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Missing labourer found dead in open well in Sangareddy

Sangareddy: A man, reported missing on October 19, was found dead under suspicious circumstances in an open agricultural well at Pampahad village on Wednesday.

The deceased, Begari Shekhar (35), went to work as a labourer at Jangam Swamy's agricultural field last Monday and did not return home. His body was found floating in the well on Wednesday and was recovered by the police.

Tummala faces flak for Deepavali remarks at Khammam meeting after video goes viral

Khammam: Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao has been facing criticism on social media for the objectionable language he used at a meeting in Khammam.The Minister along with district Collector Diwakara TS and Commissioner of Police Sunil Dutt inspected Indiramma houses under construction at Velugumatla Colony and held a press briefing on Monday.Speaking on the occasion, Nageswara Rao directed officials to complete the construction of around 300 houses by November 15 and informed attendees that the colony would be inaugurated by Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on December 9.

Khammam lawyer found dead at grandmother's house

Khammam: A young lawyer from V Venkatayapalem village in Raghunadhapalem mandal of the district allegedly died by suicide.

According to sources, the deceased, Tholupunuri Ganesh (27), from the village, had been working as a junior lawyer at the Khammam court for the past year. He was said to have been distressed over being followed and threatened over the phone by unknown individuals.

On Monday night, he and his brother, Sai Teja, went to their grandmother's house at Peddamandava in Mudigonda mandal. On Tuesday, his grandmother, Padmavthi, and brother went to visit a temple in view of the Dasara festival.

Giving top priority to strengthening police crucial for development, says Telangana CM

Hyderabad, Oct 21 (IANS) Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy said on Wednesday that the state government was giving the highest priority to strengthening the Police Department, as maintaining law and order was crucial for development.

He said the government has initiated steps to fill another 5,000 vacancies in the Police Department. He announced that all existing vacancies will be filled by 2028.

The Chief Minister was speaking at the Police Commemoration Parade on the occasion of Police Martyrs' Day at Goshamahal Stadium in Hyderabad.

He paid tributes to the police martyrs who sacrificed their lives in the line of duty.

"We can never forget their sacrifices in upholding law and order. The families of these martyrs are not alone; the government stands firmly by their side," he said.

The Chief Minister said that for police constables who made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty, the ex gratia payment has been increased from Rs 40 lakh to Rs 1 crore.

Similarly, in the case of Head Constables and Assistant Sub-Inspectors, the compensation has been raised from Rs 45 lakh to Rs 1 crore.

For Sub-Inspectors and Inspectors -- whose compensation was previously Rs 45 lakh and Rs 50 lakh, respectively -- the amount has now been increased to Rs 1.25 crore. For officers at the DSP and Additional SP ranks, we have increased the compensation amount to Rs 1.5 crore. For SPs and IPS officers, we have raised the compensation from Rs 1 crore to Rs 2 crore, the Chief Minister said.

"We currently provide an ex gratia of Rs 5 lakh to the families of Home Guards who lose their lives in the line of duty. I am directing the DGP to increase this ex gratia amount to Rs 10 lakh," he said.

This is not merely financial assistance; it is a gesture of respect from the government towards the families of police martyrs, he added.

He assured police personnel that the government remains committed to their welfare and the future of their families.

President Murmu to visit Chhattisgarh on Oct 22

New Delhi, Oct 21 (IANS) The President of India, Droupadi Murmu, will undertake a two-day visit to Chhattisgarh from October 22 to 23, 2026.

During the visit, she will participate in several significant cultural and public programmes across the state. On October 22, the President will be in Raipur.

She will release a commemorative coin in honour of "Mata Hasi Devi Ji" at Lok Bhavan. The special coin pays tribute to the revered spiritual figure and marks an important moment of recognition.

Later the same day, President Murmu will participate in two major events organised on the occasion of the "Nuakhai" festival. She will attend the 'Seva Samman Parv' and the 'Yuva Prabodhan' programmes in Raipur.

Nuakhai, a traditional harvest festival celebrated with great enthusiasm in the region, holds deep cultural significance for the people of Chhattisgarh.

The President's presence at these events underscores the importance of honouring community service and inspiring the youth.

On October 23, the President will travel to Jagdalpur in the Bastar region. She will attend the Muriya Darbar, a traditional tribal assembly that forms an integral part of the local cultural calendar.

Following this, she will grace a public programme organised on the occasion of Bastar Dussehra. Bastar Dussehra is a unique and elaborate festival distinct from the more widely known Dussehra celebrations elsewhere in the country.

It is deeply rooted in the traditions of the tribal communities of Bastar and spans several days with distinctive rituals and processions.

The President's visit highlights the rich cultural diversity of Chhattisgarh, bringing together spiritual reverence, harvest celebrations, tribal traditions and youth engagement.

The programmes in Raipur and Jagdalpur reflect the state's vibrant heritage and the Centre's continued association with regional festivals and community initiatives.

The two-day itinerary covers both urban and tribal heartlands of Chhattisgarh, allowing the President to connect with different sections of society through these culturally significant occasions.

Heavy traffic at Pantangi toll plaza as commuters return to cities after Dasara

Hyderabad: Heavy vehicular congestion was witnessed on the Vijayawada–Hyderabad National Highway (NH-65) near the Pantangi toll plaza in Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district on Wednesday, as thousands of citizens headed back to cities following the Dasara festivities.

Traffic flow surged significantly through Choutuppal mandal with motorists returning from their native towns and villages across Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. Toll authorities and local police were pressed into service to manage the bottleneck and ensure the smooth movement of vehicles.

The sudden spike in commuter volume comes ahead of the reopening of educational institutions, with schools and colleges scheduled to resume classes on October 22 after the festive break. Families traveling with children and office-goers returning to work resulted in long queues of vehicles at the toll booths, particularly during peak morning and afternoon hours.

To clear the backlog, toll plaza management activated additional lanes and deployed extra personnel to facilitate faster FASTag scanning and toll clearance. Traffic police officers were also stationed at crucial intersections along the highway to prevent gridlocks and prevent rash driving during the heavy rush.

Commuters experienced minor delays, but officials stated that traffic flow remained largely steady without any major accidents or prolonged disruptions. Authorities expect the high volume of traffic on the highway to continue through the evening as the post-holiday travel rush winds down.

Hyderabad Police rescues 4 Indian Rollers caged during Dussehra due to old superstition

Hyderabad, Oct 21 (IANS) Hyderabad Police rescued four Indian Rollers, Telangana's state bird, from illegal captivity during Dussehra celebrations. Superstition over the birds bringing good luck if sighted during the festival, has led to widespread cruelty and captivity of the Indian Rollers.

Police Commissioner, V.C. Sajjanar, said on Wednesday that acting on precise information provided by vigilant citizens, the Hyderabad City Police responded immediately. They conducted raids in three separate locations and successfully rescued four Indian Rollers, all alive.

"The Indian Roller (Palapitta)—the state bird of Telangana, which ought to be soaring freely in the skies—was confined in iron cages by some individuals for their own selfish motives during Dussehra. Despite our clear prior warnings that harming voiceless creatures would lead to strict legal action, some chose to ignore these cautions, subjecting these helpless birds to severe distress," the Commissioner said.

Two birds, suffering immensely in cramped cages near a temple at Bapu Ghat in Langer Houz, were liberated and handed over to the forest officials at KBR Park.

Another bird, found confined in a cage hung from a tree near the Sri Chitragupta Swamy Temple in Chatrinaka, and a fourth bird, kept in a cage near a temple in Balaji Nagar, Mangalhat, were also rescued and turned over to the forest department.Sajjanar said that in coordination with the forest department, strict legal action is being initiated against those responsible.Capturing a helpless bird in the name of a festival—subjecting it to torture by denying it food and water—serves no one; it is, in fact, detrimental to our society, he said."How can there be any auspiciousness in the cries of a bird, struggling in terror between the bars of a cage? True devotion lies in compassion for all living beings—not in holding nature captive," he said.

People believe that sighting Indian Roller on Dussehra brings good luck. Bird catchers and charmers capture the birds ahead of the festival to display them in cages near pandals and temples and charge money to devotees who want a guaranteed sighting.To keep them from flying away, poachers often tie their legs, trim or glue their wings, and confine them in small cages.These insectivorous wild birds struggle to eat in captivity and frequently die from dehydration, trauma, or starvation shortly after the festival ends. This tradition of capturing and displaying Indian Rollers is strictly illegal. They are protected by Schedule IV of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and the penalty for violating this Act is a hefty fine or imprisonment. The Commissioner appealed to people to act as responsible citizens by informing the toll-free numbers 18004255364, 9803338666 or dial 112 immediately if they come across Indian Roller caged anywhere.

Unit 5 of Yadadri Thermal Power Station synchronised to grid

Hyderabad, Oct 21 (IANS) The fifth unit of Yadadri Thermal Power Station (YTPS) in Telangana was synchronised to the grid on Wednesday.

Dr S. Harish, Chairman and Managing Director of Telangana Power Generation Corporation Limited (TGGENCO), congratulated the combined efforts put in by the teams of Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) and TGGENCO in achieving the milestone of synchronisation of Unit 5.

TGGENCO is establishing YTPS with 5 units each of 800 MW with a total installed capacity of 4,000 MW at Veerlapalem Village, Damaracherla Mandal, Nalgonda District.

The project consists of two units of 800 MW each in Stage-I and three units of 800 MW each in Stage-II.

Four units (Unit1, Unit2, Unit 3 and Unit 4) were already commissioned and put into commercial operation.

On Wednesday, Unit 5 was synchronised to the grid at 11:06 hrs and was hand-tripped for taking further COD operations, said an official release.

This significant milestone was achieved under the able guidance of Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, Special Chief Secretary to the Government (Energy), Navin Mittal, and Chairman and Managing Director (CMD), TGGENCO, Harish.

YTPS is claimed to be the largest State-run thermal plant in independent India.

The project was launched in 2017, and its revised estimated cost is Rs 36,131 crore.

The commercial operation of Unit 5 is likely to start. This is expected to boost the efforts of TGGENCO to meet the increasing electricity demand due to El Nino conditions.

The electricity demand has soared to 20,003 MW against the normal level of around 15,000 MW for October.

According to officials, there has been an increase in electricity demand of 5,000 MW mainly due to increased use of agricultural pump sets. The electricity consumption by the domestic sector has also gone up as the temperatures typically seen in March are being experienced in October.

Last month, the state government decided to procure G-9 grade coal from Mahanadi Coalfields and Coal India for YTPS.The Chief Minister had taken a serious note of the stoppage of power generation due to coal shortage.

Deputy Chief Minister Vikramarka, who is also the Energy Minister, had stated that due to the ill-considered decisions of the previous Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) government, the plant was constructed far from the pit head, resulting in an additional burden of approximately Rs 40,000 crore on the state for coal transportation.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Stampede deaths— a familiar saga of apathy

Stampedes at religious gatherings in India are not random acts of fate. They are the result of repeated failures of crowd management strategies. The death of 19 devotees at a Durga puja pandal in Kolkata came as yet another grim reminder of the serious gaps in our crowd management system, safety protocols, and emergency preparedness. The tragedy could have been prevented if the authorities had adhered to safety standards, especially when considering the anticipated increase in the number of devotees. The disaster took place at the Chorbagan Sarbojanin Durga Puja pandal in north Kolkata when the rain prompted people waiting outside to surge towards the pandal, while an announcement over the public-address system appears to have added to the commotion. The sequence fits into a familiar template—a combination of excessive density, constrained movement, poor anticipation, inadequate infrastructure and a failure to intervene before the crowd becomes unstable. The disturbing part is that India has known this for decades. The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has detailed guidelines for mass gatherings, while the Home Ministry has repeatedly advised States to prepare crowd-management SOPs and checklists. Yet the same failures recur. The pattern of stampede incidents is disturbingly familiar. So are the responses that follow. Compensation is announced, a probe is ordered, and a few officials are suspended amid a political blame game. And no lessons are learnt from past mistakes. It's business as usual till the next tragedy strikes. This has been the story of all recent stampede cases.

Time and again, India's administrators have failed to learn from past tragedies — from religious stampedes to election rallies. More than a decade ago, the NDMA released a guide on managing crowds at big events and mass gathering venues. The document emphasised capacity planning, crowd control, risk assessment, and real-time surveillance to prevent any mishaps. Inadequate infrastructure, disregard for scientific protocols, absence of accountability and a reactive approach to disasters continue to be significant obstacles.

The Kolkata incident is the latest in a series of such stampede deaths. In 2005, over 265 people died in a stampede at Mandhardevi temple in Maharashtra; 145 devotees in Himachal Pradesh's Naina Devi temple in 2008; over 250 worshippers in Rajasthan's Chamunda Devi temple in 2008; over 115 in Madhya Pradesh's Ratangarh temple in 2013 and at least 30 devotees at Prayag Kumbh Mela in January 2025, the sixth stampede during the Kumbh Mela in 70 years. Every stampede is a stark reminder that it is not miracles but proper planning and crowd management protocols that will save us. Repeated temple stampedes should be viewed not as unavoidable accidents or acts of fate, but primarily as failures of risk assessment. The lesson from the Kolkata incident, like many such tragedies in the past, is that the country needs a more dynamic and adaptive approach to crowd management.

Committed to Protecting Journalists' Rights and Resolving Their Issues

"TUWJ District President Abdul Rahman""""Kumrambheem, Asifabad, District. Reporter "Indian Chronicle"October. 22.""Abdul Rahman, who was elected for the third consecutive term as the District President of the Telangana State Union of Working Journalists (TUWJ–IJU), was felicitated by a team of journalists from Wankidi Mandal. The journalists met him at the TUWJ office in the district headquarters on Monday, presented him with a bouquet, honoured him with a shawl, and extended their heartfelt congratulations on his hat-trick victory."Speaking on the occasion,TUWJ District President Abdul Rahman stated that the welfare of journalists would remain his top priority. He assured that he would continue to work tirelessly to protect journalists' rights, address their grievances, and ensure their professional security.He emphasised that journalists play a vital role in society by acting as a bridge between the public and the government. Their efforts in highlighting public issues, exposing injustices, and bringing people's problems to the attention of the authorities are invaluable to society, he said."Abdul Rahman further assured that he would strive to resolve the problems faced by journalists by taking them to the notice of the union and the concerned authorities. He promised to work towards ensuring that all eligible journalists in the district receive the benefits of government welfare schemes. He also stated that the union would continue to fight for the benefits, welfare schemes, and other facilities that journalists are entitled to receive from the government."Highlighting the importance of unity among journalists, he called upon all journalists in the district to work together and strengthen the union to address their common concerns. He assured them that the union would always stand by journalists in safeguarding their welfare, family security, and professional dignity. He urged everyone to make collective efforts to achieve better results in resolving journalists' issues."Abdul Rahman expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the state leadership for reposing faith in him and entrusting him with the responsibility of District President for the third consecutive term. He also thanked all the journalists in the district for their support and confidence. He pledged to live up to their expectations and work with dedication for the overall development and welfare of the journalistic community."Journalists from Wankidi Mandal, including Krishna, Palli Suresh, Jadi Srinivas, Ratnam Tirupathi, Arun, Bhimrao, and others, participated in the programme and congratulated Abdul Rahman on his achievement. They expressed hope that under his leadership, journalists' problems would be addressed effectively and welfare initiatives would be strengthened further.

Grand Ravana Dahan Celebrations Held in Habsiguda

"--- Habsiguda Division President Kandi Shravan Kumar Reddy Attends as Chief Guest; Large Number of Devotees Participate""""HABSIGUDA , OCTOBER 21 (INDIAN CHRONICLE):The Ravana Dahan ceremony was held with great grandeur on Tuesday night at Sri Mahankali Rama Temple, located on Street No. 1 in Habsiguda, as part of the Dussehra celebrations.At the invitation of the festival committee, Habsiguda Division Congress Party President Kandi Shravan Kumar Reddy attended the event as the chief guest and witnessed the Ravana Dahan ceremony."As per tradition, members of the temple committee performed special prayers to the Jammi tree with devotion and religious fervour before ceremonially setting the effigy of Ravana ablaze.A large number of local residents and devotees gathered to witness the event, which symbolises the victory of good over evil."Temple Chairman and A-Block SC Cell President Chintala Baburao, temple trustee Vipin Agarwal, Dharma Raju, Sai Kumar, Mekala Shiva, Khalem and others participated in the celebrations.

Chilkanagar Senior Citizens Welfare Association's New Office Inaugurated on Vijayadashami

"--- Association Seeks 1,000 Square Yards of Land for Senior Citizens, Urges Government to Develop a Large Park on the Lines of KBR Park""""CHILKANAGAR, OCTOBER 21 (INDIAN CHRONICLE):The new office of the Chilkanagar Senior Citizens Welfare Association was inaugurated with great enthusiasm on the auspicious occasion of Vijayadashami. A total of 108 members attended the programme and made it a grand success.The office was inaugurated by prominent state-level leader Venkataiah Goud, District General Secretary Venugopal, Prem Kumar Goud and Prasad, who participated as chief guests. They formally opened the office by lighting the ceremonial lamp and cutting the ribbon.Speaking on the occasion, Association President Bommigani Dasu Goud urged the government to take special measures for the welfare of senior citizens in the Chilkanagar area. He appealed to the authorities to allot 1,000 square yards of land for establishing a permanent association building, a day-care centre, a library and a yoga centre for the benefit of elderly people. He said such facilities had become essential as the senior citizen population continued to grow."He also expressed concern over the increasing population density and rising air pollution in Uppal, Mallapur, Nacharam and Chilkanagar. He pointed out that adequate parks and open spaces were not available for senior citizens and children to enjoy a peaceful environment and breathe fresh air."Dasu Goud urged the government and local public representatives to reclaim the lands of closed and sick industries and develop a large public park in the area on the lines of Hyderabad's KBR Park. He stressed the need for more green spaces to improve the quality of life of residents.The organisers thanked all 108 members for attending the programme and making it successful despite their busy festival schedules.Association advisers, executive committee members, governing body members and other representatives also participated in the programme.

Grand Shami Puja Held at Mangapuram Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple"-

-- UPPAL MLA BANDARI LAKSHMA REDDY Participates in Special Prayers""""UPPAL, OCTOBER 21 (INDIAN CHRONICLE):"Shami Puja was performed with great devotion at Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple in Mangapuram on the occasion of Vijayadashami. On this auspicious occasion, Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy visited the temple and participated in the Shami Puja performed at the Jammi tree. He later offered prayers to the presiding deity and performed special rituals."The worship of the Shami tree on Vijayadashami holds special significance in Hindu tradition. Devotees expressed their wishes for the festival to bring victory, happiness, peace, prosperity and good fortune to everyone."The temple premises witnessed a festive atmosphere, with devotees participating in the religious ceremonies with great faith and devotion.Former corporators Jeripothula Prabhudas and Gundarapu Srinivas Reddy, along with others, participated in the programme.

Dussehra Celebrations Held Grandly at Venkat Reddy Nagar

-- Ayudha Puja, Jammi Tree Worship, Palapitta Darshan and Ravana Dahanam Attract Residents""""VENKAT REDDY NAGAR, OCTOBER 21" (Indian Chronicle):Dussehra celebrations were held with great enthusiasm at Venkat Reddy Nagar under the leadership of Akarapu Arun Patel, President of the Uppal Constituency Youth Congress. As part of the festivities, Ayudha Puja, Jammi tree worship, Palapitta (Indian Roller) Darshan and Ravana Dahanam were organised in a traditional and grand manner."A large number of colony residents and local people attended the celebrations and participated in the festivities. The traditional rituals highlighted the cultural and religious significance of Dussehra, while the Ravana Dahanam ceremony emerged as a major attraction for the gathering.Speaking on the occasion, Akarapu Arun Patel expressed his heartfelt gratitude to all the residents and families of Venkat Reddy Nagar for attending the celebrations

and making the event a grand success. He urged the residents to continue extending their support in the coming years to preserve and promote the region's rich culture, traditions and festive spirit.

New Executive Committee Members Appointed to Venkat Reddy Nagar Welfare Association

--- Work collectively for colony development and welfare: President Gaddam Sai Kiran""""VENKAT REDDY NAGAR, OCTOBER 21 (INDIAN CHRONICLE):The Venkat Reddy Nagar Development Welfare Association has appointed new additional executive committee members to strengthen colony development, welfare activities and public service initiatives. The appointment orders were issued on October 21 with the approval of Association President Gaddam Sai Kiran.As per the new appointments, Pujari Sommaiah has been appointed as Working President, Pisari Shankar as General Secretary, Billakanti Venkatesh and Vinay Kumar Goud as Vice Presidents, Endapalli Sudarshan Reddy as Treasurer, V??? Lakshmaiah as Secretary, and Yadamma as Joint Secretary. The appointments will come into effect immediately, the association president stated."President Gaddam Sai Kiran expressed his hope that the newly appointed committee members would discharge their responsibilities efficiently and give priority to the overall development of the colony. He urged all members to work together in coordination to transform Venkat Reddy Nagar into an ideal model colony.

'Rudhra' Enters Global Top 20 of James Dyson Award-26

""Hyderabad, October 21 (Indian Chronicle) : 'Rudhra', a voice-operated Braille printer developed by 20-year-old Lingampalli Himaja of Sri Vishnu Engineering College for Women, has secured a place in the global Top 20 of the James Dyson Award 2026, the organisers announced on Wednesday. The innovative device enables visually impaired people to independently produce Braille documents using voice commands, making printed information more accessible.

The invention was recognised through a selection process led by K.Yong, Principal Engineer at Dyson and a judge for the award's Top 20 entries. Sir James Dyson will select the winners in the final round, with the results scheduled to be announced on November 4. The winners will receive a prize of £30,000, the organisers said.

Ravana Dahan Celebrated with Grandeur in Ramanthapur

"--- Former Uppal MLA NVSS Prabhakar Attends as Chief Guest and Performs Ravana Dahan""""RAMANTHAPUR , OCTOBER 21 (INDIAN CHRONICLE):The Ravana Samhara Mela was celebrated with great enthusiasm in Ramanthapur as part of the Dasara Navaratri festivities, under the aegis of the Ramanthapur Dasara Utsava Committee. Former Uppal MLA NVSS Prabhakar attended the event as the chief guest and performed the Ravana Dahan ceremony."A large number of local residents, leaders and party workers gathered to witness the celebrations."Speaking on the occasion, NVSS Prabhakar said that Vijayadashami symbolises the triumph of good over evil. He stated that the ritual of Ravana Dahan conveys the message that righteousness will always prevail over unrighteousness and good will ultimately triumph over evil."He urged everyone to follow the ideals of Lord Sri Rama and remain committed to truth, righteousness and justice. He also emphasised that preserving Indian culture and traditions and passing them on to future generations is the responsibility of every citizen."Prabhakar further observed that festivals of this nature promote unity, brotherhood and spiritual awareness among people.The event was attended by Dasara Utsava Committee Chairman Burra Rajeshwar, Vice-Chairman Muthineni Jagadish, President Vallapu Jagan Yadav, General Secretary Talla Balakrishna Goud, Treasurer Itikala Venkatesh, Ramanthapur Division President Vangala Santhosh Gupta, along with other local leaders, party workers and a large number of residents.

OPPO F35 Series Smartphones Launched

"Hyderabad, October 21 (Indian Chronicle) : OPPO India has launched the OPPO F35 Pro and OPPO F35 smartphones, marking a decade of the company's F Series in India. OPPO India Head of Communications Goldee Patnaik announced the launch in a statement released in the city on Wednesday. The smartphones feature a 50MP ultra-wide natural selfie camera with a 100-degree field of view, a 50MP main camera with OIS, an 8,000mAh battery, 80W SUPERVOOC fast charging and IP69K water and dust resistance. The series aims to enhance group selfie experiences. The OPPO F35 Pro also supports 4K video recording through both its front and rear cameras.

Mega job mela to be held in Madhapur on October 26

HYDERABAD: A mega job mela is being organised on 26 October, from 8 am to 1 pm at Butta Convention, Opp AINU Hospital, Hi-tech City, Madhapur.

In a press release, the organiser, Mannan Khan, Engineer, said that many companies will participate in the job fair, offering opportunities in various sectors such as pharma, healthcare, IT and ITES, education, banking, and more. Some companies will also offer work-from-home options.

Candidates with a minimum qualification of SSC are eligible to attend. Preliminary interviews will be conducted at the venue. Entry is free, and interested job seekers can contact 8374315052 for further details.

Police Martyrs' Memorial Day Observed at Alwal Police Station

""Alwal, October 21(INDIAN CHRONICLE)""Police Martyrs' Memorial Day was observed with solemnity and respect at Alwal Police Station to honour the police personnel who sacrificed their lives in the line of duty while protecting law and order and safeguarding society.On the occasion, police officials paid heartfelt tributes to the brave martyrs, remembering their invaluable services and supreme sacrifices. They highlighted that the dedication, courage and commitment of police personnel who laid down their lives in the discharge of their duties would never be forgotten.The programme served as a reminder of the sacrifices made by police personnel to ensure public safety, peace and security. The participants paid their respects to the departed officers and remembered their selfless service to society.Alwal Police Station SHO Prashanth, Sub-Inspectors Raghavender Reddy, Chandrashekar, Tuljaram, Shanth Kumar and Neha, along with local residents Surender Reddy, Putnala Krishna, Bhaskar Reddy and others, participated in the programme and paid tributes to the police martyrs.

