

## Kaushik Reddy denies threatening Kadiyam, seeks review of full Assembly video

Hyderabad: BRS MLA Padi Kaushik Reddy denied allegations that he threatened fellow legislator Kadiyam Srihari during the recent monsoon session of the Telangana Assembly and urged the Ethics Committee to examine the complete video footage before taking a decision.

In his explanation to the committee, Kaushik Reddy reportedly stated that he never told Kadiyam Srihari, "I will see your end," nor did he make unethical or improper gestures towards him. He claimed the allegations were based on a misinterpretation of the video and that his gestures had been taken out of context.

## Delhi police stop Revanth Reddy while heading to meet Rahul Gandhi

Hyderabad: Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy was stopped by Delhi Police on Wednesday while he was proceeding towards Barakhamba Road police station to express solidarity with Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, who was detained during protests against the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. Speaking outside the police station, Revanth Reddy demanded the withdrawal of the SIR and the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar. He said the Congress would continue its fight under Rahul Gandhi's leadership. He said the police action against Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi indicated the intolerance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

## BRS hits back at Jupally over Srisailem water, liquor remarks

Hyderabad: The BRS took strong exception to Excise Minister Jupally Krishna Rao's statement that the government would use Srisailem project water for liquor production. The party ridiculed the government's explanation that El Nino had caused power cuts and a shortage of irrigation water, but had not affected liquor production.

"El Nino appeared to affect electricity and irrigation for farmers but not liquor production and sales," BRS Legislature Party deputy leader T Harish Rao said, alleging that the Revanth Reddy government was more concerned about increasing liquor revenue than addressing farmers' and people's welfare.



# ‘Hubris of a failing govt’: Telangana CM on arrest of Congress leaders

Hyderabad, Oct 7 (IANS) Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy said on Tuesday that the 'unlawful' detention and arrest of the Leader of the Opposition (LoP) in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi, and other MPs from the Congress and INDIA bloc partners from both Houses, is a reflection and proof of the hubris of a failing government.

Clearly, the BJP-led government is afraid of Rahul Gandhi's leadership to fight to save India and its Constitution, and to commit to saving the voting rights of every Indian, he said in a statement.

"There are precedents in our country's history. The British Government also arrested Lokmanya Balgangadhar Tilak, Mahatma Gandhi, Pundit Nehru, Sardar Vallabhai Patel, Subhash Chandra Bose and other leaders at different times of our freedom struggle on similarly flimsy grounds," Reddy said.

"But as millions of citizens, especially youth, have become a part of this

struggle to save our voting rights, our democracy and our country's future, such actions shall not deter the opposition, but rather inadvertently, actually strengthen us," he said.

He called BJP the British Janata Party. "The British Janata Party (BJP) can rest assured; we are not going away from our determination and resolve to stake everything for the sake of the country. India shall fight till its last ounce of ability, and till democratic forces led by Rahul Gandhi triumph," he added.

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy stated that the forcible arrest of leaders who are peacefully agitating to protect democracy is 'undemocratic'.

He remarked that arrests, imprisonment, and lathi-charges are nothing new for the Gandhi family and Congress leaders.

## Telangana BJP leaders take Viksit Bharat pledge



Hyderabad, Oct 7 (IANS) BJP leaders in Telangana reaffirmed their collective commitment to realise the goal of Viksit Bharat by taking a pledge on Wednesday to mark Prime Minister Narendra Modi's completion of 25 years of uninterrupted public service as head of a government.

Union Minister for Coal and Mines G. Kishan Reddy, Telangana BJP President N. Ramchander Rao and other leaders participated in the 'Seva Jyoti Yatra' and 'Viksit Bharat Sankalp Sabha' here.

A massive bike rally, followed by the installation of the sacred 'Seva Jyoti', marked the programme held in Khairatabad.

The BJP leaers, along with party workers and citizens, watched Prime Minister Modi's address and took a collective pledge towards Viksit Bharat @ 2047.

Kishan Reddy said that the Prime Minister's clarion call for Viksit Bharat @ 2047, Atmanirbhar Bharat, India becoming the world's third-largest economy, a global manufacturing hub, hosting the Olympics and scaling new heights in space exploration is a resolve shared by 140 crore Indians.

Ramchander Rao posted on X that they took the Viksit Bharat Sankalp pledge along with our Karyakartas, fully echoing Prime Minister Modi's clarion call, "we will do it" for Viksit Bharat @ 2047.

Kishan Reddy said that the Prime Minister Modi's 25-year tireless journey of service as truly remarkable! "A great patriot who has stood firm without a single stain of corruption, facing numerous obstacles and conspiracies. From the level of Chief Minister, rising to Prime Minister with the blessings of the nation's people, he is leading the country forward with development and cutting-edge technology," the Union Minister said.

"From Gujarat to leading the whole of India.. The extraordinary journey of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji is unparalleled. It is a testament to his unwavering commitment to the people, his spirit of service and his firm resolve to build a self-reliant India. Let us all proudly celebrate the 25-year-long journey of exemplary service of our beloved Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji, who is inspiring crores of people while steering the nation toward the goal of 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047," Kishan Reddy said in a post on X.

Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar participated in the 'Viksit Bharat Sankalp Sabha' and 'Seva Jyoti Yatra' organised by the Karimnagar district unit of the BJP to commemorate 25 years of long and selfless public service of Prime Minister Modi.He stated that the messages delivered virtually on this occasion by Prime Minister Modi and BJP national President Nitin Nabin filled us all with great enthusiasm and inspiration.

## Telangana: 71.23 lakh voters cleared for inclusion in final electoral rolls



Hyderabad, Oct 7 (IANS) Over 71.23 lakh voters have been cleared for inclusion in the final electoral rolls in Telangana following the hearing and disposal of notices issued to them under the Special Intensive Revision (SIR).

Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) C. Sudharsan Reddy said that, as of October 7, a total of 71,23,526 electors had been found eligible for inclusion in the final electoral rolls.

A total of 92,88,180 notices were generated on account of logical discrepancies and non-mapping of records during the notices phase and the disposal of claims and objections under the SIR.

The election authorities delivered 91,92,625 notices.

According to the CEO, 95,555 notices are still pending delivery.

The claims and objections phase of the SIR process concluded on October 7, while the deadline for disposal of claims and objections is November 5, 2026.

The final electoral rolls will be published on November 9, 2026.

More than 73 lakh voters in Telangana were marked as ASDS (Absent, Shifted, Dead, Duplicate), while over 92 lakh voters were issued notices over discrepancies.

The Election Commission published the draft voter list on August 17 following door-to-door enumeration.

## Telangana CM orders notices to KCR, family over ‘missing’ land

Hyderabad, Oct 6 (IANS) Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Tuesday directed officials to issue notices to former Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhra Rao and his family members over 45 acres of 'missing' land.

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy on Tuesday ordered officials to identify 'missing' 45 acres of land in survey number 325 at Erravalli village in Siddipet district, where former Chief Minister and Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) president K. Chandrasekhra Rao (KCR) has his farmhouse.

The Chief Minister held a review of the lands concerning Erravalli and the adjacent Venkatapuram villages in Markook Mandal, Siddipet district.

As per the official records, a total of 388 acres of land is recorded under survey number 325 in Erravalli village.

The officials briefed the Chief Minister on the survey details for both villages and the details of the survey, which

identified only 343 acres.

According to a statement from the Chief Minister's Office (CMO), 45 acres of land are missing from the records for the particular survey number.

The Chief Minister instructed the officials to issue notices to former Chief Minister KCR and his family members, whose lands adjoin the area and submit their revenue records to the government.

CM Revanth Reddy said that the government is planning to distribute the land in survey number 325 to eligible local farmers.

He also ordered the construction of a "Telangana Martyrs' Colony" within survey number 325 for the families of those who sacrificed their lives during the Telangana movement.

The officials were also directed to allot housing plots to the martyrs' families and develop a colony with all necessary amenities.

## PM Modi's 25 years in leadership reflect India's transformation, rising ambitions: CM Naidu

Hyderabad, Oct 7 (IANS) Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Wednesday highlighted how Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 25 years in leadership reflect India's transformation and its rising national ambitions.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi marks 25 years of uninterrupted leadership as head of government, beginning with his oath as Gujarat Chief Minister on October 7, 2001, and continuing through three terms as Prime Minister of India.

In an opinion article in The Hindu, Naidu said, "In my 48 years in public life, I have seen governments change, economies transform, technologies disrupt the world, and leaders rise and fall. One lesson has only become clearer with time: leadership matters."

As Prime Minister Modi completes 25 uninterrupted years in executive office, the Andhra Chief Minister said, "I reflect on what makes his journey exceptional - clarity of vision, integrity, discipline, attention to detail and, above all, the ability to execute." He said that whether through a pandemic, wars, geopolitical uncertainty, or rapid technological change, "India has remained steady at the wheel." "We have expanded infrastructure at an unprecedented pace, strengthened welfare delivery, embraced technology, encouraged enterprise and emerged with greater confidence on the world stage," Naidu posted on X.



## 101 arrested in Telangana Cyber Security Bureau's crackdown across south India

Director Shikha Goel said on Wednesday.

This is the second simultaneous multi-state operation led by the TGCSB, demonstrating its continued efforts to identify, trace and apprehend cybercrime networks operating across state boundaries and exploiting multiple jurisdictions.

Goel, in a release, said that six dedicated special teams consisting of more than 100 TGCSB personnel were deployed for coordinated field-level action.

Of those arrested, 19 were identified as agents and 81 as mule account holders.

Kerala accounted for 35 arrests, while 22 accused

were arrested from Andhra Pradesh and 17 from Karnataka. 14 from Tamil Nadu, 12 from Telangana, and one from Puducherry. The operation also resulted in the seizure of several mobile phones, SIM cards, bank pass-books, and cheque books that were allegedly used in various fraudulent transactions. About Rs 17 crore in fraudulent transactions was traced through the mule accounts. The investigation revealed that the accused belonged to diverse age groups, professions and educational backgrounds. A majority of the accused, 82 per cent, were in the 20-50 years age group, while 17 per cent were above 50 years.



Hyderabad, Oct 7 (IANS) In a coordinated and comprehensive multi-state cybercrime operation across southern India, the Telangana Cyber Security Bureau (TGCSB) has arrested 101 accused, including 18 women, and traced fraudulent transactions amounting to about Rs 17 crore.

The two-week operation commenced on September 23 and covered Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, and Puducherry, targeting individuals and networks involved in various forms of cyber-enabled financial crimes, TGCSB

# Indian Chronicle

## English Daily

### Form 7 misuse—a threat to the right to vote

Democracy is facing a grave threat under the guise of 'amendments'. A systematic attack is being launched on the right to vote. Through irregularities exposed on various occasions and court interventions, facts are coming to light one by one.

Under Article 326 of the Constitution of India, the right to vote was initially granted to those who had completed 21 years of age, regardless of caste, religion, property, gender or education. Currently, every citizen who has completed 18 years of age has the right to vote.

In a democratic system, the 'right to vote' is a powerful weapon in the hands of the common citizen. This fundamental right, conferred by the Constitution, gives citizens the opportunity to elect their representatives. The incidents coming to light during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) 2026 process undertaken in Telangana are shocking to pro-democracy voices. It is deeply tragic that Forms 6, 6A, 7, 8, intended for correcting and updating the voters' list, have been turned into conspiratorial weapons in the hands of political rivals to delete voters.

The Election Commission is a crucial institution in India's democratic framework, entrusted with conducting free and fair elections, protecting voting rights, and upholding faith in the Constitution. However, growing concerns have been raised about voter deletions and the subsequent restoration of names only after reapplication. Recent incidents in Telangana have cast doubt on the credibility and impartial functioning of the Election Commission. It is an unfortunate day for Indian democracy that forms designed for honest election management and fair maintenance of electoral rolls are being misused through the Election Commission itself to eliminate the votes of rival factions.

The High Court's warning that no voter's name can be deleted without prior notice and a transparent process serves as a stark wake-up call for officials. Commotion ensued as evidence surfaced revealing the abuse of various forms introduced by the Election Commission to ensure transparency in electoral rolls. Allegations are mounting that votes are being deleted and fake voters enrolled in a systematic manner. Victims allege that Form 7 is being weaponised to cause widespread voter deletion.

Form 7 is meant for requesting the removal of a voter's name from the list in cases of death, relocation to another area, or duplicate entry. However, this form has now been transformed into a political tool. A direct indication of this is the large-scale submission of pre-printed Form 7 applications with names and addresses in several constituencies of Hyderabad, such as Musheerabad and Bahadurpura.

As per the rules, a voter must personally sign and submit the application. However, conspiracies were hatched to target voters belonging to a specific community or supporting a particular political party, with Form 7 applications being submitted without their knowledge to delete their votes. It was also found that false information was being submitted on a massive scale in Form 6 (intended for enrolling new voters) and Form-6A (intended for Overseas Indian electors). By enrolling ineligible individuals and creating duplicate votes for the same person in different locations, the representation of genuine voters is being systematically diluted.

Illegally stripping a citizen of the right to vote amounts to erasing their existence and decision-making power. Systematically deleting the votes of a specific community or supporters of an opposing party for political gain violates the foundational principles and spirit of the Constitution. Removing a constitutionally guaranteed right without prior notice or inquiry is an infringement on a citizen's fundamental right. Turning the voters' list into a chaotic mix through bogus applications prevents a true democratic mandate. This compromises electoral transparency and creates an environment where victories are achieved through illegal votes, giving the impression that avenues for irregularities are being facilitated through the Election Commission itself—the very body responsible for conducting fair elections. When a genuine voter arrives at a polling station only to hear "Your vote has been deleted," their faith in the democratic system and the electoral process collapses.

### Essay and Drawing Competitions Held Under Seva Sankalp Abhiyan

"Former Corporator Bandaru Srivani and Viksit Bharat Uppal Assembly In-charge Gorige Krishna Attend as Chief Guests



""RAMANTHAPUR, OCTOBER 7 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Essay writing and drawing competitions were organised for students of VMH School in Ramanthapur Division as part of the Seva Sankalp Abhiyan, with the objective of creating awareness among students about Prime Minister Narendra Modi's services, development initiatives and his role in nation-building. Former Division Corporator Bandaru Srivani and Viksit Bharat Uppal Assembly In-charge Gorige Krishna attended the programme as chief guests. Students participated enthusiastically in the competitions and showcased their creativity and talent. Speaking on the occasion, Bandaru Srivani said essay writing and drawing competitions help bring out the hidden creativity, talent and thinking abilities of students. She said participation in arts and other creative activities along with academics helps enhance students' self-confidence. Such programmes, she added, play an important role in the overall development of students and contribute to their bright future. "Uppal BJP Convenor Balachander, Bandaru Venkata Rao, Division President Santosh Gupta, VMH School Correspondent Sheelam Somashekar Goud,

### UPPAL MLA BANDARI LAKSHMA REDDY Launches CC Road Works in Adarsh Nagar



"CHILKANAGAR, OCTOBER 7 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy formally launched the construction of a cement concrete (CC)

road at Road No. 12 in Adarsh Nagar Colony of Chilkana Division. The MLA performed the traditional inauguration by breaking a coconut and commencing the works. During the programme, residents of the colony brought several issues, including poor roads, drainage problems and other basic infrastructure concerns, to the MLA's attention. After inspecting the issues, Lakshma Reddy assured the residents that the problems would be addressed in a phased manner in coordination with the concerned officials. "He also assured that steps would be taken to complete pending development works at the earliest. The MLA stated that priority would be given to improving basic infrastructure in accordance with the needs of the people. "Former Chilkana Division president Palle Narsing Rao, senior leaders Gudi Madhusudan Reddy, Eerelli Ravinder Reddy, Cheryala Srinivas, Shanigaram Tirumalesh, Photola Raju, Palle Ramulu, Babu, Janardhan, Madhu Naik and Naresh, Shivaram, along with other local leaders, party workers, women and colony residents, participated in the programme.

### New Committee Formed for Uppal Market Hamali Workers Union

"UPPAL, OCTOBER 7 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): "A General Body meeting of the Hamali Workers Union was held at Uppal Market on Wednesday, during which a new committee was unanimously elected, said J. Venkanna, CITU Uppal Circle Secretary. R. Venkatesh was elected as President, while J. Bhaskar and Subhash were elected as Vice-Presidents. Bandi Mahesh was elected as Secretary, with J. Anji and B. Sairam as Assistant Secretaries and M. Kiran as Treasurer. B. Saidulu, CH. Mallesh, B. Balaji, G. Tukaram, B. Srikanth and D. Anjaneyulu were elected as committee members. Speaking on the occasion, CITU Uppal Circle Secretary J. Venkanna demanded that the government establish a separate welfare board for hamali workers. He also called for an increase in hamali rates in accordance with rising prices and urged the government to sanction double-bedroom houses to eligible hamali workers. He appealed to the government to immediately address the other



problems faced by hamali workers and ensure their welfare. Hamali Workers Union leaders and CITU leaders, including Urmila and Anjaneyulu, were present at the meeting.

### Pinapaka MLA participates in the Ninth Poshan Month programme of Anganwadis.



Ashwapuram, October 07, Indian Chronicle. ""Pinapaka MLA and Chairman of the Telangana Legislative Assembly ST Welfare Committee Payam Venkateshwarlu participated in the ninth Poshan Month 'Mana Anganwadi - Mana Badhyata' programme organised under the aegis of Anganwadi staff at the Rythu Vedika in Ashwapuram, Bhadradi Kothagudem district. On this occasion, he participated in the programme conducted on issues related to the health, nutrition, hygiene and health protection of pregnant women, lactating mothers and children, and learned about several aspects. On this occasion, MLA Payam Venkateshwarlu participated in the collective Srimantham ceremony organised for pregnant women, blessed them and conveyed his best wishes. He stated that the health of the mother and the health of the child are interlinked, and advised mothers to consume nutritious food and undergo regular medical check-ups during pregnancy. MLA Payam Venkateshwarlu inspected the nutrition exhibition arranged by the Anganwadi staff. He examined various nutritious food items, leafy greens, vegetables and pulses required for pregnant women, lactating mothers and children, and enquired with the Anganwadi staff about their nutritional values and health benefits. He stated that health can be improved by making locally available leafy greens, vegetables and nutritious food items part of the daily diet. In the same programme, an alphabet-learning ceremony was conducted for the children, and he helped them practise writing letters. The MLA conveyed his best wishes to the children, wishing that their first educational experience would begin happily. He stated that it is very important to create awareness among children from an early age about education, good habits and a healthy lifestyle along with nutrition. The MLA stated that Anganwadi centres play a key role in providing the necessary nutrition to pregnant women, lactating mothers and children. He stated that the services provided by Anganwadi staff in creating awareness among women and children in rural areas about nutrition, health and hygiene are highly beneficial. He urged every family to make proper use of Anganwadi centres. Payam Venkateshwarlu stated that the early stage is very crucial in the growth of children, and that during this period they should be provided with proper nutrition as well as a clean environment. He said that children's health and growth should be monitored regularly, and that Anganwadi staff should play a more active role in providing necessary guidance. "The MLA suggested that Poshan Month programmes should be conducted extensively so that the slogan 'Mana Anganwadi - Mana Badhyata' reaches every family. He said that government departments, Anganwadi staff and the public need to work collectively to



prevent malnutrition among pregnant women, lactating mothers and children. He stated that nutrition is very important for building a healthy generation. The MLA stated that everyone has the responsibility to ensure that pregnant women, lactating mothers and children from poor and middle-class families properly receive nutrition and health services being provided through government welfare schemes. He stated that they would work in coordination with officials of the concerned departments to ensure that government services reach every eligible person. Payam Venkateshwarlu stated that in the Pinapaka constituency, priority is being given not only to the health protection of women and children but also to their educational development. He said that they would coordinate with the concerned officials to ensure that basic facilities, a child-friendly environment and necessary services for pregnant women and lactating mothers are available at Anganwadi centres. MLA Payam Venkateshwarlu urged every family to act responsibly regarding the health of women and children and to make proper use of the services provided by Anganwadi staff. He called upon everyone to become partners in building a healthy mother, a healthy child and an educated future generation. MPDO MRO, Anganwadi officials and staff, officials of the concerned departments, Mandal President Oruganti Ramesh Babu, sarpanches, deputy sarpanches, ward members, prominent leaders, former public representatives, pregnant women, lactating mothers, women, children, local leaders, activists and others participated in the programme."

### Collector Visits EVM Godown



"Nizamabad, October 07 (indian cronical: (Collector Ila Tripathi, accompanied by Additional Collector V. Bhujanga Rao, visited the EVM godown located in Vinayaka Nagar, Nizamabad, on Wednesday.

The visit was conducted as part of a routine inspection process. She inspected the seals on the EVM godown and reviewed the police security arrangements at the site. Fire Department Officer Shankar and election wing staff members Satvik and Vijayender Reddy, among others, accompanied the Collector.

### Vigilance key to preventing cyber fraud, says Karimnagar Commissioner.



Karimnagar October 07, Khaja Sikandar Mohiuddin (Correspondent): Karimnagar Police Commissioner Gaush Alam has urged people to exercise caution while dealing with online transactions and communications, saying that cybercriminals were adopting new methods to deceive people as technology advances. Mr. Alam was speaking at an awareness programme organised at Astra Convention here on Wednesday, where he unveiled the 'Pause for Safety: Pause. Think. Verify.' awareness poster prepared with the support of the Telangana Cyber Security Bureau (TGCSB). The Commissioner explained the common forms of cyber fraud and advised people to verify details before making payments or sharing personal information. He cautioned businesses against fake invoices and purchase orders and asked them to verify vendor and bank account details before making payments.

He also warned people against work-from-home offers promising high returns for little effort, fraudulent loan applications that seek access to contacts and photographs, and calls from persons impersonating bank officials or police personnel. People should never share OTPs, passwords or other personal details with strangers, he said. Mr. Alam further cautioned people against fake shopping websites and social media links offering unusually high discounts, advising them to verify the authenticity of websites before making advance payments. He asked victims of cyber fraud to immediately call the national cybercrime helpline 1930 or register a complaint on [www.cybercrime.gov.in](http://www.cybercrime.gov.in)??, stressing the importance of reporting incidents without delay. Town ACP Venkataswamy, Town Inspectors, Cyber Wing personnel, SR Junior College zonal in-charge Tirupati and students participated in the programme.

### Sambamurthy Godasu Appointed State Co-Convenor of IT Labour Division



""LB Nagar, October 7 Indian Chronicle""Sambamurthy Godasu has been appointed as the State Co-Convenor of the IT Labour Division of the Telangana State BJP Labour Division. He received the appointment letter from State BJP Labour Division Convenor Ande Srinivas at the State BJP office."

Speaking on the occasion, Sambamurthy said he would work towards resolving the issues faced by IT employees and strive to protect their rights. "State Co-Convenor Akula Srinivas, Suryapet Labour Cell In-charge Palakurthi Seshagiri Rao, and others participated in the programme.

### Corteva Leads Global Crop Protection

Hyderabad, October 07 (Indian Chronicle) : Corteva(NYSE : CTVA) has completed the separation of its Seed and Genetic businesses and entered a new phase as a global crop protection company. Corteva CEO Chuck Magro said in a statement released in the city. He said the company's Crop Protection business increased its revenue by more than \$1 billion between 2020 and 2025, while its operating margin improved by approximately 250 basis points. Speaking on the company's future plans, he said Corteva is preparing to bring five biological products and 12 new active chemical ingredients to the market over the coming decade. He said the company's objective is to provide farmers with safer, more effective and sustainable solutions through greater focus, agility and innovation.

