

## Brain-dead Nalgonda farmer's organs donated, 4 patients benefit

Hyderabad: Family members of a 52-year-old farmer, Pannala Narsi Reddy, a resident of Singaram village in Atmakur mandal of Nalgonda, who was declared brain dead, have donated his organs to needy patients under the State-run Jeevandan organ donation initiative.

On October 27, while working in his agricultural field, Narsi Reddy fell from his tractor and suffered injuries. He was immediately shifted to a private hospital in Hyderabad for emergency treatment.

Despite the best efforts of doctors, he was declared brain dead on October 29. His wife, Bhagya Lakshmi, made the heartfelt decision to donate his kidneys (02), liver (01) and lungs (01) thereby helping several patients in need.

## Telangana HC refuses to defer TGPSC AEE exams over SSC-JE schedule clash

Hyderabad: The Telangana High Court has declined to postpone the Assistant Executive Engineer (AEE) examinations scheduled for November 6 and 7, permitting the Telangana Public Service Commission (TGPSC) to conduct them as notified. Justice K. Sarath passed the orders on Friday while hearing a petition filed by U. Satish and six others, who sought postponement citing a clash with the Staff Selection Commission's Junior Engineer examinations scheduled from November 2 to 6, with centres allotted in distant locations such as Mumbai, Pune, Thane and Nanded. The petitioners contended that candidates would face difficulty travelling back within 24 hours to attend the TGPSC examinations and pointed out that representations seeking rescheduling had been submitted on October 5, 9 and 14.

## SR University Model UN event draws 650 student registrations

Warangal: SR University's SRU-MUN-26 (Model United Nations 2026) got underway here on Friday, with 650 students registering for the event.

The event was inaugurated by Dean (Student Welfare) AVV Sudhakar. Dean (School of Computer Science and AI) Prof Sheshikala Martha, convener Sallauddin and Dean (PhD) Prof Pramod Kumar Poladi attended the event. Speaking on the occasion, Sudhakar emphasised the importance of learning beyond classrooms and developing awareness of issues such as climate change and El Niño. Prof Martha encouraged students to develop leadership and communication skills.



## Telangana CM urges Centre to expedite work on high-speed rail corridors

Hyderabad, Oct 30 (IANS) Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Friday urged Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw to expedite work relating to the high-speed rail corridors announced for the state.

The Chief Minister met the Union Minister in New Delhi and conveyed that the state government reviewed the proposals sent by the Centre regarding the Hyderabad-Pune, Hyderabad-Bengaluru, and Hyderabad-Chennai corridors and submitted revised proposals with certain suggestions. The Chief Minister clarified during the meeting with the Union Minister at Rail Bhavan that the government has not yet initiated any land acquisition process for these three corridors. Stating that the land acquisition will

commence only after the Central government approves the alignment, CM Revanth Reddy requested that the alignment process be completed as soon as possible. Immediate sanction of the new 130 km railway line between Vikarabad and Krishna was discussed in the meeting. The Chief Minister informed Ashwini Vaishnaw that large limestone deposits have been discovered near Tekalkode in the Vikarabad district, and that the state government has prepared plans to transform this region into a cement and textile hub. The Chief Minister explained to the Union Minister the importance of aligning a 'Regional Ring Rail' alongside the 360 km Regional Ring Road (RRR), which is currently being constructed

around Hyderabad and the generation of significant employment opportunities. The Chief Minister also requested the immediate approval of several other railway lines: Domakal-Gadwal, Kalwakurthy-Macherla, Kacheguda-Jaggayyapeta (250 km), Patancheru-Adilabad (320 km), Bodhan-Latur (175 km), and the Akannapet bypass line (8 km). CM Revanth Reddy also appealed to the Centre to sanction a mega coaching and freight maintenance depot—a prestigious project proposed by the South Central Railway—be established at Anantaram village, near Mahabubabad.

## ONDC 'DigiDukaan' to empower kirana retailers via digital procurement, supply chain efficiency: Goyal

New Delhi, Oct 30 (IANS) Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Friday met over 40 leaders from leading FMCG companies to deliberate on a shared roadmap for strengthening and digitising India's General Trade ecosystem through ONDC 'DigiDukaan'.

He chaired the Bharat Commerce Chintan Shivir, a high-level CEO Roundtable convened by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) and the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC).

'kaan' shows that when open digital infrastructure is built around the needs of the small retailer, adoption follows. Let this become another case study where the world can learn from India," Goyal said at a roundtable.

"By making procurement simpler and more transparent while strengthening our distributors, we can help kiranas free up working capital and grow. I invite the FMCG industry to work together and take this to every corner of Bharat," the minister noted.

DigiDukaan has connected over 21,000 retailers with more than 450 brands across Hyderabad, Jaipur and

Mumbai (as of September 2026), compared with over 12,000 retailers in the previous quarter.

Amardeep Singh Bhatia, Secretary, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) said that Open digital infrastructure has a critical role to play in accelerating the digitalisation of India's retail ecosystem, particularly its vast network of kirana stores.

"ONDC's DigiDukaan is an important step in this direction, demonstrating how an open, interoperable network can enable neighbourhood retailers to access digital procurement opportunities and participate more effectively in the evolving digital economy. By bringing together retailers, FMCG companies and distributors on a common network, DPIIT along with ONDC is helping build a more connected and efficient General Trade ecosystem, creating a pathway for digitalisation to reach kiranas at scale," Bhatia said.

The discussions focused on strengthening and re-empowering the General Trade ecosystem, which remains central to India's retail economy and supports the livelihoods of millions of neighbourhood retailers.



Senior representatives from Hindustan Unilever (HUL), Coca-Cola India, ITC, P&G, Marico, CavinKare, Pidilite, Britannia, Adani Wilmar, LT Foods, Anmol Industries, Haldiram's, Emami, Veeba and Nilon's participated in the roundtable, along with representatives from logistics providers, technology partners and ONDC network participants.

ONDC DigiDukaan addresses procurement by digitising kiranas as buyers. Through a single digital interface, retailers can discover and order products across multiple brands, distributors and wholesalers, with greater visibility into pricing, trade schemes and product availability.

## Delhi Speaker administers unity pledge to Assembly officials

New Delhi, Oct 30 (IANS) Delhi Legislative Assembly Speaker Vijender Gupta on Friday administered the Rashtriya Ekta Diwas pledge to officials of the Delhi Legislative Assembly, reaffirming their collective commitment to safeguarding the unity, integrity and security of the country.

"Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel demonstrated that national unity demands courage, sacrifice and an unwavering commitment to the country. His life reminds us that the interests of the nation must always prevail over personal considerations," said Gupta while paying floral tributes to Sardar Patel on the eve of his 151st birth anniversary at the Delhi Legislative Assembly.

Addressing Assembly officials, Gupta recalled Patel's contribution to India's freedom struggle and the consolidation of the nation following Independence.

Highlighting Patel's decisive role in integrating more than 550 princely states into the Indian Union, Gupta said that the political consolidation of India was among the most consequential achievements of the post-Independence period.

He observed that Patel's administrative foresight, political resolve and ability to combine negotiation with firm action were instrumental in transforming a fragmented political landscape into a united nation, said an official statement.

Referring particularly to the integration of Hyderabad, the Speaker said Patel's determination at a critical juncture demonstrated his unwavering commitment to India's territorial integrity.

He also recalled Patel's leadership during the Bardoli Satyagraha of 1928, which established him as a formidable organiser of non-violent resistance and earned him the title of Sardar.

Abhay Verma, Chief Whip (ruling party), and Ajay Mahawar, MLA, were also present, said the statement.

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## Hyderabad: ED searches three premises in cyber fraud case

Kochi, Oct 30 (IANS) In a crackdown against cyber fraud, the ED collected digital evidence and seized Rs 6.40 lakh in cash and froze 11 bank accounts with a balance of Rs 14 lakh during search operations at three premises in Hyderabad, an official said on Friday.

The Directorate of Enforcement, Kochi Zonal Office, conducted searches in Hyderabad on October 28, 2026, under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002. The searches were at the premises related to Allamraju Satyanarayana Murthy and were conducted in connection with a cyber fraud case registered at Ernakulam, the official said in a statement.

The ED investigation was initiated on the basis of an FIR registered by the Cyber Police Station, Ernakulam.

As per the FIR, the complaint was lodged by Nimesh alleging that he was induced by the accused through telephonic communications and chat messages using the Telegram app to make investments by promising high returns, the ED said. It was represented to the complainant that he would secure high returns by trading through the website www.capitalix.com, it said.

Accordingly, the accused deceived the complainant into transferring an aggregate sum of Rs 24.76 crore in several instalments to various bank accounts maintained by or under the control of the accused, it said. Thereafter, the accused failed to return either the assured profits or the principal sum so received, thereby committing cheating and criminal breach of trust, causing wrongful loss to the complainant, it said.



## Telangana CM accuses KCR of attempting to grab Rs 50,000 crore land

Hyderabad, Oct 30 (IANS) Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Friday alleged that former Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Reddy tried to encroach on prime land valued at Rs 50,000 crore in Miyapur, Hyderabad.

A day after the Supreme Court upheld Telangana government's claim over 550-acre land in Miyapur, the Chief Minister directed officials to take over the land and fence it.

At a press conference in Delhi, the Chief Minister termed the Supreme Court verdict in the 23-year-old case as 'historic', and thanked the apex court for upholding the state government's claim to the land.

He alleged that former Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Reddy (KCR), his close associate and Rajya Sabha MP Damodar Rao, and the CMD of 'Namasthe Telangana' attempted to grab the land using businessman Goldstone Prasad as a front.

"By protecting this land, the Supreme Court has ensured that these valuable public assets remain with the people of Telangana. This is a monumental judgment in the interest of the state and its people," said CM Revanth Reddy.

He said that the Congress party, which was in opposition during the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) regime, fought against the then State government to protect the land. After the Congress came to power, the State government argued the case and secured a favourable decision.

He claimed that his government has so far protected Rs 1.50 lakh crore worth of government lands.

## Telangana announces Rs 419 crore Diwali bonus for Singareni employees

while extending advance Diwali greetings to the employees of the coal company.

He directed the company's management to disburse the Performance-Linked Reward Bonus (Diwali bonus).

The decision is expected to benefit about 38,000 employees. Every employee will get Rs 1,10,250 as a Diwali Bonus. The company will spend a total of Rs 419 crore on the bonus.

This is the second bonus to be received by Singareni employees within a month. On October 13, the state government had Rs 596 crore as a bonus for Dasara.

Following directives from the Deputy CM, SCCL management has initiated Diwali bonus disbursement.

Singareni CMD Buddha Prakash Jyoti consulted with the personnel

and finance officials concerned and instructed them to make the necessary arrangements to credit the Diwali bonus into the workers' bank accounts by November 5.

The company stated that the Diwali bonus applies exclusively to employees covered under the National Coal Wage Agreement (NCWA) and does not extend to executive/officer-level staff. Workers who completed 190 working days in underground mines, or 240 working days in open-cast and surface operations during the previous financial year, will be eligible for the full bonus.

For those with fewer working days, the bonus will be calculated and paid on a pro-rata basis, proportional to the number of days worked. However, a minimum attendance of 30 days during the previous financial year has been set as the eligibility threshold to qualify for this bonus.



Hyderabad, Oct 30 (IANS) The government of Telangana on Friday announced that a Diwali bonus of Rs 419 crore will be paid to employees of state-owned Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) on November 5.

Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Energy, Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, made the announcement

### LOSS OF PASSPORT

I, NALLAWAR KRUPAL REDDY S/O NALLAWAR CHINNA REDDY aged 49 Years (D.O. B 14-03-1977) R/O Flat no 301 the Heaven Apartment, Ushodaya Enclave Gundalpochampally Road, Kompally, Dist. Medchal-Malkajigiri-500100 Telangana State. I Lost my original Passport No. G2263050 Issued on 21-02-2007 Valid up to 20-02-2017 Issued from RPO Hyderabad. during travelling from pet basheerabad to kompally on 23-04-2026 If anybody found my said passport, please contact me on 8341992251.

DECLARANT  
NALLAWAR KRUPAL REDDY  
S/O NALLAWAR CHINNA REDDY

# Indian Chronicle

## English Daily

### Elderly care—Kerala shows the way

In a country that takes pride in its culture of respecting elders, it is ironic that older people often suffer the most in the twilight years of their lives—uncared for, neglected and exploited. More disturbing is the fact that several elderly people are abandoned by their own kith and kin. A recent national survey by HelpAge India has revealed that 35% of the senior citizens living with their families suffered abuse at the hands of their sons. Geriatric care in India also remains largely neglected. Against this grim backdrop, Kerala has shown the way for the rest of the country by introducing a noteworthy legislation to regulate old-age homes and home-care services, train caregivers, and establish state- and district-level protection units.

The State Assembly recently passed the Keralam Senior Citizens' Care and Protection of Rights Bill, 2026, which envisages setting up a legal framework to protect the rights, dignity, and social security of people aged 60 and above. The legislation is widely regarded as the most ambitious elder-care law proposed by any State. It adopts a comprehensive rights-based model that protects senior citizens from abuse, neglect, abandonment, and exploitation. It also regulates old-age homes, retirement facilities, and home-care agencies and proposes the establishment of State and district-level protection and grievance-redressal mechanisms. The migration of workers and rise of nuclear families have weakened the traditional systems of elder care, while a lack of financial independence further exacerbates their plight.

There was a time when the elderly were regarded as repositories of wisdom and respected for their guidance in difficult times. Now, their physical safety has become a challenge for society at a time when the elderly population grapples with not just age-related difficulties but also with the prejudices of the younger generation. India's demographic trends indicate a growing elderly population. It is estimated that the 60-plus age segment will account for over 20% of the country's population by 2050, rising from the current 11–12% to reach 347 million. The significance of Kerala's legislation is that elderly care is framed as a legal right with enforcement machinery, not a welfare scheme dependent on budgets. The central law—Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007—mostly deals with maintenance and abandonment.

The Kerala law adds regulation of care homes, caregiver standards, cyber-fraud response, healthcare, digital access and end-of-life choices within a single framework. It seeks to move beyond a system that views senior citizens mainly as people who need family support or state welfare. Instead, it recognises their right to "live independently at home, with institutional care as the last resort". Kerala is undergoing one of India's fastest demographic transitions. The share of people aged 60 and above in the State rose from 12.7% in 2011 to 15% in 2021.

### Shikhara Kalapakarshana Rituals Held with Religious Fervour at Gautameshwara Temple in Manthani



"Manthani, October 30: The Shikhara Kalapakarshana ceremony was performed with great religious fervour and devotion at the historic Sri Gautameshwara Temple in Manthani town on Friday." "The religious ceremony was organised on a grand scale under the leadership of temple chairman Gunda Raju." "As part of the celebrations, temple priests performed several traditional rituals, including Ganapathi Puja, Punyahavachanam, Vastu Puja, Navagraha Puja, Homam and Purnahuti, in accordance with Vedic traditions. The rituals commenced early in the morning amid a spiritually charged atmosphere." "Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) General Secretary Duddilla Srinu Babu attended the ceremony as the chief guest and offered special prayers at the temple." "Manthani Municipal Chairman Vodnala Srinivas, Vice-Chairman Muskula Sahender Reddy, municipal councillors, Congress leader Srirambhatla Srinu, Endowments Department Assistant Commissioner Supriya, Temple Executive Officer Raj Kumar, several Congress party leaders and a large number of devotees participated in the religious celebrations." "Following the completion of the rituals, Teertha Prasadam was distributed among the devotees."

## Large Number of Youth Join BJP in Ramanthapur

— Strengthen the Party at the Grassroots Level: Former MLA NVSS Prabhakar



— Make Amit Shah's Maha Padyatra on November 2 a Grand Success "RAMANTHAPUR, OCTOBER 30 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): A large number of youth joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Ramanthapur division, giving a boost to the party's activities in the area. The new members joined the party during an emergency executive committee meeting held at Gokule Nagar in Ramanthapur division on Thursday under the leadership of division president Vangala Santosh Gupta." "Former Uppal MLA NVSS Prabhakar attended the meeting as the chief guest. Under his leadership and the initiative of Santosh Gupta, several young people joined the BJP. Party leaders welcomed the new members by presenting them with party scarves." "The large-scale enrolment of youth generated fresh enthusiasm among local BJP leaders and cadres." "Strengthen the Party at the Grassroots Level" Addressing the gathering, former MLA NVSS Prabhakar urged party leaders and workers to focus on strengthening the BJP at the grassroots level. He called upon them to create awareness among the public about the policies of the Congress government and to take

the party's programmes to the people on a wider scale. He also stressed the need to respond actively to public issues and work towards addressing the problems faced by citizens." "Prabhakar urged every party worker to work towards making the 'Loktantra Bachao – Arajakata Hatao' Maha Padyatra, scheduled to be held in Hyderabad on November 2 under the leadership of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, a grand success." "He also called upon party cadres to ensure the success of a massive public meeting being organised to mark the conclusion of the 'Jawaharnagar Jana Sankalpa Yatra', undertaken by Malkajgiri MP Eatala Rajender demanding the relocation of the Jawaharnagar dumping yard." "Senior Leaders and Party Workers Participate" Several senior BJP leaders, former public representatives and party workers participated in the meeting. Those present included former Habsiguda corporator Kakkireni Chetana Harish, former Ramanthapur corporator Bandaru Srivani Venkata Rao, former councillors Chintoju Srinivasa Chary, Boddupalli Srinivas and Tindera Hanumantha Rao." "Senior BJP leaders Burra Rajeshwara Rao, Muthineni Jagadish, Thalla Balakrishna Goud, Kompelli Upender, Itikala Venkatesh, Kamesh, Shaga Ravi, Chandramouli, Sanjay Patel, Sankuri Kumaraswamy, Oore Nagesh Gupta, V. Suresh, Masireddy Prabhakar Reddy, Pentam Shailender, Anjaiah Patel, Nasu Satish, Y. Hemanth, Gosula Madhu, Vemula Tirupathaiah, Vempati Ram Raj, Soma Srinivas Gupta and Rajaniker were also present. Other participants included Shiva, Gore Bhai, Boddupalli Balaraj, Ashok Mudiraj, Mittu Anil, Deva, Venkatesh, Vineeth, Gautham, Praneeth and Preetham." "Women leaders Ambati Bhagyalakshmi, Thalla Banga Goud, Umadevi, Keerthi Mudiraj, Nasu Keerthi and Bhagya, among others, also attended the meeting."

### The amazing talent of Sarvajna students .. Sarvajna students selected for state level competitions



"Students of the prestigious Sarvajna School in Khammam have excelled in the field of sports. School students who have shown outstanding performance in recently conducted district level sports competitions have been selected for state level competitions." "On this occasion, school chairman R.V. Nagendra Kumar Garu said – "Sports inculcate not only physical strength in students but also mental courage and leadership qualities to accept discipline and victory equally. Sarvajna School is always at the forefront of all-round development of students by giving importance to education as well as sports. My heartiest congratulations to all the students who have been selected at district level and state level. May they all succeed in state level competitions

and bring more good name to the school and the district. I wish," he said." "Details of Talented Students Selected for State Level Competitions: "Table Tennis: G. Charvik, E. Tarun (under-17 section), S.K. Fazal, E. Hari (Under-14 Section)" "Volleyball : Tanwith (Under-17 Section)" "Kabaddi : Lokit Chauhan, Ch. Nigita Durga (Under-17 Section)" "Hockey : M. Rohan Tej (Under-14 Section)" "Football : B. Shyam, M. Sri Abhiram (Under-17 Section), Rohan Tej (Under-14 Section)" "Rugby / Touch Rugby: G. Bhavish (Under-14 Division), G. Shashank, M. Hrithik Chandra (Under-17 Division)" "Kho-Kho : Tanmai (Under-14 Section)" "Chairman R.V. said the players selected for the state level. Nagendra Kumar Director Neelima Principals, P.E.T., Teachers and management team were specially congratulated."

### Manthani Young Cricketer Khaja Mazharuddin Shines in HCA One-Day League



"Claims Five-Wicket Haul with Impressive Bowling Performance" "MANTHANI, OCTOBER 30: Young cricketer Khaja Mazharuddin from Manthani delivered an outstanding bowling performance in the One-Day League organised by the Hyderabad Cricket Association (HCA)." "Representing

the Elegant team against Maredpally, Mazharuddin produced an impressive spell, claiming five crucial wickets while conceding just 48 runs in his allotted 10 overs, including one maiden over." "With his disciplined and accurate bowling, the young cricketer troubled the opposition batters and played a key role in restricting their scoring." "Mazharuddin is the son of Mohammed Jameel Ahmed, State Secretary of the Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) Minority Department. He is currently undergoing cricket training under renowned coach Salam Bayash, who has been coaching Indian cricket team's vice-captain Tilak Varma since his childhood." "Speaking on the occasion, Mazharuddin expressed his determination to bring recognition to his hometown." "My ultimate goal is to bring pride and recognition to Manthani. I am staying in Hyderabad and working hard to turn my cricketing dreams into reality. I want to achieve greater heights in cricket and make my hometown proud," he said." "Mazharuddin's remarkable five-wicket haul has brought joy to the people of Manthani and local cricket enthusiasts, who congratulated him on his achievement." "Sports lovers and well-wishers expressed hope that the promising young cricketer would continue his impressive performances and achieve greater success in his cricketing career."

### RSM US Integrated Services India Opens New Office in Hyd

"Hyderabad, October 30 (Indian Chronicle) : RSM US Integrated Services India Private Limited has inaugurated a new office spanning 100,000 square feet at Phoenix Equinox in Hyderabad, following a nearly 150 per cent increase in its workforce in the city over the past three years. In a statement issued on Friday, Ashok Kumar Prabhakar, India Head of RSM, said the expansion aims to strengthen the company's global projects by leveraging Hyderabad's talented professionals while creating better career opportunities for employees. The new facility will support various business functions, including consulting, tax, assurance, technology, digital transformation, innovation and business op-



erations. The office, which has received IGBC certification, features modern technology infrastructure, smart meeting rooms, dedicated learning spaces and wellness facilities, reflecting the company's focus on providing a modern and employee-friendly workplace.

### Five Additional Classrooms Sanctioned for ZPHS Uppal Through Efforts of UPPAL MLA BANDARI LAKSHMA REDDY



"UPPAL, OCTOBER 30 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): "Uppal Government High School (ZPHS Uppal) has received a major boost to its infrastructure development, with funds sanctioned for the construction of five additional classrooms through the efforts of Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy." "An estimated amount of ₹67.75 lakh has been sanctioned for the construction of the five classrooms to provide better educational facilities for students. The funds have been allocated under the NABARD Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF) XXVIII scheme for the school bearing code number 36210990201." "On this occasion, MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy expressed his special gratitude to the state government and the concerned officials for their support in securing the funds." "He stated that the construction of additional classrooms would provide students with a better learning environment and further strengthen the school's infrastructure. The MLA has been consistently striving to promote educational development and improve basic infrastructure in government schools across the Uppal Assembly constituency."

### Suda Chairman Puvvalla Durga Prasad inspects the Pattabhadru voter registration center



"Khammam Suda Chairman Mr. Puvvalla Durga Prasad along with Khammam Pattabhadru MLC Constituency Incharge Rayala Nageswara Rao visited the voter registration center set up at Shukrivas Nilayam in Bypass Road area of Khammam city and inspected the voter registration process." "Speaking on the occasion, they called upon every graduate who has completed his degree to register as a graduate voter and participate in the democratic process and exercise his right to vote. Everyone who is eligible is requested to take advantage of this opportunity and complete the voter registration." "Leaders Sadhu Ramesh Reddy, division leaders, chief leaders, local colony residents and others participated in this program."

### Michelin Launches Tyres for Indian Roads



"Hyderabad, October 30 (Indian Chronicle) : Leading tyre manufacturer Michelin has launched its most fuel-efficient all-position truck and bus tyre, the 'X Multi Energy Z2', developed specifically to suit Indian road conditions. Michelin India Managing Director Shantanu Deshpande announced the launch in a statement released in the city on Friday. He said the new tyre offers 6 to 13 per cent fuel savings, 25 per cent higher mileage and 11 per cent improved durability compared to tyres from leading competitors. The tyre incorporates up to 30 per cent recycled materials, reflecting the company's commitment to sustainability. It is designed to help fleet operators reduce operating costs while improving productivity and profitability. The Michelin X Multi Energy Z2 will be available across India through Michelin Tyres and Services stores and approximately 300 authorised dealers."