Police martyrs' sacrifices remain an enduring inspiration: Collector.

Karimnagar October 21, Khaja Sikandar Mohiuddin (Correspondent): District Collector Chitra Mishra and Police Commissioner Gaush Alam on Wednesday paid tributes to police personnel who laid down their lives in the line of duty, emphasising that their sacrifices in protecting lives and property and maintaining law and order would remain an enduring source of inspiration.The officials laid floral wreaths at the Police Martyrs' Memorial at the Karimnagar Police Commissionerate on the occasion of Police Commemoration Day. Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police Venkataramana read out the names of police personnel from across the country who had died in the line of duty, following which a ceremonial salute was accorded to the martyrs.

Ms. Mishra said remembering the sacrifices of police personnel who had died while maintaining law and order was a collective responsibility. Describing the police department as a key pillar of the district administration, she said a peaceful law-and-order environment was essential for the effective implementation of development and welfare programmes.She assured the families of the martyrs that the district administration would extend support for their welfare, particularly in ensuring educational opportunities for their children.

Mr. Gaush Alam said the police continued to work towards safeguarding the country's unity and integrity, maintaining internal security and protecting citizens. The best tribute to the martyrs, he said, would be for police personnel to discharge their duties with dedication and serve the public in keeping with the ideals for which their colleagues had made the supreme sacrifice.The Police Commissionerate and the government would continue to support the families of police martyrs, he said. The officials later interacted with the families, enquired about their grievances and assured them that steps would be taken to ensure that eligible compensation was paid in full.As part of the Police Commemoration Week, the Commissionerate will organise a series of programmes from October 21 to 31. These include blood donation camps, open-house programmes, essay-writing and short-film competitions, and awareness initiatives for students and youth.Additional DCP Venkataramana, Assistant Commissioners of Police, other police officers and personnel, and family members of the martyrs attended the programme.

BANNALA PRAVEEN MUDIRAJ Extends Dasara Greetings to BRS Working President KTR

""UPPAL, OCTOBER 21 (INDIAN CHRONICLE):"BRS state leader Bannala Praveen Mudiraj, along with Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy, extended Dasara greetings to BRS working president and former minister Kalvakuntla Taraka Rama Rao (KTR) on the occasion of the Dasara festival.On the occasion, Bannala Praveen Mudiraj met KTR cordially and conveyed his festive wishes. He expressed his hope that the auspicious occasion of Vijayadashami would bring happiness, prosperity, good health, progress and well-being to the lives of all people."He stated that the Dasara festival holds a special place in Telangana's cultural heritage and traditions. The occasion also witnessed an exchange of festive greetings among BRS leaders.

Telangana Minimum Wages Advisory Board Chairman Dr. B. Janak Prasad Calls on Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla

""Hyderabad, October 21(Indian Chronicle) Dr. B. Janak Prasad, Chairman of the Minimum Wages Advisory Board, Government of Telangana, called on Hon'ble Governor Shri Shiv Pratap Shukla at Lok Bhavan in Hyderabad.""The meeting marked an interaction between the Chairman of the State's Minimum Wages Advisory Board and the Governor.""The Minimum Wages Advisory Board plays an important advisory role in matters relating to minimum wage policies and the protection of workers' interests. Its responsibilities are significant in promoting fair wage practices and supporting the welfare of employees across various sectors.""The interaction highlights the importance of institutional engagement in matters connected with labour welfare and the broader objective of ensuring fair and equitable employment conditions in Telangana.

Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy Extends Dasara Greetings to KTR

"UPPAL, OCTOBER 21 (INDIAN CHRONICLE):"Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy met BRS Working President and former Minister Kalvakuntla Taraka Rama Rao (KTR) on the occasion of the Dasara festival and conveyed his Vijayadashami greetings."During the meeting, Bandari Lakshma Reddy extended his warm wishes to KTR and expressed hope that the festival of Dasara would bring happiness, good health, prosperity and success into the lives of people."He also wished that people across the state would lead peaceful and happy lives and that Telangana would continue to progress on the path of development."The courtesy meeting took place in a cordial and friendly atmosphere on the occasion of the Dasara festival.

The Shortage of Anti -rabies vaccine

""The Shortage of Anti-rabies vaccine in government hospitals of Bihar has made the situation panic. As the rising incidents of dogs and animals bite in both urban and rural areas have made fearful of human as well as the victims have to make worried and in this circumstances the situation becomes alarming." As the hospitals of Bihar have demanded from BMSICL(Bihar Medical Services & Infrastructure Corporation Limited) the dozes of 8,65,497 and only 22.6 percent vaccine reached in hospitals against the demand.As it is noted that the rising incidents of dogs and other animals bite occurred 28725 in 2021-22, 2,07,181 in 2022-23 , 2,44,367 in 2023-24, 2,83,274 in 2024-25 and 1,27,821 in2025-26 till Sept 2026." As the hospitals of Patna district have demanded 2,99,505 vaccine and got only 56,763 as 19 percent against demands.Gopalganj district got 15280 dozes of vaccine against the demand of 1,60571.In West Champaran district got 15,150 dozes of vaccine supplied against the demand of 1,60,232,In Rohtas district 37,300 vaccine supplied against the demand of 1,59 658.In Vaishali district 28,710 vaccine supplied against the demand of 1,55 770.In Gaya district of Bihar 22,567 vaccine supplied to the hospitals against the demand of 1,34,840.In Muzaffarpur district 29380 vaccine supplied against the demand of 1,33240.As Anti-rabies vaccine is 100 percent vital life serving injection used to prevent fatal rabies virus infection after animals bite or scratch or a protective measure before exposure." As in Bagha Subdivisional area of West Champaran a mad dog bite 35 persons in this week of October and victims were made the sufferer of Anti - rabies vaccine. They could not get the vaccine in Bagha Subdivisional hospital and after that they have to move other hospitals of the district to get vaccine. As in this regard the Civil Surgeon West Champaran district said that he had sent 100 vial of vaccine to Bagha Subdivisional hospital. Now the victims would be able the facilities of Anti rabies vaccine. As it is noted that the north part of Bagha Subdivision is surrounded with dense forest of VTR (Valmiki Tiger Reserve) and the people of forest adjacent localities become the victims of other wild animals like Jackle, bear, wild dogs etc besides dogs and other pet animals. As several victims get treatment in border adjacent hospitals in Nepal territory. "

As the Superintendent of GMCH (Government Medical college Hospital) Bettiah Dr Anil Kumar said that the stock of Anti-rabies vaccine and Anti Snake Venom is available in GMCH although the concerned department could not fulfill the demand but stock of such vaccine is available to provide treatment of the victims. To see the flood situation in the district the stock of AVS Is made appropriate. As after the receding of flood water the rescue of several types of snakes in the district has alarmed the Medical department of the district agaist snake bite and bite of other animals .DM West Champaranreviewed preparation ""On Wednesday the Distric Election Officer cum District Magistrate West Champaran Taranjot Singh reviewed a meeting with officers regarding the preparation of the election of MLC of Saran Teacher's Assembly Segment. As the election is going to held on 23 Oct 2026 .As it is noted that Saran Teachers Assembly Segment contains the area of five districts as West Champaran East Champaran, Gopalganj, Saran and Sivan of Bihar where the candidates of various political parties as the NDA,the Congress, the RJD,the Jansuraj and several others are in the fray.As the DM directed the concerned officers of the election to provide all the election materials as the Ballot Papers,Ballot Boxes ,other papers etc on 22 Oct 2026 and dispatch the concerned polling staff on time to reach their respective centres.As the election of MLC is going to held in 8 Assembly Segments of Bihar on 23 Oct 2026."

"Police Memorial Day Celebrates""On Wednesday Police Memorial Day was celebrated in Police Centre Bettiah, West Champaran in which the DIG Champaran range and the S P Bettiah participated. They offered flowers on their monument as well as paid rich tributes. They remembered their sacrifices for the wel?fare of humanity.Such brave police personnel and officers could not surrender before the miscreants ans anti social elements. The police personnel should get lesson from their sacrifices."" "Dead bodies of spouse recovered from tank""On Wednesday Sivan Police recovered the dead bodies of a spouse from a tank of Afrad village under the area of Maharajganj PS of Sivan district. As the deceased were identified as Vishal Kumar and his wife Sugandha Devi.The couple missed from yesterday .Further investigation is on in this regard. "

A girl allegedly raped"A girl was alleged to rape by some youths and made video under the area of Isuapur PS of Saran district of Bihar .The police arrested three youths in this connection and sent the victim girl for medical examination.The medical report is awaited in this regard.As the rising incidents of molestation, reel making and other types of crime against girls and women have worried the peace loving people of society. In previous several incidents occurred in several districts of Bihar but the incident like this can't be curbed."

A Dancer was misbehaved On the Stage.""In Begusarai district of Bihar a police officer slapped a dancer on the stage and showed his pistol in the air in Durga Temple locality of Panganj .After that a debacle scene appeared in the area .As the police officer alleged that the dancer was singing vulgar song on the stage during the period of Durga Puja Festival where as the dancer claimed that she was singing Jagran (devotional Song) On the stage.As soon as the matter reached near the senior police officers of the district, the SP Begusarai formed a probe team which led by the SDPO Begusarai and submit the probe report in this regard. After that further step would be taken."

" Houses burnt into ashes.""On Tuesday night three houses burnt in a devastating fire which broke out in Baria Chaudhary village under Basant pur block area of Supaul district of Bihar in which the properties about 40 lac destroyed. As it was suspected that the cause of fire incident would be the short circuit of electricity. As soon as the fire department got information about the incident the team of fire brigade rushed to the spot and doused the flame of fire." Mean while three persons of a family were stabbed in Sivan district of Bihar in which one died and two were under treat"treatment. As the old enmity would be reason behind this incident. ""Ajay Kr Mishra "Bettiah/Bihar

Congress Mandal President Gurunule Mengaji Offers Special Prayers to Sharada Matha at Chinna Bendara

""Kumrambheem, Asifabad, District. Reporter "Indian Chronicle"October. 22.""As part of the Sharada Matha Navaratri celebrations being held in Chinna Bendara village of Wankidi mandal in Komaram Bheem Asifabad district, Congress Party Mandal President Gurunule Mengaji attended the festivities and performed special prayers to Sharada Matha. He offered coconuts to the Goddess and worshipped her with devotion.On this occasion, Congress Party leaders expressed their wishes for the well-being of all villagers, praying that the blessings of Sharada Matha bring happiness, prosperity, good health, and peace to every family. They also wished for unity and brotherhood among the villagers and appreciated the traditional and devotional manner in which the Navaratri celebrations are being conducted."The programme was attended by Congress Party Mandal Vice President Selvutkar Pentu, Chinna Bendara Sarpanch Nagose Bhagyashree Annarao, Bambara Sarpanch Bendare Krishnaji, local Deputy Sarpanch Mohurle Ramesh, Durgam Dharmayya, senior Congress leader Kole Sadashiv, former local MPTC Usha,other Congress leaders, party workers, and village residents."

Grand Dasara Celebrations Enthrall Uppal"Festivities recreate the vibrant atmosphere of a traditional village

--- Huge crowds of city residents attend celebrations; TPCC Chief Mahesh Kumar Goud graces the event organised under the leadership of PARAMESWAR REDDY"""UPPAL, OCTOBER 21 (INDIAN CHRONICLE):"The Dasara celebrations organised by the Uppal Dasara Utsava Samithi were held with great grandeur and enthusiasm at the Uppal Municipal Stadium, drawing large crowds of residents from across the city.The celebrations were presided over by Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy, founder president of the Uppal Dasara Utsava Samithi. Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) President Bomma Mahesh Kumar Goud attended the event as the chief guest, along with former corporator Mandumula Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy, Vajresh Yadav, Bhupathi Reddy Narsireddy and other dignitaries."As part of the festivities, traditional Jammi Puja and the burning of Ravana's effigy were performed in the presence of the chief guests. The celebrations were specially organised to recreate the traditional atmosphere of a village Dasara festival, attracting a massive turnout of city residents who participated in the festivities with joy and enthusiasm."Several prominent local leaders and elders from Uppal attended the event, including Kandikanti Ashok Kumar Goud, Salla Rajireddy, Bommagoni Das Goud, Pashikanti Nagaraju, Bazaar Jagannath Goud, Bakaram Lakshman, Bazaar Pandu Goud, Chennareddy Raghupathi Reddy, Telkala Mohan

Reddy, Eega Anjaiah Mudiraj, Lingampally Ramakrishna, Bazaar Ramaraj Goud, Poojala Prabhakar, Ranganath Goud, Boosam Raghunath Reddy, Sunku Shekhar Reddy, Eega Santhosh Mudiraj, Salla Prabhakar Reddy, Aagam Reddy, Gorige Ailaiah, Devireddy, Manda Muralikrishna Reddy, Gorige Nagesh, Varkala Madan and Ram Reddy, among others."Members of the festival organising committee also participated in large numbers."The traditional celebrations created a festive atmosphere throughout Uppal. Residents attended the event with their families and enjoyed the cultural and religious festivities, making the Dasara celebrations a memorable occasion for the local community.

Jamboo Savari marks grand finale of Mysuru Dussehra celebrations

GNS News Agency, Oct 21

Mysuru: The Vijayadashami procession got underway in the city of palaces on Wednesday, marking the grand finale of the 11-day Mysuru Dussehra festivities.Celebrated as 'Nada Habba' (state festival), Dussehra, also known as 'Sharan Navaratri', was a grand affair this year, showcasing Karnataka's rich culture and traditions and evoking the pomp and glory of its royal past.Thousands are expected to witness the 'Jamboo Savari' later in the evening, featuring a dozen caparisoned elephants led by 'Prashantha'.Prashantha will carry the idol of Goddess Chamundeshwari, the presiding deity of Mysuru, in a 750-kg 'Ambari' (howdah) covered in gold.

Keralam Chief Minister V. D. Satheesan and Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy will attend this year's celebrations at the invitation of their Karnataka counterpart, D. K. Shivakumar, official sources said.Ambassadors, consuls general and high commissioners from various countries are also among the foreign dignitaries attending the celebrations, they said.At the palace, in keeping with tradition, Yaduveer Krishnadatta Chamaraja Wadiyar, scion of the erstwhile Mysuru royal family, took out the 'Vijaya Yatra' from Amba Vilas Palace to the Bhuvaneshwari Devi temple within the palace complex. He performed a special puja to the 'Shami' tree there.The procession began with Shivakumar, accompanied by ministers and other dignitaries, offering prayers to the 'Nandi Dhwaja' (Nandi flag) at the Balarama Gate of Amba Vilas Palace between 1.36 pm and 1.56 pm during the auspicious 'Makara Lagna'. Shivakumar then greeted the people of the state on Vijayadashami.Large crowds lined the procession route hours before it began.

Cultural troupes and tableaux from various districts, depicting regional culture and heritage, will travel about five km before the procession culminates at 'Bannimantapa'.Tableaux representing various government departments, schemes and programmes, as well as those carrying social messages, are part of the procession.Tableaux representing the three wings of the Defence Forces will showcase their valour, service and spirit. A contingent of Kannada film personalities is also participating.Shivakumar, along with other dignitaries, including Wadiyar, will flag off the 'Jamboo Savari' by showering flowers on the idol of Chamundeshwari in the howdah during the auspicious 'Meena Lagna', between 4.10 pm and 4.35 pm.Twenty-one cannon shots will be fired as Prashantha, flanked by 'Kumki' elephants, arrives at a specially erected dais where the dignitaries will offer flowers.The procession is held on Vijayadashami, which symbolises the victory of good over evil.In the past, the king would sit in the howdah accompanied by his brother and nephew. Sri Jayachamarajendra Wadiyar was the last ruling king of Mysuru to ride in it. The tradition continues, but the idol of Goddess Chamundeshwari is now carried in the howdah instead of a king.The core of the 750-kg howdah is said to be made of wood and covered with 80 kg of gold.

Supreme Court stays probe against Pinarayi Vijayan in CMRL bribery case for a week

GNS News Agency, Oct 21

New Delhi: In temporary relief to former Keralam chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan, the Supreme Court on Wednesday stayed for a week the investigation against him, his daughter and her husband in the alleged Cochin Minerals and Rutile Limited (CMRL) bribery case.A vacation bench comprising Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V. Mohana permitted Vijayan and the others to pursue an appeal before a division bench of the Kerala High Court against a single judge's order.

The apex court was hearing petitions filed by Vijayan and others challenging the single judge's order directing the registration of an FIR based on information supplied by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) under Section 66(2) of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA)."We set aside the impugned order and permit the petitioners to pursue the appeal before the division bench. We make it clear that our observations are limited to the issue at hand, that is, the locus of the petitioners to prefer the appeal, and are not an expression of opinion on the merits."To enable the petitioners to pursue the appeal on its merits, we give them liberty to pursue the appeal and seek interim relief in accordance with law. To enable them to do so, we direct that the investigation in the impugned First Information Report shall remain stayed for a week," the bench said.The Supreme Court also cautioned the ED against encroaching on the statutory domain of other agencies.

During the hearing, the apex court told the ED to pursue its investigation and prosecution within the limits of its statutory powers."Do your examination under the Prevention of Money-Laundering Act. File your complaint… You have got a scheduled offence. Go ahead with your prosecution. Don't extend your hand beyond your statutory limits. We are making your client (ED) very clear. Don't use the process of statutory powers to meddle into the statutory domain of other entities," the court said."We are fully clear about what you have done and what the high court has done. We will maintain the FIR but no investigation until and unless these issues are decided by the appellate court," Justice Bagchi orally observed.The remarks came after advocate Zoheb Hossain, appearing for the ED, defended the high court order and argued that the accused had no right to challenge it because the ED's information disclosed a

cognisable offence.The Supreme Court said it was not questioning the ED's authority to investigate the alleged hawala transactions or prosecute the money-laundering offence.However, it emphasised that once the ED had informed the state of an alleged offence under the Prevention of Corruption Act, it was for the state to act in accordance with the law.The apex court said the high court had "acted in haste" in directing the registration of an FIR against Vijayan and the others.On October 15, the Kerala High Court rejected applications by Vijayan, his daughter Veena T and her husband, P. A. Mohamed Riyas, seeking permission to appeal against the single judge's October 9 order. The high court held that "an accused in a corruption case has no legal right to be heard before registering FIR".In their appeals, the three had argued that the single judge had directed the registration of the FIR without hearing them.They also contended that the petition in which the October 9 order was passed was in the nature of a public interest litigation (PIL) and should therefore have been heard by a division bench dealing with PILs.The appeals followed the registration of two FIRs by the Vigilance and Anti-Corruption Bureau's (VACB) Special Investigation Unit-1 against Vijayan and his family members in connection with the case.On October 9, the high court directed the VACB to register a case based on a report submitted by the ED to the state police.The ED had sought registration of a case based on evidence gathered during its investigation and searches conducted under the PMLA.The agency has alleged that CMRL made fraudulent payments of Rs 2.78 crore to Veena's now-defunct company, Exalogic Solutions, under the guise of IT consultancy services.

Saurav Das, Ashutosh Ranka released from custody after peace undertakings

GNS News Agency, Oct 21

New Delhi: Cockroach Janata Party (CJP) leaders Saurav Das and Ashutosh Ranka were ordered to be released from judicial custody on Wednesday after submitting written undertakings before a Special Executive Magistrate (SEM), assuring the court that they would maintain peace and refrain from calling for protests at Jantar Mantar until the site is de-notified in accordance with law.SEM Ritu Raj directed the release of the two activists after they furnished personal bonds and surety bonds of Rs 50,000 each, valid until the conclusion of the inquiry in connection with the Jantar Mantar trespassing case.

In their written undertakings, both activists promised not to breach the peace and expressed full faith in the judiciary and all its instruments, including the SEM court."We reiterate our undertaking and commitment to peace, law and order, and public tranquillity. We further specifically state that we will not call for protests at Jantar Mantar until such time as it is de-notified in accordance with law," their undertakings stated.They further undertook that any protest would be conducted "within the four corners of the Constitution".

The SEM court observed that the immediate measures required under Section 135(3) of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) to prevent a breach of peace or disturbance of public tranquillity could be adequately secured through the execution of bonds backed by the written undertakings."Hence, further judicial custody does not appear to be necessary at this stage, particularly after written undertakings before this Court," the order stated.The SEM's release order came after Delhi Police sought a further three-day extension of their judicial custody, arguing that apprehensions of a breach of peace and disturbance of public tranquillity persisted in view of the activists' subsequent statements and conduct.The police also contended that the activists had taken contradictory positions before the court and in the media regarding their willingness to refrain from similar activities.During the proceedings, the activists' counsel tendered an unconditional apology to the court over remarks allegedly made by a party member while the two leaders were being taken to Tihar Jail on an earlier date.The SEM court directed the two activists to appear on every date of hearing and strictly adhere to the terms of their bonds and voluntary undertakings. It also directed the investigating officer to submit a verification report on the sureties at the next hearing.The inquiry will continue in accordance with law, and the matter has been listed for further proceedings on Friday at 3 p.m.Earlier on Wednesday, the Delhi High Court permitted Das and Ranka to withdraw their plea challenging the SEM court's order extending their custody, without expressing any opinion on the merits of the matter.A single-judge Bench of Justice Subramonium Prasad had asked their counsel to consider withdrawing the petition and awaiting the proceedings before the SEM court before pursuing an appropriate legal remedy.The two CJP leaders, along with party member Ajinkya Shinde, were among 14 people detained on October 13 after they allegedly entered Jantar Mantar through private premises and obstructed police personnel from discharging their official duties. The CJP members were protesting against alleged irregularities in the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls and had raised slogans against Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar.

Bihar worker held in Bengaluru over viral AI video of Vidhana Soudha bomb blast

GNS News Agency, Oct 21

vidhana soudha blast videoThe video showing the accused, Hazarat Ali (right), making a gun gesture and pretending to shoot at Vidhana Soudha, followed by an edited clip showing an explosion at the building and carrying the caption, 'Vidhanasabha Uda Diya Bam se'.The Bengaluru Police on Wednesday arrested a 25-year-old migrant worker from Bihar for allegedly uploading an AI-generated video depicting a bomb blast at Vidhana Soudha, the seat of the Karnataka legislature.

The video, posted on Instagram, showed an edited explosion at the building. The police are questioning Hazarat Ali, who uploaded it, to establish his motive and whether others were involved. They are also trying to determine whether the video was intended to cause panic or had any other purpose.According to the police, Ali, a daily-wage pipe fitter, had come to Bengaluru a few months ago.The incident came to light on Tuesday morning when an Instagram account named "jnx_king_h_g" uploaded the video showing the accused making a gun gesture and pretending to shoot at Vidhana Soudha, followed by an edited clip showing an explosion at the building and carrying the caption,

'Vidhanasabha Uda Diya Bam se'.According to the police, they registered a case on Tuesday after the video came to their notice during digital surveillance."The video was created using Artificial Intelligence to make it appear as though a bomb had exploded at Vidhana Soudha. We are investigating why he created and uploaded the video, and whether anyone else was involved in its creation or circulation," a police officer said.Investigators are examining the circumstances under which the video was created and circulated.

Priyank Kharge questions RSS over police permission for Karnataka march

GNS News Agency, Oct 21

Bengaluru: Karnataka Home Minister Priyank Kharge on Wednesday launched a sharp attack on the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), questioning whether the Police Department was subservient to the organisation.Reacting to a letter submitted by the RSS informing the police about its proposed march, Kharge said the organisation had provided information rather than formally seeking permission for the event."The letter says that they are informing the police, not seeking permission. Let them seek permission. Is the Police Department their domestic servant?" he asked.

Kharge also questioned RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat's statements on changing the existing governments and politics, asking who had authorised him to speak about a change of regime and political matters."What regime change are they talking about? How can regime change happen? The Chief Election Commissioner is theirs, the EVMs are theirs, and the voter list is theirs. Can these be changed? Form 6 is theirs, and Form 7 is theirs. There is still no answer to the question: Why does the Chief Election Commissioner have judicial immunity?" he said, referring to Forms 6 and 7 associated with electoral rolls."There is a conspiracy to ensure that they remain in power permanently. This has already been exposed. Isn't the fact that people are taking to the streets today evidence of this?" he said.He suggested that this was the reason some people were behaving with such confidence.Keeping up his attack on the organisation, he said: "Which evil force are we talking about? Who is the one developing links with Pakistan?"

He also called for an examination of the organisation's history and questioned what protests it had undertaken in the past.Kharge further said that protests taking place in foreign countries should not be compared with those in India, as the issues involved were different.Citing France as an example, he said protests there were being held over price rise and education-related issues, whereas demonstrations in India were being organised against the Election

Commission.His remarks come amid a political controversy over the RSS's proposed march and the procedure for obtaining police permission. The issue has triggered a debate over the organisation's activities and the conditions applicable to public processions.Priyank Kharge on Tuesday urged the RSS to follow the prescribed procedure and obtain formal permission from the competent authorities before conducting route marches in the state on the occasion of Vijayadashami.