# Fake branded goods racket centered in Khammam.



"Khammam Staffer, October 07, Indian Chronicle." "Allegations are emerging that fake goods resembling genuine brands are being sold from Khammam city as the center. It is reported that this business has expanded from Azizgalli in the city and that fake branded goods are being supplied to several areas of the district. There are allegations that electrical goods, tea powder, fancy items, coconut oil, soaps, cosmetics and other products are being sold in packaging resembling the brands of prominent companies. Although there is information that transactions worth crores of rupees are taking place in this affair, questions are being raised about inspections and action by the concerned departments." "Collection allegations in the name of a 'Welfare Society'." "There are allegations that some people associated with the fake branded goods business are operating in the name of a 'Welfare Society'. Information that special collections are being made from illegal traders in the names of officials, politicians and journalists has also become a topic of discussion. However, the explanation of the people associated with the society, official records and details of financial transactions related to these allegations are yet to come to light. The concerned authorities need to investigate and clarify the facts. There are also allegations that, unlike organizations such as traders' associations and chambers of commerce that conduct business legally, people involved in illegal businesses have specifically formed a society." "Fake wire operation comes to light following Task Force raid." "A recent incident in August, in which the Task Force and Khanapuram Haveli police jointly conducted a raid based on credible information, has raised further questions about the fake electrical goods op-

eration. It is reported that police raided a facility in Prashanthinagar under the 6th Division of Khammam city where fake wires were being manufactured and packed under the names of prominent brands. It was revealed at the time that the trader and some workers fled, while police took into custody two workers from Rajasthan along with a youth named Anil from Korlaboduthanda in Raghunathapalem mandal. It is reported that fake wires were seized during the raid." "A racket going on for years?" "There are allegations that a place was rented in the name of a sanitary materials warehouse, where fake wires were packed in a manner resembling the packaging of prominent brands and sent into the market. There is also information that these goods are being sold to homeowners through electricians. Since a lack of quality control over counterfeit electrical equipment could cause accidents such as short circuits and fires, the concerned authorities need to conduct comprehensive inspections into this matter." "Questions over unauthorized warehouses." "There are allegations that large quantities of goods are being stored in warehouses in several areas of Khammam city where permits and safety standards are not clear. Information is emerging that there are unauthorized warehouses in Mamillagudem, including a tea powder warehouse, a sanitary material warehouse on the road near the old municipal office, and in Mustafanagar, Sriniwasanagar, Prabhat Talkies area, as well as several other areas under the Haveli police station limits. It is reported that a warehouse being operated without a signboard on Gollagudem Road has large quantities of fuses and electrical equipment stored in it. Questions are being raised as to whether these warehouses have the safety measures required to prevent fires? Do they have fire department permits? Are electrical safety standards being followed? Information that there are up to ten warehouses within the Kaman Bazaar limits itself indicates the seriousness of the situation." "Where are the officials' inspections?" "The concerned departments need to conduct comprehensive inspections into the sale of fake branded goods, unauthorized warehouses, misuse of brand names and violations of safety regulations. In particular, where matters relating to the police, municipal authorities, food safety, legal metrology and drug control are involved, the concerned departments, the fire department and the commercial taxes department need to examine records within their respective jurisdictions and bring the facts to light. People are demanding that details of officials' inspections, seizures and cases in areas where allegations of illegal business are being made be made public.

## Extensive Lecture on “Literature–Social Benefits” Held at Uppal Government Degree College

UPPAL, OCTOBER 7 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): "Literature serves as a guiding force for society, said Professor Dr. K. Krishnamurthy of M.V.S. Government Degree College, Mahabubnagar. An extensive lecture on the topic "Literature–Social Benefits" was organised by the Department of Telugu at Government Degree College, Uppal. Telugu Assistant Professor Jalda Viswanath Kumar served as the coordinator of the programme, while Vice-Principal Dr. C.H. Satyanarayana presided over the event. Professor Dr. K. Krishnamurthy attended as the chief guest and delivered the keynote lecture. "Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Krishnamurthy said literature was not merely a source of entertainment but a powerful medium for promoting social values, humanity and social awareness. He explained that literature plays a vital role in bringing about necessary changes for the welfare of society. Literature not only reflects society but also serves as a guiding force in leading society towards a more humane path, he said. "Presiding over the programme, Dr. C.H. Satyanarayana advised students not to restrict themselves to their academic syllabus alone, but to study literature as well in order to develop their personality and broaden their outlook. "Programme coordinator Jalda Viswanath Kumar introduced and welcomed the chief guest. He said that the broad outlook developed through reading books would help shape students into responsible citizens. Faculty members



Damen Rajashree, Dr. G. Tirupathaiah, P. Vijay Kumar, Dr. R. Chandrasagar and Dr. C.H. Anjaiah, along with a large number of students, participated in the programme. The students gained valuable insights into the social benefits of literature. An interactive question-and-answer session was also conducted, during which students participated enthusiastically. "The programme concluded with a vote of thanks.

## Youth Congress Condemns Alleged Deletion of Votes During SIR Process



"Elagala Saikumar Condemns Rahul Gandhi's Arrest" "Demands Resignation of Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar" "Kumrambheem, Asifabad, District Reporter "Indian Chronicle" October. 08." "Asifabad, The Youth Congress has strongly condemned the alleged irregularities and deletion of voters' names during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process being undertaken by the Election Commission of India. Speaking at a press conference held in Asifabad on Wednesday, Youth Congress Assembly Co-Coordinator Elagala Saikumar alleged that attempts were being made to remove the names of eligible voters under the guise of the SIR process. He expressed concern that voters belonging to tribal communities, Dalits, economically weaker sections and youth were allegedly being affected. Saikumar alleged that the BJP government, unable to win elections through votes, was attempting to win by getting voters' names deleted. He said that the right to vote is a fundamental pillar of democracy and that every eligible citizen must be ensured the opportunity to exercise their franchise. He also condemned what he described as the illegal arrest of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for questioning the alleged deletion of votes. "Silencing Rahul Gandhi amounts to silencing the voice of crores of youth across the country," he said, adding that the Youth Congress would not remain silent on issues concerning democracy and voting rights. "Saikumar further demanded the immediate resignation of Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, alleging that the Election Commission was not functioning

impartially. He appealed to the authorities to ensure complete transparency in the revision of electoral rolls and to ensure that no eligible voter loses their right to vote. He said the Youth Congress would continue its efforts to protect voting rights and strengthen democratic institutions.

## Kakarla Govardhan Rao Appointed State Convenor of BJP Cinema Workers



"LB Nagar, October 7" "Recognizing his commitment to the party's ideology, discipline and dedicated services, Kakarla Govardhan Rao has been appointed as the State Convenor of the BJP Cinema Workers Wing. "The appointment was made under the guidance of Ande Srinivas, State Convenor of the BJP Labour Wing, as per the suggestions of Goredy Girivardhan Reddy, Medchal Urban District President. "The leaders expressed their hope that Kakarla Govardhan Rao would work for the welfare of workers and for strengthening the Cinema Workers Wing. "Palakurthi Seshagiri Rao, Rapaka Rambabu, and others participated in the programme.

## Government Must Respond to Journalists' Issues



State Leaders Demand at TUWJ-IJU Third District Conference" "Asifabad, The third district conference of the Telangana Union of Working Journalists–Indian Journalists Union (TUWJ-IJU) was held in Komuram Bheem Asifabad district on Wednesday. TUWJ-IJU State President Virahat Ali and State General Secretary Ram Narayan attended the conference as chief guests, while District Collector K. Haritha participated as a special invitee. "During the conference, extensive discussions were held on various issues

faced by journalists in the district, including their rights, welfare and security. State leaders urged the government to give greater priority to the welfare of journalists and requested immediate action on issues such as allotment of house sites, issuance of accreditation cards to eligible journalists, railway passes and health cards. They appealed to the government to resolve journalists' welfare-related issues without further delay and to take necessary measures to ensure the safety and protection of journalists while they are discharging their professional duties. "Speaking on the occasion, District Collector K. Haritha said that journalists serve as an important information bridge in a democracy. She stated that the media plays a crucial role in bringing public issues to the attention of the government. She appreciated the role of journalists in informing the public about developments in society and highlighting people's problems before the authorities. The state leaders assured that TUWJ-IJU would continue to work for the rights, welfare and security of journalists. They said efforts would be made to take the issues faced by journalists working in the district to the state government and pursue their resolution. District TUWJ-IJU leaders and a large number of journalists participated in the conference.

## Call Tenders Immediately and Commence Sanctioned Development Works in Beerappagadda and Chilkanagar Divisions

- Congress Leaders Submit Representation to Uppal Deputy Commissioner" "BEERAPPAGADDA, OCTOBER 7 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Congress leaders from Beerappagadda and Chilkanagar divisions urged the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) authorities to immediately invite tenders and commence various development works that have already been sanctioned for the two divisions. Beerappagadda Division Congress President Akiti Aagam Reddy and Chilkanagar Division Congress President Nallaveli Mahender Mudiraj, along with party leaders, met Uppal Deputy Commissioner Anand Kumar on Wednesday and submitted a representation seeking the immediate completion of the tender process and commencement of the sanctioned works. Speaking on the occasion, the Congress leaders said that several development works had already been sanctioned in Beerappagadda and Chilkanagar divisions on the initiative of Uppal Assembly Constituency in-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy, keeping the needs of the local residents in view. However, they pointed out that the tender process for some of the works was yet to be completed. "They urged the Deputy Commissioner to invite tenders without any further



delay, complete the tender process at the earliest and commence the development works immediately. They also requested that the works be completed within the stipulated timeframe for the benefit of the people. Medchal-Malkajgiri District Vice-President and DCC General Secretary Kompally Balaraj, Chilkanagar Division Congress senior leaders Amar, Chandu, Shiva and Ramnarsaiah, and others were present."

## GV Mall Opens Its 25th Showroom in Uppal

UPPAL, OCTOBER 7 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): "GV Mall has opened its 25th showroom in Uppal, Hyderabad, offering customers a modern and enhanced shopping experience with quality apparel and the latest fashion collections. "The new showroom was inaugurated by popular film actress Bhagyashree Borse and Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy, along with the management representatives Gurram Umamaheswara Rao, Gurram Vasu and Gurram Murali. Speaking on the occasion, Bhagyashree Borse expressed her happiness over the opening of GV Mall's new showroom in Uppal. She said the showroom aims to provide customers with a better shopping experience by offering quality clothing and modern fashion collections. She appealed to the people of Uppal to make use of the services provided by GV Mall. "MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy said the opening of GV Mall in Uppal was a welcome development. He appreciated the management for making quality products available to people from all sections of society at affordable prices. He suggested that the management consider establishing another branch in AS Nagar within the Uppal constituency. He wished GV Mall continued growth and success in the retail sector. The management representatives said their 75-year journey in the textile business began in Khammam and that the company has now expanded its showroom network across Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. As part of this expansion, the 25th showroom was opened in Uppal. They said the new showroom offers quality clothing in line with international fashion trends and suited to the tastes and preferences of customers in Hyderabad. A wide range of products catering to people of all age groups is being offered at



affordable prices. "The management stated that quality, a wide range of collections and affordable prices are the key features of GV Mall. The showroom has been designed to enable families from Uppal and surrounding areas to enjoy a convenient shopping experience under one roof. "Several business and political leaders, along with local residents, attended the inaugural programme and extended their best wishes to the management.

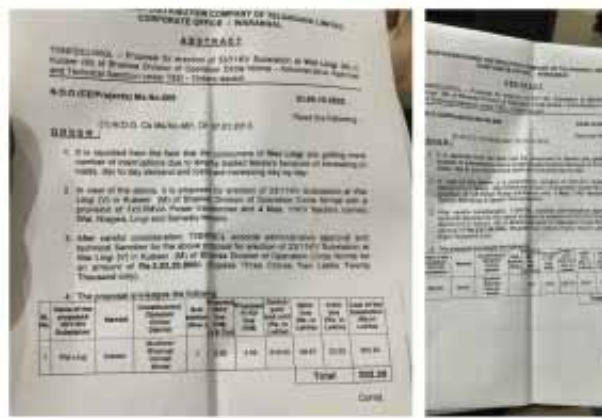
## Funds of 5.90 Crore Sanctioned for Two Power Substations“MLA Pawar Ramarao Patel



"Indian cronical mudhol 7 Octombar. MLA Pawar Ramarao Patel announced that funds amounting to ₹5,90,18,000 have been sanctioned for two power substations in the constituency. He stated that these measures were taken to resolve the difficulties farmers were facing due to low-voltage issues. He noted that ₹2,87,98,000 was sanctioned for the construction of a 33/11 KV substation in Bhamni village, Tanur Mandal, and ₹3,02,20,000 was allocated for a 33/11 KV substation in Vayi Lingi village, Kubir Mandal. He expressed his gratitude to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and the concerned ministers for promptly sanctioning the funds after the issue was brought to the attention of the relevant minister on the 11th of last month. He added that steps have been taken to address electricity-related problems in the villages.

## Two held for forging land documents in Malkajgiri, fake stamps seized

Hyderabad: The Special Operations Team (SOT), Malkajgiri, busted a land-document forgery network and arrested two real-estate brokers, recovering forged property documents, fake revenue stamps, 22 rubber stamps/seals and nine knives.



# Everyone should be wary of cybercrime



Cyber ??Crime Awareness Program at Kakatiya Institute of Technology and Science for Women College"" Call 1930 immediately if you lose money in cyber fraud: Commissioner of Police said"" Indain cronical Nizamabad(Ananthoji kalidas)""A special awareness program has been organized by the Nizamabad Police Department to make common people, especially female students, aware of cyber crime. In this program organized at Kakatiya Institute of Technology and Science for Women College of Nizamabad District \* Hon'ble Nizamabad Police Commissioner Shri P. Sai Chaitanya, I. P. S.,\* was present as the Chief Guest and gave the students complete information about cyber crime. "" Speaking on the occasion, the Police Commissioner said that with the advancement of technology, cyber crime is also happening in new forms every day and people can avoid many frauds by being careful. He said that cybercriminals are doing fraud by taking advantage of people's greed, fear, emergency and need. "" He informed the students about the main types of cyber fraud like investment fraud, digital arrest fraud, social media fake profile fraud, deepfake fraud, part-time job fraud, loan fraud, online shopping fraud etc. "" In the case of Investment Fraud, he said that huge amount of money is being looted from people by investing in fake apps and WhatsApp/Telegram groups by giving promise of more profit. He advises not to trust investment links and apps sent by unknown people. "" In Digital Arrest Fraud, they said that they pretend to be officers of Police, CBI, IAS, Customs and other government agencies and make fake video calls and transfer money by threatening cases. It has been clarified that no government agency will make a 'digital arrest' through video call and order them to pay. "" He also



advised to be careful of social media fake profile and deepfake fraud. He said that fraud is done by creating fake accounts by using wrong photos, videos and names and by using AI technology to create morphing/deepfake videos. "" He advised to avoid fraud in the name of part-time job, loan, online shopping. He advises that under no circumstances should you give OTP, PIN, CVV, password, bank details and personal information to unknown people. "" Refer to 1930 immediately after losing money during the 'Golden Hour' "" The Commissioner of Police advised that if victims lose money in cyber fraud, they should not panic and immediately contact the 1930 Cyber ??Crime Helpline. He said that the time to respond immediately after a cyber fraud occurs is very important, and filing a complaint at an early stage gives a chance to prevent defrauded money. Similarly, he advised that a complaint should be filed on the cybercrime website <https://cybercrime.gov.in>. He also advised that in case of any cyber crime, the bank/financial institution concerned should also be informed without delay. The police commissioner advised that students should not only take precautions to avoid becoming victims of cyber crime, but also inform their family members, friends and acquaintances about cyber fraud. "" Through this program, apart from informing the students about cyber crime, the students are given detailed information about safe digital usage, protection of personal information and precautions to be taken in online transactions. "" Wall posters related to cyber crime were also released on this occasion. "" Nizamabad ACP Shri Prakash Yadav, Kakatiya Institutions Chairman Shri Rajinikanth, North Rural CI Shri Srinivas, Cyber ??Crime CI Shrimukhi Pasha, McClure SI Shri Anil Reddy and students participated in this programme.

## Grand Bike Rally Held as Part of 'Seva Sankalp Abhiyan' Under the Leadership of GADDAM SAI KIRAN

"VENKAT REDDY NAGAR, OCTOBER 7 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): A grand bike rally was organised on Wednesday under the leadership of Seva Sankalp Abhiyan Venkat Reddy Nagar Division Convener Gaddam Sai Kiran, marking the completion of 25 years of public service by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who has served as a public representative, first as Chief Minister and later as Prime Minister. The programme was organised following the call given by Medchal Urban District BJP President D. Girivardhan Reddy. As part of the 'Seva Jyothi Yatra' under the Seva Sankalp Abhiyan, a sacred 'Seva Jyothi' was ceremonially lit at the Venkat Reddy Nagar Bus Stand, following which the bike rally was formally flagged off amid an enthusiastic atmosphere. Speaking on the occasion, Gaddam Sai Kiran said that various service activities and public awareness programmes were being conducted across the country as part of the 'Seva Sankalp Abhiyan', commemorating Prime Minister Narendra Modi's completion of 25 years in public life. He said the primary objective of the programmes was to create awareness among people



about public service, national development and social responsibility. He added that the bike rally organised as part of the 'Seva Jyothi Yatra' was aimed at taking the spirit of service to the people. A large number of BJP leaders and party workers participated in the bike rally.

## Joint Tour of Hadgaon and Mahur by District Collector and CEO



Inspection of schools, Anganwadis, Gram Panchayats, and development works; review of drought-relief measures. ""Nanded , 7 October Indian cronical : District Collector Rahul Kardile and Zilla Parishad Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Mahesh Patil undertook a joint tour of Hadgaon and Mahur talukas, personally inspecting schools, Anganwadis, Gram Panchayats, health check-up camps, and various development projects. During the visit, they interacted with students, parents, villagers, and farmers to understand the challenges they face. ""During a surprise visit to the Zilla Parishad Primary School in Palsa (Hadgaon taluka), it was observed that three teachers were absent without any leave application on record; instructions were issued to take necessary action regarding this matter. Directives were also given to maintain cleanliness regularly within the school premises, classrooms, and Anganwadi areas. The District Collector and CEO interacted with students to assess their academic standards and also spoke with parents and villagers. During the Anganwadi inspection, instructions were issued to ensure children are weighed on time and provided with nutritious food. ""In Malvada (Mahur taluka), they inspected a crop-cutting experiment and interacted with farmers. Against the backdrop of drought conditions, they inquired about agricultural challenges and provided guidance on availing benefits from various government schemes. A 'Jaltara' (water conservation) project under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) was inaugurated during the visit. An appeal was made to effectively implement water conservation works to enhance water storage and promote water preservation. ""They visited a health



check-up camp organized at Lakhmapur and reviewed the healthcare facilities being provided to citizens. Guidance was offered on the importance of regular health check-ups, as well as on dietary habits and health precautions necessary to improve hemoglobin levels. During a visit to Lakhmapur Gram Panchayat, a review was conducted of ongoing works under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme—specifically those focused on water conservation and employment generation amidst the drought situation. Additionally, the Zilla Parishad School in Lakhmapur was visited to assess the students' academic progress and interact with their parents. ""An inspection was also carried out at the Renuka Mata Temple in anticipation of the Sharadiya Navratri festival. Officials reviewed the preparations made by the concerned agencies regarding devotee safety, cleanliness, traffic management, and essential amenities, issuing necessary instructions in the process. ""Subsequently, a review meeting with Taluka-level officers and staff was held at the Mahur Panchayat Samiti hall. A detailed review was conducted regarding employment generation, water conservation, benefits of the Employment Guarantee Scheme for farmers, and drought-mitigation measures. Discussions also covered issues faced by farmers concerning loans and banking, as well as matters related to self-help groups. ""District Collector Rahul Kardile and Chief Executive Officer Mahesh Patil directed all concerned departments to work in a coordinated and effective manner, prioritizing water conservation, employment generation, and necessary support for farmers during the drought. They also instructed that eligible beneficiaries be ensured timely access to various government schemes."

## District Collector Rahul Kardile Issues Three Key Orders to Streamline and Expedite Crop Loan Disbursement

Nanded, 7 October (indian critical): Against the backdrop of drought-like conditions and crop losses during the Kharif season, District Collector Rahul Kardile has issued three significant orders to ensure that farmers can access crop loans easily and on time for the upcoming Rabi season. ""These orders direct that 'Occupant Class-II' (Bhogvatadar Class-II) landholders should not be asked for unnecessary prior permission or No Objection Certificates (NOC) for crop loans; that loan encumbrances (charges) of the Land Development Bank on '7/12' land extracts be removed immediately; and that 'Occupant Class-II' status be recorded on the '7/12' extracts of 'Gairan' (grazing land) leaseholders. ""No Prior Permission Required for Crop Loans for 'Occupant Class-II' Holders""Complaints had been received regarding difficulties faced by 'Occupant Class-II' landholders when attempting to secure crop loans by mortgaging their land. Under the provisions of Section 36(4) of the Maharashtra Land Revenue Code, 1966, farmers holding 'Occupant Class-II' land are permitted to obtain loans by mortgaging their land with cooperative banks, the Land Development Bank, the State Bank, and other financial institutions. ""The District Collector clarified that prior permission from the District Collector or the government is not required for this purpose. Orders have been issued to the District Lead Bank Manager and the District Deputy Registrar to instruct all concerned banks not to demand unnecessary NOCs from eligible farmers and to ensure that no eligible farmer is deprived of a crop loan. ""Directives to Immediately Remove Land Development Bank Encumbrances from '7/12' Extracts""Government's dated... In accordance with the decision dated November 9, 2022, the loans of farmers who had defaulted on payments to the Land Development Bank were waived. However, since the encumbrance (charge) related to these loans remained recorded on the '7/12 extracts' (land records) of some farmers, they were facing difficulties in obtaining new crop loans. ""Against this backdrop, instructions have been issued to all Tehsildars to immediately and unconditionally remove loan encumbrance entries—listed under names such as Land Mortgage Bank, Land Development Bank, or Maharashtra State Cooperative Agriculture and Rural Development Bank Ltd., Mumbai—from the 7/12 extracts without waiting for a No Objection Certificate (NOC). ""The supply of Rabi crop loans to eligible farmers should not be halted while the administrative process of removing these encumbrance entries is underway. District Collector Rahul Kardile has explicitly instructed District Lead Bank Managers to treat the concerned farmers as 'encumbrance-free' and immediately disburse Rabi crop loans based on their eligibility. ""Instructions to



record 'Occupant Class-II' status on the 7/12 extracts of Gayran (grazing land) leaseholders""Farmers holding leases for government Gayran land (grazing land) faced difficulties in obtaining crop loans because their 7/12 extracts carried the entry 'Government-Government Lessee'. ""In accordance with the prevailing government decision, instructions have been issued to all Tehsildars to verify 'Village Form No. 1-C' and the 7/12 extracts, and to immediately make the appropriate entry of 'Occupant Class-II' in eligible cases. This measure will facilitate the process for eligible Gayran leaseholder farmers to obtain crop loans. Administration Focuses on Timely Credit Disbursement to Farmers""The primary objective of these three directives is to ensure that farmers, currently facing financial hardship due to losses incurred during the Kharif season, receive the necessary capital for the upcoming Rabi season on time, and to prevent unnecessary administrative hurdles in the process of obtaining crop loans. ""District Collector Rahul Kardile has directed the concerned revenue and banking authorities to immediately implement these orders and ensure that eligible farmers receive crop loans for the Rabi season in a timely manner.

