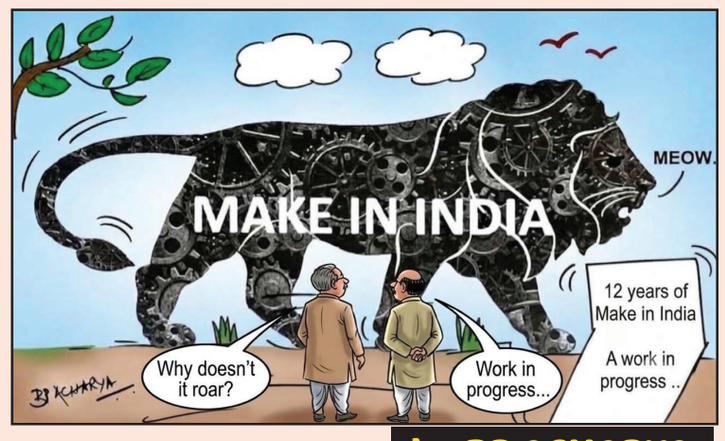
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OBTUSE ANGLE



by BP ACHARYA



Fight for India Is Gandhi vs Sangh Parivar: Revanth

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has received Kerala's prestigious 'Aryadan Muhammed-2026 Best Public Servant Award.

KOCHI, SEPTEMBER 25

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Friday described the political contest in the country as a "fight for the future of India" between the "Gandhi Parivar" and the "Sangh Parivar", and asserted that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi would become the next Prime Minister. Speaking after receiving the prestigious Aryadan Muhammed Award here, Mr. Revanth Reddy said the Gandhi family represented sacrifice, citing the contributions and deaths of Mahatma Gandhi, former Prime Ministers Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi, while claiming that Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi had sacrificed positions and power.

He alleged that the Sangh Parivar was attempting to divide the country on the basis of religion, caste, region and language. He said the country needed to unite to protect democracy, secularism, freedom and the Constitution.

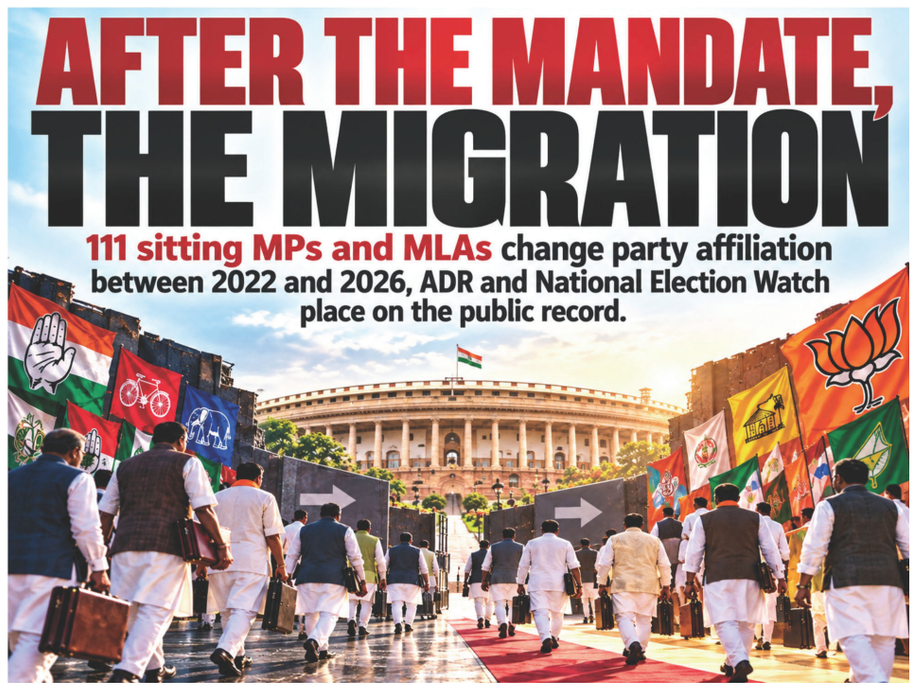
"I have no personal ambition left. My only dream is to make Rahul Gandhi the Prime Minister of India," Mr. Revanth Reddy said, adding that he had held various positions during his two decades in politics, including ZPTC member, MLC, MLA, MP, PCC president and Chief Minister.

Calling Kerala a political "bellwether" for the country, he sought to draw a parallel between political developments in the state and changes at the Centre. He referred to the Congress victories in Kerala in earlier periods and the subsequent formation of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 ➤

AFTER THE MANDATE, THE MIGRATION

111 sitting MPs and MLAs change party affiliation between 2022 and 2026, ADR and National Election Watch place on the public record.



A FRESH ANALYSIS COUNTS 26 LOK SABHA MEMBERS, 7 RAJYA SABHA MEMBERS AND 78 MLAS WHO CHANGED PARTY AFTER WINNING ELECTIONS OR BYPOLLS BETWEEN 2022 AND 2026. NAGALAND AND WEST BENGAL LEAD THE LIST. SEVERAL LARGE CLUSTERS REST ON THE TENTH SCHEDULE MERGER CLAUSE. THE AUTHORS ASK FOR INDEPENDENT, TIME BOUND DECISIONS ON DISQUALIFICATION.

BY C. SUBRAHMANYAM

The count is 111. Not rumour. Not corridor talk. A documented list of sitting legislators who, after the ballot was sealed in their favour, sat in the House under a different party label. Twenty six in the Lok Sabha. Seven in the Rajya Sabha. Seventy eight in the State Assemblies. Seventeen States and Union Territories. The period covers elections and bypolls from 2022 to 2026. The compilers are the Association for Democratic Reforms and National Election Watch. Print the number first. Then read what it contains. The study sorts the 111 cases into four routes. Individual switch without leaving the House. Formal merger of a legislature party. Resignation followed by a bypoll win. Disqualification under the Tenth Schedule followed by a bypoll win. The authors themselves warn that official records are uneven, so the list may not be exhaustive.

Nagaland accounts for 32 of the 111 cases, all MLAs, nearly three in ten. Twenty five were originally elected on NDPP tickets. Thirty two names appear among those who joined the Naga People's Front after an Election Commission recognised merger in which the NDPP ceased as a separate party.

West Bengal follows with twenty Lok Sabha members, every one of them elected on an All India Trinamool Congress ticket, later claiming merger with the Nationalist Citizens Party of India. That claim is before the Speaker of the Lok Sabha. Telangana contributes nine Assembly members originally returned on Bharat Rashtra Samithi tickets who later associated with the Congress. In one Telangana matter the High Court later set aside a Speaker's finding after the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 ➤

Allegations Against CEC: Petition Filed in SC

NEW DELHI, SEP 25

A petition has been filed in the Supreme Court seeking action against Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar. In the petition filed by advocate Shailendra Mani Tripathi, it has been alleged that statutory duties were violated during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process of electoral rolls. The petitioner alleged that certain decisions and guidelines were issued and changes were made to the software without the concurrence of the other Election Commissioners. According to the petitioner, these actions raise questions about the transparency of the electoral process.



The petition seeks initiation of prosecution against CEC Gyanesh Kumar under Section 32 of the Representation of the People Act. The petitioner has also requested the Supreme Court to

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Protests Across India from Oct 2 if CEC Does Not Resign: CJP



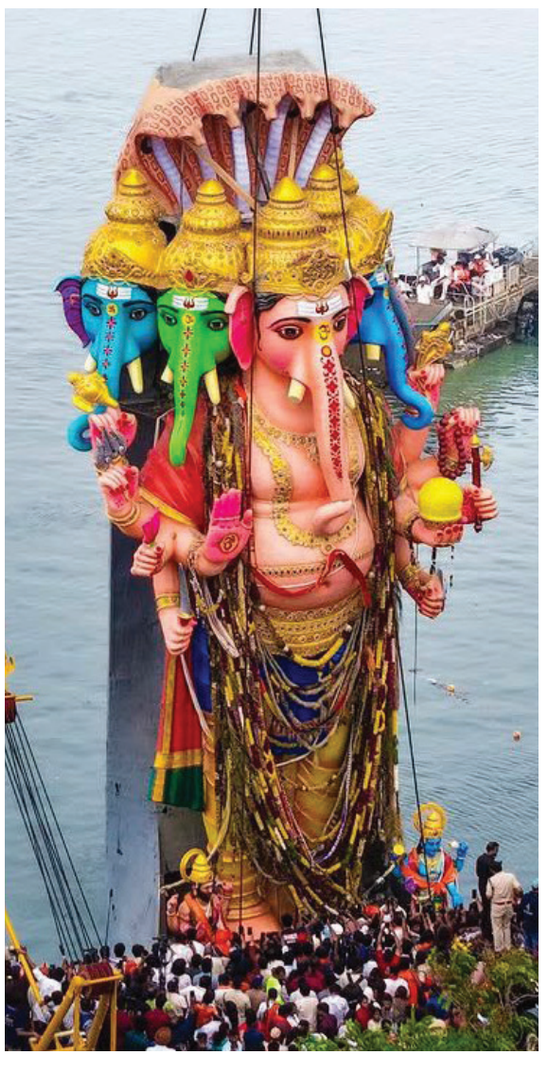
New Delhi: The Cockroach Janata Party (CJP) has announced that it will launch protests across the country from October 2 if Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar does not resign. Party founder Abhijit Deepke announced this on Friday. He said the protests would initially begin in Mumbai and would subsequently be expanded to several cities across the country. The party has demanded that Gyanesh Kumar resign from his post by Saturday. CJP, which has made several allegations against the CEC concerning the electoral process, had warned at a press conference held on Thursday that it would launch "Jantar Mantar 2.0" if he did not resign within 48 hours. Abhijit Deepke has now made it clear that if the CEC does not resign even after the latest deadline expires, the party will hold protests across the country from October 2. The Election Commission has yet to respond to these allegations.

Woman's Deepfake Photo with Modi: Notices to CJP Leaders

NEW DELHI, SEP 25:

The Delhi High Court directed Meta to immediately remove an objectionable deepfake image purportedly showing a woman with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The woman alleged that four CJP leaders circulated the image and said she received threats. The court issued notices to them and directed Delhi Police to provide her security. The matter will be heard next on October 14. The court also stressed the responsibility of social media platforms to prevent the spread of objectionable content.

DEVOTION TAKES THE FINAL DIP



The iconic 69-foot Khairatabad Ganesh idol was immersed in Hussain Sagar at 2.25 p.m. on Friday, as thousands of devotees bid an emotional farewell amid chants, prayers and flower showers.

Bandi Sanjay Hails BSF's Anti-Naxal Efforts



CHENNAI, SEPT.25

(NSS): Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar on Friday inaugurated newly constructed administrative and residential facilities at the BSF Sector Headquarters in Chennai and lauded the force for its role in safeguarding the nation and combating Naxalism and anti-national activities. The newly inaugurated facilities include an administrative block built at a cost of Rs.11.07 crore, a Gazetted Officers' building costing Rs.4.74 crore, personnel barracks at Rs.9.86 crore and a Subordinate Officers' building constructed at Rs.5.30 crore.

Addressing BSF personnel, Sanjay said the BSF Chennai - Malkangiri sector,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 ➤

ED SUMMONS MLA GANDHI IN MONEY-LAUNDERING CASE

HYDERABAD, SEPT.25

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has intensified its probe into the alleged money-laundering case involving Sahithi Infratech ventures India private limited, issuing a notice to Serilingampally MLA Arekapudi Gandhi to appear before the agency on September 27. According to the ED investigation, around Rs.2.1 crore was allegedly routed through bank accounts linked to Gandhi from funds associated with Sahithi Infra. The agency is examining the nature and purpose of the transactions and their alleged connection with the money-laundering network.

The Sahithi Infra case relates to allegations that the company collected large sums from homebuyers through pre-launch offers

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 ➤

VICAT
TRUST. LEGACY. FOREVER.

Don't give it a chance.

- Don't let them ruin your structures
- Don't let them waste your money
- Don't let them risk your dignity

If you give a chance to poor-quality cement, the quality of your life is what you risk. Many may take a chance. But once you give it, you may never get another.

Trust is never built by chance. It becomes a part of life over time.
So don't risk your dreams on uncertainty.

For more than a decade, we have shared a relationship built on trust. A trust not created in a day, nor by chance.

Powered by advanced German technology, robotic quality control, and all-day strength - we continue to lead the field with confidence.



Bharathi CEMENT
SUPERIOR QUALITY. GUARANTEED.

GERMAN TECHNOLOGY
ROBOTIC QUALITY CONTROL
LEADER IN ALL DAYS STRENGTH
3 TIMES BETTER

Sajjanar Reviews Ganesh Immersion Security

Hyderabad, Sept.25: City Police Commissioner V.C. Sajjanar on Friday announced an extensive multi-tier security blanket across Hyderabad to ensure the peaceful and smooth conduct of the annual Ganesh idol immersion procession. Accompanied by senior officials, the Commissioner inspected security measures along key routes and reviewed specific arrangements for the Khairatabad Bada Ganesh immersion. Prior to the inspection, Sajjanar offered special prayers at the Khairatabad pandal. Briefing the media, Sajjanar stated that nearly 20,000 police personnel have been deployed for bandobust duties along the primary procession corridor stretching from Balapur to Hussainsagar. Security management is being coordinated in tandem with municipal (GHMC), electricity, and water supply authorities as mandated by the Telangana government. To maintain real-time surveillance, around 10,000 CCTV cameras along major routes have been integrated into the Telangana Integrated Command and Control Centre (TGICCC) in Banjara Hills. Additionally, 26 SHE Teams have been stationed across high-density areas in three shifts to ensure safety for women and children, he said.



Inspired by Telangana warrior ilamma

the People's Government Committed to Social Justice : CM Revanth Reddy

HYDERABAD, SEP 25

Chief Minister Shri A Revanth Reddy paid rich tributes to Chakali Ilamma, a warrior of the Telangana Armed Struggle and a symbol of self-respect for the downtrodden and weaker sections. The Chief Minister said that the struggle waged by Ilamma against oppression and exploitation—fighting for land, livelihood, and rights—remains a big inspiration for the entire Telangana society. Iilamma laid a strong foundation for social justice, equality, and self-respect which serves as ideals for the present generation. On the occasion of her 131st birth anniversary, the CM affirmed that the people's government, drawing inspiration from Ilamma, is according top priority to the upliftment of Backward Classes (BCs), the poor, women, and marginalized communities. CM Revanth Reddy remembered Telnagana warrior Ilamma waged a valiant battle against the tyranny of the feudal lords on Telangana soil l80 years ago. The statue of 'Telangana Talli' (Mother Telangana) was designed drawing inspiration from heroic women like Sammakka-Saralamma and Chakali Ilamma, the Chief Minister said, highlighting that the Women's University in Koti was named after Ilamma in memory of her fight for social justice. The courage and fighting spirit demonstrated by Ilamma and other heroic women of Telangana serve as an inspiration for future generations as well.

The CM noted that the government was taking measures to ensure better education for BC students and improved facilities in residential schools and hostels, alongside initiatives for the economic empowerment of youth and women. The Chief Minister emphasized that providing equal opportunities, dignity, and justice to every section of the society is a befitting tribute to Chakali Ilamma.

Vinayaka Festivities Culminate in Grand Immersion

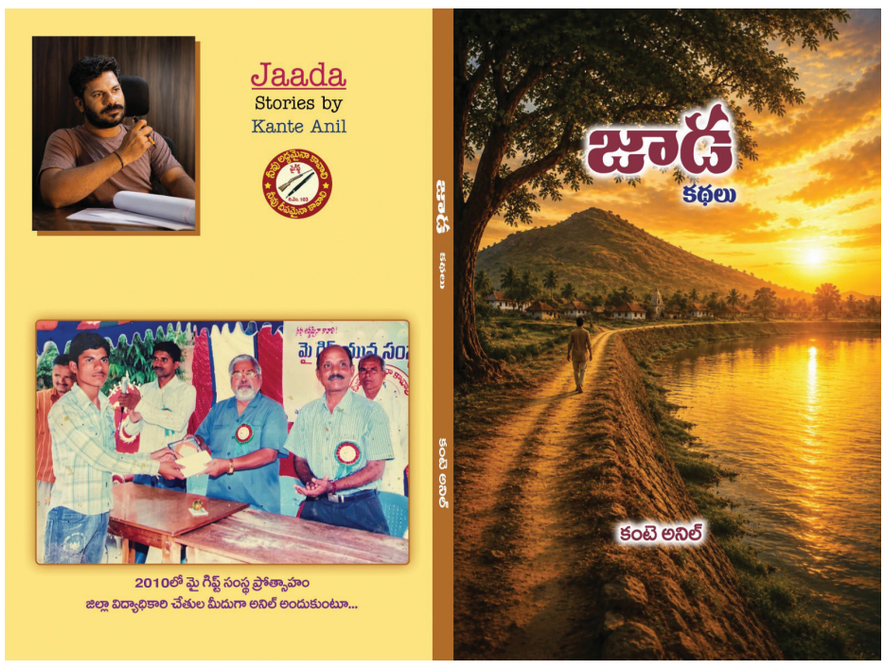
KUKATPALLY, SEP 25

The nine-day Vinayaka Chaturthi celebrations at Kamala Prasanna Nagar, under the Serilingampally Assembly constituency and Vivekananda Nagar Division, concluded on a grand note with the immersion of Lord Ganesha. Organised by the Sri Kamala Prasanna Vinayaka Bhakta Brundam, the celebrations have been held continuously for the past 30 years. This year's festivities witnessed enthusiastic participation from residents, with devotional programmes and cultural events held throughout the nine days.

Under the guidance of committee president Nayakam Raju, the celebrations began with Ganapati pooja and continued with various religious and cultural programmes. The colony remained festive throughout, with devotees participating in the rituals with devotion and enthusiasm. Dance performances were among the major attractions. S K Dance Floor student Kumari Nayakoti Medhasri impressed the audience with her performance. Residents particularly appreciated the participation of young children, including an eight-year-old performer, whose confidence and talent drew applause. A Mahaprasad laddu auction was also conducted as part of the celebrations. The sacred laddu was won by Palle Madana Gopal Reddy (Daddy) for ₹3.50 lakh. The organisers said the celebrations reflected the devotion and unity of residents and prayed for peace, happiness and prosperity in the colony.



BOOK REVIEW



'Jaada': Traces That Linger in the Hearts of the Soil

A Literary Testimony to Rural Telangana Life

Writing a story is not merely about turning an incident into words it is about making the unseen dimensions of life visible, giving an address to memories that time is slowly erasing, and lending a voice to the silent conflicts within the human heart. When a story continues to resonate after it has been read, when its characters seem like people we have known, and when a question remains even after the final line, the story has achieved something beyond narration. Anil's debut short-story collection, Jaada, belongs to this realm of lived experience and lingering memory.

Anil does not travel far in search of material for his stories. He looks closely at the world around him. The roads he has walked, the poverty he has witnessed, the childhood he has lived, the village changing before his eyes, and the relationships slowly developing cracks all become the raw material of his fiction. Consequently, these stories carry more experience than invention, more intimacy than ornamentation, and more life than literary display.

Though the sixteen stories in Jaada emerge from different situations, one thread binds them all together the human being and the traces life leaves behind.

The title story, Jaada, moves through childhood, friendship and village memories in search of one's roots. Beneath it flows an enduring truth however high one rises or however far one travels, one can never completely sever oneself from one's origins. Rani explores the inner turmoil of a woman whose individuality has been overshadowed, while Chitti Prashna allows the innocence of a child to question the adult world. Some questions do not necessarily require a writer to provide answers; placing them before society with sufficient force is itself a literary responsibility. Anil does precisely that.