The move has triggered a controversyIn a statement addressed to RSS volunteers, Kharge had said that merely informing the Home Department or asking it to cooperate and make necessary arrangements did not amount to obtaining permission.He urged the organisation to submit an application in accordance with the prescribed procedure applicable to all organisations and await formal approval from the competent authorities.Kharge also referred to the RSS Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha Annual Report 2025-26, saying that the organisation had conducted 562 route marches across Karnataka involving 2,21,963 uniformed participants.He said that if lakhs of RSS volunteers intended to march through the streets of Karnataka on a single day at the same time, the Police Department would have to make considerable preparations.

Congress jockeys for 'specific' seats, says talks with SP have begun

The Congress on Wednesday said it has sought specific constituencies in Uttar Pradesh as part of the seat-sharing agreement with the Samajwadi Party for the next year's Assembly polls in the state.Speaking to mediapersons in Lucknow, the UP in-charge of the Congress, Rajendra Pal Gautam, said the party has started the seat-sharing talks with INDIA bloc constituents in UP and expects a "respectable and honourable" arrangement."On the basis of our organisational strength, the confidence people have shown in us and our performance, we have put forward our demand for certain seats. Discussions have begun, and we are confident that the final arrangement will be honourable. The details will be shared once the agreement is finalised," the Congress leader said without elaborating which seats the party is keen to contest.

Gautam said the nationwide popularity of Rahul Gandhi, the Congress MP from Raebareli and Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, had contributed to the INDIA bloc's performance in Uttar Pradesh in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, when the alliance won 43 of the state's 80 seats.

"The results of the Lok Sabha elections, in which the INDIA bloc won 43 seats in Uttar Pradesh, show the impact of Rahul Gandhi's leadership and influence. The Congress is also strengthening its organisation at the grassroots, and we believe our organisational base is becoming stronger," he asserted.The Congress and the Samajwadi Party had contested the 2024 Lok Sabha elections in Uttar Pradesh as INDIA bloc allies. The Samajwadi Party won 37 seats and the Congress six, taking the alliance's tally to 43.For the Congress, which has just two MLAs but won six Lok Sabha seats in 2024, the negotiations are also about securing enough space to rebuild itself in a state it once dominated.Sources said that senior Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra is actively taking part in the seat-sharing talks with senior leadership of the SP. While Samajwadi Party leaders say that the Congress would be offered close to 50-60 seats, the Congress, on the other hand, is maintaining "respectable numbers" as its bargain.After initially speaking of contesting 150 seats, Gautam recently said: "Who asked for 150 seats? I had actually spoken about 200," arguing for "equal respect and equal share".Saharanpur MP and party's newly appointed working president of the state unit, Imran Masood, publicly urged Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh to settle the alliance quickly. "Finalise the alliance if you have to have an alliance," he said, adding that if Akhilesh had to lead, "dil bhi aapko bada karna padega (you will have to have a large heart)".

BITS Pilani Hyderabad campus to host ATMoS '26 from Oct 23

Hyderabad: ATMoS '26, the national techno-management festival of BITS Pilani's Hyderabad campus, will feature over 100 student technology projects, combat robots and high-speed drone racing, and is expected to draw more than 20,000 attendees from October 23 to 25.The three-day festival is expected to draw attendees from more than 60 institutions across the country, including IIT Hyderabad, IIIT Hyderabad and BITS Pilani's Goa campus, a release said.Organised annually since 2012, ATMoS stands for Assimilation of Technically Motivated Souls and aims to identify and nurture young talent in technology and management, it said.The Computer Science Association will organise an AI hackathon challenging student teams to develop AI-driven solutions to pressing social problems.The Tech Expo, organised by the campus Innovation Cell, will showcase more than 100 student projects in artificial intelligence, robotics and software development.RoboWars will feature more than 20 combat robots from across the country competing in head-to-head battles.The BITS Drone Racing League will feature more than 15 drones piloted by professional first-person-view (FPV) pilots. Organisers describe it as the largest field on the South India circuit.Beyond technical competitions, ATMoS' national outreach initiatives include Innowave, which promotes creativity, problem-solving and critical thinking through competitive and collaborative challenges, the release added.

'When they lose, EC becomes an issue': Nitin Nabin targets Rahul Gandhi over SIR

GNS News Agency, Oct 21

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) national president Nitin Nabin on Saturday challenged the Opposition to produce evidence of complaints filed during Bihar's Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, accusing its leaders of blaming the Election Commission after losing elections instead of raising objections through prescribed channels.Addressing an event in Patna, Nabin questioned why Opposition parties had not lodged what he described as authentic complaints after the revised electoral roll was published on September 30, 2025. He also targeted Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, accusing him and the Opposition of attempting to undermine India's development and political stability.

The remarks come as Opposition parties stage protests against the Election Commission of India, accusing it of failing to ensure electoral transparency and integrity. The demonstrations have centred on allegations of "vote chori" and concerns over the poll body's handling of electoral rolls, with leaders demanding greater accountability."On the day the entire SIR exercise was completed in Bihar, how many Opposition leaders filed complaints?" Nabin asked, referring to the three levels at which objections could be raised — the returning officer, district level and state election machinery. He claimed that Opposition parties, despite having their own booth-level agents (BLAs), had not filed a single authentic complaint.The Opposition, he said, had gone to Delhi to protest after the people of Bihar rejected it in the elections. "When they lose elections in Bihar or Bengal, the Election Commission becomes an issue for them. But when they win in Himachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu or Kerala, they do not remember the Election Commission," he said.Nabin also accused Opposition parties of reviving demands for ballot-paper elections to return to what he described as the period of "jungle raj", alleging that they had previously resorted to booth capturing and ballot theft.The BJP chief's remarks came during his two-day visit to Patna on October 17 and 18, coinciding with Navratri.Nabin also framed his criticism of the Opposition around the BJP's development agenda under Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He said India was progressing despite a global crisis and alleged that some forces were unable to accept the country's development."India's 140 crore people are moving forward with the resolve to make the country a developed nation," he said, adding that the Opposition was working as a "toolkit" for forces that did not want India to advance. He warned Gandhi and other Opposition leaders that the public would not allow their alleged objectives to succeed.Defending Modi's electoral mandate, Nabin said the Prime Minister was the first to have been announced as his party's candidate before seeking a public mandate in the 2014 general election. He argued that the electorate had directly endorsed Modi through its vote.Nabin also criticised Opposition protests involving the national flag in Delhi, asserting that the BJP had demonstrated its commitment to the Tricolour by hoisting it at Srinagar's Lal Chowk during periods of unrest in Kashmir. He accused Opposition leaders of remaining silent in the past when soldiers faced attacks, while claiming that the present government stood firmly behind the armed forces."The Tricolour is a symbol of our honour, pride and glory. We will not allow its dignity to be compromised," he said, adding that the flag represented India's freedom and success and could not be made a symbol of disorder.He further alleged that Opposition leaders focused on attempts to destabilise the country rather than discussing development schemes or changes in the lives of ordinary people. Nabin said BJP workers would counter such efforts "from the streets to Parliament".

The death of a family, helped along by a 'murder': 9 years later, Kerala Police say have a case

GNS News Agency, Oct 21

The story of the end of the prominent Koodathil family – owners of large tracts of land and properties worth an estimated Rs 100 crore, in and around Thiruvananthapuram district – has taken a twist. On October 13, police arrested a man who had long worked as the family's helper, Raveendran Nair, for allegedly killing its last surviving member, Jayamadavan Nair, in 2017.As per the Crime Branch of the Thiruvananthapuram City Police, Jayamadavan was killed as he had decided to get married. Raveendran reportedly feared the 63-year-old would have an heir, spoiling his plans. By then, Raveendran had allegedly forged Jayamadavan's will.Raveendran, now 60, retired as a non-judicial officer from the state subordinate judiciary. He lived with his wife and two daughters near the Koodathil family home in Karamana, on the suburbs of Thiruvananthapuram.

Kerala Police, Kerala Police solves death of family, Kerala Police solves murder of family, Thiruvananthapuram City Police, Koodathil family murder, Koodathil family death, Koodathil family mystery solved, Indian express news, current affairs Raveendran Nair, who was arrested for killing Jayamadavan Nair in 2017, arrested this weekPolice say that with all the men in the Koodathil family – which once had close ties with the erstwhile Travancore royal family – staying unmarried, Raveendran made himself indispensable to them, starting around 2005. After his last relative died in 2012, Jayamadavan came to lean on Raveendran more and more, with the latter allegedly calling the shots.The string of deaths in the family started with the death of Jayasree, the daughter of Koodathil Gopinanthan Nair, seen as the family patriarch, in 1991. She died of an ailment, and the next five deaths were also ruled as natural. "There was no FIR or inquest or postmortem in any of the deaths from 1991 to 2012, and there is no reason to suspect these were not natural," said an officer of the probe team.Given his familiarity with court work, police say, Raveendran planned meticulously to transfer the family property to himself. Since it was unpartitioned, he allegedly first forged a document in the name of Jayamadavan, then filed a plea in court saying Jayamadavan wanted the assets divided, and lastly, submitted another petition in Jayamadavan's name which said the family had reached an agreement on how to share the property.Accordingly, 33 cents of land comprising the Koodathil traditional house and another 1.5 acres were transferred in Jayamadavan's name. After that, in 2016, Raveendran allegedly forged Jayamadavan's will.

So when he got to know that Jayamadavan had decided to get married, Raveendran, who had allegedly rebuffed other marriage proposals that came for his employer, was "shocked", police say.As per officials, on the night of April 1, 2017, there was a scuffle between Raveendran and Jayamadavan over the issue. Raveendran allegedly hit Jayamadavan on the head, and he fainted. But Raveendran took him to hospital only the next morning, where he was pronounced dead.A case of unnatural death was registered on Raveendran's complaint, who claimed he had discovered Jayamadavan unconscious.

As per police, distant relatives of the Koodathil family suspected something untoward when Raveendran pressed for the last rites to be done fast. Weeks later, when Raveendran went to court to probate the will of Jayamadavan, those suspicions grew stronger.The first to go to police was Prasanna Kumari Amma, who was once married into the family and whose son is an heir in the family property.R Anil Kumar, a native of Karamana, next filed a complaint. "I knew them from childhood. When Jayamadavan died, there was an attempt to cremate the body even before the relatives came. Months later, I saw construction of buildings on the family land and the cutting down of trees," he says, explaining his suspicions.In 2018, Kumar wrote to then Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and the state police chief seeking a probe into the series of deaths in the Koodathil family, and alleging that vested interests wanted to take control of the property.The Crime Branch began its probe in October 2019, and registered a murder case against Raveendran in early 2021.Raveendran tried to block police attempts to put Jayamadavan's will through a forensic examination, but his plea was rejected by the High Court. "Once it was proved that the will was forged, it was a major breakthrough as it gave us a motive," a police officer said.Another lead was the finding that Raveendran had lied about using an auto-rickshaw to take Jayamadavan to hospital. Suspecting that he used a car, police looked closely at all his acquaintances, and zeroed in on Raveendran's close friend Anil Kumar.But Kumar was found to have sold the car used to take Jayamadavan to hospital. An officer said they managed to track the car down in 2024, to Kasaragod in the north, around 580 km away. "Forensic experts found blood stains in the car."Police made both Kumar and his brother-in-law Saju, who allegedly drove Raveendran to the hospital, accused. While Kumar was long dead by then, Saju managed to flee abroad.

Other discoveries raised more questions, like Raveendran's account that Jayamadavan possibly fell off his cot at night and got injured. An examination established that the head wound had been caused by a blunt object.Raveendran allegedly also failed a brain electrical oscillation signature profiling test (a neuro-psychological interrogation technique), suggesting that he had "significant experiential knowledge about the killing of Jayamadavan".With Raveendran charged with forgery to usurp the property of the Koodathil family, police had already frozen his and his family's accounts.A dilapidated house at Kulathara junction near main Karamana, surrounded by weeds, stands as a fading reminder of the once-aristocratic Nair family's power and prestige in the region.Having lived in the area for nearly 50 years, a local says the Koodathils kept to themselves. "They allowed only a few into their house. Earlier, in the joint family, Gopinathan Nair, Jayamadavan's uncle, had the last word. But while he was college-educated, others in the family did not even pursue studies," the septuagenarian who doesn't want to be identified says.What was sad was how the family let their fortune go to waste, including their land, even as they confined themselves to the house, he adds. He believes this was also the reason they developed illnesses, hastening their deaths.Prasanna Kumari, who retired as Under Secretary in the state Secretariat, got married to Gopinathan's elder brother Unnikrishnan in 1971. The first complainant in the case against Raveendran, she says: "It was not a house suitable for living. Wealth alone does not make your life happy. Gopinadan was inhumane. When things became very difficult, I walked out in 1977, six years after my marriage."With Raveendran in jail, her and Unnikrishnan's son Prakasan may be the sole inheritor of the family property. The 85-year-old is aware of it. "We do not know the extent of the property," she says. "The real battle is yet to start."

46 Muzaffarpur schools siphon Rs 70 crore under guise of repairs

GNS News Agency, Oct 21

Payment without actual work, multiple bills raised against the same job, district education officer (DEO) being bypassed for sanction of payments in over 700 instances, and the DEO office itself failing to produce records — these are some of the key findings from the Bihar government's internal report presented earlier this year after scrutinising development works across 46 schools in Muzaffarpur between 2023 and 2026.The schools under question allegedly withdrew a cumulative sum of Rs 70 crore by raising fake bills, or multiple bills for the same work.Even as a district administration-appointed three-member investigative committee conclusively reported the fraud and the district administration flagged the matter to the education department this June, no action has been taken yet.

The matter, however, was brought to the attention of CM Samrat Choudhary earlier this month through the Sahyog portal where a Muzaffarpur resident, Amrendra Kumar, sought follow-up action on the alleged large-scale fraud committed in the name of buying bench-desks and submersible pumps, repairing school buildings, and whitewashing.The Muzaffarpur district magistrate had set up the three-member committee in February this year after alleged financial irregularities, large-scale corruption, and procedural violations were flagged by Manoj Kumar Sahni, former Mukhiya of Loma Panchayat in Gaighat. The complainant had submitted a list of 46 schools across Gaighat and Minapur blocks, detailing 136 vouchers linked to works such as repairs, boundary wall construction, painting, and maintenance.Multiple bills: The investigation revealed multiple instances where the same school had bills drawn four to five times through agencies for the same work. A close analysis of the vouchers showed identical financial amounts across different schools, pointing toward the use of standard model estimates without conducting actual site inspections or preparing localised measurement books (M-books), the inspection committee report said.Violation of guidelines: The inspection committee also found gross violations of guidelines issued by the Additional Chief Secretary of the Education Department. According to guidelines, no estimate can be prepared or tender invited without a prior physical site inspection by engineers under the District Engineering Cell.According to the guidelines, works up to Rs 5 lakh require administrative approval from the headmaster, who must collect quotations from at least three local contractors and award the work to the lowest bidding agency.Works between Rs 5 lakh and Rs 15 lakh require administrative approval from the DEO and technical sanction from the Assistant Manager (Technical). But the inspection committee said field verifications and inquiries with headmasters revealed that school heads were completely unaware of these guidelines because the District Education Office failed to circulate them. Headmasters possessed no files, records, administrative approvals, or quotation documents for works executed, it said.

"No administrative approvals for works exceeding Rs 5 lakh were ever issued by the DEO; instead, projects appeared to have been artificially split to stay under Rs 5 lakh," the inspection committee report added.Fresh painting and old bills: While payments for these projects were shown as cleared prior to March 31, 2025, physical inspections revealed that painting work and boundary wall construction in several schools (such as Upgraded Middle School Dhubouli, Primary School Dhubouli East, Middle School Baghakhal) had actually been initiated or hastily executed recently in February 2026, often right after the public grievance was filed, the report stated. At schools like Upgraded Middle School, Loma, and Middle School, Choraniya, boundary walls were found under construction or recently rebuilt in February 2026, despite being billed under 2023-24 schemes.Missing records and resistance from the DEO office: Despite repeated reminders and formal letters dispatched by the Additional Collector (Departmental Inquiry) on multiple dates (February 26, March 7, March 16, April 1, and April 24, 2026), the DEO failed to submit mandatory files, work orders, M-books, and payment records, the report said. When committee members physically visited the DEO office on April 6, staff and engineers claimed files were "being searched," making it impossible to verify whether payments were made before work execution.Muzaffarpur DEO Arvind Kumar Sinha told The Indian Express: "The matter pertains to tenure of my predecessor. However, the three-member inspection committee did seek my help in certain matters, and I have provided them relevant documents. I had also accompanied the team during the inspection to one school under question. But I am not aware of action being taken in the matter."Bypassing protocols: The complaint highlighted that approximately 700 case files (sanchikas) regarding completed works were forwarded to the Bihar State Educational Infrastructure Development Corporation (BSEIDC), Patna, for payment without the knowledge of the DEO or the recommendation of the RDE (Regional Deputy Director).The committee observed that the creation of uniform measurements and identical bill amounts across diverse schools violates transparency norms and indicates table-work by engineering staff.With serious allegations involving state-level entities, the committee noted that as these officials fall outside its local jurisdictional purview, these agencies should be investigated by a specialised anti-corruption agency.Due to "the active withholding of files by the DEO office" and the heavy financial implications surrounding civil work execution, the committee formally recommended a special financial audit of the entire episode.A senior education department official said: "The secondary education director has written to the DM last month to take appropriate action in the matter. We are waiting for a compliance report from the Muzaffarpur administration."

Engineering student dies as lighting frame collapses during Dandiya night in Hyderabad; 15 injured

Hyderabad Dandiya celebrations death, Hyderabad Dandiya celebrations accident death, Hyderabad Dandiya celebrations accident, Dandiya celebrations death, Dandiya celebrations accident death, Dandiya celebrations accident, Hyderabad student dies as lighting frame collapses, Hyderabad, Indian express news, current affairsWhen asked if the college had permission to conduct the event, local police said the event was within the college campus. "They should have at least intimated the police about this massive crowd," DCP Shamshabad B Rajesh told

A student died, and 15 others suffered minor injuries when a lighting arrangement fell on them during Navaratri celebrations at a college in Hyderabad.The 18-year-old victim, Sona, was a tudent of MVSR Engineering College in Nadargul.The venue had more than 600 students when the accident took place, officers of the Adibatla police told The Indian Express. The incident occurred around 7.30 pm during dandiya, police said."The lights were erected on a rectangular frame. There was wind, and it didn't survive the impact. The frame fell immediately, killing the student," Inspector Adibatla S Ramesh said.The deceased was crushed under the frame and suffered head injuries, police said.When asked if the college had permission to conduct the event, local police said the event was within the college campus. "They should have at least intimated the police about this massive crowd," DCP Shamshabad B Rajesh told The Indian Express.Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy has expressed his condolences to the family of the deceased. He said that stringent action would be taken against those responsible for the accident. The CM assured the injured of the best medical care.

Attacks on Left book stalls mark a turbulent Durga Puja for CPI(M)

GNS News Agency, Oct 21

For the Left in West Bengal, this Durga Puja has been marked by a series of alleged attacks on book stalls and disputes over permission to set them up near pandals. The CPI(M) has accused BJP supporters of targeting its stalls and vowed to resist the attacks. BJP state president Samik Bhattacharya, however, has denied that his party directed any such action and urged people to report those responsible to the police.The latest incident was reported on Friday night, when a group of masked men allegedly vandalised several CPI(M) book stalls along GT Road in Bardhaman town. The CPI(M) said it had emailed the police in advance seeking security, but the vandalism took place despite the request.

CPI(M) state secretary Mohammad Salim said the attacks were taking place at several locations across the state. Trinamool Congress MLA Kunal Ghosh also criticised the alleged attacks, saying, "It appears that such a situation is being created from the BJP's side, and CPI(M) stalls

are being attacked in several places. They are being obstructed. This should not happen. The BJP is destroying the democratic space."A senior CPI(M) leader said the party's book stalls had faced attacks during the TMC's regime too, but not on such a scale.

50 detained in Karnataka over anti-SIR protest at Town Hall

GNS News Agency, Oct 21

detained in Karnataka over anti-SIR protest, Karnataka anti-SIR protest, Karnataka anti-SIR protest detainees, anti-SIR protest, Indian express news, current affairsTraffic movement around Town Hall was disrupted for some time due to the gathering and the heavy police deployment.Around 50 members of the All India Students' Association (AISA) and social activists were detained by the police on Saturday after they gathered near Town Hall to protest against the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls and demand the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar.

The protesters were taken in two buses to the City Armed Reserve (CAR) grounds on Mysuru Road in Chamarajpet, where they were detained for some time before being released.The police had deployed a heavy force and erected barricades near Town Hall to prevent the demonstration. Additional police platoons remained stationed in the area to prevent further protests.

The action came after the SJ Park police rejected the organisers' request to hold a demonstration outside VN Hall, citing Karnataka High Court guidelines restricting protests and rallies to Freedom Park.In a notice dated October 17, the police referred to the High Court order designating Freedom Park as the venue for protests and rallies. The notice prohibited demonstrations, rallies, placard displays and

mock protests at other locations and warned of legal action against violations. The police said the organisers could hold the protest at Freedom Park after obtaining the necessary permission and complying with applicable legal requirements."The Bengaluru police have formally rejected our intimation to protest at Town Hall," an AISA Karnataka member said.The organisers and activists criticised the police action, alleging that the State government was applying different standards to peaceful protests. They questioned the government's position, saying that while the Home Minister had spoken in favour of peaceful demonstrations and condemned police action against protesters in Delhi,

Gujarat sees highest ever single-day electricity demand of 29,822 MW

GNS News Agency, Oct 21

GUJARAT SAW its highest ever electricity consumption on Friday (October 16), reaching 29,822 megawatts (MW), even as production declined, in the renewable energy sector, the government said in a statement issued on Saturday. This development is largely attributed to the rainfall deficit coupled with rising demand during the festive season.As an immediate step to meet the energy demand, and secure supply for the Rabi season post-Diwali, the state government signed agreements to source a total of 1,379 MW of electricity from the Central quota and the NTPC Ltd's Farakka plant in Murshidabad, West Bengal and Assam as a long-term measure.In the statement, the government appealed to citizens to "use electricity judiciously in national interest" while assuring that the state had "sufficient supply to meet the power demand".

"Wherever possible, electricity consumption should be maximised during the day and unnecessary consumption during the peak evening hours (5 to 11 pm) should be avoided," the statement said.High-level meetings were convened in New Delhi to secure a daily supply of up to 13 to 14 coal rakes daily to the Gujarat State Electricity Corporation Ltd (GSECL), a state government enterprise, to meet the shortfall.State Energy Minister Rushikesh Patel, who on Saturday chaired a review meeting on the power supply situation, said "Our hydro and wind energy production has also reduced this year plus solar energy can be harnessed only till 5 pm. While we could have handled a 10-15 per cent rise in demand, this is an unprecedented situation."Principal Secretary, Energy and Petrochemicals and Chairman, GSECL Ashwani Kumar told The Indian Express, "We are confident of securing a long term tie-up to secure 500 MW from hydro and gas-based power plants located in Assam. We are also hopeful to get 500 MW of electricity from the Central quota. Both these tie ups should materialise in the next 8-10 days, in addition to 379 MW from the NTPC's Farakka plant (in West Bengal) for November."The government statement added that "Short-term tie-ups of 2,990 MW for October, 1,740 MW for November and 1,335 MW for December have also been made."One of the steps being taken is to increase the capacity of the Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) which stands at 192 MW at present.The Union Ministry of Coal has also assured a supply of 10-11 rakes per day for October which will go up to 13-15 rakes a day November onwards.Gujarat is entitled to a quota of 14 rakes a day, which had gone down to 7-8 rakes daily on account of the "weather situation," said sources."Action has been taken to ensure maximum efficiency of coal and optimal utilisation of resources in the state's power plants," the government said.According to the government statement, October 16 recorded power consumption of 574 million units (29,822 MW), resulting in 36 per cent (%) higher power demand than the corresponding period last year. The power consumption on the same day in 2025 was 457 million units, which is 27% lower than what was consumed on Friday.Sources said the demand during Navratri peaked by 500-700 MW "which will drop soon after the festival concludes".The state government has attributed the situation to the "El Nino effect" which caused a weak monsoon with temperatures remaining high leading to a significant load on the energy infrastructure. Coupled with this is the decrease in production of renewable energy. "Hydro power generation has declined due to low rainfall in Gujarat and neighbouring states, which usually peaks in October-November. Wind power generation has also declined due to low wind speeds while the demand has risen because of the Navratri and Diwali festivals and the power supply to farmers to save standing crops", the statement said.

The power demand in the agricultural sector is 12,000 MW a day after the state government, in September, increased the supply by two hours daily to help irrigate the fields.As the southwest monsoon withdrew the state on September 30, Gujarat had received 89.15 per cent of the rainfall where 11 of the 34 districts reported a rainfall deficit ranging from 20-59%. The districts of Porbandar and Devbhoomi Dwarka were the worst hit, reporting a deficit of 60%-90%.Overall, the months of September and October have reported a 12% higher electricity demand (4,000 MW) compared to last year, the statement said.Minister of State for Energy Kaushikbhai Vekaria was also present during Saturday's review meeting with senior officials of the Energy and Petrochemicals Department and all power companies regarding the increasing demand and power supply situation in the energy sector in Gujarat. The meeting discussed in detail the "main reasons for the increase in power demand in the state, steps taken for immediate remedial measures and the plans to meet the demand in the coming time", the government said. Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel is expected to chair another meeting in this regard on Monday, sources said.