## Modi's 25-Year Governance Journey Marks a New Era in Indian Politics



BJP District President, Dinesh Patel Kulachari""Nizamabad 7 october indan cronical. A large number of party cadres and citizens attended the "Viksit Bharat" meeting held at the Old Ganj premises, presided over by BJP District President Sri Dinesh Patel Kulachari. The event marked the historic occasion of Honorable Prime Minister Sri Narendra Modi successfully completing 25 years in public life as a constitutional representative (serving as Chief Minister and Prime Minister). Following the meeting, a massive 'Seva Jyothi Kalash Yatra' bike rally was organized from Old Ganj (Kisan Ganj) to Shivaji Chowk (RR Junction). ""Speaking on this occasion, BJP District President Sri Dinesh Patel Kulachari said... ""He hailed Sri Narendra Modi's 25-year administrative journey as the beginning of a new era in India's political history. ""He facilitated the opening of Jan Dhan accounts for crores of the poorest citizens—who had never before stepped into a bank—thereby making them active participants in the nation's economy. ""He brought light into the lives of crores of poor mothers and sisters—who were suffering health issues due to smoke from traditional firewood stoves—by providing them with 'Ujjwala' gas connections. Through the 'PM Awas Yojana', the dream of home ownership for every poor person is being realized, while investment support is being directly deposited into the accounts of farmers via the 'PM Kisan Samman Nidhi. ""It was noted that while terrorist attacks in the past were met with time-wasting peace talks, today—under Modi's leadership—India has demonstrated its formidable military might to the world by conducting cross-border surgical strikes and Balakot air strikes to eliminate terrorist strongholds. ""It was emphasized that the comprehensive development of Telangana state is possible only with the BJP, and an appeal was made to the public to extend their full support in bringing about a transparent, corruption-free 'double-engine' governance in the



state. ""Prayers were offered to Lord Anjaneya Swamy of Sarangapur to bless Modi—who is steering the nation toward a position of global leadership guided by the mantra 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Prayas'—with good health and longevity. ""As part of the 'Seva Sankalp Abhiyan' – 'Angan Milan Seva' program, Anganwadi teachers in the Indur Urban constituency were felicitated with shawls and congratulated by Dinesh Patel Kulachari, Palle Gangareddy, and Mahila Morcha leaders. Speaking on the occasion, National Turmeric Board Chairman Shri Palle Ganga Reddy said... ""He described Shri Narendra Modi as a unique 'Karma Yogi'—a leader dedicated to tireless public service in a manner unmatched by any other leader in the world. ""He noted that Shri Modi spends festivals like Diwali not with his own family, but with the soldiers guarding the nation's borders, and works ceaselessly for over 18 hours a day to ensure the safety and well-being of 140 crore Indians. ""He stated that world-class expressways, state-of-the-art international airports, and 'Vande Bharat' trains—built using indigenous technology—reflect the rapid pace of New India's development. He commended Shri Modi for expediting the completion of regional railway projects and national highway expansions that had been pending for decades. ""He highlighted that Shri Modi is steering the nation towards 'Viksit Bharat' (Developed India) with the goal of transforming India into a leading global power by 2047, and called upon all citizens to participate in building a self-reliant and prosperous nation. Gadde Bhumanna, Kachetti Gangadhar, Bharat Reddy, Naggolla Lakshmi Narayana, Nimmala Srinivas, Pramod Kumar, Jyothi, Nyalam Raju, Ramchander, Surendhar, Bobbili Venu, Vijay Krishna, Om Singh, Pili Srikanth, Vamsi Goud, along with district office bearers, corporators, mandal presidents, BJYM leaders, and others, participated in this program."

## Robotics Projects Get Boost

Hyderabad, October 07 (Indian Chronicle) : Twenty teams from 13 countries showcased their robotics ideas at the World Robot Olympiad (WRO) STEM Entrepreneur Program, Aramco Corporate Citizenship Manager Hadeel Al-Eisa said in a statement released in the city on Wednesday. Four teams emerged as winners in the programme conducted with the support of Aramco. The winners were Project CARED from the Philippines, Mini-Ibot Innovators from Italy, Navrachana Vidyani from India and Why Combinator from South Ko-



rea. Each team will receive \$5,000 in project funding and six months of mentorship. The judging panel included

representatives from Aramco Ventures, Kai Connect and India STEM Foundation. WRO Association

Secretary General Claus Ditlev Christensen congratulated the students on their innovations.

# Victims’ families question if better safety measures could have saved lives



For Bharat and his wife, Sumit Ahire was a child they had waited for five years. He was the answer to their prayers. They had promised themselves that he would have every opportunity life could offer. A black belt in karate, a gym enthusiast and a bright student preparing for the JEE, Sumit had a future his parents had carefully watched him build. He dreamed of good marks, a good college and a life beyond the limits of their expectations.

But a trip to Diveagar ended that future in the waters of the sea. Now, inside the Ahire home, the silence is heavier than words. His mother sits grieving, her tears refusing to stop, while his father is left staring at a future that no longer has his son in it. “He went for the trip for the first time. He was so excited, we gave him everything we could. He had dreams, he had a future. Tell me, whom do I ask now? Who will bring my son back?” Bharat said. For the Ahires, there are only questions about whether greater care could have saved a life so deeply cherished. A group of students from Winners’ Academy at Alandi had gone on a picnic to the popular Diveagar beach in Raigad. There were 25 boys and 17 girls who were accompanied by six teachers. By the evening, eight of the students, who had entered the sea, had been swept away and drowned. On Friday, their families cremated the boys on whom post mortem had been conducted during the night. Satish Wasankar stands on the steps of his house in a wide lane in Alandi. He watches emotionless as families and neighbours stream in to condole the death of his 16-year-old son, Kaivalya Wasankar. “He participated in all kinds of social activities, including Ganeshotsav celebrations in everybody’s house. Even I don’t know so many people, but Kaivalya was far more mature than 50-year-old men like me. He thought big, he was generous and he kept in touch with everybody,” he said. It was Kaivalya who would carry out the responsibility of buying medicine for his grandmother, a Parkinson’s patient, and courier these to her every month.

Kaivalya had planned to study in MIT Academy of Engineering in Alandi and, then, get a job in Pune. On Friday, his last rites were performed in Alandi as his village, Amravati, was 550 km away. “This is the first time that I have seen a sister, his cousin, bringing home her brother’s ashes. Kaivalya used to say that our family was complete. Now, it is only my wife and I. Who can avoid destiny?” he says. Soham Bhandwalkar’s memory is now painfully divided between two moments in the mind of his family. One is from a few weeks ago, when they had celebrated Ganeshotsav together. Then, came the night they brought

Soham’s body home. Soham, a Class XI student preparing for an engineering career, was known as a kind and helpful boy. He was good at academics, loved chess and readily helped those around him. When he told his parents he wanted to go on a day trip, there seemed little reason for alarm. His father simply arranged for someone to drop him at the meeting point from where the students would leave. They were expected to return the same day.

Around 7 pm on October 1, the family’s lives changed forever. “I received the call about Soham’s condition, and we immediately left for Raigad. I never imagined that I would have to bring that child back like this,” says father Vithal Narayan Shinde, a close friend of Soham’s father. The Banwalkar family is now too shattered to speak. For Shinde, the pain is different but no less crushing. He watched his best friend lose his young son, a boy who had become dear to him too. “Just a few weeks ago, we were celebrating Ganeshotsav together. Today, I had to bring Soham home,” he said. Some losses leave a silence that even the closest of friendships cannot fill. Pranav Bansode’s family had been clear that they did not want him near water because he could not swim. In fact, not one of the deceased boys could swim. Pranav’s parents say that they had not signed the consent form from the coaching centre, Winners Academy, for the outing. His father had specifically instructed the faculty to keep Pranav away from the water. The family said they were reassured that the students would be kept safe. Pranav’s sister and teachers remember a shy, sincere and well-mannered boy. According to them, the picnic at Raigad was to be a routine outing. At home, there was no electricity, so the family was unaware of what had happened. They learnt through social media that some students had drowned at Diveagar. Soon after, a call from the faculty confirmed the situation, and they immediately left for the spot. His sister struggles to believe that her brother is gone. “We had told them clearly that Pranav could not swim. We trusted them to take care of him. Even now, I keep looking towards the door, thinking he will come home,” she said. For the family, the hardest part is that the waiting has not yet stopped. Tanmay Vahile had never been much of a traveller. A quiet, soft-spoken and studious boy, he rarely went out on trips or picnics. So when he decided to join one, it became a small occasion for the entire family. The day before leaving, Tanmay turned to his mother with an unusual curiosity. “Mummy, have you ever been on a picnic? How is it?” he asked, eager to hear about her experiences. For a family used to seeing him stay close to home, his excitement was infectious. The next morning, his father dropped him at the departure point. He called during the trip to ask how Tanmay was doing and was relieved to hear that his son was enjoying himself. It was supposed to be a day filled with new experiences for a boy stepping out on his first picnic. By evening, his mother, who regularly watched the news, switched on the television and saw reports of the Diveagar drowning. The news was followed by the call the family feared. The family alleges that life jackets were not available in sufficient numbers and that there were lapses in supervision. But beyond those questions remains a family mourning a son whose first trip was meant to become a happy memory and instead became their last.

## Yogendra Yadav, Neha Bora among several detained near Jantar Mantar on day 2 of anti-CEC protest



Police detained the Protesters during protest against CEC near Jantar Mantar in New Delhi on Saturday. Police detain activist Neha Bora during a protest against CEC Gyanesh Kumar near Jantar Mantar in New Delhi on Saturday. Several protestors, including AISA national president Neha Bora and Swaraj India member Yogendra Yadav, were detained by Delhi police on Saturday while marching towards Jantar Mantar demanding the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar. A day ago, Bora and Yadav were among around 550 protestors who were

detained while making their way towards Jantar Mantar for a similar protest. On both days, police said that it had not granted permission for the protests to be held.

On Saturday, the protestors had gathered for a second consecutive day of protest against the CEC and had begun marching towards Jantar Mantar. Along with Bora, Yadav and student activists, those gathered also included Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal and advocate Prashant Bhushan. They crossed the first set of barricades before police stopped them near Jantar Mantar Road and moved them into buses. Bora and other protestors were seen raising slogans while being detained. While there have been two days of attempts to hold protests against the CEC in Jantar Mantar, security has been beefed up in Central Delhi. Prohibitory orders have been issued in the New Delhi district, around 5000 police and paramilitary personnel have been deployed and multiple layers of barricades erected. The police have registered three FIRs against unidentified people in connection with Friday’s protest, for disobedience of an order issued by a public servant, obstruction of a public servant in the discharge of duty, use of criminal force against a public servant, and acts committed by several persons in furtherance of a common intention.



of Form 7 applications that could be submitted. It also referred to the provision for bulk objections/Form 7 applications during the revision exercise. The delegation referred to FIRs reportedly registered in Bhalki in Bidar, Belagavi and Narasimharaja in Mysuru under provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. It argued that criminal liability should be determined based on the specific role and conduct of each accused, including whether an individual knowingly furnished false information or forged a signature or document. The BJP also raised concerns over the alleged circulation on social media and political forums of Form 7 applications containing applicants’ names, mobile numbers and signatures. It sought an inquiry into how the documents came into the public domain and identification of those responsible for their disclosure. The delegation urged the DGP-IGP to ensure that the same legal standard was applied to all applicants and complaints arising from the SIR exercise, irrespective of political affiliation, and that genuine violations, if established, were proceeded against in accordance with law.

## CNG car explodes during refuelling in Gujarat, debris rains down at pump



A car being refuelled with compressed natural gas (CNG) exploded without warning at a fuel station on National Highway-48 near Karjan in Vadodara district of Gujarat, showering a large area with debris and shattered glass, leaving two nearby vehicles badly damaged, and triggering a wave of panic among fuel station staff, customers, and bystanders.

No one was, however, injured in the explosion that took place on Thursday (October 1) afternoon. The driver of the vehicle had stepped out of it as it was being refuelled, thus averting a potentially serious accident at the station which is usually busy. Under safety rules enforced by regulatory authorities such as the Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board, it is mandatory for occupants of a CNG vehicle to step out of the vehicle when it is being refuelled.

This is because CNG is typically filled into the vehicle’s cylinders at a very high pressure of 200-220 bar, which is 20-40 times higher than a domestic cooking gas (LPG) cylinder, and 70-100 times the pressure of a car tyre. This enormous pressure puts great mechanical stress on the cylinder, valves, and pipes involved. The incident took place at a CNG station opposite Jindal Company in Karjan. The explosion that ripped through the vehicle destroyed its rear section and sent fragments of metal flying several metres away.

Visuals from the scene, captured on CCTV camera, show the car engulfed in a cloud of dust, smoke, and debris, and people trying to move quickly away from the

vehicle. The reason for the blast is yet to be established. Two days after the incident, police were still investigating whether the explosion was linked to a failure in the vehicle’s CNG system, or whether there was a problem with the vehicle itself, or perhaps an issue relating to the refuelling process. “We are registering a Janva Jog (Station Diary entry) and investigating the possible cause behind this blast. We will check if the owner had followed the necessary safety measures needed for the upkeep of the vehicle. If there are any lapses in the case, we will decide the further action,” Vadodara Superintendent of Police Sushilkumar Agrawal told The Indian Express. Police have also requested the help of forensics experts to examine the vehicle and submit its findings to help establish whether the blast originated in the vehicle’s CNG cylinder or another component of the fuel system. SP Agrawal said, “We have called in the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) to examine the vehicle and submit a report. If required, we will also write to the manufacturer of the vehicle and issue a general advisory for the public as needed.”

The owner of a CNG pump in Vadodara city told this newspaper that a vehicle’s tank can burst during filling due to the extreme high-pressure stress on a cylinder if it has an unrectified damage or corrosion, or if the vehicle has been fitted with an unauthorised CNG kit. Many owners of petrol and diesel vehicles retrofit their cars to run on CNG in order to bring down operational costs, but the kit must be authorised by government authorities. “CNG vehicles use high-pressure cylinders to store the gas and are subject to prescribed safety and maintenance requirements. Any failure involving the cylinder, valves, connecting components or fuel delivery system can have serious consequences, making the circumstances of the Karjan incident a matter of particular concern. If it is an unauthorised kit that fails under the bar pressure of the filling pump, it can explode. Vehicle owners must opt for company fitted pumps only,” the owner of the pump said. The incident has also prompted the authorities to consider whether a broader safety advisory may be required for CNG vehicle owners, depending on the findings of the investigation. Agrawal said that the decision on whether or not to issue an advisory would be taken after investigations.

## West Bengal MLA Bayron Biswas injured in house fire in Murshidabad

Sagardighi MLA Bayron Biswas, who is a member of the Democratic Trinamool Congress, sustained burn injuries in a fire at his residence on Saturday. The condition of Biswas, who sustained injuries to his arms and legs, is said to be stable, the police said. According to eyewitnesses, they saw smoke coming out of the second floor of his residence around 11 am.

Family members and local people raised an alarm, and the fire department and West Bengal police rushed to the residence, rescued the MLA, and took him to hospital. The legislator’s family claimed that the fire began in the room where Biswas was staying, and it spread to other areas, said police sources. The police said they are investigating whether the fire was caused by a short circuit or whether the fire spread from the ‘biri’ (hand-rolled cigarettes) factory of Biswas, which operates inside the MLA’s house. Reacting to the incident, Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari said, “I will enquire. I pray for a speedy recovery.” Leader of the Opposition and Democratic Trinamool Congress’ Ritabrata Banerjee posted on social media, “Deeply disturbed and pained by the news of my friend and colleague Bayron Biswas. Wishing for his speedy recovery. Get well soon, Brother.”

Bayron Biswas had contested the by-election to



Sagardighi assembly constituency on a Congress ticket in March 2023. At that time, he defeated Trinamool candidate Debashis Banerjee by 22,980 votes and became an MLA for the first time. However, he switched to Trinamool within a few months of the results being declared, while continuing to be a Congress MLA in the Assembly records. In the 2026 Assembly elections, Biswas contested on a Trinamool ticket and became the Sagardighi MLA, defeating the BJP candidate by more than 34,000 votes. Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury told media persons, “I am very worried. He is a very nice and innocent person.”

## Suvendu questions Mamata’s 2021 Nandigram leg injury claim

West Bengal Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari on Saturday alleged that former chief minister Mamata Banerjee had misrepresented her leg injury while campaigning in Nandigram ahead of the 2021 Assembly election, citing a medical report that he said found “no evidence of fracture or dislocation”. “The CID is investigating. Once the election code is lifted, we will investigate this false propaganda,” Adhikari said, addressing a press conference at Nabanna. The Model Code of Conduct is in force due to the bypolls scheduled to be held in Nandigram and Rejinagar on October 6, with counting on October 9.

“In 2021, the then chief minister insulted entire Nandigram. It was said that her leg had been broken. I have the report of the Bangur Institute of Neurosciences dated 11.03.2021... no evidence of fracture or dislocation of the leg. I am not saying anything more about this. We will inform you after the 9th,” Adhikari said, pointing to a document. On Friday, addressing a gathering at Birulia Bazaar in Nandigram II block—the same area where Banerjee was injured in March 2021—Adhikari said, “I went to the SSKM Hospital after becoming the chief minister. I am the president of the hospital committee since it falls under the jurisdiction of Bhabanipur (Assembly seat), from where I am an elected representative.” The X-ray plate is handed over to the patient concerned, but a copy of the report remains with the hospital. I now have that paper in my possession. She (Mamata Banerjee) was the chief minister then. Her doctors had written ‘no fracture,’ he added.

What happened in 2021?



On March 10, 2021, Banerjee, the then chief minister, had sustained injuries to her left leg and waist in the Reyapara area of Birulia in Nandigram during her election campaign. She had alleged that “four-five men” slammed the door of the car on whose footboard she was standing to greet people. In a subsequent video message from the hospital, she recounted that the massive crowd pressed into her car while she was greeting supporters, causing her leg to get crushed and injured. She was officially diagnosed with severe bone and ligament injuries to her left ankle and foot, along with bruising and pain in her right shoulder, forearm, neck, and waist and was rushed back to Kolkata and admitted to the state-run SSKM Hospital. Following extensive tests, Banerjee was discharged on March 12, 2021, with her left foot in a cast and continued her subsequent campaign in a wheelchair.

## India’s LNG imports fall 14 per-cent, Oman tops supplier list in September

New Delhi: Oman emerged as India’s largest supplier of liquefied natural gas (LNG) in September, replacing the United States as the country continued to diversify its energy imports amid ongoing geopolitical disruptions in West Asia, according to a report. According to Kpler data, India imported 585,000 tonnes of LNG from Oman in September, up 11.6 per cent from August, giving the Gulf nation a 27 per cent share of total LNG imports. Nigeria became the second-largest supplier, with shipments of 351,000 tonnes, although volumes fell 35 per cent from the previous month. The US, which topped the supplier list in August with 848,000 tonnes, slipped to third place after exports to India declined 59 per cent, accounting for 16 per cent of September

imports. Qatar, once India’s dominant LNG supplier with a market share of around 45 per cent, fell to sixth place and supplied about 94,000 tonnes during the month. The UAE supplied 311,000 tonnes, while Angola exported 205,000 tonnes to India. The sharp decline in Qatari supplies followed disruptions caused by Iran’s strike on Ras Laffan Industrial City in March, a key LNG production hub and a major source of natural gas exports to India. India’s overall LNG imports also declined 14 per cent month-on-month to 2.17 million tonnes in September from 2.5 million tonnes in August. Natural gas plays an important role in fertiliser production, industrial heating, power generation and urban transportation.

GNS News Agency, Oct 7

A Karnataka BJP delegation met Director General and Inspector General of Police (DG&IGP) M A Saleem on Saturday, urging a review of FIRs registered in connection with Form 7 applications during the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. The delegation was led by state president B Y Vijayendra, former chief minister B S Yediyurappa and Leader of Opposition in the Assembly R Ashoka. The BJP’s intervention comes amid the state chief electoral officer agreeing to initiate legal action against those responsible for allegedly filing bulk Form 7 applications to remove eligible voters. The controversy intensified after fresh instances of mass Form 7 submissions targeting alleged voter deletions surfaced a day after Chief Minister D K Shivakumar cited three FIRs registered over similar complaints. In a memorandum submitted to DG&IGP Saleem, the delegation alleged that criminal cases were being registered against BJP workers and political activists for submitting Form 7 objections and claimed that the police machinery was being subjected to political pressure. It urged the police to ensure that criminal proceedings arising from the electoral-roll exercise were based on evidence and due process. The BJP said Form 7 is a statutory mechanism provided by the Election Commission of India for an elector to object to the inclusion of a name or seek deletion of an existing entry from the electoral roll. It argued that the mere submission of multiple Form 7 applications during an electoral-roll revision exercise could not, by itself, constitute a criminal offence. How did Form 7 applications become public? BJP The memorandum cited provisions of the SIR guidelines and the Manual on Electoral Rolls, 2023, and claimed there was no prescribed restriction on the number

## R Sreelekha resigns as BJP councillor in Thiruvananthapuram Corporation



Thiruvananthapuram: Former Kerala DGP R. Sreelekha, the first woman to hold the rank of Director General of Police, has resigned as a BJP councilor of the Sasthamangalam ward in the Thiruvananthapuram Corporation, in a move that has caused a major surprise within the party. Sreelekha, who was elected from Sasthamangalam in December 2025 with a comfortable majority, announced her decision in a message sent to residents of the ward she represents.

She said the resignation is a personal matter and she submitted her resignation to Corporation Mayor V.V. Rajesh on September 30, citing personal reasons. She also said a copy of the resignation letter would be submitted to the Thiruvananthapuram district collector. Corporation Deputy Mayor Asha G. Nath said she had no information about Sreelekha's resignation and came to know about it through the media. Thiruvananthapuram Corporation secretary said he is yet to get the resignation letter of Sreelekha. According to rules, it's the secretary to whom the resignation letter is to be submitted. On the other hand, Mayor Rajesh said

he has the resignation letter of Sreelekha with him.

With the resignation given to the Mayor and not to the secretary, it remains to be seen if Sreelekha will be cajoled to withdraw it as the State BJP president Rajeev Chandrasekhar is out of the state capital city. Sreelekha's exit comes less than a year after she made her electoral debut and at a time when the BJP is running the Corporation for the first time. She had entered the Corporation election as a high-profile BJP candidate after retiring from the police service. Her candidature was seen as significant as she was reportedly assured that she would be made mayor if the BJP succeeded in capturing power in the Corporation. The BJP emerged as the single largest party in the 101-member council. With the support of Independent councillor P. Radhakrishnan, the party succeeded in forming the administration. However, when the mayor was chosen, Sreelekha did not get the post. BJP leader V.V. Rajesh, a full-time frontline politician, was appointed mayor. The issue had led to disappointment among Sreelekha's supporters and became a subject of discussion within BJP circles. Differences between Sreelekha and sections of the party leadership had reportedly surfaced from the time she entered the Corporation. Her resignation now brings those differences back into focus, though she has cited only personal reasons for her decision. Sreelekha was also fielded by the BJP in the Vattiyoorkavu Assembly constituency a few months after her Corporation victory. She finished third in that contest. The party currently has the support of 50 councillors, and her exit would reduce its strength to 49. With the Corporation having 101 members, the support of Independents remains important for the administration. The possibility of a by-election in Sasthamangalam is also expected to add to the political significance of her decision. Meanwhile, the state BJP leadership is doing its best to persuade her to withdraw the resignation.

## North Bengal lynching: Youth killed, another injured over alleged cow theft suspicion

GNS News Agency, Oct 7

Kolkata: A youth was allegedly lynched and another seriously injured after a mob attacked them on suspicion of cow theft in north Bengal's Matigara area on Saturday, the police said. Four people have been arrested in connection with the incident, while a search is on for others allegedly involved in the assault and subsequent vandalism.

The incident took place in the early hours on the banks of the Balasan River in the Tarabari area under Matigara police station. According to the police, some youths were passing through the area in a car when local residents noticed them and became suspicious. The locals allegedly suspected the youths of being involved in cow thefts reported in the area. They chased the vehicle and managed to catch two of the youths, while others reportedly fled. Two vehicles were also seized by the residents. The situation soon turned violent as a mob allegedly began assaulting the two youths. One of them was beaten severely and died on the spot, the police said. The other youth sustained serious injuries and was found lying on the road. The incident triggered tension in the area, with the mob allegedly vandalising and setting fire to the two vehicles. On receiving information, a large police contingent from Matigara police station reached the spot and took steps to bring the situation under control. The injured youth was rushed to a nearby hospital, where his condition is reported to be critical. Meanwhile, the body of the deceased youth was sent for post-mortem examination to ascertain



the exact cause of death. Following the incident, the police launched a search for those involved in the alleged lynching and vandalism. Four people have been arrested so far. Local residents claimed that incidents of cattle theft had been reported from the area on several occasions, leading to growing anger among villagers. They said the presence of unknown people travelling in a car during the early hours raised suspicion and prompted residents to chase them. A senior officer of the Siliguri Metropolitan Police said a case had been registered against the arrested persons and others. The officer said an investigation was underway to identify and arrest everyone allegedly involved in the assault, death and vandalism.

## Flydubai pilot Smit Machchhar recovering well, says Indian Embassy



Abu Dhabi: Captain Smit Machchhar, the Indian pilot of flydubai flight FZ1073, is responding well to treatment and continues to receive medical attention, the Indian Embassy in the UAE said on Saturday. The mission said it was coordinating with his family and local authorities. It also thanked the UAE government for the care being extended to him.