### Maruti Suzuki launches Victoris Aurum Edition in Hyd

Hyderabad: Maruti Suzuki has introduced a special edition of its Victoris SUV, named the Victoris Aurum Edition, celebrating the vehicle's successful completion of its first year in the Indian automobile market. The new edition was unveiled at Adarsha Automotives Pvt Ltd, Attapur, at an event attended by SBI Regional Manager Mohan Naik Dhanavath and Shirram Finance Vice-President Mahipal Reddy Ch. Adarsha Group Chairman B Satyanarayana Goud, Maruti Suzuki India Limited Chief Commercial Officer Debijyoti Dutta, Adarsha Group CEO Nalinikanth and Adarsha Automotives General Mana

## Special Committee Appointed for Venkat Reddy Nagar Welfare Association Elections

“Steps taken to ensure transparent and democratic conduct of elections” — Eligible colony property owners to be granted voting rights through a door-to-door survey” — **VENKAT REDDY NAGAR**, October 30 (Indian Chronicle): “A special election committee has been appointed to conduct the upcoming elections for the new executive body of the Venkat Reddy Nagar Development Welfare Association in a transparent and democratic manner, association president Gaddam Sai Kiran announced. He stated that the complete responsibility for conducting the elections had been entrusted to the special committee.” — Voter List to Be Prepared Through Door-to-Door Survey “As part of the election process, members of the election committee will visit every house in the colony and collect details of property owners. A comprehensive survey will be conducted to ensure that every eligible person is given the right to vote, and a voter list will be prepared accordingly.” The committee will be responsible for the entire election process, from conducting the survey and preparing the voter list to managing polling and announcing the results.” — Election Committee Members Not Eligible to Contest “To ensure impartiality in the election process, members appointed to the election committee will not be eligible to contest for any post

in the upcoming Welfare Association elections.” President Gaddam Sai Kiran will continue in office until the election results are announced and the new president and executive committee are elected.” — Election Schedule to Be Announced Soon “The election committee will soon announce the complete election schedule to the colony residents. The schedule will include details of the election procedure, acceptance of nominations, polling-day rules and other guidelines governing the elections.” Association president Gaddam Sai Kiran appealed to all colony residents to extend their cooperation to the committee, participate in the door-to-door survey and provide accurate information to ensure the smooth and successful conduct of the elections.” — Election Committee Members “The following members have been appointed to the election committee: “P. Buchireddy, Billakanti Yadaiah, Lakshman Prasad Sharma, Somasekar Goud, Nagula Kanakaiah, Banala Narayana, Dookidi Nageshwar Rao, Pentam Ramesh, Godishala Naresh Goud, Avula Sudhakar, Kanukanti Ramu Goud, Shankar Chary, Thota Srinivas, Sudhagani Mallesh Goud, Maddikunta Srinivasulu, Ranganath, Prasad, Pujari Shashi, Diviti Srikanth and Guduguntla Mallesh.

## Samala Satyanarayana Appointed BC Association Peddapalli Circle Liaison Officer

“Felicitated by Manthani Division DEE Prabhakar and Other Officials” — **MANTHANI**, OCTOBER 30: Samala Satyanarayana, who was recently appointed as the Peddapalli Circle Liaison Officer of the BC Association, was felicitated on Friday in recognition of his new responsibilities.” — On the occasion, Satyanarayana paid a courtesy visit to Manthani Division Deputy Executive Engineer (Operations) Prabhakar, who congratulated and felicitated him on his appointment.” — SAO Tirupathaiah, Manthani ADE (Operations) Ramesh, Godavarikhani ADE (Operations) Srinivas, Sub-Engineers Rajasekhara and Karthik, Assistant Engineers, BC Association leaders and several other dignitaries participated in the programme and extended their congratulations to Satyanarayana.” — Speaking on the occasion, the officials and association representatives expressed hope that Satyanarayana would discharge his responsibilities as Liaison Officer effectively and work



towards strengthening the BC Association.” — They also wished him success in his new role and expressed confidence that his efforts would contribute significantly to the development of the association and the welfare and empowerment of Backward Classes.

## Early Detection of Breast Cancer Can Improve Treatment Outcomes



“Hyderabad, October 30 (Indian Chronicle) : Early detection of breast cancer can significantly improve treatment outcomes, medical experts at CARE Hospitals said. They were speaking at an awareness programme organised at CARE Hospitals, Hitech City, on Friday as part of Breast

Cancer Awareness Month. Doctors advised women to consult medical professionals if they notice lumps in the breast or unusual changes in breast shape, skin or nipples, even in the absence of pain. They pointed out that breast cancer can affect young women too and may occur even without a family history of the disease. The experts also urged women to overcome misconceptions about modern treatment methods and radiation therapy and undergo timely medical screenings for early diagnosis. On the occasion, women who successfully battled breast cancer were felicitated in recognition of their courage and determination. Doctors A.Venugopal, Ramu Damuluri, Kandra Prashanth Reddy, Praveen Adusumilli, Ajay Chanakya Vallabhaneni, Rahul Reddy Levaka, Sai Madhuri Chennareddy and Sunil Kumar Malipeddi, along with hospital Chief Operating Officer Dr.Pramod Gupta, among others, participated in the programme.

## Power Supply to Be Interrupted in Several Areas of Chilkanagar on October 31



Power shutdown due to shifting of electricity lines onto towers: AE Vinay Kumar Reddy” — **CHILKANAGAR**, October 30 (Indian Chronicle): “Power supply will be interrupted in several areas under the Chilkanagar electricity section on Saturday, October 31, due to the shifting of electricity lines onto towers. Assistant Engineer (Operations) of the

Chilkanagar Electricity Department, Vinay Kumar Reddy, announced the scheduled power interruption in a statement issued on Friday.” — Power Interruption Under Three Feeders Until 12 Noon “Power supply will be suspended from 10:00 AM to 12:00 noon under the 11 kV Mallikarjun Nagar, Balaji Hills, and Surya Hills feeders.” — The affected areas include Hema Nagar, Naiguda, the Shiva Temple area, government school surroundings, New Ramnagar, and Kummurikunta.” — Hema Nagar Feeder to Remain Shut Until 4 PM “Under the 11 kV Hema Nagar feeder, power supply will be interrupted from 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM.” — The affected localities include Sai Bhavani Nagar, Vasavi Nagar, Mallayya Nagar, North Balaji Hills, Gayatri Hills, Saptagiri Colony, and Reddy's Colony.” — The electricity department officials have appealed to consumers to take the necessary precautions in advance and cooperate with the department staff during the maintenance work. They expressed regret for the inconvenience caused by the temporary power interruption.

## ITDA Project Officer B Rahul expressed happiness over the establishment of separate sections in the office.



“Bhadrachalam, October 30, Indian Chronicle.” — On Friday, he inaugurated the newly established Deputy Director (DD) Tribal Welfare Chamber at the Tribal Welfare Department office. Speaking on the occasion, he said that setting up separate sections for teachers, other employees and tribal people visiting the office would provide them with greater convenience. It would enable visitors to sit comfortably, attend to their respective official work peacefully and leave without any inconvenience, he added. Later, he in-

spected the details of pending bills related to the tribal education system at the Engineering Wing of the Tribal Welfare Department. Executive Engineer (EE) Tribal Welfare Madhukar, Deputy Director (DD) Tribal Welfare Chandana and other staff members participated in the programme.

## SR University Model UN event draws 650 student registrations

Warangal: SR University's SRU-MUN-26 (Model United Nations 2026) got underway here on Friday, with 650 students registering for the event. The event was inaugurated by Dean (Student Welfare) AVV Sudhakar. Dean (School of Computer Science and AI) Prof Sheshikala Marthi, convenor Sallauddin and Dean (PhD) Prof Pramod Kumar Poladi attended the event. Speaking on the occasion, Sudhakar emphasised the importance of learning beyond classrooms and developing awareness of issues such as climate change and El Niño. Prof Marthi encouraged students to develop leadership and communication skills.

## Residents Face Severe Inconvenience Due to HP Gas Godown Operations in Uppal Bhagayath



Locals Struggle with Noise from Heavy Trucks During Loading and Unloading” — Authorities Fail to Respond Despite Two Years of Complaints” — **UPPAL**, OCTOBER 30 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): “Residents of Uppal Bhagayath are expressing serious concerns over the inconvenience caused by the operations of an HP Gas godown in the area. Locals complain that heavy trucks regularly arrive at and leave the godown, generating excessive noise during loading and unloading activities. They allege that despite repeatedly bringing the issue to the attention of the authorities over the past two years, no permanent solution has been provided.” — Two Years of Complaints, but No Action from Authorities “Residents of Bhagayath say the noise pollution caused by the HP Gas godown operations has disrupted the peace and tranquillity of their neighbourhood. The fre-

quent movement of heavy trucks and continuous loading and unloading activities have become a major source of inconvenience.” They expressed frustration over the alleged failure of the concerned authorities to take appropriate action, despite repeated complaints over the past two years.” — From the GHMC Deputy Commissioner's Office to the Collectorate's Prajavani Programme “In an effort to resolve the issue, residents of Bhagayath have approached the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) Deputy Commissioner's office several times. They have also submitted complaints during the Prajavani public grievance programme held at the Collectorate. “However, the residents say their efforts have yielded no results so far. They questioned why the authorities have failed to respond to their repeated appeals and take steps to address the problem.” — MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy Extends Support to Residents “Residents stated that Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy had responded to their concerns and extended his support in seeking a resolution. According to them, the MLA also submitted a complaint to the GHMC Deputy Commissioner, requesting appropriate action to address the issue. “However, locals expressed dissatisfaction over the lack of effective action by the concerned officials, even after the matter was brought to their attention by an elected representative.” — Residents Demand a Permanent Solution “Residents are urging the authorities to immediately acknowledge the difficulties caused by the godown's operations in a residential neighbourhood. They have appealed to the concerned officials to investigate the noise pollution caused by loading and unloading activities and take necessary action in accordance with the applicable regulations.” They have also demanded that officials conduct a field inspection to assess the actual situation and implement appropriate measures to prevent further inconvenience to the public. “Residents of Bhagayath hope that the authorities will finally resolve the two-year-old issue and ensure a peaceful living environment for the people in the locality.

## Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy Discusses Development Works with MMC Commissioner

— Requests Improved Infrastructure and Expedited Completion of Pending Projects” — **UPPAL**, OCTOBER 30 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): “Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy has urged the concerned officials to take necessary measures to ensure the comprehensive development of the Uppal Assembly constituency. He emphasized the need to address public grievances in various areas and expedite the completion of pending development works.” As part of these efforts, MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy met Medchal Municipal Corporation (MMC) Commissioner T. Vijay Krishna Reddy, IAS, on Friday and discussed various development projects and infrastructure requirements across the constituency. “During the meeting, the MLA held detailed discussions with the Commissioner on providing essential civic amenities, improving road infrastructure, strengthening the drainage system, and ensuring effective sanitation management. He urged the Commissioner to identify the problems faced by residents in different localities and give priority to resolving them. The MLA also stressed the importance of accelerating pending development projects in



various areas to ensure that residents have access to better civic amenities and improved infrastructure. Bandari Lakshma Reddy called upon the concerned officials to work in coordination and take prompt, effective measures in accordance with public needs to achieve the overall development of the Uppal constituency.

## Cyberabad Police Push for 7-Km Counterflow BRT to Ease IT Corridor Traffic



“Cyberabad, October 30 (Indian Chronicle) In a significant move to ease traffic congestion and strengthen public transportation along Hyderabad's busy IT corridor, Cyberabad Traffic Police held a Joint Coordination Meeting on October 29, 2026, at the Cyberabad Police Commissionerate to review the proposed 7-km Counterflow Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system.” — The meeting reviewed the traffic, road safety and infrastructure survey conducted by FRIP in coordination with the Society for Cyberabad Se-

curity Council (SCSC) along the JNTU Junction–HITEC City–Raidurgam Metro Station–Waverock corridor.” — The proposed Counterflow BRT system aims to improve public transport efficiency, ensure smoother traffic movement and reduce peak-hour congestion along one of the city's busiest commuter routes.” — Sri Sunpreet Singh, IPS, Joint Commissioner of Police (Traffic), Cyberabad, directed officials to prioritise immediate improvements to pedestrian facilities, road safety measures and essential infrastructure.” —

He also instructed FRIP to examine obstacles affecting the proposed dedicated bus lanes and identify practical, cost-effective solutions in coordination with CMC, TGSRTC and Cyberabad Traffic Police.” — Representatives from Cyberabad Traffic Police, SCSC, FRIP, CMC, TGIIC and TGSRTC participated in the meeting and discussed coordinated measures to improve traffic management and public transport infrastructure.” — The initiative reflects Cyberabad Traffic Police's continued efforts to enhance road safety, promote efficient public transportation and address growing traffic challenges through interdepartmental coordination.” — The proposed BRT system, subject to further feasibility assessments and implementation decisions, is expected to support smoother commuting for thousands of daily travellers along Hyderabad's IT corridor.

## Priority to Sports - Says Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy.



Sathupalli, October 30, Indian Chronicle.” — State Revenue, Housing, Information and Public Relations Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy said that the People's Government is giving priority to sports and encouraging sporting activities. On Friday, the Minister, along with District Collector Divakara TS and Sathupalli MLA Dr Matta Ragamayi Dayanand, laid the foundation stone for the construction of a prestigious indoor stadium in Khammam District, Sathupalli town at an estimated cost of Rs. 2 crore. Speaking on the occasion, Minister Ponguleti said that the People's Government, under the leadership of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, was according the highest priority to the sports sec-

tor along with various welfare programmes. He stated that a new sports policy had been introduced to bring international recognition to Telangana and that an excellent Sports University was being established in Fourth City. He further said that the state government was encouraging young men and women interested in sports by providing financial assistance and incentives to athletes who win medals. Despite the challenging financial situation of the state, Telangana was being taken forward at the global level in the fields of education, healthcare and sports, he said. The Minister specially appreciated local MLA Matta Ragamayi Dayanand for her persistent efforts in securing the indoor stadium for Sathupalli and acknowledged her services in this regard. He expressed confidence that the Sathupalli Assembly constituency would emerge as the first constituency to secure victory with the highest majority in the upcoming elections.” — Speaking at the programme, Sathupalli MLA Matta Ragamayi Dayanand said that the support and cooperation extended by Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy towards the development of Sathupalli were invaluable. She expressed hope that more development programmes would be taken up at a faster pace under his leadership in the future.” — Kalluru Sub-Collector Ajay Kumar, District Sports Development Officer T Sunil Reddy, Sathupalli Municipal Chairperson Rehana Kamal Pasha, Municipal Commissioner Narasimha, officials from various departments, public representatives and others participated in the programme.

## Extra Metro trains, security at JLN Stadium



New Delhi: The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) has decided to extend Metro train services until midnight on Friday to facilitate the movement of spectators attending Diljit Dosanjh's "Aura India Tour 2026" concert at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium on October 30, an official said. The Delhi Metro has made special operational arrangements, including extending train services beyond normal operating hours on all Metro lines except the Airport Express Line and Rapid Metro in Gurugram. Anuj Dayal, Principal Executive Director, Corporate Communication, DMRC, said in a statement on Thursday.

The DMRC has planned to extend train services on all lines, except the Airport Express Line, until midnight on the day of the concert, which is expected to attract over 70,000 spectators, the statement said. Additional train trips will be operated across the network to facilitate the smooth dispersal of spectators after the event. Standby trains will also be kept ready for deployment, if required, to cater to any unforeseen surge in passenger traffic, it said. In addition, the timings for QR ticket purchases through the DMRC

mobile app, Delhi Metro Sarthi, will be extended by an hour in view of the extended service hours, the statement said. To ensure the smooth entry and dispersal of spectators, the DMRC has made special arrangements at JLN Stadium Metro Station and other major interchange stations. Additional DMRC staff, customer service personnel and Customer Facilitation Agents (CFAs) will be deployed to guide commuters and regulate passenger movement, the statement said. To further strengthen passenger convenience and safety, additional security personnel will be deployed at JLN Stadium Metro Station. Door Frame Metal Detectors (DFMDs) and enhanced security screening arrangements will be put in place to facilitate orderly passenger movement while ensuring compliance with security protocols, it added.

The concert is expected to attract approximately 70,000 spectators, many of whom are likely to use the Delhi Metro to travel to and from the venue. JLN Stadium Metro Station, on the Violet Line's Kashmere Gate-Raja Nahar Singh corridor, is the nearest Metro station to the venue, the DMRC said. The DMRC has encouraged spectators to use Metro services for a convenient, safe and environmentally friendly travel experience while reducing dependence on private vehicles. Earlier, the Delhi Traffic Police issued details of traffic diversions and alternative routes on Wednesday, advising commuters to use public transport, particularly the Delhi Metro. In a post on X, the Delhi Traffic Police said traffic restrictions and diversions might be in place from 1 pm to midnight on October 30 in view of Diljit Dosanjh's live music concert at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium. "Commuters are advised to plan their journeys, avoid affected roads around JLN Stadium and use public transport (Delhi Metro recommended)," it added.

## Uttar Pradesh revises government job eligibility rules for character verification

Lucknow: The Uttar Pradesh government has tightened character verification rules for candidates selected for direct recruitment to government jobs, declaring that individuals associated with organisations advocating violent changes to the existing social system will be considered ineligible for appointment. The move comes amid controversy over calls for 'regime change' during a recent protest and has drawn criticism from the Opposition Samajwadi Party and Congress. Under the revised guidelines, participation in protests or activities aimed at changing the existing system through violence could render candidates ineligible for government employment. However, the government has clarified that no candidate will be disqualified solely on the basis of their political ideology. The directive was issued by M. Devraj, Principal Secretary of the Appointments Department, and applies to direct recruitment in government departments, corporations, councils and local bodies. According to the order, individuals who are members of organisations whose stated objective is to change the existing social system through violence will be considered unsuitable for government appointments.

"Notwithstanding anything contained in the above paragraphs, no person will be considered unsuitable for appointment solely because of their political ideology. However, individuals who are members of an organisation whose stated objective is to change the existing system of society through violence will be considered ineligible for appointment under the government," the order stated. It further specifies that participation in such activities after attaining the age of 21 and within the three years preceding verification will be treated as evidence that the individual remains actively involved, unless concrete evidence demonstrates a change in their tendencies during that period. The revised policy also clarifies that the registration of a First Information Report (FIR) or a pending investigation will not automatically disqualify a candidate from government employment. Candidates who have been acquitted, cases settled through compromise and matters covered under juvenile justice laws will also not attract automatic disqualification under the guidelines. The government has further



clarified that delays in receiving character verification reports need not necessarily delay the issuance of appointment letters. Authorities may issue provisional appointment letters after obtaining the prescribed documents and a self-declaration from candidates. However, if a candidate is subsequently found ineligible during verification or is found to have furnished false information, the appointment will be cancelled immediately, and legal action may also be initiated.

The order also exempts employees already serving in government departments from undergoing character verification afresh. The appointing authority may, however, seek relevant information from their previous departments wherever necessary. The police have been directed to submit character verification reports within 30 days to ensure that the recruitment process is not unnecessarily delayed. The government said the revised guidelines seek to streamline the character verification process while ensuring that pending investigations and procedural delays do not automatically deprive eligible candidates of government employment.

## Allahabad HC suspends sentence of Azam Khan, refuses to stay conviction



GNS News Agency, Oct 30

Lucknow: In a major relief to Samajwadi Party (SP) senior leader Azam Khan and his son Abdullah Azam, the Allahabad High Court on Thursday suspended their sentences in the dual PAN card case and granted them bail. However, the High Court declined their plea to stay the conviction. Their release from jail will depend on the legal position in other pending cases. Justice Samit Gopal of the Allahabad High Court passed the order while hearing criminal revision petitions filed by the father and son challenging the convictions and sentences imposed by lower courts in the dual PAN card case.

According to the prosecution, the case concerns the alleged procurement and use of a second PAN card bearing a different date of birth. The allegations also included the purported use of the second PAN card in nomination documents filed for an election. Senior counsel representing Azam Khan argued the matter before the High Court. The defence challenged the lower court's verdict through criminal revision petitions and sought suspension of the sentences and bail pending the disposal of the case. The High Court allowed the pleas for suspension of sentence and bail but refused to stay the convictions. This distinction is legally significant: the convictions remain in force even though the sentences have been suspended. The revision petitions will be decided separately. Suspension of sentence allows a convicted person to be released on bail while an appeal or revision is pending, subject to the court's order and applicable conditions. A stay on conviction, by contrast, temporarily suspends the legal operation of the conviction itself. In this case, the court did not grant such relief.

The convictions therefore continue to stand until the revision petitions are finally decided or the court orders otherwise. Despite securing bail in the dual PAN card case, Azam Khan and Abdullah Azam may remain in custody if they are required to do so in connection with other pending cases. Azam Khan and Abdullah Azam are already lodged in jail in connection with various cases.

## Suda Chairman Puvvalla Durga Prasad inspects the Pattabhadru voter registration center



"Khammam Suda Chairman Mr. Puvvalla Durga Prasad along with Khammam Pattabhadru MLC Constituency Incharge Rayala Nageswara Rao visited the voter registration center set up at Shukrivitas Nilayam in Bypass Road area of Khammam city and inspected the voter registration process." "Speaking on the occasion, they called upon every graduate who has completed his degree to register as a graduate voter and participate in the democratic process and exercise his right to vote. Everyone who is eligible is requested to take advantage of this opportunity and complete the voter registration." "Leaders Sadhu Ramesh Reddy, division leaders, chief leaders, local colony residents and others participated in this program.

## Three sentenced to life imprisonment in Gujarat cow slaughter case



GNS News Agency, Oct 30

Gandhinagar: A court in Gujarat's Gandhinagar district has sentenced three persons to life imprisonment in a cow slaughter case after they were found in possession of 277 kg of beef, citing Hindu scriptures to underscore the religious significance of the cow. Gujarat Deputy Chief Minister Harsh Sanghavi hailed the verdict, calling it a clear message that the law would never spare those who commit cow slaughter in the state. In his judgment on Monday, Additional Sessions Judge BR Rajput also imposed a fine of Rs 3 lakh on the convicts — Vasim Qureshi, Mohammad Rafiq Qureshi and Asfaq Bahelimin.

Quoting the Manusmriti, an ancient Sanskrit text, the court observed that the cow is not merely an animal but is regarded as a pillar of material prosperity and dharma (righteousness). "Sage Manu entrusted the primary responsibility for the protection and care of cattle to the 'Vaishya' class. Furthermore, in the context of 'Arsha Vivaha' (a traditional form of Vedic marriage), the pair — a cow and a bull — holds special significance," the judge said.

Further quoting the Vedas and other Hindu scriptures, the court said that, according to religious accounts, when drops of amrita (nectar) fell to the earth through the power

of penance, the divine cow Kamadhenu emerged and came to be regarded as the progenitor of all bovine species on earth. "The cow is regarded as the 'mother of the world', serving as an abode for 33 crore deities. Her four legs are symbolic of the four Vedas," the court said. According to the prosecution, six persons were arrested with 277 kg of beef, weapons allegedly used to slaughter cows and a vehicle meant to transport the meat after a raid on a house in Jamla village in Gandhinagar district on August 22, 2024. The prosecution said a father-son duo would purchase weak or non-lactating buffaloes. They would then bring four individuals from Ahmedabad to their home and have the animals slaughtered in a cruel manner for beef, allegedly for financial gain. Citing the investigation, the prosecution said the accused intended to sell the beef to one Ghulam Moin. After the trial, the court found three of the six men guilty. The prosecution produced 54 witnesses and 18 pieces of documentary evidence to establish the charges. Sanghavi congratulated the Gandhinagar police and the prosecution for what he described as an accurate investigation and the presentation of strong evidence that led to the sentencing.