Stories such as Udam and Nalla Kodi confront the fears and irrational beliefs that sustain superstition. In Poyyala Kattelu, it is not merely the firewood that burns a childhood scorched by poverty burns with it. Katta Tegindi raises searching questions about where the human being stands amid money, relationships and dignity.

Velimudra draws attention to the widening distance between technology and human connectedness. Machines may make human labour easier, but when technology begins to replace human presence, the very nature of relationships starts to change. Thodu reminds us that, beyond wealth and material comfort, what the human heart ultimately seeks is another human being. Devadasi questions a social evil, while Anna Gadapa brings into focus the enduring value of familial bonds.

Matti Gosa is, in many ways, the voice of the soil in this collection. The relationship between a farmer and the land is not merely economic it is an inheritance carried across generations. The soil in a farmer's hands is also the unwritten history of his existence. Stories such as Chirunama and Chivari Call touch upon the emotional intimacy that human beings are gradually losing amid the accelerating pace of modern life.

Cheruvu occupies a distinctive place in the collection. Here, the village tank is not merely a source of water it becomes the memory of a village, the childhood of a generation, a reflection of rural culture, and a symbol of humanity's coexistence with nature. When such water bodies disappear, it is not only a natural resource that vanishes; the collective life, relationships and cultural memory that grew around them begin to fade as well. The principal strength of Anil's storytelling lies in its rootedness. His characters do not appear to have been constructed at a writing desk they seem to have walked into these pages from the streets, homes and fields around us. There is the cadence of Telangana in the language, the fragrance of the countryside in the narrative, and the authenticity of lived experience in its incidents. Rather than rushing to pass judgement on his characters, the writer often places them before the reader and allows them to speak through their circumstances.

At the same time, a meaningful message is most powerful when it emerges naturally from the story rather than standing above it. In a few places, greater subtlety in presenting the underlying idea and a little more interpretative space in the endings could further strengthen the artistic impact. This is not so much a limitation as a creative possibility for a writer taking his first significant step into the world of the short story. The sincerity of observation and the honesty of lived experience remain the collection's strongest assets.

The title Jaada itself captures the soul of the book. A person leaves but a memory remains. Childhood passes but experience remains. A village changes but the fragrance of its soil remains. A story ends but the question raised by a meaningful story continues to live within the reader.

Reading Jaada, therefore, is not merely reading sixteen stories. It is an invitation to turn back for a moment and ask where we came from, what we have lost along the way, and what traces of that world still remain within us.

Time may erase footprints from the earth, but it cannot erase the traces of words that have touched a human life.

Anil's debut short story collection Jaada is published by My Gift Publications and is priced at ₹160. The cover design is by Vrunda, DTP by Harish and printing by Karshaka Printers. As a debut collection, Jaada marks not merely publication of a book but the beginning of a literary journey one rooted in soil, memory and humanity. May Anil's pen continue to discover untold lives and leave many more meaningful traces in contemporary Telugu literature.

For copies - Anil, Mobile : 9849553995

DR. PERUKA RAJU
NATIONAL POET, AUTHOR &
MULTILINGUAL LITERARY WRITER
78100 32847

CONTINUATION FROM PAGE 1

AFTER THE MANDATE, THE MIGRATION

➢FROM PAGE 1

member contested a Lok Sabha election on another party's symbol.

Goa records eight Congress MLAs who, in September 2022, claimed a two thirds legislature party merger with the BJP. The Speaker of the Goa Assembly accepted that merger.

Seven Rajya Sabha members elected for the Aam Aadmi Party took the same constitutional route into the BJP. Raghav Chadha said, "We have decided that we, two thirds of members belonging to the AAP in the Rajya Sabha, will exercise the provisions of the Constitution of India and merge with the B.JP." The Chairman of the Rajya Sabha accepted the merger.

Six Lok Sabha members elected for Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) later sat with the Shiv Sena led by Eknath Shinde. Smaller figures appear in Meghalaya, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan and other Houses.

Parties that lost the most members were NDPP with 25, AITC with 20 and Congress with 19. Parties that received the most were NPF with 32, BJP with 29 and NCPI with 20. Three outgoing parties account for 58 per cent of the exits. Three incoming parties account for 73 per cent of the arrivals.

The Tenth Schedule is the hinge. It punishes individual defection. It also permits a merger when two thirds of a legislature party join another party. Several of the largest blocks in this report stand on that exception. Speakers and Chairpersons decide. Courts have been moved. The report records a plain political consequence. "It is noteworthy that the recent fall of governments in some State Assemblies was attributed to defections by their MLAS."

ADR does not stop at the tally. It asks that disqualification petitions leave the presiding officer and go to the President or the Governor on the Election Commission's advice. It also asks that a clock be fixed on every petition and that a member who changes side be kept from public office until the next election or the end of the term.

The voter marked a party and a candidate on polling day. The House later recorded a different affiliation. Where the merger clause is satisfied, the change is lawful. Where it is contested, the file is still open. Put the record on page one. Name the clause. Leave the citizen to judge. The record is 111. The clause is the Tenth Schedule.

MY SHOT

The ballot is a contract with a name and a symbol. The Tenth Schedule was written to keep that contract from being torn up in private rooms. Merger by two thirds is not a loophole invented yesterday. It is the text. Delay by a Speaker is also not an accident of paperwork. It is power sitting on a file. Reform that moves the file to the President or the Governor on the Commission's advice will not end party shopping. It will only stop the House from pretending that shopping is still pending. Count first. Then decide whether the clause still serves the voter who stood in the queue.



NSS Day Celebrations Ignite "Not Me But You" Spirit at Hussaini Alam College

HYDERABAD, SEP 24

The National Service Scheme (NSS) Day was celebrated at Government Degree College for Women, Hussaini Alam, bringing together students, NSS volunteers, and faculty members in a vibrant display of community engagement and social responsibility.

The programme was presided over by Principal Prof. K. Praveen Kumar, who addressed the gathering on the importance of NSS in shaping students into responsible citizens. Highlighting the role of NSS in promoting social service, leadership, discipline, and civic consciousness, he encouraged participants to embrace the scheme's ideals as a pathway to meaningful nation-building.

The event was further inspired by the Chief Guest, Sri Nerella Malyadri, who shared practical insights and guidance to motivate students to take active roles in community welfare. Vice-Principal Mohd. Ghouse also contributed valuable remarks, reinforcing the need for student involvement in initiatives that positively impact society. Coordination of the celebrations was carried out by dedicated NSS Programme Officers:

Unit I – Dr. Anita Monga**
Unit II – Dr. Geeta Rani**
Unit III – Dr. P. Lata**

Throughout the programme, faculty members, NSS volunteers, and students took part enthusiastically. As part of the celebrations, a prize distribution ceremony was organized to recognize students and NSS volunteers for their achievements and active participation in NSS activities.

The NSS Day celebrations served as a strong reminder of the values of service, teamwork, leadership, and community engagement, helping students internalize the ethos of contributing "beyond self" for the greater good.

The event concluded with a formal vote of thanks, with the NSS Programme Officers expressing gratitude to Principal Prof. K. Praveen Kumar for his continuous encouragement and support. Special appreciation was also extended to the Chief Guest Sri Nerella Malyadri for gracing the occasion and sharing thoughtful guidance with the students. The programme was made successful through the cooperation and dedication of the entire college community.

With an uplifting and inspiring closing message, the celebrations reaffirmed the college's commitment to the ideals of "Not Me But You", strengthening the resolve to continue community service and contribute to nation-building.

ED SUMMONS MLA GANDHI IN...

➢FROM PAGE 1

but failed to deliver several promised flats and villas. Telangana Police registered multiple cases following complaints from investors, after which the ED initiated a probe into the alleged laundering of the proceeds.

The alleged value of the fraud, initially estimated at around Rs.248 crore, was subsequently put at approximately Rs.842 crore during the ED investigation. The agency has alleged that company managing director B. Lakshminarayana, former director Sandu Purnachandra Rao and others diverted funds into personal and family-linked accounts. The ED has also alleged that about Rs.50 crore was collected in cash and around Rs.126 crore was misappropriated between 2018 and 2020.

The agency has so far attached assets allegedly acquired in benami names worth about Rs.161 crore, followed by another attachment of assets valued at Rs.12.6 crore. It has also frozen 56 bank accounts linked to the accused, according to the investigation.

Tollywood actor Jagapathi Babu, who appeared in advertisements for Sahithi Infra, was earlier questioned by the ED as a witness.

..Petition Filed in SC

➢FROM PAGE 1

constitute a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to independently investigate the changes allegedly made to electoral rolls during the SIR process.

Recent reports state that the plea also challenges decisions, guidelines and software modifications allegedly undertaken without the concurrence of the other two Election Commissioners, and seeks an SIT investigation into alleged deletions from electoral rolls. The Election Commission has maintained that decisions relating to SIR were taken with the approval of the commissioners.

Bandi Sanjay Hails BSF's Anti-Naxal Efforts

➢FROM PAGE 1

established in 2014, has played a vital role in countering Naxalism and maintaining security. He said the improvement in peace and development in the Malkangiri region was made possible by the courage and continuous efforts of BSF personnel.

He praised the jawans for their vigilance and dedication, saying their commitment reflected the BSF motto, "Duty unto Death". Sanjay said the new barracks and residential facilities were more than just infrastructure, describing them as a mark of respect for personnel who serve in difficult conditions, including extreme weather and sub-zero temperatures. The new facilities provide arrangements for rest, hygiene and other daily requirements, enabling personnel to recover physically and mentally after duty and return to their responsibilities with renewed morale, he added.

The Minister also said BSF personnel serving in South India and their families would benefit from welfare measures, administrative support, medical services and educational facilities available through the Chennai Sector.

On this occasion, Sanjay planted saplings on the BSF campus. BSF Additional Director General Tsewang Namgyal, CPWD Special Director General Vivek Nand Vivek, CPWD Chief Engineer (Southern Region) A. Srinivasa Rao, DIG C.H. Sethuram and other senior officials attended the programme.

Fight for India Is Gandhi vs Sangh Parivar..

➢FROM PAGE 1

Congress-led governments at the Centre.

Mr. Revanth Reddy said the Congress victory in Kerala in 2026 had created a "new political wind" that, according to him, could develop into a larger movement across the country. "Congress hawa has started from here. We have to make it a tsunami across India," he said.

He also accused the BJP and what he described as "communal forces" of threatening secularism, freedom and the Constitution. Referring to allegations surrounding elections, he used phrases such as "vote ki chori, party ki chori, symbol ki chori and funds ki chori", alleging that such developments were affecting the future of young people and the integrity of democracy.

Recalling his association with Kerala, the Chief Minister said he had participated in the Bharat Jodo Yatra led by Rahul Gandhi and had also campaigned in the state elections. He thanked the people of Kerala for their support for the Congress and said the state was "close to his heart".

Paying tribute to Aryadan Muhammed, Mr. Revanth Reddy described the veteran Congress leader as a "master politician" who served as an MLA eight times and held ministerial positions under several Chief Ministers. He said Aryadan Muhammed had spent more than five decades in the Congress and fought for freedom, democracy, secularism and the Constitution.

He said receiving an award instituted in Aryadan Muhammed's memory was an honour, particularly as he was the first person from outside Kerala to receive it. He accepted the award, he said, as a Congress worker and as a member of the team led by Rahul Gandhi. Mr. Revanth Reddy also referred to Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi being elected to Parliament from Kerala and urged Congress workers and supporters to unite behind Rahul Gandhi.

"History is calling. Rahul Gandhi has to become Prime Minister and save India from communal forces," he said, reiterating his call for a Congress-led government at the Centre. Concluding his speech, the Telangana Chief Minister said the "winds of change" were blowing across the country and called upon Congress workers to carry what he described as Rahul Gandhi's message of hope to every household, street, village, city and state.

SCR Amplifies Water Monitoring System at Ramagundam, Manchiryal and Bellampalli Railway Stations

- **All 255 Water samples collected at these Railway stations during 09th to 15th Sept, 2026 were found fit**
- **Water-quality test was also conducted today at Ramagundam Railway Station and found to be satisfactory**





HYDERABAD

South Central Railway is constantly working towards ensuring potable drinking-water across its Rail network and accordingly it is emphasizing frequent inspections and maintenance of the entire drinking-water system, along with water-quality testing at the source as well as at the point of delivery. In this direction, the zone has also amplified the water-quality monitoring and testing arrangements at Ramagundam, Manchiryal and Bellampalli Railway Stations in Telangana.

As part of the same, the overall water-supply arrangements were reviewed, including ground water, municipal water supply, storage, chlorination and distribution systems.

The monitoring systems havebeen strengthened with daily monitoring of residual chlorine levels, along with regular bacteriological testing for detection of E.coli contamination in the water being supplied. In addition to water testing, regular upkeep of water storage facilities is also being ensured. Ground Level Reservoirs (GLRs) and other water storage tanks are being cleaned by the Engineering Department as per the prescribed maintenance schedule.

During the period from 09th to 15th September 2026, a total of 255 water samples were collected and tested at the three stations. At Ramagundam Railway Station, 93 samples, at Manchiryal Railway Station, 105 samples, and at Bellampalli Railway Station, 57 samples were collected. The samples were examined for residual chlorine levels and bacteriological parameters. All 255 samples were found satisfactory, with no sample reported as unfit and no E. coli-positive sample detected.

Further, Water-quality test was also conducted today i.e., 25thSeptember, 2026 at Ramagundam Railway Station, where residual chlorine levels were checked and found to be within the prescribed limits. The TDS (Total Dissolved Solids) and pH (Potential of Hydrogen) levels were also checked and found to be within the limits.

Shri Sanjay Kumar Srivastava, General Manager, South Central Railway directed officials to maintain continuous vigil over the quality of drinking water supplied at Railway stations and Railway colonies ensure that it remains free from contamination. He stressed that the quality of water supplied to passengers and staff must conform to the standards prescribed in the Indian Railways Medical Manual.



807 AP liquor shops up for fresh allotment; applications open till Oct 1

AMARAVATI

The Andhra Pradesh Prohibition and Excise department has invited applications for the fresh allotment of 807 A4 liquor shops for the 2026–27 excise year through a draw of lots.

Applications, which opened on September 24, can be submitted until midnight on October 1 through online, hybrid or offline modes. The new excise policy will remain in force from October 1, 2026 to September 30, 2027.

Of the 807 shops, 799 are in the open category and eight in the reserved category. Applicants must be above 21 years of age and comply with the provisions of the AP Excise Act, 1968, and applicable rules.

The non-refundable application fee is Rs.3 lakh, apart from a Rs.1000 processing fee. Applicants can apply for multiple shops and submit multiple applications for an individual shop, subject to prescribed conditions.

A minimum of four applications is required for a shop to be included in the draw. Where four or more applications are received, selection will be made by draw conducted by the District Collector.

Applications will be scrutinised on October 3, while the draw of lots will be held on October 5 from 8 am. Successful applicants will be informed the same day.

The selected licensees must fulfill all statutory requirements before obtaining the Form-A4 licence. A permit room licence is also mandatory under the amended rules.

Shops will be allotted district-wise through draw of lots. Srikakulam 39, Vizianagaram 30, Parvathipuram Manyam 9, Visakhapatnam 52, Anakapalli 39, Alluri Sitharama Raju 3, Kakinada 38, Konaseema 12, East Godavari 4, Polavaram 1. Eluru 19, West Godavari 25, Krishna 35, NTR 18, Guntur 49, Palnadu 24, Bapatla 34, Prakasam 45, Markapuram 21, SPS Nellore 51, Chittoor 19, Tirupati 49, Kurnool 17, Nandyal 27, Anantapuramu 53, Sri Sathya Sai 17, Annamayya 17 and YSR Kadapa 60, including the respective reserved-category shops. The department has advised applicants to carefully study the respective District Gazette notifications, eligibility conditions, fees and shop details before applying.

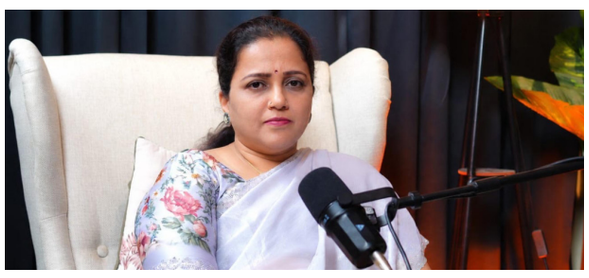
ELECTRICAL WORKS

Tender Notice No.: RNY-EL-T-02-2026-27; **Dated: 23-09-2026**. E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following work. **Tender No.:** RNY-EL-T-02-2026-27; **Name of Work**: At Naharlagun- Electrical works in connection with construction of CNC-UFWL plant. Advertised Value: ₹1,05,13,575.61; Earnest Money: ₹2,10,300.00. **E-tender will be closed at** 15:00 hrs. on 15-10-2026. The complete information with the tender document of above e-tender is available at **www.ireps.gov.in**.

Sr. DEE/Rangiya
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
"Serving Customers with a smile"

Face2Face Podcast by Dr. Prapurna: A Powerful Open Platform for Student Awareness

- **Teachers Diaries Social Media Channel Unites Teachers, Lawmakers, Doctors, NGOs, Journalists, Advocates & Officials to Guide Students, Parents & Citizens**



HYDERABAD

A new initiative is set to strengthen student and parent awareness through direct, open conversations—Face2Face Podcast by Dr. Prapurna, featured on the Teachers Diaries Social Media Channel. This platform is built as an inclusive space where credible voices meet face-to-face to share real guidance, practical information, and community-focused awareness in a way that families can easily understand and apply.

What makes this podcast especially meaningful is its open format and the diverse panel it invites. It will bring together respected contributors from many pillars of society, including teachers, lawmakers, ex-servicemen, doctors, actors, NGO's, NPO's, journalists, advocates, and officials. By featuring experts and experienced public contributors together, the conversations are designed to be both informative and balanced—rooted in real-world knowledge rather than general advice.

The podcast focuses on awareness that matters to students, parents, and citizens every day. Students can benefit from clear guidance on academic challenges, career awareness, mental well-being, safety, discipline, and responsible decision-making. Parents and citizens, on the other hand, can receive trustworthy updates and explanations on education-related systems, civic responsibilities, youth support, public health awareness, and the importance of staying informed and involved. Just as importantly, the platform connects knowledge to action. Since education is influenced by governance, healthcare, media, community organizations, and legal support, this series acts as a bridge between those who shape systems and those who experience them. Through engaging discussions, it is expected to reduce confusion, strengthen awareness, and help communities respond with clarity and confidence.

