

Gajwel SI attached to HQ over alleged assault on farmer

Siddipet: Gajwel sub-inspector (SI) Malla Reddy, who was accused of beating a farmer who approached him seeking help with a land issue inside the police station on Friday, was transferred from the police station and attached to the Police Headquarters by Commissioner of Police Rashmi Perumal.

The farmer, Bhimiri Ravi, who sustained a bleeding injury in the alleged assault, accused the SI of attacking him without any reason. After learning of the incident, Commissioner of Police Rashmi Perumal attached him to Police Headquarters on Saturday.

Over 1,500 applications rejected in Telangana Graduate voter enrolment drive

Hyderabad: A large number of voter registrations in two Graduates' Constituencies are facing rejection, with officials flagging ineligible degrees and suspected fake certificates during the scrutiny phase.

As many as 1,581 applications have been rejected in the Mahabubnagar–Rangareddy–Hyderabad and Warangal–Khammam–Nalgonda Graduates Constituencies as of Saturday.

As per the Election Commission of India (ECI) rules, the qualifying date for voter registration is November 1, 2026. This means that applicants must have obtained a degree or an equivalent qualification at least three years before the qualifying date, that is on or before October 31, 2023, to be eligible for enrolment as graduate voters.

Two youths booked in Khammam for sword stunts, social media posts

Khammam: Two youths of Tummalapalli village in Konijerla mandal of the district have been booked by police for performing stunts with swords and posting the content on social media.

Konijerla SI Suraj stated that a case has been registered under public nuisance provisions against Budeda Eshwar and Budeda Narasimha Rao who performed stunts with swords during birthday celebrations causing panic among the public.

Brandishing sharp weapons like swords in public spaces to intimidate others or promoting such acts on social media for popularity constitutes illegal behaviour. Strict legal action would be taken against anyone whose conduct disturbs law and order, the SI said.



Hyderabad, Oct 24 (IANS) The Directorate of Enforcement (ED), Hyderabad Zonal Office, on Friday conducted search operations at seven premises across Hyderabad, Secunderabad and Medchal-Malkajigiri in

ED raids Hyderabad firms in Rs 326 crore bank fraud probe

Telangana under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), an official statement said on Saturday.

The raids targeted the registered office of M/s Kanakadhara Ventures Pvt. Ltd. (KVPL), the residences of its directors, and premises linked to entities and individuals alleged to have acted as conduits for the diversion of bank funds.

The searches form part of an ongoing investigation into the alleged "misutilisation" and diversion of credit facilities sanctioned to KVPL and its directors, the ED statement said.

The ED case stems from an FIR dated December 8, 2022, registered by the Central Bureau of Investigation, Bank Securities and Fraud Branch (BS&FB), Bangalore,

on a complaint from Punjab National Bank.

The FIR alleges offences under Sections 120-B, 420, 468 and 471 of the Indian Penal Code, and provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988.

According to the agency, a consortium of banks led by Punjab National Bank -- comprising IDBI Bank, Union Bank of India, Andhra Bank (now UBI) and Bank of Baroda -- suffered a loss of Rs 326.49 crore.

ED investigations revealed that Bank Guarantee and Letter of Credit facilities granted to KVPL were misused. Funds were allegedly diverted through related and conduit entities on the strength of fabricated steel purchase invoices and transport documents.

The company is also accused of operating bank accounts outside the consortium arrangement without the knowledge of the lending banks, the statement said.

During the searches, officials seized incriminating documents, digital devices and other records related to the diversion and layering of funds. Unaccounted cash amounting to Rs 15 lakh was also recovered.

Multiple immovable properties and investments linked to the case have been identified.

ED said further investigation is underway.

The coordinated action underscores the agency's continued focus on tracing the proceeds of bank frauds and cracking down on complex money-laundering networks involving corporate entities.

‘Deal with inimical elements firmly’, directs HM Amit Shah while reviewing Delhi security

He made it clear that no one has the right to disrupt law and order, and directed that any such elements would be dealt with firmly.

The Home Minister instructed the police to increase patrolling in sensitive areas and ensure the safety of women, elderly persons and children at public places.

He also called for greater use of CCTV cameras and artificial intelligence to keep a watch on suspicious individuals.

Special attention was ordered at all entry points to the capital to prevent anti-social elements from entering the city. More than 250 companies of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF), including CRPF, BSF, ITBP, SSB, CISF and RAF units, have already been deployed in Delhi.

The deployment, which includes women personnel, has been extended till October 31 and can be prolonged further based on the security assessment.

Meanwhile, the opposition has announced a mock parliamentary session on October 30 focusing on a proposal to impeach Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, followed by a large march to Ramleela Maidan on November 1.

However, several trade organisations in Delhi, including the Chamber of Trade and Industry (CTI), have demanded the postponement of a rally proposed by the Congress and the INDIA bloc for November 1st.

In this regard, Delhi's traders have written to the Leader of the Opposition, Rahul Gandhi, requesting that the rally be held after November 10th.

The reason cited by the traders is that a rally during the festive season would lead to economic losses.

Officials indicated that the security apparatus would continue to function strictly as per protocol to maintain peace in the national capital.

CPI (M) to contest Warangal-Khammam-Nalgonda Graduates' MLC elections

Khammam: CPI (M) district secretary Nunna Nageswara Rao has announced that the party has planned to contest the upcoming Warangal-Khammam-Nalgonda Graduates' constituency MLC election.

Speaking at a meeting here on Saturday he said that the party was holding discussions with like-minded individuals and forces to build a coalition for the elections scheduled for February or March next year.

The election campaign would focus on the issues faced by students, youth, women, the working class, employees and intellectuals. Critical political issues concerning the development of both the nation and the State would be explained to the voters, he said.

Nageswara Rao pointed out that there were millions of educated youth across the country and the State and it was the responsibility of the governments to provide them with dignified employment opportunities.

However, governments have failed miserably in this regard and the rising unemployment rate was irrefutable evidence of their failure. The current socio-economic crisis is driving the youth to participate in large-scale movements questioning governments through democratic means, he added.

A Graduate Test for the Saffron Party Chief?

Will the BJP Face Criticism if It Loses the MLC Election?

How Strong Is the BJP in the Hyderabad,Rangareddy,Mahabubnagar Constituency?

Will Victory Mean One Thing for the Saffron Party and Defeat Another? Will Political Equations Come into Play?

How Strong a Challenge Can Kasani Veeresh and Sama Ram Mohan Reddy Pose to the BJP?

What Impact Will This MLC Election Have on Telangana Politics in the Future?

“-Vaasukumar, Senior Journalist

“The 2027 Graduate MLC elections in Telangana have once again triggered an interesting political debate. The Hyderabad,Rangareddy,Mahabubnagar Graduates' Constituency is not merely an election for a single Legislative Council seat. It is an important platform for major political parties to assess their support among urban voters and demonstrate their positions on issues concerning unemployed youth, employees and educated sections of society.“The BJP, which had previously won this seat, suffered a defeat at the hands of the BRS in 2021. With the BJP once again focusing on this constituency, the name of party chief N. Ramchander Rao has unexpectedly come into the spotlight. Meanwhile, the ruling Congress, as part of its efforts to secure the seat, has already announced Sama Ram Mohan Reddy as its candidate. The BRS, aiming to retain its previous support base, has also been working on its candidate selection and has brought Kasani Veeresh, from the Mudiraj community, into the political spotlight.“The 2021 Election Results Indicate a Tough Contest for the BJP“In the 2021 Hyderabad–Rangareddy–Mahabubnagar Graduates' MLC elections, the main contest was between the then TRS candidate Surabhi Vani Devi and BJP candidate N. Ramchander Rao. G. Chinna Reddy contested on behalf of the Congress, while Professor K. Nageshwar entered the fray as an independent candidate.“A total of 93 candidates contested the election. According to the available figures, the total number of valid votes was 3,37,039. The candidates received the following first-preference votes:““Surabhi Vani Devi (TRS): 1,12,689 votes (33.43%)“N. Ramchander Rao (BJP): 1,04,668 votes (31.05%)“K. Nageshwar (Independent): 53,620 votes (15.90%)“G. Chinna Reddy (Congress): 31,554 votes (9.36%)“These figures reveal an

important aspect of the contest. Vani Devi secured 1,12,689 first-preference votes, while Ramchander Rao received 1,04,668, leaving a narrow difference of just 8,021 votes between the two.However, the election was not decided in the same manner as a conventional election in which the candidate with the highest number of votes automatically wins. The elimination of candidates and the transfer of subsequent preference votes played a crucial role in the preferential voting system. Vani Devi ultimately emerged victorious.The 2021 election therefore demonstrated that, despite the BJP's considerable vote base, the direction in which preference votes from other candidates are transferred can also determine the final outcome.“If the Saffron Party Chief Loses, Will It Affect Future Elections?“If the BJP state president contests the Graduate MLC election and suffers a defeat, the outcome could trigger a wider political debate about its implications for the upcoming Assembly and parliamentary elections.Political observers may closely examine the BJP's support among urban voters, educated sections, employees and unemployed youth, particularly in Hyderabad and its surrounding areas. If the party fails to achieve the expected result in an election contested under the leadership of its state president, it could lead to an internal review of the party's strategies, candidate selection and the performance of grassroots workers.The crucial question is whether the BJP can convert its existing support base among graduates into votes sufficient to secure victory. The result could also become a test of the state leadership's ability to mobilise voters and strengthen the party's organisational machinery.At the same time, an MLC election defeat would not automatically determine the outcome of future Assembly or parliamentary elections. Nevertheless, it could influence political perceptions about the party's organisational strength and its appeal among educated urban voters.“If Kasani Veeresh Mudiraj Wins, Will the BRS Get a New Political Boost?“If

Kasani Veeresh Mudiraj contests as the BRS candidate and wins, it could provide fresh political momentum to the party.Having lost power in the state, the BRS could use a victory in the Graduate MLC election to send a strong message that it continues to enjoy support among educated voters, employees and unemployed youth, including those in urban areas. Such a victory could boost the confidence of party cadres and help mobilise grassroots workers ahead of future elections.Kasani Veeresh's candidature could also bring the representation of Backward Classes (BCs) and the participation of different social communities into sharper political focus. If his candidature is formally confirmed and he goes on to win, the BRS may seek to present the result as evidence of its ability to build support across social groups.However, the extent of this political advantage would depend on the scale of his victory, the composition of his support base and the party's ability to translate the result into broader electoral gains.“If Sama Ram Mohan Reddy Wins, Will the Congress Gain Fresh Strength in Urban Areas?“The Congress has announced Sama Ram Mohan Reddy as its candidate. He has previously served as chairman of the TPCC Media Committee.If he wins, the Congress would have an opportunity to demonstrate its support among urban graduates while in power in the state. The party's organisational strength in and around Hyderabad, public opinion on government policies, and the government's response to the concerns of employees and unemployed youth could all become significant factors in the election.A victory could strengthen the Congress's claim that its support extends beyond tradi-



tional voter groups and into sections of the educated electorate. It could also provide the party with an opportunity to reinforce its political standing in the Hyderabad–Rangareddy region.“On the other hand, a defeat could force the ruling party to review the difficulties it faces in winning over this specific category of voters despite being in power. Issues concerning employment, employee welfare, government commitments and the implementation of promises could become central to the post-election debate.Ultimately, the contest will test not only the popularity of individual candidates but also the organisational strength, electoral strategies and political credibility of the BJP, BRS and Congress.For the BJP, the election could become a test of its state leadership. For the BRS, it could offer an opportunity to regain political momentum. For the Congress, it could serve as a measure of public acceptance among educated urban voters.The final outcome will depend on the candidates' appeal, voter mobilisation, party organisation and the preferences of registered graduates. Beyond the immediate contest for a Legislative Council seat, the election could offer important political signals about the direction of Telangana's evolving electoral landscape.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Global warming— point of no return

It is now official. We have failed to achieve global emission targets. The sum and substance of the latest Emissions Gap Report 2026, released by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), is that the world has reached a point of no return. Nearly a decade ago, at the Paris Climate Summit—Conference of the Parties (COP) 21—nations agreed to strive to limit the global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. That goal is out of reach now. The best option before the world now is to limit the duration of this 'overshoot' as short as possible and bring temperatures back down by 2100. This appears a far cry, given the gap between what the nations promise and what they actually deliver. Climate diplomacy cannot remain a cycle of lofty declarations of ambition followed by patchy implementation. There is consensus among experts that extreme temperatures are directly linked to climate change. The silver lining for India is that it has delivered more than most nations despite being under pressure to meet the growing energy requirements. India is one of only six G20 countries likely to achieve its 2030 NDCs (Nationally Determined Contributions) with existing policies. UNEP says India is also likely to meet its updated 2035 targets, even though these allow total emissions to rise. However, UNEP has flagged concerns over India's net-zero strategy, citing a lack of transparency on carbon removal and the absence of annual reporting.

These concerns could invite international scrutiny at COP31, to be held in Türkiye next month. India's domestic goals are in line with its self-imposed 2070 deadline for reaching net-zero emissions. However, challenges persist in aligning policy with sustainable development. It continues to rely on coal as the main source to meet energy needs. Non-fossil sources make up about 52% of installed capacity but produce only a quarter of the electricity. For India, the key strategic takeaway from the UNEP Report is that its climate strategy must pivot from capacity building to structural integration and resilience. With a global overshoot of the 1.5 degrees Celsius threshold now increasingly difficult to avoid, India faces a double imperative: it must accelerate deep decarbonisation across industrial sectors while rapidly shielding its economy, agriculture, and citizens from severe climate impacts. Adding intermittent renewables alone is no longer enough for India because the core challenge is grid integration and system stability. As an expanding manufacturing hub, India's biggest growth in emissions will stem from industrial sectors such as steel, cement, chemicals, and heavy transport. Therefore, there is a need to move from pilot projects to large-scale commercial adoption of green hydrogen in steelmaking, fertilizer production, and refineries. India can drive transition through public incentives like PLI schemes, but long-term success hinges on multilateral finance. The country must lead Global South negotiations to demand predictable, concessional financing and technology transfers from developed nations.

Journalist Associations Must Strive to Protect Journalists' Rights



Congress Minority State General Secretary Abdul Shakeel""Kumrambheem, Asifabad, District. Reporter "Indian Chronicle"October. 25."Kagaznagar: Telangana Journalist Association (TJA) Komaram Bheem Asifabad District President Shafi Ullah Baig and District Vice-President Erra Rajasekhara were felicitated by Abdul Shakeel, State General Secretary of the Congress Party's Minority Department, in Kagaznagar on Friday. On the occasion, Abdul Shakeel honoured them with shawls and extended his congratulations on assuming their new responsibilities."Speaking at the programme, Abdul Shakeel said that Shafi Ullah Baig's election as district president was recognition of his dedication and efforts towards resolving journalists' problems. He appreciated Baig's journey from an ordinary reporter in a remote rural area to the position of district president of the Journalist Association. He also praised Baig's efforts and initiatives for safeguarding journalists' rights and promoting their welfare. Abdul Shakeel stated that journalists play a crucial role in protecting democracy by fearlessly highlighting injustices, irregularities and public issues in society. He emphasized that journalist associations must continuously work to identify journalists' problems and safeguard their rights. He expressed confidence that newly elected District President Shafi Ullah Baig and Vice-President Erra Rajasekhara would discharge their responsibilities effectively and work for the welfare and development of journalists. TJA District President Shafi Ullah Baig, Vice-President Erra Rajasekhara, Jameel and others participated in the felicitation programme.

V. Preethika Sri, a student of STEMSpark Resonance, Srinagar, shines at the City-Level Schools Basketball Championship



"V. Preethika Sri, a student of STEMSpark Resonance School located in Srinagar Colony, Khammam, participated in the City-Level Schools Basketball Championship organized by the District Basketball Association, Khammam. Through her exceptional performance, she not only led her team to victory but also impressed the spectators and the Basketball Association officials with

her individual skill. Recognizing her talent, the Association honored her with a medal and a merit certificate."During a felicitation ceremony held at the school, Directors K. Sridhar Rao and Mrs. Krishnaveni congratulated V. Preethika Sri for her outstanding performance in the championship. They encouraged all students to focus on developing their innate talents alongside their academic pursuits. In line with this, the management of STEMSpark Resonance School stated that they are committed to nurturing students across all domains, employing well-structured educational plans to help them reach great heights in the future. They highlighted that their students have already demonstrated exceptional talent, achieving success at both the state and national levels in events such as the INSPIRE MANAK science exhibitions and karate competitions, as well as in various other contests."The event was attended by School Principal K. Suresh, Khammam Basketball Organizing Committee Chairman Ramana, and the teaching and non-teaching staff, all of whom congratulated the winner.

Uppal Celebrates 12th Annual Nabhi Shila (Boddu Rai) Pushkar Festival in Grand Style



CONGRESS IN-CHARGE PARAMESWAR REDDY Participates in the Celebrations""UPPAL, OCTOBER 24 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): The 12th annual Nabhi Shila (Boddu Rai) Pushkar celebrations were held with great grandeur in Uppal. Former Uppal Corporator Mandumula Rajitha Parameswar Reddy and Uppal Constituency Congress

Party In-charge Mandumula Parameswar Reddy attended the celebrations as chief guests."On the occasion, members of the temple committee accorded them a warm welcome and felicitated them with shawls."Speaking at the event, Parameswar Reddy expressed happiness over the grand arrangements made for the 12th annual Nabhi Shila (Boddu Rai) Pushkar celebrations. He congratulated the organisers, elders, volunteers and devotees who worked hard to make the event a success."He also offered prayers to the Almighty, wishing the people of Uppal good health, happiness, prosperity and all-round well-being on the occasion of the sacred annual celebrations."The event was attended by priests Gantambolla Venkataramana Sharma (Kannaya) and Srikar Sharma, along with Telkala Mohan Reddy, Pujala Prabhakar, Chindam Venkatesh, Lingampally Ramakrishna, Sunku Shekhar Reddy, Salla Prabhakar Reddy, Manda Murali Krishna Reddy, Varkala Madan Goud, Sattireddy, Alwal Bhaskar, Janagama Ramakrishna, Anil, Tokata Raju, Kumar, Naresh Mudiraj, Delhi Chandrashekar Reddy, Jitender Reddy and Bobby."Members of the Boddu Rai Committee and a large number of devotees also participated in the celebrations.

Wankidi Congress Faces Internal Tensions

Senior Leaders Feel Neglected as Two Aspirants Vie for Cooperative Society Nominated Post"

"Unclear Political Equations in Wankidi Congress!""Kumrambheem, Asifabad, District. Reporter "Indian Chronicle"October. 25."Wankidi:Dissatisfaction Among Senior Leaders Over Alleged Neglect"Are Leaders Who Recently Joined the Congress Getting More Priority?"Cooperative Society Nominated Post Becomes a Key Point of Discussion"Will Long-Serving Congress Leaders Receive Due Recognition?"Wankidi Political developments within the Congress party in Wankidi mandal of Komaram Bheem Asifabad district have become a topic of discussion among local political circles. Questions are being raised over the importance given to senior leaders, coordination within the party, the allocation of positions, and the role of leaders who recently joined the Congress from other political parties."According to discussions in local political circles, some senior leaders who have worked for the Congress for several years are reportedly dissatisfied with the recognition they receive. At the same time, there are allegations that leaders who recently joined the party from other political backgrounds are being given greater importance in party programmes and political activities."These developments have raised questions about whether the party is maintaining a balance between its old and new leaders. The issue has gained significance as the Congress, being the ruling party, is expected to strengthen its grassroots presence while maintaining unity among its leaders and workers."Two Aspirants for the Cooperative Society Nominated Post"The nominated post associated with the cooperative society in Wankidi mandal has emerged as a major point of discussion. According to local political sources, two leaders are being considered as contenders for the position."One is reportedly a leader who recently joined the Congress after being associated with the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS). The other is a former Congress mandal president who has remained associated with the party for several years. The question of who will ultimately secure the nominated post has generated considerable interest among local political circles. Party workers and observers are keen to know whether the leadership will give preference to a leader who has served the Congress for a long time or to someone who recently joined the party."Allegations are also circulating that the leader who recently joined the Congress from the BRS is influencing political developments in a manner that could prevent senior Congress leaders from receiving positions. However, these allegations have not been independently verified, and an official response from the concerned individuals is awaited. There are also concerns among some local political observers that the decision could influence the future political equations within the Wankidi Congress unit."Will Senior Congress Leaders Receive Recognition?"Senior leaders who have remained loyal to the party through difficult political circumstances are considered an important foundation for its grassroots strength. Their role in mobilising workers, participating in election campaigns, addressing public issues, and maintaining contact with voters is significant. In Wankidi mandal, discussions are reportedly taking place over whether such leaders are receiving adequate recognition for their services. Some political observers believe that the party leadership needs to consider the contributions of long-serving leaders while allocating positions and responsibilities."At the same time, welcoming leaders from other parties can help expand the Congress's political base. However, maintaining a balance between newcomers and existing party workers is essential to avoid internal dissatisfaction."Former Mandal President's Role Under Discussion"The political approach of the former Congress mandal president has also become a subject of discussion."According to local accounts, when he was serving as mandal president, he was regularly available to the public at the Congress party office. People reportedly viewed the office as an accessible place where they could meet party representatives and raise their concerns. However, allegations are now being heard that the party office is not functioning as actively as it did previously and often remains closed. These claims require verification from the concerned party representatives."Meanwhile, the former president is



reportedly continuing to interact with people and several sarpanches at tea stalls and other public places. His current political position and his relationship with the present mandal leadership have therefore attracted attention among local political observers."Will Sarpanches and Grassroots Leaders Remain With the Party?"There is also speculation regarding the attitude of some sarpanches and grassroots representatives towards the current political situation within the Wankidi Congress. Some local political discussions suggest that dissatisfaction over the allocation of positions and the treatment of senior leaders could affect coordination among party representatives. However, there has been no official announcement confirming that the former mandal president or any sarpanches intend to leave the Congress."The views of the concerned leaders will be important in determining the actual situation."Political observers believe that the mandal leadership should initiate discussions with senior leaders, elected representatives, and grassroots workers to address any genuine grievances and prevent misunderstandings from escalating."A Crucial Decision for the Congress Leadership"The allocation of the cooperative society nominated post is now being closely watched by Congress workers and local political observers. The decision could become an indicator of how the party leadership intends to balance the interests of experienced leaders with those of newcomers."If long-serving leaders are given due recognition, it could help strengthen their confidence in the party. Conversely, if dissatisfaction continues, questions may arise about internal coordination and the party's grassroots organisation."Local residents and political observers are urging the party's senior leadership to take note of the developments and ensure that those who have worked for the Congress over the years are not overlooked."Will the nominated post go to the former Congress mandal president who has served the party for years, or to the leader who recently joined from the BRS? Will the party leadership resolve the reported differences and bring its leaders together? The developments in the coming days are likely to attract considerable attention in Wankidi mandal politics.

Troo Good opens seventh manufacturing facility in Hyd

Hyderabad: Troo Good, which describes itself as India's first and largest millet snack brand, has opened its seventh manufacturing facility in Hyderabad, taking its total manufacturing area to 90,000 sq ft. The company currently produces five crore chikkis and bars every month.

The new unit is part of a broader manufacturing expansion, with Troo Good commissioning three new facilities in 2026. These additions have increased its manufacturing network from four facilities in early 2025 to seven across Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Haryana.

During the same period, monthly production capacity has grown 2.5 times, from approximately 480 tonnes to 1,200 tonnes, according to a press release.