"This verdict under the Gujarat Animal Preservation Act is a clear message that the law will never spare those who commit cow slaughter in Gujarat. Protecting the cow mother is Gujarat's unwavering resolve. Congratulations to the Gandhinagar Police and the government side for the accurate investigation and presenting strong evidence," he said. Through a 2017 amendment to the Gujarat Animal Preservation Act, 1954, the state government enhanced the punishment for cow slaughter to life imprisonment, making Gujarat the first state in the country to prescribe such a sentence for the offence. The Gujarat Animal Preservation (Amendment) Bill approved by the state legislative assembly also provides for a 10-year prison term for the transportation, storage or sale of beef. In 2011, when Narendra Modi was the chief minister of Gujarat, the state government amended the Act to impose a complete ban on cow slaughter and on the transportation and sale of cow meat.

## Maharashtra MLA Sanjay Gaikwad says nobody should attend funerals of farmers who die by suicide

GNS News Agency, Oct 30

Buldhana: Shiv Sena MLA Sanjay Gaikwad has said that people should not attend the funerals of farmers who die by suicide, urging fellow farmers to support their families and not abandon them. If nobody attended a farmer's funeral and animals fed on the body, it might make others contemplating suicide realise the consequences and deter them from taking their own lives, the Buldhana MLA said.

Gaikwad made the potentially controversial comments at a press conference in Buldhana on Tuesday, when he was asked about a recent statement by a politician who apparently inadvertently used an expletive while talking about farmer suicides. "If you (farmers) have a problem, write to the government, your MLA or your MP. Otherwise, let me know about your difficulties, and everyone will help you. But by taking your own life and leaving your children helpless, you are, in a way, punishing them," he said. "You take the seven sacred rounds with your wife, vow to stand by her for seven lifetimes and promise to look after your children. Yet, if you end your life halfway through, what happens to those promises?" he asked. The Shiv Sena legislator said he had consistently maintained in his speeches that if someone died by suicide, no one should attend that



person's funeral. "Only when people realise that their bodies may be eaten by animals and understand what happens to their remains will they stop dying by suicide," Gaikwad said. Gaikwad, who has been involved in controversies before, flaunted a tiger tooth worn around his neck in 2024 and claimed that he had hunted the big cat in 1987. Last year, he slapped a canteen staff member, allegedly for offering stale food at the MLA hostel in Mumbai.

## Northeast drug crackdown: Assam Rifles, Manipur Police make major seizures



GNS News Agency, Oct 30

Aizawl/Imphal: Assam Rifles seized methamphetamine tablets worth Rs 6.40 crore and heroin valued at Rs 3.71 lakh in Mizoram, while Manipur Police recovered brown sugar worth around Rs 15 crore in Churachandpur district and arrested a suspected drug peddler, officials said on Thursday. Methamphetamine tablets, a highly addictive synthetic drug banned in India, continue to be among the major narcotics smuggled from Myanmar into the Northeast.

A defence spokesman in Mizoram said Assam Rifles personnel launched a targeted operation on Wednesday night following specific intelligence about the transshipment of narcotics through Crossing Point-I at Zokhawthar, along the India-Myanmar border in Champhai district. During the operation, the troops searched the suspected area and recovered seven packets of methamphetamine tablets weighing approximately 8 kg, the spokesman said.

The seized contraband has an estimated market value of Rs 6.40 crore. The recovered narcotics were subsequently handed over to the Excise and Narcotics Department in Champhai for further action. Champhai district shares a porous, mountainous international border with Myanmar. In a separate operation on Wednesday, Assam Rifles seized heroin worth approximately Rs 3.71 lakh and apprehended two persons at Seling in Aizawl district. Acting on specific intelligence inputs received from its sources and corroborated by Bawngkawn Police Station, Assam Rifles launched an operation that led to the recovery of two soap cases containing 18.54 grams of heroin from a vehicle. The vehicle was also seized. The two apprehended persons, along with the recovered narcotics and the vehicle, were handed over to Bawngkawn Police Station in Aizawl for further investigation and legal proceedings under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985. The operations underscore the importance of actionable intelligence, inter-agency coordination and sustained vigilance in curbing drug trafficking in the region, an official statement said. In Manipur, state police conducted an anti-drug opera-

tion at Valpakot village in Churachandpur district, where a vehicle was intercepted and searched. The police recovered approximately 7.732 kg of brown sugar, valued at around Rs 15 crore. The driver, identified as Lunminlal Mate, 29, a resident of Longja village in Chandel district, was arrested in connection with the seizure. The contraband and the vehicle allegedly used to transport the drugs were also seized. Mizoram and Manipur have emerged as major drug-trafficking corridors in the Northeast, largely because of their long, porous international borders with Myanmar and their proximity to the Golden Triangle, one of the world's major illicit narcotics-producing regions. Six districts of Mizoram and five districts of Manipur share a 910-km international border with Myanmar, making the two states particularly vulnerable to cross-border drug smuggling.

## Paralympic gold medallist Murlikant Petkar to flag off IITH run

GNS News Agency, Oct 30 Sangareddy: Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad (IITH) will host the IIT Hyderabad Half Marathon-2026 on November 22 at its campus, with India's first Paralympic gold medallist, Murlikant Rajaram Petkar, attending as the chief guest and flagging off the event. A Padma Shri awardee and recipient of the Arjuna Award (Lifetime) for para-swimming, Petkar's sporting journey inspired the film Chandu Champion, bringing his story of determination and resilience to a wider audience. IITH has invited students, faculty, staff, alumni, working professionals, amateur runners, experienced athletes, families and fitness enthusiasts from Hyderabad, Sangareddy and across Telangana to participate in the event.

The IIT Hyderabad Half Marathon-2026 will feature four categories for runners with different levels of experience: the Half Marathon (21.097 km), 10K Run (10 km), 5K Run (5 km) and 5K Fun Run. Prize money will be awarded to the top three male and female finishers in each of the three competitive categories: the Half Marathon, 10K Run and 5K Run. The first prize is Rs 10,000 each for men and women, the second prize is Rs 7,000 each, and the third prize is Rs 5,000 each. Swan Turbine Services Private Limited is the title sponsor and is supporting the prize-money awards for the 2026 edition. Registrations are open at [https://iifinish.in/running/IITHHM\\_2026](https://iifinish.in/running/IITHHM_2026). Runners are encouraged to register before the deadline and join IITH on November 22 for a celebration of fitness, community spirit and perseverance. For queries, participants can email [iithrunners@gmail.com](mailto:iithrunners@gmail.com) or send a message to 91 81792 40702.

## Under Sardar's gaze, former Maoists will tell story of 'Naxal Mukh Bharat' on Ekta Diwas



GNS News Agency, Oct 30

Under floodlights in Ekta Nagar in Kevadia, men in black T-shirts are sprinting around, red sashes around their waists sweeping through the night air. Nearby, performers have locked arms to build human pyramids. Some others are clustering under stage lights, synchronised steps building up to a preformative crescendo. The ongoing rehearsals have a certain raw quality – an instinctive, energetic rhythm, rather than practised theatrical polish, is driving the movements of the performers on the ground.

For most of these 2,000-odd performers, the journey to Kevadia is as significant as the performance they are preparing for. They come from districts that have lived through decades of Left-Wing Extremism (LWE) – and among them are people who were once with the Naxals, but who now want to tell the story of their changing lives through theatre. On Saturday, this sprawling ensemble will take the stage at the Ekta Diwas celebration to mark the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. On Saturday, this sprawling ensemble will take the stage at the Ekta Diwas celebration to mark the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. 'Naxal Mukh Bharat', a documentary-style stage production, will bring together tribal artists from districts scarred by decades of LWE violence, including several surrendered Maoists. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be attending the two-day celebration over October 30-31, and is likely to be part of the audience. A docu-play based on lived experience. More than 90% of the performers are from LWE-affected districts in Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, and Maharashtra, stage actor and director Chittaranjan Tripathy, Director of the National School of Drama (NSD), Bengaluru centre, who has conceptualised, written, and directed the production, told. Working with the performers had been a uniquely fulfilling experience, he said. "They inspire you as an artist and as a human being. They are simple folk, they do not show off, even though they are naturally talented. They have an innate sense of dance and rhythm, which other artists have to work to cultivate," Tripathy said.

Tripathy said the NSD team had to rethink their approach to training for the production, moving away from technical vocabulary, abstract explanations, and established methods of communicating movement and emotion. "There is a language of theatre for us. But when you direct them, you have to think differently about that language. It is a kind of rediscovery," Tripathy said. "With these performers, you don't use jargon or theory. You speak simply." Also, Tripathy said, barriers of language often mean that the performers don't always open up easily. Rehearsals have been more than just learning steps and sequences – the NSD has worked to build familiarity and trust, and find ways to translate the performers' lived experiences into theatrical language. The production is conceived as a docu-play, with performers enacting aspects of their lives and the changes they have witnessed. "Unlike a recorded or edited presentation, it will unfold live on stage, bringing together documentary elements and theatrical performance. A smaller number of actors from urban backgrounds will join the predominantly tribal ensemble," Tripathy said.

Beginning in July, he travelled to several LWE districts, including Bastar, Jagdalpur, and Bijapur in Chhattisgarh, to understand the conflict and its aftermath by interacting with people who had lived through them. Earlier this year, the government said the country was now free of active LWE, but the scars remain in areas that were formerly impacted. "I went with a blank slate and an open mind. I wanted to know about the real problem and the kind of change that has happened and the current belief of the people," Tripathy said. The experience, he said, helped him understand the people behind the broad label of "Naxal-affected" districts – their lives, their artistic traditions, and their perceptions of society and societal change. As part of NSD's extension programs, workshops were held in Bastar to introduce surrendered Naxals to theatre. Two among those who attended, including a flute player, were extremely talented, Tripathy said. But neither is in Kevadia – "They are busy setting up businesses that they have been helped to start as part of their rehabilitation program," Tripathy said.

Their absence points to another dimension of the story – that rehabilitation of former Naxals or Naxal sympathisers is not a single or uniform journey. For some, theatre offers an opportunity to explore artistic abilities; for others, rebuilding their lives through livelihoods has taken priority.

A special venue, under the gaze of the Sardar Kevadia as a venue is of unique relevance to the docu-play, its subject and its performers, Tripathy said. "Performing in the shadow of the Sardar Patel statue is very special... Patel fought for the unity and integration of India. He is the father of the federation of India, the united country that we see today," Tripathy said. Gujarat government officials said the participation of these tribal communities "underline their resilience and show the role of cultural expression in national integration". This is NSD's second Ekta Diwas assignment after "Loha Purush", the 2025 play that was performed on Patel's 150th birth anniversary.

Many were tapped using existing networks of traditional artists, Tripathy said. Some of them were already known to the organisers, and they helped identify others, creating a chain that eventually brought together a large ensemble from across the affected regions, he said. The performers started arriving in Kevadia by train or bus over the last week or so, Tripathy said, and the cohort includes performers of all ages – from children of ages 7 or 8 to people in their seventies. Around 50 to 52 surrendered Naxals are part of the group.

An individual who has travelled to Kevadia from a former LWE district in Maharashtra and will attend the October 31 production, said: "There are some performers from our district who will perform on Saturday. It is a moment of pride for us. It is of enormous significance to young people living in these regions, a signal and hope that the real world is within reach. This will be the first time we will see people from LWE-affected villages perform before a national audience." A visitor from Odisha, who had earlier been part of a village-level support group for former Naxals, said: "The production focuses on the journey of communities who have lived with violence for years. Our talent and stories are also a part of India's identity. Being on a national platform gives our communities a sense of belonging. It tells us that we too can be part of the mainstream." The docu-play will be the centrepiece of the October 31 program, which will involve 5,000 artists in all, including 3,000 from Gujarat. On Friday (October 30), around 300 NSD artists will stage an adaptation of 'Anandamath', the Bengali-language novel by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay that was published in 1882, and of which India's National Song 'Vande Mataram' is part. The plot of 'Anandamath' unfolds against the backdrop of the Sannyasi Rebellion and the great Bengal Famine of 1770. The adaptation "highlights the perseverance of the Sannyasis against the East India Company during the Bengal Famine, and describes patriotism with elements of human drama, relationships, suffering, and spiritualism", Tripathy said.

## Bengaluru police call allegations fabricated, trace phone



GNS News Agency, Oct 30

The Bengaluru police on Thursday said that the preliminary investigation into a purported sting operation video involving former Karnataka chief minister Siddaramaiah, which has been circulating on social media, indicated that the allegations of sexual abuse depicted were part of a fabricated narrative. The police said the evidence collected so far did not substantiate the incident shown in the recording. They said all individuals appearing in the video had been identified and questioned, some on multiple occasions.

"The statements recorded, and evidence collected during the investigation thus far do not substantiate the occurrence of any such incident as depicted in the video," the police said, adding that the allegations made or implied against individuals in the recording appeared to be "false and concocted". Investigators are examining the circumstances in which the video was recorded, transferred and circulated online, as well as the possible motives of those involved. The police said the original mobile phone allegedly used to record the video had been traced, recovered and seized. The device has been sent for forensic examination to ascertain the authenticity and integrity of the recording, and the report is awaited. The video was allegedly recorded in 2023 and purportedly concerns an incident dating back to 2011. Investigators are examining why it was recorded nearly 12 years after the alleged incident and whether it was staged, fabricated, or manipulated to create a misleading narrative. The police are also reconstructing the chain of possession of the video, from its original recording to its circulation on social media in September and October this year.

The technical investigation established that the video was uploaded to multiple platforms, including YouTube and X, through anonymous accounts using virtual private networks (VPNs), masked IP addresses, virtual or spoofed phone numbers and other methods to conceal the identity

ties of those involved. Some digital traces were linked to locations outside Karnataka, the police said. Investigators traced a mobile phone associated with a YouTube upload to a shop in Delhi dealing in used and refurbished devices. The individuals involved in procuring the phone have also been identified. A man linked to the procurement of the device, identified as Ritesh Pandey, was arrested in the National Capital Region (NCR) on October 24 and questioned by the Central Crime Branch. A Bengaluru court granted him bail on the same day, the police said. Investigators had earlier said that Pandey told them that he uploaded the video on the instructions of a person associated with the Janata Dal (Secular)'s social media team. This claim is also being investigated. His questioning yielded further leads in the investigation, the police said. Preliminary findings suggested that he worked as a freelance social media content creator and may have associations with politically connected individuals in New Delhi. The nature and relevance of these alleged associations are under investigation. The police said investigators had found leads suggesting that the video's circulation may have been part of a deliberate attempt to malign individuals holding positions of responsibility in the State, influence public perception and trigger political controversy. The possibility of a coordinated effort involving multiple individuals in planning, facilitating, uploading or amplifying the video for malicious intent is also being thoroughly examined," the police said.

## 20-year-old NEET aspirant dies by suicide after failing to secure medical seat

Hyderabad: A 20-year-old NEET aspirant died by suicide at his residence on Wednesday, reportedly distressed over failing to secure a medical seat despite undergoing long-term coaching.

According to police, Abdul Riyan, son of Abdul Ghafoor, was a resident of Rein Bazaar. Despite preparing for the NEET examination through long-term coaching, he could not secure a medical seat and was reportedly disappointed over his results.

On Wednesday evening, he was found hanging from a bathroom ventilator. On receiving information, the Madannapet police reached the spot and took up investigation.

## Supreme Court calls for innovative ways to curb firecracker pollution during Diwali



GNS News Agency, Oct 30

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Thursday reserved its order on restrictions on firecrackers in Delhi-NCR during Diwali, observing that repeated judicial directions had failed to ensure compliance and calling for innovative measures to tackle air pollution. A Bench of Justices M M Sundresh and Prasanna B Varale said the issue required intervention at a higher level, noting that orders were issued every year but violations continued to outnumber compliance.

"Every year, we pass orders on the issue. For us, it has now become an academic exercise. Our orders are violated more often than they are followed," the Bench led by Justice Sundresh observed, stressing the need to explore new approaches instead of relying solely on restrictions. During the hearing, the apex court suggested involving prominent public figures, particularly sportspersons, to raise awareness about the harmful effects of firecrackers and encourage people to celebrate Diwali responsibly. "Why can't you use the services of promi-

nent personalities to make the public aware, like the sportsmen, or the public figures who are highly respected, from any walk of life?" the court asked. Referring to Indian cricketer Virat Kohli as an example, the Bench suggested that celebrated personalities could be requested to appeal to people to celebrate the festival in a manner that protects public health and the environment. It also stressed the need to sensitise children and the younger generation, suggesting that educational institutions be involved in spreading awareness about pollution and its consequences. The Supreme Court observed that a complete ban on firecrackers might not be the appropriate course, cautioning that an excessively harsh approach could have wider repercussions. It reiterated the need for a balanced approach that respects the festive spirit while safeguarding public health. It also underlined the importance of enforcement, warning that judicial directions would become a "mockery" if authorities failed to implement them on the ground. The apex court asked the Union government to file an affidavit detailing the steps taken to enforce the restrictions. The matter concerns restrictions on the sale and use of firecrackers in Delhi-NCR, where the Supreme Court has repeatedly intervened over concerns about deteriorating air quality during the festive season. Last year, the apex court permitted the limited sale and use of green crackers in Delhi-NCR on a trial basis, subject to stringent safeguards. A Bench comprising then Chief Justice of India B R Gavai and Justice K Vinod Chandran had allowed the sale of approved green crackers from October 18 to 20, 2025, while restricting their use to specified morning and evening hours on the day before Diwali and on the festival day. The apex court had directed that only licensed traders sell approved products bearing QR codes and prohibited online sales of firecrackers. It had also ordered the monitoring of air, water and soil quality to assess the impact of the limited relaxation.

## Northeast drug crackdown: Assam Rifles, Manipur Police make major seizures



Aizawl/Imphal: Assam Rifles seized methamphetamine tablets worth Rs 6.40 crore and heroin valued at Rs 3.71 lakh in Mizoram, while Manipur Police recovered brown sugar worth around Rs 15 crore in Churachandpur district and arrested a suspected drug peddler, officials said on Thursday. Methamphetamine tablets, a highly addictive synthetic drug banned in India, continue to be among the major narcotics smuggled from Myanmar into the Northeast.

A defence spokesman in Mizoram said Assam Rifles personnel launched a targeted operation on Wednesday night following specific intelligence about the transshipment of narcotics through Crossing Point-I at Zokhawthar, along the India-Myanmar border in Champhai district. During the operation, the troops searched the suspected area and recovered seven packets of methamphetamine tablets weighing approximately 8 kg, the spokesman said. The seized contraband has an estimated market value of Rs 6.40 crore. The recovered narcotics were subsequently handed over to the Excise and Narcotics Department in Champhai for further action. Champhai district shares a porous, mountainous international border with Myanmar. In a separate operation on Wednesday, Assam Rifles seized heroin worth approximately Rs 3.71 lakh and apprehended two persons at Seling in Aizawl district. Acting on specific intelligence inputs received from its sources and corroborated by Bawngkawn Police Station, Assam Rifles launched an operation that led to the recovery of two soap cases containing 18.54 grams of heroin from a vehicle. The vehicle was also seized.

The two apprehended persons, along with the recovered narcotics and the vehicle, were handed over to Bawngkawn Police Station in Aizawl for further investigation and legal proceedings under the Narcotic Drugs and

Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985. The operations underscore the importance of actionable intelligence, inter-agency coordination and sustained vigilance in curbing drug trafficking in the region, an official statement said. In Manipur, state police conducted an anti-drug operation at Valpakot village in Churachandpur district, where a vehicle was intercepted and searched. The police recovered approximately 7.732 kg of brown sugar, valued at around Rs 15 crore. The driver, identified as Lunminal Mate, 29, a resident of Longja village in Chandel district, was arrested in connection with the seizure. The contraband and the vehicle allegedly used to transport the drugs were also seized. Mizoram and Manipur have emerged as major drug-trafficking corridors in the Northeast, largely because of their long, porous international borders with Myanmar and their proximity to the Golden Triangle, one of the world's major illicit narcotics-producing regions. Six districts of Mizoram and five districts of Manipur share a 910-km international border with Myanmar, making the two states particularly vulnerable to cross-border drug smuggling.

## Boxing federation meeting focuses on athletes amid leadership row



GNS News Agency, Oct 30

Hyderabad: Twenty-one of the Boxing Federation of India's 35 authorised state units participated in a two-day 'Mission Olympic Podium' meeting, bringing a majority of its state units together to discuss Indian boxing's Olympic ambitions and an athlete-first approach. Representatives of 18 units attended in person, while three joined through video conferencing. The participating units included the ad hoc

committees of Mizoram and Jharkhand, along with a player representative from the BFI Athletes Committee.

The participation comes amid the ongoing dispute involving suspended Secretary General Pramod Kumar, with the gathering focusing on the Federation's sporting programme and coordination with its state units. "Our responsibility is to the boxers and their future. The participation of a majority of our authorised state units demonstrates their commitment to working together as a federation towards our Olympic ambitions, with athletes at the centre of that effort. The work begins in the states — identifying talent, supporting coaches and creating a clear pathway for boxers to progress, gain competitive exposure and represent India. We must build a system that consistently prepares our boxers to succeed at the highest level," said BFI President Ajay Singh. The two-day meeting provided a forum for state representatives to discuss the 'Mission Olympic Podium' initiative, with athletes' perspectives informing the proceedings. The BFI said its priority remained maintaining institutional stability, strengthening coordination with state units and ensuring that boxers' development and preparation remained central to its work.

## KTR's sewage treatment plan aids HMWSSB's water supply

Hyderabad: A blueprint envisioned during the previous BRS government by the then MA&UD Minister KT Rama Rao to make Hyderabad India's first city to achieve 100 per cent sewage treatment has now come as a boon to the Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWSSB) in generating bulk treated water across the Core Urban Region Economy (CURE) area.

Though Rama Rao had then proposed 31 sewage treatment plants (STPs) with a combined capacity of 1,259.50 million litres per day, the water board built 20 plants with a capacity of 1,106 MLD due to the unavailability of land. A senior HMWSSB official told Telangana Today that 20 STPs had been completed and were generating treated water. HMWSSB Chief General Manager G Sujatha said a total of 1,872 MLD of sewage water was being treated and arrangements were being made to supply the treated water

through the Green Water Tankers facility. The water will be supplied for construction, landscaping, industrial cooling, manufacturing, data centres and government agencies.

Of the 1,873 MLD of treated water, 1,520 MLD had been kept ready for supply to consumers in need from November 1. HMWSSB currently supplies treated water at Rs 25 per kilolitre, but there was no clarity on whether it should be supplied at the same price or free of cost, the CGM said. The State government has proposed 39 STPs with a combined capacity of 972 million litres per day, according to a senior HMWSSB official. Of the first 16 STPs, 14 have been taken up, including two cascaded plants. Work was under way on 13, while one was involved in a court case. Of another 22 STPs, 14 have been taken up, including eight flow-cascaded plants. Work was under way on 10, while four faced court cases. A 7-MLD STP is being developed in public-private partnership mode.

