

Sanitary workers protest at Telangana Secretariat over pending salaries

Hyderabad: After retired employees and contractors, sanitary workers and scavengers working at different police stations staged a protest at the Secretariat on Tuesday, demanding payment of their pending salaries. The sanitary workers sweep and maintain sanitation at different police stations across the State. They are enrolled as part-time workers and are paid a minimum salary of Rs 5,200 a month.

However, the workers alleged that they had not been paid their salaries for the past 20 months. "For the last 20 months, our salaries have not been paid. Every time we raise the issue, senior officers assure us that the salary would definitely be credited the next month. But it has not been paid so far," a sanitary worker said at the Secretariat.

Centralised kitchen also to serve 7,972 students in 131 institutions across four Nalgonda mandals

Nalgonda: A massive centralised community kitchen equipped to prepare and supply nutritious meals to nearly 60,000 students a day is being developed at Syedmujaavarpet in Suryapet district, with efforts under way to make the facility operational within the next 100 days.

Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) has contributed Rs 9.6 crore towards the project. It is being implemented with the support of the Hari Krishna Movement Charitable Foundation (HKMCF). The kitchen will serve around 1,029 government schools and junior colleges.

JNTU-Sulthanpur suspends two students for alleged ragging, attack on junior

Sangareddy: JNTU-Sulthanpur suspended two final-year B.Tech students on charges of ragging and attacking a second-year student, Ruthvik. As the management failed to respond to complaints filed by the junior students, they staged a rasta-roko on NH-161 at the entrance gate of the JNTU-Sulthanpur campus on Tuesday. As the students refused to withdraw the protest and demanded the immediate suspension of the students, the management acceded to their demand. Principal Viswanth Raj, who came to meet the protesting students, read out the suspension orders issued by him. Final-year B.Tech (Mechanical Engineering) students Karthik C and Mahadev Tej were suspended from the institute. He said they would not be allowed into the campus or pursue their studies until further orders were issued. The juniors relented following the suspension orders.

Telangana CM urges Centre to expedite approvals for Tummidihatti barrage

Hyderabad, Sep 29 (IANS) Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Tuesday urged Jal Shakti Minister CR Patil to resolve the proposed construction of the Tummidihatti barrage on the Godavari River through a dialogue with the Maharashtra government.

Updating the Union Minister about the submission of the proposal to construct the Tummidihatti barrage to the Maharashtra government, the Chief Minister requested Patil to facilitate the required approvals for the barrage.

CM Revanth Reddy, accompanied by State Irrigation Minister N. Utam Kumar Reddy, met CR Patil in Delhi on Tuesday evening.

According to the Chief Minister's Office (CMO), he apprised the Union Minister of the important pending issues pertaining to Telangana's projects in the Krishna and Godavari basins.

The Chief Minister requested the Jal Shakti Minister to expedite the process for an agreement between Telangana and Maharashtra to construct the Tummidihatti barrage at a Full Reservoir Level (FRL) of +152 meters.

The CM briefed Patil that constructing the barrage at the level of 152 meters would enable the supply of water to the Yellampalli project through gravity, which also helps to reduce both the electricity consumption and the associated costs for water supply.

Pending environmental clearances for the Telangana projects were reviewed in the meeting. CM Revanth Reddy appealed to the Union Minister to grant environmental clearances for the Palamuru-Rangareddy Lift Irrigation Scheme (PRLIS), Dindi Lift Irrigation Scheme (DLIS), Sitarama Sagar Multipurpose Project (SSMP) and Gauravelli reservoirs.

The Chief Minister brought to the attention of Patil the recent announcement of the new guidelines for environmental clearances in the light of the recent Supreme Court verdict and urged the centre to accord approvals to these projects immediately.

The Chief Minister briefed the minister that the delay in granting clearances was escalating the construction costs.

Jal Shakti Minister was also requested to expedite approval of clearances pending with the Central Water Commission (CWC) for the Sammakka Sagar project. The project's Detailed Project Report (DPR) had already been submitted to the CWC and sought approvals regarding the irrigation plan and inter-state aspects, the Chief Minister said, informing the Union Minister that discussions were underway with the Chhattisgarh government to obtain a No Objection Certificate (NOC) for the project.

The CM and the Union Minister discussed the pending installation of the telemetry system, which is being undertaken by the Krishna River Management Board (KRMB), and requested that the works be expedited.

Revanth Reddy informed that the state government had already deposited the required Rs 4.15 crore for the first phase of the installation and urged the swift completion of the installation of systems in the first, second and third phases.

State Minister G. Vivek Venkatswamy, MP Gaddam Vamsi Krishna, MLA Gaddam Vinod, State Government Advisor (Irrigation) Adityanath Das, and CM's Secretary Manikraj were also present.



Congress announces candidates for two Graduate MLC seats

Hyderabad, Sep 30 (IANS) The Congress party on Tuesday announced candidates for the forthcoming biennial elections to the Telangana Legislative Council from the two Graduates' constituencies.

Sama Rammohan Reddy will be the party candidate from Mahabubnagar-Rangareddy-Hyderabad constituency while Ramreddy Sarvotham Reddy will contest on Congress ticket from Warangal-Khammam-Nalgonda constituency.

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge approved the names, according to a statement by AICC General Secretary K.C. Venugopal on Tuesday night.

Voter enrolment in the two Graduates' constituencies of the Telangana Legislative Council began on Monday. The enrolment process began with the issue of public notice under Rule 31(3) of the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960.

Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) C. Sudharsan Reddy has asked eligible graduates to register as voters.

The electoral rolls will be prepared afresh with November 1, 2026, as the qualifying date. Those who previously registered as voters must also register afresh.

The Election Commission of India has announced that two vacancies are due in March 2027 and must be filled by conducting biennial elections.

An applicant must have completed a degree or an equivalent diploma at least three years before the qualifying date. The applicant must also be an ordinary resident of the area covered by the relevant Graduates constituency.

As per the schedule announced by the Election Commission, draft electoral rolls will be published on November 25, 2026. Final electoral rolls are due for publication on December 30, 2026.

Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) Working President K. T. Rama Rao registered his vote in Hyderabad on Monday.

He urged all eligible graduates in the two Graduate MLC constituencies where elections will be held to register as voters so they can exercise their right to vote. He requested every eligible graduate to fill out the application form and complete the voter registration process before November 6.

Emphasising that every vote is crucial in the Graduate MLC elections, KTR urged all eligible individuals to register and participate in the democratic process.



Opposition unity push faces questions over numbers, cohesion

Opposition ranks have acknowledged that the bloc does not have the required numbers in Parliament to remove the CEC.

However, Opposition parties intend to demonstrate unity over what they describe as a challenge to the electoral process's integrity and transparency.

In a recent statement, Trinamool Congress MP Kalyan Banerjee reportedly acknowledged the Opposition's limitations in removing the CEC and said that it was up to the Cockroach Janata Party (CJP) to pursue that objective.

He was apparently referring to CJP protests that were said to have led to the resignation of former Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over reported examination malpractices.

New Delhi, Sep 29 (IANS) Hours before the Congress-led Opposition platform is scheduled to meet in New Delhi on September 30 to formulate a common strategy and discuss further action against Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar over alleged poll impropriety, questions remain over the bloc's cohesiveness and its apparent objectives on the issue.

The meeting comes even as leaders within the

Janata Party (BJP) and the Congress. However, those efforts have so far failed to gain broad consensus.

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convener Arvind Kejriwal, whom Baby met personally, is understood to have indicated that, after parting ways with the INDIA bloc and facing the Congress in the forthcoming Punjab Assembly elections, his party would prefer to stay away from the initiative.

The M.K. Stalin-led Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) is also expected to skip the meeting after announcing its withdrawal from the bloc following political differences with the Congress.

Following the emergence of actor-turned-politician C. Joseph Vijay's Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) as a major force in recent elections, the Congress shifted its political alignment, leading to differences with the DMK.

However, both the AAP and DMK are said to be open to supporting a parliamentary motion if the Opposition decides to seek Gyanesh Kumar's removal as CEC.

In a letter to the newly formed organisation, Communist Party of India (Marxist) General Secretary M.A. Baby is said to have sought its suggestions and involvement in the Opposition's proposed protests.

The organisation's possible participation in future movements against the Election Commission, despite not being a political party, is expected to be among the issues discussed on Wednesday, according to a CPI(M) functionary.

Incidentally, Baby took an active role in reaching out to Opposition leaders and urging them to come together.

He wrote to several leaders, including Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee, following which she reportedly began engaging more actively with the initiative.

Despite longstanding political differences and erosion of their respective support bases, efforts were made to bring together parties opposed to both the Bharatiya

4 CISF personnel, including an officer, killed after colleague opens fire in J&Ks Kathua

Jammu, Sept 29

Four Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) personnel, including an Assistant Commandant, were killed after a Head Constable allegedly opened fire on them in Kathua district of the Jammu division on Tuesday evening.

The incident took place at around 7 pm in the higher reaches of the district at SEWA hydroelectric power project in the Basohli area, near the border with Chamba in Himachal Pradesh. It has been learnt that the accused allegedly entered into an argument with his colleagues before opening fire on them with his own service rifle.

The accused, Abdeshe Singh, a 2009-batch Head Constable, was arrested by the Kathua police and taken into custody. His service rifle was also seized by the police.

The deceased have been identified as Assistant

Commandant Ankit Kumar Pandey, Sub-Inspector Lakshman Singh and constables Sandeep Kumar and Mohammad Rafiq. The four CISF personnel sustained critical injuries in the firing and were rushed to an NHPC hospital in nearby Himachal Pradesh. They were declared dead by the doctors.

The local police, besides the CISF, are carrying out separate investigations into the incident to ascertain the exact cause and sequence of events.

However, officials said after talking to other personnel present at the site, it was suspected that the accused started firing in a fit of rage after an argument with his colleagues.



SC to hear next week PIL seeking to restrain Gyanesh from functioning as CEC

New Delhi, Sept 29

The Supreme Court on Tuesday agreed to hear next week a PIL seeking to restrain Gyanesh Kumar from functioning as the Chief Election Commissioner.

A Bench led by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant agreed to take up the PIL filed by Rakesh Kumar Singh after senior advocate Vikas Singh mentioned it for urgent listing.

"The Election Commission is a multi-member body and under the statutory framework, its business is required to be transacted unanimously as far as possible, with differences being decided by majority," Vikas said, requesting an early hearing.

If the commission had not taken a unanimous decision, it was a serious issue, he told the Bench, which also included Justice Joyymalya Bagchi and Justice V Mohana.

He said there was serious doubt regarding the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls and in view of objections allegedly recorded by the other two Election Commissioners, it was not clear if it was, in fact, a decision of the commission.

The CJI said it would be listed for next week. Citing reports that about 14 decisions were taken in the name of the Election Commission between October 2025 and August 2026 despite objections recorded by Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi, the PIL has sought to restrain Kumar from functioning as the Chief Election Commissioner.



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EC forced into damage-control mode

The damage-control exercise initiated by the Election Commission in the wake of widespread criticism over its handling of the revision of electoral rolls falls short of public expectations. The show of unity put up by the poll panel—Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar and Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi—by holding an all-member meeting and later issuing a slew of clarifications has not adequately addressed the issues pertaining to the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls across the country. The core issue is whether the electoral process is being conducted transparently, in accordance with the law, and with adequate safeguards against the wrongful exclusion of eligible voters. The EC has not come up with a satisfying response to the question of fixing accountability for the severe hardships inflicted on citizens by the whimsical and authoritarian acts at the behest of the ruling dispensation. Not surprisingly, the opposition parties and rights activists are persisting with their demand for the resignation of the CEC and a halt to the SIR process, which has already been completed in 20 States and Union Territories. The poll panel came under intense scrutiny following media reports revealing that the two Commissioners—Sandhu and Joshi—had objected on record at least 14 times over 10 months to decisions and orders concerning the SIR exercise, including changes to the statutory Form 6, the handling of additions and deletions from electoral rolls and centralised control over the electoral roll database. Apparently bowing to public pressure, the EC has announced a slew of measures, including stopping physical hearings for unmapped voters or those with logical discrepancies in their enumeration forms.

Events IPO to strengthen financial base

“Hyderabad, September 29 (Indian Chronicle) : Events Limited, an MICE and corporate event management company, will open its IPO on September 30 and close it on October 5, the company's Managing Director Ravi Rajak said in a statement released in the city on Tuesday. He said the IPO would strengthen the company's financial base and support its working capital requirements and business expansion. The issue, which will be listed on the NSE SME platform, aims to raise Rs. 38.12 crore through an offer of 32,30,400 equity shares in the price band of Rs. 112-118 per share. The market lot comprises 1,200 shares, with retail investors required to apply for a minimum of two lots and HNIs for three lots. Corporate Professionals Capital Private Limited is the Book Running Lead Manager, while Mudra RTA Ventures Private Limited is the Registrar to the issue.

Inorbit Mall Transforms Into Running Track



Hyderabad, September 29 (Indian Chronicle) : Inorbit Mall, Visakhapatnam, in association with Soulmates Run Club, organised 'The Great Mall Run', according to a statement released by the organisers in the city on Tuesday. The organisers said around 120 participants, predominantly from Gen Z and Gen Alpha, took part in the early-morning run through the mall's corridors. The event was followed by an arcade gaming experience at Timezone. Winners of the fitness challenges received hampers from Technosport and vouchers from partner brands including Third Wave Coffee, Araku Valley Coffee, Forever New and Timezone. The initiative brought together fitness, community and entertainment, highlighting the evolving role of malls as platforms for social engagement and community experiences.

Chitti Babu took charge as Khammam Three Town Inspector



“N. Chitti Babu took charge as the new Inspector of Khammam Three Town Police Station on Tuesday.” “After assuming charge, Police Commissioner Sunil Dutt was politely met and presented with a bouquet at the Police Commissioner's office.

‘Oh Naa Sidhayya’ Team Organises Grand Hi-Tech City Job Fair 2026 Under the Leadership of the Cast and Crew



“A New Journey Driven by Social Responsibility” “The team of the private song ‘Oh Naa Sidhayya’, featuring Katyayani Jagan as Chittamma and Siddu Reddy Kandakattla as Sidhayya, along with Director Ramu and DOP Arun, organised a grand job fair in Hi-Tech City with the objective of combining entertainment with social responsibility.” “Siddu Reddy Kandakattla, who is making his entry into the music industry through the private song ‘Oh Naa Sidhayya’, said that his initiatives would not be limited to entertainment but would also focus on creating employment opportunities, extending social support and contributing to community development.” “Participation from 70+ IT and Non-IT Companies” “1,000+ Job Opportunities; Large Number of Job Seekers Attend” “Hyderabad, September 29: With the aim of fulfilling social responsibility alongside entertainment, the team of the private song ‘Oh Naa Sidhayya’ organised a large-scale job fair at Cyber Gardens, Jubilee Enclave, near Shilparamam, Hi-Tech City.” “The event witnessed a large turnout of job seekers. Siddu Reddy Kandakattla, Katyayani Jagan, actress Vaishnavi Chaitanya, Nilofer Café proprietor Baburao, and others attended the programme and extended their support.” “More than 70 IT and non-IT companies participated in the job fair, offering over 1,000 employment oppor-

tunities. Candidates were given an opportunity to interact directly with company representatives and attend interviews. Eligible candidates were also provided opportunities to receive spot offer letters.” “Job Opportunities Across Multiple Sectors” “Leading organisations including TCS, Sagility, Teleperformance, HGS, Tata Motors, Tech Mahindra, Digitide, Genpact, Justdial, Reliance Digital, Axis Bank, IDBI Bank and Neon Motors, among others, participated in the job fair.” “Job opportunities were available across several sectors, including IT, software, banking, logistics, automobiles, pharmaceuticals, nursing, marketing, digital marketing, hospitality, sales, driving, engineering, accounts, voice and non-voice processes.” “Opportunities were offered to candidates with qualifications ranging from 10th standard, Intermediate, ITI and Diploma to B.Tech, B.Pharm, M.Pharm, B.Com, MBA and other degree qualifications. Both freshers and experienced professionals participated in the job fair.” “Health Insurance Support for 300 Auto Drivers and Their Families” “As part of its social responsibility initiatives, the team has extended health insurance coverage of ₹3 lakh each to 300 auto drivers and their families, which can be utilised for various medical needs. The organisers also stated that financial assistance of up to ₹10.50 lakh would be provided in the event of an unforeseen incident, subject to the applicable terms.” “The organisers said that the job fair was organised with the same spirit of extending meaningful support to the community.” “Insurance Support for Technical Crew” “The team has also undertaken an initiative to provide insurance support to members of the direction, camera and other technical departments who worked on the making of the ‘Oh Naa Sidhayya’ song.” “The initiative is aimed at extending support and protection to the technical professionals who contributed behind the scenes to the project, the organisers said.” “‘Oh Naa Sidhayya’ features music by Kalyan Keys, while Ram Adnan handled the lyrics and direction. Ram Adnan and Srinidhi lent their voices to the song. Arun Koluguri handled the Director of Photography and editing responsibilities.

MLA BANDARI LAKSHMA REDDY Congratulates Chandramukhi Deepti for Participating in Guinness World Records Event

“UPPAL, SEPTEMBER 29 (INDIAN CHRONICLE):” Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy congratulated Bandela Chandramukhi Deepti, a resident of the Uppal Assembly constituency, for participating in a Guinness World Records event and receiving a Certificate of Participation. “Chandramukhi Deepti participated in the ‘Longest Chain of Crochet National Flags’ Guinness World Records event organised by Mahila Manovikas Crafts & Creations on August 2 at CMR Function Hall in Visakhapatnam.” “Speaking on the occasion, MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy said it was highly appreciable that women were bringing out their creative talents and participating in prestigious events, thereby bringing recognition to the country, state and their local communities. He said Chandramukhi Deepti’s participation in the Guinness World Records event was a matter of pride and wished her greater success in the future. The MLA also congratulated Madhavi Suribhatla, founder of Mahila Manovikas Crafts & Creations, for organising innovative programmes that encourage and promote the talents of women. He appreciated her efforts in providing women with opportunities to showcase their



creativity.” “MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy conveyed his heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to Chandramukhi Deepti for her achievement.” “Former Corporator Kotha Ramarao, former BRS party president of Dr. AS Rao Nagar Division Mahipal Reddy, and others were present on the occasion.

Awareness Walks Held on World Heart Day



“Hyderabad, September 29 (Indian Chronicle) : Care Hospitals organised awareness walks across Hyderabad

on the occasion of World Heart Day to promote heart health. As part of its ‘Time to Break Up’ campaign, doctors urged people to break away from smoking, unhealthy diets, sedentary lifestyles, inadequate sleep, stress and neglect of regular health check-ups.

A 2-km awareness walk was held in Hitec City, while a community awareness walk was organised in Malakpet. In Musheerabad, participants walked from Care Hospitals to Gandhi Hospital as part of the campaign. Care Hospitals Regional Director-Cardiology Dr.Gulla Suryaprakash, along with Dr.Krishnamohan, Dr.Naveen Kumar, Dr.Bhavani Prasad, Praveen Kumar Edla, Dr. Sudheer Gandrakota, Dr.Rajendra Vajrapu and Dr.Bharathi Jetty, among others, participated in the awareness activities.”

BJP Protests Against Use of Deities in Politics; CM Effigy Burnt in Uppal

“UPPAL, SEPTEMBER 29 (INDIAN CHRONICLE):” BJP leaders and activists staged a protest at Uppal crossroads, alleging that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy had made remarks using Hindu deities for political purposes. As part of the protest, they burnt an effigy of the Chief Minister. “The programme was organised under the leadership of BJP Uppal Division President Marneni Phanindra. BJP State Spokesperson Taduri Srinivas, BJYM Medchal District President Srinath and other leaders participated in the protest. Speaking on the occasion, Marneni Phanindra alleged that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, during an event held in New Delhi, had remarked that “Lord Shiva is the God of the poor and Lord Rama is the God of the rich.” He said the remarks could lead to divisions within Hindu society. He also objected to the Chief Minister’s remarks linking the North-South regional divide with the Aryan-Dravidian division. “Phanindra demanded that the Chief Minister withdraw his remarks and apologise to the Hindu community.” “BJP State Spokesperson Taduri Srinivas and BJYM Medchal District President Srinath said that Lord Rama and Lord Shiva are revered by Hindus across society. They alleged that categorising deities as being associated with the poor or the rich was offensive to the sentiments of Hindus.” “The BJP leaders demanded that a criminal case be registered against Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and legal action be initiated over the alleged remarks that they said had hurt Hindu religious sentiments. They further stated that people would question any statements that, according to them, sought to divide Hindu society. BJP Uppal Division General Secretary Nama Shravan, BJYM Uppal



President Adepu Ramesh, OBC Morcha District Vice-President Vidyasagar, BJYM State Leader Abhishek, senior BJP leader Gaddam Saikiran, BJYM leaders Akula Rishikesh, Abhiram Reddy, Sai Venkat, Mudiraj, Manohar, Rahul, Raju, Chintu and others participated in the protest.

Solphage Smart Electronics IPO to Open on September 30

“Hyderabad, September 29 (Indian Chronicle) : The Initial Public Offering (IPO) of Solphage Smart Electronics Limited will open on September 30 and remain open until October 5, the company's Managing Director Umesh Kumar Agarwal said in a statement released in the city on Tuesday. Agarwal said the company aims to expand its market presence and enhance customer experience across the premium audio, video and home automation segments. The IPO, proposed to be listed on the BSE SME platform, will offer 39.60 lakh equity shares at a price of Rs.55 per share, aggregating to Rs.21.78 crore. The market lot has been fixed at 2,000 shares, with the minimum application amount for retail investors standing at Rs.2.20 lakh. Finshore Management Services Limited is acting as the Book Running Lead Manager, while KFin Technologies Limited is the Registrar to the Issue.

Suda Chairman Puvvalla Durga Prasad visited former corporator Mallidu Venkateshwarlu



“Khammam: Chairman of Khammam Suda Puvvalla Durga Prasad today visited former corporator Mallidu Venkateshwarlu who is undergoing treatment at Stambhadri Hospital in Khammam city. He asked the doctors about his health condition and wished him a speedy recovery.” “Later, he also visited former DCC president Soma Naik, who is undergoing dialysis treatment in the same hospital, and inquired about his health condition. Wished for a speedy recovery.” “Rayala Nageswara Rao, public representatives, key leaders, activists and others participated in this program.

Revanth Reddy to inaugurate Karimnagar Collectorate on Wednesday

Ponnam Prabhakar reviews arrangements; CM to hold meeting on district development.



Karimnagar September 29, Khaja Sikandar Mohiuddin (Correspondent): Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy will inaugurate the newly constructed Integrated District Collectorate building in Karimnagar on Wednesday. State Transport and BC Welfare Minister and district in-charge Ponnam Prabhakar reviewed the arrangements for the visit at a meeting with elected representatives and senior officials here on Tuesday.

Mr. Prabhakar directed officials to ensure adequate security, parking facilities, sanitation and other arrangements at the Collectorate and surrounding areas. He also inspected the helipad and instructed officials to ensure the smooth conduct of the programme. The Chief Minister will unveil the Telangana Thalli statue before inaugurating the Collectorate building. He will participate in a formal programme marking the Collector taking charge in her new chamber and later review district development works with officials at the conference hall. He is also scheduled to lay foundation stones for projects relating to Telangana Public Schools, the Urban Challenge Fund and urban development, besides receiving representations from public representatives and the public. Addressing the meeting, Mr. Prabhakar said the government was according priority to education, healthcare, irrigation, infrastructure and welfare. He said more than 70,000 government job appointments had been taken up and cited initiatives relating to housing, free electricity, food security, farmers’ assistance and women’s empowerment.