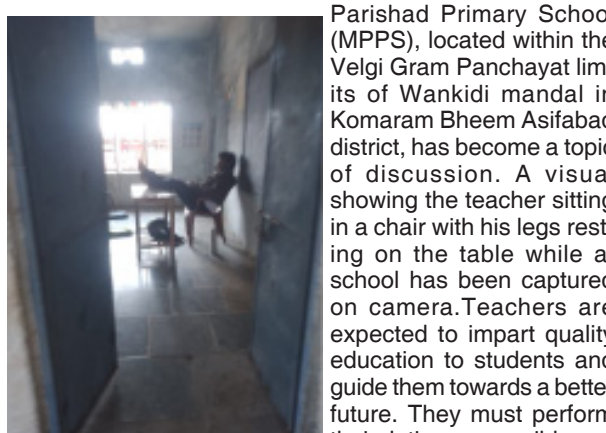
Life and General Insurance Services Under One Roof



"Hyderabad, October 24 (Indian Chronicle) : Corporate Insurance Solutions, established under the leadership of Peri Nageswara Rao and Peri P. Vijayalakshmi at New Maruthi Nagar, was inaugurated by Lion Dr.CMA Durgaprasad, former Chairman and current Director of Nagarjuna Construction Company Limited. He also unveiled the company's brochure. Speaking on the occasion, Durgaprasad appreciated the initiative, highlighting the 43 years of insurance industry experience of Peri Nageswara Rao and the services rendered by Peri P. Vijayalakshmi at LIC. He expressed hope that the organisation would provide customers with suitable insurance policies and claim-related guidance. Peri Nageswara Rao and Vijayalakshmi explained the organisation's service objectives. Pappu Seshagiri Rao, Vijayalakshmi's father, along with LIC and New India Assurance Company Limited officials and insurance industry representatives, attended the programme.

Criticism Over Teacher's Conduct at Koppaguda School

Relaxing with Legs on the Table: Education Officials Urged to Focus on Teaching Standards""Kumrambheem, Asifabad, District. Reporter "Indian Chronicle"October. 25."Wankidi:The conduct of a teacher at Koppaguda Mandal



Parishad Primary School (MPPS), located within the Velgi Gram Panchayat limits of Wankidi mandal in Komaram Bheem Asifabad district, has become a topic of discussion. A visual showing the teacher sitting in a chair with his legs resting on the table while at school has been captured on camera. Teachers are expected to impart quality education to students and guide them towards a better future. They must perform their duties responsibly and maintain professional discipline. Although the government is taking several measures to improve the quality of education in government schools, such visuals at the ground level have raised concerns among local residents. Questions have been raised about whether teaching activities are being conducted properly in government schools and whether teachers are regularly attending to their duties. In this context, local residents have urged the concerned education officials to inspect Koppaguda School on the instructions of the District Collector and conduct a comprehensive inquiry into the incident. Keeping students' futures in mind, residents have requested the education department to strengthen supervision of teachers' performance and ensure that students receive quality education. "Local residents have appealed to senior education officials to give priority to effective teaching in government schools and take appropriate measures to ensure that students receive the quality education they deserve.

Conserve water, power to meet El Niño challenge: Narendra Reddy

Former SUDA chairman calls for public cooperation and urges voluntary organisations to join preparedness efforts. Karimnagar October 24, Khaja Sikandar Mohiuddin (Correspondent): Former Special Urban Development Authority (SUDA) chairman Komatireddy Narendra Reddy has called upon people to conserve water and electricity in anticipation of possible shortages due to El Niño, and said the government was prepared to tackle the challenges arising from the weather phenomenon.

Speaking at a press conference at his office in Mukarampura here on Saturday, Mr. Narendra Reddy said El Niño was affecting countries across the world and urged people to remain vigilant and cooperate with the government by following its advisories. Inadequate rainfall could aggravate water scarcity and power shortages, making judicious use of the two resources essential, he said. Describing the situation as a natural phenomenon, he accused the Opposition of misleading people by blaming the Congress government for the drought-like conditions. Political parties should act responsibly during a crisis rather than attempt to shift the blame onto the government, he said. Referring to the COVID-19 pandemic during the previous BRS regime, he questioned whether the Congress had not extended its co-operation in addressing the public health emergency. Everyone should act responsibly in the present circumstances, he said, appealing to voluntary organisations to join efforts to mitigate the impact of the anticipated crisis. Responding to questions on nominated posts and the SUDA chairmanship, Mr. Narendra Reddy said he had been associated with the Congress for more than three decades and had worked for the party with commitment. Though he had aspired to contest the recent Assembly elections, he did not receive a ticket. However, he respected the party high command's decision and worked alongside the candidate selected by the leadership, he said. He expressed gratitude to the Congress leadership for giving him an opportunity to serve as SUDA chairman after the party formed the government in the State. During his tenure, revenue was generated for the authority and utilised for various development works, he said. He was seeking a renewal of his tenure to ensure the completion of pending development projects, he added. Alleging that some people were attempting to tarnish his image by presenting false information as fact, Mr. Narendra Reddy urged them to desist from such efforts, asserting that people knew the truth. District Congress Minority Cell chairman Mohammed Taj and other Congress leaders and party workers attended the press conference."



Demand to Continue Botany Lecturer at Bejjur Government Junior College



KVPS and DYFI Submit Representation to District Additional Collector****Kumrambheem, Asifabad, District. Reporter "Indian Chronicle" October. 25.****Bejjur: KVPS District Secretary Durgam Dinakar and DYFI District President Gedam Tikanand demanded that Mamatha, who previously worked as a Botany lecturer at Bejjur Government Junior College, be allowed to continue in the same college. They submitted a representation to the District Additional Collector, highlighting the shortage of lecturers and the difficulties

faced by students due to vacant teaching posts. The representatives stated that the college is functioning under an in-charge principal in the absence of a regular principal. They also pointed out that the Zoology lecturer post is vacant, affecting students' education. Around 200 students are studying at the college, and the shortage of lecturers is adversely affecting attendance and academic activities. "They explained that Mamatha, who had been working as a Botany lecturer at the college, was transferred on deputation to West Marredpally Girls College in Hyderabad in November 2025. They urged the authorities to bring her back and continue her services as a Botany lecturer at Bejjur Government Junior College. "The representatives emphasized that students in the educationally backward Komaram Bheem Asifabad district must receive proper teaching facilities. They appealed to the authorities to consider the students' future and take immediate steps to address the shortage of lecturers. DYFI District President Gedam Tikanand, KVPS District Vice-President Vadluri Mallesh and DYFI District Treasurer Durgam Nikhil participated in the programme.

29 FIRs registered over mule bank accounts in Karimnagar Police identify 122 accused; action initiated against 89, says Commissioner

GNS News Agency, Oct 24 Karimnagar October 24, Khaja Sikandar Mohiuddin (Correspondent): The Karimnagar police have registered 29 cases relating to mule bank accounts allegedly used in cyber fraud and identified 122 accused across the Police Commissionerate, Commissioner of Police Gaush Alam said on Saturday. Of the 122 accused, arrests have been made or legal notices issued to 89, while action against the remaining 33 is pending, he said.

The cases have been registered across 14 police stations, according to the station-wise figures released by the Commissionerate. No cases have been reported from Keshavapatnam and Ramadugu police stations. The police have intensified surveillance on bank accounts suspected to have been used to facilitate cybercrimes.

Karimnagar II Town police station accounted for the highest number of accused, with 26 persons named in five cases. Karimnagar I Town reported six cases involving 20 accused, while Jammikunta Town registered three cases involving 15 accused. Karimnagar III Town and Huzurabad Town reported two cases each, involving 12 and 10 accused, respectively. The police have warned people against allowing others to use their bank accounts, ATM cards or one-time passwords (OTPs), particularly in return for commissions. Such arrangements could facilitate cyber fraud and expose account holders to legal action, the Commis-



sioner cautioned. Account holders who knowingly assist cybercriminals would also be treated as participants in the offence and face stringent action, he said. The police appealed to the public not to share bank account details or other financial credentials with strangers.

Telangana Transport Minister Ponnamp Prabhakar Lays Foundation Stone for Bus Terminal Point in Peerzadiguda

--- DCC President Vajresh Yadav and RTC MD Nagireddy Participate in the Ceremony****BODUPPAL, OCTOBER 24 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): "Telangana Transport Minister Ponnamp Prabhakar Goud laid the foundation stone for a new bus terminal point to be developed at a cost of ₹3.2 crore near the Uppal Depot Zonal Workshop in Peerzadiguda Division, Boduppal Circle, under the Malkajgiri Municipal Corporation. "The foundation stone-laying ceremony was held on a grand note, with Telangana Transport Minister Ponnamp Prabhakar Goud and Medchal-Malkajgiri District Congress Committee (DCC) President and Medchal Constituency In-charge Thotakura Vajresh Yadav attending as chief guests and formally launching the project. "Speaking on the occasion, the leaders stated that the establishment of the bus terminal point would improve public transportation facilities for residents and commuters in the surrounding areas. They expressed confidence that the project, being undertaken to meet the growing transportation needs of the region, would contribute significantly to the overall development of the locality. "Several prominent leaders and officials participated in the foundation stone-laying ceremony, including former Zilla Parishad Chairperson Mallipeddi Sharath Chandra Reddy, Uppal Depot Work-



shop Honorary President Darga Dayakar Reddy, DCC Vice-President Vemula Mahesh Goud, former Mayor Thotakura Ajay Yadav, and Amar Singh. "Peerzadiguda, Medipally, Boduppal and Chengicherla Division Presidents Bandi Sriramulu Goud, Tungaturthi Ravi, Bommakku Kalyan, Pogula Dileep Reddy and Kotha Kishore Goud were also present. DCC members, former corporators, Congress party leaders, public representatives, RTC officials, local leaders and party workers attended the programme in large numbers."

Kuchipudi Dance Performances Enthrall Audience at Uppal Mini Shilparamam



--- Mancherla Artists Impress Audience with Traditional Classical Dance Performances****UPPAL, October 24 (Indian Chronicle): "Kuchipudi dance performances captivated audiences at Uppal Mini Shilparamam on Saturday as part of its weekend cultural programmes. The disciples of Kuchipudi dance guru Mrs. Bhargavi Prem, who arrived from Mancherla, enthralled the audience with their remarkable performances. "The artistes presented a variety of



classical dance compositions, including Vinayaka Kautham, Maha Ganapathi, Sri Vighnarajam Bhaje, Jatiswaram, Samajavaragamana, Hindola Tillana, Krishna Shabdam, Shiva Ashtakam and Natesha Kautham, among others. Through rhythmic footwork, expressive gestures and graceful abhinaya, the dancers showcased their talent while reflecting the richness of traditional Indian classical dance. "Adhyasri, Ashwika, Nityasri, Manjusri, Samyuktha, Shanvisri, Nishitha, Haindavi, Deepika, Anandini, Swastika and Dhanvisri were among the artistes who won appreciation from the audience for their impressive performances. "The weekend cultural programmes organised at Uppal Mini Shilparamam continue to promote traditional art forms and provide a valuable platform for young artistes to showcase their talent and preserve India's rich cultural heritage.

Ensure swift response to highway accidents, Gaush Alam tells police

Commissioner reviews patrolling, CCTV surveillance and emergency medical assistance on Warangal-Karimnagar road.



Karimnagar October 24, Khaja Sikandar Mohiuddin (Correspondent): Karimnagar Police Commissioner Gaush Alam on Saturday inspected safety arrangements on the newly constructed Warangal-Karimnagar national highway (NH 563), focusing on accident prevention, surveillance and emergency response mechanisms. Mr. Gaush Alam visited the highway patrolling unit at Kothagattu and the administrative block of the toll plaza to assess the functioning of CCTV cameras, surveillance systems and the control room responsible for monitoring vehicular movement.

He reviewed the arrangements for responding to road accidents and other emergencies, including the mobilisation of personnel to accident sites and the provision of timely



medical assistance to the injured. The Commissioner directed highway patrol teams to remain vigilant and respond promptly to incidents. He stressed the importance of providing immediate assistance to accident victims during the 'golden hour', the critical period when timely medical intervention can improve the chances of survival. He also called for continuous monitoring of CCTV footage to identify vehicles travelling at excessive speeds and those violating traffic regulations. Motorists using the highway should adhere to traffic rules and exercise caution, he said. Huzurabad ACP Madhavi, Rural Inspector Srinivas, Keshavapatnam Sub-Inspector Shekhar, representatives of the highway authority, toll plaza management and staff participated in the inspection.

"It is a joy to celebrate my birthday in the company of municipal workers who wage a daily battle against waste,"

says Padamati Jagan Mohan Reddy, State General Secretary of the BJP Kisan Morcha.



****(Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau – Indian Chronicle – October 24): In the town of Bhuvanagiri, sanitation work is carried out by dedicated municipal workers who begin their day at the crack of dawn, engaging in a constant battle against waste. Former Councilor and current State General Secretary of the BJP Kisan Morcha, Padamati Jagan Mohan Reddy, felt it was his duty to honor these workers and provide them with clothing as a gesture of support. On Saturday, coinciding with his birthday, an event was organized by the Janani Foundation and the Rotary Club of Bhuvanagiri to honor these municipal workers and distribute clothing to them. Speaking on the occasion, Padamati Jagan Mohan Reddy noted that 20 municipal workers were recognized for their service to the town of



Bhuvanagiri, honored, and presented with new clothing. He added that he felt immense happiness in celebrating his birthday amidst these workers. Since 2005, Jaganmohan Reddy has consistently spent his birthdays—falling on October 24th—among the workers. On these occasions, he engages with them, checks on their health and well-being, and reaffirms his commitment to supporting them. He emphasized the need to stand by these workers, who toil daily to ensure the health and welfare of the public, by providing them with insurance, a better quality of life, and access to medical facilities. The event was attended by several individuals—including Shetti Balaiah, Rotary Club President Satyanarayana Reddy, Nimmayya, Jitta Bhaskar Reddy, his parents Savitramma and Panduranga Reddy, Venu, former BJP President Uma Shankar, Ashok Yadav, Bal Shankar, Madhusudan Reddy, Ashok Kumar Goud, and Mandava Srisaiah (a close friend)—who all extended their congratulations.

MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy Inspects Medigadda Barrage Conditions

Public Representatives Examine Wastage of Water "Emphasis on Protecting Irrigation Projects Built with Public Funds



****UPPAL, OCTOBER 24 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy, along with former Telangana minister Errabelli Dayakar Rao, conducted a field inspection of the prevailing conditions at the Medigadda Barrage on Saturday. The public representatives examined the water flow and the wastage of water at the barrage. "MLAs Sudheer Reddy, Krishna Rao, Marri Rajasekhara Reddy and Vivekananda Goud, along with former MLA Gandra Venkataramana Reddy and other public representatives, participated in the inspection. "During the visit, the leaders closely examined the water flow and the situation concerning water wastage at the barrage. The inspection highlighted the need to review the protection, maintenance and efficient utilisation of irrigation projects constructed with public funds. "Measures Needed to Ensure Irrigation Water for Farmers "Irrigation projects play a crucial role in supporting agriculture, ensuring drinking water supplies and sustaining the livelihoods of farmers across Telangana. To ensure that projects built with public money deliver their intended benefits, continuous monitoring of their safety, construction quality, maintenance and water storage capacity is essential. "The effective utilisation of available water resources, without allowing water to go to waste, is particularly important for the benefit of farmers and the public. "Identifying operational issues in irrigation projects, conducting comprehensive technical assessments with the assistance of experts and implementing appropriate corrective measures are essential steps towards improving their performance. "Ensuring timely irrigation water supply to farmers can help increase agricultural productivity and strengthen the rural economy. "-----Continuous Monitoring of



Irrigation Projects Essential "Irrigation projects constructed with public funds require regular reviews of their condition, safety, maintenance and water utilisation, leaving no room for negligence. "A comprehensive technical assessment of the Medigadda Barrage and the implementation of appropriate measures based on its actual condition could help ensure the effective utilisation of available water resources. "The field inspection has brought renewed attention to the importance of protecting public infrastructure, preventing water wastage and ensuring that irrigation projects serve their intended purpose of benefiting farmers and the public.

Delayed fish seed release worries Telangana fishermen

Hyderabad: Delayed fish seed releases by the Fisheries Department and falling water levels in water bodies across Telangana have raised concerns among fishermen over fish production and their livelihoods. Fish seed is generally released between July and August. However, delays in finalising tenders pushed the start of this year's release to September 28. Fish seed is usually stocked in 26,000 water bodies across the State. However, the stocking process has yet to gather momentum, with the formal release still pending in many water bodies. Nearly 4.30 lakh fishermen affiliated with around 6,000 fishermen's cooperative societies are already concerned about the delay.

China breaking patrol patterns leads to face-off: Centre on ITBP chief's remark



GNS News Agency, Oct 24

A month after India and China held Corps Commander-level talks in Arunachal Pradesh amid reports of tension in the Taksing area of Upper Subansiri district following moves by the Chinese PLA, Shatruijeet Kapur, Director General of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), has admitted to a “face-off” at “several locations in Arunachal” which are “still ongoing”. The ITBP chief's remarks, the first by an official on the situation in the frontier state, drew a sharp reaction from the Opposition Congress Friday, which demanded “immediate answers” from the government on the situation.

The Ministry of External Affairs, responding to a question by Kapur's comments, said the situation along the Line of Actual Control “gets disturbed from time to time when Chinese forces diverge from established patrolling patterns”. It underlined that “maintenance of peace and tranquility in the border areas is essential for the overall development of bilateral relations”.

Speaking at the Himveer Samman Samaroh, an annual felicitation ceremony for ITBP personnel, in Alwar in Rajasthan Thursday, Kapur said, “Our newly raised Shaurya commandos are doing great work. Recently, a situation arose where a face-off took place at several locations in Arunachal and is still ongoing. There, our Shaurya Commando teams played an exemplary role. As everyone knows, the ITBP was raised as a mountain guerrilla force and we were given the duty of guarding the border along China in 2004. We should not abandon our exact mandate.” “We do not need guerrilla warfare these days. A specialised high-altitude mountain fighting force is being set up, which will be different from the Army. As of now, we have formed one Shaurya Commando team in every battalion, and two more have been constituted, so that there will be a full company in every battalion. Soon, we will have one full battalion of Shaurya commandos and our operations wing is working on this. This battalion will become our elite battalion and will get a special identity in our force for high-altitude operations,” he said. It may be difficult to counter China by conventional means because their PLA (People's Liberation Army) and BDR (Border Defence Regiment) have gone way ahead with investment and modernisation,” Kapur said. “However, drones are a field where even a smaller nation can mount a challenge to bigger nations. We saw how Ukraine challenged a superpower like Russia. The war was supposed to be over in a few days, but 10,000 to 15,000 Russian soldiers are being killed. They are suffering. Look at Iran... without even a navy, it challenged America with the help of drones,” he said.

The ITBP DG's confirmation of continuing PLA face-offs in Arunachal Pradesh is deeply alarming. After Doklam and Galwan, is another serious confrontation unfolding? Reports of Chinese incursions near Taksing emerged in August. Yet, even 47 days after Corps Commander-level

talks at Wacha–Damai, reportedly just 180 km away, confrontations continue. Has India's patrolling access been compromised? Arunachal Pradesh is an inseparable part of India. Why is the nation being kept in the dark?

2. ECONOMIC SECURITY

Since Galwan sacrifice of 20 Indian Army bravehearts, (FY2020–21), Chinese imports have surged 102%, while India's trade deficit with China has ballooned 155% to \$112.16 billion. Even Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman admits China obstructs Indian exports. Yet, the Government is easing Chinese investment restrictions and considering PLI benefits for eligible China-linked ventures. Has Make in India become Import from China?

3. DIPLOMATIC ACCOUNTABILITY

At least 23 reported Modi–Xi meetings and interactions, 25 Special Representatives' rounds involving NSA Ajit Doval, 36 WMCC meetings, and successive SCO and BRICS Summits. What tangible results have these engagements delivered? Have India's pre-May 2020 patrolling rights been fully restored? Our Armed Forces have our complete confidence. But National security demands accountability, not diplomatic photo opportunities & Hupplomacy! “We have to move towards drones and anti-drone systems. We spent 70 per cent of our Rs 400 crore modernisation funds on drones. There is one drone platoon in all border guarding battalions, we have started training drone pilots, and we are making drones in-house. Out of another modernisation scheme of Rs 3,500 to Rs 4,000 crore, Rs 1,000 crore have been earmarked for drones,” he said. Personnel who are over the age of 50 can understand that the weapons are the same as when they joined the force. We are using the same old weapons. There have been some changes in weaponry, but they are all the same. There is a need for modernisation and we have made a big provision for it in our scheme,” he said.

In September, India and China held Corps Commander-level talks at the Wacha-Damai border meeting point on the Indian side. Wacha is India's easternmost border personnel meeting point, located in the Kibithoo sector. According to sources, Indian troops continue to be deployed in large numbers in the area to prevent any escalation. On Friday, the Congress, reacting to Kapur's remarks, demanded that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah clarify reports that China had prevented Indian troops from patrolling certain areas of Arunachal Pradesh. “After Galwan, now Arunachal Pradesh? Disturbing reports suggest that China is attempting to push further into areas in Arunachal Pradesh, an inalienable part of our nation. This demands immediate answers from the Modi Government,” the Congress said on X. Later in the day, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal, responding to a question on the ITBP chief's remarks, said, “Insofar as the specifics are concerned, I would refer you to the Ministry of Defence. As we have noted in the past, the situation in the India-China border areas gets disturbed from time to time when Chinese forces diverge from established patrolling patterns.” “Both sides continue to use existing diplomatic and military mechanisms to resolve outstanding issues and avoid misunderstanding and miscalculation along the Line of Actual Control. The two sides have also agreed to discuss ways to improve understanding of LAC in appropriate areas for better border management. I would also like to emphasise that the maintenance of peace and tranquility in the border areas is essential for the overall development of bilateral relations,” Jaiswal said.

Bhuj. Vandana Meena, Project Administrator, Tribal Area Sub Plan, Mahisagar is transferred and appointed as District Development Officer, Valsad. Dr Harshit Pruthwiraj Gosavi, a 2013 batch IAS officer, Additional Secretary to Government (Law and Order), Home Department has been transferred and appointed as Collector, Mehsana, and S K Prajapati, Collector, Mehsana is now appointed as Additional Rural Development Commissioner, Commissionerate of Rural Development, Gandhinagar. Alok Kumar Pandey, IAS (RR:GJ:2006), Secretary, Tribal Development Department, Sachivalaya, Gandhinagar will hold additional charge of the post of Commissioner of Relief and Ex-officio Secretary to Government, Revenue Department until further orders relieving Gaurangbhai H Makwana of additional charge. The 2012 batch IAS Officer Gaurang H Makwana, Managing Director, Uttar Gujarat Vij Company Limited (UGVCL), Mehsana has been given additional charge of the post of Managing Director, INDEXT-B, Gandhinagar until further orders. G T Pandya, Additional Secretary, Education Department, has been transferred and appointed as Director of Information. Other transfers include District Development Officer, Banaskantha – Palanpur M J Dave is transferred and appointed as Collector Vav-Tharad relieving Kalpesh Kumar Sharma of the additional charge. B N Patel, Executive Director, Gujarat Gas Ltd, Gandhinagar has been transferred as Director General, Sports Authority of Gujarat, Gandhinagar.

From 58,475 to 2.28 lakh: Voter-deletion form spike casts fresh shadow on Karnataka SIR

GNS News Agency, Oct 24

Amidst allegations of mass submissions of Form 7 intended to disenfranchise genuine voters from the final electoral roll during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) in Karnataka, data shows the Election Commission of India received 2.28 lakh Form 7s. Form 7 is used to lodge an objection against the proposed or existing inclusion of a name in the voter list (electoral roll), or to request the deletion of a name due to specific grounds.

