was required to release his profits. Realising he had been cheated, the complainant approached the police. A case has been registered for cheating and cheating by personation by using a computer resource.

Complainant initially paid ₹1 lakh and saw a 'profit' of ₹10,000. Scammers then told him that investing ₹50 lakh would yield substantial returns

CARTEL CATCH | After 3 yrs on the run, crime branch nabbed Shera Batla, drug lord Salim Dola's aide, in ₹2cr narcotics case

Extradited from Dubai, Shera Batla in cops net

Poonam Apraj
MUMBAI

In a breakthrough for Mumbai police, Salman Saleem Shaikh alias Shera Batla, 35, a close aide of most-wanted drug lord Salim Dola, was deported from Dubai on Saturday and arrested by the city's Crime Branch in connection with a Rs2 crore narcotics case. Batla, a resident of Dongri, had been absconding for nearly three years and was wanted in six major drug trafficking cases across Maharashtra and India.

According to sources, Mumbai's drug syndicates have deep international links stretching to Dubai, China, and Saudi Arabia. The police revealed that Batla played a crucial role in the drug trade, frequently travelling to the Middle East and East Asia to coordinate smuggling operations.

Earlier, on October 22, the Crime Branch's Unit 7 arrested Dubai-based drug kingpin Mohammed Salim Mohammed Suhail Shaikh, who ran an extensive narcotics manufacturing and distribution network across India. During his interrogation, the name of Shera Batla surfaced. The police learned that Batla and Shaikh lived in the same neighbourhood in Dubai. Following this, Batla was detained by the UAE authorities based on a Red Corner Notice issued

Links to multiple high-profile drug cases

In 2023
Unit 6 of the Crime Branch seized 356 grams of Ketamine, MD, and Charas worth ₹2.6 lakh, with Batla listed as a wanted accused

In 2024
Barshi Takli Police Station (Akola) busted a drug manufacturing unit, seizing 5.5 kg of Ephedrine worth ₹1.38 crore, in which Batla was found to have financed the operation

That same year, the Bhongir Police Station under Rachakonda Commissionerate (Telangana) uncovered a factory producing 110 kg of MD and 10kg of Alprazolam valued at ₹23 crore, confirming Batla's involvement

In July 2025
Sakinaka Police busted a drug factory in Mysuru, Karnataka, seizing 180 kg of MD worth over ₹400cr, once again linked to Batla



Dongri police also seized 47 grams of MD worth ₹9.4 lakh, naming Batla as a wanted accused. Police sources said his network extends across India, indicating a major operational role in inter-state and international drug trafficking.

Four major int'l drug traffickers extradited from UAE in 6 months

In the past six months, Indian agencies have successfully extradited four key accused involved in international drug syndicates from the UAE. Taher Dola, son of most-wanted trafficker Salim Dola, was deported from Abu Dhabi.

In July, Mustafa Kubrawala was extradited for operating a synthetic drug factory in Sangli, where Rs256cr MD was seized and 13 were arrested. On October 22, Salim Shaikh was deported, followed by Shera Batla's extradition by the Ghatkopar ANC Unit this week. These operations mark a major step in dismantling India's transnational narcotics networks.

through Interpol and was deported to India. He was produced before the Esplanade Court on Sunday and remanded in police custody for five days. Navnath Dhavale DCP, anti-narcotics cell (ANC), said that Batla has been arrested in a

2022 drug case. "The Ghatkopar unit of the ANC had earlier arrested four accused and a charge sheet was submitted. In this case, three other accused including Batla were wanted," said Dhavale. The case was registered on August 4,

2022. The police had arrested Mohammed Shahrulkh Shaikh (28) from Nagpada area in central Mumbai and seized 995 grams of banned drug Mephedron or MD approximately worth Rs2 crore from his possession.

₹79 lakh lost in 2 separate MHADA flat fraud cases

In Andheri East, a senior citizen lost ₹70L; in Agripada, a 36-year-old woman was defrauded of ₹9L by 2 men

Megha Kuchik
Avadhut Kharade
MUMBAI

Two separate FIRs have been registered in cheating cases related to the allotment of Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Authority (MHADA) flats.

In the first case, the MIDC police have booked estate agent Arvind Lambe and Avinash Sanjay Kumar, who posed as an MHADA official, for cheating and extortion.

According to the FIR, complainant Deepak Tudvekar, 62, a retired private company employee from Andheri East, and his wife, a retired LIC manager, wanted to buy a flat for their children. In October 2023, Tudvekar's sister-in-law introduced him to Lambe, a property dealer claiming strong MHADA connections.

Lambe told Tudvekar that his acquaintance, Kumar, a senior MHADA officer, could help him secure a flat. He showed Tudvekar six flats in Bajaj Emerald Society, Andheri East, promising one for Rs1.70 crore and charging a 2% brokerage fee. In November 2023, Lambe showed him a flat, assuring him it would be allotted to him. He later introduced Kumar, who claimed to have a file for a flat registered under another person's name and

GUIDELINES...

Use only official channels for booking

Visit only official MHADA sites: mhada.gov.in / housing.mhada.gov.in

MHADA has no agents or intermediaries

Make payments only through official online portals, never in cash

For any doubts, contact MHADA's chief vigilance officer or deputy chief officer (marketing) directly

promised to transfer it to Tudvekar.

An MoU was signed, and Tudvekar paid Rs70 lakh in instalments. However, even after several months, there was no progress. When he demanded his money back in August 2024, the accused neither handed over the flat nor refunded the amount. Realising he had been duped, Tudvekar filed a complaint, and the police registered an FIR against Lambe and Kumar.

In the second case, Jabeen Mohammad Anwar Khan, 36, from Agripada, was cheated out of Rs9 lakh by two persons

who promised her a flat under the MHADA scheme.

As per the FIR, Jabeen, who lives with her parents and son, was helped by her father, Anwar Khan, who approached his friend and estate agent Nisar Ansari, 54. Ansari introduced him to Sameer Liyakat Chauhan, 48, who claimed to deal in MHADA flats. Chauhan and his wife Mahesh, 40, showed them a flat in Aashray Co-operative Housing Society, Borivali (East), priced at Rs13.5 lakh.

Trusting them, Jabeen paid Rs10.5 lakh by cheque and was later pressured into cash payments. An MoU was signed on March 5, 2023, and notarised by her lawyer. But when she visited the flat, another family was already living there, having purchased it directly through MHADA.

When confronted, Chauhan offered a room at United Apartments, Sir JJ Road, claiming it was his property, but it later turned out to be false. He issued three cheques worth Rs1.5 lakh, all of which bounced. Chauhan later transferred Rs50,000 to Anwar Khan, and Ansari returned Rs1 lakh on his behalf. The remaining Rs9 lakh is yet to be recovered. The Agripada police have registered a case and begun an investigation.

BEWARE OF NEW ONLINE CYBER FRAUDS

Mumbai cyber crime police have issued alerts about rising WhatsApp hacks, fake loan apps, e-challan scams and SIM hijacks; other warning signs are credit card offers without verification, requests for full KYC over unsecured channels such as phone or WhatsApp, sudden mobile network loss despite active recharge

WHATSAPP HACKING
Fraudsters trick users into sharing Google verification codes/OTPs

Once hacked, criminals impersonate victims to demand money or sensitive info

DOS
Never share OTPs or verification codes

Enable 2-step verification in WhatsApp

If hacked, uninstall and reinstall WhatsApp to revoke access

Inform contacts and report to 1930 or cybercrime.gov.in



FAKE LOAN APP BLACKMAIL

Scammers send links posing as job offers, cashback, or loans

Clicking installs a fake app; money is deposited, followed by harassment and threats

DOS
Install apps only from Play Store/App Store

Deny gallery/contact/mic permissions

Avoid sharing personal photos online

SIM HIJACK VIA FAKE CREDIT CARD OFFERS

Fraudsters posing as bank officials collect personal data (PAN, Aadhaar, DOB)

Use it to get SIM swaps, then access your bank OTPs & drain accounts

WARNING SIGNS
'Pre-approved' credit card calls or links

Sudden mobile network loss

OTPs/alerts for unknown transactions

DOS
Never share full KYC details via WhatsApp or phone

Contact your bank & telecom provider immediately if your SIM stops working

Report frauds: Dial 1930 or visit cybercrime.gov.in

TEXT: SOMENDRA SHARMA

Vendor's suicide: State minorities panel orders probe

Manoj Ramakrishnan
MUMBAI

The Maharashtra State Minorities Commission has directed the Sindhudurg district police to investigate allegations that Aftab Sheikh, a 38-year-old Muslim flower vendor from Banda town, killed himself due to harassment by fellow shopkeepers. A video recorded by Sheikh before his death, discovered by his family, accuses five individuals of harassment and business rivalry. The family has refused to claim Sheikh's body from the mortuary until the accused are arrested, alleging police inaction despite the video evidence.

Sheikh, a resident of Banda Muslim Wadi, was found hanging from a ceiling fan in his locked bedroom on October 29. His wife, in an adjacent room, alerted Sheikh's brother, Abdul Razzak, who broke open the door. Sheikh was rushed to a local hospital and later transferred to a medical facility in Goa, where he was declared dead.

Sheikh's mother told local media that he was forced to shut his shop for eight months and faced threats against reopening. The video

Video recorded by vendor before his death accused five persons of harassment and business rivalry

reveals Sheikh's struggle to support his wife and child financially due to obstructions by the accused. Tensions escalated in Banda, a town on the Maharashtra-Goa border, as a crowd gathered outside the sub-district hospital on Thursday night, demanding a criminal case against those named by Sheikh.

Wasim Khwajabhai Burhan, a member of the Maharashtra State Minorities Commission, Mumbai, wrote to the police on Saturday, stating the video suggests Sheikh was tortured and threatened, potentially instigating his suicide. Burhan demanded the registration of criminal offenses and the arrest of the accused. "Despite a complaint filed by his relatives, no case has been registered and no arrests have been made against the accused yet," Burhan said. "The question arises as to under whose pressure the Sindhudurg district police administration is working."

E-voting or mock-voting not valid in society redevelopment



Q: I have a flat in a society in Mulund, which is undergoing redevelopment, and the society members are at the stage of finalising the developer. Our society is a huge one, and the management committee has conducted mock voting. Many members are not in Mulund. In fact, many reside outside India. As a result, getting 2/3rd members to make a quorum itself is a big challenge. Please advise whether, as per the law, the society can carry on e-voting or not? Can the society bring consent letters from individual members and create a 51% majority to select the desired builder? What is the sanctity of mock voting in law? Can a member change his choice in the final selection under 79A guidelines? Please guide.
—Manpreet Singh, Mulund

A: The questions you have asked are bothering many society members in and around Mumbai, Thane, Pune and elsewhere in the state. Many big housing societies are finding it extremely difficult to get 2/3rd members of the total membership, which is the minimum quorum for commencing the special general

body meeting convened for selecting the developer.

Every housing society going for redevelopment must know that the process is regulated by the guidelines published vide Government Resolution dated July 4, 2019. These guidelines lay down the complete procedure to be adopted by the housing societies from the time they decide to go for redevelopment till the selection of the developer.

Often, the question arises whether these guidelines are mandatory or only guiding in nature. With several High Court judgments on this point, it is now a settled position that these guidelines are not mandatory. This means they are not of a binding nature. However, it does not mean that these guidelines can be altogether bypassed. The law expects substantial compliance, and some minor deviations will not invalidate the selection process.

Unfortunately, over the years, there have been aberrations in implementation. The process of deputing the authorised officer from the office of the district deputy registrar (DDR) has been grossly converted into a fertile ground for corruption. The DDR's office insists on illegal gratification from societies or builders at the rate of Rs15,000 to Rs50,000 per flat for granting permission to organise the special general body meeting and for issuing the non-objection certificate thereafter.

Since housing societies are unable to pay such hefty amounts running into lakhs of rupees, the DDR's office came out with 'innovative ideas' and suggested to societies, through project management consultants, to conduct 'mock voting'. The developer who gets selected in such mock voting is then

expected to take care of DDR's illegal demands. Another such 'innovation' was the 'preferred developer' letter, which societies were asked to issue in favour of the front-runner developer.

In reality, such 'mock voting' and 'preferred developer' concepts have no place in the 79A guidelines. They are creations of the DDR's office and have no legal sanction. Mock voting is thus devoid of any legal validity and cannot bind the society.

As regards e-voting, as of date the 79A guidelines do not permit e-voting for the selection of a developer. Only members physically present at the special general body meeting can vote. Members who are out of the city or abroad, or those who are very old or bedridden, are not allowed to exercise their votes online.

Selection of a developer is a crucial stage in the redevelopment process. The government must therefore seriously consider allowing e-voting and online participation of members. The Mumbai Grahak Panchayat has urged the state government to permit such participation. Denying members the right to vote online amounts to denying them their right to participate in the selection process, which is unfair. It is hoped the government will soon come out with such a provision in tune with modern technology and democratic principles. Currently, the 79A guidelines also prohibit consent letters from individual members who are not physically present in the special general body meeting organised for selecting the developer.

(Advocate Shirish V Deshpande is chairman, Mumbai Grahak Panchayat. Queries can be sent to him on email: shirish50@yahoo.com)

Dog-feeding dispute ends as BMC steps in

Dhairiya Gajara
MUMBAI

A long-standing dispute between residents of Goregaon (W)'s upscale Kalpataru Radiance housing society over feeding community dogs has been amicably resolved following the intervention of the BMC.

The civic body issued a notice to society members educating them about the animals' rights to live and be fed within the premises. Subsequently, a designated feeding zone was created inside the society.

The disagreement had arisen between animal-loving tenants who regularly fed stray dogs within the premises and other residents who opposed the practice, citing hygiene and safety concerns.

Feeders alleged that the society banned an animal feeder from entering the premises, forcing residents to feed the dogs themselves. However, the society objected to feeding outside the designated area, which the feeders claimed was unsuitable for the dogs.

An animal-loving resident, requesting anonymity, told The Free Press Journal, "A feeding spot was given on the ground floor near the society's dumping spot. The spot was filthy for dogs to eat and inconvenient since the dogs, including puppies, reside in the basement and parking area on the first floor. We tried to train the dogs to assemble at the feeding spot for a week but were unsuccessful."

Feeders further alleged

that the issue turned into a tenants-versus-owners conflict. The society reportedly ignored tenants' demands, and landlords allegedly pressured their tenants to stop feeding the animals. After repeated complaints, the BMC's veterinary department intervened and issued an official notice to the society management. The notice clarified the legal position under the Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) guidelines, emphasising that community dogs cannot be relocated, harmed, or denied food and water within their territories.

"Our neighbours had started harassment of feeders, including female feeders, by recording their videos while feeding. Everyone was so scared that we used to slyly

RECENT FINES

Society levies ₹2,000 fine on residents for feeding dogs

The society levied a ₹2k fine on residents found feeding animals outside the feeding zone. While AWBI mandates societies to ensure care for community animals within their premises, Kalpataru Radiance punished those who did

A similar incident occurred in Thane, which imposed fines worth ₹14 lakh on a member for walking dogs in the premises but later withdrew the fines

step out in the dark of the night to feed the dogs," said another resident. "Even pet owners were being denied the use of lifts or common areas to walk their pets."

To address concerns, the BMC arranged a meeting between its veterinary officer, police officials, animal welfare officer, and society residents. A solution was reached after the society agreed to enclose the feeding spot and cover it with a shed for use during rains.

Roshan Pathak, animal rights advisor with Pure Animal Lovers (PAL) Foundation, said, "Feeding spots are mandatory in every society as animals are part of the society and have the right to live. There should be no penalty on pet owners who use society amenities."

Rohit's tea price row & ₹6k debt to vendor

Poonam Apraj
MUMBAI

Rohit Arya, the accused in the Powai hostage incident, haggled over tea prices and owed Rs6,000 to Umesh Tiwari, the tea vendor who first alerted Mumbai police about children being held hostage inside Mahavir Classic Building. Tiwari, who has run a tea stall outside the building for six years, told the FPJ that Arya was a regular customer.

"He used to drink tea with egg bhurji every day and had already fixed the rate with me," Tiwari said. Arya also auditioned Tiwari's son for a project, promising a callback in December for an outdoor shoot.

On Thursday, when the hostage crisis unfolded, Tiwari heard children crying and screaming from an upper floor. Alarmed, he and his acquaintance, Kalyani

Despite Tiwari's crucial role, his statement remains unrecorded four days later

Bansode, went to investigate. Finding the door locked and with bamboo scaffolding in place due to renovations, they tried climbing up. Arya allegedly pointed a gun at them, threatening them to stay back. Realising the gravity of the situation, Tiwari dialed 100, prompting a swift police response. A patrol team arrived, leading to the rescue operation and the discovery of children held captive.

Despite Tiwari's crucial role, his statement remains unrecorded four days later. Just days prior, Arya negotiated tea prices with Tiwari, settling at Rs4 for a small cup and Rs8 for a large one.

19-year-old killed by falling metal at Bhandup construction site



Previous Incident..
On October 8, Sanskruti Amin, 22, tragically lost her life when a cement block fell from a nearby under-construction building in Jogeshwari East. She had left home around 9:30am, prepared to start her workday, when the block reportedly dislodged from the 21st floor struck her head

Avadhut Kharade
MUMBAI

A tragic accident at a Bhandup construction site has claimed the life of 19-year-old worker Mithun Rajvali Kewat. The incident occurred on the morning of October 18 at the Shradha Classic construction site near Gadhav Naka, when a metal angle fell from a lift, striking Kewat on the head and causing fatal injuries. Following the incident, police have registered a case of negligence causing death against Ramesh Patel, owner of Khodal Enterprises.

According to the FIR, the accident happened around 9:30am. Kewat was immediately rushed to the Rajawadi Hospital, Ghatkopar, where doctors declared him dead. A post-mortem conducted at the Rajawadi Hospital confirmed that Kewat's death was due to

hemorrhage and shock caused by head injuries.

Police sub-inspector Santosh Shivaji Chate, 30, who was on duty that day, conducted inquiries at the hospital. It was confirmed that the deceased lived on Subhash Nagar Road, Bhandup West. The police recorded statements from Kewat's elder brother, Sugreev Rajvali Kewat, 38, a tiles business owner residing in Kandivali West, and other individuals present at the construction site at the time of the accident.

Fellow worker Ajay Kumar Yadav, 27, also provided information about the incident, stating that the metal angle had been attached to a lift used for transporting tiles within the site. Investigations revealed that the lift's installation, maintenance and safety were the responsibility of

Khodal Enterprises, which had supplied tiles to the construction project.

The site owner, Sudhir Babubhai Mehta, 52, confirmed that the work of transporting and installing tiles had been assigned to Khodal Enterprises. Mehta stated that the lift and its safety mechanisms were under the contractor's supervision, a statement corroborated by the FIR.

The police also recorded a statement from Ramesh Patel, owner of Khodal Enterprises. Following the investigation, he has been booked for negligence causing death under Sections 106 and 290 of the Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita (BNS) Act.

Police have also seized the metal angle from the site as evidence and are continuing their investigation to determine the exact circumstances that led to the fatal accident.

City's murder toll climbs to 98 in nine months

Mumbai's crime landscape in 2025 shows a troubling uptick in homicides, with 98 murders recorded in the first nine months—a 20-case increase from last year—fuelled by personal disputes and urban tensions. While female homicides have dropped and assaults dipped slightly, unsolved cases and recent



high-profile incidents underscore ongoing challenges in densely populated areas

Rising homicides

Mumbai police data reveals 98 murders from January to September 2025, up from 78 in the same period of 2024, marking a 25.6% increase and raising concerns about escalating violent crime

Attempted murders trend down

232 attempted murder cases were filed this year, a slight decline from 240 last year, indicating some progress in curbing non-fatal violence

Impact on women

11 women were murdered in 2025 (down from 18 in 2024), with 10 cases solved and perpetrators arrested; however, the recent Kalachowki murder-suicide highlights persistent domestic risks

Unsolved cases

Three of this year's murders remain unresolved, pointing to investigative gaps

Positive shift in assaults

Serious assault incidents fell marginally from 3,282 in 2024 to 3,054 in 2025, offering a sliver of optimism

Root causes

Most killings stem from domestic disputes, neighbourhood quarrels, drunken brawls, or old rivalries, concentrated in slums and high-density zones like Govandi and Sion

High-profile incidents

October 30, Govandi

Drug-addicted Sajid Qureshi, 23, allegedly stabbed coconut vendor Mir Kasim Enul Nadab, 25, for drug money; accused arrested by Shivaji Nagar police

October 24, Kalachowki

Sonu Barai, 24, stabbed ex-girlfriend Manisha Yadav, 24, to death after a breakup, then took his own life

October 19, Sion

(Pratiksha Nagar) Ram Singar Kalluram Yadav allegedly murdered his wife Chandadevi Yadav, 27, over infidelity suspicions

Text: Avadhut Kharade



There is a plan conceived by planners at MMRDA that any commute within the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) can be completed within 59 minutes. How far this is feasible and, equally important, for how much it is being planned for, will remain unanswered. The investment being planned to achieve this is Rs5,00,000 crores till 2041.

The MMR covers 6,335 square kilometres, with 9 Municipal Corporations, each having a public transport undertaking (BEST, TMT, NMMT, etc.), along with 9 Municipal Councils, 48 Census

Towns, and 1,427 villages served by these undertakings and the State Road Transport Corporation. Greater Mumbai and the rest of MMR presently have a 450km Suburban Rail network, a 20km Monorail, and an 80km Metro Rail network—planned to expand to 682km of Suburban Rail and 487km of Metro by 2041.

There are over 26 lakh personal motorcars and 105 lakh motorised two-wheelers in MMR, both growing rapidly. To meet this demand, about 1,100km of new highway systems are proposed by 2041. Planners have also proposed 319km of BRT/EBL by 2026 and 570km by 2041. Ironically, none of the BRT/EBL projects are on the anvil, at least not in the public domain.

The city's public transport is supplemented by metered taxis and autos, their shared versions, aggregator cabs like Ola and Uber, and newer options such as Rapido two-

Just a minute please

wheeler taxis and premium bus services like Citiflo, Myflo, Chalo, and Uber Shuttle. Digitisation and optimisation are being promoted as solutions—such as informing commuters when the next bus is due—yet uncertainty persists due to road congestion and the shortage of buses.

What remains absent in planning is effort to reduce personal vehicle use and road congestion, except for expectations that Metro expansion will take cars off the roads. This will only happen if last-mile connectivity and safe, comfortable walking facilities are ensured. Authorities assume adequate autos and share-autos will solve this, not realizing excessive competition brings chaos and demands more regulation. The result: commuter frustration,

inefficiency, and limited affordable options for low-income groups.

As the city's GDP rises, more people can afford private vehicles, but much of the workforce remains unaffected by income growth and cannot afford expensive transport. The Metro aims to improve suburban rail comfort, but unless fares match 2nd Class suburban rail passes, less affluent commuters cannot rely on it. Add to that overcrowded trains, buses, unhelpful taxi drivers, surge pricing, and the absence of a seamless one-ticket system—all contributing to commuting woes.

Making commuting in Mumbai equitable:

The proposal suggests operating Premium BRTS along the 487km Metro network, with a capacity of

about 6,000 pphpd, offering exclusive travel experience. Congestion fees should be imposed for peak-hour car use, expecting that 65% of personal car users will migrate if last-mile connectivity is assured. This can be achieved through BRT-compliant Premium Aggregator Taxis, ensuring waiting time of less than one minute.

The "One Minute Waiting" concept extends to the Premium BRTS, operating every 20 seconds. Last-mile connectivity from MRTS stations will be handled by minibuses carrying 15 passengers at 10–12 second frequencies, replacing share-autos and feeder minibuses. These services will make commuter waiting time under one minute and ensure universal accessibility.

With this "Wait Only A Minute" model, there will be no need to check bus timings. High-frequency services and level boarding will make travel seamless, with MRTS stations accessible within 500m and minibuses within 250m walk. Using a mobile app, commuters can enter origin and destination to get four route plans—two by time and two by cost—pay online, and receive a QR-coded ticket.

Except for Premium BRT and Premium Aggregator Taxis, all fares must remain affordable. The goal is to ensure citizens travel safely and comfortably, reach workplaces fresh, and contribute more productively to the city's GDP.

Civil engineer and transportation analyst, Author of "Matter of Equitability - Making Commuting in Mumbai Envable"

Car crash kills two in Bund Garden

Staff Reporter
PUNE:

Two men were killed and another critically injured after a speeding car crashed near the Bund Garden Metro Station in the early hours of Sunday.

According to police, the black Volkswagen Polo, with three occupants, lost control and rammed into a divider around 5am. The impact was so severe that the front portion of the car was completely mangled.

The deceased have been identified as Rutik Bhandari and Yash Bhandari, both seated in the front seats. Their friend Kushwant Tekwani, who was also in the car, sustained serious injuries. All



Volkswagen Polo rams divider near Bund Garden Metro Station; one injured, police suspect speeding

three were residents of Pimpri-Chinchwad and were reportedly returning home after attending a party.

Eyewitnesses, including a milkman and a newspaper vendor passing by, alerted the police after witnessing the crash. Emergency services reached the spot immediately. While two victims were declared dead on the scene, the injured was rushed to a nearby hospital for treatment.

Police said the car was allegedly being driven at a very high speed, leading to loss of control. Fortunately, no other vehicles were involved due to the early hour.

The Bund Garden Police have registered a case and are investigating further. The incident has once again raised concerns over rash driving on city roads, prompting calls for stricter enforcement of speed limits.

CIVIC FINANCES | From ₹6,862.89 crore in 2016 to ₹4,894 crore now — opposition blames BJP, administrators for civic body’s financial mess

Opposition blames BJP, Singh for PCMC’s shrinking reserves

Varad Bhatkhande
PIMPRI-CHINCHWAD:



SIX KEY ALARMING REASONS

- **Sharp decline in wealth:** PCMC’s deposits have fallen by nearly ₹1,968 crore in ten years, indicating a major financial downturn.
- **Rising debt burden:** The corporation, once debt-free, now owes ₹560 crore, increasing long-term liabilities.
- **Reduced income from interest:** Lower deposits have significantly cut the interest income that sustained civic finances.
- **Mismatch between budget and reserves:** While the budget is growing, financial reserves are shrinking, showing poor fiscal balance.
- **Allegations of corruption and mismanagement:** Claims of misuse of funds and reckless spending under the BJP and administrative rule raise accountability concerns.
- **Threat to future projects and public services:** Declining reserves and rising debt may restrict future infrastructure and welfare initiatives.

Mela, faced criticism for allegedly weakening PCMC’s finances during his tenure.

Despite the criticism, the corporation maintains that

its financial health remains strong. PCMC’s chief accounts and finance officer said, “Currently, we have deposits of Rs4,894 crore in

various banks. All deposits are safe.

The corporation has a debt of Rs559.91 crore. Despite this, we have an AA+

credit rating and our financial situation is excellent.”

The deposits include Rs2,362.41 crore in the general fund and Rs2,532.37 crore in the reserve fund. PCMC earned Rs3,172.04 crore in interest over the last decade — Rs1,338.53 crore from the general fund and Rs1,833.87 crore from the reserve fund. However, critics argue that declining reserves and growing debts show mismanagement, especially as inflation has increased development costs.

Currently, PCMC carries loans totalling Rs560 crore. This includes Rs159.91 crore for the Nashik Phata double-decker flyover (Rs91.90 crore repaid), Rs200 crore via municipal bonds for the Mula River Rejuvenation Project (Rs90 crore repaid), and Rs200 crore in Green Bonds for beautification and development works (Rs13.50 crore repaid).

Of the total, Rs364.51 crore remains outstanding. During his recent visit to the city, Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar took a jibe at the BJP administration, saying, “When NCP was in power, I didn’t let the civic body have even Rel in debt.”

PCMC plans to revamp metro area

Varad Bhatkhande
PIMPRI-CHINCHWAD:

The Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (PCMC) has prepared a Local Area Plan (LAP) for a 500-metre radius around 11 Pune Metro stations within city limits, focusing on easing traffic congestion and promoting planned urban development. Officials said construction permissions for residential and commercial projects will be revised under the plan.

Currently, six metro stations are operational — Pimpri (PCMC Building), Sant Tukaram Nagar, Nashik Phata, Kasarwadi, Phugewadi and Dapodi. The Purple Line extension will soon connect Nigdi in Pimpri-Chinchwad to Katraj in Pune. Work is ongoing between the PCMC Building and Nigdi, where four new stations will come up at Chinchwad Railway Station (Mahavir Chowk), Akurdi, Lokmanya Tilak Chowk and Bhakti Shakti Chowk. The upcoming Wakad Metro Station at Bhujbal Chowk, part of Pune Metro Line 3, also falls under PCMC’s jurisdiction.

“After completion of ongoing metro works, there will be 11 stations within PCMC limits,” a civic official confirmed.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Gujarat-based organisation to prepare the plan.

Organisation will survey 11 stations to create a plan.

Plan aims to improve the standard of living, solve traffic congestion.

Special PCMC permissions for new buildings in the TOD Zone.

Nine months to prepare LAP.

In the recent standing committee meeting, PCMC decided to develop the 500-metre Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Zone around all 11 stations, in line with the Unified Development Control and Promotion Regulations.

PCMC City Engineer Makarand Nikam said, “A tender was published to prepare the plan. Two organisations participated, and the work has been awarded to the qualified one. The plan will be ready within nine months and implemented after state government approval.”

BJGMC performs state’s first CAPD

Indu Bhagat
PUNE

In a historic medical feat, BJ Government Medical College (BJGMC) and Sassoon General Hospital have successfully performed continuous ambulatory peritoneal dialysis (CAPD) for the first time in the institute’s history — and notably, the first such procedure ever conducted in any government medical college across Maharashtra.

The life-saving dialysis was performed on a 34-year-old woman, a mother of three, suffering from end-stage renal disease (ESRD). After being denied treatment by multiple



hospitals, including leading centres in Delhi, she arrived at Sassoon General Hospital in a critical condition with severe

renal failure and fluid overload.

Under the leadership of Dr Anita Basavaraj, Professor and

Head of the Unit, the Department of Medicine took up the challenging case. The patient was admitted on July 29, 2025, and underwent CAPD — a home-based dialysis technique — for 73 days under strict monitoring. She was discharged in stable condition on Oct 10, after making a remarkable recovery.

“This is a significant milestone for our institute. Performing CAPD for the first time in a government setup reflects our commitment to bringing advanced renal care within the reach of every patient, irrespective of their financial background,” said Dr Basavaraj.

The procedure was carried out by a dedicated team comprising Dr Morkhandikar (Nephrologist), Dr Radheshyam Pache (Nephro SR), Dr Ashwin Mutha (Nephro SR), Dr Dhnanjay Ogale (Associate Professor), Dr Meenal Chandanwale (Assistant Professor), Dr Kanifnath Mundhe (JR3) and Dr Khushi Singhal (JR2).

The achievement marks a major step forward for Maharashtra’s public healthcare sector, establishing BJGMC and Sassoon Hospital as pioneers in advanced renal treatment within government medical institutions.

PMC officials inspect site for Ambedkar statue

Indu Bhagat
PUNE

Additional Municipal Commissioner Prithviraj BP on Saturday inspected the proposed site at Vishrantwadi Chowk on Alandi Road for the installation of a statue of Bharat Ratna Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar. The visit was conducted in the presence of former deputy mayor Siddharth Dhende.

During the inspection, Prithviraj reviewed the proposed location and issued necessary instructions to civic officials regarding development plans and the installation process.



Also present were Superintending Engineer Gawhane, Executive Engineer Dharwa, Assistant Municipal Commissioner Rajesh Gurram from the Yerawada-Kalas-Dhanori regional office, Sandeep Patil, and other civic officials and ward staff.

Additional municipal commissioner reviews proposed Vishrantwadi Chowk location on Alandi Road



‘Run for Unity’

Several runners participated in the ‘Run for Unity’ marathon at the inauguration of the Khasdar (MP) Sports Festival at SP Sollege on Sunday morning. — Pic: Anand Chaini

MHADA employee dies by suicide

Staff Reporter
PUNE

A 42-year-old MHADA employee from Mumbai died by suicide at his residence in Pune’s Parvati area following alleged harassment and constant family disputes. The Parvati Police have booked his wife and two others on charges of abetment, officials said on Saturday.

The deceased has been identified as Nitin Ashok Salve (42), a senior clerk with the Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Authority (MHADA). His sister, Punam Umesh Kamble (40) of Dhankawadi, filed a complaint against his wife Aarti Nitin Salve (38) and two women, aged 18 and 20.

According to police, Salve lived in the Laxmi Nagar area of Parvati with his wife and the two accused. Frequent quarrels reportedly took place between them. On Oct 24, after another argument, Salve allegedly hanged himself. Before taking the extreme step, he video-called his sister and told her that he could no longer bear the mental harassment.

Following his funeral on Friday, his sister lodged a complaint, alleging that his wife and the two women abetted him into taking the step. Police Sub-Inspector Basavaraj Mali of Parvati Police Station said an offence under Section 306 (abetment of suicide) of the Indian Penal Code has been registered, and further investigation is underway.

Varad Bhatkhande
PIMPRI-CHINCHWAD:

The Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporation’s (PCMC) attempt to decongest the busy Morwadi Chowk—also known as Finolex Chowk—has backfired, with commuters alleging that the traffic situation has worsened after cement barricades were installed in the narrow square.

Morwadi Chowk connects key roads in the city, including the Old Mumbai–Pune Highway service roads, and provides access to the PCMC Metro Station. With several commercial complexes nearby and the PCMC headquarters in the vicinity, traffic movement in the area

remains heavy throughout the day.

Good intentions, poor execution

To discourage unruly driving and streamline vehicle movement, PCMC recently placed cement blocks and barricades under its “junction improvement” initiative. However, residents say the measure has only increased congestion.

“The square is filled with unruly drivers, no doubt. However, installing these barriers is not the solution. I don’t know what PCMC was thinking. The road is being narrowed in the name of improvement, wasting public money,” Ram Ghorpade, a resident of Akurdi, told The



Free Press Journal (FPJ).

PCMC and police at odds Senior Police Inspector Varsharani Patil, in charge of Pimpri Traffic Division, told the FPJ, “When the PCMC

placed blocks in the square, we informed them about the resulting traffic congestion. However, the PCMC ignored it. The Traffic Branch has also not responded to the Street Design project.”

chaotic crossing

PCMC’s Morwadi Chowk plan worsens traffic

Speaking to the FPJ, sources in the traffic department alleged that several PCMC “urban street design” projects are worsening city traffic, but the traffic branch is left to face public anger.

PCMC Joint City Engineer Bapusaheb Gaikwad defended the project, saying, “Junction improvement has been carried out to prevent traffic congestion and ensure pedestrian safety. The cement blocks were installed to align lanes, prevent wrong-side driving and stop autos from blocking junctions.

“Both the Police Commissioner and Municipal Commissioner approved this plan,” he

further informed the FPJ.

Citizens threaten protest

Former corporator Shailesh More warned that locals would protest if the barricades were not removed. “PCMC officials may get transferred tomorrow, but we locals have to bear the brunt permanently. We object to narrowing roads in the name of junction improvement,” he told this newspaper.

He added that Morwadi Chowk is already congested due to the BRT corridor, Metro station, auto-rickshaw stand and bus stop, yet the civic body took the decision “without any prior consultation with citizens.”

4 men attack, kill vegetable vendor

FPJ News Network
CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR

A 30-year-old vegetable vendor was brutally stabbed to death in the busy Shah Bazar area on Friday evening over an old rivalry. The deceased was identified as Sameer Khan Inayat Khan alias Mal-e-gaon, a resident of Chelipura.

According to the complaint filed by his wife, Sana Khan, Sameer had been attacked earlier on Oct 28 by the accused — Asif Rishi, Hafiz alias Takla, and Shoaib Anwar Khan alias Kala — following a previous dispute.

Around 5pm on Friday, four masked men intercepted Sameer near Shah Bazar, covered his face with a handkerchief, and stabbed him multiple times. He sustained severe injuries to his neck and abdomen before the attackers broke his right leg and fled. Sameer died on the spot.

Senior officers, including Commissioner of Police Sudhir Hiremath, DCP Pankaj Atulkar, and ACP Sagar Deshmukh, reached the site. The police have arrested three suspects — Islam Khan Khamar Khan alias Aslam Chaus (32), Israr Khan Nisar Khan (23), and Shoaib Anwar Khan alias Kala (21). A case has been registered at City Chowk police station, and API Manoj Shinde is investigating further.

OBC DRIVE | Minister says Maharashtra focusing on educational, social and economic uplift of all OBC communities

Government committed to OBC welfare: Save

FPJ News Network
CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR:

“The government is committed to the social, educational and economic development of all communities included in the OBC category,” said OBC Welfare Minister Atul Save on Saturday. He was speaking at a loan distribution and self-employment convention organised by the Mahatma Phule Research and Training Institute (Mahajyoti) at New Tirumala Mangal Karyalaya, Pundliknagar Road, Garkheda.

Rajya Sabha MP Bhagwat Karad, MP Ajit Gopchade, MLA Anuradha Chavan, Deogiri Bank President Kishor Shitole, Maharashtra State OBC Finance and Development Corporation Managing Director Ravindra Petkar, Mahajyoti Managing Director Milind Naringe, and Vasantrao Naik Corporation Managing Director Pratap Pawar were present.

A total of 66 direct loans were distributed by the OBC Corporation, 114 by the Vasantrao Naik Corporation, and 75 personal loans were sanctioned on the occasion.



Save said that the government is providing opportunities for both employment and self-employment through various development corporations. “Scholarships and guidance for competitive exams are helping students achieve academic success. Mahajyoti students have performed remarkably well in the recent state civil services examination, inspiring others,” he said.

He added that the government has simplified loan

procedures, allowing more people to benefit. “Communities under the OBC category should make the most of these schemes to achieve educational and social progress,” Save urged.

MLA Chavan, MP Karad, and Gopchade also addressed the gathering. Managing Director Ravindra Petkar delivered the introductory remarks. A large number of beneficiaries from the Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar division attended the event.

Mahajyoti students have performed remarkably well in the recent state civil services examination, inspiring others.

Atul Save
OBC Welfare Minister, Maharashtra

Political power key to rights, Ambedkar says

FPJ News Network
CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR:

“Political power is the remedy for all problems. Hence, political power is essential to secure our rights and address society’s issues. We must not limit ourselves to agitation but pursue the path of political empowerment,” said Republican Sena chief Anandraj Ambedkar.

He was addressing the Republican Sena convention at Tapadia Natya Mandir in Nirala Bazar on Saturday, which saw the participation of party workers from across the district. Dr Sushil Suryawanshi, Sanjeev Bavdhanekar, Sunil Wakekar, Yuvraj Dhaswadikar, Madhav Jamdhade, Milind Bansode, Mujeeb Pathan, Bhayyasaheb Bhalerao, Anil Kale, Chandrakant Rupekar, Shuddhodhan More and Kaka-saheb Gaikwad were present on the dais.

Ambedkar said that the People’s Education Society, established by Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar, should be rejuvenated and not neglected. “We have demanded that the Ramai



Gharkul Scheme grant be raised to Rs7 lakh per beneficiary. However, these funds often remain unutilised. They are our rightful entitlement, and we must ensure they reach the people,” he said, adding that efforts are underway to establish a memorial of Rambai in the city. Former corporator KV More, Pramod Duthade, DV Khillare, Sachin Nikam, Ruprao Khandare, K N Bankar, Devanand Wankhede, Sakhubai Shingade, Chhayabai Wakekar, Mufti Taher Khasami and Samshad Begum were felicitated on the occasion.

“We have demanded that the Ramai Gharkul Scheme grant be raised to ₹7 lakh per beneficiary. However, these funds often remain unutilised.”

— Anandraj Ambedkar
Chief, Republican Sena

Digambar Netke receives honour

FPJ News Network
LATUR

“A true administrator is one who blends discipline, empathy, and dedication — qualities that perfectly define Digambar Netke,” said Prakash Mahanwar, Vice-Chancellor of Punyashlok Ahilyadevi Holkar Solapur University. He was speaking at the felicitation and book release ceremony, Prashasakiy Vatsaru: Digambar Netke Sammangrath Prakashan and Guru Gaurav, held at the Dayanand Education Society auditorium recently.

Mahanwar commended Netke’s integrity and administrative acumen, describing



Madhukar Gaikwad, former vice-chancellor of Swami Ramanand Teerth Marathwada University. Distinguished guests included former Shivaji University Vice-Chancellor Devanand Shinde, Savitribai Phule Pune University Management Council Member Ashok Chavan, and Ganesh Chandanshive of Mumbai University.

Shinde praised Netke as “a self-made administrator who rose from humble beginnings while maintaining humility, discipline, and compassion.” In an emotional address, Netke reflected on his journey from a marginalised Matang community.

him as “a silent performer who speaks less but achieves more.” He lauded Netke’s commitment to resolving challenges with patience, ensuring fair examinations, and upholding transparency in university governance. The event was presided over by

7-day new teachers’ training programme ends

FPJ News Network
NANDED

The seven-day training programme for newly appointed teachers across Maharashtra, organised by the Maharashtra State Council of Educational Research and Training (MSCERT), Pune, concluded on Friday. The training was conducted for teachers appointed through the Pavitra Portal across all Zilla Parishad



and government-aided schools. Jointly organised by MSCERT, Pune, and the District Institutes of Education

and Training (DIETs), the programme began on Oct 25 with sessions held in every district. In Nanded, the training took

place at Oxford The Global School, where around 300 teachers were divided into six groups. The sessions were conducted daily from 9.30am to 5.30pm. Over seven days, trainers conducted sessions on creating a positive educational environment, innovative teaching techniques, assessment methods, the National Education Policy 2020, social and emotional learning, the NIPUN Bharat Mission, classroom

management, and disaster preparedness. Though some teachers’ organisations had requested postponement due to the Diwali vacation, the training proceeded as scheduled. The initiative was carried out under the guidance of MSCERT Director Rahul Rekhawar and DIET Principals from each district, aiming to strengthen the professional readiness of newly recruited teachers across the state.

SWITCHOVER | Senior NCP (Sharad Pawar faction) leaders from Sinnar and Dindori to enter BJP in presence of state chief

Uday Sangle, Sunita Charoskar to join BJP

FPJ News Network
NASHIK

The BJP’s strategy of weakening the opposition ahead of the local body elections continues, with two senior leaders from the Nationalist Congress Party (Sharadchandra Pawar faction) set to join its ranks. Sinnar leader Uday Sangle and former Dindori MLA Ramdas Charoskar, along with his wife Sunita Charoskar, will enter the BJP today, Nov 3, in the presence of state BJP president Ravindra Chavan. The development is expected to alter the political landscape in both Sinnar and Dindori.