"Indian braveheart Capt. Smit remains under excellent medical care & is recovering well. We are in touch with his family & local authorities, extending support for a speedy recovery. Our thanks to UAE gov. for their care. We join well-wishers in praying for his good health," the Indian mission posted on X. Captain Machchhar was injured while pre-

venting an apparent attempt to crash the aircraft on Wednesday aboard the flydubai flight from Dubai to Israel. During the incident, the co-pilot allegedly stabbed Captain Machchhar and the aircraft began to plummet.

The Indian pilot fought the attacker and managed to open the cockpit door, following which passengers rushed to assist, entered the cockpit and overpowered him. Once the attacker was subdued, the seriously wounded Indian pilot was stabilised until the aircraft made an emergency landing in Tabuk, Saudi Arabia. Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday spoke with Captain Machchhar over a video call, praising his courage, presence of mind and composure during the mid-air incident in which he helped save the lives of passengers and crew members. During the conversation, Modi said the country could proudly say that Indians are not those who take lives, but those who are willing to risk their own lives to save others. "The whole country is praying for you. Maha Mrityunjaya Jaap is being performed for you and your health. Your courage, presence of mind and composure saved many lives. The country can proudly say that Indians are not those who take lives, but those who are willing to risk their own lives to save others," Modi said. Captain Machchhar nodded and responded, "Yes, sir." The Indian pilot has also received recognition from across the world, with leaders and people lauding his bravery and actions that helped save the passengers and crew members during the mid-air attack.

## SP MP rejects Congress' 150-seat demand, backs 50



Lucknow: As the Samajwadi Party (SP) and Congress prepare to begin deliberations over seat-sharing for the 2027 Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections, the yet-to-be-finalised formula for a pre-poll alliance has already emerged as a potential point of contention between the two parties. Samajwadi Party MP Shiv Pal Singh Patel on Saturday questioned the Congress' reported demand for 150 seats, saying the party should seek seats in proportion to its electoral strength and organisational presence in the state.

Speaking to IANS, Patel said, "I think if they are given 50 seats, they should look at their actual position and status before seeking anything more than 50 seats. They should look at their past record. The six seats we got in Madhya Pradesh were because of the Samajwadi Party. Therefore, if they do this, there will be our candidates as well as theirs on several seats. This will only lead to a loss, so they should agree to 50 seats." "I understand that in Uttar Pradesh, there is no mandate for Congress. If they fight with us, they will benefit. They have only two MLAs in the state. If they fight together, they will benefit," he added. Patel also said that if the two parties (Congress and Samajwadi Party) failed to reach an agreement, the purpose of an alliance would be undermined.

"If an agreement cannot be reached, then what is the point of an alliance? Ultimately, our National President will

decide. The main decision has to be taken by our National President, honourable Akhilesh Yadav Ji. We are just ordinary soldiers of the party, Members of Parliament, so we can only state what the party's policies are and where its support base lies," he added. "That is why it is being said that they should accept 50 seats, which is actually more than enough for them. According to Congress' current standing, 50 seats are a lot. In reality, they deserve only 10 to 20 seats," Patel added. Congress MP Imran Masood, the newly appointed Working President of the Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee, said the party would adhere to its leadership's position on the issue. "Whatever our in-charge is saying, we stand by that. That is the party's official line," Masood told IANS. Meanwhile, the seat-sharing discussions between the SP and Congress are expected to begin later this month. The remarks came days after Uttar Pradesh Congress in-charge Rajendra Pal Gautam said that his party would not contest fewer than 150 of the 403 Assembly seats in the state under any alliance arrangement with the SP for the 2027 Uttar Pradesh elections. The Uttar Pradesh Assembly election is significant for both parties as the state sends 80 members to the Lok Sabha, the highest among all states. The 2027 state polls are expected to be closely watched, given the political importance of Uttar Pradesh in national politics. The SP and Congress are partners in the Opposition INDIA coalition and contested the 2024 Lok Sabha elections together in Uttar Pradesh. The BJP's tally in the state fell to 33 seats in 2024 from 62 in 2019, while the SP emerged as the single-largest party in the state in the Lok Sabha polls. The SP has been out of power in Uttar Pradesh since 2017, while the Congress has not formed the state government since 1989. Meanwhile, the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), led by Mayawati, has traditionally maintained distance from the SP, Congress and BJP, although it briefly allied with the SP for the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. The BSP has since witnessed a decline in its electoral representation while retaining a core Dalit support base. For years, the Congress had pushed for a broader alliance involving the SP and BSP. However, in the 2022 Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections, the three parties contested separately.

## Nayara Energy raises petrol price by Rs 5, diesel by Rs 3 per litre

New Delhi: Private fuel retailer Nayara Energy has increased petrol prices by Rs 5 per litre and diesel prices by Rs 3 per litre across its nationwide network as rising global crude oil and fuel product prices continue to pressure retail margins, effective from Saturday, according to industry sources. The revised rates at Nayara's more than 7,000 fuel stations mark the company's latest attempt to narrow the gap between retail fuel prices and higher procurement costs amid a sustained increase in international energy prices. However, this is the second such revision by Nayara this year so far.

Earlier in March, the company had raised petrol and diesel prices by similar amounts following supply disruptions linked to tensions in West Asia, but rolled back the increase in July after crude prices eased. The latest increase comes at a time when state-owned fuel retailers, which account for more than 90 per cent of India's over 104,000 petrol pumps have largely maintained stable retail prices despite fluctuations in global crude markets. Earlier this week, the government said private fuel retailers should not restrict sales of petrol and diesel. Apart from that, state-owned oil marketing companies (OMCs) had hiked commercial LPG rates by Rs 62.50 per 19-kg cylinder effective from October.

However, prices of domestic LPG are kept unchanged at Rs 942. In addition, aviation turbine fuel (ATF) prices were



also increased by Rs 16 per litre. ATF prices for domestic airlines surged to Rs 137 per litre from Rs 121 per litre. However, the latest hike follows an increase of Rs 6.28 per litre or 5.46 per cent in September and Rs 5 per litre in August. Notably, commercial LPG prices were increased by Rs 62.50 per 19-kg cylinder following a Rs 9.50 increase in September after rates were cut by Rs 192 in August and Rs 183.50 in July. Between February and June, rates rose by Rs 1,373 per 19-kg cylinder, from Rs 1,740.50 to Rs 3,113.50, before falling in July and August.

## 51% member nod now mandatory for housing society redevelopment in Maharashtra



The civic body grants permission for the development or redevelopment of a building, but the legal process preceding it is governed by rules framed by the state Cooperative Department. The civic body grants permission for the development or redevelopment of a building, but the legal process preceding it is governed by rules framed by the state Cooperative Department. The state Cooperative Department has made the participation of housing society members at every important stage of redevelopment mandatory, along with 51 per cent consent, a minimum of three tenders, video recording and open inspection of documents. The measures are aimed at preventing arbitrariness in the redevelopment process, which has often been undertaken without adequate participation of residential society members. The decision is likely to have an impact on redevelopment projects across Maharashtra, particularly in Pune, which has seen a significant number of redevelopment projects. In the Pune civic body jurisdiction, around 30 per cent of the building permissions issued are for redevelopment. "We consider all proposals for building construction the same technically. There is no specific data to differentiate redevelopment proposals, but around 30 per cent of the building permissions are for the redevelopment of old buildings," said Annrudha Pawaskar, city engineer of the Pune civic body. The civic body grants permission for the development or redevelopment of a building, but the legal process preceding it is governed by rules framed by the state Cooperative Department. The new procedure will supersede the government decision on redevelopment issued in 2019 and subsequent related circulars. Earlier, only the elected and legally constituted management committee could take a decision on redevelopment. Under the new procedure, the decision will have to be taken by the general body of the housing society. The decision cannot be taken by an officer, administrator or authorised body appointed by the Registrar. The rules will apply to redevelopment through developers as well as self-redevelopment, group redevelopment and redevelopment through associations.

"At least three tenders must be received for the selection of the developer. If three tenders are not received, an extension of 15 days will be given first and then another seven days. It is mandatory to advertise in Marathi and English newspapers with the highest circulation at the local level. The list of tenders received will have to be published on the notice board. It will be necessary to hold a developer selection meeting in the presence of a representative of the Registrar," the order says. The agenda must be submitted 14 days in advance. The management committee will have to call a special general body meeting if at least one-fifth of the members request it, along with suggestions and a plan. The committee must register the application within eight days and hold the meeting within two months. The agenda of the meeting will have to be given at least 14 days in advance. Before that, quotations will have to be sought from at least three registered architects or project management consultants," the order says. A quorum of two-thirds of the total membership will be required for a special meeting on redevelopment. If a quorum is not met at the first meeting, another meeting can be held after one month by giving seven days' notice. If a quorum is not met for the second time, the matter cannot be raised again for three months. The preliminary decision on redevelopment will require the approval of at least 51 per cent of the total membership. Members residing abroad or those who are seriously ill or disabled can participate remotely. Redevelopment consultant Rajendra Washivale said, "The Maharashtra government order is a welcome step to ensure protection of members of society in redevelopment projects. It will stop cheating of society members and bring in transparency in the entire process." The state government order also says the developer will have to complete the project within two years, or a maximum of three years in exceptional circumstances.

## BGUS seeks ex gratia for families who lost members during Ganesh immersions

Hyderabad: Bhagyanagar Ganesh Utsav Samithi (BGUS) has sought financial assistance or ex gratia from the Telangana government for the families of those who lost their lives during recent Ganesh immersion events across the State. A delegation from BGUS, led by president G Raghava Reddy and general secretary Ravinuthala Shashidhar, met Hyderabad district in-charge minister Ponnam Prabhakar on Saturday and submitted a representation.

## 49 foreign nationals identified for overstaying, visa violations

GNS News Agency, Oct 7 Hyderabad: Forty-nine foreign nationals have been identified for allegedly overstaying in India or violating immigration regulations during a special joint operation conducted by the Hyderabad City Police and the Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO). The operation, launched on August 31 by the Special Branch's Foreigners Monitoring Cell in coordination with the FRRO, local Law and Order police and the Hyderabad IT Cell, was aimed at verifying foreign nationals, checking compliance with visa conditions and preventing unlawful activities.

Of the 49 persons identified, 12 have already been deported to their respective countries, while the process of deporting or removing the remaining persons was under way, Hyderabad Police Commissioner V C Sajjanar said. The highest number of overstayers was identified under the Tolichowki police station limits (30), followed by Langar House (6), Mehdiapatnam (6), Rajendranagar (3), Banjara Hills (2) and Gudimalkapur (1).

The verification also uncovered cases involving alleged criminal activities, with police recovering 250 grams of ganja from one foreign national. Three South Sudanese nationals who entered India on student visas and were allegedly overstaying since 2018, 2023 and 2025, respectively, tested positive for cannabis during drug screening in Rajendranagar. Some foreign nationals were also allegedly involved in counterfeit currency-related fraud and cheating. Others who had entered India on student visas continued working as hospital translators or intermediaries after their visas expired, allegedly collecting translation charges and, in some cases, commissions of about 15 per cent of hospital bills. Certain foreign women were identified in connection with alleged prostitution-related activities, including a Kenyan national who had entered India on a tourist visa and overstayed. In another case, a foreign national was found possessing Alprazolam tablets mixed with cough syrup, allegedly for consumption to produce intoxicating effects.

# Iran security official hits back at Trump's ‘ready to fold up’ claim



Iran's security council official Mohsen Rezaei on Saturday hit back at US President Donald Trump's claim that Tehran was approaching surrender, saying America would only “win in its imagination”.

Replying to Trump's claim that Tehran was “ready to fold up”, the secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council said he was the “worst president in American history.” This comes even as the US is attempting to increase economic pressure on Iran and cut off its financial sources, even blocking the latter's crude exports. Meanwhile, the diplomacy deadlock between the nations continued, with Trump publicly rejecting Tehran's proposal. In a post on his official X handle, Rezaei said, “After one failure after another, the worst president in American history just keeps talking—and talking—and now his words have even outrun his own fantasies.” “You can win every day in your own imagination. But reality is shaped by Iran—by its people, its soldiers, and its missiles,” he told Trump.

# Flydubai co-pilot attacked pilot with axe in attempted 'terrorist attack', UAE says

DUBAI/TEL AVIV, GNS News Agency, Oct 7 The co-pilot of flydubai flight FZ1073, which was bound for Israel, attempted “to carry out a ‘terrorist attack’ with an axe during the flight, the United Arab Emirates prosecutor general said on Saturday. The co-pilot was identified as “Hammam al-Hammami, an Omani national, a source with direct knowledge of the matter told Reuters. A second source briefed on the investigation confirmed the co-pilot's name. UAE authorities did not immediately respond to a request for confirmation of his identity.

The Misinformation Monitor newsletter rounds up international misinformation narratives, with a “Real or Fake?” quiz in every edition. Sign up here. Disaster was averted on Wednesday after passengers and crew subdued the co-pilot, who had attacked the captain in what Israeli officials said was an apparent attempt to crash the plane “carrying more than 170 passengers and crew. While Emirati authorities and the airline have not publicly identified the co-pilot, Israeli officials have previously said he is an “Omani national. Oman has not commented on the incident. “Investigations into the incident involving flydubai flight FZ1073 found that the co-pilot had attempted “to carry out a terrorist attack,” Prosecutor General Hamad Saif Al Shamsi said in a statement carried by the UAE's state news agency. The co-pilot attacked the pilot inside the “cockpit with a crash axe and attempted to take control of the aircraft, the prosecutor general said. A crash axe is typically kept in the cockpit for use during emergencies such “as crashes. The investigation into flight FZ1073, including the suspect's motives, is ongoing, and the findings will be released once the “necessary procedures” have been completed, the prosecutor general said. The UAE is leading the investigation. The airline is owned by Dubai's government.

**MOST PASSENGERS ON FLIGHT WERE ISRAELI** The prosecutor general's comments were the first by Emirati investigators to describe the incident as an attempted terrorist attack. Following the release of “the prosecutor general's statement, Anwar Gargash, a senior adviser to the UAE president, said on X that the Gulf country had zero tolerance for terrorism and would show no “leniency toward extremist rhetoric. Item 1 of 2 A plane, carrying passengers who were on the FlyDubai aircraft bound for Israel from the United Arab Emirates, which was diverted to Saudi Arabia following an emergency signal, arrives at the Ben Gurion International Airport, in Lod, near Tel Aviv, Flydubai said the circumstances surrounding the incident were still under investigation and that it was not in a position to comment further, a spokesperson said on

What had Trump claimed?

While speaking in Denton, Texas, Trump said Iran was “ready to fold up”, adding that he believes US will win the war “right after the election”, CBS News reported. He claimed America can win “maybe before the election” too. “I’m ensuring that Iran will be very quickly ended,” the US President said at the Peterbilt Motors facility. He added that thereafter, energy prices would be “rapidly, rapidly coming” down. Trump claimed that the US was “trying to be nice” to the current Iranian leader. “We don’t know who the hell to deal with, to be honest with you. Nobody wants to be president,” Trump said. US and Israel had launched strikes against Iran in February earlier this year, following which Tehran retaliated by attacking American bases and interests in countries in West Asia. Iran further effectively closed the Strait of Hormuz, one of the key routes for energy supply before the conflict. While US and Iran had signed a ceasefire agreement framework in June, the truce quickly unravelled over sticking points, one of them being Strait of Hormuz. While the US is ramping up economic pressure on Iran through sanctions on entities dealing with the country under “Operation Outcast”, the opening up of another front — the Saudi-Houthi conflict — has complicated matters. In this scenario, Trump's top national security aides met at Camp David on Friday to discuss next steps in the Iran war and the Saudi-Houthi conflict in Yemen. Axios reported citing three US officials. The meeting was chaired by US Vice President JD Vance, with Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth, White House envoy Steve Witkoff, CIA director John Ratcliffe and chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Dan Caine participating.



Saturday. Reuters could not “immediately verify professional “and social media pages reportedly belonging to the co-pilot, which suggested he had worked for other airlines. Royal Air Maroc told Reuters, in response to a question about his potential employment there in the past, that he had undergone a three-month training with the airline in 2025 but his application to work there afterwards was rejected. RAM did not elaborate. In his first public comments on the incident, flydubai Chief Executive Ghaith al Ghaith on Friday said that the flight diverted after a “safety incident” inside the cockpit. Most of the passengers on board “were Israeli nationals.

A reserve flydubai pilot travelling “on the flight took control of “the aircraft and landed it at Tabuk airport in northwestern Saudi Arabia, where the co-pilot was detained by Saudi authorities. The co-pilot was transferred from Saudi Arabia to Abu Dhabi on Thursday. A source briefed on the investigation told Reuters on Friday that Israeli officials were expected “to question the co-pilot in the UAE. The source declined to say which Israeli agency or authority would take part. An Israeli “government official said that Israeli investigators “would take part alongside Emirati authorities in the UAE-led investigation. Israel does not have official diplomatic relations with Oman, and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said pilots from such countries were not permitted to operate flights to Israel. It was not clear how the co-pilot came to be assigned to the flight to Tel Aviv. On Friday, Netanyahu said that Israel was looking into “whether the “co-pilot had acted under anyone's direction, warning that anyone involved would pay a “heavy price”. The aircraft dropped about “16,625 feet in just over 30 seconds while flying over Saudi Arabia on its journey from the UAE to Israel, according to flight-tracking data from Flightradar24. The route is popular among Israeli travellers. Adds Hammami trained with Royal Air Maroc but rejected from employment,



European merchants, with Britain responsible for transporting an estimated 3.2 million people, making it the second most active European nation after Portugal. Charles, who is “head of the Commonwealth group “of 56 nations — mainly “former British colonies — encompassing some 2.7 billion people, has backed research into the British monarchy's own historical links to the trade. Last month, the Jamaican government also formally asked him “to seek legal advice on whether Britain should pay reparations and said it was “encouraged” “by the engagement “of Buckingham Palace. “It is important to note here the work his majesty himself has done over many years both to acknowledge the wrongs of the past and to find creative ways to right inequalities that endure,” the palace “spokesperson said. As “you would therefore expect, opportunities will be found during the visit “to reflect and renew his personal, wholehearted, and continuing commitment to that process.” In February, Commonwealth Secretary-General Shirley Botchwey told Reuters she expected its members “to make progress towards beginning negotiations on reparations.

# Saudis plan assault on Houthis to break Red Sea chokehold



RIYADH, GNS News Agency, Oct 7 Saudi Arabia is planning an offensive against Iran-backed Houthi militants in Yemen, with options being considered including a coastal push to secure the Red Sea shipping route or an assault on multiple fronts, regional and Western officials told Reuters. The operation, expected to be launched in the coming weeks, will be led by Yemeni forces on the ground, which are overseen by Riyadh, and supported by Saudi air strikes, according to six people with knowledge of the preparations. Make sense of global markets with the Trading Day newsletter. Sign up here.

While the US is already providing “intelligence to support Riyadh's operations in Yemen, and some regional and European nations are providing mainly defensive military aid to the kingdom, the Saudi allies aren't expected to play a direct role in combat operations, said the people “who requested anonymity to discuss security matters. Saudi Arabia entered neighboring Yemen's civil war in 2015 at the head of an Arab coalition in support of the internationally recognised government, which the Houthis had driven out of the capital Sanaa. A truce agreed between the warring parties in 2022 largely held until this year when the Houthis launched missile and drone attacks on Saudi shipping and oil infrastructure in a spillover from the Iran war. A key objective of the planned Saudi offensive, which hasn't been previously reported, is aimed at reversing the rapid gains made by the Houthis last month when they advanced down the coast and seized control of the “Bab el-Mandeb strait, according to the people with knowledge of the plans who include Gulf and Yemeni officials and Western diplomats.

The Saudis are considering two possible options for the assault, the Gulf and Yemeni officials said: Either a narrowly focused attack on “the area around Bab el-Mandeb or a broader offensive that also includes other synchronized attacks on multiple fronts around Yemen, in the governorates of Al-Bayda, Marib, Taiz and Al-Jawf. More than 100,000 Yemeni troops could “be mobilized in the offensive, depending on the scale, the officials all said. Spokespeople for the Saudi and Yemeni governments, the Houthi group and the US military didn't immediately respond to requests for comment about the Saudi plans. Bab el-Mandeb is the southern exit passage of the Red “Sea, a key shipping route between the Mediterranean and Asia that's assumed even more importance this year as an alternative to the Strait of Hormuz, which has been effectively closed by the Iran conflict. Riyadh has concluded it cannot enter new Yemeni peace negotiations with the Houthis while the “militants remain in control of Bab el-Mandeb, giving them significant global leverage, the Western diplomats and Gulf official said. The six people with knowledge of the Saudi preparations couldn't give a precise timing for the launch of the offensive, with their estimates ranging from within a week to until after the US midterm elections in early November.

# Russian strike damages Kyiv’s Northern Bridge, causes fresh traffic chaos

Kyiv: A Russian strike damaged Kyiv's Northern Bridge early Saturday, suspending traffic and causing tailbacks for a third day, in Moscow's latest effort to disrupt life in the Ukrainian capital. The strike came a day after Russian assaults forced the full or partial closure of three of Kyiv's six road bridges over the Dnipro River. Previously, Russia has hit apartment blocks, supermarket warehouses, gas stations and data centres, among other targets, in an escalation of attacks. Russia invaded its neighbour more than 4½ years ago, and there are no concrete signs that a peace settlement might be possible. Fighting along the roughly 1,250-kilometre (780-mile) front line snaking through northern, eastern and southern Ukraine has been virtually deadlocked in recent months.

Kyiv Mayor Vitalii Klitschko said the strike damaged the road surface and trolleybus cables, forcing traffic to be suspended. No casualties were reported. Russia's Defence Ministry on Saturday confirmed it was behind the latest attack, claiming the bridge is used to “facilitate troop movements and the logistics of military cargo deliveries” for Ukraine's armed forces. Videos circulating on social media appeared to show the moment of impact as vehicles crossed the bridge, including footage purportedly recorded by a driver's dashcam.

The aerial war has intensified, with Kyiv striking Russia's oil industry and businesses while Moscow has menaced Ukrainian cities with hard-to-intercept ballistic missiles and jet-powered drones.

Moldovan President Maia Sandu said Saturday that the war is “dangerously reaching” her country, following a spate of airspace incursions. “I condemn Russia's attack

Michael Ratney, a former US ambassador to Saudi Arabia, said he expected an offensive to be narrowly focused and certainly more modest in scope than the Saudi-led operation in 2015 that sought to rout the militants. “As much they want to vanquish the Houthis completely, they also need to get back to “status quo ante before Houthi controlled territory along Bab el-Mandeb,” he added. “Ideally, it would be a fairly limited operation to retake coastal areas and get back to normal maritime traffic.” The Houthis have become Iran's most formidable ally in the Middle East since Israel's degradation of Hezbollah in “Lebanon over the past three years. A Saudi-directed offensive against the group would mark a new flashpoint in a region engulfed by conflict since the Hamas-led attacks on Israel of October 7, 2023 and the subsequent US-Israeli war on Iran. TRUMP, TURKEY AND PAKISTAN

Washington, Saudi Arabia's most powerful ally, is providing military “advisers and intelligence “including targeting information to support Saudi air operations in Yemen, according to one of the Western diplomats. However, the extent of support may be limited. Reuters has previously reported that US President Donald Trump rebuffed requests by the de facto Saudi ruler Mohammed bin Salman for direct military support such as air strikes. Turkey and Pakistan, with whom Saudi Arabia signed a joint defence agreement last month, have provided military equipment that the kingdom is using in Yemen, Pakistani and regional officials said. Last month, Pakistan sent four cargo planes with equipment including air defence systems, light artillery, drones and anti-drone systems to Aden, the seat of Yemen's Saudi-backed government, a Pakistani government official said. Pakistani military advisers are also on the ground with Saudi counterparts to support Yemeni forces, according to a second Pakistani official, the Gulf official and a Western diplomat. Turkish drones, bought by Saudi Arabia “before the current war, have also been deployed over Yemen, they “added. One of the kingdom's key concerns in launching a new “offensive in Yemen is how to protect its oil facilities and other infrastructure from Houthi drone and missile attacks, according to regional officials who said Riyadh has asked several allies for help with defensive systems. Pakistan has deployed between 30,000 and 40,000 troops to Saudi Arabia to help defend the kingdom's land borders and help with drone and missile interceptions, according to the second Pakistani official, who said the troops arrived “in waves beginning last year but also after the recent escalation. Islamabad hasn't made any decision to send troops into Yemen in a fighting capacity, the official said. The Pakistani and Turkish defence ministries “didn't respond to requests for comment on “their military support for Riyadh.