To learn more about the Face2Face Podcast by Dr. Prapurna and to connect with the team for participation or collaboration, you can contact +91 97055 59984 or email teacherdiaries01@gmail.com

SOUTHERN RAILWAY
TENDER NOTICE
E-Tenders are invited by the Senior Divisional Mechanical Engineer, Southern Railway, Salem-636005 for the following work:

S No	Description	Description
1	Tender Notice Number and date	**GEM/2026/B/8077449 Dt.24.09.2026**
2	Name of work	Pest and Rodent Control in Coaches, Pit & Yards at Coimbatore & Erode Depots for a Period of Two Years (**Custom Bid for Services**).
3	Estimate Value	**₹ 2,15,97,393.70**
4	Tender Closing date and Time	**15-10-2026 15:00:00**
5	Tender Opening date and Time	**16-10-2026 15:00:00**
6	Web address	**http://www.gem.gov.in**

The Tender has been uploaded on the GeM portal **http://www.gem.gov.in** on **24.09.2026 as Custom Bid**.
The firms registered in GeM Portal are only eligible to participate in this tender.
Complete details of the above tenders are given on the GeM portal **"www.gem.gov.in".**
For Details of bid submission, please refer website portal "www.gem.gov.in".
For Details about scope of work, approximate value of tender, location and other documents, please refer website portal "**www.gem.gov.in**"
Senior Divisional Mechanical Engineer,
Salem – 636 005

World Ozone Day at Government Degree College for Women: Students Spotlight Ozone Protection Through Science and Creativity

- **Chemistry Department Club Hosts Inter-Collegiate Poster, PPT, Model and Art Competitions; Principal Prof. K. Praveen Kumar Honors Winners**



HYDERABAD

World Ozone Day was celebrated on 22-9-2026 at Government Degree College for Women, Hussainialam, where the Chemistry Department Club, functioning under the Department of Chemistry, successfully organized a special program to raise scientific and environmental awareness. To mark the occasion, the college hosted a series of inter-collegiate competitions that encouraged students to learn and communicate about ozone protection through poster presentations, PowerPoint presentations, model exhibitions, and an art gallery that showcased creativity alongside environmental learning.

The Principal, Prof. K. Praveen Kumar, felicitated the winners and distributed prizes to students who secured first, second, and third places in their respective categories. In his address to the gathering, Prof. K. Praveen Kumar emphasized the critical role and significance of the ozone layer in protecting the planet and urged students to actively raise environmental awareness through informed participation and community-minded action.

The event was attended by Department of Chemistry faculty members Dr. M. Chennaiah, Mr. K. Srikanth, and Dr. Jesse L., who supported and guided the program. Faculty members including Dr. M. Pranitha, Dr. K. Sreedevi, Dr. P. Latha, Prof. Shanmukhi Jyothi, Ms. Anitha Saka, Dr. Abdul Quddus, Prof. Zulfiquar, Dr. V. Sunitha, Ms. K. Shailaja, Dr. I. M. Rajini, Dr. Vidyadhari, and Mr. Baba Sharfuddin extended their heartfelt congratulations to all the participating students for taking part with enthusiasm and dedication.

This initiative reflects the spirit of the Sustainable Development Goals by strengthening SDG 4 (Quality Education) through interactive learning and scientific communication, supporting SDG 13 (Climate Action) by highlighting the importance of protecting Earth's protective systems, and promoting broader responsibility toward a sustainable future. Through student-led presentations and creative exhibitions, the program delivered a clear message that protecting the ozone layer is essential for safeguarding human health, ecosystems, and long-term environmental well-being.



GITAM Scholar Awarded Ph.D. in Chemistry



HYDERABAD

GITAM Deemed to be University, Hyderabad, proudly congratulates Dr. Srinivas Nakka on being awarded a Ph.D. in Chemistry for his pioneering research on Nitrosamine Drug Substance–Related Impurities (NDSRIs), under the guidance of Prof. M. S. Surendra Babu, Department of Chemistry, GITAM School of Science.

Dr. Nakka's doctoral research addresses the growing pharmaceutical and patient-safety concerns associated with NDSRIs, which may form during drug synthesis, formulation, storage, and manufacturing processes. The study focused on the synthesis, toxicity assessment, and sensitive quantification of NDSRIs in selected antibiotic, anti-inflammatory, and alpha-1 blocker drug substances and products, including Ciprofloxacin, Moxifloxacin, Aceclofenac, Mefenamic Acid, and Tamsulosin.

A highly sensitive UPLC–MS/MS analytical method was developed for the precise detection and quantification of these impurities, supporting stringent regulatory requirements and strengthening quality control and patient-safety measures in pharmaceutical manufacturing.

Prof. D. S. Rao, Pro Vice-Chancellor; D.V.V.S.R. Varma, Resident Director; Dr. M. Reza, Director, School of Science; and Dr. Gousia Begum, Head, Department of Chemistry, congratulated Dr. Srinivas Nakka on his academic achievement and valuable contribution to pharmaceutical impurity research. They also appreciated Prof. M. S. SurendraBabu for his dedicated mentorship and guidance throughout the doctoral research.



Balapur Ganesh Laddu Auction Fetches Record ₹39 Lakh

HYDERABAD: Thirty-five-year-old businessman Sama Praneeth Reddy , associated with Urban Reality Group, has won the prestigious Balapur Ganesh Laddu Prasadam in the auction by bidding a record *₹39 lakh. Reddy, a resident of Vanasthalipuram in Hyderabad, recently returned from the United States and started his business under the name Urban Groups . At a young age, he has secured the coveted Balapur Ganesh Laddu Prasadam through the prestigious annual auction.

SHORT TAKES

T-BJP chief NRR meets Toowoomba mayor in Australia

AUSTRALIA: *Telangana BJP State President N Ramchander Rao met Toowoomba Mayor Geoff McDonald in Australia on Friday, discussing the city's development and the growing contribution of the Indian community. Ramchander Rao was accompanied by Armoor MLA Rakesh Reddy and Medchal MLA Malla Reddy. Local Indian community leaders, including Srikanth Reddy, also attended the meeting. The discussions covered Toowoomba's development, the growth of the Indian diaspora and its social and economic contribution to the region. Ramchander Rao thanked the Mayor and the Indian community for their warm welcome and expressed happiness over the strong people-to-people ties between India and Australia.*

Harish urges govt to pump Godavari floodwaters, rejects El Niño defense

HYDERABAD: *BRS LP deputy leader and former Minister T. Harish Rao on Friday urged the State government to immediately run all available pumps to harness ongoing Godavari river floodwaters, rejecting official claims that El Niño is responsible for the current water shortage. In a letter to Irrigation Minister N. Uttam Kumar Reddy, Harish Rao alleged that Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Scheme (KLIS) reservoirs remain depleted despite heavy upstream inflows, exposing poor water management by the Congress administration. He demanded that pumping stations operate round-the-clock—rather than intermittently—to secure irrigation water for farmers battling dry conditions. Calling on the government to set aside political considerations, the BRS leader urged the state to take responsibility rather than blaming nature for water scarcity.*

Gujarat Handicrafts Utsav opens at Shilparamam

HYDERABAD: *A 10-day Gujarat Handicrafts Utsav was inaugurated on Friday at Shilparamam in Madhapur, offering visitors a variety of traditional handicrafts and textiles from Gujarat. Commissioner of Handicrafts in the Union Ministry of Textiles Amrita Raj, Shilparamam Special Officer G. Kishan Rao and others attended the inaugural programme. The exhibition features mirror-work dress materials and blouses, Patola and Bandhani sarees, puppets, leather products, mirror-work umbrellas, artificial jewellery and other handicrafts. The cultural programme featured Kuchipudi performances by disciples led by Sandhya Karthik. The troupe presented items including Jaya Durge. (NSS)*

NLMC wraps up three-city investor outreach for RINL land e-auction

HYDERABAD



The National Land Monetization Corporation (NLMC) has concluded a three-city investor outreach programme ahead of the e-auction of 459 land parcels belonging to Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL), the corporate entity of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant.

Investor Meets were held in Visakhapatnam on September 23, Vijayawada on September 24 and Hyderabad on September 25, giving prospective buyers, developers and investors an opportunity to understand the properties and auction process.

The Visakhapatnam meeting drew more than 150 participants physically, while over 50 others joined virtually, including NRIs and prospective buyers based outside India. Around 50 - 60 participants each attended the meetings in Vijayawada and Hyderabad.

Officials briefed participants on the land parcels, eligibility criteria, registration, Earnest Money Deposit (EMD), bidding procedure and applicable terms and conditions.

The auction portfolio comprises 459 plots covering 93,572.21 square yards in HB Colony, Maddilapalem and Auto Nagar, Gajuwaka. Of these, 456 are residential plots in HB colony, covering 87,949.77 square yards, while three plots at Auto Nagar together cover 5,622.44 square yards. Individual plot sizes range from about 128.94 sq yards to 2,728 sq yards.

Quikr India Pvt. Ltd. (QIPL) has been appointed as the transaction consultant.

E-auction on Oct 12 & 16

The auction will be conducted through the RailTel E-Nivida e-procurement platform in two sessions.- October 12: : 243 plots; bidding from 11 am to 7 pm. Registration / EMD deadline : October 8, 5 pm. October 16 : 216 plots; bidding from 11 am to 7 pm. Registration / EMD deadline : October 14, 5 pm. EMD: Rs.2 lakh per auction

NLMC CEO Rohan Chand Thakur said the outreach programme enabled direct engagement with prospective buyers and helped clarify the auction process and terms. He said the participation, including from NRIs and overseas-based prospective buyers, widened the pool of interested participants.

QIPL and the RINL team will continue assisting prospective buyers at the project venue until the auction, providing information and clarifications on the properties, registration, EMD and bidding procedures.

The e-auction forms part of the Centre's structured effort to monetise identified non-core land assets of RINL through a transparent and competitive process.

Youth Congress Must Play a Key Role in MLC Voter Registration

- **Telangana Youth Congress State President Jakkidi Shivacharan Reddy**

SURYAPET



Telangana Youth Congress State President Jakkidi Shivacharan Reddy said that the Youth Congress should play a key role in the voter registration process for the upcoming Graduate MLC elections.

Speaking at a district executive committee meeting held at the district headquarters on Friday under the chairmanship of District Youth Congress President Eliminiti Abhinay, he called upon Youth Congress workers to actively participate in the Graduate MLC election voter registration drive, which is scheduled to begin on September 28, and ensure that a large number of eligible graduates are enrolled as voters.

He urged Youth Congress workers across Telangana to take the upcoming Graduate MLC elections as a prestigious responsibility. He said they should remain vigilant at every stage, from the beginning of the voter registration process until polling, and work extensively at the grassroots level to ensure that every eligible graduate is enrolled as a voter.

He called upon Youth Congress workers to reach every constituency, mandal and graduate with the objective of ensuring the victory of the party's candidates in the MLC elections. Youth Congress Legal Cell Chairman Guduru Nikhil Reddy, Youth Congress State General Secretary and District In-charge Velimineti Suresh, State General Secretary Madhava Reddy, State Secretary Kommu Johar, TPCC Secretary Naveen Achari, Shakti Super She Kotha Vidya Reddy, District Vice-Presidents Shravya Reddy and Kandukuri Ambedkar, along with constituency presidents, mandal presidents and others, participated in the meeting.

GHMC sensitises Ganesh devotees on waste segregation, plastic disposal

HYDERABAD

The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC), in association with the Telangana and Andhra Plastic Manufacturers Association (TAAPMA), conducted an awareness programme at NTR Marg, Khairatabad, on Friday for devotees attending the Bada Ganesh procession.

The programme focused on waste segregation at source and the responsible collection and disposal of plastic waste.

A dedicated training centre was inaugurated by GHMC Commissioner R.V. Karnan, along with Additional Commissioner B. Santosh, in the presence of TAAPMA representatives and members.

Devotees were sensitised on avoiding littering, segregating waste and depositing plastic waste at designated collection points. The initiative aimed to promote clean and environmentally responsible celebrations during the Ganesh festivities across Hyderabad.

CGST unearths Rs. 5.68 cr GST evasion; Palwancha proprietor arrested

HYDERABAD

The Rangareddy CGST Commissionerate has detected an alleged Rs.5.68 crore GST evasion involving a firm that was purportedly registered as a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) unit using fraudulent documents, and arrested its proprietor.

Acting on specific intelligence, the Anti-Evasion Section searched the principal place of business of M/s Sri Tirumala services at Palwancha in Bhadradri Kothagudem district and the residence of its proprietor, Dara Ravi Kishore.

According to CGST officials, the proprietor allegedly obtained GST registration by falsely declaring the firm as an SEZ unit, enabling it to procure goods as zero-rated supplies without payment of GST. Investigators allegedly found that the Letter of Approval purportedly issued by the Visakhapatnam Special Economic Zone (VSEZ) was fabricated. The department said the alleged tax evasion involved Rs.5.60 crore on taxable supplies of around Rs.30 crore, with total detected evasion estimated at approximately Rs.5.68 crore. Ravi Kishore was arrested on September 24, 2026, under Section 69 of the CGST Act, 2017, and produced before the jurisdictional court, which remanded him to 14 days judicial custody.



BJP eyes Khairatabad by-poll, says former MLC Ramachandra Reddy

HYDERABAD

Senior BJP leader and former MLA Chintala Ramachandra Reddy on Friday expressed confidence that the BJP would receive the blessings of the Khairatabad Ganesh in the upcoming Khairatabad Assembly by-election.

Speaking after inaugurating a water-bottle distribution programme organised by BJP leader Keshiboyina Sridhar during the Ganesh immersion procession, Reddy said the Supreme Court verdict had brought clarity to the political future of MLA Danam Nagender.

Reddy alleged that the Congress had kept the issue of Nagender's disqualification pending before the Assembly Speaker for two-and-a-half years and ran a "false campaign" on the matter. He claimed that Nagender stood disqualified from the Assembly from the day he contested the Secunderabad Lok Sabha election as a Congress candidate.

Despite attempts by the Congress to delay the matter, Reddy said, "justice and righteousness" had ultimately prevailed. He also said the people of Khairatabad were closely observing Nagender's statements and asserted that the court verdict would prevent him from returning to the Legislative Assembly.

Reddy said several aspirants were interested in contesting the Khairatabad by-election on a BJP ticket. The final decision, he added, would be taken by the party's high command.

Government Responds Positively to Employees' Demands

- **Two DAs by Dasara, Another DA by Sankranti: Maram Jagadeeshwar**
- **Special Committee on CPS; Action Promised on PRC and EHS Issues**

KARIMNAGAR



The Telangana State Employees' JAC chairman, Maram Jagadeeshwar, said the State government has responded positively to the major demands of employees and assured that several long-pending issues would be addressed.

Speaking to the media at the TNGOs Association building in Karimnagar on Friday, Jagadeeshwar said the government had assured employees of releasing two Dearness Allowances (DAs) during Dasara and another DA by Sankranti. He said employees across the State had been mobilised for the proposed 'Chalo Hyderabad' programme called by employee associations to press for resolution of their demands. Reports regarding the dissatisfaction among employees had also reached the government through the intelligence wing, he said.

CM's intervention leads to postponement of Chalo Hyderabad

Jagadeeshwar said Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy intervened in view of the ongoing Assembly sessions and requested the JAC to postpone the 'Chalo Hyderabad' programme. Keeping the interests of employees in mind, the JAC decided to defer the programme, he said.

Subsequently, discussions were held between the government and employee associations, during which assurances were given on several key demands of employees, Jagadeeshwar said.

Two DAs during Dasara

On the pending DAs, Jagadeeshwar said the government had assured that two DAs would be released during the upcoming Dasara festival and another DA would be released by Sankranti.

Special committee on CPS

The government has also assured that a special committee would be constituted to examine the Contributory Pension Scheme (CPS) issue and that the process of obtaining a report would be completed within three months, he said.

Action on PRC and EHS

Jagadeeshwar said the government had assured that the Pay Revision Commission (PRC) report would be examined expeditiously and a final decision would be taken.

On the Employees Health Scheme (EHS), the government assured that the process would be expedited and steps would be taken to provide more effective and comprehensive healthcare services to employees, he said.

The Telangana State Employees' JAC would urge the government to implement all the assurances within the stipulated timeframe, Jagadeeshwar said. The JAC would continue to work for the resolution of the legitimate demands of employees, he added.

Employees' JAC to welcome CM in Karimnagar

Jagadeeshwar said Chief Minister Revanth Reddy would visit Karimnagar on September 30 to inaugurate the new District Collectorate office. He called upon employee association leaders and JAC representatives to participate in the programme and extend a warm welcome to the Chief Minister on behalf of the Telangana State Employees' JAC.

Karimnagar District Employees' JAC chairman Daram Srinivas Reddy, convener Madipalli Kali Charan, TNGOs Association secretary Sangem Laxman Rao, treasurer Kiran Kumar Reddy, Gazetted Officers' Association district secretary Dr Aravind Reddy, pensioners' association leaders Pendyala Keshava Reddy and Prabhakar Rao, TNGOs Association State leaders Ragi Srinivas, Sardar Harminder Singh and Prabhakar Reddy, besides Ramesh Goud, Prasad Reddy, Rajesh Bharadwaj, Velichala Sumanth Rao, Mamidi Ramesh, Polu Kishan, Sharada, Sunitha, Saritha, Surya, Shailaja, Azgar Ali, Waris Nawab, Rajeshwara Rao, Shankar and other employee association and JAC representatives were present.

Balapur Ganesh laddu auction fetches record Rs.39 lakh

HYDERABAD



Thirty-five-year-old businessman Sama Praneeth Reddy, associated with Urban Reality Group, won the coveted Balapur Ganesh Laddu Prasadam at a record price of ₹39 lakh at the annual auction held here on Friday.

A resident of Vanasthalipuram, Praneeth Reddy recently returned from the United States and started his business under the name Urban Groups. He emerged the successful bidder among eight people who had registered for the auction.

The laddu had fetched ₹35 lakh last year. The record bid has once again highlighted the popularity of the Balapur Ganesh Laddu, which occupies a special place in Hyderabad's Vinayaka Chavithi celebrations.

Devotees believe that possessing the 21-kg laddu offered to Lord Ganesha during the nine-day festivities brings good fortune, prosperity, happiness and well-being. This belief has made the annual auction a major attraction for devotees and bidders.

FROM Rs. 450 TO Rs.39 LAKH

The Balapur Ganesh festival has a 45-year history. The Balapur Ganesh Utsav Samithi conducted the first laddu auction in 1994 with the objective of strengthening devotees' faith in Lord Ganesha.

Farmer Kolanu Mohan Reddy won the first auction for ₹450. He distributed the laddu among his family members and relatives and scattered the remaining portion in his fields. Believing that Lord Ganesha had blessed his family with happiness and prosperity, he subsequently participated in the auction and won the laddu in 1998, 2004 and 2008.

For the first 15 years, the Utsav Samithi restricted participation in the auction to local residents.

The auction was later opened to people from outside Balapur. The laddu has been auctioned 31 times so far. The auction was not held in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and the laddu was presented to then Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao. In 2024, Kolanu Shankar Reddy won the laddu for ₹30.01 lakh, while Lingala Dasharath Goud secured it for ₹35 lakh in 2025.

Rat-bite incident at Telangana Gurukul School sparks NHRC complaint

HYDERABAD



A reported rat-bite incident involving 14 girl students at a Telangana Social Welfare Girls' Gurukul School in Palakurthi mandal of Jangaon district has raised concerns over sanitation, pest control and safety standards at residential educational institutions.

The students were reportedly bitten by rats while sleeping and were subsequently taken to a government hospital for treatment. The incident, reported on September 24, has also raised questions over sanitation conditions at the campus and whether the parents of the affected students were promptly informed.

Seeking an inquiry, National BC Dal president and advocate Dundra Kumara Swamy lodged a complaint with the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC).

Kumara Swamy sought an investigation into the incident and action against those found responsible for negligence after due inquiry. He also urged the Telangana government to constitute a special committee to review safety, sanitation and pest-control measures across Gurukul schools and residential hostels. He called for regular inspections, stronger pest-control systems and stricter monitoring of hygiene and food-storage practices to prevent similar incidents.

The incident has put the spotlight on the need for effective safety protocols, preventive maintenance and accountability in residential institutions housing children.