While the figure was 58,475 on September 23, the last date for filing claims and objections during SIR, the figure ballooned to 2.28 lakh as of October 22. The office of the Chief Electoral Officer, Karnataka, will release the final roll on October 27. The CEO, in a statement issued on Friday, also noted that the hearing for all 43.82 lakh voters in the draft roll – against whom notices were issued by SIR – was complete. Among the electoral districts in the state, Bangalore Urban had the highest number of Form 7 applications with 24,268, followed by Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) South (19,662) and BBMP North with 18,659. Outside Bengaluru, the highest number of Form-7s submitted was in Dakshina Kannada district with 10,496. In Bijapur district, where instances of bulk submission of Form

7s first surfaced, the number was 4,666. Apart from Form-7, the Election Commission of India (ECI) has received 10.42 lakh Form-6s for inclusion into the electoral roll, and 13.10 lakh Form-8s for correction of entries such as voter address changes and others. The SIR exercise has been at the centre of an intense political and civil society controversy since the completion of the enumeration phase in August. Over 1.08 crore electors were left out during the enumeration phase, which brought down Karnataka's total voter tally from 5.54 crore to 4.46 crore in the draft electoral roll. Notices were served to 43.82 lakh voters featured in the draft roll during the verification phase. According to sources, around 10-13 per cent of the voters who received notices could be removed from the final roll. In total, around 1.2 crore voters featured in the roll prepared prior to the SIR exercise will be removed. Along with the notices, voters in parts of the state were concerned due to the bulk submission of Form-7s. More than 10 FIRs were registered in different police stations across the state regarding the issue. The ruling Congress party also staged a protest in front of the CEO's office earlier this month over the bulk submission of Form-7s, after which the CEO directed a probe by Electoral Registration Officers.

Punjab House resolution seeks probe into electoral ‘irregularities’ under CEC Gyanesh Kumar



The Punjab Vidhan Sabha on Friday passed a resolution seeking an independent and impartial investigation into alleged irregularities in voter lists, electoral processes and functioning of the Election Commission (EC) under Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar. During the debate on the resolution, several speakers also demanded Kumar's resignation. This is the first time that a legislative Assembly has passed such a resolution against CEC Kumar.

When the House passed the resolution by voice vote, the legislators of the Congress, Shiromani Akali Dal and the BJP were not present in the House. However, two rebel Akali MLAs, a BSP legislator and an Independent MLA were present. Tabling the resolution on the second day of the ongoing session, Finance Minister Harpal Singh Cheema accused the BJP of snatching voting rights from the poor. He alleged that BJP workers had approached Booth Level Officers with forged documents and false claims to get names deleted from voter lists. He said the allegations warranted an independent probe and accountability. “This House firmly reiterates that every eligible citizen's vote is precious in a democracy. Illegally depriving any citizen of the right to vote goes against the fundamental values of constitutional democracy,” read the resolution. It further adds that protecting

voting rights of the people and ensuring the accountability of electoral institutions is imperative for safeguarding the country's democracy. “This House demands establishment of an independent, impartial, and credible investigative mechanism to inquire into alleged irregularities concerning the electoral process and voter lists under Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, so that the truth can come to light and accountability can be fixed,” the resolution reads. “If concrete evidence of criminal violations emerges against any person during the investigation, criminal proceedings should be initiated against them as per law,” it adds. Earlier, participating in the discussion on the resolution, Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann said the BJP-led Centre was “undermining the electoral process”. Mann claimed that names of 14 crore voters had been deleted from electoral rolls nationwide under the garb of Special Intensive Revision (SIR). He said such ‘vote chori’ was dangerous for democracy. “Earlier, people chose the government. Now, the government is deciding who will vote and whose votes will be deleted,” Mann said. The CM alleged that voters were being shifted between states, and referred to the deletion of around 40,000 votes in the New Delhi Assembly constituency from where then chief minister and AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal lost by a margin of about 5,000 votes in the 2025 Assembly polls. AAP MLA Amolak Singh cited the Indian Express report on election commissioners' objecting to amendments in Form 6, which is used for the inclusion of names in electoral rolls. Mann too questioned the Election Commission's records of meetings and the handling of corrections through Form 6, and raised doubts about the use of electronic voting machines. He said central agencies such as the Enforcement Directorate and the CBI were being used against Opposition leaders ahead of elections, alleging that cases against them often disappeared after they joined the BJP. Earlier, Cheema too referred to the Delhi Assembly elections held last year, alleging that the BJP came to power through ‘vote chori’.

A Graduate Test for the Saffron Party Chief? “Will the BJP Face Criticism if It Loses the MLC Election?”

How Strong Is the BJP in the Hyderabad, Rangareddy, Mahabubnagar Constituency? “Will Victory Mean One Thing for the Saffron Party and Defeat Another? Will Political Equations Come into Play?” “How Strong a Challenge Can Kasani Veeresh and Sama Ram Mohan Reddy Pose to the BJP?” What Impact Will This MLC Election Have on Telangana Politics in the Future?” Vaasukumar, Senior Journalist “The 2027 Graduate MLC elections in Telangana have once again triggered an interesting political debate. The Hyderabad, Rangareddy, Mahabubnagar Graduates' Constituency is not merely an election for a single Legislative Council seat. It is an important platform for major political parties to assess their support among urban voters and demonstrate their positions on issues concerning unemployed youth, employees and educated sections of society. “The BJP, which had previously won this seat, suffered a defeat at the hands of the BRS in 2021. With the BJP once again focusing on this constituency, the name of party chief N. Ramchander Rao has unexpectedly come into the spotlight. Meanwhile, the ruling Congress, as part of its efforts to secure the seat, has already announced Sama Ram Mohan Reddy as its candidate. The BRS, aiming to retain its previous support base, has also been working on its candidate selection and has brought Kasani Veeresh, from the Mudiraj community, into the political spotlight. “The 2021 Election Results Indicate a Tough Contest for the BJP “In the 2021 Hyderabad–Rangareddy–Mahabubnagar Graduates' MLC elections, the main contest was between the then TRS candidate Surabhi Vani Devi and BJP candidate N. Ramchander Rao. G. Chinna Reddy contested on behalf of the Congress, while Professor K. Nageshwar entered the fray as an independent candidate. “A total of 93 candidates contested the election. According to the available figures, the total number of valid votes was 3,37,039. The candidates received the following first-preference votes: “Surabhi Vani Devi (TRS): 1,12,689 votes (33.43%) “N. Ramchander Rao (BJP): 1,04,668 votes (31.05%) “K. Nageshwar (Independent): 53,620 votes (15.90%) “G. Chinna Reddy (Congress): 31,554 votes (9.36%) “These figures reveal an important aspect of the contest. Vani Devi secured 1,12,689 first-preference votes, while Ramchander Rao received 1,04,668, leaving a narrow difference of just 8,021 votes between the two. However, the election was not decided in the same manner as a conventional election in which the candidate with the highest number of votes automatically wins. The elimination of candidates and the transfer of subsequent preference votes played a crucial role in the preferential voting system. Vani Devi ultimately emerged victorious. The 2021 election therefore demonstrated that, despite the BJP's considerable vote base, the direction in which preference votes from other candidates are transferred can also determine the final outcome. “If the Saffron Party Chief Loses, Will It Affect Future Elections? “If the BJP state president contests the Graduate MLC election and suffers a defeat, the outcome could trigger a wider political debate about its implications for the upcoming Assembly and parliamentary elections. Political observers may closely examine the BJP's support among urban voters, educated sections, employees and unemployed youth, particularly in Hyderabad and its surrounding areas. If the party fails to achieve the expected result in an election contested under the leadership of its state president, it could lead to an internal review of the party's strategies, candidate selection and the performance of grassroots workers. The crucial question is whether the BJP can convert its existing support base among graduates into votes sufficient to secure victory. The result could also become a test of the state leadership's ability to mobilise voters and strengthen the party's organisational machinery. At the same time, an MLC election defeat would not automatically determine the outcome of future Assembly or parliamentary elections. Nevertheless, it could influence political perceptions about the party's organisational strength and its appeal among educated urban voters. “If Kasani Veeresh Mudiraj Wins, Will the BRS Get a New Political Boost? “If Kasani Veeresh Mudiraj contests as the BRS candidate and wins, it could provide fresh political momentum to the party. Having lost power in the state, the BRS could use a victory in the Graduate MLC election to send a strong message that it continues to enjoy support among educated voters, employees and unemployed youth, including those in urban areas. Such a victory could boost the confidence of party cadres and help mobilise grassroots workers ahead of future elections. Kasani Veeresh's candidature could also bring the representation of Backward Classes (BCs) and the partici-



pation of different social communities into sharper political focus. If his candidature is formally confirmed and he goes on to win, the BRS may seek to present the result as evidence of its ability to build support across social groups. However, the extent of this political advantage would depend on the scale of his victory, the composition of his support base and the party's ability to translate the result into broader electoral gains. “If Sama Ram Mohan Reddy Wins, Will the Congress Gain Fresh Strength in Urban Areas? “The Congress has announced Sama Ram Mohan Reddy as its candidate. He has previously served as chairman of the TPCC Media Committee. If he wins, the Congress would have an opportunity to demonstrate its support among urban graduates while in power in the state. The party's organisational strength in and around Hyderabad, public opinion on government policies, and the government's response to the concerns of employees and unemployed youth could all become significant factors in the election. A victory could strengthen the Congress's claim that its support extends beyond traditional voter groups and into sections of the educated electorate. It could also provide the party with an opportunity to reinforce its political standing in the Hyderabad–Rangareddy region. “On the other hand, a defeat could force the ruling party to review the difficulties it faces in winning over this specific category of voters despite being in power. Issues concerning employment, employee welfare, government commitments and the implementation of promises could become central to the post-election debate. Ultimately, the contest will test not only the popularity of individual candidates but also the organisational strength, electoral strategies and political credibility of the BJP, BRS and Congress. For the BJP, the election could become a test of its state leadership. For the BRS, it could offer an opportunity to regain political momentum. For the Congress, it could serve as a measure of public acceptance among educated urban voters. The final outcome will depend on the candidates' appeal, voter mobilisation, party organisation and the preferences of registered graduates. Beyond the immediate contest for a Legislative Council seat, the election could offer important political signals about the direction of Telangana's evolving electoral landscape.

Kannepally pumps remain idle despite water availability, BRS slams govt

Hyderabad: The Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) accused the Congress government of ignoring repeated demands to lift Godavari water through the Kannepally pump house. The party maintained that the government's failure to operate the pumps had contributed to a drinking water crisis, particularly in Hyderabad.

BRS MLAs Devireddy Sudheer Reddy, KP Vivekanand, Rajashekhar Reddy, Madhavaram Krishna Rao and other senior leaders visited Medigadda on Saturday to inspect the water flow from the barrage. They said substantial quantities of water were still flowing downstream towards the sea. Since June, the Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWSSB) has been receiving complaints about inadequate drinking water supplies to households. Protests were also held at the board's Khairatabad office, LB Nagar MLA D Sudheer Reddy said. He said officials had assured them there would be no water shortage when questioned about the measures being taken to address the drinking water crisis. Sudheer Reddy said the government only needed to operate the Kannepally pumps and lift the available water.

Over 100 detained in Delhi during protest against election panel chief



GNS News Agency, Oct 24

Delhi Police on Friday detained more than 100 protesters as a march against the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls headed towards the Election Commission of India (ECI) headquarters in central Delhi.

The march was called by the Delhi Coordination Com-

mittee of People Against SIR, a civil society collective. It began near Gole Dak Khana, at the intersection of Kalibari Marg and Bhai Vir Singh Marg, with participants carrying the national flag and banners demanding an end to the electoral roll revision exercise. Around 100-150 people gathered at Gole Dak Khana before proceeding towards the Election Commission headquarters.

The protest is part of a nationwide mobilisation by groups including People Against SIR and the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) over alleged electoral irregularities. In Delhi, organisations including the All India Students' Association (AISA) and Students' Federation of India (SFI) were scheduled to march from Gurudwara Bangla Sahib, Gole Dak Khana and Gol Market at 1 pm to the Election Commission office. People Against SIR is a civil society group comprising students, farmers and civil rights activists. It claims that more than 300 organisations have joined its campaign. Security was tightened across central Delhi, with Delhi Police and Rapid Action Force personnel deployed in large numbers.

US national VanDyke returns to Delhi, seeks release of seized items

GNS News Agency, Oct 24

A Delhi court Friday extended till February 24 the permission granted to US national Matthew Aaron VanDyke and six Ukrainian nationals to remain outside India in the Myanmar arms training case being probed by the National Investigation Agency (NIA). The accused had earlier moved a plea, to return to their countries for six weeks and meet their families. On September 24, the court allowed one month. They were directed to return by October 23, when the case was scheduled to be heard. VanDyke appeared in person before Rouse Avenue court on Friday and filed an application seeking the release of his seized personal articles. The court is yet to hear the application.

Neither of six Ukrainians have returned to India and will appear via video conferencing (VC) before Special NIA Judge Prashant Sharma. They had sought extension of the period that they were allowed to go abroad via an application; this was granted by the court. VanDyke has also been given the liberty to stay in his home country and appear through VC on the next date of hearing. The seven were arrested by the NIA in March from various airports in India for allegedly training insurgent-linked groups in Myanmar. It arrested Aaron VanDyke at Kolkata airport on March 13 under Section 18 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. The six Ukrainians — Hurba Petro, Taras Slyviak, Ivan Sukmanovskiy, Marian Stefankiv, Maksim Honcharuk and Viktor Kaminskyi — were picked up at airports in Delhi and Lucknow the same day. From March till date, the agency hasn't filed a chargesheet against them under the anti-terror law. With no UAPA in the chargesheet filed within the statutory 180 days, all the accused moved for default bail, which was granted.

NIA's caseln March, the NIA had told the court that the seven came to India on a visa, entered Mizoram — a protected area — and then crossed into Myanmar, where they allegedly contacted ethnic armed groups. According to the NIA's initial remand papers, the accused were allegedly involved in illegally "importing huge consignments of drones from Europe to Myanmar via India" for the use of "ethnic armed groups". These groups were allegedly also supporting some proscribed "Indian insurgent groups by way of supplying weapons and other terrorist hardware and train-



ing them". The NIA, which was represented by Special Public Prosecutor Rahul Tyagi, Public Prosecutor Ankit Gautam, and advocates Jatin Khatri and Amit Rohilla, also submitted before the court that the accused persons allegedly disclosed during interrogation that they were in "direct touch and abetted in their terrorist illegal activities by unknown terrorists carrying AK47 rifles". In an application dated August 19, the NIA sought permission to interrogate VanDyke and Kaminskyi inside Tihar. "... The central government has received credible information indicating the involvement of certain Ukrainian and US Nationals in a drone attack on a civilian aircraft in Myanmar," the NIA said in its application to the court. On September 8, the agency filed a chargesheet invoking only Sections 21 and 23 of the Immigration and Foreigners Act, 2025. These are offences that can be compounded before the Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO). There was no UAPA section in it, even though the FIR was registered under Section 18 of the UAPA (punishment for being part of a terrorist conspiracy). "A substantial part of the further investigation with respect to the offences committed under UA(P) Act, 1967 has been completed. Further investigation is ongoing and more time is required in order to ascertain and verify the true and complete facts about the commission of offences under UA(P)A in view of import and recovery of huge quantities of drones and accessories through India," the NIA had then submitted. On September 18, the court called the chargesheet "piecemeal" because it covered only the immigration offences while the UAPA probe was on.

Delhi HC refuses to restore water, power connections of Race Course Masjid



GNS News Agency, Oct 24

The masjid is located inside the Race Course Club. The club, spread over around 53 acres near the Prime Minister's residence at 7, Lok Kalyan Marg, and the slums around it are facing eviction following multiple rounds of litigation. The Centre has cited "national security" to justify taking possession of the area. However, sources in the Government said on Thursday that no eviction notice had been sent to the mosque. The masjid's imam, Mohd Haroon, who lives in a 'hujra' on the premises, moved HC on October 12 after the utility connections were disconnected.

On October 8, the Delhi Waqf Board had written to the NDMC executive engineer seeking the restoration of the utilities, stating that the same had been disconnected without "any prior notice or apparent valid reason" despite all dues being paid. The Board also said the connections had been in place lawfully for decades. On October 15, NDMC refused to restore the utilities. It said that "since demolition work is still going on" in the area, which involves demolition of the jhuggi structures, "and there is an element of public harm involved, the electricity connection cannot be restored". Also, according to NNDMC, the Land and Development Office (L&DO), the authority overseeing the demolition and set to take possession of the land, had not been made a party to the petition. While the masjid was not a party to the litigation concerning the eviction of around 700 slum dwellers and the Race Course Club, the NDMC's counsel orally told the court that the masjid's premises were "covered" by a HC judgment dated August 25.

The August judgment had paved the way for the eviction of slum dwellers living near the Prime Minister's residence on Race Course Road. They have since been rehabilitated in Savda Ghevra, nearly 50 km away. Justice Saurabh Banerjee dismissed the imam's petition on October 15, citing the NDMC's submissions and other factors. The court noted that the Waqf Board, described as the "original occupant" of the premises, had not challenged the disconnection of electricity. It also observed that Haroon, as an imam appointed by the Board, had no right to the premises and thus could not claim a violation of his fundamental rights on account of the disconnection. The Delhi Waqf

Andhra reports 31 incidents during local body poll nominations

Amaravati: At least 31 election-related incidents, including violence and destruction of nomination papers, were reported across 13 districts in Andhra Pradesh during local body poll nominations on Thursday, State DGP Harish Kumar Gupta said. Director General of Police (DGP) Harish Kumar Gupta said 22 incidents involved violence, clashes or public order disturbances, while nine pertained to nomination papers being snatched or torn. "During the local body poll nomination process, 31 election-related incidents, including violence, clashes and destruction of nomination papers, were reported across 13 districts of Andhra Pradesh," Gupta said in an official release late on Thursday. Anantapur district reported eight incidents, followed by Annamayya, Kadapa, Prakasam and Tirupati with three each. Chittoor, Sri Sathya Sai and Palnadu reported two each, while five other districts reported one each.

Across the State, 16 instances of nomination papers being snatched, torn or destroyed were recorded, the DGP said, adding that six incidents involved stones being hurled or attacks with stones and sticks, while four vehicles were set on fire. Two residential houses were attacked or damaged, with one demolished using an earth-mover. One incident of firing in the air was reported, while three incidents involved road blockades, sit-ins or traffic obstruction. A police vehicle escorting three candidates to a nomination centre was attacked with stones, leaving a constable with a grievous head injury. Two people, including a contesting candidate, received serious injuries. Several others were injured in three clashes. Candidates belonging to the TDP, YSRCP and CPI(M), along with an independent candidate, were among those targeted during the nomination process. Nomination papers were snatched or torn at Mandal Parishad office gates, inside nomination centres and within a Returning Officer's office. In one instance, papers were snatched while a candidate was showing them to police.

Bay of Bengal low-pressure area likely to intensify into cyclonic storm by October 26



GNS News Agency, Oct 24

Amaravati: A low pressure area has formed over the east-central and adjoining southeast Bay of Bengal and is likely to intensify into a cyclonic storm by October 26 before moving towards the north Andhra Pradesh and adjoining south Odisha coasts, the Meteorological Department said on Friday. The system, which formed at 5.30 am under the influence of an upper-air cyclonic circulation over the southeast and adjoining east-central Bay of Bengal, is likely to persist over the same region and intensify into a depression on October 24, it said.

The weather system is likely to intensify further into a deep depression on October 25 and into a cyclonic storm over the west-central Bay of Bengal by the morning of October 26. It is then expected to continue moving west-northwestwards and intensify further towards the north

Andhra Pradesh and adjoining south Odisha coasts over the subsequent two days, the Meteorological Department said in a release. Meanwhile, the Andhra Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority (APSDMA) has forecast scattered heavy rainfall across the state over the next four days under the influence of the northeast monsoon. APSDMA Managing Director Prakhhar Jain said cloudy weather, moderate rainfall and lightning were likely on Friday. He advised people to remain alert and take necessary precautions, warning them against standing under trees or near large hoardings. Moderate rainfall accompanied by lightning is likely at isolated places in Vizianagaram, Manyam, Alluri, Kadapa, Annamayya, Chittoor and Tirupati districts on Friday, he said.

Light to moderate rainfall accompanied by lightning is likely at isolated places in Srikakulam, Polavaram, Visakhapatnam, Konaseema, East Godavari, West Godavari, Eluru, Krishna, NTR, Guntur, Markapuram, Prakasam, Nellore, Nandyal and Sri Sathya Sai districts. Light rainfall is likely in the remaining districts. For Saturday, moderate rainfall accompanied by lightning is forecast at isolated places in Alluri, Krishna, Bapatla, Nellore, Kadapa and Chittoor districts, while light to moderate rainfall is likely in the remaining districts, Jain said. Rainfall recorded until 5 pm on Thursday included 87.5 mm at Alivelumangapuram and 50.4 mm at Obulavaripalle in Tirupati district, 57.2 mm at Dagadarthi in Nellore district, 53.3 mm at Kavali and 51.5 mm in Chittoor Urban. Pennepalle recorded 45.7 mm of rainfall, Renigunta 41.2 mm, Puttur 40.5 mm and Naidupeta 38.4 mm, he said.

Andhra Pradesh urban local body polls postponed to November 1

GNS News Agency, Oct 24

Vijayawada: Andhra Pradesh State Election Commission has postponed the polling for Urban Local Body elections in the state to November 1, following the Supreme Court direction to postpone the publication of the final list of contesting candidates to October 25 and extend the nomination process wherever necessary. The polling in 100 Urban Local Bodies, which was earlier scheduled on October 28, has now been rescheduled to November 1.

The State Election Commission (SEC), which had stopped the election process following the Supreme Court order on Wednesday, issued a new notification in this regard on Thursday night. State Election Commissioner Anil Chandra Punetha announced that re-polling, if any, will be conducted on November 2, while counting of votes will be taken up on November 3.

The SEC also extended the nomination process in four ULBs — Kadapa Municipal Corporation, Rajampet Municipality, Mydukur Municipality and Tirupati Municipal Corporation. The candidates can file nominations on October 22 and 23. Scrutiny of fresh nominations received during the extended nomination process will be taken up on October 25. The last date of withdrawal of nominations is also October 25. The nomination process has been extended in all 32 wards of Mydukur Municipality (YSR Kadapa district), 11 wards of each of Kadapa Municipal Corporation and Rajampet Municipality (YSR Kadapa district) and 18 wards of Tirupati Municipal Corporation (Tirupati district).

The Supreme Court had directed the SEC to consider the representations made by the petitioner party (YSR Congress Party) and/or various candidates, including evidentiary material as well as electronic evidence placed before it and take a decision to extend the last date of filing nominations in Urban Local Bodies wherever it is of the view that candidates were unable to file their nominations due to the law and order situation. According to the notification, the SEC examined the reports received from the Collectors & District Election Authorities and the Commissioners of Police / Superintendents of police in respect of 100 Urban Local Bodies and also examined the representations made by petitioner party and/or various candidates. The Commission observed that in certain Urban Local Bodies, some candidates, who were willing to contest, have been intimidated or attacked, or their nomination papers were torn, or



by any adversarial circumstance prevented such candidates from filing nominations. The Commission also observed that those incidents have occurred in four Urban Local Bodies and decided to provide them an opportunity to file nominations and to take appropriate steps to ensure that they are not deprived of their opportunity to contest the Urban Local Body Elections. The SEC had issued notifications on October 14 for conduct of the elections to 13 Municipal Corporations and 87 Municipalities / Nagar Panchayats in the State. As per the election schedule, the nomination process was conducted from October 16 to October 18, and the scrutiny of nominations was conducted by the Returning Officers / Election Officers concerned on October 19. The last date for withdrawal of nominations was October 21. However, on a petition by the opposition YSR Congress Party, the Supreme Court on Wednesday directed that the SEC postpone the publication of the final list of candidates till October 25 and, in the meantime, the SEC shall consider the representations made by the petitioner party and/or various candidates, including evidentiary material as well as electronic evidence placed before it and take a decision to extend the last date of filing nominations in Urban Local Bodies wherever it is of the view that candidates were unable to file their nominations due to the law and order situation. The Supreme Court directed that such decision shall be taken by the Commission positively by October 22 and wherever the Commission chooses to extend the time, such time shall be extended not less than 48 hours from the time of publishing such decision by amending the election notification.

