

SI held in Asifabad for alleged role in spurious cotton seed smuggling

Kumram Bheem Asifabad: A Sub-Inspector (SI) was arrested on Monday for allegedly helping smugglers trade spurious cotton seeds in the district. Briefing the media on the arrest, SP Nitika Pant said S Venkatesh, a former task force SI, was apprehended for his alleged role in smuggling spurious cotton seeds. Venkatesh is currently working with the Special Branch in Mulugu district. He had previously worked at Bejjur, Sirpur (T) and Kagaznagar police stations. Nitika said investigations revealed that Venkatesh had helped Shaik Salman of Bheemini smuggle spurious cotton seeds by introducing him to Venugopal Reddy, an alleged smuggler from Rajanna Sircilla district. Venkatesh allegedly accepted a commission of Rs 100 per kg. Salman came into contact with Venkatesh when the latter was a task force SI, after Salman was arrested in connection with a spurious seed smuggling case reported in 2025.

TCA demands scrapping of Hyderabad Ranji squad, threatens BCCI protest

Hanamkonda: Alleging serious irregularities in team selection and commercial interests overriding merit, the Telangana Cricket Association (TCA) has demanded the immediate scrapping of the existing Hyderabad Ranji Trophy squad. Alleging systematic neglect of cricketing talent across Telangana's 32 districts, the TCA also threatened to mobilise thousands of young cricketers for a mass protest at the BCCI headquarters in Mumbai if the concerns raised by district-level players continued to be ignored. The proposed agitation, the association said, would seek to draw the national cricket administration's attention to the need for equitable opportunities and a transparent selection system.

Allot Rs 5,000 cr to Munnuru Kapu Corporation: MP Vaddiraju Ravichandra

Khammam: Rajya Sabha member and Telangana Munnuru Kapu Sangham honorary president Vaddiraju Ravichandra has demanded that the Congress government allocate Rs 5,000 crore in the State Budget for the Telangana Munnuru Kapu Corporation. He said allocating the funds would greatly benefit Munnuru Kapu youth, women and impoverished farmers. He participated in the swearing-in ceremony of the sangham's new district committee here on Monday. Speaking on the occasion, Ravichandra said he had always worked towards demonstrating unity through the unanimous election of sangham committees.



Telangana CM sanctions Rs 6 lakh to bring body of man killed in Russia-Ukraine war

Hyderabad, Oct 12 (IANS) Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has sanctioned financial assistance of Rs.6 lakh for the repatriation of the mortal remains of a man who lost his life in the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war.

Vavilala Sudarshan Goud from Hasanabad village in Jagtial district was killed on September 1, 2026, in the Russia-Ukraine war.

According to the Chief Minister's Office (CMO), Sudarshan Goud, who had gone to Ukraine four months ago in search of employment, lost his life in a drone attack.

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy expressed profound shock and grief over the incident. He assured that the government will stand by the bereaved family during this tragic time.

When Minister for Development of Scheduled Castes, Adhuri Lakshman Kumar brought the incident to the Chief Minister's attention following an appeal from Sudarshan Goud's wife, the Chief Minister immediately responded by announcing financial assistance of Rs. 6 lakhs to the affected family.

Following the Chief Minister's directive, officials have issued orders to provide this financial assistance from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund.

They have also been instructed to take necessary steps to bring Sudarshan Goud's mortal remains back to the country.

According to a note from the OSD to the Chief Minister, a letter was received from Adhuri Lakshman Kumar in which he stated that Sudarshan's wife Vailala Bhargavi submitted a representation during the Praja Vani programme, requesting financial assistance of Rs.6 lakh for the repatriation of the mortal remains of her husband, so that his final rites be performed with dignity and in accordance with their traditions. The Chief Minister directed officials to sanction ex-gratia assistance of Rs.6 lakh to Vailala Bhargavi from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund. Meanwhile, another from Telangana is feared dead in the Russia-Ukraine war. Mohammed Afzal Khan (43) from Banswada in Kamareddy district went to Russia in February 2026, after being falsely promised a civilian job in the oil industry.

Anti-SIR struggle akin to another 'freedom movement': Telangana CM

Hyderabad, Oct 12 (IANS) Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Monday said that the ongoing struggle to safeguard the voting rights of the citizens is similar to another freedom movement.

Recalling the Congress leaders' struggle against British colonial rule for India's freedom, he observed that the same situation has now arisen where a struggle is necessary to protect the right to vote guaranteed by the Constitution.

Speaking at a meeting held on Monday at Telangana Bhavan in Delhi as part of the 'Vote Bachao... Desh Bachao' (Save Vote... Save Country) campaign, CM Revanth Reddy remarked that, on the lines of the 'Simon Go Back' movement during the freedom struggle, there is a need to fight with the slogans of 'Gyanesh Go Back' and 'SIR Go Back' to safeguard the right to vote.

According to a statement from the Chief Minister's Office (CMO), he highlighted that the fight against 'Vote chori' is being waged under the leadership of Congress National President Mallikarjun Kharge, Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi, and leaders of the INDIA alliance partners.

The Chief Minister alleged that the Modi government conspired to delete voters' names under the guise



of voter list revision in collusion with Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar.

He stated that the Constitution, drafted by B.R. Ambedkar after independence, empowered the people with the vote as a strong weapon. The right to vote played an important role in ending monarchical and dynastic rule and placing power in the hands of the people, he said.

The Chief Minister observed that the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls had been conducted in the past as well. During Jawaharlal Nehru's tenure as

Prime Minister in 1950, the SIR was used to grant voting rights to those who did not possess them.

People were asked to furnish the details of which regions they had moved to following the partition of the country and settled.

The SIR was conducted during the Indira Gandhi and Atal Bihari Vajpayee regimes. The primary focus was on including eligible individuals whose names were missing from the electoral rolls.

"In contrast, under the current Modi-Amit Shah administration, attempts are being made to remove the names of people who already possess voting rights," he added.

The Chief Minister said the Central Government exploited the ED, CBI, Income Tax Department, and Narcotics Control Bureau to target political opponents. Now, the Centre brought in the SIR because it found it difficult to counter the political rivals using those agencies alone.

Stating that the Election Commission is a constitutional body and functions independently and impartially, he cautioned that using such an institution for political purposes is detrimental to democracy.

CM Revanth Reddy expressed concern that if the credibility of the Election Commission is undermined,

public faith in the democratic system will be eroded.

The Congress leader recalled that the Election Commission previously functioned under the leadership of a single commissioner, but a three-commissioner system was introduced during P.V. Narasimha Rao's government, which brought greater transparency to the institution.

The Chief Minister noted that, in the past, transparency was given top priority in the appointment of election commissioners by involving the Prime Minister, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, and the Leader of the Opposition. The Modi government altered this system in 2023, with the Union Home Minister replacing the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in the appointment process.

The CM criticised these changes, asserting that they were made to facilitate decisions favourable to the government. The Chief Minister emphasised the need to ensure impartiality in the appointment of election commissioners.

Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, ministers, PCC President Mahesh Kumar Goud, AICC observer Sachin Sawant, MPs, MLAs, MLCs, and other important leaders participated.

Four burnt alive as car catches fire in Vijayawada

Vijayawada, Oct 12 (IANS) Four persons, including a child, were burnt alive as an electric car caught fire after hitting a road divider in Andhra Pradesh's Vijayawada on Monday.

Another person was critically injured in the horrific accident that occurred on the Vijayawada West Bypass Road.

Police and fire-fighting personnel rushed to the spot and doused the fire. The vehicle was completely gutted in the fire.

The deceased were identified as Kommareddy Ramdev, 39, his mother Kommareddy Aruna, T. Vijay and a child. They were all residents of Nunna and Namburu.

Tragedy struck them while they were returning from a function in Namburu.

The car caught fire after hitting the road divider, and within seconds, flames engulfed the entire vehicle, trapping four of the occupants. The fifth person sustained grievous injuries and was shifted to a hospital, where his condition is stated to be critical.

Police registered a case and took up the investigation to ascertain the cause of the crash.

Minister for Human Resource Development and IT, Nara Lokesh, termed the death of four individuals in a road accident on the Vijayawada West Bypass as deeply shocking. He offered his condolences to the families of the deceased.

The minister said he has instructed the authorities to take neces-



sary measures to ensure better medical treatment for the injured.

Meanwhile, in Hyderabad, an electric bus caught fire on Monday. No casualties were reported.

The electric bus caught fire near PNT Flyover, close to Begumpet Airport, around 5.30 p.m.

The incident led to a traffic jam on the busy road.

Ex-security guard arrested for kidnapping, murder of five-year-old girl in Hyderabad

Hyderabad, Oct 12 (IANS) Police have arrested a former security guard in the kidnapping and murder of a five-year-old girl at a gated community in Bollaram, Secunderabad.

Malkajgiri Police Commissioner B. Sumathi on Monday announced the arrest of Vikram Kumar, a native of Bihar who was recently removed as the security guard at Villa Orchids, Kowkur.

The body of Aurelia was found on Sunday in the water sump in the cellar of the clubhouse at Villa Orchids, a gated community.

According to police, Vikram Kumar, who was arrested at 4.30 p.m. on Sunday, confessed to killing the child after kidnapping her to demand ransom from her family.

There was high drama at the press conference by Malkajgiri Police Commissioner Sumathi as the victim's parents and other residents of Villa Orchids reached the Commissioner's office displaying placards and raising slogans, seeking justice for Aurelia.

They demanded that the police hand over the accused Vikram to them. The residents said they want instant justice.

They were holding placards with slogans like 'she deserved to live', 'speedy justice for Baby Aurelia' and 'no mercy for cruelty'.



'Gyanesh Kumar's resignation will not help': Kavitha calls for change in the CEC selection process

Hyderabad, Oct 12 (IANS) Telangana Rakshana Sena (TRS) Chief Kalvakuntla Kavitha on Monday called for a change in the system for the selection of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) to ensure free and fair elections.

Participating in Bathukamma celebrations at the party office here, she said that the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar will not solve the problem, and free and fair elections can be ensured by changing the process for the selection of the CEC.

"People are demanding the resignation of the Chief Election Commissioner. I disagree with that demand. Changing the Commissioner won't help because (Prime Minister Narendra) Modi will simply appoint another loyalist. The entire

system must change. We must discard EVMs and return to the ballot paper system," she said.

Kavitha, along with women leaders and workers of the party, participated in Bathukamma, a floral festival which symbolises Telangana's unique cultural identity.

The former MP and TRS women leaders arranged the seasonal flowers and offered prayers.

The TRS office resonated with folk songs and rhythmic clapping as Kavitha, along with other women, danced in circles around the floral arrangements.

Earlier, she participated in the celebrations alongside students at the historic Osmania University Arts College.

Addressing a large gathering of students and youth, Kavitha reflected on the revolutionary spirit of Osmania

University, criticised the current political and educational landscape, and offered a public apology for her past association with the BRS regime regarding its neglect of universities.

Kavitha hailed Osmania University as the heartbeat of the Telangana movement. Drawing parallels between historical milestones, she noted how Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak used Ganesh Chaturthi during the freedom struggle, much like how the Telangana movement integrated the Bathukamma festival to assert regional identity.

"Bathukamma is not just about celebration; it carries a deep social purpose. Every flower in a Bathukamma is common and equal, and a true Telangana of tomorrow must reflect that same inclusivity and equality," she said.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Dhankhar's intriguing exit

The timing of the Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar's resignation — on the opening day of the Monsoon Session of Parliament — is intriguing and leaves several questions unanswered. While the septuagenarian leader cited health reasons for his sudden decision to quit, the circumstances leading to his exit point to far deeper issues. The development came as a major embarrassment to the NDA government at a time when it is gearing up to face an aggressive opposition during the Monsoon Session. Dhankhar's conduct in the Upper House on the opening day of the session did not give any indication of an imminent storm. He announced his decision late in the night through the official X handle of the Vice President's office. It is the first time in the country's history that a Vice President, who is not in the presidential race, has quit the post mid-term. In the past, R Venkataraman, SD Sharma and KR Narayanan had resigned after being elected to the President's post while VV Giri had quit to contest as an Independent candidate in the presidential election. Bhairon Singh Shekawat had stepped down on moral grounds after losing to Pratibha Patil in the presidential election. It is fair to assume that a brewing friction with the government could have prompted Dhankhar to quit, though he still has two more years left in his term. Since the resignation, addressed to President Droupadi Murmu, was with immediate effect, it is unlikely that Dhankhar will be available for the remaining period of the Monsoon Session. While the opposition leaders speculated about the reasons for his resignation, there was no immediate reaction from the government. Speculation in political circles is that the government was peeved over Dhankhar's decision to allow an opposition-sponsored notice in the Rajya Sabha for a motion to remove Justice Yashwant Varma, a former judge of the Delhi High Court who was at the centre of a controversy following recovery of massive unaccounted cash at his residence in Delhi. When Rajya Sabha met for the Monsoon Session on Monday, the Opposition MPs moved the notice and Dhankhar, as Chairman of the Upper House, immediately accepted it and asked the House's secretary general

Make a success of the "Round Table Meeting" in Bhuvanagiri on the 14th of this month on land issues: - Telangana Agricultural Workers' Union District General Secretary

"Kondamadugu Narasimha" (Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau.. Indian Chronicle.. October 12):- Telangana Agricultural Workers' Union District Committee has demanded that the state government immediately disclose the lands blacklisted under Section 22-A and conduct a comprehensive inquiry into the land issues and make a success of the "Round Table Meeting" being organized at Sundarayya Bhavan Bhuvanagiri on the 14th of this month (Wednesday) at 11 am. Speaking on the occasion, he demanded that the government immediately withdraw the proposal to take back the lands previously distributed to the poor in the name of land pooling. He urged the government to immediately undertake a comprehensive land survey across the state, identify the surplus lands and distribute them to all the eligible poor." They urged democrats, farmers, trade union leaders, intellectuals, and the public to attend this roundtable meeting, which is being organized to protect the land rights of the poor and re-



solve land issues, in large numbers and provide their valuable advice and suggestions to make the meeting a success.

Anjan Kumar joins 'Chalo Delhi' rally against alleged vote theft.



Karimnagar October 12, Khaja Sikandar Mohiuddin (Correspondent): Karimnagar Corporation Congress president Vaidyula Anjan Kumar has demanded the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar and called for an immediate halt to the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, alleging that the process was undermining public confidence in the electoral system.

Mr. Anjan Kumar participated in the 'Chalo Delhi – For Democracy' rally organised by the Congress and INDIA bloc in New Delhi on Monday to protest against alleged vote theft and demand protection of democratic institutions.

The rally was attended by AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, TPCC president Mahesh Kumar Goud, Minister Ponnab Prabhakar and other Ministers, MPs, MLAs and MLCs from Telangana.

The rally began at Telangana Bhavan and proceeded via Barakhamba Road and Mandi House towards the Supreme Court. Participants raised slogans against alleged electoral irregularities and called for safeguarding democracy.

Speaking at a media conference at Telangana Bhavan, Mr. Anjan Kumar criticised the BJP government at the Centre, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union



Home Minister Amit Shah. He said the right to vote was fundamental to democracy and that the Election Commission must function impartially to protect it.

Drawing a parallel with the 'Simon Go Back' slogan of the freedom movement, he said the 'Gyanesh Kumar Go Back' campaign reflected the Congress's opposition to the alleged manipulation of electoral processes. He urged the Election Commission to stop the SIR exercise and take steps to restore public trust in elections.

Telangana Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla Inaugurates Elders' Committee Room at Gorakhpur Civil Court



"Gorakhpur, October 12 (Indian Chronicle) Telangana Governor Shri Shiv Pratap Shukla attended the inauguration of the Elders' Committee Room at the

Bar Association, Civil Court, Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh, as the Chief Guest." "The programme was organised by the Bar Association, Civil Court, Gorakhpur, to mark the inauguration of the facility dedicated to senior members of the legal fraternity." "The Elders' Committee Room is intended to provide a dedicated space for experienced advocates to interact, exchange views and maintain their engagement with the legal community." "The event highlighted the importance of recognising the contributions of senior advocates and preserving the traditions, values and professional experience that strengthen the legal fraternity." "The inauguration marked an important occasion for the Bar Association, reflecting its commitment to fostering collegiality, respect for senior members and a supportive environment for the legal profession.

Police Commissioner calls for speedy disposal of pending cases.

Karimnagar October 12, Khaja Sikandar Mohiuddin (Correspondent): Police Commissioner Gaush Alam has directed police officers to expedite the investigation of pending cases, strengthen law and order measures and ensure adequate security for the upcoming Durga idol immersion and Dasara celebrations.

At a crime review meeting at the Karimnagar Police Commissionerate on Monday, officers reviewed the progress of pending cases, crime prevention measures and preparedness for the festivals.

Mr. Gaush Alam instructed officers to maintain special surveillance in sensitive areas and ensure that the public faced no inconvenience during the festivities. He also called for focused attention on crimes against women and children, cases under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and cases registered under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. Long-pending cases under investigation were to be expedited, he said.

The meeting reviewed the implementation of the new criminal laws and the use of online FIRs, e-Summons, the e-Sakshya application and the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS 2.0).

Emphasising the need to tackle cybercrime, the Commissioner directed officers to respond promptly to complaints of online fraud and step up public awareness campaigns. He also called for faster tracing and recovery of lost mobile phones through the Central Equipment Identity Register (CEIR) portal.

He ordered stringent action against the illegal transportation of ganja and other narcotic substances, diversion of Public Distribution System rice, illegal sand transportation and gambling. Officers were also instructed to resolve public grievances received through Prajavani and

Bathukamma Celebrations Held in Amber Nagar

Indian chronicle, Secunderabad, October 12 : "Bathukamma celebrations were held with great enthusiasm at the Durgamata mandapam organised by the Navachaitanya Youth Association in Amber Nagar, Boudha Nagar Division, under the leadership of Mekala Keerthi Harsha Kiran. G. Kavya Kishan Reddy attended the celebrations as the chief guest." Speaking on the occasion, Kavya Kishan Reddy said she was delighted to participate in the Bathukamma celebrations along with the women of Amber Nagar. She appreciated the enthusiasm with which the women participated in the festivities



and celebrated the festival. "A large number of women, children and elders from the division participated in the celebrations, singing and dancing around Bathukamma, reflecting the rich culture and traditions of Telangana." District Mahila president Kethineni Sarala, BJP leaders Mekala Sarangapani, Prabhu Gupta, Nageshwar Reddy, Kanakatta Hari, Satish Neth, Sridhar, Vijayal, Balayya, Pratap, Rajesh and among others, attended the programme in large numbers and contributed to its success.

Arrangements must be made to celebrate the Dasara festival grandly in the 22nd Ward of Bhuvanagiri town: 22nd Ward Councilor Jaligam Vignesh

"(Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau – Indian Chronicle – October 12): 22nd Ward Councilor Jaligam Vigneshwar submitted a representation to Municipal Chairperson Tangallapalli Srivani Ravikumar and the Municipal Commissioner, stating that the Dasara festival will be celebrated grandly this year—as it is every year—on the 20th of this month at the Brahmamgari Temple in Ramnagar (22nd Ward, Nalgonda Road). He noted that it is customary for the people of Bhuvanagiri town to visit this temple on Dasara to collect Jammi leaves. Given the expected turnout of thousands of devotees, he requested



the Municipal Chairperson and the Commissioner to ensure that the municipality makes the usual arrangements for public safety and convenience. Furthermore, he requested special sanitation measures for the temple premises and approach roads, lighting arrangements, barricading to manage crowds and ensure public safety, as well as provisions for drinking water, bleaching, and other necessary facilities.

Power Supply Disruption in Several Areas of Chilkanagar on Tuesday--- Says Chilkanagar Electricity Department Assistant Engineer Vinay Kumar Reddy

"CHILKA NAGAR , OCTOBER 12 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): "Power supply will be interrupted in several areas under the Chilkanagar Electricity Department limits on Tuesday, October 13, due to works to shift electrical lines from poles to towers. Chilkanagar Electricity Department Assistant Engineer Vinay Kumar Reddy announced the details of the scheduled power interruption. "From 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM: Power supply will be interrupted in Surya Hills and North Balaji Hills. "From 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM: Residents of Sai Bhavani Nagar and Gayatri Hills, which come under the Hema Nagar feeder, will experience a power interruption. The electricity department expressed regret for the inconvenience caused by the scheduled outage and appealed to consumers to make necessary arrangements in advance and cooperate with the department to facilitate the work."



Absconding Accused in Ganja Case Arrested After Months on the Run

"MEDIPALLY , OCTOBER 12 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): "Medipally police arrested a long-absconding accused in a ganja case in the Mallapur area on Monday. The accused, identified as Sirimalla Sai Kumar alias Chintu (20), a resident of Hajipur in Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district, had been evading the police since January 21, 2026. "According to the police, the case was registered under Crime No. 109/2026 under Section 20(b)(ii)(A) of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS)



Act at Medipally Police Station. "During interrogation, the accused reportedly revealed that he and his associate, Routhu Bhaskar Rao alias Bhutan, had purchased ganja from unidentified persons in Dhoolpet. After consuming a portion of the contraband, they allegedly attempted to sell the remaining quantity in the HMDA venture area of Boduppal. "When police attempted to apprehend them earlier, Bhaskar Rao was caught, while Sai Kumar managed to escape and remained absconding. The police have now apprehended Sai Kumar and initiated further legal proceedings.

Karimnagar Collector attends State meet on El Niño preparedness

Farmers advised to conserve water and opt for short-duration crops amid rainfall concerns.

Karimnagar October 12, Khaja Sikandar Mohiuddin (Correspondent): Karimnagar District Collector Chitra Mishra attended a State-wide video conference on the anticipated impact of El Niño and preparedness measures from the Kothapalli (H) Rythu Vedita on Monday.

Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, ad-



dressng farmers from Delhi, said the State government was preparing to tackle the possible effects of El Niño, which was expected to peak in December and could influence weather conditions into 2027. He stressed the need to conserve water and protect farmers from potential agricultural losses.

Farmers were advised to protect standing crops, avoid cultivation in areas without assured water supply and choose short-duration crops based on recommendations from agricultural scientists. Water available in reservoirs, irrigation projects and tanks should be conserved primarily for drinking purposes, Mr. Vikramarka said.

He called for coordinated efforts by all political parties, officials and farmers to address the anticipated challenges. The government had been creating awareness about the likely conditions through agricultural scientists and district administrations for the past four months, he added.

Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao said the area under paddy cultivation in Telangana had declined by nearly 15 lakh acres following advance warnings about the situation. He urged farmers to focus on oilseeds and pulses and take up short-duration crops during the rabi season.

The Minister said the State had supplied 10 lakh metric tonnes of fertilisers and was drawing up plans to utilise available resources efficiently. District Collectors were asked to prepare plans for the judicious use of water stored in reservoirs and irrigation projects, with priority given to drinking water requirements.

He also highlighted concerns over power generation and directed officials to maximise thermal power production, ensure the functioning of power stations and make effective use of solar energy.

Chief Secretary Sanjay Jaju and senior officials from various departments explained the measures being planned to address the potential impact of El Niño.

Additional Collector Srinivas Reddy, District Rural Development Officer Geetha, Electricity Department Divisional Engineer Rajam, District Marketing Officer Shahabuddin and officials from agriculture and allied departments participated in the conference at Kothapalli.