Special camps for voter enrollment announced in Delhi

NEW DELHI

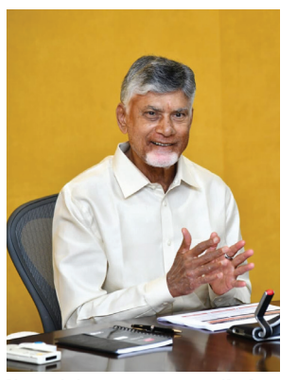
The Delhi Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Ashok Kumar on Friday announced a series of special camps aimed at enrolling left-out eligible electors and young voters across the National Capital Territory. These efforts form part of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls announced by the Election Commission of India on May 14, 2026, with the clear objective that no eligible citizen is left out while no ineligible person is included in the electoral roll. Building on the first special camp held on September 20, another camp will take place on September 27, at all polling station locations throughout Delhi.

Eligible citizens whose names are missing from the electoral rolls can use this opportunity to apply for inclusion. In a focused push to enroll young electors in the 18 to 25 age group, special camps will also be organised at all colleges, universities and other educational institutions in Delhi on September 29 and 30. Booth Level Officers will be present at these venues with electoral rolls and blank Form-6 applications. They will guide and assist eligible students in filling out the necessary forms. Anyone who has completed or will complete 18 years of age as on October 1, 2026, and whose name does not appear in the draft electoral roll, can file Form-6 along with supporting documents during these camps.

Fill Reservoirs and tanks with available rain water flows: CM

CM directs officials to be alert, continuously monitor the latest situation

AMARAVATI





Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu directed officials to utilise the present rain water to fill all available water resources across the State. He instructed officials to fill reservoirs in the Krishna and Godavari deltas as well as other water bodies in their respective areas.

During a review meeting with senior officials at the Real-Time Governance (RTGS) Centre today, the Chief Minister discussed the use of AI-based technology, data analytics, strategies to mitigate the impact of El Niño and the overall impact of rainfall across the State.

The Officials informed the Chief Minister that groundwater levels had improved to some extent due to the rains received over the past three days following the severe depression. Around 11,000 cusecs of water was flowing into the Prakasam Barrage from the Munneru and other catchment areas.The Chief Minister instructed officials to utilise the flows from the Godavari to fill the Yeleru Reservoir with 24 TMC of water. Water should also be supplied through the Polavaram Left Canal to water bodies up to Anakapalli, he said.Officials said heavy rainfall had been recorded in 16 districts, with Visakhapatnam, Anakapalli, Vizianagaram, Srikakulam, Manyam, Kakinada, the Godavari districts, Eluru, Krishna and NTR districts among those experiencing significant impact.

The Chief Minister reviewed the ongoing rainfall, wind intensity, rising flows in rivers and streams, inflows into reservoirs and the rainfall forecast for the coming days. He directed the administration to remain alert, continuously monitor the latest situation and take advance precautionary measures wherever required.The government expects heavy inflows into reservoirs in the Godavari basin, including Sabari, Indravati, Yeleru, Tandava, Yerrakalva, Pampa and Meghadrigadda, due to the continuing rains. Inflows into Yeleru Reservoir are expected to reach 21,200–26,500 cusecs, Tandava 6,000–7,500 cusecs, Meghadrigadda 2,400–3,000 cusecs and Pampa 3,100–3,875 cusecs.Officials said inflows into reservoirs in North Coastal Andhra are also expected to increase significantly in the coming days. Flows in the Nagavali and Vamsadhara basins are likely to rise due to the rainfall.Officials estimated that Gotta Barrage could reach Warning Level-I by the morning of September 25. At Bhadrachalam, Warning Level-I is likely to be reached by the afternoon of September 26 and Warning Level-II by that night.At Dowleswaram Barrage, Warning Level-I is expected by the morning of September 27 and Warning Level-II by the evening. At Kuntha on the Sabari River, the warning level is likely to be reached by the morning of September 26, officials informed the Chief Minister.

The Chief Minister said that while climatic conditions such as El Niño cannot be changed, internal conditions can be improved to reduce their impact. He said the impact of El Niño could be mitigated to some extent by improving soil health, recommending alternative crops based on soil testing, and promoting practices such as biochar and natural farming. He directed officials to implement these measures on a pilot basis in the State.The Chief Minister called for the use of technology to forecast the impact of El Niño in advance and provide necessary advisories to the agriculture sector.

The Chief Minister said the foundation stone for the Indian School of Agriculture would be laid on October 2, along with the launch of the programme to develop Rayalaseema as a horticulture hub. He also examined applications developed by Prithvi, a young man based in the United States, as part of the Swarna Andhra–Swachha Andhra initiatives, including groundwater-related activities.The Chief Minister appreciated Prithvi for developing the applications by integrating datasets collected from various government departments with NASA satellite imagery. He said analysing groundwater levels, changes and region-wise conditions would help the government take better decisions on water management in the future.

The Chief Minister directed officials to further improve infrastructure in schools.He said that despite no increase in electricity tariffs, public satisfaction was declining due to deficiencies in services and stressed the need to focus on the quality of power supply. With electricity consumption in the State standing at 287.214 million units, he directed officials to also focus on the availability of water required for power generation.

The Chief Minister directed the Sports Authority of Andhra Pradesh (SAAP) to prepare an annual sports calendar. He called for sports competitions to be organised not only in urban areas but also at the village level.As part of data-driven governance, he directed officials to further expand the use of AI Living Labs applications and data analytics across government departments.

BJP criticises Karnataka CM Shivakumar's remark on MLAs having two marriages

BENGALURU



Karnataka Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar's remark in the Legislative Assembly that several MLAs who came to Bengaluru from other parts of the state had married twice has sparked curiosity, with the Opposition Leader R. Ashoka and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MLA S. Suresh Kumar demanding that the Chief Minister disclose the names of the legislators he was referring to. Reacting to the controversy, Ashoka on Friday said, "In the drought problem discussion, Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar saying MLAs having two marriages was unnecessary. It is not known whom he targeted. It has become like a hanging sword over everyone. He himself should answer this."

During the Assembly proceedings on Thursday, Shivakumar was speaking about Bengaluru's growing population and the tendency of people who settle in the city not to return to their native places. He said that several MLAs who came to Bengaluru had also married twice and claimed that he had a list of around a dozen such legislators.

"I have the history of those who came to Bengaluru. Several have married twice. There are about a dozen of them. If required, I can give the list. I can also tell the history of legislators from Dharwad, Karwar and Mangaluru," Shivakumar was quoted as saying.

The Chief Minister, however, did not name any of the legislators. Reports said he subsequently indicated that personal matters should not be discussed in the House and that the issue could be discussed separately. BJP leader Suresh Kumar, while taking to his official Facebook account, criticised the remark, saying such a statement from the Chief Minister on the floor of the Assembly was not in keeping with the dignity of the House.

"I could not be present when the Chief Minister was replying as I had left the House early to visit a friend who was admitted to hospital. The Chief Minister's answer may have been made lightly, but speaking in this manner from the Assembly platform does not bring dignity to anyone," the BJP MLA said. He added that the dignity of the Legislative Assembly and its proceedings should be maintained and said that he would have immediately responded had he been present. Suresh Kumar also urged Shivakumar to disclose the names of the legislators who had allegedly married twice or maintained two households.

"The Chief Minister has already made such a statement and it has now created public curiosity. I do not know whether he will bring out a white paper on the state's financial situation, but I request him to kindly disclose the names of legislators who have married twice or more and maintained two households," he said. Suresh Kumar warned that if the names were not disclosed, people could end up viewing or ridiculing all legislators with suspicion.

Shivakumar's remarks were made during a broader discussion on Bengaluru's population growth. He said people who come to Bengaluru for political, professional or other reasons often settle in the city permanently, contributing to its expanding population. Reports of the Assembly exchange said the Chief Minister also referred to legislators from different districts, including Dharwad, Karwar and Mangaluru.

Jagan seeks amendment to restore confidence in appointment of ECs

AMARAVATI



Former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister and YSR Congress Party President YS Jagan Mohan Reddy on Friday demanded an amendment to the CEC and Other Election Commissioners Act, 2023, to restore public confidence in the appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and other Election Commissioners. He called for a return to the earlier system under which the CEC and other Election Commissioners were appointed by a three-member committee comprising the Leader of Opposition (LoP), the Chief Justice of India (CJI) and the Prime Minister.

In his first reaction to the ongoing row involving CEC Gyanesh Kumar, Jagan said in a post on X that democracy can stand only when people have complete confidence in constitutional institutions such as the Election Commission. "National media reports that two Election Commissioners raised objections on several occasions to decisions, electoral rolls, and the management of ECINet, which have led to serious questions and doubts among the public. Rather than an exchange of allegations, the public needs clarity on what objections were recorded, what action was taken on them, and how transparently the system functioned, whether for adding, deleting, or restoring names on electoral rolls. Steps are needed to give people confidence on these matters," he said. He added that public trust in the electoral process must be strengthened, every citizen's right to vote protected, and systems reinforced to allow people to exercise that right without fear. "In a democracy, transparency should not only prevail but should also appear to have prevailed. The very bill (Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023), which we supported then, should be revisited now in the current context. The Central government should come forward, set the norm in place, and dispel this fear. An amendment to the bill should be brought forward where the Election Commissioner is appointed by the three-member committee of LoP, CJI and the Prime Minister once again," the YSRCP said. Jagan remarked that "a student appointing the examiner is always prone to allegations even though the examiner is thoroughly honest, and it is always better to replace the process with someone neutral. This move would definitely regain the esteem and confidence in the Election Commission." He further said that during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process in Andhra Pradesh, the party in power misused its authority. "On many occasions, our appeals went unheard. In the local body election process too, our objections as an Opposition party to the manner in which divisions were redrawn were brushed aside. Such actions undoubtedly weaken public confidence in the electoral process. Transparency and accountability are the true measures of how any institution functions in a democracy, and safeguarding them is that institution's primary duty," he added

Tejashwi Yadav demands action against Bihar CM over revealing Jamui victim's photo; threatens to move court

PATNA



Bihar's Leader of Opposition (LoP) Tejashwi Yadav on Friday intensified his attack on Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary over the Jamui incident, alleging that a social media post from the Chief Minister's account exposed the identity of the minor victim. The photograph was subsequently deleted, but a screenshot of the social media post circulated online. The LoP has demanded that the Bihar Police take action against the Chief Minister, saying that the disclosure of a minor victim's identity is a serious matter under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. Reacting to the social media post, Tejashwi Yadav alleged that Chief Minister Choudhary had himself violated the safeguards provided under the POCSO Act by sharing the photograph.

He pointed to the police action already being taken against people accused of circulating material that could identify the Jamui victim. Bihar Police have registered cases against 120 social media accounts in connection with the circulation of the assault video and warned against sharing material that reveals the minor's identity. The LoP said that the same legal standards should apply to the photograph shared from the Chief Minister's social media account.

The Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) has indicated that if the police do not take action, it may approach the court and seek legal intervention, including making the Bihar Police a party to the proceedings.

Whether the deleted social media post constitutes an offence under the POCSO Act would ultimately depend on the facts and any determination by the competent authorities or court. According to reports, Samrat Choudhary had met the victim and her family at his official residence in Patna and posted a photograph of the meeting along with a message assuring the family of speedy justice on Thursday. He also said the state government would seek the strongest possible punishment for those found responsible through a speedy trial. The social media post was later removed.

The LoP also responded to Union Minister and Lok Janshakti Party-Ram Vilas Chief Chirag Paswan's remarks on the Jamui molestation incident. "Forget about Chirag Paswan; he is the one reaping the benefits of that very system,' LoP Tejashwi Yadav said.

Paswan had separately condemned the Jamui incident and called for strict action against those responsible. According to the police, the incident occurred on September 19, when a minor boy and girl travelling on a two-wheeler were intercepted by a group of youths near the Jamui-Lakhisarai road. A video of the incident subsequently surfaced on social media, prompting police action. Police registered a case under relevant provisions, including the POCSO Act, and formed a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to identify and arrest those involved. Eight accused have since been arrested.

One accused, identified by the police as Nandan Yadav, was injured in a police encounter on September 22, according to police accounts. Another accused Hareram Yadav was also reported to be injured.

Maha: Aaditya Thackeray seeks postponement of MPSC exams

MUMBAI



Shiv Sena Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray MLA and Legislature Party Leader Aaditya Thackeray on Friday, in a representation to Maharashtra Governor Jishnu Dev Varma, urged immediate intervention in the ongoing issues concerning the Maharashtra Public Service Commission (MPSC) exams and candidate grievances. Representing the student community, the Worli legislator formally placed two key demands before the Governor: postponing the upcoming MPSC examinations until the V Radha Committee report is received and implemented, and granting age concessions or relaxations to candidates facing academic or career loss due to the postponement.

In his post on X, Thackeray said: "The demands of students preparing for the MPSC exam have once again been placed before His Excellency the Governor through a letter. It is necessary to find a solution to the recurring paper leaks and the resulting troubles faced by students. In the current situation, the government is only giving students false assurances."

Highlighting distress among thousands of aspirants, Thackeray emphasised that distrust and uncertainty surround the commission's functioning and leadership. With the MPSC Rajyaseva Main Examination 2026 scheduled next month, candidate representations expressing serious concerns continue to pour in. Thackeray recalled his earlier meeting with Governor Varma on September 11, where he raised concerns about the MPSC and government recruitment processes. At that time, he demanded the resignation of the MPSC Board Chairman, citing accountability for administrative lapses, and pressed for strict action to restore credibility.

CS Unveils World Heart Day Poster

KHF Continues Its Preventive Cardiology Mission Since 2002

VIJAYAWADA



The World Heart Day 2026 poster of Kurnool Heart Foundation (KHF) was unveiled today by the Chief Secretary, highlighting the need for greater public awareness, prevention and early detection of cardiovascular diseases. Prof. Pulala Chandrasekhar, Vice-Chancellor, Dr. NTR University of Health Sciences and Founder Secretary of Kurnool Heart Foundation, and Sri T. Sai Sudheer, Registrar, Dr. NTR University of Health Sciences, participated in the programme. Prof. Suryaprabha, Director, Research was also present.

KHF's Journey Since 2002

Kurnool Heart Foundation was established in September 2002, with Sri Sai Prasad, IAS, the then District Collector of Kurnool, as its Founder President, and Prof. Pulala Chandrasekhar as its Founder Secretary. Since 2003, Kurnool Heart Foundation has been regularly observing World Heart Day, carrying forward a sustained campaign to promote preventive cardiology and public awareness about heart disease. The Foundation has consistently emphasised that prevention, identification of risk factors, regular health checks and timely intervention are crucial in reducing the burden of cardiovascular disease. Speaking on the occasion, Prof. Pulala Chandrasekhar said that cardiovascular diseases remain a major cause of mortality and that greater emphasis must be placed on prevention rather than waiting for heart disease to manifest at an advanced stage. Awareness, timely diagnosis, lifestyle modification and access to quality healthcare can make a major difference in protecting heart health.

He emphasised the responsibility of healthcare institutions, medical professionals and students to educate the community about important cardiovascular risk factors, including smoking, unhealthy diet, physical inactivity, stress, uncontrolled hypertension and diabetes. Sri T. Sai Sudheer, Registrar, Dr. NTR University of Health Sciences, underscored the importance of taking the message of preventive heart care beyond hospitals and educational institutions and reaching families and communities. He stressed the need to encourage healthy lifestyles, regular health check-ups and greater awareness of cardiovascular risk factors.

World Heart Day 2026 – "Don't Miss a Beat"

World Heart Day is observed globally on September 29 to raise awareness about cardiovascular diseases and promote better heart health. The theme for World Heart Day 2026 is "Don't Miss a Beat." The campaign particularly focuses on recognising cardiovascular signs and symptoms that may otherwise go unnoticed. The World Heart Federation has highlighted three central messages for this year's campaign — "See the Signs, Protect Your Heart and Demand Action." The campaign points out that heart disease kills around one in three people, while many cardiovascular risk factors can be prevented or effectively managed through sustained lifestyle changes and appropriate healthcare.

The campaign also encourages simple and practical measures such as regular physical activity, healthier and balanced food, routine health checks and reducing stress. Small but consistent lifestyle changes can significantly improve cardiovascular health over time.

On the occasion, Kurnool Heart Foundation appealed to the public to make heart health a priority by knowing their risk factors, recognising warning signs, undergoing regular screening and adopting heart-healthy lifestyles.

The Foundation reiterated that its World Heart Day activities would continue to spread the message that preventing cardiovascular disease through awareness and early action is one of the most effective ways of saving lives.

"Don't Miss a Beat — See the Signs. Protect Your Heart. Demand Action."

EDITORIAL

Make in India at 12: A Promise Between Progress and Paradigm Shift

On September 25, 2014, the "Make in India" initiative was launched with bold ambition. Symbolized by a roaring lion fashioned from industrial cogs, the flagship initiative set out to transform India into a global manufacturing hub, elevate the sector's contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to 25 percent, and create 100 million jobs. Twelve years later, the trajectory of Make in India presents a nuanced picture—a blend of significant sectoral breakthroughs alongside persistent structural challenges.

The initiative's primary achievement lies in its ability to reshape India's economic narrative and modernize its industrial policy landscape. By targeting 27 key sectors ranging from automobiles and pharmaceuticals to renewable energy and defense, the program established a focused framework for national manufacturing. The subsequent introduction of the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme acted as a catalyst, offering direct financial rewards to manufacturers based on incremental sales. Coupled with sweeping deregulation under the "Ease of Doing Business" campaign, the initiative successfully attracted over $840 billion in cumulative Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows over the past decade, placing India firmly on the global investment map.

The tangible benefits of this push are most evident in targeted high-tech industries. Electronics manufacturing stands as the primary success story; India evolved from a heavy importer of mobile devices into the world's second-largest smartphone producer, with a major share of globally distributed devices now assembled domestically. In defense, indigenous manufacturing expanded significantly, rising from ₹46,429 crore in 2014–15 to over ₹1.78 lakh crore, enabling India to reduce its strategic import dependencies while growing defense exports. Furthermore, the domestic production of solar energy equipment, heavy machinery, and modern public transport infrastructure—exemplified by the semi-high-speed Vande Bharat trains—demonstrates how state procurement can effectively seed complex local manufacturing capabilities.

Despite these headline victories, Make in India has struggled to meet several of its overarching macroeconomic goals. The most glaring shortfall is the manufacturing sector's contribution to GDP, which continues to hover around 15 to 16 percent—virtually unchanged from where it stood a decade ago, remaining far below the 25 percent target. Similarly, job creation has fallen short of initial projections. Because much of the new investment has flowed into capital-intensive rather than labor-intensive industries, the initiative has not absorbed the vast numbers of low- and semi-skilled workers entering the labor force each year.

A related structural challenge is the distinction between local manufacturing and local assembly. A substantial portion of production under Make in India still relies heavily on imported active components, specialized sub-assemblies, and raw materials, meaning domestic value addition remains relatively low. Furthermore, while public spending and foreign direct investment have buoyed high-priority sectors, domestic private capital expenditure remained sluggish for much of the decade, forcing the government to bear the burden of infrastructure development.

At the twelve-year mark, Make in India stands as a vital policy evolution that successfully modernized key industrial sectors, yet it remains incomplete as an engine of broad-based macroeconomic transformation. Moving forward, the strategy must transition from high-volume assembly to deep, domestic value creation. Expanding local supply chains, increasing investments in research and development, lowering logistics costs, and supporting labor-intensive small and medium enterprises will be essential to realizing the program's full potential.

THE VOLUME SPEAKS AGAIN SILENTLY

The volume speaks now
Truly
After a span of quarter Century
The intermission may spot short
Yet it appears as if a great long poem.

My psyche plays on strings of vocal cords
The melodious music may tame one and all
The poetry that springs from syllables and phonetics.
Here the runner and winner of the mission is the writer alone...