‘Look what happened to govt schools, telecom’: Gurugram power staff on strike

Outside the power department's office on Gurgaon's MG Road on Friday, Sushil Sharma joined thousands of electricity employees protesting the entry of a private power distributor in Gurugram and Nuh. An assistant foreman (technical) in the drawing department and state secretary of the All Haryana Power Corporation Workers' Union, Sharma fears the move could threaten government jobs and leave consumers at the mercy of a private company.

"Through privatisation, they are finishing government departments and jobs," he said amid slogans of "Haryana sarkar muradabad (Down with the Haryana government)" and "Parallel licence nahi chalega (A parallel licence will not be tolerated)". "Look at what happens when the private sector enters education and health — the common man can no longer afford them. This is our worry here, ki vo apne manmaani se salary aur rate teh karenge (that they will decide wages and tariffs on their own). The masses will be affected," he said. Workers on strike outside the power department's office on Gurgaon's MG Road on Friday. (Express Photo) Workers on strike outside the power department's office on Gurgaon's MG Road on Friday. (Express Photo) Amid outages, thousands of electricity employees across southern Haryana are on a three-day strike to protest the Haryana Electricity Regulatory Commission's grant of a 25-year parallel distribution licence to Eleven Power Private Limited for Gurugram and Nuh.

Rakesh Yadav, city president of the Haryana State Electricity Board (HSEB) workers, and a technical department employee of the discom, voiced fears over public infrastructure. "They will use our infrastructure to charge the public exorbitantly. Once consumers shift substantially, they will hike rates, which will make the government discom poorer and subject to possible employee cuts," Yadav claimed. How unions built support The widespread participation of field staff followed weeks of internal outreach across 300 divisions to explain the implications of the licence to employees. Sudip Datta, General Secretary of the Electricity Employees Federation of India (EEFI), told The Indian Express, "We have educated our employees. Not all linemen or gangmen may not know the entire thing, but they have a broad idea. That is why the strike has become so successful." Datta said employees also recognised the po-

tential consequences for their jobs if the public discom lost ground. "If the company goes down, its area of operation shrinks, then obviously there will be an impact on employees," he said.

Gurugram accounts for around 40% of the revenue generated by the Dakshin Haryana Bijli Vitran Nigam (DHBVN), according to employees. Datta argued that losing this hub would leave the state discom more dependent on "subsidised, loss-making rural areas", putting further strain on its finances and potentially paving the way for more privatisation. To widen the agitation, unions have formed a joint platform comprising more than 45 organisations, including farmer outfits and trade unions. The unions have put two demands before the government: invoke Section 108 of the Electricity Act, 2003, to direct the regulator to cancel the licence in the public interest; and have Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini publicly declare that Eleven Power will not be allowed to operate within DHBVN's network. Datta pointed to precedents in Navi Mumbai and Karnataka where state leaders intervened to block private licences. "If the head of the administration says, then no company can enter into Haryana against the will of the government," Datta said. On Thursday, the Chief Minister said the state will appeal against the HERC's decision before the Appellate Tribunal for Electricity (APTEL). He added that the government is prepared to engage lawyers chosen by the unions to represent the case. Haryana Energy Minister Anil Vij also said the state would move APTEL within five to six days to seek an immediate stay on the order. "The government did not invite any applications seeking privatisation... the licence was granted despite our stiff opposition," he had said, adding that the government was prepared to take the matter to the Supreme Court if the appellate tribunal does not provide relief.

Eleven One had in September maintained that its entry is not privatisation. "Privatisation, wherever it has happened in India, meant a takeover: a public network, its assets and its workforce handed over to a private operator, with the public utility ceasing to exist in that area. A parallel licence is the opposite of a takeover. Nothing is handed over. The existing utility continues exactly as today with its network, its staff and its consumers," its spokesperson had said.

Rahul Gandhi is a failed product, says Sudhanshu Trivedi

GNS News Agency, Oct 24

New Delhi: BJP MP Sudhanshu Trivedi on Friday launched a fresh attack on Rahul Gandhi, describing him as a "failed product" and alleging that repeated attempts to establish him as a national leader had resulted in political setbacks for the Congress. During a press conference, Trivedi argued that while Prime Minister Narendra Modi's political record was marked by achievements, Rahul Gandhi's leadership had brought repeated difficulties for his party.

"While Prime Minister Narendra Modi's track record is outstanding and full of achievements, Rahul Gandhi's track record has been full of problems for the Congress party. As the Prime Minister said, the Congress party has put not only its own future but also the country's constitutional system at stake by repeatedly trying to launch a failed product," Trivedi said. He added that he would present what he described as evidence of Gandhi's unsuccessful political launches, referring to his education, professional associations, the Congress's electoral performance and several initiatives undertaken to project him as a leader.

"I will present facts and evidence to support the claim that he (Rahul Gandhi) is a failed product," the BJP MP said. Trivedi referred to Rahul Gandhi's admission to St Stephen's College in Delhi, claiming that he had been admitted as a national-level archer and shooting athlete but had subsequently failed to achieve significant results in the sport. "However, after that, he kept missing his targets, and the country never saw any significant achievements from him in shooting. That was his first failure," Trivedi said. "He then went to England for higher studies, following his family's tradition. Between 1996 and 1999, he worked for a British



company called Monitor, which shut down. He later became a partner in another British company... it also shut down. It is not just the product that is failing; the corporations are failing too," he added. The BJP MP also cited the Congress's performance in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, when the party won 44 seats, its lowest tally in a general election up to that point. "In 2014, the Congress party effectively made him its undeclared leader, and the party reached its lowest-ever tally in the Lok Sabha," he said. Trivedi also cited former US President Barack Obama's memoir, referring to Obama's account of meeting Gandhi during his 2010 visit to India. "In his book 'A Promised Land', former US President Barack Obama wrote about meeting Rahul Gandhi during his 2010 visit to India... He described Gandhi as having a 'nervous and unformed quality about him, as if he were a student who had done a course work and was eager to impress the teachers, but deep down lacked either the aptitude or the passion to master the subject'."

SBI says customer funds safe after data breach exposes 3,897 records

GNS News Agency, Oct 24

New Delhi: India's largest lender — State Bank of India (SBI) — on Friday stated that account balances and funds of customers remain safe following a recent cyber incident that led to exposure of 3,897 customer records on the dark web. In a statement that was shared on social media platform X, the lender said, "Further to our earlier post regarding the recent cyber incident, the lender has individually informed all customers whose data was identified as being involved through email and/or WhatsApp. We reiterate that your account balances and funds are safe with us."

The bank advised customers to follow safe digital banking practices, never share OTP, PIN or password with anyone and remain vigilant against suspicious calls, messages and emails. The statement came after India's largest lender clarified earlier this week that it had experienced a data breach, with 3,897 customer records found exposed on the dark web.

Earlier in the week, the bank said it had received communications from its Threat Intelligence Service Provider, the Defence Cyber Agency and CERT-In regarding an alert concerning suspected exposure of customer data. During preliminary analysis of approximately 375,000 records available on the dark web, 3,897 customer records containing Personally Identifiable Information (PII) were identified, the bank had said in an exchange filing. The exposed information reportedly included customers' registered mobile num-



bers, dates of birth, names, gender, email addresses, residential addresses, branch and CIF identifiers, lead IDs and metadata associated with loan or lead records and other related files, it added. The state-owned lender said it promptly activated its cyber incident response and containment protocols and engaged an independent CERT-In-empanelled cybersecurity agency to conduct a comprehensive assessment and investigate the nature and extent of the alleged compromise. A detailed investigation is underway to establish authenticity and completeness of the exposed data, determine potential source and extent of exposure and assess associated risks, it said.

Drug cartels trying to incite violence in Northeast to revive smuggling networks: Intel

GNS News Agency, Oct 24

New Delhi: Fresh Intelligence inputs suggest that there are attempts being made to incite widespread violence in several northeastern states with an intention to enhance drug trade in the region. Recent actions by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) have dented the operations of the drug cartels largely and this explains why certain elements are trying to incite violence. An Intelligence Bureau official said that several states in the region remain vulnerable to violence. The idea is to break the security chain so that drugs can flow freely into the region and then be smuggled across other parts of the country, the official said. Despite several challenges such as operations on rugged terrains and riverine areas, the security agencies have managed to largely contain major drug operations that emanate out of Myanmar. This has led to operations by the cartels being hampered, the official said.

An official said that peace is a major deterrent for drug operations. The security agencies remain completely focussed on tackling drug related issues and smuggling. However when peace is disrupted, the focus of the security agencies completely shifts and this gives drug cartels the window to bring in narcotics and then supply them in several other parts of the country, the official said. The Modi government had taken the initiative to make India drug free. Union Home Minister Amit Shah has emphasised on numerous occasions that the war on drugs would be taken to its logical conclusion. There are multiple agencies working together and in the last year have achieved immense success in putting down drug operations from Pakistan, Myanmar and also South Indian states.

The Intelligence agencies warn that these cartels are desperately trying to break the morale of the security agencies. This can be achieved by ensuring that their focus completely shifts to domestic issues. The idea is to run disinformation campaigns while trying to incite tensions, the official said. The end goal is to ensure that the whole of north-east burns.

Another official said that violence in the northeast is never good news. There are several elements across the border waiting to capitalise on the same. This helps them not just in smuggling narcotics, but also supplying arms and ammunition, while also pushing in illegal immigrants and terrorists into the region, the official said. Drugs such as heroine and Yaba which is a combination of methamphetamine and caffeine are pumped in large numbers into the region. These drugs form the backbone of the Myanmar based cartels. With supplies being hit largely due to conducive action by the Indian security agencies, these cartels are getting desperate. They would look to use every tool at their disposal to ensure that the supply chains and routes function properly, officials say. Officials say that this is a critical time for the security agencies. While there are attempts to run disinformation campaigns to incite violence, these cartels



Intelligence inputs warn that drug cartels may attempt to incite violence across Northeast India to disrupt security operations and revive narcotics smuggling routes. Recent NCB seizures, including Yaba tablets worth Rs 50 crore, have intensified concerns ahead of Manipur's 2027 elections

would also look to exploit the upcoming elections in Manipur slated for 2027. In an election year, the biggest push by such cartels is usually made as the security agencies are busy ensuring a peaceful and fair conduct of the elections. In such times, cartels, terror groups and other smugglers will try and take advantage of the lax security situation to go about their business. The recent NCB bust in which Yaba tablets worth Rs 50 crore was seized dealt a major blow to the Myanmar drug syndicate. Two operatives were arrested from Guwahati. The NCB has prepared a list of absconding accused and has launched a manhunt for them. Such actions have become more frequent and this has been causing major problems for the drug cartels. They are desperate to put things back on track and hence would plan some misadventure in the Northeast, an official said.

Second accused of making misleading announcement arrested

Kolkata: Babu Majumdar a.k.a. Kalia, the second accused of making a misleading announcement that triggered panic among devotees at the Durga Puja pandal of Chorbagan Sarbojanin in North Kolkata on the night of October 17, was arrested by the Kolkata Police on Friday. Earlier on Thursday, the cops first detained and then arrested the prime accused behind the misleading announcement, Sanjib Raha a.k.a. Sentu, who was the treasurer of the organising committee for the Durga Puja pandal of Chorbagan Sarbojanin. During interrogation, Raha confessed that Majumdar was with him when the misleading announcement was made from a room outside the Puja pandal, which was reserved for the organising committee members and special guests.

Confirming the development, a city police officer said that the investigating officials doubt the misleading announcement was made following instructions from someone else. While interrogation of Raha has been continuing since Thursday afternoon, the investigating officials will now interrogate Majumdar on the matter. If necessary, both accused will be interrogated simultaneously and together to avoid possibilities of them making contradictory statements. "There were a number of factors that triggered panic and prompted the devotees within the pandal premises to rush. However, as we feel, the misleading announcement was the crucial factor in triggering panic among the devotees, leading to the stampede. Otherwise, the situation could have been man-



ageable, and probably the loss of so many lives could have been avoided," the city police officer said. Like Raha, Majumdar also went absconding since the tragedy took place on the night of October 17. Majumdar is a neighbour of Raha in North Kolkata. The misleading announcement was made at a time when chaos had already set in within the pandal because of the rain, with those outside trying to get inside, and those within the pandal refusing to go out for the same reason. At that time, a misleading announcement was made, asking people to evacuate the pandal immediately for fear of the structure collapsing, triggering extreme panic and prompting pilgrims to rush out, with some even moving towards the entry gate to exit, ultimately leading to the stampede.

Talat Aziz shares glimpse of fire-ravaged home, says 'no amount of money can replace memories'

GNS News Agency, Oct 24

Mumbai: Singer Talat Aziz has shared photographs of the devastation caused by a fire that engulfed his home, destroying treasured belongings, artefacts and memories accumulated over the years.

Talat took to Instagram, where he shared a string of videos and pictures from his home. The ghazal maestro said the family now faces the daunting task of rebuilding their home from scratch, with faith, patience and hope. He wrote: "Sharing some photographs of the devastation caused by the fire that engulfed our home and destroyed so much of what we had cherished over the years. The loss is not merely material." "Along with our possessions, we have lost countless memories, precious artefacts and treasured belongings, each with a story and an emotional attachment that no amount of money can ever replace." He expressed gratitude to Allah for sparing their lives. "Yet, amidst all this devastation, my heart is filled with gratitude to Allah Almighty for sparing our lives. It is His Will, and I firmly believe that there is a greater wisdom and purpose behind everything that happens, even if we are unable to comprehend it at this moment." "We now face the daunting task of rebuilding our precious home from scratch, picking up the pieces and moving forward with faith, patience and hope. My heartfelt thanks to all our friends, relatives and well-wishers who have reached out with messages of love, concern, prayers and support. Your kindness has meant more to us than words can express." "May Allah give us the strength to overcome this difficult time and bless and protect you all. Alhamdulillah for the gift of life." Aziz took his initial training in music from Kirana Gharana. He was trained primarily by Ustad Samad Khan and later by Ustad Faiyyaz Ahmed Khan. After his initial



training, Aziz learnt music from the Ghazal singer Mehdi Hassan. He released his first album in 1980, under Jagjit Singh titled Jagjit Singh presents Talat Aziz. In 1981, he sang in the film Umrao Jaan. He has sung many songs for composers Laxmikant-Pyarelal and Rajesh Roshan. He has released many albums and has collaborated with singers such as Sonu Nigam, Lata Mangeshkar, Asha Bhosle, Ghulam Ali, Hariharan and Pankaj Udhas.

Piyush Goyal warns Europe on CBAM, 50 pc steel duty; says trust hardest currency in business

New Delhi: Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal has warned European countries that the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) and high import duties on steel could raise cost of living, make industries uncompetitive and hurt consumers.

During a question and answer session at the Berlin Global Dialogue 2026, the minister said, "If you have put a CBAM on yourself, you put a 50 per cent import duty to bring steel into your country, you are inviting disaster. He noted that trust is the hardest currency in commerce today. "Your cost of living will go up. Your people will be unhappy. Your industry will be out priced," Goyal added. Speaking at another programme in Berlin, the minister noted that India-Germany bilateral trade could rise to \$310 billion from around \$31 billion at present if the two countries focus on complementary strengths and jointly create products and technologies. However, he did not specify a timeline for achieving the target.

Notably, Goyal is on an official visit to Germany and the Netherlands from October 22 to 27 and was accompanied by a delegation of about 100 Indian businesses and startups. Meanwhile, German Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Energy Katherina Reiche called for reducing red tape on both sides and undertaking joint projects, saying bilateral trade could be doubled.

Addressing the India-Germany Business Roundtable and inaugurating the India Centre of the German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP), Goyal said the India-EU free



trade agreement (FTA) is expected to be signed by the end of this year and could become operational within the next four to five months. Apart from that, Goyal and Reiche held a bilateral meeting earlier in the day and discussed cooperation in artificial intelligence, semiconductors, energy and other sectors. "Discussed opportunities in AI, semiconductors, advanced manufacturing, critical minerals, green hydrogen, renewable energy, energy storage, and resilient supply chains, as well as increased investment in India's industrial and digital ecosystems," Goyal said in a social media post. "We also exchanged views on how the India-EU FTA will prove to be a game-changer that would help businesses in both India and Germany realise their full potential," he added.

Two workers die in gas leak at Saraca Laboratories in Sangareddy

Sangareddy: Two persons died after harmful gas leaked at Saraca Laboratories Limited in Gaddapotharam in the early hours of Friday. The incident reportedly occurred following a gas leak in the Glaba Black unit, claiming the lives of Sudharshan Rao (27) and Balaji, both from Andhra Pradesh.

However, information was not available on whether any other workers were injured in the incident. Efforts were underway to stop the gas leak and prevent further damage.

Reacting to the incident, former Minister T Harish Rao expressed shock over the deaths of the two workers. He demanded action against the industry management for alleged safety violations and sought ex gratia payments of Rs 1 crore each to the families of the deceased.

Recalling the Sigachi blast, which claimed more than 54 lives in 2025, Rao accused the government of failing to fulfil its promise of paying Rs 1 crore in compensation to the



families of the victims. He demanded that the government immediately pay the remaining compensation to the families of those killed in the Sigachi blast.

New York City Council passes law to ban horse carriage, honours Indian teen killed in accident



GNS News Agency, Oct 24

New York: The City Council has passed a law to ban horse-drawn carriages and named it in honour of an Indian teen tourist who was killed in Central Park in an accident involving such vehicle. Called the Romanch's Law, it was adopted on Thursday. It honours Romanch Mahajan, who was killed in June while trying to save his mother, Priya, when she was thrown off the carriage as the horse bolted. His head hit the ground as he dove after her, and he died in the hospital. Romanch's uncle, Gaurav Mahajan, was at a rally of the supporters of the ban outside City Hall before

the bill was passed.

He said, "True justice means recognising that these gentle, majestic horses do not belong on the congested asphalt or trapped in dangerous traffic". "On behalf of his parents and his brother, I leave New Yorkers with one final sacred request: please do not forget Romanch", he said. City Council Speaker Julie Menin said, "Our landmark vote to pass Romanch's Law is a demonstration of this Council's commitment to animal welfare, public safety, and worker protection". For many years, animal rights activists campaigned for banning the horse carriages, but were met with opposition from vehicle owners and the union representing the drivers.

Romanch's tragedy gave the final impetus to get the law passed. Mayor Zohran Mamdani must now sign the bill, and should refuse, it would still become law because the high number of votes made it veto-proof. Romanch Mahajan had just passed his higher secondary from Angel's Public School in Mamun, Pathankot, and was visiting the city with his parents and brother. They were enjoying the sights of Central Park when the driver stopped to take a picture of the family. The horse suddenly bolted, overturning the carriage.

US green card backlog: EB-2 date for Indians remains stuck in 2013

Washington: Indian professionals waiting for employment-based green cards in the advanced-degree category saw no movement for a second straight month, as the US State Department's November 2026 Visa Bulletin kept the EB-2 final action date for India at November 1, 2013, while advancing the date for most other countries by three months. At the same time, a Department of Homeland Security proposal to change the deadlines for paid premium processing, used heavily by H-1B employers, is under review at the White House Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA).

According to reginfo.gov, OIRA received the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) proposed rule, titled "Amending the Premium Processing Timeframe" (RIN 1615-AD25), on October 13. It is listed as pending review, with no legal deadline, and is not designated economically significant. The text of the proposal has not been made public, and the listing does not say which visa categories would be affected or whether deadlines would be lengthened or shortened.

A separate USCIS proposed rule, "Reforming the H-1B Nonimmigrant Visa Classification Program" (RIN 1615-AD00), has been pending at OIRA since August 24 and is designated economically significant, the listing shows.

In the November bulletin, the EB-2 final action date for applicants from all chargeability areas except those listed separately moved from January 1, 2025 in October to April 1, 2025. Mexico and the Philippines moved in step with the rest of the world, while China-born applicants stayed at October 1, 2021. The EB-3 final action date for India moved by three weeks to January 22, 2014. The EB-3 "Other Workers" date for India moved to the same date. For most other countries, EB-3 advanced to June 15, 2024. The EB-1 date for India stayed at February 1, 2023, and the EB-5 unreserved date for Indian investors held at December 1, 2023. India's employment-based dates for filing were January 15, 2015 for both EB-2 and EB-3, the bulletin shows.

USCIS says on its website that, for November, ad-



justment-of-status applicants in employment-based categories "must use the Dates for Filing chart". That means Indian EB-2 applicants in the US with priority dates before January 15, 2015 can file adjustment applications, though green cards can be approved only for those with dates before November 1, 2013. Indian family-sponsored applicants fared better. Final action dates for F1, F2B and F3 moved to January 22, 2021, August 22, 2020 and October 22, 2015 respectively. On the other hand, the F4 category, for brothers and sisters of adult US citizens, remained at December 15, 2006 for India, against October 22, 2012 for most countries. The bulletin says per-country proration currently applies to China-mainland born, India, Mexico and the Philippines. The per-country limit is set at 7 per cent of combined family and employment-based limits, or 25,620. India's EB-2 category was unavailable in the last months of fiscal 2026. In its July 2026 bulletin, the State Department said that "It is likely that in October the final action date will advance to at least the final action date announced in the May 2026 Visa Bulletin." The bulletin follows a renewed push by New Jersey Democrat Josh Gottheimer to end per-country caps on employment-based green cards. "Imagine waiting 179 years for a green card. That's the projected wait for Indian green card applicants," Gottheimer said on X.

Trump signals possible further action on Iran



GNS News Agency, Oct 24

Washington: US President Donald Trump suggested that further military action against Iran remained possible, while acknowledging that the war could carry a political cost for Republicans in the approaching congressional elections. Asked how the conflict had affected the election campaign, Trump said Americans were divided over his decision but defended it as necessary to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. "Well in one way, they love it because I'm doing what should have been done by other presidents, and another way maybe they don't," he told reporters before departing Washington.

"It's — there's a price to pay, which I knew immediately when I did it, but we can't let Iran have a nuclear weapon." Trump did not specify whether he was considering a new operation, identify potential targets or give a timetable. "The Iran War, and we've knocked the hell out of them, and we may do it a little bit further," he said. That statement was an indication of possible further action, rather than an announcement that an operation had been ordered. His assessment of the damage inflicted on Iran was not accompanied by a military briefing or supporting figures. The President argued that some voters supported the campaign even if others opposed it. "I mean, in one way, people probably don't love it, but many people, many great patriots, really love it. This should have been done a long time ago by other presidents," he said. Trump's comments linked his conduct of the war directly to the domestic political contest. During the same exchange, the President said Republican prospects would depend heavily on whether his supporters turned out to vote. The remarks came as UN Secretary-General António Guterres warned in New York that widening conflicts were transmitting economic shocks far beyond the countries where fighting was taking place. Guterres identified energy markets, shipping lanes, supply chains and financial systems as channels through which wars were affecting households. "The distance from

the Strait of Hormuz to a family home or village market is shorter than we think," he said. Guterres called for fighting to stop, civilians to be protected and diplomacy to be given space. He also announced that he would travel to Egypt on Friday. Asked about the visit, he described Egypt as one of the mediators in the conflict between the United States and Iran. He did not announce a negotiating breakthrough or a meeting between American and Iranian representatives. The two sets of remarks offered no confirmed timetable for ending the conflict. Trump left open the possibility of further action, while the UN chief emphasised diplomatic efforts and the consequences for civilians and developing economies.

Harish Rao seeks Rs 1 crore for Saraca accident victims' families

GNS News Agency, Oct 24 Hyderabad: BRS Legislature Party (BRS-SP) deputy leader T Harish Rao demanded Rs 1 crore ex-gratia for the families of two workers killed in a gas leak at Saraca chemical industry in the Gaddapotharam industrial area of Jinnaram mandal in Sangareddy district on Friday. Condoling the deaths, he urged the government to ensure better medical treatment for the injured and take strict action against those responsible.

Harish Rao accused the Congress government of neglecting industrial safety despite repeated accidents. Referring to the earlier Sigachi incident and the latest accident at Saraca, he questioned whether the government had learnt any lessons from past tragedies.