Elaborate Security Arrangements for India–West Indies Match

2,200 Police Personnel Deployed; 408 CCTV Cameras and Two Drones to Keep Vigil



UPPAL, OCTOBER 12 (INDIAN CHRONICLE):“Malkajgiri Police Commissioner Sumathi has announced elaborate security arrangements at the Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium in Uppal ahead of the India–West Indies cricket match scheduled for October 14. With around 40,000 spectators expected to attend the match, the police have made extensive arrangements to ensure security, regulate traffic and facilitate vehicle parking.”Speaking to the media at the Uppal Stadium on Monday, Commissioner Sumathi explained the security measures, traffic restrictions and parking facilities planned for the event.”2,200 Police Personnel for Security”The Commissioner stated that a total of 2,200 police personnel would be deployed to ensure the smooth and peaceful conduct of the match. The security team will include five Deputy Commissioners of Police (DCPs), five Additional DCPs, 15 Assistant Commissioners of Police (ACPs), 50 Inspectors, 90 Sub-Inspectors and other police personnel. The Uppal DCP will act as the nodal officer for the arrangements.”The stadium premises, main roads and parking areas will be monitored continuously through 408 CCTV cameras and two drones. The police will also monitor social media posts and remain vigilant to prevent any untoward incidents, she said.”Traffic Restrictions from 3 PM”Traffic restrictions will come into force in and around Uppal from 3 PM on October 14, considering the anticipated increase in vehicular movement. Depending on the traffic situation, vehicles may be diverted to alternative routes.”Special arrangements are also being made to ensure the smooth movement of players travelling from Banjara Hills to the stadium.”The Commissioner said information regarding traffic diversions and restrictions would be communicated through social media from time to time. She urged spectators to follow the

updates and cooperate with the police.”Parking Facilities for 8,000 Vehicles”The police have arranged parking facilities for approximately 8,000 vehicles, including 4,600 cars and 3,400 two-wheelers.”Parking facilities have been arranged along the route from Uppal Junction towards Ramanthapur, as well as at Jain Properties and the AILA premises. Jain Properties is located approximately 900 metres from the stadium.”Officials clarified that no parking fee would be charged. Spectators were urged to park their vehicles only in the designated areas and cooperate with the traffic police.”Eight SHE Teams for Women’s Safety”Eight SHE Teams will be deployed around the stadium to ensure the safety of women spectators.”The Hyderabad Cricket Association will also organise an anti-drug awareness campaign under the slogan “Say No to Drugs,” including a signature campaign to raise public awareness about the dangers of narcotic substances.”The police made it clear that people under the influence of alcohol would not be allowed into the stadium. Commissioner Sumathi also advised cricket fans to exercise caution while purchasing tickets online and avoid fraudulent websites.”Spectators Advised to Use Metro and RTC Buses”As the match is scheduled to begin at 7 PM, spectators have been advised to reach the stadium at least two hours in advance to avoid last-minute traffic congestion.”The Commissioner urged fans to minimise the use of private vehicles and prefer Metro Rail services and RTC buses to reach the venue.”She said that following traffic police instructions and observing road diversion notices would help minimise inconvenience. Commissioner Sumathi appealed to cricket fans to cooperate with the police and enjoy the match in a peaceful atmosphere.

Telangana Activists’ Relay Hunger Strike Enters 26th Day in Alwal

Activists Demand Immediate Implementation of Government Assurances to Telangana Movement Participants

ALWAL, October 12 (INDIAN CHRONICLE):“The relay hunger strike launched in Alwal demanding the

immediate implementation of assurances made to Telangana movement activists entered its 26th day on Monday. Leaders at the protest camp urged the government to fulfil its commitments and ensure justice for those who played a significant role in the struggle for the formation of Telangana state. The leaders stated that activists had made numerous sacrifices and fought tirelessly at the forefront of the Telangana statehood movement. They stressed that the government had a responsibility to recognise their contributions, provide them with due respect and address their welfare concerns. They appealed to the government to finalise welfare policies and guidelines for Telangana movement activists without further delay and ensure that all eligible activists receive the benefits and recognition they deserve.As part of the ongoing protest, Pasula Mutyalu and Nikhil, an Ambedkarpet student leader, participated in the relay hunger strike on Monday. Patolla Surender Reddy, Putnala Krishna, Manda Shobhan, Anantula Santosh, Sherupalli Mallesh, Sangameshwar, Sattaiah and others participated in the programme and expressed their solidarity with the protesting activists. The participants reiterated their demand for the government to honour its assurances and take immediate steps to safeguard the welfare of Telangana movement activists.



Medipally Police Conduct Awareness Programme on Drug Abuse, Cybercrime and Road Safety“

“MEDIPALLY , OCTOBER 12 (INDIAN CHRONICLE):“As part of the Visible Policing, Community Policing and foot patrolling initiatives, Medipally Police conducted an awareness programme on drug abuse prevention, cybercrime and road safety at Venkateshwara Colony and Karunapriya Colony in Chengicherla.”The programme was conducted by Sector SI Uday Bhaskar along with beat staff to educate residents about the dangers of drug abuse, the prevention of cybercrime and the importance of following road safety rules.”Residents of both colonies actively participated in the awareness programme and showed keen interest in the issues discussed.”The initiative aimed to strengthen police-public relations, promote community participation and create greater awareness about public safety.



VHP Leader Pagudakula Balaswamy Calls for Ban on Muslim Bouncers at Dandiya, Garba Events

“Hyderabad Correspondent, October 12 (Indian Chronicle): Pagudakula Balaswamy, Dharmacharya Sampark Pramukh of the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP), Telangana, has called for Muslim bouncers to be excluded from Dandiya and Garba events, arguing that organisers should respect the Hindu traditions associated with Navratri. Balaswamy said the celebrations were linked to the worship of the Goddess and urged organisers to preserve their religious significance. He also stressed the need for clear event rules and stringent security arrangements, particularly to protect women and young participants. He called on organisers to assess security personnel for training, reliability and professional conduct, adopt transparent recruitment practices and take preventive measures against untoward incidents.



South India’s ~46 MnT Steel Capacity: How Can the Region Power India’s Next Phase of Steel Growth?

Hyderabad: South India is poised to play an important role in India’s next phase of steel growth. With an installed crude steel capacity of 46 million tonnes (MnT) and production of 31 MnT in FY2026, the region has a strong industrial base to build on as India advances towards its 300 MnT steel capacity ambition by 2030, according to BigMint, India’s commodities market intelligence firm. These opportunities were at the centre of the third edition of Future.Steel focusing on South, organised by BigMint and co-hosted by the Telangana Iron & Steel Manufacturers Association (TISMA) at The Westin, Hyderabad.”The event was supported by the Federation of Telangana Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FTCCI) and the Karnataka Sponge Iron Manufacturers Association (KSIMA). The National Institute of Secondary Steel Technology (NISSST) served as the knowledge partner, while Quesrow Research & Strategy Co. was the research partner.”The conference brought together 250+

participants representing 150 companies across 17 states, along with 30+ speakers from across the steel value chain. A key highlight was the launch of BigMint’s flagship regional market-intelligence report, “The Structural Gap,” during the inaugural session, focusing on Telangana’s role in the evolving steel ecosystem and opportunities for regional investment.”The inaugural session featured Mr. Vivek Nishant Nath, Director (Commercial), NMDC Limited; Mr. G.L. Gupta, Group Chief Procurement Officer, MEIL; Mr. K.K. Maheshwari, President, FTCCI; Mr. Vinod Kumar Agarwal, VP, FTCCI, Secretary General, TISMA and MD, MPL Group; Mr. Prakash Goenka, MD, Devashree Ispat (P) Ltd; and Mr. Anurag Agarwal, Executive Director, MS Agarwal Foundries Pvt. Ltd. The discussion covered regional investment, policy priorities, raw-material availability, manufacturing opportunities and the role of South India in India’s expanding steel ecosystem.

Period Protection Reimagined: Stayfree® Expands Its Menstrual Hygiene Portfolio with Launch of Stayfree

Hyderabad: Stayfree®, one of India’s leading menstrual hygiene brands, today announced the launch of Stayfree® ProComfort Period Panty, further expanding its menstrual hygiene portfolio. Designed to complement existing period routines, Stayfree ProComfort Period Panty provides women reliable & ‘intuitive-use’ protection even during heavy-flow days, overnight use, long commutes and travel. Combining comfort with snug fit, superior absorption and affordable pricing like never before, Stayfree® aims to make Period Panties more accessible to Indian women. “Backed by extensive consumer research and product validation, Stayfree® ProComfort Period Panty reinforces the brand’s continued commitment to delivering innovative menstrual care solutions and provide women with ‘comfortable protection’.”Key features of Stayfree® ProComfort Period Panty “360° Leakage Protection: All-round protection designed to help prevent leaks from every side, regardless of sleeping or movement position. No more worrying about adjusting pads or leaks.”Snug fit providing unmatched comfort: Air-Soft Cover and body-hugging elastic fit that feels soft, breathable, and non-bulky. “Inclusive sizing: Available in 3 sizes M-L, L-

XL, XL-XXL, to comfortably fit diverse body types.”Affordable Access to Period Panties: Starting at just INR 50 for a pack of 2 panties Stayfree is making period panties accessible to more women across India.”Commenting on the newest launch in the Stayfree portfolio, Supriya Srinivasa, Marketing Director, Stayfree India said “Consumers are seeking greater comfort, discretion, freedom of movement and superior leakage protection from their period solutions, making period panties one of the fastest-growing segments in India’s menstrual hygiene category. However, affordability remains a key barrier to adoption for many women. With the launch of Stayfree® ProComfort Period Panty, we are bringing together 360° leakage protection, superior comfort through a snug fit, and accessible pricing in one solution, helping democratize access to this segment. At Stayfree®, we remain committed to improving the period experience for women. That means not only innovating, but also ensuring our innovations reach more women across India. This holds true for Stayfree ProComfort Period Panty so consumers can experience the confidence, comfort and freedom that it can offer.”

India Logs on for The Big Billion Days: Flipkart Records 6.3 Million Concurrent Users as the Festive Season Opens

Hyderabad: India turned up for The Big Billion Days. In the opening hour of the 13th edition, Flipkart recorded 6.3 million concurrent users in a minute, kicking off the country’s festive shopping season. Every 15th Indian online shopper visited Flipkart in that first hour, with over 6x more Indians shopping on the platform than in a regular hour and new customers growing 34%. Early Access opened at midnight on October 8 for Flipkart Plus and Black members and Flipkart Co-brand card members, leading to over 287 million sessions as customers from across India shopped for Mobiles, Electronics, Large Appliances, Beauty, Lifestyle and Home. The opening hour is a strong indicator of how deeply festive shopping online has taken root in India, and Flipkart is serving customers across every corner of it. “Bharat leads the festive shopping rush”The clearest signal from the opening hours of TBBD 2026 is where the demand is coming from. Nearly 1 in 2 visits in the first hour came from Tier 3 towns and beyond. Non-metro customers accounted for approximately 60% of demand, with Sardulgarh, Panskura, Sheikhpura and Kishanganj among the fastest-growing markets at the opening of the sale.”Mobiles saw strong

traction across premium and flagship smartphones, with affordability levers driving clear uplift: 1 in 4 customers opted for product exchange and 1 in 3 opted for No Cost EMI. Entry-level 5G models, held at last year’s prices, also drove strong purchases on value.”Large Appliances grew 30% year on year in the first hour, with strong demand across ACs, Refrigerators and Washing Machines. Tablets grew 73% yoy, reflecting a strong festive appetite for personal tech upgrades.”Beauty grew 42% year on year in the first hour, led by men’s grooming and self-care. At peak, Flipkart was selling over 1,600 units of Men’s Perfume every minute, a clear signal of how deeply personal care has entered the festive basket.”Festive shopping, delivered in minutes”Flipkart Minutes saw order volumes rise 3.5x over regular days and new customers grow 11x in the first hour, with demand extending well beyond everyday essentials into premium electronics, grooming and wearables. Demand beyond metros was particularly strong, with Tier 2-plus cities among the fastest-growing markets on Minutes in the opening phase.”During Early Access, an iPhone 17 reached a customer in New Delhi in 3.4 minutes, powered by Flipkart Minutes. Other popular purchases included air fryers, laptops and external hard drives.

Public sector banks tighten grip on home loan market, eat into private banks' share



In a fiercely competitive housing finance market, public sector banks (PSBs) have emerged as the clear winners in the June quarter of FY26, strengthening their hold on home loan originations both by value and volume. Riding on the back of lower interest rates, improved service offerings, and government-led affordability schemes, PSBs have significantly outpaced private sector lenders. According to the latest data from CRIF High Mark, a credit information bureau, PSBs' share of home loan originations by value jumped from 37.6 per cent in the first quarter of FY25 to 46.2 per cent in Q1 FY26, while their volume share rose from 36.5 per cent to 41.9 per cent over the same period. In contrast, private sector banks witnessed a sharp drop — their value share declined from 35.2 per cent to 28.2 per cent, and volume share slipped from 25.2 per cent to 22.0 per cent year-on-year.

Loan origination is the process by which a borrower applies for a loan and a lender processes that application, leading to the approval, documentation, and disbursement of the loan. The outstanding home loan portfolio grew at a steady 12.8 per cent, reaching Rs 41.2 lakh crore as of June 2026. Despite the dip in market share, private banks continued to command the highest average ticket size at Rs 41 lakh, although this marked a 3.3 per cent year-on-year decline. PSBs came in next with Rs 35.3 lakh, registering a notable 12.6 per cent increase, while Housing Finance Companies (HFCs) reported an average

ticket size of Rs 24.6 lakh, up 11.8 per cent over the previous year, CRIF High Mark said. The growth in originations value has been primarily driven by PSBs, which recorded a growth of 36.1 per cent year-on-year, compared to -11.2 per cent degrowth for private banks, and a 7.1 per cent increase for HFCs in Q1 FY26.

The average ticket size increased from Rs 30.4 lakh in the June quarter of FY25 to Rs 32.0 lakh in Q1 FY26, and up from Rs 28.0 lakh in Q1 of FY24, indicating a clear shift toward higher ticket sizes among borrowers, it said. One of the most striking shifts in the housing loan market has been the rise of the Rs 75 lakh-plus loan category, which became the largest segment by origination value in Q1 FY26. This segment accounted for 38 per cent of total home loan value, up from 33.6 per cent in the June quarter of FY25, overtaking the Rs 5–35 lakh bracket that previously led. Here too, PSBs stole the spotlight, increasing their value share in the Rs 75 lakh-plus segment from 38 per cent to 51 per cent, firmly taking the lead. Private banks, on the other hand, saw their share fall from 44 per cent to 33 per cent, while HFCs maintained a stable 12 per cent across both quarters, CRIF High Mark said. Still, in terms of volume, the Rs 5–35 lakh loan range remains dominant, underlining the persistent demand for affordable housing across the country. Analysts suggest this reflects strong traction in tier 2 and 3 cities, where PSBs have a wider reach and better penetration compared to their private counterparts. This shift comes at a time when home loan margins have come under pressure, following the RBI's 100 basis point cut in the repo rate since February. Despite the rate cuts, several banks have increased home loan interest rates to protect their margins, citing rising funding costs and tight liquidity conditions. As a result, the benefits of the RBI's accommodative stance have not been fully passed on to borrowers. Public sector banks, however, appear to have absorbed some of the margin pressure to maintain competitive rates, which may have helped them gain market share in the home loan segment. With PSBs aggressively pushing into higher-value loans while retaining dominance in affordable segments, private lenders may need to recalibrate their home loan strategies to stay competitive.

Amid US visa troubles, Indians' spending on foreign studies hits 7-year low

Amid tightening of policies for international students in the US and several other developed nations, Indians have drastically cut down on the money they are sending abroad for the education of their children, with latest data from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) showing that the amount transferred in the first half of 2025 was the lowest in seven years.

As per data from the central bank, Indians' outward remittances in January-June 2025 under the Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS) stood at \$1.16 billion. Not only is this figure down 22 per cent from last year, it is the least amount of money sent under the scheme in the first six months of a calendar year since 2018, when \$1.06 billion was sent abroad for foreign studies. Notably, a slightly larger chunk of outward remittances under the LRS is sent in the second half of the calendar year in line with admission cycles. However, money sent abroad in the first half, that is from January to June, is sizeable and on average accounted for 45 per cent of full-year transfers on an average over the last five years. In June, data for which was released on August 28, just \$139 million was sent under the LRS — the lowest since the COVID-hit month of April 2020. Under the LRS, the RBI permits Indian residents to send up to \$250,000 abroad every financial year for certain transactions, including travel, studies, medical treatment, and investments in foreign stocks, among others.

Spending on foreign studies by Indians has come at a time when it is becoming increasingly difficult for students to meet qualifying criteria to study abroad, with key destination countries such as the US, Canada, the UK, and Australia tightening visa and admission policies for international students. Canada, for instance, has more than doubled the minimum proof of living expenses in the last couple of years to 22,895 Canadian dollars starting September 1. Meanwhile, Australia last year increased its minimum IELTS score — a measure of applicants' English proficiency — for certain categories of international students. Just last week, the US Department of Homeland Security proposed to end the so-called 'duration of status' system which permits certain students to stay in the US for as long as they are enrolled full-time and are compliant with visa rules. The draft regulations intend to



cap the stay at four years, beyond which students will have to apply for an 'extension of stay'. This followed a battle earlier in the year between the Trump administration and Harvard University that saw the famed institution being barred from enrolling international students before a court issued a temporary restraining order against the order.

According to Malvika Bhotika, a Director at Crisil Ratings, two broad factors are at play when it comes to the reduced overseas remittances by Indians for foreign studies: a shift in geographies from the US to other countries such as Germany and domestic higher-education institutions seeing renewed focus. Analysts at rating agency ICRA had noted the same in a report in June, saying that tightening of student visa norms would lead to Indian students exploring options at home. The shift has already resulted in a marked fall in growth in education loans given by banks. As on June 27, Indian banks' outstanding education loans were up 14 per cent year-on-year compared to the 20 per cent growth recorded a year ago. Even the business of non-banks has suffered, with Crisil predicting in July that the education loan book growth of these shadow banks will almost halve to 25 per cent in the current fiscal. According to Crisil, the share of US in non-bank financial companies' (NBFCs) overall education loan portfolio stood at 50 per cent at the end of 2024-25 — down 300 basis points from a year ago. This share is expected to fall further as other countries come into greater focus. "Predominantly, the same factors as NBFCs are at play for banks also. While banks do have a large domestic portfolio, around 50 per cent or just over that is linked to overseas education," Crisil's Bhotika said.



adding that they will see Centre's strategy and next course of action in the meeting. "Let's see what happens in the meeting. Wait and watch," he said. The two-day 56th meeting of the GST Council begins today wherein Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman along with ministers from 31 states and union territories will hold a threadbare discussion on the next-generation reforms submitted by the Centre to the Group of Ministers under GST. The Opposition-ruled states had met on Friday also where they explicitly and unambiguously supported the Centre's GST rate rationalisation proposal, but were concerned about revenue loss. In a joint statement, the states projected revenue loss of between Rs 85,000 crore and Rs 2 lakh crore a year and sought "protection of revenue interest and fiscal stability in a federal structure". They had said states should be compensated for revenue loss — anything lower than 14 per cent revenue growth — for a minimum five years. States were also worried if benefits of rate rationalisation will actually reach the common people or lead to "windfall profits" for just a few companies. In his Independence Day address,

New BP pill a gamechanger, works when all others fail: Why UK clinical trial is hope for those with resistant hypertension



In an age of blockbuster drugs, this is being hailed as a gamechanger for patients with high blood pressure (BP) that cannot be controlled effectively by existing pills. Now Phase III clinical trials by the University College of London (UCL) have shown that a new drug — baxdrostat — can significantly lower resistant hypertension, thereby reducing the risk of heart attacks, strokes and kidney disease. This is significant as globally more than 1.3 billion people have hypertension. "The arrival of baxdrostat in the group of blood pressure-lowering drugs is a therapeutic advance that will enable clinicians to achieve better control of high blood pressure and associated conditions," says Dr K Srinath Reddy, honorary distinguished professor at Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI).

Why is the study significant?

The BaxHTN study, which was conducted on 796 patients from 214 clinics worldwide, showed that those taking baxdrostat had a blood pressure fall by about 9-10 mmHg (millimetres of mercury, the unit of measurement of blood pressure) more than placebo in 12 weeks. About four in 10 patients taking the drug — as a 1 mg or 2 mg daily tablet — reached normal blood pressure levels, compared with fewer than two in 10 on placebo. A 10 mmHg reduction is significant as it can substantially lower risk of heart attack, stroke, heart failure and kidney disease. The findings were presented at the European Society of Cardiology congress in Madrid, the world's largest heart conference.

My patient's blood sugar didn't go down despite walking regularly: What was he missing in his fitness routine?

A 48-year-old professional, diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes, followed standard advice to walk 45 minutes a day. Over six months, there was a small improvement — slight weight loss and a modest drop in HbA1c (a marker of long-term blood sugar levels). However, the overall impact was limited. Blood sugar fluctuations persisted and fatigue remained an issue. What did he need? Walking may have long been considered a safe and effective form of exercise to manage blood sugar levels. However, recent findings and practical results suggest that strength training — also known as resistance training — may offer even greater benefits in managing and potentially helping in Type 2 diabetes remission. So we recommended strength training as a routine, beginning with basic exercises like squats, wall push-ups and resistance band movements, three times a week. As his strength and confidence increased, we gradually introduced weights under professional supervision.

The changes were notable. After three months, my patient's energy levels improved significantly. His daily blood glucose readings began to stabilize. By six months, there was a substantial drop in HbA1c — from 7.9% to 6.3% — along with a reduction in waist circumference and a healthier body composition. He reported better sleep, improved mood and no longer experienced sharp sugar spikes after meals. In Type 2 diabetes, the body struggles to respond effectively to insulin or fails to produce enough of it. This leads to elevated blood sugar levels, which can result in serious complications over time. Exercise plays a crucial role in increasing insulin sensitivity and helping the muscles absorb more glucose from the bloodstream, even without insulin.

Walking is excellent for heart health and burns calories but it primarily uses fat as a fuel source and does not significantly build muscle mass. Strength training, on the other hand, directly targets and stimulates muscle fibres. This not only burns glucose during the workout but continues to do so during recovery, as the body repairs and

Can eating meat help protect you from cancer? Here are takeaways from a new study

Consuming animal proteins may not be as bad as it is thought to be with a recent study by Canadian researchers suggesting that it does not increase the risk of dying of cancer and may even offer a slight protection. The study, based on the data of nearly 16,000 people, says that switching to plant-based proteins may not have much benefit when it comes to cancer deaths. "It is not simply the consumption of protein that increases the cancer risk, it is how the food has been prepared. A normal curry may not be as bad as say a tikka or a fried burger patty. This is because cooking at higher temperature breaks down the amino acids and proteins in the meat to form nitrosamines that are carcinogenic. Making stews like people do in Japan is much better than frying or barbecuing it as is done in the US," said Ritika Samaddar, regional head, Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics, Max Healthcare. "Addition of some preservatives can also lead to formation of carcinogenic compounds," she added.

What did the study find?

The study, based on dietary observations of 15,937 adults over the age of 19 years, shows that the usual intake of either animal or plant protein had no impact on the risk of death due to any cause. When it comes to the risk of cancer deaths, animal proteins had a mild protective effect while plant proteins did not have any impact at all, the researchers found. This is surprising, considering the same data previously analysed by another team had reported an astonishing four-fold increased risk of cancer in adults aged between 50 and 65 years who consumed animal proteins and not at all in those who consumed animal proteins. The Canadian researchers stated that they were not able to fully account for the discrepancy between both the studies and suggested that the earlier study could have been complicated as they considered the actual intake of proteins (something that is recorded for a given day) as compared to usual intake (that records a person's usual habits). "It was imperative that our analysis used the most rigorous, gold standard methods to assess usual intake and mortality risk. These methods allowed us to account for fluctuations in daily

What is resistant hypertension?