He said the government was also focusing on irrigation projects in the erstwhile Karimnagar district, including Yellampalli, Lower Manair, Mid Manair, Upper Manair and Gouravelli. An allocation of ₹250 crore had been made for land acquisition for the Gouravelli project, while funds had been released to address pending issues concerning those affected by the Mid Manair project, he added. The Manair Riverfront, dumping yard and Karimnagar Ring Road were among the key development issues being pursued with the Chief Minister, Mr. Prabhakar said. After his Karimnagar visit, Mr. Revanth Reddy is scheduled to proceed to Siricilla, where he will undertake a padayatra from the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar statue and address a public meeting. The visit is also expected to focus on the problems of handloom and powerloom workers, including pending dues. MLAs Kavvampalli Satyanarayana and Medipalli Satyam, District Collector Chitra Mishra, Commissioner of Police Gaush Alam and other public representatives and officials attended the review meeting.

Becoming the Divine You' Book Launched



“Hyderabad, September 29 (Indian Chronicle) : ‘Becoming the Divine You-Awaken the Power Within to Find True Happiness’, authored by Balwinder Nath Chaganl, was launched at a hotel here on Tuesday. Narenn Group Chairman Narendra Nath Chaganl attended as the chief guest, while actor and motivational speaker K.V.Pradeep was the

guest of honour. The book explores self-awareness, spirituality, emotions, relationships, meditation, yoga and the search for true happiness. A special Perini Shiva Tandava performance was presented by Perini Pavan Kumar, a disciple of Padma Shri Dr. Nataraja Ramakrishna, and his troupe. Later, Perini Pavan Kumar and Sandhya Pavan were felicitated by the guests.

Student led conference at Narayana School

“Khammam: “Student Let Conference” program was organized in Narayana School for the academic year 2026-27. This program was organized with the intention of sharing the talent, learning progress and future goals of the students with the parents. Director of Narayana Group of Institutions Ms. Ramadevi was the chief guest of the program through video conference. On this occasion, she spoke directly to the students and parents through video call and learned about the learning process, progress and goals of the students. Encouraging the students, parents are advised to be partners in their development. Also GM Gopal Reddy, AGM Ranki, R&H Sangeeta, R.I. Kranti, the Kids Coordinator Neelima participated in the program and congratulated the students. Students showcased their learning experiences, talents, progress and future goals in front of their parents. Parents enthusiastically participated in the program and congratulated the students.”The program was successfully conducted with the coordination of the principal and staff.



Protest Held at Tarnaka X Roads Against Arrests and CM’s Remarks



“Tarnaka, September 29(INDIAN CHORNICLE):“A protest was organised at Tarnaka X Roads on Monday by BJP leaders and activists condemning the remarks made by Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy regarding Lord Sri Rama and Lord Shiva. The protesters also expressed their opposition to the arrests made in connection with protests against the Chief Minister’s remarks.”The protesters alleged that the Chief Minister’s comments comparing Lord Sri Rama and Lord Shiva had hurt the religious sentiments of devotees. The remarks, made during an event

in New Delhi, have triggered a political controversy, with BJP leaders publicly criticising the Chief Minister and demanding that the statements be withdrawn.”Speaking during the protest, the BJP leaders said that religious figures should not be brought into political controversies and urged the government to respect the sentiments of people belonging to all sections of society. They questioned the arrest of those who, according to them, were expressing their opposition to the Chief Minister’s remarks through democratic protests.”The protesters raised slogans against what they described as the government’s handling of the issue and demanded the immediate release of those arrested in connection with the protests. They also called upon the government to ensure that citizens are allowed to express their views peacefully and democratically.”BJP Mahankali District Intellectual Cell In-charge Sriram, Division President Karunakar, along with Ragi Srinivas, Subbarao, Satish Reddy, Shivakumar Goud, Naka Nagesh and Deva, among others, participated in the protest and expressed their opposition to the Chief Minister’s remarks and the arrests.”The protest concluded with the participants reiterating their demand for respect towards religious sentiments and for action concerning the arrests made in connection with the protests.

Service is the resolve - Good governance is the goal.



“Khammam, September 29, Indian Chronicle.“As part of the ‘Angan Milan’ service programme being conducted in the spirit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s 25 years of good governance, and as per the directions of the state committee and the instructions of BJP district president Nelluri Koteswara Rao, a programme to distribute milk and fruits and provide service to the elderly was conducted at an old-age home on Khammam Bypass Road under the leadership of Khammam district OBC Morcha president Rekha Venkata Satyanarayana Yadav.

They expressed happiness over Narendra Modi’s 25 years of good governance service programmes. District OBC Morcha state executive committee member Donthu Jwala Narasimha Rao, OBC Morcha district general secretaries Gandhasiri Veerabhadram Goud and Pillalamarri Venkat, SC Morcha state executive committee member

Kotaparthi Sudarshan, OBC Morcha vice presidents Meda Sampath Naidu, Mandula Mallikarjun, Linganaboyina Venkateswarlu, Pallapu Venkateswarlu, media convener Bora Banu Prakash, 2 Town BJP president Daniyakula Venkata Narayana, 2 Town general secretary Rudragani Madhav, Edulapuram Municipality BJP party president Nagaraju, BJP leader Vemula Venkateswarlu and others participated in the programme.

ICICI Life Partner Stack 2.0 Launched

“Hyderabad, September 29 (Indian Chronicle) : ICICI Prudential Life Insurance has launched ‘ICICI Life Partner Stack 2.0’ to enhance the digital capabilities of advisors and distribution partners, ICICI Prudential Life Chief Distribution Officer Amish Banker said in a statement issued in the city on Tuesday.

He said the platform includes AI-powered product recommendations, personalised quotations and the LIVA chatbot. Integration with various national databases enables up to 70% of application forms to be pre-filled.

The company has over 200 partner-system integrations and recorded more than 2.7 crore digital service interactions in the first quarter of FY2027, he said. The initiative aims to simplify partners’ day-to-day operations and improve customer service, he added.

Strict Action Sought Over Vehicle-Burning Incidents in Ramanthapur

FORMER MLA NVSS PRABHAKER Questions Senior Police Officials““UPPAL, SEPTEMBET 29 (INDIAN CHRONICLE):“ Former MLA NVSS Prabhakar questioned senior police officials over the recent series of vehicle-burning incidents reported in Ramanthapur. He demanded to know why strict action had not been taken against those repeatedly involved in such incidents in the same locality.”Prabhakar demanded the immediate arrest of those responsible for setting vehicles on fire and called for stringent measures, including opening rowdy sheets and invoking the Preventive Detention (PD) Act wherever necessary. He warned that if the police failed to act or delayed action in the matter, a large-scale protest would be launched.”Residents brought to the attention of the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) that tense conditions had prevailed in Ramanthapur for the past two days, leaving people fearful for their safety. They appealed to the authorities to provide adequate security and take strict action against those responsible for the incidents.”Meanwhile, BJP leaders, prominent local residents, citizens and representatives of Hindu organisations informed the police that illegal sale of ganja was allegedly taking place frequently near the Musi canal and vacant lands in the area. They urged the police to intensify surveillance in these locations and take effective measures to prevent illegal activities.



‘Dial Your DM’ Programme at Chengicherla RTC Depot Today

““BODUPPAL, SEPTEMBER 29 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): A ‘Dial Your DM’ programme will be conducted today at the Chengicherla RTC Depot to directly receive and address passenger grievances, Depot Manager S. Swathi said.”She stated that the programme has been organised to receive complaints, suggestions and feedback from passengers regarding issues faced on various routes under the depot.”Passengers have been requested to call the Depot Manager at 78930 88433 between 11 a.m. and 12 noon today to report their problems and provide suggestions.”Swathi said necessary steps would be taken to further improve RTC services based on the feedback received from passengers.



550 police personnel deployed for CM’s Karimnagar visit

Security tightened at helipad, convoy route and new IDOC.

Karimnagar September 29, Khaja Sikandar Mohiuddin (Correspondent): Elaborate security arrangements have been made for Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy’s visit to Karimnagar on Tuesday for the inauguration of the new Integrated District Offices Complex (IDOC) and several development programmes.

Police Commissioner Gaush Alam said around 550 police personnel had been deployed for security duty in co-ordination with the district administration. Special arrangements have been made at the helipad, along the Chief Minister’s convoy route and around the old Collectorate and the new IDOC.Access to the programme venues will be restricted to authorised persons. A separate media gallery has been arranged for accredited media personnel.

Vehicular movement will be regulated between Prathima Theatre and Mamata Theatre, with traffic diverted through alternative routes wherever necessary. Reserve forces and special teams have also been kept ready to respond to emergencies.The Commissioner appealed to motorists and the public to follow traffic advisories and cooperate with the police.”



Arrangements completed for CM’s Karimnagar visit.

Karimnagar September 29, Khaja Sikandar Mohiuddin (Correspondent): Collector Chitra Mishra and Police Commissioner Gaush Alam, along with the Chief Minister’s security officials, inspected the arrangements at the Collectorate on Tuesday evening. They reviewed the conference hall, the Collector’s and Additional Collector’s chambers, and other areas earmarked for the visit.

Ms. Mishra directed officials to ensure that all arrangements relating to security, protocol, traffic regulation, parking, power supply and sanitation were in place. She stressed the need for coordination among departments and continuous monitoring to ensure the smooth conduct of the programmes.Additional Collector (Revenue) Srinivas Reddy, District Revenue Officer Swamy, officials from various departments and members of the Chief Minister’s security team participated in the inspection.

Crackdown on Illegal Constructions in Boduppal; Unauthorised Penthouse Demolished

--Illegal constructions in Boduppal should be brought to my notice: Commissioner Vinay Krishna Reddy““BODUPPAL, September 29 (Indian Chronicle):“ Authorities have initiated action against illegal constructions within the limits of Boduppal Municipal Corporation. As part of the enforcement drive, officials demolished an unauthorised penthouse constructed near Kakatiya Colony under Boduppal Circle-10 without the required permissions.”Municipal Commissioner Vinay Krishna Reddy warned that strict action would be taken against those who undertake constructions in violation of building regulations and without obtaining the necessary approvals.”The Commissioner also urged residents to bring information regarding unauthorised constructions in Boduppal to his notice so that appropriate action can be taken in accordance with the rules.



Thane PSI killed after man fleeing police vehicle attacks him with cement brick; accused held



GNS News Agency, Sept 29

The incident took place around 11 pm on September 24 on Pokhran Road No. 2, where PSI Kisan Kamlakar Bhoir of Chitalsar police station was patrolling with Police Constable Ghute and other personnel as part of security arrangements for the Ganpati festival. The incident took place around 11 pm on September 24 on Pokhran Road No. 2, where PSI Kisan Kamlakar Bhoir of Chitalsar police station was patrolling with Police Constable Ghute and other personnel as part of security arrangements for the Ganpati festival. (Special Arrangement/ AI Enhanced)A 56-year-old police sub-inspector was killed after a man he was chasing during a night patrol in Thane allegedly pushed him to the ground and struck him on the back of his head with a cement brick late Wednesday, police said. The accused, who allegedly fled after the attack, was subsequently chased down and arrested by another police team. The incident took place around 11 pm on September 24 on Pokhran Road No. 2, where PSI Kisan Kamlakar Bhoir of Chitalsar police station was patrolling with Police Constable Ghute and other personnel as part of security arrangements for the Ganpati festival.

Police identified the arrested accused as Raju Premkumar Valmiki, 30, a resident of Gandhinagar in Thane.

Police said he has several previous theft cases registered against him. According to police, the patrol team noticed a crowd near a paan stall, where Valmiki was allegedly creating a commotion. When Bhoir asked the stall owner to shut the shop, Valmiki allegedly intervened and began arguing with the officers.

Police personnel then put Valmiki in their patrol vehicle and began taking him towards the police station. On the way, police said, Valmiki questioned why he was being taken away and allegedly abused and slapped Bhoir before pushing him. Valmiki then allegedly jumped out of the slowly moving police vehicle and ran towards the paan stall. Bhoir got down and chased him, while Ghute stopped the vehicle and followed to assist him. Bhoir caught up with Valmiki near the City Flow bus stop, where the accused allegedly pushed him to the ground. "He picked up a cement brick lying nearby and hit Bhoir on the back of his head before fleeing into a nearby lane," a police officer said.

Ghute found Bhoir unconscious and bleeding from the head and alerted the police control room. Beat Marshal personnel Nilesh Pawar and Bhosale, who were patrolling nearby, reached the spot and chased Valmiki into a lane before apprehending him, police said. Meanwhile, Ghute, with the help of passers-by, rushed Bhoir to Titan Hospital in Manpada. Doctors declared him dead around 11.41 pm. Police said he suffered a severe head injury and internal bleeding. Bhoir had joined the police force around three decades ago as a constable and had been posted at Chitalsar police station for the past one-and-a-half years. He had recently been promoted from Assistant Sub-Inspector to Police Sub-Inspector. A native of Palghar, he was living in Thane and is survived by his wife and three sons. The Chitalsar police have registered a murder case against Valmiki under Section 103(1), along with Sections 132, 121(1), 121(2), 115(2), 351(2) and 352 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. Police said further investigation is underway into the sequence of events and the accused's conduct before and after the attack.

She died in 1993. Her signature turned up on a 2016 Gurgaon land deed: Court orders probe

GNS News Agency, Sept 29

On May 25, 2016, three women stood together to sign a legal document in Haryana, releasing their shares in a piece of ancestral land in Gurugram. A photograph was taken that day — Sarupi, Misri, and Gheeso standing side by side, three co-sharers signing away their shares. Except Gheeso had allegedly been dead since 1993. The contradiction sat undetected for a decade, until it surfaced on September 15 inside a courtroom in Gurugram — during a legal fight over more than 50 kanals of land in Mohammadpur Jharsa. A local court has now ordered police to investigate both sides of the dispute, after finding that neither side's story added up. Competing claims



The case relates to father-son duo, Attar Singh and Shyam Sunder, defending their claim to the land. According to them, a corporate developer, Nemita Commercial Pvt Ltd, had allegedly orchestrated a "fraudulent" ex-parte partition of the land in 2012, without serving them notice. They claim that their possession remained undisturbed until local police threatened them with eviction a decade later, prompted by a complaint from another corporate developer PG Propmart Pvt Ltd, which bought the land from Nemita. A piece of documentary evidence key to their claim was a registered release deed from May 25, 2016, claiming three elderly women co-sharers, Sarupi, Misri, and Gheeso, had willingly transferred their shares to the family.

PG Propmart, on their part, argued that Nemita Commercial had purchased the land through valid consideration, legitimately secured partition and possession in 2012, and obtained official town planning licenses to develop a plotted residential colony. The builders maintained the villagers were aware of the division for years, had collected government compensation for an acquired portion, and were now attempting to stall development through a time-barred lawsuit. A death that didn't add up. The villagers initially challenged the developer's 2012 partition decree by claiming Gheeso was already dead at the time and her legal heirs were never impleaded. But when the matter reached the court of Dr. Gagan Geet Kaur, Additional District Judge, she began picking apart the conflicting claims, all of which unravelled upon a closer look at Gheeso's death.

The family claimed that she was dead during the 2012 land takeover, but their own prized document—the 2016 registered release deed—listed her as an active grantor. Not only that, she was also physically photographed standing alongside Misri and Sarupi to execute the deed. "Here, question arises if she had already died during partition proceedings in year 2012, then how this release deed can be executed by her in year 2016," Judge Kaur observed in her order. "From record, she is also shown present in photo-

graph on release deed dated 25.05.2016 alongwith Misri and Sarupi," states the order. When the bench pressed this question, Shyam Sunder crumbled and made a revelation that demolished his own family's case: his grandmother Gheeso had actually passed away in 1993. He admitted in court that the deed and accompanying photograph were carried out through acts of impersonation, and that he himself had signed the 2016 deed as an attesting witness to a transaction purportedly executed in person by a woman dead for twenty-three years. This admission, stated the court, also put the developers' claims under a cloud of suspicion.

"The appellants-plaintiffs (Shyam Sunder and family) have not approached the court with clean hands and hence, are not entitled for any relief... And if, Gheeso was died in 1993 as per appellant no.2/plaintiff No.8 (Shyam Sunder) how partition application can be moved against her in 2012... How revenue authorities registered release deed dated 25.05.2016 without verification," remarked the court in its order. The court dismissed the appeal based on the gaps and instead directed the police chief to probe both the 2012 revenue partition and the 2016 registration. "Mystery over the year of death of Gheeso has made both partition proceedings and release deed no.818 dated 25.05.2016 [allegedly suspect]... Accordingly, this Court is left with no other option except to send the matter to worthy Commissioner of Police, Gurugram with a direction to register an FIR in the matter and to get probed the matter so that truth comes out," it concluded. The dispute had reached Judge Kaur's court after the district's Civil Judge (Junior Division) had dismissed the family's plea for an interim injunction on September 9, 2022, in a civil suit they had filed challenging the partition and seeking to protect their possession. Attar Singh and Shyam Sunder then moved the Additional District Judge in an appeal to overturn that dismissal, even as their parallel challenge against the partition order is pending before revenue authorities.

Bigg Boss Marathi's Divya Shinde booked after Pune doctor alleges assault

GNS News Agency, Sept 29

The Pune city police have booked Big Boss Marathi contestant and social media influencer Divya Shinde, along with several others, for allegedly assaulting a retired government doctor at his residence and demanding Rs 5 lakh from him. The alleged incident took place on Thursday night. The FIR was lodged by Dr Vidyadhar Gaikwad, 65, at Kalepadal police station on Friday. According to the FIR, Dr Gaikwad retired as a medical officer from the Cantonment Hospital in Pune in 2021. He is a member of the Karunadeep Foundation, which organised the 'Kala Avishkar Mahotsav' at the Balgandharva Auditorium, between September 1 and 3.

Dr Gaikwad's brother, Mahendra, alleged that Shinde was not invited to the event but attended it and addressed the gathering as a social media influencer. "Later, she began demanding Rs 5 lakh, claiming that the programme received publicity because of her. Dr Vidyadhar had transferred around Rs 50,000 to her through GPay, but she continued demanding more money," Mahendra alleged. Assault and vandalism: What FIR states

suffering from paralysis and was only a member of the organisation that conducted the programme and had no role in its finances, the FIR added. According to the FIR, around 8.30 pm on Thursday, Shinde and several others allegedly arrived at Dr Gaikwad's residence in Nyati Highlands and assaulted him using a wooden stick, a belt and a metal pot. The accused allegedly vandalised the house and threatened to kill him if he failed to pay Rs 5 lakh. They also allegedly threatened his son, the FIR states. Mahendra reached the spot with the police, following which Dr Gaikwad was taken to the hospital for treatment. The doctor is undergoing treatment at the government-run Sassoon General Hospital, the police said.

Based on his complaint, the police have booked Shinde, Dhamdhare and others under various provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, including charges related to attempt to murder, causing hurt, criminal intimidation and extortion.

Who is Divya Shinde?

Divya Shinde, who is known as 'Sarkar' on social media, was ejected from Bigg Boss Marathi Season 6 in February this year following allegations that she had threatened fellow contestants. She has more than one million followers across social media platforms. The police said Shinde stays in the Sinhgad Road area. Investigators have obtained CCTV footage from the building where the alleged incident took place and have launched a probe.

The Karnataka cavalrymen who fought at Haifa in World War I



GNS News Agency, Sept 29

A sharp lance in hand may seem a poor weapon when put up against bolt-action rifles and machine guns. Yet it was these weapons the horsemen of the 'Mysore Lancers', on behalf of the British, drove home in battle against Ottoman forces during World War I, on September 23, 1918, with little help but their own mastery of horsemanship. In one of the final successful open-warfare cavalry charges in history, the Indian horsemen operating under the 15th (Imperial Service) Cavalry Brigade, from the princely states of Mysore and Jodhpur, captured the strategic port city of Haifa in modern Israel (Haifa was part of British Palestine after WW1) from the Ottoman Empire as part of the British Army's Palestine Offensive. This was already the twilight of the horse in open warfare.

Horsemen from today's Karnataka and Rajasthan — in the form of the Mysore and Jodhpur Lancers, raised by the rulers of the then princely states thus led one of the final successful cavalry attacks during the period. The Mysore contingent was led by Colonel Desraj Urs. Interestingly, Colonel Urs was also the first Indian permitted into the Bangalore Club — then a military club. Contrary to the theories of many generals before 1914, there were very few situations in the battlefields of this war where horsemen could be put to effective use. They needed enough space to maneuver, and ground that was relatively unobstructed. They were faced with increasingly efficient firearms, as the various types of modern machine guns were put to use on the battlefield for the first time.

While horses would still be used for transport in World War 2, the few cavalry charges of World War 1 were their last showing in open warfare. It was in the dying days of the First World War, then, that these horsemen would cover

themselves in glory at Haifa on September 23, 1918. The direct attack on the Ottomans defending Haifa and the capture of the city itself would fall to the Jodhpur Lancers. This was a difficult task in itself. However, it was complicated by a strong defensive position of the Central Powers on the nearby Mount Carmel. Austrian and German forces had set up an artillery position here, with 77 mm light field guns. The defenses of Haifa itself also included 10 machine gun positions covering the approaches to the town.

To learn what happened, we may refer to the writings of the overall commander, General Edmund Allenby, and his dispatches back to headquarters. He recorded at the time, "Some two miles before Haifa is reached, the road is confined between a spur of Mount Carmel on the left, and the marshy banks of the River Kishon and its tributaries on the right. When the 5th Cavalry Division reached this point on September 23, it was shelled from the slopes of Mount Carmel, and found the road and the river crossings defended by numerous machine guns." What could have been a long-drawn affair was swiftly resolved by the Indian cavalry of the 15th. The Jodhpur Lancers overran the machine gun positions and broke through into Haifa itself. They were able to do this because of a Mysorean attack on the mountain against the German and Austrian positions. General Allenby records, "A squadron of the Mysore Lancers was sent over Mt Carmel at the same time to turn the town from the south. They captured two Turkish naval guns mounted on the ridge of Carmel and also made a gallant charge in the face of heavy machine-gun fire. The Turks made a very stubborn defence at Haifa, and, but for the ... 15th (Imperial Service) Cavalry Brigade, might have held out for a considerable time." Once the Mysore and Jodhpur forces had mopped up their foes, 17 artillery guns were captured as well as over a thousand Ottoman soldiers. The Indian cavalry had performed very well, enough that their valour was recognised at Parliament in London. The Earl of Mayo (a descendant of that same Lord Mayo who Mayo Hall is named after) rose on May 21, 1919, to inquire why they were not given more credit, saying, "I do not suppose that any more brilliant campaign was ever carried out before. General Allenby marched as a conqueror into Jerusalem. What I should like to ask is why the Indian Cavalry did not get sufficient credit for what they had done. They fought the Turk, and they beat the Turk...." He was politely rebuked by the Viscount Peel, who stated that the Indian horsemen had been given high praise and honours, including mentions in several dispatches by General Allenby. Today, memorials to the victory at Haifa stand both in Haifa and Bengaluru, and are the site of memorial events on most anniversaries of the event — such as this Wednesday. The successor unit of both the Jodhpur and Mysore Lancers survives to this day in the Indian Armed Forces in the form of the 61st Cavalry Regiment, one of the last military units in the world that still includes mounted soldiers. Their regimental emblem is derived from the Gandaberunda bird, the royal Mysore symbol, which still represents Karnataka in many places today.

Maharashtra declares drought in 265 tehsils, covers nearly three fourths of state

GNS News Agency, Sept 29

Maharashtra on Saturday declared drought in 265 of the state's 358 tehsils, covering nearly three fourths of the state, after prolonged rainfall deficits and dry spells affected crops across large parts of Maharashtra. The declaration triggers an immediate assessment of crop losses and a series of relief measures for farmers, including waiver of land revenue, restructuring of crop loans and a stay on recovery of agriculture related loans. Financial assistance for crop damage, however, will be announced separately after the assessment is completed. The decision came two days after Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, following a tour of rain deficit areas, said the government would soon issue the drought notification.

According to the Government Resolution, the Agriculture Commissioner's report found drought like conditions in 265 talukas from June onwards due to rainfall deficit and other factors. Trigger 1, defined as a continuous dry spell of at least 21 days without significant rainfall during the monsoon, has been found applicable in these areas. What does the declaration mean?

District Collectors have been directed to immediately



begin crop loss assessment through panchnamas. Officials have to document crop conditions, including photographs with GPS coordinates, and submit reports to the government through the Agriculture Commissioner. The assessment will form the basis for determining crop damage assistance. The government has said financial assistance to affected farmers will be announced through a separate GR after the prescribed procedures are completed.