He stated that inadequate enforcement of safety standards and a lack of official supervision were putting workers' lives at risk. He also questioned the government's response to industrial accidents, accusing it of focusing on appearances and posing for cameras after incidents rather than ensuring workers' safety. Demanding a comprehensive inquiry into the Saraca accident, the senior BRS leader called for stringent action against the company management if found responsible. He urged the government to strengthen safety measures across industries to prevent such incidents from recurring. He also demanded that the government fulfil its promise of Rs 1 crore compensation to each of the 54 families that lost their breadwinners in the Sigachi incident. He asserted that the Chief Minister should ensure the promised relief reaches them without further delay.

First Russian diesel from Putin-Trump deal heading for US, data shows



The first Russian diesel bound for the US following a surprise agreement reached between Moscow and US President Donald Trump is aboard a tanker heading for New York, ship-tracking data showed on Friday. Trump announced the deal this month as part of his efforts to bring down soaring diesel prices ahead of November 3 US midterm elections. The Reuters Power Up newsletter by columnist Ron Bouso provides everything you need to know about the global energy industry. Sign up here.

Trump also waived parts of a new US sanctions law against Russia and threatened Europe with a US diesel export ban unless countries released more from their emergency reserves to help ease prices. The Malta-flagged medium-sized tanker Agioi Fanendes was loaded with 40,000 metric tons of ultra-low sulphur diesel in Russia's Baltic port of Primorsk on October 22, according to LSEG shipping data. It is expected to arrive in the United States on November 7.

The identity of the buyer and seller were not immediately known. The cargo will be the first imported by the US

Trump's diesel price relief efforts grow costlier as election nears

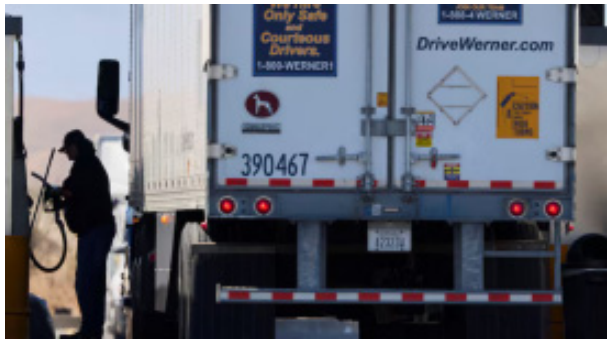
With the November midterm elections fast approaching, President Donald Trump is throwing an array of costly and politically fraught solutions at one stubborn problem: the price of diesel. His administration has offered billions of dollars to farmers, relaxed rules for truckers, eased sanctions on Russian fuel and pressured European allies to release emergency stocks. Yet diesel prices rose again last week, leaving Trump spending political and financial capital without delivering the relief his party wants as voters go to the polls.

The Reuters Power Up newsletter by columnist Ron Bouso provides everything you need to know about the global energy industry. Sign up here. Republicans are defending narrow majorities in Congress, and high costs are a major concern for voters. Nearly 80% of Americans blame Trump for higher costs, according to an October Reuters/Ipsos poll.

US diesel prices rose nearly 10 cents a gallon in the latest week to an average of \$6.28, reversing two weeks of declines and remaining near record highs, according to the Energy Information Administration. The political pressure is particularly acute in traditionally Republican Farm Belt states like Iowa and Kansas, where rising fuel and fertilizer costs, trade disruptions and weak farm economics have fueled discontent among some of Trump's core supporters. Trump has promoted his diesel measures at campaign rallies across the region. He signed an executive order onstage in Nebraska allowing red-dyed diesel to be used in highway vehicles and announced \$8 billion in new farm aid during a rally in Kansas on Monday. The measures illustrate the trade-offs Trump is accepting in pursuit of near-term relief. The new aid adds fresh strain on federal spending, while the Russian fuel move risks helping Moscow finance its war in Ukraine. Pressure on European allies to release emergency stocks, backed by a threat to restrict US diesel exports, has created diplomatic friction. "The president tends to discount long-term losses over short-term gain, and I am skeptical if there is any short gain to be had here," said Chris Borick, a pollster and political scientist at Muhlenberg College in Pennsylvania. The White House attributed high diesel prices to "pre-existing issues," including years of refinery closures and damage from Russia's war in Ukraine, while defending Trump's efforts to ease costs. "The President wants diesel prices to fall, which is why he has taken historic actions to save American farmers, truckers, and workers every hard-earned penny," White House spokeswoman Taylor Rogers said. SKEPTICISM AND UNANSWERED QUESTIONS One of Trump's most direct attempts to lower diesel costs has struggled to gain traction. Trump signed an executive order this month allowing truckers to use red-dyed diesel, typically intended for off-road use such as farm equipment, for highway driving while temporarily avoiding certain federal tax reporting and record-keeping requirements. But the IRS has not eliminated the federal diesel tax, instead temporarily waiving related reporting, opens new tab requirements and penalties through year-end, leaving uncertainty for truck stops and fuel sellers. David Fialkov, top lobbyist at NATSO, a trade group representing the largest US truck stop operators, said members appreciate Trump's effort to tackle diesel costs but that the guidance remains "murky" and carries too much risk. "I really don't see any of these dyed diesel announce-

ments making a meaningful dent in diesel prices," Fialkov said. Trump is also turning to federal payments to cushion some of the constituencies feeling the pain.

Government payments to farmers were already expected to top \$47 billion this year, buoyed by commodity payments and \$12 billion in tariff relief distributed by the US Department of Agriculture earlier this year. The \$8 billion farm relief program would push the total to a record \$55.4 billion, exceeding the previous high of \$45 billion in 2020, when farmers received pandemic assistance. The payments can help farmers manage higher costs and lost sales but do not directly address the market disruptions driving up fuel and fertilizer prices. They also raise questions about taxpayer spending to compensate producers for damage that farm groups say is linked partly to the administration's own trade and foreign policies. "This is the second round of emergency aid this year to address losses that were largely foreseeable," National Farmers Union President Rob Larew said. "Trade disruptions and rising fuel costs tied to conflict abroad have put family farmers in a difficult position, and one-time payments can't provide the stability they need to plan for the future." It is unclear how quickly the latest aid will reach farmers. USDA could not immediately say how the money would be allocated, when payments would reach farmers or whether congressional approval would be required. FRICTION OVER RUSSIAN FUEL Some of Trump's efforts to increase diesel supplies carry geopolitical trade-offs. His decision to ease sanctions on Russian diesel that were designed to restrict Moscow's energy revenues and limit its ability to finance its war in Ukraine has drawn bipartisan criticism — and raised questions about whether the move will meaningfully lower US fuel prices. Trump has defended the sanctions relief as necessary to draw Russian President Vladimir Putin into negotiations to end the war in Ukraine and to release American prisoner Stephen Hubbard. As the administration's intervention efforts have failed to lower fuel costs, Trump has sought to shift blame toward Ukraine and President Volodymyr Zelenskiy rather than the Iran war ahead of the November 3 elections. Analysts say the Iran conflict has been the much bigger driver of the diesel price spike, disrupting global oil flows and refined-fuel supplies, while Ukrainian attacks on Russian refineries have helped tighten supplies but played a more limited role on the price. "I sort of see it as a blame-shifting kind of scapegoating operation, more than a genuine attempt to moderate prices in the lead-up to the election," said Edward Fishman, director of the Maurice R. Greenberg Center at the Council on Foreign Relations.



16 killed, 32 injured in magnitude-7 earthquake in Tibet

Lhasa: Sixteen people were killed and 32 others injured after a 7.0-magnitude earthquake struck Tibet on Thursday, according to the city's emergency management bureau. As of 2:25 a.m. Friday, 11 of the injured were in serious condition while 21 sustained minor injuries. Over 300 houses collapsed. The damage caused by the quake is being further evaluated, and disaster relief work is underway, reports Xinhua news agency. More than 300 police officers have been dispatched to the epicenter for relief work while the regional fire and rescue corps has mobilised 347 personnel to the affected areas. The latest earthquake also follows seismic activity recorded in Tibet on September 3, when a magnitude 5.0 earthquake struck at a depth of approximately 14 kilometres. In January 2025, another major earthquake measuring 6.8, according to the China Earthquake Networks Centre, killed more than 120 people and injured hundreds. According to India's National Centre for Seismology (NCS), the earthquake occurred at a depth of

173 kilometres below the Earth's surface. The epicentre was approximately 400 kilometres from Lhasa, the Tibetan capital. Experts have warned that rising temperatures, retreating glaciers and increasingly extreme weather events could heighten natural disaster risks across the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. Experts say that the latest earthquake has renewed attention on the region's vulnerability as communities continue to grapple with the consequences of recent disasters. The earthquake has come weeks after an ice-rock avalanche near the Nepal-Tibet border on August 26 triggered catastrophic flash floods. The floods swept away homes, roads and bridges, damaged hydropower projects, and left thousands of people missing, causing widespread destruction across the affected areas. The earthquakes come weeks after devastating flash floods earlier in August this year which killed over 1,400 people in the Nepal-Tibet border region in August.

Over six lakh cases identified under 100-day TB control campaign: Health Ministry data



Speaking about the nutritional support given to TB patients, a Health Ministry official said that India is one of the few countries to have universal social support systems for TB patients and under the Ni-kshay Poshan Yojana, 3,697 crore have been disbursed to 1.24 crore TB patients since April 2018. File picture for representation. Speaking about the nutritional support given to TB patients, a Health Ministry official said that India is one of the few countries to have universal social support systems for TB patients and under the Ni-kshay Poshan Yojana, ₹3,697 crore have been disbursed to 1.24 crore TB patients since April 2018. File picture for representation.

Over 6.1 lakh tuberculosis patients across the country have been notified of which 4.3 lakh patients were diagnosed from the 455 intervention districts as part of Union Health Ministry's 100-day intensified TB elimination campaign launched on December 7, last year in 33 States and Union Territories to screen and test for TB among people belonging to the vulnerable or high-risk groups. "The 100-day intensified TB-Mukt Bharat Abhiyaan is an outcome of a new strategy for early TB identification involving offering X-ray

screening to high-risk populations, such as individuals with diabetes, smokers, and people living with HIV. By deploying ultraportable hand-held X-ray units and conducting door-to-door screenings in congregate settings, both symptomatic and asymptomatic individuals were tested. Positive X-ray results were then confirmed with NAAT (an advanced diagnostic test), leading to the identification of multiple asymptomatic TB patients," explained a senior Health Ministry official.

India has the world's largest TB epidemic and continues to be a major public health problem. According to World Health Organization (WHO), the country's TB incidence has declined by 17.7% from 2015 to 2023. This is more than double the global average decline of 8.3%. India's TB mortality rate has also declined by 18% during the same period. TB is a communicable disease that is a major cause of mortality and morbidity. It is transmitted from person to person via droplets from the throat and lungs of people with the active respiratory disease. Speaking about the nutritional support given to TB patients, the official said that India is one of the few countries to have universal social support systems for TB patients and under the Ni-kshay Poshan Yojana, ₹3,697 crore have been disbursed to 1.24 crore TB patients since April 2018. The programme is a monthly nutrition support scheme each notified TB patient is entitled to. In October 2024, recognising the role nutrition plays in reducing mortality and improving treatment outcomes, the Government of India doubled monthly disbursements under the Ni-kshay Poshan Yojana from ₹500 to ₹1,000 per month. The ambit of the Ni-kshay Mitra scheme (a voluntary programme that allows individuals and organisations to provide additional nutrition support during TB treatment) was expanded to cover not just TB patients, but their family members as well.

Flawed food regulations fuel the obesity crisis

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call to tackle obesity and the 2025 Economic Survey's recommendation of imposing a 'health tax' on ultra-processed foods (UPFs) to curb their consumption are both laudable. But these efforts risk being derailed by India's ambiguous, industry-friendly, and subjective food marketing regulations. In India, one in four adult men and women are obese and one in four adults are either diabetic or pre-diabetic (National Family Health Survey-5). This underlines the urgency of the problem. Right to Information responses and official communications expose how various Ministries and the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) have not been able to implement the labelling or advertising regulations planned in 2017 and continue to rely on regulations that are ambiguous and subjective in nature. No wonder there are so many advertisements of UPFs, and no front-of-pack labels yet.

In September 2022, the FSSAI proposed the Indian Nutrition Rating, a 'health star' labelling system modelled on Australia's not-so-successful framework, which was developed by a food industry technologist. In this system, half a star means that the food is 'least healthy' and 5 stars means that it qualifies as 'healthiest'. Right to Information responses confirm that the FSSAI relied on an IIM Ahmedabad study to justify the rating system — a study it never critically evaluated. Worse, food industry representatives dominated key stakeholder meetings and members of the scientific panel were sidelined. The whole process sided with industry, as a member of the stakeholder group pointed out. Moreover, the FSSAI ignored its own 2021 draft regulations indicating 'traffic light' colour-coded and mandatory warning labels and instead bowed down to industry lobbying.

The Indian Nutrition Rating system is flawed because the stars, at best, can mislead consumers by creating a health halo on all pre-packaged unhealthy food products. The system allows foods high in fat, salt and sugar (HFSS) and UPFs, such as biscuits, flaunt two stars on the packet when they might otherwise have four warning signals. Similarly, a soft drink that should have a high warning in sugar instead gets two stars. Corn flakes, which is high in sugar and sodium, gets 3 stars. This means that the system allows all these foods to be some level of healthy. Globally, warning labels that say the product is high in sugar/salt or bad fats allow consumers to know the true nature of the product and make a choice. Most of the front-of-pack labels in use today are warning labels. For instance, Chile's black 'high in' labels reduced consumption of UPFs by 24%. The fix is therefore to ensure that front-of-pack labels are notified soon and replace stars with mandatory 'high in' warnings on HFSS foods and UPFs, based on the World Health Organization's guidelines or the National Institute of Nutrition's Dietary Guideline for Indians. India has four laws to curb misleading advertising for HFSS/UPFs but none of them is effective, according to reports and data. The National Multisectoral Action Plan, 2017, called for an amendment to these laws to include restrictions on advertisements on HFSS foods, but no regulatory action has been taken so



far. Existing regulations are ambiguous and subjective. The Consumer Protection Act, 2019, defines as 'misleading' any product or service that deliberately conceals important information. If we interpret important information to be about fat/sugar or salt, FSSAI does not agree. FSS regulations nowhere specify that nutritional information of a food product must be provided in the advertisement. This means that a cola drink can target people, especially children and youth, without disclosing that the drink contains 9-10 teaspoons of sugar per bottle. FSS regulations are yet to provide a definition of HFSS or UPFs and thresholds beyond which these will be regulated. The result is continued freedom to advertise unhealthy addictive food products across media. This puts people at risk of obesity and diabetes. Studies show that if regulations banning junk foods are implemented, it would cut the rate of childhood obesity significantly.

The path forward The Economic Survey rightly demands stringent front-of-pack labels and stricter marketing curbs. To achieve this, India needs to take the following steps. First, it needs to scrap the Indian Nutrition Rating system and adopt warning labels. Second, there must be clear sugar/salt/fat limits for HFSS foods. The World Health Organization's SEARO guidelines and the Indian Council of Medical Research-National Institute of Nutrition guidelines offer a template. Third, advertising loopholes need to be closed through the amendment of existing laws or the enactment of a new one harmonising all laws under a unified UPF/HFSS advertisement ban. Fourth, the government could consider launching a campaign on the risks of UPFs in all languages. India's obesity crisis is not a public failure but a policy failure. The Economic Survey offers a road map to rectify this. Without urgent action, the plan to halt obesity by 2025 will not be successful.

The Prime Minister's vision of a healthy India demands more than rhetoric; India needs a regulatory approach that does not sacrifice children's health for corporate profit. The suggestions in the Economic Survey can break the cycle to achieve the Prime Minister's vision. It is for the policy makers to show urgency and will. Dr. Arun Gupta, pediatrician, public health expert, and convener of the Nutrition Advocacy in Public Interest. He is a former member of the PM's Council on India's Nutritional Challenges

Telangana facing a low birth weight epidemic, says expert

Telangana is grappling with a 'low birth weight epidemic', a crisis that places children at a severe disadvantage from the moment they are born, UNICEF's Chief of Field Office for Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, and Karnataka, Zelalem Taffesse, said Speaking at the fifth annual day celebration of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Bibingar he highlighted the alarming levels of childhood malnutrition and stunting in the State, despite its overall economic progress.

"One out of three children under five in Telangana is stunted. That is a significant burden of malnutrition. Worse still, severe acute malnutrition is prevalent even among infants under six months," Mr. Taffesse said,



addressing an audience largely composed of medical professionals. The high incidence of low birth weight, he stressed, means that many children are starting life at a disadvantage, with increased risks of severe malnutrition and associated

health complications.

Mr. Taffesse underscored the stark disparities within the State, stating: "Telangana is not Hyderabad, and Hyderabad is not Telangana. Within affluence, there are pockets where communities do not

have the same access." While Hyderabad represents rapid urbanisation and economic growth, many rural and marginalised communities remain deprived of essential healthcare, nutrition, and sanitation services.

Sun Pharma to acquire Nasdaq-listed oncology firm Checkpoint Therapeutics for \$335 million



Sun Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd and Nasdaq-listed Checkpoint Therapeutics, Inc. have announced that they have entered into an agreement by which Sun Pharma will acquire Checkpoint, an immunotherapy and targeted oncology company. Checkpoint is a commercial-stage company focused on developing novel treatments for patients with solid tumor cancers.

It has received approval from the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) for UNLOXCYT™ (cosibelimab-ipdl) for the treatment of adults with metastatic cutaneous squamous cell carcinoma (cSCC) or locally advanced cSCC who are not candidates for curative surgery or curative radiation. Dilip Shanghvi, Chairman & Managing Director of Sun Pharma, said, "Combining UNLOXCYT, an FDA-approved anti-PD-L1 treatment for advanced cutaneous squamous cell carcinoma, with Sun Pharma's global presence means patients with cSCC may soon have access to an important, new treatment option." "The acquisition further bolsters our innovative portfolio in onco-derm therapy."

"I am proud of the dedication and passion of our team at Checkpoint that allowed us to achieve the first and only FDA-approved anti-PD-L1 treatment for patients with advanced cSCC, and we are excited to enter this transaction with Sun Pharma as the next step to bringing UNLOXCYT to cSCC patients in need of a differentiated immunotherapy

treatment option," said James Oliviero, President and Chief Executive Officer of Checkpoint in a statement. "Sun Pharma is aligned with Checkpoint's commitment to improving the lives of skin cancer patients, and I believe this transaction will maximize value for our stockholders and provide accelerated access to UNLOXCYT in the United States, Europe and other markets worldwide," he said. Upon completion of the transaction, Sun Pharma will acquire all outstanding shares of Checkpoint and Checkpoint stockholders will receive, for each share of common stock they hold, an upfront cash payment of \$4.10, without interest, and a non-transferable contingent value right (CVR) entitling the stockholder to receive up to an additional \$0.70 in cash, without interest, if cosibelimab is approved prior to certain deadlines in the European Union pursuant to the centralized approval procedure or in Germany, France, Italy, Spain or the United Kingdom, subject to the terms and conditions in the contingent value rights agreement. The upfront cash payment of \$4.10 per share of common stock represents a premium of approximately 66.0% to Checkpoint's closing share price on March 7, 2025, the last trading day prior to today's announcement, the companies said in a joint statement.

In connection with the transaction, Checkpoint, Sun Pharma and Fortress Biotech, Inc., Checkpoint's controlling stockholder have entered into a royalty agreement, under which following the closing of the transaction Fortress would be entitled to receive royalty payments based on future sales of cosibelimab during a specified term, in lieu of royalty rights that were granted to Fortress in connection with its founding of Checkpoint. The transaction is expected to be completed in the second calendar quarter of 2025. For the nine-month period ending September 2024, Checkpoint reported \$0.04 million in revenue and a net loss of \$27.3 million. The R&D expense for the nine-month period was \$19.3 million. As of September 30, 2024, Checkpoint had a cash balance of \$4.7 million, outstanding accounts payable and accrued expenses of \$15.6 million, and outstanding accounts payable and accrued expenses – related party of \$2.0 million.

Here's what happens if you combine apple cider vinegar with diabetes medication



Apple Cider Vinegar (ACV) is often hailed for its potential to help lose weight. Many also claim that it can regulate blood sugar levels, making it an attractive option for individuals with diabetes. However, experts state that its use alongside diabetes medications should be approached with caution due to possible interactions. ACV is made by fermenting apple juice. "The fermentation process converts the sugars in the apple juice into alcohol, and then further fermentation transforms the alcohol into acetic acid, the main active component in vinegar," said Dr. Swatee Sandhan, senior dietician, Jupiter Hospital Baner, Pune, adding that it is "rich in minerals, vitamins and beneficial compounds like polyphenols and antioxidants."

Dr. Hiran S. Reddy, consultant physician, diabetologist and critical care specialist, Gleneagles Hospital, Lakdi ka Pul, Hyderabad, mentioned that studies suggest ACV may enhance insulin sensitivity and reduce post-meal blood sugar spikes. "While this can be beneficial, combining ACV with diabetes medications, such as insulin or oral hypoglycemics, can increase the risk of hypoglycemia (low blood sugar), which is a potentially dangerous condition that can cause dizziness, confusion, or fainting," Dr. Reddy told indianexpress.com. Furthermore, Dr. Reddy said that excessive consumption of ACV can lead to gastrointestinal issues, such as nausea or delayed gastric emptying, which might impact how quickly glucose enters the bloodstream.

How regular bedtime habits are reshaping sleep quality in India

In the hustle of modern Indian life, a silent epidemic of sleep disturbance is taking its toll – but new research suggests a solution might be simpler than we think. According to a recent YouGov and Amazon Alexa study released just ahead of World Sleep Day (March 14), more than half of Indians experience sleep-related issues when they don't follow consistent bedtime routines.

The survey shows 53% of respondents experience sleep-related issues when not following a consistent bedtime routine. It indicates that adults actively follow bedtime routines — with 54% of respondents having seen a noticeable improvement in sleep when following a regular sleep routine. According to the findings, 52% of surveyed respondents follow a consistent bedtime and pre-sleep habits. The survey shows that 86% of those surveyed start their bedtime routine 8 PM onwards every day, with 53% choosing to begin their routine after 10:30pm.

The most common activities that form part of bedtime routines include watching video content (63%), connecting with family and friends (59%), listening to podcasts, music, or audiobooks (58%), and scrolling through social media apps (57%). Households with only couples rank highest in following these activities as part of their bedtime routine, amongst all other household types. Significantly, one in two respondents use voice assistants to set up their sleep routines — with more people between 35-45 years using voice assistants than those aged between 25-34 years.

Voice assistants becoming key to bedtime routines "Sleep routines are gaining popularity, and what's noteworthy is that smart technologies, especially voice assistants like Alexa, are increasingly becoming valuable in helping people follow their bedtime routines. Personalised voice AI experiences are emerging as practical alternatives to handheld screen devices before bedtime. Whether playing meditation sessions or relaxing sounds, listening to audiobooks or music, setting reminders and alarms, or controlling smart devices to adjust the room's sleep environment, people are finding innovative ways to use Alexa as part of their bedtime routines. Alexa users can easily set up their bedtime routine through the Alexa app, customising it to their specific needs and preferences," says Teena Sidana, country manager, Alexa India.

Families with children lead this trend, with households containing couples and kids ranking highest in voice assistant adoption for bedtime routines. Across all demographics, 45% use voice interfaces for accessing relaxing content like music and podcasts, 23% for setting reminders and alarms, and 22% for controlling smart home devices like bedroom lighting, automated curtains and AC temperature. Growing interest in wellness activities before bed

While digital consumption dominates bedtime



In the hustle of modern Indian life, a silent epidemic of sleep disturbance is taking its toll – but new research suggests a solution might be simpler than we think. According to a recent YouGov and Amazon Alexa study released just ahead of World Sleep Day (March 14), more than half of Indians experience sleep-related issues when they don't follow consistent bedtime routines.

behaviour, the study reveals evolving aspirations toward more wellness-focused activities. Over half of respondents expressed interest in incorporating meditation, journaling, light exercise, and skincare routines into their pre-sleep regimens. Couples with and without children showed particular enthusiasm for mindfulness practices, with 32% wanting to add meditation and journaling to their nighttime rituals. Meanwhile, 34% of respondents indicated interest in enjoying relaxing beverages or light snacks before bed – though sleep experts generally caution against heavy consumption too close to bedtime. Changing preferences in pre-sleep activities The study also notes that about 21% currently prefer eating and snacking before bedtime. Respondents are becoming more interested in this habit, with 34% wanting to have a relaxing beverage or snack before bedtime.