This is a condition where your blood pressure continues to be above target despite treatment with at least three different blood pressure medications, including a diuretic, at maximally tolerated doses. Sometimes this happens because of a high-sodium diet, excessive alcohol intake, obesity and physical inactivity. But mostly, it is because of excess levels of a hormone called aldosterone. The adrenal glands produce too much of it, leading to high blood pressure, low potassium and high sodium.

How does the new pill work on your body?

Aldosterone is an important hormone because it maintains the body's electrolyte balance. Excess of it, however, prods the body to hold salt and water. This increased volume pushes up blood pressure. "Aldosterone helps to retain sodium in the body while preventing high potassium levels. But excess secretion of aldosterone or high receptor sensitivity to its action results in extra sodium retention in the body and changes how blood vessels react to it. This leads to high blood pressure which can lead to brain strokes, heart attacks, heart failure and kidney dysfunction. Aldosterone-receptor blocking drugs have been used in the treatment of high blood pressure and heart failure," says Dr Reddy.

The new drug is an improvement because it is targeted at blocking aldosterone production altogether. "For years, existing drugs have been prescribed to block the effects of aldosterone and eliminate excess fluid and salt without causing a significant loss of potassium. Now we have a drug that goes to the root of the problem, stops aldosterone production," says Dr Ranjan Shetty, lead cardiologist at Sparsh Hospitals, Bengaluru. In fact, the latest American Heart Association guidelines on blood pressure mandate that patients must undertake the aldosterone to renin (kidney enzyme that regulates blood pressure) ratio test to help diagnose hyperaldosteronism or excess levels of the hormone. "Since this test is still very expensive, we do a symptomatic assessment of resistant hypertension and give aldosterone-limiting drugs. That takes care of the problem in most cases. Now we have a better alternative," says Dr Shetty.



strengthens the muscles. Strength training builds lean muscle, and muscle is a metabolically active tissue that acts like a sponge for glucose. After a workout, muscles continue to absorb sugar from the blood for repair and recovery. Over time, as muscle mass increases, so does the body's ability to regulate blood sugar levels efficiently. Additionally, strength training helps reduce visceral fat — the dangerous fat that surrounds internal organs and worsens insulin resistance. It also improves hormonal balance and lowers chronic inflammation, both of which are linked to better glucose control. Another benefit is increased resting metabolic rate. A person with more muscle burns more calories and glucose even while at rest. This creates a long-term improvement in blood sugar stability, rather than a temporary dip that occurs with cardio-focused exercises alone. Walking is an excellent and low-risk way to start moving, especially for beginners or those with mobility issues. It improves circulation, reduces stress and can support mild weight loss. However, for those looking for more lasting control over Type 2 diabetes, adding strength training to the routine can make a transformative difference.



protein intake and provide a more accurate picture of long-term eating habits," says Stuart Phillips, Professor and Chair of the Department of Kinesiology at McMaster University.

Should I move to plant based proteins?

While it is possible to consume the required amount of protein from plant-based sources such as soybean, beans and lentils, you can continue to consume animal proteins if you do. The study says that there was "no apparent benefit of this recommendation" of switching from animal proteins to plant proteins. When consuming animal proteins, doctors say that sticking to fish and poultry may be beneficial. The International Agency for Research on Cancer — a World Health Organisation (WHO) agency that looks at cancer-causing effects of various compounds — found small increases in the risk of several cancers and their association with high consumption of red meat. Doctors also say that the consumption of red meat is associated with an increased risk of heart diseases.

So, how much protein should I consume? And, is there a way to make it safer? A person should ideally consume 0.8 grams of protein/kg of body weight every day. Proteins should ideally make up 10% to 35% of the daily energy requirement. With the India-diet being high in carbohydrates, there is a shortfall in the amount of proteins a person ends up consuming even though it is possible to get this amount from the normal consumption of both plant and animal protein.

Opposition states flag revenue loss concerns from rate cuts; NDA ally Andhra offers support

Ministers from eight opposition-ruled states — Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and West Bengal — met over breakfast today ahead of the crucial Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council meeting to formulate a strategy for discussing the revenue loss arising out of the rate rationalisation proposal. States expressed support for the rate rationalisation proposal, but flagged concerns about revenue loss, stating that they will not approve the proposal in the Council's meeting till a compensation mechanism for potential revenue loss is spelled out. The Centre's GST rate rationalisation proposal found complete support from the National Democratic Alliance's (NDA's) key ally Andhra Pradesh, with the state's Finance Minister Payyavula Keshav saying that he supports the proposal as an alliance partner. Jharkhand's Finance Minister Radha Krishana Kishore said they discussed the statewide revenue loss figures and a compensation mechanism for revenue loss is required, adding that his state is anticipated to lose Rs 2,000 crore annually on account of the GST rate rationalisation proposal. He said he expects the Centre to take on board their revenue loss concerns and the proposal won't go through without assurance on compensation. "Loss hoga state ko, woh compensation central government de toh phir unko agenda ko approve karenge otherwise nahi karenge (States will face revenue loss and central government needs to compensate for revenue loss. And if they assure compensation, we will approve the proposal, otherwise not)," he said. When asked if it would require voting, Kishore said he doesn't think that it'll reach the stage of voting as being a "federal country and parliamentary democracy", it is Centre's obligation to give compensation. Himachal Pradesh's Minister for Technical Education Rajesh Dharmani said they have discussed states' revenue loss,

‘What could be more dishonest?’: Retired Delhi judge scammed of life savings in Noida realty fraud



GNS News Agency, Oct 12

Sixteen years ago, Justice M L Varma was going through his morning ritual of reading the newspaper when his eyes fell on an advertisement in a corner. The advertisement carried striking pictures of an upcoming project in Noida Sector 15, said the 84-year-old, who retired in 1991 from the Delhi High Court. “It promised a high rental commercial unit. The pictures were so attractive and appealing, it looked like it was absolutely out of the world. They showed a metro station nearby, a very good sector,” he added.

Interested, he quickly dialled the contact number mentioned in the advertisement. He also nudged a relative to book another unit in the same project. The papers were signed at his office in Delhi’s Neeti Bagh, and he and his brother-in-law, Naveen Sawhney, paid Rs 3 crore. It is now 2026 and not a single brick has been laid, he said.

“We have been cheated out of the money. Thirteen, fourteen, fifteen years, and not a brick has been laid there,” Justice Varma said. Last month, he filed a complaint at the Hauz Khas police station in Delhi and police lodged an FIR under sections of criminal conspiracy and criminal intent against Aims Sanya Developers Private Limited, and its directors Roop Kishore Madan, Sanjay Thukral and other unknown persons. Varma initially had no plans to take the legal route, hoping instead that the builders would honour their commitments. “It seemed like a good investment to make, to be able to earn some money later...,” said Varma, who enrolled as a lawyer in 1964 and is quasi-retired — he still practises and does arbitrations. “The location was good and they had shown such a good picture, the brochure had made it very attractive. It would also have fetched rent, so

that would have been a source of income.” According to the complaint, the commercial project was to be completed within 36 months, with a grace period of six months, and was to yield high returns on investment for the investors and purchasers. “As per the assurances and public advertisements, the construction of the commercial project was to commence in September 2010 and conclude by March 2014,” the complaint stated, alleging that the complainants have been cheated of over Rs 3,22,34,640. After the deadline passed, Varma said he made multiple trips to the builder’s office in Defence Colony. He would be made to wait for hours, he said, while the builder did not show up. A few years ago, they eventually entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). “If there was a delay, he was supposed to give assured returns based on what the property would have fetched if it had been rented. He did not. Eventually, some years ago, we entered into an MoU. He gave advance cheques, but the cheques would bounce. That went on for five years,” Varma claimed, adding that the accused paid the monthly assured returns intermittently. Eventually, when the builder stopped picking up calls in October 2025, the family decided to approach the police. “He [the builder] induced and tricked us into buying a property which he had no intention, from day zero, of building,” claimed Varma’s son Satvik, a senior advocate in the Delhi High Court. “Property not even demarcated.” If he had dug up the land, there could have been reasons such as a National Green Tribunal order or a ban on construction. But... the property is not even demarcated. We don’t even know if it has a name now. Earlier, it was called Landmark Towers, then they changed it to Tempian Towers,” he said. Varma and his wife, Nita, had persuaded Naveen to invest in the project. Naveen died two years ago after suffering from cancer for a year and a half. “We could have used those resources. My father always felt that because of his mistake, my uncle lost his money as well. There was guilt and a moral dilemma,” said Satvik. Varma still has the brochure of the property, which runs into multiple pages and contains elaborate maps. He asked in disbelief: “What could be more dishonest than this? If it can happen to someone who has been a part of the legal system for over 50 years, then what is likely to be the plight of the common man about whose misery one reads every day, who is deprived of their life savings?”

Gujarat doctor caught accepting bribe for ‘not harassing’ students

GNS News Agency, Oct 12

Bribery The incident came to light after one of the students who refused to pay the bribe approached the Gandhinagar ACB, said officials who set a trap to nab him. A government medical superintendent in Gujarat was arrested on Monday by the state Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) for seeking and receiving a bribe from medical students who were deputed to his hospital for rural service.

The ACB, on Monday, booked and arrested Dr Rahim Ibrahim Memon, 59, Medical Superintendent (Class-1) of the J S Chauhan Civil Hospital in Devgad Baria, Dahod, for allegedly seeking the bribe under the pretext of “not harassing” the medical students during their time at the institution headed by him. A statement from the ACB on Tuesday stated, “A total of eight students were appointed to J S Chauhan Government Civil Hospital, Devgad Baria, Dahod, under the District Residency Programme (DRP). The accused demanded a bribe of Rs 40,000 in total, calculated at Rs 5,000 per student, from the eight students in exchange for assigning favourable duties and ensuring they



would not be harassed during their service.” The incident came to light after one of the students who refused to pay the bribe approached the Gandhinagar ACB, said officials who set a trap to nab him. A team of the anti-corruption agency set a trap at the government staff quarters of the officer, who was caught red-handed while accepting a bribe of Rs 40,000 from the complainant, said the ACB. He was placed under arrest, and further investigation is underway.

Shiv Sena fields candidate against BJP for Pune MLC seat

GNS News Agency, Oct 12

Disagreements within Maharashtra’s ruling Mahayuti alliance surfaced on the final day of nomination filings for the Legislative Council elections, as Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena Tuesday fielded Mangesh Chivate from the Pune Teachers’ constituency, a seat where ally BJP has already nominated its own candidate. The move raises the prospect of an internal contest within the alliance ahead of the Maharashtra Legislative Council elections scheduled for October 23. Elections are being held across five seats falling vacant as sitting members’ terms end on December 6. These include three Graduates’ constituencies: Aurangabad, Pune, and Nagpur divisions, and two Teachers’ constituencies: Amravati and Pune divisions.

Following the nomination deadline, scrutiny of papers will take place on October 7, with the final date for withdrawal of candidature set for October 9. Votes will be counted on October 27. Chivate filed his nomination papers a day after Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde returned from New Delhi, where he met Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Party sources indicated that Shinde discussed Chivate’s candidature during the visit, particularly after the BJP fielded Kaustubh Gawade for the Pune Teachers’ seat. “A lot can happen” While expressing confidence that the BJP would agree to a resolution on candidate withdrawals, Shinde said his party remains firm on Chivate’s nomination.

“The process of filing nomination papers for the Legislative Council elections is underway, and there is still time



for withdrawal. During this period, discussions will take place among leaders of Mahayuti, and a decision will be made following those talks,” Shinde said. “Mangesh Chivate is contesting the Pune Teachers’ constituency seat. After the nomination deadline ends, the withdrawal process will begin. A lot can happen during this time,” he added. After receiving his official form from the party, Chivate thanked Eknath Shinde and MP Shrikant Shinde. Shiv Sena workers celebrated his nomination outside the office, lifting him on their shoulders as he held the form. “I am thankful to them for picking me for the MLC seat,” Chivate said, adding that he remains confident of securing a victory in the Pune Teachers’ constituency based on his work. Reacting to Shiv Sena’s move, BJP Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis acknowledged the ongoing rift over the seat. “We could not reach a consensus for the Pune seat. There is still time for withdrawal. We will discuss it,” Fadnavis said.



Cygni Energy, Indus Towers sign MoU to explore energy storage solutions

Hyderabad: Cygni Energy Private Limited and Indus Towers Limited have signed an MoU outlining the intent to explore collaboration on sourcing energy storage solutions for telecom infrastructure in India. Under the MoU, the proposed collaboration includes plans to establish Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) manufacturing capacity of up to 1.5 GWh to address the evolving energy requirements of telecom infrastructure in India.

The collaboration is also expected to evaluate advanced battery technologies for telecom applications, aimed at enhancing reliability, improving energy efficiency and enabling more sustainable telecom operations. Venkat Rajaraman, Founder & CEO, Cygni Energy, said,

Maharashtra police told CJP volunteers to skip Delhi protest, asked who’s paying: Dipke



GNS News Agency, Oct 12

Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) founder Abhijeet Dipke on Tuesday accused the Maharashtra Police of trying to intimidate protesters, after police in Chandrapur issued notices to volunteers planning to join a protest at Delhi’s Jantar Mantar on October 10. He called the action “dictatorship”. A notice issued by Chandrapur’s Ballarpur Police on October 5 under Section 168 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) to a CJP supporter, which Dipke shared on X, states that police had learnt he was planning to travel to New Delhi to support Dipke in the proposed march.

The notice asks why he was joining the CJP agitation, who was funding his participation and what his objective was. It directs him not to take part in the Delhi protest or any agitation without permission, not to associate with violent protesters, not to post “violent” content on social media and not to make provocative speeches. It also directs him to follow police instructions and not obstruct public peace or law and order, and warns of preventive or criminal action if a violation leads to, or could lead to, a cognisable offence. The notice further states that Section 37(1)(3) of the Maharashtra Police Act is in force in Chandrapur district by order of the district collector to maintain law and order, and warns of legal action if he violates it and a law-and-order situation arises from his actions. At a press conference, Dipke said several volunteers had received similar notices, asking them not to join the protest and seeking details of their travel to Delhi, including who was paying for it. Somewhere or the other, the Maharashtra Police have broken our hearts. Yesterday, some of our volunteers received notices from the Chandrapur Police. They have been told not to go to the protest at Jantar Mantar. They have also been asked where the funds for their travel to Delhi are coming from,” he said. “If a person from Maharashtra wants to go to Delhi for a protest, what business is it of the Chandrapur Police to ask where his travel expenses are coming from? Can’t a person himself buy a railway ticket worth Rs 1,000 or Rs 1,500?” he asked. Chandrapur Superintendent of Police Ayush Nopany said the notices were routine. “Issuing such notices before any protest or event is a routine activity. This is a prohibitory provision, and the police noticed that some people from Chandrapur were likely

to travel to Delhi for the protest. We wanted to caution them against violence and provocative speeches, and remind them that they need to obtain permission from the concerned police station — in this case, the police station in Delhi and not Chandrapur,” he told The Indian Express. He stressed that the notices were a preventive measure and not aimed specifically at the protesters. Dipke questioned the police’s suggestion that the protest could turn violent. “The notice says the protesters could become violent. How does the Chandrapur Police already know that the protest will turn violent? Has it already been planned that it will become violent?” On the warning against social media posts, he said, “I want to ask the Maharashtra Police to show me one video where anyone from our side has said anything that could lead to violence. I keep speaking about Gandhi and Ambedkar. Does that appear violent?” “Why is the Maharashtra Police behaving like the Delhi Police? When did Jantar Mantar come under the Chandrapur Police? Who are the Chandrapur Police to tell people not to participate in a protest at Jantar Mantar?” he asked. “Who told these officials to issue these notices? No police officer would send such notices on his own. One or two police officers should not end up bringing disrepute to the Maharashtra Police.”

Dipke also criticised the Mumbai Police over action against tribal students marching in Mumbai. He alleged that some students in the agitation, which he said was led by tribal activist Rahul Pawra, were detained and beaten. “Criminals have reduced so much that you have started laying hands on students?” he asked, questioning whether police would treat the children of influential politicians and businessmen the same way.

He accused the BJP of assuming that protesters are paid to take part, and repeated his demand for Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar’s resignation, citing allegations of voter deletions and the Supreme Court’s observations on Form 6 applications. “Every Indian should demand Gyanesh Kumar’s resignation because our right to vote is being taken away,” he said. The Form 6 row follows The Indian Express investigation that revealed objections by Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi to a declaration added to the online version of Form 6, the form used to enrol new voters. The ECI has said the Supreme Court upheld the declaration, a claim legal experts have disputed, arguing the court never directly examined its validity. He said he was ready to face arrest. “If you want to arrest me, arrest me. I am sitting here. Impose NSA, impose UAPA if you think that threatening us with arrest will make us remain silent. That will not happen. If you want to put me in jail, put me there. We will continue to fight to save democracy.”

Kid in arms, man dangling from window: Tribals students say forcibly being sent home

GNS News Agency, Oct 12 Hundreds of tribal students marched into Mumbai from Nashik to press for their demands. On Day 1, they were allegedly detained by the Mumbai Police and on Day 2, they were thrown into the police bus — some with infants in their arms, some dangling from the bus windows, and some with their legs upside down with their clothes torn in the scuffle. Pushing them inside the bus, the cops stood there, smiling. These were the visuals The Indian Express witnessed outside the Tilak Bhavan in Mumbai today on October 6.

Tribal students bring put into police buses outside Tilak Bhavan (Express Photo by Akash Patil) Tribal students bring put into police buses outside Tilak Bhavan (Express Photo by Akash Patil) The tribal students have refused to leave Mumbai without meeting Governor Jishnu Dev Varna. The students have alleged that since they refused to leave Mumbai, the police officials tried to push them into the buses and take them to their homes, prompting an altercation between students and police. Adivasi students protest at tilak bhavan Mumbai The police have denied detaining anyone. (Express Photo by Akash Patil) “We have been protesting for so long in Nashik. And we began our journey to Mumbai on September 29. After walking for so many days, we are denied to meet the governor with our demands,” one of the protesting students said. The police have denied detaining anyone. “A bus was arranged, and the students have been taken back to their hometown. No one was detained,” a senior official said. The students had earlier planned to march



to the Lok Bhavan, but permission was denied. On Tuesday, there was a heavy police deployment outside the Tilak Bhavan, which is headquarters of the Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee. The students were not allowed to move out of the Tilak Bhavan. On Sunday, October 4, the Congress had alleged that the Mumbai Police entered the Congress headquarters and detained some tribal students, including women. The cops have rejected the allegations. Now the students are planning a protest at a later date. “The plan is now to come back to Mumbai for a protest on October 25. All students will go back to their respective home districts in buses arranged by the Congress. Each bus will have a Congress member to ensure safety of all students,” said Dhananjay Shinde from Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee.

Meerut trader’s family came to bury him after ‘heart attack’, then they saw his neck



The 30-year-old trader’s family had been told he died of a heart attack at his Meerut home on September 28. When they arrived, they found his body covered with a bedsheet, with only his face visible, said police. They took him to his ancestral home in Muzaffarnagar for burial. There, as the cloth around his neck slipped, someone took a photograph. Police said the picture was later circulated in the family WhatsApp group. Relatives noticed a dark mark around Talib’s neck and began questioning the circumstances of his death.

They also learned about his wife Ilma’s alleged friendship with a local youth, Aman. Police said the family now suspects the two had a role in Talib’s death. Based on a complaint by Talib’s cousin Akram Ali, police registered an FIR against Ilma, who works at a beauty parlour, and Aman at Lohianagar police station on charges of murder. “The case has been registered. We will exhumate the body to get a post-mortem done. We are in correspondence with Muzaffarnagar authorities,” said Lohiya Nagar SHO Sumit Tomar. Talib had been living with Ilma and their two-year-old son in rented accommodation in Meerut’s Zakir Colony. He had moved to the city around eight years ago following a dispute within his family. Akram said relatives and friends began arriving at Talib’s house after being told of his death.

Ilma told them he had suffered a heart attack in his sleep. “But Ilma did not allow anyone visiting the house to remove the cloth below his face. She also initially refused to let us take the body to Muzaffarnagar for burial. It was only when everyone insisted that he be taken to his hometown that she finally agreed,” alleged Akram, adding that she accompanied them. It was at the burial ground that the cloth covering Talib’s neck slipped off, exposing the mark that caught the family’s attention. After the photograph was shared, relatives began asking neighbours in Meerut about Ilma, said Akram. The family also asked Ilma about Talib’s cellphone. According to Akram, she denied having it. Relatives also noticed Ilma’s “unusual behaviour”, finding her busy packing up household belongings.

KTR sends legal notice to media house over passport report

Hyderabad: BRS working president KT Rama Rao issued a legal notice to Telugu vernacular newspaper “Eenadu,” objecting to a news report published on September 29, stating that a special court had ordered temporary seizure of his passport. He demanded the withdrawal of the report within 48 hours, the publication of a correction with the same prominence and tendering of an unconditional apology.

The notice also sought corrections across the newspaper’s digital platforms and archives, failing which the newspaper was warned of civil and criminal defamation proceedings and action before approaching the Press Council of India.

In the notices served to the newspaper’s editor, publisher, printer, resident editor and reporter, Rama Rao’s counsel, N Lalitha Reddy said the report was contrary to facts and could mislead readers.

Man uses old laptop and AI to stay connected with his mother 24/7



GNS News Agency, Oct 12

What if you could be miles away from home and still have your mother within sight throughout the day? Harsh Savergaonkar has found a simple tech-powered solution, using an old laptop and an always-on video call to stay connected with his mother while working away from home. The setup was shared online by Harsh, who explained that he placed an old Linux laptop connected to a large screen on the dining table at his home. A video call remains active throughout the day, creating a virtual window between the two despite the distance. Leaving mom for work was the hardest this time so I set up an old Linux laptop with a big screen on our dining table that stays on a video call 24x7 got Claude to write scripts so that if the laptop / browser crashes it rejoins, if the wifi breaks it fixes itself and rejoins, and if it gets switched off she just presses the power button and I'm back right now I'm somewhere over Iceland working and eating, and she's at home doing her work we're not even talking, but every now and then she looks up and I'm there, and I look up and she's there

and when she gets up at 3am for water, I'll be on the screen working and she can just say hi before going back to bed. The system was designed to keep working even when

technical problems arise. Savergaonkar said he used AI assistant Claude to help write scripts that automatically restart the video call if the browser or laptop crashes. The system can also attempt to reconnect after an internet outage. If the laptop is switched off, his mother only needs to press the power button to restore the connection, he explained. The setup is not necessarily meant for constant conversation. Instead, mother and son simply go about their routines while remaining visible to one another. Savergaonkar said he could be working or eating somewhere as far away as Iceland while his mother continued with her day back home. The small moments are what make the arrangement particularly meaningful. They may not speak for long periods, but occasionally one of them looks up at the screen and sees the other person there. One of the most touching moments comes when his mother wakes up during the night. If she gets up around 3 am to drink water, she can see her son working on the screen, greet him briefly and then return to bed. "We're not even talking, but every now and then she looks up and I'm there, and I look up and she's there," Harsh wrote. The unusual use of technology quickly drew attention online, with several users praising the idea and asking how they could create something similar. "This is beautiful, man! It's tough living alone in another country, and kudos to you for going on!" one user wrote. Others asked Savergaonkar to share more details about how he built the system, while some suggested adding features such as alerts when his mother appears on camera during unusual hours or when the two have not acknowledged each other for a while. Not everyone thought such an elaborate setup was necessary, though. "This is a great idea! But why not use a CCTV or a baby cam?" one user questioned. Despite the debate over the technology involved, the idea has resonated because of what it represents. Rather than using the screen simply for scheduled calls, the mother and son have created a way to share everyday life from different places. For them, the constant video feed is less about talking and more about knowing that the other person is there.