Students hold candle march, demand external probe



During the peaceful march, protesting students carried a large poster listing 10 demands, including revisions to their earlier charter. They also reiterated their demands for an independent probe and sought wider reforms in student welfare and disciplinary mechanisms.

A week after IIT Bombay student Sahil Wakode died by suicide, students continuing their sit-in protest at the institute held a candlelight march on campus on Friday night to remember the second-year BTech student and others from the institute who have died by suicide in the past. Sahil, 20, died by suicide on September 18 after he was allegedly found with a mobile phone during a mid-semester examination.

They have also reiterated their demand for the immediate suspension of Professor Suryanarayana Doolla, who caught the alleged exam malpractice, from all responsibilities until the criminal investigation is concluded and sought the resignation of IIT Bombay Director Professor Shireesh Kedare.

Reforms in student welfare centre sought. The students have also demanded that Sahil's parents be provided safety while visiting the campus and sought reforms in the Student Welfare Centre, including periodic audits and a medically qualified Dean of Students' Welfare. Their demands for changes to the Disciplinary Action Committee include greater transparency in proceedings, a system to track cases and a graded, reformative disciplinary framework.

The students further sought reconstitution of the SC/ST Cell in accordance with UGC norms, release of its reports from the past three years and action over alleged caste-based attacks on Wakode and his family. Other demands include allowing batchmates to remain on the same hostel floor, a three-day buffer before and after mid-semester examinations, no multiple examinations on the same day, improved working conditions for campus workers and an assurance that no action will be taken against protesting students. Sahil's parents, Ravindra and Sonali, have alleged that he faced caste-based discrimination and pressure on campus. Based on Ravindra's complaint, the Powai police on September 19 registered a case that names Doolla. While the case has now been transferred to the Crime Branch, the parents have sought that it be transferred to the CBI. IIT Bombay has constituted a 10-member committee to examine the circumstances surrounding Sahil's death, and it is expected to submit its report within seven days. Meanwhile, Sahil's parents, who began a hunger strike at Mumbai's Azad Maidan on Thursday demanding arrests in the case, ended it later that night. Their lawyers had said that the parents are likely to resume the protest on Saturday.

Maharashtra declares 265 talukas drought-affected, announces relief measures



GNS News Agency, Sept 29Mumbai: The Maharashtra government on Saturday declared 265 of the state's 358 talukas drought-affected, announcing a slew of relief measures, including crop loan restructuring, land revenue concessions and power bill subsidies.Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has directed district collectors to initiate crop-damage assessments immediately and assured that farmers remain at the centre of the government's relief efforts in the drought situation.According to a government resolution issued late on Friday, 265 talukas spread across 32 districts account for 74 per cent of the state.Deputy Chief Minister Sunetra Pawar said the actual financial assistance to farmers will be decided after the ground-level assessment.The state government has activated 'Trigger-1' under the Drought Management Code 2016, updated in 2020, to declare drought conditions and initiate relief.

Trigger-1 is the first stage in the state's drought framework, activated by a rainfall deficit of more than 25 per cent combined with a prolonged dry spell of 21 days.A report submitted by the Agriculture Commissioner found drought-like conditions in the 265 talukas across 32 districts due to rainfall deficit and other factors since June.

As per the report, Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar division has the highest number of 74 drought-affected talukas, followed by Amravati with 56, Nashik with 49, Nagpur with 39, Pune with 35 and Thane with 12.The Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar division includes Jalna, Beed, Latur, Dhareashiv, Nanded, Parbhani and Hingoli districts, while Buldhana, Amravati, Akola, Washim and Yavatmal districts come under Amravati division.

The Nagpur division includes Wardha, Nagpur, Bhandara, Gondia, Chandrapur and Gadchiroli.As many as 49 talukas in Nashik, Dhule, Jalgaon, Nandurbar and Ahilyanagar districts, and 35 talukas in Pune, Solapur, Sangli, Satara and Kolhapur districts have been declared drought-affected.At least 12 talukas in the Thane revenue division, including one in Raigad, three in Ratnagiri and eight in Sindhudurg, have been included in the list."Farmers, agricultural labourers and workers are at the centre of our re-

lief efforts in the drought situation. All possible efforts will be made to provide them relief," the Chief Minister's Office said, quoting Fadnavis.The government has directed district collectors to begin crop-loss assessments in the affected talukas and collect photographs and GPS coordinates of the surveyed areas to document crop conditions. The reports are to be submitted to the government through the Agriculture Commissioner.The government has announced a slew of relief measures, including land revenue concessions, restructuring of crop loans, postponement of recovery of agriculture-related loans and concessions in electricity bills of agricultural pumps.

The GR stated that electricity bills of agricultural pumps up to 7.5 horsepower had already been waived, and the newly announced concession would apply to pumps above that capacity in the affected areas.The measures also include a waiver of examination fees for school and college students, relaxation of norms under the Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme to enable maximum works, deployment of water tankers wherever necessary and ensuring uninterrupted power supply to agricultural pumps in villages affected by water scarcity.Arrangements will also be made to ensure foodgrains for farmers and labourers dependent on agriculture and adequate fodder for livestock.Water conservation works and arrangements for drinking water for people and livestock will also be undertaken, the government stated.A government order on Saturday said that a separate GR will be issued on financial assistance for crop losses suffered by farmers in the 265 drought-affected talukas after completion of the prescribed procedure.The Opposition parties, meanwhile, slammed the state government for delaying the declaration of drought, claiming that the situation on the ground was much worse.Congress spokesperson Atul Londhe said that Fadnavis had earlier accused the Opposition of politicising the drought issue, but had now officially declared it under Trigger-1, when the situation on the ground was already worse than what is prescribed under Trigger-3.Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Aaditya Thackeray said the state government must now focus on implementing relief measures and ensure that every affected farmer gets assistance.Thackeray, who is on a tour of drought-hit areas in Marathwada, said his party had been demanding the declaration of drought for some time and that the decision should have been taken earlier.The Kisan Sabha stated that the government order lacked adequate measures to provide direct relief to affected farmers.It demanded that farmers affected by two consecutive failed kharif seasons be provided concrete financial assistance, including loan waivers and compensation based on crop insurance coverage.As per government data, the state recorded an 18.8 per cent rainfall deficit, receiving actual rainfall of 755.9 mm from June to September 18, compared to its average of 932.3 mm, amid the El Nino phenomenon.

IOC expands Xtreme Weather Grade diesel supply to Army's Eastern Command

GNS News Agency, Sept 29
New Delhi: Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOC) has flagged off the maiden rake of its Xtreme Weather Grade high-speed diesel for the Indian Army's Eastern Command, expanding supplies of the specialised fuel beyond the northern frontier, the company said on Saturday.Xtreme Weather Grade (XWG) high-speed diesel, launched in July 2026 by the Chief of Army Staff, has been developed to meet the Army's requirements in extreme cold and high-altitude conditions.The fuel is designed to offer enhanced low-temperature performance and reliable operation of military vehicles and equipment in challenging terrain.

Fuel performance at low temperatures is critical for military operations in high-altitude regions, where conventional diesel can face problems related to cold-weather operability. Specialised grades such as XWG diesel are designed to address these requirements and improve the reliability of vehicles and equipment deployed in extreme climatic conditions.The rake was flagged off from IOC's Panipat Marketing Complex by Lt Gen Mukesh Chadha, Director General Supplies & Transport and Senior Colonel Commandant at IHQ of the Ministry of Defence (Army), the company said in a statement.The move makes IOC the first public sector oil company to position XWG diesel in the eastern region, enabling a dedicated supply chain for the Army's requirements in Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh.With the latest dispatch, IOC's XWG diesel supply footprint now covers both the northern and eastern frontiers.

"XWG is a potential game changer for operational preparedness and readiness in high-altitude and extreme-weather areas," said Lt Gen Mukesh Chadha.He highlighted that, for the first time, this specialised fuel is being extended beyond Ladakh to support operations in Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh.He emphasised the need for a predictable, scalable and responsive supply chain, with the right

fuel at the right place and time. He also acknowledged IOC's partnership in transforming XWG diesel from an operational requirement into an operational reality in the eastern region.K John Prasad, Country Head (Institutional Business), IOC, said, "The Indian Army operates in some of the most demanding terrains and climatic conditions, where dependable fuel performance is critical to operational mobility. Extending XWG HSD supplies to the Eastern Command strengthens our ability to support the Army across another strategically important geography."In line with its core corporate value of Nation-First, IOC remains committed to developing indigenous, fit-for-purpose energy solutions for our Armed Forces and contributing to the vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat."The development builds on IOC's earlier efforts to develop specialised fuels for the armed forces, including Winter Grade Diesel in 2019, and All Weather Grade HSD and Low Sulphur Low Aromatic Superior Kerosene Oil in 2022.IOC said the latest dispatch further strengthens its long-standing partnership with the Army by combining indigenous product development with its nationwide fuel distribution network to support military operations in remote and strategically important locations.



CJI Surya Kant says judiciary will protect students' right to peaceful protest



GNS News Agency, Sept 29
Patna: Chief Justice of India Surya Kant on Saturday asserted that the judiciary is committed to "protecting" students' fundamental right to hold peaceful protests and that courts will not look the other way when there is an infringement.The CJI made the statement at the Chanakya National Law University (CNLU) in Patna, where he engaged in an "unfiltered interaction" with students, making it clear that he "preferred to have a frank question-and-answer session".According to a CNLU statement, a girl student asked about the "police response to peaceful students' protests".

The allusion was to the Jantar Mantar protests in Delhi against alleged NEET exam paper leaks, spearheaded by the Cockroach Janata Party, which, incidentally, began as a satirical online campaign following a remark made by the CJI in the Supreme Court, though he later claimed that his utterances had been reported out of context.The CJI told the questioner that "courts will not look the other way" when faced with cases of alleged brutal repression by the police and "unequivocally reaffirmed the judiciary's commitment to protecting students' peaceful right to protest".Another student sought to know "why dissenting opinions within the collegium were recorded but never made public".The CJI replied, "Disclosure, however well-intentioned, risks placing the individual under consideration in an untenable position".Noting that "transparency has its limits when personal dignity is at stake", the CJI asked, "How can a chief justice or a judge continue to work if a negative observation about him is included in the collegium's minutes?"According to the CNLU statement, the CJI visited the campus along with Patna High Court Chief Justice V Kameswar Rao, who is also the Chancellor of the university."In the light of recent opposition to the CJI in NALSAR, Hyderabad and NLSIU, Bangalore, the event had great significance," the CNLU statement said.The CJI also lauded as "a new, welcome idea" a proposal by CNLU Vice Chancellor and noted jurist Faizan Mustafa "to compress the five-year law degree into four years of academic study".

Char Dham Yatra suspended for two days amid Uttarakhand rain alerts



GNS News Agency, Sept 29Dehradun: The Char Dham Yatra has been suspended for Saturday and Sunday in view of the 'red' and 'orange' rain alerts issued by the meteorological department for most districts of Uttarakhand, officials said.Garhwal Commissioner Anand Swaroop has

issued a letter to all district magistrates in this regard. The letter stated that, based on the forecast issued by the meteorological department and considering the safety of pilgrims arriving from across the country and abroad, the Char Dham Yatra has been suspended from Saturday afternoon until Sunday due to the 'red' rain alert.The Commissioner has directed all district magistrates to take necessary action in their respective districts in this regard. The letter mentioned that the Yatra will resume once weather conditions normalise.The meteorological department has issued 'red' and 'orange' rain alerts for various districts of Uttarakhand for September 26 and 27.For Saturday, a 'red' alert for heavy rain has been issued for five districts — Bageshwar, Pithoragarh, Champawat, Nainital and Udham Singh Nagar — an 'orange' alert for five other districts — Dehradun, Pauri, Rudraprayag, Chamoli and Almora — and a 'yellow' alert for the remaining three districts — Haridwar, Uttarkashi and Tehri.Similarly, for Sunday, a 'red' alert has been issued for four districts — Dehradun, Tehri, Pauri and Haridwar — an 'orange' alert for four other districts — Uttarkashi, Chamoli, Nainital and Rudraprayag — and a 'yellow' alert for the remaining five districts — Bageshwar, Almora, Champawat, Udham Singh Nagar and Pithoragarh.

INDIA bloc parties likely to meet on September 30 over EC row, SIR



GNS News Agency, Sept 29
New Delhi: Opposition INDIA bloc parties are likely to meet in New Delhi on September 30 to discuss concerns over the Election Commission and the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, besides other issues, sources said.The proposed meeting comes amid increased coordination among opposition parties over the Election Commission following reports of differences within the poll panel over aspects of the SIR exercise.The parties have been in touch with each other on the issue and are discussing a joint response, sources added.

The CPI(M), CPI and CPI(ML)-Liberation have demanded the removal of Chief Election Commissioner

Court lifts interim restraint on retired HC judge from publishing or sharing material

GNS News Agency, Sept 29
A district court in Chandigarh on Friday lifted "interim restraint" on retired judge of the Punjab and Haryana High Court Justice Ranjit Singh, which had prohibited him from publishing or sharing material related to an alleged Rs 5-crore bribery demand, observing that a person approaching the court must come with "clean hands".On September 8, the court had restrained Justice Ranjit Singh, who heads the Punjab Human Rights Organisation (PHRO), SAD leader Bikram Singh Majithia, and Congress MLA Sukhpal Singh Khaira from publishing, circulating, or making any "unverified defamatory content" over an alleged bribe demand by Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann's wife Gurpreet Kaur to secure the release of an accused in a rape case.

Civil Judge (Junior Division) Dr Prikshit of Chandigarh District Court had passed the order on a suit filed by Gurpreet Kaur on September 8 after the retired High Court judge — in a TV programme — and others made comments about the alleged Rs 5 crore bribe demand by Kaur. Gurpreet Kaur had alleged that Justice Singh, Majithia and Khaira made baseless and defamatory allegations against her and circulated them on social media, damaging her reputation.Justice Singh subsequently challenged the order, arguing that the complete context of his remarks had not been placed before the court.

Challenging the order, Justice Singh's counsel Charanjit Singh Bakshi told the court that Justice Singh had not independently made any allegation against Gurpreet Kaur at the press conference, and that he had only referred to allegations contained in proceedings before the High Court.The counsel placed before the court the complete video of a press conference held on August 20, along with a relevant Punjab and Haryana High Court order.After watching the complete press conference, the court found that Justice Singh was not claiming personal knowledge of any alleged demand of Rs 5 crore, and was rather referring to allegations made in a petition pending before the High



Court.The court, thus, observed that Justice Singh, as the chairman of a human rights organisation, was dealing with an issue concerning alleged human rights violations and referring to the matter in that context.The court also noted that the petitioner had not disclosed certain material facts, while seeking the ex-parte relief. "A petitioner, who conceals important facts from the court, cannot question the conduct of another person, the court observed.The Rs 5 crore bribery allegation stems from an alleged abduction and rape case in Amritsar, in which the survivor's father approached the High Court, alleging that attempts were being made to get the FIR cancelled.The High Court's July 20 order recorded allegations in pleadings that "a person allegedly close to Gurpreet Kaur was involved and that a demand of Rs 4-5 crore had been made for securing cancellation of the FIR".Gurpreet Kaur, however, denied the allegations as false and defamatory.Justice Singh later referred to these allegations at a press conference, making it clear that he was referring to what had been stated in the High Court pleadings and was not making the allegation from his personal knowledge.While transferring the investigation to a senior police officer, The High Court specifically said it was not determining the truth of the allegations at that stage.

6 months, 4 slain Punjab police officers, and a supply chain police can't crack

A covert threat looms on law enforcers in Punjab as four Punjab Police officials have been shot dead in cold blood and one left injured in the past six months. With a few of the perpetrators 'neutralised' and others arrested, some police officials claim that "handlers based in Pakistan" are behind these attacks, allegedly using an already laid out supply chain and smuggling network.Police sources say that these handlers target local drug addicts and unemployed individuals to carry out the attacks — supplying them with weapons and asking them to record the act — in return for financial gain.The series of killings began on February 22, when Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) Gurnam Singh and Home Guard Ashok Kumar were shot at close range in Gurdaspur — barely a kilometre from the zero line between India and Pakistan. Police were quick to claim the involvement of Pakistan's ISI, alleging that local men had been recruited and paid to carry out the killing. Three suspects were identified. Two — Dilawar Singh and Inderjit Singh — were arrested. The third, Ranjit Singh, was killed in a police encounter.Only Inderjit Singh had a previous police record.

Dilawar and Ranjit — were working in Delhi — were lured by the promise of quick money. Later, police named Sukhjinder Singh, alias Heera — a local businessman — as the financial conduit for the operation, accusing him of routing Rs 8 lakh on the instructions of a handler abroad and charged him under UAPA's terror-financing provisions.By the time the final chargesheet was filed on June 8, police had reversed course — stating no evidence had been found against him and seeking his discharge — even as internal records reportedly indicated investigators had built a detailed evidentiary trail. The supply of the weapon used in the killing was never explained.Three months later, on May 24, ASI Joga Singh, a 54-year-old traffic officer with 35 years of service, was intercepted and killed by two motorcycle-borne shooters on the Fatehgarh Churian-Majitha road. No arrest has been made in the case.DGP Gaurav Yadav later claimed that the accused had been identified; however, no information was made public. Two days after Singh was killed, a group calling itself Tehreek-e-Taliban Hindustan (TTH) claimed responsibility and released a video of the killing.

Putin says Ukraine’s ‘provocative acts’ will worsen situation



GNS News Agency, Sept 29

Moscow: Russian President Vladimir Putin said that an escalation of tensions would not achieve the outcome sought by Kyiv and could only worsen the situation in Ukraine. “They must understand that no provocative acts or escalation of tensions will deliver the outcome they seek. Such moves will only make the situation worse for them,” Putin said at a press briefing on Friday.

He said Russia’s military responses had prompted Kyiv to seek ceasefire arrangements covering several ar-

eas, including attacks on energy facilities and airstrikes, Xinhua news agency reported.Russia has begun responding to what he described as actions taken by Ukraine, including an alleged bid to impose a naval blockade and strikes on storage facilities and civilian infrastructure, he said, adding that, according to Russian assessments, Ukraine had damaged more than 100 vessels in the Black Sea.Earlier this month, Moscow said that sanctions on Russia’s oil and gas exports would not revive relations with the United States or lead to peace with Ukraine.

US President Donald Trump signed the Russia sanctions bill into law. The legislation targets Russia’s energy and defence industries, as well as its “shadow fleet” of tankers.Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said that Russia has largely adapted to the sanctions and found ways to minimise their impact, adding that the country’s trading partners oppose such restrictions.Earlier in the day, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said that he and President Trump had agreed to meet in New York, and said Ukraine was ready to take serious steps towards peace in coordination with the American team.“We agreed to meet in New York, and this meeting could change a lot. There is diplomatic momentum,” Zelensky said in a post on X after speaking with Trump.

Iran awaits US move after WSJ report says Trump rejects peace plan

CAIRO/UNITED NATIONS, GNS News Agency, Sept 29 Iran on Saturday awaited a US response to its proposal to reopen the Strait of Hormuz and end fighting in the Middle East war after the Wall Street Journal’s report that President Donald Trump had rejected the deal.Iran raised the diplomatic initiative at the UN General Assembly in New York, saying it had been transmitted to the Americans via Qatari mediators and could reopen the strategic waterway and put an end to hostilities in the region within seven days.

The Reuters Iran Briefing newsletter keeps you informed with the latest developments and analysis of the Iran war. Sign up here.But Trump is privately sceptical that Iran would meet his demands and has told his staff that he sees a renewed bombing campaign as likely after the November US midterm elections, the Journal reported, citing unnamed US officials.Earlier, a US official had said discussions with Iran through mediators were “positive and constructive”.



aging Iran’s already ailing economy.Iran and its allies have retaliated by extending the conflict throughout the region. Iran, which controls the strait along with Oman, has struck US allies in the Gulf with drones and missiles while its Houthi allies in Yemen have targeted Saudi interests. Iranian-aligned militias in Iraq were blamed for a pipeline attack that temporarily took more Saudi oil off the market. All the while, Iranian-backed Hezbollah has been engaged with Israeli forces in Lebanon.

IRAN WON’T ACCEPT ‘BULLYING, COERCION’, PRESIDENT SAYSThe Iranians also engaged their Saudi rivals regarding the strait, underscoring the stakes of a seven-month-old conflict that has disrupted oil flows through one of the world’s most critical shipping lanes and taken a toll on the global economy.Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi told reporters at the United Nations on Friday the proposed deal would trigger a seven-day countdown to reopening the strait and a pause in regional fighting.

“If there is seriousness on the US side to come to a deal and reopen the Strait of Hormuz, everything is now prepared,” Araqchi said. If the US were to agree, the warring parties could start wider talks “on mutually agreed subjects”, he said.That could potentially include discussions of Iran’s nuclear programme. Trump has vowed that Tehran will never acquire a nuclear bomb, while a senior Iranian official told Reuters that Iran will show no flexibility over its nuclear programme even if the United States accepts its peace deal.Iran would grant no concessions over its rights, including enriching uranium or shipping its highly enriched uranium out of the country, the official said.Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, in an interview with the CBS show “Face the Nation”, said Tehran was ready for talks on its nuclear programme and other issues, but would not accept “bullying or coercion”.“Iran is not seeking war, but will defend itself against pressure, threats and attacks,” Pezeshkian said, adding that it had already agreed that “we’re not supposed to develop nuclear weapons”.

Araqchi said Iran had put forward a plan that would halt hostilities on all fronts, including Lebanon. The plan in turn would require the United States to lift its blockade on Iranian ports, release Iran’s frozen funds, and waive its oil sanctions, Araqchi said.Previous attempts at diplomacy have failed to end the war, which began on February 28 with US and Israeli attacks.Since then the war has alternated between pauses and renewed strikes, killing thousands while degrading Iran’s conventional forces and dam-

SAUDI ALLIES UNITEAraqchi briefed his Saudi counterpart Prince Faisal bin Farhan on the understanding between Iran and Oman regarding safe shipping routes in the Strait of Hormuz, Iran’s foreign ministry said early Saturday.The war’s widening toll has also united Saudi Arabia’s allies to shore up the kingdom’s defences.The Saudi-backed, internationally recognised Yemeni government has come under assault from Iran-linked Houthi fighters, with Houthi missiles striking inside the kingdom.Yemen’s Saudi-led coalition said early Saturday it intercepted two ballistic missiles launched by the Houthis towards Khamis Mushait and two drones headed towards the capital Riyadh.The Houthis, who control the most populous parts of Yemen and much of the north, have launched attacks against Saudi Arabia since declaring a naval blockade against Riyadh in July, with strikes targeting Saudi vessels in the Red Sea.

The attacks have targeted Saudi cities, energy infrastructure and shipping, adding to pressures on global oil supplies caused by the US-Israeli war on Iran and putting at risk the main alternative Red Sea route for Gulf exports while traffic through the Strait of Hormuz remains largely blocked.Defence officials of Turkey and Pakistan, both partners in a joint defence pact with Saudi Arabia, met in Riyadh on Friday to review the security situation and discuss intelligence cooperation, military coordination and integrating forces, the Saudi defence ministry said in a statement.The statement came a day after Saudi, Pakistani and Turkish foreign ministers met within the framework of the Mecca Joint Defense Agreement.The violence in Yemen has prompted a new humanitarian crisis, the United Nations children’s agency said on Friday, reporting a rise in acute malnutrition among children.Adds comments from Iranian president in paragraphs 10-11

Iran will make no nuclear concessions, Iranian official says

UNITED NATIONS,GNS News Agency, Sept 29 Iran will show no flexibility over its nuclear program even if the United States accepts its proposal to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, which calls for steps including the lifting of a US naval blockade on Iranian ports, a senior Iranian official told Reuters on Friday.The official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the waterway would remain closed until “all of Iran’s conditions are met” by the United States.The Reuters Iran Briefing newsletter keeps you informed with the latest developments and analysis of the Iran war. Sign up here.Under Iran’s proposal, Tehran has offered to reopen the strategically vital Strait of Hormuz. Within seven days, hostilities would end on all fronts, including Lebanon, the official said.States would lift its blockade on Iranian ports, release Iran’s frozen funds and waive its oil sanctions, Iran’s Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said on Thursday.