## Spain reckons with 2nd deadly train crash of the year ahead of national election



GNS News Agency, Oct 30

Urda: Spain's second high-speed rail disaster this year, a crash in which one train struck another from behind, killing 68 people, has raised fresh concerns about the safety of the country's rail network. Spain's network of high-speed rail has been considered one of the nation's crowning achievements. It ranks second to China in track mileage in the world. Until this year, it had not endured a deadly crash since coming into service over three decades ago. The collision Wednesday that turned a sleepy stretch of rail lined by olive groves into a scene of carnage came just four weeks before the country votes in a national election. Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez visited the crash site in the central province of Toledo after regional authorities confirmed that more than 60 people had died and dozens more were being treated at hospitals. Only in January, 46 people had died when one train jumped the track and slammed into the side of another going the opposite way in southern Spain. Sanchez pledged an investigation into the latest collision and improvements to prevent another tragedy like the two that have shaken trust in a rail system that carried 45 million travellers last year, including millions of tourists. "It is clear that we need to reinforce the safety of our train service to rebuild the trust in our high-speed rail," Sanchez said. "It is not acceptable for a country like Spain to endure two high-speed train accidents in the same year." Sanchez's government declared three days of mourning starting Thursday. Both deadly crashes this year involved a train operated by the state-owned RENFE company and one from the privately owned IRYO. Spain only liberalised its high-speed rail service in 2021, with the Italian IRYO starting service the following year. Political implications for Sanchez ahead of election

Sanchez has weathered many crises since taking power in 2018, staying in power and winning reelection after the COVID-19 pandemic and the global rise in inflation. But polls show he faces another uphill battle when voters cast ballots in Spain's first national election since 2023. The new

rail disaster can't help the prospects of his Socialist party. Sanchez and other progressive parties had hoped to leverage a wave of discontent over housing costs and high rents when he called for early elections earlier this month. About an hour before news of Wednesday's crash spread, Sanchez had posted on X a message that "There are lots of reasons to be optimistic about this country." Now it appears he will have to handle concerns over the state of Spain's rail service along with attacks from right-wing parties over his liberal migration policies and accusations of corruption against his party and his wife, which both he and his wife deny. His transport minister, Oscar Puente, had to handle media questions over whether he would resign following a second major train wreck under his watch. His response was that he was fully focused on dealing with the collision, not his future. Sanchez's main rival, Popular Party leader Alberto Nunez Feijoo, demanded a full investigation of the crash. The conservative leader said that in respect for the victims, his party cancelled its campaign events for the day. "This is the moment to respect the dead, the injured and their families," Nunez Feijoo said. "That does not mean we will ignore the fact that Spaniards are asking tough questions that demand answers." The far-right Vox leader, Santiago Abascal, who is likely hoping to enter a coalition government with the conservatives, did not show the same restraint.

"More dead. Another tragedy. More rage over being left to fend for ourselves, the despair and the betrayal that Spaniards are enduring," Abascal said just hours after the crash. "I promise to work tirelessly until this government, which is a criminal organisation, is sitting in a courtroom to answer for its crimes," he said. Puente said that the crash was caused by what he called the "inexplicable" order from a central command centre for Spain's trains after a security system had failed. He said the train engineers were not to blame. Puente said that at 8:30 am the security system on a stretch of 63 kilometres (39 miles) stopped working due to a computer malfunction, causing all trains on that stretch to stop. At that point, the IRYO train was stopped near the town of Urda, while the RENFE train was 25 kilometres (15.5 miles) behind it. But a few minutes later the central command told the RENFE train to start running again without any speed restrictions, and it ended up colliding with the stationary IRYO train at 8:53 am. Puente said that the train should never have been told to start moving again since there was still a "stop signal" active on that line. And if it had, at least it should have been told to go at reduced speed. Workers started to use cranes to move parts of the damaged trains late on Wednesday after a hectic day involving hundreds of emergency workers, firefighters, police and soldiers all pitching in to rescue survivors and recover bodies.

## United Kingdom announces extra 10-billion-pound support for Ukraine



London: The United Kingdom would provide 10 billion pounds (13 billion US dollars) of additional economic and military support to Ukraine, said British Chancellor of the Exchequer, John Healey. In the Budget 2026 speech in the House of Commons on Wednesday, Healey said the 10 billion pounds of additional economic and military support is "based on loans, Export Finance guarantees, and half a billion in urgent military funding for this winter."

He said British Prime Minister Andy Burnham and he called Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky earlier on Wednesday to tell him about the commitments. "This is the largest ever package of funding for Ukraine from the UK," said Burnham. With the announcement on Wednesday, Britain has committed a total of 35 billion pounds (47 billion dollars) for Ukraine, including 16 billion pounds (21 billion dollars) in military support, according to the British government. This funding will help Ukraine meet its immediate needs and support economic resilience, British Foreign Secretary Ed Miliband said on social media on Wednesday. Meanwhile, Burnham's first 100 days in office, which fell on Tuesday, have seen him put forward plans to devolve more power to the regions, reconsider Brexit, and pursue a more independent foreign policy. Since taking office on July 20, the former mayor of Greater Manchester has helped the Labour Party recover from the stark drop in popularity it experienced under former Prime Minister Keir Starmer. An analysis of polling data by the Press Association shows that Labour's average support has risen by around 10 percentage points compared with the period immediately before Starmer announced his resignation in June. Nevertheless, Burnham faces growing pressure to turn his proposals into results, with constitutional tensions, the legacy of Brexit and disagreements with Washington testing his government.

## India votes in favour of UNGA resolution calling for end to US embargo on Cuba

United Nations: India voted in favour of a UN General Assembly resolution calling for an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the US against Cuba, reiterating that the restrictions should be lifted to help the Caribbean nation pursue its development aspirations. The 193-member General Assembly adopted the resolution on Wednesday with 130 countries voting in favour, 17 against and 25 abstaining. Delivering India's statement, Counsellor at India's Permanent Mission to the UN Soumya Nair said the General Assembly has repeatedly called for an end to the embargo and rejected laws and regulations with extra-territorial effects that adversely affect the sovereignty of other states and the progress and prosperity of their peoples.

"India reiterates the Assembly's call to all states to refrain from promulgating and applying, and to repeal and invalidate, such laws and measures in conformity with their obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and international law," she said. Nair said India's commitment to multilateralism is rooted in the belief that international challenges are best addressed through dialogue and diplomacy, in accordance with the UN Charter.

"It is in this spirit that India hopes that the embargo will be lifted at the earliest to help create an environment that would enable the people of Cuba to participate more fully in international cooperation and pursue their legitimate development aspirations," she said. Citing a report by the UN Secretary-General, Nair highlighted the impact of the restrictions on Cuba's economy and essential services. Cuba's health system faces shortages of over 60 per cent of essential medicines, while food production has declined by more than 50 per cent in the past five years, she said. "The restrictions on fuel exports to Cuba have also aggravated the country's ongoing energy crisis. The shortages have disrupted essential services, including healthcare, education, water supplies, food distribution, and transportation," Nair said.

The conflict between America and Cuba stems from a decades-old political, economic, and ideological divide that

began when Fidel Castro overthrew a US-backed government in 1959 and aligned the island with the Soviet Union.

Washington has maintained a strict trade embargo and sanctions against Cuba for over six decades to pressure its communist regime. Cuba blames these restrictions for crippling its economy, causing severe fuel shortages, blackouts, and deep poverty. The resolution, titled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba", reflects the General Assembly's longstanding opposition to the US restrictions. However, General Assembly resolutions of this nature are not legally binding. On Tuesday, unprecedented scenes unfolded in the UN General Assembly hall as tensions escalated between US Ambassador to the UN Mike Waltz and Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez Parrilla. While Waltz was addressing the UNGA on Cuba, Parrilla and other Cuban diplomats rose from their assigned seats and walked up towards the podium to confront the American envoy, triggering a verbal duel between the two sides. As Parrilla walked up to the podium, Waltz stepped aside from the lectern and gestured the Cuban minister "to back away from this podium". "Mr President, this individual needs to back away from this podium. He is not going to intimidate me in the United States of America like he tries to intimidate political prisoners," Waltz said, as Parrilla and other Cuban diplomats continued to confront him. UNGA President Khalilur Rahman, who was presiding over the meeting, subsequently had to suspend the session. Later, Waltz said he had questioned why Cuba's "rulers" came to the UN to talk about the suffering of the Cuban people while, at the "height of hypocrisy, enjoying luxury watches, Rolexes, yachts, mansions, and even private islands, "while the Cuban people starve and sit in the dark". "In response, the regime's so-called diplomats responded by pounding their desks, screaming across this chamber, storming the podium, not respecting the sanctity of this institution, and even assaulting an American diplomat," he said.

## Intercommunal violence in southern Ethiopia displaces thousands: UN



GNS News Agency, Oct 30

United Nations: UN humanitarians have voiced deep concern about the intercommunal violence in the Ethiopian town of Moyale on the border with Kenya that has displaced thousands of people. Casualties have been reported, along with disruptions to transport, markets and cross-border trade, limiting access to essential goods and services, said the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) on Wednesday (local time). On the Ethiopian side, the violence that erupted on October 18 has reportedly displaced thousands of people in Oromia and Somali regions. This is in addition to the thousands of people who have reportedly crossed into Kenya, reports Xinhua news agency, quoting OCHA.

Local authorities in Kenya estimate that up to 50,000

people have crossed into the country since Thursday, amid reports of further crossings, it said. Many of those fleeing are women and children. While some are staying with relatives and host communities, others have sought shelter in temporary locations, such as schools and churches. Food remains the most urgent need, alongside safe drinking water, emergency shelter, sanitation and health care, said the office. "Continued insecurity has forced several partners to suspend activities," OCHA said. "The UN and its partners are preparing a joint assessment mission to areas affected by the violence as soon as security conditions permit." It is critical to ensure the safety of the population, as well as safe, sustained and unimpeded humanitarian access to all people in need, said the office. The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) has deployed an emergency team to Moyale and is working closely with the Kenyan government, UN agencies, the Kenya Red Cross Society and other humanitarian partners to support the national and local response, said OCHA. The Kenya Red Cross Society is operating six health service points, screening for malnutrition and distributing relief items. Local communities have shared food and water, though their stocks are limited, said OCHA. The UN and its humanitarian partners are working to scale up the response. UN agencies have deployed staff and are mobilising additional supplies, including to prepare for potential further displacement. UNHCR is mobilising emergency relief supplies, including essential household items and temporary shelter materials, to support nearly 12,000 people, with efforts under way to scale up assistance as needs grow, said OCHA.

## North Korea fires missile barrage toward sea as tensions with South rise



Seoul: North Korea launched a barrage of ballistic missiles toward the sea Thursday, South Korea's military said, days after the North threatened to resume front-line propaganda loudspeaker broadcasts and deploy new weapons along the rivals' tense border. The launches also followed leader Kim Jong Un's surprise weekend visit to China, the North's main ally and economic pipeline, to push for greater cooperation.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said it detected about 10 short-range ballistic missiles fired from the North's eastern coastal town of Wonsan. It said South Korea's military bolstered its surveillance posture and was closely exchanging information about the launches with the US and Japan. Animosity between the Koreas has deepened after

last month's land mine blasts that injured three South Korean soldiers. Seoul accused North Korea of planting mines south of the military demarcation line that caused the Sept 21 blasts, but Pyongyang has denied responsibility for the explosions and warned of retaliation if provoked. Last week, North Korea said it would restart propaganda broadcasts and deploy new weapons systems along the border in protest of what it called repeated warning shots by South Korean troops at border areas. South Korea later proposed talks on clarifying the border to prevent accidental clashes, but North Korea hasn't responded.

Thursday's launches were the latest in a series of weapons tests by North Korea in recent weeks, which involved submarine-launched cruise missiles and hypersonic missiles. Experts say North Korea likely aimed to pressure the US into making bigger concessions as President Donald Trump expressed his desire to restore diplomacy with Kim. On Saturday, Kim visited the Chinese border city of Dandong via a newly inaugurated bridge to pay respect at a memorial marking China's support of North Korea during the 1950-53 Korean War. It was his sixth visit to China since taking office in late 2011. At the memorial, Kim said North Korea will firmly carry forward "the invincible" friendship with China. Later he met top Chinese Communist Party official Wang Huning and reaffirmed his resolve to develop bilateral cooperation. Kim has recently taken steps to bolster ties with China after years of prioritising ties with Russia by sending troops and munitions to support its war against Ukraine.

## Trump backs Vivek Ramaswamy for Ohio governor at campaign rally

Washington: US President Donald Trump urged Ohio voters to elect Vivek Ramaswamy as governor, bringing the Republican nominee onto the stage at a campaign rally where Ramaswamy promised property-tax relief and action against sanctuary cities. Addressing supporters in Chillicothe the six days before the midterm elections on Wednesday (local time), Trump predicted a Republican victory and repeatedly appealed for voters to support Ramaswamy and the party's congressional candidates. "Six days from now, the people of Ohio are going to elect Vivek Ramaswamy as your governor," Trump said, according to the supplied rally transcript. The president later invited Ramaswamy to address the crowd, giving him another opportunity to set out his economic and immigration message in the closing stretch of the campaign against Democrat Amy Acton. Ramaswamy framed the contest around which candidate would improve voters' lives, explicitly linking his state-level promises to Trump's national agenda. "President Trump puts Americans first," he said. "I'm going to put Ohioans first." He pledged what he described as the biggest property-tax relief package in Ohio's history if elected. He did not provide figures, a financing plan or a legislative timetable for that proposal in the remarks.

Ramaswamy also promised to end sanctuary cities in Ohio, presenting the commitment as a state-level extension of the administration's immigration policies. In his earlier address to the rally, he said he would act by executive order on his first day in office. Both commitments were campaign promises. The speech did not announce an enacted tax measure or a new state immigration order. Trump repeatedly returned to the importance of turnout, telling supporters they could not take victory for granted. His endorsement was part of a wider appeal to elect Republicans across the ballot and preserve the party's ability to advance his agenda in Washington. The president also defended Ramaswamy against criticism of his campaign, accusing the media of treating him unfairly. He attacked Acton's record and political positions, while Ramaswamy criticised her handling of the state's response to Covid. Trump combined his appeals for Ohio candidates with a renewed promise to give adult US citizens \$5,000 each if Republicans won both the House of Representatives and the Senate.

If Republicans win the House of Representatives and the Senate, I am going to give all adult citizens in the United States \$5,000," he said. He described the proposed payment as a dividend, put its cost at approximately \$1 trillion and said recipients should spend the money inside the United States. He did not set out a payment schedule or detailed funding mechanism at the rally. The president also promoted tariffs and domestic manufacturing, arguing that his trade policies encouraged companies to produce in America. Those claims formed part of his broader campaign argument that Republican victories would protect jobs and household incomes. Ramaswamy closed his appearance by urging supporters to vote and expressing confidence that the party would win. Trump repeated his appeal for the candidate near the conclusion of the event. Ramaswamy and Acton are contesting Ohio's governorship in the November



3 elections. The Chillicothe event brought the state race together with Trump's campaign for Republican congressional candidates, allowing the gubernatorial nominee to present his priorities directly to the president's supporters.

## US lawmakers warn banks, ports of congressional probe over Russian diesel imports

Washington: A bipartisan group of US lawmakers has warned American banks, port authorities and fuel distributors that importing Russian diesel could invite legal action and congressional investigations.

In letters to the heads of major financial institutions, ports and fuel distributors, the lawmakers said companies facilitating imports in violation of US law could face criminal and civil liability. The letters came amid reports that shipments of Russian diesel were headed to American shores after President Donald Trump earlier this month granted a waiver allowing Moscow to supply diesel to global markets, including the US.

The lawmakers cited Section 2 of the Ending Importation of Russian Oil Act of 2022, which generally prohibits the importation of Russian-origin energy products, including diesel fuel. Such imports are allowed only after the President certifies to Congress that Russia has ceased all military hostilities in Ukraine and that it poses no immediate threat to NATO members. The signatories include Senators Jeanne Shaheen, Roy Wyden, Sheldon Whitehouse, Chris Coons, Elizabeth Warren (all Democrats), and Republican Thom Tillis. Congressman Gregory Meeks, who is serving as the Representative for New York's 5th congressional district, is also a signatory. The letters are addressed to the CEOs of JPMorgan Chase, Bank of America, Citigroup, Wells Fargo Bank, Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley, as well as the heads of port authorities of Houston, Corpus Christi and Beaumont in Texas, and New York and New Jersey.

# US Supreme Court upholds childproofing porn sites



Washington: The US Supreme Court handed down a decision on June 27, 2025, that will reshape how States protect children online. In a case assessing a Texas law requiring age verification to access porn sites, the court created a new legal path that makes it easier for States to craft laws regulating what kids see and do on the internet. In a 6-3 decision, the court ruled in *Free Speech Coalition Inc. v. Paxton* that Texas' law obligating porn sites to block access to underage users is constitutional. The law requires pornographic websites to verify users' ages – for example by making users scan and upload their driver's license – before granting access to content that is deemed obscene for minors but not adults.

The majority on the court rejected both the porn industry's argument for strict scrutiny – the toughest legal test that requires the government to prove a law is absolutely necessary – and Texas' argument for mere rational basis review, which requires only a rational connection between the law's legitimate aims and its actions. Instead, Justice Clarence Thomas' opinion established intermediate scrutiny, a middle ground that requires laws to serve important government interests without being overly burdensome, as the appropriate standard. The court's reasoning hinged on characterizing the law as only “incidentally” burdening adults' First Amendment rights. Since minors have no constitutional right to access pornography, the state can require age verification to prevent that unprotected activity. Any burden on adults is, according to the ruling, merely a side effect of this legitimate regulation. The court also pointed to dramatic technological changes since earlier similar laws were struck down in the 1990s and early 2000s. Back then, only 2 in 5 households had internet access, mostly through slow dial-up connections on desktop computers. Today, 95 per cent of teens carry smartphones with constant internet access to massive libraries of content. Porn site Pornhub alone published over 150 years of new material in 2019. The court argued that earlier decisions “could not have conceived of these developments,” making age verification more necessary than judges could have imagined decades ago. More importantly for future legislation, the court embraced an “ordinary and appropriate means” doctrine: When states have authority to govern an area, they may use traditional methods to exercise that power. Since age verification is common for alcohol and tobacco, tattoos and piercings, firearms, driver's licenses and voting, the court held that it's similarly appropriate for regulating minors' access to sexual content. The key takeaway: When States are trying to keep kids away from certain types of content that kids have no legal right to see anyway, requiring age verification is an ordinary and appropriate way to enforce that boundary. This decision could resolve a fundamental enforcement problem in child privacy laws. Current laws like the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act protect children only when companies have actual knowledge a user is under 13. But platforms routinely

avoid this requirement by not asking users' ages or letting them enter whatever age they want. Without age verification, there's no actual knowledge and thus no privacy protections.

The Supreme Court's reasoning changes this dynamic. Since the court emphasized that children lack the same constitutional rights as adults regarding certain protections, states may now be able to require age verification before data collection. California's Age-Appropriate Design Code and similar state privacy laws would gain substantially more regulatory power under this framework. Meanwhile, social media platforms could face more restrictions. Several states have tried to limit how social media platforms interact with minors. Florida recently banned kids under 14 from having social media accounts entirely, while other states have targeted specific features such as endless scrolling or push notifications designed to keep kids hooked.

The Supreme Court's reasoning could protect laws that require age verification before kids can use certain platform features, such as direct messaging with strangers or livestreaming. However, laws that try to block kids from seeing general social media content would still face tough legal challenges, since that content is typically protected speech for everyone. The decision also supports state laws regulating how minors interact with app stores and gaming platforms. Minors generally can't enter binding contracts without parental consent in the physical world, so states could require the same online. Proposed legislation such as the App Store Accountability Act would require parental approval before kids can download apps or agree to terms of service. States have also considered restrictions on “loot boxes” – digital gambling-like features – and surprise in-app purchases that can result in massive charges to parents. Since States already require an ID to buy lottery tickets or enter casinos, requiring age verification before kids can spend money on digital gambling mechanics follows the court's logic. But this decision doesn't give states free rein to regulate the internet. The court's reasoning applies to content that children have no legal right to access in the first place, specifically sexually explicit material. For most online content such as news, educational materials, general entertainment and political discussions, both adults and kids have constitutional rights to access.

Laws trying to age-gate this protected content would still likely face the strict scrutiny's standard and be struck down, but what online content and experiences underage users are constitutionally entitled to is not settled. Many advocates worry that while the “obscene for minors” standard in this case appears legally narrow, states will try to expand it or use similar reasoning to classify LGBTQ+-related educational content, health resources or community support materials as inherently sexual and inappropriate for minors.

The court also emphasized that even under this more permissive standard, laws still have to be reasonable. Age verification requirements that are overly burdensome, sweep too broadly or create serious privacy problems could still be ruled unconstitutional. The court's decision in this case gives state lawmakers much more room to effectively regulate how online platforms interact with children, but I believe successful laws will need to be carefully written. For parents worried about their kids' online safety, this could mean more tools and protections. For tech companies, it likely means more compliance requirements and age verification systems. And for the broader internet, it represents a significant shift toward treating online spaces more like physical ones, where people have long accepted that some doors require showing ID to enter.

## Weddings, interrupted

As men arrange themselves comfortably on a charpoy, Munnish Devi, 50, finds herself a spot on the mud floor of her three-room house at Bhureka village in Uttar Pradesh's Mathura district. Devi, whose husband passed away a few years ago, has four daughters. One of them is Kalpana, 20, who married Akash, 21, in May this year. The only memory Devi has from the wedding is a blood-stained pair of white pyjamas, which she has kept in a stainless steel trunk. It's a reminder of the day a celebration turned violent.

Akash, a member of the Dalit community, was dragged off the chariot he was riding joyously to his bride's house. Many wedding guests were allegedly assaulted by a group of men from the Jat community because members of the Dalit community had organised a wedding procession. In Uttar Pradesh, numerous cases have been reported where Dalit families have faced violence from upper caste communities for organising wedding ceremonies in smaller towns and villages. As many as 15,368 cases of atrocities against Scheduled Castes and five against Scheduled Tribes were registered in the State in 2022, as per the National Crime Records Bureau data. There is no separate data on atrocities against Dalits during celebrations. Every month though, there are incidents of Dalit wedding processions being attacked in the State. On June 21, Ari Kumari, 19, and Vikas Singh, 21, were getting married in Etah district's Dhakpura village. When their baraat reached a Rajput-dominant settlement, they allegedly faced threats and stones were pelted. The wedding ultimately took place under police protection. In Bhureka, where mud houses dot green fields, people primarily engage in farming. Despite being located just off the Yamuna Expressway — the 165-km, high-speed road that connects Noida with Agra — people in the village have a slow life.

Inside Devi's barely constructed house, open from all sides, men discuss the heatwave. Kalpana's cousin, Anil Kumar, 25, shows videos of the wedding day. He explains how, on May 22, a group of people allegedly from the Jat community in the neighbouring village disrupted the wedding procession. They were upset with the DJ playing music and Akash riding a chariot, he says. “They hurled casteist abuses and attacked our baraatīs (members of the bridegroom's procession). It was shameful. We were all so excited about the wedding. Akash's family had come from Aligarh. When the men started threatening our baraatīs, we called the police,” Anil says. After the police arrived at the marriage hall, barely a few kilometres away, the couple completed their pheras (seven rounds around the fire) at midnight. The next day at 8 a.m., Anil says, the same group, and 20-25 others, returned to the house, holding weapons. They tore the baraatīs' clothes, hit them, and damaged the tent and everything in the vicinity. They hurled casteist abuses and insulted the women and children, he says. “We couldn't sit there and see our guests being insulted, so we retaliated, and many of us, including the elderly, got hurt. Look at our stained pyjamas,” he says, pointing to a video of the incident. “These were brand new, and now, this is the

only memory we hold.” Anil looks away as other family members show their wounds. An FIR has been registered at the Naujheel police station against 20-25 people for rioting, house trespassing, and criminal intimidation under sections of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989.

Circle Officer (Mant) Gunjan Singh says six persons from the village have been arrested in connection with the incident. “The allegation that the baraat was stopped is false. Our investigation did not reveal it. The argument took place only because the DJ played loud music at night,” he says, adding that only three persons asked for the volume to be turned down. During the ‘bidai (giving away of the bride)’, Kalpana's family was at the police station, waiting to give their statements. “The last thing I could have given my daughter was a peaceful goodbye; even that wasn't allowed,” Devi adds.