Other activities on sleep routine wish lists include brain games, puzzles, and reading as alternatives to phone use, as well as unwinding with music, podcasts, and news updates. Interestingly, a segment of 11% who were contrarian stated they would prefer "doing nothing" over following any structured sleep routine. For those struggling with sleep issues, the message from this research seems clear: consistency matters, and finding the right set of wind-down activities — whether tech-focused or unplugged — could be the key to more restful nights.

As U.S. pulls back from WHO and Paris climate deal, China is primed to expand its soft power



Under President Donald Trump, the U.S. has been withdrawing from several key international commitments it had long supported and invested in. It announced its departure from the World Health Organization (WHO) and then from the Paris Agreement. With the U.S. pulling back from global commitments, China has quietly been advancing its position on the world stage. Through promises of financial aid, Beijing has positioned itself as a potential alternative to the Western superpower. With over a quarter of global bilateral sovereign debt now owed to China, and the country's investments spanning continents, the Asian giant has been steadily expanding its soft power influence. Is China trying to fill the void left by a retreating U.S. in the international arena?

The 78th World Health Assembly, the decision-making body of the WHO, approved the budget this month for the first time without the participation of the U.S., a founding member and a top donor of the WHO. Mr. Trump has accused the WHO of being biased towards China and mis-handling the COVID-19 pandemic. He has also said that the WHO demands onerous payments, which are out of proportion with other countries' assessed payments. While the U.S.'s exit has left a significant void in the WHO, China has committed an additional \$500 million over the next five years. China has also been increasing its membership dues to the WHO in recent years. China's share in the WHO's total assessed payments more than doubled post the pandemic, from 6.5% in 2015-16 to 15% in 2024-25 (Chart 1). While China's contribution still falls short of that of the U.S. — which

has accounted for around 20% of the WHO's total assessed funding every year — it continues to inch closer. With the U.S. stepping back and China pledging increased support, its share is poised to rise even further. The Trump administration also announced the U.S.'s withdrawal from the Paris Agreement and said it will immediately cease or revoke any purported financial commitment made under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The U.S.'s share in contributions to the UNFCCC was close to 22% of its core budget, followed by China (17%) — the second highest globally (Chart 2). China also holds strategic investments across numerous countries, and many of them owe China a significant share of their external debt. Data show that China is the world's largest debt collector. China's share in bilateral global debts owed remained around 1% until 2003. In just two decades, this share surged to 26%. On the other hand, the U.S.'s share in bilateral global debts owed plummeted from 36% in 1973 to just 4% in 2023 (Chart 3). This influence is also impacting attitudes towards China. A survey conducted by the Pew Research Center in 2024 shows that more than 60% of the respondents across 21 countries believe that China influences their economy by a great deal or by a fair amount (Chart 4). Chart 4 | The share of respondents (in %) who said in 2024 that China is having _ (of) influence on economic conditions in their country. Note:

The above chart shows data for only 21 countries out of the 35 that were surveyed. The median value is for all the countries surveyed. The question was asked as a part of Pew Research Center's Spring 2024 Global Attitudes Survey across 35 countries. The Democracy Perception Index survey, published by the Alliance of Democracies Foundation, revealed that most countries have a more favourable view of China compared to the U.S. this year. Of the 96 countries surveyed this year, respondents from 76 countries had a more positive view of China, whereas only 20 had a positive view of the U.S. As Chen Xu, China's Ambassador to Geneva, told reporters last month, "We have to adapt ourselves to multilateral organisations without the Americans. Life goes on." The data for the charts are sourced from the WHO Budget Portal, UNFCCC, Pew Research Center, World Bank and Reuters

Rise of automation promises a future of 'dark factories', says TCS' Chandrasekaran

IT and business services were rapidly moving toward autonomous operations, and the rise of autonomous robots and AI agents promised a future of 'dark factories' and AI-assisted enterprise functions, said N. Chandrasekaran, chairman, Tata Consultancy Services. He said, "The path is clear: IT and business services are moving toward autonomous operations. The rise of autonomous robots and AI agents promises a future of 'dark factories' and AI-assisted enterprise functions," he said in TCS Annual Report FY2025 released on Tuesday. The single most transformative force in 2024 was Generative AI, which achieved near-human reasoning capabilities, he said in his letter to shareholders. "GenAI is not just another tech cycle—it is a civilisational shift. TCS is uniquely positioned to lead this transition, with its domain expertise, deep client relationships, and contextual knowledge," he assured them.

He further said, software development was being re-defined by AI-led modernisation, as legacy code was being transformed rapidly. Agentic AI was being embedded deeply into enterprise systems. Looking ahead, TCS has charted out four distinct progressions: 1. Establish a large pool of AI agents working alongside our human workforce, 2. Deliver solutions through a human+AI model, 3. Consciously invest in AI data centers and cloud infrastructure and 4. Forge industry-best partnerships with hardware providers, solution innovators, and startups.

According to Mr. Chandrasekaran, who is also the chairman of Tata Sons and Tata Group, the evolving geopolitical landscape and the emergence of a multipolar world are now reshaping how global businesses operate. "We are in the midst of an irreversible transition towards green en-



ergy; businesses must adapt by developing market-appropriate solutions," he said adding TCS has developed an AI-powered clever energy platform that has been helping clients optimise energy consumption, reducing emissions and energy costs. He further said, the financial year 2025 was a year of profound global disruption. "In the face of this turbulence, TCS demonstrated exceptional resilience." "TCS's financial performance was robust, Mr. Chandrasekaran said, with FY 2025 revenue of over \$30 billion and an industry-leading operating margin of 24.3%. Significant innovation was happening in the AI ecosystem across infrastructure, data platforms, models, and AI native business applications, said TCS, CEO and MD, K. Krithivasan in the report. "These innovations are forcing companies to invest in technology modernisation and rapidly adopt AI to meet evolving customer expectations. Across industries, clients are increasingly shifting their focus from use case based approach to ROI led scaling of AI," he said.

A bumpy ride: Chennai's speed breakers break more than just speed

For P. Saravanan, a person with disability and a member of the Social Justice Movement, navigating his vehicle over the speedbreakers in Kaladipettai under Tiruvottiyur Zone is a source of physical pain, on a daily basis. His struggle is far from isolated as several residents have complained about speedbreakers that flout the design standards of Indian Road Congress (IRC) across the city. As per IRC 1988, speedbreakers should be 3.7 metres wide and 10 centimetres high with a 17 metre radius hump, designed for 25 km/h speeds, and marked with reflective thermoplastic paint and warning signs placed in advance. Further, the IRC 2018 adds that placement, gradient, material, and signage are crucial for effectiveness. "The thin rubber-plastic speedbreaker installed two months ago by the Greater Chennai Corporation in Tiruvottiyur is the toughest to negotiate. Yet, it has not been removed despite repeated complaints," he said.

Earlier in May, in Anna Main road of K.K. Nagar, a 22-year-old pregnant woman sustained severe injuries after falling from a two-wheeler, as her husband, who was riding the vehicle, failed to notice a speedbreaker there. Meera Ravikumar, a social activist in Adyar, said that few speedbreakers in Gandhi Nagar under Ward 173 are taller than 10 cm and cause back pain for those forced to frequently pass by them. "Many are yet to be painted with reflective thermoplastic paint for better visibility at night. The rubber-plastic speedbreaker found in Kastuba Nagar is very uncomfortable for two-wheeler and bicycle riders," she said.

P. Arunkumar, 39, of Manali, stated that in Kamnadasan Nagar, emulsion paint was used on a speedbreaker instead of reflective thermoplastic paint, making markings fade quickly, which lead to minor accidents, especially at night when visibility is low. He said that in areas like Korukkupet, speedbreakers are abruptly laid without a smooth transition from the road. Prabhu Krishnamoorthy of M.K.B. Nagar said there are over 10 unmarked speedbreakers on the road between Basin Bridge and Madhavaram, and stretches from Kasimedu to Ennore and Moolakadai to Kavangarai had over 30 unmarked humps. According to a recent complaint submitted by civic activist Balaji Gopalan, speedbreakers in Wards 149 and 150 violate many IRC norms. He said that when a hump in Ward 151 exceeding 10 cm height, was flagged via the Chief Minister's grievance cell, the GCC responded that it was within standards, though it was visibly too high. He added that an RTI filed over eight months ago, seeking details on the number of faulty speedbreakers in



As per IRC 1988, speedbreakers should be 3.7 metres wide and 10 centimetres high with a 17 metre radius hump, designed for 25 km/h speeds, and marked with reflective thermoplastic paint and warning signs placed in advance.

the city and action taken against officials responsible, remains unanswered. According to the audit conducted in June and July 2024 by 1000 volunteers of NGO Arappor Iyakkam, 201 of the surveyed speed breakers in 467 spots across the city, including those under Greater Chennai Corporation, Iyyapanthangal, Agaramthen and Thiruneermalai, do not meet IRC regulations. A senior official said little progress was made since February, when 41 speed breakers in Teynampet, Royapuram, and Thiru-Vi-Ka Nagar Zones, 29 in Kodambakkam Zone, and 20 in Adyar Zone were corrected ensuring proper height and reflective paint marking, after the speedbreaker committee met with Greater Chennai Traffic Police personnel. No further meetings have been held since, he added. GCC Commissioner J. Kumaragurubaran stated that nearly 2,000 speedbreakers in the city were identified as not conforming to IRC norms across the city and were taken up for correction before heavy rains hit in 2024. He added that another corrective drive can be undertaken to address the pending issues as raised by commuters.

A case of practical, pragmatic and innovative education



There has been much attention on the issues of the practical utility, employment generating capacity, innovativeness of the research universe and the capacity of the Indian educational universe for global competition under the New Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The NEP 2020 is a long-term structural reform, designed for phased implementation. It aims to transform India's education system by fostering innovation, strengthening industry-academia collaboration, and enhancing student employability through a wide array of initiatives. The NEP-2020 works in a three-fold way: ensuring originality and indigenously-rooted imagination in research; constant competitiveness in the global educational sphere, and preparing students on a multiple career path. Towards better employability

The NEP proposes a four-year innovative flexible teaching programme which is certainly not designed to push students into low-paying jobs, as some allege. Instead, students earn other credentials during their educational journey and return later to complete their degrees. This is beneficial to students who might otherwise be forced to drop out without formal qualifications. It enables them to pursue diverse career trajectories with tangible credentials. Along with a vocationalisation of education and industry internships, students gain meaningful knowledge with practical exposure, thereby enhancing their employability. Before the NEP, it was a serious concern whether Indian education provided real world competencies. Under the NEP, there is a push for industry-academia linkages, vocational training, and internships to enhance the employability outcome. Around 167 universities and 59 colleges have already begun four-year undergraduate degrees — 224 universities and 101 colleges offer a multidisciplinary degree programme. To enable an original and innovative research universe, a vibrant research internship programme for undergraduate and postgraduate students has evolved in higher education institutions. This initiative aims to bridge the gap between academic learning and industry requirements by embedding hands-on, practical training within the curriculum.

Additionally, the scheme allows diploma holders, including students who have exited degree programmes or pursued standalone diploma courses, to enrol as apprentices within five years of graduation. These apprenticeships provide on-the-job training at industry establishments and include a stipend, partially funded by the government. Around 197 universities and 93 colleges offer internships to students (3,07,564 students are at the undergraduate level and 58,834 students placed for internships at the postgraduate level). Research and development (R&D) cells have been established in 242 universities, while 113 colleges have established R&D cells that are working to develop innovative research skills among our students. As a result of these efforts, 11 Indian universities feature in the QS 500 listing.

Why India is the third-largest economy, not fourth or fifth

Over the weekend Niti Aayog CEO BVR Subrahmanyam declared that India had overtaken Japan to become the fourth-largest economy in the world. He based this claim on data from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). This claim reportedly led to two fairly divergent reactions. First, a wave of self-congratulation among Indians who take this particular detail as a clinching argument that the government of the day has brought about a fundamental improvement in India's economy. Second, an examination of the claim and a counter-assertion, again based on IMF data, that India is still the fifth-largest economy, not the fourth. As it often happens in these days of deeply polarised opinions, the discussion has fast reduced to a dialogue of the deaf. Before answering, let's broaden the scope of this explainer by making another claim (also based on IMF data): India is the third largest economy in the world, and, the fact is, it has been that way since Prime Minister Manmohan Singh-led UPA days. Here's the proof: Look at CHART 1. It shows India's GDP (dark green line) breaking away from the rest of the bunch. India became the third largest economy in 2009, when it, curiously enough, overtook Japan. An aside: There is one more pertinent break in this chart: It comes in 2016 when China overtakes the US as the largest economy in the world. The year 2016 is crucial as it was the year when the US first elected Donald Trump and what has followed since is a dedicated US policy to contain China's growing economic might not just under Trump but also under President Biden. Those who have been celebrating India's rise as the fourth-largest economy might wonder how this particular calculation — that shows India becoming the third largest economy as early as 2009 — is done. And those who have been quibbling over when exactly will India overtake Japan are more likely to wonder why this fact — one that pegs India even higher in terms of GDP — has been ignored by the current government for the past 11 years. To understand all these issues one has to understand both the economics and the politics of such economic rankings. Suppose you and your classmate both get a similar kind of job, and both get roughly the same salary. You get Rs 50,000 per month and he gets Rs 45,000 per month. If your answer is that your friend is better off then you intuitively grasp the concept of "cost of living". It is different from "inflation". The cost of living captures the purchasing power of your salary: What can you buy from the same amount of money? For instance, the rent of a similar-sized apartment is likely to make a much bigger dent in your Mumbai salary than in your friend's lower salary in Patna. Of course, prices may not vary for everything — a motorcycle is likely to be similarly priced in both cities but it is quite possible that a motorcycle will not help your commute in Mumbai while it is likely to be enough for your friend in Patna. Purchasing power changes both over time — recall how your parents or grandparents often reminisce about what all they could buy for say Rs 100 or even Rs 10 in "their time" — and over space — as exhibited from example above. The point is: How do we know that France or Japan is a bigger and better economy than India? One approach is to look at the nominal

India also has the highest representation in the QS Asia Rankings 2025, with 163 universities across the continent. Under subject-specific performance, Indian institutions recorded a 25.7% jump in total entries (533), with 10 higher education institutions (including six Indian Institutes of Technology, and two Indian Institutes of Management) placed in the global top 50 across various disciplines. Such data show that India's capacity has been maturing since the NEP reforms. Patents filed by Indian higher education institutions have grown from 7,405 in 2021-22 to 19,155 in 2022-23, which is a 158% increase. India's performance in the Global Innovation Index has been laudable (39th overall). This is an exponential improvement from a decade ago, when India was 76. In the post-NEP period, there has been much change in the Indian research and innovation sphere. Policy and schemes such as the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) 2023 Act, the All India Council for Technical Education's (AICTE) initiative to have Idea Development, Evaluation and Application (IDEA) labs and the Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration (SPARC) have all contributed in giving depth to the Indian research universe. SPARC has been instrumental in fostering a culture of research and innovation by facilitating collaborative projects between Indian and foreign educational institutions. It has identified educational partners from 28 countries, which include the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Australia and France to advance joint research efforts. To develop indigenous scientific imagination and educational wisdom, the NEP 2020 has focused on the Indian Knowledge System (vision and pedagogy). It is being implemented from school to higher education. Initiatives such as the Smart India Hackathon are nurturing innovation at the grass-root level. Since inception, it has empowered over 13.9 lakh students, with idea submissions growing sevenfold since 2017. Employability is a multifaceted issue that must be assessed in the context of various dynamic factors, including industry hiring cycles, global macroeconomic trends, and post-COVID-19 pandemic recovery. Employment conditions before and after 2014 may be interpreted by some to show a declining trend in employment among educated youth (15 to 29 years) from 2004-05 to the 2017-18, especially among women. But from 2018-19 on, there has been constant growth in the employment rate of educated youth. By 2023-24, the employment rate of men was 53.4% and that of women at 22.7%, approaching 2004-05 levels. The overall employment rate increased to 38.6%. For all age groups, also, employment grew after 2017-18, touching 43.7% in 2023-24. The female employment rate grew post-2017-18, reaching 30.7% in 2023-24. The good job ratio has been growing fast in India. It is supported by the fact that the proportion of regular workers has grown, particularly for men (from 17.2% in 2004-05 to 24.88% in 2023-24. It is further documented that there is a constant decline in casual labour, especially among females (30.31% to 16.68%) and overall (28.85% to 19.83%) in NSS employment and unemployment and Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) data. This suggests a qualitative transition away from irregular, unorganised, low-paying jobs. There is an increase in the proportion of regular workers among men (from 17.2% in 2004-05 to 24.88% in 2023-24), which suggests that more individuals are moving into formal and structured job roles. This data and changing conditions prove that this shift in the employment sector highlights more decent and sustainable employment conditions, contributing positively to economic stability and worker well-being. This cannot be possible without practical, pragmatic and innovative education.



GDP: That is to add up the current market value of all final goods and services produced within the geographical boundaries of an economy in a year. Alternatively, you could add up the current incomes accruing to everyone in the economy. It shows how India overtook the UK in nominal GDP terms soon after the Covid pandemic. It is noteworthy that at that time Germany was the fourth-largest economy and Japan was the third-largest one. CHART 2 further shows that as of the 2024 end, India was still behind both Japan and Germany but equally importantly, IMF's projections (dotted line) show that India overtaking Japan and Germany is just a matter of time. A crucial thing to remember here is that nominal GDP that is plotted here in CHART 2 is in US dollar terms. There are two straight problems this creates. As an earlier edition of ExplainSpeaking explained, India's GDP, even when it is counted in Indian rupees undergoes several revisions. Two, converting the Indian GDP from rupees to US dollars requires the exchange rate. This exchange rate has gone up and down over the time. In other words, if the Indian rupee weakens against the US dollar while the Japanese yen strengthens against the dollar, the relative positions can change even though the underlying GDP of India and Japan may not have changed even by one unit. But the bigger problem with nominal GDP comparisons is that they are not as meaningful because they miss out on the purchasing power aspect. It is for this reason that the IMF also calculates GDP based on something called the Purchasing Power Parity. Now let's say the tables are turned and your friend moves from Patna to Paris while your job is still in Delhi. On paper — that is, when you just convert his salary by exchange rate — he earns more than you. But here's the odd thing: You find that he buys his mobile phones when he visits India, gets a haircut as well as a dental check, buys story books for his children, and sometimes even buys food items from India to carry back to France. It is perfectly reasonable for him to do that because his purchasing power may not have gone above yours even though his nominal salary (when converted into Indian rupees) is higher than yours. Here's another way to understand purchasing power. The cooking and cleaning services provided by maids in Indian cities are priced at a very low amount both in Indian rupees and even more so in euro or dollar terms. To get the same facility, your friend would have to be much richer (think GDP because all individual incomes add up to national GDP) than what you are in India. To get a meaningful international comparison of GDP, the IMF uses the PPP estimates, provided by the International Comparisons Program (ICP), which is a global statistical initiative that produces internationally comparable Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) estimates.

GST process reforms to be implemented in phases; draft returns to be out in public from November 1



The process reforms announced by the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council earlier this month will be implemented in phases, with authorities focusing on simplified registration for e-commerce sellers, streamlined registration process and faster refunds in the first phase. The Ministry of Finance will also share draft GST returns on 'myGov.in' portal on November 1 for public comments till November 30 in a bid to incorporate industry feedback and minimise the sources of mismatches that account for nearly 80% of notices issued at present, officials said on Thursday.

Based on industry representations and consultations, the government is attempting to modify the GSTR-1 return — the monthly or quarterly statement of outward supplies. "Based on the industry responses, we are modifying the GSTR-1 form, we are improving the IMS (invoice management system) so that the need for editing (GSTR) 3B does not arise. If the need does not arise, there won't be any case for notice based on mismatches. We will put the forms on 'myGov' for comments on November 1 with a 30-day window," Gaurav Singh, Commissioner (GST Policy Wing), Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), said at the Assocham's National Conclave on GST. If reforms in the GST returns system can be implemented successfully, the integrity issues in the supply chain get resolved, Singh said. "This would be the foundation for further reforms," he added.

The GST Council in its 57th meeting held on October 8 had approved the draft GST forms, GSTR-1/1A/IFF, to enable better reconciliation of the details furnished in these forms with the details reported in the return in GSTR-3B — the monthly self-declared summary return. The revised forms will be brought into force from April 1 next year. At present, businesses can modify or edit GSTR-3B, which often leads to mismatches with GSTR-1. Invoice Furnishing Facility (IFF) is an optional monthly statement filed by taxpayers under the GST Quarterly Return Monthly Payment (QRMP) scheme. GSTR-1 is a monthly invoice-wise sales return, while GSTR-1A is an amendment statement that allows taxpayers to correct errors or add missed invoice details before filing their monthly GSTR-3B return. The Council had recommended amendment in GST rules to provide a mechanism for correct reporting and correction/rectification of in-

put tax credit (ITC) in the return, so that the ITC availed in GSTR-3B aligns with the details of ITC made available in GSTR-2B. These measures will considerably reduce mismatches in liability and ITC in returns, thus not only reducing demand notices and system generated intimations on account of such mismatches, but also improving the integrity of ITC across the supply chain, thereby facilitating taxpayers, an official statement after the Council's meeting had stated.

The government is focusing on bringing in the changes that only require administrative processes in the first phase from November 1, that is likely to include simplified GST registration for small sellers on e-commerce platforms, unified documentation for GST registration, faster refunds, and a Rs 10,000 threshold for issuing GST notices. The changes, which require an amendment to the GST law, would be implemented from April 1, 2027. The notifications and circulars on the relevant process reforms have already been approved by the legal department and are likely to be issued on Friday, an official said.

Once approved, small suppliers selling goods through e-commerce (ECO) platforms in multiple states/UTs, where they do not have a physical presence, and pass on ITC of up to Rs 2.5 lakh per month, will be able to declare ECOs warehouse in that state/UT as their Principal Place of Business (PPoB). A seller would need to have a genuine presence in one state, where physical verification and Aadhaar authentication would be completed, while registrations in other states could be obtained with the consent of the e-commerce platform without further involvement of a tax officer. The move could enable small sellers to access the national market without having to establish physical offices in every state where their goods are stored, while creating greater tax parity across competing e-commerce business models. For registration, a comprehensive circular will be issued specifying the documents and information required to simplify the filing and processing of registration applications. Registration form GST REG-01 will have drop boxes to select prescribed documents, so that both the taxpayer and the tax officer have clarity regarding the documents and information to be furnished.

The GST portal will provide a user-friendly interface for filing registration applications with clear navigational paths, drop-down lists, tool-tips. This is expected to reduce rejections and queries raised in respect of registration applications due to a lack of correct information/details, and will expedite processing of registration applications. Further, full refund claims of excess balance in the electronic cash ledger will be sanctioned automatically by the system, without officer intervention. The time limit for issuance of acknowledgement or deficiency memo will be reduced from 15 days to 10 days. A key business-friendly measure that will introduce the Rs 10,000 threshold for issuing show-cause notices under GST is also likely to be rolled out in the first phase.

Renault brings back Duster, plans to revive India fortunes: CEO Stephane Deblaise

French carmaker Renault is looking to revive its fortunes in India with new launches, including the return of its popular Duster SUV, a greater focus on hybrid and CNG vehicles, and plans to expand its portfolio to seven models by 2030. After losing ground while restructuring its European operations, Renault is betting on India's engineering and manufacturing capabilities. The country, with over 6,000 engineers, is its second-largest engineering base after France. The company has acquired full ownership of its manufacturing facility from the Japanese carmaker Nissan.