The official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the waterway would remain closed until “all of Iran’s conditions are met” by the United States.

The proposal follows a sharp escalation in Middle East tensions after seven months of war between Iran and the United States, with Iran-backed Houthi militias in Yemen launching missiles and drones at Saudi Arabia.The strait has become the central bargaining chip in efforts to end the US-Iran conflict, with Iran seeking relief from the US blockade that is choking its economy and Washington seeking free passage for ships on the global oil supply route now blocked by Tehran.

In a meeting with journalists on Thursday on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said he hoped a deal with Washington to end the hostilities could be reached before the US midterm elections on November 3.Tehran said it would be prepared to engage in detailed negotiations over its nuclear program only after its conditions are met by the US.But the official said Iran would give no concessions over its rights, including enriching uranium or shipping its highly enriched uranium out of the country, one of the main US demands.Israel, the United States and other Western states

have long accused Iran of seeking nuclear weapons, including pointing to its move to enrich uranium to 60%, far higher than needed for civilian uses and closer to the 90% needed for a weapon. Iran denies seeking nuclear weapons.The International Atomic Energy Agency estimates that Iran had 440.9 kg of uranium enriched to 60% when Israel and the US attacked Iranian nuclear facilities in June 2025. How much of that has survived is unclear.Iranian authorities have said that Iran could agree to dilute its most highly enriched uranium.In May, Reuters reported that Iran’s Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei has issued a directive that the country’s nuclear program should not be sent abroad, according to two senior Iranian sources.Adds Pezeshkian’s comment, paragraph 6; details throughout

US to host G20 trade talks in Milwaukee next week



Washington: US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer will host G20 trade ministers in Milwaukee next week for talks on forced labour, food trade, industrial overcapacity and possible changes to a core principle of the global trading system.The ministerial will be held from September 29 to October 1, according to a programme released by the Office of the US Trade Representative on Friday.

Greer will lead discussions on eliminating forced labour from global supply chains and addressing structural excess production and capacity. India would be represented by Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal.Ministers will also discuss updating the Most-Favoured-Nation principle and denouncing what the USTR described as the weaponisation of trade in food.The Most-Favoured-Nation principle requires a World Trade Organization member to extend the same trade advantage granted to one member to other members, subject to exceptions recognised under WTO rules.The USTR release did not provide details about the changes to the principle that Washington may propose at the Milwaukee meeting.

The gathering will begin on Tuesday evening with a welcome reception hosted by the Business Roundtable and the National Association of Manufacturers.The formal programme will open on Wednesday morning with a ministerial meeting of the Global Forum on Steel Excess Capacity.Steel production and industrial overcapacity have become major points of dispute in international trade. The United States has repeatedly linked excess production to

pressure on domestic manufacturers and workers.Following the steel meeting, Greer and the visiting ministers will tour a Rockwell Automation facility in Milwaukee.They will meet factory workers and industry executives while walking through the plant, according to the USTR.The visit is intended to highlight the Trump administration’s claim that its trade programme is accelerating American reindustrialisation and strengthening supply chains.Greer will deliver opening remarks at the first formal session of the G20 Trade Ministerial on Wednesday afternoon.The Office of the US Trade Representative and the US Department of Agriculture will host a welcome dinner for the visiting delegations that evening.

The principal ministerial negotiations will take place on Thursday. The programme includes a morning session lasting until 1 p.m. and a second session during the afternoon.Greer is scheduled to hold a press conference between the two sessions.The three-day programme will end with a reception at the Harley-Davidson Museum in Milwaukee.

The USTR announcement did not disclose Greer’s planned bilateral meetings with individual trade ministers. Such meetings on the margins of a G20 gathering allow participating countries to address disputes and negotiations that fall outside the broader ministerial agenda.The selection of Milwaukee places the meeting in an American manufacturing centre. The programme’s emphasis on a factory tour, steel capacity, workers and supply-chain resilience also reflects the administration’s focus on connecting trade policy with domestic industrial production.India is a member of the G20 and has consistently pressed for the concerns of developing economies to receive greater weight in global economic decision-making. Questions involving food trade, industrial capacity, supply chains and the future of non-discrimination rules have direct implications for Indian exports and manufacturing.The Milwaukee ministerial comes as governments are reassessing their dependence on concentrated supply chains and the effectiveness of existing international trade rules. India and the United States have expanded commercial ties, but their trade relationship has also involved differences over tariffs, market access, agricultural products and the treatment of developing countries within the multilateral trading system.

India, Russia reaffirm commitment to ‘special, privileged’ strategic partnership



United Nations: India and Russia reaffirmed their commitment to “the special and privileged” strategic partnership during a meeting between External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Russia’s Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov here, according to Moscow’s Foreign Ministry.“The sides reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening the special and privileged Russia-India Strategic Partnership and close coordination at the UN, G20 and BRICS,” the ministry said in an X post after the Friday meeting.EAM Jaishankar wrote on X that they “exchanged views on a number of ongoing issues. Also took stock of our bilateral and BRICS cooperation”.Lavrov had visited India earlier this month for

the BRICS summit along with Russia’s President Vladimir Putin.US President Donald Trump has invited Putin to the G20 Summit of industrialised and emerging economies in December, which Prime Minister Narendra Modi is also expected to attend.At his meeting with Putin at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Summit in Kyrgyzstan late last month, PM Modi firmly asked him to end the Ukraine War in the name of humanity.EAM Jaishankar had met Ukraine’s Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha on Monday.

He wrote on X tersely after the meeting that they “focused on developments over the past few weeks”, while Sybiha said more explicitly that they discussed “peace efforts”.Neither EAM Jaishankar nor the Russian ministry mentioned the Ukraine War as a topic of discussion in the Lavrov meeting.But EAM Jaishankar cryptically mentioned their discussion covered a “number of ongoing issues”.As founding members, India and Russia have often coordinated positions on issues ranging from reforming global financial institutions to technology transfer and the energy transition.The meeting also highlights India’s active diplomatic calendar at UNGA, where EAM Jaishankar has been holding bilateral talks with counterparts from multiple countries.His engagements are expected to focus on strengthening partnerships, addressing global challenges such as climate change and terrorism, and reinforcing India’s role as a voice for the Global South.

How three colonial powers gained – and then lost – control over the straits of Hormuz, Bab el-Mandeb

San Marcos: Over recent months, the straits of Hormuz and Bab el-Mandeb have become synonymous with geopolitical jostling. Whoever controls these narrow waterways governs the flow of maritime traffic from the Arabian Sea and the Red Sea to the Indian Ocean – and with it, a vitally significant chunk of global trade.

However, conflict over these straits is almost as old as modern maritime trade itself. The war between the US and Iran over these chokepoints is just the latest chapter in a centuries-long history of extra-regional powers attempting to influence or dominate the Middle East by sea.Ming China offers one of the earliest examples of an extra-regional power projecting its power through naval might and diplomacy. In 1405, the Chinese Muslim admiral, explorer and diplomat Zheng He embarked on the first of seven expeditions across the Indian Ocean. Commanding fleets of more than 300 vessels, he reached the town of Hormuz around 1414, then Aden in Yemen, passing through Bab el-Mandeb into the Red Sea.

This Pax Sinica did not control the straits. Instead, it established a strong trading presence based on displays of naval power, diplomatic missions, and lucrative gift exchanges. Unlike later colonial powers, Zheng He did not establish colonies at Hormuz or along the Arabian coast. Instead, he entered the existing trading system established by the region’s Arab, Persian, Indian, and East African merchants.The voyages also demonstrate the limits of over-extended maritime power. After Zheng He’s final expedition in the 1430s, shifting priorities in the Ming dynasty brought the voyages to an end. The state was unwilling to invest in its navy and its upkeep.

Today, China invokes Zheng He’s voyages to bestow historical legitimacy upon Chinese-Middle Eastern relations. Beijing presents its modern investments in infrastructure, energy, and ports, such as Gwadar in Pakistan, as the revival of an ancient and peaceful relationship that stretches back to the pre-modern Silk Road.Back in the 1500s, however, the rise in global shipping traffic and the arrival of Europe’s colonial powers would soon mark a shift towards more violent, aggressive efforts to control the straits.The Portuguese were naval innovators, introducing a more coercive form of maritime power employing heavy cannons on ocean-going ships. In 1513, Afonso de Albuquerque at-

tacked Aden in an attempt to control access to the Red Sea. He failed to capture the fortified mainland city, which was surrounded by steep mountainous terrain.As the US has learned centuries later, naval superiority did not translate into immediate victory on land. Portuguese warships could destroy vessels and bombard a harbour, but commanding the waters outside a port was not the same as controlling the land behind it.

However, in 1515, Albuquerque managed to seize the town of Hormuz, where he imposed the cartaz, a paid permit for merchants to sail through the Gulf and Indian Ocean. This regulation of trade is, in essence, what Iran’s toll is attempting to do in the present.This “Pax Lusitana” was more violent than its Chinese predecessor, and in 1622, forces from the Iranian Safavid dynasty and English East India Company vessels joined forces to expel the Portuguese from Hormuz and open up trade.With Portugal ousted, Ottoman, Safavid, Omani, Dutch and English forces vied for control. The system was dominated by powerful European ships, and by local rulers who controlled both the ports and the goods that flowed through them.The Dutch East India Company entered these waters in 1614. Supported by heavily armed ships, it established itself at the port of Mokha, in Yemen.Following Portugal’s expulsion, the Dutch obtained commercial privileges in 1623 and competed with British traders in Bandar Abbas, the principal Gulf trading station across from Hormuz.While the British were famous for the tea trade, the Dutch came to dominate coffee. Previously the domain of traders based in Mokha, the Dutch broke Yemen’s monopoly over the coffee trade by smuggling Arabica coffee plants to the Indonesian island of Java, where they were cultivated on a massive scale. The Dutch thus demonstrated that the balance of maritime power could shift through control of production and trade, rather than through cannons and coercion.However, once the British captured Aden in 1839, they gained the upper hand. They signed agreements with neighbouring rulers and tribes in South Yemen that gave them de facto control over Bal al-Mandeb at the dawn of the industrial era.Aden soon became a naval coaling station and communications centre, connected to India by telegraph cables. When the Suez Canal opened in 1869, the British also dominated this chokepoint, as the Red Sea offered the shortest maritime route to its crown colony in India.

‘Digital arrests’: Now you see me, now you don’t



Over the past three months, Ruchi Garg, 44, a stay-at-home mother of two in Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, has preferred offline transactions to digital ones. In August, a 13-minute WhatsApp audio call changed the way she uses the Internet and social media. Like many others in her circle, Garg used to spend up to eight hours on her phone on various social media apps, especially WhatsApp. One morning, after her second son had gone to school and her husband to office, Garg got a WhatsApp call from a number displaying the photo of a police officer in uniform. “I couldn’t understand why a police officer would be calling me,” she says.

“The man spoke quickly, saying that my elder son, who is studying engineering in a college in Vellore [in Tamil Nadu], had been arrested in a major scam. He told me that if I wanted to save his reputation, I would have to pay ₹80,000,” she says. The money, he said, was to prevent her son’s photograph from being widely circulated. “He didn’t let me hang up. He insisted that if I wanted to consult my husband, I should call him from another number,” says Garg. She panicked and sent the money to the Unified Payments Interface number the scammer had given her. “I could hear my son’s screams in the background,” she recalls. “Maybe they used AI to generate his voice.” When the caller asked for more money, something felt odd, and she called her son from another number. “He said he was in class. I understood that I had been scammed and hung up,” she says.

Garg is overwhelmed by what happened to her; shocked that the scammer had profiled her, and knew where and what her son was studying. There is fear of being scammed again. “I verbally informed the Senior Superintendent of Police in Vellore as I was worried about my son, but they did not pursue the case as the [scammer’s] number was from Pakistan,” she says. Garg is among thousands of Indians who have been the target of a scam known colloquially as ‘digital arrest’. From January 1 to November 15 this year, as many as 92,323 ‘digital arrests’ have been reported across the country with people collectively being cheated of ₹2,140.99 crore, as per the Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre (I4C) that operates under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and is the nodal body for monitoring, analysing, and investigating cybercrime trends. There are many more like Garg who have not filed police complaints. On October 27, Prime Minister Narendra Modi cautioned people against the new cybercrime. He described what Garg and others like her have gone through. Criminals collect personal information and make phone or video calls to prospective victims. They pose as officials from various law enforcement agencies, and at times from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), and extort money by creating an atmosphere of fear. ‘Digital arrests’ are just one of the many large-scale organised cybercrimes in India. According to I4C, Indians are likely to lose over ₹1.2 lakh crore, roughly 0.7% of the GDP, over the next year due to cyber frauds. Through 2024, until November 11, financial fraud in the country reported via MHA’s cybercrime portal, cybercrime.gov.in, stood at ₹19,888.42 crore. The 1930 helpline to report such fraud recorded 14.41 lakh calls. In 2023, up to 15.56 lakh calls were received and India’s total cybercrime financial fraud was reported at ₹921.59 crore. As per I4C, cybercrimes witnessed an increase of 113% from 2021 to 2022 and 60% from 2022 to 2023.

Held hostage digitally Sunita Mehta (name changed upon request), a 57-year-old Central government employee, was travelling on work on May 24 this year during the Lok Sabha election. Back home in Delhi, her husband was alone. “As soon as I left, my husband, Rajesh (name changed to protect identity), received an automated call stating that his parcel was stuck in the Customs Department. But we were not expecting any parcel,” Mehta recalls. The call was then forwarded to a person who claimed that banned items had been found in the parcel and that the call was being transferred to the Crime Branch. The caller instructed Rajesh to download Skype. Once he did, a person in a police uniform appeared on screen and informed him that documents pertaining to his identity were being misused for money laundering. The caller showed him a photograph of a Minister in jail and alleged that four bank accounts in Rajesh’s name were used by someone involved in financial crimes. “Another person in a police uniform appeared on screen and showed Rajesh a letter bearing the logos of the Crime Branch, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), and other probe agencies. They told him that RBI rules stipulated he would need to transfer 96% of his money to a government bank account for verification. They said after verification, the money would be returned,” Mehta says.

The call continued for more than 24 hours as the scammers said they needed to monitor Rajesh 24x7, Mehta says. They even asked him to show them the bathroom before he entered in order to check if anyone else was around. “The moment he paused, another person would appear on the video and start talking. They terrorised him. They claimed to be watching our home with drones and warned him that if he turned off the video, the police would arrest him,” she says. The next morning, Rajesh went to a bank near his home in south Delhi’s Saket with the Skype video still on. He transferred ₹5.68 lakh to a so-called surveillance bank account of the government. When he questioned the scammer about it being a savings bank account, the scammer assured him that it was done intentionally so that money launderers would not be alerted. At one point, Rajesh said he would speak to his lawyer. The caller grew angry and warned him that all his money would be seized, and that he would be sent to jail. “They assured him that the money would be returned within 20 minutes. However, after 2-3 hours, when the money didn’t come back, we immediately called the cybercrime helpline,” Mehta says. She adds that the police only placed the account under surveillance on May 30. “By then, the money had been transferred through several bank accounts.” Mehta says when they took the case to court, “the bank argued that the money remaining in the account belonged to other victims and our funds had already been moved to other bank accounts”. In court, it was revealed that on the same day at least 30 people had been given that account number to transfer funds to. On August 20, around 550 km from Delhi, a physician in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, fell victim to an identical crime. He was held hostage digitally for 48 hours and lost ₹48 lakh.

On November 14, U.P. Police’s Special Task Force (STF) arrested five persons from Gurugram, Haryana, who had cheated the physician. “While investigating, we found that the money from the Lucknow doctor was deposited in two bank accounts and subsequently transferred to 178 other bank accounts,” says Vishal Vikram Singh, Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP), STF, U.P. Police. The main accused was identified as Pankaj Surela, 28, a graduate and resident of Alwar, Rajasthan.

Singh says Surela had gone to work in a ‘scam compound’ in Cambodia in March. The outfit was owned by five or six Chinese nationals, with staff hired from Pakistan, Nepal, and India. “They received training in how to cheat people by posing as CBI, police, Crime Branch, and narcotics department officials,” the ASP says. The suspects were arrested on charges of cheating, forgery, and criminal conspiracy under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and Section 66 of the Information Technology Act, 2000.

The I4C has identified ‘scam compounds’ in Asian countries such as Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos, and Azerbaijan that resemble call centres. These compounds used to be casinos that shut down during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to a United Nations report from October, Indian youth are being recruited with offers of IT or administrative work, often based in Thailand. On arrival, they are met by agents who transfer them to counterparts, who take them across the border into Cambodia, Myanmar, and Lao PDR. Around 1,300 Indians have been rescued from ‘scam compounds’ between May and August this year. On January 3, Rajesh Kumar, chief executive officer of I4C, said at a press conference that around 50% of cybercrime complaints on the national helpline every day have their origin in China and pockets of Cambodia and Myanmar. Surela told the STF that the ‘scam compound’ operators have local conduits in India. He was working for Chinese operators after returning from Cambodia, where he stayed for 15-20 days. “Up to 30% of the commission is assured to the holder of the bank account where the money is parked. It is not only mule accounts; people are also renting their accounts out,” Singh says. According to I4C, about 4,000 mule bank accounts are identified every day by investigating agencies. Over the past year, over seven lakh mule bank accounts have been blocked. Officials say the defrauded money may be used for terror financing and money laundering, and is often pushed out of the country in the form of cryptocurrencies. “They exploit a person’s inner fear. If the victim shares their Aadhaar number, they misuse the information and convince the person that they are involved in a crime. If you appear weak, they play with the mind and the person succumbs to the fraud,” Singh says. The golden hour for reporting the crime is within 24 hours. The helpline and the portal run by the I4C are linked to State police apparatuses in addition to over 300 financial intermediaries, banks, and wallets. Real-time alerts are sent to banks and payment wallets by I4C after a financial fraud is reported, asking them to block or freeze the amount.

However, data from I4C show that out of the ₹11,269 crore that was reported to have been defrauded in the first six months of the year, ₹1,361 crore was blocked by banks, but only ₹1.97 crore was returned to the victims. Until June, I4C had asked Microsoft to block 1,500 Skype IDs involved in digital frauds. Fraud alert On October 28, the I4C issued an alert against illegal payment gateways facilitated by mule bank accounts following raids by the Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh police forces. Visakhapatnam Commissioner of Police Shanka Brata Bagchi says the police identified the main accused who brought the scam from China to India. The illegal set-up was running from a flat in the city in the guise of a cosmetics company. “The extent of the scam can be uncovered only when the masterminds, who are hiding in the U.S and Taiwan, are caught. All of them have Chinese passports,” Bagchi says. Five persons, including four women, were arrested in Visakhapatnam. Two primary suspects — Sairam and Girish — had hired people for ₹25,000 each. Bagchi suggests that a certain percentage of police hirings should be reserved for cybersecurity experts. Meanwhile, in Chennai, C. Jebaraj, 75, a retired university professor, and his wife Shanthi, 71, almost became victims of a ‘digital arrest’ on November 5. “We were on a video call with men who initially claimed to be from the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India,” says Shanthi, a home-maker. “Then they told us that my husband’s name had appeared in a major money laundering scam involving politicians and policemen, and that we needed to cooperate to save him. One of the callers was even wearing a police uniform,” she adds. After the call went on for a couple of hours, their daughter, who also lives in the city, called Jebaraj. He told her that they couldn’t speak and briefly explained what was happening. “She rushed home. When she arrived, the call was still going on with the logo of Delhi Police’s Crime Branch on the screen. She immediately disconnected the call. Later, we received a threatening message saying that if we didn’t take the call, we would be arrested,” Shanthi says. Her daughter then reported the incident to the cybercrime helpline, informed the bank, and requested a password change for their accounts. A police officer said people’s personal information is on sale on the dark web and apps like Telegram for as low as 10 paise. According to Akshat Khetan, founder of AU Corporate Advisory and Legal Services that also offers financial services, black market data trading must be tackled jointly by the government and technology platforms. He calls for stronger penalties for violations to deter illegal sale of data.

Modus operandi of fraudsters: How scamsters execute digital arrests revealed

New Delhi: As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, cybercrimes are on the rise, and digital arrest and other online scams are emerging as a new threat. These scams have a certain modus operandi where the fraudsters impersonate as officials of the law enforcement agencies and use video calls to convince victims that they are involved in criminal activities and hence accountable to the law. Fearing action, they give in to the hollow threats of these scamsters. Typically, these scams begin with an automated message, projecting it as a call from the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI). The phone calls are usually made via WhatsApp voice or video call. The scamsters, posing as officials give the victim two options: either report to a police station or court within a few hours or provide a statement via phone. Unsuspecting victims usually opt for the latter, which sets the stage for the scam. In recent incidents, these scamsters also show fabricated government documents letters to justify their identity, thereby leading the former to believe they are under threat.

Armed insurrection to parliamentary politics



The recent electoral success of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP)-led National People’s Power in the parliamentary and presidential elections in Sri Lanka highlights a less noticeable trend, where left-wing revolutionary groups, once dedicated to armed struggle, are shifting toward democratic engagement. Historically guided by ideologies such as Marxism-Leninism and Maoism, these groups have viewed the state as a tool of capitalist oppression, believing that social and economic justice demands dismantling capitalist structures by force. In recent decades, however, some of the most prominent insurgencies, including Nepal’s Maoists, El Salvador’s Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), and certain Marxist-Leninist groups within India, have pursued a new path by entering parliamentary politics. This shift reflects a pragmatic blend of ideological adaptation and responsiveness to changing political realities.

Left-wing insurgencies typically emerge with the belief that dismantling the capitalist state is necessary for social justice, viewing it as inherently biased toward elite interests, and armed struggle becomes a key tenet of resistance. This conviction is often grounded in the belief that only through force can the structures of oppression be overturned. Many movements, such as those in El Salvador, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka, have adhered to the principle of “protracted people’s war” to achieve a revolutionary overthrow of the state. Yet, prolonged insurgency is daunting, requiring extensive resources, popular support, and the resilience to withstand state counterinsurgency tactics. Over time, these factors push revolutionary groups to reconsider armed struggle as the optimal strategy. The harsh realities of insurgency often reveal that public sentiment may shift against sustained violence, particularly when civilian casualties and prolonged hardship weaken popular support. This realisation has spurred some factions to experiment with political engagement to achieve their goals without violence and potentially greater public acceptance. A striking example in Nepal The transformation of Nepal’s Maoist insurgency is a striking example of this political shift. The Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) launched a civil war in 1996 to dismantle the monarchy and establish a people’s republic. After a decade of intense conflict, the Maoists chose to negotiate, signing the Comprehensive Peace Accord in 2006. This historic agreement permitted them to participate in mainstream politics, allowing former insurgents to engage in governance. By 2008, they played a pivotal role in transitioning Nepal to a federal democratic republic, a landmark achievement for a movement once defined by its commitment to revolutionary overthrow. Their participation in mainstream politics demonstrated how revolutionary ideals could be adapted to operate within established political institutions.

A similar transformation took place in El Salvador, where the FMLN, a coalition of Marxist-Leninist guerrilla groups, fought a civil war throughout the 1980s, aiming to overthrow a U.S.-backed government until the 1992 peace accords enabled their shift from an insurgent group to a legitimate political party. The FMLN eventually won national elections, illustrating how left-wing insurgent groups can channel their social and economic agendas through democratic processes, winning significant support in the electoral arena. Over time, the party shifted from revolutionary Marxism to a more moderate leftist stance, aligning itself with democratic socialism. What drives the shift

In India, the story is more complex. The Communist Party of India (Maoist) continues to pursue armed insurgency, especially in rural areas where government presence is weak, holding to Mao’s concept of a “protracted people’s war”. However, other Maoist factions, such as the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation, have abandoned armed struggle. By the 1980s, the CPI (M-L)

Do new schemes ahead of elections amount to ‘voter bribes’?