Kalpana studied till Class 8; Akash works as a carpenter. The family felt that their daughter would have a better life in a city. Many young women in the village marry in that hope. Not many have access to higher education. A marriage that will take women to a city is seen as a way out of both poverty and suppression. Soon after the incident, which was reported across newspapers, Ram Khiladi, 60, a resident of Bhureka village, says his daughter's ‘rishta (match)’ from Palwal in Rajasthan seems to have fallen through. “The family has stopped responding. They said they wouldn't send their baraat to our village because they would get attacked. This is what the attack has done to our people,” he says. While the ‘pradhan (village head)’ is usually the first to respond to local matters, villagers say it depends a lot on which community they are from and which community is at the receiving end. In Bhureka, the pradhan, Bhuvnesh Sharma, hails from the Brahmin community, and he did not offer any support, they say. Sharma says he did. “I even met the family,” he says, though he does not give details of what they spoke about. Sushil Gautam, a Dalit rights activist, who has been working on ground for more than 20 years, believes that even though times are changing, “issues still persist”. He talks about how the traditional system of marriage has evolved in the Dalit community over the past few years. “With access to social media and education, people from the Dalit community have understood what the term ‘resistance’ means. It is about creating a safe space for ourselves and accessing rights, be it marriage, education, or something as small as keeping a moustache,” he explains. Gautam says even during wedding ceremonies, photographs of Dalit icons such as Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Ravidas, and Jyotibha Phule take centre stage. “In several instances, when a Dalit wears bright colours, like yellow or green, casteist slurs are hurled at them.” This behaviour was endorsed by the caste system for centuries to make the so-called lowest castes unseen and unheard, he says. “Now, people from the Dalit community dress up and the women wear the bridal red. Nobody can take that away from us,” he says.

# What are the issues around deportation? | Explained



The story so far: At least seven West Bengal residents who were pushed to Bangladesh by the Border Security Force (BSF) on suspicion of being Bangladeshis were brought back to India after the intervention of the State government. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said on June 25 that residents speaking in their native Bengali language are being branded as Bangladeshis in some Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-ruled States. Several people who were pushed from Assam to Bangladesh also returned as they were found to be Indians or that their citizenship cases were sub-judice.

Why have matters escalated?

After the regime change in Bangladesh in August 2024, the police across the country were asked by the Union Home Ministry to detect Bangladeshis who had illegally entered the country and were living here on forged documents. The drive assumed momentum after the Pahalgam terror attack in April and the subsequent ‘Operation Sindoor’. The Ministry has issued instructions to States to deport undocumented migrants but in most cases pushbacks are happening. Around 2,500 suspected Bangladeshis have been pushed back so far. On May 10, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said that the government has decided to implement the “pushback” mechanism to check infiltration instead of going through the legal route which is a long-drawn process. Home Minister Amit Shah has asked top intelligence officials to make an example of “infiltrators” by detecting, detaining, and deporting them. In 2022, at an Intelligence Bureau meeting, Mr. Shah had asked officials to identify around 100 illegal migrants in each State, check documents and arrest and deport them. He asked them to continue with the crackdown even if neighbouring countries do not accept the undocumented migrants.

What is the difference between deportation and pushback?

Deportation is a legal process which involves detaining and arresting a foreigner suspected to be living in India without documents or who has entered the country illegally. The case is presented before a court and after exhaustion of all legal avenues, which includes conviction by the court, the country which the foreigner belongs to is contacted and the deportation takes place once the identity is confirmed. Pushbacks are not a legal procedure and there are no stated rules. They happen when a foreigner has been caught by the border security force on the international border and, depending on the intensity of the case or the discretion of the border personnel, they are either arrested, made to face the law here or pushed back. Since citizenship and foreigners are Union List subjects, it is the Home Ministry which delegates powers to deport foreigners to State governments. In 2024, the Ministry told the Jharkhand High Court that since the ‘Central Government does not maintain a separate federal police force exclusively dedicated to the task of detection and deportation of illegally staying foreigners, action in this regard has been entrusted to the State police.”

What is the Immigrants (Expulsion from Assam) Act,

1950?

On June 9, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said the State government was likely to enforce a 1950 law to identify and evict illegal foreigners, adding that under the law, district commissioners are empowered to declare individuals as illegal immigrants and initiate eviction proceedings. The 1950 Act was passed by Parliament amid communal disturbance and violence following the Partition of India in 1947 and creation of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) bordering West Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram. The Act says that “it extends to the whole of India”, but has Assam-specific provisions. Section 2 of the Act says that if the Union government is of the opinion that any person or class of persons, having been ordinarily resident in any place outside India are detrimental to the interests of the general public of India or any Scheduled Tribe in Assam, the Union government may by order, “direct such person or class of persons to remove himself or themselves from India or Assam within such time and by such route as may be specified in the order”; and “give such further directions in regard to his or their removal from India or Assam as it may consider necessary or expedient”.

What are the laws for foreigners?

Till April this year, matters relating to foreigners and immigration were administered through “pre-Constitution period” laws enacted during the First and Second World Wars, which were the Foreigners Act, 1946, Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920, the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939 and the Immigration (Carriers' Liability) Act, 2000. In April, Parliament enacted the Immigration and Foreigners Act, 2025 repealing the old laws.

Unlike Pakistan and Bangladesh borders, the rules for movement of people along Nepal and Myanmar are different. Nepal has a free-border agreement with India, and a Free Movement regime (FMR), allowing movement of people residing within 10-km on either side, exists along the India-Myanmar border. Following the May 2023 ethnic violence in Manipur, the Ministry in 2024 decided to fence the entire 1,643-km Myanmar border in the next 10 years. Post the military coup in Myanmar in February 2021, over 40,000 refugees from Myanmar belonging to the Chin ethnic group who are closely related to the Mizo community crossed over to Mizoram. On March 10, 2021, the MHA sent a letter to the State governments of Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Mizoram that the refugees should be identified and deported and that the State Governments have no powers to grant “refugee” status to any foreigner as India is not a signatory to the UN Refugee Convention of 1951 and its 1967 Protocol. The refugees continue to live here.

What is behind this recent drive?

Since the April 22 terror attack at Pahalgam, the police has intensified the drive to detect undocumented migrants. Initially, they were taken by trains to border districts and then pushed to Bangladesh by the BSF. In some instances, migrants after being up picked from Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Maharashtra, were flown by planes to Agartala in Tripura and transported to the Bangladesh border by BSF personnel. The police and the BSF record biometrics and photographs of the undocumented migrants. It is to be noted that the BSF has never acknowledged any of the pushbacks. The Ministry has asked the States to verify the claims of undocumented migrants who claim Indian nationality after which District Magistrates are to send a report within 30 days, failing which the Foreigners Regional Registration Officer would deport them. In 2022, the Unique Identification Authority of India was asked to maintain a “negative list” to stop undocumented migrants from procuring identity documents in the future.

## Where does India lag in gender metrics? | Explained



The legislation for 33% reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and in State legislatures was passed after a long wait in 2023, but as it is tied to a new Census and delimitation exercise, it can only be implemented from the 2029 general election at the earliest. Women's representation in the Lok Sabha has ranged from 3.4% in 1977 to 14% in 2019.

The story so far: India dropped two places in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index for 2025, slipping to the 131st rank out of 148 countries. While the gender gap has narrowed or remained stable in the case of three categories — economic participation and opportunity; educational attainment; health and survival — it has worsened in the case of political empowerment. At a time when rising numbers of women are voting in elections, the number of women in the highest halls of power remain stubbornly low. This is set to change in 2029, when mandatory 33% reservation for women in State and national legislatures is set to kick in, but steps need to be taken to ensure the benefits of this law extend to the long term.

What led to the drop?

The Index uses three indicators to assess political empowerment, with India falling in two — the percentage of women in Parliament, which dropped from 14.7% (78 MPs) in 2024 to 13.79% (74 MPs) in 2025 after the general election for the 18th Lok Sabha; and the percentage of women in ministerial positions, which dropped from an already abysmal 6.45% in 2024 to just 5.56% in 2025.

What will change after women's reservation?

The legislation for 33% reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and in State legislatures was passed after a long wait in 2023, but as it is tied to a new Census and delimitation exercise, it can only be implemented from the 2029 general election at the earliest. Women's representation in the Lok Sabha has ranged from 3.4% in 1977 to 14% in 2019. At the time of the passage of the women's reserva-

tion legislation in 2023, women accounted for only 9% of MLAs in State Assemblies, with Chhattisgarh having the highest representation (18% women MLAs), while Himachal Pradesh had just one woman MLA and Mizoram had none. Jacking these figures up to at least 33% will give a significant boost to India's political empowerment scores. The catch is that reservation is only valid for 15 years from the time the law passes, meaning that it is likely to be implemented in only two general election cycles, 2029 and 2034, raising concerns about the sustainability of gains women would make in this period. Also, while more women may become MPs, it remains to be seen if ruling parties also appoint them to ministerial roles in higher numbers, increasing their representation in actual governance. Despite the three-decade old 33% reservation for women at the panchayat and municipality level, which has been increased to 50% in most States, there is no clear pipeline to draw such local leaders into State-level politics.

Does the rise in women voters matter?

Back in 1952, 28 lakh women were excluded from voting in the general election as they were listed on the electoral rolls only as someone's mother or wife, with their own names missing. The gender gap among voters has narrowed speedily since then, from 17 percentage points in 1962 to less than two percentage points in 2014. In fact, in the last two general elections, women voters have actually overtaken men, though this can also be partially attributed to rising male migration for employment, leaving men unable to vote in their home States. The rising numbers of women voting has led to political parties wooing women as a votebank, with a slew of welfare schemes aimed at women, ranging from free bicycles for girls to a monthly allowance for poorer women.

How to increase women candidates? The trend with respect to women voters, however, has not translated into an increase in women's representation. “Political parties continue to give lower representation to women candidates in so-called ‘good seats’, often citing a lack of winnability,” says Rahul Verma, a political scientist at the Centre for Policy Research, noting that many parties field women in seats reserved for Scheduled Caste/Tribe candidates, in a bid to offset that quota. “Women voters do not automatically vote for women candidates. Gender is not like caste, where voters may vote on the basis of identity. Women are much more practical, looking for actual programmatic delivery,” says Tara Krishnaswamy of Political Shakti, a non-partisan group working to improve women's representation in politics. However, she dismisses parties' excuses that women candidates are not winnable. “In every general election since 1952, women candidates have had a higher winning percentage in comparison to men. The problem is that women do not make it to the candidates list... Women candidates in the lists of recognised parties average about 8% or 9%,” she says.

# Ada Lovelace: the Enchantress of Numbers



Women in STEM is a popular term you would have heard, and it is well-celebrated in the modern age. However, what about the women who laid the stepping stones for the term? Women who not only broke gender barriers but also played an important role in laying the foundation in several modern fields. One such icon was Ada Lovelace. Augusta Ada King, Countess of Lovelace, more commonly known as Ada Lovelace, was the daughter of the poet Lord Byron and his wife, Anne Isabella Milbanke. She did something most women deemed impossible then. She became the world's first computer programmer. Even though recognised much later, her visionary notes on Charles Babbage's Analytical Engine included what is recognised as the first computer algorithm, earning her that title.

Being a single mother, Lady Byron was sceptical of several skills thought to be irrational — specifically subjects like the arts — which she associated with Lord Byron. In order to prevent Ada from having any poetic tendencies, Lady Byron made sure that her daughter received a rigorous education in science and mathematics, which were very uncommon for girls in her era. Ada had a natural aptitude for numbers and reasoning from a young age. Among her tutors were renowned mathematicians like Augustus De Morgan, a well-known logician, and Mary Somerville, one of the first female members of the Royal Astronomical Society. Ada's life changed dramatically when she met

Charles Babbage, the inventor and mathematician who is frequently referred to as the "father of the computer", when she was just 17 years old. Babbage was then developing the Difference Engine, a mechanical device used to perform mathematical calculations. Ada was fascinated by his ideas and demonstrated a thorough understanding of his work.

They developed a strong intellectual bond, and Babbage was impressed by her perceptions and critical abilities. He affectionately referred to her as "The Enchantress of Numbers". Babbage and Lovelace's friendship and collaboration would become one of the most significant intellectual partnerships of the 19th Century. Babbage later started working on the Analytical Engine, a general-purpose computing machine. It contained many features that we see and use in modern computers, including an arithmetic logic unit and integrated memory. In 1842, based on a lecture Babbage gave in Turin, Italian engineer Luigi Federico Menabrea wrote a paper in French about the Analytical Engine. Lovelace was commissioned to translate this paper into English. But she went far beyond a mere translation.

Her notes were three times longer than the original text and offered profound insights into the potential of the machine. She described how the engine could be programmed to perform tasks beyond pure number-crunching—such as composing music—highlighting her prescient understanding of computing as a universal machine. Lovelace most famously included a technique for using the Analytical Engine to calculate a series of Bernoulli numbers. This is widely regarded as the first algorithm ever intended to be executed by a machine, making her the first computer programmer in history. Ada Lovelace Day, celebrated annually in October, promotes the achievements of women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). The U.S. Department of Defence named a programming language "Ada" in her honour in the 1980s. She was also aware of machines' limitations and emphasised the difference between human creativity and machine processing, which is still relevant in discussions about automation and artificial intelligence today. But in the late 1840s, her health began to decline, and in 1852, she passed away from uterine cancer. She was buried next to her father, Lord Byron, in Nottinghamshire's Church of St Mary Magdalene, as she requested. For many years after her death, Ada Lovelace's contributions were largely forgotten. It wasn't until the mid-20th Century, with the rise of computer science as a discipline, that her work was rediscovered and properly recognised. In a field where women have been traditionally discriminated against and not taken seriously, Ada Lovelace shines bright as a pioneer in not just STEM but also feminism!

# Endocrine disruptors in plastic waste: a new public health threat



Plastics have revolutionised modern living with their convenience and affordability, but this same ubiquity is spawning an invisible, long-term health crisis. Beyond choking oceans and clogging landfills, plastics are now infiltrating our bodies through microplastic particles and a cocktail of endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs). The evidence is clear and deeply concerning: these substances are interfering with our hormonal systems, damaging reproductive health and increasing our susceptibility to chronic diseases, including cancer. India, now the world's largest generator of plastic waste, stands at the epicenter of this escalating public health emergency. Microplastics in the human body: from the environment to the bloodstream. Once considered inert pollutants, microplastics—plastic particles smaller than 5 mm—are now recognised as biologically active. A 2022 study by Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam detected microplastics in the blood of 80% of human participants. Further, a 2024 study published in Nature Scientific Reports reported the presence of microplastics in nearly 89% of blood samples in India, with an average concentration of 4.2 particles per milliliter. These particles have also been found in human lungs, hearts, placentas, breast milk, ovarian follicular fluid, and semen. Alarmingly, testicular tissue in Indian men was found to contain three times more microplastics than that in dogs.

The plastics in our lives are not chemically neutral. They often contain EDCs such as: Bisphenol A (BPA) and BPS: Used in water bottles, food containers, and thermal paper. - Phthalates (e.g., DEHP, DBP): Used to soften plastics and found in cosmetics, toys and IV tubing. - PFAS (Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances): Found in food packaging and non-stick cookware. These chemicals mimic or block natural hormones such as estrogen, testosterone, thyroid hormones, and cortisol. They interfere with receptor binding, disrupt gene expression in reproductive organs, and induce oxidative stress, inflammation, and apoptosis (cell death). Animal studies published in Food and Chemical Toxicology (2023) showed that even low doses of polystyrene microplastics (20 µg/L) disrupted testosterone levels, impaired sperm production, and damaged the blood-testis barrier. Similar effects were observed in ovaries, where microplastics reduced anti-Müllerian hormone levels, triggered oxidative stress pathways, and induced cell death. Recent clinical studies from China and India have linked the presence of microplastics in semen to reduced sperm count, concentration and motility. Exposure to BPA and phthalates has been associated with lower testosterone levels and elevated luteinizing hormone (LH) levels—both indicators of endocrine disruption. A global review published in Science of the Total Environment further supports the connection between microplastics and male subfertility. Notably, a 2023 study in Environmental Science & Technology Letters reported a strong correlation between microplastic levels in semen and decreased sperm count, motility, and abnormal morphology in Chinese men. In India, studies have documented a 30% decline in average sperm count over the past two decades.

A study published in Ecotoxicology and Environmental Safety (2025) found microplastics in 14 out of 18 follicular fluid samples collected from women undergoing fertility treatment in Italy. These particles, along with their associated endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs), were found to compromise egg quality and were linked to menstrual irregularities, reduced estradiol levels, and an increased risk

of miscarriage. Epidemiological studies have also linked exposure to phthalates and BPA with conditions such as polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), endometriosis, and spontaneous abortions. These associations have been further supported by findings published in Advances in Pharmacology (2021) and Frontiers in Cell and Developmental Biology (2023). The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) now classifies several plastic additives as probable human carcinogens. Case-control studies from India have shown that women with elevated levels of DEHP in their urine face nearly a threefold increased risk of breast cancer (odds ratio = 2.97). Exposure to BPA and phthalates has also been linked to higher incidences of prostate, uterine, and testicular cancers.

In addition to their carcinogenic potential, these endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs) have been implicated in metabolic disorders. By mimicking cortisol, altering insulin sensitivity, and promoting fat storage, EDCs contribute to the development of obesity and type 2 diabetes. Moreover, PFAS exposure has been associated with metabolic syndrome, cardiovascular disease, and thyroid dysfunction, as reported in a 2024 study published in Frontiers in Public Health. India generates over 9.3 million tonnes of plastic waste each year. Of this, approximately 5.8 million tonnes are incinerated, releasing toxic gases, while 3.5 million tonnes end up polluting the environment. Studies have shown that residents in cities like Mumbai are exposed to between 382 and 2,012 microplastic particles daily through air, food, and water. In Nagpur, doctors are reporting an increase in cases of early puberty, respiratory problems, obesity, and learning disorders in children—conditions increasingly linked to plastic pollution. Recent testing by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) detected phthalate concentrations in drinking water samples from Delhi, Jabalpur, and Chennai that exceeded European Union safety limits. Despite progressive policies like the Plastic Waste Management Rules (2016, updated in 2022 and 2024), enforcement remains inconsistent. Current regulations do not account for low-dose effects or the complex interactions of EDCs, nor do they address the specific vulnerabilities of children and pregnant women.

The health burden associated with EDCs in India is staggering, costing over ₹25,000 crore annually due to increased healthcare spending and lost productivity. The poorest populations, often living near waste dumps or working in the informal recycling sector, bear the brunt of this crisis. Globally, the U.S. reports healthcare costs of \$250 billion annually linked to plastic-related chemicals, according to the Endocrine Society. Biomonitoring and surveillance are crucial for establishing national programmes that measure endocrine-disrupting chemical (EDC) levels in blood, urine, and breast milk. Longitudinal studies must be funded to assess the health impacts of EDC exposure on fertility, neurodevelopment, and chronic diseases. In addition, public awareness needs to be improved, and behaviour changes should be encouraged, such as educating people on the risks of microwaving food in plastic containers and promoting the use of glass, stainless steel, and EDC-free alternatives. It is also important to advocate for antioxidant-rich diets to help counteract oxidative stress.

Further actions should include enforcing plastic segregation, recycling, and safe disposal, while investing in microplastic filtration systems for water treatment plants. Additionally, incentivising the development of biodegradable, non-toxic materials is essential to reduce EDC exposure. Plastic pollution is no longer a distant environmental concern; it is a biological invasion with profound implications for human health. The infiltration of microplastics and plastic-derived EDCs into our bodies is triggering hormonal disruption, reproductive dysfunction and chronic diseases. The science is undeniable, and the time for action is now. For India, the world's most exposed population, this is more than a policy issue—it is a generational imperative. We must address this silent epidemic through science-driven regulation, robust monitoring, public education, and systemic change. The health of our people, especially our children, depends on it.

# Revisit digital search powers under the I-T Bill 2025

The Finance Minister recently introduced a proposal in Parliament to allow tax authorities to access, under the Income-Tax Bill, 2025, an individual's "virtual digital space" during search and seizure operations. The justification is straightforward: as financial activity moves online, so must enforcement. However, this glosses over the far-reaching implications of such a shift, which raises significant concerns about privacy, overreach, and surveillance.

A blurring, open-ended. Currently, India's tax law already provides for search and seizure under Section 132 of the Income-Tax Act, 1961. But those powers are limited to physical space such as a house, office, and locker. Since such operations are based on suspicion of undisclosed income or assets, there is a connection between the objective, which is finding undisclosed income and getting access to physical assets.

The new Bill, however, blurs this link by including an individual's digital presence which is not only vast but often contains much more than what is relevant to a tax investigation. Without clear limits, such access can lead to disproportionate intrusion. For example, under the existing regime, what could be searched was what concerned only the individual under investigation. In contrast, digital spaces involve multiple stakeholders. Accessing a social media account also exposes friends, family, and professional contacts, through photographs and posts.

The proposed definition of 'virtual digital space' includes access to emails, personal cloud drives, social media accounts, digital application platforms, and more. Crucially, the phrase "any other space of similar nature" makes the list open-ended, potentially covering a wide range of digital platforms. Additionally, the proposed provision empowers tax authorities to override access codes to gain entry into electronic devices or virtual digital spaces. It still remains unclear though how this power will be operationalised in practice particularly in cases involving encrypted messaging apps such as WhatsApp, as explicitly cited by the Finance Minister in Parliament. The problem becomes even more of a concern when the individual involved is a professional whose work requires confidentiality. For instance, journalists whose devices and emails hold sensitive information, including confidential sources, unpublished material, and protected communications. If a search is conducted on flimsy or overly broad grounds, it not only violates their privacy but also endangers their ability to undertake reporting. Recognising the risks, the Supreme Court of India, in 2023, circulated interim guidelines on the seizure of digital devices and directed the Union Government to contemplate formulating necessary protocols. Moreover, the judicial interpre-



tation of "reason to believe" emphasises the need for tangible material beyond mere suspicion. Even under existing law, courts have construed that the provision ought to be exercised strictly, acknowledging that search and seizure is a serious invasion of privacy. A violation of transparency, accountability. Yet, the proposed provision goes against these principles and is devoid of guardrails, judicial oversight, and has a lack of understanding of the stakes. It fails to acknowledge, let alone address, the sheer breadth and layered sensitivity of information stored on electronic devices. In line with the current law, the proposed provision prohibits disclosure of the "reason to believe" clearly violating principles of transparency and accountability. Globally, privacy and transparency standards in search and seizure, especially where digital devices are involved, are grounded in statutory protections and procedural safeguards. In Canada, Section 8 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees the right to be secure against "unreasonable search or seizure". It is designed to prevent unjustified searches and sets a three-part default standard: prior authorisation; approval by a neutral and impartial judicial authority; and reasonable and probable grounds. In the United States, the Taxpayer Bill of Rights, adopted by the Internal Revenue Service, affirms that taxpayers have the right to expect that any inquiry or enforcement action will be legally compliant and will not be more intrusive than necessary following due process rights, including search and seizure protections. The U.S. Supreme Court's decision in Riley vs California also necessitated a warrant before accessing digital data, given the deeply personal nature of information stored on phones and devices. Contradiction of proportionality test. In contrast, India's proposed Income Tax provision grants sweeping access to digital personal data without warrants, relevance thresholds, or any distinction between financial and non-financial information.

# ‘Disclose PEDs to insurers’

For now, hiding a pre-existing disease (PED) from an insurer before buying a health policy might seem to be an advantage with a lower cost premium. However, the reality is that it can lead to rejection of the claim or even policy cancellation. In both cases, the policyholder must pay exorbitant medical bills from his/her pocket. When one buys cover, he/she is entering into a contract with the insurer. All the medical insurance policies are developed on a legally-binding principle – "utmost good faith" so the insurer and the policyholder must be transparent and honest. While buying the policy, the policyholder has an obligation to disclose all relevant details regarding his/her health conditions, including PEDs. If even a small piece of information on PEDs is not disclosed, it means the policyholder has violated the fundamental legal principle, thereby forcing the insurer to reject claim or even cancel the policy itself. The premium the policyholder has paid till then will go down the drain.

What are PEDs?