Tata Trusts trustees accuse Venu Srinivasan and Vijay Singh of undermining board resolutions

GNS News Agency, Oct 12

New Delhi: Senior trustees of Sir Dorabji Tata Trust have accused fellow trustees Venu Srinivasan and Vijay Singh of undermining board resolutions and breaching their fiduciary duties by publicly supporting the listing of Tata Sons, the holding company of the Tata Group, according to a report. NDTV Profit reported that the letter — signed by SDTT trustees Noel N Tata, Darius J. Khambata, Neville N. Tata and Bhaskar Bhat — marks an escalation in internal differences within Tata Trusts over the future ownership and listing status of Tata Sons. The trustees said keeping Tata Sons unlisted had been the settled position of the Trusts and the company for years. The Tata Sons board had unanimously resolved in March 2024 to retain the company's unlisted status, while trustees of SDTT and Sir Ratan Tata Trust unanimously reiterated the position in July 2025 and agreed to engage with the Reserve Bank of India on the matter, according to the report. Moreover, the trustees said the July 2025 resolutions had not been rescinded and criticised Srinivasan and Singh for not seeking a reconsideration of those decisions or bringing their changed views on a potential listing before the trustees for collective deliberation. Their public statements supporting a listing undermined the Trusts' resolutions and could also affect Tata Sons' pending application with the RBI.

The trustees also referred to a September 28 proposal to merge Tata Electronics Systems Solutions Private Lim-



ited and Tata Consulting Engineers with Tata Sons as one possible route to help the company avoid the RBI's principal business criteria for non-banking financial companies while retaining its unlisted status. The report showed that the Tata Sons board had asked the Trusts to explore all available options and not listing alone to comply with the RBI's communications. "The Tata Trusts did what the Board of Tata Sons asked of them," the trustees said in the letter and defended their efforts to find alternatives to a public listing. The developments highlight growing differences among trustees over whether Tata Sons should remain unlisted or pursue a public listing as it seeks to address regulatory requirements set by the RBI.

Delhi HC seeks dedicated POCSO probe teams to speed up investigations



GNS News Agency, Oct 12 New Delhi: The Delhi High Court has directed the Commissioner of Police to consider setting up dedicated investigation teams for cases registered under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act in every police district of the national capital to ensure timely probes. A bench of Chief Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya and Justice Tejas Karia issued the direction while disposing of a public interest litigation (PIL) concerning delays in the investigation of cases under the POCSO Act.

During the hearing, the petitioner drew the High Court's attention to the statutory timelines prescribed under the POCSO Act and the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023. The bench was informed that Section 35 of the POCSO Act mandates that the evidence of a child vic-

tim be recorded within 30 days of the Special Court taking cognisance of the offence, while the trial is required to be completed, as far as possible, within one year.

The petitioner further referred to Section 193(2) of the BNSS, which mandates that investigations into specified offences under the POCSO Act be completed within two months from the date of registration of the FIR by the officer in charge of the police station. It was submitted before the High Court that there have been numerous instances where investigations were not completed within the time stipulated by law.

The petitioner, Zuber Ali, had sought the setting up of dedicated POCSO investigation teams in every police district of Delhi to ensure timely investigation of such cases. He had also submitted a representation dated September 5 to the Commissioner of Police, highlighting the issue and seeking appropriate measures. During the hearing, counsel appearing for the Delhi Police, on instructions, informed the High Court that the representation was being attended to and that necessary consultations and other processes were underway. Taking note of the response, the bench said the Delhi Police was already cognisant of the grievances raised in the representation and directed the Commissioner of Police to take appropriate steps while taking into account the suggestions made by the petitioner. It directed that a decision be taken within three months and asked counsel for the Delhi Police to communicate the order to the Commissioner of Police forthwith.

SC directs Assam authorities to examine concerns raised over recurring floods and erosion

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday refused to entertain a public interest litigation (PIL) seeking directions to ensure effective measures to address recurring floods, riverbank erosion and drainage-related problems in Assam and the Brahmaputra Valley. A Bench headed by Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant declined to entertain the plea filed by advocate Ujjawal Gaur but directed the registry to forward a copy of the petition to all the respondent authorities, asking them to examine the issues raised and take appropriate remedial measures.

Appearing in person, Gaur submitted that the administrative lapses highlighted in the petition were amenable to judicial scrutiny and urged the apex court to issue notice to the authorities. However, the CJI-led Bench observed that the suggestions and deficiencies highlighted by the petitioner ought to draw the attention of the concerned authorities, but the issue was "not essentially legal" in nature. The PIL had sought judicial intervention to ensure effective implementation of the statutory framework governing flood and erosion management. It also proposed a high-level expert mechanism to examine the recurring problems. The petitioner contended that the recurring devastation caused by floods could not be treated as wholly inevitable when statutory frameworks and specialised institutions had been created for flood control, riverbank erosion and drainage management. The plea referred to the Brahmaputra Board Act, 1980, the Assam Embankment and Drainage Act, 1953, and the River Boards Act, 1956, arguing that these laws contemplated scientific investigation, integrated river-basin planning and implementation of measures relating to floods, erosion and drainage. It relied on successive reports of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG), which, according to the petitioner, had recorded deficiencies in flood-control planning, execution and maintenance, drainage management, floodplain management and monitoring of projects. The petition specifically referred to the CAG's Performance Audit on "Flood Control in Assam", contained in Report No. 5 of 2018. It claimed that the report identified deficiencies in integrated basin-wise planning, floodplain zoning, hydrological and morphological studies, and the execution and monitoring of flood-control works. It also relied on official records concerning drainage congestion, backflow, inadequate drainage



through sluices, encroachment upon natural drainage channels, sedimentation and river morphology as factors aggravating flood vulnerability.

The petitioner further highlighted a shortage of technical manpower in the Brahmaputra Board, referring to an official Lok Sabha reply dated December 12, 2024, which disclosed that 65 of its 182 sanctioned technical posts remained vacant in 2024. The plea also referred to a CAG State Finances Audit Report, claiming that Rs 1,112.50 crore remained uninvested in the State Disaster Response Fund as of March 31, 2025, and pointed to savings of Rs 555.13 crore under the Water Resources grant during 2024-25. The petitioner argued that the issue was not about eliminating floods altogether or directing authorities on specific engineering designs, but ensuring that statutory institutions discharged the functions entrusted to them. The plea sought directions for updated scientific hydrological, morphological and drainage studies; an integrated basin-wide flood, erosion and drainage management framework; assessment and maintenance of flood-control infrastructure; protection of natural drainage channels and vulnerable floodplains; strengthening of technical capacity; and mechanisms for monitoring and accountability. The petitioner had sought directions to the Union government, Central Water Commission, National Disaster Management Authority, Brahmaputra Board, Assam government and other concerned states and authorities.

Assam revives Dibrugarh river route with first Bangladesh cargo shipment

GNS News Agency, Oct 12

Dibrugarh (Assam): A barge carrying 540 metric tonnes of methanol left Bogibeel Terminal here for Dhaka in Bangladesh on Monday, marking the first cargo shipment from upper Assam to a foreign port since Independence, nearly seven decades after Dibrugarh's river ghat fell silent. The methanol, produced by state-owned Assam Petrochemicals Ltd (APCL) at Namrup, is bound for Pangaon Port in Dhaka. The vessel will travel about 768 km along National Waterway-2 on the Brahmaputra to the India-Bangladesh border before continuing on the Indo-Bangladesh Protocol Route (IBPR). The vessel will cover a total distance of about 1,300 km from Bogibeel in Dibrugarh to Narayanganj in Dhaka.

Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal flagged off the vessel DLB Patkai, pushed by the tug Kushal Konwar, from Bogibeel. Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma joined the ceremony virtually. The voyage is being viewed as a test of whether the Brahmaputra can emerge as a commercially viable freight corridor linking the Northeast with overseas markets. Regular methanol shipments to Bangladesh are planned. The shipment was made possible after customs and immigration complexes were recently established at Bogibeel and Dhubri. "Our grandparents grew up hearing the steamer whistle at Dibrugarh Ghat. For 70 years, that whistle fell silent, and the ships stopped coming," Sonowal said. "Today, a ship leaves Dibrugarh for the world once again. The river never failed us. What it lacked for decades was the will to revive it," he said. Sarma described it as a proud day for Assam. Assam's own product, made in Namrup, is now travelling to an international market on Assam's own river. The Northeast is no longer a frontier. It is India's gateway to the East," he said. Dibrugarh was once among the busiest river ports in eastern India. Government steamers reached the town from Calcutta, now Kolkata, by 1856. In 1882, the Dibrugarh Sadiya Railway began operating from the Dibrugarh steamer ghat. By 1913, steamers were sailing up the Brahmaputra to Dibrugarh daily, carrying tea, timber and passengers. The 1947 Partition disrupted the route, forcing Assam's goods to pass through East Pakistan to reach Calcutta. According to the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, cargo movement on India's national waterways rose from 18 million metric tonnes in 2013-14 to 218 million metric tonnes in 2025-26. More than Rs 6,800 crore is being invested in waterways across the Northeast, including the development of National Waterway-2, a ship repair facility at Pandu and last-



mile connectivity to Pandu Port. "Every ton we move on the river means less fuel burnt and fewer trucks on the highway," Sonowal said. He added that India was working with Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar on regional waterway links.

Man critically injured after touching high-voltage wire in Charlapalli

Hyderabad: A 27-year-old man suffered severe injuries after coming into contact with a 32-KV high-voltage electricity wire at his house in Charlapalli. The youth, identified as Ram Singh, a native of Rajasthan, was reportedly speaking on his mobile phone when he came into contact with the high-voltage wire, resulting in an electrical



short circuit.

He suffered serious burns and was rushed to a hospital for treatment. His condition is said to be critical. Police are investigating.

Mann govt moves SC against HC-ordered CBI probe

GNS News Agency, Oct 12

New Delhi/Chandigarh: The Punjab government has moved the Supreme Court challenging the Punjab and Haryana High Court's order directing the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to probe allegations of corruption involving Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann's OSD Rajvir Ghuman and others. As per details available on the apex court's official website, a Special Leave Petition (SLP) has been filed by the State of Punjab through its Home Department and registered as Diary No. 62464/2026. The petition was filed in the early hours of Tuesday (October 6) and is currently listed as "pending".

The state government has approached the Supreme Court a day after the Punjab and Haryana High Court ordered that the matter arising from three letters written by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to the Punjab DGP be handed over to the CBI. The High Court also directed the CBI to register a case and submit a status report within two months. The ED had written three letters to Punjab Director General of Police (DGP) Gaurav Yadav, alleging that CM Bhagwant Mann's OSD Rajvir Ghuman and his associates Nitin Gohal and Bir Devinder were involved in corruption.

The central anti-money laundering agency had claimed that they were interfering in administrative transfers and postings, besides government tenders, and had called for registration of an FIR. After the Punjab Police did not register a case on the basis of the ED communications, advocate Nikhil Saraf filed a PIL before the Punjab and Haryana High Court seeking a CBI probe. In his petition, Saraf had argued that the ED letters contained serious allegations concerning persons linked to the Punjab Chief Minister's Office and sought a "fair and independent investigation" free from the influence of the Punjab Police and Punjab Vigilance.

He had also sought an investigation into the alleged money trail and appropriate action against those found guilty. While directing the CBI probe, the High Court ordered the investigating agency to submit its report within two months and directed the Punjab government and police to extend full cooperation to the CBI. Meanwhile, Punjab BJP President Kewal Singh Dhillon welcomed the High Court's decision to hand over the matter to the CBI and attacked the Mann government over the allegations. Speaking to the media in Chandigarh on Monday, Dhillon said the development had exposed the reality behind a government that claims to follow a "zero-tolerance" policy towards corruption. He demanded that Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann should resign immediately, alleging that the government had lost the moral right to remain in power. Dhillon said the ED had written to the Punjab DGP three times, but the Punjab Police did not register an FIR, following which the matter reached the High Court through a PIL. He expressed hope that the CBI would



conduct a fair and transparent investigation and questioned why the government had allegedly resisted an investigation despite repeated communications from the ED. Dhillon demanded that the Punjab government and the police provide all necessary records to the CBI and extend full cooperation so that the investigation could be completed within the two-month deadline fixed by the High Court.

CARE Hospitals doctors replant severed forearm of 19-year-old worker

Hyderabad: In a complex surgical intervention, a multidisciplinary team at CARE Hospitals,HITEC City, replanted a completely severed right forearm of a 19-year-old worker following a drill-machine accident.

The young man reached the hospital's emergency department within an hour of the accident and underwent a marathon 10-hour surgery to save the limb. The worker suffered a severe crush injury while operating a drill machine, resulting in complete amputation of his right forearm. Considering his young age, the extent of the injury and the timely arrival at the hospital, doctors decided to attempt replantation and give him the best possible chance of preserving his limb and regaining function.

A multidisciplinary team comprising specialists from Orthopaedics, Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery, General Surgery and Anaesthesia took up a complex procedure which involved extensive cleaning of the damaged tissue, stabilisation of both forearm bones with plates, restoration of the limb and reconstruction of the damaged soft tissues.

California officials blast Trump's comment to let Iran 'take out' Los Angeles and San Diego



LOS ANGELES, President Donald Trump suggested to a crowd of his supporters in Nebraska that Iran "could 'take out' a major US city like Los Angeles or San Diego, drawing a swift rebuke from California's Democratic leaders "and some fellow Republicans.Trump, speaking at a political rally in the state's farm belt on Monday, discussed American wartime economic sacrifices and he said he was determined to "see a tremendous victory, because it verifies all the things we did."The Misinformation Monitor newsletter rounds up international misinformation narratives, with a "Real or Fake?" quiz in every edition. Sign up here.

"And again, remember, with the war, it's just artificial, it's a little bit high, it's a small price to pay," he "told the crowd in Grand Island, Nebraska, apparently referring to rising prices of fuel, fertilizer and other products attributed to energy "market disruptions from the war."It's a small price to pay for keeping the world safe, for keeping our country "safe. They could take out a city. Let 'em take out Los Angeles, let 'em take out San Diego. This is a very small price "to pay, and it's going to be over with very soon," he said, speaking about a month before midterm elections that could sweep Democrats back "in control of Congress."It's essentially almost over with," Trump went on. "But it's going to end very soon, and it's going to end one way or the other."Trump has shrugged off inflation concerns stemming

Americans deeply skeptical of taxpayer-funded election ads, Reuters/Ipsos poll finds

GNS News Agency, Oct 12

WASHINGTON, An overwhelming majority of Americans said that it "is inappropriate to use taxpayer funds for TV ads featuring the president around an election, in a Reuters/Ipsos poll conducted as "spots with President Donald Trump air ahead of November's midterms.The six-day poll, which concluded on Monday, found that 86% of Americans — and four out of five Republicans — think it is inappropriate to use taxpayer money to pay for election-related TV ads featuring the president or his cabinet.The Misinformation Monitor newsletter rounds up international misinformation narratives, with a "Real or Fake?" quiz in every edition. Sign up here.

Ethics experts and lawmakers from both parties have criticized three nationally "broadcast ads that celebrate a "golden age of America" airing weeks before the November 3 midterm elections. Lawmakers have questioned whether public funds "are being used to promote Trump politically, while other critics say the spots may violate longstanding restrictions on "government propaganda and political activity.Trump and his aides have said the ads are educational, patriotic and not intended to promote any politician's candidacy.

"These public "service announcements are about reminding Americans to love their country and understand what makes it worth defending, at home, at our borders, and abroad," "said a White House spokesperson who declined to be named. Trump said late on Monday that he would pay for ads himself or with money raised from the MAGA political committee.One ad features Trump declaring that "America will never be a communist country" while a chorus repeats "love me." Another combines images of Mount Rushmore with footage "of Trump praising a "golden age of America." A third describes a "final battle" against the "deep state" and closely resembles one of Trump's 2024 campaign advertisements.Each "ad ends with a disclaimer that it was paid for by the US government.Democratic lawmakers have sought independent investigations and said that the White House transferred \$20 million "in Homeland "Security Department funds to air the ads.

PRESSURE ON REPUBLICANS AHEAD OF ELECTIONSRepublicans seeking reelection face growing

Students and teachers march in France on biggest day of high school protests

PARIS, GNS News Agency, Oct 12- Students, teachers and parents marched in cities across France on Tuesday and protesters blockaded hundreds of schools, in "the biggest day of action in a wave of demonstrations demanding the government tackle understaffed and dilapidated classrooms.In Marseille, Nantes and Lyon, the "street protests began peacefully mid-morning, with the largest demonstration expected in Paris in the afternoon.

Get a look at the day ahead in European and global markets with the Morning Bid Europe newsletter. Sign up here.Youngsters held aloft smoke flares and placards reading "Under our school books, anger" and "Where are the politicians? Do they even know we exist?"Tuesday's demonstrations come after a fortnight of protests which began in Paris's deprived suburbs before spreading across the country. The government responded with "riot police, saying the movement had now morphed into urban violence.A teenager's hand was blown off as high-school protesters clashed with riot "police in northern France on Monday. François-Xavier Lauch, prefect of Pas-de-Calais, declined to comment on the exact circumstances, saying some "200 to 250 protesters had been hurling objects at police.

The regional newspaper La Voix du Nord said the 15-year-old lost his hand and part "of his lower arm after picking up a police dispersal grenade.The High School Students Union said 1,800 high schools were blockaded or would close for the "day. Some local education authorities have tried to move classes online. The education ministry did not immediately make numbers available."When the answer is violence, it means democracy is no longer working," said Hugo Vetzell, a high school leaver in Strasbourg now taking classes for the entrance exams to France's top-tier universities. "There is such a gap between the "elites and us."Prime Minister Sebastien Lecornu has ordered his ministers to tackle the students' leading demands. Those in-

from the Iran conflict before, and even downplayed his concerns about the potential for Iran or its allies to launch an attack on "US soil.But Monday's comments prompted a backlash from California officials.California Governor Gavin Newsom denounced the Republican president as "deranged and dangerous.""After sending the National Guard "and Marines to occupy California, Donald Trump is now saying our foreign enemies should 'take out' Los Angeles and San Diego," he wrote on X.Newsom, a Democrat who "has positioned "himself as a major political foil to Trump and is considered a possible candidate for the Democratic Party's presidential nomination in 2028, juxtaposed a video clip of Trump in Nebraska with mention of the president's previous rhetoric to justify deploying US military troops to Los Angeles and other cities to fight crime and enforce immigration.Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass, a Democrat and former member of Congress, likewise chided Trump for his comments.

"The president of the "United States suggested that a foreign "government attack Los Angeles. His statements "against our city are dangerous and could potentially compromise our safety," Bass said in a statement.San Diego Mayor Todd Gloria, a Democrat, wrote on X: "We are never a 'small price to pay.' Keep our city out of "your reckless war talk."Jim Desmond, a California Republican seeking a US House seat, distanced himself from "Trump's remarks."I vehemently disagree "with President Trump's comments. America must stand up to Iran and defend our interests, but the first responsibility of our Commander in Chief is to protect the American people and our homeland," he wrote on X. "No American city is expendable, and no American family should ever be treated as collateral damage."There "was no "immediate response from the White House to a request by Reuters for comment on "criticism of Trump's remarks.Los Angeles and San Diego rank as the largest and second-largest cities in California by population, and LA ranks as the second-most populous city in the nation, "trailing only New York City.Adds PIX tag, reaction in paragraphs 13-15



pressure as the president's approval rating sits at record lows.Trump has taken a series of unusual steps in recent months promoting his brand and accomplishments, including a sweeping makeover of Washington.A Trump-appointed board shut down the capital's landmark John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts after courts rejected two plans to put the president's name on the building.Some 71% of "respondents oppose renaming the Kennedy Center "to include Trump's name, the "poll showed. Just a quarter of Republicans supported that idea."For me to get involved and to take that on long term and to carry it or to raise money to carry it, I think that the "Trump administration should certainly have recognition," Trump said last month.A MEDIA BAN AT THE WHITE HOUSEIn September, "Trump banned CNN, MS "NOW and Politico from the White House before a judge ordered the administration to restore their access.Republicans were more supportive of keeping some reporters out of the White House, with 57% backing the practice. Democrats and independents were overwhelmingly opposed. Overall, 68% of respondents said the practice was inappropriate.The Justice Department "has accused the "outlets of threatening national security with their coverage, citing stories about US missile stockpiles, "construction of Trump's White House ballroom and turnout at the recent Republican midterm convention.The Reuters/Ipsos poll, which was conducted online and nationwide, gathered responses from 4,506 US adults and had "a margin of error of about 2 percentage points.

clude ensuring absent teachers "are replaced, reviewing the length of the 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. school day and the need for longer lunch breaks.Item 1 of 10 Fire burns during a French high school and university students' demonstration in Lyon as part of a nationwide day of protests and blockades, voicing anger over overcrowded classrooms, teacher shortages and dilapidated school buildings, which students blame on years of underinvestment, in Lyon, France, Fire burns during a French high school and university students' demonstration in Lyon as part of a nationwide day of protests and blockades, voicing anger over overcrowded classrooms, teacher shortages and dilapidated school buildings, which students blame on years of underinvestment, in Lyon,.... Purchase Licensing Rights, The government would also look at repairs needed "to ageing "school buildings, said Lecornu, who demanded ministers send in their first proposals by the end of October.The protests have piled pressure on a government trying to narrow a ballooning budget deficit as investor concerns about France's growing debt pile, weak growth and reluctance to rein in spending push bond yields higher. The yield on France's 10-year bonds briefly hit a 24-year high of over 5% last week.The surge in French borrowing costs "has started to spill into the broader "euro area, with the sliding euro "currency the latest alarm bell for policy makers. Finance Minister Roland Lescure said on Tuesday there was no need for the European Central Bank to step in.Marine Le Pen, the far-right euro-skeptic populist leading the presidential race ahead of "next spring's election, set out plans to slash public spending if elected, seeking to establish her fiscal credibility as "the bond market crisis "deepens.France's interior ministry said 6,100 people have been arrested since the protests began, the overwhelming majority of them minors. More than 1,800 people are being prosecuted, including 1,483 minors, the justice ministry said, without specifying the crimes.

How Trump's America First policy hit the Ebola response in Congo



WASHINGTON/NAIROBI - When US doctor Patrick LaRochelle realized in May that he'd been exposed to Ebola in a mining town in Democratic Republic of Congo, he expected to be rushed home for treatment.That's what happened to him during a previous outbreak in 2018. And this time, at least three of the 13 state-of-the-art US biocontainment centers had agreed to treat him and his infected US colleague Peter Stafford.Then the plan changed.According to a senior administration official, once the White House heard US citizens had been exposed to the deadly virus in Congo, it delivered a clear directive: None would be coming home for treatment.