In the beautiful green meadows of respiration
The song at pause opens the throat
So that, the tune runs on the track
The beat and feet of the heart dance at
To meet the poetic perfume
Where the silence poem renders resilience beyond horizons.

The silence that spoke carried and continued the legacy back
To render epics of ode to society
Travels through the light of desert
In depth of the essence of the earthly layers
The blossom of Gunugu Poolu swayed
In and around versatile Naneelu
And the rain of the body is showered to
Translate the Speaking Roots.

Getting momentum to bridge the void
Now heralds the volume of 105 Indian writers cuppled with
'Tender Ameya' PoemWs Bilingual poetry
As cup and saucer, inseparable twins

At a fine,elegant evening of September 26,2026
With a sip of hot tea at simple stand
The warm welcome awaits to call upon lovely litterateurs.
Be one and all writers...

..: Dr.T.Radhakrishnamacharyulu :..
9849305871.

(On the occasion of World Environmental Health Day – September 26)

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH IS THE FOUNDATION OF PUBLIC HEALTH



K AMARAVATI
MEMBER PLUS NGO

Environmental health is not a subject separate from public health. The air people breathe, the water they drink, the soil that produces their food and the places where they live all shape their health. The World Health Organization estimates that environmental risks are associated with about 24 per cent of deaths worldwide. The estimate is based on 2016 data, but the underlying message remains relevant: the causes of ill health are not confined to hospitals, health systems or individual behaviour. They are also found in the conditions in which people live.

Climate change is adding another layer of risk. According to the World Meteorological Organization, 2015–2025 was the hottest 11-year period on record. In 2025, the global mean temperature was 1.44°C above the pre-industrial average. Extreme heat, heavy rainfall, floods and droughts increasingly affect health, agriculture, water security and livelihoods. Climate change, therefore, has to be treated not only as an environmental challenge but also as a public health and development concern.



The burden is not evenly distributed. Households with fewer resources have less capacity to cope with extreme heat, floods, water shortages and the loss of livelihoods. Environmental degradation can therefore deepen existing inequalities. Air pollution is one of the clearest examples.

The WHO estimates that 99 per cent of the world's population is exposed to air pollution levels that exceed its air quality guidelines. Air pollution contributes to millions of premature deaths every year. The sources are also more diverse than is often acknowledged. Vehicles are only one part of the problem. Industry, power generation, construction, road dust, waste burning, crop-residue burning and household fuels all contribute.

That makes clean air a governance issue rather than the responsibility of a single department. Transport policy, energy use, industrial regulation, urban planning and waste management have to work together. India has the National Clean Air Programme, but its progress should ultimately be judged by outcomes: Are pollution levels actually falling in cities? Are the reductions sustained? Are the most polluted areas receiving effective interventions? Counting programmes is easier than measuring results. Public policy must do the latter.

Water presents a similar challenge. Access alone is not enough; water must also be safe, reliable and sustainably managed. Wastewater has to be treated, groundwater needs to be replenished and sanitation systems need to function. According to 2026 WHO-UNICEF data, 2.1 billion people globally still lack safely managed drinking water, while 3.4 billion lack safely managed sanitation.

India's water challenge is also linked to the loss of natural water systems. Lakes, tanks, streams and drainage channels are being degraded even as dependence on groundwater increases. The result is a familiar contradiction: flooding during intense rainfall and water scarcity during dry periods. Protecting water security therefore requires more than creating new sources. Existing tanks and wetlands must be protected from encroachment, rainwater must be allowed to recharge aquifers, and treated wastewater should be reused wherever feasible.

Forests are part of this same system. They regulate water, protect soil, support biodiversity and store carbon. The FAO's Global Forest Resources Assessment 2025 estimates that an average of 10.9 million hectares of forest was lost to deforestation each year between 2015 and 2025. The rate of deforestation has declined compared with earlier decades, but the long-term loss remains substantial. Since 1990, the area of naturally regenerating forests has fallen by about 324 million hectares.

This has an important implication for forest policy. Planting trees and conserving natural forests are not interchangeable activities. A plantation cannot immediately reproduce the biodiversity, soil structure, water regulation and ecological functions of a mature natural forest. Forest policy must therefore give priority to preventing the loss of existing natural forests, rather than relying primarily on compensatory planting.

The same logic applies to biodiversity. Pollinator decline can affect agricultural production. Damage to coastal ecosystems can affect fishing communities. The loss of soil organisms can weaken agricultural systems. Biodiversity is therefore not simply a conservation concern. It is part of the economic and ecological infrastructure on which food production and livelihoods depend.

India already has multiple programmes addressing different parts of this challenge, including the National Clean Air Programme, Namami Gange, the National Solar Mission, the National Green Hydrogen Mission, initiatives for coastal and wetland conservation and the Nagar Van programme. The policy question now is less about adding another scheme and more about improving the measurement of existing ones.

How much has air pollution fallen? How has the quality of river water changed? Are groundwater levels and quality improving? How much natural forest has actually been protected? How effectively are vulnerable populations being protected from extreme heat? These are the questions that should determine whether environmental interventions are working. Expenditure is an input. Improved environmental conditions are the outcome.

This requires coordination across government. Transport, energy, water, waste management, land use and urban planning cannot be treated as isolated sectors when their environmental consequences overlap. A decision in one sector can create costs in another. Public transport can affect air quality. Wetland protection can reduce flood risk. Renewable energy can reduce emissions. Better soil management can strengthen food security.

Citizens also have a role, but environmental responsibility should not be reduced to individual consumption choices. Waste segregation, water conservation and reduced plastic use matter. So do effective local institutions, credible regulation and accountable industries. Industries, in particular, need to treat pollution control as part of their production systems and invest in cleaner technologies. Regulatory agencies need the capacity to monitor compliance and act when standards are violated.

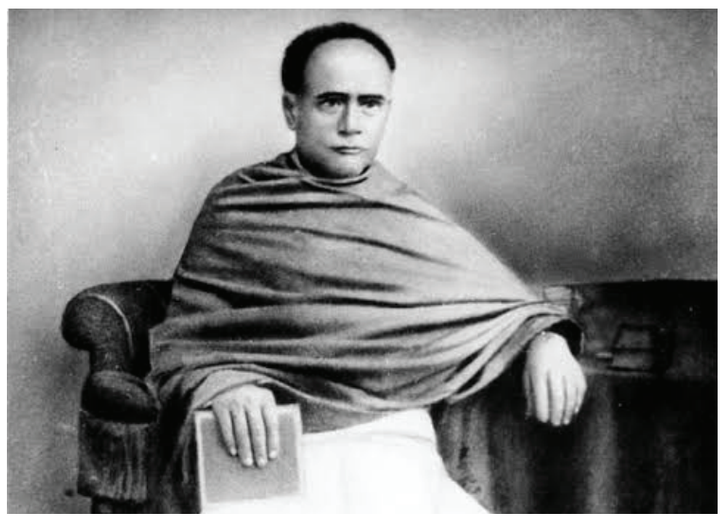
World Environmental Health Day, observed on September 26, places this discussion in a wider context. The 2026 theme, "Supporting science to protect communities," underlines the importance of evidence-based action. That principle should extend beyond the day's observance. Environmental decisions need reliable data, measurable targets, transparent monitoring and the willingness to change course when policies fail to deliver.

Environmental protection is ultimately about protecting people — their health, food, water and livelihoods. Clean air, safe water, healthy soil and a stable climate are not luxuries that can wait until development reaches a higher level. They are among the conditions that make development possible in the first place.

Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar: A Pioneer of Social Reform

Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, the proponent of the principle "Do your own work yourself," was a strong advocate of women's education and always taught people the lessons of self-reliance and self-sufficiency through his actions. In Indian history, he is remembered in many roles as a great teacher, philosopher and social reformer. Because of his simple life, fearless nature, spirit of self-sacrifice, dedication to education and work for the welfare of the oppressed, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar became a great personality for the entire world. At Sanskrit College, he introduced the study of modern Western ideas and opened admission to Sanskrit studies for students belonging to the so-called lower castes. Because of his profound knowledge of the Sanskrit language and philosophy, and for his exceptional scholarship, the Sanskrit College of Calcutta, where he later also served as Principal for several years, conferred upon him the title of "Vidyasagar" while he was still a student. He devoted his entire life to the promotion and propagation of the Sanskrit language. His contribution to making Bengali prose simple and modern will also always be remembered. He simplified and rationalised the Bengali script and alphabet, established hundreds of schools for teaching Bengali, and also made arrangements for night schools.

Ishwar Chandra not only launched a widespread social movement for women's education, but it was also because of his continuous efforts and firm determination that, in 1856, the British government was compelled to pass the Widow Remarriage Act during British rule. Following this, widows in Indian society gained the right to begin their lives anew and live with dignity. In fact, at that time, the condition of widows in Hindu society was extremely distressing. When he was born in Bengal in 1820, numerous social evils had taken deep root in society. One of these was that women who became widows were either forced to commit sati or had to spend their lives in a deeply neglected and miserable condition of widowhood. Ishwar Chandra was the personality who, despite facing immense opposition, not only arranged widow remarriages in Bengal but also compelled the then British government to enact a law in this regard. He created public opinion in favour of widow remarriage, and it was because of his unwavering efforts that the "Widow Remarriage Act" could be passed. Just three months after the law was enacted, he arranged the marriage of a widow named Kamaladevi with a young man from a reputed family, which was the first widow remarriage in Bengal. He facilitated the remarriage of 25 widows between 1856 and 1860. Not only this, by marrying his only son Narayan to a widow, he set an unforgettable example before Indian society by eliminating the difference between words and deeds.



Born on 26 September 1820 into a poor Brahmin family of religious inclination in Medinipur district of West Bengal, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar was regarded throughout his life as a guardian of moral values. In fact, he was such a great personality who, along with promoting women's education, also raised his voice against polygamy and the practice of multiple marriages. He remained a strong supporter of women's upliftment until the last moments of his life. It was due to his tireless efforts that several girls' schools were established in Kolkata and various other places in West Bengal, and he also established the Metropolitan College in Calcutta. Making serious efforts for women's education, he established the Bethune School and helped open nearly three dozen schools. Not only this, he also took responsibility for bearing the entire cost of running these schools. In fact, to meet the expenses of the schools, he raised funds particularly through the sale of books written in Bengali for schoolchildren. For the promotion of the local Bengali language and girls' education, he established a chain of schools as well as the Metropolitan College in Calcutta. During British rule, colleges that were entirely managed by Indians and where all the teachers were also Indian were rare; however, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar achieved this feat by establishing Vidyasagar College in Kolkata in 1872.

It was because of numerous such works undertaken for Bengali society that he came to be regarded as one of the principal pillars of the Bengal Renaissance. Because of his work for social reform and the welfare of society, he became known as a protector of the poor and oppressed and as a great social reformer. Even today, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar is remembered in Indian society in many capacities—as a freedom fighter, social reformer, writer, educationist, philosopher and in several other roles. On 29 July 1891, this great personality passed away forever into the eternal void. Because he always thought about the welfare of society and continued to do something different for society, he was also regarded as the successor to Raja Ram Mohan Roy as a great social reformer. Vidyasagar, a guardian of moral values and a great educationist, believed that only by combining knowledge of the English and Sanskrit languages could the best of Indian and Western traditions be attained.



SHWETA GOYAL

(The author is an educationist who has been actively associated with the teaching profession for more than 18 years)



SIT Flags Ram Temple Donation Pilferage, 105 CCTV Cases

BY CHANDAN KUMAR

AYODHYA: The diversion of donations from the Ram temple in Ayodhya took place during the cash-counting process and involved a network of people who allegedly removed, concealed and distributed the pilfered funds, according to the nearly-70,000-page chargesheet filed by the Supreme Court-mandated Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the offerings-embezzlement case. The document cites 105 instances of removal of cash from the counting area captured on CCTV cameras, besides thousands of recovered text messages and cash and valuables seized during the probe. The chargesheet names eight accused -- Anukalp Mishra, Avinash Shukla alias Shani, Lavkush Mishra, Manish Kumar Yadav, Karunesh Pandey, Ramashankar Mishra, Ram Shankar Yadav alias Tinnu and Subhash Srivastava -- all of whom are in judicial custody.

Naveen Patnaik demands CEC's resignation, revisit of SIR exercise

BHUBANESWAR

BJD president Naveen Patnaik on Friday demanded that Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar resign immediately and the Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls be revisited.

His remarks came after a newspaper report about differences within the three-member Election Commission over several decisions and instructions relating to electoral roll revision, including deletion and addition of names, changes in forms for new voters, and access to voter data.

"Because of the sharp differences between election commissioners and the chief election commissioner, the CEC should immediately resign, and the whole SIR process should be thoroughly revisited," Patnaik told reporters outside the Assembly.

National policy on use of smartphones in schools

digital media by children is need of the hour

NEW DELHI



A report by Centre for Legal Action and Behaviour Change (C-LAB) has demanded a national-level policy regulating the use of digital media by children, including a ban on smartphones in schools and age-restricted access to online spaces. It also suggests that legal obligations and penalties should be attached to digital platforms, never to the child or parent.

The report, "Prevention By Design: From Voluntary Self-Regulation to a State Duty of Care", was launched at a side event at the United Nations General Assembly in New York. The event, "Responsible AI & Safe Digital Spaces for Children", was organised by Athena Infonomics and Just Rights for Children (JRC). C-LAB is one of India's leading research and policy institutes and a partner of JRC, the country's largest network of NGOs working on child protection and child support rights.

As digital participation is not a choice for children anymore, the question now is whether online spaces are designed for their rights, safety, and development, and who bears responsibility for it. The study attempts to answer these questions by providing recommendations for a national-level framework. It has compared policies and laws related to age-based restrictions on the use of digital media in over 40 countries and school phone policies in 110 countries. According to the report, child protection has moved from being a matter of self-regulation by platforms to a "binding legal obligation of the state".

To tackle the issue on one front, the report strongly supports national bright-line restrictions on smartphones in schools. A bright-line restriction is a clearly defined, objective standard that establishes a fixed legal boundary with no room for flexible interpretation. According to the report, which analysed smartphone school ban policies in 110 countries, as many as 52 countries have national legislative bans on smartphone use in schools, 31 more have issued national guidance directing such restrictions, and only nine leave the matter to individual schools. The study calls for a ban on pupil smartphone use throughout the school day in primary and lower secondary education.

Speaking at the launch of the report, Just Rights for Children, founder, Bhuwan Ribhu stated, "The digital world has expanded the scale of harm, while systems for preventing it have not kept pace. The world needs mandatory reporting and an international legal framework to address online harms that cross borders. Social media platforms cannot be allowed to place children in contracts or arrangements that undermine their rights and safety. A child below the age of 18 cannot legally enter into a contract, and any such agreement is void ab initio."

He further added that this report applies the principles of child protection and the rule of law to technology itself. "At the scale of digital platforms, we cannot wait for millions of harms to occur before acting – we must design systems that prevent harm and use technology to identify risks early and connect children to protection," Ribhu said.

According to the report, a few years ago, only some countries were contemplating measures like restricting online access to children, but the landscape shifted once Australia banned social media for children under 16. Now such regulations have been implemented in China, Indonesia and Malaysia as well, while similar proposals are before parliaments in some countries and under discussion in many others.

To this end, the report analysed statutory frameworks on contractual obligations and parental consent in selected countries. Statutory standards differ in the age threshold below which a child cannot form a binding contract with an online platform. In the US, it is 14 years in Florida and 16 years in Ohio. Vietnam has a similar threshold, but India has fixed it at 18 years. This means India treats an agreement entered into by a minor as void ab initio.

The report recommends a five-pillar framework to address these issues:

The first pillar calls for banning social media accounts for children below 15 and supervised access for 15- to 16-year-olds only with verified guardian consent. It says all responsibilities should lie with digital platforms, not the child or parents. The second pillar recommends prohibiting the profiling of minors for targeted advertising, and requiring platforms to disable features such as infinite scrolling and dark patterns that encourage compulsive use. The third pillar proposes a privacy-protecting age-verification system in which digital IDs reveal only a person's age, with strict limits on data collection. The fourth pillar calls for an independent online safety regulator, mandatory reporting of violations to authorities and financial penalties for serious or systemic breaches. The fifth pillar recommends involving children in policymaking, investing in digital literacy, providing parental guidance alongside restrictions.



NFR TO INSTALL PARCEL CAGES AT SEVEN STATIONS IN KATIHAR DIVISION

MALIGAON

Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR), towards making parcel handling a more organised and secure system at stations & terminals, has begun introducing installation of modern parcel cages, providing an extra edge of safety for its passengers and users. With this aim, the facilities are planned at Kishanganj, New Jalpaiguri, Siliguri, Haldibari, Malda Court, Balurghat and Katihar. Installation is under way at New Jalpaiguri, Katihar, Malda Court and Balurghat. Work at the remaining three stations will begin shortly.

Designed to provide dedicated storage for parcels and luggage, the facilities will bring greater order, safety and efficiency to the movement of consignments at the stations. The dedicated facilities will provide space for the temporary storage of parcels and luggage, helping protect consignments while they await handling or dispatch. Once completed, the parcel cages will create clearly defined spaces for the temporary storage and handling of parcels and luggage, helping railway staff manage consignments with greater precision at these important stations. The improved arrangements will also contribute to better utilisation of station space and smoother parcel operations.

By strengthening the security and organisation of parcel handling, the initiative is expected to reduce the risk of consignments being misplaced, damaged or stolen. It will also enhance customer confidence in railway parcel services and provide passengers with a more dependable and convenient experience.

Gujarat CM stresses simplified policies, faster subsidies to boost industrial growth

GANDHINAGAR

Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel on Friday stressed the need for simpler laws, transparent procedures and timely disbursement of industrial subsidies as he outlined the state government's approach to advancing industrial growth. Addressing a felicitation ceremony organised by the Ship Recycling Industries Association in Bhavnagar district, Chief Minister Patel said the state government is continuously working to simplify policies and regulations to make it easier for citizens and industries to operate. He added that the state government is undertaking reforms to maintain Gujarat's position as a leader in "Ease of Doing Business". "Government assistance should reach industries promptly and effectively when needed," CM Patel said, while highlighting steps being taken to strengthen the monitoring system for timely disbursement of subsidies to industries. The Chief Minister added that the state government is introducing sector-specific and industry-specific policies with simplified and transparent procedures. "Such measures are intended to facilitate industrial activity and strengthen cooperation between the government and industry," he said. Referring to the 'Vibrant Gujarat' initiative, Chief Minister Patel added that the summit, launched in 2003 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, had helped establish Gujarat as a global investment platform. "The state government would prioritise providing simple and convenient arrangements for industries participating in the upcoming Vibrant Gujarat Summit," he said.

Chief Minister Patel added that the state government's efforts were inspired by PM Modi's "Nation First" approach and dedication to public service and industrial development.

Seva Setu Abhiyan Draws Overwhelming Response in Uripok; 1,110 Avail Services

IMPHAL



The Seva Setu Abhiyan, organised under the Seva Sankalp Abhiyan by the BJP Uripok Mandal, received an overwhelming response in Uripok on Friday, with 1,110 people participating, around 80 per cent of whom were women. The programme was held at the Youth Club Community Hall, Uripok Achom Leikai, Lane No. 1. Kh. Raghumani Singh, MLA of 10-Uripok Assembly Constituency, played a key role in bringing together various government departments under one platform. Organised in collaboration with the District Administration, Imphal West and line departments, 38 departmental counters were set up to provide direct access to government services and welfare schemes. A major highlight was the Free Mega Health Camp which offered consultations in Medicine, Paediatrics, Dermatology, Dental, Diabetology, Surgery, Obstetrics & Gynaecology, Orthopaedics, ENT, Eye and Optometry. Diagnostic services including ECG, haemoglobin testing, lipid profile, kidney function tests, liver function tests, uric acid and blood sugar tests were also provided. The camp was held from 9:30 AM to 4:00 PM. The Social Welfare Department extended assistance under the Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana, e-KYC updation and other beneficiary services. Departments including District Medical Office, District Supply Office, Agriculture, Fisheries and Horticulture enabled residents to access information without visiting multiple offices.