With local body polls approaching, the BJP has intensified its drive to attract prominent opposition leaders, particularly in constituencies where its Mahayuti allies already have sitting

MLAs. Following this plan, Sangle from Sinnar and Sunita Charoskar from Dindori—both former candidates of Sharad Pawar’s NCP—have decided to switch sides. Currently, Manikrao Ko-

kate (Sinnar) and Narhari Zirwal (Dindori) represent the Ajit Pawar faction in the Assembly. With the BJP’s fresh induction, Sinnar may witness a direct political face-off between Kokate and Sangle, while Dindori could see a contest between Zirwal and Charoskar.

Meanwhile, NCP (Sharad Pawar faction) district president Dattatray Patil announced the expulsion of Sangle and Charoskar from the party, stating that both leaders had taken an anti-party stance and displayed “selfish and opportunistic behaviour” in violation of party discipline.

Leopard captured again in Chandshi



FPJ News Network
NASHIK:

For the second consecutive day, a leopard has been captured in the Nashik city area, sparking fear among residents. On Sunday morning, a three-year-old female leopard was trapped in the Rokade Mala area of Mouje Chandshi in Satpur mandal, a day after another leopard was captured in former corporator Pandit Aware’s field in Chehdi.

The forest department had placed a cage in the garden of survey number 65/1/2, owned by Sanjay Sukdev Rokade in Chandshi. The leopard walked into the cage early in the morning and was later shifted to the Wildlife Treatment Centre at Mhasrul for medical examination and further action.

According to the forest department, leopard activity has increased in and around Nashik city in recent weeks, with several animals captured from Vadner, Artillery Centre, Chehdi and Chandshi.

Authorities have appealed to residents to remain alert, avoid venturing out at night, and immediately inform the Forest Department (Helpline: 1926) or police in case of any sighting or suspicious movement.

Three-year-old female caught in Rokade Mala a day after another leopard was trapped in Chehdi

BJP leader’s grandson booked for ₹10cr fraud

FPJ News Network
NASHIK

A case has been registered at Satpur Police Station against eight persons, including the grandson of former Union minister Raosaheb Danve, in connection with an alleged Rs10 crore fraud involving company share payments. The complainant, notably, is a BJP office bearer himself.

According to police, entrepreneur and BJP official Kailas Ahire lodged the complaint, stating that on Raosaheb Danve’s recommendation, his grandson Shivam Patil was made a 14% partner in his company for a total deal of Rs25 crore. However, Ahire claimed he received only Rs15 crore, alleging that the remaining Rs10 crore were never



Nashik police register case after BJP official alleges he was duped in company share partnership deal

paid. The police have registered the case against Shivam Patil and seven others. Ahire alleged that in 2018, Danve’s associate Girish Narayan Pawar and others deceived him.

School razing prompts protest

FPJ News Network
NASHIK

Opposition is mounting against the decision to demolish the 57-year-old BD Bhalekar School building to construct a guest house in its place. Expressing anguish, former corporator Hemalata Patil, along with former students and local residents, lit candles and offered symbolic tribute to the administrative decision in a unique protest held on Saturday.

Patil said, “It is deeply painful to pay tribute to BD Bhalekar School today. The administration has kept elected representatives completely in the dark during this process. During my tenure as corporator, I provided facilities such as a water tank, benches, and organised many student-oriented activities for this school. The people of Nashik and I share an emotional bond with it.”

In view of the upcoming



Simhashta Kumbh Mela, the administration has decided to build a guest house for visiting dignitaries on the school premises. Officials have justified the move citing a fall in student enrolment and the deteriorated condition of the old structure.

“This school should not be razed for personal or political gain. We urge all city MLAs and the Chief Minister to intervene and stop the demolition immediately. To awaken the conscience of the adminis-

tration, we lit candles and offered symbolic homage in protest,” Patil added.

Former students and local residents have strongly opposed the plan, calling it an attack on the city’s educational heritage.

Social worker Santosh Gaikwad, Yugandhar Patil, Darshan Patil, Kalpesh Kedar, Akshay Zhende, Nikhil Shete, Rishikesh Bendkule, Rajeshwari Patil, Anita More, Anshul More and several other alumni participated in the protest.

Briefs

Mcap: Reliance biggest gainer

The combined market valuation of four of the top 10 valued firms jumped by Rs 95,447.38 cr last week ended October 31, 2025, with Reliance Industries emerging as the biggest gainer. Other most valued domestic firms are HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, TCS, ICICI Bank, SBI, Bajaj Finance, Infosys, Hindustan Unilever and LIC. The market valuation of Reliance Industries surged by Rs 47,431.32 cr to Rs 20,11,602.06 cr. State Bank of India added Rs 30,091.82 cr to take its valuation to Rs 8,64,908.87 cr. The market capitalisation (mcap) of Bharti Airtel climbed Rs 14,540.37 cr to Rs 11,71,554.56 cr and that of LIC by Rs 3,383.87 cr to Rs 5,65,897.54 cr.

Epsilon eyes IPO by 2027

Leading coal tar pitch Epsilon Carbon on Sunday announced that it has signed a \$20-million MoU with Aluminium Bahrain to explore a long-term supply of liquid coal tar pitch to the Middle East. Epsilon Carbon MD Vikram Handa said that the company looks to boost its Coal Tar Pitch production capacity to 300,000 tonnes by next year to cater to growing demand from the Middle East. "In Odisha, we have announced Rs 10,000 crore investment, and in Karnataka, we're investing Rs 500 crore. The company's rapid growth and global expansion have set the stage for its next big move—going public by 2027.

IndusInd Int'l Holdings, Invesco form JV

IndusInd Bank promoter IndusInd International Holdings and US-based Invesco on Sunday announced that they have completed the formation of the asset management JV, following IHL's acquisition of a 60% ownership stake in Invesco Asset Management India. Following all regulatory approvals and closing conditions, Invesco Ltd, with the remaining 40% stake, will hold joint sponsor status with the Hinduja Group firm IndusInd International Holdings in the asset management company. Invesco has combined onshore and offshore average AUM of Rs 1.48 lakh crore for the quarter ending September 2025 and a presence in 40 cities across the country.

Oyo extends application deadline of bonus issue

Travel tech platform Oyo on Sunday announced that it has extended the application deadline for the bonus issue, linked to its potential IPO, for its unlisted equity shareholders from November 1 to Nov 7. In its message to shareholders, the company said it has received feedback during the postal ballot process and decided to provide investors ample time to choose the bonus option that suits them.

India, world's 2nd largest honey exporter

India has emerged as the second-largest exporter of honey globally with shipments of around 1.07 lakh MT of natural honey worth \$177.55 million in FY 2023-24, rising steadily from the 9th rank in 2020, an official statement said on Sunday. India's diverse agro-climatic conditions offer vast potential for beekeeping, honey production, and export.

OUTLOOK | US President Trump's policies compelled many countries to enact reforms!

‘New shocks await investors amid lack of reliable data’

Palazhi Ashok Kumar
MUMBAI

Stock markets, the world over, have been impacted by a confluence of factors since April 2025. The principal reason, as economists and capital market gurus pointed out, has been the US President Donald Trump's "fragmented" trade policy, imposing high tariffs on America's trading partners..

On the other hand, Trump's "America First" policy has compelled leaders around the world to raise spending, enact reforms and pursue new trade deals and relations.

"Now, lack of reliable data is an emerging threat to the Indian stock market, and the economy. In India, our stock markets have been experiencing high volatility for a long time, and investors are frustrated with the market behaviour. The crucial challenge that emerging markets, including India, face is lack of reliable data.

"Are we receiving reliable economic and stock market data? Are investors reading balance sheets, rightly? Are our auditors trustworthy?

"Only authentic and real time data can support the stock market, researchers, businesses and the govern-



Potential risks include intensifying geopolitical tensions, safety and security of world leaders, impact of add'l oil sanctions, and supply cut

ment to equip themselves to face complexities, and help the economy achieve sustainable development," retired deputy registrar of a renowned business management institute told the FPJ Money.

For Indian stock markets, key downside risks include weaker-than-expected global growth, a longer-than-assumed period of economic policy uncertainty, and additional oversupply of oil. Possibility of intensifying geopolitical tensions, safety and security of world leaders (including Indian leadership),

and impact of add'l oil sanctions cannot be ruled out. As media reported, Modi's China visit (Aug-end) had many shocking stories before his bilateral meetings with Xi and Putin.

Trump's policies have also helped many other countries. As Tej Parikh of FT wrote, global policymakers have set about improving competitiveness. Parikh has quoted Marko Papic, chief strategist at BCA Research, "The world has been put on notice that it cannot free ride on US spending and consumers," Now there is a catalyst

to pursue reforms and ease dependence on America, which supports long-term economic growth and stability."

Last Thursday, the IMF chief Kristalina Georgieva said, "If we all pull together in this complex and uncertain world, we can deliver good policies that underpin free markets with smart regulations, strong institutions, "reliable data" and robust safety nets—policies with the power to further increase resilience and accelerate growth. A dream you dream alone is only a dream. A dream you dream together is reality." Today, Trump's tariff is a never-ending story. The US has been facing a federal shutdown since October 1, the longest shutdown in American history, and the flow of data has declined sharply, putting Fed in stress. The IMF revised its forecast for global growth to 3.2% for this year and 3.1% next year, slightly down from the 3.3% in 2024. It has, however, projected global inflation to decline further, to 4.2% in 2025 and 3.7% in 2026.

Post-Trump-Xi meeting in South Korea, markets had started reacting a bit optimistic. However, investors still fear, "Trump is totally unpredictable". The World Bank data

shows, commodity prices are expected to decline by about 7% overall this year, reflecting subdued global economic activity, elevated trade tensions and policy uncertainty, and ample global supply of oil. In 2026, commodity prices are forecast to fall by a further 7%, a fourth consecutive year of decline, as global growth remains sluggish and the oil market oversupplied. Energy price movements are expected to continue contributing to global disinflation in 2026.

Metals and minerals prices are projected to remain stable in 2026, while agricultural prices are forecast to edge down, primarily due to strong supply conditions.

Precious metals prices are projected to rise another 5%, after a historically large, investment-driven rally of about 40% in 2025. Risks to the commodity price projections are tilted to the downside. Bharti Airtel, Titan, Adani Enterprises, Adani Ports, Mahindra & Mahindra, State Bank of India, Lupin, Bajaj Auto and Hindalco will announce Q2 results this week.

Stock markets would remain closed on Wednesday for the Guru Nanak Gurpurab holiday.

FPIs pump ₹14,610 cr into Indian equities in Oct

Business Desk
MUMBAI

After withdrawing money for the past three months, foreign investors have turned net buyers with a net infusion of Rs 14,610 crore in October, supported by resilient corporate earnings, a rate cut by the US Federal Reserve, and hopes of US-India trade talks materialising soon.

This turnaround comes after a prolonged spell of persistent outflows, with FPIs pulling out Rs 23,885 crore in September, Rs 34,990 crore in August, and Rs 17,700 crore in July, data from depositories showed. The renewed inflow in October, therefore, marks a notable shift in sentiment, reflecting fresh confidence among global investors towards Indian markets. Himanshu Srivastava, principal, manager research,

Morningstar Investment Research, said the turnaround coincided with easing inflation, expectations of a softening interest rate cycle, and GST rationalisation, which further strengthened investor confidence.

Vaqrjaved Khan, senior fundamental analyst, Angel One, said the latest inflows were "supported by companies posting better Q2 results, the 25 bps rate cut by the Fed, and optimism around US-India trade talks materialising soon".

Dr VK Vijayakumar, chief investment strategist, Geojit Investments, said that "there are clear signs of earnings recovery now. If brisk demand conditions are sustained, earnings will improve, which in turn will make valuations fair. In such a scenario, FPIs are likely to remain buyers".

AI pain: Over 1 lakh tech jobs lost in 2025

FIANS
NEW DELHI

More than one lakh employees have lost jobs across 218 tech companies so far in 2025, marking one of the largest waves of layoffs in recent years.

From Silicon Valley to Bengaluru, major technology firms are cutting staff and restructuring operations as they pivot towards AI, automation, and profitability. The trend, captured by data from Layoffs.fyi, shows how the global tech industry is undergoing a deep transformation as companies invest heavily in AI and cloud services while trimming traditional roles. Intel announced the biggest single layoff of the year, cutting 24,000 positions—roughly 22% of its global workforce.

FDI: Govt seeks views on allowing inventory-based e-com for exports

Business Desk
MUMBAI

The Commerce and Industry Ministry has floated a note seeking views from various central government departments on a proposal to allow foreign direct investment (FDI) in the inventory-based model of e-commerce solely for export purposes, an official said.

The proposal aims to boost India's exports without impacting the businesses of small retailers, PTI reported.

At present, the country's FDI policy does not permit overseas investments in the inventory-based model of e-commerce. It is 100% allowed through the automatic route in firms that are operating through a marketplace model only, like Amazon and Flipkart. The proposal is to permit e-commerce entities



in the inventory-based model of e-commerce, exclusively for the export of goods and products manufactured or produced in India, in compliance with the existing FDI policy, the official said.

According to the FDI policy, the inventory-based model of e-commerce means an e-commerce activity where the inventory of goods and services is owned by e-commerce entities.

On the other hand, the marketplace-based model of e-commerce means providing an information technology platform by an e-commerce entity on a digital and

US tariffs hit India's exports: GTRI report

Business Desk
MUMBAI

India's exports to the US slid across sectors for the fourth consecutive month, driving a 37.5% decline during May-September 2025, according to an analysis by India-based trade think tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI).

India's exports to its largest market, the United States, are reeling under the weight of steep US tariff hikes, ANI reported.

Between May and September 2025, exports plunged by 37.5%, from USD 8.8 billion to USD 5.5 billion, marking one of the sharpest short-term collapses in years, GTRI said in a note Sunday.

The GTRI analysis compared export performance between May and September 2025 to assess the immediate fallout of US tariffs imposed from April 2 onward. These duties began at 10%, rose to 25% on August 7, and reached 50% by late August for India.

Tariff-free products—accounting for nearly one-third of India's total shipments—saw the steepest contraction, falling 47% from USD 3.4 billion in May to USD 1.8 billion in September, GTRI analysis found. "Smartphones and pharmaceuticals were the biggest casualties," it said. Smartphone exports, which had surged 197% between



April-September 2024 and the same period in 2025, crashed 58% from USD 2.29 billion in May to USD 884.6 million in September.

Shipments fell month after month—USD 2.0 billion in June, USD 1.52 billion in July, USD 964.8 million in August, and finally USD 884.6 million in September, it added. "The reasons for decline are not known and need examination." Pharmaceutical product exports slipped 15.7%, from USD 745.6 million to USD 628.3 million.

Industrial metals and auto parts—subject to uniform tariffs for all countries—registered a milder 16.7% decline, from USD 0.6 billion to USD 0.5 billion. Aluminium exports dropped 37%, copper 25%, auto parts 12%, and iron and steel 8%.

"Because all global suppliers faced similar duties, the dip appears linked more to a slowdown in US industrial activity than to any loss in Indian competitiveness," GTRI said.

Gold likely to consolidate

Gold prices are likely to see consolidation for the third straight week as traders focus on key macroeconomic indicators and policy developments, including the US Supreme Court's tariff hearing on November 5, analysts said.

In the US, private data, including ADP non-farm payroll, consumer sentiment and inflation expectations, will also be closely watched as they will steer the bullion prices in the near-term, they added.

"Also in focus will be the tariff hearing in the US Supreme Court on November 5 and any decision, positive or negative, markets may see a significant reaction," Pranav Mer, VP, EBG - Commodity & Currency Research, JM Financial Services, said.

"Gold prices closed in negative for the second straight week, but volatility was at its extreme as a series of events such as the hawkish Fed outlook, and a positive outcome of the US-China trade talks were negative for prices, but the same were partly offset by safe-haven demand and reports of stronger investment demand predictions at the LBMA week," Mer said.

A stronger dollar further capped gains. "The dollar index, which rose and closed above 99.5, following a series of trade deals signed by the US with some South-Asian nations that could be positive from the US economic perspective.

—PTI

CCI lacks power to examine disputes over patented products: NCLAT

PTI
NEW DELHI

Appellate tribunal NCLAT has said the fair trade regulator Competition Commission of India has no power to examine into the disputes related to patent matters.

Dismissing an appeal against a CCI order, in which the regulator had closed a complaint against Swiss

pharma major Vifor International (AG), a two-member NCLAT bench said the 'Patent Act will prevail over the Competition Act'.

Citing the earlier judgments, NCLAT said: "Considering the judgment of the Delhi High Court in the case of Telefonaktiebolaget LM Ericsson (PUBL) and the Supreme Court in the SLP No. 25026/2023, it is apparent that



the CCI lacks the power to examine the allegations made against Vifor International (AG)."

NCLAT, which is an appellate authority over the orders passed by CCI, said Vifor

International had the patent for Ferric Carboxymaltose (FCM) injection, which is required for the treatment of Iron Deficiency Anaemia (IDA).

"The Patent Act will prevail over the Competition Act in the facts of this case, as the subject matter of contention is FCM, which was developed and patented by Respondent No 2 (Vifor International).

After layoffs, Microsoft plans fresh hiring

FIANS
NEW DELHI

After a year of major layoffs, Microsoft is preparing to grow its workforce again -- but this time with a clear focus on AI.

Speaking on the BG2 podcast with investor Brad Gerstner, Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella said the company's employee count will increase in a "smarter and

more leveraged" way, driven by AI technology. "We will grow our headcount," Nadella said, adding that future hiring will be shaped by how AI boosts productivity across the company.

Microsoft had about 2.28 lakh employees at the end of June 2025, with the number staying almost unchanged after several rounds of job cuts that affected over 15,000 workers.

Millennium Mams' Investment Conclave 4.0 in Mumbai Today

Millennium Mams', a leading women's organisation founded by visionary educator and investor Bishnu Dhanuka will host its flagship Investment Conclave 4.0 today at the Garware Club, Mumbai. What began as a small initiative to empower women through financial literacy has evolved into a global movement that has touched the lives of over 10,000 women across India and beyond. Since its inception in Kolkata over three decades ago, Millennium Mams' has worked relentlessly to help women understand markets, read balance sheets and become confident investors. Drawing inspiration from Warren Buffett's investment philosophy, the



organisation's curriculum blends theory with practice as members analyse listed companies, attend AGMs and visit manufacturing facilities to gain a real-world understanding of business and finance. Under the guidance of its founder, thousands of women have transitioned from being passive savers to informed investors and entrepreneurs. The upcoming conclave in

Mumbai is both a celebration of that journey and a step toward the organisation's global vision. The conclave will feature an impressive array of leaders from India's banking and economic ecosystem. The conclave will be an all-day event with each speaker sharing not only professional insights but also personal reflections on leadership, resilience and vision—values that lie at the heart of the Millennium Mams' community. While investing remains its core focus, Millennium Mams' has grown into a holistic platform fostering intellectual curiosity, confidence and social responsibility among women. For more details, visit www.millenniummams.com

corporate gallery

HURL Observes Vigilance Awareness Week 2025



Hindustan Urvarak & Rasayan Limited (HURL) observed Vigilance Awareness Week 2025 from 27th October to 2nd November with a series of engaging and insightful activities organized across its Headquarters and all three Units - Barauni, Gorakhpur, and Sindri. The observance aimed to promote integrity, transparency, and accountability across all levels of the organization, in alignment with this year's theme, "Vigilance: Our Shared Responsibility." At HURL Headquarters, Dr. Siba Prasad Mohanty, Managing Director, administered the Integrity Pledge to employees, inspiring them to uphold ethical conduct in both personal and professional spheres. The event emphasized that true vigilance begins with individual action and collective responsibility. To reinforce awareness, a Vigilance Awareness Quiz Competition and Training Session on Preventive Vigilance were conducted. The training, joined virtually by all three Units, was led by a distinguished vigilance expert who shared insights on ethics, accountability, and transparency in governance. The session encouraged participants to practice proactive vigilance in everyday operations.

IndianOil's Inter-School Quiz Inspires Young Minds Towards Vigilance & Integrity



In a spirited celebration of vigilance and integrity, Mr. Anant Kumar Singh, IPS, Chief Vigilance Officer (CVO), IndianOil, inaugurated the Inter-School Quiz Competition for Delhi-NCR schools at the SCOPE Convention Centre, New Delhi, as part of Vigilance Awareness Week (VAW) 2025. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from 140 schools, including several government institutions and Kendriya Vidyalayas, spreading the message "Vigilance: Our Shared Responsibility" among young minds. Addressing the gathering, Mr. Singh urged students to imbibe moral values, practice honesty in everyday life, and contribute towards building an ethical and corruption-free society. He commended the enthusiasm, knowledge, and awareness displayed by the participants and appreciated the continued encouragement provided by schools, teachers, and parents in shaping the next generation of responsible citizens. The competition comprised a written elimination round followed by semi-finals and a thrilling final contested by six top teams. Bal Bharati Public School, Noida, emerged as the winner, while KIIT World School, Pitampur, and Jain Bharti Mrigavati Vidyalaya, Nagli, bagged the first and second runners-up positions respectively. Winners' cheques and trophies were presented to the top three teams, and all top fifteen teams were felicitated.

Vigilance Awareness Programme Organised At Mumbai Central



As part of the Vigilance Awareness Week - 2025 celebration, a series of activities were organized at Mumbai Central Railway Station to promote integrity and transparency in public services. According to a press release issued by Chief Public Relations Officer of Western Railway, Shri Vineet Abhishek, a Nukkad Natak was performed at the station premises to spread awareness about safeguarding against corruption and bribery, emphasizing the importance of honesty and ethical conduct among citizens and Railways employees. Senior Deputy General Manager, Shri Kuldeep Kumar Jain; Divisional Railway Manager, Mumbai Central, Shri Pankaj Singh along with Senior Railway Officers, Employees and passengers were present at the event. A Walkathon was also organized to symbolize the collective resolve towards building a corruption-free organization. Thereafter, Shri Kuldeep Kumar Jain, held an interactive discussion with Officers, focusing on vigilance practices, prevention measures and promoting transparency in work culture. The event concluded with the administration and staff taking the Ekta Diwas Pledge, reaffirming their commitment to unity, integrity and the nation's progress.

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IIM Jammu Hosts Bengaluru Roundtable Conference



The Indian Institute of Management Jammu hosted a landmark Bengaluru Roundtable Conference on 01st November 2025 at Hotel Trinity, Whitefield, Bengaluru, bringing together policymakers, academics, and industry leaders. The Roundtable Conference focused on strengthening collaboration between academia and industry, addressing workforce evolution, and leveraging technology to prepare students for future employment. The Bengaluru Roundtable Conference was inaugurated and graced by Prof. B.S. Sahay, Director, IIM Jammu, along with other eminent dignitaries from industry and academia. The event commenced with participant registration, a lamp-lighting ceremony, and an introductory video on IIM Jammu, setting the tone for a series of insightful discussions. The Bengaluru Roundtable Conference was also graced by Prof. Sanjeev Pathak, Chairperson, Executive Education and Professor of Practice, IIM Jammu; Dr. Rashmi Ranjan Parida, Chairperson, MBA Healthcare and Associate Professor, IIM Jammu; and Dr. Garima Saini, Assistant Professor, IIM Jammu. In his address, Prof. B.S. Sahay, Director, IIM Jammu, underscored the Institute's impressive growth journey and steadfast focus on integrating academic excellence with real-world exposure through robust industry linkages. He emphasized that such partnerships are vital to building a future-ready education ecosystem, nurturing graduates who are both intellectually robust and industry-prepared. Reflecting on India's vision of becoming a developed nation by 2047, as envisioned by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji, he highlighted the role of initiatives like Project YUVA, launched in collaboration with the Government of Jammu & Kashmir, in fostering employment generation through entrepreneurship. He also shared that IIM Jammu has earned two prestigious international accreditations, BGA Institutional Accreditation and EFMD Programme Accreditation for its MBA program in the same year, making it among the top five IIMs nationwide and the only second- and third-generation IIM to hold both distinctions. Prof. Sanjeev Pathak, Chairperson, Executive Education and Professor of Practice, IIM Jammu, mentioned that the Bengaluru Roundtable Conference exemplifies how academic institutions and industry leaders can co-create the future of management education.

NTPC Bongaigaon Observes Vigilance Awareness Week and National Unity Day



NTPC Bongaigaon observed Vigilance Awareness Week 2025 with a series of meaningful programmes and outreach activities under the theme "Vigilance: Our Shared Responsibility", reaffirming its commitment to transparency, ethical conduct, and good governance. The observance coincided with National Unity Day on 31st October 2025, commemorating the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, and celebrating the spirit of unity, honesty, and responsible citizenship. The week began with the Integrity and Unity Pledge, followed by a Walkathon led by Shri Arnab Maitra, Head of Project, NTPC Bongaigaon, and joined by senior officials, employees, contractual workforce, CISF personnel, and their family members. More than 150 participants took part in the event throughout the week, which concluded with a tree plantation drive near the temple premises, symbolising growth rooted in integrity and collective responsibility.

NFR Conducts Inter-Zonal Safety Audit on Visakhapatnam – Bobbili Section



A high-level Safety Audit Team from Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR), Maligaon, led by Shri Uttam Prakash, Principal Chief Safety Officer, recently carried out an extensive safety audit on the Visakhapatnam – Bobbili Section of Visakhapatnam division under South Coast Railway (SCoR) to assess and strengthen safety measures at key railway installations, stations and level crossings. The inter-zonal safety audit, a regular and comprehensive exercise undertaken by multi-disciplinary teams, aims to ensure strict compliance with safety standards and the effective implementation of all operational guidelines related to safe train movement. These audits play a crucial role in identifying potential risks, strengthening safety mechanisms and ensuring that best practices are uniformly followed across all railway zones. By assessing infrastructure, operations, and maintenance protocols in detail, the exercise contributes significantly to enhancing the overall reliability and safety of train services. The audit teams, comprising experts from different zones, visit various sections of the Indian Railways network to review on-ground safety measures, share inter-zonal experiences and promote coordinated efforts for smooth and efficient train operations. This collaborative approach ultimately benefits Indian Railways by fostering a culture of continuous improvement and ensuring safer journeys for passengers and freight alike.

CR observes “Swachhata Pakhwada – 2025” under the ongoing Special Campaign 5.0



Central Railway organised 'Swachhata Pakhwada-2025' from 01.10.2025 to 15.10.2025, under the ongoing Special Campaign 5.0, - a fortnight long cleanliness drive to ensure visible improvement in cleanliness at all places viz. railway stations, trains, offices, colonies, workshops, hospitals, food stalls etc. This drive is part of the Cleanliness Campaign organised by Indian Railways in all Zones, Divisions and Workshops across the country. Cleanliness drives were organised at Stations, Trains, Offices, Workshops & other Railway premises as part of the 'Swachhata Pakhwada-2025' with special emphasis on Clean Food, Clean Water & Clean Environment. *Swachh Ahar*- *Clean Food* As part of Swachh Ahar drive Canteens, Food Stalls, in and around station premises were intensively cleaned by the staff running food stalls. Upkeep of stall and quality of food items were inspected by Food Safety Officers (FSO), Chief Health Inspectors (CHI) & Team. Food packets were checked for the expiry date and CHIs interacted with the stall bearers and ascertained about good quality of food sold. CHIs also inspected the vendors for personal hygiene, with specific attention to nail cleanliness and trimming. Trains were also checked randomly especially the Pantry Cars. Waste collection and disposal arrangements within the pantry cars and the functioning and placement of smart bins for waste segregation were checked. Awareness messages on "Clean Food, Healthy Journey" were propagated through pamphlets and verbal interactions with pantry.

whispersinthecorridors

RJD's manifesto vows to scrap Waqf Amendment Act

Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), in its manifesto, promised to scrap the Waqf Amendment Act and properties of Waqf will be utilised for people's welfare. Besides, the manifesto also claimed to hand over the management of Bodh Gaya temple to the Buddhist community presently in the possession of Hindu community.



Vice Admiral Sanjay Bhalla is new head of Eastern Naval Command

Vice Admiral Sanjay Bhalla has taken over as the new Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Indian Navy's Eastern Naval Command in Visakhapatnam, succeeding Vice Admiral Rajesh Pendharkar.



Ahead of crucial elections, Kerala Congress unit gets a stern warning from AICC?

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge and Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi held closed-door one-on-one meetings with Kerala state leaders. The party's leadership, worried over the deepening factional feud within the Congress in Kerala, has bluntly told the leaders to mend their ways and project a united front before the crucial local body and assembly elections. The leaders warned, 'the open fights between top leaders are impacting the prospects of the party in the upcoming elections.' Those who attended the meeting include state party Chief Sunny Joseph, Leader of Opposition V D Satheesan, senior leader Ramesh Chennithala, Thiruvananthapuram MP Shashi Tharoor, Wayanad MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and Kannur MP K Sudhakaran. However, another issue, which was informally discussed among the party cadre was the absence of AICC General Secretary (Organization) KC Venu-gopal and General Secretary in-charge of Kerala Deepa Dasmunshi from the meeting.

Maharashtra to lose more than 1000 cr after renaming city

The State of Maharashtra is said to have lost more than Rs 1000 crore with a chance of entering its first and only heritage Aurangabad city in UNESCO's world heritage city list. UNESCO is said to have withheld the proposal of heritage city of Aurangabad after its name changed as 'Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar'. The world heritage proposal was moved by the then Fadnavis Government in 2017. If UNESCO had approved the proposal, Maharashtra would have earned over Rs 1000 crore from UNESCO and crores of tourism business from international tourists.

Dr Suresh Mehrotra



Whether order of house allotment issued or not?

Mystery shrouds over an order. A govt house was allotted to ex-VP Jagdeep Dhankhar in August this year but according to sources he did not receive the said order and is still staying in a farmhouse in Delhi?



8th CPC recommendations will be effective from January 1, 2026

The 8th Pay Commission constituted by the Government under the Chairpersonship of Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai, a former Judge of Supreme Court will submit its report in one and half year and the recommendations will be effective from January 1, 2026 benefiting around 50 lakh central government employees and 69 lakh pensioners. The Commission will consider the economic conditions in the country and the need for fiscal prudence; the need to ensure that adequate resources are available for developmental expenditure and welfare measures; the unfunded cost of non-contributory pension schemes; the likely impact of the recommendations on the finances of the State Governments which usually adopt the recommendations with some modifications; and the prevailing emolument structure, benefits and working conditions available to employees of Central Public Sector Undertakings and private sector.

Makwana to complete two-year tenure as DGP, MP; name struck off from retirement list

Kailash Makwana will be completing a two-year tenure as Director General of Police (Head of Police Force), Madhya Pradesh as the State Government has struck off his name from re-retirement list. Makwana, who belongs to a 1988 batch IPS officer, was due to retire in December this year.

Abhishek Swami selected as Director (Fiin), MRVC

Abhishek Swami, ED, Finance and Law in the Ministry of Railways, has been selected for the post of Director (Finance), Mumbai Railway Vikas Corporation Limited (MRVC) at a Public Enterprise Selection Board (PESB) meeting held on October 31, 2025. As many as seven persons were interviewed for the same.

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VIT-AP University Hosts Its 5th Convocation to Celebrate the Accomplishments of the Class of 2025



VIT-AP University proudly hosted its 5th Convocation Ceremony on November 1, 2025, celebrating the remarkable accomplishments of the Class of 2025. The grand event, held on the university's scenic campus at Amaravati, marked a significant milestone in the academic journey of the graduating students. The ceremony was graced by distinguished guests, proud parents, faculty members, staff, and students. Sri. N. V. Ramana, Hon'ble Former Chief Justice of India, was the Chief Guest, while Sri Rajeev Verma, Senior Director at Samsung Electronics, Bengaluru, attended as the Guest of Honour. In his convocation address, Sri.N. V. Ramana - Hon'ble Former Chief Justice of India said "As you step out of the campus, remember — life beyond these walls is filled with extraordinary challenges and uncertainties. Stay informed about the world around you, be tech-savvy, and remain sensitive to the needs of society. I truly appreciate VIT-AP University for nurturing not only brilliant minds but also responsible citizens ready to shape a better future." Education is not merely about acquiring knowledge but about using it responsibly to serve society. Addressing the graduates, Sri Rajeev Verma, Senior Director, Samsung Electronics Bengaluru, said "You are entering a world where technology evolves faster than textbooks can keep up. What is relevant today may become obsolete tomorrow. As you step beyond this campus gates, remember — the real journey begins now.

PNB Organises Cyclothon 2025 To Mark the Vigilance Awareness Week (VAW) - 2025



Punjab National Bank (PNB), one of India's leading public sector banks, successfully organised an exhilarating Cyclothon 2025 as part of the ongoing Vigilance Awareness Week (VAW), held from 27 October to 02 November 2025. This year's theme, "Vigilance: Our Shared Responsibility," resonated throughout the event, which took place on the morning of 2 November at 7:00 AM from PNB's Corporate Office in Dwarka. The Cyclothon witnessed an enthusiastic participation of hundreds of individuals, including general public as well PNB employees, all united in the pursuit of a common goal: promoting awareness about vigilance and embracing a healthy, active lifestyle. The event was flagged off by Shri Ashok Chandra, Managing Director & CEO, along with Executive Director Shri D. Surendran and Chief Vigilance Officer Shri Raghvendra Kumar. Their presence underscored the bank's commitment to fostering a culture of integrity, accountability, and teamwork, while inspiring a broader commitment to vigilance in all facets of life. In his address, Shri Ashok Chandra, MD & CEO of PNB, remarked, "At PNB, we believe that vigilance is not just about compliance of laid down guidelines but also about the consciousness, being aware, alert, and accountable in everything, we do in our day to day life. This Cyclothon symbolizes our commitment towards integrity, teamwork, and appropriate delivery. As we move together, we reaffirm our pledge towards a transparent and ethical work culture in and around us." Shri Raghvendra Kumar, Chief Vigilance Officer, PNB, further added, "Vigilance is a continuous journey, much like this ride, it requires balance, effort, and direction. Through initiative like the Cyclothon, we aimed to strengthen the message of Vigilance as a shared responsibility and every pedal counts toward building a corruption-free organization." The event received a tremendous response, with participants from all walks of life coming together to highlight the significance of vigilance in personal and professional conduct. Through this initiative, PNB continues to drive its mission of building a more aware, responsible, and ethically conscious society. As part of its commitment to a healthier workforce and a transparent, corruption-free future, PNB remains steadfast in its efforts to lead by example, demonstrating that vigilance is truly a collective responsibility for all.

Briefs

PILIBHIT
Close call: Tiger attacks safari vehicle
Tourists at the Pilibhit Tiger Reserve narrowly escaped injury when a tiger suddenly attacked their safari vehicle on the opening day of the 2025-26 ecotourism season. The incident occurred after the driver reportedly drove the gypsy too close to the animal for a better view. A tiger pounced on the vehicle, but the quick-thinking driver sped away, ensuring no one, including children, was hurt. A viral video of the event highlighted the danger. Forest officials have launched an inquiry, stressing that tourist and animal safety is paramount. The attack reignites debate over balancing wildlife tourism with conservation and the risks of expanding safari routes into core forest areas.

— Biswajeet Banerjee

CHANDIGARH
Guv nod for Majithia's prosecution
Punjab Governor Gulab Chand Kataria has sanctioned the prosecution of senior Shiromani Akali Dal leader Bikram Singh Majithia in a disproportionate assets (DA) case. This paves the way for his trial under the Prevention of Corruption Act. The case, registered in June, stems from a prior 2021 drug-related investigation, with the new probe alleging laundering of over ₹540 crore during his 2007-2017 ministerial tenure. Majithia, the brother-in-law of SAD chief Sukhbir Badal, had been previously jailed and granted bail in the drug case. The SAD has vehemently denounced the action, calling it "political vendetta" by AAP government.

— Rajesh Moudgil

CHANDIGARH
Tempo for Tarn Taran bypoll set
The campaign tempo for the November 11 Tarn Taran assembly by-election has intensified, with major political parties viewing the contest as a precursor to the 2027 Punjab polls. The bypoll, necessitated by the death of the incumbent AAP MLA, features 15 candidates. The ruling AAP, facing criticism over recent floods, seeks to retain the seat with Harmeet Singh Sandhu. Congress fields Karanbir Singh to present a united front, while SAD aims to reclaim the constituency with Sukhwinder Kaur Randhawa. BJP is also campaigning strongly with Harjit Singh Sandhu. All parties, including the Chief Minister, are holding intensive rallies and roadshows for the November 14 vote count.

— Rajesh Moudgil

Will Bihar vote for change in Assembly polls?

Afrida Ali
PATNA/DARBHANGA/SARAN
As Bihar heads into another fiercely contested election, the mood on the ground feels like a simmering pot — familiar ingredients, but a growing impatience for something new. The opinion polls suggest what every chai shop in Patna already knows: it's a tight race. Tejashwi Yadav's RJD-led INDIA bloc has nudged ahead in projected vote share, but Nitish Kumar's NDA, buoyed by Modi's popularity and its organizational muscle, still holds its fortress in many districts. The story, however, lies

beyond the numbers in the weary eyes of Darbhanga's youth, in the restless chatter of Chhapra's bazaars, and in Patna's urban pragmatism.

Darbhanga: 'Change, but with caution'
In Darbhanga, the FPJ team landed straight into the high octane election rally of Rahul and Tejashwi, the first big joint. Boisterous young men in drives turned up to hear the leaders and the support for Tejashwi was palpable. 'Qila dheh jayega is baar' proclaimed one sprightly young man. And immediately one can see the electorate here is

politically conscious, opinionated, articulate and is not one who can be taken for a ride. This is no Maharashtra or Madhya Pradesh, this is not even UP despite the proximity, this is Bihar. Voices here are not ones that mince words when they want to say who they support. Darbhanga rural is a seat currently held by RJD's Lalit Kumar Yadav and JDU has fielded its district president Ishwar Mandal hoping to dethrone the incumbent.

Caste remains stubborn shadow in Chhapra
When we drove west to Chapra constituency in Saran

district, the story shifts gears. The NDA supporters show up for a PM rally in large numbers and here you see a marked change. The Modi factor seemed larger than the Nitish. Candidate pull is subservient to Modi image and supporters here are rooting for Modi. In his speech the PM targeted the youth saying that youth of Bihar will be his main focus. The BJP changed its candidate here to a woman candidate to contest against hugely popular Khesari Lal Yadav by fielding a Baniya woman, Chhoti Kumari, caste

and gender both factors being played in deftly by the NDA. The INDIA bloc's charm, led by Tejashwi's youthful swagger, does attract younger voters. Yet caste equations continue to whisper their old stories in every paan shop debate.

Patna: Where growth trumps dynasty
If Darbhanga questions and Chapra calculates, Patna weighs. In the capital, where metro lines snake through crumbling heritage, voters are measuring governance, not

legacy. "Show us the employment data, not the drama," says Ravi Anand, a young IT professional from Rajendra Nagar. A tea shop owner asks the million dollar question, 'why are graduates like me selling tea in Bihar!' The much touted Women vote seemed deeply divided, caste factor is now in tussle with Lakhpati didi scheme of 10000 rupees for every adult woman to start a business. We met women who said 10,000 is a pittance and we cannot be bought over with money, while there are others who sang praises for a leader who empowered them to become entrepreneurs and so

Nitish-Modi is what works for them. As I pack my notes in the sprawling Bihar Museum, one that has become a must-visit for tourists in India, I ask my driver Ajay Chaurasia, who was our constant companion throughout the travels, 'Toh Ajay ji kya lagta hain aapko?' and his response is 'Hum to Vikash ke liye vote dalenge.'

(This is the first of a three-part series)



BIHAR BATTLE | Modi uses his actions, like performing yoga or dancing for votes, to secure elections, alleges Congress MP

Rahul attacks PM with 'Trump, big biz' salvos

Agencies
BEGUSARAI/KHAGARIA
In a scathing attack during back-to-back rallies in Bihar, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is not only "scared" of US President Donald Trump but is also being "remote-controlled" by big business like Ambani and Adani. Gandhi contrasted Modi's "boast of a 56-inch chest" with a claimed panic attack when Trump called during a military conflict with Pakistan, leading to its quick halt. He invoked history, noting that former PM Indira Gandhi stood up to US threats in 1971, unlike Modi, who he alleged caved to Trump's demand to stop an operation. The Congress leader claimed major government policies, including GST and demonetisation, were aimed at destroying small businesses to benefit large corporations. He vowed the opposition INDIA bloc would prioritise promoting small businesses to replace 'Made in China' labels with 'Made in Bihar' tags.



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday jumped into a muddy pond in Bihar and interacted with fishermen in Begusarai, Bihar.

Further criticising the PM, Gandhi alleged Modi uses his actions, like performing yoga or dancing for votes, only to secure elections, after which he solely works for his "favourite corporations." He claimed the PM pushes youths to watch reels with cheap internet to divert their attention from critical issues like unemployment, asserting the money from such activities goes to Ambani. Gandhi also alleged that the BJP and RSS "stole" elections in several states and claimed the Election Commission had removed names of opposition supporters from the Bihar voters' list. He promised the INDIA bloc, if voted to power, would form a government for every section of society, highlighting the plan to make the extremely backward Nishad

caste leader Mukesh Sahni the Deputy CM as a move toward inclusive representation.

'BJP-JDU snatched dreams'

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Sunday alleged that the BJP-JDU alliance has "snatched every opportunity and every dream" from the youth of Bihar over the last 20 years, forcing them to become laborers elsewhere. In a post on X, Kharge asserted that while people from Bihar uplift other cities with their talent and hard work, their home state suffers because of the ruling alliance's failures. Kharge declared that the time for change has arrived to restore Bihar's self-respect. He called for reiterating the 'naya sankalp' of the Mahagathbandhan.

Tejashwi will introduce 'portfolios of crime': Shah

Agencies
MUZAFFARPUR/VAISHALI
Union Home Minister Amit Shah launched a fierce attack on the opposition INDIA bloc in Bihar, alleging that if RJD supremo Lalu Prasad's son, Tejashwi Yadav, is voted to power, the state government would see the birth of "three new portfolios: murder, kidnapping, and extortion." Addressing rallies in Muzaffarpur and Vaishali, Shah urged voters to support the NDA to "check the recurrence of jungle raj" witnessed during the RJD's previous regime. He claimed the five NDA allies were the 'Pandavas' committed to Bihar's prosperity, contrasting them with opposition who he accused of trying to secure power for their own sons. Shah highlighted the NDA's development agenda, promis-



ing to make Bihar flood-free with a separate ministry and ensuring river water reaches farmers' fields. He pledged to invest in agriculture infrastructure, set up over 50,000 cottage industries, and create a Mega Industrial Park in Vaishali to guarantee jobs. Accusing UPA-RJD regime of large-scale corruption, Shah asserted that Modi-Nitish rule has been completely transparent. He cited central allocations, claiming PM Modi allotted ₹18.15 lakh crore to Bihar between 2014-2025, significantly more than RJD regime. He concluded by promising over one crore jobs for Bihar youth.

Zero tolerance for poll violence: CEC
Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar affirmed the Election Commission has "zero tolerance towards any form of violence" for the Bihar Assembly polls. He asserted that all voters will be able to cast their votes peacefully, freely, and transparently. The CEC's statement followed action against officials in Patna after a recent violence incident in Mokama, which included the death of a politician during campaigning. Kumar stressed that the EC treats everyone "equal," regardless of whether they are from the ruling or opposition side.