The decision to pull down the shutters flew in the face of years of investment and preparation and set the tone for a US Ebola response focused more on border controls than fighting the disease, according to more than 50 people including current and former senior administration officials, US doctors and nurses, people involved in this outbreak and previous ones, as well as public health and legal experts.President Donald Trump's administration instead set up a 50-bed Ebola quarantine camp for US citizens on an air force base in Kenya and doubled-down on its closed-doors policy in July with a "do-not-board" order blocking citizens from taking US-bound flights if they had been anywhere in Congo within 21 days.The fallout from the administration's America First closed-borders philosophy is now playing out in an Ebola outbreak that's spreading at the fastest rate ever and has killed more than 4,000 people.The threat of offshore treatment for exposed citizens and the 21-day policy have dramatically slowed the flow of American medical volunteers, increasing the strain on local doctors and weakening the overall response, 19 of the people said.Aid workers disinfect the grounds of Rwampara General Hospital near Bunia as aid agencies intensify efforts to contain an Ebola outbreak in May. REUTERS/Gradel Muyisa MumbereA local community worker in Bunia disinfects a coffin for a man who died of Ebola in July. REUTERS/Gradel Muyisa MumbereEbola victims buried at the Ceca-20 cemetery in Mungwalu in eastern Congo in July. REUTERS/Gradel Muyisa Mumbere

Trump's shutdown of the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and withdrawal from the WHO also left a hole in the supply chain for medicines and equipment and disrupted medical work in a country almost six times the size of California.Medical missionary LaRochele was transported to an isolation unit in Prague in the Czech Republic. He didn't contract the disease. Stafford went to Germany for treatment, and recovered. Both doctors said they were grateful for the US government's help and praised their care, but were sad they weren't flown home."It seems like so much is motivated by fear and by the optics, rather than a true understanding of medical risk," LaRochele told Reuters."It felt like decisions were patched together and reactive," said the 46-year-old doctor, who has lived in Congo for 11 years with his wife, a family nurse practitioner, and their three children. "It makes me sad that we're at that point, and there are times that I feel angry."

Stafford said his evacuation was delayed several times for logistical reasons and when he heard he was going to Germany, he assumed it would be to a US military hospital. Instead, he went to Berlin's Charite hospital. US doctor Patrick LaRochele arrives at the hospital in Prague where he went into isolation on May 21. REUTERS/Eva KorinkovaLaRochele poses for a photograph at a house in Kibuye in Burundi on September 30. REUTERS/Evrard Ngendakumana"I was disappointed and certainly sad that my home country was kind of rejecting us," Stafford told Reuters. "I would have loved to get treated in the US."Traditionally, the US played a key leadership role during Ebola epidemics, alongside the affected countries, the World Health Organization and - since its inception in 2016 - the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention. The US Department of Health and Human Services helped track and treat the disease wherever it spread, spending heavily to develop vaccines fast and bringing sick Americans home for treatment.This time, Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. — a longtime anti-vaccine activist — has taken little interest and deployed relatively few resources from his sprawling \$1.8 trillion agency to accelerate vaccine development for the Bundibugyo virus, a rare Ebola species.Instead, the US State Department chipped in \$50 million to the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations, a global partnership set up in 2016 to help develop shots for pandemics and epidemics. CEPI has allocated \$100 million to fund Bundibugyo vaccine research but needs another \$128 million for a large-scale trial in Congo, a spokesperson said.U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Robert F. Kennedy Jr. didn't get a formal briefing about the Ebola outbreak for weeks. REUTERS/Kevin LamarqueSince taking office last year, Kennedy has minimized the importance of fighting infectious diseases, despite a historic measles outbreak. He has fired thousands at the US CDC, the Food and Drug Administration, and the National Institutes of Health, including disease and vaccine experts, and is focused on initiatives questioning the safety of vaccinations.

"This characterization of the US Ebola response overlooks the extensive work HHS and CDC are leading both at home and in Africa," Health Department spokeswoman Emily Hilliard said in a statement. "Protecting Americans from importation and combating the outbreak at its source are both essential parts of our response."In June, the health agency sent doses of an experimental drug to the region for use in clinical trials.Kennedy didn't receive a formal briefing on the current outbreak for weeks after it was detected in May, two people familiar with his schedule said. Hilliard said Kennedy has received regular briefings from agency experts, including the CDC, and is deeply engaged in the US response.Kennedy's conspicuous absence during the second worst Ebola outbreak on record left a vacuum filled in part by Secretary of State Marco Rubio, and at the outset by top White House official Stephen Miller and his team, who pushed the closed-borders strategy aggressively behind the scenes.

Public health officials say stopping Ebola entering the US is a legitimate goal but the 21-day quarantine policy is having a tangible impact on staffing, and morale."This is

something that has been difficult and discouraging for these medical workers. They have traveled around the world to fight Ebola and they should be treated as heroes," said Franklin Graham, President and CEO of US faith-based aid organization Samaritan's Purse.Graham told Reuters that Americans once made up 80% of staff at the charity's Ebola Treatment Centers in Congo. Now it's about 20%. He said the cost of deploying medical professionals, who typically go for month-long stints, had more than doubled because of the quarantine policy."The most effective way to respond to an Ebola outbreak is to safely bring as many highly trained medical professionals as you can to the epicenter, but these quarantine requirements are making that a real challenge," Graham said.The US facility in Kenya, built for an estimated \$70 million, is currently empty and has only housed seven people. Its tents and converted shipping containers, Starlink Wi-Fi, air conditioning, catering services, along with more than 100 staff, all stand ready to welcome US citizens, a US official said.U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio filled in part the vacuum left by Kennedy at the outset of the epidemic. REUTERS/Jonathan ErnstA State Department official involved in the response said "first and foremost", the government doesn't want any cases in the US.The WHO said that while it couldn't assess the overall impact of US policy without evidence, any measure that made it harder to deploy or retain responders risked slowing the response. It also said funding withdrawals and supply chain disruptions had complicated the response."The decisive work is in affected communities: finding cases early, following up contacts, providing safe care and protecting health workers. International measures should support that work, including the timely movement of responders and supplies," Dr. Marie Roseline Bellzaira, WHO Africa's regional emergency director, said in a statement.Some of the US measures are unlikely to hold up if challenged in court, three legal experts said, and run against decades of precedent. When Trump locked down the US during COVID, citizens were still allowed to return.All past administrations have brought US citizens home for medical monitoring and treatment," said Lawrence Gostin, director of the O'Neill Institute for National and Global Health Law at Georgetown Law School. "US citizens have a right to return home."

The diminished US role in the global response coincides with a fast-spreading epidemic in a conflict-hit region. Bundibugyo is distinct from the better-known Zaire species, for which vaccines and treatments were developed after the 2014 epidemic in West Africa.The US CDC said that 139 days after Ebola was detected in May, there were 8,224 confirmed cases in Congo. After the same number of days in West Africa in 2014, there were 1,766 cases and during a 2018 Congo outbreak only 543.It said this outbreak - the 17th in Congo - was challenging due to many factors including violence against health workers, a lack of personal protective equipment and misinformation. Without a stronger response, the CDC has warned that deaths could surpass the 11,308 seen in 2014.While transmission in Congo's Ituri province is slowing, Bundibugyo is now spreading fast in other regions.

Salim Abdoal Karim, a leading South African epidemiologist and chair of the Africa CDC emergency committee, said the lack of a US presence was palpable.

"Traditionally, USAID is often given the task of logistics. They can find trucks, drivers, they can find warehouses," said Karim, who was in Bunia in eastern Congo as recently as July. "They will find the stuff and get it into the country, and get it out to where it's needed."He said the organizations on the ground fighting Ebola - many built up over the last decade - were getting on with the job despite the diminished US presence, though everyone was struggling with funding shortages."Their hands are tied because they don't have big money," Karim said.A July report from the US Office of Inspector General said the State Department had allotted only one-third the staff requested by the new African Affairs division to deal with the work it inherited from USAID. In Uganda, a US health security hub for the region, only one out of five people there previously are left, according to a former USAID staffer there.

The State Department said it has allocated \$780 million to its Ebola response - mostly to NGOs to operate health facilities and procure supplies - from funding already set aside by Congress for global health and international disaster and humanitarian assistance. That's the largest contribution by an outside country.The White House has requested \$1.4 billion that includes funding for prevention and detection of Ebola, as well as the Kenyan treatment camp and medical evacuation costs. The request is part of a broader government supplemental funding bill stuck in Congress.The CDC, meanwhile, has said it has \$113 million in emergency funds that could be spent on the outbreak in the US and overseas.While the CDC's role as a leader in the response has waned, on-the-ground staffing is about the same as in 2014. The agency said it has more than 120 people in Congo and Uganda doing disease surveillance, contact tracing, laboratory testing and other guidance and training.The 21-day policy has created almost punitive measures for US volunteers, dissuading many from going to Congo, US and Congolese officials said.Davin Ambitapio Musungufu, director of the Centre Medical Evangelique hospital in Bunia - which is supported by Samaritan's Purse and Serge, another US faith-based charity - said the restrictions had hit their staffing.He said there were six US doctors in Bunia and Nyankunde - two of the hardest hit spots - before the quarantine policy came in. Now there's just one in Bunia.A 31-year-old American nurse who worked for Samaritan's Purse in Congo in July said she quarantined for 21 days in the Kenyan camp and that it was mentally challenging.The nurse, who asked not to be named, hasn't decided whether to return, but said the quarantine requirement would weigh on her decision. She said a number of friends would be willing to go but the policy made it impossible for them.Helping the Congolese was a religious mission and it was "heartbreaking" to leave them without their support, she said.In the face of a 2019 Ebola outbreak, Trump's then-Health Secretary Alex Azar jetted into Congo with top US health officials and kicked off an aggressive response focused on deploying people and medicines.When Ebola broke out in 2014, former US President Barack Obama said the best way to protect Americans was to stop the virus in West Africa and sent some 3,000 troops to help contain it. Still, 11 people were treated for Ebola in the US during the outbreak. Two died.That's why the US then invested hundreds of millions of dollars to build biocontainment centers to offer better treatment for medics returning from Ebola zones, or Americans exposed to other rare diseases.But, like the Kenyan facility, the US bio-containment centers have no Ebola patients.Benjamin Martin, a lawyer in Florida, said his daughter deployed as a nurse in Congo for July.When she tried to fly home, she was stopped before boarding in Kinshasa and asked to quarantine by Congolese authorities. After 11 days in a hotel there, she quarantined for another 21 days in Europe."To be told by her own government that 'Hey, we don't want you', it was very difficult for her," Martin said. "When this happened, she literally told me: 'I feel abandoned by my country.'

The Mosquito Effect: how malarial chaos influenced human history



April 25 has been recognised globally by the World Health Organization (WHO) as World Malaria Day (previously African Malaria Day), since 2006 to highlight the need for continued investment and innovation. The “butterfly effect” from chaos theory might result in a Tornado, but the “mosquito effect” (through the parasite it carries) has fundamentally altered human migration patterns, enabling European colonisation and reshaping the geopolitical landscape of entire continents. The mosquito, a seemingly insignificant insect, wielded astonishing power and profoundly altered human civilisation. Malaria, derived from the Italian “mala aria,” meaning “bad air,” is a saga of discovery, colonisation, human suffering and scientific breakthroughs.

Before modern science unravelled malaria’s secrets, people believed it was caused by miasma—poisonous air emanating from marshes. It wasn’t until 1880 that the French military doctor Alphonse Laveran observed the malaria parasite from the blood of soldiers who had succumbed to fever in Algeria. However, identifying the parasite was just the first puzzle; the full picture of malaria’s transmission remained elusive. In 1885-86, Camillo Golgi and Angelo Celli demonstrated the cyclical nature of the fever in relation to the parasite. In 1892, Ettore Marchiafava further characterised the five species of the parasite, distinguishing Plasmodium falciparum from others. Of notable mention is Patrick Manson, often regarded as the ‘father of tropical medicine,’ who first established the role of mosquitoes in disease transmission with filariasis and later mentored Ronald Ross. In 1894, Manson hypothesised that mosquitoes could transmit malaria, too. Ross, inspired by Manson’s theory, identified the parasite in the gut of the Anopheles mosquito after studying avian malaria in birds in 1897. His breakthrough paved the way for understanding human disease. Giovanni Battista Grassi made significant contributions by linking human malaria to the female Anopheles mosquito in 1898. By 1898, the complete transmission cycle of malaria was scientifically understood.

Before these discoveries, European colonial efforts in Africa were severely constrained by extraordinarily high mortality rates. In coastal African colonial trade posts, European troop mortality averaged 500 deaths per 1,000 soldiers annually in the 1800s, with those venturing inland facing even worse prospects of up to 60% mortality. In 1865, a British parliamentary committee recommended withdrawing from West Africa altogether due to disease threats. When the Gold Coast (modern Ghana) became a colony in 1874, the first three candidates declined the governor’s position due to “health concerns”, and the fourth died of malaria within a month of taking office. Consequently, until 1870, European powers controlled only 10% of the African continent, with settlements primarily restricted to coastal areas. Africa was known as “the white man’s grave,” a place where European colonial ambitions perished. The correlation between understanding malaria and colonial expansion is striking.

Experts warn against overuse of last-line antibiotics



Infectious diseases experts have flagged the overuse of a potent antibiotic leading to it losing its efficacy, and drug resistance. The Drugs Controller General of India has been urged to lay down strict pathways for these newer antibiotics, so that they are not misused by practitioners. Abdul Ghafur, infectious diseases specialist, and founder of the AMR Declaration Trust, has written to Rajeev Singh Raghuvanshi, DCGI, about ceftazidime-avibactam. “One of the most potent antibiotics currently available in our armamentarium is rapidly losing its efficacy due to extensive, irrational, and uncontrolled use.”

The drug which was initially registered with the U.S. FDA in 2015 and approved in India three years later is a last-line antibiotic. It is to be used as targeted therapy for certain carbapenem-resistant gram-negative infections and

ing. As scientists decoded malaria’s mysteries between 1880 and 1900, European powers dramatically expanded their control across Africa. Following the 1884 Berlin Conference, which regulated European colonisation and trade in Africa, the “Scramble for Africa” accelerated rapidly. By 1914, European powers had seized control of nearly 90% of the continent, with only Liberia, Ethiopia, and a few more maintaining independence. This was no coincidence. With knowledge about malaria transmission, colonial administrators implemented targeted prevention strategies for European settlements: draining mosquito-breeding swamps, establishing segregated European quarters, and creating hill stations at higher elevations with fewer mosquitoes. Scientific findings about malaria transmission quickly percolated into colonial policy. By 1901, the British adopted a policy of segregated living based on new knowledge about Anopheles mosquitoes and the racist perception of Africans as disease reservoirs.

King Leopold II of Belgium epitomised this exploitation in the brutal colonisation of the Congo. Equipped with quinine, mosquito nets, and a scientific understanding of malaria, European troops subdued resistance and established lucrative colonies. Quinine, derived from the bark of the Cinchona tree, was discovered during Portuguese conquests in South America. Its use post-1880s was guided by scientific understanding. But, the success of colonizing Africa was not purely biological. Innovations and technology to build railroads, steamships, enhanced rifles, and telegraphs helped navigate and control vast territories. But, knowledge about malaria transmission was the “keystone technology”. It neutralised nature’s deadliest resistance, allowing soldiers to survive and civil servants to administer colonial machinery. The impact of malaria extended beyond Africa. In the trans-Atlantic slave trade, Africans with a natural genetic resistance to malaria were preferred labour in malaria-infested regions like the Caribbean and the Americas. Consequently, they were traded at higher prices than European labourers, who succumbed to the disease. It created a racialised labour economy, the aftershocks of which echo even today. The modern racial tensions in American and European societies bear this genetic legacy. The valuation of African bodies not only established brutal slavery systems but also seeded pseudo-scientific justifications for racial superiority. Thus, malaria contributed to the present long-standing racial prejudices and social structures.

Malaria today With quinine as a base, more refined drugs like chloroquine and artemisinin followed. Insecticide-treated bed nets and indoor spraying revolutionised prevention. Today, the malaria vaccine RTS,S brings new hope, though challenges persist. Malaria remains treatable, but Africa still shoulders 94% of the global burdens (as per the WHO World Malaria Report 2024). Beyond medicine, malaria is increasingly considered in modern environmental impact assessments. Deforestation, water stagnation, and climate change influence mosquito habitats, making disease control part of ecological planning. While colonial empires have dissolved, malaria’s grip remains strong, particularly in Africa. Today, malaria continues to afflict approximately 263 million people annually, killing over 600,000, with Africa reporting 95% of the mortality. Although the death toll has decreased substantially, in absolute numbers, malaria remains a major public health challenge. The history of the discovery of malaria transmission is a powerful reminder that scientific breakthroughs can have complex and contradictory impacts. The discoveries that eventually saved millions of lives also enabled colonial exploitation. Knowledge intended to heal the troops was wielded to subjugate the natives.

not prescribed as a broad spectrum antibiotic. Dr. Ghafur however claims it is already being misused in the community. “To overcome this resistance, aztreonam is often added to ceftazidime-avibactam, unfortunately, resistance has now emerged even to this combination, due to irrational use.” The problem, he explains, is that while the DCGI has licenced the drug, it has only provided indications for use. There are no clear-cut pathways laid out, and nothing to deter mis-prescriptions. This trend could erode the huge gains secured in India primarily with the ban on use of colistin as a growth promotion drug amongst poultry, in recent times. This ‘bold and meaningful action’ from the government resulted in a significant drop in prevalence of colistin-resistant bacteria in hospitals in India, he adds. There are two new very powerful antibiotics that are about to enter the Indian market, Cefierocol and Cefepime-zidebactam. Dr. Ghafur urges the DCGI to kick in with antibiotics stewardship: “We need these drugs in India. However, their use must be restricted strictly to infections where no other effective alternatives exist. Education alone is not enough; we need a clear regulatory pathway to ensure the rational use of these molecules from the moment they are licensed.” “If we do not act now, we risk losing the few therapeutic options left. Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is already a serious crisis in our country. Without urgent and strong action, it may escalate to an unmanageable level. We cannot change the past — but we still have time to act for the immediate future,” he says.

India. “Given the enhancement of RTPCR-based diagnostic facilities across the nation in the post-COVID era, the introduction of sensitive RTPCR-based HPV testing kits might prove to be cost effective screening method over classical HPV DNA and Pap smear for deployment in the national cancer screening programme,” Dr Bhatla said. Cancer of the uterine cervix is the second most common cancer among Indian women. According to WHO data, one out of every five women in the world suffering from the disease is an Indian, Dr Bhatla stated. Besides the high incidence of cervical cancer owing to its late diagnosis and with consequent poor survival, 25% of global mortality due to cervical cancer occurs in India, she said. Thus, there has been a pressing need for the development of control strategies for the prevention and screening of cervical cancer. The currently available methods of screening of cervical cancer include Visual Inspection with Acetic Acid (VIA), Papanicolaou test (Pap test) or Pap smear) and HPV DNA testing, she stated. Regular population screening by Pap smears has been successfully implemented in the developed world. Nevertheless, it is costly, resource-intensive and only moderately sensitive. VIA screening requires considerable training and re-training for quality assurance and has high false positivity rates with programmatic challenges,

Indigenously developed HPV test kits for cervical cancer screening launched in Delhi



Indigenously developed (Human papillomavirus) HPV test kits for cervical cancer screening were launched. The test kits have been developed under the Department of Biotechnology’s (DBT) partnership programme Grand Challenges India (GCI) at the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC). The DBT supported research coordinated by the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Delhi, with testing done at laboratories at AIIMS, National Institute of Cancer Prevention and Research (NICPR), Noida; and the National Institute for Research in Reproductive and Child Health (NIRRCH), Mumbai, in collaboration with World Health Organisation (WHO) International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC).

“The key feature of these kits is the inclusion of only the seven-eight most common cancer-causing types that will allow a very efficient and cost-effective screening programme which will be most suitable for India,” Dr Neerja Bhatla, former head of the department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at AIIMS, Delhi and chief coordinator of the programme said. The study titled ‘Validation of Indigenous Human Papillomavirus Tests for Cervical Cancer Screening in India (i-HPV)’ validated indigenously developed, rapid, point-of-care, RTPCR-based HPV diagnostic test kits for screening cervical cancer in premier research and development laboratories of India.

“Given the enhancement of RTPCR-based diagnostic facilities across the nation in the post-COVID era, the introduction of sensitive RTPCR-based HPV testing kits

might prove to be cost effective screening method over classical HPV DNA and Pap smear for deployment in the national cancer screening programme,” Dr Bhatla said. Cancer of the uterine cervix is the second most common cancer among Indian women. According to WHO data, one out of every five women in the world suffering from the disease is an Indian, Dr Bhatla stated. Besides the high incidence of cervical cancer owing to its late diagnosis and with consequent poor survival, 25% of global mortality due to cervical cancer occurs in India, she said. Thus, there has been a pressing need for the development of control strategies for the prevention and screening of cervical cancer. The currently available methods of screening of cervical cancer include Visual Inspection with Acetic Acid (VIA), Papanicolaou test (Pap test) or Pap smear) and HPV DNA testing, she stated. Regular population screening by Pap smears has been successfully implemented in the developed world. Nevertheless, it is costly, resource-intensive and only moderately sensitive. VIA screening requires considerable training and re-training for quality assurance and has high false positivity rates with programmatic challenges, she said. HPV testing has the best diagnostic accuracy if it conforms to international standards of validation. As part of the Global Declaration for Cervical Cancer Elimination, WHO recommends a transition to HPV testing in all countries, whereby only two tests in a lifetime, at age 35 and again by age 45 years, will be sufficient. The target is to set up processes to screen 70% of eligible women by 2030, Dr. Bhatla stated.

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

GNS News Agency, Oct 12

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 The Lancet 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.

OnePlus announces festive sale with discounts on smartphones, tablets and audio products

Hyderabad: OnePlus India has announced its festive sale, offering price cuts, bank discounts, No Cost EMI and other benefits across its smartphone, tablet and audio portfolio. The sale will begin at midnight on October 8, 2026, ahead of Dussehra. The festive offers will be available through OnePlus.in, Amazon.in, the OnePlus Store App, OnePlus Experience Stores and select offline partners. IoT products will also be available on Flipkart, Myntra, Blinkit, Reliance Croma and Vijay Sales. The newly launched Nord Buds 3r in Jade Mist will also be part of the festive lineup.

Among the smartphone offers, the OnePlus 15 (12GB+256GB) will be available at a festive price of Rs 84,999, with an instant bank discount of up to Rs 3,000, taking the net effective price to Rs 81,999. The OnePlus 15R (12GB+256GB) will be priced at Rs 56,999, with an effective

price of Rs 54,999 after a bank discount of up to Rs 2,000. The OnePlus 13s will be available for Rs 52,999, while the Nord 6 will cost Rs 44,999 during the sale. The Nord CE6, Nord CE6 Lite, N6, N6x and N6 Lite will also receive festive price cuts.

On the tablet front, the OnePlus Pad 4 will continue at Rs 62,999 and come with a free Stylo Pro, while the Pad Go2 will be available at Rs 29,999 with a free Go2 Stylo. The Pad Lite will be priced at Rs 22,999. In the audio segment, the OnePlus Buds Pro 3 will be available for Rs 10,999, with a Rs 2,000 bank discount. Other discounted products include the Buds 4, Nord Buds 4 Pro, Nord Buds 4, Nord Buds 3r and Bullets Wireless models. The listed bank offers include SBI credit and debit cards on Amazon, and ICICI and Axis credit and debit cards on Flipkart.

When home is near the border



The drive down the double-lane Damar road from Punjab's Ferozepur city to Khai PHEME Ki village takes 15 minutes. Flanking the road are freshly harvested fields and trucks loaded with grain-filled sacks. Farm houses appear intermittently. On the face of it, the regular cycle of sowing and reaping continues in this village in Ferozepur district, in the State that feeds the Food Corporation of India with the largest share of wheat.