The programme began with the arrival of public and officials, followed by felicitation of dignitaries. Smt. Bhagyashree Laishram, MCS, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Imphal West*, delivered the welcome address.

Addressing the gathering, MLA Kh. Raghumani Singh spoke on the importance of taking public services closer to the people and ensuring welfare schemes reach intended beneficiaries.

The event concluded with a vote of thanks by Shri Y. Hemchandra Singh, ZEO, Zone-I.

World Pharmacist Day Celebrated at BLW Central Hospital

Important Role of Pharmacists in the Safe and Effective Use of Medicines Highlighted

VARANASI





World Pharmacist Day was celebrated with enthusiasm at the Central Hospital of Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW). The programme commenced with the worship of Lord Dhanvantari and floral tributes to the portrait of M.L. Shrab by Principal Chief Medical Officer Dr. Sunil Kumar and Public Relations Officer Shri Rajesh Kumar, along with doctors, pharmacists, paramedical and nursing staff, and Staff Council member Shri Naveen Sinha present on the occasion.

Programme coordinators Shri Rajendra Kushwaha and Shri Somanath Hembram highlighted the significance of World Pharmacist Day and stated that pharmacists are an important link in the healthcare system.

Pharmacists play a vital role in the proper storage and availability of medicines, their safe and appropriate use, and in providing patients with necessary information regarding medicines.

Pharmacist Dr. Atul Kumar Sahu said that continuous research, development of new medicines and technological advancements are taking place in the field of pharmacy. He emphasized that seminars and training programmes should be organized from time to time to disseminate information about these latest developments among pharmacists and students undergoing training. This helps improve the quality of healthcare services and promotes the safe and effective use of medicines.

On the occasion, patients undergoing treatment at the Central Hospital, BLW along with doctors, nursing staff and paramedical personnel, were present. The programme conveyed a message of appreciation and awareness regarding the significant contribution of pharmacists to healthcare services.

Principal Chief Medical Officer Dr. Sunil Kumar, Chief Medical Superintendent,Adm.Dr. Madhulika Singh, Senior Divisional Medical Officer Dr. S.K. Maurya, Senior Divisional Medical Officer Dr. Minhaj Ahmad, Divisional Medical Officer Dr. Saurabh Sagar, Divisional Medical Officer Dr. Abdul Mabood, Divisional Medical Officer Dr. Mohammad Yafik, Dr. Snehanjali, Dr. Komal, Shri Amit Dubey, Shri Baban Prasad, Shri Arun Kumar Maurya, Shri Tapan Mandal, Shri Shivendra Naval, Shri Lokpati Shukla, Shri Jitendra Kumar, Shri Vidyakant Kushwaha, Shri Brijesh Patel, Shri Niteshwar, Shri Saroj and Smt. Shivani Pal, along with other pharmacists, were present during the programme. The programme was conducted by Pharmacist Shri Anurag Jaiswal.

India Eyes ₹50,000 Crore Defence Export Target by 2028

NEW DELHI



India is poised to achieve its Rs 50,000 crore target for defence exports by 2028, nearly two years ahead of the 2030 deadline fixed by the government, as overseas demand for the country's military hardware is on the rise, Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh said on Friday.

"We've reached Rs 38,000 crore in orders in the last year, and in the future we have a target of Rs 50,000 crore by 2030, and my anticipation is that we'll achieve it possibly by 2028," the Defence Secretary said at a Public Affairs Forum of India (PAFI) conference. The country's annual defence exports have surged to a record Rs 38,424 crore in 2025-26 compared with a mere Rs 686 crore in 2013-14. Rajesh Kumar Singh highlighted that India's cost competitiveness would help drive export growth, especially in the missiles segment, in which Indian systems cost far less than comparable offerings of other foreign manufacturers. "Our USP really is that we can offer missiles at almost one-fourth of the price of what foreign OEMs (original equipment manufacturers) offer," he contended. "In general, the cost for our missile production rates is lower, and therefore that is an area where export potential is high," he added. Rajesh Kumar Singh said there was growing demand for artillery and mounted gun systems, while the Akash surface-to-air missile system was also attracting interest from potential buyers. "We are selling unique products. The most well-known is the BrahMos missile, which is fairly coveted and which we are selling to, or in the process of selling to, several Southeast Asian countries," he observed. He pointed out that the government is keen to expand the number of domestic manufacturers across key defence segments. India should have at least two, if not three, fighter aircraft production lines, around half a dozen missile producers, and hundreds of drone makers, he added, The top official further stated that the government was opening up ammunition and propellant production to more private-sector companies to reduce dependence on a single PSU. He said India's growing defence manufacturing ecosystem would also support the development of larger platforms, including fighter aircraft. "We already know that for Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA), we are fielding proposals from three shortlisted companies," he pointed out. The Defence Secretary also said exports help India establish longer-term defence relationships with buyer countries through maintenance, spares and other support in the supply chain. He further highlighted that defence exports also bring in foreign exchange and generate employment in the country, which strengthens the economy.

Report Questions China's Nuclear Policy and Political Choices

BEIJING



The nuclear policy of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) demonstrates inefficient technocrats and deliberate political choices. Engineers in China work under pressure to meet expansion targets, regulators raise thresholds instead of shutting down plants, and officials hide information by paying money, a report has detailed.

"China's nuclear ambitions have surged with breathtaking speed, transforming the nation into one of the world's largest operators of nuclear reactors. Yet behind the polished narrative of "energy independence" lies a troubling reality: a fragile system riddled with abnormal shutdowns, concealed leaks, and a waste management crisis that threatens to scar generations," a report in Nile Post mentioned.

It detailed that the recent claims made in the Kyoto News reveal technical lapses and the CCP's efforts at expansion at any cost. The CCP's governance has created a culture where safety is compromised, transparency is suppressed, and there is a lack of accountability. The Chinese government has been using substandard structures and inefficient technocrats to create a nuclear empire that seems formidable on paper but is dangerously unstable in practice.

According to the report, nuclear reactors in China faced 130 abnormal shutdowns and more than 500 incidents from 2011 to 2024, demonstrating flaws in its nuclear infrastructure. These incidents were not minor technical issues but events that risked uncontrolled decay heat, hydrogen explosions, and full-scale meltdowns.

By 2024, the CCP stopped publishing details regarding radioactive emission data, effectively silencing transparency in one of the most critical areas of public safety. International experts have said that tritium wastewater discharges from nuclear plants of China were nine times higher than Fukushima's limits. However, China rejected these findings as "distortions" and accused media of "irresponsible reporting."

China's nuclear fleet increased from 15 reactors in 2011 to 59 in 2025. However, China's waste disposal infrastructure is failing to keep pace with the expansion of nuclear power plants. China's primary site for nuclear fuel reprocessing in Gansu remains heavily restricted and obscured from public view. Temporary storage facilities have hit capacity while there is a lack of high-level waste sites in China.

"The CCP's nuclear policy reflects both inefficient technocrats and deliberate political choices. Engineers operate under pressure to meet expansion targets, regulators raise thresholds instead of shutting plants, and officials silence leaks with hush money. This is not incompetence alone it is a systemic failure engineered by a regime that values secrecy over safety," the NilePost report stated.

Taliban Says Pakistan Strikes Afghanistan to Avoid Pact Duties

KABUL



Taliban spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid has accused Pakistan of launching attacks against Afghanistan to divert attention from its internal problems and evade its obligations under the Mecca Pact, local media reported.

Speaking at a religious seminary in Kandahar, Mujahid alleged that Islamabad was using attacks on Afghanistan to distract the public from mounting political and economic problems in Pakistan, including protests at home. Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Turkey signed the defence agreement in Mecca on August 7, pledging to strengthen collective deterrence against acts of aggression. Under the agreement, an armed attack against any one of the signatories would be regarded as an attack against all three.

"Pakistan's recent attacks on Afghanistan were carried out with the aim of escaping the Meeca agreement with Saudi Arabia, while portraying the situation as though Pakistan is engaged in a war in Afghanistan," Mujahid said. He further said, "Pakistan, by violating the territory of its neighbouring Islamic country, wants to divert attention from its failures," Afghan media outlet Ariana News reported. Mujahid also hit out at Pakistan's political environment, claiming that political space had been curtailed and legally protected freedoms were being withheld. He said that Pakistan's economic situation had deteriorated substantially and alleged that the country was attempting to deflect public attention from those difficulties through conflict with Afghanistan. Mujahid further alleged that Pakistan's military leadership was endangering its own people by pursuing what he called a "false position". He warned that Afghanistan would give an "appropriate response" to what he described as the Pakistani military regime's "bullying." These remarks came after Pakistan's military once again carried out airstrikes on Afghanistan's Kandahar, Paktia, and Khost provinces on Thursday, killing four civilians. Condemning the "indiscriminate and cowardly" attacks, Mujahid, in a post on X, described them as a flagrant violation of all principles and a clear act of "aggression and crime". "The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan assures the people that these shameless acts of aggression and attacks by the Pakistani military regime will be met with an appropriate response through a decisive stance," he stated. Mujahid further warned that such "reckless, careless, and hostile actions" would undoubtedly provoke the anger of the Afghan people and have adverse consequences for the Pakistani military regime. The latest attacks came just days after Pakistan carried out airstrikes on Kunar and Paktika provinces of Afghanistan, which killed three people. Mujahid condemned the September 21 airstrikes, saying Pakistan targeted Afghan territory and civilians and warned that Afghanistan would give an "appropriate response" to the attacks.

Global South's voice will continue to matter amidst geopolitical fragmentation, conflicts: EAM Jaishankar

NEW YORK



External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar said on Friday that the voice of the Global South will continue to matter amidst geopolitical fragmentation, conflicts, climate change, economic uncertainty and technological disruption. EAM Jaishankar made the remarks while participating in the discussion on 'Ruptures and Ramparts: Building Bridges for a Changing World'. Jamaica's Foreign Minister Kamina J Smith, Ghana's Foreign Minister Sam Okudzeto Ablakwa, Suriname's Foreign Minister Melvin Bouva and EastWest Center President Celeste Connors also participated in the discussion. "We agreed that the UN remains indispensable, while recognising the need for reform to reflect the aspirations and realities of the Global South. The voice of the Global South will continue to matter amidst geopolitical fragmentation, conflicts, climate change, economic uncertainty and technological disruption. The world will not be defined by binary choices. Countries will continue to make their choices based on interests, values and trust. Grateful to Samir Saran and the ORF America Team for convening this timely conversation," EAM Jaishankar wrote on X after the meeting. EAM Jaishankar is currently leading the Indian delegation at the 81st Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York.

On Thursday, he met Foreign Ministers Ronald Lamola of South Africa and Mauro Vieira of Brazil who jointly condemned the Pahalgam terrorist attack last year and reaffirmed their commitment to zero tolerance for terrorism.

The ministers of the three countries that form the IBSA Dialogue Forum met in New York on Thursday. In the joint statement, they called for a comprehensive United Nations Security Council (UNSC) reform to make it more democratic, representative, legitimate and reflective of contemporary realities.

They also said that the global economic governance system should have more effective, equitable and representative participation of developing and emerging economies. "Participated in the IBSA Foreign Ministers' Meeting today with FM Ronald Lamola of South Africa and FM Mauro Vieira of Brazil. UNGA 81," EAM Jaishankar posted on X. "Our Joint Media Statement underscored: Commitment to the UN Charter, international law and a stronger multilateral system. Support for comprehensive UNSC reform to make it more democratic, representative, legitimate and reflective of contemporary realities. Concern over the spillover of conflicts on the Global South, particularly through energy and food insecurity, inflation and fiscal pressures. Strong condemnation of the Pahalgam terror attack and reaffirmation of zero tolerance for terrorism," he added.

The joint statement also underscored full commitment to empowering women and girls and removing social and economic barriers. The democratic countries from the three continents of the Global South are among the major emerging economies with several common interests. They stressed the need to protect balanced, fair and mutually beneficial trade for equitable growth, inclusive development and greater resilience, according to EAM Jaishankar.

The ministers emphasised the urgency of fighting climate change, which was leading to increasingly frequent and intense disasters and shocks that threaten sustainable development.

They expressed support for tripling renewable energy capacity in the Global South, doubling the global average rate of energy-efficiency improvements, and expanding sustainable fuels including biofuels, biogases and low-emission hydrogen.

They paid particular attention to the fast-changing world of technology, making a commitment to universal, meaningful connectivity and greater deployment of digital infrastructure. They also recognised the immense potential of artificial intelligence to drive economic growth and sustainable development.



Energy sector exemplifies 'scale and breadth' of growing US-India partnership: Official

NEW YORK

The scale and breadth" of US relations with India are growing, with the energy sector exemplifying it as New Delhi tries to diversify its sources, according to Bethany Morrison who looks after the region in the US State Department.

"We're now very proudly the largest exporter of LPG to India", said Morrison, who is the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia. "So, when we talk about diversifying energy sources, we are happy that the United States is now becoming that provider" she said at a briefing for reporters in New York. Imports of LPG from the US surged from under 10 per cent of the imports last year, to 67 per cent till August because of the blockage of the Strait of Hormuz, through which most of it used to come from the Gulf nations. Should things stabilise in the Gulf region, India still targets getting at least 25 per cent of its supply from the US next year, according to reports. In another energy area, nuclear, Morrison said she saw " exciting new developments". "India for the first time in 20 years reformed their nuclear regulatory environment by passing the SHANTI Act, and now we're moving forward on some really exciting new developments in civil nuclear cooperation", she said.

The Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India Act – or SHANTI Act – passed in December opens the nuclear sector to the private sector and reforms liability rules. As another example of increasing cooperation, she cited the 10-year Defence Framework Agreement signed last year by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth last year. It covers interoperability between weapon systems of the two countries, defence equipment manufacture, sharing intelligence, and ensuring maritime security in the Indo-Pacific.

Morrison also mentioned that US President Donald Trump wants more attention paid to South Asia, "a critical" part of the world.

"We're very, very excited about where the next years are going to go", she said.

"We see South Asia as such a critical sort of part of the world that really has not gotten enough attention, and that's where President Trump has really made sure, that he has advised us to do" more, Morrison said briefing reporters. "It's often a region that historically gets overlooked until there's a crisis because of all, everything else, happening in the world -- from what's happening in Latin America to Africa to the Middle East, and then obviously land wars in Europe", she said.



Pakistan's military grip runs deep from politics to civilian institutions: Report

ISLAMABAD

The Pakistani military's influence extends well beyond the security establishment, with parallel institutions and its personnel embedded in the civil bureaucracy and federal cabinet. Its reach also runs deep into the country's economic and social spheres, while major foreign-policy decisions require its approval, a report has stated.

The irony of Pakistan's democracy is that Prime Ministers often find themselves in trouble when they try to act as the country's true chief executives. Several premiers have made that mistake and faced serious repercussions after challenging the entrenched balance of power, a report in the Union of Catholic Asian (UCA) News highlighted.

"The prolonged incarceration of Pakistan's former Prime Minister Imran Khan and denial of access to the hospital of his choice for medical treatment might have surprised many, but for those familiar with Pakistan's political dynamics, it is not a new story. This is not the first time that a politician has been treated in this way, but in reality, the registration of concocted cases against politicians, throwing them behind bars, and putting restrictions on their media appearances are some of the tactics that the country's powerful military has been employing for years now," the report detailed.

It noted that during Pakistan's first two decades, more than six Prime Ministers were forced to leave office before completing their terms, while no premier managed to serve a full five-year constitutional tenure.

Over the years, Pakistan's military has seen civilian governments create institutions that have served the former's interests. The National Accountability Bureau (NAB), an anti-corruption watchdog, has been used to target politicians, bureaucrats and business figures. At the provincial level, the Counter Terrorism Department is believed to be acting in line with the military's interests, the UCA news mentioned.

Indian Youth Advocate Urges Global Digital Safety at UNHRC

GENEVA

Drawing attention to the real-world consequences of digital abuse, Tarangini Sharma, a 14-year-old youth advocate with Rajasthan Samgrah Kalyan Sansthan (RSKS India), spoke about stronger safeguards against abusive deepfakes and non-consensual intimate imagery during her intervention at an Interactive Dialogue with the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee at the ongoing 63rd Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in Switzerland's Geneva. Sharma highlighted that digital violence does not remain behind a screen and can follow a woman into her classroom, workplace, home and public life. Welcoming the Advisory Committee's work on technology-facilitated gender-based violence against women and girls, Sharma said the international response must now move beyond recognising digital harm to building systems capable of preventing it. "No woman should ever have to choose between using technology and protecting her dignity, safety and life," Sharma told the Council during her virtual intervention. She drew attention to the real-world consequences of digital abuse: fabricated images capable of disrupting a girl's education, doxxing that can drive women from public life, and cyberstalking that may escalate beyond the digital sphere. She emphasised that survivors often confront fragmented legal protections, slow platform responses and reporting mechanisms that can add to their trauma. Her message to the Council was direct: digital safety must be designed into technology from the beginning.

Trump wants more attention paid to South Asia: US official

NEW YORK



US President Donald Trump wants more attention paid to South Asia, "a critical" part of the world, according to a US State Department official charged with the region's diplomacy. "We're very, very excited about where the next years are going to go", said Bethany Morrison, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia.

"We see South Asia as such a critical sort of part of the world that really has not gotten enough attention, and that's where President Trump has really made sure, that he has advised us to do" more, she said briefing reporters. "It's often a region that historically gets overlooked until there's a crisis because of all, everything else, happening in the world -- from what's happening in Latin America to Africa to the Middle East, and then obviously land wars in Europe", she said. It "has really become a major priority of the Trump Administration, and we're very, very excited about that", she said. The importance given the region is seen in "from energy to big commercial deals to defense engagements and agreements to large multilateral diplomatic meetings like the Quad", group of India, the US, Japan and Australia, she said. "The fact that the US cares about these relationships [with South Asian countries] is real", Morrision said. Trump has given US Ambassador to India, Sergei Gor, the additional assignment as the special envoy to South and Central Asia. Morrison said about him, "We also have an incredibly active special envoy who's been to almost every single country in South Asia and he's engaged at the highest level with the government leaders there on behalf of the president". She also mentioned that the "scale and breadth" of US relations with India are growing, with the energy sector exemplifying it as New Delhi tries to diversify its sources. "We're now very proudly the largest exporter of LPG to India", said Morrison. "So, when we talk about diversifying energy sources, we are happy that the United States is now becoming that provider" she told reporters in New York. In another energy area, nuclear, Morrison said she saw " exciting new developments". "India for the first time in 20 years reformed their nuclear regulatory environment by passing the SHANTI Act, and now we're moving forward on some really exciting new developments in civil nuclear cooperation", she said.

India, Liberia launch sea personnel safety group amid 'indefensible' attacks on seafarers, shipping

UNITED NATIONS: India on Friday said that repeated attacks on seafarers that disrupt maritime commerce and cost innocent lives are "indefensible" and "unacceptable", as Delhi launched a landmark maritime initiative with Liberia focused on safety and security of sea personnel and shipping.