In an interview with The Indian Express, Renault Group India CEO Stephane Deblaise acknowledged that a prolonged lack of new launches had hurt the company amid intensifying competition in India since the original Duster debuted in 2012. He said the revival strategy extends beyond the hybrid Duster. Edited excerpts: You are bringing the famous car name Duster back to India. How has the response been, and how crucial is it for Renault's revival in the country?

Duster is a name that many people know in India, because we created the segment in 2012. The platform, it's a very good platform, on which we can put a lot of technical solutions. And last, but not least, the Duster was successful 14 years ago thanks to diesel, but today, we think that we will be successful thanks to the hybrid. It has a fuel efficiency of 29 litres per kilometre, which is better than the competition. Duster, though, is one piece of the game. We have a great lineup. For instance, we launched the Tribler with a nearly 100 bhp engine, and nobody offers a seven seater car like that at Rs 6 lakh.

What I want to tell you is that we are not only focusing on the Duster, though it is a very important car. We have several cars in our lineup, and we will have more. We have two platforms, we are investing in people because we have more than 6,000 engineers in India, which makes India more or less the second biggest engineering centre in the world after France for us. We are investing in products. By 2030 we will have seven cars in the lineup, and we are investing in our manufacturing plant, which we have bought from Nissan. If you invest in people, technology, and production, you are part of the game. Despite being a famous name in India, initial traction towards the new Duster was sluggish. How has the hybrid version done abroad, and do you hope it will help the car in India? It's working amazingly. It's over performing in Europe. There, we sell only the hybrid, and the market share of the Duster is very high. The hybrid Duster is a very good solution for India, where powertrains are very important. In Europe, people are gradually starting to pay less attention to displacement, but India has not forgotten the engine yet. Indians are still preoccupied by having a good engine, a big displacement, and good fuel efficiency. The hybrid Duster has a 1.8 litre engine, you can not be any bigger in this type of a car. India should like the car.

Renault had some big hits in India. But it has not been able to sustain initial traction in a way that leads to long-term growth. What went wrong? Yes, you are right on all that you said. In fact, between 2018 to 2023, Renault had decided to focus its revival plan in Europe. Apparently, it was a good choice because it worked. But after 2023, it was decided to look at international expansion. But there was this lack of product during a certain time, and it explains why the second Duster did not come to India, and why we lost ground at that time. What is the typical profile of a Duster customer, and has it changed from when the car first launched over a decade ago?

It's a very difficult question because India is changing at the same time. You cannot compare India in 2012 and 2026. Many people think the Duster created the midsize SUV

segment in India back then, when the reality is that it created the segment worldwide. Till then, to have an SUV, you had to be rich. The Duster gave an SUV to normal people. This happened in Europe, Brazil, Russia, and India. India has changed. Now, of course the competitors have taken the place that we left, and now we have to come back in a much more mature market. I think people today are more sensitive to value than before. Earlier, they were okay with a lower-priced car which had low value, but today those cars won't sell. It has to be a good price for a good value. Even if the market is a bit crowded in this segment, there are not that many different offerings. The Korean ones are basically the same from underneath, and same for the Germans.

We see a broad divergence in powertrain focus among Indian carmakers. Some seem to be leaning more on EV, others on hybrids and CNG. What is Renault's plan for India?

Electrification is at the core of our strategy and development. And we say electrification by purpose, because it doesn't mean only full electric cars. It means plug-in hybrids, regular hybrids, range-extenders etc. Depending on the customers, we will develop either a strong hybrid, or an EV. For India, a key part of our strategy is to acknowledge that CNG seems to be a good solution. So, we will develop many more CNG options, especially for value conscious customers. There is a broad consensus that outside of the two-three big carmakers in India, other manufacturers may struggle with the overcapacity issue, where parts of their manufacturing plant remain underutilised. Do you agree with the thought? We don't think the way you think. We see India as an amazing country for engineering, manufacturing, and the market. I think, outside of domestic brands, Renault has the biggest engineering centre of any OEM in India, which is our second biggest one after France. The supplier network and development here, which was not good earlier, is amazing today. When you have a good engineering base, and supplier network, naturally you think the market can be used as an export hub — be it car development, parts, or the things we do for the rest of the world from our engineering base here. The cost of unused capacity is not the same in every country. In India, my biggest issue is not if my plant is full, but whether we are able to deliver cars that Indians want to buy. We would have a lot to lose if we make a strategic mistake on a bad choice on technology on one car or a bad choice on localisation, rather than having our plant not fully full. Exports are a big part of the overall strategy of almost all carmakers in India. What is Renault's export strategy, and do you see some gaps in using India as an export hub?

There are some challenges due to the supply chain, because as of now, the export volumes from India of goods to some other countries, especially, for instance, Europe, are not so high. It means that the cost of logistics is high, because the routes do not exist properly. Having a good engineering solution to build a good car at a good cost is possible in India, but after that, the transportation to some countries — not to all — is too high.



Most people would be classified as having a high genetic risk for around three common diseases, including diabetes, cardiovascular disease and schizophrenia. But most of us are not destined to become ill, according to a new study. It is that genetic risk is far more common than the disease itself — and the two should not be confused. Published in the journal Genome Medicine on October 22, the study set out to describe what a typical human genome looks like and how much genetic variation people carry, including variations associated with disease. Researchers led by the University of Exeter analysed genetic data from nearly one million people in the UK Biobank and the US All of Us research programme. Their findings offer a useful lesson in how to interpret genetic tests, and why a concerning result on a DNA report is not necessarily a prediction of what will happen to your health.

The study is significant because it offers a useful corrective to the idea that our DNA can neatly predict our medical future. Our genomes contain millions of differences, and many people carry genetic variants associated with disease. Yet the presence of these variants does not translate directly into illness. 1. Most people have a high genetic score for around three common conditions: The researchers examined genetic risk scores for 28 diseases in the UK Biobank dataset. On average, participants fell within the top 10% of genetic risk scores for around three conditions. These scores combine information from many genetic variants, each of which may contribute a small amount to a person's predisposition to a disease. Being in the top 10% means having a higher score than most people in the comparison group. It does not mean having a 10% chance of developing the disease, nor does it mean that the disease is inevitable. The study also did not establish that the people with higher scores would go on to develop those conditions. 2. Everyone's DNA contains enormous amounts of variation: The average genome contains roughly 4.3 million to 5.3 million genetic variants — differences in DNA compared with a reference genome. Most are harmless or have no clearly measurable effect on health. Some influence ordinary traits like how the body processes substances or how a person responds to medicines. A much smaller number has established links to disease. In other words, genetic variation is normal. Finding a difference in someone's DNA is not, by itself, evidence that something is wrong.

Can air pollution damage more than lungs? Delhi man shows how it impacts kidneys

A 52-year-old man visited me for a routine health check. He felt well, had no obvious symptoms and believed his parameters were reasonably under control. He was taking medication for high blood pressure and following a fairly balanced diet. Yet his blood reports revealed something concerning: his kidney function was declining. There had been no dramatic warning signs. No persistent pain. No obvious change in his daily routine. Just a subtle but progressive deterioration in his kidney function, reflected in successive blood tests. We evaluated possible reasons. Was his blood pressure adequately controlled? Could diabetes, an underlying medical condition, dehydration or medication use be contributing to the decline? We reviewed his medical history, lifestyle and previous investigations.

Another factor also deserved consideration: his prolonged exposure to polluted air, particularly during daily commutes through heavy traffic on his bike. Could the air he breathed every day be adding to the strain on his kidneys? Usually, kidney disease develops through a combination of factors, and identifying the precise contribution of any single exposure can be difficult. However, the case raised an important question: Could air pollution be an overlooked contributor to kidney damage, especially in people who already have risk factors? The answer is increasingly relevant as research explores the effects of polluted air beyond the lungs.

How Can Air Pollution Affect the Kidneys?

The kidneys perform several essential functions. They filter waste products from the blood, remove excess fluid, maintain electrolyte balance and help regulate blood pressure. They also play a role in red blood cell production and bone health. To carry out these tasks, the kidneys depend on a continuous blood supply and highly specialised filtering units called nephrons. These delicate structures can be damaged by prolonged inflammation, impaired blood vessel function and other forms of cellular stress. Fine particulate matter, particularly PM2.5 — airborne particles measuring 2.5 micrometres or less — can penetrate deep into the lungs. Exposure can trigger inflammation and oxidative stress, processes that may affect blood vessels and other organs throughout the body.

Researchers are investigating how these mechanisms may contribute to kidney injury. Potential pathways include damage to the small blood vessels supplying the kidneys, impaired function of the cells responsible for filtration, and changes in the body's inflammatory and metabolic responses. Long-term exposure to particulate matter and certain gaseous pollutants, including nitrogen dioxide, has been associated in observational studies with a higher risk of chronic kidney disease and a faster decline in kidney function. Air pollution may also affect kidney health indirectly. It has been linked to adverse cardiovascular and metabolic effects and may contribute to the development or worsening of conditions such as hypertension and diabetes. Both are major risk factors for chronic kidney disease. For someone who already has high blood pressure or reduced kidney function, these additional stresses may be particularly important.

Not everyone exposed to polluted air will develop kidney disease. However, certain people may be more vulnerable to its potential effects. People with high blood pressure: Uncontrolled hypertension can damage the small blood vessels in the kidneys. Pollution-related vascular and inflammatory stress may add to this burden. People with diabetes: Persistently elevated blood sugar can damage the kidney's filtering units. Any additional factors affecting vascular or metabolic health deserve attention. People with existing kid-

3. A disease-associated genetic variant does not always cause disease: Researchers estimated that an average person carries around one to three rare variants classified as pathogenic or likely pathogenic in certain genes associated with single-gene disorders. That may sound alarming, but many of these variants occur in genes linked to recessive conditions. A person who carries just one disease-causing copy may be a healthy carrier rather than someone who has the disease.

4. Genetic testing can produce uncertain results: The study also found that people carry numerous rare genetic variants whose clinical significance is not yet known — around 50 variants of uncertain significance on average under the study's definitions. An uncertain result is not a diagnosis. It means researchers do not yet have enough evidence to determine whether the variant affects health. As genetic databases grow and scientific understanding improves, some interpretations may change. This is one reason why genetic reports need careful clinical interpretation rather than being read as a list of diseases a person is likely to get.

What does "high genetic risk" actually mean?

Imagine two people with similar lifestyles. One has a genetic profile that places them above average for type 2 diabetes risk, while the other has a lower score. The first person may have a greater inherited predisposition. But whether either person develops diabetes also depends on other influences, including age, body composition, physical activity, diet, medical history and other biological factors. Genes are part of the picture, not the whole picture. The study's results are, therefore, best understood as a warning against treating genetic scores as stand-alone forecasts.

Does this mean genetic testing is not useful?

No. Genetic testing can be extremely valuable when used for the right purpose. It can help diagnose certain inherited disorders, identify people who may benefit from specific preventive measures, guide some treatment decisions and clarify the risk of particular conditions within families.

But the usefulness of a test depends on what it measures and how reliably its findings predict a meaningful health outcome. A test designed to help diagnose an inherited disorder is not the same as a broad screening test that calculates scores for dozens of common diseases. The latter may flag many people without reliably identifying who will actually become ill. The researchers caution that reporting numerous genetic risk scores together could lead to unnecessary anxiety, follow-up testing and overdiagnosis.

What about people in India and other under-represented populations?

Although the research involved nearly one million people, the data came from the UK and the US, and people of Western European ancestry were over-represented. The researchers acknowledge the need for more diverse genetic datasets. More representative research will be needed to establish how well these risk scores work across different populations.



He felt healthy but routine blood tests revealed declining kidney function. His case highlights the silent progression of kidney disease and the emerging evidence linking long-term air pollution exposure to kidney health

ney disease: When kidney function is already reduced, protecting the remaining kidney function becomes especially important. Older adults: Kidney function may decline with age, while the likelihood of other chronic health conditions also increases.

People with prolonged exposure to polluted air: Individuals living near busy roads or industrial areas, working in dusty environments or spending long periods in heavy traffic may experience repeated exposure to airborne pollutants. The risk is influenced by several factors, including the duration and intensity of exposure, underlying health conditions, family history, age and lifestyle. Occupational exposures, smoking and certain medications may also be relevant. The Silent Nature of Kidney Disease One of the greatest challenges in protecting kidney health is that chronic kidney disease (CKD) can progress for years without noticeable symptoms. This is why routine testing matters, particularly for people with diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease or other recognised risk factors. Blood creatinine and estimated glomerular filtration rate (eGFR): These help assess how effectively the kidneys are filtering waste from the blood. Urine albumin-to-creatinine ratio (uACR): This detects increased albumin, a protein that can leak into the urine when the kidneys' filtering barrier is damaged. An abnormal result does not always mean that chronic kidney disease is present. Doctors interpret the findings alongside the patient's medical history and other investigations.

Protecting Your Kidneys in a Polluted Environment Avoiding air pollution completely may not be realistic, particularly in densely populated cities. Nevertheless, a combination of exposure-reduction measures and good medical care can help protect overall health. Check local air-quality advisories, particularly on days when pollution levels are high. When practical, avoid strenuous outdoor exercise during periods of severe pollution. Where possible, choose less congested routes, avoid prolonged idling near busy roads and limit unnecessary time in heavy traffic. A well-fitting N95 respirator can reduce inhalation of fine particles when worn correctly, although it does not eliminate all pollutant exposure or protect against every gaseous pollutant. Keep windows closed when outdoor pollution is high if this can be done safely, and ventilate when outdoor air quality improves. A suitably sized HEPA air purifier may help reduce indoor particulate matter. Avoid indoor sources of pollution, including tobacco smoke and the burning of solid fuels.

What is wrong with Axar Patel? A yard here, an inch there, and a lost touch



An odd six or two doesn't bother Axar Patel. "Kabhi kabhi yeh hota T20I mein (This happens sometimes in T20Is). Even your best balls could be hit for six. You try not to repeat the same mistake and bounce back," he once told this newspaper. Had he brooded over the sixes struck off his bowling, he wouldn't have built the imposing career he has. Yet some sixes sting. Bowlers fall apart, begin to question themselves, and become unrecognisable.

It took just one violent swipe from Finn Allen for Axar to turn into a different man. Allen backed away a fraction from the stumps and bludgeoned the full ball outside off-stump over long-off. It was a staple Axar ball, one most batsmen would have nudged for a single. But he was a yard slower than he had thought, and Allen had adequate time to process his options. Axar blew his cheeks in anguish. This is the crux of Axar's T20 smarts: landing the ball on the precise spot he wants, at the exact pace and angle he chooses. Behind his recent travails is the slow waning of the virtue that made him India's foremost white-ball spinner. Not every ball does what the bowler wants, but Axar's deliveries are disobeying him more often. The margins are fine: a yard shorter, an inch fuller, the angle a trifle wider. For a bowler who has built his game around fine margins and subtleties, and not a stack of variations, even minor aberrations can be damning in the most punishing format of all for bowlers. Axar Patel of India appeals during the 2nd T20 International match between England and India at the Old Trafford, Manchester, England on July 4, 2026. Axar Patel in action. (CREIMAS)

Since the World Cup, his numbers paint a disturbing picture. In 17 T20Is, he has conceded 9.1 runs an over, a substantial spike from his earlier economy rate of 7.7. Take out the Asian Games and the one-off Japan match, where his economy rate was 5.28, and his ability to strangle batsmen has diminished across conditions. England's batsmen scored at 11.14 an over against him in England; West Indies' at 12.21; Allen and company at 12.75. Some of the decks were horribly flat, but choking batsmen irrespective of conditions was his calling card.

India ends Asian Para Games 2026 with record medal tally



GNS News Agency, Oct 24

The Indian contingent at the Asian Para Games ended the campaign with the best ever performance at the continental showpiece with a total of 114 medals including 30 gold, 35 silver, and 49 bronze medals. (Photo: Paralympic Committee of India) The Indian contingent at the Asian Para Games ended the campaign with the best ever performance at the continental showpiece with a total of 114 medals including 30 gold, 35 silver, and 49 bronze medals. (Photo: Paralympic Committee of India) The Indian contingent at the Asian Para Games ended the campaign with the best ever performance at the continental showpiece with a total of 114 medals including 30 gold, 35 silver, and 49 bronze medals. India is placed fourth in the medal table right now. There is one more day left in the Asian Para Games but there won't

The stats are not the cruellest portrait. It is that he can no longer produce what he habitually did. Take pace modulation. He was always on the quicker side, consistently in the 95-100 kmh band. But often he would reduce the speed without any discernible reduction in arm-speed. The change in speed is more discernible these days, especially when he tries to bowl faster than his normal range. At Hagley Oval he often stretched the speed gun to 102-103 kmh. In doing so he went utterly flat, and the arm-speed at release was quicker. It was as though he just wanted to complete his over as fast as he could. Allen, and then Glenn Phillips, treated him like a military medium pacer: stand firm in the crease and swing through the line. When he tried to slow down, he became too slow and the ball lost its bite. Phillips had ample time to sashay down the surface and thump him past the sight-screen. He doesn't beat batsmen in flight or drop in this format; he tosses it up, and a batsman of Phillips' calibre will not miss that. When he tried to pull his length back, he at times went too short. He went wider off the crease to exaggerate the angle from around the stumps. He was so masterful at manipulating angles that the ball would still land on middle and off, bringing leg before wicket into play. Here, a few veered down the leg-side, and some slipped out of his palm and flew as full tosses. In a nutshell, he is now exactly the bowler he doesn't want to be: one who cannot land the ball where he wants, at the pace and angle he envisions.

Allen's wicket brought relief, and suggested there could still be several games left in him. The under-cut ball gripped the surface, stopped on him, and held its line to induce a miscue. There was the double-wicket maiden against West Indies in Lucknow as well. Such instances have been rare since the World Cup. Axar Axar Patel after picking up Finn Allen's wicket. (Surjeet Yadav / CREIMAS for BCCI) He was never the most prolific wicket-taker. He was the enforcer who tied an end up, piled on the dot balls and built pressure. When he is not pulling the chain on runs, India are left with neither a wicket-taking aggressor nor a run-traffic controller. Kuldeep Yadav and Varun Chakaravarthy are the two extreme alternatives in the eleven. Both are proven wicket-takers who can influence the game with a spell, but their inclusion weakens India's batting depth. Axar, though, hasn't quite starred with the bat down the order. Apart from his 63 against Sri Lanka three years ago, most of his utility knocks have come in the middle order. Naman Dhir cannot yet be trusted with four overs. There are alternatives outside the squad, such as Washington Sundar and Krunal Pandya. More pertinently, it could just be a passing phase every cricketer endures. He is too valuable and proven a player to be discarded like a stale curry leaf. But in the immediate context of the series, the selectors have a tough riddle to solve: whether to stick or twist with Axar, a firm pillar of successive T20 World Cup-winning squads, but now shaking dangerously.

be any Indian in the action tomorrow.

India surpassed the previous edition medal count of 108 medals which had 27 gold, 32 silver and 49 bronze medals. India had originally won 111 medals but three medals were stripped off due to doping charges of Neeraj Yadav and Parveen. The performance in Aichi Nagoya has surpassed the expectations as the Indian contingent that was sent to this edition was heavily trimmed as compared to the last edition. A total of 168 para athletes travelled for the Games this time as compared to 309 athletes in Hangzhou. As usual Para Athletics accounted for more than half of the medal tally as the Indian para athletics team won a total of 65 medals with 22 gold, 19 silver, and 24 bronze medals. This is 12 more medals than the previous edition where the Para Athletics team had won 53 medals in total (three medals were stripped off). Para Badminton was the second largest contributor with 16 medals including three gold, five silver, and eight bronze medals. However, this is five less than the previous edition where India had won 21 medals. Para Swimming and Para Table Tennis were the two events where the Indian athletes improved massively. The Para swimming team had won one medal last time but contributed 11 medals this time with three silver and eight bronze. Similarly, Para TT athletes had won two bronze last time but contributed seven bronze medals this time significantly boosting the medal table. In Para Archery and Para Shooting, India had similar numbers like last edition winning six and five medals respectively as compared to seven and six medals in 2023 edition.

BCCI appoints Parvinder Awana as Chairperson of the Junior Selection Committee



GNS News Agency, Oct 24

Parvinder Awana was appointed Chairperson of the Junior Selection Committee on Thursday. The former fast bowler will have Krishna Das, Rakesh Patel and N. Arjun Yadav as members of the committee. Awana represented India in two T20Is and played in 62 First-Class matches, taking 191 wickets. Awana announced his retirement from cricket in July 2018. He did not achieve anything noticeable in his first-class debut against Himachal Pradesh in 2007 but attracted attention in the following game against Maharashtra by taking a hat-trick. Awana represented Delhi for nine years and played two T20 Internationals for India in the 2012 home series against England but failed to take a wicket.

"The former fast bowler represented Delhi, India A and Rest of India, besides playing in the IPL for Kings XI Punjab (now Punjab Kings). After retirement, he moved into coaching, working with Delhi's U16, U19 and U23 teams, as well as India U19 and various BCCI/COE high-performance programmes," a press release from the BCCI stated. While Das is a former Assam and Goa fast bowler, Patel represented Gujarat and Baroda, and Yadav played 83 First-Class matches during his career; all three played for India A at some point. "The fifth member of the Junior Cricket Committee will be appointed shortly," said the BCCI. Earlier, the BCCI appointed Pragyan Ojha as the chief selector of the senior team on Monday, succeeding Ajit Agarkar. Ramesh Powar has been appointed as a member of the selection panel. Left-arm spinner Ojha has played 24 Tests, 18 ODIs and six T20Is for India. While Mumbai's Powar played two Tests and 31 ODIs for India, he has since taken up coaching roles at various levels. "The Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC), comprising Mr. Ashok Malhotra and Mr. Jatin Paranjape, conducted a selection process for the appointment of a member of the Men's Selection Committee. The CAC met at the BCCI HQ to screen and interview applicants and, following the process, unanimously recommended the appointment," a BCCI press release said. Junior Cricket Committee: Parvinder Awana (Chairperson), Krishna Das, Rakesh Patel, N. Arjun Yadav Men's Selection Committee: Pragyan Ojha (Chairperson), Shiv Sundar Das, RP Singh, Ajay Ratra, Ramesh Powar

'I can't believe he's treated like this': Nasser Hussain slams Lancashire for cutting James Anderson off

James Anderson is 44 years old, and Lancashire's decision to not offer him a new contract may spell the eventual end of one of the longest and greatest pace-bowling careers in cricket. But former England skipper Nasser Hussain feels the veteran could have carried on as he brings a lot to the table in terms of experience and guidance for youngsters, apart from his obvious expertise with the ball. Hussain was the England captain when a raw Anderson was virtually plucked out of the Lancashire Second XI for a tour of Australia in 2002. Hussain marvelled at Anderson's longevity and speculated whether financial reasons were at play for the county not offering a contract for a player who has been a Lancashire boy through and through.

"I don't know what the financial situation is at Lancashire, so I don't want to comment too much on whether it's right or wrong, but it just didn't seem to me to be the change that you need to make at that club," Hussain wrote in his column for Sky Sports. Calling it "a hugely sad way for Anderson to go out," he added "I'm just not sure it's the way you treat such a legend of the club." Anderson played the last of his 188 Tests – second only to Sachin Tendulkar – in July 2024 and Hussain said England's decision to move on from the pacer with 704 wickets "was a marginal call at best". England were thrashed 1-4 in the last Ashes Down Under and while Hussain didn't say Anderson could have changed the outcome, he claimed the veteran would have held his own. "He would have bowled alright in Australia last winter, I tell you. He'd have bowled better than some that bowled out there and he bowled better than some that bowled



for Lancashire this summer and have done for the last 26 years," adding "I can't believe that he's going to be treated like this and he deserves a bit better." However, Hussain believes Lancashire's decision may not necessarily bring Anderson's illustrious career to an end. "I'd say most counties in the country would take Anderson, even at the age of 44. When I watched clips of him this summer, he still had that magic about him and the hunger," Hussain, one of the shrewdest cricket commentators and one of the most observant and frank voices in the game, said. "His skill is just incredible – the control of the ball, the way he changed from being a swing bowler to a wobble seam bowler and a swing bowler, his hunger, his fitness and his longevity. I personally think Lancashire are a better side with a 44-year-old Anderson than without."