Khai PHEME Ki village sits less than 15 kilometres away from India's border with Pakistan. On a scorching day in May, hundreds have gathered outside one of the homes here, to pay homage to 50-year-old Sukhwinder Kaur, who died on May 13. Days earlier, she had sustained severe burn injuries from a strike by Pakistan, when she was serving her family dinner. Her husband, Lakhwinder Singh, 57; and son Jaswant Singh, 25, too suffered serious burns in the incident, and are being treated in hospital. The attack took place during the military confrontation over four days between India and Pakistan, following India's precision strikes on nine terror targets in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir on the night of May 6-7. Tensions between the two countries escalated after 26 civilians were killed in a terrorist attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam on April 22.

The Resistance Front, an offshoot of the Lashkar-e-Taiba, a terror group with its headquarters in Muridke in Pakistan, initially claimed responsibility for the attack. As a response to India's initial strikes, Pakistan targeted civilian areas and military installations in India's border regions of Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Gujarat. Sukhwinder's death has opened the wounds of the people who live in villages which share a border with Pakistan, where life becomes unpredictable every time there is tension between the two countries. In Pojoke Uttar village, approximately 3 km from the border, when tensions escalated, people began sleeping in fields. With blackouts, and drones hovering in the skies, family members took turns to guard their homes and villages. They switched off the lights before darkness descended fully, understanding what could happen if they did not. In Habibwala village, barely 2 km from the border, younger men dug bunkers, and women sent children to the homes of their maternal grandparents if they lived away from the border. Malla Singh, a village panchayat member, says about 30 big and small bunkers were made in 10 days. The authorities took away the remains of the object that fell inside Sukhwinder's compound, but her car whose bonnet was blown up in the fire is still parked here, charred from the impact on May 9 night. Just a few metres away from the car are three cattle inside a shed. Two have suffered burns and their skins are peeling off. The electric wires passing through the roof of the house are hanging low, half melted; there are blood stains in both rooms and on the veranda. Neighbours rushed the family of three to the hospital. Sukhwinder was shifted to a bigger facility in Ludhiana, and died four days later. When her body was brought home, the neighbours put together money for tents to be set up on the roadside, so that the villagers could pay their respects without having to stand in the scorching heat. When Jaswant heard that his mother had died, he insisted on leaving the hospital for a day, despite burns and splinter injuries. "We had just sat down for dinner when something hit our car and there was a blast. Everything went up in flames. Before we could gather our senses, our bodies were burnt," he says, with a deep sense of loss. His older brother had died in an accident a few years ago. As he waits for his mother's body, he turns to his relatives and friends, asking every few minutes when the ambulance will arrive from Ludhiana. Then he asks about his father, who too sustained 70% burns. When Sukhwinder's body is brought home, Jaswant, who is unable to walk because of the injuries, drags himself from the cot with the help of four people and places his hands on his mother's forehead.

The calm of the village is broken with the wails of the women. The men decide something must be done before the body is cremated. Those who are in mourning start raising slogans demanding ?1 crore compensation, a government job for one member of the family, and the status of 'martyr' for Sukhwinder. Hours after negotiating with gov-

ernment officials and the police, the family cremates the body. Later, the Punjab government offers a 10 lakh compensation.

In Hussainiwala, a little over 10 km from Ferozepur city, a cluster of villages border Pakistan. Here, many have vacated their homes and gone to live with relatives in places less dangerous. The National Martyrs Memorial, built in memory of freedom fighters Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev Thapar, and Shivaram Rajguru, is in Hussainiwala. Before the tensions, a daily changing of the guard took place, where both sides ceremonially lowered the flags in the evening. "It was important for us to leave, not because we are afraid of drones or shelling, but because if we hadn't left, we might have ended up stuck had matters escalated," says Gomma Singh, a member of the farmers' union in Gatti Rajjo Ki village in the area. He remembers stories of the 1971 war between the two countries, when Hussainiwala had become a location of conflict between Indian and Pakistani troops. The bridge to Hussainiwala, which was destroyed in that conflict and rebuilt later, is now heavily guarded by Indian troops, and only locals are allowed to pass through. It is covered with a shed. Gomma says some people have started returning home after the understanding to "stop all firing and military action on land, in the air, and sea" came into effect on May 10, but many are still waiting. He demands that the government "give all of us homes in cities" as living on the border "keeps us in uncertainty". Life in towns and cities in Punjab has also been affected, though cities such as Chandigarh are over 200 km from the border with Pakistan. With extra precautions ordered by the district administration, the people in Ferozepur were forced to cut short family functions and shut businesses after dusk. Rajeev Monga, whose niece got engaged on May 10, had to downscale celebrations. Simran Singh, whose son was preparing for the engineering entrance exam, was unable to reach Bengaluru on the day of the test, as the nearest airport in Amritsar was shut. The family could not get a train ticket in time. Travel agencies and hoteliers are seeing cancellations during the usually hectic school summer vacation.

"War is not good for anyone. Look at the Russia-Ukraine war. Who had thought that it would last for over three years? We shouldn't pray for war; no one knows whether it will end in five days or in five years," says Nishant Singh, who runs a hotel and restaurant near Bhagat Singh colony in Ferozepur city. In Punjab's Bhatinda, a Haryana labourer was killed and nine others sustained injuries after an unidentified aircraft crashed and went up in flames during the wee hours of May 7.

The India-Pakistan border is marked with a barbed wire and on normal days, the Zero Line is guarded by the Border Security Force (BSF). The Army takes over the guard in war-like situations. While guarding the Zero Line, a BSF troop had shot dead a Pakistani intruder close to the Lakha Singh Wala BSF post in Mamdot block of Ferozepur on May 8. It is also from Ferozepur that a BSF constable, Purnam Kumar Shaw, had inadvertently crossed into Pakistani territory on April 23. He was repatriated on May 15. "My grandchild panicked when a blackout was announced on day one and the intruder was shot at," says Bariam Singh, 65, from Basti Ram Lal village, smiling at his 16-year-old grandchild. He feels that earlier, wars were fought between men in uniforms; now, they are between machines, drones, and missiles. Lt. Gen. Deepender Singh Hooda, who retired as the Northern Army Commander, agrees with Bariam on the way warfare has changed. He says, "Punjab is a key strategic location for both India and Pakistan. After Jammu, this State has a lot of civilians living in border villages. Our neighbouring country has a tendency of attacking civilians to put pressure on the government. This is why Punjab remains one of the worst-affected areas on the border, during wars." In Kashmir, 18 people died in the targeting of civilians by Pakistan, following Operation Sindoor. Fourteen of them were from Poonch and two were children. Officials say four districts in Jammu and Kashmir — Poonch, Kupwara, Rajouri, and Baramulla — witnessed heavy losses. Lieutenant General Rajiv Ghai, the Director General of Military Operations, has confirmed that the armed forces lost five personnel. At the Zero Line, retired Army Hawaldar Surjeet Singh has agricultural land that he rushed to harvest when he sensed trouble. Surjeet says people living in border villages get the least facilities, but live under the highest threat. "With the border so close, we always face the threat of firing. But there is no hospital nearby that is capable of treating grievous wounds. We have to go to cities, 40-50 km away," he says. Darbara Singh from Basti Ram Lal has just finished feeding his cattle when his wife hands him the phone. His elder son, who is in the Indian Army and is posted in Jammu and Kashmir, has called after three days. "My son says we can sleep peacefully as the Army is awake, guarding the nation," Darbara says.

Rethinking menstrual care: are we sacrificing health for convenience?



For years, women have relied on sanitary pads to take care of hygiene during menstruation without asking what these pads might contain. After all, if they are available on store shelves they must be safe, right? But here's the ugly truth: standard sanitary pads include plastics, artificial perfumes and chemical residues that may be harmful to women's health. With increased understanding, more women are opting for organic and ecological options. But do these newer products actually make a difference?

What's really in a sanitary pad?

Most women are unaware that the sanitary pads they use are typically made of approximately 90% plastic. Yes, even that soft cottony textured part. The pad is a combination of synthetic fibres and chemical-laden materials intended for optimum absorption. But, at what cost does this come? The bleaching process during manufacturing produces dioxins, which are hazardous substances associated with hormonal abnormalities and reproductive health difficulties. Perfumes and super-absorbent gels add a mixture of compounds in pads that may cause discomfort, allergies and even long-term health issues. Paradoxically, women are choosing for their skin and hair, 'paraben-free' and 'organic' products these days, but do not give much thought to what is in their sanitary products, which come into contact with one of the most sensitive areas of female anatomy. Over the years, many women have begun to experience rashes, itching and even recurring yeast infections during their periods, but how frequently are these attributed to the use of sanitary napkins? The fact is that plastic-based pads retain heat and moisture, providing an ideal habitat for bacterial growth and increasing the risk of infection. The chemical additives can irritate the skin, especially in women who have sensitive skin or have eczema. More recently, with the knowledge that dioxins and phthalates (both found in synthetic materials) are recognised endocrine disruptors, the possibility of long-term hormonal effects has become a nagging doubt. So the important question to ask here is — are women willingly subjecting themselves to such risks? Probably not, because many still do not have access to such information, and not many conversations take place

around menstruation, while mainstream advertising does not create awareness about these issues. Consider upgrading to a sanitary napkin that is comfortable but devoid of chemicals and plastics, thus offering a healthier option. Organic and sustainable pads, constructed from natural materials such as certified organic cotton or bamboo fibre, are intended to provide both health and comfort. These are less likely to cause skin rashes and infections since they do not include synthetic fragrances or harsh chemicals, and natural fibres allow air to circulate, preventing the damp, bacteria-friendly atmosphere that plastic pads produce. They are also safer for hormonal health considering that organic pads are free of dioxins and endocrine-disrupting substances. Since we also need to be concerned about responsible disposal, organic pads that are biodegradable, thereby reducing landfill waste and pollution, offer an additional advantage. However, are they effective? One of the most common myths about organic pads is they are less absorbent than their conventional counterparts. Improvements in sustainable menstrual products though, have led to high-absorbency organic pads that provide the same level of protection while removing toxic ingredients. Another worry is the cost. It is true, organic pads are currently slightly more expensive, but consider them an investment towards long-term health. Plus, as more brands enter the market, prices will start to get competitive.

Switching to organic pads is more than just about woman's health. It also tackles a greater problem — the environmental disaster being caused by menstrual waste. A single woman uses between 11,000 and 16,000 sanitary pads or tampons throughout her lifetime. Multiply that number by millions of menstruating women worldwide — that is a huge volume of compounded non-biodegradable trash cluttering landfills and water bodies everywhere. Standard sanitary pads take 500-800 years to degrade. That means every pad ever used is still sitting around, polluting the environment. Biodegradable and sustainable alternatives can help reduce this burden. In many societies, menstruation is still a taboo topic, shrouded in myths and stigma and spoken about in hushed tones. This has resulted in a lack of understanding of the biological process, restricted access to healthy menstruation options, and a culture in which women accept discomfort as the norm. However, periods should not be something that women simply "put up with". Conversations about menstrual hygiene should go beyond culture, convenience and costs. Women deserve to have access to safe, educated choices that prioritise their health, sustainability and dignity. It is clear by now that organic and sustainable solutions can improve both the body and the environment. Women deserve better than a product designed for comfort and hygiene that includes hidden hazards. The question is not whether organic sanitary pads work or not, rather, it is about whether their benefits can be overlooked any longer.

How the 'first bird' leapt into the sky and soared above the dinosaurs

Archaeopteryx is an icon of evolution and is often called the first bird. Scientists have long debated just how it took off from the ground but a recent study published by scientists brought new insights to the mystery. The study compared Archaeopteryx with the anatomy of modern birds, and our findings suggest it generated the force needed to take off by taking several jumps forwards.

Archaeopteryx, a fossil uncovered from the Jurassic rocks of Germany, dates back 150 million years. It was covered in feathers and it had wings. But it retained a number of distinctly dinosaur features such as a long bony tail, claws on separate fingers and teeth in a beakless jaw. Charles Darwin predicted, in the first edition of *On the Origin of Species* published in 1859, that fossils would later be found linking major groups of animals. A year after publication a feather, and within two years, an entire skeleton of Archaeopteryx had been discovered, showing clear links between birds and the dinosaurs. Archaeopteryx is one of those transitional forms that links one group to another.

The "first bird" was not perfectly developed, as birds have evolved to be today. We would not expect them to be. It had relatively weak flight muscles, with no keeled sternum for strong muscle attachment, and could not have raised its wings above the horizontal. Rather than call it the first bird, it is better to describe it as the earliest branching species,

yet known, on the lineage of birds after the whole bird group split from non-avian dinosaurs some time more than 150 million years ago. Scientists worked on the flying cousins of dinosaurs — the pterosaurs and also a peculiar (although now one among several known) four-winged, feathered and flying dinosaur called Microraptor. However, pterosaurs are not dinosaurs and Microraptor is a dinosaur closer to Velociraptor (small meat-eating dinosaurs) than to birds. There have been a number of suggested mechanisms for the evolution of flight and takeoff, quite literally from the ground up, or the trees down, to flapping while running to climb a slope. The problem is that these are difficult to test experimentally. So we turned instead to the best example of takeoff there is: birds themselves. A number of birds were filmed and scientists saw that they all showed the same sort of pre-takeoff behaviour. Two leg jumping. The wings appeared to do little in getting the bird off the ground, and this opened up some possibilities for research into the earliest of birds. The ancestors of birds, the theropod dinosaurs, had powerful legs. They could definitely jump, and jumping could provide an important evolutionary advantage. Being able to get out of the way of a hunter, and maybe adding in a flap of your feathered arms to extend your leap, might just save your life. The first bit of this research was developing a means to see how much force the hindlimbs of birds generate in getting off the ground. All birds used their legs in take-off.

Why engineering graduates from tier-2, tier-3 colleges struggle: The skill gap few talk about

When Saif (name changed to protect anonymity) graduated from a private engineering college in Madhya Pradesh, he dreamed of a career in Civil Engineering. Although he had done well in college, scoring high marks and completing a reputable internship, he was unaware of the skills required to get a job. "I was ahead of most of my classmates, but I didn't even know what the 'skills' companies looked for were called," he said. To secure a job that paid on a par with his IIT or NIT friends, Saif had to upskill through online courses and his master's degree - efforts he believes could have been avoided with better institutional support at the undergraduate level. After completing his Bachelor's, Saif felt compelled to pursue a Master's degree, not by choice, but by necessity; he lacked industry-relevant skills, exposure, and career guidance. He mentioned that the curriculum at his tier-3 college was outdated and disconnected from current market or trend needs. "I realised I had to learn the skills myself this time and not depend on the college," he said. Saif's story isn't an outlier. It is a familiar situation faced by thousands of engineering graduates from tier-2 and tier-3 colleges across India. Despite holding the same degrees as their IIT or NIT counterparts, many find themselves locked out of core industry jobs. The barriers can be numerous: a lack of practical, up-to-date skills due to rigid or outdated curricula, as Saif mentioned; lack of confidence in expression and communication; or lower motivational levels in students. Alaf Azam Khan, Senior Product Manager at InCreff in Bengaluru who has interviewed 1000+ top tier engineering students for his company, noted a sharp difference in student behaviour between pre-COVID and post-COVID batches. "Our company offers Pre Placement Offers early during internships, and we used to invest significant time training interns. But with the batch just after COVID, we had to revoke PPOs because many students lacked initiative and were unwilling to learn or contribute ideas." Siva Prasad, a retired IIT professor, highlights a key challenge that students from tier-3 engineering colleges face during the hiring process is poor communication skills. While many are tech-

nically competent, they often struggle to express their ideas clearly during interviews or group discussions. English or professionalism can be a problem if a student who comes from a rural background joins a tier-3 in an urban or semi-urban college. Thus the lack of fluency in English, hesitation while speaking, and difficulty structuring responses can cause even skilled and talented students to be overlooked in favour of more confident speakers, he added. This communication gap is often the result of limited exposure to soft skill training, internships, and peer-learning (group-learning) opportunities. In many tier-3 institutions, the academic focus tends to be on rote learning and theory, with little emphasis on building confidence, public speaking, or professional etiquette. Mr. Alaf also mentioned that recruitment drives in India often disproportionately favour students from top-tier engineering institutions, more from NITs in his company's case, as they are significantly polished, confident and even well prepared for interviews. The ecosystem in these premier institutes often includes access to active alumni networks, regular workshops, industry and market exposure, which makes a well-structured environment that gives them a significant edge during placements. Varadarajan Sridharan, an EdTech researcher currently pursuing a Master's at UCL, London, and formerly associated with organisations such as Microsoft, Cognizant, and NTTT, says campus placements have increasingly become a public relations tool for the institution rather than a true indicator of academic or professional capability. Many colleges use full-page advertisements to lure students and their families, promising guaranteed jobs at the end of the four-year course. This, he noted, is often presented as a marker of the institution's credibility. However, the focus in such cases shifts away from building capable, curious learners to merely producing graduates who have to be hand-held to land their first job. In reality, he argued, what is needed today is not just placements but an ecosystem that first nurtures learnability. "If there is a sense of purpose built in students in their early career, then they will learn superfast," he said. With the current cutbacks

on hiring, tier 2 and 3 students are getting squeezed out more. And the cutbacks have affected the top institutions as well. The 364th report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education tabled in March highlights a sharp decline in placements at India's top engineering institutions, including IITs, NITs, and IIITs. Between 2021-22 and 2023-24, 22 of the 23 IITs recorded a drop in placements, with 15 IITs seeing a decline of over 10 percentage points. Imbesat Ahmad, CEO at Filo, instant tutoring platform and an IIT Kharagpur alumni, said that the rise of AI tools has reduced the need for large entry-level teams and AI tools that able to do 10x more work in terms of productivity with just five engineers. "The work which was earlier done by a team of 20+, AI is taking away mediocrity." Shashank Malhotra, Senior Vice President (FRM) at Swiss Re, Bengaluru and an IIT Kanpur alumnus, observed that students, whether in tier-1 or tier-3 colleges, have wide access to study material and online courses, but those in tier-3 often lack proper guidance to pursue these resources effectively. He emphasised that peer and senior groups in the field can foster discussions, both, offline and online, helping students understand how to improve their odds, participate in competitions just to test the waters, and make informed decisions. He added, "The system may well take a long time to improve. Meanwhile, students should focus on the things that are under their control." The advice fits well with Saif's experiences. Poor training and lack of professional exposure in his undergraduate years pushed him to pursue a Master's degree from Maulana Azad National Institute of Technology, Bhopal in order to stand on equal footing with his peers. He worked on 71+ government projects as a civil engineer for six years. Today tier 2 and 3 college students can benefit from skilling programs over and beyond the college and the curriculum. Government-led skill development schemes such as PMKVY (Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana) and NASSCOM's FutureSkills initiative, which is a government-industry partnership aimed at reskilling and upskilling India's IT workforce in technologies like AI, cybersecurity, cloud



computing, and data science. Simultaneously, edtech platforms like Coursera, NPTEL, Scaler, and UpGrad are transforming how students access knowledge beyond the classroom curriculum. These platforms provide structured learning paths, expert instruction, mentorship, and in some cases, career support. Some engineering colleges are now beginning to embrace innovation more proactively. Several tier-2 institutions have started setting up incubation cells, inviting startups for placements, and encouraging student-led projects or entrepreneurship. These initiatives can demonstrate that even within conventional academic structures, meaningful change is possible when institutions prioritise experiential learning and industry alignment. At the same time, a few innovative startups and institutions have stepped in to bridge the gap left by traditional colleges. EngineersConnect, a community-driven platform founded in 2022 and recognised by the Ministry of Education, helps engineering students from smaller towns build relevant projects, join hackathons, and network with startups and recruiters. "This is a platform for everyone in the ecosystem like students, from first year to last, alumni, and recruiters," says Bhushan Gaikwad, Founder and CEO of the startup. EngineersConnect is a "discovery and showcase platform for both skills and talent" that offers tools like scoring systems to help students understand where they stand and how they can improve.

GST process reforms pin hope on data, tech to ensure compliance



The GST Council's meeting on Wednesday will take up the second half of the reform exercise that was kicked off by the Goods and Services Tax (GST) rate cuts announced in September 2025, with officials saying the process reforms on the agenda will cement the indirect tax regime for the next half a decade or so. Officials are also of the view that "systems built on technology and good quality data" can help ensure correct behaviour from businesses without "onerous compliance". "GST rates were cleaned up last year. Now, the focus is on moving towards a stable tax system with predictability, as was the demand from the industry. It may take a year or two to stabilise and then the GST regime will only require minor tweaks for the next 5-6 years," an official said. "If the proposals are approved by the Council, then the framework will be set," the official added. No arrest, notices threshold

A key proposal in the process reforms that will be discussed in the Council meeting on October 8 is going to be the removal of the power to arrest by GST officers, as reported by The Indian Express on Sunday. This power, officials said, has led to the creation of unnecessary leverage over businesses even before the actual arrest stage is reached. "Tax disputes will be resolved through civil consequences, namely recovery of the tax, interest for the delay, and penalty," the official said. However, prosecution will remain available, with the GST Council expected to discuss some tweaks. Additionally, the threshold for prosecution is likely to be increased from Rs 1 crore to Rs 5 crore. The sentencing provisions are also proposed to be softened, with

the minimum sentence likely to be removed altogether. This, officials said, means courts won't be bound to impose a term of imprisonment regardless of circumstances. Also, a fine will be available as an option in every case. Furthermore, it is proposed that no notice will be issued at all where the amount involved is below Rs 10,000. Crucially, this change is expected to apply to new cases as well as those pending, whether in adjudication or in the appeal phase. Such cases are about a fifth of all cases by number and a negligible part of the money. For a small business, a notice of this size costs more to answer in fees and time than the amount in dispute. Removing that category will be a real relief, and will free up officers for matters of substance," the official said. The GST Council will deliberate on a wide variety of issues on October 7 that encompass all the tax dealings of an entity during its lifecycle — getting registered, filing returns and correcting them, claiming refunds, and answering demands.

All four processes are proposed to be redesigned on a single principle, namely that the system should do what can be done from data and the officer should be left with what needs judgement," an official said. One major process change is set to be for the export of services, which will help align GST laws with the practice on ground. Citing the example of a testing laboratory which receives a prototype from a foreign client, tests it, sends back the report, and is paid in foreign exchange, the official explained that the place of supply followed where the work was performed. "It will now follow the location of the customer, and such work therefore qualifies as an export. This opens the whole field of testing, certification, repair, calibration, research, and analysis to export treatment, and India has substantial capacity in all of them." Wednesday's GST Council meeting comes over 13 months after the last one in September 2025 which announced the major rate overhaul that saw the number of tax slabs being reduced to 5% and 18%, with a 40% rate for demerit goods. "There have been no meetings of the GST Council in the interim, but discussions have been ongoing to bring all stakeholders on the same page, and that takes time. What has helped is that there have not been any major concerns about revenues being adversely impacted by the rate rationalisation exercise of September 2025. This has made it easier to go ahead with the process reforms discussions at this week's meeting."

As RBI rate hike looms, action beyond 25 bps a minor possibility

The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) began its three-day meeting on Monday. And while most economists are predicting that a 25-basis-point (bps) increase in the policy repo rate to 5.5% will be announced on Wednesday, talk has emerged that a larger hike could be possible. "It's not a debate that there will be a rate hike on Wednesday. But considering the MPC is now acting from behind the curve, it could even be a 50 bps increase," said a senior economist who did not wish to be named.