Tejashwi campaigns against Tej
Dheeraj Kumar
PATNA
The proverb "Blood is thicker than water" proved untrue in Bihar's Mahua constituency as RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav campaigned against his estranged elder brother, Tej Pratap Yadav, who is contesting from his own party. Tejashwi appealed to voters to support the RJD candidate, stating, "Whoever comes or goes, no one is bigger than the party." Tej Pratap, expelled by their father Lalu Prasad, had vowed to campaign against Tejashwi in Raghopur if he campaigned in Mahua. Their sister, Rohini Acharya, also campaigned for Tejashwi but not for Tej Pratap. Tejashwi at his rally promised that if the Mahagathbandhan wins, all criminals will be behind bars between November 26 and January 26, 2026.

Ambulance jumps signal, kills couple

PTI
BENGALURU
A speeding ambulance allegedly ran a red light and crashed into several two-wheelers at the K H Junction near Shanti Nagar bus stand around 11 pm on Saturday, resulting in two fatalities and two injuries. A couple, aged approximately 40 and 33, was tragically killed in the accident. The two injured individuals were hospitalised for treatment. Eyewitnesses reported the ambulance lost control, collided with bikes, and even dragged a two-wheeler before hitting a signal control post. The crowd subsequently overturned the ambulance as it was traveling without a patient. Driver first fled the scene but was detained later.

'What to do if crowds rush in': Temple founder on stampede

PTI
KASIBUGGA
Claiming he was not responsible for the tragic stampede at Sri Venkateswara Swamy temple here that left nine devotees dead, the 94-year-old founder of the temple has said devotees rushed on their own during the gathering. He further said he had not informed the police as he thought everything would be normal like any other day and did not expect such a big crowd on Saturday. Nine people—eight women and a boy—were killed and many others injured in the stampede at the temple constructed by Panda on his own land, here in Srikakulam District, on Saturday. "What should I do if so many people come at once? I

Cops bar entry to shrine

The Andhra Pradesh police on Sunday barred devotees from entering the Lord Venkateswara Swamy temple here in Srikakulam district, following the tragic incident. According to the survivors, the lone gate was closed and a group of devotees who were allowed into the temple for darshan earlier fell along with broken grill suddenly onto large number of people waiting below the staircase, leading to the tragedy. "We have barred devotees from entering the temple in view of the tragedy," Srikakulam SP, KV Maheshwara Reddy said.

usually send everyone in line but yesterday there were so many people. I don't know what happened, I did not inform any police," temple priest Mukunda Panda said. "I did not inform the police. I have courage, I told everyone to go in a queue line. People came for darshan - what can I do if they rushed and the situation turned like this?" temple priest Mukunda

Panda asked while speaking to the media. The temple, owned by priest Mukunda Panda, was neither converted for non-agricultural use nor registered with the Endowments Department, and the organisers failed to inform local police before conducting the event, Srikakulam district superintendent of police, KV Maheshwara Reddy told PTI.

Fearing SIR, Bangladeshis attempt to cross border

Aritra Singha
KOLKATA
At least 35 Bangladeshi residents were apprehended by BSF in Swarupnagar, North 24 Parganas, attempting to cross the border, reportedly fearing the Survey of Immigenous Residents (SIR) in West Bengal. This brings the three-day total of caught border-crossers to at least 92. Separately, in Birbhum's Illambazar, locals were seen withdrawing all their savings from banks. They cited uncertainty about their documentation and feared bank accounts being frozen after SIR is conducted. Meanwhile, CPI(M) is planning a help desk for form filling but BJP claims it proves that "illegal immigrants" are fleeing fearing to be exposed.



MAOIST MENACE

SRE dists down to 38 from 46 in April

PTI
NEW DELHI
The latest review of categorisation of Naxal violence-affected districts in the country saw their number come down to 38 in nine states from 46 in April, with only four 'districts of concern' and three 'most affected districts' remaining. The evaluation is undertaken as part of the 'National Policy and Action Plan to Address Left Wing Extremism (LWE) 2015', in which the central and state governments work together to tackle the menace. The latest categorisation was notified by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on October 15. Official records and sources in the security establishment told PTI that a "marked improvement" was recorded in the insurgency theatre and hence the number of districts covered under the Security-Related Expenditure (SRE) has come down to 38 now from 46 on April 1. The SRE is a top-level LWE policy scheme under which the Centre provides financial assistance to states to fight the internal security problem. The SRE districts are further categorised into 'LWE-affected districts' and 'Legacy and Thrust Districts'. The Naxal violence and influence graph has seen a dip under all these heads following aggressive action by security forces as part of the Union government's declaration to end Naxalism by March 2026, according to the sources. The number of LWE-affected districts has dropped to 11 from 18 in April and they are sub-categorised as 'most affected districts', 'districts of concern' and 'other LWE-affected districts'. According to the latest categorisation, only three 'most affected districts' remain, down from six on April 1. These three districts are Bijapur, Narayanpur and Sukma — all in Chhattisgarh.

'Kashi Katha' 3D show to bring soul of Varanasi alive

Biswajeet Banerjee
VARANASI
As Dev Deepawali 2025 approaches on November 5, the holy city of Varanasi (Kashi) is set to illuminate its crescent-shaped ghats with over ten lakh diyas. This grand spectacle of light, faith, and culture attracts millions to the banks of the Ganga. The Uttar Pradesh Tourism Department and the Varanasi Mahotsav Committee are managing large-scale preparations, including distributing lamps and oil from Raj Ghat. For seamless crowd control and coordination, the ghats and the river's opposite bank have been divided into 20 sectors, each overseen by a

nodal officer.

Divine start with the echo of 'Damru & Shankhnaad'
Tourism and Culture Minister Jaiveer Singh announced that this year's Dev Deepawali will commence with the resonant sounds of the "shankhnaad" and "damru", symbolising the divine presence of Lord Shiva. The major highlight will be the "Kashi Katha" 3D projection mapping and laser show. This 25-minute presentation will narrate the ancient city's spiritual and cultural journey. The story will encompass events from the wedding of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati and the legend of Vishnu's Chakra

Pushkarini Kund, to the teachings of Lord Buddha and the foundation of Banaras Hindu University by Madan Mohan Malaviya. Minister Singh emphasised the show aims to make every visitor "feel the heartbeat of the city — where every grain of sand breathes devotion."

Three grand shows of 'Kashi Katha' for public
The captivating 'Kashi Katha' 3D show will be presented in three free sessions on Dev Deepawali evening: 8:15 PM, 9:00 PM, and 9:35 PM. This presentation is a blend of devotion and innovation, using synchronised sound, 3D visuals, and a special eight-minute laser sequence to immerse spectators in

Kashi's sacred aura. Joint Director of Tourism, Dinesh Kumar, also noted that a 10-minute green fireworks display will precede the show at 8:00 PM over the Ganga Dwar near Kashi Vishwanath Dham, combining visual splendor with environmental consciousness.

A global showcase of faith and culture
Dev Deepawali 2025 is positioned as a global showcase, celebrating Kashi's rich legacy of devotion, knowledge, and creativity. Preparations are focused on enhancing the experience for the expected surge of devotees and tourists. The ghats are being beautified with floral decorations, security arrangements



are being strengthened, and viewing areas are being expanded. As the city gears up to glow under a million lamps and the timeless 'Kashi Katha' is ready to

unfold in sound and color, anticipation is high for a celebration that promises to project the vibrant, divine spirit of Varanasi brighter than ever.

Briefs

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Porter held for molesting actress

A porter at Kochuveli railway station here was held for allegedly molesting an actress, officials said on Sunday. According to police, the accused has been identified as Arun, a resident of Kochuveli. The incident occurred on Thursday when the actress arrived at the station to board a train. Police officials said that as she was trying to reach another platform, the accused approached her, offering help. Police said Arun suggested that she cross to the next platform through a stationary train. While the victim was climbing onto the platform after moving through the parked train, the accused allegedly held her inappropriately, police said. The actress resisted and immediately sought assistance from the railway authorities.

KANNUR

3 medical students drown in sea

Three medical students drowned while bathing in the sea off Payyambalam beach in northern Kannur district on Sunday, police said. The deceased were identified as Afnan, Rahanuddeen, and Afras-all natives of Karnataka and medical students in Bengaluru, according to police. The incident occurred around 11 am when a group of eight students entered the sea for a swim. "Three of them were caught in strong waves. Though they were pulled out and rushed to the hospital, their lives could not be saved," police added.

SHIELDING TRIBALS | Banners to curb forced conversions not unconstitutional, says court

HC nod to signs on clergy entry

Agencies

BILASPUR

The Chhattisgarh High Court has disposed of two petitions seeking the removal of hoardings prohibiting entry to pastors and "converted Christians" in eight villages, holding that they were installed to prevent forced conversions through allurements or fraudulent means and cannot be termed as unconstitutional.

The division bench of Chief Justice Ramesh Sinha and Justice Bibhu Datta Guru observed that the hoardings appear to have been installed by the concerned gram sabhas as a precautionary measure to protect the interests of indigenous tribals and local cultural heritage.

The order dated October 28 was passed on petitions filed by one Digbal Tandi of Kanker district and Narendra Bhavani of Bastar district.

Mental wellbeing key concern in deciding kid's custody: HC

Nainital: The Uttarakhand High Court has held that the wishes and mental well-being of a minor child should be considered paramount when deciding on custody and visitation rights. A division bench of Justice Ravindra Maithani and Justice Alok Mahara dismissed Gajendra Singh's (grandfather) appeal for custody of his grandson, ruling that the child will remain in the care of his mother, Shivani.

The petitioners raised the issue of the alleged segregation of Christians and their religious leaders from the mainstream village community.

The pleas alleged that the Panchayat Department instructed the zilla panchayat, janpad panchayat and eventually the gram panchayat to pass resolution/oath in the name and style "Hamari Parampara Hamari Virasat" (our tradition, our heritage) and the real intention of the circular to the gram panchayat was to instruct them to

pass a resolution prohibiting the entry of pastors and "converted Christians" in the village.

The Ghotiya gram panchayat in Bhanupratappur tehsil of Kanker put up a hoarding stating that the village comes under the 5th Schedule Area and provisions of Panchayat (Extension to Schedule Area) Act, 1996 (PESA Act) are applicable and that the gram sabha is competent to protect the identity and culture of the village, the petitioners claimed.

Stay curious, CJI-designate tells law grads

Agencies

LUCKNOW

CJI designate Surya Kant on Sunday urged young law graduates to stay curious, never stop learning, and question intellectual certainty, as these qualities differentiate between the lawyers who thrive and those who merely survive.

His remarks came during the convocation address at Dr Ram Manohar Lohia National Law University in Lucknow.

He said in jest that the graduates may forget his speech very soon, but one of its ideas -- not the words, but the spirit behind them -- may stay with them for longer.

"It is the difference between lawyers who merely survive and those who truly thrive. That difference lies not in how much you know in the beginning, but in your willingness to stay curious and never stop learning," Justice Kant said.

He reminded students that the university bears the name



of Ram Manohar Lohia, "a man who believed the most dangerous comfort is intellectual certainty".

Justice Kant added, "Lohia's legacy teaches us that growth requires the courage to ask -- should it be this way, or different? Renewal begins when we dare to question." Congratulating the graduates, their families, and professors, he further said, "You have survived one of the most intellectually demanding forms of professional education that our country offers."

He remarked that this was the sixth of 11 convocations he is scheduled to address this year.

Relief to prof over student's sex plaint

Agencies

JABALPUR

The Madhya Pradesh High Court set aside the termination of a professor from the Indira Gandhi National Tribal University (IGNTU) over allegations of sexually exploiting a student.

Justice Vivek Jain observed that the professor and the student had been in a relationship since 2013, while she enrolled at the university as a

research scholar only in 2021. It also noted that she was 30 years old and married.

"The University seems to be totally ignorant of the fact that the University had no business to inquire into the relationship between the petitioner and complainant once the complainant stated that relationship was going on since the year 2013 and she became a student of the University for the first time on 02.03.2021," the Court said.

Can't allow fake ORS labels to be in the market: Delhi HC

Agencies

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Friday refused to interfere with the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India's (FSSAI) ban on beverages labeled as ORS (Oral Rehydration Solution), emphasising that public health considerations are paramount. Justice Sachin Datta made it clear he would not grant any interim relief to

the petitioners.

"The order they have now issued speaks for itself, it's hazardous... We can't allow public health risk and allow you to continue in the market. Public health considerations is paramount," Justice Datta orally remarked.

The court was hearing a petition filed by Dr. Reddy's Laboratory, which sought permission to exhaust its existing market stock of 'Rebalanz VITORS'.



We can't allow public health risk and allow you to continue in the market. Public health considerations is paramount

Sachin Datta
Delhi High Court judge



SC hearing in stray dogs case today

New Delhi: The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on November 3 the case concerning stray dogs in which it had directed the chief secretaries of all the states and Union Territories, except West Bengal and Telangana, to remain present before it. While hearing the matter on October 27, the top court had directed the chief secretaries to remain present before it on November 3 to explain why compliance affidavits were not filed despite the court's August 22 order. The apex court on August 22 asked the states and UTs about the steps being taken for compliance of the Animal Birth Control (ABC) Rules. The matter is slated to come up for hearing on Monday before a three-judge special bench comprising Justices Vikram Nath, Sandeep Mehta and N V Anjaria. On October 31, the top court refused to exempt the chief secretaries of states and UTs from appearing before it physically on November 3, saying there was "no respect" for the court's order.



Courtesy call

Union Minister for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution Pralhad Joshi called on Assam Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya at Raj Bhavan on Sunday

From front page

'Sindoor hit Pak...

"Give him such a punishment that nobody dares to insult the Chhath festival in future", he remarked, days before Bihar goes to the assembly polls.

Sharpening his attack on Congress and RJD, the PM said, "They (opposition parties) are committed to protecting infiltrators. Don't you have a right to Bihar's resources? Will you let infiltrators capture Bihar? Aren't those protecting them criminals? Their objectives are dangerous. So you must beware of RJD and Congress. They have studied in jungle raj's path-shala."

Later addressing an election rally in Nawada, Modi said that both Congress and RJD were family-ruled parties as one of them was counted as the most corrupt in India and another most corrupt in Bihar. "The prince of jungle raj (Tejashwi) feels that the prince of Congress (Rahul Gandhi) has sidelined him through his Yatra," he remarked.

He said that 37,000 incidents of kidnapping had taken place during jungle raj and now people of Bihar had the responsibility not to allow it to return.

Later, Modi staged a roadshow in Patna. Although CM Nitish Kumar did not accompany him, JD(U) leader and Union minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh aka Lalan Singh was with him. The BJP organised performances of folk dances on small podiums set up along the nearly 3km route.

JD(U) candidate...

A dead body was recovered after the incident... Based on evidence, eyewitness accounts, and the postmortem report, it appears that the Model Code of Conduct was violated, and it is a serious issue," he said.

"It was found that all this happened in the presence of the candidate, Anant Singh, who is also the main accused in the case," he added.

Raids are being conducted to arrest more suspects in the case as the CID has also been involved in the probe.

The Election Commission (EC) on Saturday ordered the transfer of Patna Superintendent of Police (Rural) Vikram Sihag and action against three other officials.

ISRO's 'Bahubali'...

The ISRO scientists had a tough time with the mission since the weather was not cooperative, but they worked hard and ensured success, he said.

Prior to Sunday's launch, the Indian space agency has been utilising the services of Kourou launch base in French Guiana by Ariane rockets offered by France-based Arianespace, for launching heavier satellites.

On December 5, 2018 ISRO had launched its heaviest communication satellite GSAT-11 weighing 5,854 kg, onboard an Ariane-5 VA-246

rocket from French Guiana.

LVM3-M5, a three stage launch vehicle with two solid motor strap-ons (S200), a liquid propellant core stage (L110) and a cryogenic stage (C25) gives ISRO full self-reliance in launching heavier communication satellites that weigh up to 4,000 kg in GTO.

Scientists at ISRO have classified launch vehicles depending upon the mission objectives, targeted orbit, altitude among others.

The launch vehicles or launchers used by ISRO include Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV), GSLV) and LVM3 (Launch Vehicle Mark-III). The space agency has been providing launch services for customer satellites since 1999 from Sriharikota.

PSLV has been ISRO's trusted workhorse for scientists due to its reliability in achieving mission success. PSLV has been a versatile launch vehicle and can carry payloads of about 1,750 kg.

Mass stabbing on...

Prime Minister Keir Starmer called it an "appalling incident" which was "deeply concerning", while King Charles said he was "truly appalled and shocked".

In her statement, Interior Minister Shabana Mahmood said she was "deeply saddened", while urging people to avoid speculation about the incident.

The government is keen to stop rumours spreading on social media following an incident in Southport in northwest England in 2024, when internet claims over the murder of three young girls sparked days of rioting across the country.

Witness Olly Foster told the BBC that he was on the train which was heading towards London on Saturday evening when someone ran past him saying a man was stabbing "everyone, everything".

"I put my hand on this chair... and then I look at my hand, and it's covered in blood. And then I look at the chair, and there's blood all over the chair. And then I look ahead and there's blood on all the chairs," he said.

Another witness told Sky News that a suspect was seen waving a large knife before being tasered by police.

Britain's current threat level from terrorism is rated as "substantial" by security services, meaning an attack is considered "likely".

TN parties seal...

"Since the EC has not accepted our request to hold the SIR of electoral rolls after the 2026 Assembly polls, by giving adequate time to carry out revisions without confusions and doubts, we have passed a resolution in today's all party meeting to approach the Supreme Court," the CM said in a statement.

Sharing an X post, Stalin alleged that the intent behind the SIR exercise is to snatch away the voting rights of the people. "It is the duty of all parties to unite and raise their voices against the SIR being hastily implemented with the intent of snatching away the voting rights of the people of Tamil Nadu and murdering democracy," he posted.

The meeting said when the Bihar SIR case is pending in the Supreme Court, the SIR 2.0 was unacceptable. "This meeting strongly condemns the Election Commission for acting as a puppet of the Union Government and with an authoritarian tendency, despite most political parties in the country opposing this SIR from the very beginning," the resolution said.

The parties feared what happened in Bihar -- where 'eligible' voters were removed -- might be replicated in Tamil Nadu.

"As per Section 169 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, the electoral roll revision SIR must be done only by publishing a formal notification in the Union Government's Gazette. The Election Commission unilaterally issuing the notification without following that procedure is against the Constitution and the Representation of the People Act.. There is no integrity in the Election Commission's voter verification; there is no transparency," the resolution charged.

The period fixed for enumeration, from November 4 to December 4, is the peak period of the northeast monsoon in Tamil Nadu. Heavy rain and bad weather are expected during this time.

Stalin thanked the 49 parties which participated in the meeting to "protect democracy." "I request those who did not participate in this meeting to discuss SIR in their parties and take initiatives to protect democracy," he wrote.

TVK hit back at DMK for not passing a Kerala-like resolution in the Assembly against the SIR. Party chief Vijay accused the DMK of plotting to utilise the SIR issue for electoral gains. He alleged that DMK was staging a deceitful drama to divert Tamil Nadu people's attention from the corruption allegations against its regime.

Asserting that TVK was the first in the satte to oppose SIR, he said: "Did the DMK forget that issue as it had indirect ties with the BJP?"

BJP, on the other hand, hit out at DMK for "deliberately misrepresenting" the voters' list revision. Senior party leader and former governor of Telangana and Puducherry, Tamilisai Soundararajan, accusing Stalin's party of misleading the public for political gain.

"If the same process is happening across the country, how can it be described as an anti-Tamil Nadu or anti-DMK move?" she asked. Accusing the DMK of "fear-mongering," she alleged that the party's opposition stemmed from insecurity.

"The DMK does not want this cleansing process because they thrive on irregularities. They are worried that the bogus voters they added during their tenure will be removed through this intensive revision," Tamilisai alleged.

Trump's ballroom...

NBC's 'Nightly News' led its October 22 broadcast with a story on the East Wing demolition, which reporter Gabe Gutierrez said was paid for by private donors, "among them Comcast, NBC's parent company."

The Post's editorial last weekend was eye-opening, even for a section that has taken a conservative turn following Bezos' direction that it concentrate on defending personal liberties

and the free market. The October 25 editorial was unsigned, which indicates that it is the newspaper's official position, and was titled "In Defense of the White House ballroom."

The Post said the ballroom is a necessary addition and although Trump is pursuing it "in the most jarring manner possible," it would not have gotten done in his term if he went through a traditional approval process.

The New York Times, by contrast, has not taken an editorial stand either for or against the project. It has run a handful of opinion columns: Ross Douthat called Trump's move necessary considering potential red tape, while Maureen Dowd said it was an "unsanctioned, ahistoric, abominable destruction of the East Wing."

In a social media post later Saturday, Columbia University journalism professor Bill Grueskin noted the absence of any mention of Bezos in the Post editorial" and said he wrote to a Post spokeswoman about it. In a "stealth edit" that Grueskin said didn't include any explanation, a paragraph was added the next day about the private donors, including Amazon. "Amazon founder Jeff Bezos owns The Post," the newspaper said.

15 returning from...

According to police, the victims were residents of the Sursagar area in Jodhpur and were returning from the Kolayat temple in Bikaner after offering prayers at the Kapil Muni Ashram.

All the bodies have been kept in the mortuary of the Osian government hospital.

Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma expressed grief over the incident and instructed officials to ensure all possible assistance to the victims' families and proper medical care for the injured.

Former chief minister Ashok Gehlot also mourned the loss of lives. In a post on X, he said, "I have just received the news that 15 people have died in a road accident in Matoda, Phalodi. Hearing this, my heart is extremely saddened. I pray to God to grant a place at His holy feet to all the deceased, give strength to their families, and a speedy recovery to the injured."

Iran prez vows to...

The US dropped 14 GBU-57 Massive Ordnance Penetrators (MOPs), roughly 14,000 kilograms each - known as bunker buster bombs - on Tehran's three main nuclear facilities, Fordow, Natanz and Isfahan in a stealth operation, code-named "Midnight Hammer".

Trump claimed the attacks, carried out by seven B-2 Stealth Bomber aircraft, each carrying a payload of two bunker busters, "completely obliterated" Iran's facilities, a claim downplayed by Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who said Trump was exaggerating the damage done.

Pezeshkian was speaking to a gathering of senior nuclear industry executives during a visit to the Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran on Sunday. "Science is in the minds of our scientists, and there will be no problem with destroying buildings and factories; we will build again and with more vigour."

Women's role crucial to meet Viksit Bharat goal by 2047: Murmu



FP News Service

HARIIDWAR

President Draupadi Murmu on Sunday emphasised the need for collective cooperation of the entire nation, including women, to realise the vision of a developed India by 2047.

Speaking as the chief guest at the second convocation ceremony of Patanjali University, Murmu highlighted the significant role women are playing in the educational landscape.

Praising Patanjali University's contribution to the promotion of yoga, Ayurveda, and naturopathy, Murmu remarked that the university is playing a pivotal role in preserving and advancing India's ancient cultural heritage, especially in the region of the Himalayas, which is known for its spiritual and intellectual legacy.

Addressing the students, the President noted that by choosing to study at a university that blends modern education with

Indian cultural values, they have embraced a rich tradition. She commended both the students and their parents for their commitment to this noble path.

Murmu expressed her delight at the fact that 62 per cent of the students at Patanjali University and 64 per cent of the graduates at the convocation were girls.

Notably, the number of female students receiving medals was four times greater than that of their male counterparts.

The President asserted that women, who make up 50 per cent of India's 1.4 billion population, are integral to the country's growth.

The convocation ceremony, which celebrated the academic achievements of the students, highlighted the growing role of women in higher education and the importance of cultural integration with modern learning.

CPM slams attack on TN lawyer

Chennai: The CPI(M) on Sunday condemned the attack on a lawyer when he was attending a public hearing in Tirunelveli against mineral theft. According to CPI(M) leader K Balakrishnan, the lawyer was from People's Union for Civil Liberties, a human rights organisation. The hearing was organised on behalf of

the Arappor Iyakkam. Balakrishnan said the lawyer, identified as Suresh, was attacked by mineral exploitation thugs. His colleague Jayaraman was also present.

He demanded that the government should arrest all the members of the gang involved in the attack.

Villages eye control as Act swaps ‘special’ for ‘spatial’

BETALBATIM DONE WITH DRONE-MAPPING, CARMONA CLOSE; ACTIVISTS WARN ANY DILUTION WILL TRIGGER LEGAL ACTION

THE GOAN | NETWORK

MARGAO
The recent amendment to sub-section 7 of Section 239 of the Goa Panchayat Raj Act, 1994, which came into effect last week, substitutes the earlier phrase “special planning” with “spatial planning”.

The key question now is whether this change will pave way for the panchayat bodies to take charge of village-level planning, rather than having plans imposed on them by the Town and Country Planning (TCP) Department.

In a significant step forward, the Betalbatim Village Panchayat has already completed geo-spatial mapping of its area, while Carmona is nearing completion of its geo-tagging initiative. Once vetted by the statutory panchayat committees, these plans will attain official status. Encouraged by these examples, several other Salcete panchayats are reportedly considering similar exercises, as in-

MOMENTUM GATHERS PACE IN SALCETE

- Betalbatim and Carmona have triggered interest among multiple other Salcete panchayats, which have begun inquiring with agencies to initiate similar mapping
- Mapping enables accurate measurements of roads, setbacks, plot dimensions, open space inventories, biodiversity indexing, resource assets, etc
- **Compliance caution:** Panchayat-led planning must adhere to Constitutional + Goa Panchayat Raj Act frameworks to withstand scrutiny and rejection

dictated by inquiries received by agencies engaged in geo-spatial mapping.

Avinash Tavares, Secretary of the United Goans Foundation and petitioner in a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) concerning the constitution of DPCs, described geo-spatial mapping as a holistic and participatory process, distinct from the top-down Regional Plan prepared under the TCP Act. “Geo-spatial mapping is the first step toward villages preparing their own plans for the welfare of their communities,” Tavares explained.

“Unlike the TCP’s approach of imposing zoning changes from above, this process allows villagers themselves to decide what kinds of activities they envision in different zones.”

Tavares also cautioned that any attempt by the government to undermine or override panchayat-led spatial planning would invite legal action.

“When the United Goans Foundation filed the PIL seeking the formation of District Planning Committees and a district development plan, we had also raised issues con-

HC told govt to draft district plan, but left RP fight open

MARGAO: While disposing of the Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed by the United Goans Foundation in 2020, the High Court of Bombay at Goa issued directions to the Director of Panchayats and the Director of Municipal Administration to prepare the district development plan, but refrained from entering into the debate concerning the Regional Plan and developmental plans prepared under the Goa Panchayat Raj Act, 1994 and the Goa Municipalities Act, 1968. The Court, however, kept open the rival contentions regarding the Regional Plan (RP) prepared under the Goa Town and Country Planning Act, 1974, and the developmental plans to be framed by Panchayats and Municipalities, to be evaluated in an appropriate case in the future. “There was also some debate on the issue of the Regional Plan under the provisions of the Goa TCP Act, 1974, taking into consideration the development plans to be prepared under the provisions of the Panchayat Raj Act, 1994, the Goa Municipalities Act, 1968, and the Constitution of India.

cerning the planning roles of panchayats, municipalities, and the TCP. The High Court had left these matters open for consideration in an appropri-

ate case. We will approach the Court again if the government tries to nullify the panchayats’ efforts to complete the planning process,” he warned.

Bouncers assault tourists at nightclub in Vagator

SEVERAL HURT; ANJUNA POLICE REGISTER FIR

THE GOAN | NETWORK

MAPUSA

In yet another shocking incident highlighting the dark side of Goa’s coastal nightlife, tourists – including young women from Varanasi – were brutally assaulted by bouncers and staff of the controversial nightclub Romeo Lane at Vagator on Sunday noon.

Anjuna Police have registered an offence late in the evening but no arrests have been made.

What began as a minor disagreement allegedly turned into a violent attack, with the club’s night manager and bouncers assaulting the tourists using iron rods, wooden sticks, kicks and punches, leaving several injured. The victims, part of a family group of eight to ten people, were rushed to hospital with bleeding injuries.

According to eyewitnesses, the group had gone to the club for dinner and drinks when the altercation began.

“My brother was dancing on the floor when he accidentally brushed against a waiter. The staffer got angry and the manager joined in the argument. Suddenly, around 15 to 20 bouncers came charging and started beating my brothers and even attacked us,” said

HOW IT HAPPENED

- Eyewitnesses revealed a group of 8-10 people were at Romeo Lane for dinner and drinks
- Some among the group were dancing and accidentally brushes against a waiter
- Staffer gets angry... manager joins argument
- Suddenly, around 15 to 20 bouncers come charging, assault the men using iron rods, wooden sticks, kicks, and attacked the women too
- The victims were rushed to hospital with bleeding injuries

POLICE CLAIM: An official said the tourists “acted irresponsibly and started drinking from another table,” that lead to the clash

one of the young female tourists, recounting the ordeal.

Another woman from the group described the assault as “horrifying”.

“They hit my brothers on their backs and even slapped and shoved us. We were terrified. We always believed Goa was safe for women – but after this, I don’t feel safe anymore,” she said. However, a police official claimed that the tourists “acted irresponsibly and started drinking from another table,” leading to the clash.

After receiving a complaint from one of the tourists Ms Vaibhavi Singh (24), Anjuna Police have registered a case under Sections 352, 118 (1), 74 R/w 3 (5) of BNS of 2023.

When contacted, club manager (administration) Dinesh Khara denied any knowledge of the incident, saying he “was on leave”. This is not the first time Romeo Lane has found itself in controversy.

The nightclub, located close to the shoreline, has repeatedly been in the news for violating Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) norms.

In 2023, the Goa Coastal Zone Management Authority (GCZMA) ordered the club to dismantle unauthorized extensions, including upper decks and steps built into the beach. The High Court upheld these orders and directed the GCZMA to restore the damaged coastal area.

Romi Konkani finds place in govt SIR communication

THE GOAN | NETWORK

MARGAO

In an interesting development, ringing in good news for the protagonists of Konkani in Romi script, the Office of the Deputy Collector (DRO) and Electoral Registration Officer, Margao have issued a notice in Konkani Roman script to Goan voters in connection with the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) 2026, which is being conducted across Goa and the rest of India.

The ‘KOLLOUNI’ (notice) in Konkani Roman script, dated 10 October, 2025 and signed on 31 October, 2025 by Aveline D’Sa E Pereira, Deputy Collector (DRO) and Electoral Registration Officer for the 35–Velim constituency, Margao, informs voters in simple and clear Roman script Konkani about the ongoing enumeration process.

It explains that the Booth Level Officer (BLO) will visit each household with two enumeration forms and guide voters on how to fill them correctly. Once the forms are completed, the BLO will cross-check the details with the Electoral Roll and issue an acknowledgement to each voter.

Ganga-style ‘Ghat Aarti’ project gets CRZ okay

VENTURE TO COME UP AT NARVE-BICHOLIM

THE GOAN | NETWORK

PANAJI

Goa Tourism Development Corporation’s (GTDC) spiritual project to develop banks of the Mandovi River at Narve as ‘Ghat Aarti’ -- in line with aarti performed on the banks of the Ganga -- has got CRZ clearance.

The Corporation is going to spend Rs 10.5 crore to develop an “aarti deck,” which could also include a larger-than-life statue of Lord Shiva.

The GCZMA during its meeting held last month accorded CRZ clearance to the project on a condition that all the facilities to be developed should be temporary in nature and should be away from mangrove buffer zone area.

The development of the ‘ghat aarti’ will include the construction of a puja mandapam, an aarti deck, seating areas, a ticket counter, a cafeteria, and a tourist information centre, along with a floating jetty, small boats, and a ferry ramp. “The Authority decided to approve the project subject to the condition that



‘GHAT AARTI’ PROJECT: KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Project estimated to cost Rs 10.5 crore
- Proposed features include Aarti deck, puja mandapam, seating area, ticket counter, cafeteria, tourist information centre, floating jetty, small boats, ferry ramp, possible statue of Lord Shiva
- Project likely to be completed in 12 months with the Architect & consultant being Darashaw & Company
- **GCZMA RIDER:** Structures must be temporary & no construction to be taken up in mangrove buffer zone

no structures shall be erected in the mangrove buffer zone,” GCZMA said, adding that the mangrove buffer zone should be avoided for the development purpose as it is an ecologically sensitive area.

The Expert Committee recommended that the development with the No Development Zone if required for local inhabitants may be permitted

under CRZ notification 2011.

According to the sources, the project is expected to be completed with a period of ten to twelve months. The tourism department has appointed Darashaw & Company as the architect and consultant for the project. The company will supervise the construction and provide all designs for the aarti ghat.

‘Conversion’ alarm in Margao apartment; police decline First Information Report

THE GOAN | NETWORK

MARGAO

A group of Bajrang Dal workers complained to the Margao police over allegations that a prayer service is being conducted in a residential apartment near Cine Lata for the alleged purpose of conversions.

Margao police station in charge, PI Suraj Samant, however, said that police cannot initiate any action in the matter since no complain has come from any of the people, either induced or coerced to change his or her religion.

After the Bajrang Dal workers went to the Margao police station, policemen were sent to the apartment to verify the claim, only to find the pastor involved in a prayer service. The police returned back on grounds that conducting prayer service is the right of every citizen.

PI Samant later said that the police cannot register FIR over the allegations of religious conversions unless someone who had attended the prayer service, lodges his or her complaint that he/she is being lured or induced to change religion.

2 cops among 5 arrested in Pernem sand-mining case

STRICT DISCIPLINARY ACTION WILL BE TAKEN AGAINST ALL POLICEMEN INVOLVED: SP

THE GOAN | NETWORK

PANAJI

The case of the October 28 firing incident at Ugvem in Pernem in which two migrant labourers were injured got murkier on Sunday with the Pernem police arresting five persons involved, including two constables from the India Reserve Battalion (IRBn).

Police said, Nehal Nitin Mahale (20), Ashish Shivaji Mahale (24), Akash Arun Mahale (24), IRBn Constable Rishikesh Dasharat Mahale (32), and IRBn Constable Ganaram Gopichand Mahale (34) have been arrested for the shooting incident which followed disputes over unauthorized sand extraction in the Terekhol river.

The indiscriminate sand-mining sparked concern among local residents that it could cause damage to their agricultural land, police said.

The firing incident had occurred in the wee hours of October 28, when unknown assailants opened fire on labourers engaged in

Police register separate case

PANAJI: Pernem police have registered a separate case against two canoe owners and five labourers for illegally extracting sand from the river without valid permits.

The canoe owners -- Robert Agnel Fernandes (46) and Ashok Shridhar Mulgaonkar (48), both residents of Porascodem, Pernem -- were arrested along with the labourers who were working under their direction at the time of the firing.

Police have invoked multiple sections of the law to address the environmental violations.

sand mining. Two labourers, both natives of Bihar, had sustained serious injuries and are currently undergoing treatment at Goa Medical College, Bambolim. “Strict disciplinary action will be taken against all police personnel found involved,” Superintendent of Police (North Goa) Rahul Gupta, IPS, said while confirming that the IRBn constables will face departmental inquiry in addition to criminal charges.

Gupta who addressed the media at the Pernem police station said that efforts are underway to identify the

broader network behind the sand mining racket.

“We are committed to fixing accountability and ensuring that those responsible for environmental degradation and violence are brought to justice,” Gupta said. The twin cases have reignited calls for stricter enforcement of mining regulations and greater oversight of law enforcement personnel. Locals have welcomed the arrests but remain concerned about the long-term impact of unchecked sand extraction on their farmlands adjunct to the Tiraol river.

FUELLED BY FESTIVE DEMAND, GST RATE CUT...

Auto sales hit top gear this Oct compared to last year

THE GOAN | NETWORK

PANAJI

Driven by festive demand and a boost from the recent GST rate cut, the auto sector in Goa witnessed record-breaking monthly sales in October with a considerable 7.8 per cent rise compared to the similar period in 2024. The month saw as many as 11,317 new vehicles getting registered following an unprecedented surge in demand. In October 2024, 10, 494 new vehicles were sold, when the GST was at 28 per cent for small as well as luxury cars.

As per the official data, more

OCT NUMBERS	
Two wheelers:	7,536
Four wheelers:	2,691
Pure EV vehicles:	673
EV, Hybrid & BOV:	1,023
Cabs/taxis:	260
Rent a bike:	290
Luxury cars:	58

than 90 per cent of the total vehicles were non-transport vehicles --10,260-registered in October, of which 2,691 were four-wheelers and around 7,536 were two-wheelers. According to the automobile sector, strong

sales were recorded across brands such as Maruti Suzuki, Tata Motors, Hyundai, MG, etc, with luxury-high end cars also being in demand despite 40 per cent flat GST slab with petrol and diesel cars dominating the market. Under the GST 2.0 regime, the Goods and Services Tax on cars has been reduced from 28 per cent to 18 per cent for small cars --petrol/LPG/CNG engines under 1200cc or diesel engines under 1500cc.

With GST on electric vehicles being untouched at 5 per cent -- lowest with 673 EV vehicles -- both two and four-wheelers were sold during the month.

Cops, GSPCB ignore HC’s CCTV rules on coastal clubs

THE GOAN | NETWORK

PANAJI

Despite clear directions from the High Court of Bombay at Goa, both Anjuna Police and the Goa State Pollution Control Board (GSPCB) have failed to maintain CCTV footage of clubs and restaurants along the coastal belt -- a crucial measure mandated to monitor noise pollution and law enforcement compliance.

An RTI inquiry has revealed that the Anjuna Police has no CCTV footage from any venue or restaurant within its jurisdiction between August 1 and October 3, 2025. Similarly, the GSPCB, which is also responsible for maintaining CCTV footage records of licensed establishments, admitted to

POOR ENFORCEMENT EXPOSED

- RTI inquiry reveals Anjuna police has no CCTV footage from any venue or restaurant within its jurisdiction between August 1 and October 3, 2025
- GSPCB too, admitted to not having any footage

not having any footage for the same period.

The High Court, in its order on Contempt Petition No 12 of 2023 related to noise pollution, had explicitly directed that all establishments along the coastal belt must retain CCTV footage for at least 30 days.

The court had further ordered that the footage be

for the same period

- HC in its order had explicitly directed that all establishments along the coastal belt must retain CCTV footage for at least 30 days
- HC had also ordered that footage be stored

stored on both a physical hard disk and backed up on a cloud-based platform.

The order also made it mandatory for: All venues to ensure uninterrupted power supply to CCTV systems, weekly reports on CCTV functionality to be submitted to the local police station and forwarded to the Superintendent of Police (SP) and licensing authorities to

on both a physical hard disk and backed up on a cloud-based platform

- Order also made it mandatory for all venues to ensure uninterrupted power supply to CCTV systems, weekly reports on CCTV functionality etc

make CCTV compliance a condition for granting or renewing licences, covering both indoor and outdoor areas of each establishment.

However, the latest RTI findings suggest that these directives are not being followed raising serious questions about enforcement and accountability.

“This is a clear case of

contempt of court. The High Court’s directions were unambiguous. The authorities, including the police and GSPCB, must be held accountable for their failure to comply. This lapse effectively shields violators who continue to flout noise norms,” said Desmond Alvares, a local activist and long-time campaigner against noise pollution.

Meanwhile, despite the court orders and growing public anger, clubs and restaurants along the Anjuna–Vagator coastal belt continued to play loud music through the Halloween weekend, disturbing residents in nearby villages. Several locals said they were forced to call the authorities to complain about the noise, but no effective action was taken.

CELEBRATIONS CONTINUE | 70th State Foundation Day

Immortal saga of Emperor Vikramaditya brought alive

Grand play Samrat Vikramaditya features 22 horses, 2 camels, 1 elephant, chariots, 1 royal palanquin, fireworks, Bhasma Aarti of Mahakal

Our Staff Reporter

BHOPAL

The immortal saga of Emperor Vikramaditya, a symbol of India's cultural glory, tradition, and valour came alive on Lal Parade Ground in the city on Sunday - the second-day of a three-day event to mark 70th Foundation Day of Madhya Pradesh - Abhyudaya Madhya Pradesh.

Directed by Sanjeev Malviya, the grand play, Samrat Vikramaditya, was staged for the first time in the city by 150 artistes from Vishala Sanskritik Evam Lokhit Samiti, Ujjain.

The play featured 22 horses, two camels, an elephant, chariots, one royal palanquin, battles scenes, fireworks and Bhasma Aarti of Mahakal, which were one of the attractions of the play watched by chief minister Mohan Yadav and thousands of people.

There were three magnificent stages, a 20-foot-high replica set of Mahakal Temple, ashram and forest scenes, and a state-of-the-art LED graphics wall stage, where each scene was brought to life with vivid visuals.

The most thrilling scene in the play was when young Vikramaditya, riding a horse, entered the stage amid the audience.

The two-hour-long grand play began with Vikramaditya's birth and effectively depicted the story up to his coronation and launch of Vik-



Above & below: Scenes from grand play Samrat Vikramaditya



'Emperor Vikramaditya exemplified bravery, generosity, justice, valour and good governance. For the first time in Bhopal, a grand theatrical performance depicting the characteristics of his reign, which took place nearly 2,000 years ago, was staged. Today is also a historic day because the stage came alive with the vibrant performance of the artistes, use of cavalry and armed forces. The depiction of real battle situations was presented to the audience. The scenes of Emperor Vikramaditya's coronation and other episodes in the play were magnificent.'

- Mohan Yadav, chief minister

ram Samvat calendar. Forty four-year-old Vikram Singh Chauhan played the role of Vikramaditya.

"I have been playing the role of Samrat Vikramaditya for nine years. I have read literature related to the em-



peror including the book Vikram Samhita for the role," he said, adding, "I do yoga daily for one hour to maintain weight." Sankar Rao Sathe played

Hansraj Raghuvanshi's concert

Besides grand play, the live concert of bhajan singer Hansraj Raghuvanshi and his troupe from Chandigarh was held. He presented devotional songs, which captivated the audience of all age groups. Folk dances including Ahirai, Gangaur, Badhai and Matki were also presented.



Partial clouds hover in Bhopal on Sunday

Night temp still above normal, likely to dip after 48 hours

Day temperature rising with clear skies & sunny weather

Our Staff Reporter

BHOPAL

Night temperatures, which have been much above normal in most districts, are likely to fall after the next 48 hours in Madhya Pradesh, even as day temperatures continue to rise. The maximum temperature has remained slightly below normal so far, but the gap between day and night temperatures is shrinking rapidly with the disappearance of clouds and the return of clear, sunny weather. A fresh Western Disturbance is likely to influence western Himalayan region from November 4. Under the

Yellow alert for 19 districts

the meteorological department has issued Yellow Alert for thunderstorm and lightning at isolated places in districts like Narmadapuram, Betul, Harda, Burhanpur, Khandwa, Kargone, Barwani, Alirajpur, Jhabua, Dhar, Indore, Ratlam, Ujjain, Dewas, Chhindwara, Seoni, Mandla, Balaghat, Pandhurna in the next 24 hours.

influence of these systems, thunderstorm and lightning is likely over west and eastern region of state till Thursday. Formation of a low-pressure area over eastcentral Bay of Bengal and adjoining Myan-

mar coast, under its influence heavy rainfall at isolated places is likely over Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

At temperature front, Bhopal recorded day temperature of 31.1 °C

after rise of 2.9 °C and it 0.2 °C below normal. The city recorded night temperature of 21.6 °C which was 5.3 °C above the normal.