On November 23, the incumbent Bharatiya Janata Party-led Mahayuti alliance won a landslide victory in Maharashtra Assembly elections. Among several reasons cited for this victory are the implementation of the Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana — a direct benefit transfer programme introduced by the Maharashtra government in July 2024 — four months ahead of the polls. The scheme, much like its Madhya Pradesh counterpart, which was also introduced ahead of the Assembly elections there, aims to provide monthly financial assistance of ₹1,500 to poor women between the ages of 21 and 65 whose incomes are less than ₹2.5 lakh annually. Critics say such schemes amount to bribing voters and giving the incumbent government an unfair advantage. To discuss this, Kunal Shankar spoke to Reetika Khera and Vikas Rawal. Edited excerpts: Your initial thoughts.

Vikas Rawal: I think implementing social welfare programmes in response to popular needs, reflected through the political processes is necessary. That said, if this happens just before elections, if it is accompanied by weakening systems of evaluation, independent regulation and so on... And if it does not result in establishing a robust system of social welfare and merely ends in providing election soaps, then there is a problem.

Reetika Khera: Not so long ago in the southern States, parties promised mixer-grinders. At that time too, the media labelled these manifesto promises as freebies. I think of cash transfers as a modern avatar of those electoral promises. Labelling them as bribes would be wrong, just as it was wrong to label electoral promises as freebies. I do have reservations about certain cash transfers, though I support other kinds of cash transfers, like old age pensions and maternity benefits. What you’re probably getting at is that these promises reflect the flaw in our democracy. The only time that ordinary people get a hearing and are remembered by political parties is during elections and it is a pity that electoral promises are reduced to small, visible and short-term gains such as these cash transfers. But for those who are on the margins and largely ignored by the powers that be, they’ll just take what they get right? There’s a related question - how much do such promises — mixer-grinder or cash transfers, actually influence voter behaviour? I don’t

Liberation shifted to democratic participation, contesting elections and becoming a political entity. In Sri Lanka, the JVP provides the latest example of insurgents-turned-politicians. Initially a Marxist-Leninist-Maoist party, the JVP led two uprisings in 1971 and the 1980s, using ingenious methods in their violent strategy to capture power. The brutal suppression of both insurrections led the group to shift course and embrace parliamentary politics. Since the 1990s, within the democratic framework, the JVP could advocate for economic reform, social justice, and workers’ rights without the costs and sacrifices of warfare. The shift from armed struggle to electoral politics is driven by several factors, with strategic realism being among the most significant. Protracted insurgencies are resource-intensive and often unsustainable, as seen in places such as Nepal and El Salvador, where negotiated peace accords opened the door to political influence without ongoing violence. Shifting public sentiment is another key factor. Over time, the persistence of violence often alienates civilian populations, making it difficult for insurgent groups to sustain a loyal base of support. International pressure has also encouraged insurgent groups to transition to peaceful political engagement. International actors have been instrumental in mediating peace agreements in a global context that often condemns violent insurgencies, particularly in regions where insurgencies have been prolonged. In El Salvador, for example, the United Nations played a vital role in brokering peace between the government and the FMLN, enabling the transition of insurgents to legitimate political figures. Insurgent groups often undergo significant ideological evolution, adapting rigid revolutionary doctrines to fit within democratic frameworks as prolonged conflict pushes them to reassess their methods. The JVP in Sri Lanka, for example, reoriented its Marxist-Leninist-Maoist roots to advocate for social justice within a democratic structure, thereby reaching a broader social base without resorting to armed confrontation. While the JVP has softened its revolutionary rhetoric to appeal to a wider electorate, it has remained committed to its core values of social and economic justice.

The transition from insurgency to electoral politics reveals a paradox among revolutionary groups once rooted in rigid ideologies. While they may have dismissed democratic systems as capitalist instruments, many now use them to drive change. Some view this as a dilution of revolutionary ideals, but it reflects a pragmatic shift — recognising that violent revolution is not the only, and perhaps not the most effective, path to power. By entering mainstream politics, these groups gain avenues to expand representation and amplify marginalised voices. For example, Nepal’s Maoists have prioritised rural and marginalised communities, fostering more inclusive governance. The responses Operating within established political frameworks gives former insurgent groups legitimacy and greater capacity to address the social injustices that motivated their struggle. Yet, whether this shift leads to genuine reform or co-option by existing systems remains uncertain. These groups often face public scepticism about their commitment to democratic norms, as citizens may remember their violent past. To succeed, they must build credibility and balance their ideals with the practical demands of governance. This raises questions about whether ideology drives their actions or merely serves as a tool for power. Often, their transition reflects political realities rather than an abandonment of ideology. Integrating insurgent groups into democratic politics can strengthen the legitimacy of democracy. These groups often bring with them large support bases, and their inclusion can reinforce trust in the democratic process, fostering a more participatory and resilient political system — especially when these groups commit to democratic principles and contribute to the development of inclusive governance structures. While some may view this adaptation as an ideological compromise, it could also be seen as an evolution. Left-wing insurgencies adapting to parliamentary politics could be rationalised as a new phase of ideological struggle, reinterpreting revolution in a modern democratic context. In this view, parliamentary engagement is not an anathema but rather an adjustment to contemporary realities where the state can be reformed from within. This transition from armed insurrection to political participation is reshaping the narrative of contemporary insurgencies. It reveals that radical movements can evolve within democratic frameworks. It also rekindles confidence in certain forms of democratic socialism, offering paths that address the systemic issues of capitalism.

know the answer to that, but as a voter, what would stop me from taking what is due to me through such interventions and yet apply my mind independently to what is a pressing issue for the country and decide who to vote for?

Are DBTs then a failure of the government’s attempt to provide better livelihoods, and substitute it with one-time cash transfer schemes?

Reetika Khera: The question arises, do these cash transfers displace spending on health and education? From the point of view of the women who get these cash transfers, they have welcomed it, because they are often vulnerable. But what are cash transfers taking away from, if anything? Fiscally, that’s one important question. I was looking at the objectives for the cash transfers to women — what are they trying to achieve? There are three objectives which I’ve come across — one is they (governments) say economic independence for women, another to improve their health and nutrition. And the third, especially in Tamil Nadu, that it was compensation for all the unpaid domestic work. Each of these raise questions. Take economic independence. Isn’t that better achieved by making employment opportunities available to them? Why is the central government starving MNREGA (the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act) of funds? It would give women much more money. In Tamil Nadu for instance, they’re getting ₹12,000 a year (as part of the State’s cash transfer scheme). If women were to get 100 days of MNREGA employment, they would get ₹29,000 a year - more than double what they get through these cash transfers.

I talked to a woman recently in Chengalpattu and she absolutely prefers employment over cash transfers. The second objective of health and nutrition can also be achieved much better through providing eggs in anganwadis and mid-day meals. In many North Indian States children are not getting nutritious food. The third objective is compensation for unpaid domestic work: are you then saying that if women are supposed to be doing domestic work only, then they should just be given some money for it? Wouldn’t it be much better to think harder about how to change gender norms? So, the problem with these cash promises is not that it is a “bribe”, but rather what are they trying to achieve? Where do they fit into our conception of a welfare state?

Trump Effect : Opportunities for internationalisation of Indian universities



As per the Government of India, the number of Indian students pursuing higher education in foreign universities has gone up steeply by 47% in the last two years, from about 907,000 in 2022 to 1,330,000 in 2024. In the last three months, however, policy measures taken by the U.S. President Trump administration are discouraging students to go to the U.S. for higher studies. Governments at destinations like the U.K., Australia, and Canada placing restrictions on student visas and caps on admission of foreign students presents an excellent opportunity for India to attract more foreign students, besides retaining some Indian students back home. This article analyses the factors affecting international students' mobility and opportunities for internationalisation and suggests strategies to tap the emerging market by Indian universities.

U.S. and Canada, attractive destinations for higher studies for Indian students

According to Government of India statistics on Indian students studying abroad in 2024, Canada comes on top, with 427,000 Indian students, followed by the U.S. with 337,630, the U.K. with 185,000, Australia with 122,202, and Germany with 42,997. The U.S. and Canada have been the hot spots for higher studies because of the quality of education, fee waivers offered, availability of career opportunities, post studies and exposure to global work environment.Canada's popularity surged due to easier Permanent Residency (PR) pathways and work permits. The students that go to the U.S. on student visa (F1) are allowed to work full-time or part-time in the U.S. for a limited period of time as a part of the Optional Practical Training (OPT) scheme. In study fields like Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), needed by IT industry, OPT could be extended for an additional 24 months, from one year. This enables the students to pay back the loans availed for the studies during this period. Subsequently, they could secure regular jobs, after obtaining H1B Visa and build a lucrative career there. U.K. saw good growth in foreign student enrolments, after reintroducing the Post-Study Work Visa (Graduate Route) in 2021.

About 40% of the students who go to the developed countries for higher education pursue post-graduation in Engineering, followed by 25% in Management. It is estimated that over 75,000 Indians study MBBS in East and Central Asian countries like China, Russia, Georgia, Uzbekistan, the Philippines, Kyrgyzstan, and Ukraine (before the war with Russia), as it is recognised worldwide, more affordable and easier to get admission .Radical policy shift in the U.S. higher education

After the re-election of Donald Trump as the President of the United States, in January 2025, things have changed. Trump's administration introduced significant policy changes in higher education, particularly in the realms of immigration, visa issuance, and revoking student visas. Federal funding support was drastically cut to major U.S. universities for research and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives, thereby reducing the scholarships and hiking the program fees steeply.The 24-month extension for STEM OPT is likely to be removed. It is proposed to set a cap on international student visas at top public universities to prioritise domestic students. With more U.S. employers preferring to recruit locals, job opportunities for international students are expected to come down steeply. Recent visa withdrawals and suspension of international students in some of the U.S. universities have created uncertainty on security and safety of the students. On May 12, 2025, the U.K. Prime Minister, Keir Starmer, announced measures to cut migration, including restrictions on skilled worker visas and tightening citizenship rules. Canada, Australia, and some European nations are also in the process of tightening visa restrictions and setting enrolment caps for international students, including Indian students, citing concerns on immigration growth, housing shortages, and other social and economic factors. These changes will limit the influx of international students, seeking to study abroad in these countries. Diplomatic stand-off between Canada and India, coupled with new student visa regulations introduced in 2024, witnessed a 41% drop in students going to Canada in the last year. The decline was about 27% for the U.K. and 12-13% for the U.S. and Australia, as per the Bureau of Immigration data.

This presents a good opportunity for Indian Universities to scale up international admissions. Several Indians who wanted to pursue higher education abroad earlier are now keen to stay back. Considering the huge global demand for IT professionals, India, with its large IT industry, coupled with the capacity for quality engineering education, is well placed to attract foreign students in IT and allied disciplines.Besides, areas like Indian Traditional Knowledge Systems, like Yoga, Ayurveda, Vedic Literature, and Buddhist studies, are of interest to some of the international students. Indian HEIs can offer quality education at 25% of the cost of comparable institutions in the west, with home comforts and good industry exposure. Salary levels in India are comparable to the ones abroad, when compared on Purchasing Power Parity (PPP). As per the OECD study on international students' mobility (March 2025), affordability, university reputation, language, cultural ties, research excellence, and employment prospects are key factors in attracting international students. A survey, conducted in April

2025 of 27,400 prospective students, representing over 195 countries, revealed that for the first time, China has emerged among the top 10 global destinations for international students and is ranked overall eighth, third for university rankings, and twelfth in the world for achieving career goals.It is estimated that currently, over 450,000 foreign students are studying in China, including over 50,000 from South Korea, 23,000 from India, and 21,000 from the US. Programs preferred in China include Medicine, AI, Data Sciences, FinTech, Luxury Management, International Business, China studies (Chinese Law, Chinese Culture, China Global affairs etc).

How did China make it happen?

Over a period of time, China was able to ramp up foreign students studying in its institutions through a combination of policy interventions, enhancement of quality of education, branding, industry linkages, and post-studies employment. Over 50,000 students are admitted through fully funded seats annually by way of Belt and Road scholarships.Besides, universities are paid an incentive of \$3,000 per foreign student enrolled. Digital platforms like Alibaba are used to recruit students. Over 500 global centers of Confucius Institutes are used as feeder systems. Companies like Huawei Tech offer guaranteed internships for top students. Automatic work permits are given in Free Trade Zones like Shanghai to foreign students that graduate in China.Foreign students in India – current status

In the last two years, the number of foreign students in India grew by 35% from about 48,000 in 2022 to about 65,000 in 2024. Out of them, 40% are from Nepal, with the balance being from Afghanistan, Africa and Middle East. Over 32% of the students are studying Engineering (including Computer Sciences), 31% Medicine and 14% Business Management. There is an immense potential to double the number of foreign students in the next three years.Policy initiatives by Government of India to attract foreign students

The New Education Policy 2020 advocates for the internationalisation of education in India through various measures. During May 2022, the UGC formulated regulations for academic collaboration between Indian and foreign Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) to offer Twinning, Joint Degree and Dual Degree Programmes.Twinning is an arrangement whereby students enrolled with an Indian HEI may undertake their studies partly in India and partly, typically a semester, abroad. In a joint degree programme, the degree is awarded jointly by the Indian university and the foreign university. In a dual degree programme, the degrees is conferred by the two universities, separately and simultaneously, upon completion of requirements of both the institutions. HEIs are allowed to create up to 25% additional seats for international students, over and above of their sanctioned seats.

What is being done by Indian HEIs?

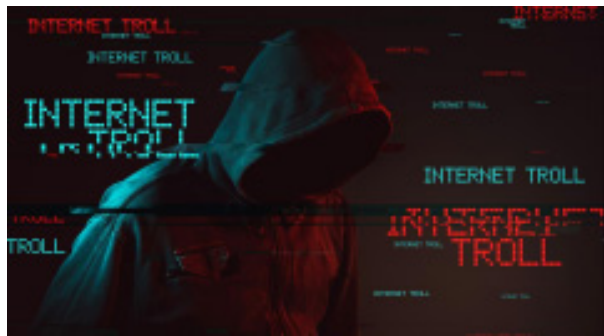
As of now, 13 Indian universities (Three public – IIT Madras, IIT Delhi, and IIM Ahmedabad, and 10 private) have set up campuses abroad, 11 of them in the Middle East and two in Africa. It is expected that 20 more HEIs will join them in the next 12 months. Three foreign universities (Two from Australia - Deakin and University of Wollongong and one from the U.K. University of Southampton) already set up campuses in India.Two more from the U.K. (Queen's University Belfast and University of Surrey) are planning to set up their Indian campuses by January 2026. It is significant to note that four of the above five universities preferred GIFT City in Gujarat, which is emerging as India's first international education hub, with world-class facilities, favourable legislation, and tax breaks.A number of Indian HEIs, which include IITs as well as private universities like Ashoka University, ISB, Manipal, Shiv Nadar University, Chitkara, OP Jindal, and more, signed joint ventures for academic collaboration with foreign universities in Australia and U.S. and have been offering joint programs, with semesters abroad.Four Indian business schools, IIM Calcutta, IIM Indore, ISB Hyderabad, and SPIJMR hold the distinction of "Triple Crown" of international accreditations from AACSB, AMBA, and EQUIS, whereas over 25 B-Schools have at least one of the three accreditations.Challenges to attract international students

Regulations, though liberalised to some extent in the recent past, continue to be a constraining factor for signing up with foreign universities and introducing joint programs. International students look for physical infrastructure befitting their lifestyles so that they feel at home. Besides quality education, the students expect post studies work opportunities.

What more can be done?

India signed cross-border education agreements with Australia and the U.K. for mutual recognition of qualifications and promotion of mobility of students. There is a need to sign more such agreements with countries in South Asia. Going by the success of GIFT City, more such education Special Economic Zones may be set up.The student visa regime needs to be simplified and extended to provide post-studies work opportunities in IT companies and GCCs. Besides IT related programs, interdisciplinary programs in emerging areas like Sustainability, Indian traditional Knowledge Systems may be offered. Digital Universities may be set up to offer online programs as well as blended delivery programs for international students.As per the UNESCO, there are over seven million internationally mobile students. India is well-positioned to be the Asian hub for education, as it can be the value leader, offering Ivy League-quality education at Asian costs. Protectionist measures, being taken by the developed countries in the recent past, offer an excellent opportunity for the Indian universities to attract more international students.To tap the opportunity, it needs concerted efforts, which include policy initiatives, more internationally recognised universities, with congenial infrastructure and post-studies work opportunities. It is equally important to promote the national brand "Study in India".

Why laws fall short in combating the surge in cyber-bullying cases



In the aftermath of the Pahalgam terror attack, Himanshi Narwal, the wife of slain Navy Lieutenant Vinay Narwal, issued a heartfelt appeal for peace and firmly rejected the vilification of Muslims and Kashmiris. Soon after, the grieving newlywed became the target of a vicious trolling campaign on X (formerly Twitter). Anonymous accounts hurled slurs at her, questioned her loyalty to her late husband, and even called for the cancellation of her pension.

However, Ms. Narwal was not alone in facing such online vitriol. Following Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri's announcement on May 10 that India and Pakistan had reached an understanding to halt military hostilities, his account on Xwas inundated with abusive comments, some of which targeted even his daughter. Mr. Misri was eventually compelled to lock his account, as several diplomats and politicians condemned the toxic trolling culture in unequivocal terms.Emboldened by the anonymity of the internet, faceless trolls have turned into virtual vigilantes, punishing those who dare to question dominant narratives. What regulatory reforms, then, are necessary to ensure that such depravity is no longer met with impunity?

A range of terms has emerged to describe contemporary forms of cybercrime, including cyberbullying, stalking, hate speech, and doxxing. Doxxing, short for "dropping dox" (documents), involves the unauthorised online disclosure of private information, often with malicious intent. This may include home addresses, phone numbers, or sensitive images, leaving victims vulnerable to harassment and tangible real-world threats.Studies show that such abuse disproportionately targets women and minorities, suggesting that these attacks are often driven by organised political motives. The consequences can be severe, frequently escalating to rape and death threats.India lacks a dedicated law specifically aimed at tackling online hate speech and trolling. Instead, a limited number of provisions under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2003, and the Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000, cover certain aspects of cyberbullying. The BNS contains provisions applicable to electronic communications, such as Section 74 (assault or criminal force against a woman with intent to outrage her modesty), Section 75 (sexual harassment), Section 351 (criminal intimidation), Section 356 (defamation), and Section 196 (promoting enmity between groups). The IT Act supplements these offences with provisions like Section 66C (identity theft), Section 66D (impersonation fraud) and Section 67 (publishing or transmitting obscene material electronically).

"The existing regulatory framework is functional but far from complete. No provision squarely criminalises sustained online abuse that does not qualify as 'obscene,' 'threatening,' or 'fraudulent.' Stalking under the BNS is gender-specific—limited to men targeting women—and hinges on intent to engage personally, failing to capture the collective harassment that defines much of online trolling. While cyberbullying may sometimes be shoehorned into offences like criminal intimidation or defamation, these require proof of threat or reputational harm and are ill-suited to counter the rapid, anonymous abuse unleashed by online mobs," Apar Gupta, advocate and founder-director of the Internet Freedom Foundation, t

Moderation or censorship?

Mounting domestic and international pressure to curb disinformation and hate speech has compelled social media giants to moderate and remove harmful content. While many advocate for "self-regulation," where platforms enforce their own community guidelines, this model has largely failed and faces growing scrutiny. Last year, Telegram founder and CEO Pavel Durov was arrested by French authorities for allegedly failing to moderate criminal activity on the platform, including the circulation of child sexual abuse material and fraudulent content. Telegram later amended its privacy policy to permit the disclosure of users' IP addresses and phone numbers to law enforcement upon receipt of "valid legal requests."The challenge is further exacerbated by the gradual erosion of content moderation policies in favour of monetisation. In a damning re-

port released earlier this month, the Centre for the Study of Organized Hate found that X had become a "high-velocity distribution channel" for hate speech and conspiracy theories, particularly targeting British-Pakistani men as well as other South Asian and immigrant communities. An analysis of 1,365 posts generating more than 1.5 billion engagements revealed that the platform played a central role in weaponising the "grooming gang" discourse to scapegoat Muslims in the U.K., despite police data showing that most offenders were white men.In India, Section 69A of the IT Act empowers the government to issue blocking orders on grounds aligned with constitutionally permissible restrictions on speech, such as national sovereignty, friendly relations with foreign States, and public order. Platforms that fail to comply risk losing safe harbour protection under Section 79, which ordinarily shields intermediaries from liability for user-generated content. However, experts have warned that these provisions are increasingly being used as tools for online censorship. In recent years, the Union Government has frequently taken down content without notifying affected users — a practice that contravenes the Supreme Court's 2015 ruling in Shreya Singhal v. Union of India. While the court upheld the constitutionality of Section 69A, it underscored that blocking orders must be accompanied by cogent reasons to enable judicial scrutiny.Following the Pahalgam attack, X disclosed that it had been directed to block more than 8,000 accounts in India, but said the government had not specified which posts violated the law in most cases. In March, the company filed a lawsuit in the Karnataka High Court challenging the government's reliance on Section 79(3)(b) to issue takedown orders, arguing that it bypasses the procedural safeguards under Section 69A. Unlike Section 69A, Section 79(3)(b) neither defines what constitutes an "unlawful act" nor provides for any review mechanism.Meanwhile, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting recently informed a Parliamentary Committee that it is reconsidering safe harbour protections for social media platforms in a bid to combat "fake news." X has received executive orders from the Indian government requiring X to block over 8,000 accounts in India, subject to potential penalties including significant fines and imprisonment of the company's local employees. The orders include demands to block access in India to...In February last year, the Delhi High Court directed X to remove tweets revealing the personal and professional details of a woman who had reportedly posted a critical comment about Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. The post triggered a wave of online harassment, with details of her workplace, residence, and photographs being widely circulated. Although these disclosures raised privacy concerns, Justice Prathiba Singh ruled that the incident did not constitute doxxing, as the information was already publicly available.

However, the judge acknowledged that while doxxing is not yet a statutory offence in India, it poses a serious threat. She observed that it infringes upon the right to privacy and that courts could invoke tort law to offer redress. Accordingly, X was directed to disclose subscriber information associated with the offending posts.This case highlights the contested nature of what qualifies as public information. The Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023, exempts from its ambit personal data that is made "publicly available", either through voluntary disclosure by the individual or by entities under a legal obligation. However, this exemption is riddled with ambiguity, as the law offers no clear definition for what qualifies as "publicly available data."This lack of clarity may inadvertently enable cybercrimes such as doxxing, especially given the ease with which fragmented data from multiple platforms can be easily aggregated and used for harassment or intimidation.Experts underscored that enforcement, or rather the lack of it, often determines whether victims can access remedies."All laws are only as effective as their enforcement. While posts and accounts are promptly removed when government directives are issued, the same urgency is rarely extended to ordinary users reporting harassment or abusive content," Mishi Choudhary, technology lawyer and digital rights advocate, told The Hindu.She pointed out that for victims of gendered online abuse, legal recourse is typically a last resort. "Survivors are often disbelieved or, worse, blamed for the abuse they face. The lack of awareness and institutional support has a profoundly detrimental impact, forcing many to navigate an uphill battle in their quest for justice," she said.Mr. Gupta agreed, highlighting challenges such as perpetrator anonymity, cross-jurisdictional hurdles, and limited cybercrime training. "While the BNS has modernised terminology and broadened the scope of online offences, gaps in legal clarity and enforcement persist. Merely creating new offences is insufficient and may even endanger journalists and rights defenders, especially given India's weak rule of law framework," he cautioned.