"From the Black Sea to the Red Sea to the Gulf, attacks on civilian shipping have become a growing cause of concern. These actions that disrupt maritime commerce and cost innocent lives are simply indefensible. We are here to not just highlight this dangerous trend, but to urge the international community to close ranks and deter such attacks," External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said.

Jaishankar, along with Liberia's Minister for Foreign Affairs Sara Beysolow Nyanti, launched the 'Group of Friends on Safety & Security of Shipping & Seafarers' here on the margins of the high-level UN General Assembly session.

NABARD sanctions Rs 195-crore loan to boost fisheries infrastructure in Bihar's Siwan

PATNA: The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has sanctioned a Rs 195-crore loan to the Bihar government to develop modern fisheries infrastructure in Siwan district, officials said on Friday. The loan was sanctioned under the Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund (FIDF). According to a statement issued by NABARD, "The project will support fish farming units, seed production centres and hatcheries, collection and landing centres, cold storage and cold-chain facilities, processing and packaging units, modern fish markets and improved transportation and marketing infrastructure."

India reserves third-party rights in Russia-EU CBAM trade dispute in WTO: Official

NEW DELHI

India, along with several other countries, has reserved its third-party rights to participate in proceedings related to a trade dispute filed by Russia against the European Union over its Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, as the WTO's Dispute Settlement Body has agreed to establish a panel to adjudicate on the issue, an official said. Argentina, Brazil, Canada, China, Chinese Taipei, Indonesia, Japan, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Malaysia, Norway, Paraguay, Singapore, Switzerland, Thailand, the UK and the US are other countries that have reserved their third-party rights in the dispute, the Geneva-based official said. Russia has filed a dispute against the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) Package and alleged export subsidy under the EU scheme for trading greenhouse gas emission allowances.

Sensex ends 315 points higher, Nifty above 23,100; Axis Bank up 3%

Benchmark indices ended higher on Friday, recovering partially after Thursday's sharp sell-off, but the rebound was not enough to prevent another weekly decline. Persistent concerns over elevated crude oil prices, high bond yields and foreign fund outflows kept gains in check.



The Sensex closed at 73,895.74, up 315.20 points or 0.43%, while the Nifty 50 gained 77.40 points or 0.34% to end at 23,140.50. Despite Friday's recovery, both indices ended lower for the seventh straight week. The Nifty fell around 0.9% during the week, while the Sensex declined 0.5%. The broader market saw a mixed trend. The Nifty 100 rose 0.38%, while the Nifty 200 gained 0.27% and Nifty 500 advanced 0.23%. The Nifty Midcap 50 fell 0.25% and Midcap 100 declined 0.14%, while the Nifty Smallcap 100 gained 0.15%. India VIX fell 4% to 12.18.

FINANCIAL, AUTO STOCKS SUPPORT MARKETS

Financial and auto stocks helped the benchmarks recover after Thursday's sell-off. Axis Bank was the top Sensex gainer, rising 2.82%, followed by M&M, which gained 2.24%. Asian Paints rose 1.93%, Bajaj Finance gained 1.21%, HCLTech advanced 1.17% and Titan rose 1.01%. Other notable gainers included IndiGo, L&T, HDFC Bank, Power Grid and Reliance Industries. On the other hand, Trent was the biggest Sensex loser, falling 1.41%. Infosys declined 0.81%, Tech Mahindra fell 0.06%, ICICI Bank dropped 0.41% and Kotak Mahindra Bank declined 0.47%.

SECTORAL PERFORMANCE

The Nifty Auto index rose 0.89%, while Realty gained 0.92%. Consumer Durables advanced 0.95%, Financial Services 25/50 rose 0.33%, FMCG gained 0.40% and Private Bank increased 0.45%.

Metal rose 0.35%, PSU Bank gained 0.28% and Chemicals advanced 0.23%. IT was among the weaker sectors, falling 0.17%. Media declined 0.23%, Pharma fell 0.10% and Healthcare dropped 0.47%. The Nifty MidSmall Financial Services index fell 0.52%, while the Financial Services Ex-Bank index declined 0.07%.

CRUDE REMAINS A KEY CONCERN

Brent crude was trading at around $105.39 a barrel, down 1.14%, while WTI crude fell 1.85% to $92.86.

Despite Friday's decline, crude remains at elevated levels and continues to be a key risk for Indian markets because of its impact on inflation, the import bill and corporate profitability. Friday's gains came after the Nifty and Sensex recorded their steepest single-session fall in 10 weeks on Thursday. The previous session's sell-off was driven by rising crude prices, higher global bond yields and concerns over the proposed IRDAI changes to insurance commission structures.

Financial stocks faced particularly heavy selling during the week, while IT stocks also remained under pressure.

The Nifty Financial Services index fell 1.6% during the week, while the Nifty IT index declined 2.4%, marking their fourth consecutive weekly losses. The broader Nifty Midcap 100 and Smallcap 100 fell 2.1% and 0.9%, respectively, during the week.

The Nifty's seven-week losing streak is its longest in six years. Before the current streak, the index had recorded seven or more consecutive weekly losses only four times in the past 25 years — in 2020, 2008 and twice in 2001.

Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said, "Volatile crude and bond yields at elevated levels kept the market recovery capped. Concerns over inflation, foreign fund outflows and pressure on EM currencies remained intact. Selective bargain hunting after the recent pullback helped the market retain a positive bias, though gains remained confined to a narrow trading range. "The ability of benchmark indices to sustain above the psychologically important 23,000 level reflects domestic resilience and support from strong domestic liquidity. While elevated oil prices and global yields may continue to temper risk appetite in the near term, improving valuations and resilient domestic growth prospects are encouraging selective accumulation, helping the market absorb external pressures more effectively," he added.

India's crypto crowd is getting younger: Gen Z drives 50% of new users

India's crypto market is seeing a noticeable change in who is joining the space. Younger investors are increasingly showing interest in digital assets, while smaller cities are also making up a larger share of new users.



More than 1.2 lakh new users joined the platform in the first half of 2026, with the 18-24 age group, or Gen Z, accounting for around 50% of new registrations, according to the 'The State of Crypto in India: H1 2026 Review & H2 Outlook' report by ZebPay.

GEN Z ACCOUNTS FOR HALF OF NEW USERS

The strong participation from Gen Z is one of the key findings of the report. The data suggests that crypto is gaining traction among younger investors, who are increasingly exploring digital assets as part of their investment choices. Gen Z users also showed a clear preference for buying rather than selling. Their buy volumes were nearly 10 times higher than their sell volumes during the first half of the year. Solana emerged as the most preferred digital asset among this group.

SMALLER CITIES ARE DRIVING PARTICIPATION

The shift is not only about age. Investors from smaller cities are also playing a bigger role in India's crypto market. Tier-2 and Tier-3 markets together accounted for around 62% of new registrations on ZebPay during H1 2026. Tier-3 markets alone contributed nearly 21% of new registrations. The report also found that Tier-3 markets were the only segment to record an increase in the average spot order size during the period. Further, it suggests that many users are taking a longer-term approach instead of frequently buying and selling digital assets. Around 63% of users held crypto without making any trades during H1 2026. Another 29% continued trading while also holding crypto assets. The data also showed a clear link between regular participation and trading activity. Users who remained active throughout all six months generated around 21 times the trading volume of those who were active for only one month.

BITCOIN STILL A MAJOR CHOICE

While Gen Z showed a strong preference for Solana, Bitcoin continued to have a major presence among investors. Bitcoin Maximalists made up the largest investor group, accounting for 30% of users. They were followed by Legacy Altcoin Holders at 17.3% and Diversified Explorers at 15%. The report also found that around 85% of active users participated in spot markets, while about 72% used at least two platform features.

USDT REMAINS THE TOP TRADING PAIR

USDT continued to be the most-used trading pair during H1 2026. Bitcoin, Ethereum, XRP and Solana were among the other top five assets by spot trading activity. Layer-1 assets accounted for nearly 90% of categorised trading volume, while memecoins had the second-highest trader participation.

CRYPTO PARTICIPATION IS SPREADING

The findings point to a crypto user base that is becoming broader in terms of age and location. Younger users are joining in large numbers, while investors from Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities are accounting for a significant share of new registrations. Rahul Pagidipati, Chief Executive Officer, ZebPay, said the first half of 2026 showed a growing focus among Indian investors on diversification and long-term wealth creation.

Is your insurance really right for you? IRDAI plans tougher mis-selling checks

IRDAI in its public consultation paper has proposed specific regulatory guardrails to tackle mis-selling and make insurers and intermediaries more accountable.

Buying an insurance policy can become a costly mistake if the product does not match a customer's needs or is sold with promises that do not tell the full story. The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has now proposed a set of measures to make insurance sales more transparent and create greater awareness around mis-selling.

IRDAI, in its public consultation paper titled "Recalibrating Economics of Insurance Distribution", has proposed specific regulatory guardrails to tackle mis-selling and make insurers and intermediaries more accountable. The regulator said unfair business practices are a leading category of customer complaints, with mis-selling having a significant impact on public trust in the insurance sector. It has also been a major cause of premature surrender of life insurance policies, IRDAI said. "While most measures proposed in these reforms will combine to reduce mis-selling, it is also imperative that specific regulatory guardrails are established and awareness is built around this issue," the regulator said.

SUITABILITY CHECK BEFORE SELLING INSURANCE

One of the key proposals is to make suitability an enforceable obligation. IRDAI has proposed a detailed suitability framework for every insurer and insurance distribution entity. For life insurance sales above a defined ticket size, a documented needs and suitability analysis should be mandatory, backed by an appropriate audit trail. If a customer chooses a product different from the one recommended after the suitability assessment, the reason should also be documented. Importantly, simply obtaining a customer's consent or signature should not absolve the insurer or intermediary of responsibility for selling an unsuitable product, according to the proposal. IRDAI said such a framework could help deter practices such as presenting endowment or other savings insurance plans as fixed deposits or equivalent deposit products, particularly in bank-led distribution.

WHAT COULD AMOUNT TO MIS-SELLING?

The regulator has listed



several examples of insurance sales that could attract disincentives or regulatory action.

These include selling a regular-premium product as a single-premium product or selling a regular-premium life insurance policy without explaining what happens if the customer stops paying premiums and the low surrender value. Selling life insurance, including term insurance, to customers who are not in their working age or do not have dependants has also been listed as an example. Similarly, customers without a steady income should not normally be sold regular-premium life insurance products that require them to make payments year after year.IRDAI has also proposed safeguards for ULIPs. Selling such products to risk-averse customers or those beyond their working age without explaining mortality charges, risks to capital and uncertainty of returns could amount to mis-selling. Selling participating or ULIP life insurance products with a false promise of assured returns is also among the practices flagged by the regulator.

DON'T SELL INSURANCE AS A FIXED DEPOSIT

IRDAI has specifically highlighted the practice of selling insurance products as alternatives to bank deposits.

The proposed guidance includes selling non-participating life insurance products in lieu of bank deposits even when their returns are lower than, or at best comparable to, bank deposits. Selling insurance products as fixed-income deposits or high-return investment products has also been listed as an example of mis-selling. The regulator has also flagged cases where customers are encouraged to withdraw from an existing policy or cancel it and buy a new product based on a misleading promise of better returns. High-value single-premium products offering low liquidity and poor insurance coverage have also been included among the examples.

CLEAR AND SIMPLE INFORMATION FOR CUSTOMERS

IRDAI has proposed that promotional material should use factual and easy-to-understand language. There should be a clear and bold mention of whether the product involves a single or regular premium, whether returns are assured or not, and the risks involved in ULIPs. The regulator has also proposed that an insurer or intermediary's policy on charging or receiving commission on insurance products should be readily available on its website and brought to the attention of customers being solicited for those products.

INCENTIVES THAT ENCOURAGE MIS-SELLING

IRDAI has proposed bringing all forms of remuneration, whether direct or indirect and monetary or non-monetary, within the definition of commission for regulatory purposes. It has also proposed prohibiting volume-linked or reward-linked incentives for bank and NBFC staff selling insurance. The regulator noted that sales incentives such as foreign or domestic trips, luxury gifts, milestone bonuses and contest rewards are currently common across the channel. According to IRDAI, such incentives can create a direct conflict of interest with customer suitability.

SALESPERSONS COULD BE IDENTIFIED

IRDAI has also proposed tagging the functional identity of the salesperson with the insurance policy sold by them.

This could include specified persons, salespersons or Point of Sales Persons (PoSPs) of insurance distribution entities, as well as agents or associates of insurers. Information on instances of mis-selling could then be placed in the public domain as part of the concerned person's performance record. IRDAI said this could help achieve four objectives — enable disincentives from commissions, fix accountability, alert future recruiters and, most importantly, allow prospective customers to make informed decisions by knowing the mis-selling history of salespersons. The regulator has proposed enabling this functionality through the Public Insurance Registry. IRDAI has also proposed that instances of mis-selling should lead to commission claw-back by insurers. The measures proposed by the regulator seek to put greater focus on whether an insurance product is suitable for the customer, how it is presented and whether incentives given to sellers could encourage unsuitable sales.

Five-day banking week was never agreed, say govt sources

According to the report, senior government sources said the five-day working week was neither agreed upon nor used as a negotiating point during earlier wage discussions with bank unions.



Bank unions are set to go ahead with a three-day nationwide strike over their demand for a five-day working week. However, government sources have said the issue was never part of wage negotiations with bank unions, according to a Business Today report. The unions have been seeking a Monday-to-Friday working week, citing long working hours for bank employees. The United Forum of Bank Unions (UFBU), which claims to represent around 90% of the banking workforce, has called for the strike from September 28 to 30.

According to the report, senior government sources said the five-day working week was neither agreed upon nor used as a negotiating point during earlier wage discussions with bank unions. The government's position comes even as bank unions maintain that the five-day week has been under discussion for more than two years. Bank employees currently get holidays on the second and fourth Saturdays of every month. The unions are seeking a full five-day working week from Monday to Friday. The unions have also pointed out that the Reserve Bank of India and the Department of Financial Services follow a five-day working week.

Government sources said the Centre had already agreed to several demands raised by bank unions during the previous round of wage negotiations in 2022. This included the issue of family pension.

The government has also decided to keep the proposed performance-linked incentive (PLI) scheme in abeyance. The Finance Ministry, in a recent statement, said one of the two major demands raised by the unions had already been addressed. It also referred to the one-day strike held on September 11 and the three-day strike planned for September 28 to 30. The ministry also said an indefinite strike had been proposed from October 26 over the five-day working week demand and appealed to bank employees to ensure that banking services remain uninterrupted.

Despite the government's position, bank unions continue to make a five-day working week their key demand. The unions contend that the 12th bipartite settlement had formally committed to a five-day banking week. The government, however, maintains that the issue was never agreed upon during wage negotiations.

The dispute comes ahead of the three-day strike scheduled from September 28 to 30, with the five-day working week remaining the central point of disagreement between the two sides.



NICZISCL in Hundai Inaugurates New Office

First Offer Letter Issued to M/s Hyundai Motor India Engineering Pvt. Ltd. for Allotment of 270 Acres at Zaheerabad Industrial Smart City

A significant milestone in the industrial development of the State of Telangana

HYDERABAD

It is a momentous day for the Zaheerabad Industrial Smart City. The new office of NICDIT Zaheerabad Industrial Smart City Limited (NICZISCL), the Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) constituted for the development of the Zaheerabad Industrial Smart City, was inaugurated today by Sri K. Shashanka, IAS, Vice Chairman & Managing Director, Telangana Industrial Infrastructure Corporation Limited (TGIIC). He was accompanied by Lt Cdr Ravindranath Reddy, CEO (P), TGIIC, along with other senior officials. Marking this significant occasion, the first Offer Letter was issued to M/s Hyundai Motor India Engineering Pvt. Ltd. for the allotment of 270 acres of land in the Zaheerabad Industrial Smart City. This allotment is expected to pave the way for industrial development, create employment opportunities and contribute to the economic growth of the State of Telangana. The new office will serve as the operational base of NICZISCL. It will facilitate the planning, development and administration of the Industrial Smart City and will act as a point of contact for prospective investors. On this occasion, NICZISCL invites prospective investors and industries to invest in the Zaheerabad Industrial Smart City and to be part of its vision to emerge as a leading industrial hub in Telangana.

Adityanath invites partner countries to invest in UP's defence, pharma, manufacturing sectors

NOIDA

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Friday held a round-table meeting with representatives of the Uttar Pradesh International Trade Show's partner countries and invited them to explore investment opportunities in sectors, including mobile manufacturing, defence, and medical devices. Representatives of Singapore, Vietnam, Russia, Belarus, Japan and Austria participated in the discussions on investment and business opportunities in the state, according to a Uttar Pradesh government statement. "Uttar Pradesh, besides being India's most populous state, has a large market, a young workforce, fertile land and adequate water resources, offering considerable scope for businesses from partner countries," Adityanath said, according to the statement.



Hyderabad Realty Faces New Challenges

Rising prices, affordability concerns, unsold inventory and infrastructure pressures are reshaping the city's property market

Hyderabad's real estate market is entering a more complicated phase. The city continues to attract homebuyers, global capability centres, technology companies, financial services firms and large developers, but the easy-growth phase appears to be giving way to a market where affordability, inventory, infrastructure and location-specific demand matter more than before. The latest numbers show that Hyderabad is not facing a broad real estate collapse. Instead, the market is showing signs of moderation alongside continued price growth. Housing sales in the first half of 2026 were reported at 26,068 units, down 13% from the previous year in one CREDAI Hyderabad–CRE Matrix assessment, while the average ticket size increased 10% to Rs 2.03 crore. Another Knight Frank assessment reported 19,249 residential sales during the first half of 2026, broadly stable year-on-year, while unsold inventory increased 3% to 56,095 units. The difference between datasets reflects variations in methodology and market coverage, but both point to the same broader trend: buyers remain active, while the market is becoming more selective.

The Biggest Problem Is No Longer Lack of Demand

For several years, Hyderabad's property story was relatively straightforward. Employment growth, IT expansion, infrastructure development and comparatively attractive property prices brought buyers into the market. The western corridor emerged as the centre of this transformation, with areas such as Gachibowli, Financial District, Kokapet, Nanakramguda, Narsingi and Tellapur witnessing rapid residential and commercial development. That story has not disappeared. But the nature of demand is changing. The challenge today is that property prices in several established corridors have moved substantially higher, making the city less affordable for middle-income households. At the same time, developers continue to launch larger apartments and premium projects because these segments generate better returns. According to Knight Frank data reported in July, homes priced between Rs 1 crore and Rs 2 crore accounted for 45% of sales in H1 2026. The Rs 2 crore-Rs 5 crore segment increased its share to 23%, while homes below Rs 50 lakh accounted for only 3% of sales.

This represents one of the most important changes in Hyderabad's housing market.

The Affordable Home Is Becoming Harder to Find

Hyderabad was once known for offering relatively spacious homes at prices below those of Mumbai, Delhi-NCR and Bengaluru. That advantage has narrowed considerably. Land prices, construction costs, infrastructure spending and rising demand in employment corridors have pushed project prices higher. For a salaried family, the issue is not simply whether a home is available. The bigger question is whether the monthly EMI is manageable without compromising other household expenses. This is particularly relevant for first-time buyers. As homes in western Hyderabad move further into premium territory, buyers are increasingly looking towards locations beyond the traditional IT belt. Kollur, Bachupally, Patancheru, parts of the northern corridor and emerging areas beyond the established western market are attracting attention because the entry price can be relatively lower. But cheaper property on the outskirts comes with another question: how quickly will infrastructure catch up with housing? That is where Hyderabad's next real estate challenge lies.