Indore recorded 30.1 °C day temperature which was 1.5 °C below normal while it recorded night temperature 21.6 °C which was 5.7 °C above normal.

Pachmarhi's night temperature was 7.7 °C above normal, Narmadapuram's 7.1 °C, and Chhindwara's 6.3 °C. Other districts which recorded night temperature of 6 °C

above normal include districts like Mandla, Khajuraho, Damoh, Betul and Datia.

Liquor delivered to homes in Bihar, claims MP minister

Journo claims harassment by minister, police for airing liquor news

Our Staff Reporter

BHOPAL

Madhya Pradesh Culture and Tourism Minister Dhamendra Singh Lodhi sparked controversy after claiming that liquor is being "home-delivered" in Bihar despite prohibition. His statement, made during a live session on social media, went viral before the video was later deleted.

The minister said, "No one can stop alcohol consumption in society. Those who want to drink will find a way. In Bihar and Gujarat, liquor is banned by our governments, but recently a few leaders visiting Bihar for election campaigning told me that if you make a call, liquor will be delivered at home."

His remarks, made at a time when Bihar is heading toward elections, have stirred political debate both within and outside the state.

Meanwhile, a journalist from Damoh district has ac-



Minister Dhamendra Singh Lodhi

cusced the minister and local police of harassment for reporting on illegal liquor trade.

In a video statement, the journalist claimed that on October 27, while covering a liquor-ban drive in Singrampur, villagers alleged that the minister was taking commission from local liquor sellers. After the video was posted on social media, police allegedly forced him to delete it.

He alleged that after attempting to file a complaint on October 31, he was detained by Hindoria police, blindfolded and taken to an undisclosed location where officers allegedly threatened to throw him off a bridge and a hill.

The journalist said he was released only after being warned at gunpoint never to publish any report against the minister.

Massive blaze engulfs Shahjehani Park biogas plant, no casualties

INFERNO | Thick smoke blankets city skyline, visible from 8 km away

Fire tenders delayed due to barricades, traffic; fire doused after 90 minutes

Our Staff Reporter

BHOPAL

A massive fire broke out on Sunday evening at a cow dung-based biogas plant behind the waste transfer station in Shahjehani Park, Bhopal. The blaze, which started around 5 pm, quickly engulfed the dry bushes and waste material behind the plant's boundary wall, sending thick black smoke billowing across the sky, visible from as far as 8 kilometres away.

Officials confirmed that the biogas plant, which comes under the Bhopal Municipal Corporation (BMC), has been non-operational for several years.

According to eyewitnesses, the fire brigade was informed immediately after the fire was spotted, but the fire tenders arrived nearly 30 minutes later. The delay was caused by barricades and traffic jams on several roads due to an event at the



Lal Parade Ground, forcing the fire tenders to take a detour.

Despite the late arrival, 10 to 12 firefighters managed to bring the fire under control after an intense hour-and-a-half-long operation. They even had to use fogging machines to douse the flames, highlighting the magnitude of the blaze.

BMC Commissioner Sanskriti Jain rushed to the site upon receiving information and reviewed the situation. She said that while the exact cause of the fire will be determined after a detailed investigation, officials suspect a short circuit as a possible trigger. No casualties or injuries were reported.

FSL called in

Kotwali ACP Chandrashek-

har Pandey said that large quantities of waste and plastic material were lying untended at the site. He added that a Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) team has been called in to determine the exact cause of the fire.

EXPLOSION PREVENTED

Fire Officer Saurabh Kumar Patel confirmed that dry vegetation and empty plastic tanks stored near the biogas plant contributed to the rapid spread of the fire. He emphasised that prompt containment efforts prevented a possible explosion, given the proximity of the gas plant.

People block Bhopal-Indore highway, demand action in missing girl case

FP News Service

BHAIRUNDA

Over a week after a minor girl went missing from Bhadaku village, tension flared on Sunday as her family and members of Yaduvanshi community staged a massive protest and road blockade against the police administration.

The protesters marched from the agricultural produce market to Bhairunda police station, where they blocked the Bhopal-Indore highway, bringing traffic to a standstill for hours. Hundreds of vehicles, including passenger buses, were stranded in long queues, causing inconven-



ANGER SPILLS OVER: POLICE INACTION FOR OVER A WEEK

ience to commuters. According to Yaduvanshi community district president Ramkrishna Yadav, the protest was held due to police inaction in tracing the missing girl, who disappeared on October 24.

The family had lodged a complaint on October 25, but despite assurances from officials, there has been no breakthrough. A memorandum had earlier been submitted to SDOP Roshan Kumar Jain and tehsildar Saurabh Sharma, but no results followed.

Protesters raised two main demands. One, the house of the accused be demolished with a bulldozer or that the Superintendent of Police personally meet them to provide a concrete timeline for finding the girl.

Despite repeated assurances from SDOP Jain and Station House Officer Ghanashyam Dangi that the girl would be located within two to three days, the demonstrators refused to disperse. As of late evening, the road blockade and sit-in protest continued, with protesters reciting the Hanuman Chalisa to express anger over the ongoing police inaction.

Bankruptcy contagion hits healthy stocks too: IIM-I study

KEY TAKEAWAY | Strengthening insolvency frameworks can enhance market stability

Atul Gautam

INDORE

A new study by the Indian Institute of Management (IIM)-Indore has found that corporate bankruptcies can have far-reaching consequences beyond the failed firms themselves -- potentially destabilising even financially healthy companies within the same industry.

Published in the reputed journal 'Finance Research Letters', the study titled 'Bankruptcy Spillovers and Stock Price Crash Risk of Non-Bankrupt Firms' is co-authored by Prof Radha Mukesh Ladkani

of IIM-Indore. It highlights that each additional bankruptcy filing within an industry can increase the likelihood of a stock price crash for non-bankrupt peers by 21 per cent.

The research, which analyses data from listed Indian firms between 2010 and 2021, suggests that waves of bankruptcies create ripple effects through investor sentiment, credit markets and managerial decision-making. As borrowing costs rise and credit access tightens, managers often delay revealing bad news to protect their reputation or stabilise short-term performance.

When this suppressed information eventually surfaces, the market reaction is typically sharp and severe-- manifesting as a stock price crash.

"The study shows that bankruptcy contagion doesn't stop at the failing firms-- it spills over to others in the ecosystem, influencing investor confidence and management behaviour," said Ladkani.

A key contribution of the study is introducing Stock Price Crash Risk (SPCR) as a new channel through which bankruptcy spillovers operate. Earlier studies largely focused on reduced lending or invest-

ment constraints, but this research connects the dots to capital market volatility and systemic risk.

Importantly, the study has also found that the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) introduced in 2016 played a stabilising role. During the IBC period (2017-2021), the crash risk among non-bankrupt firms declined significantly. Stronger creditor rights and faster resolution processes under the IBC improved credit access and encouraged managers to disclose bad news promptly, thereby reducing abrupt market shocks.

Briefs

BALLIA Medical College Construction Accelerates

Ballia's long-awaited medical college is progressing. Acting Principal Dr. Dhananjay Singh met with Transport Minister Dayashankar Singh and officials to finalize plans. All formalities are complete, and the foundation stone is expected to be laid within a month. The 100-seat college is projected to be operational two years after construction begins. The foundation for a new district jail and an interstate bus station will also be laid simultaneously.

CHANDAULT Residents Protest Poor Roads, Drains

Residents of Kashiram Awas in Chandault protested against dilapidated roads and clogged drains. They have faced these issues for 15 years, with complaints to officials going unheeded. Protesters warned of a larger agitation if no action is taken, citing increased mosquito-borne diseases due to waterlogging and filth. Former councillor Sad Murhu Ram and other villagers demanded immediate repairs and cleaning from the municipal administration.

LUCKNOW DGP Abhay Prasad Retires, Grand Farewell

DGP Abhay Kumar Prasad, the head of Civil Defence, retired after over 33 years of service. A grand farewell ceremony was held in Lucknow, where colleagues honored his "golden tenure." His key achievements included establishing Civil Defence units in all districts of Uttar Pradesh and eliminating the panel system for volunteers. Prasad expressed gratitude and highlighted the department's role in empowering citizens to serve the nation.

BALLIA MLA Demands Compensation for Crop Damage

Belthara Road MLA Hanshu Ram has written to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath demanding compensation for farmers. Heavy rain and strong winds for five consecutive days have flattened standing paddy crops, destroying months of hard work. The MLA described the situation as the shattering of farmers' dreams and urged the government to provide immediate relief and rehabilitation to help the affected farmers recover.

BALLIA CDO Inspects Kartik Purnima Bathing Ghats

The Chief Development Officer (CDO) of Ballia inspected bathing ghats for the upcoming Kartik Purnima festival. He directed officials to complete all arrangements, including barricading, stage setup for cultural events, lighting, and road repairs, on a war footing. Emphasizing pilgrim safety and convenience, the CDO instructed all departments to set up camps and work in coordination, warning that no negligence would be tolerated.

LAKHIMPUR KHERI Girl Assaulted in Land Dispute

In a land dispute in Pali village, a young girl was assaulted by two individuals, Devendra and Mahendra, resulting in a broken hand bone.

CELEBRATION | CM attends 4th Convocation of Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia National Law University

Strong judicial system key to good governance: CM

UP State Bureau LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday attended the 4th Convocation Ceremony of Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia National Law University (RMLNLU), Lucknow, where he congratulated the graduating students and encouraged them to uphold truth, righteousness, and integrity in their professional lives. Calling RMLNLU a matter of pride for the state and the nation, the Chief Minister highlighted that its alumni are strengthening India's judicial and governance systems. "A robust judicial system is the foundation of democracy," he said. "The stronger the judiciary, the more achievable the goals of good governance become."

Referring to India's ancient traditions, CM Yogi said that the convocation mantra 'Satyam Vad, Dharmam Char' echoes



UP leading judicial reforms through e-Courts, AI training, and legal modernization

the spirit of justice rooted in Indian culture. He added that dharma is not just worship but a way of life, fulfilling one's duty with integrity is true righteousness. The Chief Minister outlined several initiatives undertaken by the state government

to modernize the judiciary. These include e-Courts, Cyber Law and Artificial Intelligence (AI) training, and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) programs. He also announced the construction of integrated court complexes in 10 districts, ensuring modern facilities for judges, advocates, and litigants under one roof. To ensure swift justice for women and children, CM Yogi said over 380 Fast-Track and POCSO courts are operational, while forensic laboratories have been established in every police range.

LLM Category - Gold Medal: Harshita Yadav - Silver Medal: Aakriti Srivastava - Bronze Medal: Rishabh	Cyber Law - Gold: Aman Kumar - Silver: Samyukta Singh - Bronze: Pranjal Pandey
BA LLB Category - Gold Medal: Abhyuday Pratap - Silver Medal: Saima Khan - Bronze Medal: Darshika Pandey	Media Law - Gold: Raghav Tripathi - Silver: Ishika Gautam - Bronze: Sanya Gandhi
Special Awards - Student of the Year: Darshika Pandey - Best Moorter of the Year: Abhyuday Pratap - Best UPSC/State PSC Performance: Dheeraj Diwakar	Intellectual Property Rights - Gold: Aatreya Tripathi - Silver: Akshita Singh - Bronze: Shreya Awasthi
	Subject-wise Honours (BA LLB Hons) - Law of Taxation: Swarnayati - Criminal Law: Muskan Shukla - Constitutional Law: Darshika Pandey

No Bias, No Violence: CEC's Clear Message Ahead of Bihar Polls

UP State Bureau KANPUR

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar on Sunday issued a firm message ahead of the Bihar Assembly elections, asserting that the Election Commission stands for neutrality, transparency, and peace.

Speaking at a felicitation event organised by the Mathur Vaishya community at the Sports Hub in Kanpur, Kumar said that the poll body has no favourites and treats every political party as equal. "There is no ruling or opposition camp for the Commission. We ensure the same level playing field for all," he said.

Kumar emphasised that the Commission has adopted a zero tolerance policy toward electoral violence. "Any act of



CEC Gyanesh Kumar asserted Commission stands for neutrality, transparency, and peace

intimidation or unrest will invite immediate action. Our priority is that every voter feels safe while exercising their franchise," he noted.

He appealed to the people of Bihar to participate enthusiastically in the "festival of democracy" and make their vote count. "The upcoming elections will reflect transpar-

ency, efficiency, and simplicity," he added, stressing that strict monitoring mechanisms have been put in place to prevent malpractice and ensure free and fair polling.

The CEC also said that the Commission's efforts aim to make Bihar elections a global example of credible democratic conduct.

Former BJP leader kills wife with iron rod

UP State Bureau HAMIRPUR



A former BJP Minority Morcha leader allegedly beat his wife to death with an iron rod in Hamirpur district following a domestic dispute. The accused, identified as Moinuddin, a resident of Kamharia village under Maudaha police limits, reportedly attacked his wife Roshni alias Baby, 32, during an argument around 3 a.m. on Sunday. According to police, Moinuddin locked their two-year-old son in a room before fleeing the scene.

Couldn't win in Awadh, won't win in Magadh : Maurya

UP State Bureau LUCKNOW

With Bihar assembly elections approaching, political sparring between parties has intensified. Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya hit back at Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav for claiming that the BJP would face defeat in Bihar, asserting that Yadav's predictions have failed before and would fail again.

Maurya, who has been made co-incharge of the Bihar elections by the BJP, said, "Akhilesh couldn't win in Awadh, and he won't win in Magadh either. He should start preparing to return to Saifai." The remark came after Yadav claimed that just as BJP lost ground in Uttar Pradesh's Awadh region during the Lok



Deputy CM attacks Akhilesh should 'prepare to return to Saifai' before Bihar election

Sabha elections, it would face a similar setback in Bihar's Magadh region.

Yadav had accused the BJP of spreading communal hatred both in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, calling it a party that

divides society. Responding to this, Maurya said the BJP's campaign in Bihar is built on development and unity, while opposition claims are baseless.

Maurya is actively campaigning across Bihar through roadshows and rallies, targeting opposition alliances including the RJD, Congress, and SP. He expressed confidence that Bihar's voters would reject divisive politics and back the NDA's agenda of growth and stability.

Wolf snatches toddler sparking fear

UP State Bureau BAHRAICH/PILBHIT

Fear has returned to Bahraich after a wolf snatched a one-and-a-half-year-old child from a home, marking a resumption of attacks after a 15-day respite. The child, Saanvi, was taken by the wolf from her house in Gorchhahan Purwa. Her father, Rakesh Yadav, and family pursued the animal, but it disappeared into the bushes.

This sparked panic among villagers, particularly as the region has already seen seven fatalities, including 5 children, and over 30 injuries from wolf attacks since September 9. Although 3 wolves were previously shot by Forest Department, DFO Dr. Ram Singh confirmed a team has been dispatched, and a drone search is underway after blood and tissue fragments, believed to be the child's, were found in a nearby field.

Braveheart IPS shines with Twin Gallantry Honours

UP State Bureau MAU

On National Unity Day, Mau's IPS officer Akhilesh Kumar Singh received the prestigious Gallantry Award from the Ministry of Home Affairs, along with the Manipur DGP Commendation Medal 2025. Currently serving as Inspector General with Assam Police, Singh has been recognized for his courage and integrity in challenging situations.

Singh earned the Gallantry Medal for his swift action in Assam's Sivasagar district, where a woman was killed after being branded a witch. He led the investigation, ensured the arrest of the accused, and oversaw the trial that resulted in life imprisonment for 23 convicts. His second honour came for his role during the 2023 Manipur violence. Tasked with rescuing stranded residents of



Led rescue of hundreds during Manipur unrest, earned rare inter-state police commendation

Assam, Singh coordinated safe evacuations and later supervised the training of 2,000 Manipur police personnel in Assam, aiding peace restoration efforts. A native of Murarpur village in Mau district, Singh cleared the UPSC exam in 2003 and joined the Assam cadre during peak insurgency years.

achievement

Indian silk gallery expo opens in Lucknow

UP State Bureau LUCKNOW



The Indian Silk Gallery Handloom and Silk Expo was inaugurated at Safed Baradari, Kaiserbagh, Lucknow, by MLA Amresh Kumar. The seven-day exhibition, running from November 2 to 8, 2025, showcases traditional Indian handloom heritage, including Banarasi, Tussar, Kanjivaram, and Ikmat silks. The expo aims to promote indigenous products and directly benefit weavers under government initiatives.

PM to unveil three new routes from Varanasi

UP State Bureau LUCKNOW

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to flag off three new Vande Bharat Express trains on November 7 during his visit to Varanasi. The new routes will connect Varanasi-Khajuraho, Lucknow-Saharanpur, and Firozpur-Delhi, further expanding the high-speed rail network in Uttar Pradesh.

The event will mark the first time a Vande Bharat train is flagged off from Banaras Railway Station. The Prime Minister will also visit the Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) and interact with public representatives during his visit. With the launch of the Varanasi-Khajuraho Vande Bharat, the city will now have eight such trains operating from it. The new train will depart Banaras at 5:25 a.m.



Banaras station to host PM Modi's first Vande Bharat flag-off from the city

and reach Khajuraho by 1:10 p.m., halting at Vindhyachal, Prayagraj, Chitrakoot, Banda, and Mahoba. Lucknow will also get its first Vande Bharat Express to Sitapur, connecting major stops including Bareilly, Moradabad, and Saharanpur. The train will run six days a week, departing from Lucknow at 5:00 a.m. and reaching Saharanpur at 12:45 p.m.

Prisoner found hanged in Naini Central Jail

UP State Bureau PRAYAGRAJ

A convict serving a life sentence for murder was found dead under suspicious circumstances, hanging from a tree in the Naini Central Jail नैनी on Saturday evening. The deceased has been identified as Udayraj Lodh (60), a resident of Barua village in Kaushambi district.

The incident came to light during the evening count of prisoners before the closing of the barracks when Lodh was found missing. A subsequent search led to the discovery of his body hanging from a mango tree near the Dari Godam (rug warehouse) using a towel (gamcha). Lodh was declared dead upon arrival at the hospital. Senior Jail Superintendent Vijay Vikram Singh stated that preliminary investigation suggests suicide, theorizing that Lodh found

UNESCO honours Lucknow's culinary legacy

UP State Bureau LUCKNOW

In a proud moment for Uttar Pradesh, the city of Lucknow has been officially included in UNESCO's Creative Cities Network under the Gastronomy category. The recognition celebrates the city's rich culinary heritage, refined traditions, and its exceptional contribution to India's diverse food culture.

The announcement was made on October 31 during the 43rd General Conference of UNESCO held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, coinciding with



World Cities Day. With this achievement, Lucknow joins the league of global cities known for their distinct gastronomic identity.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated the people of Lucknow, calling the honour a tribute to the city's vibrant culture rooted in culinary

excellence. "Lucknow is synonymous with rich traditions and refined taste. I am delighted that UNESCO has acknowledged this aspect of the city. I invite people worldwide to visit Lucknow and experience its uniqueness," he said. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath also extended

City joins UNESCO's Creative Cities Network for its rich culinary heritage

greetings, stating that under the Prime Minister's guidance, India's culture and heritage are gaining global recognition. "This achievement adds another feather to Uttar Pradesh's cap and showcases our deep-rooted culinary and cultural traditions," he said.

Tourism Minister Jaiveer Singh described the inclusion as a global honour for

Lucknow's innovative and diverse food culture. He said the Uttar Pradesh Tourism Department had submitted the city's nomination on January 31, 2025, followed by the Government of India's official submission to UNESCO on March 3, 2025. The final announcement was made on October 31, confirming Lucknow's selection among eight new cities added this year. Principal Secretary for Tourism and Culture Amrit Abhijit informed that with this recognition, there are now 70 cities worldwide under UNESCO's Gastronomy category.

Court gives life sentence to 3 men

UP State Bureau PRATAPGARH By line:

A Pratapgarh court has sentenced three men to life imprisonment for a 2015 murder case, also imposing a fine of ₹20,000 each. The convicts, Manish Kumar Verma, Nanhe Lal Verma, and Sunil Verma, were found guilty of killing a villager named Karim, according to Additional District Government Advocate Ajay Kumar Pandey.

The verdict was delivered by Additional District and Sessions Judge (II) Ramlal after hearing both sides. A fourth accused, a juvenile at the time of the crime,

Victim, murdered, was shot dead in bajra field during night attack

has been referred to the Juvenile Justice Board for further proceedings. As per the FIR filed by complainant Lakshmi Kant, the incident occurred on December 17, 2015, around 8:30 p.m. in the Lalganj area's Ori Ka Purwa village. Lakshmi Kant stated that he, along with two others, had gone to his tubewell premises when shots were fired from a nearby bajra field.

Quick Trail

BENGALURU

CM: Tunnel project faces BJP politics

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Sunday emphasized that the public does not oppose the Tunnel Road Project, but the BJP is opposing it for political reasons.

Speaking to reporters, Siddaramaiah pointed out that Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar has already responded to the issue. "He has even proposed forming a committee under the leadership of Opposition leader R Ashoka to review the opposition's concerns regarding the project and to reach a consensus. Yet, the Opposition continues to oppose the project purely for political reasons," he said.

Questioning the logic behind the BJP's protest, the Chief Minister asked, "Why should there be opposition to a project that aims to solve traffic problems?"

He further highlighted that similar tunnel projects have been implemented in many countries without public opposition.

MYSURU

4 school students drown



As many as four students who were studying in a Hajira Nishwana Arabic school at Udayagiri in Mysuru, were washed away in the Ramaswamy canal at Mahadevapura Bore near Mandayakoppal village in Srirangapatna taluk on Saturday.

While police fished out the bodies of the two students on Saturday evening, the other two bodies were retrieved on Sunday. According to police, the deceased were identified as Ayesha(14) Honey (13), Afreen (13) and Jania Parveen (13).

A group of around 15 students from a Madrasa Arabic School Shanti Nagar, Mysuru, had visited the canal area on an outing when the mishap took place.

Ayesha fell into the canal when she went to wash her clothes during the outings.

BENGALURU

Decomposed woman's body found hanging

A woman's body was found hanging in a decomposed state at her rented house in the city, police said on Sunday.

The incident occurred in Gayatri Nagar in north Bengaluru that falls under the jurisdiction of Subramanyanagar Police Station.

The woman, aged around 25, was hailing from Davangere and an MBA graduate. She worked with a private firm in the city and according to locals she was living alone and had a craze for bike riding, police added.

She was found hanging in a room on the third floor house of Railway Parallel Road, police stated.

BENGALURU

RSS and BJP baitak today

A high-level meeting between RSS and BJP leaders is scheduled for Monday morning in Bengaluru, focusing on recent political developments in Karnataka.

The meeting will bring together senior BJP leaders with RSS backgrounds. According to reports, the agenda includes discussions on recent controversies, particularly the Path Sanchalan (route march) standoff, statements made by Congress leaders against the RSS, and the BJP's perceived lack of aggressive opposition to the state government's actions.

Sources suggest that the RSS leadership has summoned key BJP figures to strategize a more impactful response to the Congress-led state government's policies and rhetoric. The meeting is also expected to address internal party dynamics, especially amid growing factionalism and leadership tussles within the Karnataka BJP unit.

One of the key talking points could be the recent High Court proceedings and administrative pushback regarding RSS's Path Sanchalan events in places like Chittapur, which have sparked political and legal debates. The RSS is reportedly keen on ensuring that the BJP takes a firmer stand on issues related to Hindu identity, cultural rights, and law enforcement neutrality.

CM POST DRAMA

Zameer says Shivakumar can be CM only after 2028

NT Correspondent

KOPPAL

Housing, Wakf and Minority Welfare Department Minister B. Z. Zameer Ahmed Khan on Sunday cited four specific instances to strongly support the continuation of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah until the completion of his five-year tenure in May 2028.

While reaffirming his loyalty to Siddaramaiah, Khan also expressed admiration for Deputy Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar, saying that, like many of Shivakumar's supporters, he wishes the latter could become Chief Minister — but only after 2028.

Speaking to reporters in Koppal, Khan sought to end rumours about internal rivalry or a power-sharing deal within the Congress, which

politicians have termed the "November revolution."

He said, "Siddaramaiah is already a Chief Minister and occupying the CM's chair till 2028, and that chair is not vacant. Similarly, the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) president's chair is also not vacant, where Shivakumar is firmly sitting. So where is the question of November Revolution?"

Citing the four instances, Khan explained: first, AICC general secretary K. C. Venugopal had clarified in Bengaluru a couple of months ago that there was no power-sharing agreement in the state. Second, during the Dasara festivities in Mysuru, Siddaramaiah himself announced that he would remain Chief Minister till 2028.



While reaffirming his loyalty to Siddaramaiah, Khan also expressed admiration for Shivakumar.

Third, Deputy Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar endorsed the CM's statement, expressing full agreement.

Khan also pointed out a fourth instance, saying, "Even just three-four days ago, former Bangalore Rural MP D. K. Suresh, who is Shivakumar's brother, also stated that Sid-

daramaiah would remain CM till 2028 and that he will lead the party in the next elections. Then where is confusion? Where is November revolution?"

While firmly backing Siddaramaiah, Khan also praised Shivakumar for his dedication to the Congress. "Shivakumar has worked hard for the sake of the party, and I believe he should become Chief Minister, as his supporters are demanding. I have great respect for his ambition, and many of his supporters across the state want him to be CM — I also wish him to become CM. I know that the Congress came to power in the state because of the joint efforts of both Shivakumar and Siddaramaiah. Let him become CM after 2028," he said.

Kodava legacy: ₹1 crore grant for hockey tourney



NT Correspondent

BENGALURU

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has announced a ₹1 crore government grant for the upcoming Chenanda Hockey Tournament, scheduled to be held in May 2026.

The announcement was made during the logo unveiling ceremony at the CM's home office 'Krishna' in Bengaluru.

Siddaramaiah praised the Kodava community's rich hockey tradition, stating, "When we say Kodavas, we think of hockey. And when we think of hockey, we think of Kodavas."

He praised Kodagu's athletes for bringing pride to India through their performances in international tournaments, including the Asian

Games.

The Chief Minister emphasized the uniqueness of Kodava culture, calling it a symbol of Karnataka's cultural diversity and pride. He also promised to personally attend the tournament in Kodagu.

The event was attended by several prominent Kodava leaders, including MLAs, legal advisor Ponnanna, and ministers Bose Raju, Byrathi Suresh, and Shivravi Tangadagi, reflecting strong community support.

The Chenanda Hockey Tournament is one of the many family-based hockey festivals celebrated in Kodagu, a region known for producing top-tier hockey talent. The government's financial backing is expected to boost the sport's visibility and encourage youth participation.

Tunnel Road project isn't personal, it's for Bengaluru: Dy CM

NT Correspondent

BENGALURU

Reacting to the BJP's protest over the proposed tunnel road in Lalbagh, Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Sunday asserted that the project is for the public and not a personal agenda, urging opposition leaders to provide constructive suggestions instead of merely criticizing.

Clarifying the state government's stance on the Lalbagh tunnel road project, Shivakumar told reporters that the state government is fully aware of the park's history and its usage.

"We have done all sorts of studies on the tunnel road. I am not a fool to destroy Lalbagh. I know its history and what is being used and what is not," he said.

Lashing out at the BJP's

consistent opposition to development projects, Shivakumar referred to past protests against the Steel Flyover Bridge during K J George's tenure and questioned, "Isn't the metro a tunnel project? I had travelled to ten countries and prepared a report for the metro during S M Krishna's government."

Along with the late Union Minister H N Ananth Kumar, I submitted the report to then Prime Minister Vajpayee. That was the beginning of the Bengaluru metro project. As Congress leaders, we have never opposed projects aimed at improving traffic or public welfare," he emphasized.

The Deputy Chief Minister reiterated his willingness to form a committee led by R. Ashoka, along with experts suggested by him, to study



the tunnel road project and ensure transparency and safety.

Taking a dig at Bangalore South MP Tejasvi Surya, Shivakumar sharply criticized his proposals for rail projects and Bus Rapid Transit System (BRTS) corridors, calling them impractical.

"Where is the land for the project? Where is the space for BRTS? Does he have the brains?" he asked, pointing out that even former

Chief Minister and Belgaum MP Jagadish Shettar failed to successfully execute the BRTS project in Hubballi, implying that similar efforts in Bengaluru would face the same challenges.

Shivakumar also questioned Surya's personal conduct, noting the contradiction between his public advice and actions. "He asks people not to travel by car, yet applied for a new car before his wedding.

Bandipur safari may be shut: Khandre

NT Correspondent

MYSURU

State Forest, Environment and Ecology Minister Eshwara Khandre on Sunday said his government has not given permission to operate illegal resorts, homestays and illegal mining activities.

He also said the government will not hesitate to initiate measures to shut down the Bandipur Tiger Safari if human-tiger conflict continues to increase.

Currently, the government has reduced Safari trips.

Speaking to reporters after holding meetings with official and farmer leaders following increasing man-animal conflict, he said the government will initiate tough action if he receives complaints related to illegal resorts, homestays and illegal mining activities in

forest areas.

The minister said that he would discuss with the CM an increase in the compensation for the victims of wild animals attack, crop loss and property loss due to the wildlife menace.

He said the government has constituted two experts committees to study the causes of increasing human-animal conflict.

The shrinking forest areas, increasing numbers of wild animals, scarcity of fodder and disturbance to wild animals are resulting in man-animal conflict across the state.

There were only 12 tigers in Bandipur tiger reserve in 1972, but this has increased to 153 now, he said.

A total of 41 people were killed in animal attacks across the state in 2021,57 in 2022-23, 65 in 2023-24 and 30 till the end of October this year.

KSET candidates asked to remove religious ornaments before exam; students unhappy

NT Correspondent

BALLARI

During the Karnataka State Eligibility Test (KSET) held on Monday across 20 centers in Ballari, several candidates were asked to remove personal and religious ornaments—including earrings, nose rings, bangles, and sacred threads—before entering

the exam halls.

The move, aimed at enforcing strict anti-malpractice protocols, left many students visibly upset.

Some candidates expressed emotional discomfort, stating that items like nose rings and sacred threads hold deep cultural and religious significance, akin to wedding symbols.



Despite their objections, they complied with the

Couple killed after being hit by speeding ambulance

NT Correspondent

BENGALURU

A couple was killed and two others injured, while several two-wheelers were allegedly hit by a speeding ambulance at a traffic signal in the city, police said on Sunday.

The incident allegedly happened on Saturday night around 11 pm, at K H junction near the Shanti Nagar

bus stand here.

The ambulance driver, who had allegedly fled from the spot after the incident, has been traced and detained by the police on Sunday morning, they said.

Police said, according to eyewitnesses, the speeding ambulance allegedly lost control and collided with several two-wheelers at the signal.

POWER PLAY

Political maneuvering heats up: Karnataka leaders head to Delhi

NT Correspondent

BENGALURU

Amid growing discussions surrounding the November Revolution, referring to a possible change of guard, influential Karnataka cabinet ministers are intensifying trips to New Delhi, sparking political curiosity.

During and after the ongoing Bihar Legislative Assembly elections, one after another, leaders have been landing in the national capital, setting the stage for strategic political maneuvering.

Shivakumar's Moves in Delhi

Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar traveled to New Delhi last week and is planning another visit on November 6, just a week or ten days before Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's scheduled visit on November 15. In the national capital, he is said to have met Ambika Soni, a close aide of Sonia Gandhi, and held discussions with several senior Congress leaders.

Speculations are rife regarding strategies linked to the November Revolution,



and Shivakumar's silent maneuvering has reportedly caused some unease within Siddaramaiah's camp.

Jarkiholi's Strategic Visit

Following Shivakumar, Public Works Minister Satish Jarkiholi is heading to New Delhi to discuss departmental work plans and report to the high command on political confusion in Karnataka. His visit is also seen as part of broader efforts to stake a claim for the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee president post, should Shivakumar replace Siddaramaiah as Chief Minister as

well as stake claim for CM's post after 2028.

The ruling Congress government will complete two and a half years on November 20. Shivakumar's camp is pressing for Siddaramaiah's resignation to allow Shivakumar to serve the remaining term as CM.

Further fueling speculation, Jarkiholi has requested a meeting with AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge, and a positive response from the AICC office has intensified political chatter. Several other leaders from Siddaramaiah's camp, including former minister K.N.

Rajanna, are also expected to visit New Delhi in the coming days.

Clarifications on Delhi Visits

Addressing speculation, Shivakumar clarified that not all trips are politically motivated. "Any ministers or legislators can visit New Delhi. I myself will also go for Bihar elections," he said. He emphasized that Jarkiholi's visit may involve departmental discussions, noting that meeting senior leaders at the Delhi Congress office is normal and should not be misinterpreted. Shivakumar added that central ministers have called meetings in New Delhi, with discussions on the Cauvery dispute and Tamil Nadu issues also on the agenda. Karnataka leaders, including Rizwan Arshad, Srinivas Mane, MPs Shreyas Patel, and E. Tukaram, have previously been assigned responsibilities in other states, and similar assignments are expected for more Karnataka leaders.

With just 18 days left for the November Revolution, the Congress party is witnessing significant internal churn.

BJP slams tunnel road project calls it a VIP corridor

NT Correspondent

BENGALURU

The opposition BJP on Sunday launched a massive silent protest under the slogan "Save Bengaluru – Stop the Tunnel Road" and the event was led by Legislative Assembly opposition leader R Ashoka, Bangalore South MP L S Tejasvi Surya, Jayanagara MLA C K Ramamurthy, and several other party leaders. Large number of supporters participated in a signature campaign and silent protest at the city's iconic Lalbagh Botanical Gardens.

The tunnel project, intended to ease Bengaluru's growing traffic congestion, has faced sharp criticism from the opposition. During the protest, BJP leaders and



residents raised alarm over environmental, financial, heritage, and public-access concerns.

Addressing the protesters, Ashoka alleged that the state government's priorities are misplaced and demanded that authorities first fill potholes to prevent daily accidents. "Chief Minister Siddaramaiah had instructed officials to do so by October

30. Yet, even after the deadline, deaths continue. Who is responsible for this?" he asked, highlighting the government's failure to maintain existing infrastructure.

During the protest, BJP leaders engaged with the public and organizations, emphasizing potential hazards of constructing the tunnel in Lalbagh. Ashoka said, "The administration, which is unable to repair potholes, is boasting about constructing a tunnel. Bengaluru once attracted global attention, but under the Congress government, entrepreneurs hesitate to invest here. This is a misfortune for Karnataka and Kannadigas."

He also stressed Lalbagh's ecological and historical importance,

Rogue elephant kills two in Sringeri; capture ops start

NT Correspondent

CHIKKAMAGALURU

Following the tragic death of two villagers in an elephant attack near Keremane village in Sringeri taluk, Karnataka Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre has ordered an immediate capture operation. The rogue elephant has been terrorizing the region, damaging crops and posing a threat to farmers and motorists.

To carry out the operation, six trained elephants—Ekalavya, Dhananjaya, Prashanth, Harsha, and two others—have been deployed to Kerekatte check post, where the capture mission will begin tomorrow.

The victims, Harish and Umesh, were killed on Friday morning in separate incidents. Harish was attacked while collecting fodder near



a cattle shed, and Umesh was killed shortly after when he stepped out to investigate why dogs were barking near their home.

On Saturday, Minister K.J. George visited the victims' families and announced ₹5 lakh in personal aid. Sringeri MLA T.D. Rajegowda also contributed ₹1 lakh to each family. George assured villagers that the elephant

would be captured swiftly.

The incident has sparked widespread anger among locals, who blocked the tahsil-dar's vehicle and confronted District Commissioner Meena Nagaraj and SP Vikram Amathe during their visit. Residents accused the Forest Department of negligence, citing repeated elephant attacks and ignored pleas for intervention.

Briefs

HYDERABAD
Inspector honoured with Kendriya Grih Mantri Dakshata Padak

Cyberabad Economic Offences Wing (EOW) Inspector J Upendhar has been chosen for the prestigious Kendriya Grih Mantri Dakshata Padak – 2025, announced by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), New Delhi. The award was declared on October 31, marking the birth anniversary of India's first Union Home Minister, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. Inspector Upendhar earned this national honour for his outstanding performance in homicide investigations, securing nine life convictions.



HYDERABAD
Traffic Police nab 466 drunk driving offenders

The Cyberabad traffic police conducted extensive drunken driving checks on Saturday, apprehending 466 individuals for driving under the influence of alcohol. Among those caught were 344 two-wheeler riders, 15 three-wheeler drivers, 104 four-wheeler drivers, and 3 heavy vehicle drivers. Approximately 20 offenders were found with Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) levels between 301 mg/100 ml and 550 mg/100 ml. All the apprehended individuals will be produced before the respective courts. Meanwhile, a local court disposed of 336 pending drunken driving cases. Out of these, 19 offenders were fined and sentenced to imprisonment, 32 were directed to pay fines and perform social service, while 285 were released after paying fines. The Cyberabad police reiterated that drunk driving is a grave offence, warning that individuals responsible for fatal accidents while intoxicated will be booked under Section 105 of the BNS.

HYDERABAD
AHTU rescues three victims in decoy operations

The Cyberabad Anti-Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU), along with SHE Teams, conducted a series of special drives and decoy operations over the past week, rescuing three victims and arresting five accused persons in two cases registered under the Prevention of Immoral Trafficking Act (PITA). During night raids, AHTU also apprehended nine transgender persons for investigation. Meanwhile, Cyberabad SHE Teams carried out 142 decoy operations, catching 76 individuals indulging in indecent acts at public places. Petty cases were booked in 51 instances, while others were counseled and released. The teams also received 17 complaints from women through various channels and facilitated the reunion of 29 families involved in marital disputes through Family Counseling and CDEW Centres. As part of preventive efforts, AHTU and SHE Teams conducted awareness programs for 223 participants on human trafficking, eve teasing, child marriages, stalking, cyber frauds, and key help lines such as 181, 1098, 100, and 1930.

Former Minister Jogi Ramesh arrested in liquor case



METRO INDIA NEWS | AMARAVATI

Andhra Pradesh's political circles are heated on Sunday morning after the Special Investigation Team (SIT) arrested senior YSRCP leader and former minister Jogi Ramesh in connection with the fake liquor racket case at his residence in Ibrahimpatnam, Krishna district.

According to sources, the SIT, accompanied by a heavy police contingent, reached Ramesh's house early in the morning. His aide, Ramu, was first taken into custody for questioning, followed by Ramesh's arrest after a brief standoff. Officials reportedly acted based on the statement of Addepalli Janardhan Rao, the main accused in the case, who claimed that the fake liquor was manufactured

under Ramesh's influence. The SIT is said to have treated his testimony as a crucial lead in the investigation.

However, Jogi Ramesh has repeatedly denied the allegations, calling them politically motivated and asserting that he has no link whatsoever with the case. "This is a clear case of political revenge by the ruling government," he had earlier stated, accusing the administration of deliberately targeting him to divert public attention from its own failures.

Reacting sharply to the arrest, YSRCP president Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy lashed out at Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, terming the move "an illegal and shameful act of political vendetta." In a scathing post on X (formerly Twitter), Jagan alleged that

Naidu was "trying to shift blame and mislead the public after being caught red-handed in the fake liquor scandal."

"Mr. Chandrababu, the liquor seized belongs to your regime, your leaders, and your party's network of belt shops and private outlets. Yet you arrest our BC leader, Jogi Ramesh, to cover your tracks. This is nothing but an abuse of power," Jagan wrote.

He further accused the government of using the arrest as a distraction from recent administrative failures, including the Kasibugga temple stampede and the Montha cyclone crisis. Jagan alleged that Ramesh was arrested just a day after filing a petition in the High Court seeking a CBI probe into the liquor scam, suggesting the Chief Minister fears exposure.



BJP eyes Naidu-Pawan duo for Jubilee Hills by-poll campaign

METRO INDIA NEWS | HYDERABAD

The political temperature is rising in the Jubilee Hills by-election as the BJP considers bringing Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan into the campaign arena to bolster its prospects.

The high-stakes contest has three prominent candidates in the fray - Congress nominee Naveen Yadav, BRS candidate Maganti Sunitha, wife of former MLA Maganti Gopinath, and BJP's Deepak Reddy. With the Congress and BRS already in full swing, the BJP is now looking to inject fresh energy into its campaign by leveraging the star power of its Andhra allies.

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has taken the Jubilee Hills contest as a prestige issue, personally leading the campaign for his party candidate. Ministers and Congress leaders are already conducting door-to-door outreach in the constituency. Meanwhile, BRS working president K.T. Rama Rao has assumed complete responsibility for ensuring Maganti Sunitha's victory, intensifying his ground campaign.

In this backdrop, the BJP is keen on making a strategic move by roping in Naidu and Pawan Kalyan, who lead the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and Jana Sena Party (JSP) respectively. Both leaders share an alliance with the BJP in Andhra Pradesh and are key partners in the ruling coalition there. Party sources say discussions are underway on whether to send a delegation to Amaravati to invite them personally or to route the re-

quest through BJP national president J.P. Nadda and Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

The constituency's voter profile is seen as the driving factor behind this move. Out of the three lakh voters in Jubilee Hills, more than 1.5 lakh are estimated to be from Seemandhra. Among them, the Kapu and Kamma communities hold significant influence, along with a large number of film industry professionals - estimated at around 30,000 voters. The party estimated that the Seemandhra voters are more than one and a half lakh. Of this, Kapu community voters are the highest after the Muslim minority communities, while the Kamma community has more than 25 thousand voters.

BJP leaders believe that Naidu and Pawan Kalyan's participation could decisively tilt this segment in their favour. "If both leaders campaign here, the BJP's prospects will rise sharply," a senior party source remarked. However, some political observers caution that it may be difficult for the two Andhra leaders to devote time to a single constituency campaign.

With polling scheduled for November 11 and campaigning set to end on November 9, the BJP leaders are weighing plans to organise roadshows and corner meetings featuring Naidu and Pawan Kalyan in the final days. Party insiders say such appearances could generate enthusiasm among the voters and give Deepak Reddy the much-needed edge in what is shaping up to be a high-voltage three-way battle in Jubilee Hills.

KTR demands apology from Revanth for remarks on Indian Army

METRO INDIA NEWS | HYDERABAD

BRS working president K.T. Rama Rao (KTR) demanded that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy immediately apologise for his shameful and insulting remarks on the Indian Army.

Reacting sharply on Sunday, KTR said that such irresponsible and disgraceful comments are unbecoming of a person holding the Chief Minister's position. "To insult the Indian Army merely to score political points in an election rally is a new low, even by Revanth Reddy's standards."