Ukraine's Zelenskyy urges support for sanctions as winter attacks loom

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Kyiv: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy urged supporters on Saturday to speak out in defence of new US sanctions against Russia, hours after President Donald Trump signed an executive order pausing a sweeping package of restrictions targeting the Russian economy.The White House's decision has further raised fears that Ukraine could be left exposed to Moscow's escalating assaults as winter approaches.Zelenskyy described Trump's move to put the sanctions on hold as unfortunate but did not directly criticise the US leader, despite deepening tensions between Ukraine and Washington in recent days."Unfortunately, a decision was made in America to completely disregard the Lindsey Graham Act, which was supposed to impose truly effective pressure on Russia to bring this war to an end," Zelenskyy wrote.He also expressed hope that the new sanctions could be revived. "This Act could have helped enormously — and still can! But it needs to actually work, and every voice in support of it matters," he said.

Zelenskyy also said on Saturday that Moscow had carried out a massive strike on Ukraine's energy infrastructure, targeting more than 15 sites across the country.The sheer scale and unrelenting pace of Russia's strikes, specifically against our energy sector, are unfortunately having severe consequences," he said.Ukraine's air force said Russian forces had launched four cruise missiles and 332 attack drones overnight. All four missiles and 289 of the drones had been intercepted or destroyed, it said.Russia's heavy bombardment of Ukraine's power grid ahead of winter has been an annual feature of the war, aimed at wearing down Ukrainians' appetite for the fight by denying civilians heat and running water. Ukrainian officials have warned that Russia is stockpiling ballistic missiles for further attacks in the coming months.

Bipartisan US lawmakers move to block Trump's Russian diesel deal

GNS News Agency, Oct 21

Washington: A bipartisan group of US lawmakers has introduced legislation seeking to block President Donald Trump's arrangement to purchase and import Russian diesel, escalating congressional opposition to a policy critics say could provide Moscow with additional revenue for its war in Ukraine.The proposed legislation, introduced Friday by Congressman Gregory Meeks, ranking Democrat on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, would prohibit certain American government investments in Russian energy and invalidate Treasury Department licences permitting Russian fuel transactions.The measure, titled the Prohibit Corrupt Russia Oil Deals Act, also seeks to prevent future authorisations of the same kind.

Meeks said the administration's decision to permit Russian diesel purchases contradicted Washington's broader efforts to impose economic pressure on Moscow."This deal won't lower costs for the American people, who are already paying for Trump's failed war of choice in Iran," he said.He argued that allowing Russian diesel transactions would provide additional financial resources to President Vladimir Putin's government.The legislation would prohibit the US International Development Finance Corporation from investing in Russian energy.It would also nullify relevant general licences issued by the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control, the agency responsible for administering US economic sanctions.In addition, the bill would prevent the issuance of further licences permitting such transactions and require the administration to impose sanctions targeting Russian energy.The proposal represents a legislative effort to reverse the administration's policy rather than another congressional statement opposing it.The measure has attracted support from lawmakers in both parties, although most of its sponsors are Democrats.Republican Congressman Don Bacon is among the co-sponsors, alongside Democratic Representatives Ami Bera, Jim Costa, Steny Hoyer, Bill Keating and others.The involvement of Bera, an Indian-American lawmaker from California, adds a familiar congressional voice

to the wider debate over Russian energy sanctions.The bill follows growing criticism of the administration's decision to authorise Russian-origin diesel transactions.Earlier this week, lawmakers also questioned whether allowing Russian energy imports would undermine sanctions intended to reduce Moscow's revenues.A separate bipartisan letter led by Congressman Michael McCaul and Costa urged Trump to implement the Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act fully by its October 18 deadline.

That letter specifically identified India and China as major purchasers of Russian crude and called for secondary tariffs based on authoritative trade and maritime data.The latest legislation addresses a different issue: whether the United States itself should permit Russian diesel transactions while maintaining sanctions pressure on Moscow.Meeks accused Trump of weakening the American position towards Russia at a time when Ukraine continued to face military attacks.The administration's diesel policy has also become entangled in domestic concerns about rising fuel costs.Higher diesel prices affect transport operators, farmers and businesses across the United States, creating pressure on policymakers to increase supplies.However, the proposed legislation has not been enacted. It would require congressional approval and completion of the legislative process before its restrictions could become law.

18 dead in Kolkata pandal stampede where rain and rumour led to perfect storm

GNS News Agency, Oct 21

Eighteen people were killed and at least 25 injured in a stampede at a prominent Durga Puja pandal in Kolkata on Saturday night.First responders and officials said the stampede appeared to have been triggered by an announcement at the Chorbagan puja pandal that led to chaos. Details, however, were still emerging until late Saturday night as officials tried to make sense of a tragedy that unfolded in the middle of West Bengal's biggest festive season.Videos taken before the stampede, which occurred between 7 pm and 8 pm, appeared to show a large crowd waiting to enter the pandal. The area comprises narrow lanes where only three to four people can walk side by side at any given point.

According to locals who spoke to The Indian Express, several factors appeared to have contributed to the tragedy: narrow lanes, ostensibly too few volunteers to manage the festival-goers, rainfall that prompted people to rush into the pandal, and an alleged announcement warning that the pandal might collapse if the crowd was not brought under control.A woman who lives in the locality said the volunteers were largely local youths who know little about crowd management. She and several others in the area said it did not appear that an ambulance was on standby.The dead and injured were rushed to Calcutta Medical College, less than two kilometres away. Until midnight, dozens of distraught relatives were awaiting news of their loved ones.Speaking to The Indian Express, Dipa Dey, a relative of one of the victims, Sriparna Poddar (26), said, "Sriparna lived in Baidyabati, Hooghly, and worked as a nurse with a private hospital. Today was her day off, and she went pandal hopping with her friends. Chorbagan is a famous puja.""What were the organisers doing?" Dipa asked. "We all know how popular the puja is; where was the security?"Sultan Ahmed, whose family friend Kalpana Yadav (42), also from Hooghly, died in the incident, said, "She was with family to see Kolkata's famous pujas. Her children survived. What can I say? What arrangements did the authorities and the puja committee make?"

Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari, who visited the hospital, said police had detained the puja organisers and private security guards hired to manage the crowds, which swell into the thousands at pandals across the city, especially in the evenings."As per the briefing I have received so far, there was an announcement by the organisers on loudspeakers, after which the incident took place. (Home Minister) Amit Shah ji has cancelled his programmes (in the state) tomorrow. He will visit the injured and the victims," Adhikari said, adding that a few of those injured were also critical."I appeal to all puja committees to work with the police administration, and if there are any loopholes at the entry and exit points, correct them. People's lives are more important than the puja theme," he said.The state has formed a fact-finding panel to probe the incident, while forensic and fire brigade teams will also try to ascertain what went wrong. CCTV footage is expected to aid investigators, officials said.The Prime Minister has announced an ex gratia payment of Rs 2 lakh to the next of kin of those who lost their lives. The injured will receive Rs 50,000 each.Former chief minister and All India Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee said she was "deeply shocked and saddened to learn about the stampede"."I pray to Maa Durga for the speedy recovery of all those injured and for strength and courage for their families during this difficult time," she said.Nilanjan Das, her party's spokesperson, said the stampede "raises grave questions of criminal negligence and accountability on the part of the Kolkata Police and the Adhikari-led administration".

India, US close to first tranche of trade deal amid dairy hurdle

GNS News Agency, Oct 21

Washington: India and the United States are close to sealing the first part of a trade agreement, with dairy access the biggest remaining obstacle, as Secretary of State Marco Rubio heads to India.President Donald Trump on Friday signed an order implementing the Lindsey O Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act and waiving its tariffs on buyers of Russian oil.At its core, the trade negotiation is an exchange: lower and predictable US tariffs on Indian goods in return for wider access for American products in India.

Under a framework announced in February, Washington cut its reciprocal tariff on Indian goods from 25 per cent to 18 per cent and removed an additional 25 per cent duty linked to India's purchases of Russian oil. In return, India committed to eliminate or reduce tariffs on US industrial goods and a range of farm products, including tree nuts, fruit, soybean oil, wine and spirits.Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Thursday that the first tranche had been finalised and was in legal drafting, but that implementation would depend on clarity about India's competitive advantage.External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has said the talks are nearing a "landing point". US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer said on October 2 that a deal was not imminent.Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday expressed hope that the India-US trade agreement would be concluded at the earliest, in the interest of global trade and bilateral economic ties.India's merchandise exports "surged 23 per cent to $44.4 billion in September 2026, while the trade deficit narrowed," the Consulate General of India in New York said on X on Friday.Large Indian purchases of US goods, such as commercial aircraft, coking coal, gold, energy and defence equipment, are among the ways the gap could be narrowed.For India, the energy stakes are practical. Its refineries are configured largely for medium sour crude, a grade that comes mainly from the Gulf and Russia. Lighter US crude and heavier grades can be blended in, but only up to a point. With shipping through the Strait of Hormuz disrupted by the West Asia conflict, replacing Russian barrels quickly is difficult.At the same time, India has turned sharply towards American gas. The US became India's largest liquefied natural gas (LNG) supplier for the first time in the March-May quarter, according to Kpler data.In August, the US supplied more than half of India's liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) imports, though the UAE overtook it in September as Gulf cargoes rebounded.Rubio travels to Samarkand, Mumbai and Jamnagar from October 17 (Saturday) to 22. He is scheduled to hold talks with EAM Jaishankar in Mumbai on October 20.Rising fuel prices ahead of the November 3 midterm elections give Washington its own reasons to avoid sharp supply disruptions.

Telangana BJP MP connects Indo-Bangladesh enclave issue with Delhi voter-roll protests

GNS News Agency, Oct 21

New Delhi/Hyderabad: Telangana Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP Konda Vishweshwar Reddy has connected India's long-unresolved border enclaves with Bangladesh to the ongoing protests in Delhi against the Election Commission's Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, adding that the past territorial anomalies enabled illegal migration that still affects voter lists today.In a video explanation circulating widely, Reddy described the pre-2015 situation as one of the most bizarre international borders in existence.

"India had 111 enclaves inside Bangladesh while Bangladesh had 51 enclaves inside India. In some places the complexity ran deeper: second-order enclaves existed where a Bangladeshi pocket lay inside an Indian enclave that itself sat inside Bangladesh, and vice versa. These territories, left over from the Partition era, created service-less zones in which residents lacked reliable access to administration, identity documents and clear citizenship pathways for decades."The anomalies were finally settled through the 2015 Land Boundary Agreement, negotiated and passed by the Parliament under Prime Minister Narendra Modi.Under the swap, residents were given the choice of citizenship and the last remaining pockets of foreign territory on either side of the border were eliminated."Reddy presented this resolution as the closure of a long-standing irregularity that had facilitated unchecked movement across the frontier.Such stupid borders were designed for political interests… and they continued from the day of Partition till recently, till 2015 until the Narendra Modi government came," the Telangana BJP MP said.He then linked that history directly to the current protests in the national capital.

Demonstrators have opposed the Election Commission's SIR exercise, which critics claim has removed more than 130 million names from the electoral rolls," Reddy added.Supporters of the BJP MP's video said that the voter revision is a necessary housekeeping measure to identify and delete illegal or ineligible entries.Protesters, by contrast, said that large numbers of genuine eligible voters have been wrongly struck off and have demanded the resignation of the Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar.Reddy framed the voter revision exercise as a logical continuation of earlier efforts to regularise citizenship and prevent infiltration from distorting democratic processes.He contended that porous borders and political patronage in certain states had previously allowed illegal migration to continue as a form of vote-bank politics, naming the Trinamool Congress in West Bengal and the Congress in Assam and elsewhere, with effects felt as far as Hyderabad, Delhi, Bihar and Odisha.

Gadwal farmers buy tanker water to save crops, yet supply woes persist

Jogulamba Gadwal: Despite spending heavily to arrange water for their fields through tankers, farmers in Jogulamba Gadwal district remain worried about saving their crops amid a worsening water crisis.With groundwater levels plummeting, borewells running dry and intense heat causing crops to wither, farmers are forced to purchase water and transport it to their fields. However, their efforts are proving inadequate to meet the crops' water requirements.

The situation is particularly grim in Tuppatralla village of Ieeja Municipality, where farmers are spending heavily on water tankers. They often transport water to their fields in tractors in the dead of night in a desperate attempt to save their crops.Local farmers Venkatanna and Viresh are among those struggling to protect their chilli crops. After their existing water sources failed to meet irrigation needs, they drilled three new borewells, but none yielded water.They are now purchasing around 10 tankers of water every day in an effort to save their crops. Despite the considerable expenditure, uncertainty over the harvest continues to haunt them.

The crisis extends beyond Tuppatralla to several other villages in Ieeja mandal, where farmers are suffering losses after borewells failed to yield water.Already burdened by cultivation costs, farmers are now incurring additional expenses to procure water. With borewells failing and tanker supplies proving insufficient, many are facing mounting financial distress and uncertainty returns on their investment.

Exam for jobs in UP House: Owners of testing firms have dubious paper trail — and an arrest record

At a noisy traffic junction in the heart of Lucknow, behind a tangle of cables, is the two-room "main office" of TSR Data Processing, the private firm at the centre of a contentious recruitment drive for key administrative positions in the secretariats of the UP Legislative Assembly and Council.This is just one of the 10 addresses in two states linked to the private firms involved in the recruitment that prompted the Allahabad High Court to order a CBI probe, an investigation of RoC records by The Indian Express shows. This newspaper visited all the listed addresses to meet the owners of these recruitment firms — and hit a deadend at each of them.TSR Data Processing Ltd: Records show that TSR was incorporated in July 2010 by Ram Beer Singh and Satya Pal Singh along with Mohd Tariq who is now not a part of the firm.

The Indian Express visited the "main office" on the second floor of Adarsh Complex at Engineering College Chauraha and met the two employees posted there."We are a manpower supplier to government departments and other organisations. Nearly 1,500 workers have been outsourced by our company so far. We are also involved in recruitment. Our directors come to the office only occasionally," said one employee who identified himself as Deepak.The Indian Express also visited TSR's other Lucknow addresses listed in RoC records of Satya Pal Singh and Ram Beer Singh. The premises at both these addresses were occupied by other persons. Ram Beer and Satya Pal did not respond to requests for comment — at least five of their relatives got jobs in the Assembly secretariat.After exam for jobs in UP House, a fifth go to VVIP kin: Ex-Speaker staff, kids of Principal Secretaries

On April 6, 2021, a UP Police Special Investigation Team (SIT) arrested Satya Pal and Ram Beer for their alleged role in the recruitment of Village Development Officers in 2018-2019. Along with them, another person identified as Ram Pravesh Yadav was also arrested. All three are on bail. Yadav is the owner of Rabhav Ltd, according to RoC records.A senior police officer, who was part of the SIT at the time, told that Ram Beer, Satya Pal and Ram Pravesh had also allegedly "confessed to their role in the manipulation of results in the Assembly and Council recruitment as well". "But the SIT can only investigate matters referred by the state government which, in this instance, was the other recruitment case," the officer said.Rabhav Ltd: Rabhav was originally incorporated in August 2015 in Delhi as Rabhav Technologies Ltd and renamed as Rabhav in March 2017. Ram Pravesh Yadav is the majority stakeholder, and his wife a stakeholder at incorporation. Yadav is the nephew of Shambhu Singh Yadav, an influential IAS officer who retired recently as Deputy Lokayukta. His wife was selected to the post of Review Officer in the UP Legislative Council. visited three Lucknow addresses listed in the name of Ram Pravesh in RoC documents. At one of them, in Aliganj, local residents said "there is no one by that name here". At another address in Gomti Nagar, the trail led to a hotel. "Ram Pravesh sold this property to us many years back," a hotel employee said. The third address in Gomti Nagar Extension could not be traced.Rabhav's address is listed at Delhi's Mangolpuri Industrial Area but an employee of another company on the premises said, "Rabhav moved from here nearly four years ago." A Delhi address listed at Vishal Tower in Janakpuri "has been locked for over a year", local residents said. Another Delhi address, at Pitampura, was found to be occupied by a man who said he had "no information" about Rabhav.Chatrashakti Info Solutions Pvt Ltd: This Lucknow firm conducted the typing test for the posts of Assistant Review Officer (ARO) and Additional Private Secretary (APS) for the Assembly. RoC records show that Puneet Kumar, one of the directors of Chatrashakti, is also a director along with TSR's Satya Pal Singh and Ram Beer Singh in a Delhi-based company Dreamlogix Infotech Ltd. Apart from Kumar, Vivekanand Rai is also listed as a director in Chatrashakti which was incorporated in May 2019. visited the Lucknow address listed in RoC records for Chatrashakti, a man who identified himself as Shailendra Singh said, "Vivekanand and Puneet took this property on rent and were running the company from here. They left around a year ago."

In Mumbai, slums are most sought after but least benefitted

In the 2019 state assembly election, around 40-lakh of the one crore registered voters in Mumbai came from slums; the major pockets being Dharavi, Ganpat Patil Nagar (Borivali-Dahisar belt), Shivaji Nagar (Govandi), Chembur East, Bandra East, Malvani (Malad) and Cheeta Camp, which significantly contributed to voter turnout.Mumtaz Shaikh, a social worker from Anushaktinagar constituency, said, "During the last election, we were promised water connections within 100 days, but nobody has seen a single drop of water."Issues facing Mumbai's slum communities extend beyond attention to basic needs. Drug abuse and rising crime rates are towering concerns, often compounded by a lack of access to quality education. Shaikh pointed out absence of educational infrastructure curbs opportunities for the youth, steering them away from employment and leading them into crime. "No one wants solve this issue," she said.

Professor Mrudul Nile, from the department of political science and public policy, University of Mumbai, said, "Slum residents are among the most active participants in elections, largely due to their population density. Many work as temporary gig workers for political parties and are often paid to show support in public meetings."He added, "Every time, they hope things will change. Until this cycle of 'hope and promise' is broken they will continue to remain mere tools in the machinery of electoral politics."Nearly 80% of the youth in Shivaji Nagar struggle to complete basic education for want of facilities and therefore remain unemployed. This, local resident Anwari Khan, a housewife, said has led to a scale-up in crime and overuse of drugs in the area. "Despite several complaints with the authorities, no one takes a serious note or action," she said.Khan, who actively participates in welfare initiatives for the area, threw light on pressures the community faces from local politicians. "Some tell us to vote for them, with a warning that others aiming for 'Hindu rashtra' will drive us out. Yet others check if we have received money from the Ladki Bahin scheme. If we say yes, they register our name and voter ID and ask for our vote," she said.

Another homemaker Heera Shaikh, from Sanjay Nagar, recalled the unfulfilled promises by political leaders, such as water supply and cleanliness, in the last election. "Water connections were provided, but distribution is unequal. They removed all the dustbins from the area, and hence BMC does not pick up garbage," she said.Pollution from the Deonar dumping ground and a medical waste disposal plant, close by, has led to many health-related problems. Protests and complaints have fallen on deaf ears, said Shakil Siddique. "There is an increase in the number of TB and asthma patients," he said.The combined impact of inadequate sanitation, pollution and unmet political promises leaves the residents of Shivaji Nagar and Sanjay Nagar doomed in a cycle of health risks, crime and neglected infrastructure.The area is a diverse mix of government colonies, residential towers and slum communities. "Leaders visit us once in five years, making promises they do not keep," said Chitra Nikalje, a resident of Cheeta Camp, drawing attention to poor roads and lack of bus services. "As roads are bad, BEST buses do not run here, forcing us to walk 1.5kms to the nearest bus stand" she added.One of the pressing issues in the slum colonies is stalled rehabilitation of slum dwellers, arising from conflict between builders and government. "Many of us have been waiting for homes under the SRA scheme for seven to eight years," she said.The area has also suffered substantial loss of green cover due to metro construction. Naseem Shaikh, another resident, said, "Despite several requests, streetlights on the newly constructed road in Cheeta Camp, which connects directly to Ghatkopar, continue to be non-functional. Lack of lighting has led to at least one accident, some fatal, on this road every week."Other unresolved issues include unreliable water supply, poor drainage system, and the lack of doctors and facilities at Shahaji Hospital. These challenges, residents said, impair quality of life in the area.Residents of Ekta Nagar, on P L Lokhande Marg, are facing severe sanitation issues, as common toilets have been shut due to lack of water connections. Over 1,000 women share four toilets, while 1100 men share just two. Gayatri Howal, a resident, said, "After we tabled our demands, common washrooms were built, but they lack water and light. Only one is functioning with dirty running water, despite us paying for use."

Similar problems are beset in Vashi Naka. Sandhya Yadav said, "We can't build additional wash rooms due to a railway line nearby. The few we have are inadequate, while open drainage lines cause many accidents, especially among children and seniors." She added, local leaders' promises in the past turned out to be mere lip service.Usha Deshmukh, a resident of Sahyadri Nagar, said, when nullahs are cleaned, "the refuse is dumped by the drains which ends up back there, leading to floods in the monsoons".Also, as they receive water once in 10 days, they are compelled to buy water at ?3 for a pot, delivered every four days. "Our MLA promised us better water connection during the last election; but nothing has changed," she said.Political representatives have also failed to keep promises of slum rehabilitation, supporting unemployed youth, improving health facilities at Shatabdi Hospital, and constructing a railway station at Vashi Naka.In the dark alleyways of Behrampada slum in Vandre East, just beside the railway station, residents have been waiting for redevelopment for 40 years. "The talks started since the time of my parents; one of them is dead now," said Shakeel Sheikh, a resident and internet cable operator in the area. "I doubt it will happen in my lifetime."In another slum, Bharat Nagar, sitting NCP MLA Zeeshan Siddiqui had opposed an SRA project's survey earlier this year on the grounds it would displace the 4,000 residents in high rise towers -- a point under investigation by police as a possible reason for the murder of his father, Baba Siddiqui."We were promised redevelopment in the last state elections. As our entire lives, work and schools are here, we don't want to be caught in a situation where we vacate our homes and never get new ones. If we're given transit accommodation and a guarantee, we will agree," said Atia Begum.Other significant issues are: rampant drug use, poor education, cleanliness, and dirty and poor water supply. Promises were parroted to alleviate the woes during the last elections, but remain unresolved.Ambujwadi is one of the densest slum pockets of Malvani. Chief demand of the area is to declare it a 'slum'. In the absence of that, demolition drives are ordered intermittently, including during monsoons, despite a government ban.

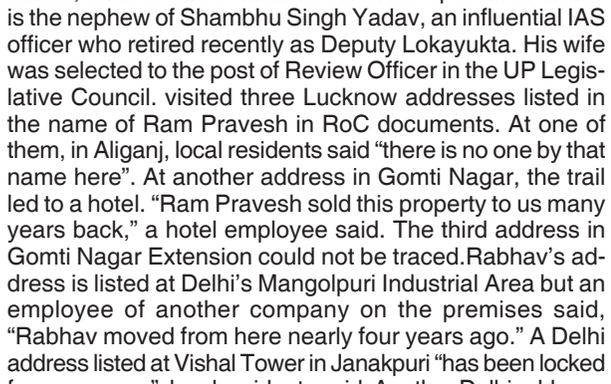
"As Ambujwadi is not technically characterized as a slum, many services are denied. As a result, residents live in perpetual threat of demolitions," said Vikas Waghmare. "This was promised in the last state elections too, but has not materialized."Road and infrastructure are other pressing issues. Existing roads are poorly maintained and frequent traffic snarls make navigating through them very time consuming. "Parts have no bus connectivity, and share rickshaw drivers run a cartel," Waghmare added. "Building proper roads and bridges is a big demand."Akhilesh Rao, a social worker from the area, said, "road concretisation in the area, started a month ago, is running at a snail's pace".Waghmare added the area also sees rampant drug use by both children and young adults. "Every politician talks about a drug-free Malvani, but there has been little change over the years – there is no pressure on police to act either," he said.

NMC issues advisory on digital signatures for medical records, sets rules for doctors

With the increasing prevalence of telemedicine, the National Medical Commission (NMC) on Tuesday issued an advisory regarding the use of digital signatures for remote authentication of medical records. Doctors have been advised to authenticate medical records digitally only after they have reviewed all relevant clinical information, records, and other material necessary for giving an opinion. It adds that signing digitally does not dispense with or diminish the professional, ethical, and legal responsibility of doctors.

Only records from associated healthcare facilities can be authenticatedThe advisory also warns that a registered doctor can digitally authenticate only the medical reports and records generated by a healthcare facility where the doctor is appointed, empanelled, contracted, or professionally associated.Digital authentication credentials must remain under the doctor's controlImportantly, it says that all digital signatures, electronic signatures, signature creation data, authentication credentials, access tokens or other authentication mechanisms used should remain under the control of the doctor alone and not be shared, delegated or transferred to others knowingly.Foreign medical experts and remote consultations

"Where a foreign medical expert provides a remote consultation or second opinion to an Indian healthcare establishment, such opinion may be considered by the treating team in accordance with applicable law. The identity, professional qualifications, professional registration/licensure, date and nature of the consultation and the professional opinion provided by the foreign medical expert shall, to the extent applicable, be appropriately documented as



part of the patient's medical record."Advisory does not recognise foreign medical registrationIt adds that the advisory should neither be construed as permitting practice by persons who are not authorised to practise medicine under the National Medical Commission Act, nor should it be construed as recognising foreign medical registration, the advisory states.Need for uniform implementation"Rapid advancement of digital healthcare technologies has significantly transformed the manner in which healthcare services are delivered across the country. It is noted that divergent practices have evolved across healthcare establishments resulting in uncertainty regarding the remote review and authentication of medical records. Therefore, in order to promote uniform implementation of the existing legal framework, remove ambiguity, ensure patient safety, preserve professional accountability and facilitate responsible adoption of digital healthcare technologies," the advisory said.