Is your blood pressure out of control? Understanding resistant hypertension and what can help

GNS News Agency, Sept 29

High blood pressure is a common concern in India. But what happens when standard treatments don't work? This is the reality of resistant hypertension, a condition requiring specialised care. According to the World Health Organisation, approximately only 1 in 5 adults (21%) with hypertension have it under control.A secondary analysis of the National Family Health Survey-5 data found that almost 36.8% of Indian women and 49.5% of men with hypertension in India don't have the condition under control despite being on medication. This isn't just high blood pressure—it's a resistant form that remains uncontrolled despite standard treatment and requires a more specialized approach.What is resistant hypertension?Resistant hypertension is defined as blood pressure that remains above 140/90 mmHg despite adherence to a regimen of three or more antihypertensive medications, including a diuretic, all at optimal doses. Unlike standard hypertension, which usually responds to medications and lifestyle modifications, in resistant hypertension, the BP remains elevated despite adherence to recommended treatment. Resistant hypertension may affect more people than you think. Despite the growing burden of this condition however, hypertensive disorders are still not looked at with the urgency they deserve. Many people view high blood pressure as a manageable part of life, unlike conditions such as cancer, which evoke far greater concern. This lack of awareness means that many patients continue to live with uncontrolled hypertension for years, risking severe complications such as heart failure, stroke, and kidney damage. The emotional toll can also be significant, with patients feeling frustrated, anxious, or disheartened by their inability to bring their blood pressure under control.For those dealing with resistant hypertension, a diagnosis involves ruling out factors that can mimic resistance, such as inaccurate blood pressure readings or interactions with other medications. Once confirmed, identifying the underlying cause is key. Resistant hypertension is driven by one or more underlying causes. According to

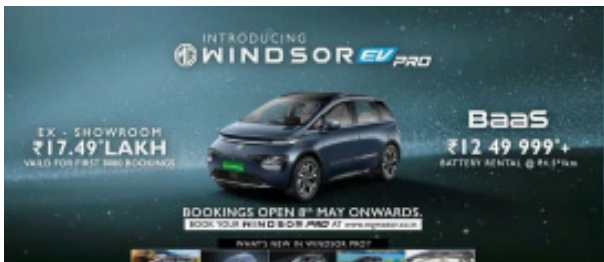
the American Heart Association, these can include hormonal imbalances that affect blood pressure, plaque buildup in the arteries supplying the kidneys, and sleep-related disorders such as sleep apnea. Ambulatory BP monitoring, hormonal testing, imaging of the kidneys, sleep studies, and a detailed review of the patient's medication and medical history can all help uncover the root cause of the problem.In recent years, treatment options for resistant hypertension have expanded beyond medication alone. One of the most promising advances is a minimally invasive procedure known as renal denervation (RDN). This technique uses radiofrequency energy to disrupt the overactive sympathetic nerves around the renal arteries. By targeting these nerves, RDN helps reduce and regulate the sympathetic drive that keeps blood pressure elevated in many patients with resistant forms of the condition.While the idea of undergoing a procedure for hypertension may initially seem excessive, especially given how the condition is perceived, this mindset is beginning to shift. RDN is gaining recognition for its potential to provide sustained blood pressure control and reduce the long-term risk of organ damage.

For patients who have exhausted conventional treatment options, RDN offers renewed hope, particularly when combined with ongoing lifestyle support and medical care. According to a study in TheLancet study, it complements both medication and lifestyle changes, but unlike medications, RDN maintains blood pressure reductions consistently over a 24-hour period.Resistant hypertension is not just a more stubborn version of high blood pressure—it is a distinct medical condition that requires deeper investigation, targeted treatment, and a shift in how both patients and clinicians approach it. With greater awareness, timely diagnosis, and innovative therapies like RDN, it is possible to bring even the most unrelenting cases of high blood pressure back under control—and protect long-term health in the process.(Dr. Y. Vijayachandra Reddy is a senior consultant & interventional cardiologist at Apollo Main Hospitals, Chennai.

MG Motors launch 'Windows EV Pro' with 52.9 kWh battery pack, ADAS

Hyderabad: With the increasing demand for electric vehicles, MG Motor India launches the 'Windows EV Pro,' an upgraded variant of its popular electric MPV that offers enhanced features and improved designs.The newly unveiled Windows EV pro is equipped with a 52.9 kWh battery pack, delivering a claimed range of 449 km on a single charge. This is a significant improvement over the previous 38 kWh battery which offered a range of approximately 331 km.

The Pro Variant which is launched in three new colours Celadon Blue, Glaze Red, and Aurora Silver, retains its signature AeroGlide design but introduces new dual-tone 18-inch alloy wheels. The car's interior enhancements include providing more space with a lighter Ivory leatherette upholstery.



The car is equipped with an Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS)suite which features blind spot detection, traffic sign recognition mechanism, driver attention alert, and 360-degree camera system with parking sensors among others.

Britain, Canada, France warn Israel over 'egregious' Gaza tactics



“We are committed to recognising a Palestinian state as a contribution to achieving a two-state solution and are prepared to work with others to this end,” the statement saysThe leaders of Britain, France and Canada on Monday (May 19, 2025) condemned Israel's "egregious actions" in Gaza and warned of joint action if it did not halt a heightened military offensive in the Palestinian territory.

But Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu hit back at British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, French President Emmanuel Macron and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney, saying their joint statement was a "huge prize" for Hamas in the Gaza war.Mr. Starmer, Mr. Macron and Mr. Carney slammed Israel's blocking of aid and comments by ministers in Netanyahu's government who have threatened the mass displacement of Palestinians."We will not stand by while the Netanyahu government pursues these egregious actions. If Israel does not cease the renewed military offensive and lift its restrictions on humanitarian aid, we will take further concrete actions in response," the leaders said.

My joint statement with @Keir_Starmer and @EmmanuelMacron on the situation in Gaza and the West Bank: They did not say what action could be taken but added: "We are committed to recognising a Palestinian state as a contribution to achieving a two-state solution and are prepared to work with others to this end."The statement coin-

In the wake of crisis, the need for bipartisanship

The terrorist attack in Pahalgam, on April 22, 2025 has once again shaken our collective conscience, reminding us of the fragility of peace in a region long burdened by the weight of history. As India grieves the loss of innocent lives and strengthens its resolve against terror, we must also recognise the critical importance of bipartisanship — both in shaping our response and in ensuring that national security does not become another theatre for political posturing.

There is a distressing pattern that emerges whenever India faces a crisis of this nature: political parties, instead of closing ranks in defence of the nation, often resort to scoring points — weaponising grief for electoral advantage rather than forging a unified front. We saw this after the Pulwama attack in 2019, where swift retaliatory action became intertwined with campaign narratives. That was perhaps inevitable, since the general election was only weeks away from being called, and the national discourse swiftly veered from security imperatives to domestic politicking. But there is no doubt that this cycle weakens our ability to formulate a cohesive and long-term strategy, one that can fortify our defences without compromising our democratic integrity.

The challenge before us is clear: terrorism is a scourge that demands a decisive, well-coordinated response, not knee-jerk reactions shaped by party ideologies. Whether dealing with counter-terror operations, diplomatic negotiations, or intelligence reforms, decisions must be made collectively, informed by strategic foresight rather than short-term gains. National security is too vital an issue to be circumscribed by party affiliations; it must transcend ideological divides.Take, for instance, the Kargil conflict of 1999 — a moment when India, despite political differences between the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party and Opposition Congress, stood together in defence of the nation. The war effort saw bipartisan cooperation, ensuring that security strategies were aligned with national interests rather than partisan agendas. The Opposition, led by Congress President Sonia Gandhi, largely supported the government's military response. She praised the armed forces, stating: "The bravery of our soldiers in Kargil has made every Indian proud. Their sacrifice will never be forgotten." Similarly, when India conducted surgical strikes in 2016 in response to the Uri terror attack, it was done with clear messaging — demonstrating strength without overstepping into prolonged conflict — and the nation was united in applauding the action across political lines.Recent global history is replete with examples of bipartisanship across political divides in response to terrorism in various democracies. Following the September 11 attacks, both parties in the United States recognised the need for a more unified approach to national security, and a bipartisan effort ensured a swift and coordinated response to terrorism. After the terrorist attack on two mosques in Christchurch in 2019, then New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern led a bipartisan effort to reform gun laws. Within weeks, the government passed legislation banning military-style semi-automatic weapons, with support from both major parties. More recently, after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, bipartisan support emerged across Western Europe for military aid to Kyiv and sanctions against Russia. Traditionally neutral countries such as Sweden and Finland joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), with broad political consensus across party lines.These examples highlight how, despite political differences, nations can unite in times of crisis to prioritise security, unity and effective action. Should Pahalgam and its aftermath be any different?When I first became Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs, I declared that "there is no such thing as a Congress foreign policy and a BJP foreign policy; there is only Indian foreign policy, and Indian national interests." I was reminded of a famous episode of Indian diplomatic history in 1994, when Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao picked Opposition Leader (and then Chairman of the External Affairs Committee) Atal Bihari Vajpayee to lead the Indian delegation to present India's case on Kashmir, and counter Pakistan's falsehoods, at a United Nations session in Geneva. The Congress Minister of State for External Affairs, Salmaan Khurshid, was named as A.B. Vajpayee's deputy. Later, as Prime Minister, A.B. Vajpayee recalled with amusement just how bewildered the Pakistani governing class was at seeing an Opposition leader representing his nation's interests at such a prestigious forum, and at such a crucial moment. But such, he concluded, is our "vichitra loktantra" — as clamorous and chaotic as it is miraculous and mesmerising.Sadly, this episode has not been repeated in the last three decades, as our politics has turned ever more rancorous and bitter. There is very little mutual respect and friendship on display between the ruling party

cided with a joint demand by 22 countries -- including Britain, France and Canada -- for Israel to immediately "allow a full resumption of aid into Gaza", noting that the territory's population "faces starvation".Israel has kept Gaza in a total aid blockade since March 2, but announced on Monday it would allow in a limited number of supply trucks.Netanyahu said the limited aid access was because "images of mass starvation" in Gaza could hurt the legitimacy of his country's war.The British-French-Canada statement said Israel's "denial of essential humanitarian assistance to the civilian population is unacceptable and risks breaching international humanitarian law". It also slammed "abhorrent language used recently by members of the Israeli government, threatening that, in their despair at the destruction of Gaza, civilians will start to relocate".The leaders said that "permanent forced displacement is a breach of international humanitarian law". "By asking Israel to end a defensive war for our survival before Hamas terrorists on our border are destroyed and by demanding a Palestinian state, the leaders in London, Ottawa and Paris are offering a huge prize for the genocidal attack on Israel on October 7 while inviting more such atrocities," he said, referring to the Hamas attacks in 2023 that set off the war.Netanyahu said "all European leaders" should follow U.S. President Donald Trump's example in supporting Israel.

"The war can end tomorrow if the remaining hostages are released, Hamas lays down its arms, its murderous leaders are exiled and Gaza is demilitarised. No nation can be expected to accept anything less and Israel certainly won't," Netanyahu declared."This is a war of civilisation over barbarism. Israel will continue to defend itself by just means until total victory is achieved."Israel's military has stepped up an offensive in Gaza as part of its prolonged response to Hamas's October 7, 2023 attack that resulted in the deaths of 1,218 people on the Israeli side, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally based on official figures.Gaza's health ministry said on Monday at least 3,340 people have been killed since Israel resumed strikes on March 18, taking the war's overall toll to 53,486.



and the Opposition. The core assumption of democratic politics is supposed to be that both sides understand that the other is as committed to the national interest as itself, even if they disagree on how best to ensure the nation's well-being. In that sense the two sides are not enemies but adversaries. But that assumption has yielded to a bitter polarisation in recent years. One could, of course, argue that this is merely a natural consequence of the pushes and pulls that are inevitable in a democratic polity. But the Indian discourse has taken on extreme hues that imperil any possibility of consensus. The Overton's Window of political mobilisation (in other words, what is considered acceptable in the political arena) has become more vengeful, driven by resentment and an obsession to expiate past wrongs. And social media has emerged as an important tool for divisive discourse, through which the political benefits of this polarisation are reaped. From public debates to dinner-table conversations, the greys have given way to Manichaeen blacks and whites.The result is that in recent years, political discourse on security has frequently devolved into blame games, sidestepping the actual need for strategic recalibration. India's relationship with Pakistan, though complex and fraught, requires clarity. There can be no ambiguity in condemning acts of terror; the line between national security and political point-scoring is not a thin one. It is in India's interest to unite in the response to terror, because a perception of division at home always emboldens the enemy. Inflammatory rhetoric, though politically expedient, serves no substantive purpose. If India is to emerge as a responsible power, it must ensure that its politics is mature, that the nation always comes ahead of party interests, and that its diplomacy walks in step with defence preparedness — balancing deterrence with restraint, security with stability, and democratic politics with national unity.Need for a non-partisan security doctrineWhat India needs today is a structured national security doctrine that remains insulated from electoral cycles — one that provides a clear vision on counter-terrorism, intelligence-sharing, and strategic deterrence without becoming a tool for political oneupmanship. Policies regarding defence, zero-tolerance of terror, the security of the homeland, regional strategy and global diplomacy, must be formulated with bipartisan consensus, ensuring that they remain consistent, regardless of which party is in power.True political leadership demands statesmanship over populism, clarity over chaos. If our lawmakers recognise this imperative, they will understand that safeguarding India's security is not a party matter but a collective responsibility. In moments of grief and crisis, let bipartisanship be the force that unites us — not just in words, but in action. The promise of a secure, stable, and resilient India depends on it.Shashi Tharoor is a fourth-term Member of Parliament (Congress), Lok Sabha, for Thiruvananthapuram, Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs, and the Sahitya Akademi Award-winning author of 27 books, including 'The Battle of Belonging: On Nationalism, Patriotism, and what it Means to Be Indian'

Theft of hard disks reported at Raj Bhavan in Hyd

Hyderabad: A theft of hard disks was reported at the high security Raj Bhavan, the official residence of the Telangana Governor in the city, creating a stir.Four hard disks were stolen from the Sudharma Bhavan in Raj Bhavan. The Raj Bhavan officials, who learnt about it after recently examining the CCTV footage on the premises, have lodged a complaint with the Punjagutta police.The police immediately registered a case and started an investigation.As per available information, Srinivas, a computer hardware engineer working in outsourcing who was reportedly involved in the theft was arrested.

The workings of an atomiser and its myriad applications



All of us have had this experience at some point: you wake up, find out you're late for a class or meeting, clean up, put on some nice clothes, and run. When you finally get to where you need to be, you're sweating. You pull out a small deodorant bottle from your bag, give yourself a spray, and you're set. Wasn't that handy? The spray nozzle, also known as an atomiser, is a nifty piece of technology that creates a mist of particles from a liquid on demand. Liquids are easier to store whereas a spray spreads better. Thus some enterprising engineers invented the atomiser to allow you, and in fact many industries in the world, to make the best of both worlds.

What is an atomiser?

An atomiser is a device that creates a spray. A spray is in turn a collection of drops that disperses as gas. There are different kinds of atomisers based on the kind of spray required. Since there are many hundreds of scenarios where sprays are required — including injecting fuel into internal combustion engines, manufacturing steel, and to irrigate gardens and quench small fires — atomisers are also expected to have different abilities.Some simple ways in which sprays differ are in the drop size, spray pattern, and angle of application.There are at least two ways to measure spray drop sizes: by the drops' average surface area or average volume. Some use a statistical figure called the Relative Span Factor (RSF). It denotes the distribution of drop sizes as a ratio of the size difference between the largest and smallest drops to the median size. If the RSF is close to 1, it means the spray is close to being very evenly sized. There are also many ways to measure the drop sizes. For example, the greater the angle at which light is scattered by a drop, the smaller it is. So scientists can shine a laser light at a spray and assess drop sizes using a detector to record the scattered light.Spray pattern refers to the distribution of the spray's drops once they hit the target surface. While the spray on a deodorant may want to deliver drops to a wide area on skin, a spray in a coal mine may need to deliver a ring of drops spreading in a conical shape through the air to quickly trap as many coal-dust particles as possible (devices that can achieve the latter are good at preventing clogging and can create sprays at low pressure.)Similarly, the angle of application matters to keep a spray from striking surfaces that shouldn't be sprayed or, conversely, to cover a given area as efficiently as possible.

How does an atomiser work?

There are many applications, so there are many atomisers. Perhaps the one mechanism they all share is that they create sprays by blowing up some liquid. In one

simple implementation, liquid flowing through a wider channel is suddenly forced into a much narrower channel. A sufficiently high pressure drop will cause the liquid to break up into small drops. If the narrower channel has a notched opening at the other end, the spray emerges as a flat fan — of the kind used in spray painting.If the narrower channel opens after a short distance to an upward ramp, the fluid hits the ramp in a sheet and then shatters into drops — an output that's useful when a thin coating is required, like an insecticide on a plant.Another design called a pressure-swirl atomiser works similarly to when you're cradling a glass of chai in your hand. To help it cool, you might move the glass with your hand such that the liquid swirls inside, flowing more along the sides than in the centre. The atomiser does the same thing while allowing air to push through at the centre, keeping the fluid flowing along the walls. As gravity pulls the fluid down, a small opening allows it to flow out in a conical pattern.More complicated designs cater to specific applications. For example, an atomiser can also deliver an aerosol — which is a spray where the drops are so small (typically 10 µm or smaller) that they can stay airborne for many hours instead of settling down. To do this the shear, or tearing, force acting on the liquid at the liquid-gas interface should be much higher than in, say, an atomiser used to spray cleaning liquid on a household surface.Pressure-swirl atomisers can achieve this if the liquid is already at high pressure when entering the swirling chamber. Other techniques include ultrasonic nebulisation, where high-frequency vibrations induced on the liquid surface can cause small drops to break off, and air-assisted atomisers, where compressed air rips through the liquid as it flows out.

Where are atomisers used?

Aside from the applications mentioned thus far, atomisers are used everywhere where a liquid needs to be distributed in a specific and efficient way across a surface or through a space. In power plants, coolants are sprayed on spinning turbine blades and lubricants are often sprayed on machines with high-contact moving parts — in both cases to prevent heat build-up.A method called spray drying is used to make milk powder by creating a spray and passing it through hot gas to quickly dry it. In the automobile and aerospace sectors, fuel injectors spray pressurised fuel into engines.Firefighters' only option for putting out fires involving flammable solids is often foam sprays.In addition to pesticides and fertilizers, farmers use spray-based irrigation systems when planting in soils that have poor percolation.Atomisers are ubiquitous in medicine: nasal sprays deliver drugs to the lungs, pain-relief sprays can quickly soothe aching muscles, antiseptics are sprayed on wounds, and disinfectants are used to keep air and hospital surfaces clean.In the early days of COVID-19 pandemic, there was some confusion over how far the virus could spread by air, leaving many scientists trying to model the pathogen as an aerosol. Climate scientists also study aerosols because of their cooling effects in the atmosphere, to subtract them and estimate the actual level of warming.Within a household itself, atomisers serve cooking oils, mirror cleaners, and fragrances for hair and perfumes. In the end, let's not forget the humble deodorant itself that allows people to be around each other despite India's increasingly hot summers without stuffing their noses.

What India can learn from U.S. academic freedom crisis: When politics enters the classroom

With conservative State governments in the United States enacting policies that opponents claim jeopardize academic freedom, institutional autonomy, and intellectual diversity, American colleges have recently turned into arenas for ideological conflict. Although freedom of thought and inquiry have long been defended by the U.S. as essential components of its higher education system, that basic foundation is currently in jeopardy. This incident serves as a frightening reminder to Indian administrators, students, and policy intellectuals of how readily university integrity can be undermined by politicization.Laws that limit the teaching of subjects like race, gender, and sexuality in schools have been passed in a number of conservative-led U.S. states, including Florida, Texas, and Tennessee. These laws, which were framed as attempts to shield kids from political indoctrination, have caused: Critical Race Theory (CRT) being prohibited in public institutions; Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) offices being dismantle; and control of course content and library resourcesMany educators are concerned about this top-down management because they perceive it as an open attack on their freedom to teach and conduct research. There are also requests to restrict or do away with tenure systems, which are a cornerstone of academic freedom.The theory known as Critical Race Theory (CRT), which was created in American law schools throughout the 1970s and 1980s, essentially explains how racism is ingrained in institutions, legal systems, and public policy rather than being limited to individual opinions. The key underlying concepts are: Racism is systemic; it is not limited to individual prejudice but is ingrained in institutions, laws, and structures.Race is socially manufactured; it is not biologically based; rather, it is a social construct used for control and classification.Privilege and power are important: Who gains from current structures? CRT poses challenging queries regarding inequality and justice. To fully tell the tale of law and history, the voices of the underprivileged must be heard.Intersectionality: When race coexists with other identities such as gender, class, or disability, particular difficulties might arise.Affirmative action, housing laws, education inequalities, and police reform are just a few of the topics that are examined utilizing CRT. It promotes critical thinking about history, equity, and how we formulate laws to create a society that is more inclusive.Although CRT is mostly taught in academic institutions, it has recently become politicized, particularly in the U.S., with detractors saying it sows discord. Advocates claim it makes it possible to have frank discussions on justice, history, and racism.Advocates of these regulations contend that liberal ideology have taken over universities, turning them into echo chambers. They think that more balanced, ideologically diverse learning environments will result from eliminating some types of content and regaining control over the curriculum. But rather than promoting conversation, the methods used to achieve this goal frequently entail stifling it.Some conservative leaders have publicly expressed hostility against prestigious universities. Donald Trump has questioned the worth of an Ivy League education and referred to American universities as "radical left indoctrination centers." Florida Governor Ron DeSantis said that "education is not about imposing ideology" but rather "about pursuing truth" in his criticism of the New College of Florida and his doubts about Harvard's ideological neutrality. These remarks reveal a deeper hostility for academic institutions that are viewed as strongholds of progressive ideas.

The Harvard conflictThe difficulties are further exem-



plified by the recent impasse between the U.S. Department of Education and Harvard University, one of the most respected Ivy League universities. Following the 2023 Hamas-Israel crisis, a number of Harvard student organizations made contentious remarks that infuriated donors and the general public. The Department of Education launched a civil rights inquiry into Harvard amid claims that the university was encouraging antisemitism.Although this action was purportedly taken for campus safety, it was widely perceived as pressure with political motivations. Opponents cautioned that these inquiries might be used as instruments of ideological control, using federal supervision as a weapon to threaten organizations that don't fit the prevailing political narratives.India's higher education system is about to undergo a significant change. There is a major drive for increased autonomy, interdisciplinary learning, and international research collaboration with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. However, the U.S. case serves as a caution:Autonomy is brittle. It is difficult to get back once lost: Indian universities, especially public ones, frequently have to balance academic independence with governmental supervision. The danger of political ideology controlling curricula is not only intellectual homogenization but also a deterioration in research quality, international recognition, and student readiness.Politicization over pedagogy: The goal of education changes from inquiry to indoctrination when political narratives begin to influence curricula. It is discouraged for faculty to question prevailing views. Diverse worldviews and critical thinking are not presented to students. Additionally, the university stops being a forum for free discussion.This risk is not fictitious. We have already witnessed attempts in India to marginalize specific academic disciplines, remove inconvenient viewpoints, and rewrite history texts. The decline of academic freedom may resemble the American experience if these trends continue unchecked.Stakeholders in Indian higher education need to be proactive. They need to redouble their effort to boost institutional oversight to safeguard academic freedom; encourage scholarly organizations, not political appointees, to create curricula; encourage critical thinking instead than memorization; preserve research freedom and tenure.Students also play a part. Students' conversations, not simply faculty arguments, should include awareness of and participation in academic freedom problems.India needs to learn from other countries' mistakes if it hopes to establish top-notch colleges and establish itself as a global center of knowledge. The story of American institutions becoming politicized serves as a warning. Ensuring that the next generation of Indian leaders, scientists, artists, and thinkers are educated in settings that encourage truth, complexity, and free discussion is equally as important as protecting academic freedom.

After cases of drug, alcohol use by pilots, Air India stresses zero-tolerance, strict compliance



Air India has undertaken additional measures to reinforce compliance among employees performing safety-critical functions, sources said. Air India has undertaken additional measures to reinforce compliance among employees performing safety-critical functions, sources said. After one of its pilots tested positive for drug use and another failed an alcohol breath analyser test just before operating a flight, Tata group airline Air India has made various interventions in recent weeks to reinforce upon pilots the need for professional conduct and regulatory compliance, according to sources in the know. These incidents had raised questions about evident safety-related violations involving pilots. In their wake, the airline has now doubled down on its efforts to strengthen compliance and come down heavily on such transgressions, as per sources.