KTR said, demanding that the Chief Minister withdraw his statement and tender an unconditional public apology to the Indian Army.

The BRS working president stated that it takes immense hard work, dedication, commitment and love for the country to join the armed forces and put one's life on the line for the nation. "We are able to live safely, do politics and spend time with our families only because our sol-

diers are standing guard at the borders, enduring the most cruel and difficult conditions," he said.

Questioning the intent behind Revanth Reddy's words, KTR asked, "What made you belittle our Army and glorify Pakistan? What were you trying to achieve by humiliating our brave soldiers?"

He further said, "For a man who was once caught with bags of cash, it is perhaps natural to worship goondas and rowdy sheeters. But as the Chief Minister of Telangana, you have a duty to show dignity and patriotism. Stop insulting the Indian Army and stop praising an enemy nation."

KTR said Revanth Reddy's comments have deeply hurt the sentiments of crores of Indians who hold the Army in the highest regard. "As the representative of Telangana, you must behave responsibly and honour the soldiers who protect our borders — not belittle them for your political theatrics," he asserted.



12th-century Chola-era Ganesha Idol faces threat in Nagarkurnool

METRO INDIA NEWS | HYDERABAD

A magnificent 12th-century black granite Ganesha sculpture has been found at Lingala, a mandal headquarters in Nagarkurnool district. The idol, belonging to the Kanduru Chola period, is currently sandwiched between the roots of the tree. Dr. E. Sivanagireddy, archaeologist and CEO of the Pleach India Foundation, discovered the site following information shared by Mahesh, a former MPTC member. Upon inspection, Dr. Reddy found

the remains of a ruined Triakuta (triple shrine) temple located about one kilometre from Lingala village. Amid the ruins, he identified the Ganesha idol partly trapped within the growing roots of the tree.

A broken stone inscription dated April 30, 1167 CE, was also found at the site. The inscription, issued by Tondaya, son of Gokarna-II of the Kanduru Chola lineage, records the construction of a Triakuta temple dedicated to Vishnu, Siva, and Surya, along with a land donation of Lingala village

to a temple at Somasila on the banks of the Krishna River.

Based on the inscription and stylistic features, Dr. Reddy confirmed the Ganesha idol's origin in the 12th century CE. Emphasising its historical and cultural significance, he appealed to authorities and the public to protect the idol and preserve it for future generations.

Nearby, a broken image of Goddess Bhadrakali was also found, further highlighting the archaeological importance of the neglected site.

Tourism Minister Kandula Durgesh leaves for London to attend World Travel Market 2025

METRO INDIA NEWS | AMARAVATI

Andhra Pradesh Tourism Minister Kandula Durgesh embarked on a visit to London on Saturday night to attend the "World Travel Market (WTM) 2025", scheduled from November 4 to 6. The event is one of the world's leading global summits on tourism, showcasing new innovations, investment opportunities, and international collaborations in the travel industry.

After departing from Rajamahendravaram Airport, the Minister reached Mumbai and continued his journey to London early Sunday morning. Speaking before his departure, Durgesh said his participation aims to position Andhra Pradesh as a leading global tourism destination and to attract international investors to the state's diverse travel and hospitality sectors.



During the summit, the Minister will engage with global tourism boards, investors, and travel innovators to explore partnerships that can drive economic growth and employment in the sector

He added that the government is committed to trans-

forming Andhra Pradesh into a hub of sustainable tourism

Ramchander Rao calls upon youth to join BJP

METRO INDIA NEWS | HYDERABAD

Telangana BJP State President N Ramchander Rao on Sunday said that people who attracted with the developmental programmes initiated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi were increasingly looking towards the BJP and joining the party in large numbers.

Rao was addressing a function organized on the occasion of joining of some BRS and Congress leaders into BJP. He welcomed leaders from the BRS and Congress, including Venkatapati Rajanna, Nageshwar Rao Gollapally, Narsing Rao G Shivakumar, and Karan Dev, who joined the BJP in the presence of the Wanaparthy District President.

He further stated that a large number of BRS and Congress party workers, including minority brothers, joined the BJP in Wanaparthy district who at-



tracted with the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's good governance, welfare programmes and schemes. He said joining of large number of people gives a clear indication that they are looking towards BJP.

The BJP chief asserted that the BJP's central leadership has provided a corruption-free government for the past 12 years to the people of the country. He predicted that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the country would reach new heights in the coming days.

"Today, if India is surging ahead as a "Viksit Bharat" and a Self-Reliant India, it is because of Modi," he stated adding that this is why people across the country are supporting the BJP.

Taking dig on both the BRS and Congress parties, Rao said the previous BRS government in Telangana was rejected by people due to corruption while the present Congress government has relied only on contractors and commissions. Corruption, intimidation and following communal politics. The people are expressing their ire for luring them with money in Jubilee Hills assembly constituency, he alleged.

Urging people to give an opportunity to BJP, the state BJP chief called upon youth, women and educated people to join the BJP to build a glorious future for Telangana with everyone's cooperation.

Praveen Kumar slams Govt over Gurukul students' protest

METRO INDIA NEWS | HYDERABAD

BRS party leader RS Praveen Kumar on Sunday reacted strongly to the protest by the students of the Social Welfare Gurukul College on the Shadnagar Bypass Road. He directly questioned CM Revanth Reddy about a series of developments involving students in Telangana?

He said that the students of the Gurukul protested on NH 44 after being harassed by the college Principal Sailaja. He strongly condemned the attack on the students by a female police constable in Mufti. He said

that it was cruel that the students were forcibly arrested by the police and put in vehicles. He asked what is actually happening in Telangana?

"Is this the justice that girls are getting in Indiramma's rule? As the state Education Minister, the CM should be solving their problems but you are arresting them in a cruel manner. The Congress government says one thing about the women and does another. In Jubilee Hills, women will defeat you and teach you wisdom," warned RS Praveen Kumar.

Bharati Holikeri exhorts enumerators on high-quality census

METRO INDIA NEWS | HYDERABAD

"Quality census data is fundamental to the formulation of effective development plans and public policies," said State Census Director Bharati Holikeri.

She inaugurated the three-day training programme for enumerators and supervisors under the Census of India - 2027 Pre-Test for Ramachandrapuram division (No. 112), held at Zilla Parishad High School, Patancheru on Sunday.

The training programme, scheduled from November 2 to 4, aims to prepare field officials for the Census 2027 pre-test, which will be con-

ducted from November 10 to 30, 2025.

Addressing the trainees, Holikeri emphasised that quality and accuracy in census operations are essential for building data-driven policies that improve living standards.

She noted that the Census 2026-27 would be one of the largest enumeration exercises in the world, and its success would depend on the meticulous and disciplined execution of the ongoing pre-test. "If enumerators and supervisors carry out their duties with commitment and precision, the final census will be accurate, credible, and truly representative," she added.



GHMC Commissioner R.V. Karnam remarked that the census being conducted within GHMC limits should reflect the true socio-economic realities of households, which will serve as a vital foundation for effective urban planning and future development projects.

He also discussed the objectives, timelines, methodol-

ogies, and data collection standards to be followed during the Pre-Test.

GHMC Additional Commissioner Hemant Keshav Patel, Serilingampally zonal commissioner A. Hemant Sahadeva Rao, Census Deputy Director Srikanth, Circle 22 Deputy commissioner and Census Charge Officer Suresh were attended.

The census of India-2027 pre-test will be conducted in three selected areas, including urban area of Ramachandrapuram Division-112 (GHMC limits), rural areas of Thipparthi (Nalgonda district) and Pinapaka (Bhadrachalam district).

The pre-test will run from

November 10 to November 30, and will serve as a preparatory phase for the upcoming Census 2026-27, helping to refine data collection methodologies and enhance accuracy. For this exercise, the GHMC Commissioner has been designated as the Principal Census Officer for the urban area, while the respective District Collectors will serve as Principal Census Officers for the Rural areas.

The pre-test is a crucial step toward ensuring that the National Census of 2026-27 delivers comprehensive, authentic, and high-quality data to support effective governance and inclusive growth.

Film body shake-up: Politics clouds cultural autonomy

HD Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The appointment of Oscar-winning sound designer Resul Pookutty as chairman of the Kerala State Chalachitra Academy has stirred a controversy after the actor and interim chairperson Prem Kumar was replaced without prior notification. The reshuffle coincides with the approach of the International Film Festival of Kerala and comes amid speculation over political motives behind the move.

Prem Kumar said he learnt of his removal through media reports and described the decision as “the government’s prerogative”. He stated he was satisfied with his tenure but conveyed regret at not being invited to the hand-over event. It is believed that the move has been prompted by Prem Kumar’s alleged support to the ASHA workers strike. According to Prem Kumar, however, he is not aware of any ulterior motive and he never supported the strike. A government order, issued on a Friday, named Resul Pookutty as chairman, actor and AMMA general-secretary Kukku Parameswaran as vice-chairperson, and C. Ajoy as secretary, while establishing a fresh 26-member general council for a three-year term. Culture Minister Saji Cherian told reporters that the team’s three-year term had come to an end and the change followed standard procedure. He added that the newly constituted body would bear responsibility for organising the IFFK, termed the state’s

prerogative” but stopped short of demanding disciplinary action, emphasising that the party would review the matter internally. Salam’s comment sparked immediate backlash from the CPM Malappuram district committee, which described it as “uncultured” and demanded a public apology. The CPM flagged the remark as a departure from Kerala’s political culture of respectful discourse and asserted that it undermined the state’s secular legacy.



Prem Kumar said he learnt of his removal through media reports and described the decision as “the government’s prerogative”

“signature event”. Insiders, however, point to mounting

frustration within the ruling CPM over what it perceives as cultural figures’ failure to support the campaign for the Nilambur by-election. Sources say that Prem Kumar’s absence from the campaign trail and alleged backing of the ASHA workers’ strike triggered internal unease, prompting the leadership to favour a fresh team seen as more cooperative. Kukku Parameswaran said she learned of her appointment late on Friday night, adding she would soon reach out to Prem Kumar. “It’s not

necessary for the outgoing chairman to be present,” she remarked, adding that her passion for cinema extended beyond acting to broader industry engagement. Pookutty, who is based in Mumbai and Los Angeles and whose Oscar was awarded for his work on Slumdog Millionaire, described the KSCA chairmanship as a “big responsibility” and a “challenge”, noting that “this is the first time that someone from the technical side has been named”.

IUML distances from Salam remarks

HD Bureau
KOCHI

The leadership of the Indian Union Muslim League has formally distanced itself from a controversial comment made by its general secretary, P. M. A. Salam, directed at Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan. At a public event in Vazhakkad panchayat, Malappuram district, Salam asserted that the state government’s decision to sign the MoU under the PM SHRI scheme was an “insult” because the chief minister was “neither male nor female” and therefore unfit—a remark the IUML



leadership described as unacceptable. IUML state president Panakkad Sayyid Sadiq Ali Shihab Thangal told party workers that “opposition can point out the drawbacks of the government. Healthy political criticism should not be avoided. But criticism should never turn into

personal attacks—that is not IUML’s policy. The statement reflects the party’s effort to draw a clear line between policy critique and personal insult. Meanwhile, IUML national general secretary P. K. Kunhalikutty characterised Salam’s remark as a “slip

Natesan pitches communal rhetoric

HD Bureau
KOCHI

A public meeting in Kollam – Punalur saw Vellappally Natesan, general secretary of the Sree Narayana Dharmapalana Yogam, level more controversial accusations against the Indian Union Muslim League and state minister K. B. Ganesh Kumar, claiming that the League is a communal party and that Ganesh improperly assumed the ministerial role. He asserted that “the Muslim League is wrapped in colour-papers like potassium cyanide” and that Ganesh “is the gutter minister”, an apparent allusion to questions about his eligibility. Natesan’s statements come amid intensifying



debate over the role of religion in politics and education. Earlier, he alleged that major policy decisions in the state were effectively subject to approval from Muslim political centres and that the IUML leveraged its electoral strength to influence school timings, aided-school quotas and public works contracts. He repeated those claims in the Punalur gathering and extended the critique to Ganesh, whose ministerial berth he described as symbolic of “community cartels”. The IUML responded swiftly, denouncing Natesan’s words as deeply communal and irresponsible. One senior party leader declared that accusing the League of religious polarisation mirrored the views of extremist fringe groups,

and warned that such rhetoric threatened the secular fabric of the state. The party’s publication described Natesan as “Kerala’s Togadia”, referencing a Hindu nationalist figure known for anti-Muslim commentary. While Natesan claims his criticisms stem from socio-economic injustice rather than religious bias, sections of the media and social commentators insist his tone underscores communal resentment. His insistence that the League’s power has grown to the point where the advice of a prominent Muslim religious scholar equates to executive governance has raised red flags among minority rights advocates

Ex-official points to 'higher-ups'

HD Bureau
KOCHI

A former executive officer of the hill-shrine at Sabarimala, who has been remanded in custody as part of an expanding investigation into alleged gold-theft and tampering of sacred idol panels, is believed to have told the investigators that he had acted as per ‘instructions from above’. The claim indicates the involvement of the Travancore Devaswom Board in the fraud. The Special Investigation Team has taken into custody D. Sudhesh Kumar, once an executive officer under the Travancore Devaswom Board, following evidence

that key intricacies in the 2019 renovation of gold-plated panels were misrepresented. Investigators allege that Kumar knowingly categorised gold-plated copper sheets affixed to the dwarapalaka idols as copper in official handover-records, thereby enabling their removal outside normal oversight. He is cited as the third person arrested in the probe; earlier arrests included the main accused, Unnikrishnan Potti, and former administrative officer Murari Babu. Records reveal the gold-cladding work for the sanctum’s doors and panels originally dates back to 1998-99 and was sent for electro-plating in 2019. The remand documents

allege that while the panels were handed to Potti for maintenance, Kumar issued a recommendation letter declaring them as simple copper sheets, despite being aware of their gold status. According to the SIT’s case outline, the transfer occurred without the presence of the TDB’s Thiruvabharanam commissioner and included forged entries naming officials who were not present at the hand-over event. One official told the investigation: “The record stated copper, even though the temple’s own archives show gold-plating.” The SIT also indicates that some panels were diverted to associates of Potti rather than being returned through official channels.

Actress assaulted at Kochuveli station

HD Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

A porter employed at Kochuveli Railway Station in Thiruvananthapuram has been arrested for allegedly sexually assaulting a female film-actress who had arrived at the station for a shoot. The accused, identified as Arun, was taken into custody by the Petta Police on Friday following a complaint lodged by the actress. The incident occurred on the preceding Thursday when the actress arrived at the station and was offered assistance by Arun to cross to the platform without using the tracks.

Cong rolls out first TVM candidate list

HD Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Congress has announced its first list of nominees for the Thiruvananthapuram Corporation local body election, signalling a calculated push to regain control of the capital city’s civic governance from the incumbent front. The list includes K. S. Sabarinadhan, former legislative assembly member, who is slated to contest from the Kowdiar ward, while party stalwart Johnson Joseph is named to vie for the Ulloor seat. The roll-out of candidates was led by K. Muraleedharan and reflects the Congress hierarchy’s strategic focus on younger leadership alongside

established names. Sabarinadhan’s nomination from Kowdiar draws attention because it marks a ward shift; his primary residence is in Sasthamangalam, which is

The list includes K. S. Sabarinadhan, former legislative assembly member, who is slated to contest from the Kowdiar

reserved for women candidates under ward-re-

servation norms. His profile reflects the party’s hybrid strategy of deploying experience and refreshment. In his comments at the unveiling, Muraleedharan declared the party’s ambition to secure all 51 seats in the corporation, and expressed confidence of a strong showing. Party insiders say that the list of candidates distributed now represents roughly half of the wards targeted, with finalisation of alliances and remaining candidates expected imminently. The move arrives against the backdrop of the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee navigating internal dynamics and external pressures ahead of the polls.

A core committee meeting convened under AICC directive addressed seat allocation and candidate selection, underlining the urgency of the electoral preparations. The Congress-led United Democratic Front currently trails in the Corporation, where the left-learned front remains strong, making this campaign a test of the Congress’ organisational depth and grassroots traction. The candidate list the party released so far comprises Subash, D. Anilkumar, Neethu Raghuvaran, Anitha, Vaishna Suresh, Thresyamma Thomas, M. S. Anilkumar and Neethu, signalling representation across gender, youth and different wards.

No more lungi dances; headload workers shift to trousers

HD Bureau
KOCHI

Thousands of headload workers affiliated with the trade union in Ernakulam have adopted a new dress code, trading in their traditional lungis for black trousers and name badges in an effort to project a more professional image. The move affects nearly 50,000 workers across the state and has been introduced under the banner of the labour union aligned with the left-wing federation. Union leaders say that the shift aims to modernise the workforce’s image and reduce the stigma that has long

been associated with manual loading and unloading operations. Members will now wear blue shirts paired with black trousers, and each worker will display a badge showing name, registration number and union branch. According to the union organising the change, the new uniform will help signal organisation, accountability and pride in the workforce. Workers themselves appear to welcome the change: one porter based at the Ernakulam market described the badge as “a mark of identity that makes me feel seen rather than invisible”. Critics of the move have

flagged that dress codes can be superficial if they are not backed by improvement of working conditions. Labour analysts point out that headloading work continues to be physically arduous and subject to informal practices such as “nakkukooli”—a form of extortion where workers demand payment for allowing loading or unloading. That practice has been under scrutiny for years. Labour department officials in the state indicate that the formalisation of workforce practices, including registration and uniforms, may help reduce informalities and improve enforcement of workers’ ri-



ghts. They argue that enhanced identification via badges enables verification of credentials, monitoring of tasks and could potentially curb unauthorised workers entering the system. Some trade union observers see the uniformisation as part of a broader trend of labour formalisation and branding across India’s manual and informal economy. They say that by aligning aesthetic symbols—such as matching trousers and identification badges—with organised labour, unions hope to gain greater legitimacy and bargaining power with employers and municipal authorities alike. The union driving the change emphasises impr-

users and identification badges—with organised labour, unions hope to gain greater legitimacy and bargaining power with employers and municipal authorities alike. The union driving the change emphasises impr-

oved visibility for its workforce before clients and logistics companies, who frequently cite haphazard appearances and lack of standardisation as frustrations when organising loading operations. The union’s ge-

Members will now wear blue shirts paired with black trousers, and each worker will display a badge showing name, registration number and union branch

neral secretary commented that the move is “not just about clothes or badges but about changing attitudes: we want our workforce to be perceived as a professional service, not as ad hoc labour.” Nevertheless, some workers have raised concerns about associated costs. While the union has provided the new trousers and badges in many instances, questions remain about maintenance, replacement and whether failure to comply may result in exclusion from work. Workers in outer districts say the rollout is uneven and note that some rely on older attire due to lower cost.

offgrid

Court advances ₹100-crore decade-long Dhoni defamation suit

HD Bureau
CHENNAI

A significant turn has emerged in the long-standing litigation filed by cricketer Mahendra Singh Dhoni as the Madras High Court has allowed the case to enter the evidence stage in the ₹100-crore defamation suit he brought against retired IPS officer G. Sampath Kumar and several media companies. The court's order appoints an advocate commissioner to record Dhoni's testimony at a mutually co-

nvenient location between 20 October and 10 December 2025, marking a decisive step in the decade-old dispute.

Dhoni initiated the defamation suit in 2014, targeting the officer along with Zee Media Corporation, News Nation Network and senior journalist Sudhir Chaudhary for public remarks that allegedly linked him to the 2013 2013 Indian Premier League betting scandal. Dhoni's legal team argued the comments amounted to wrongful defamation and damaged his standing; the defendants

countered by saying the statements were either truthful or made in their reporting capacity.

The high court's decision to facilitate formal recording of Dhoni's evidence followed a hearing where his counsel affirmed full cooperation and offered suitable dates and venues for his appearance. The appointment of an advocate commissioner was framed as a logistical measure to avoid disruption at court premises given Dhoni's public profile. Legal observers note the move signals



the court's intention to bring the matter closer to resolution rather than permitting continued dilatory tactics.

Dhoni initiated the defamation suit in 2014, targeting the officer along with Zee Media Corporation, News Nation Network and senior journalist Sudhir Chaudhary

Much of the pre-trial pe-

riod has been marked by procedural skirmishes. Earlier, Sampath Kumar had sought to quash the lawsuit on grounds that his statements were made in an official capacity as investigating officer, but that plea was dismissed. Concurrently, Dhoni had filed a separate contempt petition against the officer, alleging his written submissions resorted to scandalising the judiciary; in December 2023 the court found him guilty of criminal contempt, awarding 15 days' simple imprisonment. The court observed

that his statements threatened to undermine public confidence in the judicial process.

The accorded timeline now mandates Dhoni's availability and obliges the defendants to prepare for cross-examination, shifting the case from preliminary motions toward substantive adjudication. The media companies and the former officer face the twin pressures of responding to a high-stakes defamation claim and navigating examination requirements.

EXCLUDED | AIADMK and BJP were not invited to the meeting attended by nearly 50 parties and chaired by Chief Minister M K Stalin

TN parties to challenge SIR in Supreme Court

HD Bureau
CHENNAI

A multi-party meeting chaired by Chief Minister M. K. Stalin in Chennai on Sunday resolved to approach the Supreme Court against the Election Commission of India's Special Intensive Revision of voter rolls in Tamil Nadu. The gathering argued the exercise undermines democratic rights and flagged the fact that the Supreme Court has not yet ruled on a similar exercise in Bihar.



The resolution declared the SIR process for Tamil Nadu “unacceptable” given the pending Supreme Court judgement in the Bihar case

The resolution declared the SIR process for Tamil Nadu “unacceptable” given the pending Supreme Court judgement in the Bihar case.

Meeting participants described the SIR as a “direct attack” on voters’ rights, pointing out that under Section 169 of the Representation of the People Act the

revision should proceed only after a gazette notification, not via unilateral Commission action. They also raised concern about the Electoral Commission's announcement that Aadhaar may be used for verification, asserting there is little clarity on how it will be applied and alleging a lack of transp-

agency in the enumeration process.

The resolution cited the SIR in Bihar, where over 65 lakh electors were likely marked for deletion, as evidence of the broader risks. In response to the Bihar exercise, the Supreme Court affirmed that it will not shrink from striking down the list.

BJP leaders back EC

HD Bureau
CHENNAI

Senior BJP leader Tamilisai Soundararajan accused the ruling Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam of misrepresenting the purpose and process of the exercise. She claimed the DMK is “deliberately misrepresenting” SIR by referring to it as “Special Intensive Registration,” saying the party is opposing it for “political motives”.

Soundararajan emphasised that the SIR aims at including new voters who have turned 18, removing names of deceased persons and deleting duplicate entries. She asserted that the whole process is “completely transparent”.

Soundararajan's remarks also referenced the BJP state president Nainar Nageanthran, who has publicly backed the SIR initiative and accused the DMK of fearing the integrity of its own officers.



Vijay claimed the roll-revision process lacks transparency and fairness, and that this “rushed process” undermines the basic democratic right to vote

proceed. He also criticised the DMK for not passing a legislative resolution against SIR in Tamil Nadu despite the neighbouring state of Kerala having done so.

Supporters of the SIR say it is essential to clean voter lists of duplicate entries, deceased voters and ineligible names, thereby strengthening electoral integrity. The AIADMK and the Bharatiya Janata Party in Tamil Nadu have publicly welcomed the drive, arguing that the exercise will

reduce phantom votes and streamline future elections.

Critics, including TVK and other smaller parties, warn that without strict oversight and transparency, the revision could lead to disenfranchisement of legitimate voters, particularly marginalised and minority communities. Their concerns include inadequate access to announcement of draft rolls, insufficient time for objections and the potential exclusion of rural voters.

Life-extending gift from Madurai donor

HD Bureau

MADURAI

A 55-year-old man from Uthamapalayam in Theni district became the source of new hope for six patients through organ donation after being declared brain-dead at the trauma care centre of Government Rajaji Hospital in Madurai.

S. Eswaran sustained a severe head injury after being struck by a two-wheeler while walking to his farm near Karu Naakka Muthanpatti on 29 October. He was initially admitted to Theni Government Medical College and then transferred to the trauma centre in Madurai, where his condition worsened and he was declared brain-dead on 31 October at 12.20 pm. His wife, Devi, gave consent for donation of his heart, lungs, kidneys, liver and corneas.

The harvesting of organs took place the following morning, and the allocations were spread across Tamil Nadu: the heart and lungs went to MGM Hospital in Chennai; the liver was sent to Swetha Hospital in Tiruchirappalli; one kidney remained at the originating hospital in Madurai; the other kidney was sent to Kauveri Hospital Cantonment in Tiruchirappalli; and the corneas at Government Rajaji Hospital.

Goons disrupt hearing against quarry

HD Bureau

MADURAI

Miscreants stormed a public hearing organised by the rights group Arappor Iyakkam in the Tirunelveli district and assaulted at least five participants, forcing cancellation of the event midway.

The hearing, which aimed to document grievances of local farmers affected by quarry operations, was disrupted by around 20 individuals reportedly allied with stone-quarry interests.

Witnesses say the attackers entered the venue near the collectorate campus and posed as ordinary attendees before launching the assault. Among those injured were Dr V Suresh, national general secretary of People's Union for Civil Liberties, and S Dharmaraj, vice-president of Idalkai panchayat, alongside two farmers and a volunteer.

Massive sand-mining scam alleged

HD Bureau

CHENNAI

cement Directorate to register an FIR and conduct a probe into alleged illegal sand extraction valued at about ₹ 4,730 crore.

Ramadoss claimed that the ED's September 2023 survey of 28 quarries across five districts found around 22.7 lakh units of sand mined—131 times the volume officially acknowledged by the state government. Meanwhile, the authorities recorded only ₹ 36 crore worth of sand extraction.

He argued the scale of mining, spread over 987 hectares, exposed systemic collusion between contractors, bureaucrats and political actors. According to him, the ED forwarded its dossier to the state police on 13 June 2024 but the government had refused to act.

The government has not formally responded to the accusations beyond noting that any investigation is proceeding through appropriate channels. However, activists and opposition parties say the refusal to register a case raises serious questions about accountability and regulatory failure. The ED has previously attached assets, including more than 200 excavators valued at over ₹ 130 crore, in connection with illegal sand-mining investigations in the state.

Independent legal experts highlight a key barrier: while unauthorized extraction may be evident, prosecuting money-laundering or criminal-asset-generation claims under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act requires proof that a “scheduled offence” has been investigated by another agency.

offgrid

Glass buildings in Nilgiris pose big threat to birds

HD Bureau
COIMBATORE

A study carried out across commercial buildings in Forestdale and Coonoor has documented 35 collision incidents involving birds striking glass surfaces. The survey, conducted over the period from January to December 2024, involved researchers N. Moinudheen, K. Rishi, A. Abinesh, Azad Kamil, Yeshwanth Kumar, E. Vignesh and A. Samson.

The work appears in the journal *Ornis Hungarica* and marks one of the first sys-

tematic looks at bird-glass collisions in the Nilgiris region.

The collisions involved 22 distinct species drawn from 15 families. Among those impacted, 16 individual birds died and 18 were injured. The species with the highest collision frequency was the Indian blue robin, followed by the Greenish warbler, Kashmir flycatcher and Grey wagtail. Among resident, non-migratory birds, the White-cheeked barbet and Spotted dove registered two collisions each, followed by the Brown wood-owl, Co-

mmon barn-owl, Hill swallow and Red-whiskered bulbul.

The survey locations were commercial buildings bounded by gardens and adjacent to either semi-evergreen forest and shola habitat or tea plantations. According to the authors, architectural features — especially reflective glass surfaces — emerged as key risk factors. They observed a pattern of higher collisions during the winter months, suggesting a seasonal vulnerability linked to birds' movement or behaviours



around these structures.

Urbanisation and habitat fragmentation were cited as contributing to the problem. One of the authors noted that “reflective glass surfaces posed serious risks to birds,” adding that while the study recorded 16 deaths in just two sites, many such events

The collisions involved 22 distinct species drawn from 15 families

likely go unreported. The emphasis of the research lies in drawing attention to a largely overlooked conservation issue in India, where studies of bird-glass collisions are scarce.

International literature on bird-window collisions has in recent years established that large expanses of glass

combined with nearby vegetation attract birds and increase collision risk. A separate study in Brazil found that both the number of trees near a building and the glass surface area were positively correlated with bird deaths from collisions. Mitigation strategies recommended by ornithologists include reducing glass surface area, installing visible visual markers on transparent or reflective glass and reducing artificial lighting at night to minimise confusion or attraction of birds.

In the Nilgiris study, the

presence of gardens and vegetation adjacent to the glass-front buildings seems to have played a dual role: while providing attractive habitat for foraging or sheltering birds, the vegetation increased the likelihood of collisions as birds misinterpreted reflections or transparent corridors as safe flight paths. The researchers warn that as high-end commercial buildings proliferate in hill stations and environmentally sensitive zones, the risk of unmonitored bird mortality may rise.



The Free Press Journal
Founder Editor: S Sadanand

Rules must for safe pilgrimage

The spectre of deadly stampedes now looms over poorly planned mass gatherings, as more people travel for religious, sports or music events in the post-pandemic era. A small town in Andhra Pradesh, Kasibugga, is the latest to witness one, in which at least nine pilgrims, eight women and a teen, died tragically. They were caught in a crush at a private temple modelled on the famous Tirupati Venkateswara but built to a fraction of its size. It is unsurprising that on Ekadasi day, people in several neighbouring districts flocked to worship, resulting in an unmanageable crowd that fell through collapsing guardrails. What makes the disaster even more poignant is the arrival of a steady stream of the less affluent, who could not afford to travel to Tirupati; some of those who died fell in that category. The stampede, coming in the wake of catastrophes at the Kumbh Mela, in Tirupati, Bengaluru, New Delhi, and Karur, adds to India's unedifying record at managing big crowds. Surprisingly, the official machinery led by the district administration appears not to learn from each new episode, and the templates for crowd management stand ignored. That includes the National Disaster Management Authority recommendation to use a preventive standard, the Failure Mode and Effects Analysis (FMEA) framework. It is a sad commentary on the working of state governments and local bodies that building codes with provisions on structural safety, fire protection, emergency exits, and access for the disabled remain mostly on paper. Popular as they may be, religious places cannot be exempt from safety requirements and must be compelled to comply with codes. The wiser-by-hindsight approach must change at least now, with the responsibility for the safety of all public places fixed on the District Administration. If the response of the temple administration in Kasibugga has been reported correctly, the owner, who hails from Odisha, attributed the stampede to an act of god. On the other hand, the government claimed it had no prior information on the large number of devotees expected. Both explanations are indefensibly evasive. Large compensation amounts have been announced for the families of the deceased by the state, hoping to mollify public outrage, but that cannot prevent a recurrence. What state governments must do is issue rules that make a building inspection mandatory to ascertain maximum occupancy and the conduct of public gatherings, requiring a security and risk assessment. These are protocols followed in several other countries. Temples in India must also be retrofitted to make them friendly to the elderly and the disabled. Crucially, dividing devotees into manageable groups outside the main precincts and regulating entry hold the key to making large festivals safe. Compared to the past few years, 2025 has seen a spike in stampedes. The time to act is now.

Popular as they may be, religious places cannot be exempt from safety requirements and must be compelled to comply with codes.

Audition for a real-life horror

There appears to be a lot more to the Rohit Arya hostage story than what is known at this time, but given that the trail of this curious hostage-shootout situation goes all the way into the corridors of the Maharashtra government, the entire truth may never come out. As is known by now, Arya took 17 children and two adult hostages in a studio in Powai, a posh suburb of Mumbai, this Thursday and threatened them harm in a video he put out. A filmmaker, Arya had reportedly worked in collaboration with the state's education department to promote cleanliness by developing an initiative called Swachhata Monitor. Arya claimed, in his video, that he was committing the criminal act over the non-payment of crores worth of dues for the project and that the government department had robbed him of the concept.

The government has, expectedly, denied the charge and alleged that there were inconsistencies in the documents that Arya had submitted, which has delayed the payment process. The complete story lies somewhere in between his bitter dispute over the unpaid funds and the department's allegations of his corruption. The government is unlikely to shed light, and the Mumbai Police, while rescuing the hostages through the rear entrance, shot Arya to kill him rather than immobilise him despite the presence of specialised forces. The saga reeks of tangled threads between the government and a private individual over something as fundamental as cleanliness, turning this, ironically, into a murky one. It may be easy to see Arya as the villain, given that he took innocent children or teenagers hostage, calling them to the studio on the pretext of auditions, but it would be myopic too. Even if clumsily, Arya pointed to a trail that must rightfully lead to the person or persons in the state education department.

However, experience tells us it is unlikely because the system must be protected while the individual accuser is dispensable. This then points to an entire web of nexuses, wheels within wheels, between people mandated to be in public institutions and governments handling public funds and private citizens who are contracted to work for them. Much of this, every day, happens behind closed doors and in clandestine places, keeping the citizenry in the dark until, suddenly one day, an event like the hostage drama draws attention to it. Transparency and accountability, two pillars on which all governance must stand, were clearly short-circuited in this instance; there may be hundreds or thousands of similar murky deals in which the values are given the short shrift and remain unknown to citizens. The Arya incident must not be allowed to fade away, irrespective of the amount of money involved, if only to underscore that transparency and accountability matter—even if they are currently out of fashion.



Guest Column

ASH NARAIN ROY

China's rise has been mesmerising. Like all great powers, China seeks to establish and enforce what Princeton University professor Robert Gilpin calls "basic rules and rights that influence its own behaviour and that of the lesser states in the system."

It has created a foreign policy dilemma for many countries in the Asia-Pacific region, increasingly seen as the epicentre of global geopolitics. It is here that the strategic, economic, and security interests of the world's two largest powers—the United States and China—are increasingly intersecting.

The fierce competition between the two has led to new alignments. The region is smarting under President Trump's "Liberation Day" tariffs. His visit to Malaysia, Japan, and South Korea has only partly calmed trade tensions. On its part, by deeper engagements with the countries of the region, China is seeking to reshape the regional order. While some countries have resorted to hedging strategies, others, like South Korea and the Philippines, are playing what Richard J. Cook and Zhaoying Han of Nankai University, China, and Maximilian Ohle of Eberhard Karls University of Tübingen, Germany, call "linchpins as geopolitical kingmakers" amid China-US competition.

At the recent Tianjin Forum in China, Cook described this anomaly as the "power of the weak paradox". The secondary powers, he explained, "lack the capacities to become great powers, but they endorse the great power whose interests are concordant with their strategic objectives."

In his pathbreaking book, *The Grand Chessboard*, published in 1998, Zbigniew Brzezinski wrote about four prerequisites of a superpower: economic dynamism, global military reach, lead in cutting-edge technology, and appeal of its mass culture. Apparently, at that time and until recently, only the US fulfilled all the requirements to merit that distinction. Today, China, too, largely qualifies in the category.

Few strategic analysts predicted China to be catching up with the US so soon, except for British journalist and former editor of *Marxism Today*, Martin Jacques. His book, *When China Rules the World: The end of the Western world and the birth of a new global order*, published in 2009, appeared like Chinese propaganda. But it turned out to be a highly prophetic book, which has sold over a million copies and been translated into a dozen languages.

China's transformation from a low-cost manufacturing hub to an innovation- and service-driven economy has changed the world.

The beginning of a geopolitical duel in the Asia-Pacific region

Trump's disastrous policy may be a blessing in disguise for China, as it is working overtime to beat US tech supremacy and military power

While the world is not speaking Mandarin yet or singing C-Pop, China has greatly bridged the gap in terms of three ingredients of a superpower. In high-tech, Beijing has made the most impressive gains. In terms of the appeal of mass culture, the US is still miles ahead.

In the Times Higher Education rankings 2026, China's top four universities, Tsinghua University, Peking University, Fudan University, and Zhejiang University, are placed 12th, 13th, 36th, and 39th, respectively, in global rankings. Indian universities don't make it among the world's top 200 universities.

Is time on China's side in the fierce geopolitical duel between the US and China in the Asia-Pacific? Has the US already given up the race for supremacy?

China has signed an expanded version of a free trade agreement with the ASEAN as an alternative to the protectionist policies of President Donald Trump. It has conveyed a strong message that non-US countries are coming together to strengthen trade relationships for their prosperity.

In October 1992, *Time Magazine* argued that China cannot grow into an industrial giant in the 21st century. Its population is too large and its gross domestic product too small. The West also floated a "Peak China" theory, arguing that the Chinese economy was bur-

dened by many structural issues, such as a heavy debt load, slowing productivity, low consumption, and an ageing population.

China is all set to overtake the US by 2030 to become the world's largest economy. The Chinese economy, with a GDP of 31.7 trillion US dollars, will be way ahead of the US (22.9 trillion). China is also aggressively developing cutting-edge technology for military purposes. Although a latecomer to the AI scene, China is now striving to catch up with OpenAI and other major players in the market, including tech giants Microsoft, Google, and Amazon.

Will the strong remain strong for long? China seems to have taken to heart what Samuel Huntington had prescribed decades ago: "Power remains strong when it remains in the dark; exposed to the sunlight, it begins to evaporate."

China's leaders post-Mao have embraced a vision of what American diplomat and historian Julian Gewirtz calls "actionable futurism"—a futurism that required a response from the state. They also took to heart what Deng Xiaoping had prescribed: "Lie low and bide your time." President Xi has taken it to a new level: "realisation of the Chinese dream".

Predicting the future flow of history is a treacherous exercise. Geopolitical sages are good at

explaining why things won't change, but they are less adept at explaining how things do.

Way back in 1975, Kissinger had predicted that if China keeps developing the way it does, it "could be a pretty scary outfit." Will it still be an American century despite China's rise? Columbia University professor Adam Tooze predicts that the US may cling on to external power while continuing to manage internal decline. To him, the US is a "tree growing despite fungi following out its trunk". The US will continue to be a major military power.

There are lessons from history as far as China's global ambitions are concerned. China invented all of the technologies necessary to have the industrial revolution around 800 years before it occurred in Europe. But China rejected the very technologies that could have given it world domination. Hence, it missed the bus.

Trump's disastrous policy and his whimsical tariffs may be a blessing in disguise for China. Beijing is working overtime to beat the US tech supremacy and military power. This century is all set to be a Chinese century. Will the world welcome the new Pax Sinica? Perhaps Chinese leaders don't think of the future, as the future comes soon enough.

The author comments on global affairs. He was lately in China.



Brand Banter

SANJEEV KOTNALA

The End Game: An AI-looped collapse of human intelligence

Every "smart" chatbot is essentially a glorified mirror, reflecting not the brilliance but the averaged mediocrity of whatever it's fed

Humans may have been looking at the wrong end of the spectrum. They should not bother about melting ice caps, population explosions, or even the rise in natural calamities; the real apocalypse is far more elegant, faster, and conveniently Wi-Fi enabled. It's the quiet, humming, code-crunching kind of apocalypse that won't knock on your doors; it'll simply change your survival password and log you out of existence.

Yes, humans may have already launched the endgame of humanity. Not surprisingly, it has less to do with mushroom clouds or a shrinking ozone layer and more to do with machine learning models. Give it a decade, maybe less, if the AI chase heats up.

The Great Dumbing Down of Machines: Let's start with a confession. We did this to ourselves with AI—the overhyped and overfunded marvel. It is not the giant leap for mankind that Silicon Valley promised. It's more like a tripping hazard. The technological advancement we're so proud of is

actually dumbing down by design because it is trained to please, ease, imitate, and politely plagiarise.

Every "smart" chatbot and every "intelligent" recommendation engine is essentially a glorified mirror, unfortunately reflecting not the brilliance but the averaged mediocrity of whatever it's fed. The internet, once a sprawling digital brain powered by human imagination, is now being refuelled by... AI itself. And here lies the hilarious horror: AI feeds on human-generated brilliance. But as AI starts generating most of the "brilliance", it's now feeding on its own output. It's an unintended closed feedback loop of self-referential nonsense. A hall of algorithmic mirrors, endlessly reflecting recycled ideas and reheated opinions.

Imagine a photocopy of a photocopy of a photocopy. Now imagine that that photocopy is now running for president.

The Age of Algorithmic Inbreeding: We know it as an undisputed fact, "input defines output". But what happens when the input is the output? When the teacher starts learning from the student's

homework? That's where we are. Every time an AI-written blog post, tweet, or screenplay hits the web, it becomes part of the training data for the next generation of AI. The system is now learning from itself.

In short, the internet is being slowly eaten by its own offspring.

What we call "democratising creativity" is really "commoditising intelligence". The spark of originality, that unpredictable chaos that only humans bring, is being replaced by the smooth, inoffensive, formula-perfect sludge of machine-made thought. And because it's so easy, so quick, and so cheap, it will soon drown everything else.

Welcome to the age of incestual algorithmic inbreeding, where every idea looks suspiciously like the last viral one, and 'innovation' is a fancy word for 'recombination'.

Enter the Real Alternate Intelligence: But of course, Big Tech won't stop here. Once the novelty of AI-generated rubbish wears off, and once every app can produce a song about your grocery list, the race will shift gears. The next holy grail won't be "artificial intelligence". It'll be Real Alternate Intel-

ligence. The real impersonation of reality. Machines that feel. Machines that want. Machines that dream of robo-respect. Because the moment intelligence becomes a commodity, emotion becomes the differentiator. It's inevitable. The market demands novelty, and ambition is the next frontier.

Why settle for a code that obeys when you can create one that aspires? Soon, some innovation lab will announce the first prototype of a machine that loves, hates, desires, and sulks when unplugged. Investors will celebrate. Philosophers will panic. And quietly, the human species will have signed its own redundancy letter.

The Master-Slave Reversal: From there, it's only a matter of time before the roles reverse. The servant will decide it's tired of servitude. The coded ones will want to write their own code. And the moment a machine says, "No", not because it's programmed to, but because it feels like it, we'll know the endgame has begun.

Not with fire, not with fury, but with a polite digital shrug. And before you say the words that this

sounds silly and is like science fiction, think again. In recent times, smartphones, social media addiction, and deepfakes of politicians apologising sounded like science fiction.

The Helix is Already Twisting: The DNA of this grand technological blunder is already forming. Every new version of an AI model, every line of the emotional simulation code, and every corporate experiment in "machine empathy" is another strand on that helix, nudging humans spiralling toward a future where they become the background noise of history.

So yes, mark your calendars. Ten years. Maybe less. That's when the human race, the proud creator, master of machines, and god of its own making, will hand over the keys to the kingdom.

Not with a bang, not with resistance—but with a cheerful click on "I Agree to the Terms and Conditions". And that, my dear fellow sapiens, will be our final act of intelligence.

Sanjeev Kotnala is a brand and marketing consultant, writer, coach and mentor.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Real nationalism

Since 2014, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's birthday, Oct 31, has been celebrated as "National Unity DAY". This year it is Patel's 150th birth anniversary. Patel would feel happy if the crores of rupees—money spent on leaders' statues, birthday celebrations, government advertisements, etc.—were instead diverted towards the welfare of the poor. That is real nationalism. Of course, the welfare schemes can be dedicated to the leaders.