A PED is a disease/medical condition existing in an individual even before buying a policy. Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) guidelines say illness/disease is treated as a PED if it was diagnosed within three years (36 months) prior to the purchase of the policy by a recognised doctor. (Previously it was 48 months but IRDAI brought it down to 36 months, effective from April 1, 2024.) In common insurance parlance, if an individual knows he has a health issue before buying the policy, it is considered a PED and must be disclosed. V. Mangala, senior subject-matter executive, Aionion Insurance Marketing Pvt. Ltd., says, "It must be noted not every visit to a doctor is treated as a PED. For instance, if you consult a doctor for normal fever, cold, cough, etc. you need not reveal these details. PEDs are those ailments that have a major impact on your general health in the long run. Say, for instance, BP, cholesterol, thyroid, asthma, piles, diabetes, lumbar issues, previous surgery or heart attacks, epilepsy etc., these must necessarily be divulged to the insurer." Waiting period. Another concept while buying health insurance policy is the waiting



period. Most insurers in India cover pre-existing diseases but only after the waiting period gets over. If any medical emergency occurs during the waiting period, especially related to the PED, then in almost all cases, the claim would naturally be rejected by the insurer. Though the concept of wait period is there in all insurers, the wait time might differ across insurers. Generally, majority of the insurance companies provide coverage to PEDs after a waiting period of two to three years.

Ms. Mangala says, "In some insurance companies, riders are sold separately at an additional premium. These riders reduce the waiting period, and some insurance companies also cover PEDs from Day 1 with or without a rider, of course, the premium will be high. Therefore, before buying a policy, whether an individual health insurance policy or a family floater policy, the policyholder must choose a policy that has no/lower waiting period." Co-payment clause. Some insurers might offer PED coverage with a 'co-payment' clause. Based on the co-payment agreement, the policyholder must pay an agreed portion of the total claim amount; only then will the insurance company settle the remaining claim amount. Ms. Mangala says that it is always advisable and cost-effective to choose a policy without the 'co-payment' condition so that the entire claim amount would be settled by the insurance company."

# Global warming changing cloud patterns. That means more global warming

Melbourne: At any given time, about two-thirds of Earth's surface is covered by clouds. Overall, they make the planet much cooler than it would be without them. But as Earth gets warmer, mostly due to the rise in greenhouse gases in the atmosphere from humans burning fossil fuels, clouds are changing too.

And that might already be causing more warming — adding to the greenhouse heat boost, and changing clouds even more. Over the past few years, the world's average temperature has increased more than climate scientists were expecting. In our latest research, led by NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies, we show that changes in clouds have made a significant contribution to turning up the thermostat. Clouds and climate. Clouds help to keep Earth cool by reflecting sunlight back out to space before it can reach the ground. But not all clouds are equal. Shiny, white clouds reflect away more sunlight — especially when they are closer to the equator, in the parts of Earth that receive the most sun. Grey, broken clouds reflect less sunlight, as do clouds closer to the poles where less light falls.

Research published last year showed that Earth has been absorbing more sunlight than the greenhouse effect alone can explain. Clouds were involved, but it wasn't clear exactly how. Bright cloud zones are shrinking. A new study shows what is happening. The areas covered by highly reflective clouds are shrinking. At the same time, the areas containing broken, less reflective clouds are growing. The net effect is that additional energy from sunlight is reaching Earth's surface. Here it is absorbed, leading to extra heating. The effect of changes in the properties of the highly reflective clouds, caused by things such as changes in the amount of aerosol pollution in the atmosphere, were found much smaller than the effect of the change in area.



In the big picture, Earth's wind patterns are driven by hot air rising near the equator and the rotation of the planet. This creates huge, looping currents of atmospheric circulation around the globe. Local weather systems — the kind that determine the location and type of clouds — depend on these major, large-scale wind systems. The major circulation patterns in the atmosphere are changing as a result of global warming. We found much of the cloud action is taking place at the edges of these major wind systems. Highly reflective clouds are on the decline in a region near the equator called the intertropical convergence zone, and also two other bands called the storm tracks, which lie between 30 and 40 degrees of latitude. At the same time the subtropical trade-wind regions, home to ever-present but less reflective broken clouds, are expanding. A feedback loop. In short, the global warming induced by increased greenhouse gases changes the major wind systems on Earth. This in turn reduces the area of highly reflective clouds, leading to additional warming. Warming changes wind patterns, which changes cloud patterns, which results in more warming.

# Justice delayed yet again

## Maharashtra

Last week, a special National Investigation Agency (NIA) court acquitted all the seven accused, including BJP MP Sadhvi Pragya Singh Thakur, in the 2008 Malegaon blasts case. Six people were killed and 95 injured in the bombing that had struck the Muslim-majority town in Maharashtra. The case, which was investigated by two different agencies, triggered accusations of 'safron terror'. All the accused were charged by the Maharashtra Anti Terrorism Squad (ATS) in 2008 of being 'Hindutva extremists'. The trial was controversial as Rohini Salian, the former special public prosecutor, had alleged in 2015 that the government had put pressure on her, through the NIA, to "go soft" on the accused. The case was initially probed by ATS chief Hemant Karkare, who was gunned down by terrorists during the November 26, 2008, terror attack on Mumbai. Eventually, it was handed over to the NIA.

While acquitting the seven accused, the court pointed out several lapses in the investigation and criticised the NIA for presenting 'inconclusive', 'unreliable', and 'legally inadmissible' evidence. It said that there were procedural lapses in the invocation of stringent laws such as the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act, 1999, and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967. It added that the investigators had failed to link the motorcycle, allegedly used in the crime, to Ms. Thakur; that there were problems with witness statements; and that there was no proof that Lt Col Prasad Purohit (retired) or the right-wing outfit, Abhinav Bharat, was linked to the blast.

In the order, Special Judge A.K. Lahoti observed, "The testimony of prosecution witnesses is riddled with material inconsistencies and contradictions. Such discrepancies undermine the credibility of the prosecution's case and fall short of establishing the guilt of the accused beyond rea-

sonable doubt." While he said that terrorism has no religion, the Special Judge also added that a court cannot convict someone based on mere perception. Civil society members were critical of the verdict given the allegations that it was politically driven; and also since it came on the back of another verdict acquitting all the accused in another blast case. On July 21, the Bombay High Court acquitted all the 12 accused in the 2006 serial bomb blasts case. Seven explosions had ripped through Mumbai's local trains on the evening of July 11, 2006, killing 189 people and seriously injuring 824. The coordinated blasts had scarred the estimated 70 lakh people of Mumbai who use the local trains, often dubbed the city's lifeline, every day. Many victims feared taking the local train again. This case too was riddled with controversies. While the Maharashtra ATS, which had conducted the probe from the beginning, claimed that the attacks were the handiwork of the Lashkar-e-Taiba and the Students' Islamic Movement of India, several other investigating agencies, including the NIA, claimed that the Indian Mujahideen had carried out the terror attacks. While acquitting the 12 accused, the High Court laid bare the inconsistencies, loopholes, and lapses in the probe by the Maharashtra ATS. It asked how key witness statements were recorded after an unexplained delay of 100 days. It questioned the trustworthiness and credibility of witnesses, highlighted deep flaws in both the investigation as well as prosecution, and demanded to know why the circumstantial evidence, such as call detail records, which the investigators had relied on so much, was inconclusive. It pointed out that the witness statements were delayed and inconsistent; that there were procedural lapses and coercion allegations about the confessions retrieved; that there was no proof of actual explosives used; and that the chain of custody of the recoveries was broken. The High Court also rapped the trial court for the conviction order. The judgments on two terror cases in India have left the victims, who have had to wait for nearly two decades for verdicts, without a sense of justice. The investigations raise serious questions about India's criminal justice system and specifically about the accountability of investigating agencies. Who are the agencies answerable to, for their contradictory claims and shoddy procedures, which have allowed extremist organisations to get away with such terrible crimes in Maharashtra? And when — if at all they do — will the victims of these blasts get a sense of closure?

# What the 1871 educational census shows about the divide in the pyall schools of Madras Presidency

The report on the 'Results of the Educational Census of Madras November 1871' throws some interesting light on the sharp divide in the pyall schools in the Madras Presidency. The Educational Census was meant to ascertain the exact state of education in Madras as shown by the number of schools, their standards of instruction and the number of their pupils. In that era, the pyall school was an important aspect not only in education but also in the social and religious life of people.

The author of the Education Census report tried to highlight the difference in payment for teachers in a school for the well-to-do and those in a school for the poor. "We will suppose the son of a respectable, good-caste writer to be sent for the first time to the nearest pyall school, the teacher of which will almost certainly be a Brahmin," the author writes. For this, a lucky day must first be chosen, and then the teacher comes to the new pupil's house together with all his scholars. "Before the boy is handed over to the master, pooja to Ganapati or Ganesa is performed by the family purohit, and then to Sarasvati, the goddess of learning, in the presence of the lad's father and male relations. Then presents are distributed to Brahmins, and fruits, sugar, etc to everybody present. The schoolmaster is placed sitting in a conspicuous part of the room, and is presented with flowers, sandal (chandanam), fruits, and a pair of cloths; one of which is twelve cubits long, and the other six cubits, the cost of both being about one-and-a-quarter rupees," notes the report.

The teacher then puts the cloths on, sits himself by the side of the proposed scholar, causes him to repeat a prayer to Ganesa, asking for wisdom and that his course of study may be fortunate and successful, and makes him repeat the whole of the alphabet three times. "Next, a flat vessel containing dry rice is brought in, and the teacher guides the finger of the pupil, so that he may write in the loose rice the names of the deity they serve, whether Vishnu or Siva. Then the ceremony concludes. "All the school boys are presented with beaten rice, Bengal gram and sugar mixed together, a handful each; the monitor or senior boy, who acts as the teacher's assistant, receives also a few pice. "Now the boy proceeds in procession to the school, where



he is again made to repeat the alphabet three times. The procession then returns to his home, and they disperse for the day. With the next day commences the ordinary school career of the boy," says the report adding, the monthly school fee is decided between the teacher and the father. This sum varies with the means of the parent, "but never exceeds eight annas a month." In contrast, things were different in a pyall school for the children of the poor. "Here no entrance fee is offered, nor any monthly payment until the alphabet is fully mastered. Nor is the customary present made on commencement of a new book or chapter. A small payment is made each month of, say, one or two annas, and a tiny present every fourteenth day," according to the report.

The same ritual is performed at Dassera as in the more respectable school, but the gains of the master are smaller in proportion, and similarly for each festival throughout the year," it adds. "Combining all sources of income, the teacher of a respectable pyall school with about twenty-five pupils will receive from ₹5 to ₹25 per mensem, while his colleague labouring in a poor locality will not receive more than from ₹5 to ₹10," the report says. In Mussulman schools, no monthly fee was charged, and the teacher was entirely dependent on presents. Thus, whenever a new chapter of the Koran was commenced, the pupils were required to give from four annas to as many rupees, according to the wealth of the family. "At the commencement of every festival, as the Muharam, Shub-i-burat, Ramzan, Bukreed, etc the teacher also receives presents - not more than four annas or less than one fanam," it says.

# Ancient Tamil literature inspires new wedding format

On Tuesday evening, the Roja Muthiah Research Library, known for facilitating interesting discussions, hosted one by lawyer Supanki Kalanadan. The topic: a new wedding format involving Tamil indigenous practices. When you think of a quintessential Tamil wedding, what comes to mind? Does it involve a male priest and a trial by the fire? Supanki, an Eelam Tamil refugee whose family fled to Canada, said that she looked into some Tamil texts and attempted to re-conceptualise a format that involves practices from the Sangam literature and Tolkappiyam. In her style, there will be no sacrificial fire. They will also involve the use of the parai and conch, two instruments that are not traditionally used in weddings because they are often associated with the Scheduled Caste community and are played during death rituals. She added that Nature will be the central focus of worship with the five thinais or Tamil landscapes placed in the form of pictures on a stage including kurinjii (mountains), mullai (forests), marutham (farmlands), neithal (coastal regions), and palai (dry lands). "One of the couples that got married were diasporic Eelam Tamil refugees who picked pictures from our land," she said. The wedding oath would be taken on the Thirukkural, one of the foremost classic Tamil language texts. "Besides pledging equality and taking care of one another, the oath is also one that commits to taking care of the environment and society," she said.

Supanki said that when she was younger, her Tamil identity was a central point of conversation at her household as her mother always believed they would go back to their hometown. However, she hated wearing a bindi to school and carrying Tamil meals to lunch as she was bullied. It was through the arts — dance and drama — that she found her way back to this identity. She would like many



other diasporic people to engage with their identities in a manner similar to hers. The wedding is one such way to connect with the roots, she feels. Uma Kasturi, an assistant professor at a private college in Chennai who attended the talk, asked the speaker about why she chose to retain and continue the usage of the thali despite having a conversation about new practices. "When Periyar's self-respect marriages and Buddhist weddings choose to do away with the thali, why should we continue to hold on to it? In the name of new marriages, are we bringing back oppressive traditions? Are we looking at it critically enough," she asked. Supanki suggested that one view the thread as a security amulet. "Nobody in the diaspora would get married if there was no thali involved. It is still an ongoing conversation," she said. Sai Sarvesh, a media student, also asked about the prevalence of caste and its role in marriages within the diasporic communities. Supanki said that it is not as prevalent in Canada as it is here. Supanki is hoping for many people to chime in with ideas on reimagining this concept of a Tamil wedding. "This is a work in progress," she said.

# The technocratic calculus of India's welfare state



With a billion Aadhaar enrollments, 1,206 schemes integrated into the Direct Benefit Transfer system, and 36 grievance portals across States/Union Territories, India's welfare orientation is transitioning into a technocratic calculus. The promise to deliver social welfare at scale, bypassing leaky pipelines and eliminating ghost beneficiaries, might have led to a 're-casting' that delivers 'efficiency' and 'coverage' at the cost of 'democratic norms' and 'political accountability'. An offloadingAre we witnessing the emergence of a post-rights based welfare regime? Is the Indian digital welfare state headed towards a systemic impasse? What is the technocratic calculus behind all this? Recent game-theoretic work shows that technocratic rule thrives where parties are polarised. Evidently, our questions have changed. We have shifted from "who deserves support and why?" to "how do we minimise leakage and maximise coverage?" Our politicians across party lines have rationally offloaded hard-choices onto data-driven algorithms without questioning the complexities of constitutional values.

Contextualising Habermas's 'technocratic consciousness' and Foucault's 'governmentality', India's welfare architecture is increasingly shaped by measurable, auditable, and depoliticised rationality. Schemes such as E-SHRAM and PM KISAN embody a uni-directional, innovation-led logic that is streamlined, measurable, and intolerant of ambiguity or error. Conversely, we have deliberative calls for participatory planning and local feedback embodying the long forgotten core of democratic thinking resonating Giorgio Agamben's notion of homo sacer — a life stripped of political agency. Seemingly, welfare, in the contemporary context, has ceased to exist as a site of democratic deliberations. On a microscopic level, a rights-bearing citizen has been replaced by the auditable beneficiary. Thus, it calls for an urgent need for the state to revisit (in a Rancierean sense) whether it is curating who is visible, who can complain, and whose suffering is computable. Despite claims of a 'social-istic state', we observe a decade-low decline in India's social sector spending that has dwindled to 17% in 2024-25 from the 2014-24 average of 21%. Further, there are some interesting observations beyond plain statistics. Key social sector schemes have borne the brunt of such decline where minorities, labour, employment, nutrition and social security welfare saw a significant decline from 11% (in the pre-COVID-19 phase) to 3% (in post-COVID-19 phase). Paralelly, social commentators often comment the Right to Information (RTI) regime to be in 'existential crisis' and further uncovering the cloak on RTI exposes a critical issue within the institution of dysfunctional information com-

# Meet the woman behind one of India's most exclusive ikat sari brands

"A special sari for a special day," says Hyderabad-based Gajam Narmada, gently unfolding a handloom ikat silk sari in a striking cream, offset by a red border. Narmada, who runs Narmada Handlooms in Kothapet, has chosen this piece to wear on August 7, when she will receive the prestigious Sant Kabir National Handloom Award from President Droupadi Murmu in New Delhi. Recognised in the category for marketing handloom products, she also becomes the first woman from Telangana to be honoured with this distinction.

The Gajam family hails from the weaving community of Puttapaka in Telangana's Nalgonda district — a well-known hub for ikat. Narmada, who had only completed her intermediate education and had no prior experience in business, began her journey as a homemaker supporting her husband, Narendra. He had moved to Hyderabad in 1998 to set up a handloom sari business, and while he travelled for marketing, Narmada quietly managed the small venture from their home. It was her father-in-law, Chandraiah, a seasoned weaver, whose words helped her find her purpose and gradually grow into a businesswoman. "He once told me, 'Weaving will help us meet our daily needs, but if we build something of our own and work hard at it, we can create a future not just for ourselves, but for others too.' Some of their popular designs are: Elephant, tree and bird in Narikunj design, paan patola, teliya rumal, peacock, forest and golabhama.

Ikat fabrics for men, dupattas, lehengas and blouse pieces for women. In 2013, Narendra established Narmada Handlooms, naming Narmada as the proprietor. While he travelled across Hyderabad and beyond to secure orders, she oversaw operations at home — liaising with weavers, managing stock, and nurturing the growing business. "Designers usually hand over patterns to weavers," Narmada, now 46, explains. "But we offered ideas based on what customers actually wanted and what was changing on the ground." Today, the enterprise supports a collective of 300 weavers from ten villages, including

missions. As of June 30, 2024, the number of pending cases crossed the four lakh tally across 29 Information Commission's (ICs), and eight CIC posts were vacant (annual report of CIC, 2023-24).

The Indian welfare regime must recover its capacity for reflexivity and situated knowledge, elements that are very peculiar to gram sabhas and frontline bureaucratic discretions. To draw Rancière's critique on democracy, we highlight one major impending concern, that "democracy depends on whose suffering is rendered visible and contestable, not merely computable". This concern is further highlighted in Justice D.Y Chandrachud's Aadhaar dissent (2018), that warned precisely against such decontextualisation of identity which served as a caution against reducing citizens to disembedded, machinic data who are devoid of care, context, or even constitutional assurance in some cases.

Another instance of algorithmic insulationAnother worrisome trend is the Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System's flattening of the federal hierarchies into ticket-tracking systems. Although it is a novel initiative resolving tickets and routing complaints across state agencies, empirical data show that lakhs of grievances were disposed of between 2022-24. But on a closer examination it might just be centralising the visibility but not the responsibility — a form of algorithmic insulation that renders political accountability increasingly elusive.

These observations are not to dismiss the value of such initiatives. Rather, they invite a deeper conversation on how welfare governance can evolve for a more resilient and responsive state. The government should now think along the lines of 'democratic antifragility' so that our systems built on perfect data and flawless infrastructure do not fail catastrophically under stress (consider Taleb's 'hyper-integrated systems').

We need to empower States to design context-sensitive regimes where federalism and welfare push for pluralism as a feature. Institutionalising community-driven impact audits (as reiterated by the UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty), by looping in the Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan and Gram Panchayat Development Plans should be the core target. All States must be made capable to build platform cooperatives where self-help groups act as intermediaries; functionally, lessons can be learnt from Kerala's Kudumbashree. Civil society must be incentivised to invest in grass-roots political education and legal aid clinics in order to strengthen the community accountability mechanisms. Lastly, it is time we strengthen and codify our offline fall-back mechanisms, human feedback safeguards, and statutory bias audits by embedding the "right to explanation and appeal" — as proposed by the UN Human Rights for digital governance systems. Focus on the citizenWe, as citizens of India, must realise that a welfare state stripped of democratic deliberations is a machine that works efficiently for everyone except those it is meant to help. For a Viksit Bharat we will have to reorient digitisation with democratic and anti-fragile principles so that citizens become partners in governance, and not mere entries in a ledger. Anmol Rattan Singh and Agastya Shukla are Co-founder and Programme Associate respectively at the PANJ Foundation, a Punjab-based policy research think tank



Puttapaka, Chandur, Ghattuppal, Munugodu, Balemla, Narayanapuram, and Choutuppal. This strong network, built over two decades, is a testament to the Gajam family's long-standing relationship with their weaving community. Supporting livelihoods has been central to that trust. COVID was difficult for everyone," Narmada recalls. "But we stayed in touch with our weavers, reassuring them not to lose hope. We'd say, 'Weave and keep the sari ready, someone will surely buy it later.' If a weaver doesn't have work, how will their family survive?" She also encourages them to evolve with changing times, while maintaining consistent quality. The Gajams live in a two-storey complex in Kothapet, which houses both their residence and wholesale store. "I simply move between floors to switch roles," she laughs, on juggling life as both homemaker and entrepreneur. Around 60 saris are delivered to their unit daily by weavers, and nearly 100 go out to stores across India. "Our strength lies in exclusivity," Narmada says. They don't sell online, preferring instead to supply to premium retailers such as Singhania's, Kalanjali, Neeru's, Second Skin, Gaurang Shah, Radha Krishna, and Kankatala in Hyderabad. Their saris also find shelves in stores across nearly 15 cities nationwide. As she lives out her dream, Narmada's next goal is to take their collection to an international audience.

# Hyderabad's new organic store champions sustainable living

Chennai-based social enterprise Tula India is making its way to Hyderabad with a new venture, The Conscious Living Store (TCLS). Opening on August 1 in Kukatpally, the 350 sq. ft. store brings together organic groceries and handmade clothing, all in line with Tula's philosophy of sustainability — from farm to fabric, and with absolutely no plastic packaging. Run by engineer-turned-ecopreneurs Jahnavi and Rakesh Regella, the newly-wed couple say they are not the founders, but are simply "replicating what's already been beautifully done by Tula, with a little mentoring from Ananthoo sir," referring to Tula's co-founder.

Rakesh, who specialises in organic food, and Jahnavi, a designer with Tula, wanted to combine their interests but were not sure what kind of eco-friendly business to start. It was Ananthoo who suggested bringing the Tula concept to Hyderabad. "One of the biggest issues with organic stores is the plastic packaging. Even if the product is organic, we end up consuming microplastics from the packaging itself," says Jahnavi. That is why customers at TCLS are expected

to bring their own cloth bags and containers.

The store is split into two sections — organic groceries on one side and handspun, handmade clothing on the other. The food section stocks around 65 items, including several varieties of rice, millets, wheat, pulses, cold-pressed oils, sweeteners, spices, and a few toiletries. The clothing line features everyday wear for men, women, and children, including newborn sets, dhotis, and towels. Due to space constraints, the launch and workshops will be held at a nearby community hall. But the focus, Jahnavi says, goes beyond retail. "We want people to build conscious living into their daily habits, it should feel natural, not like a chore." The team plans to continue monthly talks and workshops at the store going forward. Uzamma, founder of Malkha Marketing Trust and Narsanna, founder of Aranya Agricultural Alternatives are to launch the store on August 1 at 11 am followed by talks and workshops by experts. For more details check out their social media pages.

## ‘Aim to democratise technologies like AI, cloud, digital services’: Akash Ambani as Jio debuts at a premium of 21% after Rs 30,213 crore issue



Shares of Jio Platforms listed on the National Stock Exchange (NSE) at Rs 1,358 a share, a premium of 21.3% from the issue price of Rs 1,119, finally concluding the much-awaited public issue. At this price, the issue garnered a market capitalisation of around Rs 12.5 lakh crore and matched the listing-day premium of 20-25% expected by analysts in comparison to the stock's price in the unlisted grey market. The stock eventually ended up 4.5% from its listing price at Rs 1,419, with a market cap of Rs 13.1 lakh crore. Its biggest rival, Bharti Airtel, currently has a market cap of Rs 12.2 lakh crore. The listing ceremony at NSE was attended by key figures from the Ambani family, including Reliance Industries' MD and Chairman Mukesh Ambani, Jio Platforms MD Akash Ambani, director Anant Ambani, Reliance Retail MD Isha Ambani, and Reliance Foundation Chairperson Nita Ambani.

Akash Ambani said future technologies like AI and cloud will power the next phase of growth for the company. "In our first 10 years, we democratised data, bringing hundreds of millions into digital life. In our next 10 (years), we want to democratise every technology that can transform Indian lives: AI, cloud, connected devices, connectivity even from space, and digital services not yet imagined," he said while speaking at the event. "My heart overflows with gratitude. Gratitude to every individual, every institutional investor in India and abroad, who made our IPO a blockbuster success," he added, reaffirming the aim to take the company to greater heights, with the IPO being just a "starting line". With this issue, Jio became the Mukesh Ambani-backed Reliance Industries group's 12th company to get listed on the stock exchanges. Shares of Reliance Industries ended at Rs 1,158 on the NSE, down 3.2%. Bharti Airtel lost 1.6%. The Nifty 50 index, for context, ended 0.2% lower,

having fallen over 1% intraday.