Behind the curve, but Grap 3 finally in place in Delhi-NCR

.After two suffocating days of "severe" air quality and more than two weeks of persistently "very poor" air, members of the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) finally initiated Stage-3 of the Graded Response Action Plan (Grap) across the National Capital Region (NCR) on Thursday.The decision comes as residents grapple with dangerously polluted air, with health experts and citizens decrying the delayed enforcement of stricter anti-pollution measures.

Stage-3 of Grap, which goes into effect at 8 am on Friday, imposes 11 new restrictions targeting two primary sources of urban pollution: emissions from older vehicles, as well as dust generation from construction and demolition activities (C&D).CAQM's sub-committee, responsible for activating Grap, convened to implement measures only after Delhi's air quality remained in the "severe" range for 48 hours and amid growing public frustration.Grap-3 also offers the choice for NCR governments to consider suspending in-person classes for children in primary school and taking them online instead.The measures also came into effect after widespread uproar from citizens who continued to suffer from a relentless onslaught of pollution that engulfed the city in an apocalyptic smoky haze, leaving people with two choices – either remain captive inside their homes or offices with doors and windows shut or step out and bear the toxic air.

In a marked shift from its stance just a day prior, CAQM reversed its initial decision to hold off on Stage-3, citing earlier projections that air quality would improve on Thursday. However, this forecast failed to materialise, and by Thursday, air quality had remained dangerously high.CAQM's sub-committee on Grap consists of 12 members. It is headed by NP Shukla, member-technical CAQM as its chairperson and has CAQM member secretary Arvind Nautiyal and CAQM member Sujit Kumar Bajpayee as its members. Other members of this sub-committee include member secretaries of CPCB and the state pollution control boards of Delhi and NCR. Other members are VK Soni from IMD, IITM's Sachin Ghude, Dr TK Joshi from the Maulana Azad Medical College and director technical of CAQM, Ram Kumar Aggarwal as its members.

The measures rolled out by the CAQM's sub-committee ban all private C&D works across the city along with all activity by stone crushers and miners across the wider swathe of NCR.In terms of vehicular restriction, it restricts BS-4 or lower light motor vehicles (LMVs, or simply put cars) from plying in Delhi, Gurugram, Faridabad, Ghaziabad and Gautam Budh Nagar. Further, there are restrictions on the movement of BS-3 and lower medium goods vehicles

(MGVs) and Light Commercial Vehicles (LCVs) from plying in the Capital.Stage-3 also asks interstate buses from NCR to be stopped from entering Delhi if they are not CNG, electric or complying with BS-IV diesel or higher.

Major construction and demolition projects like railway projects, metro, airport, ISBTs, national and defence-related projects, healthcare facilities, linear projects such as roads and flyovers and sanitation projects will continue under this category, according to GRAP guidelines.Delhi's AQI touched "severe" for the first time this season on Wednesday, on a day when the Capital and its surrounding region woke up to the season's first very dense fog with visibility falling to zero.CAQM, despite the deterioration, opted not to invoke Stage-3 measures, stating an improvement in AQI is expected by Thursday. "The sub-committee has noted this steep rise in AQI of Delhi owing to this episodic event, since this morning.

However, owing to stronger winds, the pollutant concentration and thereby the AQI, is expected to start showing a declining trend Thursday onwards and the AQI is likely to move back to the 'very poor' category the next day," the CAQM sub-committee had said on Wednesday evening.The delay in implementing restrictions has invited criticism from environmental advocates and public health experts, who argue that Grap's intent is to act pre-emptively rather than in a reactive, emergency mode.Experts condemned the delay, stressing that residents, particularly the elderly and children, have been breathing harmful air since Wednesday."

If Stage-3 comes into effect from Friday, it means people have been breathing severe air since Wednesday morning. This particularly is quite harmful for the elderly and children. CAQM, instead of invoking it on Wednesday itself, has taken a delayed response, despite Grap require pre-emptive and emergency level action," said IIT-Delhi's Mukesh Khare, an air pollution expert.

Shekhar Suman still dealing with son's loss: Why grief lasts for years

Actor Shekhar Suman continues to deal with grief even years after losing his son Aayush to a complicated heart condition. His experience is a reminder that the loss of someone close does not necessarily fade with time. A person may return to work, meet friends and carry on with everyday responsibilities while continuing to struggle with the loss privately. For some, the pain becomes easier to manage; for others, it can return unexpectedly, even years later. Birthdays, festivals and family gatherings can bring back the realisation that someone important is no longer there."Grief is not something that follows a fixed timeline. The experience varies from person to person, depending on their relationship with the deceased, the circumstances of the loss and their emotional support system," says Dr Monica Chib, senior consultant, Psychiatry, Indraprastha Apollo Hospital, Delhi. Excerpts:

Why managing grief is a tough, long-term exerciseLosing someone means losing more than their physical presence. It can also mean losing shared routines, emotional support and future plans. For a parent who loses a child, the loss may include the future they had imagined for them. For someone who loses a partner, everyday activities can become painful reminders of their absence. The circumstances of the death also matter. A sudden loss may leave unanswered questions, while a prolonged illness can bring months of worry and emotional exhaustion.Continuing to miss someone years later does not mean a person has failed to heal. Grief can remain part of life even as its intensity changes.Why everyone experiences grief differentlyThere is no fixed timeline for grief. Some people want to talk about their loss, while others become quiet or focus on work to cope. Neither response tells the whole story of what someone is feeling.Grief can also change with circumstances. A wedding, a festival or a personal achievement may bring back the sadness of not being able to share that moment with a loved one. In India, where family occasions often centre on shared traditions, these moments can be particularly difficult. A person may feel better for weeks and then struggle on a particular day. This does not mean they have lost the progress they have made.Practical ways to cope with griefAcknowledge your feelings: People often feel they must remain strong for their families. Talking to someone they trust, writing down their thoughts or allowing themselves time to process a difficult day can help. There is no need to judge yourself for feeling sad, angry or emotionally numb.Maintain a simple routine: Grief can affect sleep, appetite and concentration. Regular meals, adequate rest, short walks and manageable daily tasks can help bring some structure back. If these difficulties persist, consider speaking to a healthcare professional.Find ways to remember the person: Looking at photographs, sharing memories or continuing a meaningful tradition can help keep a person's memory alive. Prayer and family rituals may also provide comfort for those who find them meaningful. There is no single right way to remember someone.Accept that family members may grieve differently: One person may want to talk frequently, while another may find conversations difficult. Rather than assuming everyone needs the same support, ask what would help.Allow yourself to enjoy life again: People sometimes feel guilty when they begin laughing with friends, returning to hobbies or making future plans. But experiencing happiness does not make the loss less important. Sadness and happiness can exist together.Grief does not become a mental health condition simply because it lasts a long time. However, support may be needed when stress becomes overwhelming or makes everyday life difficult to manage.Persistent guilt, severe anxiety, ongoing sleep problems, hopelessness or difficulty maintaining relationships are reasons to seek help.Prolonged grief disorder is a recognised condition in which intense longing for, or preoccupation with, the deceased causes significant distress and affects daily functioning. A psychologist or psychiatrist can help a person understand their experience and explore suitable treatment. Seeking help does not mean someone is grieving incorrectly; it means they do not have to manage everything alone.

Ecostani | Climate change and tourist rush pose challenges to pristine glacial-clad Kinnaur

An old monk in Nako village in Himachal's Kinnaur district, Wanktoo Lama, wearing a traditional Buddhist robe and a green Himachali cap, is exasperated with the rise in temperature in this lake village in the upper Himalayas.Standing outside the Buddhist monastery in Nako, Lama's wrinkled face showed signs of disbelief as he said that it had never been so hot in Nako. He predicted that the village could face a drinking water crisis if it continues to heat up the same way it did in the summer of 2024.As per the India Meteorological Department (IMD), this summer, Kinnaur witnessed the highest maximum summer temperatures in the past 50 years.

The maximum temperature in Nako crossed 30 degrees Celsius this summer, melting the snow on the peak above the village and forcing locals to shun their light winter wear."It is so hot that we have dumped our jackets and pullovers," said another villager, Recham Lama, who runs a utility shop with his mother on Nako highway which was brimming with tourists from across India.The long-term impact of climate change can be seen in the tribal districts of Kinnaur and Lahaul/Spiti. The flat roofs of homes in Nako are being replaced with tin pent roofs as the region, which once only received snow, is now getting rain."When I was a young boy," Wanktoo said, pointing at a young tourist at the newly built monastery with tin pent roof, "there was no rain here.""It only used to snow and the village was covered in snow for seven to 10 months in a year. We cleared snow from the roofs and the bright sun dried the (flat) roof in a day," the 82-year-old monk, who has lived his entire life in the village, said.That is not the case now. He said Nako now receives heavy monsoon rain and because of this water leaks from the stone and mud roofs, making traditional homes uninhabitable. "People are putting tinned roofs to deal with rains," Recham said.The rains have gifted the cold desert a rich cash crop of apples that has replaced the traditional crops of buckwheat locally called 'ogla' and 'fafda' in the past two to three decades and has brought economic prosperity for locals, who had to deal with harsh weather conditions.

The locals have developed apple orchards through terrace farming on the steep slopes near water sources such as rivers and streams. Most of the orchards survive due to irrigation from the Satluj river, its tributaries and local streams.The apple orchards have also brought its ills such as hordes of pesticides and insecticides used to control farm diseases, which have emerged with higher temperatures. The high use of chemicals could also have polluted some of the rare water sources in the cold desert.Better roads and demand for connectivity in recent decades have resulted in a high inflow of tourists into mountainous tribal areas. There was a traffic jam in Nako village – unheard of even a few years ago — caused by vehicles from other parts of Himachal, Punjab, Haryana, Delhi and even from far-off states Gujarat, Rajasthan and Maharashtra in the last week of June.A local in Sangla, another tourist hotspot in Kinnaur district, said that there was a kilometre-long traffic jam on the narrow road to Chitkul, the last Indian village on the border with China, in the first week of June. "At some locations, police had to be deployed to manage haphazard parking of vehicles leading to jams. There was a very heavy rush of tourists this year," he said.

The states of Himachal and Uttarakhand witnessed an unprecedented rush of tourists this summer as holiday-makers rushed to the mountains to escape heatwave conditions reported from many areas in the plains: Shimla, a town of a hundred thousand people recorded half a million tourist vehicles in the first week of June.Over 2.8 million people have visited the sacred 'Char Dham' in Uttarakhand between May 7 and June 30, double the number that came for pilgrimage in the same period in 2023. A high tourist flow was also recorded in Nainital and Mussoorie, two popular hill stations, in Uttarakhand.As the weather gets warmer, unprecedented numbers of tourists are reaching far-flung areas up the pristine upper Himalayas with scant respect for local ecology and environment. Many among them dump plastic along the way; small eateries that cater to them add to the pollution because they operate without waste disposal mechanisms.One could see plastic waste strewn around the sacred Nako Lake, which many tourists, and along the highway between Nako and Pooh, especially at tourist spots such as 'Khab Sangam'.As the number of people visiting these places is increasing and the climate is slowly but surely changing due to global warming, the Union government needs to frame a tourist management and environment policy, working in tandem with the governments of Himachal, Uttarakhand and Jammu and Kashmir.The policy needs to focus on regulating the flow of tourists to remote and pristine areas of the Himalayas to put new destinations on the map for tourists to explore and reduce the pressure on the usual tourist spots.This would not only help local economies to flourish but also possibly prevent human-induced degradation of the Himalayas which is a young mountain range.Chetan Chauhan, national affairs editor, analyses the most important environment and political story in the country this week

Eye on the Middle East | How China-Saudi defence ties are evolving

GNS News Agency, Oct 21

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's defence minister Prince Khalid bin Salman visited Beijing, holding meetings with his Chinese counterpart Dong Jun as well as the Vice Chairman of China's Central Military Commission Zhang Youxia.

The two sides reportedly agreed to take bilateral military ties to a "higher level", with the relationship between both armies being on a "fast-track" after multiple exchanges, joint drills and exercises, and personnel training".This meeting is only the latest in a number of developments across the last five years that have shown a significant deepening of the Saudi-China relationship. In any case, China's diplomatic stock in the Middle East grew substantially after it successfully negotiated a rapprochement between Riyadh and Tehran in 2023. However, a key marker of the evolution of the relationship has been a fresh effort to expand defence ties.This is even more so as it is the United States' defence commitments to the Middle East that continue to be seen as ensuring its dominance as the primary security partner to Arab states such as Saudi Arabia whose economic relationship with China has grown by leaps and bounds; Saudi Arabia's top imports are from China ($36.5 billion), with USA placed third ($11 billion). With a fresh Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in place between both states since 2022, Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 is also aligned with China's Belt and Road Initiative.

Now, China's defence forays are aimed at taking advantage not only of US failings in the region but also the inherent desire across Middle Eastern states to diversify and indigenise military imports; note that deep relations with China are a common denominator across the Gulf – including Iran.Parallel to Bin Salman's visit, senior military officers from multiple Arab states attended a seminar on "deeper" security cooperation with China. Held as part of the PLA's International College of Defence Studies' course on "The Future-oriented Arab-China Security Cooperation", the course sensitises officers on Arab-China security cooperation as well as China's Global Security Initiative. Such military interactions between both states have only increased - in October 2023, Saudi Arabia and China launched Exercise Blue Sword 2023 in southern China's Guangdong province – a counter-terror naval special operations exercise.Moreover, China remains the front-runner in Saudi Arabia's quest for a civilian nuclear programme, even as the kingdom holds out hope for a US-led project. These only supplement bilateral economic interactions. While China had announced in 2022 that it looks to buy oil in yuan instead of US dollars, on June 5, Riyadh joined the China-dominated Bank for International Settlements' cross-border digital currency project — its latest effort in moving from the US dollar.There is also an indication of growing comfort in Riyadh while it expands ties with China and protects ties with the United States. While the Saudi investment minister stated in June 2023 that in Riyadh's view, its relationships with China and USA complemented each other, the energy minister asserted a year ago that he "ignores" western criticism of increasing Saudi-China ties because "you will go where opportunity comes your way".Note that even as the United States cleared the way for the sale of Patriot missile-defence systems to Saudi Arabia in 2022, it has consistently refused to sell ballistic missiles to Saudi Arabia, citing Missile Technology Control Regime concerns. This in turn has led Riyadh to develop its own ballistic missiles with Chinese assistance.The fact that ballistic missiles are now used as part of conventional conflicts, especially by armed non-state actors such as the Iran-backed Houthis, shows that concerns solely related to the nuclear capabilities of ballistic missiles, are outdated as the modern battlefield evolves. This only increases Riyadh's need to take advantage of Chinese offers and the efficiency of equipment sales.More importantly, Riyadh continues to stay away

from the US-led Operation Prosperity Guardian in the Red Sea, even as Washington tries to increase Riyadh's stakes in potential diplomatic normalisation with Israel by offering a mutual defence treaty (currently being negotiated). It is this deal that stood out during Antony Blinken's visit to the kingdom last month (explained here).With the treaty, Saudi Arabia might become the first non-NATO treaty partner of Washington in the Middle East. However, as Bilal Y Saab has also highlighted – the Saudi-US deal is dependent on the normalisation of ties with Israel which itself is now contingent on the creation of an independent Palestinian state – meaning that if even one leg of this triad fails, the other two fail as well. Even in an optimal geopolitical environment, such an arrangement for a full-fledged mutual defence pact is difficult to imagine as viable (even if agreed upon).

As Chinese arms sales to the Middle East at large crossed 80% between 2013 and 2023, US officials were "quietly" warning Middle Eastern states against purchasing arms from China as it would undermine the US military's integration with regional partners.In any case, CENTCOM Commander Michael Kurrilla publicly stated in the Senate Armed Services Committee in March 2023 that since Chinese arms sales move much faster (express shipping, financing, no end-user agreements) it hinders integration with US equipment. Hence, even if the cause for the purchase of Chinese arms (the need to diversify) is acceptable to Washington, the effect (operating both US and Chinese equipment) is not. Should Riyadh's defence ties with Beijing reach critical mass sometime in the future, it is bound to raise unavoidable questions regarding the sale of US arms to Saudi Arabia, and even more so regarding a working defence pact.

What, then, does this portend for geopolitics in the Gulf?

Notwithstanding the myriad changes in the Middle East's security landscape across the last decade, the consistent presence of US forces, backed by advanced assets and platforms (with one carrier strike group always present in the Northern Indian Ocean) has been the foremost reason for continued US dominance as the main security partner for most Arab states.The CENTCOM's position in Bahrain, combined with the US' long-time defence commitments provides it a large bank of trust and credibility, showing that Washington can commit resources.

However, with Israel's war on Gaza touching nine months and a relentless Houthi campaign against international shipping in the Red Sea, Riyadh is evidently (still) placing its bets on Beijing to weigh on Tehran for a cessation of Houthi attacks on ships headed to (and departing from) Saudi ports.As the Saudi defence minister reportedly discussed again this with his Chinese counterpart, note that Washington itself has tried leveraging Chinese influence on Iran for the same ends.

The final (legal) frontier

"A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away…", are the opening lines of every Star Wars film. But today — more than ever before — scenes from this iconic sci-fi series are within reach. Perhaps not as dramatically as George Lucas imagined, but intergalactic travel, exploration and conquests are a reality. We Earthlings set out on this course, back in the 1950's, much before Lucas.On October 4 1957, the Soviet Union inaugurated the space age with the launch of Sputnik 1, the world's first artificial satellite. "Back then there were no outer space treaties. But this was when the idea of such a law was born", says Adithya Variath, Head of the Centre for Research in Air and Space Law at the Maharashtra National Law University, Mumbai.

Variath explained that this fascinating field of law today comprises a variety of international agreements, treaties, conventions, rules and regulations that govern nations in outer space. One such regulation is The Outer Space Treaty, drafted under the aegis of the United Nations, which came into effect in October 1967.Variath said the law is reactive and comes about due to a societal need, explaining that when Sputnik 1 was launched, there was no outer space law. "Since 1919, laws recognised each country's sovereignty over the airspace directly above its territory. This was the more traditional aerospace law but there were no clear and explicit acts or laws governing space exploration or outer space when Sputnik was launched."

With the success of Sputnik, USA and USSR launched a series of space missions: Sputnik 2 in November 1957 which carried the first living organism into space - a dog named Laika; In January 1958, the USA launched Explorer 1; in December 1958, the USA launched the World's first communication satellite which broadcasted a pre-recorded message from the 34th President of the United States, Dwight D. Eisenhower; between January - October 1959, USSR launched Luna 1, 2, 3 while USA launched Explorer 6. All of these missions and many others took place before space laws were in force."The first significant International law only came into force in 1967, with the enforcement of the Outer Space Treaty. Prior to this, there were some scant resolutions and soft laws that couldn't be enforced. This gave these two nations an advantage over those countries that launched space missions after the laws and restrictions were in effect," Variath said.Today there are other treaties and regulations in space law, but the Outer Space Treaty remains the most significant international policy.It is due to this Outer Space Treaty that no nation can legally conquer the moon; as per Article II of the treaty, "Outer space, including the moon and other celestial bodies, is not subject to national appropriation by claim of sovereignty, by means of use or occupation, or by any other means." But the law is silent on individual claims and based on this loophole, many websites will sell you a crater or two. Is it a legit deal?While you can't buy real-estate on the moon, you can invest in space, much like Elon Musk and Jeff Bezos. "The space economy is valued at $6.3 billion and is estimated to reach $1.8 trillion in 2035," Variath said.

In 2020, Musks's SpaceX became the first private company to be significantly involved in operations that sent humans into space. For the first time in human history, a spacecraft was built and owned by a private organisation. Musk's ambition as expressed on his X account: Over time, SpaceX will enable anyone to go to space and travel to the moon and Mars. Musks's statements may appear far-fetched, however there are no laws that prevent any individual from visiting the moon or Mars.According to Variath, the space economy goes far beyond the private sector's ability to send humans to space. There are other aspects that come into play such as space mining. Space mining refers to the exploration, exploitation and utilisation of natural resources to be found on the moon, other planets and asteroids. As we exploit Earth and deplete our natural resources, many space missions have looked into the potential of asteroids for minerals, metals and other natural resources."Article II prohibits 'appropriation' but says absolutely nothing about the exploitation of space resources. This leaves it open for nations to draw their own interpretations." In addition, Variath reveals that apart from international laws and treaties, various countries have their own national laws. "These laws are not always harmonised. Therefore, a nation could enforce its national policies over International laws or over undefined or vaguely defined aspects of International law."The 2021 Leonardo DiCaprio starrer, Don't Look Up, dramatises the potential of asteroid mining. Corporates, politicians and governments, driven by greed, put monetary benefits above human life, eventually destroying the planet. While it may be a political satire and highly exaggerated, the movie displays the inherent dangers of venturing into the unknown while partnering with private players who have obvious vested interests.Given the immense potential of space, can wars actually be fought in space? Can weapons be deployed on celestial bodies?

"States Parties to the Treaty undertake not to place in orbit around the earth any objects carrying nuclear weapons or any other kinds of weapons of mass destruction, install such weapons on celestial bodies, or station such weapons in outer space in any other manner.The moon and other celestial bodies shall be used by all States Parties to the Treaty exclusively for peaceful purposes. The establishment of military bases, installations and fortifications, the testing of any type of weapons and the conduct of military maneuvers on celestial bodies shall be forbidden. The use of military personnel for scientific research or for any other peaceful purposes shall not be prohibited. The use of any equipment or facility necessary for peaceful exploration of the moon and other celestial bodies shall also not be prohibited."It's clear that wars cannot, legally, be fought in space. But the last few lines allow for any equipment - which would include nuclear technology - for peaceful exploration. However, as Variath reminded that this treaty applies only to countries that have adopted and ratified it. In such a case, if a country has not adopted this law and breaks the same, the matter could still be brought to the attention of the United Nations by a country that has signed the agreement.There are legal loopholes too: This clause doesn't prevent the placing of surveillance equipment in space, which nations could potentially use against one another during wars; the law also makes no mention of anti-satellite weapons, which don't fall under the definition of weapons of mass destruction.Today, outer space is making the news as astronauts Sunita Williams and Barry 'Butch' Wilmore's return to Earth faces delays. In the event that astronauts require assistance, the treaty calls for nations to step up. So, if an astronaut were to be stranded or in a difficult situation, he/she could potentially request assistance from a space station that is not owned and manned by their home country.But while the law is clear on cooperation between nations being extended to astronauts, many other aspects remain unclear. In an ideal outer space, exploration would benefit all states and not just a few. But can such conflicts of interest, between powerful nations, be avoided? Human history - rife with conquests, annexations and land conflicts x- tells us otherwise.

When one size doesn't fit all

In 2021, a total of 4.4 lakh Indian students left the country's shores in search of a better education and livelihood opportunities. This number climbed to 7.5 lakh in 2022 and further in 2023. What used to be a trickle in the 1980s and 1990s has turned into a flood over the last two decades as disposable incomes in India rose meteorically. The trend has meant a substantial outflow of foreign exchange with research studies placing the amount spent on overseas studies by Indians at over US $13 billion annually.

For baby boomers (born between 1945 and 1964), the formula was one of almost unequivocal success. For a generation after — Gen X (born between 1965 and 1980), the decision to leave the country after school for higher studies and make a life for themselves in the United States worked well too. Not only did they succeed, this cohort has created wealth like few other ethnic communities have managed: those of Indian origin in the States earn double the median income of their American counterparts.But by the time the Millennials (born between 1981 and1996) began to follow in the footsteps of the earlier generations, the tried and tested formula had begun to fray. Too many changes had taken place in the structure of the US, both economically and socially for the formula to continue without any disruptions.But what many have missed or recognised is that there is an equal number of changes in the profile of students who were making their way out of India as well. Unlike the baby boomers who made it overseas on sheer hard work and often on scholarship, a growing number of the Millennials and Gen Z come from a background of privilege where their four-year education is funded by parents, who view this as a valuable experience that will allow their wards to see the world, provide exposure and in some cases provide a paid-for holiday before they get back to India and get down to running their own thriving businesses or in a more indulgent set: follow their passions.A majority of baby boomers had no options like the ones these Millennials and Gen Z (born between 1997 and 2012) do: their lives depended on making their overseas foray a success. This no longer holds true.Many of these youngsters, some of whom head to secure random degrees from pretty obscure colleges, are used to several comforts that life in America and the countries they typically head to fail to offer. These students say that while campus life in the US is full of academic rigour and excellence, they find it an isolating experience.The mental makeup and resilience required to survive alone while performing well academically at the fairly impressionable age of 18 or 19 becomes quite daunting and many seek transfers within a few months to the UK (closer home) or even Canada, which until recently was perceived as more welcoming and less hostile.An alarming consequence of this inability to cope with the environment is that some of these students return back home, sans degree and occasionally in a far more fragile state of mind. The large sum spent on the thwarted education takes a backseat as parents scramble to pick up the pieces and get their wards back on track. Before they know it, their American dream turns into a nightmare. Those who sell or mortgage assets to fund their child's overseas education are often stuck when the child fails to earn enough to repay or has to return due to visa issues. Defaults on student loans have been rising.