While the six-member MPC had unanimously left the repo rate unchanged at 5.25% on August 5 and offered rather sanguine commentary to go along with it, minutes of its meeting, released two weeks later, struck a different note. Governor Sanjay Malhotra, for instance, said that while the headline retail inflation had averaged only 2% in 2025-26 — when the repo rate was brought down to 5.25% — there were signs it was now normalising. This "may suggest a recalibration of policy rate." Meanwhile, Deputy Governor Poonam Gupta noted "a case for a hike may emerge during the course of the year". According to Soumya Kanti Ghosh, State Bank of India's Group Chief Economic Advisor, the RBI may "raise rates by 25 bps AT LEAST" (emphasis Ghosh's). Madhavi Arora and Harshal Patel of Emkay Global Financial Services said that "a 50 bps hike cannot be ruled out as a potential policy catch-up". The RBI last increased the repo rate way back in February 2023. As such, any rate hike on Wednesday will be the first in over three-and-a-half years. The headline inflation rate, based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI), rose to 4.82% in August, as per latest data. While this is comfortably within the RBI's mandated range of 2-6%, it was the third month in a row that it had come in above the medium-term target of 4%. The RBI's most recent forecasts also show inflation rising to an average of 5.9% in the last three months of 2026, before cooling to 5.5% and 5.3% in the first two quarters of 2027.

Long rate hike cycle?

To be sure, the market overwhelmingly expects the repo rate to be raised by only 25 bps on Wednesday. However, many who do so have not only brought forward their prediction of a rate hike from December to October but also think the RBI may end up raising interest rates significantly. Morgan Stanley economists led by Upasana Chachra see the RBI on Wednesday kicking off a run of four consecutive rate hikes of 25 bps each, or 100 bps in total, which will take the repo rate to 6.25% in April. "We view the rate hike cycle primarily as policy normalisation rather than disruptive tightening," Morgan Stanley said in a report last week. The word 'normalisation' has found several takers, with some even suggesting the first 50 bps of increase in interest rate will only lead to some normalisation of mon-



etary conditions. The last time the repo rate was 5.25% or lower was in mid-2022, when the RBI was in the middle of reversing the extraordinary measures taken to help the economy hit by the coronavirus pandemic.

Barclays' Rahul Bajoria and Smriti Mehra have not only brought forward their rate hike call of 25 bps to this week from December but also doubled their prediction of total tightening to 100 bps from 50 bps. According to them, the balance of risks is shifting away from accommodation to tightening. "This essentially is no longer just about reversing the incremental cut that the RBI had delivered last December but actually taking away the monetary punchbowl before inflation risks become entrenched amid a large inflow of liquidity." While CPI inflation is well within the 2-6% mandated range, there are signs that price pressures are rising: as many as 314 of the 358 items in the CPI basket saw higher prices in August compared to July. The number was 310 in July and 236 in February, before the West Asia war had begun. Inflation is being driven by a variety of forces: higher energy prices due to the West Asia conflict, sub-par monsoons pushing up food prices, skyrocketing 'chipflation' making consumer electronics more expensive, and a low base until April 2027 or so. With growth stronger than expected, demand may impart a push to inflation too. The availability of money in the banking system — or, liquidity — is also very high due to the \$133 billion of foreign inflows that have come in via the highly attractive Foreign Currency Non-Resident (Bank) deposit scheme. These inflows, according to Sajjid Chinoy, Head-Asia Economic Research at JPMorgan, have created a "liquidity overhang which has meant that monetary conditions are actually more accommodative than interest rate levels would suggest," he told Bloomberg Television. While the liquidity deluge has lowered the weighted average call rate — interest rate at which banks borrow from each other — from August onwards, the central bank has pushed it up since the second half of September through a variety of instruments, including the sale of government bonds.

The patient dragon—what twenty years of quiet preparation looks like, and what it means for India



He arrives early. Orders tea. Sets up the board. He has been playing in this corner for thirty years, against whoever sits across from him. He rarely moves quickly. While his opponent reacts to the last move, the old man is already thinking about the position fifteen moves from now. His grandson once asked him: Dadu, who wins? The old man smiled. The one who thinks furthest ahead. He was not talking about chess. What Chanakya Said About The Treasury Chanakya's Arthashastra, written over two thousand years ago, captures this principle clearly: a ruler without a treasury cannot maintain an army, and without an army cannot protect territory. The treasury is the root of all state activity. He ranked the treasury, Kosha, as the second pillar of state power. Before the army. Before the territory itself. Monetary sovereignty is not an accident. It is built deliberately. Over time. Through patient accumulation of real assets and real alternatives. By Q1 2026, the People's Bank of China officially declared 2,313 tonnes. Eighteen consecutive months of reported gold purchases. Every month. Without announcement. Without drama.

Credible analysts, examining withdrawal data from the Shanghai Gold Exchange, estimate China's actual gold holdings may be significantly higher than officially declared. These estimates remain contested and should be treated as informed analysis, not established fact. But the direction of the official data alone tells a clear story: patient, consistent, deliberate accumulation over two decades. India has built formidable payment infrastructure, but the deeper challenge is preparing reserve-level alternatives before global monetary pressures become urgent. Alongside gold, China has been building parallel financial infrastructure. In March 2025, the mBridge cross-border payment system went live, connecting sixteen nations across Asia and the Middle East. Transactions that take three to five days through SWIFT settle in seconds through mBridge. Fees are a fraction of conventional correspondent banking. Approximately ninety percent of trade between China and Russia is now settled in yuan or rubles, the dollar largely absent from that

relationship. None of this happened overnight. The Shanghai International Energy Exchange, which allows oil to be priced and settled in yuan for the first time, was launched in March 2018. It is now the third most traded crude benchmark globally. The yuan's share of actual global oil settlement remains small, but the infrastructure and precedent now exist. The digital yuan has been in domestic pilot since 2020. The Euro was not launched on impulse. It was prepared for over a decade, from the 1989 Delors Report, through the 1991 Maastricht Treaty, to the 1999 launch. Ten years of institutional preparation before a single Euro note was printed. Today the Euro holds approximately twenty percent of global foreign exchange reserves. It is the only currency in the modern era to have achieved meaningful reserve status alongside the dollar. It proved something important: building a genuine monetary alternative is possible. It requires patience. It requires decades. It requires preparation that begins long before the need becomes urgent.

UPI is live in more than eight countries. In January 2026, it processed 21.7 billion transactions worth approximately Rs 28 lakh crore in a single month. NPCI International is helping twenty-three nations build their own instant payment systems, exporting India's model, not just its product. Approximately ninety-three percent of India's oil imports from Russia now settle in rupees. Import settlements in rupees grew forty-one percent year-on-year in 2025-26. The RBI bought 73 tonnes of gold in 2024, more than four times the previous year. In June 2024, India repatriated 100 tonnes of gold from storage in the United Kingdom, the first such repatriation since 1991. These are real, deliberate steps toward reducing dollar dependency. But here is the honest question that reading China's preparation and Europe's preparation raises: UPI operates at the retail payment layer, tourists, NRIs, daily commerce. Genuinely impressive at that layer. China's preparation has been at the reserve layer, central bank gold, wholesale settlement infrastructure, commodity pricing. Europe's preparation was at the reserve layer, a currency that central banks actually hold. The dollar dependency this series has described, the invisible tax on Lakshmi's kitchen, Sirajuddin's loom, the Bihar farmer's fertiliser, operates at the reserve and wholesale layer. That is where the pressure lands when the system shifts.

The Question Worth Sitting With The old man in Kolkata wins because he thinks furthest ahead. Not because he is cleverer. Not because he has more pieces. Because he begins preparing for the endgame while his opponent is still reacting to the last move. India has been building. That is true and deserves honest acknowledgment. The question is whether India is building with the same patience, and at the same layer, as those who have been thinking furthest ahead.

RBI policy stance, Q2 earnings, West Asia tensions key triggers next week

Mumbai: After a holiday-shortened week which saw benchmarks slip below a key psychological level as a worsening global backdrop overwhelmed domestic support, the Indian stock markets are geared up for the RBI policy decision and growth projections, along with the beginning of the Q2 earnings season. A meaningful de-escalation in West Asia could trigger a sharp relief rally next week, according to market watchers.

The RBI policy stance, inflation outlook and growth projections will provide important cues on the near-term trajectory of domestic interest rates and financial markets. Last week, the bearish tone was evident from the start, with the Sensex declining 1.52 per cent on Monday, followed by relatively modest losses over the next two sessions before another 0.79 per cent decline on Thursday. Consequently, the Sensex shed 1,670.84 points to settle at 71,909.70, while the Nifty lost over 3 per cent to close at 22,421.95.

The weekly price action reflects a clear continuation of the corrective phase, with Nifty witnessing its eighth consecutive weekly decline, said analysts. From a technical perspective, the weekly RSI is placed at around 31.06, remaining well below the neutral 50 mark and indicating weak momentum. The RSI is also significantly below its average near 46.27 and is approaching the oversold zone, suggesting that the index remains under pressure but may see intermittent technical pullbacks from lower levels, said analysts. On the upside, immediate resistance is placed at 22,800 and 23,000.

A sustained move above this zone would be required to ease the prevailing selling pressure and improve the short-term structure, they added. On the downside, support is seen at 22,350 and 22,180. Global factors remain the dominant



influence on market sentiment. Rising US Treasury yields, persistent inflation concerns and elevated energy prices keep investors cautious. The surge in long-term US bond yields also raised concerns over global financial conditions and the relative attractiveness of emerging-market assets. On the domestic front, economic activity remained resilient. India's industrial production growth accelerated to 8.0 per cent year-on-year in August from an upwardly revised 7.4 per cent in July. Manufacturing output grew 9 per cent, while electricity and gas supply expanded 12.3 per cent. Developments in the energy market will remain a crucial trigger for market sentiment. Brent crude has retreated from its recent highs as crude exports through the Strait of Hormuz recovered closer to pre-war levels. The global macroeconomic calendar will also remain important, with key US high-frequency data, including the nonfarm payrolls report and ISM Manufacturing PMI, likely to influence market sentiment.

India's bullet train not delayed, even Japan can't do it in 10 yrs: High-speed rail body head

Amid allegations over delays in India's first bullet train project between Mumbai and Ahmedabad, the head of the international high speed rail body said it should not be said that the project is delayed given the many unforeseen problems India encountered, such as the Covid-19 pandemic and land acquisition. Speaking to The Indian Express on the sidelines of the Kautilya Economic Conclave, Masafumi Shukuri, Chairman of the Japan Transport and Tourism Research Institute (JTTRI) and International High-Speed Rail Association (IHRA), defended the Indian government, saying that even though Japan has 62 years of experience in building and operating bullet trains, it cannot complete a 500-km long stretch in 10 years.

"The first high-speed rail (project) in Japan was launched in 1964, which means Japan has 62 years of experience of constructing and operating the high-speed train. Now, let's just say today Japan decides to make a high-speed rail track of 500 km. It is not possible to complete it in 10 years. Even today's Japan cannot do it... I think from this perspective, given the different conditions, building a high-speed rail of 500 km long in India is a big deal," Shukuri said. "We also have to remember that initially when any project starts, there are many unforeseen problems. I know that there was a delay in land acquisition and many other things which have to be factored in," the IHRA Chairman added. Shukuri's comments come after Hideki Makihara, a former justice minister and a member of Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party, who alleged in July that India had displayed "sheer recklessness" in its bullet train project that stalled its progress. The Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed

Rail (MAHSR), India's first ever bullet train project, was initially expected to be completed in 2022. "I do not think there is a delay really, because you have to look at the size of this project. It is a 500 km long alignment. It is being done for the first time in India. With all of this together, it is a humongous, massive project. It is not a project which is expected to be wrapped up and completed in a matter of just a few years. It is just not possible," Shukuri said. "Another thing is that we also had to deal with the Covid-19 (pandemic), which came with disruption that it took time to get back on track. I feel that despite all of that this project is proceeding very strongly," he further said, adding that IHRA has been involved with the project since 2014, even before it was officially announced. The first section from Surat to Vapi in Gujarat of the 508-km project is scheduled to begin operation by the end of 2027. The entire project is expected to be completed by 2029. The priority section will begin the operation with India-made bullet trains, since the Japanese E10 Shinkansen won't arrive before 2034 and is still under design in Japan. India is currently developing its own bullet train set (B28). The design speed of the train is 280 kmph and two sets are being developed by BEML in Bengaluru. It will operate at a maximum speed of 250 kmph. The manufacturing of the train is scheduled to be completed by April 2027, with testing to be done between May-July 2027. The commercial operation of the train will begin by December 2027. Shukuri also said that while it is absolutely fine that India has decided to use its own rolling stock, or India-made bullet train, for the project, it has to ensure the operation is not only stable, but safe and reliable.

Aprilia launches SXR GT 125 and SXR GT 175 in India

New Delhi: Aprilia has introduced its SXR GT range in India, comprising the SXR GT 125 and SXR GT 175, with updated engines and larger wheels. The SXR GT 125 is priced at Rs 1.11 lakh, while the SXR GT 175 costs Rs 1.31 lakh (ex-showroom). The launch comes after Aprilia discontinued the SXR 125 and SXR 160 models in May. Instead of developing an entirely new scooter, Aprilia has based the SXR GT range on the newer engines already used in its SR 125 and SR 175 models.

The scooters feature a maxi-scooter-inspired design, with a large front apron, wide seat and proportions aimed at enhancing their road presence. The SXR GT 125 is powered by a 124.5cc single-cylinder engine that produces 10.6 hp at 7,400 rpm and 10.4 Nm of torque at 6,200 rpm. The SXR GT 175 gets a 174.7cc air-cooled single-cylinder engine, producing 13.3 hp at 7,200 rpm and 14.1 Nm of torque at 6,000 rpm.

Both engines comply with BS6 OBD-II Stage B requirements and are compatible with E20 petrol. Both variants get 14-inch wheels. The SXR GT 175 features a 5-inch TFT



display with Bluetooth connectivity, offering access to call and music controls as well as turn-by-turn navigation. It also gets handlebar-mounted controls, single-channel ABS and an exhaust end pipe with a heat shield. The SXR GT 125 comes with a 5-inch LCD instrument cluster and uses a combined braking system (CBS) instead of ABS.

Stepping down as captain will boost Harmanpreet Kaur the match-winning batter



When Harmanpreet Kaur ran back to complete the final catch of India's 2025 World Cup triumph, there was something fitting about the image. The captain who had carried Indian women's cricket through years of expectation was there at the finish, taking the catch that confirmed the moment India had waited for. But her legacy is bigger than that trophy. Harmanpreet leaves captaincy, having raised India's expectations of itself. Before her, India had reached the ODI World Cup final in 2005 and 2017 under Mithali Raj. Under Harmanpreet, India became regulars at the business end of major tournaments – the 2018 T20 World Cup semifinal, the 2020 T20 World Cup final, the 2023 T20 World Cup semifinal and, eventually, the 2025 ODI World Cup title at home.

She took over when Indian women's cricket was growing, but was still searching for consistency and belief. At the 2018 T20 World Cup, her first major tournament as captain, she announced herself with a 103 against New Zealand. It was a statement about the kind of captain she would be; aggressive, expressive and unafraid of the big stage. That intensity stayed with her. Harmanpreet was emotional, vocal and sometimes combative. Her batting, however, became less consistent as the years went by. Her strike rate was also a concern. The Harmanpreet who could win a match

from almost anywhere showed up less often. But she continued to produce when India needed her most.

In the 2025 World Cup semifinal against Australia, with India chasing a record total, Harmanpreet made 89 and helped keep the chase alive alongside Jemimah Rodrigues. A year later, in a must-win T20 World Cup game against Australia, she made 56 off 27, hitting three sixes in the final over to take India to a competitive total. Those innings gave reminders of the player India will now want to see more often. In her farewell post, Harmanpreet acknowledged the cost of captaincy herself. "There were moments when I had to put my individual performance, my own growth, and what I wanted for myself aside, because I believed the team had to come first," she wrote. She said every difficult decision was made with one intention — "to make this TEAM better and to give other players the opportunity to grow". That is an important part of her legacy. She leaves behind a team in which Smriti Mandhana has found stability, Deepti Sharma has become a central figure, and younger players such as N Sree Charani have emerged with confidence. Most importantly, she leaves behind a team that has won the World Cup and now knows what it feels like to be there. Harmanpreet wrote that she leaves captaincy with "a heart full of emotions, but also with PEACE" because she believes the team is in a good place. And perhaps the most interesting line was saved for the end: "Now, I'm ready to play for the love of the game again." That is what Indian cricket will hope for. Without the burden of captaincy, Harmanpreet can now focus on being the batter who can change a game. As captain, she had to think about the team first. Now she can focus more on her own cricket. She says she has "done her duty". She leaves the next captain with more than a World Cup trophy. She leaves a team that believes it can compete on the biggest stages. That is why the shoes are big. "Captaincy ends. The journey continues," Harmanpreet wrote. For Indian cricket, the hope is that the next chapter brings back the player who made everyone believe.

'I have done my duty': Harmanpreet Kaur steps down as India captain in all formats

Harmanpreet Kaur, the only Indian captain to have won the Women's World Cup, announced on Tuesday that she has stepped down from the role with immediate effect. Harmanpreet made the announcement in a lengthy post on her Instagram account. "Today, I step down as captain of the Indian Women's Cricket Team across all formats. This is not an easy decision. It carries years of memories, emotions, sacrifices, and moments that will stay with me for the rest of my life," said Harmanpreet in her statement.

Widely rated among India's greatest cricketers of all time, Harmanpreet took over as India's full-time captain across formats after Mithali Raj retired in 2022, having led the team periodically before that as Mithali's deputy. She has also been India's T20I captain since 2016. Her last act as skipper of the side was leading the team to their second consecutive gold medal at the Asian Games last month. "I leave the captaincy today with a heart full of emotions, but also with PEACE. Because I genuinely believe My team is in a good place. A team with talent, character, belief and a future that I am incredibly excited to watch and be a part of," Harmanpreet further said in her statement. "I feel I have done my duty."

Harmanpreet has confirmed that she will continue to be available for India in all formats. "Captaincy may end today, but my love for Indian cricket never will. Thank you to every teammate, coach, support staff, management, BCCI, family members every single fan who stood by me through the highs and lows. Blood. Sweat. Sacrifice. Pride. I gave it all." Now, I'm ready to play for the love of the game again. Captaincy ends. The journey continues," she concluded in her statement. She has led the Indian team in five Tests, 51 ODIs and 155 T20Is. The crowning achievement of her career came last year, when under her captaincy India won

India vs West Indies 1st T20 Playing 11: Wait for Vaibhav Sooryavanshi's home debut to continue

GNS News Agency, Oct 12 India vs West Indies 1st T20 Playing 11 Today Match, Team Prediction, Full Squad, Players List, Fantasy Cricket Tips: Having won the three-match ODI series 2-1, India now face the West Indies in a five-match T20I series that starts in Lucknow on Tuesday. The Indian T20I team come into this match fresh off their successful campaign in the Asian Games. Shreyas Iyer has settled into his role as captain of the side, having experienced a shaky start to the tenure after he was appointed as a replacement for Suryakumar Yadav earlier this year. Iyer had started off with six defeats in seven matches as India's T20I captain.

Since then, however, India have won their next nine matches on the bounce. The return of India's T20I squad also means a renewed spotlight on Vaibhav Sooryavanshi. The 15-year-old has played eight matches thus far in his fledgling career but Sooryavanshi is yet to play an international match in India. However, there is a high chance that India may keep him on the bench for this match as well, with Gambhir and Iyer choosing to go with Sanju Samson and Abhishek Sharma as their opening combination for their last home series against Afghanistan. Ishan Kishan came in at No.3. India would be looking to make their all-rounders



their maiden Women's World Cup title, beating South Africa in the final. Notably, they had defeated the runaway favourites and record winners Australia in the semifinal before that. Harmanpreet is just the only Indian captain apart from MS Dhoni and Kapil Dev to have won the ODI World Cup. (Reuters Photo) Harmanpreet is just the only Indian captain apart from MS Dhoni and Kapil Dev to have won the ODI World Cup. (Reuters Photo) Harmanpreet is overall just the third Indian captain to have won the 50-over World Cup after Kapil Dev and MS Dhoni and one of five Indians to have won any World Cup as skipper, with Rohit Sharma and Suryakumar Yadav leading the men's side to victory in the T20 World Cups of 2024 and 2026 respectively. She has captained the Indian team in 155 T20I matches, the most for any player across men's or women's cricket. She has played a total of 210 T20I matches, which is also the most for any player across genders. Harmanpreet made her international debut in March 2009 in an ODI against Pakistan in the Women's World Cup that year. Her T20I debut came a couple of months after that against England. She made her Test debut against England in August 2014.



bowl more with the continued uncertainty around Hardik Pandya. This would mean that they could be playing only one of Prince Yadav or Mayank Yadav, with Nitish Kumar Reddy and Shivam Dube both finding a place. India: Abhishek Sharma, Sanju Samson (wk), Ishan Kishan, Shreyas Iyer (c), Tilak Varma, Shivam Dube, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Arshdeep Singh, Prince Yadav/ Mayank Yadav West Indies: Kamill Pooran, Shai Hope (c & wk), Shimron Hetmyer, Roston Chase, Rovman Powell, Sherfane Rutherford, Keemo Paul, Romario Shepherd, Matthew Forde, Akeal Hosein, Shamar Joseph

looking forward to working with the squad, the new season, and building a strong and fearless team. "Earlier, DC had announced the return of wicketkeeper-batter Rishabh Pant to the side, although they haven't stated that he will go back to being captain of the squad. Ganguly was among the "Icon Players" in the inaugural edition of the IPL in 2008 and was made the first captain of the Kolkata Knight Riders. That also turned out to be the year in which he ended his illustrious international career. He led KKR for three seasons and then played for the now-defunct Pune Warriors India for two before ending his IPL career as well. In the years since, Ganguly established a career first in commentary before moving into cricket administration.

How Vaibhav Sooryavanshi is challenged by Morne Morkel when he is left out of playing XI



Vaibhav Sooryavanshi may have captured the imagination of the cricket world with his big-hitting prowess at the age of 15 in last year's IPL but the Indian team management is being cautious with the teenager. There have been moments in his fledgling international career when it has looked clear that he remains in early stages of his development despite his immense talent and India bowling coach Morne Morkel has said that he likes to challenge Sooryavanshi regardless of whether he is playing or not.

Morkel said that being with the team is good for Sooryavanshi's development, regardless of whether he is in the playing eleven or not. "If he is not getting that game time, he is still on a bus, in the dugout, in the hotel with guys with a lot of experience," Morkel told reporters ahead of India's

first T20I against the West Indies. "I think, with him, sharing that dressing room and talking to guys, just actually watching how the guys go through their processes and how they set up will be key. "So I always challenge him. I say, 'watch what this guy is doing in training. How does he face his first 15 balls when the wicket is tough? What sort of game plan has he come up with?' "For any young player, if he gets game time or if that game time is a little bit limited, it is still our job to make sure that these guys learn, they grow and they ask questions." "I always ask him on the bus, 'What is the one thing you have learned today? Tell me what you think about that guy's batting'. That makes him think, and I think next time he comes to the nets, the sort of things he will observe, he will adapt to his game." Morkel said that he can't say for sure if Sooryavanshi will open for India in all five of their upcoming T20Is against the West Indies. Head coach Gautam Gambhir had said that the teenager will have to wait for his chances. Sooryavanshi has played eight T20Is thus far and has a strike rate of 186.16 but an average of only 30.75 in the 246 runs he has scored. He is yet to play an international match in India, having been left on the bench during the T20I series against Afghanistan earlier this year while Sanju Samson and Abhishek Sharma opened. "I am pretty sure Gautam will look to rotate them," Morkel said about India's openers. "The guys just came back from the Asian Games, so we want to see how everybody is feeling after jet lag, after travelling, and then from there make the plan."