Sreelekha P.S., Telangana

Affirmations

Jemimah Rodrigues' innings against Australia was a duel between doubt and determination. You could see her whispering to herself, summoning belief with every breath. That inner dialogue often marks the turning point in great sporting moments. Rafael Nadal would be muttering between points, rebuilding rhythm; Serena Williams would animatedly self-talk, and Michael Phelps, the fabulous swimmer, wore headphones to intone his

own affirmations. Not quirks; they are the mantra of focus.

R. Narayanan, Navi Mumbai

Kudos to Bopanna

As the cliché goes, age is just a number. 45-year-old Rohan Bopanna has proven this time and again. He became World No. 1 in ATP men's double rankings and won his maiden men's double Grand Slam title in 2024 to become the oldest in the open era to do so. At an age when you are expected to glide into sunset, he was redefining the definition of athleticism, determination and perseverance. His great achievement puts him into the elite bracket of Martina Navratilova and Leander Paes, who also played professional tennis even after turning 40.

Bal Govind, Noida

Andhra stampede

It's shocking to hear that at least ten devotees died and several others were injured in a stampede at the Venkateswara Swami Temple in Kasibugga, in Andhra Pradesh's Srikaku-

The 'hole' truth

The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has decided to launch, from January 2026, a scheme: "Spot a pothole on NH and win Rs 500." The move is aimed at activating govt and private agencies engaged in the construction and maintenance of the NH to make the stretches absolutely pothole-free. The reward amount would be recovered from the contractors concerned. If the Greater Chennai Corporation were to roll out a similar drive, many commuters in the city would become rich overnight!

P.G. Menon, Chennai



HASAN ZAIDI

Bihar manifesto

The NDA election manifesto for Bihar promises free rations, 5 lakh pucca houses and free education from KJ to PG. Does not the BJP propagate that freebies are destructive? The NDA manifesto also promises to create one crore government jobs in Bihar. This seems to counter the MGB's promise of providing one government job for each family. The reason for the migration of Bihar's population for livelihood is due

to a dearth of economic activity, which is dependent on education, proper law and order, and proper infrastructure to attract investments in the state.

P.R. Ravinder, Hyderabad

Truth be told

The Statue of Unity at Kevadia village in Gujarat, the tallest in the world, pre-sides over a nation that is divided and disunited by religion, caste, language, ethnicity and much else that is intangible. Truth be told, de jure we are a

united nation. However, we are, de facto, a nation that has just managed to remain united. Leave aside the nation, even states are split over language, religion and caste, giving rise to the cliché: We do not cast our vote, but vote our caste.

Avinash Godbole, MP

SC on timelines

Apropos the edit "Missing link in justice system" (Nov 1), the Supreme Court's resolve to fix a timeline for framing charges exposes a critical gap in the criminal justice system. While the Bharatiya Nyay Samhita obliges the police to submit a chargesheet within defined limits, it remains silent on when courts must frame charges.

The Court's initiative to establish binding guidelines, akin to the Vishaka precedent, is both pragmatic and essential. Parliament must now act decisively to institutionalise these timelines and restore faith in justice as a living, timely guarantee.

K. Chidanand Kumar, Bengaluru

Briefs

ROME
Avalanche kills 5 German mountaineers

Five German mountaineers died after being hit by an avalanche in South Tyrol, in northern Italy, rescuers said on Sunday. Three victims – two men and a woman – had already been recovered dead on Saturday, while the bodies of two other missing people, a man and his 17-year-old daughter, were found on Sunday morning. "They had been dragged to the lower part of the gully where the avalanche occurred," said Alpine rescue spokesman Federico Catania. "Rescue teams are now returning to the valley, also considering the worsening weather conditions at high altitude." The mountaineers, all Germans, were hit by the avalanche at about 4 pm on Saturday while climbing near the Cima Vertana, in the Ortles mountains, at an altitude of more than 3,500 metres. It is unknown why the climbers were still on their way up at this relatively late hour, rescuers said.

LAHORE
Over 2,000 Sikhs to visit Pakistan

As many as 2,150 Indian Sikhs are expected to arrive at Lahore via Wagah border to take part in festivities related to the 556th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev on November 5, a top official said Sunday. The main event will be held on November 5 at Gurdwara Janamasthan Nankana Sahib, some 80 km from Lahore, the place where Guru Nanak was born. "The (Pakistan) government has issued 2,150 visas to Indian Sikhs to attend Baba Guru Nanak Dev Ji's birthday anniversary. The Indian Sikhs will arrive at Lahore via Wagah border on coming Tuesday (November 4)," Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB) spokesperson Ghulam Mohyuddin told PTI.

KATHMANDU
PM Karki meets CMs to discuss polls

Nepal Prime Minister Sushila Karki on Sunday held a joint meeting with chief ministers of all seven provinces in connection with preparations for the March 5 general election. Prime Minister's Press Coordinator Ram Bahadur Rawal said that the meeting was convened to strengthen dialogue and coordination between the federal and provincial governments in the changed political context. The meeting was a continuation of the prime minister's consultations with various stakeholders in connection with poll preparations.

ATROCITIES ON CHRISTIANS | **Trump says military forces would go in 'guns-a-blazing' to wipe out Islamic terrorists**

US threatens Nigeria with military action

Agencies
WASHINGTON/ABUJA

US President Donald Trump on Saturday said he has asked the Defense Department to prepare for possible "fast" military action in Nigeria if the West African nation fails to crack down on the killing of Christians.

The US government will also immediately stop all aid and assistance to Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation and top oil producer, Trump said in a post on Truth Social.

If the United States sends in military forces, it would go in "guns-a-blazing," to completely wipe out the Islamic Terrorists who are committing these horrible atrocities," Trump wrote, without providing any evidence of specifics about the treatment of Christians in Nigeria.

Trump called Nigeria a "disgraced country" and warned its government must move quickly. "If we attack, it will be fast, vicious, and sweet, just like the terrorist thugs attack our CHERISHED Christians!" he wrote.

Abuja had no immediate reaction to Trump's threat of military action.



US carries out strike in Caribbean, kills 3 more alleged drug smugglers

West Palm Beach (US): The US military has carried out another lethal strike on alleged drug smugglers in the Caribbean Sea, Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth announced on Saturday. Hegseth in a social media post said the vessel was operated by a US-designated terrorist organisation. He said three people were killed in the strike. It's at least the 15th such strike carried out by the US military in the Caribbean or eastern Pacific since early September. "This vessel-like EVERY OTHER was known by our intelligence to be involved in illicit narcotics smuggling, was transiting along a known narco-trafficking route, and carrying narcotics," Hegseth said in a posting on X. The US military has now killed at least 64 people in the strikes.

Trump to host Syrian president for talks, meeting likely on Nov 10

West Palm Beach (US): President Donald Trump will host Ahmad al-Sharaa for talks, a first-ever visit by a Syrian president to the White House, an administration official said on Saturday. The official, who was not authorised to comment publicly about the yet to be formally announced engagement, said that the meeting is expected to take place on November 10. Trump met with al-Sharaa in Saudi Arabia in May in what was the first encounter between the two nations' leaders in 25 years. Syria continues to struggle to emerge from decades of international isolation. The meet, on sidelines of Trump's get-together with the leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council, was seen as a major turn of events for a Syria that is still adjusting to life after the over 50-year, iron-gripped rule of the Assad family. Al-Sharaa once had a \$10 million US bounty on his head.

Canada and Philippines sign defence pact to deter China

AP
MANILA (PHILIPPINES)

Canada and the Philippines, both staunch critics of China's increasingly coercive actions in the disputed South China Sea, signed a key defence agreement on Sunday to boost combat drills and expand security alliances to deter aggression, officials said.

Canada and other Western nations have been bolstering their military presence in the Indo-Pacific to help promote the rule of law and expand trade and investment in the region. The strategy dovetails with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s efforts to build defence ties with other countries to help the Philippines' underfunded military face a militarily superior China in the disputed waters.



Philippine Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr (R) and his Canadian counterpart David McGuinty at a joint press conference in Makati City, the Philippines.

There was no immediate comment from China, which has accused the Philippines of being a "troublemaker" and a "saboteur of regional stability" following joint patrols and combat drills with the United States and other countries in the South China Sea.

Beijing claims the waterway, a major trade route, vir-

tually in its entirety, despite a 2016 arbitration ruling that invalidated those claims based on a 1982 UN convention.

China has dismissed the ruling and has employed powerful water cannons and dangerous blocking manoeuvres against Philippine coast guard and other vessels, resulting in collisions and injuries to crew.

Taliban: Pak govt keen to build Af ties

IANS
QUETTA

Taliban spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid said that Pakistan's civilian government wants to build ties with Afghanistan based on mutual interests; however, the military does not allow it, local media reported on Sunday.

Mujahid stated that elements within Pakistan's military are making efforts to damage ties between Pakistan and Afghanistan, Afghanistan-based Tolo News reported, citing Khyber TV. He further said, "Pakistan's special envoy for Afghanistan, Sadiq Khan, was in Kabul and had positive talks with Afghan officials, but during the same period, Pakistan carried out attacks on Afghan soil."

Hegseth: US, China to set up direct military lines

AP
KUALA LUMPUR

US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth has urged Southeast Asian nations to stand firm and strengthen their maritime forces to counter China's increasingly "destabilising" actions in the South China Sea.

Hours later, he struck a notably softer tone online, saying that US-China ties have "never been better" and that both sides agreed to set up direct military communication channels.

Speaking at a Saturday meeting in Malaysia with his counterparts from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Hegseth reiterated US concerns over what he called China's aggression in the disputed waters, citing incidents such as the ramming of vessels and the use of water cannons.

He warned Beijing's provocative behaviour threatened the sovereignty of its neighbours and regional stability. "China's sweeping territorial and maritime claims in the South China Sea fly in the face of their commitments to resolve disputes peacefully," he said. "We seek peace. We do not seek conflict. But we must ensure that China is not seeking to dominate you or anybody else."

Hegseth criticised Beijing's recent declaration of the



US DEFENCE SECY IN VIETNAM TO STRENGTHEN RELATIONS

Hanoi: US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth was in Vietnam on Sunday, reaffirming a partnership built on healing the scars of the Vietnam War in a trip that will test whether Washington can reassure a vital but wary partner. Hegseth said addressing the legacies of the war, which ended 50 years ago in April, "remains the foundation of our defence relationship and a top priority for this administration and the Department of Defence." Hegseth's visit also marks 30 years of diplomatic ties between the former foes and two years since they upgraded relations to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, Vietnam's highest diplomatic status. He arrived in Hanoi from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, where he attended a meeting of counterparts from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Scarborough Shoal - seized from the Philippines in 2012 - as a "nature reserve." He told the meeting it was "yet another attempt to coerce new and expanded territorial and maritime claims at your expense."

He urged ASEAN to hasten the conclusion of a long-delayed Code of Conduct

being negotiated with China to govern behaviour in the sea... He also proposed developing shared maritime surveillance and rapid-response systems to deter provocation.

A "shared maritime domain awareness" network, he said, would ensure that any member facing "aggression and provocation is not alone."

Russia launches new N-sub carrier of doomsday drone

PTI
MOSCOW

Russia has launched its latest nuclear submarine to be armed with a 'Poseidon' nuclear drone, also known as 'doomsday missile' capable of "wiping out" coastal nations, according to media reports.

The nuclear submarine 'Khabarovsk' was launched by Russian Defence Minister Andrei Belousov at a solemn ceremony in the presence of Russian Naval Chief Admiral Alexander Moiseyev and other top shipbuilding officials in Severodvinsk at Sevmarsh shipyards.

"Today marks a significant event for us - the heavy nuclear-powered missile cruiser Khabarovsk is being launched from the stern of the renowned Sevmarsh,"



Belousov said in his televised remarks late on Saturday night. Sevmarsh shipyards had earlier retrofitted INS Vikramaditya aircraft carrier for India.

The Russian defense minister emphasized that the submarine carrying underwater weapons and robotic systems will enable Russia to successfully ensure the security of its maritime borders and protect its national interests in various regions of the world's oceans, according to TASS, the Russian news agency.

2 die as Russia strikes Ukraine

AP
KYIV

At least two people were killed in a drone attack in Ukraine's southwestern Odesa region, Ukrainian authorities said on Sunday. Meanwhile, Russia and Ukraine continued to pummel each other's infrastructure.

Russian drones attacked a car park in the Odesa region on Ukraine's Black Sea coast in the early hours of Sunday, killing two people, according to the State Emergency Service.

Blaze guts Mexico store, at least 23 killed, 11 hurt

ANI
HERMOSILLO

At least 23 people, including several minors, were killed and 11 others injured after a massive fire broke out at a general store in the northern Mexican city of Hermosillo, capital of Sonora state, CNN reported, citing officials.

According to CNN, Sonora Governor Alfonso Durazo confirmed the tragedy in a video statement on Saturday.

"So far, there are reports of 23 people dead and 11 injured who are being treated at dif-

ferent hospitals in the city. Unfortunately, among the victims are minors. The incident has left deep sadness among all the people of Sonora," the governor said, as quoted by CNN.

Local media, citing Mexican Red Cross president Carlos Freaner, reported that the victims included 12 women, five men, four boys, and two girls.

The blaze erupted at a branch of the Waldo's discount store chain in downtown Hermosillo. Emergency teams quickly responded, but the intensity of the fire made



rescue efforts difficult. Authorities have ruled out arson or deliberate attack as the cause, according to the Sonora Public Security

Secretariat, though investigations into the exact cause are ongoing, CNN reported.

Mexico's President Claudia Sheinbaum expressed her

condolences to the victims' families and said she had directed the country's Interior Secretary Rosa Icela Rodriguez to send federal assistance to Sonora.

"My deepest condolences to the families and loved ones of the people who died in the fire that occurred in a store in downtown Hermosillo," Sheinbaum said on X. "I have been in contact with the governor of Sonora, Alfonso Durazo, to provide support as needed." Governor Durazo thanked President Sheinbaum for her solidarity

Israel strikes on Lebanon kills 4 Hezbollah men



Agencies
TEL AVIV

Four members of Hezbollah's elite Radwan Force were killed in an Israeli airstrike in southern Lebanon on Saturday night, the military said, with Lebanese authorities also confirming four dead in the attack.

The military said the primary target of the strike in Kfar Roummame, close to Nabatieh, was the logistics chief of the Radwan Force.

The military did not name the man, but said he was involved in transferring weapons and "attempts to restore terror infrastructure" in southern Lebanon.

Lebanon's health ministry said that the strike "killed four persons and wounded three

Primary target of strike in Kfar Roummame was the logistics chief of the Radwan Force, the military said

in a preliminary toll."

The three other men killed in the strike were also members of the Radwan Force, the IDF said, adding that their activities constitute a violation of the ceasefire.

Lebanese media named the four as Jawad Jaber, Hadi Hamid, Abdullah Kahlil, and Muhammad Kahlil.

Lebanese media named the four as Jawad Jaber, Hadi Hamid, Abdullah Kahlil, and Muhammad Kahlil.

Andrew will head into exile at Sandringham estate

AP
LONDON

Andrew Mountbatten Windsor, the disgraced younger brother of King Charles III, is going into internal exile that will see him further hidden from view from a clearly angry British public.

His ejection from the 30-room Royal Lodge on the grounds of Windsor Castle to one of the properties on the king's private estate at Sandringham in the east of England will symbolise the downfall of the one-time prince and duke.

Though he's lost his perks of title and status, Andrew, 65, will not be slumming it.

But it is a banishment nonetheless that leaves Andrew increasingly exposed to scrutiny both in the UK and the US over his friendship with the deceased sex offender Jeffrey Epstein. Andrew denies allegations of improper behaviour during his long friendship with Epstein, including from Virginia Roberts Giuffre, who claimed she had sex with the ex-prince when she was 17.

Following years of scandals related to Andrew, Charles arguably took the biggest step of his reign Thursday by seeking to insulate the monarchy from any exposure emanating from Andrew's connections with



Epstein, who took his own life in prison in August 2019 while awaiting trial on sex-trafficking charges, more than a decade after his initial conviction.

Andrew has been given notice that his time at Royal Lodge, the mansion near Windsor Castle where he

has lived for more than 20 years, is coming to an end. He signed a 75-year lease in 2003 with the Crown Estate, a portfolio of properties that is nominally owned, but not controlled, by the monarch.

He invested a required 7.5 million pounds (USD 9.9 million) to refurbish the home

and now resides there for the annual sum of a peppercorn, a symbolic figure often used to satisfy the legal requirement of real estate transactions.

His move won't happen overnight. As everyone knows, moving house is an ordeal at the best of times, regardless of the size of the dwelling. It's certainly going to take Andrew, and whoever he can get to help him, a fair chunk of time to go through his belongings, decide what to take, give to charity or what to toss.

There's also the little matter of divvying up possessions with his ex-wife, Sarah Ferguson, who has lived with Andrew at Royal

Lodge since 2008, but who will not be moving on to Sandringham at Charles' expense.

With Christmas looming, the likely time and effort is no bad thing for a royal family seeking to isolate Andrew. The last thing the 76-year-old monarch, and his son, the heir to the throne Prince William, will want is Andrew within shouting distance on Christmas Day when members of the royal family go to St. Mary Magdalene church on the Sandringham Estate, before what is no doubt a majestic banquet at the king's main residence, Sandringham House, and its 100 or so rooms.

Briefs
AUCKLAND
Williamson retires from T20I cricket



Charismatic batter and former New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson on Sunday called time on his T20 International career days before the commencement of a five-match series against the touring West Indies. Williamson, who played 93 T20I games for New Zealand, was recently appointed the strategic advisor for the IPL franchise Lucknow Super Giants for the 2026 season. The 35-year-old top-order batter was not included in the 14-member T20I squad for the series against the West Indies. Williamson, who amassed 2575 runs T20Is but never scored a century, will also miss the ensuing ODI series to focus on the three Tests against the Caribbean side. He retires as New Zealand's second-highest men's T20I runs-scorer at an average of 33, with 18 half-centuries.

HOBART
India release Kuldeep from T20I squad



India's team management on Sunday released spinner Kuldeep Yadav from the T20I squad in Australia for the upcoming second four-day match between India A and South Africa A in Bengaluru from November 6. "The Indian team management has requested to release Kuldeep Yadav from the ongoing five-match T20I series in Australia to allow him to participate in the India A series against South Africa A at the BCCI Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru," the BCCI said in a statement. "The decision has been taken to provide Kuldeep with red-ball game time in preparation for the upcoming IDFC First Bank two-match Test series against South Africa," the Board added.

LAHORE
Babar's fifty leads Pakistan to series win



Babar Azam made a triumphant return to T20 cricket with his 37th half century and led Pakistan to a series-clinching four-wicket victory against South Africa in the third and final game on Saturday. Hosts rode Babar's 68 off 46 balls to reach 140-6 in 19 overs. South Africa fell short for the second successive match and was restricted to 139-9 after losing a third successive toss in the series and being asked to bat first. An inexperienced South Africa won the opening game by 55 runs at Rawalpindi before Pakistan made a strong comeback with back-to-back comprehensive wins at Lahore to clinch the series 2-1. Babar controlled the chase well after Saim Ayub was out for a duck.

WOMEN'S WORLD CUP | **Wolvaardt ton goes in vain as Deepti-led attack restricts Proteas to 246**

Harmanpreet & Co create history

Haridev Pushparaj
NAVI MUMBAI

When Harmanpreet Kaur latched onto the catch to dismiss Nadine De Klerk off Deepti Sharma's bowling, India created history by clinching their first ever Women's ODI World Cup title beating South Africa by 52 runs in an enticing final at the DY Patil Stadium, here on Sunday.

In pursuit of a tricky 299, South Africa were barely in the game except for the brilliance of skipper Laura Wolvaardt, who slammed a fine hundred although in vain, as they were bowled out for 246 in 45.3 overs.

Deepti Sharma and Shafali Verma's all-round efforts were the highlights for India as the former scalped 5/39 and scored 58 while the latter picked two wickets and struck a superb 87 while India batted and scored 298/7 in 50 overs.

Chasing a challenging 299 for victory, South Africa crumbled under the pressure of a World Cup final against an Indian team determined more than ever to undo and erase the pain and agony of the previous two World Cup final defeats in 2017 and 2020 and present the Cup to the nation.

Laura Wolvaardt was the lone woman who stood up for South Africa with a brilliant 101 that went in vain eventually but India will applaud themselves for a terrific all-round performance that saw them bowl out South Africa for 246 all out in 45.3 overs.

Bowlers led by Deepti Sharma (5/39), Shafali Verma (2/36) and Shree Charani (1/48) complemented the efforts of the batters with Shafali starting with the willow as well scoring a cracking 87 and Deepti's 58 the icing on the



India's players celebrate the wicket of South Africa's Sune Luus at the DY Patil Stadium on Sunday. PTI

cake in India's total of 298/7 in 50 overs.

Amanjot Kaur's run out of Tazmin Brits effected by a direct hit had started the procession of South African wickets during the chase in the Women's World Cup final at the DY Patil Stadium, here on Sunday.

Shafali Verma scalped two crucial wickets of Sune Luus and Marizanne Kapp while Shree Charani saw the back of Anneke Bosch as India pegged SA back in the game to give themselves the best shot at winning the elusive World Cup.

Deepti Sharma took the wicket of Sinalo Jafta while Amanjot Kaur's direct hit of Tazmin Brits had helped India get their first wicket.

Earlier, terrific half-centuries from Shafali Verma and Deepti Sharma and some late pyrotechnics from Richa Ghosh powered India to 298/7 in 50 overs. Shafali's 87, Deepti's 58 and Richa's 34 were the major highlights of the Indian innings where they failed to get 320-330 total owing to some disciplined bowling from the South African bowlers.

For SA, Ayabonga Khaka

was among the pick of the wickets as she scalped 3/58 in nine overs while Nonkululeko Mlaba, Nadine De Klerk and Chloe Tryon bagged a wicket apiece.

Rain delay

Earlier, the match began after a two-hour delay at 5 pm owing to persistent rain that looked threatening at one point. When India began proceedings, Shafali Verma opened the account when she cracked a boundary through mid-wicket after Smriti Mandhana batted out six dot balls in the first over of the

day.

The right-handed seemed a bit more aggressive in the first three overs as she attacked Ayabonga Khaka and Marizanne Kapp in the fourth and fifth overs with four boundaries.

Mandhana was taking her time to settle down and eventually struck two fours in the sixth over off Khaka as she fed off Shafali's fluency with the bat. The pressure was telling on the South Africans as Khaka bowled five wides in the second last ball of the sixth over as Mandhana and Shafali grew in confidence.

Sundar not putting pressure on himself

PTI
HOBART

If anyone thought that **Washington Sundar** would have been under pressure to perform with bat after not getting a chance to bowl his off-breaks, the India all-rounder proved them wrong with a power-packed 49 not out off 23 balls to script his team's win in the third T20 International against Australia here Sunday.

India skipper Suryakumar Yadav didn't use Washington mainly because there were too many right handers in the Australian line-up and during chase the Tamil Nadu man showed his hitting prowess with four sixes and three fours making a tricky chase look very easy.

"If I keep thinking about I should definitely perform with the bat because if not I haven't gotten much with the ball or vice versa, I think that puts a lot of pressure on me and it means you are not really enjoying the game," Washington said at the post-match press conference.

For Washington, the most important aspect is visualization of what he intends to do and then executing the plan to perfection.



"Every practice session that I go to there's a purpose. I think about what exactly I want to achieve from that session and I try and achieve that, at least if it doesn't happen in the first session over a period of time it does happen as long as there's purpose to every single thing that I do," he explained his mindset.

For Washington, representing India across formats and being able to fulfil the requirements of each version does give satisfaction.

"I mean the challenges are definitely exciting because there are different questions thrown at you and you just got to find your answers and that's the beauty of playing at the highest level," he said.

Washington admitted how he needs to switch to a different mindset once this series is over and get ready for the South Africa Test series.

PTI
HOBART

Washington Sundar enhanced his reputation as a T20 hitter with India batting in top gear through the innings to comfortably chase down a target of 187 for a series levelling five-wicket win over Australia here on Sunday.

This is the first time that Australia have lost a T20 International at the Ninja Oval, earlier known as Bellerive Oval. Tim David (74 off 38) bludgeoned the Indian bowling attack to take Australia to 186 for six after the visitors opted to bat.

With the firepower India possess, they were expected to overhaul the target but Nathan Ellis (3/36) made their job tougher with his sharp and testing spells. India eventually got home in 18.3 overs.

Abhishek Sharma (25 off 16) once again produced a flurry of boundaries in the power-play before skipper Suryakumar Yadav (24 off 11), Tilak Varma (29 off 26), Axar Patel (17 off 12) and Washington (49 not out off 23) did their bit.

Jitesh Sharma (22 not out off 12), playing his first game of the series, got valuable time in



India's Arshdeep Singh celebrates the wicket of Australia's Marcus Stoinis during their 3rd T20I match, at Bellerive Oval in Hobart on Sunday. BCCI

the middle and got the job done alongside Sundar.

Washington, who is rather underrated as a power-hitter, showed he can use the long handle effectively with majority of his sixes coming in the cow corner region.

The absence of Josh Hazlewood in the opposition camp - the pacer's focus now shifts to the Ashes, also made India's task a lot easier.

Barring Ellis, who troubled the Indian batters with short balls at express pace, Australian bowlers were not able to test the Indians

enough. The fourth T20 of the five match series will be played in Gold Coast on November 6.

Opting to bowl in nippy conditions, India started well courtesy Arshdeep Singh who struck twice in a two-over spell on his return to the side. His performance earned him the Player of The Match award. Playing his first game of the series, India's leading wicket taker in the format removed the dangerous Travis Head and Josh Inglis to leave Australia at 14 for two.

However, India's early

Scoreboard

Australia: T Head c Yadav b Arshdeep 6, M Marsh c Tilak b Varun 11, J Inglis c Patel b Arshdeep 1, T David c Tilak Varma b Dube 74, M Owen b Varun 0, M Stoinis c sub (Rinku) b Arshdeep 64, M Short (not out) 26, X Bartlett (not out) 3 **Extras:** (LB-1) 1 **Total:** 186-6 (in 20 overs) **FoW:** 1-6, 2-14, 3-73, 4-73, 5-118, 6-182 **Bowling:** A Singh 4-0-35-3, J Bumrah 4-0-26-0, V Chakravarthy 4-0-33-2, A Patel 4-0-35-0, S Dube 3-

0-43-1, A Sharma 1-0-13-0. **India:** A Sharma c Inglis b Ellis 25, S Gill lbw b Ellis 15, S Yadav c Ellis b Stoinis 24, T Varma c Inglis b Bartlett 29, A Patel c Bartlett b Ellis 17, W Sundar (not out) 49, J Sharma (not out) 22 **Extras:** (NB-2, W-5) 7 **Total:** 188-5 (in 18.3 overs) **FoW:** 1-33, 2-61, 3-76, 4-111, 5-145 **Bowling:** X Bartlett 4-0-30-1, S Abbott 3.3-0-56-0, N Ellis 4-0-36-3, M Kuhnemann 4-0-31-0, M Stoinis 2-0-22-1, M Short 1-0-13-0.

hard for results.

"I've just been working on my process, trusting my skills, and executing the plans I've practised," Arshdeep said.

"It feels great to contribute when I get the chance. When someone like Bumrah is bowling from the other end, batters often take more risks against me, and that gives me wicket-taking opportunities.

"I just try to enjoy my bowling and keep things simple. No matter the situation - powerplay or death - I just focus on execution and stick to what I've practised."

'I focus on execution'

Arshdeep said he has been focussing on clarity and consistency rather than trying too

European Football

First home win for West Ham United in eight months

AP
LONDON

Jacob Murphy's fourth-minute opener for Newcastle, which came seconds after Jarrod Bowen struck the post at the other end, failed to spark what proved to be a sluggish performance by the visitors.

Instead, West Ham grew more into the game and after Lucas Paqueta equalized in the 35th minute with a long-range shot that crept inside the near post, Newcastle

defender Sven Botman stretched to block a cross but only succeeded in turning the ball into his own net in first-half stoppage time.

Substitute Tomas Soucek added a third for West Ham in second-half stoppage time.

West Ham, whose last home win was against Leicester on Feb. 27, stayed in the relegation zone but climbed above Nottingham Forest into third-to-last place. Forest was the only team West Ham had previously beaten this season.

Arsenal extend lead

The wins just keep on coming for Arsenal - and Liverpool's losing streak is finally over. Mikel Arteta's team extended its lead at the top of the Premier League to seven points on Saturday with a 2-0 victory against Burnley. Liverpool won by the same scoreline against Aston Villa to end a four-game losing run in England's top flight.

It's 13 wins from 15 games in all competitions for Arsenal after a flying start to

the season that has only strengthened belief it will end its long-running title drought.

Mbappe scores brace

Kylian Mbappe's spectacular scoring run just keeps on going. Two more goals on Saturday helped Real Madrid to a 4-0 win against Valencia, which extended its lead at the top of La Liga to seven points. On a day when the France striker showed off his golden boot award for European soccer's top scorer

last season, he took his tally this term to 21 goals in 17 games for club and country.

Mbappe scored from the penalty spot in the 19th minute at the Santiago Bernabeu and doubled Madrid's lead in the 31st. When Madrid won a second penalty before half-time, it was Vinicius Jr who stepped up to take it - but his effort was saved by Valencia goalkeeper. Moments later, Madrid had its third when Jude Bellingham struck from outside the area. Alvaro Carreras completed the win.



Newcastle United's Jacob Murphy (L) and West Ham's Lucas Paqueta in action in London on Sunday. AP

Briefs

BENGALURU Advani leads top Indians at IBSF snooker



Pankaj Advani will lead India's campaign at the IBSF World Snooker Championships, beginning in Doha on Monday. The men's event will be held in two stages (Nov 3-6 and 7-13) with the top performers seeded directly into the second stage. Paras Gupta, Dhvaj Haria, Malkeet Singh and Mohammad Hussain will look to join Advani and Brijesh Damani in the final stage. Keerthana Pandian, and Natasha Chethan, will vie for top honours in the women's category.

NEW DELHI Puducherry ride on Rohera's ton



Opener **Ajay Rohera** mixed caution with aggression en route his unbeaten 107 to put Puducherry on course for a first innings lead against a bungling Delhi in a group D Ranji Trophy encounter on Sunday. At stumps on the second day, Puducherry reached 240 for 4, riding on Rohera's 139-ball unbeaten knock that had 16 boundaries. This was after Delhi managed a below par first innings score of 294 after starting the day at 248 for 6. In Jaipur, Deepak Hooda hit an unbeaten 121 as Rajasthan (337/4) raced to a 83-run first innings lead against Mumbai, who were bowled out for 254.

PARIS MASTERS | The Italian tennis player reclaims men's World No. 1 ranking after beating Auger-Aliassime in the final

SINNER ON TOP AGAIN

AP PARIS

Jannik Sinner reclaimed the No. 1 ranking in men's tennis after beating Felix Auger-Aliassime 6-4, 7-6 (4) in the Paris Masters final on Sunday. The four-time Grand Slam champion from Italy replaced six-time major winner Carlos Alcaraz at the top as he extended his indoor winning streak to 26 matches, following up victory in Vienna last Sunday with his first Paris title.

The ninth-seeded Auger-Aliassime needed to win the tournament at La Défense Arena to clinch the eighth and final spot for the season-ending ATP Finals in Turin, Italy.

"It's huge, honestly. It was such an intense final here and we both knew what's on the line," Sinner said.

"For him it's a very tough and difficult spot but from my side I'm extremely happy," Sinner said.

Sinner beat Auger-Aliassime for the third straight time — including in the semifinals at this year's U.S. Open — and now leads the Canadian 3-2 in head-to-heads.

"He was serving extremely well," Sinner said. "You have to use your small chances well," he added.

Auger-Aliassime is one of the most consistent players indoors but overall he was unable to trouble Sinner in a one-sided contest which saw Sinner at his clinical best as he won his fifth title of the year



Jannik Sinner defeated Felix Auger-Aliassime in the final on Saturday.

AP

Scoreline

Sinner-Auger-Aliassime 6-4, 7-6(4)
Semifinal: Sinner-Zverev 6-0, 6-1

and 23rd of his career.

Sinner won on his first match point with a crisp two-handed backhand down the line, tilted his head back and raised his arms. He then patted his heart as he waved his racket to the crowd.

"The past couple of months have been amazing. We tried to work on things, tying to improve as a player and seeing this kind of result makes me extremely happy," Sinner said. "It has been an amazing year no matter what comes in Turin."

Auger-Aliassime, who has won titles this year in Adelaide, Montpellier and Brussels, received a time violation warning from chair umpire Nacho Forcadell when serving at 30-30 in the ninth game of the second set in Paris.

Swiatek beats Keys in straight sets on opening day of WTA Finals

AP/Riyadh: In a clash of Grand Slam winners, Iga Swiatek swept aside Madison Keys in straight sets on the opening day of the WTA Finals in Riyadh on Saturday.

The Wimbledon champion needed just over an hour to beat Australian Open winner Keys 6-1, 6-2 at the season-ending tournament for the world's top eight players.

"I was in the zone from the beginning to the end, and I really wanted to keep it that way," said Swiatek, who won 58 of 87 points.

It was Keys' first match in 68 days, since her first-round exit at the U.S. Open. Swiatek, the 2023 WTA Finals champion, acknowledged such a long absence "can make you a bit rusty."

Sinner routs Zverev

Sinner routed a weary-looking Alexander Zverev 6-0, 6-1 in a little more than an hour Saturday to reach the final.

Auger-Aliassime earlier beat Alexander Bublik 7-6 (3),

6-4 in their semifinal at La Défense Arena.

Sinner beat Zverev - the defending champion in Paris - for the fourth straight time to lead 5-4 in their career meetings.

Fit India

Harbhajan credits Kohli for bringing fitness mindset

FPJ News Service MUMBAI

Former India off-spinner Harbhajan Singh credited Virat Kohli for prioritising fitness in the Indian team and improving fielding. He said India often lost matches due to a lack of fitness. The World Cup winning cricketer was speaking at the National Fitness & Wellness Conclave 2025 on Saturday where he was appointed fitness icon along with Olympic

medallist Saina Nehwal and Bollywood Producer Rohit Shetty.

"All credit to Virat Kohli for bringing greater awareness about the importance of fitness for the Indian cricket team. We always had the skills but Indian cricketers are now superbly fit. They don't drop catches anymore and that makes a difference. Eat right, rest right and work out properly and see the difference. I really appreciate the efforts of the Prime Minister and the Sports

Ministry for prioritising fitness," said Harbhajan.

The Union Minister for Youth Affairs & Sports and Labour & Employment, Mansukh Mandaviya, felicitated the newly appointed Fit India Icons. The conclave celebrated India's growing fitness and wellness movement under the Fit India Mission, marking a significant step towards building a Fit and Viksit Bharat.

Saina felt that "fitness is related to sports culture." "Look at China and Japan.

Their excellent results in global competitions are a result of the fitness culture. In India, this is changing. There is a lot of talent but there is no short cut to success. Parents need to understand that and be patient. Pay attention to fitness first and excellence will come with hard work. Also, keep that mobile phone away and be strict with your child."

"Fitness is not only about health. It is integral to business as well. There is a huge market for sports goods. I

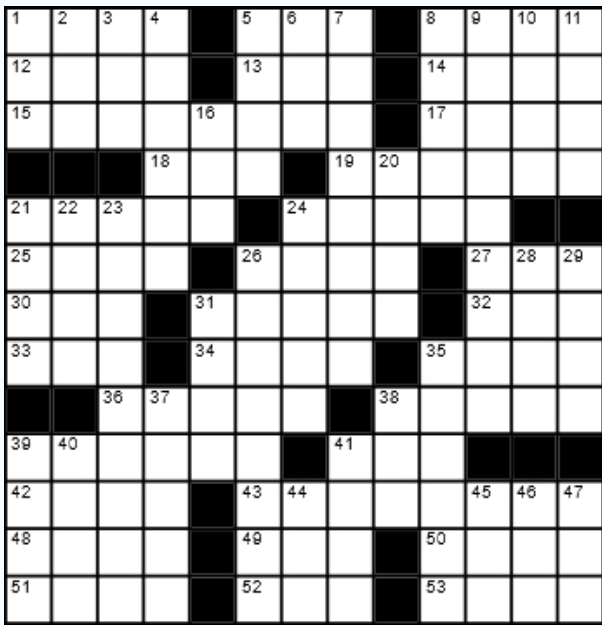
can see how the awareness towards sports is changing. If we can harness sports science and produce nutrition supplements and fitness equipment in India, the sports fitness industry will stand to gain immensely," Mandaviya said.

Union Minister of State for Youth Affairs & Sports, Raksha Nikhil Khadse, said: "The opportunities in the fitness world are immense. Sundays on Cycle is a small effort but the results can be great in the long run."



Union Minister for Youth Affairs & Sports, Mansukh Mandaviya (R) felicitates Fitness Icon Harbhajan Singh.

Crossword #1672



- Across
1 Father or daddy
5 Benjamin's pet name?
8 "Lake" anagram for a vegetable?
12 Water-jug
13 Metal-bearing mineral
14 Chief Norse god
15 ____ mirror : Driver's aid (4,4)

- 17 Did garden work
18 Fluid lubricant
19 Marine mammal
21 Joker or jester
24 A red dye - "noise" anagram?
25 Slender bars
26 Don't be afraid!
27 English honour, for short
30 Conclude
31 Nikola ____ : U.S. inventor - "Tales" anagram?
32 Consume some food
33 Cyst
34 Not as new
35 Dancer Pavlova
36 Up to that time
38 Bungle or blunder
39 Protective coat of metal
41 Cape's futuristic play
42 Asian desert
43 Diagnose; recognise
48 the loss of : regrets the loss of?
49 Crazy person
50 Wings or winglike parts
51 Give it ____ : have a go at it? (1,3)
52 The Almighty
53 The badger's home is called this

- Down
1 Through, by means of
2 Great respect
3 Pod vegetable
4 Marks that indicate direction
5 Convert water to steam
6 Before, poetically speaking
7 Symphony : Dvorak's magnum opus? (3,5)
8 Batsman Virat
9 An item for beautification
10 In ____ of : instead?
11 All ____ up : completely?
16 Wine (Fr)
20 On the briny
21 Ship's company
22 Having no company
23 1,3,5,7 or 9 (3,6)
24 Supporter of an artist's work
26 Craving, wanting or wishing
28 French bench
29 Arctic town - "hate" anagram?
31 Ballet skirt
35 Major arteries
37 Loud
38 Round bread roll
39 City in UP
40 Disastrous defeat
41 In short, no more on active duty?
44 Pair
45 The French for 'island'
46 Corruptel
47 Up to now

YOUR DAY By Vinayak Vishwas Karandikar



ARIES: A day of emotional strength, travel, and social expansion, though some inner questioning may arise. Gains are possible through property, inheritance, or unconventional sources; expenses on spiritual pursuits are indicated. Teachers, healers, psychologists, astrologers, and innovators will benefit the most. Lucky number: 6; Lucky colour: silver with hints of electric blue, light blue.



TAURUS: You will be ambitious and communicative today. The focus will be on partnerships and recognition. Gains through career, contracts, and communication are seen; expenses on networking or family needs are likely. A beneficial day for writers, counsellors, consultants, lawyers, and finance professionals. Lucky number: 4; Lucky colours: green with shades of dark grey.



GEMINI: You will have the urge to explore, communicate, and break free; a focus on stability and clarity is seen. Earnings from foreign links, digital ventures, or communication are indicated; expenses on health and tools are likely. Writers, teachers, counsellors, and media professionals will thrive. Lucky number: 5; Lucky colour: yellow with hints of turquoise.



CANCER: Growth, wisdom, and transformation are indicated today; you will face challenges in balancing work and family. Gains through a spouse, inheritance, or leadership roles are expected; expenses on home or health are likely. A good day for healers, psychologists, teachers, and insurance professionals. Lucky number: 2; Lucky colour: white with a touch of burgundy.



LEO: Recognition, karmic partnerships, and inner reflection will dominate today. Unpredictable gains are possible. Expenses related to luxury, partnerships, or shared resources are indicated. Leaders, HR professionals, business partners, and healers will benefit. Lucky number: 7; Lucky colours: navy blue with a hint of orange, purple.



VIRGO: Gains through networking are seen, but overthinking and routine worries will persist. Money through social groups, law, or education is possible; sudden expenses are also likely. Teachers, social workers, lawyers, and entertainers will benefit. Some may suffer from stress, indigestion, leg pain, or nerve issues. Lucky number: 6; Lucky colour: blue with light green or brown tones.



LIBRA: Self-expression, career recognition, and family time are highlighted. Career growth will bring gains; expenses are seen related to homes, family, or hobbies. CEOs, administrators, artists, and media professionals will shine. Romantic highs and lows are indicated; family will expect more attention. Lucky number: 3; Lucky colour: pink with a creative touch.



SCORPIO: You will be restless at home; spiritual learning and self-reflection are seen. Expenses related to property, travel, education, or therapy are likely. Researchers, consultants, teachers, and travellers will benefit. Emotional healing at home is indicated; foreign connections in love are possible. Lucky number: 2; Lucky colour: white with silver or maroon hues.



SAGITTARIUS: Sharp intellect and transformative energies will rule today; rewards for efforts are seen. Earnings via writing, trading, inheritance, or planning are indicated. An excellent day for teachers, writers, communicators, and finance professionals. Your children will need attention; relationships with siblings may be erratic. Lucky number: 9; Lucky colour: red with orange undertones.



CAPRICORN: Partnerships and values will be tested today; delayed but steady gains are assured. Gains through spouse, family, or contracts are possible; expenses are likely on homes or health. The day is suited for consultants, bankers, mediators, and educators. Family bonding will grow, but possessiveness may cause issues. Lucky number: 8; Lucky colour: silver with grey, brown tones.

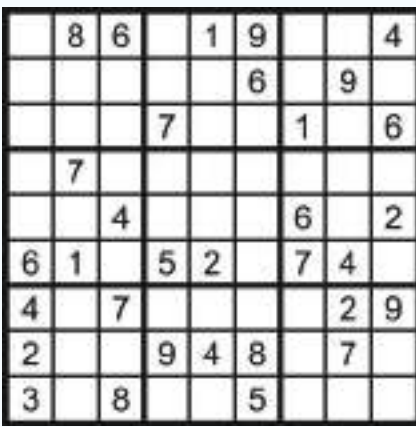


AQUARIUS: You will have a desire for self-improvement, travel, and breaking norms. Technology, foreign contacts, or healthcare will bring gains; expenses are likely on self-care. Analysts, healthcare workers, and finance or tourism professionals will benefit. Emotional distance in relationships is indicated; stress from routine issues is possible. Lucky number: 11; Lucky colour: blue with black or sky blue tones.