Any ground operation inside Yemen will rely on the disparate coalition of Yemeni fighting factions that Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates armed and trained at earlier stages of the civil war when the conflict ground to a bloody stalemate. “Many anti-Houthi forces are still not organised or prepared for the kind of sustained offensive required to push back a disciplined Houthi military force. And they are being tested right now, “as the Houthis apply “pressure across several fronts at once,” said Yemen analyst Mohammed Albasha. Yemeni forces were further fractured last winter when southern fighters backed by the UAE tried to take “territory in the east and announce secession plans, leading to their defeat by Saudi-backed fighters after a series of clashes. Ali Shihabi, a Saudi political analyst close to government thinking, cautioned the outcome of any offensive by the Saudis against the Houthis would depend on how ground forces perform. “The priority so far has been to defend the positions on “the ground and stabilize the front, but certainly they will be going on the offensive,” he said. “Success greatly depends on the quality of the performance of the local forces.”



on Ukraine this morning. Its war is dangerously reaching Moldova,” she said in a post on X, adding that five “Russian air attack weapons, including Banderol missiles and drones, violated our airspace and exploded on our soil.” “Moscow is putting lives at risk across Europe and must be stopped,” she added. Ukraine's air force said Moscow overnight launched Banderol cruise missiles — low-cost, jet-powered loitering munitions that Russia uses to overwhelm Ukrainian air defences — at the Odesa region, which shares a long land border with Moldova. A loitering munition is designed to hover over an area, search for targets and detonate while crashing into them. Meanwhile, people were injured after Ukrainian drones struck the city of Kaluga in western Russia overnight, damaging apartment buildings, according to regional Gov. Vladislav Shapsha. He did not immediately give any figures but reported that 13 drones were shot down over the region during the night.

# Driver arrested after car hits crowd in Australia’s Newcastle

Sydney: A driver has been arrested after a car crashed into a crowd in the Australian city of Newcastle, north of Sydney, on Saturday morning, injuring nine people, including children. A police statement said emergency services were called to reports that a vehicle had struck people in a crowd in Newcastle, 110 km north of Sydney, around 9.30 a.m. local time on Saturday, with multiple people injured and a large emergency response underway. According to local media, the crowd had gathered to farewell the local team, the Newcastle Knights, as they travelled to Sydney to play in the National Rugby League grand final on Sunday night, reports Xinhua news agency. Sydney newspaper The Daily Telegraph reported that nine people were injured, including two who were in critical condition, two who were seriously injured and five who suffered minor injuries. The

newspaper reported that the critical patients were an infant girl who went into cardiac arrest and a man who suffered multiple leg fractures. Police said the driver of the vehicle was arrested at the scene. Newcastle Mayor Gavin Morris told Australian Broadcasting Corporation television that the driver was a supporter of the team who had lost control of the vehicle. “It appears that he's lost control of the car, and he's gone into the crowd. And I believe about nine were injured, which sadly also included children,” he said. Chris Minns, premier of the state of New South Wales, described the incident as heartbreaking. “My thoughts are with the families and friends of loved ones who have been involved or injured in the crash,” he said. We've seen how this grand final has brought Newcastle together, and I hope the whole community remains united as we continue to respond.”

# No apology but King Charles will not shy away from slavery issue during Caribbean tour, Buckingham Palace says

LONDON, GNS News Agency, Oct 7 King Charles will not shy away from Britain's involvement in the transatlantic slave trade when he tours the Caribbean later this month, but will “not formally apologise for “the darkest days of our past”, Buckingham Palace said on Friday. Charles and his “wife Queen Camilla will visit the Bahamas and Guyana, before heading to Antigua and Barbuda where he will attend the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) which is being held from November 1-4 this year.

Get a look at the day ahead in European and global markets with the Morning Bid Europe newsletter. Sign up here. The trip comes amid growing clamour from Caribbean and “African nations for Britain and other colonial powers to pay reparations for their involvement in slavery, “with the issue likely to be prominent at CHOGM. The British government has ruled out paying “any reparations though Charles, who remains the head of state of a number of Caribbean nations including both “the Bahamas and Antigua and Barbuda, has previously expressed his sorrow about slavery. As such, both reparations and apologies “were a matter for the government, a palace spokesperson said. There are important discussions taking place in various fora about colonial legacy and the intergenerational impact of the transatlantic trade in enslaved persons,” the Buckingham Palace spokesperson said, adding the visit was coming at “an important time in the relationship between Britain and Caribbean nations.” The visit programme will therefore not shy away from “the “darkest days of our past”, as his majesty has described them, but — in keeping with the wishes of our host nations — “it “will principally be oriented to the vibrant present and promising future of each country.” From the 15th to the 19th century, at least 12.5 million Africans were abducted and sold into slavery by

# Portugal's cork won rare Trump tariff exemption thanks to lobbying on both sides of Atlantic



Cork comes from the spongy bark of the cork oak tree, which is primarily grown and harvested in the Mediterranean basin. The framework trade agreement between the United States and the European Union singled out the material as an “unavailable natural product.” So as of September 1, cork joined a handful of other items, including aeroplanes and generic pharmaceuticals, that are exempt from a 15% U.S. tariff on most EU products.

The cork carve-out was vital for Portugal. The European country is the world's largest cork producer, accounting for about half of global production.Portuguese diplomats lobbied for the exemption on both sides of the Atlantic. Patrick Spencer, the executive director of the U.S.-based Natural Cork Council, raced from Salem, Oregon, to Washington in June to explain cork's origins to U.S. trade officials and to seek a tariff reprieve.The Wine Institute, which represents California vintners, said it also pushed for the special dispensation. Mr. Spencer said he was thrilled when a summary of the U.S.-EU agreement released in August mentioned cork.“It was a great day in our neighbourhood,” said Mr. Spencer, a self-described “cork dork.More than cork!It's unclear if cork is unique or if other natural products will be exempt from U.S. tariffs in future trade agreements. The U.S. Department of Commerce and the White House did not respond when The Associated Press asked about tariff exemptions.It's not even clear if the tariffs U.S. President Donald Trump put on imports from the EU's 27 member nations and almost every country will remain. Late last month, a U.S. appeals court ruled that Mr. Trump had no right to impose his sweeping tariffs, although it left them in place while his administration appeals to the US Supreme Court.But if the tariffs stay in place, cork may signal other exemptions to come. U.S. Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick indicated during a July interview with CNBC that natural products like mangoes or cocoa may be free from tariffs.U.S. dependenceThe U.S. is the second-largest market for Portuguese cork after France. In 2023, the U.S. imported 7241 million worth of cork from Portugal; just over 70% of it came in the form of stoppers for wine, spirits, olive oil, honey and other liquids, according to the Natural Cork Council, a trade group.

Cork has other applications, too. NASA and SpaceX have used it for thermal protection on rockets. Cork crumbles are also used as infill for sports fields and inserted into concrete on airport runways to help absorb the shock of plane landings.Even though California has a similar climate to the Mediterranean, the U.S. has never developed a cork indus-

try. There was an attempt to start one during World War II, and around 500 cork oaks from that period remain on the campus of the University of California, Davis.But the effort evaporated when the war ended. The problem: it takes 25 years for a cork tree to produce its first bark for harvesting, and the initial yield typically isn't high quality. After that, it takes the tree about nine years to grow new bark.“Americans are not patient enough to wait for a tree that takes 25 years to give its first harvest,” said Antonio Amorim, the chairman and CEO of Portugal's Corticeira Amorim, one of the world's largest cork companies.Cork harvesting is also an extremely specialised skill, since cutting into a tree the wrong way could kill it. Cork harvesters are the highest-paid agricultural workers in Europe, Mr. Spencer said.Harvesting by hand

Amorim, which exports cork to more than 100 countries, has more than 20 million cork trees spread over 700,000 hectares (1.7 million acres) of woodland.On a recent day at Amorim's Herdade de Rio Frio, a farm 40 kilometres southeast of Lisbon, crews zig-zagged across the thin, pale grass between scattered cork trees, kicking up dust.A worker uses a steel axe to gently pierce the bark of a cork tree so it can be peeled off, in Rio Frio, Portugal, Thursday, Aug. 28, 2025.The quiet woodland echoed with the gentle thud of the workers' axes. They gently pierced the bark, feeling for the thickness of cork that could be peeled off without harming the trunk. The Portuguese have harvested cork this way for more than 200 years.The tree bark came off in featherweight slabs that the workers, their hands black from the oaks' natural tannins, tossed onto a flatbed truck. It would go to factories to be cut into strips and fed into a machine that punches out stoppers.Once the trees were bare, a woman painted a white “5” on the orange-coloured trunks, signalling they were stripped in 2025. Herdade de Rio Frio's cork oaks, which are native to Portugal and can resist frequent droughts and scorching summer temperatures, were planted more than 100 years ago.Stick a cork in it

Cork's sustainable harvesting process and its biodegradability are two reasons many U.S. winemakers have returned to plugging bottles with it after experimenting with closures made of aluminium, plastic and glass. In 2010, 53% of premium U.S. wines used cork stoppers; by 2022, that had risen to 64.5%, according to the Natural Cork Council.Cork taint, which gives wine a funky taste and is caused by a fungus in natural corks, was a big problem in the 1990s, and it pushed many vintners into aluminium screw caps and other closures, said Andrew Waterhouse, a chemist and director of the Robert Mondavi Institute of Wine and Food Science at the University of California, Davis.The cork industry has largely solved that problem, Mr. Waterhouse said. In the meantime, the wine industry came up with new technology, like screw caps that can mimic cork in the amount of oxygen they let into a bottle over time.Many wineries, including Trump Winery in Virginia, now use both screw caps and natural corks. Mr. Waterhouse said screw caps generally make more sense for a wine like rose, which isn't intended to age, while cork is the standard for ageing wines.“If you say, Has this wine aged properly? ”, what you mean is, Was it in a glass bottle with a cork seal in a cool cellar? Under any other conditions, it didn't age the same,” Mr. Waterhouse said. “We're always trapped by history.”

# Noida dowry death: Nikki Bhati’s trial by fire

Trigger warning: The following article has references to domestic violence. Please avoid reading if you feel distressed by the subject.Sitting in Roopwas village, in Gautam Budh Nagar district in Uttar Pradesh, Bhikari Singh Payla, 50, struggled to remember a time when his daughters — Kanchan and Nikki — were happy after they got married.Nine years ago, the Paylas got a proposal of marriage from the Bhati family from Sirsa town, about 20km away. Kanchan was 19 then, and Nikki, 17. Bhikari and his wife Manju were thrilled. “The BhatIs had a two-storey house and their relative had a house next to theirs. The family had a decent financial background and a good name in the community,” Bhikari said.

The Paylas got the sisters married on the same mandap (stage) on the same day. Kanchan married Rohit Bhati and Nikki married his brother, Vipin. The Paylas allegedly gave the BhatIs an SUV, cash, and gold as dowry. The sisters moved to Sirsa into their in-laws' house.Soon after the wedding, his daughters began to allege abuse, Bhikari said. But one decision in particular caused their lives to deteriorate sharply: “It was when they started running a parlour and opened an Instagram page in 2024.”Kanchan and Nikki's Instagram page, called Makeover by Kanchan, has 90,000 followers. The sisters would upload pictures and reels of brides who got their makeup done at the parlour. They would also occasionally upload reels of themselves walking together, driving, or simply spending time with their family.“Rohit and Vipin and their parents had a problem with that,” Bhikari said. “They would constantly try and coerce them to stop working.”On August 21, 2025, Nikki, 26, was found with severe burn injuries at her in-laws' house. She died on the way to hospital. The police have arrested Vipin, Rohit, and their parents — Satveer and Daya — in connection with the alleged dowry death.Nikki's brother, Rohit Gujjar, said, “We handed over two beautiful sisters to one family. Now, our laddo (loved one) is gone.” Manju sat weeping inside a room, surrounded by women. The chairperson of the National Commission for Women (NCW), Vijaya Rahatkar, condemned the incident. “Daughters are not our property... There have been movements in the country to end such malpractices. Those malpractices have taken up a new form now. This is a matter of grave concern,” she said.A fight that ended in death

On August 22, 2025 a day after Nikki was declared dead by authorities at the Safdarjung Hospital in Delhi, Kanchan, 28, went to the Kasna police station in Greater Noida to file a First Information Report (FIR). She claimed that Nikki and Vipin had got into a fight the previous day, which had escalated quickly.“My mother-in-law, Daya, gave Vipin (Nikki's husband) a bottle with inflammable liquid. They poured that on her and set her body on fire. My husband, Rohit Bhati, and father-in-law, Satveer Bhati, too were present there. When I tried stopping them, they beat me up as well,” she wrote.

Kanchan told The Hindu that she had rushed to help her sister. While she tried pouring water on Nikki with one hand, she recorded a video of the incident with the other. The video that she shot showed Nikki stumbling down a flight of stairs, ablaze. Another video that went viral showed Nikki's minor son saying he saw Vipin slap his mother and set her on fire.Kanchan said she also shot another video where Nikki can be seen asking for help inside their house. “My sister was still alive when she was in the house. They killed her while taking her to the hospital,” she alleged, while talking to TheHindu.Taking cognisance of Kanchan's complaint, the police arrested Vipin from Sirsa on August 23, 2025. They took him to his house to identify the inflammable object which he had allegedly poured on Nikki. “He snatched



an officer's pistol and opened fire. In retaliatory firing, he suffered a bullet injury in his leg,” said Sudhir Kumar (DCP) Greater Noida.

The police transferred Vipin to a hospital. Vipin told the media that he had no remorse since he had not done anything. “She died on her own,” he said. “Fights between a husband and wife happen everywhere. It is not a big deal.”Hours later, the police also arrested Daya, who had allegedly handed Vipin the bottle of inflammable liquid. A day later, they arrested Satyaveer and Rohit from the Sirsa toll plaza area. The police booked the four accused under Sections 103(1) (murder), 115(2) (voluntarily causing hurt), and 61(2) (attempting to commit offences punishable with life imprisonment or others) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023.A messy affairKanchan said Nikki was abused the night before she died as well. “Our in-laws and husbands would constantly ask us for the money we were earning from the parlour and simultaneously shame us for earning it,” she said, adding that Vipin and Rohit were both unemployed.A police officer in Greater Noida said he received a call in February from a woman who had gone to Nikki and Kanchan's salon. “The woman alleged that Vipin had come to the parlour and demanded money from Nikki. A scuffle took place and the client ended up getting hurt. However, the families resolved the issue, so no complaint was registered,” the officer said. The parlour was shut down after that, he added.Bhikari said the situation worsened after this incident. Nikki and Kanchan left their in-laws' house and came back to their parents' house. After a few months, a panchayat was held in Roopwas. Vipin's family apologised and asked whether they could take Nikki back. “As her father, I was hoping that her marriage would not break down,” Bhikari said.

However, a Station House Officer from Kasna, Uttar Pradesh, alleged that Vipin began assaulting Nikki after she alleged that he had an extramarital affair in 2022. The officer said Nikki had caught Vipin in an intimate position with a woman from Jarcha village. “She presented evidence — photographs and call records — to the village elders. That enraged Vipin. He would beat her up frequently,” he said. The woman from Jarcha was unaware about Vipin's marital status, the officer claimed. The woman, who was divorced, was earlier a victim of domestic violence. She had left her parents' house and moved into a one-room rented accommodation in Jarcha so that she could live with Vipin, the officer said. “He started assaulting that woman, so she decided to leave. But Nikki had caught them by then,” he claimed. The woman filed a complaint in October alleging that Vipin and his friend had forcefully picked her up in their car, assaulted her, verbally abused her, and snatched her phone. “She also claimed that the two of them had threatened to kill her,” the officer said. The police booked Vipin under Sections 115(2) (voluntarily causing hurt), 352 (breach of peace) and 351(2) criminal intimidation) of the BNS the same month. by her neighbour and in-laws.



A chemistry lecturer in a government-run pre-university college in Hassan has been asked to divide his time between two colleges this academic year. He has been posted to another college for three days a week on deputation to make up for the absence of teachers for this subject there. This system, he argues, can badly impact learning process in both colleges. “If there is no continuous teaching, especially in science, the students cannot be expected to do well in exams. Since I have been sent on deputation, the academic activities of my parent college are hampered.”

Attempts to make up for massive vacancies in government-run educational institutions in Karnataka, from primary schools to professional colleges and universities, has had a debilitating impact. While guest lecturers and teachers are periodically hired in some, other methods like deputation are also used to make up for vacant posts.When the National Medical Commission (NMC) rejected the request of the State Medical Education Department to open two new medical colleges in Ramanagara and Kanakapura of Bengaluru South district (formerly Ramanagara) for the year 2025-26, one of the key reasons cited was the shortage of teaching faculty. The final report of the State Education Policy (SEP), recently submitted to the State government, also made a specific mention of “a large number of vacant teaching posts for many years” as the reason for the decline in the quality of education.Karnataka is seen as a hub of education and boasts of institutions at the national and international level such as the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), the National Law School India University (NLSIU), and the Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (IIMB). The State's educational institutions are the first priority for higher education of students from India and abroad.However, ironically, a whopping 85,495 teaching posts are vacant across government-run educational institutions in Karnataka, when those coming under Departments of School Education and Literacy (DSEL), Higher Education, Technical Education, Medical Education, and 32 public universities across the State are taken into account. Out of 2,85,103 teaching posts sanctioned, only 1,99,608 have been filled.While this gap in most places is made up by “guest faculty”, this year, there has been a delay in even these appointments in colleges owing to a pending court case that has questioned the qualifying criteria.

On the other hand, while there has been much talk on the need to bring education up to speed with emerging technologies, no posts have been created for teaching courses such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Robotics, Machine Learning (ML), and such others that are seen as key sectors in the days to come. In schoolsWhile free and compulsory education has been promised for all children between the ages of 6 and 14 under the Right to Education Act, 2009, the shortage of teachers is a major obstacle in providing this basic education in government schools.According to the data of DSEL, there are a total of 46,776 government schools, including 41,905 primary schools and 4,871 high schools, with about 52 lakh students. Though the State government has sanctioned 2,32,937 teacher posts, 61,525 are vacant.

While free and compulsory education has been promised for all children between the ages of 6 and 14 under the Right to Education Act, 2009, the shortage of teachers is a major obstacle in providing this basic education in government schools. To make up this shortage, the process of transfer and reassignment of excess teachers for the current academic year is under way, and 43,526 guest faculty members have been appointed for the vacant posts.Madhu Bangarappa, Minister for School Education and Literacy, said that the process of filling these posts is under way. “Around 14,499 graduate primary teachers have been recruited in 2024. In the current year Budget, the Chief Minister has announced of recruiting for 5,267 teaching posts in Kalyana Karnataka and 5,000 in other regions.”

The situation in colleges is no different. In the 1,229 government pre-university (PU) colleges in Karnataka, with a total of 12,923 lecturer posts sanctioned, only 8,150 have been filled with permanent teachers. In the 430 government-run first grade colleges running under the Collegiate Education Department, not a single post among the sanctioned 374 grade-1 principal and 38 grade-2 principal posts have been filled.M.C. Sudhakar, Minister for Higher and Technical Education, said that the process is under way to remedy this. “Since the number of emerging courses has increased, steps will be taken to sanction additional posts accordingly. In addition, the process of recruiting 310 principal posts in government first-grade colleges is already in the final stage,” he said.The situation in colleges is particularly dire this year owing to an ongoing court case that has halted the process of hiring even guest faculty.Earlier, the government had appointed about 10,500 guest faculty members to meet the shortage in degree colleges. Some guest lecturers had approached the High Court to make University Grants Commission (UGC) norms mandatory for the appointment of guest faculty in degree colleges. The court, in its verdict in September, 2024, ordered that only candidates who fulfilled the UGC norms should be appointed. Following this, more than 5,500 candidates without NET, K-SET, and PhD qualifications lost their posts. The government has filed an appeal in this regard, and the case is still pending. Therefore, even though classes have started in degree colleges for the year 2025-26, guest faculty have not been appointed so far. “A verdict is expected by the end of September and action will be taken to appoint guest faculty soon,” Sudhakar explained.State-run universities under the Higher Education Department too are languishing without permanent teachers. There are 32 public universities in Karnataka, with a total of 5,653 teacher posts sanctioned, of which only 2,171 have been filled. In addition, out of the 6,205 non-teaching posts sanctioned, only 1,679 have been filled.Notably, none of the teaching posts sanctioned to the recently started universities in Kodagu, Bagalkot, Haveri, Chamarajanagar, Hassan, Mandya, and Koppal are filled. Similar is the situation in Dr. B.R. Ambedkar School of Economics University-Bangalore, Maharani Cluster University, Nrupathunga Cluster University, and Dr. Gangubai Hangal Music and Performing Arts University, Mysuru. There are 219 teaching posts vacant in the State's oldest university, the University of Mysore.What is more, the post of Vice-Chancellor (VCs) is vacant in Gulbarga University, Bangalore City University, Karnataka State Dr. Gangubai Hangal Music and Performing Arts University, and Maharani, Nrupathunga and Mandya Cluster Universities.“A Cabinet sub-committee headed by Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar has held several

meetings and discussed the issue of filling up the vacant posts in State-run universities,” said Sudhakar.Technical educationWhile Karnataka prides itself as a hub of technical education, a large number of teaching posts remain vacant in government engineering colleges and polytechnics under the Technical Education Department.While this gap in most places is made up by “guest faculty”, this year, there has been a delay in even these appointments in colleges owing to a pending court case that has questioned the qualifying criteria.While this gap in most places is made up by “guest faculty”, this year, there has been a delay in even these appointments in colleges owing to a pending court case that has questioned the qualifying criteria. | Photo Credit: file photo

There are 109 government polytechnics in the State, and as per the All-India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) norms, there should be 3,438 teaching posts. However, of the government-sanctioned posts of 3,023, only 1,727 posts have been filled. A total of 17 government engineering colleges should have 1,020 teaching posts as per AICTE rules. But, the government has sanctioned only 765, of which only 332 posts have been filled.In nine engineering colleges and 27 polytechnics, no teaching post has been filled with permanent faculty and they run only with guest faculty. Principals of nearby technical colleges have been given the responsibility of administration. The Technical Education Department faces a peculiar problem of the Cadre and Recruitment (C&R) Rules not being framed for about 16-17 years. “Our government is framing the rules for the first time. The Chief Minister has announced in this year's Budget to fill 2,000 posts in the Collegiate and Technical Education Department,” said Sudhakar, adding that a meeting had been held with the Finance Department and senior officials regarding the filling of vacant posts.

The absence of permanent teachers has, for medical education, meant a roadblock to sanctioning new colleges. There are 22 government medical colleges in Karnataka with 21,860 sanctioned posts. Out of these, only 9,413 have been filled.While NMC has not sanctioned any new government colleges to the State this year owing to non-filling of vacancies, it had issued show cause notices to all 22 government medical colleges for not meeting criteria including filling up posts. It had imposed penalty on 16 government medical colleges in the range of ₹2 lakh to ₹16 lakh in the year 2024-25.With the internal reservation issue now resolved, action will be taken to fill the vacant posts in government medical colleges, promised Sharanprakash Patil, Minister for Medical Education.Absence of quality faculty is cited as one of the reasons for declining standards of education on the whole.For example, the impact is visible in SSLC results. “There are a large number of guest teachers in government schools, who are not trained as regular teachers. Moreover, there is no official criteria for their selection. This is significantly affecting the quality of education. For example, while the class 10 and 12 results in Central curriculum schools is above 80% every year, the SSLC and IPU results in State curriculum schools have failed to reach 75% in the three annual examinations,” pointed out Umesh G. Gangavadi, State president, School Development Monitoring Committee (SDMC).