Where did India's 226-run chase against New Zealand in 1st T20I turn?

The game was in the balance with 46 runs required from 24 balls. India had already lost five wickets, with Shreyas Iyer and Naman Dhir in the middle while the skipper was well set on 33. Dhir just walked in and has faced a couple of deliveries. Then Mitchell Santner came on to bowl the 17th over. On the night, Santner was quite wily with his bowling. His pace variations and guile have been fantastic, but that over, though, did not go to plan as he gave away 19 runs, which completely turned the momentum of the game and made the contest one-sided.

"It was the turning point, because it seemed that the match might change. Maybe Mitchell Santner could have taken New Zealand to victory. But Naman Dhir had completely different intentions," Former Indian cricketer Aakash Chopra said on ESPNcricinfo. "The way the Indian batsmen started, it seemed that they would chase down the target by the 17th or the 18th over. But both the spinners came in and not only controlled the pace of the runs, but also got some wickets," he added. "They put us under pressure. We knew they were going to do that, and yeah, another big powerplay from them. We weren't probably at our best. We can sharpen up a few things, but I think we know what the ball does, so you can slow them down. I think in the middle we did well to kind of squeeze them and then again it was a tight game. So I think both teams could probably look at a few things here



and there, I think could have gone either way," Santner said after the game. Although Samson was named Player of the Match, Naman Dhir played a crucial knock, scoring 42 off 15 balls down the order. "He gives us a lot of options, especially for lefty batsmen, or even the right-handers batting, especially on this ground, coming in and bowling those two-three crucial overs actually can change the momentum. And I personally feel that the calm and composed nature that he showed today, it was simply magnificent to see him bat," Iyer said on Dhir.

Delhi Toofans name 14-player squad for Prime Volleyball League

Hyderabad: Delhi Toofans have named their 14-player squad and support staff for the fifth season of the Prime Volleyball League (PVL), scheduled to commence on November 30, 2026. The franchise, owned by Resolute Sports, will enter the upcoming season with a mix of Indian and international players across key positions, supported by a specialist team led by head coach Fabio Menta. Delhi Toofans' squad includes George Antony, Deepak Kumar M, Amadou Laye Samb and Sheik Numan as outside hitters; Abhishek Rajeev and Yoan David as opposites; Pravin P, Muhammed Jasim and James Weir as middle blockers; Lal Sujan M V and Muhammed Shamil O K as setters; Anand and Aljo Sabu as liberos; and Sachin K as a blocker.

Alok Sanghi, Chairman, Resolute Sports, said: "Finalising the squad marks an important milestone in our preparations for the upcoming season. With volleyball gaining greater recognition and professional opportunities in India, there is growing potential to take the sport to a wider audience and create more pathways for players." Sai Prakash K, CEO, Resolute Sports, said: "Our focus this season is on building a well-rounded team environment that

supports performance, collaboration and player development. Finalising the squad and support staff allows us to move into the next phase of preparations with greater clarity on our approach and priorities. We aim to strengthen Delhi Toofans' identity within the league and deliver a campaign that our players, partners and supporters can take pride in." The team will be led by Italian coach Fabio Menta, whose appointment was announced in September this year. Fabio Menta, head coach, Delhi Toofans, said: "The team has already demonstrated its potential by reaching the Prime Volleyball League final in its debut season, giving us a strong foundation to build upon. With the squad now in place, our priority is to bring the players together around a clear playing philosophy and a shared ambition. The combination of Indian and international talent offers an opportunity to learn from different playing styles and experiences. We will focus on tactical discipline, communication, physical preparation and consistency to ensure that individual strengths translate into collective performance on the court." Delhi Toofans made an early impact in the Prime Volleyball League by reaching the final in their debut season in 2024, finishing as runners-up.

Asiad champ Sujeet's 23-match unbeaten run faces tough test at wrestling Worlds

GNS News Agency, Oct 24 Sujeet Kalkal will headline India's 30-member squad at the World Wrestling Championships in Astana, Kazakhstan, where the 23-year-old will look to extend his 23-match unbeaten run and win his first senior world title. The championships begin on Saturday with Greco-Roman wrestling before moving to women's wrestling and then men's freestyle, with Sujeet scheduled to compete in the 65kg category on October 29, with medal rounds on October 30.

India have entered 10 wrestlers each in men's freestyle, women's wrestling and Greco-Roman, with the contingent featuring several Asian Games medallists. The Greco-Roman campaign will be led by Nitesh Siwach and Sunil Kumar. Nitesh won silver in the 97kg category at the Asian Games in Nagoya-Aichi, ending India's 64-year wait for an Asian Games silver in the discipline.

Sunil's bronze in the 87kg category made him the first Indian Greco-Roman wrestler to win two Asian Games medals. India, however, will be without several prominent names. Olympic bronze medallist Aman Sehrawat, who won Asian Games gold, has skipped the Worlds to focus on his fitness. Two-time World Championships bronze medallist Antim Panghal and Asian Games bronze medallist Deepak Punia will also miss the competition. Much of India's attention will eventually turn to Sujeet, whose recent form has made him one of the leading contenders in a fiercely competitive 65kg field. He last lost to Iran's Rahman Amouzad 5-6 in the quarterfinals of last year's World Championships in Zagreb. Amouzad went on to win the title, but Sujeet accounted for five of the six points the Iranian conceded throughout the tournament. Sujeet has since won 23 consecutive matches, including 18 this year. His titles include the Muhamet Malo tournament in Tirana, the Zagreb Open,



Sujeet Kalkal will headline India's 30-member squad at the World Wrestling Championships in Astana, Kazakhstan, where the 23-year-old will look to extend his 23-match unbeaten run and win his first senior world title.

the Asian Championships and the U23 World Championships. He capped that run at the Asian Games earlier this month, beating reigning Olympic champion Kotaro Kiyooka of Japan in the semifinals before recovering from a 9-2 deficit to defeat Tajikistan's Abdulmazzhid Kudiev 10-9 in the final. The challenge in Astana will be to sustain that intensity through a demanding draw. Amouzad will be looking to defend his title, while former world champion Abasgadzhi Magomedov of Russia, Japan's 2025 Asian champion Kaisei Tanabe, Bulgaria's Shamil Mamedov and American U20 world champion Bowen Bassett are among the other contenders. For Sujeet, the championships offer a chance to turn an exceptional run into a senior world title, and settle the unfinished business from his narrow defeat to Amouzad last year.

Gajab Raat movie review: Manoj Bajpayee keeps you watching as film meanders



Gajab Raat movie review: Another of those iss raat ki subah nahin sagas, featuring bent cops, greedy politicians, gun-toting hoods, and sundry others chasing a common target, the best thing about Gajab Raat is its lead actor. Manoj Bajpayee, unerringly playing a very efficient but very corrupt cop whose conscience is not completely dead, kept me watching even when the pace slackened. A film whose level of interest depends entirely on how pacy it is has no business losing track of time, but given that it goes over two hours, what else could we have expected. After losing no time in getting everything kickstarted, with a grievously injured girl (Aditi Sandhya Sharma) slides

out of a moving car in the middle of Connaught Place, followed by a rapid if reluctant response from an investigating officer (Manoj Bajpayee) and his team, a whole host of shady characters target the victim who is left fighting for her life.

Initially, the melee is racy enough. A CBI officer (Akshay Oberoi) threatens to take over the case from the cop. A representative of a woman's organisation wants to dog his footsteps. Another officer (Saqib Saleem) shows up with a different version. Who's the girl? Is she a Russian mobster's mole? Or is she a journalist on the trail of a story that will damage reputations — a strong female politician (Divya Dutta) as well as her associate (Sunit Tandon) are in the mix — across the board. In these kinds of flicks, you aren't really looking for grim realism. What you do want is colourful characters and zing and after a point, it begins to meander and explain. The film was originally called Ghooskhor Pandat, but with the thin-skinned creatures we have become, there was huge uproar. Haww, how can such worthy beings be bribe-takers? Gajab Raat is a generic alternative: once the edge has fallen off, so does the film. The only one who keeps going, regardless, is Nushratt Bharuchha's lady of the night, whose flirty exchanges with Bajpayee's cop made me smile. But my favourite bits from the film have to be Bajpayee going, sir, sir, sir, sir, putting his low-life superiors in their place, elevating himself to the status of a hero who is on the take, but who will never be taken over. Gajab Raat movie cast: Manoj Bajpayee, Divya Dutta, Akshay Oberoi, Shraddha Das, Saqib Saleem, Aditi Sandhya Sharma, Nushratt Bharuchha, Kiku Sharda, Sunit Tandon. Gajab Raat movie director: Ritesh Shah. Gajab Raat movie rating: 2.5 stars

How Rs 3 cr Premada Ooralli made Rs 107 cr: Shot by former waiter, team stayed in banquet halls

The year 2026 has been a remarkable one for small-budget films. The latest to join the success story is the Kannada film Premada Ooralli, which, made on a budget of nearly Rs 3 crore, has earned over Rs 107 crore. With multiple houseful shows even on Day 29, the film's journey to success was far from smooth. On its release day, several theatres cancelled shows at the last minute, while producers remained hesitant to invest in its release. In an exclusive conversation with SCREEN, the film's cinematographer, Rajkanth SK, recalled warning a prominent producer that he would regret turning down the film. Today, he claims, the same producer is desperately seeking an appointment with the filmmaker.

From being a waiter to a celebrated cinematographer, Rajkanth is not a professionally trained cinematographer. In fact, he does not hold a college degree and has barely completed his schooling. However, inspired by a few people from his village in Hassan who worked in the costume and makeup departments, he decided to enter the film industry. Hoping to receive the same attention they enjoyed back home, he left Hassan and joined a pub in the housekeeping department. Soon, his contacts helped him find a foothold in cinema. "While it was a new world to me, I constantly asked myself which was the most valuable job in the industry that would empower me. I realised it was being a cameraman," he said.

"As a cameraman, I can tell stories and give work to people. I was always interested in photography and learnt everything through phones. I worked as an assistant on a television serial, but they wouldn't teach me anything. I would stand behind the director, watching the monitor and observing how things were created. I learnt to work at a fast pace and eventually learnt to operate drones. That was the newest thing back in 2014-2015. I would take up 15-20 projects a month operating drones." "I learnt from others' mistakes. Rather than allowing his limited formal training to hold him back, Rajkanth worked with different people across the industry, observing their techniques and learning from their mistakes.

"I would often imagine how I would have shot a scene differently while watching someone else do the work. All of that came in handy," he said. Today, he is the man behind the striking frames, camera angles and visual composition of Premada Ooralli, a film that initially began with a budget of Rs 1 crore. Recalling how he joined the project, Rajkanth said, "When I joined the team, I understood their vision and what they wanted to achieve. Knowing their budget, I used all my contacts to bring down the cost of the cameras and equipment required for the shoot. Equipment that would cost Rs 25,000 a day was available to us for just Rs 11,000, thanks to friends and contacts. When we say low-budget, we don't mean that we compromised on the quality of the film." Initially, the film was financed by filmmaker Manoj Kumar's brother and Mamatha Devendra. As expenses increased, more people from their circle came forward, with some investing Rs 10 lakh and others Rs 20 lakh. Eventually, the number of investors grew to around 15, although Rajkanth said he had personally met only seven of them. "They were all connected to directors and producers through their families. They believed in Manoj Kumar. When he made Akshi, he had borrowed money, but after winning the National Award, he repaid everyone. That earned him their trust. They knew their money wasn't being wasted," he said. Despite the challenges, both the filmmaker and cinematographer remained hopeful about the film's prospects. It might sound hard to believe, but Premada Ooralli was made with the support of an entire village. The production had more than 100 crew members working on a typical day, yet the team found ways to keep costs under control without compromising the film's technical quality. "We had over 100 people on our crew every day. It was like running a big production house. But instead of booking separate rooms and lodges for everyone, we rented banquet halls, constructed temporary washrooms and had people sleep together in the same hall. We booked lodges for the actors. We paid Rs 50,000 to rent a banquet hall that could easily accommodate around 50 people. Many locals also helped us with accommodation," Rajkanth said. Most of the shooting took place in Hassan, where Manoj Kumar's familiarity with the area proved invaluable. "The director knew most people because he came from the same village. We didn't have to pay much for locations. Many people allowed us to use their properties for free. Where we used fields, we paid small amounts to ensure the owners did not suffer any losses, particularly to their crops," he added.

Consequently, much of the budget went towards the film's technical requirements rather than the comforts of those involved in its making. Completing the film was only half the battle. By the time the team needed to promote and release it, there was little money left. "We approached and



In an exclusive conversation with SCREEN, the film's cinematographer, Rajkanth SK, recalled warning a prominent producer that he would regret turning down the film. Today, he claims, the same producer is desperately seeking an appointment with the filmmaker.

pleaded with several producers to invest at least Rs 10-15 lakh towards the film's release. We screened it for multiple producers. They liked the film, but nobody agreed to invest. No one showed interest," Rajkanth recalled. That was when Manoj Kumar came up with an unconventional marketing strategy. He got more than 10,000 radium stickers printed and put them on the backs of autorickshaws across Karnataka.

"He personally went around doing this. Each sticker cost around Rs 80, and it worked in our favour. The next step was printing invitation cards," Rajkanth said. The stickers cost him between Rs 6 to 8 lakh. Instead of organising promotional events to draw crowds, the team approached people individually and invited them to watch the film. "We went out, handed people invitation cards and invited them to watch the film as if we were inviting them to our wedding," he added. Last-minute cancellations, but the team refused to give up

The struggle continued until the film's release. Several theatre owners who had initially agreed to screen it backed out at the last minute, with some prioritising a bigger release. Others allegedly refused to display its posters, claiming that prominent filmmakers had rented their theatres. Several shows were cancelled. Yet the team remained confident that audiences would embrace the film. Despite having little promotional buzz, one single-screen theatre that went ahead with the screening sold more than 400 tickets by the second show, according to Rajkanth. "People started dancing and shouting. Watching them enjoy the film, we felt that we had succeeded. Veteran journalists from Karnataka praised us, and word of mouth began to spread. From the second day onwards, we started receiving calls from theatres. Then Raghu sir approached Jayanna, who helped distribute the film across Karnataka, and the number of shows increased," he said.

Tickets are being sold in black, earning extra Rs 5 lakh to theatre owners. The film's popularity has since sparked extraordinary scenes in rural theatres, with owners reportedly adding chairs and laying carpets to accommodate audiences. "People are even sitting on the floor to watch the film. In some places, tickets are being sold in black for as much as Rs 500. This has created livelihoods for many people in Karnataka. It had been a long time since we heard stories of tickets being sold in black," Rajkanth said. He added: "Theatre owners are earning at least Rs 5 lakh extra from these tickets." With the film now a box-office phenomenon, Rajkanth said producers who refused to back it are regretting their decisions. "When we were looking for producers to help with post-production and the release, I approached a big name in the industry. I told him that if he let this film go, he would regret it later. I warned him that once the film was released, he wouldn't be able to get an appointment with our filmmaker. He didn't listen," Rajkanth recalled. "After the film's release and the buzz around it, he called me and asked me to arrange a meeting with our filmmaker. I told him that wouldn't be possible now. All the producers who rejected us are having sleepless nights because of their guilt and regret," he added. Premada Ooralli has now become the sixth-highest-grossing Kannada film in history and, by reported profit margins, the most profitable Kannada film to date. Its profitability has surpassed that of films such as Yash's KGF and Rishab Shetty's Kantara. Directed by Manoj Kumar, the film stars Shree Ram, Rangayana Raghu, Thapasawini Poonacha and Ramika Shivu.

'I let him go': A fan poisoned Chiranjeevi on the film set that made him Megastar



Most actors have a story about the strangest thing a fan has ever done. For star Chiranjeevi, the story involves poison, which was mixed into a cake and brought to a film set in Madras in 1988. This was fed to the actor by a fan who believed that making Chiranjeevi consume a tantric substance would create an unbreakable bond between them. The film was Marana Mrudangam, directed by A Kodandarami Reddy, scored by Ilaiyaraaja and based on a novel by Yandamuri Veerendranath. Chiranjeevi had been acting for a decade, had done over 100 films and was on the way to become the biggest star Telugu cinema had ever produced. He was not yet the 'Megastar' on screen. That title would arrive, for the first time, in the opening credits of this very film.

And the set, as was typical for a Chiranjeevi shoot in the late 1980s, was surrounded by fans who had turned up simply to watch him work. During a break in shooting, a fan approached Chiranjeevi with a cake. In one account, the fan said it was his birthday and asked the actor to cut the cake. Chiranjeevi, surrounded by fans and crew, did what

any star in that situation would do. He obliged and took a bite. The actor immediately realised that there was something wrong as the cake tasted bitter. Chiranjeevi spat it out almost immediately. He had swallowed very little and informed the people on set that the cake tasted strange. The cake was tested and was confirmed that a foreign substance had been mixed into it. The set went into a state of alarm. Chiranjeevi was checked by medical professionals and was declared that he had not ingested enough to cause serious harm. However, the intent was clear: somebody had deliberately contaminated food and tried to feed it to one of the biggest stars in Telugu cinema. In 2023, Chiranjeevi himself recalled the incident in an interview and filled in the detail that had been missing from earlier accounts: the why. The fan, according to Chiranjeevi, had gone to Kerala and procured what is known as 'Vaseekaran' powder, a substance associated with tantric practices and believed in certain folk traditions to create an obsessive bond between the person who administers it and the person who consumes it. The fan's motive was not to kill Chiranjeevi, but to make Chiranjeevi pay attention to him. The fan felt the actor had been distant, had not given him the importance he deserved, and believed that feeding him this substance would change that. "As soon I ate it, my lips turned blue, I immediately spat it out," the actor recalled. "I let him go as he is my fan. It was shocking that a fan did that to me," Chiranjeevi said. He took the incident lightly, attributing it to what he called misguided admiration. Marana Mrudangam, the film during which Chiranjeevi was poisoned by a fan, was also the film that first credited him as "Megastar" in its title cards. Before this film, he had been billed as "Supreme Hero" and "Dynamic Hero." From Marana Mrudangam onward, the credit read "Megastar Chiranjeevi." The song "Godave Godavamma" in the film was choreographed by Chiranjeevi himself. Immediately after this incident, he went back to work, choreographed his own dance sequence, performed it and delivered one of the biggest hits of 1988.

'Security for every actor not practical': Cine body advisor on aftermath of Tiger Shroff attack

The recent attack on actor Tiger Shroff in Mumbai, has left the entire film industry in deep shock and concern. In fact, days after the actor escaped unhurt from the firing incident, security has been tightened outside Salman Khan and Akshay Kumar's house. However, Federation of Western India Cine Employees (FWICE) chief advisor Ashoke Pandit feels that tightening the security for stars might not be practical. In a recent interview, he opened up about the recent incident and how the industry has been dealing with it.

During a chat with Hindustan Times, Ashoke Pandit mentioned that while fear was induced in the industry right after the incident, the government's quick action gave them relief and confidence. "Initially there was fear. But the government went all out and nabbed the accused in two days. That has proved how seriously the system took it. This increases our confidence. We are all very nice people in the industry, we are artists and performers, we are not violent people. Because the police has arrested (the suspected accused), this will break the resolve of the attackers. The fear of law will build confidence in people," he said. The cine body chief advisor had also met Tiger's father, actor Jackie Shroff at an event in Mumbai, after the attack. "He (Jackie) said 'God has been kind, everything went off well. The government had reacted tremendously'. This gave him confidence and he went out to meet people, Tiger too met some. The authorities had got in touch with them immediately," he shared. With several reports around the increased security arrangement for stars, Ashoke emphasised that its not a practical solution. He stated, "It is not just about stars, it should be about the security of every individual. Kitne logon ko security denge (How many actors can be given additional security)? It is not practical." "Ultimately effective steps should be taken for overall security of everyone. Fear ko khatam karna hai. Work is on in full swing, kaam pe impact bilkul nahi dikh raha (We have to end the fear. Work is not being impacted at all)," he concluded.

Tiger Shroff firing incident Actor Tiger Shroff escaped unscathed when three gunmen fired at his car in Juhu, on October 18. He later shared a video of his right hand, showing minor pellet injuries. Tiger's driver suffered a hand injury, and a bystander named Umesh Chauhan was hit by a bullet and is currently receiving treatment in the hospital. The suspects were later arrested at the Kota railway station in



Rajasthan while trying to flee toward Delhi. After the accused were caught, police investigation revealed that the three shooters who came to Mumbai to carry out the attack, had also visited buildings where actors Aamir Khan, Salman Khan and Ranveer Singh live. They were in the city for over a month. A day after the attack, US-based gangster Anil Pandit claimed responsibility for firing at Tiger Shroff's car. In an audio, he threatened Bollywood and asked for an apology from Salman Khan to his elder brother Lawrence Bishnoi and to the Bishnoi community. They have been demanding an apology from the actor regarding his alleged involvement in the 1998 blackbuck poaching case. As an aftermath of the incident, Salman Khan has been provided a Y+ security and was seen leaving Mumbai two days ago. On the other hand, as per a report by NDTV, Akshay Kumar installing a bulletproof glass shield outside his house in Juhu. The police patrolling has also been increased outside Aamir Khan and Rohit Shetty's residences.

Mika Singh says Daler Mehndi was threatened by Uttarakhand minister: 'Maninder Buttar beaten up'

Ever since Uttarakhand minister Subodh Uniyal publicly reprimanded Daler Mehndi during a show on October 18, Mika Singh has been vocal in his criticism of the minister, demanding an apology for his remarks against his brother. Now, Mika has alleged that Uniyal has a history of disrespectful behaviour towards artists, claiming that Punjabi singer Maninder Buttar was beaten up when he came to the state. In an X post thanking a journalist for speaking out against the minister, Mika wrote, "Thank you so much for your support." He added, "The way Minister Subodh Uniyal ji spoke on stage was extremely rude and disrespectful. An artist deserves dignity, regardless of the circumstances."

Mika further alleged that Uniyal had made derogatory remarks about Maninder Buttar during the same incident. "He reportedly said on stage, 'Yahan aapse pehle @manindarbuttar pit ke gaya tha. Itna pita tha ki ab uska baap bhi nahi aa sakta yahan se (Before you, @manindarbuttar was beaten up here and left. He was beaten so badly that he wouldn't dare come here now),' Mika claimed. The way Minister @SubodhUniyal1 ji spoke on stage was extremely rude and disrespectful. An artist deserves dignity, regardless of the circumstances. He reportedly said on stage, 'Yahan aapse pehle @manindarbuttar pit ke gaya tha. Itna pita tha ki ab uska baap bhi nahi aa sakta yahan se.'" Is this really the language a minister should use for artists? What kind of behaviour is this? Artists come to perform, entertain people, and honour their commitments. They deserve respect, not humiliation from a public platform. Subodh Uniyal ji, do you want artists to stop coming to Uttarakhand? Such an attitude can discourage artists from performing in a state that we all love. Please remember that the people have given



you the position you hold today. Public office comes with responsibility, humility, and accountability. I have immense love and respect for Uttarakhand, but artists deserve respect too. I sincerely hope you will reflect on your words and address this matter with dignity. Questioning the minister's choice of words, Mika warned that such behaviour could discourage artists from performing in Uttarakhand. "Is this really the language a minister should use for artists? What kind of behaviour is this? Artists come to perform, entertain people, and honour their commitments. They deserve respect, not humiliation from a public platform. Subodh Uniyal ji, do you want artists to stop coming to Uttarakhand? Such an attitude can discourage artists from performing in a state that we all love," he wrote. Mika also reminded Uniyal that his position came with public responsibility and accountability. "