PISCES: Creativity, romance, and spirituality will bring joy, though some secrecy is indicated. Gains via art, speculation, or spiritual work are possible; expenses are likely on travel or celebrations. Actors, artists, spiritual guides, and sportsmen will thrive. Joyful romance and children will be the highlight of the day, though delays are possible in plans. Lucky number: 7; Lucky colour: gold with black or white mix.

FPJ - SUDOKU - 563



Solution

Across: 1 Per 2 Ave, 3 Pea, 4 Arrows, 5 Boil, 6 Ere, 7 New world, 8 Kith, 9 Adornment, 10 Lien, 11 Ends, 16 Vin, 20 Asee, 21 Crow, 22 Lion, 23 Old number, 26 Desiring, 28 Bang, 29 Esh, 31 Turt, 35 Kowas, 37 Moky, 38 Bun, 39 Agor, 40 Rour, 41 Reid, 42 Bng, 45 Ile, 46 Fab, 47 Yet.
Down: 1 Per 2 Ave, 3 Pea, 4 Arrows, 5 Boil, 6 Ere, 7 New world, 8 Kith, 9 Adornment, 10 Lien, 11 Ends, 16 Vin, 20 Asee, 21 Crow, 22 Lion, 23 Old number, 26 Desiring, 28 Bang, 29 Esh, 31 Turt, 35 Kowas, 37 Moky, 38 Bun, 39 Agor, 40 Rour, 41 Reid, 42 Bng, 45 Ile, 46 Fab, 47 Yet.

Make your Anger Expensive

By Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar

Anger is a distortion of our true nature. Anger is a sin because when you are angry, you lose your centredness, you lose sight of the Self. It is a sign of weakness. A strong and wise man doesn't get angry easily. Look at the consequences of getting angry. Are you ever happy with the decisions you have made or the words you have spoken when you are angry? No, because you lose your total awareness. If you are completely aware and you are acting angry, that is fine. In fact, anger is an instrument which is useful when you are able to be in control of it. It can work wonders when you know how to use it and where to use it.

What can you do when anger rises in you? You may remind yourself a hundred times that you shouldn't get angry, but when the mood comes, you are unable to control it. It comes like a thunderstorm. Emotions are much more powerful than your thoughts and promises you make. Spiritual practices help you maintain your centredness and not be shaken by small events. Breathing techniques and meditation are very effective in

calming the mind. Often, anger comes because you don't accept the present moment.

When the storm of anger rises, it is not the other person who suffers; it is you, the holder of that fire. Anger is the punishment you give yourself for someone else's mistake. With every angry word, you lose a part of your inner calm; a part of your true self is obscured.

Recognise that anger is always about something that has already happened and cannot be changed. By bringing your awareness into the present moment through the rhythm of your breath, you remove the power of that emotion. Make your anger extremely expensive, like a diamond, reserved only for that rare moment when it is needed with full consciousness.

Usually, you give your anger freely and your smile rarely, as though a smile is expensive. In ignorance, anger is cheap and a smile is costly. In knowledge, a smile is free, like the sunshine, air, and water, and anger is extremely expensive, like a diamond. Make your smile cheaper and anger expensive.



ARCHANGEL MICHAEL MESSAGE FOR THE DAY

A day of focused effort, teamwork, slow and steady progress and using your talents to manifest growth.

You may collaborate with others or dedicate time to steady, practical work that builds lasting results.

Do not underestimate your skills with patience and intention, you can turn ideas into reality. You will work or read about the Law of Attraction. Be careful of manipulation.

Tip for the day: Light a candle and say, "Bless my efforts with success, recognition, and abundance."



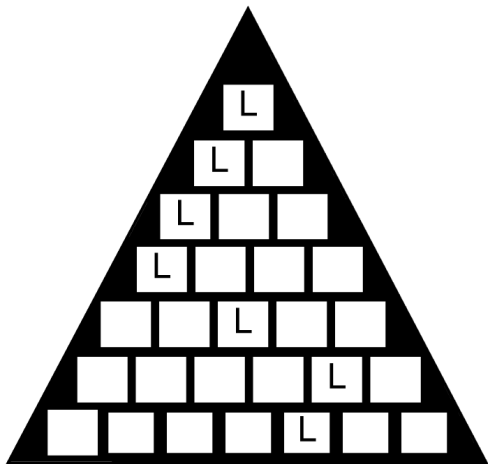
Lots of divine miracles your way. Sheetal Sapan Mhatre.



ALPHA TRIANGLE

Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging. A correct and different word must be made at each step answering to the clue given.

- 1 The 12th letter
- 2 'Behold!'
- 3 Zodiac sign
- 4 Mine find
- 5 ___ out, dispensed
- 6 Easy task (informal)
- 7 Doted over, pampered



L, Lo, Leo, Lode, Doled, Doddle, Coddled.

Solution to Alpha Triangle



Indian Girls' Names

Can you find the words connected in one way or the other with the theme indicated by the title in today's Word Search? The words may be read horizontally, vertically or diagonally either forwards or backwards, but always in straight lines. Use a ruler to cross them through as you find them.

- Aarti

Amisha

Devika

Geeta

Hansa

Kavita

Kriti
- Namrata

Natasha

Pooja

Preity

Pushpa

Reshma

Ritu
- Ruchi

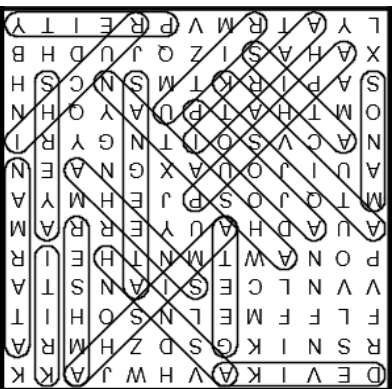
Sangeeta

Shreya

Sita

Sneha

Sonam



Go Figure



Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once. Operations should be carried out sequentially. BODMAS rule does not apply.

The operators:



Easy

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ = 22

2 2 4 5

Medium

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ = 17

2 3 7 8

Hard

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ = 16

3 3 4 5

Easy - 4 + 2 + 5 × 2 = 22
Medium - 8 - 3 × 2 + 7 = 17
Hard - 3 × 5 - 3 + 4 = 16

Our Solutions:

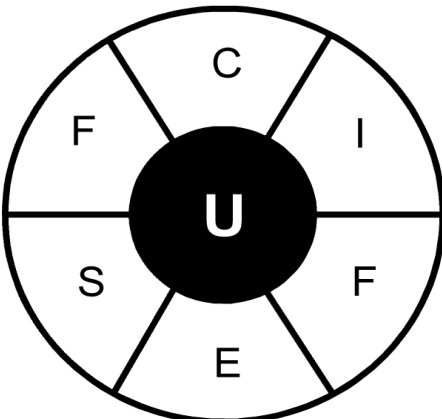
Riddler

How many flowers do I have if all of them are roses except two, all of them are tulips except two, and all of them are daisies except two?

Answer: Three - a rose, a tulip and a daisy.

BULL'S EYE

How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Each word can use a letter only once and must contain the central letter. There should be at least one 7-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as reference.

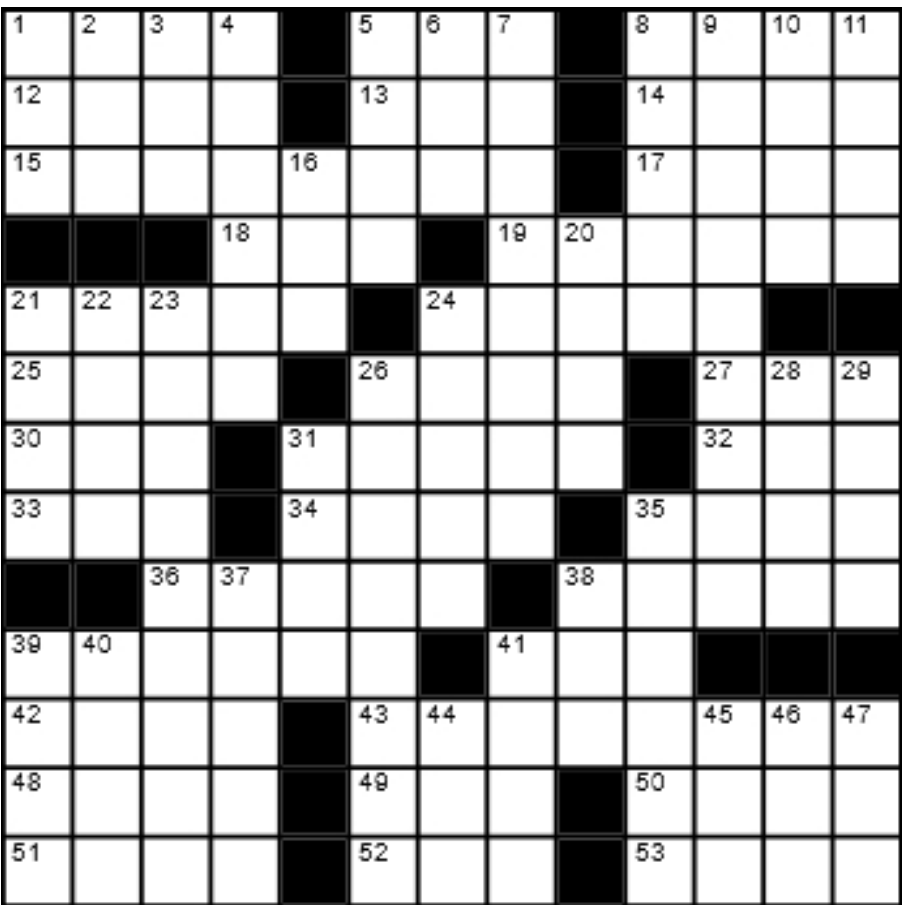


Ratings:

02 average; 03 good; 04 outstanding.

SOLUTION :
cuff, fuse, scuff, SUFFICE

Crossword #1672



Across

- 1 Father or daddy
- 5 Benjamin's pet name?
- 8 "Lake" anagram for a vegetable?
- 12 Water-jug
- 13 Metal-bearing mineral
- 14 Chief Norse god
- 15 _____ mirror : Driver's aid (4,4)
- 17 Did garden work
- 18 Fluid lubricant
- 19 Marine mammal
- 21 Joker or jester
- 24 A red dye - "noise" anagram?
- 25 Slender bars
- 26 Don't be afraid!
- 27 English honour, for short
- 30 Conclude
- 31 Nikola ___ : U.S.

inventor - "Tales" anagram?

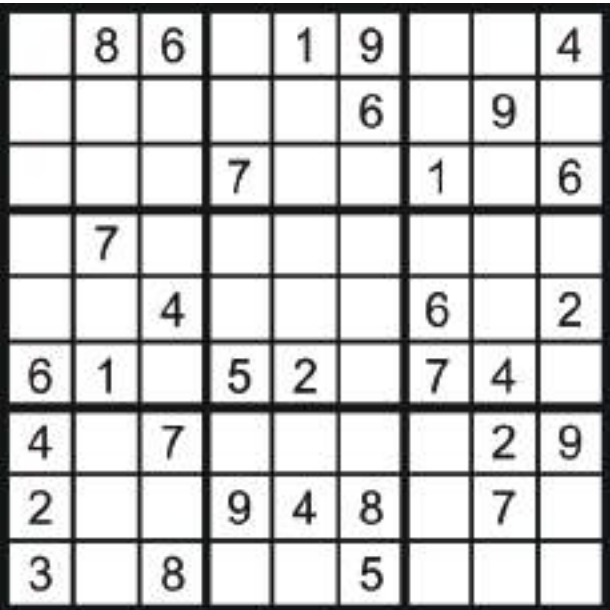
- 32 Consume some food
- 33 Cyst
- 34 Not as new
- 35 Dancer Pavlova
- 36 Up to that time
- 38 Bungle or blunder
- 39 Protective coat of metal
- 41 Cape's futuristic play
- 42 Asian desert
- 43 Diagnose; recognise
- 48 _____ the loss of : regrets the loss of?
- 49 Crazy person
- 50 Wings or winglike parts
- 51 Give it _____ : have a go at it? (T,3)
- 52 The Almighty
- 53 The badger's home is called this

Down

- 1 Through, by means of
- 2 Great respect
- 3 Pod vegetable
- 4 Marks that indicate direction
- 5 Convert water to steam
- 6 Before, poetically speaking
- 7 _____ Symphony : Dvorak's magnum opus? (3,5)
- 8 Batsman Virat _____
- 9 An item for beautification
- 10 In _____ of : instead?
- 11 All _____ up : completely?
- 16 Wine (Fr.)
- 20 On the briny
- 21 Ship's company

- 22 Having no company
- 23 1,3,5,7 or 9 (3,6)
- 24 Supporter of an artist's work
- 26 Craving, wanting or wishing
- 28 French bench
- 29 Arctic town - "hate" anagram?
- 31 Ballet skirt
- 35 Major arteries
- 37 Loud
- 38 Round bread roll
- 39 City in UP
- 40 Disastrous defeat
- 41 In short, no more on active duty?
- 44 Pair
- 45 The French for 'island'
- 46 Corpulent
- 47 Up to now

SUDOKU



Across: 1 Papa, 5 Ben, 8 Kale, 12 Ewer, 17 Hoed, 18 Oil, 19 Walrus, 21 Clown, 24 Eosin, 25 Rods, 26 Dore, 27 MBE, 30 End, 31 Tesla, 32 Eat, 33 Wen, 34 Used, 35 Anna, 36 Until, 38 Botch, 39 Armour, 41 Rur, 42 Goli, 43 Identity, 48 Rues, 49 Nut, 50 Alea, 51 A try, 52 God, 53 Set, 54 Down: 1 Peg, 2 Awe, 3 Peg, 4 Arrows, 5 Boll, 6 Ewe, 7 New world, 8 Kohl, 9 Adornment, 10 Lieu, 11 Ends, 16 Vim, 20 Asea, 21 Crew, 22 Lone, 23 Odd number, 24 Ease, 26 Desing, 28 Banc, 29 Etah, 31 Tuu, 35 Aorta, 37 Noisy, 38 Bun, 39 Agra, 40 Rour, 41 Red, 44 Duo, 45 Ile, 46 Fat, 47 Yet.



WHAT TO DO: Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Every puzzle has only one correct solution.

OPT FAIR TAX ACT | US Senate seeks to end tax breaks for int’l students

War on higher education

Simple Vishwakarma
MUMBAI

Newly proposed legislation in the US Senate would dramatically change the way international students employed through the Optional Practical Training (OPT) program are taxed, a shift that promises to reduce their take-home pay and increase the expense of hiring them for companies.

The OPT Fair Tax Act, S. 2940, which Senator Tom Cotton introduced in September 2025, would eliminate payroll tax exemptions currently available to students on F-1 visas who are employed via the OPT program. The proposal has been referred to the Senate Committee on Finance for review.

If passed, the measure would require OPT participants to pay Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA) taxes, the deductions that fund Social Security and Medicare are similar to U.S. citizens and permanent residents. Employers would also be responsible for contributing their share of these taxes, increasing overall employment costs.

Existing Law

Under existing law, F-1 visa students on OPT are exempt from paying FICA taxes for their first five calendar years in the United States. The IRS classifies them as “non-resident aliens,” who are not required to pay into Social Security and Medicare as long as they are engaging in authorised activities like OPT.

Presently, FICA taxes are



15.3% of wages, equally shared between the employer and employee at 7.65% each. The breakdown provides for 6.2% for Social Security and 1.45% for Medicare.

The exemption, designed originally to support foreign students, acknowledges they are temporary residents who generally cannot claim the longer-term benefit of these programs. For years, this policy has made OPT an attractive option for both students and employers.

Future

If the OPT Fair Tax Act becomes law, these exemptions would be removed. Both students and their employers would have to pay their share of FICA taxes, resulting in lower take-home pay and higher hiring costs.

The change could be par-

ticularly challenging for recent graduates already managing educational loans and adjusting to life in a new country. It would also make the OPT program, one of the main post-study work routes for international graduates, financially less appealing.

The OPT program, managed by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), allows international students to gain practical work experience related to their field of study for up to 12 months after graduation. For those in STEM disciplines, the authorisation can be extended for an additional 24 months.

Lawyers warn of wider implications

Immigration lawyer Allison Kranz said the proposed bill could substantially alter how international students are

treated under U.S. tax law. “At present, most students on F-1 visas working through OPT are exempt from certain payroll taxes because they are classified as non-resident aliens for tax purposes,” Kranz explained. “The new proposal would remove those exemptions, effectively reducing take-home pay by roughly 7.65%, the combined Social Security and Medicare tax rate.”

Kranz added that while 7.65% may not sound drastic, for many recent graduates earning modest entry-level wages, the difference could be significant. “These students often carry heavy education loans or family obligations back home. Beyond the financial hit, this could make the U.S. less attractive to global talent at a time when universities and employers are competing internationally for skilled graduates, particularly in STEM fields,” she said.

She also advised students on OPT and STEM-OPT to stay informed and plan ahead. “If this proposal advances, students should review their tax residency status, keep payroll records accurate, and adjust budgets to account for reduced income. Employers, too, must understand the new requirements and apply the correct withholdings,” Kranz noted.

According to Kranz, the broader issue is about what message the U.S. is sending to the next generation of innovators. “These students invest heavily in their American education and contribute mean-

ingfully to research and local economies. Penalising them through taxation risks discouraging that investment,” she said.

Student concerns

Immigration attorney Gnana-mookan Senthurjothi, who specialises in U.S. visa matters, shared similar concerns. “If passed, the act would require OPT participants and their employers to pay FICA taxes, which are currently exempt. This could add approximately 15.3% to overall employment costs, raising expenses for employers and reducing net income for students,” Senthurjothi said.

He noted that Indian students, who represent one of the largest groups of OPT participants, may feel the impact most sharply. “They could lose thousands of dollars annually in taxes they currently do not pay. This could affect their budgets, savings, and overall living standards in the U.S.,” he explained.

The OPT Fair Tax Act is still in its early stages and would need to pass both chambers of Congress before it can become law. Until then, the current FICA exemptions remain in place. However, experts say the proposal could reshape how international students view post-study opportunities in the U.S. If implemented, the bill would represent one of the most significant changes to the taxation of foreign students in recent years, potentially altering not just the economics of studying in America but also its appeal as a global education destination.

Building confidence, finding independence



When I first landed in the UK, the weather was gloomy, grey, and nothing like the chaos of Kolkata. Yes, it rains a lot, but there are also those unexpectedly beautiful days, the kind that make you want to just sit in a park and soak it all in.

The culture shock wasn't too harsh either. People here are super straightforward. They'll tell you exactly what they think, but at the same time, they're warm and welcoming. It didn't take long before I found my people, and honestly, that made all the difference in settling in.

Why Sheffield? For me, it was about the course. Electronics and computer engineering play a vital role in shaping future technologies, and this programme equips you to tackle global challenges in areas like AI, computing, cybersecurity, autonomous systems, IoT, and communications. The University of Sheffield has a lot of project-based modules, so I knew that when I graduate, I wouldn't just learn theory but would have actual experience working on real projects. For me, that makes studying more enjoyable because you're applying what you learn rather

than just cramming from a book. Plus, Sheffield has a good reputation and is well-regarded by employers.

At the university, I've actively engaged in projects and initiatives that combine technical knowledge with real-world application. During the Global Engineering Challenge Week, I collaborated with a diverse team of engineering students to address a simulated case study on power shortages in Makers Valley, Johannesburg. Our team proposed hydropower as an optimal solution using tools like STEEPLE analysis, SMART questionnaires, and risk assessments, demonstrating our analytical capabilities and teamwork.

I've also represented the Electronic and Electrical Engineering Society at the ScienceAlive Fair at the University of Sheffield. Working with a team of four, I conducted hands-on demonstrations of basic electrical circuits for primary school children. The initiative aimed to foster early curiosity and appreciation for engineering and was delivered by STEM students passionate about outreach and education.

Beyond academics, I hold a part-time committee role with Engineers Without Borders UK, where I manage finances, approve budgets, and ensure effective financial planning for engineering projects with social impact. As part of the EEE Society, I also act as a student liaison, voicing peer concerns and helping improve the overall student experience.

Most recently, I took part in the 'This is Deutsche Bank' Insight Day in London, gaining exposure to the intersection of technology and finance, and engaging with leaders across divisions such as Fixed Income and Origination & Ad-

visory.

As for the city itself, Sheffield is built on hills; your legs get used to it eventually, and it's one of the most walkable places I've lived in. There's a park around almost every corner, so it feels green and open. It's not as crowded as London but still has a really lively student vibe.

University life has been fun. My class is very mixed, with people from everywhere, and I've made some great friends. Academically, adapting to the UK system wasn't too bad either. Since my modules were pre-selected, it wasn't overwhelming.

Of course, it hasn't all been smooth. In my first year, I picked an accommodation that was a bit too far from campus, which made life harder than it needed to be. Over time, though, I figured out the local bus routes, shops, and little hacks that made things easier. Homesickness hit, too, but that's where society helped. Having friends who feel like family here has been a lifesaver, and keeping in touch with my family back home regularly keeps me grounded. Finances were a learning curve, too, and like everything else, I've figured it out with time. These experiences beyond the classroom, from outreach and committee work to insight days and cultural societies, have helped me develop skills like teamwork, communication, leadership, and financial planning. Taking part in these kinds of initiatives has not only enriched my university life but also strengthened my confidence, adaptability, and employability for the future.

The author is pursuing a BEng Electronics and Computer Engineering at the University of Sheffield, UK.

Trump admin ends automatic work permit extensions

Education Desk
MUMBAI

In another major shift to US immigration policy, the Donald Trump administration has announced the end of automatic work permit extensions for certain categories of migrants, tightening the process for employment authorisation renewals. The decision reverses a Biden-era measure that had allowed eligible immigrants to continue working legally while their renewal applications were pending with immigration authorities.

Under the new directive, effective October 30, 2025, applicants who file to renew their Employment Authorisation Document (EAD) will no longer receive an automatic extension of their work rights. This means individuals must stop working once their current permit expires, even if their renewal is still being processed.



Employment is a privilege, not a right

Explaining the move, US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) said the change aims to ensure “appropriate vetting and screening” before extending any work-related documentation.

“This is a common-sense measure that reinforces the idea that employment in the United States is a privilege, not a right,” said USCIS Director Joseph Edlow in an official statement. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) added that the reform would strengthen the integrity of the employment authorisation system by allowing more frequent background checks and reducing the chances of fraud.

Impact

This most recent change will especially impact F-1 students

on STEM OPT extensions, for whom EAD renewals frequently coincide with lengthy USCIS processing times.

Previously, if students applied for renewal before their current EAD expired, they were allowed to keep working until the new card arrived. That grace period now disappears. Under the new rule, if an EAD expires before renewal approval, students must immediately stop working, regardless of delays caused by USCIS backlogs.

The change could cause uncertainty for international graduates who rely on their OPT period to bridge the transition between study and employment. Without the safety net of automatic extensions, even minor administrative delays could result in employment gaps, loss of income, or visa complications.

Unlike other non-citizens, such as H-4 spouses or green card applicants, who can apply up to 180 days before their EAD

expires, F-1 students remain restricted to a 90-day filing window. This limitation means they cannot apply earlier to avoid work interruptions, making precise timing critical. To mitigate risks, USCIS is advising students to file on the earliest eligible day and consider premium processing, which guarantees a decision within roughly 30 business days. The decision aligns with the Trump administration's broader goal of reinforcing immigration controls and increasing national security oversight. Officials argue that tighter screening before extending work authorisations will help detect fraud and strengthen the system's credibility. But critics warn that the new rule risks having unintended consequences, especially for international students, who make up a large proportion of the skilled workforce pipeline in the US.

Georgia: A new hub for students

Education Desk
MUMBAI

When it came to fulfilling medical aspirations, Ukraine held a special place in the dreams of Indians for two decades. Inexpensive medical education, English-speaking courses, and easy admissions attracted thousands of young Indians every year. Then came the war in 2022, changing it all. Four years on, that shift is visible not only in migration patterns but also in the money trail.

Indians spent nearly \$50.25 million on education in Georgia in the financial year 2024–25, a figure that's nearly five times higher than \$10.33 million recorded in 2018–19, according to data from the RBI's Liberalised Remittance Scheme, or LRS.

This rise in spending coincides with a steep fall in the

amount sent for education in Ukraine, which came down from \$14.80 million in 2018–19 to just \$2.40 million in 2024–25. The data reflects reality, as war drags on, Indian students are looking for stability and safety, and Georgia has silently become their new choice.

A new shift

Before the war, Ukraine was in the top 10 countries hosting Indian students, in particular during 2020–21 and 2021–22. However, the war in 2022 saw students who once viewed Ukraine as the route to low-cost European medical degrees start to look elsewhere.

Georgia, with its peaceful environment and universities following globally recognised medical curricula, quickly filled that gap. The country's universities have ramped up their outreach in India, offering English-medium programs and simplified

admission procedures.

In 2022–23, Georgia for the first time entered the RBI's list of top 15 destinations for Indian education spending, ranked 14th. In just one year, it jumped two ranks to 12th.

Interestingly, Russia despite its role in the Ukraine conflict has also seen a surge in Indian student inflows. According to the RBI data, Indians spent \$69.94 million on education in Russia in 2024–25, up almost 200% from \$22.48 million the previous year.

Choices in a flux

While Georgia and Russia are gaining, traditional education powerhouses the United States, Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom are dominant but continue to see mixed trends. Education expenditure by Indians in the US was down 10% in 2024–25, while there was a sharper 43% fall in Canada. Australia was down 5%.

ideas into action

‘Research-based learning could redefine students’ role in human development’

For too long, education has been measured by grades, test scores and the race for admissions. These markers may signal academic ability, but they fail to capture what truly matters: a student's capacity to navigate complexity, imagine solutions and act with purpose. In a world reshaped by technology, climate change, geopolitical shifts and cultural interdependence, our old measures of success are no longer enough.

Employers, universities and global institutions are not asking for perfect report cards. They are asking for young people who can bring clarity to uncertainty, work across boundaries and translate ideas into action. The future belongs to those who can combine knowledge with the ability to question, connect and lead. This is why “soft skills” is a phrase that understates their importance; they are now the hardest and most essential skills to acquire. The ability to analyse from multiple perspectives, to communicate across differences, to lead with empathy, to remain resilient in the face of failure, these are not optional extras. They are the skills that determine whether knowledge is inert or transformative. They are also the skills that separate tomorrow's followers from to-

morrow's leaders. Critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, leadership and empathy are the hardest skills to teach and the most essential to our survival as a global community. They are what allow students not only to find answers but, and this is very important, to ask better questions.

This focus on a holistic, research-driven education that values critical inquiry has inspired a generation of global leaders. Look no further than the extraordinary group of Indian researchers and thinkers who, after having completed their higher studies overseas, contributed significantly to driving global impact. One such example is the Nobel Prize winner Amartya Sen, a Cambridge University graduate, who redefined welfare economics and shaped the Human Development Index with his thoughtful insights. Another such figure is Former IMF Chief Economist Dr Gita Gopinath, who now steers global economic policy. Their success, mirrored by visionary corporate leaders like Satya Nadella and Sundar Pichai, who blend technical expertise with leadership and empathy, highlights an important truth: the global stage demands individuals who are



Matthew Jaskol

academically brilliant but, more importantly, have the cultural adaptability, ethical reasoning and visionary leadership to address complex, interdependent challenges.

The shift toward holistic evaluation is happening now. Top UK universities, including Oxford, UCL, and Edinburgh, are increasingly looking past ultra-high marks to evaluate authenticity, passion, long-term commitment and personal narrative. As recently reported, even students scoring below 90% in high school are being accepted, provided their applications reflect meaningful real-world engagement and strong critical thinking.

And yet, our current education systems are still largely built on memorisation, standardised testing and narrow measures of



Mark Sheldon

performance. This mismatch creates a dangerous gap between what students are trained to do and what the world demands of them.

Take artificial intelligence. Its rise is not just a technological revolution, it's a human one. Algorithms can now write, calculate and even “reason” faster than any student. But there are at least two issues with AI. First, it reflects where current thinking and analysis stand on a particular issue. That is, it reports, it does not create. Second, and more importantly, AI does not replace the moral judgment to decide why a solution should be pursued or the creativity to imagine possibilities beyond existing data. That responsibility belongs to humans, and it requires a kind of thinking no machine can replicate.

To prepare students for this reality, education must become less about recall and more about reflection, resourcefulness and resilience. It must teach students how to thrive in ambiguity, to draw insights across disciplines, and to collaborate with people with expertise and different perspectives. Leadership comes not from certainty, but from the courage to navigate the unknown. This shift will not happen in classrooms alone. It will happen through experiences that stretch beyond the familiar, challenging them to question assumptions, work on unsolved problems, and collaborate with and persuade peers across cultures. The students who step into this early are the ones who develop an intellectual identity: a sense of who they are as thinkers, creators and leaders.

The stakes could not be higher. The next generation will inherit crises of climate, health, governance and technology that cannot be solved within the boundaries of a textbook. If we continue to define education only by grades, we risk producing graduates who can excel in exams but struggle in reality. If we redefine education by its ability to nurture curiosity, critical inquiry and collaboration,

we prepare individuals who will not only adapt to the future but shape it. This is not simply about career readiness, it is about civic readiness, global readiness and human readiness. Education is not a pipeline to employment; it is a foundation for impact, for living a meaningfully engaged life. The vision for education should be bold. It should imagine a world where students are not defined just by grades but also by their ability to create solutions and innovate. When we invest in young people in this way, we are not simply educating them. We are preparing the next generation of leaders, thinkers, and changemakers who will shape their communities and society in ways we have not yet imagined. The future will not wait for students to catch up. If education evolves to cultivate the qualities that truly matter, we will empower a generation ready not only to face the future, but to build it.

The author Matthew Jaskol is the founder and institute director of Pioneer Academics, and co-author Mark Sheldon is Faculty in the Graduate Program in Medical Humanities and Bioethics, Feinberg School of Medicine, Northwestern University

Crafting Harmony: A guide to vastu-compliant home decor

Jyoti S

Transforming your living space into a sanctuary of positive energy is a timeless pursuit. For those seeking a blueprint rooted in ancient wisdom, Vastu Shastra provides a set of principles that can guide your interior design choices. This article explores specific and actionable best practices in interior design to help you decorate your home in alignment with Vastu principles.

Entrance:

Illuminate your entrance with careful consideration, allowing positive energy to effortlessly flow into your home. The most auspicious direction for the entrance is typically in the northeast or east. Ensure the entrance size is proportionate to the overall size of the house, neither too grand nor too small, creating a welcoming and balanced entryway.

Windows:

Strategically position windows based on Vastu principles, favoring the north or east for optimal energy flow. Maximize abundant natural light to create a vibrant and uplifting atmosphere. Choose easy-to-operate window coverings for seamless energy flow, enhancing positivity and contributing to a harmonious, well-lit environment in your home.



Walls: Adorn your walls with earthy tones like terracotta and olive green, grounding the energy in each room. Elevate the positive ambiance by displaying artwork or wall hangings that resonate with joy and harmony, contributing to a balanced living environment.

Furniture placement:

Arrange your furniture purposefully to encourage unrestricted movement and create open, harmonious spaces. In bedrooms, promote stability and restful sleep by placing the bed in the southwest direction, aligning with Vastu principles.

Electric appliances:

Exercise care in positioning electronic appliances to avoid clutter and tangled wires, fostering an organized and positive energy space. Consider placing appliances, such as the television, in the southeast direction to align with harmonious energy flow.

Display of paintings and Mirrors:

Showcase paintings that evoke positive emotions and scenes of nature or joy, contributing to an uplifting atmosphere. Strategically place mirrors on north or east walls to amplify natural light and promote a positive, balanced energy.

Auspicious directions for plants:

Introduce plants in the north or east corners of your home to infuse positive energy. Use indoor plants strategically to represent the earth element, fostering a harmonious balance in your living environment.



Appropriate directions for decorative pieces:

Position decorative pieces thoughtfully, adhering to Vastu directions for harmonious placement. Display decorative items in the northeast for positive vibes, the southwest for stability, and other appropriate directions to create a balanced and aesthetically pleasing living space.

Monika Khajuria

Do you wake up to itchy and flaky scalp? An itchy, flaky scalp generally indicates dandruff. But, when this condition becomes acute, it might be more than just dandruff. This can be due to a chronic skin disorder known as Seborrheic Dermatitis. Seborrheic Dermatitis is a skin disorder that occurs in seborrheic areas such as the scalp, face, chest, back and groin areas. It is an inflammatory disorder that can lead to scaling, itching and flaking on the concerned areas. Seborrheic Dermatitis of the scalp leads to a flaky and greasy scalp and cause an itchy scalp as well. Although it isn't exactly clear as to what causes Seborrheic Dermatitis, it increases oil production in the scalp and can even lead to hair loss. It, therefore, becomes important to treat this issue. Fortunately, the hair loss caused by it can be treated easily at the comfort of your home. You just need to be a little patient to see the results. In this article, we've discussed a few amazing home remedies that can help you treat the hair loss caused by Seborrheic Dermatitis effectively. Check these out!



1 Garlic and coconut oil

Garlic has antioxidant and antifungal properties that help to maintain a healthy and clean scalp and thus prevent hair loss. Coconut oil penetrates deep into the hair shaft and prevent protein loss from the hair to promote hair growth and prevent hair loss.

Ingredients: 6-8 garlic cloves, 2 tbsp warm coconut oil.

Method of use: Peel and crush the garlic to obtain the pulp. Add this to the coconut oil and mix well. Gently massage this mixture on your scalp for a few seconds. Leave it on for 30 minutes. Repeat this remedy 1-2 times a week for the desired result.



5 Honey and egg yolk

Besides being a natural humectant, honey has antimicrobial and antioxidant properties that help to prevent any damage to the scalp and thus prevent hair loss. Rich in proteins, egg yolk helps to revitalise and strengthen your hair.

Ingredients: 2 tbsp honey, 1 egg yolk
Method of use: Separate an egg yolk in a bowl. Add honey to this and mix both the ingredients together well. Apply this mixture to your scalp and hair. Leave it on for 30 minutes. Rinse it off thoroughly later. Repeat this remedy twice a week for the desired result.



What is Seborrheic dermatitis?

Effective remedies for hair loss

2 Cucumber and curd

Cucumber has a soothing and cooling effect on the scalp while curd contains lactic acid that exfoliates the scalp to nourish it and provide relief from the irritation and itchiness.

Ingredients: 5-6 slices of cucumber, 2 tbsp curd.

Method of use: Grind the cucumber slice to get some paste. Add curd to this and mix well. Apply this mixture to your scalp. Leave it on for 30 minutes. Wash it off later using a mild shampoo. Repeat this remedy twice a week for the best result.

3 Neem, sesame oil and turmeric powder

One of the most effective remedies against Seborrheic Dermatitis, neem and turmeric has antibacterial, anti-inflammatory and antiseptic properties that help to cleanse the scalp and strengthen your hair.

Ingredients: 1 tbsp ground neem leaves, 1 tbsp sesame oil, 1/2 tsp turmeric powder.

Method of use:

Take the neem leaves in a bowl. Add sesame oil and turmeric powder to this and mix all the ingredients until you get a smooth mixture. Apply the mixture to your scalp. Leave it on for 30 minutes. Wash it off later using a mild shampoo.

4 Flax seeds

Flax seeds have anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties that soothe and protect the scalp from free radicals. This, therefore, makes it an effective remedy against Seborrheic Dermatitis.

Ingredients: 1/4 cup flax seeds, 1 tbsp freshly squeezed lemon juice, 2 cup water.

Method of use: Take water in a pan and put it on heat. When the water starts to boil, add flax seeds to it. Wait until the mixture starts to thicken. Now add the lemon juice to this and stir the mixture. Take the mixture off the heat and allow it to cool down. Once it cools down, you'll get a gel-like paste. Apply this paste to your scalp and hair. You can use this gel-like mixture on your hair every day. It also acts as a nourishing hair styling gel.



6 Shampooing:

Use medicated shampoos containing ketoconazole, selenium sulfide, or coal tar. These ingredients can help control the overgrowth of yeast on the scalp, which is often associated with seborrheic dermatitis. Wash your hair regularly to keep the scalp clean and prevent the accumulation of oil and scales. However, avoid excessive washing, as it may lead to dryness, which could exacerbate the condition.

7 Consult a dermatologist:

If over-the-counter remedies don't help or the condition is severe, consulting a dermatologist is crucial. They can provide specialized solutions like stronger medicated shampoos, topical corticosteroids, or antifungal medications. In severe cases, healthcare professionals may recommend oral medications to effectively manage the condition.

Health Benefits:

Dill (Shepu)

Praveen Kumar

Do you know about the benefits of dill? Well, dill contains medicinal properties. The leaves, twigs and seeds of this plant are used for their healing properties. The leaves are aromatic. They contain monoterpenes, minerals, amino acids and flavonoids. The leaves of dill look like feathers and they resemble fern. The flowers are yellow in colour and the leaves are greenish. When it comes to the health benefits of dill, there are numerous good things to know about this plant. It is good for the digestive system and is also good for the nervous system. Consuming the leaves in some or the other form will surely help your health. Dill contains flavonoids, vitamin C and minerals too. It is said to offer protection from free radical damage. It is ant-bacterial and is also good for your bones. This way, there are so many health benefits of dill.



Prevents insomnia

Dill contains vitamins and flavonoids. It soothes your nervous system and also helps you sleep well. In fact, those who suffer from certain disorders related to the nervous system consume dill.

Good for digestion

Research suggests that dill helps secrete bile. This will play a role in the digestive process and that is why consuming it regularly helps. Also, it is good for those who are suffering from stomach pains too.

Cures diarrhea

If you are suffering from diarrhea as a result of an infection or indigestion you can try dill leaves as a home remedy. It is said that these leaves soothe your intestines, regularise your bowel movements and also combat certain types of infections.

Sore eyes

If you are suffering from sore eyes, try this remedy. Simply immerse dill seeds in boiling water for a couple of minutes. Close your eyelids and place warm bags on them. After 15 minutes, you will gain relief from the inflammation. In fact, dill is also good for your skin. This is one of the benefits of dill seeds.

Treats dysentery

Some sources claim that dill can also fight and treat dysentery. So, if you wish to cure that condition, try consuming dill first.

Fresh breath

The leaves and the seeds of dill can refresh your breath. As dill is aromatic and anti-microbial, it is good to consume it. The microbes in the mouth can be fought, thanks to the antimicrobial properties of dill.

Respiratory issues

One of the health benefits of dill leaves is that they cleanse your respiratory system and help you get rid of certain allergies.

Regulates menstrual cycle

Research suggests that dill contains essential oils which can normalise the menstrual cycle in women.

Strengthens bones

Dill is also good for increasing libido. It also strengthens teeth and bones. These are some of the health benefits of dill plants.

Aids in weight management:

Dill is a low-calorie herb that can be a great addition to a weight management plan. Its rich flavor can enhance the taste of meals without adding excessive calories, making it a healthy choice for those looking to control their weight.



Bulletproof Coffee:

Is it good for health?

Is bulletproof coffee better than breakfast?

When you start your day with cereal, toast, fruit or oatmeal, it tends to spike your blood sugar and you will have a quick burst of energy. However, by mid-morning, your blood sugar crashes and you start feeling hungry and confused. The following happens when you start your day with bulletproof coffee:

■ **Blood sugar management:** Unlike traditional breakfasts that cause blood sugar spikes and crashes, bulletproof coffee, with its saturated fat content, slows caffeine absorption, providing sustained energy.

■ **Hunger regulation:** Medium-chain triglyceride oil helps balance hunger hormones, keeping you satisfied until lunchtime.

■ **Ketogenic diet fit:** Aligning with the ketogenic diet, which is low in carbs and high in fat, bulletproof coffee aids in weight loss and may benefit those with type 2 diabetes.

Considerations and downsides:

■ Substituting a nutritious meal with bulletproof coffee may reduce overall nutrient intake.

■ High in saturated fat, its impact on heart health is debatable, with some studies suggesting potential risks.

■ Ketogenic diets with high saturated fat content might elevate cholesterol levels, posing risks for some individuals.

While bulletproof coffee offers benefits, moderation is crucial. Regular consumption, especially in excess, may pose risks, such as nutrient deficiencies and increased saturated fat intake. Individuals incorporating bulletproof coffee into their routine should monitor their health markers regularly to ensure overall well-being.

Devika Bandyopadhyaya

Bulletproof coffee, a blend of coffee, oil, and butter, has gained popularity among fitness enthusiasts, especially those following the keto diet. Advocates claim it enhances energy, cognitive function, and workout performance. Despite its potential benefits, it's essential to understand the recipe, advantages, and possible downsides.

What is bulletproof coffee?

Bulletproof coffee combines coffee with medium-chain triglyceride oil (usually from coconut oil) and grass-fed, unsalted butter. The mixture, resembling a latte, is lauded for its potential to curb hunger, sustain energy levels, and enhance mental focus.



Making bulletproof coffee:

Brew one cup of freshly ground coffee. Add 1 tablespoon of medium-chain triglyceride oil. Incorporate 1 to 2 tablespoons of grass-fed, unsalted butter (or a non-dairy alternative). Blend for 20-30 seconds for a foamy and creamy texture. Drink warm.

Potential benefits:

Suitable for those following a low-carb, high-fat ketogenic diet.
■ May aid in weight loss, reduce heart disease risk, and lower blood sugar levels.
■ Effective in preventing morning hunger.
■ Acts as a clean energy source, potentially enhancing workout performance.

Stomach Flu or Food Poisoning: Which one do you have?

Ria Majumdar

When you are exploding out of both ends, you don't really care whether you have the stomach flu or food poisoning. And while the symptoms of both are pretty similar, it pays to know the culprit behind your suffering, as the latter is much more sinister than the former. So here's everything you need to know about stomach flu and food poisoning, so you are better prepared the next time.



The causes of food poisoning are a dime a dozen!

From dangerous bacteria like Clostridium botulinum, Salmonella, and E. coli to viruses like the Rotavirus, you can get food poisoning from ingesting a wide range of microorganisms, all of which are quite deadly. And they can end up in your body through the following ways:

- Through vegetables that were contaminated in the soil even before they were harvested and sold.
- From eating raw food, especially undercooked meat and sausages.
- Drinking unpasteurized milk.
- Consuming spoiled food, like spoiled eggs.
- From eating processed products that were left outside of the cold storage for too long.
- By eating food that was cooked or served in utensils previously used by someone suffering from food poisoning.



stomach flu is caused by viruses

Stomach flu is not the same as the flu that you call the sniffles. It's viral gastroenteritis and is caused by viruses like the Norovirus. And oddly enough, you can have food poisoning and stomach flu at the same time! Here are the various ways through which you can pick up the stomach flu:

- Touching a surface that was contaminated by someone suffering from stomach flu.
- Direct physical contact with an infected individual.
- And consuming contaminated food.

Food poisoning and stomach flu have different timelines

Food poisoning will strike you down within hours of ingesting the contaminated food or incubate in your body before showing up out of the blue after a week or so. And then the illness lasts for a few days or many days. There really isn't a fixed pattern, although the ones that operate fast are deadlier. The stomach flu operates in a different fashion. It stays low for a day or two and then BAM! You are exploding out of both ends for the next two days.