On the other hand, Karnataka's universities and degree colleges are not doing well in the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) national ranking. NAAC has given three reasons for this: scarcity of teaching staff, quality of the teaching, and lack of infrastructure. The commission recommended that about 20,000 posts which are vacant in the higher education sector in Karnataka should be filled within five year. It argued against the very concept of guest lecturers in higher education institutions.The declining enrolment in State universities is also a warning sign. “Despite having excellent campuses and infrastructure, the quality in universities is declining owing to a shortage of teaching faculty. Due to this, students and parent prefer to go for private universities. Most of the people studying in public universities are SC, ST, and OBC students. This year, students did not enrol in nine departments of the University of Mysore. Therefore, the entrance test has been cancelled for 20 courses and only around 5,000 applications have been received for admission to PG courses. Shortage of faculty also affected research activities,” said the Vice-Chancellor of a public university.Former Higher Education Minister and former chairman of the Karnataka Legislative Council B.K. Chandrashekar observed that neglect of public universities is a trend observed across India over the past few years. “Due to this, private universities are profiting. Public universities are the backbone of higher education for the poorest of poor in society,” he said, underlining the need for a law that guarantees “Right to University Education.”He also suggested that instead of establishing universities in every district, the focus should be on filling vacancies in existing ones and strengthening them.

# Airtel to hike postpaid plan prices by up to 10 pc with new plans

New Delhi: Leading telecom firm Bharti Airtel on Wednesday launched new postpaid plans for customers with increasing tariffs by around 3-10 per cent, effective from Thursday.Moreover, it added a free international roaming benefit to the plans. However, the complimentary International Roaming pack offers 5GB of data, 60 minutes of calls, 25 outgoing SMS and free incoming SMS, all valid for 5 days, the telecom said in an exchange filing. The revised plans range from Rs 499 a month for an individual connection to Rs 1,799 for a family plan covering up to five SIMs.Moreover, customers will get one free international roaming trip per SIM each year under the new plans along with unlimited data and calling.Amit Tripathi, Director – Market Operations, Bharti Airtel, said that postpaid for us is about delivering the best-in-class experience in the Indian market. “We have the best network experience in the country, on which we offer our postpaid customers Fast Lane technology on 5G, and constant Spam and frauds protection. What is more, we offer the customers the best value – through access to entertainment and services that enrich their everyday lives; and now Free International Roaming for them. We are determined to constantly raising the game for customers and give them more and more reasons to choose Airtel Postpaid,” according to Tripathi.The company has increased the price of Rs 449 to Rs 499 for the individual plan. Rs 749 family plan — which was Rs 699 earlier — will offer two SIMs. Apart from that, the Rs 999 plan will be available at a cost of Rs 1,049 for three SIMs. Similarly, for 4 SIMs the prices are Rs 1,249 and Rs 1,449. For five SIMs, the company will charge Rs 1,799 for a plan subscription that includes Netflix Standard.Additionally, these plans also include Airtel's spam and fraud prevention features. Apart from that, the company said that effective Thursday, these postpaid plans are available for all customers opting for Airtel Postpaid.

# A complex turn in India’s FDI story



Foreign direct investment (FDI) has remained a major contributory factor in India’s economic landscape since the first wave of investments began in the wake of the 1991 reforms. FDI has played a crucial part in the modernisation of India’s industrial base, leading to technological innovation and linking the country more deeply with global markets. E-commerce and the computer hardware and software sectors are two areas that saw a massive influx of FDI, changing these sectors profoundly. However, recent trends suggest a complex turn as investments go downhill. While India is still able to attract foreign capital, the central part of these investments has been aimed at short-term profit gains rather than long-term industrial development. At the same time, Indian firms are investing heavily abroad, raising questions about the health of the domestic investment climate. Recent numbers may seem encouraging. Gross FDI inflows reached \$81 billion in FY 2024-25, up 13.7% from the previous year. Between 2011 and 2021, FDI climbed from \$46.6 billion to \$84.8 billion, highlighting India’s investor appeal. After peaking in FY 2021-22, FDI inflows fell to \$71 billion in FY 2023-24 before recovering slightly. In the four years after the COVID-19 pandemic, gross inflows recovered at an annual rate of 0.3%, while disinvestments and repatriations by foreign investors grew at 18.9% annually. This divergence between inflows and outflows is profound. Though India saw \$308.5 billion in gross FDI inflows during the post-pandemic period, foreign investors also withdrew or repatriated \$153.9 billion. More telling is the decline in FDI net inflows — gross inflows minus repatriations and loan repayments — which sharply declined from FY 2021-22 to FY 2024-25. After adjusting for outward FDI by Indian companies, the net retained capital within India fell to an alarming \$0.4 billion. Thus, a large outflow limits FDI’s long term development impact. These figures indicate that the capital does not stay long enough, limiting its long-term developmental impact. The sharp rise in disinvestments has significantly contributed to this deterioration. In FY 2023-24, this surged by 51% to \$44.4 billion and rose again in FY 2024-25 to \$51.4 billion. They now represent over 63%, signalling a marked shift in investor behaviour — from long-term strategic commitments to short-term profit-seeking, often through tax arbitrage and treaty-based routing. Short-term investments aimed at rapid financial returns replace those contributing to sustained industrial or technological development. For instance, what was once a primary sector to attract FDI, the manufacturing sector saw incredible outflows, with its share dropping to a meagre 12% of total FDI.

The declining FDI net inflow suggests that capital is not staying long enough to contribute meaningfully to the country’s economic landscape. A lack of sustained investment in manufacturing, infrastructure and innovation hampers India’s growth trajectory. The surge in outward invest-

ment by Indian firms is another cause for concern. FDI outflows have grown from \$13 billion in FY 2011-12 to \$29.2 billion in FY 2024-25. Many firms blame regulatory inefficiencies, infrastructure gaps and unpredictable policy frameworks for looking beyond India’s borders. This outflow of capital weakens the domestic economy, hampering job creation, arresting innovation and stifling industrial growth. Despite improving rankings and government reforms, structural barriers such as regulatory opacity, legal unpredictability and inconsistent governance continue to discourage foreign and domestic investors. The growing parity in behaviour between foreign firms withdrawing funds and Indian firms investing abroad highlights deeper systemic lacunae that must be addressed if India hopes to reverse the trend. The long term is what matters

Short-term capital inflows lack potential to support long-term growth. India must prioritise reforms that reward long-term commitments to build a more resilient investment ecosystem. This includes simplifying regulations, ensuring policy consistency, investing in infrastructure, and expanding educational and skill-building initiatives to meet evolving industry demands. India needs to proactively work to attract and retain investment aligned with its developmental goals in a global economic environment, especially those that help technological change. The gross FDI figures may appear promising but they seem to hide more than they reveal. Rising disinvestments, shifting investment patterns and growing capital outflows reflect a deeper erosion of confidence in India’s economic outlook. Further, the dominance of financial centres such as Singapore and Mauritius in India’s FDI inflows suggests that much of this capital may be driven by tax strategies rather than productive investment. Moreover, traditional sources of industrial FDI such as the United States, Germany, and the United Kingdom have pulled back on their involvement. Services and rent-seeking sectors such as financial services, energy distribution and hospitality saw increased capital flow. Despite their contribution to GDP, such investments lack the broader multiplier effects typically associated with manufacturing, infrastructure or advanced technology. This shift is contributing to weaker long-term growth potential and reduced economic resilience. India’s macroeconomic stability is also closely tied to the health of its FDI ecosystem. FDI inflows serve as a source of capital, support the balance of payments and provide a cushion for the currency. As FDI net inflows decline, the implications for external account management and monetary policy flexibility become more concerning. The Reserve Bank of India has acknowledged this trend, noting that while rising outflows are in line with trends in other emerging economies, they also present risks that need to be managed carefully. Around half of India’s FDI outflows are directed toward developed economies, attracted by favourable tax regimes, market stability, and access to strategic resources. What needs to be done if India seeks to lead as a global investment hub, it must look beyond headline FDI figures and focus on the quality, durability and strategic alignment of capital inflows. An overemphasis on gross figures neglecting their origin or economic impact risks masking deeper vulnerabilities. What the country truly needs is committed capital investment that builds domestic capability and furthers national priorities. Streamlined regulations, infrastructure upgrades, policy stability and renewed trust in institutions may help fulfil these priorities. Equally crucial is investing in human capital to attract high-value sectors such as advanced manufacturing, clean energy, and technology. India stands at the crossroads in the FDI conundrum.

# The making of an ecological disaster in the Nicobar



There has been no shortage of half-baked and ill-conceived policymaking in the last 11 years. The latest in this series of planned misadventures is the Great Nicobar mega-infrastructure project. The totally misplaced ₹72,000 crore expenditure poses an existential danger to the island’s indigenous tribal communities, threatens one of the world’s most unique flora and fauna ecosystems, and is highly susceptible to natural disasters. Nevertheless, it is being insensitively pushed through, making a mockery of all legal and deliberative processes. The Great Nicobar Island is home to two indigenous communities, the Nicobarese tribe and the Shompen tribe (a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group). The ancestral villages of the Nicobarese tribals fall in the project’s proposed land area. The Nicobarese were forced to evacuate their villages during the Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004. This project will now permanently displace this community, ending its dream of returning to its ancestral villages.

The Shompen face an even greater threat. The Island’s Shompen Policy, notified by the Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs, specifically requires the authorities to prioritise the tribe’s welfare and “integrity”, when considering “large scale development proposals.” Instead, the project denotifies a significant part of the Shompen tribal reserve, destroys the forest ecosystems where the Shompen live, and will cause a large-scale influx of people and tourists on the island. Ultimately, the Shompen will find themselves cut off from their ancestral lands and unable to sustain their social and economic existence. Yet, the Government is stubbornly adamant and shockingly insistent. The Constitutional and statutory bodies set up to preserve tribal rights have been side-stepped throughout this process. As in Article 338-A of the Constitution, the Government should have consulted the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes. It has failed to do so. The Government should have consulted the Tribal Council of Great Nicobar and Little Nicobar Island. Instead, the Council Chairman’s plea that the Nicobarese tribals be allowed to return to their ancestral villages has been neglected. A Letter of No Objection was secured from the Council, but it has since been revoked, with the Council noting that the authorities had “rushed them” into signing the letter. What is the scale of environmental risks and biodiversity losses linked to the Great Nicobar mega-project? | In Focus podcast Due process and regulatory safeguards set up to protect local communities have been evaded. The Social Impact Assessment (SIA) conducted as per the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 should have considered the Nicobarese and Shompen as stakeholders of the process and evaluated the project’s impact on them. Instead, it omits any reference to them altogether. The For-

est Rights Act (2006), which empowers the Shompen as the authority to protect, preserve, regulate and manage the forests, should have underpinned any policy action. Instead, the Shompen have not been consulted on this issue — a fact which the Tribal Council has now confirmed. The country’s laws are being mocked wholesale. Unconscionably, one of the country’s most vulnerable groups may have to pay the ultimate price for it. The farce of compensatory afforestation

Ecologically, this project is nothing short of an environmental and humanitarian catastrophe. The project will require the cutting down of trees on an estimated 15% of the island’s land, decimating a nationally and globally unique rainforest ecosystem. The Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change estimates that 8.5 lakh trees may be cut. This is a depressing figure, but it may also be a gross underestimate — independent estimates have suggested that 32 lakh trees to 58 lakh trees may eventually be cut. The Government’s solution to this indiscriminate tree felling is that of ‘compensatory afforestation’, a rather poor substitute for the loss of natural, old-growth forests. Inexplicably, the planned afforestation is in Haryana, a State that is thousands of kilometres away, and in a decidedly different ecology. In a tragedy bordering on farce, a quarter of this land planned for afforestation has now been auctioned off by the Haryana Government for mining. In any case, compensatory afforestation may help assuage a guilty conscience but is simply no substitute for the destruction of multi-species, biodiversity-rich natural forests. The planned port site is also controversial with some of it falling under the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) 1A. Port construction is prohibited in CRZ 1A areas due to the presence of turtle nesting sites and coral reefs. Despite abundant evidence confirming the same, which includes a National Green Tribunal order, the Government has contrived ways to manipulate this truth through a high-powered committee (HPC). The report of this HPC and the ground-truthing exercise it conducted to reclassify the port site out of CRZ 1A has not been made public. From a wildlife standpoint too, the project raises serious concerns. Primatologists have written to the Government expressing grave concerns about the project’s impact on the Nicobar long-tailed macaque. These concerns have been ignored. The biodiversity assessments for the projects have come under questioning for critical methodological flaws. The assessment of sea turtle nesting sites was conducted in the off-season for nesting. Drones were employed to gauge the project’s impact on dugongs, but these drones have limited capacity and can only assess shallow areas. Evidence has emerged that the institutes were made to conduct these assessments under highly unusual conditions, bordering on duress. Finally, the project — including the port — is coming up in a seismically sensitive earthquake prone zone. The tsunami of December 2004 saw a permanent land subsidence of about 15 feet. The 6.2 magnitude earthquake in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands in July 2025 only reminds us of this ever-present threat. Locating such a massive project here deliberately jeopardises investment, infrastructure, people, and the ecology. Our collective conscience cannot, and must not, stay silent when the very survival of the Shompen and Nicobarese tribes is at stake. Our commitment to future generations cannot permit this large-scale destruction of a most unique ecosystem. We must raise our voice against this travesty of justice and this betrayal of our national values.

# Nilgiris tea and the brewing of a crisis



At the start of the current millennium, the Nilgiris saw a turn of events that were most unlikely in its glorious history. Plantation farmers, most of them Badagas, revolted against the government as the price for Green Tea Leaves (GTL) had dwindled. Initially restrained, the protest soon turned violent when three public buses were set on fire. The centenary celebrations of the famed Ooty Flower show (1999) was also cancelled following growing resentment by local planters. The situation was in danger of spiralling out of control. To address the crisis, a one-day seminar, called the “Future of Tea in the Nilgiris”, was organised on September 4, 2000, by the ‘Save Nilgiris Campaign’, after a signal from the Chief Minister’s Secretariat. Every stakeholder across the industry came together to draw attention to the plight of the industry and discuss paths to take. It is unfortunate that a quarter of a century later, the remedy remains elusive.

Participants flagged the reasons for the price decline and highlighted the need for reforms. The facts were there for all to see: an over-reliance on Russian exports, poor quality management, auction gimmicks, adulteration and local market negligence had together resulted in a crisis. From the late 1970s, Nilgiris tea had overwhelming market support in the erstwhile USSR. The land cover of this plantation crop in the Nilgiris rose by 36% between 1985 and 1995 and small tea growers welcomed the flow of unprecedented wealth and income. Then things changed. The collapse of the USSR and the devaluation of the rouble by 30% worsened the existing situation for small growers. They were reeling under high production costs, which were proportional to the quality of the product. An excess of factories in weak feeder areas reduced GTL quality. The total capacity of tea factories in the Nilgiris was more than double that of crop production. Though tea experts endorsed the well-oiled functioning of the auction system, unhealthy practices began to disrupt operations at the Coonoor auction centre. Some producers had taken money in advance from brokers, pushing them to supply made tea at fixed rates. From 1990, sales at Coonoor rose while those at other centres across India declined. Yet average prices stayed the lowest. This disparity highlighted the need to streamline quality and trading.

According to the Tea Board of India, the Nilgiris tea industry covers about 46,481 small tea growers with an assessed plantation area of 34,408.85 hectares. The main demands of these growers include a minimum GTL price, a base auction price, and recognition of this plantation crop as an essential commodity under the Ministry of Agriculture. Currently, tea remains under the ambit of the Ministry of Commerce. Though the health benefits of tea are well known, trade interests have ensured that tea is treated as an item under commerce. Government schemes and subsidies have failed to deliver the goods. The call by the United Planters’ Association of Southern India, the apex body, to go in for intercropping has not gained ground. The situation demands renewed trust among battered growers. To overcome this persistent cost price crisis, growers and producers must implement strategies that result in a win-win situation. Progressive small tea growers must look at innovation and mechanisation during the phases of plucking and pruning. They must look at self-employment to avoid heavy labour costs. Most bought leaf factories have been successful in branding and direct trade, in-line with the outcomes of the seminar. However, they should also explore tea exports to CIS countries and encourage sales in untapped domestic markets. Of late, second- and third-generation planters have begun to move to the IT sector, and are hiring labour. The

reluctance of next-generation producers to target CIS markets is a result of apathy or due to a lack of global marketing competence. The government-run INDCOSERVE and TANTEA could also lead the way by becoming price leaders, as they have access to one-fourth of GTL procurements among bought leaf factories. There is great potential for value-added products as the Nilgiris is capable of producing some of the best tea in the world — the “champagne among teas”. Yukesh Saravanan is a member of the Nilgiri Documentation Centre, The Nilgiris. His work focuses on the environment, indigenous communities and local history

# Why lithium-ion batteries need to be recycled

The next in the column featuring conversations with entrepreneurs, technologists and researchers about emerging technologies and what students need to know about these fields. What do you do?

I am the co-founder and CTO of MiniMines Cleantech Solutions, a lithium-ion battery (LIB) resource recovery company. Using our patented Hybrid Hydrometallurgy process, we recover high-purity lithium, cobalt, nickel, graphite and copper from all types of end-of-life (EoL) LIBs at one-tenth the carbon footprint of other technologies. I have a PG degree in Nanotechnology and Biotechnology. I have worked on drug development and diagnostics at CSIR-National Chemical Laboratory, Pune, developed and delivered anti-corrosion coating for naval warships (US Navy - ONRG Singapore), and developed technologies for energy storage devices like LIBs, Supercapacitors and Aluminium-air Batteries. Why is your work important?

As the world is moving towards sustainability, the demand for EVs and energy storage devices like LIBs is increasing exponentially. The heavy metals in LIBs are an environmental risk and a fire hazard after their EoL. Our work enables sustainable LIB recycling and achieves high recovery rates (>96%) and purity (>99%) with minimal discharge. By recovering critical minerals responsibly, we reduce e-waste, mining dependence, and support a global circular economy essential for the clean energy transition. What is exciting about your work? The opportunity to solve a pressing global challenge — lithium-ion battery waste and limited domestic critical mineral supply while building a true and sustainable circular economy.

What if I told you that you could make money through hobbies? Interesting right? Yes, it’s possible to grow money, if hobbies also become investments. If you are an avid numismatist who collects rare coins, a bibliophile who collects books or comics, a philatelist collecting stamps, a connoisseur of art, or a music buff, you can easily turn that hobby into a source of income. Even wine and whiskey enthusiasts can earn money by investing in fine vintages. These drinks have also become alternative investments and potential sources of income. “But wait. Even if you don’t collect, you can still invest in them, provided you learn and explore. Investing platforms don’t care whether you’re truly passionate about these hobbies or merely interested in them as assets. Hobby investments: The world of hobby-style investments is wide and varied – collectibles such as coins, stamps, comics, trading cards, physical or digital art, paintings, fine wines, whiskeys, music royalties, watches, jewellery, vintage cars, motorcycles, memorabilia, autographs and much more. In India, many such investments are gradually gaining traction. Making money: Hobbies turn into investments when the items you collect gain value over a period. The worth and value of a collectible depends on its rarity and demand among collectors. A rare coin, first-edition comic or a limited-edition wine bottle could considerably rise in price after a couple of years. Including hobby-style assets in portfolio gives you emotional gratification, financial potential and serves as a good way of diversification.

How to invest?

If you are investing hard-earned money in a post-office scheme, you don’t need to worry about learning



# Entering the terrains of hobby-investments is a different ball game altogether. Such a foray requires careful understanding, research and patience before it starts yielding gains

complicated jargon. Just do some math and see which scheme yields more interest. But entering hobby-investments is a different ball game altogether. It needs careful understanding, research, and patience. You need to observe the market trends keenly, verify the authenticity and consider storage and preservation. At times, you may need to build connections with fellow collectors or communities. Even a small mistake will cost painfully. However, the rewards, financial and emotional, can make the learning and effort worthwhile. Do research

o not invest in any hobby-style asset without homework. You need to put in the effort to learn about the assets’ rarity, authenticity and demand. Check for certified dealers of coins and stamps; explore galleries and online platforms for art; understand vintages, storage and preservation techniques for wine or whiskey. No bro-

ker, agent or a friend can do this for you. Only knowledge can reduce your risk, prevent you from making poor or losing choices, and help you invest smartly. The platforms you choose must be trustworthy. Though online auction-houses and online market-places make the buying and selling easier and safer, you need to exercise caution. Read reviews, try to talk to other collectors or hobby-style investors. For wine, whiskey, or music royalties, you need to ensure whether the international platform you have zeroed in on accepts Indian residents. If it does, check currency rates, forex charges, taxes or shipping and other factors before investing. For physical assets such as coins, art, wine and other collectibles, storage and preservation are crucial. Improper care can significantly reduce value over time. Therefore, it is essential to invest in safe storage solutions before investing in them. Begin

small. Invest only what you can comfortably afford to lose. For instance, in India, some collectibles such as vintage cars or rare wines need huge investment, so starting with affordable options such as coins or stamps is advisable. Once you get the hang of hobby-style assets, you can gradually move on to other higher-value hobby assets. Patience is key, as these assets do not yield significant profits in the short- or medium term. Diversification is crucial. Spread investments across coins, comics, art, or wine, and other collectibles. Caution: These investments carry high risk and volatility. Prices may fluctuate wildly and liquidity can be limited. Only invest money you can afford to lose. Make informed decisions based on thorough research and verification. Treat these investments as a combination of passion and long-term strategy, not a shortcut to quick profits.

# Ship-to-ship transfers boost India’s West Asian oil imports, Russian flows see supply pressure



India’s oil imports from West Asia saw a notable rise in September with Gulf suppliers effectively using ship-to-ship (STS) cargo transfers to move their crude through the fraught waters of the Strait of Hormuz, as per provisional tanker data.Oil imports from India’s largest supplier Russia, however, declined for the second straight month due to stronger competition from Chinese refiners and tighter Russian crude availability amid Ukrainian attacks on Russia’s oil and gas infrastructure, industry insiders and analysts said.

Amid the ongoing conflict in the region, the much improved availability of West Asian oil comes as a relief for India, given the pressure being exerted by the US on top buyers of Russian oil. Although India has said that its priority is to meet the energy needs of its 1.4 billion citizens through diversified sourcing, the recently enacted Russia and Iran sanctions law in the US has added a layer of uncertainty around the future of oil imports from Russia.The law — Lindsey O Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act — allows US President Donald Trump to impose tariffs of up to 100% on the biggest buyers of Russian oil, a list topped by China and India.

While New Delhi continues to engage with Washington on the new law, experts believe that it would be prudent for Indian refiners to try and progressively reduce their reliance on Russian crude and step up further diversification of oil import sources.“Going forward, improved Middle Eastern barrels’ availability could see Indian refiners lean more towards them, particularly amid the geopolitical uncertainty surrounding the Graham Act,” said Nikhil Dubey, lead analyst-refining at commodity market analytics firm Kpler.India’s Russian oil imports declined almost 9% in September to 1.9 million barrels per day (bpd) from 2.1 million bpd in August, according to vessel tracking data from Kpler.Russian oil import volumes had touched a historic high of 2.8 million bpd in July, and September volumes were at a five-month low, although they still accounted for over 35% of India’s total oil imports during the month.The sequential decline in oil imports from Russia was more than made up for by a spurt in imports from suppliers like Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Qatar.Oil imports from Iraq jumped 238.2% sequentially in September to over 551,000 bpd, while those

from Saudi Arabia were up 56.2% at almost 543,000 bpd. Imports of Kuwaiti oil surged 104.4% over August to about 317,000 tonnes.Oil imports from Qatar, which were nil in August, stood at nearly 110,000 bpd. Among West Asian suppliers, only the UAE saw a decline in volumes — down 15.8% month-on-month at around 460,000 bpd.In February, before the West Asia war started, India’s oil imports from these five West Asian suppliers stood at around 3 million bpd.