Pakistan appoint Sahibzada Farhan as new T20I captain, drop Salman Ali Agha from squad

Pakistan have named top-order batter Sahibzada Farhan as their new T20I captain, with the 30-year-old taking over from Salman Ali Agha starting with the upcoming series against Sri Lanka. Agha, who led the side at the 2026 T20 World Cup, has been dropped from the 15-member squad for the shortest format. Agha is set to remain part of the ODI setup, where Shaheen Shah Afridi retains the captaincy for the tri-nation series against England and Sri Lanka. Former captain Babar Azam has also been included in the ODI squad.

Pakistan's three-match T20 series against Sri Lanka begins on Friday, October 9 in Rawalpindi, while the ODI triseries will begin on October 18 and feature a double round-robin format, with the top two teams facing off in the final on October 31 at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore. Farhan, who top-scored at the T20 World Cup earlier this year, led Pakistan to a silver medal at the recently concluded 2026 Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya. He scored 383 runs at a strike rate of 160 to become the player with the most runs in a single edition of a T20 World Cup. The right-handed opener is among several players from that squad retained for the senior side, with Abdul Samad, Saim Ayub, Hasan Nawaz, Arafat Minhas, Maaz Sadaqat, Abrar Ahmed, Sufiyan Moqim and Mohammad Salman Mirza also included. While Farhan has been named captain the shortest format, he is not part of a 16-member ODI squad. From the squad that last played the format and beat Australia 2-1 in January this year, Abdul Samad, Rohail Nazir, Shami Hussain, Maaz Sadaqat and Ahmed Daniyal have also been left out. Fakhar Zaman,



Faheem Ashraf, Razaullah, Saad Baig and Saim Ayub have been called up alongside Hasan Nawaz, who scored a fine 96 in the Asian Games final against India. Sahibzada Farhan (c), Abdul Samad, Abrar Ahmed, Arafat Minhas, Fakhar Zaman, Hasan Nawaz, Khawaja Nafay (wk), Maaz Sadaqat, Mohammad Salman Mirza, Muhammad Imran Randhawa, Naseem Shah, Razaullah, Saim Ayub, Shadab Khan, Sufiyan Moqim.

Pakistan's ODI squad for tri-series: Shaheen Shah Afridi (c), Abrar Ahmed, Arafat Minhas, Babar Azam, Faheem Ashraf, Fakhar Zaman, Haris Rauf, Hasan Nawaz, Muhammad Ghazi Ghorri (wk), Naseem Shah, Razaullah, Saad Baig (wk), Saim Ayub, Salman Ali Agha, Shadab Khan, Sufiyan Moqim.

Suryakumar Yadav asked to confirm availability for Ranji Trophy, and then snubbed; Yashasvi Jaiswal picked

The Mumbai selectors have not picked former India T20 captain Suryakumar Yadav for their Ranji Trophy season opener despite the veteran confirming his availability for the same a week ago. The selection committee of the Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA) announced a 16-member squad on Monday. Both Suryakumar, under whose captaincy India had successfully defended their T20 World Cup crown earlier this year, and Yashasvi Jaiswal had informed the panel that they were available. But only the latter finds his name in the list.

Chief selector Rajesh Pawar said Suryakumar's lack of recent red-ball match practice was behind their decision. "He is a very big player. But he hasn't played red-ball cricket in the last one and a half years. Should he play a few red-ball games, he can definitely come into the side," Pawar said. It was just last week that Suryakumar was asked about his availability and willingness to play Ranji Trophy, and he took a day before confirming it. However, MCA officials claim they tried to reach out to him many times but he didn't respond to their calls.

Mumbai will take on Chandigarh in their season opener at the Wankhede Stadium from October 11-14. The selection committee has appointed Siddhesh Lad as skipper for the season with opener Ayush Mhatre as his vice-captain. Speaking on Jaiswal's return, Pawar said, "It's a good thing that Yashasvi is coming to play for Mumbai. He also needs match practice. When asked, he said he is available, so that's good for the team. There is a chance he might be in either the senior or the A team touring New Zealand;



so we only announced the squad for the first match." The squad features India batter Sarfaraz Khan, who recently played for the Rest of India side that beat Jammu and Kashmir in the Irani Cup. Also included is Shams Mulani, whose all-round performance against Australia A helped India A clinch their two-match unofficial Test series 1-0. Mhatre, who led India to the Under-19 World Cup title earlier this year, has been rewarded for his impressive leadership with the vice-captaincy. Mumbai will miss the services of pacer Shardul Thakur, who got injured a few weeks ago. Mumbai squad: Siddhesh Lad (capt), Ayush Mhatre (vice-capt), Shams Mulani, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Tanush Kotian, Atharva Ankolekar, Divyaansh Saxena, Tushar Deshpande, Musheer Khan, Mohit Avasthi, Sarfaraz Khan, Sylvester D'Souza, Suved Parkar, Onkar Tarmale, Aakash Anand (wk), Hardik Tamore (wk).

Shubman Gill, Abhishek Sharma headline ICC Player of the Month shortlist

Hyderabad: India batting duo Shubman Gill and Abhishek Sharma headline the ICC Men's Player of the Month shortlist for September alongside Zimbabwe captain Sikandar Raza. Sri Lanka captain Chamari Athapaththu, India's Sree Charani and Shafali Verma make up the women's shortlist. Sharma smashed 229 runs in four T20Is, including a record 30-ball century against Afghanistan, while Gill amassed 333 runs in two ODIs against the West Indies, including his second double-century. Raza was the leading run-scorer in Zimbabwe's home ODI series against Australia.

The women's shortlist recognises standout performances at the Asia Cup and the Asian Games. Athapaththu made an impact with both bat and ball, while Shafali excelled at the top of the order and finished as the leading run-scorer in the Women's Asia Cup. Charani, meanwhile, reached the highest rating points ever recorded in the ICC Women's T20 Bowling Rankings.



Shubman Gill and Abhishek Sharma have been shortlisted for the ICC Men's Player of the Month award for September alongside Zimbabwe captain Sikandar Raza. Chamari Athapaththu, Sree Charani and Shafali Verma feature on the women's shortlist.

Sourav Ganguly announced as Delhi Capitals' head coach

Former India captain Sourav Ganguly was on Tuesday announced as head coach of Indian Premier League (IPL) side Delhi Capitals. Ganguly has been associated with the side since 2019, having first joined the franchise as an Advisor. Over the years, he has positions across the Capitals ecosystem, including Director of Cricket for both the men's and women's teams. "I am looking forward to take on the role of Head Coach in the IPL. Delhi Capitals is a franchise very close to my heart, and one that I have shared a strong relationship with over the years," said Ganguly in a statement. "I have worked closely with the owners, management, support staff and players, which makes this an exciting responsibility for me. We have a talented group and have played a good brand of cricket in the recent past. I am

Anupam Kher ‘almost slapped me’ over hospital costs: Raju Kher on battling bladder cancer



Raju Kher, 69, the younger brother of Anupam Kher has opened up about one of the most difficult phases of his life, recalling how his brother Anupam stood by him when he was diagnosed with bladder cancer in 2004. From leaving a shoot abroad to rushing back to Mumbai, to quietly taking care of his medical expenses, Anupam was there for Raju through his treatment. Looking back at that time, Raju said his brother is not just family but a “father figure” to him.

In an interview with Siddharth Kannan, Raju Kher recalled the time when he broke the news to Anupam, Raju said his brother immediately left his work abroad and returned to Mumbai to be with him. “In 2004, I got to know that I have cancer in my bladder. This is that time when I was going through a bad phase. He (Anupam Kher) was shoot-

ing abroad, and he left his work and came to Bombay. I told him everything, and he said, ‘Let’s go to Lilavati Hospital,’ and I said, ‘Lilavati is expensive.’ He almost slapped me, and said, ‘Who are you to speak about in this matter? Stay quiet, and do as I say.’”

Raju shared that Anupam quietly took care of the financial aspect of his treatment. “And, without my knowledge, he bore all the expenses, and there are many such things that he has done for me. He’s a father figure to me,” he said. Raju Kher further opened up about the seriousness of his condition and explained that doctors had to remove his urinary bladder to save him. “I had tumour in my urinary bladder, and the doctors removed my urinary bladder. I was lucky to have a big intestine, which was converted into a urinary bladder, and attached to the kidneys and the urinary tract,” he said. He explained that there are five levels of the tumour and that his was detected at the first level. “There are 5 levels of tumour, and we found out through the original bladder that the tumour was at the first level, it was growing fast. This operation lasted for 17 hours,” Raju recalled. The actor also spoke about how his relationship with Anupam Kher has given him a sense of security. “In today’s times, I am not scared about anything because somewhere I know that my brother is there, who can take care of everybody here. So, I’m not worried,” he said. Raju also emphasised, “At the same time, I am also very conscious about not taking him for granted.” Raju Kher also shared an update about his sister-in-law and actor-politician Kirron Kher’s health who earlier battled cancer. He said that she is “alright” and only needs an injection as part of her treatment.

‘Not my personal views’: Sanjay Dutt’s new clarification for ‘don’t feel peace in India’ remark

A day after issuing a clarification for his ‘don’t feel peace in India’ comment on Shekhar Suman’s talk show Shekhar Tonite, Sanjay Dutt has now shared yet another explanation. This time, his clarification comes in a video, where he’s speaking in Hindi, and underlining a key point: the remarks he made on the show, which was part of a scripted conversation, are not his personal views.

Sanjay Dutt’s second clarificationA paparazzo handle shared a video recorded by Dutt, where he’s addressing the audience by looking into the camera. “A lot of people contacted me on social media regarding my recent expression on Shekhar Suman’s show. Some people said they’re quite shocked by my words, while the others expressed strong disagreement with them,” said the actor. “I completely understand their feelings. I want to make one thing very clear. Whatever I said on the show was part of a scripted segment, like it often happens in television shows of this kind. We were acting as per a script. A lot of the things I said were part of that performance and that context. They’re not, by any stretch, my personal views, thinking or feelings,” he added. “I deeply respect the love and trust showered by my friends and well-wishers. I’d never want a scripted performance to create a misunderstanding about my personal views. I hope this will clarify the right thing in the right context,” concluded Dutt, signing off with “Jai Hind! Jai Bharat!”

What did Sanjay Dutt say on Shekhar Tonite?

Dutt said on Shekhar Tonite that he doesn’t feel peace in India anymore. “The people of this country are so lovely. There should be peace here. I can’t feel that peace in our country anymore. We Indians are large-hearted people and we are hospitable. We have given so much, and we should always remain that way. I pray to Shiva ji that those days come back soon,” he said on the show. After that, he went on to deliver a monologue as the new hypothetical prime minister of the country. Harking back to his iconic role of gangster with Gandhigiri as his weapon of choice, Munna Bhai, he took digs at Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his foreign trips and indulgence in getting his pictures clicked everywhere. Dutt didn’t even spare US President Donald Trump, claiming that the next time the leader wants to send missiles to another country, he should be sending bouquets instead. Referring to him as “mamu”, Dutt said that Trump needed a “jadoo ki jhappi”. In Rajkumar Hirani’s 2006 blockbuster sequel comedy Lage Raho Munna Bhai, Dutt’s gangster goes on Mahatma Gandhi’s path of non-violence, which he also advocated for during his satirical monologue on Shekhar Tonite. Dutt and Shekhar Suman’s clarificationsA



day after his monologue drew divisive reactions, Dutt took to his X handle to issue a clarification. “I want to clarify that I has never been my intention to hurt the feelings of any individual, community, or institution, to insult them, or to disrespect them. I would like to clarify that it was never my intention to hurt, offend, or disrespect the sentiments of any individual, community, or institution,” he wrote.

“My remarks were made in the context of a scripted conversation intended to be light-hearted and humorous. The spirit behind them was similar to the humour and satire seen in films like Munna Bhai, particularly the concept of ‘Gandhigiri’, which was intended to convey a message of love, warmth, togetherness, and goodwill. Unfortunately, my words were interpreted outside of that intended context,” added Dutt.

Even host Shekhar Suman backed Dutt in his defense hours later. “Sanjay Dutt has huge respect for our country and fellow countrymen, and what he said was completely innocuous and in a very positive way. He should not be penalised and maligned for what he never said or meant. I know him for years; he is a good man who loves his country and has utmost regard for it,”

Sonakshi Sinha, Shahid Kapoor’s driver opened a momo shop, Tukaram Mundhe shut it down



Tukaram Mundhe-led Maharashtra Food & Drug Administration (FDA) suspended the licenses of eight more eateries on Monday, as part of its intense festival season encroachment drive. These outlets included the original Andheri West branch of Suraj Lama Momos, one of the most popular momo shops of Mumbai, the eponymous owner of which has an interesting Bollywood connection. Suraj Lama relocated to Mumbai at the age of 14, leaving behind his village Mirik in Darjeeling, in order to seek employment. After doing a few odd jobs, Suraj became a celebrity driver. He worked in that capacity for 25 years, including with actors Sonakshi Sinha and Shahid Kapoor, and also drove the car for leading banners like Karan Johar’s Dharma Productions. “I worked with a lot of dedication, and saw people I worked with as my own family, but sometimes I wasn’t seen as equal. It bothered me,” Suraj confessed in an interview with The Indian Express a couple of years ago. He recalled an incident as the final nail in the coffin — “I drove an actor to the set. There was a child who wanted to take a photo with the actor, and had been waiting for a long time. I thought of helping that child, but when I conveyed his wish to the actor, they refused. I didn’t feel good,” he recounted.

When Suraj quit driving to sell momosThe subsequent rise in app-based cab services like Ola and Uber was also a factor in Suraj going for a pivot to selling momos in

2017. He even made Sonakshi and her family taste his momos, and they approved of his skills. So, he decided to quit his job, sell his motorbike and buy a cycle, with which he started a pop-up shop. He also convinced his wife Vijayata to join him, so she also quit her job of a cook at singer KK’s household. “In hindsight, it was a big risk. We both were earning around Rs 30,000 each, spending half of it running our home, and saving the rest. The gamble paid off, but it could have gone in another direction as well,” admitted Suraj. Since momos weren’t as easily available in Mumbai back then as they were in North India, Suraj got a pretty good start. He’d cycle across parts of Andheri West to sell both vegetarian and non-vegetarian momos. The demand swelled up fast, which prompted him to open a roadside eatery in Versova. “In fact, when I first asked the owner of our current store to lease the space to me, he said, You won’t be able to afford it’, and later, he himself reached out to me,” said Suraj. Even though Suraj and his wife earned Rs 30,000 each from their previous jobs, once they began selling momos, they quickly began earnings Rs 700 in a day alone. He spelled out the secret to his recipe, claiming that the momos reminded him of home. “My momos are just like my mother’s. I follow her recipe. I don’t use preservatives or artificial colouring,” he told Mid-Day in 2017. He also claims his wife, a great cook, makes delectable momos. Even though he expanded with more outlets in Malad and Kandivali, he hadn’t reached other far-flung areas of high demand, including Pune, Nashik, and Gujarat. It is important to maintain quality. Today, we have a central kitchen in Mumbai, overseen entirely by my wife, with a staff of 25, preparing about 16,000 momos daily across various options. It is these momos, cooked till about 90 per cent, that go to each store, whether run by us or a franchise. Until I can do that in another city, I won’t expand,” said Suraj in 2024. It’s ironic that with so much emphasis on food quality, as he claims, Suraj Lama Momos’s license was suspended by the FDA. The authority flagged lapses in the way the food was handled and stored, in sanitation, cleanliness and safeguards intended to prevent contamination. It said the violations were “serious enough” to take swift action against the establishment under the applicable food safety guidelines.

Aaradhya took Abhishek Bachchan-Aishwarya Rai to Ariana Grande concert: ‘Didn’t know one song’

Actor Abhishek Bachchan recently attended a concert by singer-songwriter Ariana Grande with his daughter, Aaradhya Bachchan, and even though he did not know any of her songs, he was mighty impressed by her. In a recent interview, the actor-entrepreneur was asked about his favourite musical artistes and while his list included some of the most popular Bollywood music composers and singers, he shared that he is getting exposed to many popular international artistes, thanks to his daughter. In a chat with BBC Asian Network, Abhishek mentioned a list of artistes that he likes to listen to and said, “Kishore Kumar is a personal favourite. I love listening to Hindi film music, especially the older ones: RD Burman, SD Burman, Kalyanji Anandji, Laxmikant Pyarelal, Bappi Lahiri, they are all just brilliant. I enjoy that.” He then added that he also gets to listen to singers like Taylor Swift because of his teenage daughter. He spoke about Aaradhya’s “eclectic” taste in music and said, “I have a 14-year-old at home, so there is a lot of Olivia Rodrigo and Taylor Swift and Ariana Grande. But thankfully, she also loves 80s music and she is getting into Bon Jovi, and Van Halen and Metallica so that’s fun. She has got an eclectic sense of music, so I am safe. I don’t have to just listen to all these...” Abhishek then spoke about attending Ariana Grande’s concert and shared, “On our summer break, we were abroad and she took us to see an Ariana Grande concert. I didn’t even know one song, but that woman could sing. Oh my god! The quality of the voice... unbelievable, and to see the fandom that these young singers have is unbelievable. I think they are all so immensely talented,



and I know as an older generation like, ‘Oh no no, we don’t want to listen to Taylor Swift.’ No, they actually make great music.” Abhishek Bachchan was last seen in Riteish Deshmukh’s Marathi film Raja Shivaji. He will next be seen in the role of an antagonist in Shah Rukh Khan’s King. Directed by Siddharth Anand, the film stars SRK in the lead role. The film also stars SRK’s daughter Suhana Khan along with Deepika Padukone, Rani Mukerji, Anil Kapoor, Jackie Shroff, Arshad Warsi, among others. King is scheduled to release on December 24, just a week after Avengers Doomsday and Dune 3. The film marks SRK’s return to the big screen after 2023’s three massive hits – Pathan, Jawan and Dunki.

‘Staff touched Bollywood star’s feet’: Sabeer Bhatia says ‘celeb worship’ shocked American guests



Indians’ obsession with cinema and film stars is globally famous. It’s doubtful if any other country harbours such an intense affinity for movies as India does. Recently, entrepreneur Sabeer Bhatia, best known as the co-founder of the first free web-based email service, Hotmail.com, shared an anecdote that highlights how deeply “celebrity worship” is embedded in our culture. ‘He lay down flat on the ground’ Recalling a gathering he hosted at his home a few decades ago, Sabeer mentioned that a renowned female Bollywood actor was among the attendees. Upon seeing her, he said that one of the Indian waitstaff bowed down and even touched her feet, much to the shock of others, who were left wondering why he did that. Must Read | Salman Khan hosts BJP youth leader at Mumbai home: ‘Touched

by your warmth, simplicity’ Although Sabeer tried to explain the gesture, he admitted it was beyond him. However, he refrained from revealing the star’s identity in his social media post. “Many decades ago, I invited a Bollywood actress to my home. I won’t name her out of respect for her privacy. There were several American guests, and I had catered Indian food from a local restaurant,” he wrote on X (formerly Twitter). Sabeer continued, “Midway through the evening, one of the waitstaff recognised her. He immediately put down his tray, bent all the way down, and touched her feet. In fact, he lay down flat on the ground.” Many decades ago, I invited a Bollywood actress to my home. I won’t name her out of respect for her privacy. There were several American guests, and I had catered Indian food from a local restaurant. Midway through the evening, one of the wait staff recognized her. He immediately put down his tray, bent all the way down, and touched her feet. In fact he lay down flat on the ground. My American friends were completely bewildered. “Why did he touch her feet? Who is she?” I didn’t know how to explain it. That moment stayed with me. Celebrity worship is so deeply embedded in our culture that what seems completely normal to one person can look incomprehensible to someone outside it. Seeing this, the other guests were shocked and eager to know why the waitstaff respected her so much, even though she was just a film star. “My American friends were completely bewildered. ‘Why did he touch her feet? Who is she?’ I didn’t know how to explain it.” He concluded, “That moment stayed with me. Celebrity worship is so deeply embedded in our culture that what seems completely normal to one person can look incomprehensible to someone outside it.” The post soon went viral on social media, drawing sharp reactions from netizens. One person commented, “The master-servant equation was there in pre-20th-century British society. Americans imported slaves. Hindu casteism and Muslim hierarchical arrangements were similar stuff in different bottles. Indian society still has that classism. Here, working using one’s own limbs is considered below par.” Another Twitterati noted, “Such behaviours are one of the biggest reasons India can never grow — when people look down or up upon each other,

Salman Khan gets Delhi HC notice over plea to stay his suit against Kala Hiran release

The Delhi High Court has sought actor Salman Khan’s response to an application filed by the makers of Kala Hiran: The Battle for Legal, who have asked the court to stay the proceedings in the actor’s suit seeking to restrain the film’s release. According to PTI, Justice Anup Jairam Bhambhani issued notice to Salman on Tuesday after producer Amit Jani argued that the dispute over the proposed film substantially overlaps with an earlier personality-rights case filed by the actor. Salman Khan has sought restrictions on the release of the film, which is purportedly based on him. The latest application by the filmmaker claims that allowing both matters to proceed separately would result in parallel litigation over the same film, its promotional material and the alleged violation of Salman’s personality or publicity rights.

Why have Kala Hiran makers sought a stay?

According to the application, Salman Khan had already filed a suit seeking protection of his personality rights, in which the Delhi High Court granted an ex-parte ad-interim injunction on December 11, 2025. The actor later filed another application seeking an interim injunction specifically against the proposed film. According to producer Amit Jani’s plea, that application is still pending. The filmmaker has argued that the relief Salman is seeking in the present proceedings, including restrictions on the release, exhibition and dissemination of the film and its teasers, is substantially similar to the relief sought in the earlier case. The producer has therefore contended that the proceedings amount to parallel litigation concerning the same dispute. The legal dispute between Salman Khan and the makers of Kala Hiran had earlier led to an interim order from the Delhi High Court. On July 27, a coordinate bench directed online platforms to remove the film’s teaser and other related posts after the actor objected to the content. While passing the order, the court

said the makers of Kala Hiran could not use the 59-year-old actor’s name, mannerisms and other distinctive attributes for commercial gains without his authorisation. It also restrained the dissemination of material that could harm his reputation. The court observed that the use of social media to circulate material allegedly violating personality rights or harming reputation can worsen the situation because of the “speed, reach and permanence” of digital publications. The makers of Kala Hiran have maintained that the proposed film is not a biopic on Salman Khan. They have also argued that the actor cannot use personality-rights protection “to erase” public events connected with the blackbuck controversy. The film has been linked to the blackbuck poaching case involving the actor, but its makers have maintained that their project does not amount to an unauthorised portrayal of the actor’s life. The filmmaker had earlier told the court that the movie was not yet ready for release as it had not received certification from the censor board. They also said that its trailer had not been released. Salman Khan accuses filmmakers of sensationalising blackbuck caseSalman Khan, in his application, has accused the filmmaker of deliberately attempting to “sensationalise” the poaching case and generate headlines to attract public attention at the expense of his goodwill and reputation. His restraint application forms part of his broader lawsuit seeking protection of his personality rights. The actor had earlier approached the Delhi High Court seeking directions against various social media platforms and e-commerce websites over what he alleged was the unauthorised use of his name, images, persona and likeness. What happens next in Salman Khan’s Kala Hiran case? The Delhi High Court has now issued notice to Salman Khan on the filmmakers’ application seeking a stay. The actor will have to respond to the plea before the court considers submissions from both sides and decides the matter.