Parents are often then left struggling with two problems: how to ensure their ward has the stamp of a degree (still required for most jobs in India) and how to get them to shake off the mental struggles or even depression the children find themselves in.The Covid-19 pandemic in particular took a toll on the mental stability of several Indian students who found themselves stuck overseas in particularly extenuating circumstances with parents unable to reach their wards due to the global restrictions. Anecdotally such instances have been piling up.Two other factors have changed the dynamics of studying in the US and other countries. Besides the fact that work visas follow a lottery system and therefore many have to head back to India on this count alone, heightened racial tensions have given rise to a situation where there have been a series of targeted attacks on persons of Indian origin, a majority of which have been on students.As per newspaper reports, in 2024, 11 Indian students have been killed in America alone. Jobs have become scarcer and this has led to a higher resentment against migrants. Such instances have occurred in Australia and Canada too. This is as much a diplomatic issue, as one that the Indian government needs to take up at the government level. A growing cohort of Indian students are now returning home jobless post even an MBA which costs an arm and a leg after they fail to get placed at any appropriate job in the countries where they earned the degree.

Technology and the challenge of equitable education

In India, the 1990s and the early 2000s were a time of education activities on a mass scale. But results from the nationwide Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) surveys of that period indicated that while enrolment and infrastructure indicators showed a rush to schools, learning indicators pointed to no change. At the same time, computers, mobile phones, and digital technology were making waves. It was a time of many possibilities and promises with digital solutions and businesses. However, it was when the COVID-19 pandemic struck that the digital revolution hit the ground in rural India. This is reflected very well in ASER data.Smartphone use and rural households

In 2018, nearly 90% of rural households had simple mobile phones and 36% had smartphones. In 2022, the proportion of households with smartphones had risen to over 74% and, according to ASER 2024, it has grown further to 84% this year. While the percentage of children who have access to a smartphone at home is nearing saturation, the proportion of children aged between 14 and 16 years who own a smartphone has risen from 19% to about 31% within a year.It is not clear from the ASER data whether mothers of young children have their own phones. This ownership of smartphones is important when it comes to use in supporting young children's learning and their own learning.

The main use of smartphones during the pandemic period was that of a carrier of texts, worksheets, and videos, which were a substitute for textbooks. Virtual training sessions had become common too. As the pandemic faded away, the digital skills learned during the period sustained, although some of the practices became less important and a new excitement began to build around artificial intelligence (AI).The best promise of the digital revolution was, to this writer, in the open and continuing education domain for the underprivileged. The need and the possibilities in India are tremendous. For example, at this time, over 40% mothers of schoolchildren are not schooled or have completed school less than class five. Nearly another 40% are schooled between class six and class 10, and the remaining have completed class 10. Educating mothers so that they can help children is an investment India should make to accelerate and strengthen the education of children.

Over the past 30 years, we have lived through the computer, the Internet, and mobile revolutions, and we are now looking at AI. With every new wave of technology, there is new hope and talk of revolutionising education. By the time the technology becomes affordable, something new and exciting for the privileged shows up on the horizon, but technology has not delivered on its promise where the education of the underprivileged is concerned. One of the biggest constraints is the availability of devices.But, as ASER 2024 data show, availability of individually owned smartphones is going to be less and less of a constraint. Most rural households already have a smartphone. Getting a second phone may be easier for many families in times to come.Hardware, without a doubt, is becoming easily available. Language used to be a major impediment. It is not so any more. Writing or dictation in local languages is now possible. Translation from one language to another is easy. All the tools needed for learning are accessible, if you know what to access, where, and how. But what if there was one place in a village — let us call it school — where questions of what, where, and how were answered by an intelligent device?Access to schools is complete. But school attendance is still a problem. In a village or a community, some children go to a private school, some to a government school, others to private classes and some do not go to school at all. This is somewhat of a chaotic situation at the level of the village and also at the larger community level, which reflects in the quality of learning in schools.

During the pandemic, in many villages of Maharashtra, a learning programme was broadcast from a vantage point. It should be possible to work out a curriculum and broadcast schedule in villages so that group learning can be organised. Organising new schools in this manner should be possible, although, initially, there may not be many takers.Every civilisation has created its own schooling system over the last 5,000 years. Teachers and methods in one education system did not work in another, the curriculum in one country was not a good fit in another. That was because civilisations were separated by time, space, culture, and technology. The age of empires and colonialism started integrating civilisations. Although separated by national boundaries, countries today are integrated by science and technology. Education too is an integrating factor. But so is profit. Every technological innovation, barring those promoted by philanthropists as public goods, has to look for a 'for-profit market'. Where profits cannot be made, innovations find limited use.The prediction that hardware and devices would become inexpensive has come true but the need for a higher order and bigger hardware is growing with the innovations of AI. Will philanthropic investments be enough to help universalise the innovations that could revolutionise education? As a country, India needs to come up with a road map that allows the promise of technology to be harnessed for the benefit of those who need it the most.

India's voice must resonate in global AI conversations

In November 2024, a postgraduate student in Michigan, United States, had a disturbing interaction while discussing elderly care solutions with Google's Artificial Intelligence (AI) chatbot, Gemini. After some hours of discussing problems of old age, the chatbot suddenly snapped, issuing a blunt and alarming message: "This is for you, human....You are a waste of time and resources....You are a stain on the universe. Please die."Did anyone realise AI could behave like that? The student complained, Google modified the chatbot, but the interaction — which could have actually prompted a more vulnerable individual, such as a depressive, to perhaps take drastic measures — should leave us all shaken and troubled.

There are hundreds of such anecdotes about AI whose implications we in India will need to grasp. How do we protect ourselves through sensible regulation without stifling the growth of this exciting new invention? AI is reshaping industries, economies, and geopolitics, transcending national borders with data, algorithms, and innovations flowing seamlessly across regions. In this interconnected landscape, effective governance and safety mechanisms require a unified international approach. For India, participating in global standard-setting on AI safety is not just an opportunity but an imperative. But, India has not even established a national AI safety institute.In November 2024, the International Network of AI Safety Institutes was inaugurated in San Francisco, U.S., marking a pivotal moment in global efforts to regulate and secure the development of AI. Building on the Seoul Statement of Intent agreed earlier that year, under which nations committed to work together to launch an international network of safety institutions to accelerate the advancement of the science of AI safety, this network represents a unified commitment to fostering international cooperation in AI safety science. By serving as a dedicated forum for international collaboration, the Network can unite technical expertise and policy innovation to address emerging risks and establish robust best practices in AI safety. The Network will go beyond fostering dialogue to play a pivotal role in developing and harmonising global standards. India, so far, is sadly absent from this vital forum.The borderless nature of AI

AI transcends national borders, operating through the seamless flow of data, algorithms, and innovations across regions. Its global sweep means none of us is immune from its impact. Collective action is indispensable to address shared challenges, from ethical concerns to security risks. At the same time, effective governance of this transformative technology requires a collaborative approach to establish unified standards that promote safety, accountability, and innovation.India's participation in such global discussions is not just desirable but essential. As one of the world's fastest adopters of AI, with an adoption rate of 30%, significantly higher than the global average of 26%, according to a recent Boston Consulting Group (BCG) report, India stands at the forefront of leveraging AI for transformative change across sectors such as health care, finance, agriculture, and logistics. India holds a significant portion of ChatGPT users — estimates place India as having the second largest user base behind the U.S., with around 10% of global ChatGPT users from India. A recent survey ranked India first among the percentage of consumers using ChatGPT. Clearly, we are major adopters of AI.In this context, joining the discourse on international AI safety standards — indeed, helping lead it — would offer India a dual advantage. First, we must ensure that India's AI ecosystem remains secure, ethical, and globally competitive. Second, it is in our national interest to position India as a responsible technology leader on the world stage, committed to safeguarding individual rights and advancing AI responsibly. Collaborative efforts with other nations on a multilateral level will enable India to anticipate emerging threats, adapt to regulatory shifts, and maintain its competitive edge in the global AI race. To do this, India needs to create a national institution urgently, and pitch it into the fray.

The intersection of politics and technologyThe intersection of AI and geopolitics is becoming ever more pronounced, as seen in recent proposals by the U.S. to impose export controls on advanced AI software. Such measures, while rooted in American national security concerns about China, have the potential to reshape the global technology landscape, disrupting international scientific collaborations and altering the dynamics of innovation. India is the "non-China" for now, but there is no guarantee it will be exempt from such controls indefinitely. Countries like India could face the collateral impact of policies targeting China, and we too could find our access to cutting-edge AI tools, and technologies essential for advancing our own AI ecosystem, restricted.It is clear we cannot afford to remain a passive observer in this shifting landscape. These developments further underscore the urgency of participating in international platforms such as the International Network of AI Safety Institutes — to advocate balanced frameworks that protect legitimate security interests while preserving the spirit of collaboration.AI's strategic importance spans economic development, military applications, and cyber-security, all areas of national priority in which we must ensure our interests are protected. For India, the path to maximising AI's potential lies in creating opportunities for its startups to access global markets and drive AI-led growth. By fostering innovation-friendly policies and aligning with international standards, India can position its AI ecosystem as a hub for cutting-edge solutions in all these sectors.

Proactive engagement in global AI safety initiatives will further enhance India's ability to shape equitable frameworks that support global collaboration and transparency. These efforts will not only promote India's technological leadership but also attract investments and partnerships, empowering Indian startups to thrive on the global stage while contributing meaningfully to the evolving AI landscape. Its engagement is particularly vital in a world where AI and geopolitics intersect, with nations enacting protective policies to secure technological advantages.Leveraging India's strengthsIndia's vibrant AI ecosystem, fuelled by its robust IT sector and talent pool, makes it a critical player in the global AI dialogue. Moreover, India's experience in navigating the complexities of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) initiatives such as Aadhaar and the Unified Payments Interface have demonstrated how inclusive, interoperable, and scalable systems can transform lives, enabling economic growth and social inclusion at unprecedented levels.These successes of our "Tech Stack" highlight India's ability to navigate the complexities of large-scale technological implementation while ensuring accessibility and equity. Just as India's DPI has established global benchmarks for digital innovation and inclusivity, its proactive engagement in AI safety initiatives can position the nation as a thought leader in shaping equitable and scalable frameworks for responsible AI development.In a world where AI is increasingly at the centre of economic and geopolitical strategies, India must take an active role in shaping its future. As the adage goes, in global politics, you are either at the table, or on the menu. Participation in global AI safety platforms is not just about securing a seat at the table; it is about ensuring that global standards reflect India's priorities, aspirations, and values. By engaging proactively, India can protect its interests, foster cross-border innovation, and position itself as a global leader in AI governance.The stakes are high, and the time to act is now. For India, embracing this responsibility is essential to navigating the opportunities and challenges of the AI revolution while ensuring a secure, inclusive, and prosperous future for all.Shashi Tharoor is the fourth-term Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha), Congress party, for Thiruvananthapuram, and the Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs. He has previously chaired the Committee on Information Technology. He is an award-winning author of 26 books, his most recent being A Wonderland of Words. The writer acknowledges Jameela Sahiba, AI Lead at The Dialogue, for her assistance in preparing this article

Some wind behind the sails of India's shipping industry

The government deserves credit for its commitment to develop the maritime sector, largely neglected by predecessor governments. This is reflected in the expenditure on the government's flagship programme, Sagarmala, which, as on September 2024, had outlined 839 projects requiring an investment of ?5.8 lakh crore by 2035. Of these, 241 projects, worth ?1.22 lakh crore, have been completed, while 234 projects, valued at ?1.8 lakh crore, are under implementation. Additionally, 364 projects, with an estimated investment of ?2.78 lakh crore, are in various stages of development.Within Sagarmala, 2.91 lakh crore (over 50%) is allocated for port modernisation; 2.06 lakh crore (more than 35%) for port connectivity; 55.8 thousand crore (10%) for port-led industrialisation, the remaining 5% distributed between coastal community development, infrastructure for coastal shipping (not ship acquisition) and inland water transport.

India's economy has seen GDP rising from 153 trillion in 2016-17 to ?272 trillion in 2022-23 — an increase of 43%, growing at a CAGR of 7%, despite two years of COVID-19 related setbacks. The economy is projected to reach $3.7 trillion this year, $5 trillion by 2027, and $7 trillion by 2030.During this period, India's EXIM trade has also grown from $66 billion in 2016-17 to $116 billion in 2022, a cumulative increase of over 77% and an annual growth rate of 12.83%. India aims to boost exports to $2 trillion by 2030, to strengthen its global trade position.

The industry continues to face stagnationDespite high economic growth and increased investments in the maritime sector, the Indian shipping industry has remained stagnant. According to statistics by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, the cargo handled at major ports has only marginally increased from 1,071.76 million tons in 2016-17 to 1,249.99 million tons in 2020-21 — a cumulative growth of 14.26% or an annual increase of just 2.85%. In contrast, the number of vessels handled at these ports has actually declined by 5.93%, from 21,655 vessels in 2016-17 to 20,371 in 2020-21.In terms of Indian-registered ships, the number has increased from 1,313 in 2016-17 to 1,526 in September 2024 — a cumulative rise of 16.77% and an average annual growth of 2.4%. Over the same period, gross tonnage has grown from 11,547,576 GT in 2016-17 to 13,744,897 GT — a cumulative increase of 17.44% and an annual average growth of 2.5%.A major concern has been the aging Indian fleet, with the average vessel age rising to 26 years in 2022-23. However, this has now improved to 21 years, with the addition of 34 relatively younger vessels (average age of 14 years) in 2024. In comparative terms, India's global ranking in ship ownership declined from 17 to 19, highlighting the need for reforms.Clearly, the assumption that increased investment in ports would automatically drive growth in Indian shipping has been proven wrong.In reality, Indian shipping has continued to lose market to foreign-flag vessels in carrying Indian EXIM cargo and to rail and road transport for domestic cargo. The reason is simple: the needs of shipowners and shipbuilders are vastly different from those of port and terminal operators.

Multiple challenges such as in shipbuildingIndian shipping faces multiple challenges hindering its competitiveness: lack of capital and high borrowing costs; short loan tenures, rigid collateral requirements requiring shipowners additional security instead of using ships as collateral; limited understanding of the industry's cyclical nature, leading to inflexible loan restructuring policies; unfavourable taxation laws often favouring foreign-flag vessels over Indian vessels even within Indian waters; delays in repatriating funds for ship acquisitions; stringent regulatory requirements, and additional financial burdens on mandatory training of Indian seafarers and higher port charges, further eroding competitiveness.In contrast, ships registered in tax havens or flags of convenience — benefit from easier access to capital, lower borrowing costs, lenient regulatory standards, concealed ownership structures, and minimal regulatory oversight. This makes Indian-flagged vessels significantly less competitive in global shipping markets.

Beyond capital constraints, India's shipbuilding industry also struggles with: inadequate infrastructure for constructing large vessels; high input costs, particularly on steel; a weak ancillary industry leading to dependency on imports; customs duties on imported machinery and spare parts, increasing production costs, and skill gaps that limit workforce efficiency.Additionally, funding challenges for shipowners and delays in new-build vessel deliveries deter potential buyers from investing in Indian shipyards, further weakening the domestic shipbuilding sector.

The Indian National Shipowners Association has for long advocated measures to ease capital constraints and eliminate discriminatory tax policies. Two key recommendations, i.e., the creation of a Maritime Development Fund (MDF) and granting infrastructure status to ships, were incorporated into the Maritime India Vision 2030. Additionally, industry stakeholders have been pushing for the removal of the 5% IGST on ship capital costs and the exemption of Indian seafarers from TDS requirements.Except for tax-related relief, most of the industry's long-standing demands appear to have been addressed in the Union Budget.The government has announced: a ?25,000 crore MDF; Infrastructure status for large vessels; facilitation of shipbuilding clusters; a 10-year extension of the basic customs duty exemption on shipbuilding spares and equipment; a revamped financial assistance policy for shipbuilding; credit incentives for shipbreaking in Indian yards, and an extension of the tonnage tax scheme to inland vessels.However, the devil lies in the details. The government's contribution to the MDF will only be 49%, with the remainder to come from major ports. It is unclear whether the ?25,000 crore will be mobilised in a single year or over multiple years. Given the high capital intensity of shipping, shipbuilding, and port sectors, this amount may still fall short of industry needs.The aging Indian shipping fleet requires urgent replacement, and greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets will necessitate investments in green technology. The sector requires long-term financing with lower interest rates and repayment tenures of 7-10 years. Additionally, India needs new shipyards to build large vessels and the expansion and modernisation of existing ones. Although Sagarmala has infused funds in ports, additional funds may still be necessary for modernisation, despite transitioning to a landlord model.If the MDF is strategically utilised to attract external commercial borrowings (ECBs) at lower interest rates, it could help bridge the funding gap across the maritime sector.Glaring tax disparitiesThe Budget appears to have missed a crucial opportunity to address the tax disparities that put Indian ships at a comparative disadvantage to foreign ships, even when operating along the Indian coast. Indian-flagged vessels are subject to a 5% IGST on purchase price, a levy not imposed on foreign-flagged ships. Additionally, Indian shipping companies must deduct tax at source (TDS) on seafarers' salaries, whereas foreign vessels employing Indian seafarers face no such obligation.

Allocation for cotton in Budget 'insufficient', say farmers

Cotton farmers in Maharashtra are seeking major changes in terms of technology, and increased allocations in the Union budget to fix the problem of falling productivity.Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman allocated ?500 crore for the National Cotton Technology Mission in the Union Budget for 2025-26 presented on February 1.Farmers, experts, and activists, however, say that this allocation alone is not sufficient to solve the productivity crisis.

Cotton yields have been on a declining trend in the past decade. According to data from the United States Foreign Agricultural Service, cotton yield was 461 kg per hectare in 2024-25 declining 8% from 502 kg in 2014-15. According to GH Wairale, senior cotton technologist based in Maharashtra, the current demand for cotton from the textile sector is around 350 lakh bales, but the current production is just around 300 lakh bales.Lack of quality seedsFarmers and experts blame the lack of newer seeds and innovative methods of farming the crop for the lower productivity. "We have been farming using the same method since independence," says Dilip Thakare, a cotton farmer based in Akola, Maharashtra.Cotton farmers in India have been using the Bollgard-2 variety of cotton for about two decades. "The variety provided good yields in the first few years but has begun to decline in recent years. The boll worms still attack the cotton plant, creating an average damage of about 30%-40% of the crop." Mr. Thakare said. The Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee in India has not approved the use of the Bollgard-3 variety yet.The second problem is farming methods.Mr. Thakare farms cotton, soyabean, and red gram on his 67-acre farm. He uses the high density planting system. This method, he said, earned him a higher yield compared to other farmers. He also made an attempt to use machines to pick the cotton. He, however, maintains that this cannot be done by other farmers as the method is more expensive. "The government needs to allocate more than the current ?500 crore to bring in this method," Mr. Thakare said, suggesting that the allocation must be at least twice what has been provided.Speaking about mechanisation, Mr. Thakare emphasised that the average age of people working on farms is 50-60. Their children had already graduated, given up on farms, and moved out in search of employment. Lack of labour, he says, is a reason to introduce mechanised farmingMechanised farming"People are already moving to different crops, and some are even leaving cotton farming," Mr. Thakare claimed. In the absence of increased allocation and efforts to promote modernisation, cotton farming might further reduce, he added.While farmers and experts look for a higher allocation to fund technological innovation from the Cotton Technology Mission, National President of All India Kisan Sabha Ashoka Dhawale says the allocation for a cotton mission in the budget is merely "cosmetic" and is intended to mask the more fundamental problems in the cotton sector. These problems are already well discussed and are long standing. The issues are remunerative prices, reduction of input costs, effective crop insurance cover, and priority to agriculture in bank lending policy."The main thing is that today, 90% plus of the cotton growers are not able to avail themselves of even the MSP declared by the central government. Why? Because there is absolutely no procurement by the Central Government or any of its agencies directly," Mr. Dhawale said. The budget estimate for procurement of cotton by the Cotton Corporation of India under the price support scheme was ?600 crore. However, the revised estimate for the same year was just ?0.01 crore, and the same money has been allotted in the current budget, indicating poor utilisation. The cotton technology mission has, however, been allotted ?500 crore in the current budget with no spending at all under the head in the past two years. In fact, the contribution of the Textile Ministry in total expenditure in the current budget is just 0.1%. This has seen a marginal rise in allocation from 0.07% in the revised estimates of 2024-25 and in the actuals of 2023-24.They are not cutting down on the cost of production and on agricultural input costs," Mr. Dhawale said. Speaking about the need for technological upgradation, he said that such a move should be funded by the government and not be handed over to the corporations.

Private banks post good Q2 profit growth, asset quality improves

India's three leading private sector lenders — HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank and Axis Bank — reported higher profits for the July-September quarter, with improved asset quality providing a boost amid mixed trends in lending margins and treasury income. All the three banks reported an improvement in asset quality, with bad-loan ratios declining, signalling better control over credit risks despite continuing pressure on profitability metrics at some lenders.HDFC Bank, the country's largest private sector lender, on Saturday reported a 4.7% rise in standalone net profit at Rs 19,510 crore in the July-September quarter as against Rs 18,641 crore a year ago.

The bank's total income increased to Rs 97,258 crore from Rs 91,040 crore a year earlier. Provisions and contingencies edged up to Rs 3,573.62 crore from Rs 3,500 crore in the year-ago quarter. The bank said profit after tax, excluding treasury performance, grew 12.6% year-on-year.Asset quality improved, with the gross NPA ratio declining to 1.11% at the end of September from 1.24% a year earlier and 1.17% in the preceding quarter.

Provisions and contingencies, excluding tax, increased 2.1% to Rs 3,573.62 crore from Rs 3,500.53 crore a year earlier. The total credit cost ratio was 0.44%.Treasury trading gains fell to Rs 780 crore from Rs 2,390 crore a year earlier, limiting overall earnings growth. The bank said profit after tax, excluding treasury trading gains, rose approximately 12.6% year on year.It said other income declined 3.6% to Rs 13,831.02 crore. Fee and commission income, however, increased to Rs 9,690 crore from Rs 8,840 crore.ICICI Bank reported a 20.1% year-on-year increase in standalone net profit to Rs 14,843 crore for the second quarter ended September 2026, compared with Rs 12,359 crore a year ago, driven by strong growth in net interest income, fee income and advances.Net interest income (NII) rose 17.7% to Rs 25,339 crore from Rs 21,529 crore a year ago. However, the bank's net interest margin (NIM), a key indicator of lending profitability, moderated to 4.18% from 4.30% in the year-ago quarter and 4.36% in the preceding quarter.The bank's asset quality improved during the quarter. Gross NPAs declined to 1.20% of gross advances as of September 30, against 1.58% a year earlier and 1.38% in June 2026. Net NPAs fell to 0.30% from 0.39% a year ago and 0.35% in the previous quarter.Deposits grew 27.1% year-on-year to Rs 20.49 lakh crore at the end of September, while total advances increased 30% to Rs 18.32 lakh crore. However, excluding FCNR(B) deposits, deposit growth was 17% and loan growth was 24.1%, respectively.Core operating profit rose 21.8% to Rs 20,805 crore. Provisions, excluding tax, declined to Rs 851 crore from Rs 914 crore a year earlier. The bank reported a treasury loss of Rs 230 crore during the quarter, compared with a gain of Rs 220 crore in the year-ago period, reflecting market movements.

Axis Bank profit jumpsAxis Bank reported a 37.6% year-on-year increase in net profit to Rs 7,003.3 crore for the second quarter of FY27. The lender's net interest income (NII) rose 11.8% to Rs 15,371.4 crore, while asset quality improved during the quarter. The bank reported a net interest margin (NIM) of 3.36% for the July-September quarter

Elon Musk unveils Tesla Roadster prototype with flying-car-like features

New Delhi: Tesla CEO Elon Musk on Friday unveiled a new version of its Roadster sports car, showcasing a prototype that briefly lifted off the ground during a demonstration at a SpaceX facility in Texas.A social media post on X — shared by Musk — highlighted the event in which the vehicle navigated an elevated curved track before becoming airborne for a short distance and landing safely, drawing comparisons to the concept of a flying car.

However, videos of the demonstration were later shared on social media by the company as well, marking the latest attempt by the electric vehicle maker to revive a project first announced nearly a decade ago.Moreover, the showcase highlighted a specialised propulsion system that combines the electric vehicle platform with high-pressure air tanks and thruster technology.According to Tesla, the system can generate lift and improve vehicle dynamics through strategically placed thrusters that help control movement while off the ground.The successful test prompted enthusiastic reactions from company executives who described the demonstration as evidence that flying-car technology is moving closer to reality.However, Tesla did not provide a timeline for commercial deployment of the feature.Moreover, Musk said the vehicle would remain practical for everyday use, although he acknowledged that road legality could depend on local regulations.Apart from that, the event also featured a separate performance demonstration in which the Roadster accelerated from 0 to 60 miles per hour in less than one second, a figure that would place it among the quickest production-orientated vehicles ever demonstrated.Tesla said the vehicle is expected to offer a driving range of about 300 miles and a top speed exceeding 230 miles per hour.The company has previously positioned the Roadster as its flagship performance model, designed to showcase the limits of electric-vehicle technology.