Combined September volumes were 33% lower at 2 million bpd. Their cumulative share in India’s oil imports was 36.7% in September, up from 26% in August, but still substantially lower than February’s 56.3%.Iraq, Kuwait, and Qatar are the most dependent on the Strait of Hormuz for exporting their oil.Saudi Arabia and the UAE have pipeline systems that bypass the chokepoint, although a bulk of their oil also traditionally transited the strait. The jump in export volumes from inside the Strait of Hormuz is largely due to STS activity, according to trade sources.

Unlike regular operations, in which oil is loaded onto tankers that sail directly to the destination port, STS transfers involve a shuttle tanker that carries the oil for some distance, after which the cargo is transferred to another ship.In STS operations in the Strait of Hormuz, the supplier usually takes on the responsibility — and the risk — of sending the oil through the strait, after which a tanker waiting in safer waters outside the strait takes the oil and sails to the destination port.This has effectively transferred the risk largely to the suppliers from the buyers, who were earlier required to charter ships and send them into the Persian Gulf for lifting oil.So far, Iran hasn’t been able to effectively disrupt this STS arrangement, which is evidently getting protection from the American navy.As for Russian crude, Ukrainian attacks on Russia’s oil and gas infrastructure is a key reason for the pressure on Moscow’s oil exports.Attacks on export infrastructure in the Black Sea have become a tangible threat to navigation of energy tankers in the region.Freight economics are also incentivising avoiding the Black Sea routes altogether.Competition for Russian oil from China has picked up due to various factors. They include lower Russian oil exports as Moscow has been trying to maximise domestic refinery production to meet its own fuel demand amid Ukrainian attacks on its energy infrastructure, and the fall in Iranian oil volumes available to Chinese refiners amid the Strait of Hormuz crisis.India’s crude import strategy has shifted sharply since March 2026 as Strait of Hormuz disruptions tightened West Asian oil flows and increased freight risks. Russian crude remains the backbone of India’s import slate, while refiners have diversified aggressively towards African, North American, and South American barrels to offset the drop in supplies from the Gulf.About 40% of India’s crude imports usually came through the Strait of Hormuz, and a large part of that supply was effectively offline for the past six months.

# Trade deal with India not imminent, sticking points identified: USTR

United States Trade Representative (USTR) Jamieson Greer has said that India and US trade deal talks are in their final phase, but the signing of the deal is not “imminent” as both countries have identified a “universe of items that are sticking points”.Greer made these remarks Thursday after he met Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal during theG20 Trade Ministers’ Meeting amid talks on a bilateral trade deal between negotiators in Washington.The US is expected to come out with the results of its second Section 301 trade investigation on “overcapacity”.Washington has already imposed 10% tariffs on India on grounds of import of items produced using forced labour.

“So we had a very constructive conversation, Minister Goyal and myself. Our staff is meeting right now, since they are in the country and we are here. We are continually trying to finish the trade deal with India. I would characterise it as we say in the US, we are in the short strokes. So I think we are toward the end of it. The President (Trump) and Prime Minister (Modi) did have a very constructive call yesterday morning US time,” Greer told a press briefing.“At the same time, I don’t think there’s something imminent, but we truly have identified the universe of items that are sticking points. We are working diligently toward them. My sense is that the President, the Prime Minister may have another call, very soon on this, just to assess progress in where we are,” he said.As India and several other countries await the results of Section 301 investigation related to overcapacity, Goyal said India does not have structural excess manufacturing capacity in the sectors identified by the G20 Presidency,



asserting that the country’s manufacturing capacity serves both domestic and global needs.India’s manufacturing capacity serves its domestic and global needs and that, in the sectors identified by the G20 Presidency, India does not have structural excess capacity,” he said.

The US also has fresh leverage on India after Trump signed into law the Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act of 2026, giving himself the authority to impose tariffs up to 100% on countries, including India and China, that continue buying Russian oil and gas.The Ministry of External Affairs has said the government remains committed to ensuring the nation’s energy security “through diversified sourcing and based on evolving market dynamics”. It has said that the proposed legislation’s implications for the India-US relationship as well as the global energy market have been flagged in discussions with US representatives.

# India remains cautious on cryptocurrencies, promotes underlying technology: RBI Governor



RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra said India remains cautious about cryptocurrencies while supporting underlying technologies such as distributed ledgers and tokenisation. He also flagged concerns over monetary sovereignty, capital flows and monetary policy, while identifying cross-border payments as a significant challenge.

New Delhi: India has maintained a cautious approach towards cryptocurrencies while promoting the underlying technologies such as distributed ledger technology and tokenisation, RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra said on Saturday.Malhotra said India supports innovation in tech-

nologies underlying crypto assets, including distributed ledger and tokenisation, but remains cautious about cryptocurrencies due to concerns over monetary sovereignty, monetary policy and capital flows.“So, our approach has been to promote the underlying technologies, and we are using some of these in the central bank and outside in PPP (public-private partnership) mode. But insofar as crypto is concerned, it has been a cautious approach,” he said at the Kaulitlya Economic Conclave.

Expressing concerns about cryptocurrencies, the RBI Governor said it is related to the ‘singleness of money’ and their potential implications for monetary policy, particularly in emerging market economies, where capital flow restrictions are in place.“The problem that you are trying to address is primarily not so much of domestic payments, because domestic payments within our country and in many countries now are quite fast, cheap and convenient,” he said.The more significant challenge is cross-border payments, for which other solutions, including central bank digital currencies (CBDCs), can be explored, he said.

On rising public debt and hardening bond yields globally, Malhotra said the yield movement is essentially a function of demand and supply, with government and private-sector spending rising, including on account of artificial intelligence (AI).“Money is scarce, spending has increased, both by the government as well as private enterprises, led by AI, and so that’s what is leading to the hardening of the bond yields and debts,” he said.Malhotra said the RBI’s monetary policy primarily focuses on domestic growth-inflation dynamics. But global interest rates also have implications for India, including through their impact on real interest rates in the country.“That is something that we need to take care of,” he said.

# The ‘bangs theory’: Why we get a fringe when life gets chaotic



What ties Ananya Panday, Aditi Rao Hydari, and Hannah Montana together? Wispy bangs cover all three’s foreheads. Bangs as a hairstyle go way back in time, dating back to the 1920s’ flapper era, and then making a comeback with Marilyn Monroe’s side-swept bangs in the 60s. Cut to 2026, celebrities are embracing fringes in style. But when someone gets bangs, we often end up thinking, “I wonder if something’s going on in their life”. Such is their chaotic reputation. Whether you’re going through a breakup or need a fresh back-to-school look, bangs are on top of the list of choices.

Sonia Dhyani was extremely attached to her long hair, and cutting it was not a decision she took lightly. She had the same hairstyle for a long time and finally thought it was the right time to try something new and get out of her comfort zone. “Getting bangs was a spur-of-the-moment decision. I just wanted to try it out and see if it would go well with my look. However, it was a big emotional step for me,” said the senior communication professional.The results surprised her. “It was not just a makeover, but a total change in my persona. I was feeling confident and fresh with my new look,” she added.When life beats Shilpashree Jagannathan down, or when she feels nothing is going the way she wants it, her first reaction is to withdraw, feel pity for myself, but at the first sign of getting over the sadness, she tends to change her hair. The Canada-based content strategist said that, as someone belonging to a family that believes women should have long hair and where cutting and styling hair is frowned upon, changing her hairstyle is not just a coping mechanism to get over stress, but also a way to assert her identity.

Deepti Chandy, Therapist & COO, Anna Chandy & Associates, agreed that a haircut is often described as a refresh, even a detox, because psychologically, we link it to a shift in mood. After a breakup or a period of emotional upheaval, many people feel an almost immediate urge to cut their hair, get bangs, or experiment with colour. The act itself becomes symbolic. “By changing something external and visible, we attempt to mark an internal transition. It feels like a reset, a way of signalling that something has shifted,”

she said.Anna Mariam Ittyerah echoed her sentiments when she got bangs during lockdown. “I was bored to death. But I also felt like this move won’t be too risky since I don’t have to go out and show my face,” the Bengaluru-based copy-writer said. She watched a couple of YouTube tutorials and did it herself. “I wanted to get bangs because I felt my forehead was way too wide. Plus, I grew up watching television shows like New Girl and Hannah Montana, where the main characters would have amazing bangs,” she elaborated.For both women and men, hair is closely tied to identity and self-image. Chandy explained that it significantly shapes how we see ourselves and how we believe others perceive us. “For many women, shaving their head can feel like losing more than just hair; it can feel like shedding aspects of vanity or culturally defined femininity. This underscores how emotionally charged hair can be and how deeply it is woven into personal identity,” she said.

At the same time, altering one’s hair offers a sense of control. During moments of uncertainty, such as a breakup or a major life change, modifying one’s appearance can feel like reclaiming agency. Chandy shared that it becomes a tangible action in situations where much feels intangible. A new haircut can signal renewal, quietly declaring, “This is a new version of me.” “Ultimately, it is less about the hair itself and more about the meaning attached to it: reinvention, autonomy, and the comfort of choosing change on one’s own terms,” she added.Gurbandana Kohli, Founder of Rapunzel’s Hair Extensions, Gurgaon, said that even though a lot of people echo these sentiments, changing one’s hair is a serious commitment, and not many can see it through. “People don’t always want to cut their hair permanently, so clip-on bangs become popular automatically. They offer instant solutions, and make the face look slimmer, hide a big forehead, add volume in the front area and give a younger look in general,” she told indianexpress.com.

Inspired? Here’s what to note before getting started.Celebrity hairstylist James Lahlmunsiem recalled his experience, sharing how people often rush into bangs not just for a style change, but during emotional lows. It’s their way of reclaiming control and giving themselves an instant boost of confidence. “A great haircut, especially with well-placed bangs, goes far beyond trimming length. It becomes a powerful emotional reset, a moment of self-pampering that recharges you with fresh, positive energy and restores your sense of self,” he told indianexpress.com.Ittyerah mentioned that for curly hair, it’s always advised not to cut the bangs too short, or else it’s going to look really odd. And Lahlmunsiem agrees. According to him, no matter how much length you cut, if the face isn’t properly framed, the transformation rarely shows. Soft, face-framing bangs instantly create a sharp, youthful, and vibrant look. They beautifully highlight bone structure, draw attention to the eyes, and deliver one of the quickest, most impactful head-turning changes, both visually and emotionally.

# Indian working in Japan for 10 years on office culture: ‘Even 15 minutes of overtime is paid’

Japan work culturePurohit went on to explain that lunch hours are treated as personal time and are generally left uninterrupted.An Indian professional who has spent the last decade working in Japan is giving social media users a closer look at what it’s like to be part of the country’s corporate culture. Through a recent Instagram video, Ankit Purohit explained that while finding a job in Japan is achievable, adapting to the workplace mindset is what truly matters.Drawing from his own experience, he described a work environment built around punctuality, mutual respect, discipline, and clearly defined professional boundaries. Time is taken seriously

Purohit said one of the first things anyone working in Japan notices is the importance placed on being on time.“If you are going to the office and your office is at 9:00 in the morning, you have to reach the office before 9:00.” He also pointed out that hierarchy is not reflected in how employees travel to work.“In Japan, even the company’s CEO comes to the office by train, so there is no comparison regarding who comes to the office by car, who comes by bike, and who comes by train,” he said.Lunch breaks, elevator etiquette, and overtimePurohit went on to explain that lunch hours are treated as personal time and are generally left uninterrupted.“In Japan, there is usually a lunch break from 12:00 to 1:00, which is your own private time. And most Japanese people prefer to eat bento from convenience stores rather than bringing a tiffin from home.”

He also highlighted an everyday courtesy that many viewers found interesting.“In Japan, elevators also have a different culture. If you are standing near the elevator buttons, you have to keep the door’s button open until everyone has exited the elevator, and you will be the last one to exit.”Speaking about work-life balance, Purohit said employees are compensated even for short periods of extra work.“If you are doing 15 minutes of overtime, the company will even pay you for that. And once you log out, your manager will not call you to do extra work, and they will not ask you to do



extra work on your days off.”Sharing the video, Purohit wrote that anyone planning to build a career in Japan should understand that the country’s work culture extends beyond office responsibilities.Working in Japan is more than just having a job; it’s about becoming part of a culture that values discipline, respect, responsibility, and teamwork.”He further explained that punctuality is expected, communication should be proactive, teamwork is valued over individual achievements, and quality of work takes priority over speed. He also noted that employees are encouraged to keep improving their skills and adapt to changing technologies.Reflecting on his own journey, he added that after living and working in Japan for 10 years, he believes these everyday habits not only make someone a better employee but also contribute to personal growth.

The video sparked a discussion online, with many viewers praising Japan’s workplace practices.An Instagram user wrote, “Yess .. i have been to japan at my previous job.. i would love to get a job there.” Another commented, “When you have zero interest rate . You enjoy everything.”A third user wrote, “Japan is so beautiful i really like the discipline culture passion life style the other countrie should gain something from themsome discipline and respect for others.”

# Vitamin D deficiency linked to heart cell damage, finds Hyderabad NIN study

Hyderabad: Vitamin D might be capable of doing much more than just making your bones stronger and improving immunity. The micronutrient, which can be sourced directly from the sun, could in fact be a vital shield for your heart.A recent study published in the scientific journal Steroids in September 2026 by researchers from the Hyderabad-based National Institute of Nutrition (ICMR-NIN) has found that vitamin D deficiency and insufficiency are linked to increased cellular stress and damage in the heart.In a significant finding that sheds new light on cardiovascular health, researchers from the Hyderabad-based National Institute of Nutrition have revealed that vitamin D deficiency weakens the heart’s cellular defences.Published in the scientific journal Steroids on September 2, 2026, the study used rat models to evaluate varying vitamin D levels and map a step-by-step biological effect inside cardiac tissue.Led by NIN Scientist B D Ayesha Ismail, alongside researchers Athira Anilkumar Sudharma and Shabna Aboo, the study said that when vitamin D levels drop, the heart’s natural antioxidant defences, specifically a protective pathway regulated by a protein called Nrf2, are also suppressed, leading to a surge of oxidative damage in the left ventricle.The chemical imbalance inside the heart did not stop there. It overwhelmed the cells’ internal protein-folding machinery, triggering endoplasmic reticulum (ER) stress and ultimately activating self-destruct and



autophagy signals, resulting in programmed cell death.To validate these mechanisms at the cellular level, the team conducted in vitro experiments using rat cardiomyoblast cells (H9C2). Pretreatment with vitamin D enhanced antioxidant status and reduced both ER stress and autophagy markers.The findings indicate that maintaining adequate vitamin D levels could be important in helping cardiac cells cope with oxidative stress and stave off cellular degradation. While the study offers insights into how micronutrient deficiencies may translate to cardiac vulnerability, the researchers note that these conclusions are currently derived from animal and cell models, paving the way for broader clinical investigations in humans.

# BCCI secretary Saikia hails India after Asian Games cricket gold against Pakistan

GNS News Agency,Oct 7

Nisshin: BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia hailed India's men's cricket team after their thrilling 19-run win over Pakistan in the Asian Games final, saying the victory highlighted the country's strength in white-ball cricket. "It felt very good. A very delightful victory against Pakistan. It is always sweetest when we win the match against Pakistan, especially in all international tournaments. In the Asian Games, another gold came. So, I think India is a superpower in white-ball cricket nowadays," Saikia told IANS. India secured consecutive gold medals at the Asian Games in the men's cricket event after giving a high-quality performance and beating Pakistan at Korogi Sports Park on Saturday. After winning the toss, captain Shreyas Iyer chose to bat first and India scored a formidable 211 for 6, thanks to Abhishek Sharma's outstanding 61 off 28 balls and Tilak Varma's unbeaten 51 off 22.

Although India had lost Vaibhav Sooryavanshi (15) and Sanju Samson (4) early on, Abhishek stepped in during the Powerplay and hit seven sixes and three fours to reach his fifty in just 20 balls, which is the fastest fifty ever scored by an Indian player against Pakistan in T20 internationals. He finally scored 61 at a strike rate of 217.85, but Tilak and Shivam Dube made sure that India performed well at the end.

They put on 62 runs for the sixth wicket, Tilak finishing the innings without being out on 51 and Dube scoring 27



from 15. The score came about with 18 runs scored in Sufyan Moqim's over and 23 in Saim Ayub's, before Dube was bowled off the very first ball of the last over. Even though the target was very high, Pakistan were never eliminated, mainly due to Hasan Nawaz, who scored 96 off 51 balls in a splendid counterattack. But in the later parts of the match India's spinners and all-rounders remained calm. Washington Sundar and Axar Patel kept Pakistan in check during the middle phase before Dube provided the deciding contribution by getting Nawaz out on the very last ball, thereby leaving Pakistan at 192 all out. The win secured India their second consecutive men's cricket gold at the Asian Games and ended a strongly successful campaign in the format.

# Asian Games wrestling: Aman Sehrawat wins gold in 57kg category



GNS News Agency,Oct 7

Nagoya: India's Aman Sehrawat added another feather to his growing medal cabinet as he clinched the gold medal in the men's 57kg wrestling final at the Asian Games 2026, stunning reigning world champion Han Chong-song 11-7. Aman registered a strong win in what was a roller-coaster final at the Nagoya City Inae Sports Center against the North Korean grappler, becoming the first Indian to clinch the gold medal in the men's 57kg freestyle division. The Indian grappler was leading 6-1 in the second period of the bout, but the world champion made a comeback with three two-point moves to take a 7-6 lead. With time running out, Aman then

picked up four points with a takedown and a roll. The North Korean challenged the points but was unsuccessful, and lost a point, giving Aman an 11-7 lead. The Indian grappler fended off the final 30 seconds to clinch the gold. Earlier, Sujeet Kalkal had won gold in the men's freestyle 65kg category. This is the first time since 1978 that India have won two gold medals in the men's freestyle category. Aman is already an Olympic medallist, having won a bronze at the Paris Games. He also won a bronze at the 2023 Hangzhou Games and has now upgraded his medal. Aman came into the final on the back of a comeback victory in the semifinal. The Indian began the day with a 20-9 technical superiority win over Japan's Yamato Ogawa before beating Kazakhstan's Nurdanat Aitanov 12-1 in the quarterfinals. In the semifinal against Tajikistan's Aiaal Belolyubskii, Aman trailed 2-6 after the opening period but turned the contest around spectacularly, scoring 12 points in the second period while conceding only two to win 14-8. Earlier, Sujeet ended India's wait for a wrestling gold at the Asian Games 2026 with a stunning comeback victory in the men's freestyle 65kg category, overcoming Tajikistan's Abdulmazhid Kudiyeu 10-9 in a dramatic final. For most of the match, the 23-year-old Indian trailed 2-9, but then pulled off a remarkable late rally, scoring eight consecutive points in the final stages to beat Kudiyeu and secure India's first wrestling gold at the Games.

# Abhishek, Tilak, Washington, Axar and Dube power India past Pakistan to retain gold

GNS News Agency,Oct 7

Nisshin: Abhishek Sharma's breathtaking 61 off 28, Tilak Varma's unbeaten 51 off 22 and an all-round effort from Washington Sundar, Axar Patel and Shivam Dube helped India clinch back-to-back Asian Games gold medals in men's cricket as they beat Pakistan by 19 runs in a thrilling final at Korogi Sports Park on Saturday. India produced a brilliant, breathless and golden finish after posting 211/6, with Abhishek setting the tone with the fastest fifty by an Indian against Pakistan in T20Is before Tilak and Dube provided a late surge.

But Pakistan were not going down without a fight and were powered by a magnificent 96 off 51 from Hasan Nawaz. But India's spinners and all-rounders held their nerve in a frenzied finish with Dube taking the wicket of Nawaz on the final ball to end Pakistan's innings at 192 for 6 and sending the Indian players into wild celebrations. India began their innings in typically aggressive fashion after Shreyas Iyer won the toss and opted to bat first. The 15-year-old left-hander Vaibhav Sooryavanshi hit 15 in nine with two sixes before Saim Ayub dismissed him in the second over. Sanju Samson scored four in six before Ahmed Daniyal had him caught at mid-on. However, the quick wickets did little to deter Abhishek Sharma.

The southpaw was in devastating touch in the Powerplay, reaching his fifty off 20 balls as India struck at 81/2 in the first six overs. Pakistan's fielding was also a source of frustration for them, with Saim Ayub dropping two catches in the same over while Daniyal missed a direct-hit chance to dismiss Abhishek. Abhishek finally holed out to Arafat Minhas for a spectacular 61 off 28 deliveries with three fours and seven sixes at a strike rate of 217.85. The Pakistan attack had a very short window to attack before the pressure from their spin bowlers started taking India. Ishan Kishan made 20 off 18 balls before the heat was felt and Shreyas Iyer added 21 from 24 balls before they lost their wickets under the pressure. However, India had raced past 150 in 16.4 overs and had enough in the tank to unleash a late onslaught.

Tilak Varma and Shivam Dube blended superbly at the end to make it a 62-run partnership for the sixth wicket at the end. The duo batted without respite, scoring 12 runs off the 17th over of Abrar Ahmed, 18 runs in the 18th over of Sufyan Moqim and 23 runs of the 19th over by Saim Ayub. Daniyal struck on the first ball of the final over, removing Dube for 27 off 15, but Tilak finished 51 not out from 22 balls, including three fours and four sixes at a strike rate of 231.81, and Axar Patel scored the final single to take India to 211/6. Tilak reached his fifty from 21 balls, making it the second-fastest fifty for India against Pakistan in the format, behind only Abhishek's 20-ball effort earlier in the day. The 62-run stand between Tilak and Dube is the second-highest for the sixth wicket or lower in a 5-plus team T20 tournament final, only behind the 68\* between Kumar Sangakkara and Angelo Mathews against the same opponent in the 20 World Cup 2009 final at Lord's. India's total of 211/6 also marked the second instance of a full-member team scoring over 200 in a 5-plus team T20 tournament final, after India had posted 255/5 against New Zealand in the T20 WC 2026 final in Ahmedabad.

Abhishek's assault also saw him join an elite list of Indian batters in T20I finals. His 7 sixes against Pakistan put

# How Tilak Varma has mastered batting in finals against Pakistan

GNS News Agency,Oct 7

Tilak Varma took his time against Pakistan's spinners, rotated the strike and waited for the balls he could hit. (CREIMAS) Tilak Varma took his time against Pakistan's spinners, rotated the strike and waited for the balls he could hit. (CREIMAS) In the Asian Games final against Pakistan in Japan, with India needing a strong finish, Tilak made an unbeaten 51 off 22 balls. He did not attack from the first ball. He took his time against Pakistan's spinners, rotated the strike and waited for the balls he could hit. Then, when the chance came, he took the game away.

The acceleration was spectacular. He hit two sixes in the 18th over, reverse-swept Saim Ayub for four in the next over, then hit Ahmed Daniyal for two more sixes in the final over. He reached his fifty in the last over and finished unbeaten as India posted 211. There was a similar quality to his innings in last year's Asia Cup final, also against Pakistan. But the situation was very different. India were 20/3 in Dubai after losing Abhishek Sharma, Shubman Gill and Suryakumar Yadav. Tilak walked in with Pakistan's bowlers on top and the required rate climbing. Instead of forcing the pace, he settled in and built a 57-run partnership with Sanju Samson, taking singles and twos and punishing the loose balls.

Against Abrar Ahmed, he went down on one knee and slog-swept a six. Against Faheem Ashraf, he punched a short-of-length delivery through the off side before hitting another poor ball over long leg. When Haris Rauf came back at the death, Tilak was ready. He pulled a hard-length delivery for six in the 20th over, leaving India needing two runs. A single followed, taking India level, before Rinku Singh hit the winning runs. Tilak finished unbeaten on 69 off 53 balls. In



Dubai, Tilak rebuilt the innings before helping finish the chase. In Japan, he provided the late surge. The method was similar: read the bowling, keep the innings moving, then increase the rate when the moment was right.

That was clear against Pakistan's spinners in the Asian Games final. Tilak took the singles on offer early. When Abrar kept things tight, he worked the ball around. When Sufyan Moqim dropped it into his hitting area, he launched it straight over the bowler's head. When the ball was full enough, he went down on one knee and swept. That was also visible in Dubai. Tilak's 69 included three fours and four sixes, much of the innings built through rotation before he attacked at the end. In the Asia Cup final, he absorbed pressure without letting the required rate dictate his shots. In the Asian Games final, once the platform was there, he shifted gears and finished strong. At 23, as T20 vice-captain, that reading of the game is becoming central to his value. The big hits will draw attention, especially after a 51 off 22, but the foundation for both innings was built before the fireworks.