The pilot-in-command of an Air India Phuket-Delhi flight involved in a sudden altitude loss incident on August 4 tested positive for psychoactive substance, and was sacked after the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AARB) in its preliminary report on September 4 flagged his positive drug test as a serious concern. Then on September 6, an Air India pilot failed a breath analyser test in Zurich before operating a flight to Delhi, and was suspended pending investigation and his final medical report. A similar incident occurred at the Vancouver airport in January. The recent incidents led to a missive to all Air India pilots from the airline's head of flight operations reiterating its "zero-tolerance policy towards the use of prohibited substances and reporting for duty under the influence of alcohol or drugs", according to airline sources. They added that Air India follows a zero-tolerance policy towards any violation of safety, security, or regulatory requirements, and confirmed breaches of rules and protocols are dealt with strict disciplinary action.

NSE's primary duty is of a regulator, even at cost to business, says Chairman Srinivas Injeti



The primary duty of the National Stock Exchange (NSE) is to ensure a safe and trusted market for investors even if it comes at the cost of business for the exchange, Chairman Srinivas Injeti said here on Friday, amid the on-going tightening of regulations for derivatives markets which has been a "cash cow" for both the bourse operators, NSE and BSE. "We can't be distracted from our primary duty of giving you a market with integrity and a market where investors are protected," Injeti said during a media briefing here, a day after NSE's listing. MD and CEO Ashishkumar Chauhan and other senior management of the bourse operator were also present.

On regulatory tightening in the derivatives segment, Injeti said, "This imbalance, excessive dependence (on the derivatives segment), you know, will have to be reduced. So, I think that is the big picture. And given this, there is no way, there is no jugglery, there is no way in which quarter to quarter you can do some magic." Before this tightening, NSE and BSE were deriving over 90% of their revenues from the derivatives segment at one point. Diversifying revenue streams NSE's management emphasised the need to take steps to better protect retail investors and diversify its revenue streams going forward. "Maybe if this domination in options was unquestioned, they (SEBI) may not have looked at the commodity. They may not have looked at ... what are the small, small things we can do to sort of get data connectivity, some money here, some money there,

In the September 6 incident in Zurich, the pilot was immediately removed from operating duties upon receipt of a preliminary breath analyser test report from local authorities and referred for further medical evaluation. He was then flown to India as a passenger and is currently under suspension. According to airline sources, disciplinary action will be taken based on the findings of the investigation and his medical report. "This approach is consistent with Air India's longstanding policy that safety-related violations, particularly those involving alcohol, prohibited substances or conduct that could compromise operational safety, are treated with the utmost seriousness," said a source. In the Zurich case, the issue was identified and reported through Air India's airport team to the airport authorities in line with the airline's internal monitoring and compliance processes, it is learnt. Sources in the airline said that the prompt reporting and immediate operational action in this case demonstrate the effectiveness of Air India's safety oversight and compliance framework. They said that Air India's internal safety management system is designed to "identify, report and address operational deviations and non-compliance proactively". The airline is now working to strengthen safety monitoring and reporting within the organisation. Air India has undertaken additional measures to reinforce compliance among employees performing safety-critical functions, sources said. Some of these include mandatory testing for psychoactive substances, enhanced awareness programmes focused on safety-critical responsibilities, reinforcement of reporting obligations and regulatory expectations, and continued monitoring of compliance trends and operational conduct. "Air India enforces internal standards that complement regulatory requirements and maintains a strict stance on any failure to comply with alcohol restrictions, substance abuse regulations, mandatory reporting obligations or other safety-related protocols. Where violations have been established, the airline has taken disciplinary action, including suspension and termination of employment, depending on the nature and severity of the breach," said an airline source. "Safety remains the cornerstone of Air India's ongoing transformation journey. Alongside investments in fleet modernisation, technology and customer experience, the airline continues to strengthen its safety culture through rigorous compliance mechanisms, enhanced oversight, continuous training, leadership engagement and strict enforcement of standards," the source added.

some data modernisation. All that is happening because of this imbalance, excessive dependence (on revenues from derivatives), you know, will have to reduce," Injeti added. A study by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) last month showed that despite signs of retail participation in India's equity derivatives (F&O) cooling for the first time in at least five years, nearly 9 in 10 individual traders continued to face losses in 2025-26, as the average loss per trader rose 2% year-on-year to Rs 1.17 lakh crore. This was despite steps taken by the regulator such as limiting expiries to one per exchange and increasing lot sizes of derivative contracts, among others.

NSE has considerably reduced its revenue dependence on derivatives, and aims to continue doing so through more focus on the cash market, electronic gold receipts, and the commodity market, among others. In fact, SEBI on Thursday permitted foreign investors to participate in physically settled non-agricultural commodity derivatives, a move expected to boost trading volumes in bullion contracts. This will also bring in significant capital for NSE, whose facilities have been used by FPIs for decades to invest in equities, the management said. The NSE chairman also said that the SEBI should allow exchanges to list on their own platforms as the Indian market has matured. While self-listing is permitted across various major markets, like in the US, the Indian market regulator continues to prohibit it, citing conflict of interest concerns. "Prior to 2012, even listing was not allowed. A stock exchange or an MII could not list. In 2012, it was allowed," Injeti said, adding that there is merit in aligning the Indian norms with global standards. Similar concerns have also been raised by foreign investors, it added. NSE's shares listed on the BSE on Thursday at a premium of around 1%. The management said it had not yet approached SEBI for approval regarding its shares trading on its own platform through the "permitted-to-trade" route without listing. The "permitted-to-trade" route enables a share to trade on an exchange without listing on it, leaving the regulatory burden to the exchange it is listed on. This enables the stock to get into passive funds tracking indices specific to that particular exchange.

Government never agreed to 5-day work week for banks, facts being twisted: Official sources

The government never agreed to a 5-day working week for banks, a finance ministry official has said ahead of the three-day strike announced by the United Forum of Bank Unions (UFBU) from September 28 to 30 because this key demand has not been met. "The five-day week was never agreed at the time of the last wage negotiations. It was never a negotiating tool. They (bank unions) are twisting the facts," the official said on the condition of anonymity.

In a letter dated September 22, the All India Bank Officers' Confederation said there had been no response to this demand "which was agreed and signed in March, 2024 under the last wage revision settlement". The letter added that officials from the Indian Banks' Association (IBA) had informed union representatives that the issue of five-days banking is "under consideration by the Government". Currently, bank branches are open on the first, third, and fifth Saturdays of every month. The 12th Bipartite Settlement, agreed in March 2024, said that "in terms of an understanding" was reached between the IBA and unions to declare all Saturdays as holidays for banks.

"...IBA has accordingly recommended to the Government. The due changes in the working hours, will be effective after approval by the Government of India and necessary clearances from Government / Reserve Bank of India," the Settlement said. However, the finance ministry official asserted the government had not agreed to a five-day work week, although a lot of other concessions were made.

"The IBA didn't want to go beyond an 11% hike in the wage negotiations, but the government intervened and a hike of 17% was announced. Even on the issue of family pension, the IBA was not keen but the government said that post-retirement, they will be on the other side, and they should not fight it," the source said, adding that the perfor-



mance-linked incentive (PLI) scheme had been kept on hold for the current financial year following opposition. Announced in November 2024, the PLI scheme for public sector banks' employees faced intense pushback and was called "discriminatory" because it was only for Scale 4 officers and above. According to bank unions, the scheme is divisive, demotivating, and distortionary.

With the three-day strike that begins on Monday in mind, the government on Wednesday said public sector banks and regional rural banks will function as normal on September 27, Sunday.

The decision, the Ministry of Finance said, was being taken to ensure "genuine banking needs" of the public are not hindered for an extended period. With September 26 being a non-working Saturday for banks, the three-day strike would have led to banks being shut for five days in a row. The RBI has given its approval for all bank branches, offices, ATM-linked branches, and currency chests to remain "fully operational" on Sunday, the finance ministry further said.

Understanding What Health Insurance Actually Pays For



Buying health insurance is an important step towards protecting yourself and your family from rising medical costs. However, having a policy does not automatically mean every medical expense will be covered. Many people discover this only when they file a claim. A hospitalisation is already stressful, and uncertainty about what the insurer will pay, which documents are required, or why deductions have been made can add to the pressure. The key is understanding what your health insurance policy actually covers before you need to use it.

What Does Health Insurance Cover?

Health insurance policies provide coverage based on specific terms and conditions. The sum insured is the maximum amount available under the policy, but it does not mean every medical expense will automatically be paid. Coverage depends on factors such as:

- Waiting periods
- Hospitalisation requirements
- Pre-existing disease disclosures
- Deductibles, co-pays and other policy limits

For example, a medical diagnosis does not always mean that every related expense is covered. Depending on the policy, treatment may need to involve hospitalisation or qualify as a daycare procedure. Similarly, emergency room visits can sometimes create confusion. A patient may undergo tests, scans, IV treatment or observation and assume the expense will be covered because the situation was serious. However, claim eligibility depends on whether the treatment meets the conditions mentioned in the policy. Why Understanding Waiting Periods Matters Waiting periods are an important part of health insurance coverage. Pre-existing diseases (PEDs), such as diabetes or hypertension, may have a waiting period before they are covered. Some insurers offer add-ons that can reduce this waiting period for specific conditions. This is why accurate disclosure while buying a policy is critical. If a medical condition is not disclosed correctly, it can lead to questions during claim assessment. How Policy Limits Can Affect Your Claim Amount Even when a claim is approved, the final amount received may not always match the hospital bill. Certain policy features can reduce the final payout, including:

- Room rent limits
- Co-payment clauses
- Deductibles
- Non-medical expenses
- Sub-limits on specific treatments

For example, if a policy has a room rent restriction and a policyholder chooses a higher room category, the insurer may apply proportionate deductions across the hospital bill. Understanding these limitations before purchasing a policy can help avoid unexpected expenses during a medical emergency. Why Documentation Plays an Important Role During Claims During a claim, insurers may ask for documents such as medical reports, first consultation records, previous treatment papers, discharge summaries and pre-authorisation documents.

In some cases, additional queries or medical reviews may be required before the claim can be processed. Keeping medical records organised and understanding documentation requirements beforehand can make the claims journey smoother. A Real Claim Shows Why Understanding Your Policy Matters

A 55-year-old policyholder bought health insurance with an add-on to reduce the waiting period for two conditions she'd declared: diabetes and hypertension. That September, she was diagnosed with breast cancer and filed a claim for treatment, at a time when treatment itself was already enough to deal with. The insurer flagged the claim and asked for pre-hospitalisation OPD records, past treatment papers for her hypertension and diabetes, and first consultation records related to cholesterol. During the investigation, they alleged she had an undisclosed cholesterol condition that could void the policy altogether. Working with her son, Ditto Insurance found that hypertension had simply been recorded incorrectly on the proposal form. There was no evidence of a cholesterol condition to speak of, and diabetes was the only pre-existing condition she actually had. The insurer still pushed back, so Ditto Insurance pulled the underwriting records from when the policy was first issued. The medical check-up done at that stage had already tested her total cholesterol, along with a CBC and ECG, and the results were within the normal range. Ditto Insurance used these results to counter the non-disclosure allegation. Since cholesterol had been tested and found to be within the normal range when the policy was issued, the records did not support the allegation that it had been an undisclosed condition. The claim was eventually approved. This case highlights an important point. Buying health insurance is not only about having financial coverage. It is also about understanding what was disclosed, what the policy covers, and how claims are assessed when questions arise. Choosing the right policy is only one part of the insurance journey. Understanding the policy terms, maintaining documentation, and knowing how to respond during a claim can be equally important. An advisor can help you understand: What treatments are covered Which expenses may not be payable How waiting periods work What medical information needs to be disclosed Which documents may be required during claims

Ditto Insurance supports customers beyond policy selection by helping them understand claim-related questions, documentation requirements, and communication with insurers. When a claim involves questions around pre-existing diseases, alleged non-disclosure or policy interpretation, having support can help policyholders understand what is being asked and how to respond. If a genuine claim is rejected, Ditto Insurance can also help customers escalate the matter through appropriate channels, including the insurer's grievance process and, when required, the Insurance Ombudsman or consumer courts. Where legal escalation is required for a genuinely rejected claim, Ditto Insurance bears the associated legal costs. This does not mean every claim will be approved. Instead, the focus is on helping policyholders understand the decision-making process and pursue available options where there are valid grounds. Health Insurance Is About Knowing Your Coverage Before You Need It

Health insurance is designed to provide financial protection during medical emergencies. However, that protection works best when policyholders understand the conditions attached to their coverage. Before buying or renewing a policy, it is important to ask:

- What treatments are covered?
- Which treatments require hospitalisation?
- Which daycare procedures are included?
- How do waiting periods apply to my medical history? What deductions could affect the final payout?
- Which documents may be needed during a claim?

Reviewing these details in advance can reduce uncertainty when a medical emergency occurs. With Ditto Insurance, the aim is to provide clarity before a claim and support when one actually happens. This includes helping customers understand policies at purchase, supporting them with claim-related documentation, and assisting with escalation routes when required. If you're comparing health insurance policies, you can explore plans and see how they differ in coverage, waiting periods and other important terms. Understanding these details before you buy can help you choose a policy that fits your needs and avoid surprises when you need to use it.

CISCE to bring together 16 lakh students to help shape mental-health guidelines

The Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE) will organise a three-tier national initiative on student mental health and well-being, involving nearly 16 lakh students from Classes VI to XII, 32,000 teachers and more than 3,300 affiliated schools. The CISCE Student Mental Health and Well-Being Conclave 2026 will begin with school-level discussions in October and culminate in a national conclave in Hyderabad from November 20 to 22. The initiative will coincide with World Mental Health Day on October 10.

The first stage, School-Level Mental Health and Well-Being Dialogues, will be held from October 4 to 31 across CISCE-affiliated schools. Students from Classes VI to XII will take part in weekly classroom discussions on four areas — student stress and academic pressure; emotional well-being, digital life and positive relationships; drugs, substance abuse and healthy choices; and resilience and help-seeking behaviour.

The discussions are intended to collect students' views and experiences on mental health and encourage schools to strengthen mechanisms for listening to students, peer support and access to appropriate help. The second stage will consist of Regional Student Mental Health and Well-Being Conclaves, which will be conducted virtually across 18 regions from November 4 to 14. Selected student representatives and teacher mentors will take part in these discussions. School-level issues and experiences will be discussed at the regional level, following which representatives and mentors will be selected for the national conclave.

The final stage will be held at the CISCE Centre of Excellence in Hyderabad from November 20 to 22. It will bring together 72 students representing 18 regions, 18 teacher mentors, mental health and policy experts, CISCE representatives and partner organisations. A key outcome of the national conclave will be a CISCE Student Mental Health Charter. The charter will set out principles, rights, responsibilities and recommendations for creating supportive and emotionally safe school environments. The initiative will also work towards developing a Student Well-being Index, compiling examples of practices followed by schools, and preparing a White Paper on Emerging Mental Health Concerns among Adolescents. CISCE has said it may later make the Student Mental Health Conclave a biennial initiative, held around World Mental Health Day.

The 2026 programme is designed to take student concerns from classroom discussions to regional and national



platforms and use them to develop recommendations for school-level practices and student well-being.

Angad Bedi remembers father Bishan Singh Bedi on his 80th birth anniversary

Mumbai: Actor Angad Bedi has remembered his late father, legendary cricketer Bishan Singh Bedi, on his 80th birth anniversary on Friday. He spoke about his legacy and the changes in their lives since his passing.

Angad shared a video montage featuring his late father from his cricketing days, moments with family, photographs with daughter-in-law Neha Dhupia and hid grandchildren. Angad wrote in the caption: "Happy 80th today, Dad. Hope you are at peace with yourself. Mehr and Guriq are growing up well. Guriq has taken to cricket and football and Mehr is pushing herself in swimming and track n field.. Both the Nehas are fine (sic)."

He added: "Suhavi is shaping up well under gush pa guidance.. wished to share that your mrs is launching your book today.. and has done a splendid job in carrying the entire event on her shoulders.. giving credit where its due.. Gautam too is well (sic)." Angad said that he celebrates his father every day. "We all celebrate you everyday.. today just is extra special. I miss you, and you will be happy to know that im still running. Been a while since i filled you in.. We moved to a new house.. what else!!! yes everything else is still the same (sic)."

Anahat, Abhay in squash finals – chance for Olympic quota



GNS News Agency, Sept 29

Indian squash prodigy Anahat Singh was trailing 0-2 against World no 6 Satomi Watanabe of Japan in the women's semifinals. In men's singles, Abhay Singh lived up to billing, outclassing Pakistan's Muhammad Irfan in straight games to enter the final. The second-seeded Indian was rampant in Game 1 before Irfan upped his game to make it a closer contest. Abhay won with ease nevertheless, as reflected by an 11-3, 12-10, 11-6 scoreline. Abhay will face the winner of the second semifinal between Pakistan's Noor Zaman and Malaysia's NG Eain Yow in the gold medal match.

However, in the third game, Anahat saved three match points and then dismantled Watanabe's lead slowly to win the tie 3-2 and enter the final. With this, Anahat became the first ever Indian squash player to enter a singles final at the Asian Games. Dipika Pallikal is the only Indian women player to win a singles squash medal at the continental showpiece. The last three games felt like someone injected

ice in the veins of the 18-year-old Indian as she barely gave a chance to her opponent winning 9-11, 11-13, 12-10, 11-6, 11-3. After the third game, Anahat only conceded nine points while winning 22 points in return. "When I was losing, the first thought in my head was that I can't let go of the Olympic spot so quickly and that is what really pushed me. It really motivated me that Olympic qualification is on line here," Anahat revealed later after her match.

Asian Games offers one Olympic quota to the singles champion in both genders and Anahat will be fighting for that quota tomorrow when she takes to the court for the final. Watanabe, who is one of the top players in the world and a certain home favourite, was on top of the game in the first two games and troubled Anahat with her drops. However, Anahat didn't back down and fought well in both the games and lost the second game very closely. "When I was trailing 0-2, my coaches constantly told me that you don't need to stress. As I was playing well, they just asked me to stick to what I was doing and I simply followed their instructions," she said. Anahat termed this win as her best win of the career. "I have never defeated anyone ranked this high. She is ranked six in the world and I have lost to her before. So, this is easily the best and biggest win of my squash career. Our last game was a close one, so I knew that I can win as anything is possible on a stage like the Asian Games," Anahat said. Going tomorrow in the final, Anahat is most likely to come up against top seed Sivasangari Subramaniam of Malaysia. "I have played her so many times, she is a great player. I am excited to go on the court tomorrow and hopefully I can turn it around like this time," she concluded.

How Baranica Elangovan evaded pole problem en route historic Asian Games bronze

GNS News Agency, Sept 29

A few days before Baranica Elangovan was due to leave for Japan, there was still one question hanging over her Asian Games campaign: would her pole make it there? On Friday, the 29-year-old cleared 4.15 metres to win bronze in the women's pole vault, becoming the first Indian to win an Asian Games medal in the event. But getting the equipment that would carry her over the bar to Nagoya had been a struggle of its own. The 4.30m pole was hardly something she could simply check in with her luggage. More than six or seven airlines were approached, emails were sent, and the answer kept coming back the same: their regulations allowed equipment only up to 3.40 metres. Baranica's pole was 90 centimetres longer. "It was a big struggle," said her coach Milber Bertrand Russell. "We tried more than six to seven airlines, we tried, sent emails. The problem was the length was too high." The Athletics Federation of India then stepped in. "They explained to the airline officials that this is sports equipment and we are going to the Asian Games to represent our country," Russell said. The clearance came a few days before Baranica's departure. The poles would travel with her after all. For pole vaulters, transporting their equipment is a familiar logistical headache. Thankfully for Baranica, the problem was solved before she left India. In Nagoya, she had another one to deal with: clearing the bar.

Her 4.15m clearance was below the 4.23m national record she set earlier this year, but it was enough to put her on the podium. She shared bronze with Kazakhstan's Polina Ivanova, who also cleared 4.15m. Japan's Misaki Morita won gold with a jump of 4.55m while Niu Chunge of China



clinched silver after clearing 4.50m. India's Baranica Elangovan poses for a picture after winning bronze in the women's pole vault at the Asian Games 2026, in Nagoya on Friday. India's Baranica Elangovan poses for a picture after winning bronze in the women's pole vault at the Asian Games 2026, in Nagoya on Friday. For Baranica, the medal carried the weight of a much longer struggle. She tore the ACL in her take-off leg in 2020 and spent years trying to rebuild her body and career.

This year, she began finding her heights again, breaking the national record twice. On Friday, she needed two attempts to jump over 4.15m. She could not get over 4.25m, but by then the medal was secure. "I'm really feeling happy that... I'm really happy that I was able to bring a medal for my country," she said. "It's my dream, actually, to change it, rewrite history, and I did it today." The pole had arrived in time. Baranica had done the rest.



denly changed. The pace rose as the runners reached an uphill stretch and the group of six began to splinter. Soon, only three or four remained. Barwal briefly lost contact as Yamashita accelerated up the hill. But he did not panic. Once the road tilted downwards again, he clawed back the lost ground. "After 30 km, when you see the hill and the pace increases, you feel a little different. I got left behind, but when we crossed it, I covered it on the downward slope," he said. By the final 10km, there were only three runners left in contention. Barwal knew the danger of going beyond what his body could sustain. His experience at the Rotterdam Marathon earlier this year, where he had set the national record, had taught him how brutal the closing kilometres could be. "We didn't try to go too fast. We kept the limit at 2:58 per kilometre," he said. "Our target was not to go beyond our limit." Yamashita eventually found another gear. By 39 kilometres, he had begun to pull away, and at 40 kilometres the gap was 26 seconds. The gold was slipping away, but Barwal's silver was not. The Japanese runner entered the stadium to a roar from the home crowd and crossed the line in 2:10:51. Barwal followed, holding on for second and lowering the national record he had set in Rotterdam in April. That race had already been a breakthrough. Barwal had become the first Indian to break 2:12 in the marathon, bettering Shivnath Singh's 48-year-old national record in Holland. In Nagoya, he went faster still — and added an Asian Games medal to it, ending India's 44-year wait.

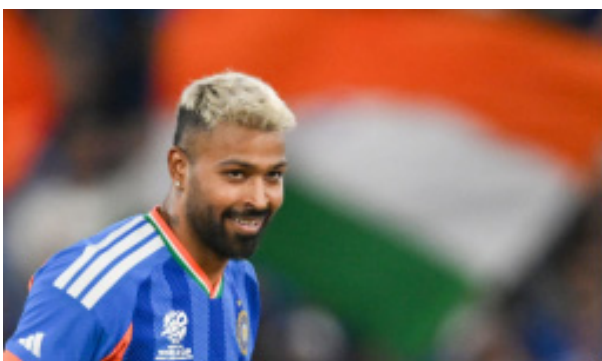
Jyothi Yarraji pulls out of Asian Games hurdles race after warm-up pain

Nagoya: Last edition's silver medalist in the 100m hurdles, Jyothi Yarraji, on Saturday pulled out of the first-round heat here after feeling pain during warm-up, a top official of the Athletics Federation of India (AFI) said.

Yarraji was earlier named in the 75-member Indian athletics team after receiving fitness clearance at the last minute. She was carrying a minor stress injury in her knee.

Yarraji made a comeback this year after undergoing surgery in July 2025 to repair an anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) tear in her right knee.

Hardik Pandya advised rest after shin issue, set to miss Australia A games



New Delhi: Hardik Pandya's return has been hit by another delay as the India all-rounder is set to miss the one-dayers against Australia A due to a fresh injury setback. Hardik, who was named in the India A squad for the three one-dayers from October 6, subject to fitness clearance, has suffered a shin issue and has been advised to rest and avoid physical activity, IANS has learnt. "Yes, Hardik has suffered another injury setback. After the leg niggle, now a shin issue has cropped up, which has complicated things regarding his return to competitive cricket. He's definitely putting in the hard yards to get back to playing again, but a clearer picture of his recovery timeline will come in the coming weeks.