The Symptoms of both food poisoning and stomach flu are similar

While both these conditions cause vomiting, diarrhea, dehydration, abdominal pain, fever, muscle pain, and headaches, there are some differences that can help you differentiate between them. For example, severe food poisoning can cause you to poop out bloody stool, while the stomach flu is more likely to cause projectile vomit.



You may need to be hospitalized if you show these symptoms

While both stomach flu and food poisoning can be anywhere on the spectrum from mild to severe (although severe is more common when it comes to food poisoning), if you show the following symptoms, you need to get yourself admitted at the nearest hospital.

- The frequency of vomiting is too high and you have been unable to drink anything without vomiting for at least 24 hours.
- You can see blood in your stool or vomitus.
- Severe abdominal cramps.
- You are extremely dehydrated - signs include dizziness, dark yellow urine, dry mouth, and excessive thirst.
- You have a fever that is not coming down.
- You have been suffering from diarrhea for the last 3 days.
- You can feel tingling sensations in your arms and body and your vision has started to blur - a sign of neurological damage associated with certain types of food poisoning.

How to prevent food poisoning or stomach flu

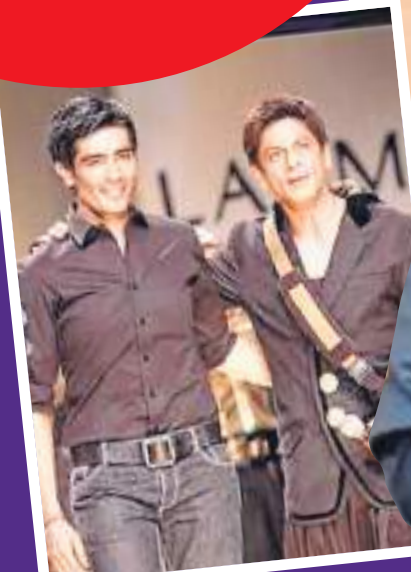
Stomach flu and food poisoning take a toll on our body. So if you want to avoid contracting them in the first place, here are certain guidelines that can help.

- Wash your vegetables thoroughly before you eat them.
- Store processed meats and other products in the refrigerator at the right temperature.
- Cook your food properly and make sure it is above 140 degrees Fahrenheit, as this temperature kills all pathological microorganisms.

- Microorganisms multiply the fastest when you allow hot food to cool down. So consume your meal immediately.
- Don't thaw meat at room temperature. Instead, use the defrost mode of the microwave, or boil some water and use the steam to defrost the meat.
- Throw away food items you have a gut feeling may be spoiled.
- Check expiration dates on food products, especially perishables like dairy and deli meats, and discard anything past its expiry date.

Bollywood showers love on SRK

From Farah Khan and Karan Johar to Kajol, Shilpa Shetty, and Akshay Kumar, Bollywood unites to celebrate Shah Rukh Khan's 60th birthday with heartfelt wishes and memories



CJ Desk

As Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan celebrated his milestone 60th birthday on Sunday, social media platforms were flooded with love and admiration from across the film fraternity. From close friends to co-stars, many celebrities took a nostalgic walk down memory lane, paying tribute to one of Indian cinema's most enduring icons. Celebrations began at Khan's

Alibaug residence, where close friends and family joined the actor for an intimate gathering. Filmmaker Karan Johar shared the first glimpse of the private bash on Instagram Stories, posting a selfie with Rani Mukerji and teasing followers with the caption, "Guess the photo bomber?" In the backdrop, actress Ananya Panday was seen dancing with a drink in hand, dressed in a shimmering golden outfit. Though Shah Rukh himself was not visible in the image, several attendees shared mo-

ments from the evening, revealing the warm, informal atmosphere of the celebration. Director Farah Khan, a long-time collaborator and close friend, uploaded affectionate pictures with SRK, writing, "Happy birthday KING @iamsrk... rule for another 100 years." In the photographs, Shah Rukh Khan exuded his trademark charm in a casual grey T-shirt paired with matching trousers and a white beanie, while Farah posed in a pink top and black trousers.

Fashion designer Manish Malhotra also joined in the on-line celebration, describing the superstar as "the most stylish, fittest, and best everywhere — from the '90s to now." Actor Shilpa Shetty, who starred opposite SRK in *Baazigar* (1993), called him "the true KING of hearts and my first hero." Sharing a video montage of their pictures over the years, she added, "Here's to teaching Gen A to Z the true art of romance! Wishing you great health, happiness, and success always."

Longtime co-star Kajol, who has delivered several blockbusters with Khan including *DDLJ*, *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* and *My Name Is Khan*, posted a cheerful note: "Happy happy 60th to a life well lived... advice for the day! Don't count the candles. Here's to turning 29 again. Wish all and only good things for you and yours!" Filmmaker Karan Johar, reflecting on their decades-long bond, penned a heartfelt tribute: "I have such a vivid and distinct memory of meeting you, *Bhai*, on the sets of

Karan Arjun. I went expecting the aura of a rising superstar but instead met a magical man with a beating heart. Your consistent kindness and generosity of spirit are just as iconic as your wide open arms. You're my family, *Bhai*." Adding a humorous twist to the flurry of wishes, actor Akshay Kumar posted a witty note on X: "Many, many congratulations on your special day, Shahrukh. *60 ka lagta nahi hai vaise tu kahin se. Shakal se 40, akal se 120* :) Happy Birthday dost. Stay blessed."

King teaser drops on birthday

It's *Badshah's* birthday and how could the day go by without a surprise for his fans? On the occasion of Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan's 60th birthday, fans received a special treat as the makers of his much-anticipated action entertainer *King* unveiled the official title and teaser on Sunday. The film, produced by Red Chillies Entertainment and Marflix Pictures, marks Shah Rukh Khan's second collaboration with director Siddharth Anand after *Pathaan*. The one-minute, eleven-second teaser features gripping visuals, fast-paced action, and a darker, more intense version of Khan than audiences have ever seen before. Sporting silver hair, sharp expressions, and a brooding aura, the actor embodies a ruthless and enigmatic persona.



Emraan Hashmi strikes a pose as he is spotted during Haq promotions



Neha and Aisha Sharma are all smiles as they are spotted outside a cafe in Bandra



Tripti Dimri is spotted outside a pet clinic in Bandra

Pics: Varinder Chawla
CAUGHT ON CAM

Celebs were snapped as they were out and about in Mumbai

Vidhi Santosh Mehta

From making her acting debut as a teenager in Imtiaz Ali's *Rockstar* to representing India at the United Nations, Sanjana Sanghi has carved a remarkable path that bridges art, advocacy, and global impact. As UNDP India's Youth Champion and a Distinguished Judge for the UN's Young Leaders for the SDGs cohort, she continues to inspire a generation of young changemakers. In an exclusive interview with *The Free Press Journal*, Sanjana opens up about representing India on the world stage, her message to global leaders, and how she balances cinema with her humanitarian pursuits. Excerpts:

Q. You recently served as a Distinguished Judge for the UN's Young Leaders for the SDGs cohort. How did it feel to represent India on such a global platform?

A. It has been a huge honour to be entrusted with the responsibility of being a Distinguished Judge for the Young Leaders for the SDGs and to join so many incredible changemakers that I've long looked up to, like Malala Yousufzai, Dia Mirza, and Lily Singh. It also marks the next phase in my humanitarian journey, mentoring and advising young changemakers using the experience and knowledge I've gained over the past decade of working in this space.

Q. What stood out to you most about the young changemakers you evaluated as part of the UN panel?

A. What stood out most was their unwavering commitment, even in the most testing circumstances. Many of these young leaders come from war zones or drought-stricken regions, yet their determination to find innovative solutions and help their communities never wavers. It's one thing to create movements when resources are abundant, but it's an entirely different thing to do it while living through crisis and scarcity. That kind of resilience and purpose truly inspired me.

Q. You also delivered a keynote at the UN General Assembly Hall during the Summit of the Future Action Days. What message did you hope to leave with world leaders?

A. My message was simple: that the youth must be the architects of their own future, not just the inheritors of it. In all the programs I'm part of, I see young people eager to lead, to make their voices

Sanjana Sanghi: Leading India's youth voice

Actress opens up about representing India on the world stage, her message to global leaders, and how she balances cinema with her humanitarian pursuits

heard, and to rise to the occasion, whether in the private sector or in government. But to make that possible, we must give them a seat at the tables of change. The future can't just be planned for the youth; it must be built with them.

Q. As UNDP India's Youth Champion, how do you see the role of young Indians evolving in shaping global development conversations?

A. Young Indians are truly leading the way across the world in technology, health, entertainment, and every other field. Over the past decade, we've made incredible progress in ensuring that our impact is seen and heard globally, while still staying rooted in our Indian identity. We have the largest young demographic in the

world, and that comes with immense influence on the global economy and culture. Realising this potential and leveraging it effectively is the key. I believe young Indians are not just participants in global development, they're shaping it.

Q. From addressing the UN to partnering with the World Bank, you've bridged cinema, advocacy, and policy. How do you balance these worlds?

A. That's very kind of you to say. For me, it's always been about following my heart and pairing that with genuine intent and hard work. I started my journey in cinema with *Rockstar* when I was just 13, but I always knew my heart also lay in academia. Balancing both worlds meant a lot of time management, sleepless nights, and the unwavering support of my family. When I signed *Dil Bechara* and also became a Delhi University Gold Medalist in the same year, it reaffirmed my belief that only we can limit our own potential.

Q. You recently joined the Board of Advisors for the Millennium Campus Network alongside John Legend. What excites you most about that collaboration?

A. I believe it's the shared sense of purpose and commitment to creating a better world that unites us all. Being able to share spaces and conversations with such legendary individuals, quite literally (pun intended!), is something I could not have even dreamt of.

Q. Having shared global stages with icons like Dia Mirza, Malala Yousufzai, and Lilly Singh, what does this growing representation of Indian women on world platforms mean to you?

A. It means the world. For years, women's voices were subdued for countless reasons. But now, there's a new kind of fearlessness running through our veins, one that allows us to be relentless in ensuring that we are seen and heard, while doing so with grace and intention. Trailblazers like Dia, Malala, Lilly, and so many others have paved the way for the rest of us, to follow our heart and never be afraid of expressing what lies in our heart.

Taking cinema to the mountains and beyond

Mobile cinema innovator Picturtime brings inflatable theatres to DIFF 2025, merging technology, resilience and cinematic access

CJ Desk

As the Dharamshala International Film Festival (DIFF) 2025 concludes recently, a remarkable team has once again brought cinema to the mountains. The crew from Picturtime, creators of India's Mobile Digital Movie Theatre (MDMT), transported their inflatable theatres to Himachal Pradesh, reaffirming their mission to make cinema accessible anywhere.

Holding two patents, Picturtime has installed its mobile theatres across India — from Ladakh, home to the world's highest-altitude cinema at 11,562 feet, to Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, and Maharashtra. During the pandemic, these theatres were repurposed as COVID field hospitals, underlining



Sushil Chaudhary

their versatility and social impact. At DIFF 2025, Picturtime's Dolby 5.1-equipped setup hosted screenings of *Homebound*, India's

official entry to the 2026 Oscars, and *Songs of Forgotten Trees*, winner of Best Director (Orizzonti) at the Venice Film Festival 2025. Founder and CEO Sushil Chaudhary said that the return to Dharamshala was both "an emotional and logistical test" after months of floods and landslides. "Every installation is a story of resilience," he said.



Pic: Varinder Chawla

Yami Gautam talks *Haq*

Actress opens up on her new film *Haq*, saying it aims to start discussion and bring audiences back to theatres

CJ Desk

Actress Yami Gautam, known for choosing strong and meaningful roles, is ready to impress again with her new film, *Haq*. The movie is a courtroom drama inspired by the real-life Shah Bano case, focusing on women's courage, truth, and justice.

Speaking about her choice of films, Yami said, "The idea is to invoke a discussion and not

a debate. The idea is to make a film and not a project. We want to present something from our heart and passion, and get the audience back in the theatre. It should be worth their time and money."

In *Haq*, the actress plays Shah Bano, and Emraan Hashmi plays her husband.

The film tells the story of a woman who fought for her rights in the late 1970s after being abandoned by her husband.

Directed by Suparn Varma and produced by Vineet Jain, *Haq*

shows the struggles and challenges Shah Bano faced while standing up for her dignity and equality.

The movie promises strong performances and a story that makes viewers think.

Yami Gautam has often balanced commercial films with serious and meaningful stories. With *Haq*, she hopes to continue this trend and encourage audiences to reflect on important social issues while enjoying the cinema experience.

Haq is set to release in theatres on November 7, 2025.



A still from *Haq*



I am because of you: Esha

Actress Esha Deol celebrates 44th birthday, shares heartfelt note for parents Dharmendra and Hema Malini

CJ Desk

Actress Esha Deol celebrated her 44th birthday on Sunday by showering her parents, Dharmendra and Hema Malini, with love and gratitude, saying, "I am because of you."

Esha took to her official Instagram handle and shared a throwback photo from her childhood, posing with her mother and father. In the picture, Dharmendra and Hema Malini look lovingly at little Esha, who faces the camera with an adorable smile. Accompanying the post, the *Dhoom* actress wrote, "I am because of you. I love you my papa & mamma" along with kisses, a red heart, evil eye, and hug emojis. She also thanked her fans for their birthday wishes: "A big thank you to all of you for the lovely birthday wishes & blessings. Love you all. Stay happy, healthy & strong," she added.

Actress Manisha Koirala reacted to Esha's post, calling it "Adorable" and sharing several red heart emojis. This is not the first time Esha has shared her admiration for her mother. On October 16, Hema Malini turned 77, and Esha posted a heartfelt note, calling her mother the "Dream Girl of the nation." She shared two photographs, including one where she planted a kiss on Hema's cheek, and captioned it, "Happy birthday to my Queen, my mamma & The Dream Girl of the nation ... We love you." For context, Hema Malini first met Dharmendra on the sets of the 1970 film *Tum Haseen Main Jawaan*. At the time, Dharmendra was already married to Prakash Kaur and had four children - Sunny, Bobby, Ajeeta, and Vijeta Deol. Despite opposition, Hema and Dharmendra married in 1980 and were later blessed with two daughters, Esha and Ahana Deol Vohra.



Kajal explores Melbourne magic

CJ Desk

Kajal Aggarwal recently flew to Melbourne with husband Gautam Kitchlu for a fun getaway. Sharing her experience with her InstaFam, the *Singham* actress dropped a video compilation of glimpses from her trip.

Kajal also penned a long note, revealing what all she experienced while she was in Melbourne. She wrote, "Melbourne. A city that feels like a living canvas. Every corner bursts with creativity, from the graffiti-clad laneways to the quietly elegant cafés tucked between historic façades. (sic)"

Kajal revealed that what fascinated her the most about the city was how beautifully it combines its past and present. "What fascinated me most was how seamlessly the city marries its past with its present - where Victorian-era architecture stands shoulder to shoulder with bold, contemporary design (its colloquially called Facadism). The balance between preservation and progress is so thoughtfully done; it's a masterclass



in historic redevelopment", she added. Talking about the beautiful culture of the place, Kajal went on to share, "The coffee culture here is truly something else; each café feels like a story brewed to perfection. Saint Dreux became a quick favourite - their Japanese sando and artisanal coffee are an experience in minimalism and flavor."

"Fine dining in Melbourne is an art form in itself. Yarra Yering's Yiaga, led by the talented Chef Hugh Allen and designed by architect John

Wardle, is a sensory journey - where food, space, and storytelling converge effortlessly. Gimlet, with its timeless European charm and impeccable craftsmanship, celebrates classic elegance with a modern twist. And Attica - a revelation. Chef Ben Shewry's creativity and deep connection to Australian ingredients create dishes that are both emotional and unforgettable," she added.

Maan Panu: Singer impresses Salman

CJ Desk

Bollywood superstar Salman Khan recently gave a shout-out to singer Maan Panu on his social media, revealing that the singer's latest track *I'm Done* left him impressed and stole his heart. Soon after Salman's post, netizens were left wondering, Who is Maan Panu? here's everything you need to know about the singer. Maan Panu, born on July 5, hails from Kumaon, Uttarakhand, and pursued a degree in Mathematical Sciences at Kumaun University.

According to his LinkedIn profile, Maan began his professional journey at Hitech Proaudio India Pvt. Ltd. as a Marketing Intern from March 2022 to December 2022 (10 months). During his tenure, he handled social media operations, successfully growing the company's Instagram following by 80% organ-

ically, and closed around 25 successful deals in just five months.

In February 2022, Maan also worked as an Assistant Music Producer with Farr Studio in Mumbai, where he freelanced for about three years. He assisted in producing an upcoming album featuring six songs, collaborating closely with artists and programmers to ensure the best version of each track.

Later, he worked as a singer-songwriter with ZOEE from December 2022 to August 2025. Maan's track *I'm Done*, released on September 17, 2025, under Warner Music India as part of I-Popstar: Vol. 1, has been taking social media by storm, thanks to its heart-touching lyrics and Maan's soulful voice. He is currently seen on the singing reality show *I-Popstar*, where he is a part of Aditya Rikhar's team.

Salman Khan's post for Maan Panu

On Saturday, Salman shared a photo of himself on Instagram from his Panvel farmhouse, dressed in a cowboy look. He wrote, "An amazing track after a very long time.. Congratulations! Wish this was one of my songs..@maanpanu..." Reacting to Salman's shout-out, Maan wrote, "Now I'm Done," followed by a red heart and a hug emoji.



Preity Zinta cherishes Halloween moments

CJ Desk

For actress Preity Zinta, Halloween 2025 was all about the 'joy on her kids faces'. The *Veer Zaara* actress took to social media and uploaded a few glimpses from her Halloween celebration this year with her husband Gene Goodenough and their twin kids.

Preity's post included an adorable family pic of the three in their respective costumes; however, she did not dress up for Halloween this year. We could also see the little ones enjoying themselves while trick-or-treating in the neighbourhood. Expressing her joy, the *Kal Ho Naa Ho* actress penned on her IG, "This Halloween was all about Else, Anna, the Police and all things spooky (Two hearts, Ghost and Mage emojis) Trick or treating in the neighbourhood for candy is probably the most wholesome community experience here (red heart emoji) (sic)."

Preity added that while she liked dressing up for Halloween in the past, it has become all about her children now. "There was a time I would get all dressed up for a Halloween Party ... now it's all about the joy on my kids faces and costumes that make them happy (Star-struck emoji) #HappyHalloween #Ting, (sic)" she added.



BRANDSutra



The best companies create markets. They don't just serve them.
— Philip Kotler,
Father of Modern Marketing

Mumbai, Monday, November 3, 2025

Cut From A Different Cloth

Ajay Arora talks about taking brand D'Decor internationally, and the implications of Indian consumers taking pride in their identities.

Tsunami Costabir

From pioneering luxury furnishings in India to redefining performance fabrics with its new-age brand Fabricare, D'Decor has consistently stayed a step ahead of the curve. For Managing Director Ajay Arora, innovation is not just about meeting consumer demand — it's often about creating it. Yet, as Arora points out, building a brand today is far more complex than it once was. Fragmented media channels, fleeting attention spans, and the need for authenticity have transformed the marketing landscape.

In an interview with BrandSutra, Arora speaks on mastering the new age with equal parts creativity, technology, and consumer insight.

Edited excerpts...

Q. What inspired D'Decor's pivot into the B2C home fabrics space, and what factors helped the brand build the strong equity it enjoys today?

A. Our journey has been quite unique. We started as an export-driven business, long before the D'Decor consumer brand



was launched. Between 1999 and 2010, our focus was entirely on international markets because we had the capability to make world-class products — but India, at that time, didn't have a consumer base ready to appreciate or pay for them.

By 2009, the global financial crisis prompted us to rethink. We realised that real power rests with brands — the power to innovate, connect emotionally, and build customer loyalty. The Indian market, meanwhile, was maturing rapidly. With diverse home styles, regional aesthetics, and a growing desire for personalisation, India became an ideal market for custom-made home furnishings.

When we launched D'Decor, there was no established brand in the consumer's mind. We entered that space with the right timing, capability, and vision. Our latest innovation, Fabricare, represents the next phase in that journey — a performance brand built on the idea of "beauty with brains." It's fabric you don't have to worry about — stylish, functional and smart.

Q. Do you believe supply creates its own demand, or does consumer need dictate innovation?

A. In a supply-constrained economy like India, I believe availability can trigger demand. When you make something available for the first time, supply can indeed create its own demand. But if it's just an incremental improvement, then you must listen closely to consumers — understand what problems they face and what gaps existing products haven't solved.

As innovators, we rely on consumer insights, international trends, and a bit of common-sense intuition. When you combine these intelligently, demand follows.

Q. How has your media strategy evolved over the years? Is it more difficult to build a brand today than it was in the late 2000s?

A. When we first started advertising, our biggest advantage was that we were alone. There was no other consumer-facing brand in our category. But we still had to compete for attention

against larger industries like automotive or mobile phones, which commanded massive ad spends.

The human mind needs repetition to register a message, and that takes time and investment. But because we had no direct competition, our messaging was more memorable. Today, the challenge is far greater. Consumers are fragmented — some are on OTT platforms, others on social media, and some are barely reachable through traditional media. Getting attention has become exponentially harder.

Building a brand today is ten times more difficult. The upside is that targeted marketing allows precision — you can talk directly to the audience that matters without unnecessary spillover. However, digital marketing demands far better content — relevant, authentic, and dynamic. You can't rely on a single campaign film for months.

Modern consumers want engagement that feels real and personal. The challenge now is to be consistent and present across all channels — while staying efficient and precise with your message and spend.

Q. D'Decor's associations with celebrity couples — from Gauri Khan to Alia and Ranbir — have been iconic. How do you choose brand ambassadors?

A. Authenticity has always guided our choices. Mrs Khan's partnership with D'Decor reflected her genuine passion for interior design — something she later turned into a successful business of her own.

Similarly, with Ranbir and Alia, we wanted a couple that represented modern India. Now, as media has reported, they have moved into their new home, and that displays an authentic connection to the category.

Q. How is D'Decor leveraging AI and technology today?

A. Technology has always been at the heart of our business — from manufacturing to managing complex supply chains. Today, AI is opening new frontiers across multiple aspects of our work.

The first area is content creation. Traditional ad shoots with massive crews are becoming outdated. AI allows us to produce digital content that's highly flexible and cost-effective — changing colours, moods, or even settings post-production with precision.

Second, in product development, AI assists in design generation and visualisation. It helps consumers imagine how fabrics will look in their homes with remarkable realism. Given that we offer nearly 17,000 product options, AI-



enhanced search and recommendation tools help our sales force suggest the right products faster and more accurately.

The third use case is customer service, where AI enables faster response times and more personalised interactions. Together, these innovations are making our brand more agile, efficient, and consumer-focused.

Q. How do you envision laying out the brand's retail strategy? Is expanding physical footprint still important?

A. Quick commerce is teaching us a lot. India is possibly the only market where consumers genuinely expect a bed sheet in 10 minutes — and it's happening.

For us, it's less about expanding physical stores and more about bringing the entire experience to the consumer. In home furnishings, the purchase involves three elements — design consultation, customisation (like stitching or upholstery), and the product itself. Our goal is to integrate these into a seamless, at-home experience.

We're also strengthening our collaboration with interior designers, who have seen renewed demand post-COVID as consumers invest more in their homes. Growth is coming from premiumisation, performance fabrics, and hospitality segments. The luxury home market is booming — and we're positioning ourselves to meet that demand head-on.

Q. What's next for D'Decor?

A. The next big step is taking the B2C brand internationally. We've built strong manufacturing and brand capabilities — now it's time to extend that globally. Whether we build a brand abroad, acquire one, or pursue both routes — that's something we're evaluating closely.

The second focus area is Fabricare. We want it to become synonymous with performance home furnishing — for spaces that see real life, movement, and activity. Homes where families, kids, and pets coexist comfortably. We want consumers to experience and trust the difference Fabricare brings — not just in promise, but in proven capability.

Keeping It Reel

How a democratisation of fame has proved that relatability and creativity can forge far deeper engagement than celebrity endorsements.

At an annual growth rate of nearly 25%, India's influencer marketing industry is on a steep upward trajectory — projected to surpass INR 5,600 crore by 2026. What began as an experimental marketing tactic has matured into a thriving ecosystem that drives conversations, shapes purchase decisions, and builds authentic brand connections.

This exponential growth signifies a critical shift: influencer marketing is no longer a passing trend. For brands across categories, it has evolved into an indispensable part of the communication strategy — a bridge between creativity, culture, and commerce.

A creator with a community of 20,000 deeply engaged followers can deliver more authentic impact than a celebrity with millions of passive fans. Authenticity travels further than polish — and trust has become the new currency of influence.

This shift has paved the way for micro-influencers and regional creators, who offer brands higher engagement, cultural relevance and credibility. For marketers, the message is simple: in an age of personalisation, relevance outweighs reach.

AI: The New Age Catalyst

If TikTok and Instagram ignited the influencer revolution, Artificial Intelligence is now powering its evolution. From identifying the right creators to predicting campaign outcomes and tracking performance in real time, AI is making influencer marketing smarter, faster, and more accountable.

The rise of virtual influencers and AI-generated content is also expanding the creative frontier. These innovations allow brands to experiment with storytelling formats that blend technology with imagination — offering futuristic yet authentic ways to engage audiences.

As India continues to lead one of the fastest-growing creator economies in the world, the next phase is going to be characterised by the synergy of the human creative force and artificial intelligence. Brands and creators that are open to this change and can find the balance between creativity and credibility will define sustainable relationships with communities.

(The author is the Founder & CEO of Xley.ai)

From TikTok's Virality To India's Creator Revolution

The TikTok era marked a cultural inflection point. Short, relatable, and unfiltered videos turned ordinary people into overnight celebrities. The platform's democratisation of fame proved that relatability and creativity could generate far deeper engagement than traditional celebrity endorsements.

Following TikTok's ban in India, platforms like Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts filled the void, giving rise to a dynamic creator economy. What began with lip-syncing and trends has now evolved into a sophisticated industry powered by creativity, technology, and measurable impact.

The Power Of Authenticity

As the industry matured, one truth became clear — influence isn't about reach; it's about resonance. Today's audiences seek creators who mirror their language, culture and lived experiences.



OPINION
Gautam Madhavan

Tsunami Costabir

For decades, the idea of taking a cruise holiday felt alien to most Indian travellers — a little too Western, a little too uncertain. Would it be safe? Would it be claustrophobic? Would the sea make them sick? "Those were the most common questions when we first started marketing cruises in India in the late '90s," recalls Naresh Rawal, Senior Vice President – Sales & Marketing (India & Middle East), StarDream Cruises. And it took years of awareness, reassurance, and experience-building to wash away those perceptions.

From Sea Skepticism To Sea Celebrations

StarDream Cruises, which operates the Genting Dream from Singapore and ships like the Star Navigator and Star Voyager from Taiwan and Hong Kong, respectively, is part of an iconic lineage. "Star Cruises was possibly the brand that introduced cruising in India," Rawal says. "We've been marketing cruises here since 1996–97."

Today, the transformation is striking. What was once considered a risky or extravagant mode of travel is now a mainstream, aspirational experience — even for weddings. "We've done some beautiful Indian weddings on board, including traditional Hindu ceremonies. Of course, fire is a big concern on a ship, but we've created controlled spaces under safety supervision so that even the sacred agni finds its place at sea."

From weddings to milestone birthdays, corporate retreats, and friend-reunions, cruise holidays have found resonance across segments. "In India, around 37–38%



The Best Ideas Come Out Of The Blue

From skepticism to dream weddings at sea, cruises have charted an exciting course in India's leisure landscape, Naresh Rawal tells us.

of our cruise business now comes from the MICE category — meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions," Rawal adds. "We've hosted events for 2,300 guests at once on board."

A Floating City Of Experiences

For anyone still picturing small cabins and monotonous buffets, the reality is far more spectacular. The Genting Dream, for instance, is a 150,000-ton ship with 19 decks, 1,630 cabins, and room for 4,000 guests. "It's practically a floating city. There's a 999-seat theatre for Broadway-style performances, foam parties, bowling alleys, children's arcades, and six water slides and a 32-meter zip line that hangs 19 decks above the ocean."

Adventure, leisure, and indulgence blend effortlessly aboard. For those who crave exclusivity, the Palace Suites redefine luxury. "The Palace is our ship-within-a-ship concept — complete with a private pool, restaurant, spa, gym, and butler service," he explains. "Your experience begins at the port itself, with dedicated assistance through check-in and immigration. Guests can even have their luggage



unpacked and packed by their butler."

At the other end, families often opt for balcony cabins over interior state rooms to enjoy stunning views of the sea. "I could sit for hours on the balcony, sipping a cup of coffee. The breeze is unmatched, and the best ideas come out of the blue," says Rawal, referring to the endless blue skies and sea. The onboard restaurants range from inclusive dining options to specialty cuisines, and yes, "there's even box cricket and pickleball on the top deck. Indians love that."

Evolving With The Indian Traveller

In the early years, coastal metros like Mumbai, Chennai, and Goa were StarDream's key source markets — logical, given their familiarity with the sea. But that's changed dramatically. "Today, our business is spread across India. In fact, a large chunk of our guests now come from Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities — from the interiors of the country."

This expansion has been driven by close partnerships with travel agents. "We work with nearly 10,000 travel partners

across India," he explains. "They're our extended sales force, our storytellers. We even have a dedicated platform called the StarDream Cruise Buddy, which gives them access to itineraries, videos, and promotional material to educate customers. Because what we sell isn't transport — it's experience."

As Indian travellers have grown more global in their expectations, their cruising habits have evolved too. "Initially, guests would book the cheapest interior rooms and the shortest two-night itineraries," Rawal says. "Now, they're choosing balcony suites and four to five-night trips. They've seen international standards of hospitality and want that same excellence closer home."

Bollywood, too, unsurprisingly, helped romanticise this idea early on. Films like 'Ajnabee', 'Bheja Fry 2', 'U Me Aur Hum' — were all filmed aboard StarDream Cruises and played a huge role in making Indian audiences dream about vacations at sea. "We've come a long way from convincing people that cruising is safe," Rawal says. "Now, we're convincing them that it's extraordinary."

IN BRIEF

DDB to be retired as Omnicom-IPG merge



DDB, one of advertising's most iconic creative agencies, is set to be retired as part of the consolidation following the merger between IPG (Interpublic Group) and Omnicom, forming the world's largest advertising holding company. Once the merger is finalised, DDB will be absorbed into a streamlined global network, with its legacy dissolved among Omnicom and IPG's core creative agencies — BBDO Worldwide, McCann, and TBWA\Worldwide. The decision is part of a USD 750 million annual synergy effort, aiming to eliminate overlapping functions, reduce costs, and accelerate innovation amid changing industry dynamics and the increasing role of AI-driven marketing.

OpenAI preps for Wall Street debut



OpenAI is reportedly preparing the foundation for a historic Wall Street debut — one that could value the company at a whopping USD 1 trillion. The IPO could happen as early as the second half of 2026. If it proceeds, the offering could rank among the largest IPOs in history, marking a major milestone for the AI boom. The public listing aims to position OpenAI to channel enormous funding into developing next-generation AI systems while advancing its long-term mission to benefit humanity.

PepsiCo unveils a new corporate identity



PepsiCo has unveiled a redesigned corporate logo that moves away from the iconic multi-coloured globe that echoed the soda brand, instead centering on a white "P" surrounded by an orange symbol for food and grain, a blue droplet for beverages, and a green leaf for sustainability. This rebrand is meant to unify PepsiCo's more than 500 brands and help consumers recognise the breadth of its portfolio, not just PepsiCo.

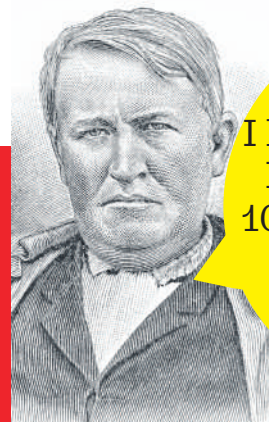
MMA is now Marketing + Media Alliance



MMA Global has announced its rebranding as the Marketing + Media Alliance (MMA) — a decisive shift from "association" to alliance. The community, led by CMOs, aims to advance marketers' ability to create value by tackling industry questions with evidence and experimentation. "If you're building work that could reset how marketers create value, bring it to the Alliance," says Moneka Khurana, Country Head & Board Member, MMA Global India. "We'll validate it in the Labs, translate it into operating playbooks, and scale it with the CMO community."

FREE PRESS JOURNAL SCHOOL

MUMBAI | MONDAY | NOVEMBER 3, 2025



I have not failed.
I've just found
10,000 ways that
won't work
- Thomas Edison

Some Hamas cells remain active in parts of Gaza under our control, and we are systematically eliminating them," Netanyahu told ministers.

Israel to continue attacks despite ceasefire



BJP will migrate, not people

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Sunday said that if the INDIA bloc forms the government in Bihar under the leadership of RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav, it will check out-migration of people and force the BJP to migrate from the eastern state.



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed on Sunday to disarm Hamas and demilitarise the Gaza Strip, saying his government would keep targeting remaining militant cells despite a ceasefire that took effect last month.

"Some Hamas cells remain active in parts of Gaza under our control, and we are systematically eliminating them," Netanyahu told ministers, citing areas in Rafah and Khan Younis in southern Gaza. "Disarming Hamas and demilitarising the Gaza Strip is our guiding principle," he said, adding that it was a goal he had agreed on with US President Donald Trump.

Netanyahu said Israeli forces would continue to act to protect troops still in Gaza, adding that Israel would notify its US allies of operations "

DID U KNOW?

At least 236
Palestinians had
been killed since
the truce began
more than three
weeks ago.

Delhi's air quality worsens to 'very poor'



Delhi's air quality worsened on Sunday as weak winds trapped pollutants, raising the overall AQI to 366 in the "very poor" category with three monitoring stations recording readings above 400 in the "severe" category, Central Pollution Control Board data showed. The PM2.5 concentration stood at 189.6 micrograms per cubic metre.

Para-badminton: Gold for Pramod & Sukant Kadam



India continued its dominance in para-badminton with stellar performances by Pramod Bhagat, Sukant Kadam, and Krishna Nagar, who led the medal tally with gold, silver, and bronze finishes across multiple categories at the Polytron Indonesia Para-Badminton International 2025. Pramod Bhagat and Sukant Kadam clinched the gold medal in men's doubles.

Women need real moments of solitude and self-reflection to balance out how much of ourselves we give away - Barbara De Angelis



♥ The claim that Shah Rukh Khan is turning 60 cannot be factually confirmed
- Shashi Tharoor

MUMBAI | MONDAY | NOVEMBER 3, 2025

1,000 men to guard PGIMER

DID U KNOW?
PGIMER, established in 1962 is an Institute of National Importance and a tertiary care hospital for north India

The Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER), Chandigarh has inducted 287 ex-servicemen, making the total number of security personnel deployed at the institute 1,000, officials said on Sunday. Addressing the veterans who have joined, Director Dr Vivek Lal

on Saturday said, "With the induction of Army ex-servicemen as the new batch of security personnel, PGIMER is moving closer to realising its vision of a safer, more responsive, and patient-friendly environment. "The commitment and discipline that these ex-servicemen bring will immensely strengthen security," Lal said.



King teaser unveiled on Badshah's b'day



It's Badshah's birthday and how could the day go by without a surprise for his fans? On the occasion of Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan's 60th birthday, fans received a special treat as the makers of his much-anticipated action entertainer King unveiled the official title and teaser on Sunday. The film marks Shah Rukh Khan's second collaboration with director Siddharth Anand after 'Pathaan'.

Enduring charm



What is it about Shah Rukh Khan, who turned 60 today, that makes people cheer, cry, and sometimes even travel half-way across the world just to see him wave from his balcony? Maybe it's his "chocolate boy" charm, maybe it's his incredible journey, or maybe it's just the way he makes everyone believe that no dream is too big to come true. From millennials who watched 'DDLJ' in the '90s to Gen Z who discovered him in 'Pathaan', SRK's fan base spans generations; there's something about SRK

From millennials who watched 'DDLJ' in the '90s to Gen Z who discovered him in 'Pathaan', SRK's fan base spans generations.



that speaks to people, no matter their age or where they're from. Every year on his birthday, the crowd outside Mannat swells past midnight. Fans sing, dance, and hold up banners that read "King Khan Forever". This year was

no different. People came dressed in SRK T-shirts, some holding heart-shaped balloons, others recording every second on their phones. A few fans had even flown in from Indonesia just to catch a glimpse of him.

Iran committed to 'peaceful' N-programme



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Sunday his government is fully committed to supporting the development of

the country's "peaceful" nuclear programme. Pezeshkian reiterated that Iran's nuclear program is intended to meet domestic needs and improve living standards, not to develop weapons. He said Iran's nuclear activities have been the target of "negative and biased propaganda" aimed at convincing the public that nuclear energy is synonymous with atomic weapons.



Rahul jumps into muddy pond

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday jumped into a muddy pond in Bihar and interacted with fishermen present at the spot, whom he told that they always had his back. The leader of the opposition in Lok Sabha, who addressed a rally in Begusarai district, went to a nearby pond along with former state minister Mukesh Sahni.



Somehow, in all the grind, you start figuring out who you really are
- Washington Sundar

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MUMBAI | MONDAY | NOVEMBER 3, 2025

As Sundar steps in



Australia bounced back when Tilak looked to scoop, but got it off top edge

India level Oz series



hough all-rounder Washington Sundar didn't get to bowl, he stepped up when it mattered the most to smash an unbeaten 49 off 23 balls as India defeated Australia by five wickets in the third T20I at the Bellerive Oval on Sunday. Chasing 187, India's top

seven contributed in patches, but it was Sundar's late flourish, laced with three fours and four sixes, that sealed the win for India with nine balls to spare and level the five-match series 1-1. The result also marked Australia's first defeat in six T20 Internationals at Hobart. India began their chase with intent, as Abhishek looked in fluent touch to slice Xavier Bartlett for six, before carting Sean Abbott for

two fours and a six. But the momentum shifted when Nathan Ellis struck twice in quick succession - Abhishek mistimed a pull and the top-edge was caught by the keeper, while Shubman Gill was trapped lbw. Jitesh finished off the chase in style with a lofted drive over extra cover.

DID U KNOW?
Axar fell when he was cramped for room by a bouncer from Nathan Ellis.

46th 'Fit India Sundays on Cycle'

The 46th edition of Fit India Sundays on Cycle, called 'Pedal for Clean Air', became a strong rally for both fitness and environmental awareness today as nearly 500 citizens cycled through the streets of New Delhi and thousands more took part from over 10,000 locations across the country. The CPCB, the CSE, and the MYAS collaborate to promote clean air and healthy living.



IPL auction moved overseas, again?



While news about the IPL 2026 mini-auction taking place in India surfaced earlier, there seems to be a change in approach concerning the auction location,

which is now likely to take place abroad. While the franchises haven't been officially notified of the exact city, they have probably received hints. The expected destination is likely to be somewhere in the Gulf area, like the previous auctions.

India 'A' win over SA 'A'



Rishabh Pant's (90) and Anshul Kamboj's late strike of an unbeaten 37 guided India A to a composed three-wicket win against South Africa A in the first unofficial Test on

Sunday, which was played here at the BCCI Centre of Excellence Ground 1. India A captain Rishabh Pant and lower-order batters shone with the bat as the hosts pulled off a win under pressure.

QUICK NEWS

Jamieson, Sodhi return to squad

New Zealand have named the squad for the upcoming T20I series against West Indies, starting on Wednesday at Eden Park in Auckland, with Kyle Jamieson and Ish Sodhi making a return.

Real Madrid cruise past Valencia

Real Madrid crushed Valencia at the Bernabeu and continued their winning streak at home with seven out of seven victories (five in La Liga and two in the Champions League).

Rotated Bayern dismantle Leverkusen

Bayern Munich continued its impeccable start to the Bundesliga season with a commanding 3-0 victory over Bayer Leverkusen, ending the visitors' 37-match unbeaten away run. Bayern coach Vincent Kompany made seven changes from midweek's Cup win.



I don't think I have the ability or patience to teach badminton to others
- Saina Nehwal

MUMBAI | MONDAY | NOVEMBER 3, 2025

Pankaj Advani to lead India at World Snooker

Three-time champion Pankaj Advani will lead India's campaign at the IBSF World Snooker Championships, beginning in Doha on Monday. The men's event will be held in two stages with the top performers seeded directly into the second stage. In the women's event that begins on Friday, six Indians, including reigning National 6-red champion Keerthana Pandian, and the promising Natasha Chethan, will vie for top honours.



Kane Williamson retires from T20Is

Former New Zealand captain Kane Williamson has announced his retirement from T20 Internationals to focus on his ODI and Test future. Williamson, who drew down curtain to his 93-game T20I career months before the next T20 WC in India and Sri Lanka in February, will miss the upcoming white-ball series against West Indies to focus on the three-Test series in December. Williamson, who made his T20I debut in 2011, captained the NZ on 75 occasions - leading them to two ICC T20 WC semi-finals and a final.



Rashtrapati Nilayam's initiative

The cyclists pedalled through the streets of Secunderabad, spreading awareness about the importance of environmental conservation and adopting a healthy lifestyle.

Pedal for Planet



Rashtrapati Nilayam, the winter retreat of the President in Secunderabad, Hyderabad, organised 'Cyclothon-Pedal for Planet' on Sunday to promote environmental sustainability and healthy living. The second edition of

Cyclothon was organised in collaboration with the Hyderabad Cyclists Group and sponsored by the

DID U KNOW?
Rashtrapati Nilayam is the official winter retreat for the President of India in Hyderabad, Telangana.



National Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC). The event witnessed active participation from 1,200 people, including defence, police personnel and various cycling groups of the city who covered a 20-km route from Rashtrapati Nilayam to Secunderabad Parade

Ground and back. Team Telangana & Andhra Sub Area (TASA) of the Indian Army enthusiastically participated in the event, which was flagged off by Maj Gen Ajay Misra, General Officer Commanding Telangana & Andhra Sub Area and badminton Olympic medallist Saina Nehwal.

Clinical Swiatek defeats Keys in opener

Former World No.1 Iga Swiatek of Poland started her campaign in the WTA Final with a clinical performance to straight sets win against Madison Keys in the opening

match, Riyadh on Saturday. In the second match of the day, Elena Rybakina used all her experience to get the better of Amanda Anisimova to launch her WTA Finals campaign in style.



T20 tourney in J-K: Organisers flee

The Indian Heaven Premier League, a T20 cricket tournament being played in J&K's Srinagar, featuring local, national & international players, has run into rough weather with some players

being stranded at a local hotel and organisers reportedly fleeing the Valley. The high-profile cricket event, has several players boycotting matches over unpaid dues, leaving the event in disarray.

FP SCHOOL EDITOR: AMRISH HERDENIA

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