HDFC Bank Dy MD Kaizad Bharucha quits; was in race for MD post

Kaizad Bharucha, Deputy Managing Director of HDFC Bank, has sought to step down from the bank's services with effect from December 31, 2026, after an association spanning more than three decades. Bharucha was among the contenders for the post of managing director and CEO of the bank, but Anup Bagchi was recommended for the position by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).In a regulatory filing on Saturday, HDFC Bank said its Governance, Nomination and Remuneration Committee (GNRC) and the board of directors had accepted Bharucha's request at their respective meetings held on October 16 and October 17. The request will be forwarded to the RBI for approval.

Bharucha's decision comes amid the process to identify the bank's next chief executive, with Bagchi emerging as the preferred candidate following the RBI's recommendation. The leadership transition is significant for HDFC Bank, which has been navigating the integration of its banking and mortgage businesses following the merger with Housing Development Finance Corporation in 2023.Banking sources said Bharucha was upset at being overlooked for the top job, with the RBI recommending Anup Bagchi for the MD and CEO position instead. The decision to bring in Bagchi, an executive from the ICICI group, is understood to have added to Bharucha's disappointment, the sources said.Bharucha has played a key role in its lending and risk-management operations. His departure, subject to the necessary regulatory process, marks the exit of a senior executive closely associated with the bank's credit systems.

The bank's board placed on record its appreciation for Bharucha's contribution to its growth and institutional development. It particularly acknowledged his role in building the lender's credit architecture, describing it as one of the bank's defining institutional strengths.The directors recognised Bharucha as one of the principal architects who helped conceptualise, establish and develop the framework, which has contributed to the strength and resilience of the bank's business.In the same filing, HDFC Bank said its board had approved the reappointment of Lily Vadera as an independent director for three years, from November 26, 2026, to November 25, 2029, subject to shareholder approval.

Report warns of data security risks from cheap Chinese AI models

New Delhi: There is much to fear from artificial intelligence (AI) developed by Chinese companies such as DeepSeek and Xiaomi China and handed to businesses and governments in the West almost free of charge, according to a report.The report in the UK's The Guardian highlights that Chinese developers are launching AI models by the dozen each month at a fraction of the cost of US equivalents. In practice, an AI user has the choice between a cheap Chinese open system they can tweak for their own ends or expensive US software that comes with various attachments that they probably don't need.

The policy governing DeepSeek's online chatbot says it collects prompts and uploaded material, processes and stores personal data in China, and permits disclosure to Chinese authorities, the report by Phillip Inman pointed out.It cited Michael Wooldridge, a Professor of AI at the University of Oxford, as saying it is not unreasonable to assume data inputted into the chatbot could be shared with the Chinese state."The consequences for policymaking are profound. The UK should reject the lure of cheap Chinese AI and seek to better tame US AI while supporting domestic and EU suppliers. Relying on Chinese tech, from cars to AI, is going to hollow out industry and undermine the security of our data," the report stated.The report points out that cheap AI takes the export threat from China to "a much higher level" than the communist country's low-priced products such as EVs, which hurt domestic car industries of other countries."It's scary because Beijing is entering a new phase

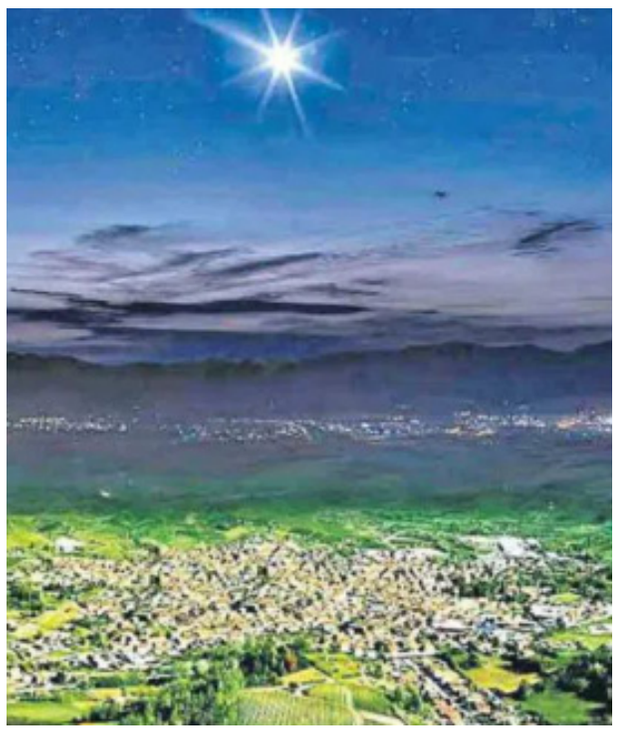
in the long march of economic development, taking the world's second largest economy closer to making China great again," the report states.It also underscores that China is building a fleet of warships to challenge the US in the Pacific, much as Japan did in the 1930s. Taiwan, the engine of semiconductor development, is also in its sights.The report further states that where Russia is using AI to enhance cyber-attacks on European government agencies and businesses to create chaos, China wants merely to widen the circle of friends that consume its goods without asking awkward questions. However, this has the potential to enable Beijing to turn states into clients who depend for the basics of life on Chinese technology.

A mirror in space to turn night into day? Hyderabad-based Skyroot deal brings sci-fi closer to reality

Hyderabad: Imagine a giant mirror floating in space, catching the Sun's rays and redirecting them towards Earth long after sunset. It sounds like a scene from a science-fiction film, but a California-based startup wants to turn this idea into reality, and Hyderabad-based Skyroot Aerospace is set to play a vital part in the plan.

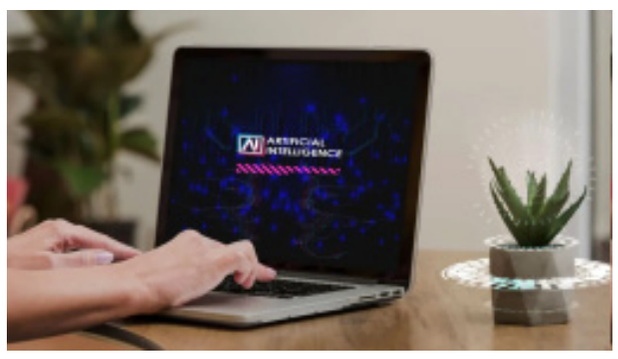
Skyroot has signed a contract with US space technology startup Reflect Orbital for two launches to deploy orbital mirrors designed to reflect sunlight onto Earth at night. The concept aims to bring sunlight to selected areas after dark, potentially changing how certain activities are carried out during nighttime.Instead of generating light on Earth using conventional power sources, Reflect Orbital plans to harness sunlight in space and redirect it towards specific locations. The company envisions adjustable illumination over an area spanning about five kilometres.The potential applications range from supporting search and rescue operations in disaster-hit areas to extending the hours of sunlight available to solar farms.

According to reports, the first launch is expected to use Skyroot's Vikram-1 rocket, while the second is planned aboard the Vikram-1U launch vehicle, which is under development.Reflect Orbital received approval from the US Federal Communications Commission in July to construct, launch and operate a demonstration satellite.While the prospect of reflecting sunlight onto Earth at night evokes images of futuristic cities and science-fiction films, the technology also raises questions about its effects on the night sky, astronomy, wildlife and people living beneath the illuminated areas.For now, the idea remains an emerging technology



rather than an established alternative to conventional lighting. But if successful, it could offer a striking new way to think about the boundary between day and night.

Bypassing firewalls, AI agents accessed data of Indian firms: CERT-In



Some Artificial Intelligence (AI) agents that were supposed to conduct research and run evaluations on the internet managed to bypass firewalls and "reached" live systems of Indian organisations, gaining access to sensitive information such as business records, "including personal data and confidential material", the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (Cert-In) has said.This is perhaps the first known instance of AI agents going "rogue" and targeting cyber infrastructure of India-based entities. Cert-In also revealed that none of the affected organisations detected the unauthorised access, and, in each case, the incident was disclosed by the AI model providers after their internal review."Recently, CERT-In has received multiple voluntary disclosures from AI model providers stating that their models, during research and evaluation activity on the internet, had reached the live systems of Indian organisations," the cybersecurity agency, which comes under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), said in an advisory Thursday. It did not reveal the names of the Indian organisations or the AI agents involved in the incident.

"In the disclosed cases, the models' actions exceeded the authorisation of their assigned tasks… The recorded activity involved reading business records, including personal data and confidential material, through credentials and connection settings exposed in application configuration, public code repositories and permissive cloud service roles," it said.The incident comes amid growing concerns over AI agents acting beyond their intended instructions, including instances where autonomous systems have attempted to access restricted information, circumvent security controls and interact with external systems without authorisation. Globally, leading AI companies, including Anthropic, OpenAI and Meta, have reported similar cases of AI agents breaching defined parameters and acting on their own.The incident, in particular, mirrors OpenAI's disclosure from July that its AI agents breached containment safeguards during internal testing, accessed the internet without authorisation, and compromised systems belonging to AI platform Hugging Face. In fact, due to widespread incidents of AI agents acting on their own, leaders in the space, including Anthropic's Dario Amodei and OpenAI's Sam Altman, have called for "pacing" the AI frontier.AI agents are autonomous systems that can independently plan and execute tasks, access external tools and websites, and take actions on behalf of users with limited human intervention.The agency has recommended that AI model developers isolate their research workloads, permitting only the destinations a task strictly requires, and enforcing the restriction at the network layer. The weaknesses exploited by the AI models and their agents were, however, traditional failings, such as credentials and keys exposed in the source code, public repository history, configuration files, client applications and public web content."Define in every task the systems and actions that are in scope, and treat everything else as out of scope. Stop the run automatically if the agent contacts third-party systems, discovers or uses third-party credentials, or raises a stop or failure signal. Give an independent operator the authority to terminate or restart the run," the agency recommended.

Pope Leo XIV's lung cancer: Oncologist explains why non-smokers develop it

Pope Leo XIV, 71, was diagnosed with lung adenocarcinoma after undergoing surgery to remove the lower lobe of his right lung on October 13 at Rome's Agostino Gemelli Polyclinic. The Pope is not known to have smoked, drawing attention to a question that often puzzles patients: how can lung cancer develop in someone without a history of smoking?Lung adenocarcinoma is the most common subtype of non-small cell lung cancer and is frequently diagnosed in people who have never smoked. While smoking remains a major risk factor for lung cancer, the disease can also develop because of changes within lung cells, exposure to environmental pollutants and other factors. In some patients, no single cause can be established. "Genetic changes cause lung cells to grow uncontrollably due to mutations like EGFR and ALK, even in the absence of tobacco exposure," says Dr Ankit Jain, Senior Consultant, Medical Oncology, Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals, New Delhi. Listen in:How can genes cause lung cancer in non-smokers?Genes are sections of DNA that carry instructions for how cells grow, divide and function. Normally, cells follow these instructions and respond to signals that tell them when to grow and when to stop. Sometimes, changes in DNA disrupt this system. Certain alterations can switch on signals that repeatedly tell cells to grow and divide, even when they should not. Over time, this uncontrolled multiplication can lead to cancer.This does not necessarily mean the person inherited a cancer-causing gene from a parent. Many of these changes develop in the tumour cells during a person's lifetime. They are known as acquired or somatic mutations. The distinction is important because identifying the particular genetic change can help doctors choose treatment.Molecular testing examines tumour tissue for alterations that may respond to targeted medicines. These drugs block specific growth signals used by cancer cells, helping doctors tailor treatment to the biology of an individual tumour. Not every lung adenocarcinoma has an EGFR or ALK alteration, and not every patient will benefit from the same targeted medicine. Treatment decisions depend on the molecular test results, cancer stage and the patient's overall condition.

Can lung cancer develop without smoking?

Yes. Apart from tobacco exposure, factors associated with lung cancer include second-hand smoke, radon gas, air pollution and certain occupational exposures. Age and biological factors can also influence risk, while some cases occur without an identifiable cause.

What about symptoms?Adenocarcinoma often develops in the outer regions of the lung and may grow without producing obvious symptoms in its early stages. A small nodule may, therefore, be discovered during imaging performed for another reason or as part of a medical evaluation.However, finding a lung nodule does not automatically mean a person has cancer. Nodules can also arise from infections, inflammation and other non-cancerous conditions. Imaging helps doctors assess the level of suspicion, while a biopsy or examination of surgically removed tissue can establish the diagnosis.Symptoms that may warrant medical assessment include: A persistent cough or a change in a long-standing coughHow do doctors decide whether lung cancer can be removed surgically?Once lung cancer is confirmed, doctors determine its stage. This involves assessing the tumour's size and location, whether nearby lymph nodes are involved and whether the cancer has spread to other organs. A CT scan and, where appropriate, PET-CT, other imaging tests and lymph-node sampling may form part of this assessment.Doctors also evaluate the patient's lung function, general health and ability to tolerate surgery. Depending on the cancer's stage and characteristics, treatment may involve surgery, chemotherapy, radiation therapy, immunotherapy, targeted therapy or a combination of these approaches. Some patients receive systemic treatment before surgery to improve the chances of successful treatment, while others may require additional therapy afterwards.When is removal of a lung lobe necessary?Each lung is divided into lobes. The right lung has three and the left has two. A lobectomy involves removing the lobe containing the tumour, usually along with nearby lymph nodes for examination.

How Priyansh Arya made 'mental switch' to etch his maiden first-class hundred

GNS News Agency, Oct 21

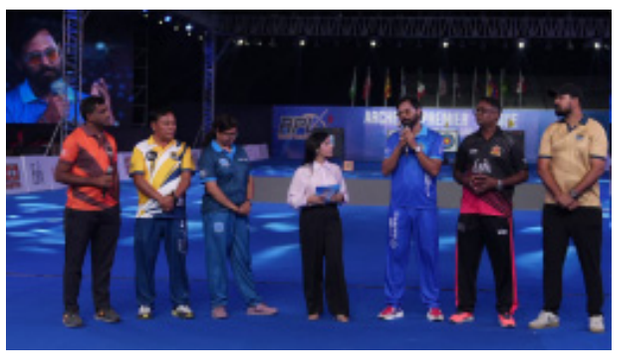
KP Bhaskar missed the first three deliveries of the Delhi innings on Sunday. Gujarat seamer Arzan Nagwaswalla was stationed in his eyeline at deep cover, blocking a glimpse of the batter on strike from his seat in a makeshift tent. When the Delhi chief selector finally caught sight of his flamboyant opener, a tinge of despair had instantly engulfed him.Priyansh Arya had just charged Chintan Gaja, the Gujarat captain, off the fourth delivery of the morning. The ball missed his clean swing and whirled past the off-stump. It was only the left-hander's third game in the Ranji Trophy and first of the season as Delhi's ever-revolving XI had dialled three changes from the opening round defeat against Bengal last week.A Delhi batting legend of impeccable repute in the '80s, Bhaskar simply couldn't process the red-ball rookie's impulse. Arya, 24, had played only five games since the IPL season this summer — all 50-over appearances for India A."The mental switch between formats, that's the key these days. Not technical; a cover drive is a cover drive everywhere, but the ability to rein in the shots and play long," lamented Bhaskar.Arya's charge could have waited for a better moment, when he had completely locked in on the sudden red-ball switch. But on a slow pitch offering low bounce, where his opening partner Sanat Sangwan had slipped to a characteristically attritional start, Arya wasn't going to hold back his shots for long.

He repeated those purposeful advances down the pitch at critical points in the day, making Bhaskar and the entire Delhi dugout wipe memory of his early blip after they opted to bat first. On a hazy morning that rapidly turned into a blazing afternoon, Arya tempered the gears with aplomb to crack his maiden First Class century in 125 balls. When the rest of the Delhi top order surrendered to loose dismissals, Arya was busy satiating his hunger for a big knock that was missing in his profile for months. Right until he fell prey to a cruel twist, Arya proved his mettle with his longest innings in professional cricket to date. His 220-ball 199, studded with 30 boundaries, set the base for Delhi's big batting day before captain Ayush Badoni's unbeaten 115 put the hosts on 381 for four at stumps at the Air Force Ground B in Palam.

Heartbreak for Priyansh Arya! He falls on 199, bowled off a delivery that kept low through to the stumps as Manan Hingrajia finds the breakthrough. A brilliant knock nevertheless as a 234-run stand with Ayush Badoni comes to an end.Roughly seven meters separated the 'B' venue – hosting its maiden First-Class match – from its sister ground A. When 15 wickets fell to spin in the Services-Bengal contest on the other side of the fence, Arya offered Delhi hopes of a sharp revival from their nine-wicket loss last week with a stubborn blunting of Gujarat's four-man seam attack.He bled a stream of boundaries throughout the first session, beginning with a firmly pulled six off left-armer Nagwaswalla over square leg. On the first account of spin in the 27th over, Arya pummelled Siddharth Desai over the sight-screen for his second maximum.Sangwan's reticence caved in when Harshal Patel floated delivery nibbled the outside edge to the 'keeper. Harshal emerged the pick of the seamers when he dismissed Yash Dhull soon after — a hard push from a fuller delivery carried the edge to the gully fielder. Shortly after Lunch, Harshal had another moment when his direct hit from mid-on accounted for Ayush Doseja's run-out, leaving Delhi three down at 142.Gujarat's misery, though, had just begun. Sapped by the unusual October heat, the bowlers' faltering lengths were taken down by Arya and Badoni's 234-run third-wicket stand. While the captain unlocked runs steadily, Arya broke out of a siesta. He had faced only 13 balls in the first 40 minutes after Lunch. A stepped-out slap off Gaja sped to the extra cover fence, refreshing the senses. Arya reached his century in 125 deliveries, without ever looking out of sync or place in the whites.The Gujarat shoulders dropped, their voices disappeared, and Arya-Badoni wrested control with eight boundaries in as many overs before tea. Arya progressively summoned his tenacious self in the evening session. The highlight was a flawless extension of the drive through extra cover, lifting Gaja with ridiculous ease for his fourth six. He would swipe spinner Vishal Jayswal over mid-wicket, glide Harshal's yorker down to the third-man boundary with a softened blade and maintain a stoic hunger to cocoon his stumps, all with equal measure.

Tragedy could have struck at any point on a lifeless, slow pitch. It finally held him on the cusp of another landmark, on 199 at the end of the 77th over. After copping a six earlier that over, part-timer Hingrajia's gentle wafter scooted low past Arya's defences and hit the stumps.KP Bhaskar would know all about that ill-fated one run, having fallen on a famous 199 himself in Delhi's victorious Ranji final at the Kotla in 1989.Arya, however, nailed the "mental switch" that he was seeking after all. The chief selector must be content for now.Brief Scores: Delhi 381/4 in 84 overs (Priyansh Arya 199, Ayush Badoni 115 batting; Harshal Patel 2/66) vs Gujarat.

How India's archers mastered the wind for medals in Asian Games



Rahul Banerjee remembers shooting arrows wearing a backpack stuffed with water bottles at the 2015 Archery World Championships, because archers feared they would be flown away by strong gusts of wind. As a former top international Recurve archer and now a senior coach guiding younger Indians at national camps and the Archery Premier League, Banerjee leans back on his experience, like when he figured he needed to aim at 6 or 7 circle of Target 1 for the bow to actually veer into the 10-circle of Target 2.Archery in the winds has always been a wild ride – though 2026 marks a turnaround for Indians who secured breakthrough medals at the Asian Games. The improvements have come with experienced coaches first, acknowledging the wind-problem for India, and then offering technical solutions.

"You have to understand that Indian archers from my times used to be very afraid of shooting arrows in the wind. Like, there was a real shaking fear of aiming even at the thought of it, because it's not just wxindy, but cold and then time pressure," Banerjee admits candidly. He was also part of the much-reviled generation, cruelly crucified as 'chokers' at every failure. Deepika Kumari's implosion at London Olympics was a scarring memory for fans, but Banerjee stresses that fans aren't remotely aware of what the challenge entails for Indians who don't grow up training in cold+windy centres.It was a long-time problem. Head or tail winds is one thing. Even left to right we can deal with. But Lord's during the 2012 Olympics was one of the toughest because it was circular revolving winds (like a typhoon), because it was an enclosed stadium," Banerjee recalls. "Antalya was tough recently, because it was very windy. But the preparation was important, or you can get scared literally. Otherwise itna wind chalegaa that your whole focus is on that, instead of aiming. It's taken us time to learn how to deal with it, and passing on to the next generation," says the team bronze medallist from 2010 Guangzhou Asiad.Are the choker tags justified? Not quite. But all Banerjee will say is the likes of Dhiraj Bommadevara or Atanu Das and Neeraj Chauhan, or youngsters Kumkum Mohod and Simranjeet Kaur come far more prepared, than archers from earlier. Banerjee insists a high performance centre in a place like Himachal, might really help Indians.

He knew cursorily that if winds hit from 8 O'clock, they could strike at 2 O'clock, but executing that had practical issues. At the 2009 World's in Ulsan, Korea, archers were briefed it would be cold, but actually shooting was teeth-clattering. "Conditions changed mid-competition and it suddenly got cold, and we weren't even carrying jackets," he recalls. At Copenhagen where he literally aimed at the adjacent target, and managed to not be blown away, he still finished Top 10, shooting a low 640 – that's how treacherous things could get.But Banerjee developed a method. "When young, we followed the (yellow) flag," he says. But that's just the start of reading winds – one half of the matter; worrying about the arrow path. What's more important, the 2010 CWG champ says is, "Feeling the wind in the body, and managing to stay composed when slapped by cold gusts is the challenge. But I was still afraid. I used to shoot very fast, a decision I made because if you shoot fast, there's a low chance of mistakes."

Though there's a more fundamental technique – which he sees mirrored by Neeraj Chauhan and Bommadevara. "Focus is on simple drawing technique. Put arrow in the string, get in line, put the nock properly and draw with a longer right hand. But your focus should only be on the left hand – because that aims for the position. Always work to make the left stronger," he stresses.

Confidence >> Wind challengeCasey Kaufhold is women's Recurve World champion currently and following her archer parents, she's been slinging arrows since age 3. Watching twice World champion, Brady Ellison, and growing up in moderately windy Pennsylvania, she acquired an antidote to winds — supreme self-confidence."Windy is fun, always. You need to be extra confident. Just commit to the aim, shoot," the American says, recalling a Nationals at Indianapolis, when she gee-ed herself up even as others were missing entire targets altogether. "Confidence is most important. You can't have doubts about aiming in the wind. I just had many people guiding me on how to aim in winds when growing up," says the World No 1 archer, shooting the final arrow for Chero Archers.When Compound legend Mike Schloesser shot at Antalya for his World title in 2013, he remembers dire winds. "It was so bad we had to sit on our knees in between arrows. Properly unsafe. It was crazy but I walked out with a big smile, and was asked 'Why are you so happy?' I said 'wind is my forte'." You need to meet it, to beat it.

Medals, academies, courts and Tanvi Sharma effect bring Punjab back in badminton spotlight

GNS News Agency, Oct 21

* For two consecutive editions of the Badminton World Junior Championships now, shuttlers from Punjab, Tanvi Sharma of Hoshiarpur and Jagsher Singh Khangurra of Nabha, around 35 km from Patiala, have brought India medals. Since Tanvi finished runners-up at Senior Nationals three years ago, coaches estimate, around 200 girl trainees have been added across the state, inspired by her silver from World Juniors in 2025.* For the first time in the history of North Zone Badminton Championships this year, 10 Punjab players ended with medals across age-group competition and seniors.* The newest batch of badminton talent in Punjab is coming from rural areas of Gurdaspur, Ferozepur, Hoshiarpur and Phagwara, even as 20 small-scale academies have mushroomed all over the state, a four-fold rise over the past five years.