"For now, he's been advised complete rest and not to do any kind of serious physical activity," said a source familiar with the matter to IANS on Saturday. This also puts him in doubt for the New Zealand tour, where India will play five T20Is and as many ODIs, apart from the two Tests, although Hardik does not play Tests anymore. Hardik has been on the mend since IPL 2026, when he missed part of Mumbai Indians' season. He has been at the BCCI Centre of Excellence (CoE) since May after suffering back spasms during the IPL. He has not played any competitive cricket

since IPL 2026.

The all-rounder picked up a leg strain at the CoE in the build-up to the ODI series against Afghanistan and subsequently missed that series as well. He has not played an ODI since the 2025 Champions Trophy win and has not played a T20I since India's T20 World Cup 2026 win. Recently, India head coach Gautam Gambhir had stated that Hardik was not fit enough to bowl his full quota of 10 overs in ODI cricket and said he would not be rushed back into the international arena. As Hardik was not available for the West Indies series, India brought in seam-bowling all-rounder Nitish Kumar Reddy from the Asian Games in Japan and slotted him into the white-ball games against the West Indies, starting with the three-match ODI series in Thiruvananthapuram on September 27. "First of all, from Nitish's point of view, it's actually a great thing that he's been withdrawn from a T20 format and he'll get game time against the West Indies as well. We know how important seam-bowling all-rounders will be probably in a year's time when we go to South Africa and Namibia.

"Once Hardik comes back, obviously it's going to be good. Sometimes we could even go on to play both of them in the playing XI. But again, Hardik at the moment, yes, he cannot bowl 10 overs, and he hasn't played a lot of cricket since the IPL. So we don't want to push him into international cricket because international cricket can be extremely tough on your body as well. "So if he plays that India A series, obviously he'll get some game time as well, and that was the clear message to him that if he can play that A series and then, if everything goes well, he can come back and be part of the T20 and one-day squad as well. In the meantime, Nitish will get more game time as well because he hasn't played enough cricket since the IPL either," Gambhir said in the post-match press conference after India wrapped up the 3-0 T20I series win over Afghanistan with a thumping 127-run victory at the Arun Jaitley Stadium.

India make semis with 2-0 win against Japan

Kakamigahara: Defending champions India punched their ticket to the semifinals with a hard-fought 2-0 win over hosts Japan to register their fourth consecutive victory in Pool A at the Asian Games 2026 on a rainy Saturday in Kakamigahara, Japan. In a match played under persistent rain at the Kawasaki Juko Hockey Stadium, Japan made India fight for every inch. However, goals by Abhishek and captain Harmanpreet Singh were enough to take the defending champions through to the last-four stage of the competition, with a pool match against Bangladesh left to play on September 28.

The match against Japan was a landmark moment for Indian defender Sanjay, who played his 100th senior international match. The match began at a brisk pace, with both teams looking to attack. India came close in the third minute when an aerial pass found Abhishek at the top of the circle. However, the move was stopped after the ball was deemed dangerous, with the Indian striker in a one-on-one situation against Japanese goalkeeper Takashi Yoshikawa. Two minutes later, Manpreet Singh earned India a penalty corner, but Harmanpreet's flick struck an Indian player. Another penalty corner followed in the sixth minute after a Japanese foot in the circle. Harmanpreet's effort hit the rusher's foot and, from the re-award, the Japanese defender on the post made a fine save.

Japan responded with sharp counter-attacks. In the seventh minute, they created a double chance, with Seren Tanaka getting another attempt after an initial effort was mis-hit, but Indian goalkeeper Suraj Karkera stood firm. India continued to press, with Manpreet setting up Dilpreet Singh in the ninth minute, although his attempt to score lacked the required power. Japan thought they had taken the lead in the 10th minute, but the goal was ruled out because an Indian foot had been involved before the ball entered the goal. At the other end, India continued to create opportunities, with Shilanand Lakra making a superb run through the centre before finding Abhishek, whose attempt to set up Sukhjeet Singh was intercepted.

India finally broke the deadlock in the 15th minute. Japan's defence allowed Abhishek too much time at the top of the circle, and the forward made no mistake, pushing the ball past the goalkeeper to give India a 1-0 lead at the end of the first quarter. Japan continued to threaten after the restart, earning a penalty corner in the 17th minute, but Ryoma Ooka's powerful effort was deflected away by an Indian stick. India came close to doubling their lead when Jarmanpreet Singh, Rajinder Singh and Sukhjeet combined, but Rajinder's pass harmlessly went across the face of the goal. At the other end, Mohith HS produced an excellent save to keep Japan from finding an equaliser.

India earned another penalty corner in the 21st minute, but Jugraj Singh's grounded effort lacked sting, and Japan cleared. The hosts then tightened their defensive structure, making it difficult for India to find another opening before half-time. India went into the break with a slender 1-0



advantage. Japan continued to defend deep in the third quarter, relying on quick counters. In the 36th minute, the hosts earned a penalty corner after a well-constructed move into the Indian circle. Shota Yamada's initial attempt went wide, but Japan successfully challenged the decision through a video referral for an Indian foot. The resulting penalty corner was brilliantly blocked by Karkera.

India eventually found the much-needed cushion in the 40th minute. From their sixth penalty corner, Harmanpreet unleashed a rocket-speed flick into the left corner of the Japanese goal, giving the goalkeeper no chance and putting India 2-0 ahead. India earned another penalty corner in the 43rd minute, with Harmanpreet denied by the goalkeeper. The captain spotted a possible foot and called for a referral, which resulted in another penalty corner. Harmanpreet went aerial this time, but the flick sailed wide. Japan continued to fight hard in the final quarter, while India remained composed. Jugraj's penalty-corner attempt in the 46th minute was powerful but straight at the goalkeeper. India earned three more penalty-corner opportunities in quick succession between the 54th and 55th minutes but could not convert them. Japan had one final chance in the 58th minute when Manabu Yamashita found space following a poor stop at the top of the circle, but his shot travelled across the face of goal. India held on comfortably in the closing minutes to complete a 2-0 victory, with the defending champions showing composure in a tightly contested encounter against the hosts.

Why African-born runners reduce India's long-distance gold count

In three races (Women's 10,000m, Men's 10,000m, and Mixed 4x400m relay), African athletes who switched nationalities, stormed to the podium and in two of them pipped Indians to the gold medal. This is not the first time that African born athletes are participating in the Asiads. But not only has the number of medals won by them increased (from 14 in 2014 to 16 in 2018), so has the number of countries they represent. For India, it's a challenge because track and field, especially middle distance events, is the strongest suit for the country. Indian athletes have to dig deeper to finish on the podium. In men's 10000m, Gulveer Singh won a silver after Ethiopia-born Birhanu Balew of Bahrain won the gold. Gulveer, one of the best Asian long distance runners at the moment, was in the lead throughout his race. He looked destined for a great finish given his devastating last kick but it was Balew who produced the tremendous last kick, opening a big lead over the Indian and finishing 1.87 seconds ahead of the Indian. Bahrain's Albert Kiptoo, left, Bahrain's Birhanu Balew, center, and India's Gulveer Singh compete in the men's 10,000-meter final at the Asian Games in Nagoya, Japan, Friday, Sept. 25, 2026. (AP Photo/Lee Jin-man) Bahrain's Albert Kiptoo, left, Bahrain's Birhanu Balew, center, and India's Gulveer Singh compete in the men's 10,000-meter final at the Asian Games in Nagoya, Japan, Friday, Sept. 25, 2026. It not only impacts the podium at the Asian Games but also the record books. For example, the all time Asian top 10 list of men's 5000m, has eight African-born athletes and two na-

tive Asians- Moukhlid Al Outaibi of Saudi Arabia and Gulveer. Similarly, in the women's 3000m Steeplechase, Parul Chaudhary is the only native Asian in the top five of all time top list with the other four being African athletes switching to represent Bahrain and Kazakhstan. It has also cost India sprint medals specially at the 2018 edition when Dutee Chand in 100m and 200m and Hima Das in 400m lost to Nigeria-born sprinters Edidiong Odiong and Salwa Naser. African athletes, specially from Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, and Sudan, have completely changed the medal tally of Athletics at the Asian Games. Gulf countries, specially Qatar and Bahrain, have benefitted mostly from these transfers while the likes of Kazakhstan have been the recent benefactors. Qatar was one of the earliest adopters of the practice when Somalia-born Mohamed Suleiman in the 1500m discipline became their first Olympic medalist at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics. It started mainly at the 2006 Doha Asian Games where Kenya-born runners won the men's 800m, 1500m, 5,000m, 10,000m, 3000m steeplechase and marathon for Qatar and Bahrain. The practice increased after 2006 and was at peak during the period of 2012 to 2016 where Bahrain got 18 athletes from Kenya, 17 from Ethiopia, 5 from Morocco and 2 from Nigeria. It coincided with the improvement in medal tally as Bahrain went from nine athletics medals in 2010 Asian Games to 19 (9 gold) in 2014 Incheon edition, 26 (12 gold) in 2018 Jakarta edition, and 16 (10 gold) in 2023 Hangzhou edition.

Dev Anand offered Imran Khan Awwal Number, said he'd be 'next Big B'; he said no



It is well known that before Aamir Khan's Lagaan, Hindi films based on cricket had a poor track record at the box office. The Indian audience loved to watch the game of cricket, but when it was presented in a movie, they always seemed to reject it. With this kind of history associated with the genre, Dev Anand, who always had an enthusiasm for trying out new things, decided to make Awwal Number, a decade before Lagaan. Aamir had just tasted success with Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak, so Dev hired him, and for the other lead role of the film, he approached Pakistani cricketer Imran Khan. Imran was promised that he would get in the "same league" as Amitabh Bachchan after doing the film. And Dev, in all honesty, believed that it would be a "casting coup."

Aamir Khan and Imran Khan together would be a 'casting coup' for Dev Anand. In his memoir Romancing with Life, Dev recalled this incident from the late 1980s when he came up with the idea for making Awwal Number. The film was about a young cricketer Sunny, played by Aamir, who finds himself in the middle of a scandal after he replaces a star cricketer Ronny, played by Aditya Pancholi, in the team. Dev had a significant role for himself carved out in the film. It was the role of Ronny, the jaded former star cricketer, that was offered to Imran. Dev recalled that casting Aamir was a no-brainer. "Aamir Khan's first film had just been released, and since he

was a talented fresh newcomer joining the ranks of the young rising stars, I cast him as an up-and-coming young cricketer," he wrote. Imran, who was one of the most popular international cricketers of the era, had just announced his retirement from the game, and Dev believed he was the perfect fit for Ronny. "For the role of the star on the decline, my choice fell on Imran Khan, the former Pakistani captain, who had just announced his retirement from the game," he wrote. Describing Imran as "very photogenic and handsome," Dev said that he thought of this as a "casting coup."

Imran Khan was offered the role of a 'fading cricket star'. After announcing his retirement from cricket, Imran was spending quite a lot of time in London. He had also started taking up some modelling assignments, and at this time, Dev approached him in London. Upon listening to Dev's offer, Imran was "speechless." Dev recalled his offer, "Will you act in my film and do the role of a fading cricket star? It will catapult you to stardom of a different kind." Upon taking a beat, Imran responded that he didn't see himself as a good actor. When Dev sensed some hesitation, he decided to fly out to London and meet Imran in person, and so, he took the next available flight. "I narrated the story of Awwal Number to him with a special emphasis on the role I wanted him to play. But he seemed a little nervous at the idea of facing the camera for a professional acting assignment," he recalled. 'You'd be in the same league as Amitabh Bachchan' Imran didn't seem keen, so Dev started enticing him, even promising a premiere in Pakistan. "It'd be fun holding the premiere of the film in Pakistan with you as its star," he said. He tried to convince Imran that he could be the next Amitabh Bachchan. He added, "You are already very big all over the world. The film will further enhance your status in India as well. I assure you, you'd be in the same league in the movies as Amitabh Bachchan in our country." Imran then presented his side of the argument and said that the then-President of Pakistan, Zia-ul-Haq, wanted him to join his cabinet as a cultural minister. When Dev heard this, he suggested that Imran could do both. Imran tried to refuse again but Dev insisted that he spend some time with the script. As he left Imran, Dev said, "I shall feel honoured having cast Imran Khan in a movie that my country would love to see." The next day, Dev got a package at his hotel in London. The package had Dev's script and a note that just said, 'No'. The role ultimately went to Aditya Pancholi, and as is well known, the film tanked at the box office and was one of the many failures that Aamir experienced in the early days of his career.

Vicky Kaushal looks suave in his first look from Bhansali's Love and War.

After sharing the first looks of Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt from Sanjay Leela Bhansali's much-awaited Love & War, the makers have now unveiled Vicky Kaushal's first look through a special vintage-style poster. In the poster, Vicky can be seen sporting a vintage hair-cut and moustache as he tries to light a cigarette with an antique-looking lighter. Sharing the poster, the actor wrote in the caption, "Nazrein milengi, lekin hatengi nahin!" The poster also revealed the film's release date. Love & War will hit theatres on January 21, 2027.

The poster soon caught the attention of Vicky's co-star Alia Bhatt, who dropped fire emojis in the comments section. Actor Sonam Kapoor also reacted to the post with clapping emojis. On Thursday, the makers had unveiled Ranbir Kapoor's first-look poster. It showed the actor sitting in the driver's seat of a vintage sports car, sporting a bullet wound on his arm.

Similarly, on Friday, the makers dropped Alia Bhatt's first-look poster. The actor was seen dressed in red, with the setting evoking the retro cabaret songs that featured prominently in films of the 1960s and 1970s. First announced in January 2024, Love & War marks the second film featuring real-life couple Alia Bhatt and Ranbir Kapoor together, after Ayan Mukerji's Brahmastra. While Alia and Ranbir have previously collaborated with Sanjay Leela Bhansali on Gangubai Kathiawadi and Saawariya, respectively, Love & War marks Vicky Kaushal's first collaboration with the filmmaker.



Vicky Kaushal was last seen in Chhaava, which emerged as one of the highest-grossing films of 2025. Love & War is reportedly mounted on a budget of Rs 425 crore. A report by Variety India from a couple of months ago claimed that the three lead actors have not charged a fee for the film. The report also stated that the Sanjay Leela Bhansali directorial has secured a deal worth Rs 130 crore with Netflix and earned another Rs 70-80 crore through its music and satellite rights.

No new cast members. "No new additions. We are continuing with the story we started, and there are already so many characters in it," he said. When Deepika Padukone left Kalki 2898 AD

Deepika Padukone was a major part of Kalki 2898 AD and the first part of the franchise unfolded around her character. But, as production for the second part was about to begin, the makers, Vyjayanthi Movies, put out a statement saying that they were parting ways with the actor. "This is to officially announce that @deepikapadukone will not be a part of the upcoming sequel of #Kalki2898AD. After careful consideration, we have decided to part ways. Despite the long journey of making the first film, we were unable to find a partnership. And a film like @Kalki2898AD deserves that commitment and much more. We wish her the best with her future works," they shared on X. Why Deepika Padukone exited the film after Spirit exit? Deepika's exit from Kalki 2898 AD sequel happened days after she exited Sandeep Reddy Vanga's Spirit. It was reported that Deepika had exited from Spirit after Vanga refused to adjust to her 8-hour-workday demand. For Kalki 2898 AD sequel, however, it was reported by Bollywood Hungama, that Deepika had asked for a 25 percent hike in pay. Meanwhile, a report in India Today claimed that Deepika's role in the sequel was significantly reduced, which led to her exit. Deepika has not directly addressed her exit from the film. However, months after her departure was announced, she spoke about choosing work differently at this stage of her life. "Anything that doesn't feel true to me doesn't cut it. Sometimes people offer a lot of money and think that's enough, but it isn't. And the reverse is also true — some things may not be commercially big, but I believe in the people or the message, and I'll stand by it. Was I always this clear? Maybe not.

YRF's casting director told Anjali Anand: 'When you lose weight, we'll do something'



Born to actor parents, Anjali Anand, despite being a trained actor and dancer, struggled to find work. After exhausting her savings, Anjali decided to quit acting altogether and move abroad. However, just when she was ready to close the chapter on her acting career, she landed a role in a Karan Johar film, after which she was cast in a lead role in Dhamaal 4. Recalling the period, Anjali, in a chat with Farah Khan on her YouTube channel, said that her mother was in utter disbelief when she went to meet Karan Johar. "Badi aayi Karan Johar se milne wali," she said.

Anjali had previously gained recognition for her work in television shows such as Dhhai Kilo Prem and Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala, and said that she was at the lowest point of her life when Karan Johar offered her a role in Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani. Anjali played Ranveer Singh's sister and had a strong part in the film. "I was at the lowest point of my life in 2020. I was considering leaving India and quitting acting altogether. I was not getting any acting offers. The pandemic had happened, all my savings were exhausted, and I was living alone on rent for six months. I remember my friends had dragged me to Goa when I received a message from Shanoo Sharma. She said, 'Babe, call me'," she said. Shanoo Sharma works as a casting

director for YRF and Karan Johar.

Recalling her earlier meetings with Shanoo, Anjali said, "Whenever I used to meet her for roles, she would tell me, 'When you lose weight, we will do something.'" Sharma is a casting director associated with YRF. Anjali's mother recalled how she would react whenever her daughter went for auditions. "When she went for auditions, I said from behind, 'She won't make it this time too,'" she said. Anjali recalled her mother's reaction when she told her she was going to meet Karan Johar. "My mother told me, 'Badi aayi Karan Johar se milne jaa rahi hai.' I said, 'Mummy, I am actually going to meet him.'" Her mother explained that her comment came from a place of concern. "My point was that she doesn't have any backing or godfather in the industry," she said. Anjali then recalled how she eventually landed the role in Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani. "When I met Shanoo, she said, 'Karan saw your photo and he liked it. He is looking for an actor for this part, and if you crack this audition, then he will take you.' Then she was like, 'When he saw you for the first ten seconds, he liked you.'" She added, "He wanted an actor. There were a lot of influencers as well for that part."

Her mother recalled the moment Anjali returned from the audition. "When she returned from the audition, she told me, 'Haan, ho gaya!' I was like, 'What happened?' She said, 'I cracked it.'" As the conversation progressed, Anjali revealed that her mother had a rather different opinion of Dhamaal 4, in which she played a lead role. "My mother called Dhamaal a one-time watch. She thought I was just average," Anjali said. Anjali has previously spoken about facing discrimination in the industry because of her weight. In an interview with SCREEN, she recalled being given roles that mocked her appearance. "I was in Bell Bottom only so that one terrorist could fall on top of me and get caught in the film," she said. Explaining how such experiences affected her, she added, "Such roles got offered to me because I am fat, and it hurts when people just try to make fun of it. They are not even seeing if I am a good actor or not. They just judge me on my body. According to them, I don't fit the standards, but then, for them, even Deepika Padukone and Aishwarya Rai are not good enough. Even Shah Rukh Khan and Amitabh Bachchan have faced criticism. These are just people who want to have an opinion just because they can. Their belief won't change your reality."

After Nani acknowledges The Paradise's flaws, makers get BookMyShow ratings disabled

Hours after Nani publicly acknowledged the flaws in his latest film The Paradise and said he had "equally enjoyed the hilarious trolls," the film's reviews and ratings were removed from ticketing platform BookMyShow. The platform's page for the Srikanth Odela-directed action drama now displays "Rating & Review Disabled". A Bengaluru court has separately granted the makers relief against the circulation of "defamatory" content about the film.

Nani's acknowledgement of film's flaws As the audience reactions for The Paradise started getting divisive, Nani posted a note on X. "I have seen all your reactions and responses. I've received all your love and equally enjoyed your hilarious trolls. I'm heartwarmed by the way audience have owned the film, and also learnt from the flaws that critics and reviewers have pointed out," he wrote. He added, "Thank you for everything is all I can say. We have made The Paradise with a lot of blood and sweat to give you a unique experience, and it's all yours to celebrate or judge. With the excitement you had for the film and the affection you showed on me, I am filled with gratitude."

I have seen all your reactions and responses. I've received all your love and equally enjoyed your hilarious trolls. I'm heartwarmed by the way audience have owned the film, and also learnt from the flaws that critics and reviewers have pointed out. Reviews and ratings for The Paradise, which had been active since the film's Wednesday paid premieres, were disabled on the platform approximately one day after release. The page now reads "Rating & Review Disabled" with no accompanying explanation for when the restriction was applied, who requested it or when it might be lifted.

The disabling took place during a period when the film was receiving significant negative feedback from audiences. Multiple reviewers had rated the film between 2 and 2.75 out of 5. Audience reactions on social media had been sharply critical of the repetitive second half, the underwritten heroine track, the underuse of Mohan Babu and the anticlimactic climax. The BookMyShow audience score, before it was removed, reflected this sentiment. The Paradise is not the first major Indian film to have its BookMyShow reviews re-



stricted. Yash's Toxic: A Fairy Tale for Grown-Ups, Pawan Kalyan's Ustaad Bhagat Singh, Chiranjeevi's Mana Shankara Vara Prasad Garu and Shahid Kapoor's O'Romeo have all had their ratings and reviews disabled on the platform in recent months. In each case, the stated justification has been the same: preventing "review bombing by bots," a practice where automated or coordinated accounts flood a film's page with negative ratings to artificially drag down its score.

The court order Separately, a court in Bengaluru granted relief to the makers of The Paradise against the publication and circulation of content they described as "defamatory." The plea, filed by the production team under Sri Lakshmi Venkateshwara Cinemas and IVY Entertainment, argued that a substantial investment had been made in the production, marketing and distribution of the film, and that the circulation of such material could cause "irreversible financial damage." When the court order generated speculation on social media about whether it would be used to suppress legitimate reviews, Nani addressed the concern during a promotional appearance in Mumbai. "It does not target genuine reviews," he said. The Paradise opened to Rs 34.65 crore net in India on Day 1, the biggest opening of Nani's career. It dropped 57 percent on Day 2, collecting Rs 14.90 crore net. The worldwide gross after two days stands at Rs 98.50 crore.

Soni Razdan lost work overnight after getting married to Mahesh Bhatt: 'Everything went away'

Soni Razdan, who is the mother of Bollywood star Alia Bhatt and wife of director Mahesh Bhatt, has often been described by these labels. But before all these roles came to her life, Soni was an actor and made quite a name for herself with films like Saraansh and TV shows like Bunliyaad. In a new interview, Soni shared that after she got married to Mahesh, she suddenly stopped getting acting opportunities.

In an interview with Zoom, Soni said, "I was already working when I got married. So that work continued, but then after that, nothing happened. Just zero. It's like everything went away." Soni and Mahesh got married in 1986 and by then, Soni believed that she had done enough work to prove her ability as an actor. When she asked her husband why the work had disappeared, the answer was blunt. Bhatt told her that people in the industry had said to him directly: "Your wife needs to work? She's married, isn't she?" Soni wasn't familiar with this school of thought where women were expected to leave their work after marriage. "It was such an alien concept to me. I didn't come from that thought process, that mind. In those days, a lot of people did," she said. Soni connected her experience to a broader pattern that governed how female actors in Hindi cinema managed their personal lives for decades. She said the reason many female actors delayed marriage or avoided it entirely during the peak of their careers was precisely this: the indus-

try treated marriage as a career-ending event for women.

"That's exactly why actors paced themselves and did not get married earlier," she said and added, "But me, I was in love. I had to get married." She then commented on the male gaze that dominates films and said, "It was patriarchal. It was full patriarchy. It's all about the male gaze and some skewed notion of what a desirable woman actually is. And why does she also have to be desirable in the first place? I get it. You're in films. People are going to watch you for two and a half hours. You better have something to show, something that they would want to look at. But that doesn't mean you can't have a relationship." Soni said she always believed that living a full life was essential to being a good actor. Real experiences, whether heartbreak, pain or joy, were the foundation of authentic performance for her. Books could teach her about emotions, but feeling them firsthand was what allowed her to portray them convincingly on screen. Soni was not willing to sacrifice her personal life for a career that had no guarantees. Her decision was straightforward: she would live her life and figure out her career alongside it. She eventually managed to find a balance between the two, but she admitted the process came with significant struggle and years of being overlooked by an industry that had decided married women did not belong on screen.