# How Kumkum Mohod beat best in world to win historic archery gold in Asiad

Seventeen-year-old Kukum Mohod didn't blink in the crunch. Up against former World Youth Champion Oh Yejin of Korea in the final, Kumkum won 6-5 via a shoot-off to become India's first-ever recurve archer to win an Asian Games title. Her WhatsApp display picture is a sketch with the caption: 'My target is the Olympics and my dream also. And one day, I will complete this dream'. Her sketch speaks volumes about her ambition. After the historic medal at the Asian Games, which also secured an Olympic quota, the sky is the limit for her.

Kukum Mohod's WhatsApp display picture is a sketch with the caption: 'My target is the Olympics and my dream also. And one day, I will complete this dream'. Kukum Mohod's WhatsApp display picture is a sketch with the caption: 'My target is the Olympics and my dream also. And one day, I will complete this dream'.

Her path to gold is impressive. She edged out Kang Chae-young, Tokyo Olympics women's team gold medalist and reigning world champion in the quarter-final, then beat China's Zhu Jingyi in the semis to enter the finals. She is a self-confessed fan of Chae-young but when it mattered she didn't get overawed. Small changes made a big difference. "The last few months I worked on my strength as well as the bow-hand release. I am going to my first Asian Games but I have the belief that I can win there and shoot my best to win the title," Kukum had told The Indian Express. Father Anil Mohod runs a sweet box making business in Amravati. He was glued to TV on Saturday morning, watching his daughter win the gold for India. "Kukum's biggest strength has been her mental resilience. She shot with a second-hand bow for a good part of the last five years. We would travel in sleeper class trains and buses for the tournaments. She would never complain. Yesterday, when she won the team gold, she sent us a picture of her with the gold medal and today will also be the same," Anil said. Kukum Mohod's parents Anil Manohar Mohod and Rupali Mohod celebrate the gold medal at their home in Amravati. (Special Arrangement) Kukum Mohod's parents Anil Manohar Mohod and Rupali Mohod celebrate the gold medal at their home in Amravati. (Special Arrangement) At the World Cup Stage 2 in Shanghai in May, she paired up with four-time Olympian Deepika Kumari and Ankita Bhakat for a win via shoot-off against the Chinese team of World No. 3 Zhu Jingyi, Huang Yuwei and You Qi. The team gold was India's first since 2021. Days later, the Maharashtra youngster would make it to the Indian team for the Asian Games along with Ankita Bhakat and Kirti Sharma. At the trials in Sonapat, she topped qualification, won six matches in the second stage and finished second behind Kirti Sharma. Four-time Olympian Deepika Kumari finished fourth and missed the Asian Games berth.

"We all idolise Deepika didi. We don't think like we have edged her out or something like that. We focus on our shooting and process. The initial two years in archery were tough



for me. I had shot with a wooden arrow in Indian round for four years and starting with the full recurve bow took a lot of time to adjust. I would do pulling and bow draw only for many months before I shot the arrows at the distance," Kukum had shared. The Indian was trailing Korean Oh Yejin 1-3 in the final before she made a comeback to tie the match 3-3. With the Korean winning the next net, Kukum was once again trailing 3-5 in the match before she won the next set to once again tie the match 5-5. In the shoot-off, the Korean shot an eight followed by Kukum hitting a ten and winning the Asian games title. In her comeback, Kukum had shot six consecutive arrows of ten and hit a total of 11 shots of ten each to win the title.

Manifesting Asian Games The youngster had also spoken about how she had last year manifested that she will be going to the Asian Games. "At my hometown, there is a big function on Janmashtami celebrations. I have never missed that. I had manifested that next year's Janmashtami festival, I will not be there in Amravati and will be in an Indian camp for training for Asian Games," Kukum had shared. Her coach Prafull Dange too was following the final at Radhey Archery Academy in Amravati, where Kukum first came to train under him. "Her shoulder strength was good to take load off the bow. But we started with less poundage of the bow so as to first teach her to handle the bow with ease. Normally archers also don't try short distance shooting but then she was never shy to shoot short distance. The tension and the strength required to shoot short distances helped her gain the shoulder strength as well maintain back tension," Dange said. Dange also speaks how his trainee works on her mental strength as well her confidence. "Kukum spends a lot of time on visualisation as well as her mental strength. She reads the book 'The Power of Subconscious Mind' as well Marathi book 'Vichar Niyam', a book on positive thoughts. She has never seen the Koreans or other archers as somebody to be fearful of. Post her women's team gold on Friday, she told me, Podium Gaajavanaaraa (I will perform grandly on the podium). And she had kept her word today," Dange said.

# India prevail in hockey, Pakistan triumph in volleyball, but handshakes win the day

The scoreboard still read 25-18, the final point of Pakistan's 3-0 win over India. But as Amit Balwan Singh stood talking about the defeat, Pakistan's middle blocker Musaweer Khan ruffled his hair, Murad Khan consoled him and Abu Bakar Siddique walked over and patted him on the back. "The Indian players are like my brothers," Siddique said. It was a gentle end to a match Pakistan had dominated, on a day that offered two different India-Pakistan results across two sports. In the morning, Pakistan beat India 3-0 in volleyball. In the evening, India beat Pakistan 4-3 in hockey — a semifinal that provided a glimpse of what the rivalry between the two could still produce, with players high-fiving each other before the push-back and captains shaking hands at the start. The two countries will meet again on Saturday, this time for the Asian Games cricket gold medal. There, the customary handshake has been absent in recent meetings, offering a different picture of the rivalry. Asked in the context of the cricket teams' decision not to shake hands, Amit, an outside-hitter, said: "People look at India-Pakistan from a different point of view. But a sportsperson has to think about his best performance. The relations (between the two countries) haven't been good since the beginning but a sportsperson has to ignore all that and focus on the game."

The volleyball court offered a glimpse of what he meant. Before the quarterfinal match, the teams exchanged pins and greeted each other. Once the whistle went, however, the familiarity gave way to the contest, with Pakistan attacking more cleanly and repeatedly finding ways around India's

block. Pakistan took the first set 25-19, fought back from 16-13 down to take the second 25-23 and then pulled away early in the third to win 25-18. The intensity was obvious during the match. Pakistan celebrated almost every point loudly, especially as India began to struggle in the third set. But the mood changed quickly once the contest ended. "We were relaxed throughout," Siddique said, as Pakistan recorded a third straight win over India at the Asian Games. At 19, Siddique is one of the younger players in the Pakistan team. Sharing the athletes' accommodation with the Indian side, he said, had given him a chance to learn from players he had previously known mainly as opponents. "We are staying at the same hotel. I am a junior, so I learn a lot just by watching how they conduct themselves. What they eat, what they do, how they kit up. It feels very good to share space with seniors. We all eat together at the mess," he said. India's Hardik Singh with Pakistan's Nadeem Ahmad during the men's semifinal hockey match. (PTI) India's Hardik Singh with Pakistan's Nadeem Ahmad during the men's semifinal hockey match. (PTI) Siddique also spoke about Indian players with the familiarity of someone discussing teammates rather than rivals. "Mashallah, all Indian players are good. I have seen Chirag (Yadav, an outside-hitter) a lot, there's Muthuswamy (Appavu, a setter). Mashallah, he is also good. At CAVA (Nations League, last year when India had won), he was very good, outstanding. I saw him and wondered, 'yeh kya kar raha hai (what is he doing)'!" There is, of course, an awareness among the play-

ers of what an India-Pakistan fixture represents beyond the court. Abu Bakar said the hype surrounding the matches was largely a product of the rivalry built around them.

Of course, there is hype when India and Pakistan play. But that's because of the way this rivalry has been turned into animosity. So that's what stays with us, India-Pakistan, India-Pakistan. But trust me, our two teams have a very good relationship, gupshup karte hai (we do have chats)," he said. There is familiarity and respect also because the players face each other in club colours. Indian and Pakistani spikers often ply their trade in volleyball leagues in central Asia. And, sharing a neutral ground has helped players understand each other better. "I know Amit because we played two years ago together in Kazakhstan," said Khan, who hails from Pakistan's volleyball-crazy district of Bannu, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. "What happens outside sport does not reflect on our relationship when we play." Amit, who has played alongside Pakistani players at clubs in Iran, made the same distinction. "This is, of course, a very important match. As a sportsperson, if we look at this match from that point of view, there will be more pressure. We can execute our skills if we play with a free mind. Out of the court, we speak to each other cordially. Sometimes, we end up playing for the same clubs abroad, like in Iran," he said. A few hours later, the result was reversed on the hockey field, but the drama was turned up several notches. India raced to a 3-0 lead, only for Pakistan to fight back and level the match at 3-3.

## Vijay Deverakonda recalls ‘unhealthy’ body transformation for Liger: ‘Was licking an ice cube’



Vijay Deverakonda's 2022 film *Liger* was hyped as his big pan-Indian film but before one could blink, the film flopped at the box office. But, that does not mean that Vijay did not put his heart and soul into the film. In a recent interview, he opened up about the massive toll that his body underwent for the preparation of the film as at one point, he was just taking 200 ml of water. During the shoot, even that wasn't allowed so he was just licking an ice cube. Vijay admitted that this was not healthy, and after he was done with the shoot, he was just craving for some chilled coconut water. He shared that he started with four to six litres of water a day. The intake was gradually reduced, and by the end, he was just taking 200 ml water a day. "In the last 10 hours before the shoot, you're not drinking water. You're just licking an ice cube," Vijay Deverakonda said in a conversation with Sudhir Srinivasan. "It's not at all healthy," The deprivation consumed him entirely. "Every second, from the time I was

drinking 300 ml of water a day, every minute you're just like: water, water, water. That's all you need. That's all you want at that moment," he said. "When I was licking that ice cube and was not allowed water, I was sleeping thinking of water. I was like, I can't function like this." He knew he had to endure four more hours of shooting before he could finally drink. His instructions to his team were desperate and precise. "I told them, I want coconut water, get four litres of it. I didn't want food, I just wanted chilled coconut water," he said.

Vijay recalled this incident as he was promoting his upcoming film *Ranabaali*, which is set during the Madras Famine of 1876-78. Vijay said the images from that period are among the most disturbing things he has ever seen. "They used to call it the Madras Famine because everywhere you went, people's ribs and chests were popping out because their stomachs had just shrunk from starvation," he said. "There are images from those times which, when you see them, are so disturbing. You can't even believe it." He said every person he showed the images to had the same reaction. "Every time I saw those images, and every time we showed them to someone, the reaction was: is this real? This happened in India?" he said. The research changed something fundamental in Vijay Deverakonda. "Every time we eat and I don't want to have that meal because I don't like it, I stop myself," he said. "People were starving 150 years ago. They would have felt like the gods had blessed them if they had even just the white rice, forget the chicken and the vegetables. You can't take this for granted. It gives you a perspective on starvation that you don't forget."

Disclaimer: The extreme physical transformation and extreme fluid restriction described above are part of an actor's movie preparation and do not constitute healthy fitness advice. Please consult a qualified healthcare professional before undertaking severe dietary restrictions or rapid weight transformation routines.

## Jaya Bachchan bursts into laughter with Gulzar, fans say ‘she’s smiling for once’

Amitabh Bachchan and Jaya Bachchan recently reunited with veteran filmmaker and lyricist Gulzar at a book launch event in Mumbai. Several pictures and videos from the event have surfaced on social media, with one particular moment between Gulzar and Jaya leaving fans amused. In the videos, Jaya can be seen laughing and sharing a light-hearted moment with Gulzar, prompting fans to comment on her rare candid smile. Amitabh and Jaya attended the launch of Dr P Jagannath's book, *DR BLUE: A Cancer Surgeon's Journey into the Human Side of Healing*.

In one of the now-viral videos, Amitabh, who was already on stage with Gulzar, can be seen extending his hand to assist Jaya as she climbed the stairs. Once she joined them, Gulzar put his arms around her and the two began talking, leaving Jaya in splits. The trio appeared to share a warm and candid moment on stage. The video soon caught the attention of social media users. One user commented, "First time hasate hue dekha," while another wrote, "Wow, she's smiling for once." Several others also reacted to Jaya's laughter and her candid interaction with Gulzar.

In another video from the event, Gulzar can be seen handing a parcel to Jaya, who accepts it with a smile. Gulzar and Jaya have shared a long professional association. The veteran filmmaker and lyricist worked on several projects featuring Jaya, including their iconic film *Guddi*. Gulzar has also collaborated with Amitabh on multiple projects over the years, and the two have maintained a close professional and personal bond. For the event, Jaya opted for an elegant off-white anarkali, while Gulzar was dressed in an all-white



kurta-pyjama. Amitabh complemented his white kurta-pyjama with a waistcoat. The reunion of the three veterans quickly became a talking point online, particularly the warm interaction between Gulzar and Jaya, which offered fans a glimpse of their longstanding friendship. Several other prominent personalities attended the book launch, including former Indian cricketer Sachin Tendulkar.

## Aishwarya Lekshmi refutes casting rumours around Allu Arjun’s Raaka: ‘Please cast me’

Aishwarya Lekshmi says she would love to be part of Allu Arjun's *Raaka* but is not. Aishwarya Lekshmi says she would love to be part of Allu Arjun's *Raaka* but is not. Actress Aishwarya Lekshmi has put an end to the speculation surrounding her rumoured involvement in *Raaka*, the highly anticipated pan-India film starring Allu Arjun and directed by Atlee. Several reports had recently surfaced claiming Aishwarya had joined the cast, with some suggesting she was being considered for a negative role. The actress has now denied those reports directly. Speaking to *India Today*, Aishwarya was straightforward about her status on the project. "No, I am not part of the film," she said. She then humourously added, "Somebody please cast me in the film." How the rumours started

Aishwarya's name began circulating in connection with *Raaka* after casting reports about the film's expanding ensemble gained momentum on entertainment news platforms. With *Raaka* already confirmed to feature Allu Arjun, and Deepika Padukone, every additional casting rumour has attracted significant attention. The report about Aishwarya being considered for a negative role was picked up by multiple outlets before she addressed it. The actress is currently promoting her Tamil romantic series *#Love*, opposite Arjun Das, which premiered on Netflix on Friday. Her schedule includes multiple promotional commitments for the series, and her name appearing in *Raaka* reports coinciding with the *#Love* launch may have been a factor in the rumour gaining traction.

What we know about *Raaka*'s cast *Raaka*, which marks the first collaboration between Allu Arjun and director Atlee, has been assembling one of the most ambitious ensemble casts in recent Indian cinema. Allu Arjun is playing the lead role, and his first look showed him in a werewolf-inspired, beast-like avatar. Deepika Padukone is also playing the lead role here. A recent promotional promo carried the tagline: "Beyond what seemed possible. We dared to imagine. We dared to achieve. *Raaka*: A global triumph." The language suggests the makers are positioning the film as an international-scale production. Allu Arjun himself addressed the anticipation around the film recently, asking fans to be patient. "We're trying to serve you the best. I request each one of you to just hold on a little longer. I hope it's all worth it for you," he said. He also described the film as "pushing the limits of cinema, not just by Indian standards, but by global standards."

About *Raaka* *Raaka* is directed by Atlee, whose previous film *Jawan* with Shah Rukh Khan became one of the



highest-grossing Indian films of all time. The music is composed by Sai Abhyankar. The film is being shot primarily in Mumbai and is produced under Sun Pictures. Allu Arjun has reportedly asked the production team to complete all shooting before the end of December 2026 so he can move to his next project with Lokesh Kanagaraj.

## Anne Hathaway opens up about grief, anxiety and parenthood

Mumbai: Hollywood star Anne Hathaway opened up about navigating grief, anxiety and parenthood, saying that with time she has learned to approach life with more calm, grace and perspective. During her appearance on *The Drew Barrymore Show*, Anne also reflected on how being a parent has taught her the importance of showing oneself compassion. A video of her chat was shared on the show's Instagram handle, with the caption: "@annehathaway shares how her outlook has changed as she prepares to welcome her third child." The video began with the *Princess Diaries* star saying: "There's highs and lows to life, as we all know, and one of the things that's really hard to get through is grief. And Adam and I have now weathered several seasons of very real grief together, and that either breaks you or it bonds you."

## Vijay’s son watched Ajith’s Aarambam FDFS, says they always had ‘healthy competition’



Vijay and Ajith were pitched as rivals for two decades. Vijay and Ajith were pitched as rivals for two decades. Jason Sanjay, the son of Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Vijay and the director of *Sigma*, was recently asked about the fierce rivalry between actors Vijay and Ajith and said that it was a "healthy competition" that "motivated" both of them. He also spoke about how both the actors chose different paths for their personal growth. "We've grown up seeing Thalapathy Vijay and Thala Ajith as the competition during that time in cinema. It was healthy competition. It motivated both of them. You give this kind of film, I'll give this kind of film. You deliver a 100-day successful movie, I'll deliver a 100-day successful movie. It was healthy competition," he said in an interview with VJ Siddhu vlogs.

He then addressed where both men are now, and why the rivalry no longer exists in the form it once did. "Thalapathy is now concentrating on a different avatar away from cinema. Ajith sir is focusing on another thing," he said, referring to Vijay's transition to full-time politics as the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu and Ajith's growing commitment to profes-

sional motorsport. "They don't have time for competition. They don't need to keep competition for a lifetime. Thus, they both joined together," Jason said. "This is healthy competition and we need to see such competitions in the future too." The most personal detail in Jason's comments was his revelation about Ajith's films. "I watched *Aarambam*, first day first show, in Woodlands theatre. First time for an AK film," he said. "From a young age, I've watched my father's films first day first show." *Aarambam*, directed by Vishnuvardhan and also starring Nayanthara and Arya, was one of Ajith's biggest hits during the peak of the Vijay-Ajith rivalry. For Jason to have been in the theatre on Day 1, voluntarily, at Woodlands, one of Chennai's most iconic single-screen theatres, suggests that the rivalry between the two actors was never as absolute within their families as it was within their fan bases. Vijay's support for Ajith Recently, Vijay was present at the Le Mans race at Silverstone racing circuit in the UK to flag off the race. Ajith was participating in the race and fans got a chance to see the two superstars together. Vijay, who made his last film *Jana Nayagan* with H Vinoth in 2026, is now fully immersed in his role as Chief Minister. His days are consumed by governance, party rallies, policy launches and constituency work. He has not announced another film and is widely expected to have retired from acting permanently. Ajith has been pursuing professional motorsport with increasing seriousness. He competed at the 24 Hours of Dubai in January 2026, participated in the Le Mans race at Silverstone in September, and has been training and racing between film commitments. He was last seen in *Good Bad Ugly*, and his next film with director Adhik Ravichandran is currently in pre-production.

## From 1-BHK to 99 houses, 100 acre farm: Mika Singh’s ‘rich friends don’t have horses, boats’

Mika Singh is the owner of a sprawling 100-acre farmhouse in Delhi, and reaching the property involves four different modes of transport — a flight, car, boat and if one is lucky, even a horse. However, did you know that the sprawling estate began with just two acres of land? In a recent interview with *Times Now*, Mika Singh recalled how he first bought the farmhouse and gradually expanded the property. Flight, car, boat, horse — how Mika reaches his farmhouse When the interviewer pointed out the elaborate journey to the farmhouse — travelling by air from Mumbai, followed by a car ride, a boat journey and even a horse ride — Mika explained the reason behind it. "The reason behind all this is that all my rich friends have Maybachs and Rolls-Royces, but none of them has horses or boats. I thought I would make them sit on this simple boat," he said.

Recalling how it all began, Mika said, "I had come to see the place when it was still more like a forest. I only bought two acres of land at first. I would come there at times to relax, cook and stay in the jungle inside a tent." He then recalled how someone he knew predicted that the area would eventually develop. "I was like, who will come here? He inspired me to buy more land. I increased the size of the property and you won't believe, just opposite to my farm is Taj Vivanta. And now several hotels have followed," he said. Mika also addressed his much-discussed claim of owning 99 properties. "Earlier, I had nothing. I was happy then. I never complained to anybody or God. We had just a one-bedroom house, where five siblings lived. We were immensely happy then. So if we have lived in a place like that, then now anything that's adding is just God's blessing," he said. Mika Singh farm house Mika Singh introduces his horses to Farah Khan. (Photo: Farah Khan/YouTube) The singer revealed that he at least two people reside at each of his 99 properties, just so he can maintain them. Interestingly, one of those properties is his first home — the one-bedroom house where he



spent his early years. "That house is near Tilak Vihar in Delhi. I travelled from Punjab and first came to Tilak Vihar. I still have that house. That house was also home to Daler Mehndi," Mika recalled. It was from this house that the two brothers collaborated and became pop sensations in the late 90s.

Inside Mika Singh's farmhouse Previously, while giving filmmaker-choreographer Farah Khan a tour of his farmhouse, Mika revealed that the sprawling property has horses, tractors, a camel, mustard fields and a helipad. It also has places of worship, including a temple and a gurdwara where prayers are conducted at all hours of the day. Mika Singh 100 acre farm house Inside Mika Singh's farmhouse.

The farmhouse also houses a private music studio. Mika has reportedly employed more than 200 people on the property, with around 50 of them living there permanently. His estate also features a dhaba-style cafe complete with traditional khaats. Speaking about the farm previously, Mika highlighted its role in generating employment. "I have a 100-acre farm that is one of my prized possessions. But it is also important to note that because of this farm, around 150 families are getting their livelihoods in order. Farming is happening along with a lot of other lucrative businesses," he said.

## Komal Rani on alleged relationship with Govinda: ‘We announced our film, not a romantic affair’

Actress Komal Rani Swarnkar, who has been at the centre of speculation about an alleged relationship with veteran Bollywood actor Govinda, has broken her silence with a lengthy statement posted across multiple Instagram Stories on Friday. The duo is starring in an upcoming film called *Roopa*. Komal started her statement by pointing to what she described as a selective outrage from celebrities who have commented on her personal life and her association with Govinda. She questioned why the same people who stay silent on serious national issues have chosen her personal life as the hill to speak on. "Recently, I have seen some celebrities openly commenting on Govinda ji and my personal life and our character. Yet I have never seen them come forward so strongly to express their opinion on any serious issue, whether it was terrorism, politics, the death of actors or even another actor's multiple marriages," she wrote. "Why, then, has our personal life suddenly become such a public spectacle that everyone feels entitled to comment on it?" Komal directly addressed the criticism around her public appearances alongside Govinda, which have been widely interpreted by some as evidence of a romantic relationship. "Since when did going before Ganpati Bappa alongside my hero and praying for the success of my upcoming film *Roopa* become a matter of shame, a national issue or *dikhawa* for others?" she wrote. She made it clear that the film was the reason for their public visibility, not a personal relationship. "We announced our film *Roopa*, not a romantic affair," she wrote. She also challenged those who have assumed the appearances are personal rather than professional. "We are working together, and we will continue to be seen together. If that bothers anyone, let them burn," she wrote. Without naming specific individuals, Komal Rani Swarnkar pointed at an actresses in the film industry whom she accused of using the controversy to extend their own fading public profiles. "Some actresses in the film industry, whose careers have gone cold, whose films are no longer working at the box office, seem to have nothing left except their washed-out brand tags," she wrote. "They are trying to stay relevant by sticking their noses into other people's ongoing controversies and trying desperately to keep themselves in the limelight."



She said she does not care about their opinions. "I honestly don't give a damn whether these people think I am a good person or a bad one," she wrote. She then offered her own theory about what is motivating the criticism. "I feel they are all part of the same group, taking out their frustration over their own failed marriages on someone else," she wrote. Komal Rani Swarnkar named Kashmera Shah and Divya Khosla directly, both of whom had previously criticised her publicly for her appearances with Govinda and made allegations against her. Shah is the wife of comedian Krushna Abhishek, who is Govinda's nephew. The Govinda-Krushna family feud has been one of Bollywood's most public family disputes for years, adding a layer of personal stakes to Shah's comments. She asked both women to stop associating themselves with her name. "