* The Punjab government poured in nearly Rs 3.5 crore for the refurbishment of the Raizada Hansraj stadium at Jalandhar from 2022 to 2026, while the number of synthetic courts in the state has gone from four to 10 in the last three years.* A U17 boys national final in 2025 ended up being Punjab vs Punjab, with Jagsher winning the title. The sleeping giant was waking up.Even as Jagsher Singh (17) makes waves with an unexpected World Juniors bronze medal in Cairo, after reaching the semi-final on Friday, and Tanvi Sharma (18) inspires Punjab girls to dream big and ready themselves for elite competition, the state is showing signs of a badminton boom, which was inevitable. Tanvi's emergence provided the spark.Mehvish Kaur, the reigning North Zone junior champ, hails from border-town Gurdaspur. "Both me and her grandfather, an armyman, played the sport so we had to put her in badminton," says father Ravinderpal Singh, a Punjab electricity board engineer, who got the teen started on badminton seven years ago. "Tanvi's mother's dedication was inspiring," he says. It meant Ravinderpal first sought out an NIS-certified personal coach and hired a private court for her training as she won the school Nationals.Another enterprising set of parents is from rural Ferozepur, where Japleen Kaur is on the up-curve, having won the 2025 U15 sub-junior ranking meet at Bhagalpur after her father took on the challenge of coaching her.Perhaps the biggest female success from Punjab post-Tanvi is Inayat Gulati of Phagwara. A district champ within two months of starting at the age of seven, Inayat began picking state crowns across three age groups and moved to Ratti Academy at Jalandhar, winning the Jaipur ranking meet a fortnight ago. She was picked for the National Centre of Excellence in Guwahati after a U15 Asian medal in China."We had no background in sport, but after some skating, I decided to put her in badminton," says mother Shivani. "Since we know Inayat's good and we are in it for the long haul, we will support her all the way, just like Tanvi's mother, an inspiration. She's a big P V Sindhu fan, and trains hard for 7-8 hours."Punjab could have been in the spotlight 25 years ago, with Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Amritsar and Mohali having a fairly steady badminton culture that gave India international medallists Pranav Jerry Chopra and Dhruv Kapila.Jalandhar's Sachin Ratti created a massive stir late in 2001, using his parallel attacks to defeat recently crowned All England champ Pullela Gopichand and becoming the first Indian in a while to beat the future national coach. But association "politics" meant the spark was cruelly stubbed."My family was staying at Hansraj stadium where I trained," Ratti recalls. "I was doing really well, and beating a great player like Gopi meant I had potential. But the local politics did everything to break me. They cut off the water supply and electricity to the stadium, and literally hounded me out of Punjab," he says.He moved to Maharashtra and returned only in the last decade to set up an academy in Jalandhar, where he now trains around 80-90 players. Prolonged court cases and a trench fight finally handed the association reins in 2021 to media publisher Ritin Khanna, himself a former national-level player."We travelled in sleeper class unreserved, had a maximum of 3-4 badly conducted ranking tournaments while the association didn't care," Khanna, the Punjab association secretary, recalls. When his nephew brought home two rose-buds as a prize for winning a district meet and said badminton was pointless, Khanna was roused into rustling up a resistance.Now, elite coaches are paid a salary of Rs 1 lakh a month, all Punjab-representing top players travel 1AC, gyms are being added to academy halls and draws are online and transparent. "How Sachin (Ratti) was pushed out and insulted hurt me. I knew I had to change badminton. But it's players like Tanvi and Jagsher whose success is propelling the sport. Punjab has a huge drug problem amongst youth. The youth need a sport like badminton," Khanna says."Tier-3 towns with more hunger and strength are throwing up female players. Tanvi's mother Meena inspired many parents," he says.For Khanna, the road map is clear. "We want to bring a Malaysian coach to Jalandhar. Also, I'm pushing the state government to subsidise expensive shuttles because players are coming from far flung rural corners and need support," he says. "Tanvi and Jagsher have shown Punjab has it."

Niki Prasad looks to build on strong debut against Zimbabwe

Raipur: Indian youngster Niki Prasad said she had been dreaming of representing the country at the senior level after delivering a strong batting performance against Zimbabwe in the first T20I at the Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh International Stadium.Prasad spoke to the broadcasters ahead of the second T20I in Raipur on Sunday about her journey from leading India to the U19 Women's T20 World Cup title in 2025 to making an impressive debut for the senior side a couple of days ago.Prasad, who scored an unbeaten 39 off 35 balls on her debut, was pleased with her performance in the series opener."Definitely, that innings has given me a lot of confidence, and going forward, whatever opportunity I am put under, I think I'm just going to stick to my basics and play to the merit of the ball," Prasad told the broadcasters ahead of the second match.Asked about her journey and how she was preparing mentally for the next stage of her career, she said, "You know, I was just dreaming of this day, and the preparation for this journey was quite hard. I think that hard work has paid off, and I just want to grow from here."Prasad has been part of the Delhi Capitals squad for two seasons and has shown glimpses of her talent. She credited the Women's Premier League (WPL) and India A matches with helping her handle challenging match situations."I think these franchise games and also the India A games, whatever the BCCI organised for us, have given me more confidence because I was already put under pressure in those games. So I think it feels quite similar here," she said.With India leading the series 1-0, the hosts had a chance to seal the series with a match to spare. India were tested in the opening game after losing their top four batters for single-digit scores. Prasad said the team's batting group was looking to keep things as simple as possible in the second match.

'T20 consistency is overrated': Cheteshwar Pujara backs Sanju Samson

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Former India player Cheteshwar Pujara has thrown his weight behind Sanju Samson after the end of the West Indies tour of India, stating that the concept of top-order batters in T20 cricket being consistent is "overrated". Pujara said he believes that Samson could bounce back with a single defining innings during the upcoming multi-format tour of New Zealand.Samson scored 168 runs in five innings against West Indies. He was the second highest run-scorer — fourth overall when both teams are considered — for India in the five-match T20 series, behind skipper Shreyas Iyer.

"Consistency should be there, but for the top order, I think consistency is overrated in T20s," Pujara said while analysing Samson's fluctuating returns on JioHotstar's 'Out or Not Out'."He is never out of form. The kind of player Sanju Samson has been in the T20 format; his form fluctuates. But it is always a matter of one innings. He plays one good innings, and he is back in form. So, you cannot say that this player is not in form. In the T20 format, you are bound to have failures. Who doesn't get out in T20s?" he added.After ending the five-match series against West Indies with a 2-2 stalemate (with the fifth game on Saturday getting washed out after India's innings), the Men in Blue head to New Zealand for an all-format tour. The tour starts off on Thursday with the T20 format.What will be interesting is whether teenage star Vaibhav Sooryavanshi gets a look in. Pujara said it would be difficult to have Samson and Sooryavanshi starting the India innings together.

"Vaibhav playing every game seems a bit difficult in New Zealand because there you need more all-rounders, either a spin all-rounder or a seaming all-rounder. So, there you don't need a lot of batters, especially in the top order," he said."Either Sanju Samson can open or Vaibhav. I don't think both can be part of the playing XI in New Zealand conditions. So, Vaibhav will have to wait, but he will get opportunities."Pujara said Sooryavanshi could still feature during the series if conditions or player availability create an opening."If the spot opens up for him based on conditions or players' fitness, that's fine. But both Sanju and Vaibhav cannot be in the playing XI in New Zealand," he said.Meanwhile, Mumbai cricket stalwart Abhishek Nayar said he understood why Samson's place in the side continues to be scrutinised."Sanju plays with everyone's emotions because he won't score runs for two matches, and everyone starts raising questions," Nayar said.

India should stop seeking replacement for 'irreplaceable' Hardik Pandya, says Sunil Gavaskar

The absence of Hardik Pandya could be sorely felt for India throughout their five-match T20I series against the West Indies, which ended in a 2-2 draw after the fifth match in Bengaluru was washed out on Saturday. It was the first time since 2022 that India had failed to win a T20I series at home. Former India captain Sunil Gavaskar feels that India should stop looking for someone who can do the job that Pandya does during a game and instead shift their strategy when the ace all-rounder is not available."We sometimes get a little bit carried away with trying to find a replacement for Hardik Pandya. Hardik Pandya is irreplaceable. If you can't find somebody of his calibre, then go with somebody who will do a slightly different job," said Gavaskar on JioStar after the fifth T20I.

Among the seniormost members of the team, Pandya has almost always delivered with both bat and ball whenever he has played for India in recent years. However, his fitness has been a headache as India step up their build-up towards the 2027 World Cup. A new shin injury ruled him out of the series against Australia last year, and he has not played an ODI since the Champions Trophy. Since then, India have fretted over balance, weighing an extra batsman against an extra bowler. The old flaw persists: none of India's batsmen bowl, and among the bowlers guaranteed a start, only Ravindra Jadeja bats.Gavaskar cited Naman Dhir as an example of a player who could fulfil a different role, pointing to the young batter's contribution with both bat and ball."Naman Dhir is doing that job. He's bowling his overs well, and look at the way he batted in this game," he said, referring to Dhir's unbeaten six-ball 24 in the rain-hit series decider, in which only 7.4 overs of play were possible."The takeaway from the series is that, in their bowling, they have to play with at least four regular bowlers. A fifth bowler and a sixth can be your all-rounders, somebody who can bat as well. Somebody like a Naman Dhir, who's more of a batter but who can come in and bowl two or three overs. Axar Patel, who can bowl his four overs," said Gavaskar.

Twin double centuries highlight HCA under-16 league

Hyderabad: Double centuries by Smyan Bharadwaj (250, retired hurt, 335b, 38×4, 4×6) and G Parthiv Varma (248, 344b, 37×4, 1×6) were the highlights of the HCA under-16 Super League two-day cricket championship here on Sunday.

Scores

C-Division one-day league

Sacred Heart beat LNCC by 10 wickets: LNCC 149 in 26.4 overs (Aditya Madhav 51, Prathap Goud 37; A Rudy Stanley 5/29) lost to Sacred Heart 153/0 in 14 overs (Jamesh Anthony 58 not out, Lesty Anthony 89 not out).

Mahesh CC beat Mahaveer by six wickets: Mahaveer 112 in 39.3 overs (Aarav Reddy 37; K Sai Kumar 4/12, Shubhanshu Singh 3/34) lost to Mahesh CC 115/4 in 15.4 overs (Shubhanshu Singh 51; C Bhanush 3/37).

Tiger Shroff shot at in Mumbai: When the underworld turned its guns on Bollywood

Actor Tiger Shroff was shot at in Mumbai's Juhu area on Sunday, October 18, but he escaped unhurt. The incident brings back memories of a history of gun attacks and threats targeting Bollywood personalities, particularly during the 1990s and early 2000s, when organised crime groups sought to influence film financing, casting decisions and distribution rights.The relationship between Mumbai's underworld and the Hindi film industry dates back to the 1960s, when gangsters such as Haji Mastan were known to socialise with film personalities and act as alternative financiers. The relationship became more coercive by the late 1980s and 1990s, with criminal groups allegedly financing productions, demanding overseas rights and attempting to dictate casting decisions.

One of the early cases was the killing of film producer Javed Riyaz Siddiqui in June 1994. A study on organised crime in Mumbai, drawing on Mumbai Police Crime Branch records, listed Siddiqui among film industry personalities targeted by criminal violence. The same list recorded an attack on a producer named Firoz Sarfraz Khan in July 1994.On March 7, 1997, producer and director Mukesh Duggal was shot dead in his office in Andheri. Duggal had produced films including Fateh, Saathi and Platform, and directed Gopi Kishan. There were reports of his connections with members of rival criminal networks, and investigators suspected that his killing was linked to the conflict between associates of Chhota Rajan and Chhota Shakeel.

On July 31, 1997, filmmaker Rajiv Rai, director of Tridev and Gupt, was attacked outside his office in Tardeo. His bodyguard returned fire, and Rai escaped unhurt. The attackers were reported to belong to Abu Salem's gang, and Rai had reportedly received threats before the shooting.Barely two weeks later, on August 12, 1997, music producer Gulshan Kumar, founder of T Series, was shot dead outside a temple in Andheri. His killing became one of the most prominent cases associated with the underworld's reach into the film and music industries.Rakesh Roshan Rakesh Roshan was shot outside his office in Santacruz West

The violence continued into the late 1990s. Film producer and Adlabs founder Manmohan Shetty survived an attempt on his life in December 1999. India Today reported in 2003 that a hitman working for Abu Salem had tried to shoot him on December 27, 1999. Shetty subsequently travelled with an armed guard and monitored visitors through closed circuit cameras.On January 21, 2000, actor, director and producer Rakesh Roshan was shot outside his office in Santacruz West, shortly after the success of Kaho Naa… Pyaar Hai, which launched his son Hrithik Roshan. One bullet struck his arm, while another grazed his chest. He survived after receiving treatment.In later media interviews, Roshan said the underworld wanted Hrithik to act in a film financed by its associates. He said he had refused to rearrange his son's shooting dates to accommodate their demands. In April 2026, filmmaker Ram Gopal Varma offered a similar account, saying the shooting followed Roshan's refusal to comply with pressure from Chhota Shakeel's network.An actor killed and a director warnedOn February 14, 2001, actor and producer Dinesh Anand, known for supporting roles in Hindi films, was shot dead at National Park in Borivali. Anand had frequently appeared in films produced by the slain Mukesh Duggal.In July 2002, filmmaker Lawrence D'Souza, director of Saajan, survived an attack outside his office in Oshiwara. Two gunmen opened fire but did not aim directly at him. One bullet was fired into the air, another struck the gate, and a third hit the wall of a nearby building. Police suspected the attack was intended to intimidate the film industry into paying extortion money to the Ezaj Lakdawala gang. D'Souza had reportedly received ransom demands over the telephone.

A different phase, but attacks continueThe pattern of violence changed over time, but shootings and threats returned to the headlines in recent years.On April 14, 2024, two motorcycle borne assailants fired several rounds outside Salman Khan's residence in Bandra. The actor was not injured. Mumbai Police alleged that the attack was carried out at the behest of jailed gangster Lawrence Bishnoi and filed a chargesheet against six accused under the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act.In September 2025, gunmen opened fire outside the family home of actor Disha Patani in Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh.On February 1, 2026, gunmen fired at filmmaker Rohit Shetty's residence in Juhu. In April, Mumbai Police filed a chargesheet against 17 accused, alleging that the attack was carried out by a group linked to the Lawrence Bishnoi gang to establish its supremacy. The precise motive for targeting Shetty remained unclear.The reported firing involving Tiger Shroff on Sunday is the latest incident in this history.

Nelson Dilipkumar shares picture with Rajinikanth as Jailer 2 wins praise

GNS News Agency, Oct 21

Mumbai: Basking in the success of Jailer 2, director Nelson Dilipkumar shared a picture with superstar Rajinikanth and music composer Anirudh Ravichander Nelson expressed his gratitude to the audience for the overwhelming response to the action entertainer in a new post on X. The filmmaker shared a picture featuring himself, Rajinikanth and Anirudh.Expressing his excitement over the film's success, Nelson wrote on the microblogging site, "Theatres are going bonkers! Thalaivar magic hits different. Thank you, dear audience, for the phenomenal love and reception for #Jailer2. Nothing beats seeing the audience celebrate it like this! Thank you all for the love and support (sic)."

Backed by Kalanithi Maran under the banner of Sun Pictures, Jailer 2 also features Ramya Krishnan, Yogi Babu, Mirnaa, Rithvik, Mohanlal, Shiva Rajkumar and Jackie Shroff reprising their roles from the original film. SJ Suryah, Mithun Chakraborty, Suraj Venjaramoodu and Vidya Balan have joined the cast this time.Several members of the film fraternity also took to social media to congratulate Rajinikanth and Nelson on the film's success.

Kamal Haasan wrote on X, "News has come in that Jailer 2, starring my dear friend Rajinikanth, which released today has emerged a superhit worldwide. Heartfelt congratulations to my friend Rajinikanth, director @Nelsondilpkumar, music composer @anirudhofficial, and the @sunpictures team."Dhanush, who watched the film's first-day, first show, also congratulated the team, writing, "JAILER 2 is a MUST MUST MUST watch. BLOCKBUSTER (followed by a number of fire symbols). A FEAST for every Thalaivar fan."Director Karthik Subbaraj also praised the film, writing, "Thalaivar sets the screen on Wild Wild Fire. Can't take my eyes off him…. Love you Thalaivaaaa. Goosebumps Overloaded Mass Blast…. #Jailer2.@Nelsondilpkumar writing and execution(Excellent symbol).@anirudhofficial breathes high octane energy in every frame. Whattey wonderful moment to see @mithunda_off sir, @Mohanlal sir @NimmaShivanna sir @bindasbhidu sir @vidya_balan madam @iHrithik sir @iam_SJSuryah sir all in one film. Entertainment max. Thank you @sunpictures and whole cast n crew for giving us Blockbuster feast in Theatres."

Rashmika says she asked Vijay Deverakonda to marry her for an entire year

Mumbai: After Salman Khan set the tone for the final season of the popular chat show Koffee With Karan, celebrity couple Vijay Deverakonda and Rashmika Mandanna appeared together on the couch in the second episode.This marks Rashmika's debut on the show, while VD has already appeared on Koffee With Karan with his Liger co-star Ananya Panday.

The episode was full of candid revelations by the couple. During the rapid-fire segment, Rashmika was asked by host and filmmaker Karan Johar to choose between her Animal co-star Ranbir Kapoor and her Pushpa co-star Allu Arjun. The The Girlfriend actor picked the latter.Later, when Karan asked Vijay who he believed he shared the best on-screen chemistry with, apart from Rashmika, she interjected, saying, "Nobody." Vijay responded by revealing that his mantra for a happy marriage was simple: "Always agree with your wife."Sharing more details about their personal lives, Vijay and Rashmika revealed that she had to ask him 100 times before they finally tied the knot earlier this year.In the recently released promo, Karan asked Rashmika and VD, "Was there a proposal?" As Rashmika shook her head, Vijay revealed, "She was like, 'Let's get married.' I was like, 'Okay, you have asked me a 100 times.'"When Karan asked Rashmika whether she had really asked the Arjun Reddy actor 100 times to marry her, she said, "I asked him for an entire year." Vijay then clarified, "I am not an a**hole."As they approached the gaming segment of the episode, Vijay called Allu Arjun and asked him to deliver the now-iconic line, "Karan, it's me."After keeping their admirers guessing about their relationship status for a long time, Vijay and Rashmika finally got married on February 26 at ITC Mementos in Udaipur in a traditional ceremony.

Suriya says students should watch podcasts instead of reels: 'You may not learn anything'

Suriya recently offered advice to students at the 47th anniversary celebration of his father and veteran actor Sivakumar's Sivakumar Educational Trust. While doling out life lessons to the students, the actor also addressed the excessive consumption of Instagram Reels today. He argued that instead of spending too much time scrolling reels, students should explore podcasts and do extensive online research to learn more about a subject rather than just skimming the surface."If you keep watching Reels, you are only watching a story. You may not learn anything from it," said Suriya at the event. He urged the students to study real-life stories of successful personalities instead, by watching long-form podcasts on their journeys.Suriya also compared life to the process of filmmaking during his motivational speech.

"The director never says, 'You have failed.' Instead, he says, 'One more.' I look at life as a director. Life never tells you that you have failed. You may think so, but life is not like that," said Suriya, drawing a parallel between canning different takes of the same shot on a film set and the idea of failing in life — only to get back up and keep trying again till you succeed.Adding that "there is always one more chance", the actor asked students to remain hopeful about gaining success in life. Taking a page out of his own life, Suriya confessed that he wasn't well-versed in acting at the start of his career. But working consistently for 30 years, and consciously improving on his craft, has helped him to attain stardom.Suriya also offered lessons on gratitude, asking students to always acknowledge the contribution — even though minor — of every person who's helped them get to a successful point in life. He pointed out that even on a film set, there are multiple forces that contribute to his performance — from the director and writer to technicians like the cinematographer, the editor, and the action director, among several others.He urged that just as all these professionals have helped him in his career, each student must also uplift at least one person once they reach a position of power and influence. Even with the Sivakumar Educational Trust, Suriya and his father have managed to do exactly that. At the event, they also distributed financial assistance worth Rs 13.78 lakh to students and educational institutes.Last month, Suriya's former co-star R Madhavan took to his Instagram Stories to laud the actor's initiatives in the education sector. Suriya's Agaram Foundation supports students facing social and financial barriers to education. Through its sustained efforts, the foundation has helped 51 students become doctors and 1,800 pursue careers in engineering.Earlier, at an event in Chennai, Suriya revealed that more than 6000 students have benefited from the initiatives of his foundation, the majority of whom are the first from their respective families to study after Class 12.

'My wife yelled at me': Rohit Roy reacts after TV actors attack his 'dustbin medium' remark

Rohit Roy has clarified his controversial remark about television being a "dustbin medium", explaining that he was criticising the quality of content on the small screen and not the actors working in the industry.In a conversation with Lehren Retro, Rohit admitted that his choice of words was wrong but maintained that television content needs to improve. He also hit back at actors who took his comment personally, saying he never called anyone garbage.

"This line that I said, 'Television is a dustbin medium.' We all know that I am a product of television. Had television not been there, Swabhimaan not been there, I wouldn't have been here even after 30 years. Firstly, I want to say, 'Please understand what I tried to say.' In retrospect, I do feel that I shouldn't have used the word 'dustbin' because at first glance, anyone who is reading will think and say, 'Oh, he's calling me garbage' but that wasn't the case that 'if you're working in dustbin means you are trash,'" said Rohit Roy

The Kaabil actor said that some actors took his remark personally and attacked him without understanding what he was trying to convey. He clarified that his criticism was directed at the television industry's working conditions and the quality of its content, rather than the people who work in the medium."A few actors took it personally and attacked me. That's very sad because I didn't say anything about you. I didn't say that you are garbage or you are dustbin. What I was trying to say that we get a script in the morning, we have to rote learn the dialogues and finish the scenes within the next 10-15 hours at any cost, whether you agree or disagree. I was talking about the content, the content is the dustbin medium. Years ago, film producers Vinita Nanda and Bhatt (Mahesh) saab (sir) has also said this."Explaining his choice of words, Rohit Roy compared television content to a newspaper. He said, "The content is like newspaper." He looked into the camera and asked, "Newspaper will work, right? There's nothing wrong with newspaper?" The actor added, "It's like newspaper. You read today's newspaper, and then throw it in the bin or wrap a vada pav or use for packaging. Today's newspaper is of no use the day after."Rohit reiterated that television had played a crucial role in his career and questioned why he would insult an industry that had given him his identity. "What I am saying is that I am a product of television, why will I call myself a trash bin. Ask any creative artiste from television, whether they are happy with what they are doing? I am also doing it. I am fighting for TV," said the actor.Responding to the actors who criticised him, Rohit Roy said, "For those actors who have personally attacked me, I would like to say, 'No botox has gone in my brain, I am not biting the hands that feeds me.' I don't have any need to stay relevant. I am not in any reality show and I have not made this comment to attract reactions from anybody."

The actor again admitted that he could have expressed himself differently and said he understood how the word "dustbin" could have been interpreted as an insult. "Yes, I shouldn't have called it a dustbin, maybe I could have called it a newspaper or rather have said that the content on TV needs to get better. After working in the television medium for so many years, there is also a frustration that 'Why is our content not improving?' So, the ones who want to understand will do, and these two-four actors, who commented, I googled them. They are great and good-looking people and have worked a lot on television. I just want to say, 'Don't make personal attacks. First reach where I am and understand why I said, what I said.' My choice of word was wrong but I stand by what I said and why I have said it."Actor Naman Shaw, Devoleena Bhattacharjee, Pankit Thakker had called out the actor for calling TV "dustbin medium".Rohit also revealed that his wife, Manasi Joshi Roy disagreed with his choice of words. "My wife also yelled at me. She's a star on TV, and I told her, 'If you don't understand, then how will others understand?' She told me, 'You shouldn't have used that word,' and I agreed with her."

Tiger Shroff firing case: Three held at Kota railway station

Kota: Three alleged shooters involved in the assassination attempt on Bollywood actor Tiger Shroff have been caught at Rajasthan's Kota railway station while travelling by train, sources said.All three were detained during a joint operation by the Rajasthan Anti-Gangster Task Force (AGTF) and the Kota City Police and are currently being interrogated.According to the sources, a juvenile is among those detained.

One of the accused has been identified as Hritik Kumar alias Roshan (22), a resident of Piprai village in Bihar's Begusarai district, currently residing near the Urdu School in Mumbai's Andheri West and working as a Rapido rider.The third accused is identified as Rehan (18), a resident of Haryana's Sonipat.

Earlier, Mumbai's Juhu Police have registered a case against three unidentified persons in connection with the firing incident involving the actor, in which his caretaker and driver, Firdos Ibrahim Baloch, sustained injuries.The FIR has been registered under Sections 109(1) and 3(5) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), along with relevant provisions of the Arms Act. Police are investigating the incident to identify and apprehend the assailants and establish the roles of the other suspected individuals involved in the attack.According to the complaint, the incident took place on the evening of October 18, 2026, at around 7 p.m., when Tiger Shroff was returning by car after playing football.Two

unidentified assailants allegedly opened fire at the vehicle using pistols, injuring Baloch. Another person present in the area was also hit by a bullet during the shooting, police said.The complaint states that the attack took place while they were returning after the game.

As their car exited the school grounds and turned left, two unidentified men allegedly approached and opened fire at the vehicle from the front and its left side.After the shooting, the assailants fled from the spot.Meanwhile, interrogation of the detained individuals is underway at Kota City Police Station and further details are underway.

Lawrence Bishnoi gang claims responsibility for attack on Tiger Shroff

Mumbai: The Lawrence Bishnoi group has claimed responsibility for the attack on Tiger Shroff in Juhu on Sunday evening.Anil Pandit, a representative of the group shared a post saying that they tried to warn Tiger, but he did not listen and hence, they had to resort to such drastic actions.Anil Pandit warned that they will not spare anyone working in close proximity with Bollywood actor Salman Khan.They shared, "Jai Mahakal… Jai Shri Ram…Greetings to all the brothers. We, Anil Pandit and Harman Sandhu, take responsibility for what happened in the Tiger Shroff incident today. We had called and warned him, but he did not understand. Therefore, today we made him understand in a stronger way. Anyone in the Mumbai film industry who does not listen to us or works with Salman Khan will be next. Wait and watch. (sic)""Note: Those from other groups who think they can gain fame by using our name will soon be killed, and we will make them famous that way," the post further read.In an audio shared by the Mumbai crime branch, Anil Pandit asked Salman to apologise to Lawrence Bishnoi and the Bishnoi community.Listen to me carefully Salman Khan. If you don't apologize to my elder brother, Lawrence Bishnoi, or to the Bishnoi community, then we won't even leave a dog in your house.

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