The issue, first announced in mid-2025, aimed to raise Rs 30,213 crores from the public exclusively through a fresh issue. This means all the money raised by the company will go to the company, with none going directly to any of the promoters or shareholders. Out of the amount raised, Rs 27.5 crore will be used by the company to repay the debts of subsidiary Reliance Jio Infocomm, and the rest will be used for 'general corporate purposes', Jio's offer documents had stated. The company had set a price band of Rs 1,065-Rs 1,119 a share ahead of the issue and had raised Rs 8,110 crores from anchor investors, with mutual funds subscribing to over 34% of the shares allocated for institutional investors. The IPO received a strong response, with the portion allocated for qualified institutional buyers subscribed nearly 71 times what was available. The non-institutional category was subscribed around 14 times. Originally started as a telecom business, Jio has since transitioned towards becoming a digital ecosystem with an aim to also offer AI services. "It is India's largest digital connectivity platform by subscriber base, carrying a majority of the country's wireless data traffic, with a nationwide 5G network built on proprietary technology and a growing fixed wireless broadband business under JioAirFiber. Digital services span cloud, enterprise solutions and artificial intelligence," said analysts from Motilal Oswal. Analysts cite factors like Jio's steady growth in average revenue per user (ARPU), earnings, entry into AI services, and a strong cash flow as key strengths for the company. For context, Jio's ARPU – among the most important metrics in the telecom sector – grew to Rs 214 in FY26 and Rs 215.6 in the April-June quarter (Q1) of FY27, from Rs 181.7 in FY24. Its AI and new tech verticals are also expected to play a key role, as suggested by Akash Ambani. While it lags behind Bharti Airtel's ARPU of Rs 264 in Q1 of FY27, it has a larger subscriber base and a more diversified business, according to analysts. "Jio's higher market cap comes from the potential it offers in terms of AI services. Meta holds a 10% stake, while Google holds an around 8% stake in the company. They have also signed key partnerships with Jio, which can potentially lead to the company offering attractive AI services in the future through these collaborations," an analyst at a leading domestic brokerage said. Experts also expect tariff hikes in the immediate future, with Nomura expecting an industry-wide hike of around 15% around November and December. This will aid the earnings of Jio, alongside the rest of the telecom industry.

## Green energy surge, rising demand strain North India's power lines & transformers



Sustained high power demand and surge in renewable energy flow from Rajasthan have pushed loading at key transformers and transmission lines carrying electricity to northern India beyond safe operating limits, particularly during daytime solar generation hours, the region's grid operator has warned. In a communication dated September 30 to the Central Transmission Utility of India Ltd (CTUIL), the National Load Despatch Centre (NLDC) of Grid-India urged CTUIL to expedite implementation of network augmentation measures to overcome the constraints.

NLDC said the region has been experiencing sustained high demand since April, while a rapid increase in renewable energy capacity in Rajasthan had led to higher power transfers towards Northern Region load centres. "This is resulting in high loading of Interconnecting Transformers (ICTs) and downstream transmission elements at several major substations such as Moga (PG), Bhiwani (PG) and Jhatikara (PG)," it said. These constraints are likely to become more pronounced as RE capacity grows and demand in the Northern Region increases," it added.

Notably, the northern region recorded a maximum demand of 95,027 MW on July 16 and met maximum energy of 2,095 million units (MU) on July 18. This comes as the country is witnessing an unusually high demand this year, with peak power demand touching 270 gigawatts (GW).

Punjab peak adds to strain At Moga substation in Punjab, the two 765/400 kilovolts (kV) interconnecting transformers (ICTs), each rated 1,500 megavolt-amperes (MVA), a measure of the maximum load a transformer can carry, are being loaded beyond the "N-1" limit during solar hours, the letter said. N-1 criterion is a reliability and security standard that ensures the system keeps working normally even if one single critical component such as a transmission line, transformer, generating unit, or circuit breaker unexpectedly fails or trips. The 765/400 kV transformers step power down from 765 kV, high voltage used to move bulk electricity over

long distances, to 400 kV, lower voltage level used for regional transmission. "Punjab demand has remained consistently high and touched its all-time peak demand in September 2026. Coupled with high demand in Haryana and Jammu & Kashmir, this has resulted in high loading of the Moga ICTs and associated downstream network," it said. It warned that the anticipated increase in demand in Jammu and Kashmir during winter could further raise power transfers through the 400 kV Moga-Kishenpur double-circuit line, aggravating loading on the transformers and the downstream network. It recommended prioritising additional 765/400 kV transformation capacity at Moga, exploring an upgrade of the Moga-Kishenpur corridor from 400 kV to 765 kV, and planning a new 765 kV substation each in Punjab, and Jammu and Kashmir to strengthen the transmission network. At Haryana's Bhiwani substation, the 765/400 kV transformers continued to experience loading beyond permissible limits during solar hours even after the commissioning of a third 1,500 MVA transformer in the Bhiwani-BBMB section, the communication said. The existing arrangement comprises two 1,000 MVA transformers and one 1,500 MVA transformer. The downstream 400 kV Bhiwani (PG)–Jind double circuit and Bhiwani (PG)–Bhiwani (BBMB) lines are also N-1 non-compliant in those hours, it added.

The communication recommended additional transformation capacity at Bhiwani and augmentation of downstream 400 kV lines through reconductoring or additional parallel transmission corridors. Implementing Dynamic Line Rating on the lines was also suggested as a short-term measure to make use of available dynamic thermal capacity and provide greater operational flexibility during periods of high renewable generation. Dynamic Line Rating is a smart grid technology that works out, in real time, how much electricity a transmission line can safely carry based on current weather conditions. It further called for expediting the implementation of the 765/400 kV Siwani substation and associated 400 kV transmission lines, including the Siwani-Jind and Siwani-Sonepat double-circuit lines, to improve transfer capacity and compliance with the N-1 criterion. Similar concerns were also flagged for Jhatikara substation in Delhi where both 765/400 kV transformers, each rated 1,500 MVA, were also found to be loaded beyond the permissible N-1 level during solar hours. The downstream 400 kV Jhatikara-Mundka lines were also found to be experiencing high loading during the solar hours. For this, NLDC recommended examining the options of upgrading the corridor with higher-capacity conductors or adding parallel transmission circuits to ease the loading constraints. To address overloading of 400 kV lines in the Jhatikara-Bamnauli-Dwarka section, it recommended expediting the commissioning of the 400 kV Jhatikara-Dwarka double-circuit line.

## TVS family files caveats in Chennai courts as Mallika, Lakshmi seek settlement

Tractor Farm Equipment Ltd (TAFE) Chairman and Managing Director (MD) Mallika Srinivasan and her daughter Lakshmi Venu on Tuesday expressed their desire for an amicable family settlement through transparent discussions and dialogue, even as members of the TVS family filed caveats against one another in two Chennai courts amid an ongoing dispute over the division of the family's wealth. Venu Srinivasan, chairman emeritus of TVS Motor Company, his wife Mallika Srinivasan, and their children Lakshmi Venu and Sudarshan Venu have filed several caveats on October 12 and 13. Four caveats each were filed in the City Civil Court and the Commercial Court in Chennai, indicating that the family members are preparing for possible legal proceedings as the dispute continues.

While Venu Srinivasan and son Sudarshan Venu are on one side, Srinivasan's daughter Lakshmi Venu and wife Mallika Srinivasan are on the other side. The filings place members of the family on opposing sides as they seek to safeguard their interests in event of further court proceedings. In a statement, a spokesperson reiterated the position taken by Mallika Srinivasan and Lakshmi Venu on resolving the differences amicably. "As stated earlier in the joint statement, Lakshmi Venu and Mallika Srinivasan reiterate their desire for an amicable resolution through transparent discussions and dialogue," the spokesperson said on Tuesday.

Dispute settlement, legal precaution The statement signals that Mallika Srinivasan and Lakshmi Venu continue to favour discussions as a way to settle the dispute. However, the caveat filings suggest that the parties are also taking legal precautions in anticipation of potential proceedings. The filings in both the City Civil Court and the Commercial Court indicate that the parties are preparing to protect their respective positions should the matter come before the courts. A caveat is a legal notice filed by a person who wants to be heard before a court passes an order on an application that



may affect their interests. Such a filing seeks to ensure that the court gives the caveator an opportunity to present their position before passing an order without hearing them. "Rightful economic ownership" The larger TVS family partition, agreed upon in 2020 and implemented subsequently, was carried out through a process involving the relevant stakeholders, Lakshmi and Mallika said in a joint statement earlier this month. They, however, maintained that the same process has not taken place for the economic interests within the Venu Srinivasan family. "The fundamental issue is not about management positions which have been compensated appropriately and commensurately. It is about the fair recognition of rightful economic ownership, which remains unresolved," they said. Mallika Srinivasan is Chairman and MD of TAFE while Lakshmi is its Vice Chairman. Lakshmi is also ED-MD of Sundaram-Clayton. Sudarshan Venu is Chairman and MD of TVS Motor. TAFE forms part of the Amalgamations Group, a separate family business group in which Mallika Srinivasan is a shareholder. TAFE has no bearing on the economic settlement within the Venu Srinivasan family and should not be conflated with it, Mallika Srinivasan said.

## TB patients before patents: India rejects TB Alliance's BPaL patent application

The Indian Patent Office has refused a patent application filed by the Global Alliance for TB Drug Development, known as TB Alliance, for a combination antibacterial composition and short-course treatment regimen for drug-resistant tuberculosis (DR-TB). The regimen, known as BPaL, combines bedaquiline, pretomanid and linezolid. The order, issued on October 27, 2026, under Section 15 of the Patents Act, 1970, followed two pre-grant oppositions filed in July 2020.

The Controller upheld objections relating to lack of novelty, lack of inventive step, non-patentability and insufficient disclosure, concluding that the application did not meet the requirements of Indian patent law. For TB survivors and public-health advocates, the decision is an important milestone in efforts to protect access to affordable treatment. However, rejecting a patent application does not automatically lower medicine prices or guarantee the immediate availability of generic alternatives.

What is BPaL, and why does it matter?

BPaL comprises bedaquiline, pretomanid and linezolid. For eligible patients with drug-resistant TB, it offers a shorter, all-oral treatment option that can reduce the burden of prolonged therapy. India's National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP) has also adopted the six-month BPaLM regimen, which adds moxifloxacin to the three BPaL medicines, for eligible patients with multidrug- or rifampicin-resistant TB. Shorter treatment can ease the burden on patients, families and healthcare services. However, treatment eligibility, drug safety and monitoring must continue to follow clinical guidance and national protocols. Given India's

substantial TB burden, access to effective and affordable treatment remains essential to improving patient outcomes and advancing the country's TB elimination goals.

What the decision means for patients

Ganesh Acharya, a two-time TB survivor and chair of TB People India Acharya, who had opposed the patent plea, described the refusal as a victory for people affected by drug-resistant TB, saying: "Medicines must serve people, not monopolies. Affordable access to life-saving TB treatment is a right, not a privilege."

He also cautioned that rejecting a patent is only the first step towards ensuring that everyone who needs BPaL can access quality-assured treatment without financial hardship or delays. The ruling removes this particular potential patent barrier to generic competition. But it does not set prices, automatically approve generic products or guarantee uninterrupted supplies. The government, NTEP, procurement agencies and other stakeholders must ensure timely purchasing, reliable supply chains and affordable access across the country. Continued investment in TB services, safety monitoring and community participation will also be crucial. Two pre-grant oppositions challenged the application. The application, numbered IN201817014361 and filed on April 16, 2018, faced two separate pre-grant oppositions. The first was filed jointly by Eldred Tellis and Acharya. The second was filed by the Delhi Network of Positive People (DNP+). Both challenges were brought under Section 25(1) of the Patents Act, 1970, which allows any person to oppose a patent application before a patent is granted.

## How brain stroke survivors fought their way back: From struggling to swallow to resuming work

For a 43-year-old bank manager in Bengaluru, life changed in an instant when he suddenly lost his balance and struggled to swallow. "Slurring, he told his wife to rush him to hospital. And that saved him," says Dr Lakshmi Krishna V, consultant neurologist at Manipal Hospital, Electronics City. He did intravenous thrombolysis, a treatment used in eligible patients to restore blood flow in certain types of strokes. And his recovery was encouraging. Within two months, he had regained sufficient function to return to work. "This case illustrates an important goal of stroke care: helping patients reclaim their everyday lives," he says.

But recovery does not always follow such a clear trajectory. Dr Sonal Gupta, Principal Director & HOD, Neuro and Spine Surgery, Fortis Hospital, Shalimar Bagh, New Delhi, recalls another patient who survived a major brain haemorrhage but continues to experience significant functional limitations. His recovery has been slower than his family had hoped. Determined to explore available options, his son enrolled him in a rehabilitation programme combining physical rehabilitation, occupational therapy and speech therapy, alongside repetitive transcranial magnetic stimulation (rTMS), a non-invasive technique that uses repeated magnetic pulses to stimulate specific brain regions and may support recovery of functions such as movement and speech after a stroke. "He has improved a lot now, his speech is decipherable. This case tells us that surviving a stroke is only the beginning. What follows can shape a person's ability to live, work and participate in family life," she says.

Rehabilitation: The bridge between survival and independence Stroke can leave survivors with far more than weakness or paralysis. Depending on the area of the brain affected, they may experience difficulties with speech, swallowing, communication, memory, cognition, balance and emotional well-being. These difficulties can affect everyday activities, relationships and the ability to live independently. "Rehabilitation must therefore be viewed as an integral part of stroke care — not simply a final stage after emergency treatment. The goal extends beyond survival to helping people recover function and participate in daily life to the greatest extent possible," says Dr Gupta. Dr Krishna emphasises a personalised approach. "One has to connect treatment and rehabilitation with a patient's real-life goals. Returning to work was a significant milestone for my patient because it enabled him to resume an important part of his life. So that shaped his rehabilitation." Early rehabilitation: Building the foundation for recovery Rehabilitation should begin as soon as the patient's medical condition permits. In the early stages, it may include appropriate positioning, gentle joint movements, prevention of contractures, management of muscle tone, sitting balance and gradual mobilisation. For people with severe disability, supported sitting and carefully supervised tilt-table sessions may help introduce upright positioning and prepare them for further movement. The programme must progress according to the patient's condition and tolerance.

"Recovery is not a single event. It is a gradual process in which each stage builds on the gains achieved earlier," says Dr Gupta. The first three to six months are often an important period for recovery, with substantial improvements frequently occurring early on. "Early, appropriate rehabilitation can help survivors work towards regaining movement, communication skills, confidence and independence. Medical care must also address complications and other health risks that could interfere with recovery," adds Dr Krishna. Why rehabilitation must be multidisciplinary Stroke can affect several aspects of functioning simultaneously, so rehabilitation often requires a coordinated team. Depending on the patient's needs, this may include the treating neurologist or neurosurgeon, a rehabilitation physician, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists, swallowing specialists, clinical psychologists,



psychiatrists, rehabilitation nurses and caregivers. Physiotherapy focuses on movement, balance and mobility. Occupational therapy helps people practise the activities needed for everyday life, while speech and language therapy addresses communication and swallowing difficulties. Cognitive and psychological support are particularly important. "The programme should be adapted as the patient's needs change, with regular reassessment of progress and goals," says Dr Gupta.

Recovery should be measured not only through improvements in movement but also by whether a person can participate more fully in everyday life. Regaining independence may mean returning to familiar routines, reconnecting with family and community, or gradually resuming responsibilities. "Progress will differ from one survivor to another, so rehabilitation goals need to reflect individual abilities, circumstances and priorities," explains Dr Gupta. Yet returning to employment after a stroke may require a gradual resumption of duties, workplace adjustments or additional support, depending on physical, cognitive and psychological needs. "Encouragement from family members and employers, together with a coordinated rehabilitation plan, can help make the transition easier. The broader lesson is that rehabilitation should consider what matters to the individual, not only what can be measured in a clinical assessment," says Dr Krishna. Technology can support rehabilitation, but it cannot replace it.

Dr Gupta, who has worked with robotic rehabilitation, says it can offer additional support for selected stroke survivors, particularly those who need assistance practising repetitive, task-specific movements. "Robotic systems can provide controlled and repeatable movement, adjust assistance and help therapists monitor performance. Some incorporate visual feedback, interactive games or auditory cues to encourage engagement. Broadly, these systems include exoskeleton robots and end-effector robots. They can complement conventional physiotherapy and occupational therapy by supporting additional practice, but they are not replacements for comprehensive rehabilitation," she says. Dr Sonal also uses rTMS. "Its rationale is linked to neuroplasticity, the brain's capacity to reorganise and adapt after injury. The use of such technology should be guided by appropriate clinical assessment and integrated into an individualised programme," she says. Families are partners in the journey. The patient with persistent disability following a major brain haemorrhage illustrates the important role families can play. "My patient's son has taken an active role in exploring options and arranging a programme that brings together physical rehabilitation, occupational therapy, speech therapy and rTMS. Family involvement is especially important when progress is slow or the survivor remains dependent," says Dr Gupta. Ultimately, stroke rehabilitation must be judged by how far it helps a person return to living, not simply by improvements recorded during therapy. The ability to eat independently, communicate with loved ones, manage daily routines or return to work can each represent a meaningful gain. These outcomes require clinicians to look beyond the site of the brain injury and understand the person's life, priorities and circumstances.

## ‘In end overs, bowler is under more pressure’: Tilak Varma on pacing run chases



Tilak Varma of India plays a shot during the 4th T20I match between India and West Indies at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium, Hyderabad, India on October 14, 2026. Tilak Varma of India plays a shot during the 4th T20I match between India and West Indies at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium, Hyderabad, India on October 14, 2026. (CREIMAS) India vice-captain Tilak Varma has earned a reputation as a chaser in the last 12 months, with the batter showing that quality in the second T20I vs New Zealand in the ongoing series, where he and Nitish Reddy pulled off a

tense chase. Ahead of the 4th T20I, Tilak opened up on how he likes to pace the chase.

“In the end overs, as a batsman, the bowler is under far more pressure than I am. That positive thought is constantly running in my head: the bowler is under more pressure, so they are bound to leak runs,” he said in a pre-match press conference on Thursday. The Mumbai Indians batter also said that moving down from number three to five in the batting order has led to a slight change in his mindset and he now eyes boundaries from ball one instead of trying to settle in first. “I already had the power game; I have scored runs at number three as well. Now, batting at number five or six, I think about going for a boundary off the very first ball only if it’s there to be hit,” he said. “Otherwise, I focus on taking the game deep. I take a bit more time. Initially, I focus on singles and doubles, finding gaps for fours or two runs,” he added. With India already 3-0 up in the series, Tilak said that they have a real opportunity to go for the clean sweep. “We are thinking this is a great opportunity to achieve a clean sweep. The next goal is to win the upcoming match and give the Indian crowd a great chance to witness a 5-0 series win,” he said. India will play the 4th T20I in Auckland, followed by the 5th and final match of the T20I series in Hamilton.

## Mumbai Indians continue overhaul of coaching setup as Malinga, Mhambrey depart

GNS News Agency, Oct 30

Mumbai Indians have parted ways with Lasith Malinga, Paras Mhambrey and Carl Hopkinson, making the move official with a social media post thanking the trio for their contributions. This comes just days after the five-time Indian Premier League (IPL) champions parted ways with head coach Mahela Jaywardene with West Indies’ Kieron Pollard appointed as head coach. “Lasith Malinga, Paras Mhambrey and Carl Hopkinson will be moving on from their respective roles in the men’s team coaching setup,” Mumbai said while thanking each of them for their commitment, contribution and service to the franchise.

Malinga has been an integral part of the Mumbai Indians family and one of the most iconic figures in the franchise’s history. He spearheaded Mumbai’s bowling attack and played a defining role in four of Mumbai’s IPL title triumphs besides the 2011 Champions League T20 victory. After retiring, Malinga returned as a mentor and coach for Mumbai Indians. “Lasith’s journey with Mumbai Indians has been truly special. His passion, competitive spirit and commitment to the team have inspired generations of players. His legacy will forever remain an important part of Mumbai Indians,” the franchise said in a statement.

Mhambrey meanwhile shared a long association with Mumbai Indians, first from 2010 to 2017 before subsequently returning in 2024. “Across both spells, Paras has brought immense experience, dedication and a deep understanding of the MI culture. His contribution to developing and nurtur-



ing the team’s bowling talent, along with the relationships he has built over the years, has been greatly appreciated,” Mumbai said in the statement. Carl Hopkinson had joined Mumbai Indians ahead of the 2025 season, bringing valuable international experience from his time with the England men’s team. “His professionalism, expertise and commitment to improving the team’s fielding standards have been valued throughout his time with the franchise,” MI said. Mumbai Indians went on to add: “Mumbai Indians extend their heartfelt gratitude to Lasith, Paras and Carl for their contributions to the team and the wider MI family. Their commitment, the relationships they have built and the memories they have helped create will always be part of our journey. We wish each of them the very best in their future endeavours. Once MI, Always MI.”

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## Waqar Younis decodes why modern-day bowlers are losing pace and breaking down

Genuine pace is becoming a rare commodity in cricket these days. What’s even more puzzling is that bowlers who break into international cricket with searing pace get slower within years, contrary to pacers like Shoaib Akhtar and Wasim Akram, who went decades bowling at roughly the same speed. Pakistan pace legend Waqar Younis has an explanation for what has changed in modern-day cricket that has caused this ‘pace drain’. “Don’t forget that cricket itself has changed. When we used to play, cricket was different. Test cricket was given the highest preference, followed by One Day cricket. One Day cricket was there in our times but T20 didn’t exist. That was a major factor, and we had plenty of time to prepare ourselves,” Younis said on the Unplugged podcast with Shubhankar Mishra. “As for modern-day cricketers—setting India aside for a moment, leave India out of it—cricketers from all over the rest of the world travel around, play in leagues worldwide. I think the reason is that when you play so much cricket... and don’t make the mistake of thinking T20 cricket is easy. It might seem like it’s just four overs, but the pressure those four overs create on you is probably more than even a full 10-over spell in a One-Day match. That’s because your neck is on the line; every single ball is tough for you. “So when you start out, you bowl at 150 km/h, but after a while, you have to keep learning new things. You have to learn: How do I bowl a slower ball? How do I bowl a wide yorker? How do I survive? The question becomes: How do I survive? Now, once



the thought of survival enters your mind, that 150 km/h speed is gone. Understand that at 150 km/h, you should be in control all the time—not the batter. But on today’s pitches, with the kind of batters playing now, when they hit you for two boundaries—which is very common these days—your mindset as a bowler instantly shifts,” Younis explained. Younis said that it was up to cricket boards to protect their pacers. “It is crucial for all cricket boards—like England has done, and Australia to some extent as well—to keep your Test bowling unit separate. Have them play four-day cricket, three-day cricket, or whatever long-format cricket you have. That unit should be separate so they can practice bowling 20 to 25 overs a day while maintaining 150 km/h, because in Test cricket, you don’t have that fear.

## Ashwin predicts which team Hardik can lead in IPL after Mumbai Indians



Hardik Pandya’s second stint at Mumbai Indians has not gone to plan; he couldn’t get the best out of the side from a captaincy perspective, nor could he sustain a run of scores or wicket-taking streaks with his own performance. In the end, there were murmurs about the unrest in the dressing room, and the tough call of moving on from Hardik had come. Former Indian cricketer R Ashwin predicted the teams Hardik could join. A move to Kolkata Knight Riders would be good for him because it could also give him an opportunity to become captain.

“KKR have great potential because Hardik can also become the captain there. They could offer Varun

Chakaravarthy for him. But as long as Abhishek Nayar is there, I don’t think Varun will move from KKR. Harshit Rana and Rinku Singh could be other options. With RR (Rajasthan Royals), it could be Yashasvi Jaiswal and Sam Curran, or Brijesh Sharma or Tushar Deshpande. It could also be Jaiswal with Yash Raj Punja or Bishnoi,” Ashwin said on his YouTube channel.

Speaking about Mumbai Indians, the former off-spinner was adamant that they need an Indian keeper and also a good set of bowlers. “MI desperately need an Indian keeper. They will also look to strengthen their bowling, which has been dismal the last few years. PBKS with Omarzai could interest MI. No one is talking about GT, but they could get involved by giving Rashid Khan for Hardik,” Ashwin said. Ashwin also acknowledged that in addition to the above-mentioned teams, there are other teams in the race for Pandya.

“There are as many as six teams in battle for Hardik Pandya, is what I hear. But I don’t think that’s the case, as LSG aren’t in the race. It’s mainly CSK (Chennai Super Kings), KKR, RR, GT (Gujarat Titans) and PBKS (Punjab Kings). I also think captaincy isn’t a must for Hardik anymore in his next franchise. He will just want to go to the ideal franchise for him, as he’s keen to move on from MI,” said Ashwin

## Rahane urges not to ‘overthink’ Bhuvneshwar’s performances and ‘no reason to write him off’

GNS News Agency, Oct 30

Bhuvneshwar Kumar’s much-awaited comeback in the Indian colours hasn’t gone according to plan. He conceded 49, 50, and 40 runs in three consecutive T20I games, picking up just one wicket. At times, especially with the new ball, he showed what he can deliver with his swing, but he was also quite rusty in other phases of the game. Former Indian cricketer Ajinkya Rahane urged people not to overanalyse Bhuvneshwar’s performance and was adamant that there was no reason to write him off yet.

“I don’t think we should judge him or overthink how he has bowled. He is an experienced player and would certainly reflect on where he fell short and what he could have done better. As far as his performances are concerned, ups and downs are part of the game. Sometimes, as a bowler, you may not find your rhythm, but that is no reason to write him off. Bhuvneshwar Kumar would certainly know what he could have done better,” Rahane said on his YouTube channel. Instead of being critical of his performances, Rahane said people should appreciate the comeback he has made. “For me, the biggest story is that he has made a comeback at this age. We should learn from this that, as a bowler, you must never give up. Keep doing your job, and things will eventually fall into place. You never know; he could take five wickets in the next match, and things could change im-



mediately. Bhuvneshwar is a bowler who certainly reflects on his game, but he is also confident in his abilities and is a confident person overall,” he said.

While Bhuvneshwar did look off-colour, his partner in crime Arshdeep Singh bowled well in the series. “Talking about Arshdeep, he looked in very good form and displayed a great rhythm. He picked up wickets in the powerplay, both in the previous match and in the third T20I. He is a very important player for the Indian team. He has played more than 100 T20Is and is approaching the 150-wicket mark,” Rahane said about him.

## East Bengal can’t stop scoring; fatigue impacts teams

GNS News Agency, Oct 30

While East Bengal can’t seem to stop scoring, most of the other teams found it tougher to hold on to leads in the latest round of matches in the 2026/27 Indian Super League (ISL). There were two goalless matches this week, Odisha FC-NorthEast United before Kerala Blasters and Mumbai City drew a blank too. It didn’t prevent the Blasters fans from coming out in large numbers as usual and creating an entertaining spectacle, even though the football on display didn’t always match their enthusiasm. Only four of the 13 shots their side took were on target. That and much more to dissect at the end of the latest match week of the 2026/27 ISL. Let’s dive in:

Late goals galore and Punjab are loving it Out of the 18 matches played thus far in the 2026/27 ISL, 13 have featured goals scored in the 80th minute or later. No one is loving it more than Punjab FC, who have taken advantage of players getting sapped of energy towards the end of games even in these opening weeks, securing either an equaliser or a winner in the final few minutes. The efforts of a fresh substitute running at the opposition defence have been crucial to Punjab getting each of these late goals. It was 68th-minute substitute Bishu in their opening match against Odisha FC, who lurked into space unnoticed by opposition defenders and before they knew what had happened, he had squared the ball for Raphael Messi Boulou to score the winner in the fourth minute of added time. In their second game against Mumbai City, 77th-minute substitute Konsam Sanathoi Singh kept charging at the tired defence, which was crucial to another substitute Gurkirat Singh scoring a 90th-minute equaliser. Konsam was brought on at the start of the second half in this week’s fixture against Churchill Brothers, and he scored the winner in the fifth minute of added time. Eight. That is the number of times the word “fitness” was mentioned in the post-match press conference after the goalless draw between Kerala Blasters and Mumbai City FC. It was the first game in hot and humid Kochi and head coach Ashley Westwood’s Blasters had altogether run



about 98.8km. The Englishman said that with hardly any pre-season, their fitness levels and stamina are still building up to full capacity. He also stated “It’s not an excuse” a number of times to cushion any negative impact of his reasoning. Late goals tend to be attributed to defenders feeling fatigued towards the end of games. This season, it has become common to see at least one player going down with cramps after the 70th minute. However, there seems to be no consensus yet on how much having a full pre-season and matches has helped teams physically. Mohun Bagan Super Giant coach Panagiotis Dilmeris, in fact, had said earlier that playing all the way to the final of the Durand Cup and then in the IFA Shield and the Calcutta Football League cost his players some of their “aerobic and anaerobic capacity”.

East Bengal juggernaut One side that hasn’t needed late goals, or broken a metaphorical sweat, has been defending champions East Bengal, who hammered Inter Kashi 5-1. They have only played two matches thus far this season, so it is still early days, but scoring nine goals and conceding one in their first two games qualifies as a flying start. The first goal they scored at the Balewadi Stadium on Friday sums it up. Some very slick one-touch football between Mohammed Rashid, Ake Arnaud and Dani Ramirez brought East Bengal racing into the Inter Kashi box. Ramirez skipped the ball over a sliding defender and then chipped it almost nonchalantly over goalkeeper Albino Gomes.

## Malinga, Mhambrey and Hopkinson exit Mumbai Indians coaching setup

Mumbai: Mumbai Indians on Thursday announced that they had parted ways with bowling coaches Lasith Malinga and Paras Mhambrey, as well as fielding coach Carl Hopkinson, ahead of IPL 2027. The exit of the three coaches signals a major overhaul of the five-time IPL champions’ coaching setup, with head coach Mahela Jayawardene having been replaced by Kieron Pollard last week.

“Mumbai Indians today announced that Lasith Malinga, Paras Mhambrey and Carl Hopkinson will be moving on from their respective roles in the men’s team coaching setup, thanking each of them for their commitment, contribution and service to the franchise,” MI said in an official statement. Former Sri Lankan pacer Malinga had a long association with Mumbai Indians, first as a player and later as a member of the coaching staff. “Lasith Malinga has been an integral part of the Mumbai Indians family and one of the most iconic figures in the franchise’s history,” MI said.

“From spearheading MI’s bowling attack and playing a defining role in four IPL title triumphs and the 2011 Champi-



ons League T20 victory to returning as a mentor and coach, Lasith’s journey with MI has been truly special. “Mhambrey joined MI’s support staff after completing his coaching stint with the Indian team in October 2024. “Paras Mhambrey has shared a long and valued association with Mumbai Indians, first from 2010 to 2017 and subsequently returning in 2024,” MI said.”

# The One About Matthew Perry review: Friends co-stars’ absence keeps it an intimate affair



The One About Matthew Perry review: Friends fans were bummed when they learnt that none of Matthew Perry’s co-stars from the seminal sitcom agreed to be a part of Emmy Award-winning filmmaker Mary Robertson’s three-part docuseries on the late actor. Ever since Perry, who played the sarcastic connoisseur Chandler Bing on the show, died on this day three years ago, all his five F.R.I.E.N.D.S. have largely kept a long yet dignified silence on the tragedy. By giving the docuseries a pass, they actually end up doing it a favour, since it gets more room and spotlight for Perry’s friends, sans any caps lock or periods in between.

Matthew Perry’s life through his friendsThere’s an overarching narration by Perry’s own voice — through his tell-all interviews over the years — that serves as the spine of the docuseries. But peppered all over it are accounts of two of his closest, longtime friends — Roger Castillo and David Pressman. They lend not only a beating heart to the proceedings, but also pockets of gallows humour that serve as the irrefutable litmus test of their friendship with Perry, more than anything else. After all, he’s the man who famously wrote in his 2022 memoir Friends, Lovers, and the Big Terrible Thing, “It is very odd to live in a world where if you died, it would shock people but surprise no one.”

His prophecy rang true because all his friends — including half-sister Mia Perry Bowick — validate his prophecy that they saw his death coming. The only shocking aspect was the circumstance under which it happened. In fact, all of them admitted that, with his appearance on Friends: The Reunion in 2021, he “behaviourally” foretold his death. His exhaustion after filming the special was proof enough that he knew, in the deepest recesses of his heart, that he couldn’t go on for too long. His spokesperson may have dismissed the online chatter about the strain in his speech as a “dental issue” at the time, but Perry’s close ones pin it as the time when the actor had decided to hang up his boots. But Matthew Perry did strike back a year later, when he wrote his bestselling memoir, detailing his decades-long battle with drug abuse, alcoholism, and depression. Some of his friends and family speculate he’d never gone down the rabbit hole had he not met with an on-set skiing accident, that exposed him to prescriptive painkillers. The others observe that the highs and lows of an actor’s life — particularly while encountering the lull that followed the conclusion of Friends in 2004 — also served as a major catalyst. But Perry introduces drug addiction in his memoir — and in

turn, in the docuseries narrated from the grave — as just a friend, who after giving him the initial bouts of happiness, just turned on him one day.

And that’s exactly how the “the Big Terrible Thing” has been treated as The One About Mathew Perry. It’s probably like the former girlfriend, who’d get bowled over by Perry’s affable personality and self-deprecating humour. Even though she looks back at him fondly now, she can’t help but confess that he’d become too much to take on beyond a point. There’s be other exes who’d flag Perry just snapping out of relationships right when they’d start going somewhere. The docuseries briefly broaches his short-lived, fairly public romance with Julia Roberts after her cameo on Friends. Given she was at the peak of her Hollywood career, it’s quite a page out of the Notting Hill book. Because like Hugh Grant’s library store owner William Thacker in Roger Michell’s 1999 seminal romantic comedy, Perry also remained more or less of a commoner, at least when compared to his fellow Friends stars. He made several attempts at changing his perception and launching his career as a serious actor or a movie star, but his appeal would circle back to him at his funniest — as Chandler Bing — or at his darkest — him writing and fronting The End of Longing, a play on alcohol addiction. Like his Friends character, Perry’s primary identity became his dark comedy and witty barbs. Like his best friends on the show, no one knew what he was actually upto in life outside of that sense of humour.

Which is probably why Jennifer Aniston, Lisa Kudrow, Courteney Cox, David Schwimmer, and Matt LeBlanc did this docuseries a favour by giving it a miss. Their active participation could’ve taken the spotlight away from Perry, his life and struggles. Also, given his battle with drug addiction caused considerable scheduling delays in Friends, their accounts would be candid, yet one-note and measured. Aniston broke down even at the thought of re-watching Friends “after Matthew” on Variety’s Actor on Actor in June 2024. On the other hand, Kudrow admitted she’d never watched Friends until after the passing of Perry since that’s her way of remembering him.

Clearly, all of them are still grieving in one form or the other for Perry, with whom they shared screen space across a decade. One of the most beautiful anecdotes about the shooting of the show comes from Matthew’s sister, who recalled how he shot the memorable scene of his wedding with Monica (Courteney) while still in rehab. She revealed that the whole family was present then because they just took it to be Perry’s actual wedding, given the looming uncertainty about his recovery. “There was so much love between Matthew and Courteney — platonic love, but so much love,” she said. Maybe in Chandler — and that romantic track of misfits with Monica — Perry found his unfinished story. Chandler was his alter ego, had he not gone down the dark path he did. It’s then ironic that his co-stars from that show gave Perry his due by keeping a distance from his docuseries. More than two decades after the show ended, finally came The One About (just) Matthew Perry.

that bad,” he added. During the same press conference, Boney Kapoor revealed that he had lost more than 14 kg while preparing for the procedure. “During the process, I remembered my wife’s advice, who wanted me to lose weight before the hair transplant, so I went on a diet and lost about 14 kg, and now I am in better shape. It’s hard for me to exercise, but yet, after I shed some weight, I went to the doctor for a hair transplant,” he said. The producer also joked that Sridevi had been apprehensive about his decision, believing that he might become even better-looking after the procedure. However, in a separate interview with Chandra Kochhar, Boney Kapoor recalled how Sridevi had encouraged him to explore the possibility of a hair transplant much earlier. “When Sri was there, she was after me and took me to the hospital once for donor hair. I used to think at that time, ‘When I have Sri with me, why do I need to put hair? I won’t get a more beautiful girl than her,’” he said.

## Sylvester Stallone recalls being sent to a ‘snake pit’ at 16

Los Angeles: Hollywood star Sylvester Stallone has opened up about one of the most difficult chapters of his life, recalling his experiences at a tough school when he was 16, where punishment meant being sent to a place known as the “Snake Pit”. Stallone took to Instagram, where he shared a video talking about going to a “tough school” at the age of 16, which exposed him to frightening situations that he would never otherwise have encountered. He wrote in the caption: This was one of the hardest parts of The Steps to write. I was 16 years old and at a rough school where punishment could mean being sent to a place we called the ‘Snake Pit.’ In the clip, where he said: “One of the hardest chapters in this book to write is what happened to me when I was 16. I went to a very, very tough school, basically almost a kind of reform school. And when you were punished, they took you to a certain building called the snake pit.” He added that persevering through those hard moments made him feel he would be ready to face any obstacle that came his way. Stallone said: “And there you are exposed to things that you’ll never be exposed to, scary things. And I thought if I could persevere, empower through this kind of stuff, I’ll be ready to face any kind of challenge that ever comes my way. And then it happens.” Talking about the Hollywood legend, he made his screen debut in the 1970 with “The Party at Kitty and Stud’s”. Before becoming an icon, Stallone took on a few uncredited roles in films like Downhill Racer and Bananas. However, his breakthrough and official launch into mainstream cinema came in 1974 with his starring role in “The Lords of Flatbush”. Shortly after, he wrote and starred in the 1976 blockbuster “Rocky”, which established him as a global icon. Regarded as an icon of action cinema, Stallone after Rocky portrayed the PTSD-plagued soldier John Rambo in First Blood, a role he would play across five Rambo films. He then featured in films such as Cobra, Tango and Cash, Cliffhanger, Demolition Man, and The Specialist. At the height of his career, Stallone was known for his rivalry with Arnold Schwarzenegger. He was then seen in The Expendables film franchise. In 2013, he starred in the successful film Escape Plan and appeared in its sequels. In 2015, he returned to Rocky again with Creed, in which a retired Rocky mentors former rival Apollo Creed’s son Adonis Creed.

# Inside Arjun Bijlani’s 12,000-sq-ft Karjat farmhouse: Dream home with private pool, Jacuzzi



Popular television actor Arjun Bijlani recently made headlines after sharing pictures of his new villa during the ‘griha pravesh (housewarming) ceremony. While the property marked another milestone in the actor’s life, for Arjun, it was the realisation of a dream he had nurtured for years — a holiday home built from scratch, exactly as he had imagined it. “I would often go to other people’s farmhouses and holiday homes and dream that when I had one of my own, I would make it in a certain manner,” Arjun shared.

Spread across approximately 12,000 square feet, his Karjat property, with a sprawling 1,000-square-foot lawn, is designed around his vision of an all-white home. The actor recently offered a tour of his beautiful Tara Villa, which features a private swimming pool, a jacuzzi, expansive outdoor spaces and several personal touches that reflect the thought and effort that went into building it. Why Arjun Bijlani named his villa Tara

The name of the property holds special significance for Arjun and his family. Explaining the thought behind it, the actor told Pinkvilla, “While our Mumbai house is named after my mother, Shakti, we wanted to name our villa after my wife Neha’s mother, Tanuja. But as we lost Neha’s father earlier this year, we thought of naming it after him too. His name is Rakesh. Hence, TaRa.” The villa follows a predominantly white colour palette, from its grand entrance gate and exterior to its interiors and furniture. The result is a bright, elegant space that draws inspiration from Mediterranean and Greek architecture. A white entrance with a touch of tradition

The entrance opens into a beautifully landscaped pathway lined with neatly maintained plants, adding a splash of colour to the otherwise pristine white surroundings. The property has a separate division near the entrance, with the main kitchen on the ground floor and the servants’ quarters upstairs. Arjun has kept the main entrance of the house understated, with just a striking evil-eye symbol and an idol of Panchmukhi Hanuman. “We have added this on purpose to keep the buri nazar away from our home,” he explained. The living room carries the villa’s signature white aesthetic, with white walls, flowing curtains, plush seating and a dedicated entertainment area featuring a television. The dining space follows the same palette, creating a seamless visual flow throughout the ground floor. Inside Arjun Bijlani Karjat Villa. A Greece-themed living room with Indian touch. (Photo: Pinkvilla/YouTube) The only dramatic splash of colour comes from a snail-shaped rug in shades of blue, red and white, which adds character to the otherwise neutral space. Inside Arjun Bijlani Karjat Villa. The corner which Arjun Bijlani referred to as the mehengi wall. (Photo: Pinkvilla/YouTube) To the right of the main entrance is a cosy sitting area decorated with an assortment of artefacts. Pointing towards the collection, Arjun joked, “Yeh bahaut mehengi wall hai.” Explaining why, he said, “If you go and buy these artefacts, they will sell for thousands. When the contractor made this corner, I said, ‘Gaya mera Rs 2 lakh.’ But my wife spent a day bringing these artefacts, reducing the cost by lakhs.” The villa also has a dedicated kitchen area with a refrigerator, although it is not used extensively. Speaking about the living

room, Arjun revealed that he designed it himself. Pointing towards the seating, he added, “It is a recliner sofa. It was a dream.” While the colour palette takes inspiration from Greece, Arjun has ensured that the home retains its Indian identity. From the kalash kept after the griha pravesh ceremony to the Lakshmi-Ganesh idol, traditional elements have found a place alongside the contemporary interiors. Large windows offer beautiful views of the surrounding mountains, bringing the outdoors into the living space.

Behind the entertainment area is a staircase leading to Arjun’s bedroom, which continues the villa’s understated aesthetic with white and off-white tones complemented by touches of olive green. The bedroom opens into a dressing room and offers uninterrupted views of the mountains. An extended terrace further enhances the sense of space, making the room feel like a private retreat within the holiday home.

A terrace with a jacuzzi and a holiday-home vibe The terrace is among the most thoughtfully designed corners of the villa. Its black-and-white patterned flooring creates a striking contrast against the navy-blue sofas, while carefully arranged plants soften the space. There is ample room to walk around, sit back and enjoy the lush green views. The terrace also features a jacuzzi, making it an ideal spot to unwind. Explaining the idea behind the space, Arjun said, “It is a perfect spot to enjoy with your family when it’s raining. I have purposely made it like a cabana so that you can enjoy the weather outside.” Building the villa was a hands-on process for the actor. Several elements were redesigned and redone until they matched his vision. As Arjun put it, “It’s the small things that make a house a home.” A sprawling lawn, swimming pool and outdoor entertaining space While the interiors reflect Arjun’s love for understated elegance, it is the outdoor area that truly stands out. The villa features a beautifully maintained lawn, a swimming pool, landscaped pathways and generous open spaces for outdoor games. A serene Buddha sculpture adds to the tranquility of the garden, while a dedicated patch has been set aside for trees, plants and a small kitchen garden. The property also has ample space for hosting gatherings, making it more than just a private holiday retreat. Describing the villa’s transformation after sunset, Arjun said, “At night, with all the lighting, it feels like you are either in Dubai or Greece.” The outdoor area is particularly striking after dark, when the illuminated façade, pool and garden create a resort-like atmosphere.

Arjun Bijlani took three years to build his dream villa. Behind the finished property lies a journey that took three years, considerable planning and years of hard work. “I had first bought a plot. Then it took me some time to earn all that money to invest in building what I wanted. I would shoot in the mornings and come back in the evenings to decide the interiors and decor and supervise the construction,” Arjun recalled. His original plan was to purchase a single plot. However, he eventually took the risk of buying two. Today, one plot houses the villa, while the other has been developed into a sprawling lawn that can accommodate gatherings of more than 150 people. For Arjun, the journey was about more than acquiring a luxurious property. It was about creating something he had envisioned when he was still finding his feet in the entertainment industry. Recalling one particularly emotional moment, the actor said, “This one time, I was walking from a distance when I saw my entire villa from far. It was night. It looked so beautiful that I started crying. Soon, Neha came looking for me and, seeing me in tears, she too became emotional. It was a very sacred moment for us. She said, ‘You have done it, baby. I am so proud of you.’” For many, Tara Villa may be another addition to the actor’s achievements. For Arjun Bijlani, however, it represents years of aspiration, patience and perseverance — a dream that began with imagining what his own holiday home could look like and culminated in a space built entirely on his terms.

# Rajesh Kumar recalls how NEET paper leak shattered his family after a personal tragedy

Actor Rajesh Kumar, best known for playing Rosesh Sarabhai in Sarabhai vs Sarabhai, has recalled how the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) paper leak affected his family and explained why he believes those responsible for such incidents must be held accountable. He also spoke about an incident involving a producer who told him that actors who speak against the system could face difficulties getting work. In a conversation with Nidhi Vasandani on her podcast, Rajesh Kumar said that CJP is a representation of young people frustrated with the system. “CJP is a representation of a certain section of the youth, which makes up 55% of India,” he said.

Rajesh explained that young people have witnessed their parents struggle to provide them with higher education. They work hard to secure good ranks in competitive examinations, hoping to improve their futures and ease the burden on their families. When examination irregularities occur, it undermines their efforts. The actor then recalled a deeply personal experience involving his cousin’s daughter who had appeared for the medical entrance examination. “My first cousin had taken his daughter to Vaishno Devi. She had scored good marks in the NEET examination, the one which was cancelled due to the paper leak,” he said. Tragedy struck when his cousin died while travelling to Vaishno Devi. The NEET re-examination was scheduled just 13 days after his death, Rajesh recalled. “The 13th day after my brother’s death was the day of the NEET re-examination. I flew down to Delhi and took my niece there for the exam. There was a difference of 200 marks between her first result and the re-examination result. It had been only 13 days since her father’s death,” he said. Rajesh explained that his niece was dealing with the loss of her father while also facing uncertainty about her future.

“She didn’t have the time to prepare for another year, and her father was no longer there to support her. When such things happen in your personal life, you feel that someone in the system should be answerable. You wonder why they are not responding,” he said. The actor added that experiences such as these made him feel that the concerns of young people needed to be heard and addressed. Rajesh Kumar says producer warned him about pressure on actors. Rajesh Kumar also spoke about the pressure actors may face when they speak out against the system. Recalling a conversation with a producer, he said he was told that some actors could be denied work because of their public statements. “I was once speaking to a producer when I felt like supporting the cause. There was a fear that had been instilled in me. The producer told me that letters come from certain higher departments saying that actors who



have spoken against the system should not be signed. The pressure becomes immense,” he said. The actor credited CJP with giving people an opportunity to express views they might otherwise hesitate to voice. “CJP gave us that freedom of expression. Perhaps it was not just expressing its own views; it was also saying what I could not say. This system needed to be challenged in some way, and all of this had been building up,” Rajesh said.

Rajesh Kumar says Vijay could become India’s next PM. During the conversation, Rajesh Kumar was asked who he thought could become India’s next prime minister. He named Vijay, the actor-turned-politician who is currently serving as the chief minister of Tamil Nadu and leads the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK). Sharing his assessment, Rajesh said Vijay’s vision appeared to align with the aspirations of younger Indians. “My reading tells me that Vijay from TVK could be the next prime minister. He has a vision that matches this generation. He is 50 years old, which makes him closer to this generation. A 75- or 80-year-old statesman is not as close to this generation,” he said. Rajesh Kumar is best known for playing Rosesh Sarabhai, the poetry-loving son of Maya and Indravadan Sarabhai, in the popular sitcom Sarabhai vs Sarabhai. The show also starred Ratna Pathak Shah, Satish Shah, Sumeet Raghavan and Rupali Ganguly, and continues to enjoy a loyal following among Indian television audiences.