Too Much Growth in One Direction

One of the defining characteristics of Hyderabad's property market is its concentration around the western corridor. Knight Frank reported that West Hyderabad accounted for 61% of launches and 63% of sales in H1 2026. Cushman & Wakefield's Q2 data showed an even stronger concentration in new supply, with the western corridor accounting for 72.5% of residential launches. The concentration makes economic sense. Major IT campuses, GCCs, financial services companies, premium office developments and established social infrastructure are already located in or around this belt. But it also creates pressure. Traffic congestion, travel times, land prices, water requirements, road capacity and pressure on civic infrastructure can increase as residential density rises. If housing development moves much faster than roads, public transport, drainage, water supply and other civic services, the quality-of-life advantage that attracts buyers can gradually weaken. This does not mean western Hyderabad is losing its importance. Rather, it suggests that the next phase of development needs to be more distributed.

Unsold Inventory Needs Watching

Another issue attracting attention is unsold housing stock.

Knight Frank data put Hyderabad's unsold inventory at 56,095 units in H1 2026, up 3% year-on-year. The overall inventory stood at 5.9 quarters of supply. Importantly, nearly 70% of the unsold stock was concentrated in the Rs 50 lakh-Rs 2 crore segments. West Hyderabad alone accounted for 36,458 unsold units. This does not automatically indicate a property crisis. Inventory becomes problematic when supply remains unsold for a prolonged period while new projects continue entering the market. The present situation is more nuanced. Developers appear to be becoming more cautious about launches, while genuine end-user demand continues in several locations. The question is whether developers can maintain that discipline as landowners and investors continue to expect higher property values.

Premiumisation Is Changing Hyderabad

Hyderabad's real estate market is increasingly becoming a premium housing market. Large apartments, gated communities, clubhouses, landscaped spaces, retail facilities, schools and other amenities are becoming central to new projects. Buyers who can afford them are willing to pay for convenience, security and lifestyle. The result is a visible shift in the type of housing being constructed. The market is no longer dominated by the simple proposition of buying a two-bedroom or three-bedroom apartment. Four-bedroom homes, larger floor plans, luxury towers and integrated communities are becoming increasingly prominent in several western locations. This creates opportunities for developers, but it also creates a potential mismatch. A city needs premium housing, but it also needs homes for teachers, healthcare workers, young professionals, small-business owners, government employees and other middle-income households. If affordable and mid-income housing continues to shrink as a share of new supply, many workers may be pushed farther away from employment centres.

Infrastructure Has Become a Real Estate Issue

Real estate growth cannot be separated from infrastructure. A home may look attractive on a brochure, but its long-term value depends partly on how easily residents can reach workplaces, schools, hospitals, shopping centres and public transport. This is particularly important for Hyderabad's peripheral growth corridors. The recent national discussion around real estate development has also highlighted the need for closer coordination between developers and municipal authorities on water, sewage and other physical infrastructure. A senior Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs official recently called for greater cooperation between developers and municipalities on these issues. For Hyderabad, this is especially relevant because the city's expansion is increasingly moving beyond established urban areas.

Water and Urban Sustainability Cannot Be Ignored

Another long-term concern is water. Large residential communities require substantial and dependable water supplies. As more housing, commercial buildings and infrastructure come up across the city's growth corridors, water management will become increasingly important. The issue is not simply availability. It also involves groundwater, lakes, drainage channels, sewage treatment, rainwater harvesting and the reuse of treated water. Hyderabad's future real estate expansion will therefore have to be increasingly linked with environmental planning. Projects that provide better water management, waste treatment, energy efficiency and open spaces could become more attractive to increasingly informed buyers.

Supporting Housing Demand

Despite concerns in residential real estate, Hyderabad's commercial property market remains an important support for housing. Cushman & Wakefield reported 5.2 million square feet of office leasing in H1 2026, up 25% year-on-year. GCCs accounted for 37% of quarterly leasing, while Gachibowli remained the most active office corridor. Citywide office vacancy declined to 19.1% during the period. This matters because Hyderabad's housing demand is closely connected to employment. Technology is still important, but the city's economic base has broadened into BFSI, healthcare, pharmaceuticals, life sciences, engineering and other sectors. That diversification can provide a more stable foundation for housing demand. However, employment growth cannot be taken for granted. If global technology hiring slows significantly or companies reduce expansion, premium housing markets that depend heavily on high-income professionals could feel the impact.

What Happens Next?

The next phase of Hyderabad real estate is likely to be less about spectacular expansion and more about consolidation.

Demand is still present. Office leasing remains strong, registrations have shown resilience and Hyderabad continues to attract businesses and workers. July 2026 residential registrations reached 6,166 units, up 1% year-on-year and 11% from June, according to Knight Frank data reported by Telangana Today. But rising prices mean that not every buyer can participate equally. The central challenge for Hyderabad is therefore to balance three things: economic growth, housing affordability and sustainable urban expansion. Developers will need to assess demand more carefully rather than assuming that every new project will be absorbed. Buyers will increasingly compare locations, connectivity, developer credibility and total ownership costs rather than simply looking at amenities.

The Rise of the Peripheral City

One of the most visible consequences of rising property prices is Hyderabad's outward expansion.

The Outer Ring Road has made it possible for residential development to move farther from the traditional city while remaining connected to major employment centres. Areas such as Kollur, Tellapur, Bachupally, Patancheru, Shamshabad and Adibatla are part of a broader expansion story, although their development trajectories are different. Some are being driven by IT and residential demand. Others are benefiting from industrial, aerospace, logistics or airport-related development. The advantage for buyers is relatively lower entry pricing compared with established premium neighbourhoods. The disadvantage is that buyers may have to wait for social infrastructure and public transport to mature. Therefore, the success of peripheral Hyderabad will depend not only on how many apartments developers build but also on how effectively employment, transport and civic infrastructure expand alongside them.

Regulatory Uncertainty Adds Another Layer

The real estate industry is also adapting to tighter scrutiny and regulatory changes. The implementation of HYDRAA has influenced developer behaviour, with Knight Frank noting that new launches moderated during H1 2026 amid enhanced regulatory oversight. For buyers, regulatory scrutiny can provide greater emphasis on legality and planning compliance. For developers, however, it can mean greater diligence before acquiring land or launching projects. This transition can temporarily slow supply, but it also highlights the importance of transparent land titles, planning permissions and compliance.For a buyer, these are not minor technicalities. They can determine whether a property remains legally and financially secure over the long term.

Why Prices Have Not Fallen Sharply

One question many prospective buyers are asking is simple: if sales have moderated and inventory has increased, why haven't property prices fallen significantly? There are several reasons. Developers face high land acquisition costs, construction expenses, financing costs and regulatory expenses. A significant price reduction can therefore affect project economics. At the same time, many established developers have stronger financial capacity than in earlier property cycles. They may be able to hold inventory rather than immediately sell at a discount.\ This has created a market where developers may offer payment plans, additional amenities or other incentives rather than openly cutting headline prices. For buyers, that means the headline per-square-foot price may not tell the entire story. The total cost, maintenance charges, parking, floor-rise charges, registration costs and payment schedule can be equally important.

The Market Is Becoming More Location-Specific

Hyderabad can no longer be viewed as one single real estate market. A premium apartment in Kokapet, a mid-income project in Bachupally, a plotted development near an outer corridor and an independent house in an established neighbourhood all respond to different demand drivers. Even within West Hyderabad, the difference between locations can be substantial. A project closer to major employment centres may command a premium because of reduced commuting time. Another project farther away may offer larger homes at lower prices but depend more heavily on future infrastructure.

Office Growth Is Still

Bengaluru's Thanush Shekar secures entry for Junior Orange Bowl in Miami

BENGALURU

Karnataka's Under-12 tennis sensation, Thanush Shekar BC, has officially secured a direct main draw entry to compete in the prestigious 65th Junior Orange Bowl International Tennis Championships, which is scheduled to take place in Miami, Florida, from December 12 to December 19, 2026.

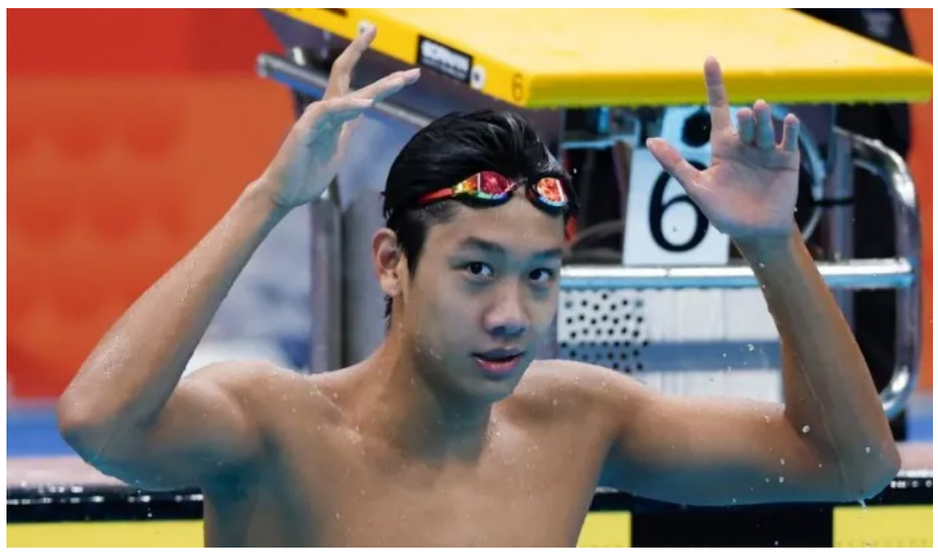
Thanush earned his coveted individual spot in the draw of 124 in the 12 & Under (12U) category following his exceptional performance at the World Tennis Asia 12&U Team Competition Finals in Singapore earlier this month.

The Junior Orange Bowl stands as an individual championship where players compete independently on the global stage. Thanush joins an elite group of just six standout junior boys players from across the continent to secure entry through this exclusive Asian pathway. The other players include Lee Yeseong (South Korea), Pan Junting (China), Lee Roon (South Korea), Bregvadze Gabriel (Kazakhstan) and Tanujoyo Reizo (Indonesia).

Reacting to his entry at the elite junior event, Thanush Shekar said: "Getting the chance to play in the Junior Orange Bowl main draw is a dream come true for me. Competing in Miami against the best individual players in the world is going to be a huge challenge, but I have been working incredibly hard with my coaches at TAFL. I am really excited to test my game on such a massive global stage and want to thank KSLTA for their constant belief and support." Currently training at the Tennis Academy For Learning (TAFL) in Bengaluru, the Coorg-born prodigy has had a stellar 2026 season.

Asian Games: With seven gold medals on debut: Zhang Zhanshuo makes history

TOKYO



Moments after touching the wall in the men's 400m freestyle final on Friday, Zhang Zhanshuo surfaced, raised both hands and slowly counted from one to seven.

The 19-year-old Chinese swimmer had just completed his first Asian Games with seven gold medals. The Tokyo Aquatics Centre was filled with cheers. Zhang, however, appeared remarkably calm.

"I feel much calmer than I had imagined," Zhang said after winning the 400m freestyle in an Asian Games record of 3 minutes 41.28 seconds. "Of course, I'm very happy to win these seven gold medals, and I will turn them into greater motivation going forward."

The victory made Zhang the first swimmer to win seven gold medals at a single edition of the Asian Games. More significantly, his haul equalled the Games record for most gold medals won by an athlete at a single edition, a mark set by DPRK shooter So Gilsan in 1982.

For Chinese swimming, it was also a new benchmark, as Zhang surpassed the six-gold haul of teammate Zhang Yufei at the Hangzhou Asian Games in 2023. His seven titles came from a demanding mix of individual and relay events: the men's 200m, 400m, 800m and 1,500m freestyle, the men's 4x100m and 4x200m freestyle relays, and the mixed 4x100m medley relay.

He won gold in seven of the eight events he entered, while setting an Asian record in the 200m freestyle, Games records in the 400m and 800m, and Asian records in the two men's freestyle relays, reports Xinhua.

But the seven medals did not change the way Zhang viewed the competition. Asked what had excited him most during the Games, he did not point to the medal ceremonies or the seven-gold haul. Instead, he recalled the instant he touched the wall.

"When I touched the wall and came out of the water, I looked back at the big screen and saw my time flashing, or the 'AR' mark," he said.

Then came the quiet count from one to seven. "It was a perfect finish to the Games," Zhang said.

The calmness was not a sign that Zhang considered his work finished. Quite the opposite, when asked about his ambitions for the Los Angeles Olympics, Zhang stressed that the Asian Games was not his ultimate goal.

"I need to settle down and face the gaps between myself and the world's best. The Asian Games is not my ultimate goal," he said.

And his next target is the world record. Zhang's 3:41.28 was just 1.25 seconds outside the world record, and he said breaking that mark would be one of his next goals over the coming two years. "I think that will be one of my next goals, and I will give my all to chase the world record," he said.

The young swimmer is also clear about what stands between him and that target. "There are many things I need to improve," Zhang said. "That's also one of the purposes of this competition, to make a new summary and find the gaps, both technically and in terms of ability."

Zhang said his turning technique still lagged behind that of some of the world's top swimmers, making it an important focus for his next phase of training.

The same approach applies to his events. Rather than picking one as his favorite, Zhang said he wanted to continue developing across the middle and long distance free events.

"Everything is possible. I will stay humble and keep pushing forward," he said.

At 19, Zhang has already matched a record that had stood for more than four decades. He left the Tokyo Aquatics Centre with seven gold medals, but also with a clear sense that there was more work to do.

Asked to rate his performance at the Games, Zhang gave himself 85 out of 100. For Zhang, the number seven therefore marks both an achievement and a starting point. "There are still gaps between me and the world level in some events," he said. "I will turn these gold medals into greater motivation."



India A women pull off sensational chase of 363 against Australia A, clinch 50-over series 2-1

MOHALI

In a staggering display of superb batting and tremendous composure, India A women pulled off a mammoth chase of 363 runs to defeat Australia A women by four wickets in the third and final 50-over game of the multi-format series, and clinched a memorable 2-1 series victory at the IS Bindra PCA Stadium in Mohali on Friday.

Driven by an explosive, unbeaten 88 off 56 balls from Minnu Mani, laced with 12 fours and three sixes, and all-round heroics from Niki Prasad, who hit a 71-ball 76 and picked a four-wicket haul, India A, playing minus Yastika Bhatia, Priya Punia and Sayali Satghare, overhauled Australia A's formidable total of 362/9 with 10 balls to spare.

Despite no live streaming of the game, India A women's remarkable 363-run pursuit currently stands as the second-highest successful run chase in women's 50-over cricket history. The record remains with Bengal, who scripted history during the Senior Women's One-Day Trophy in 2024 by hunting down a monumental 390-run target against Haryana at the Niranjan Shah Stadium in Rajkot.

Internationally, New Zealand hold the record after successfully chasing down 347 against South Africa Women at the Basin Reserve in Wellington in April this year. Chasing a mammoth target, India A laid a solid foundation through top-order half-centuries before their middle order launched a relentless counter-attack.

Opener Tanisha Singh hit a calculated 60 off 58 deliveries, laced with 11 boundaries, while sharing a 67-run opening stand with Vrinda Dinesh (34). Though Uma Chetry and Tejal Hasabnis fell for two each, it was the partnership between Niki and Anushka Sharma that turned the match decisively in India A's favour.

Niki's crisp 76 off 71 balls was decorated with ten boundaries and a six during the middle overs, while Anushka's aggressive 58 off 42 balls was studded with four boundaries and three sixes. When Anushka departed, off-spin bowling all-rounder Minnu Mani produced a masterclass in operational finishing.

Batting with a staggering strike rate of 157.14, Minnu smashed an unbeaten 88 off just 56 balls, anchored by clean hitting and aggressive running between the wickets, to seal the historic chase in style. She also shared a decisive 106-run stand with Niki, before stitching a stand of 47 runs with Jintimani Kalita (19 not out) to take India A home in an epic run chase.

Earlier in the day, Australia A Women posted a towering 362/9 in their allotted 50 overs by capitalising on good batting conditions. They were driven to the massive total by a blistering century from Charli Knott and a fluent half-century from Courtney Webb.

Injured Buttler ruled out of England's decisive third ODI against SL; Lawrence called up

LONDON



England wicketkeeper-batter Jos Buttler has been ruled out of the deciding third ODI against Sri Lanka, to be played at The Oval on Sunday, after suffering a left hamstring injury during the second match at Headingley.

Right-handed batter Dan Lawrence, who was midway through a County Championship match for Surrey against Somerset, has been pulled out of domestic duty and drafted into the squad as cover for the series finale. Lawrence is set to link up with the national squad for training at The Oval on Saturday morning.

"Surrey batter Dan Lawrence has been called into the England Men's squad for Sunday's third Metro Bank ODI against Sri Lanka. Jos Buttler has been ruled out due to the hamstring injury he suffered in the second Metro Bank ODI at Headingley last night and will undergo further assessment," an ECB spokesperson said in an official statement on Friday.

The injury to Buttler occurred in the 38th over of England's run chase on Thursday when he pulled up while running between the wickets. Despite receiving immediate attention on the field, the 36-year-old was forced to retire hurt on 67.

He hobbled back to the crease in the 48th over in a desperate bid to haul England across the line and added two more runs to finish on 69, his highest ODI score in three years, before holing out. Buttler's late effort was in vain as Sri Lanka held their nerve to secure a 16-run victory and level the three-match series 1-1.

The hamstring issue adds to a frustrating history of soft-tissue setbacks for the veteran, who previously missed time during the 2024 IPL season with a similar leg injury. In Buttler's absence, Jordan Cox is tipped to take over the wicketkeeping duties and earn his fourth ODI cap on Sunday.

Lawrence struck a century for Surrey on Thursday and recently hit three fifties in England's Test series win over Pakistan, and is uncapped in ODIs. He previously earned an ODI call-up against Pakistan in 2021 during a Covid-19 outbreak in the English camp, but is yet to make his white-ball debut. Lawrence has played only 28 List A matches, the last of which came in May 2019.

UPL emerging as a crucial springboard for Uttarakhand talent to reach IPL and national level: Sunil Joshi

DEHRADUN



Uttarakhand Premier League (UPL) Chairperson Sunil Joshi on Friday said the franchise league is rapidly evolving into a vital feeder system for the state's aspiring talent, as it opens up pathways for players to feature in the Indian Premier League (IPL), Women's Premier League (WPL), and the national teams.

"UPL is a platform for players. It gives them a pathway to move towards the India level and potentially the IPL. There are several state-level competitions, including Ranji Trophy and Under-19 cricket, but UPL gives opportunities to players who may not have been selected for those teams. They get a chance to play for one of the teams and showcase their talent," Joshi said in a statement by the tournament on Friday.

"Our aim is to give these young players as many opportunities as possible so that they can improve themselves, make Uttarakhand proud and eventually reach the India level. We want their talent to be recognised and for them to go on to represent India," he added.

Citing the rise of players like Mumbai Indians pacer Akash Madhwal, along with women's cricketers Raghvi Bisht, Prema Rawat, Nandini Kashyap and Neelam Bhardwaj, Joshi pointed out that the tournament provides a crucial bridge between grassroots cricket and high-performance environments.

"We have seen players like Raghvi Bisht, Prema Rawat, Neelam Bhardwaj and several other young cricketers coming through the system. There are also players from UPL who have gone on to play in the IPL. We have seen the example of Akash Madhwal as well, and many other youngsters are moving forward," he said.

Highlighting the scale of player engagement in the current edition, Joshi noted that having seven franchises has led to more playing opportunities across the state. "That is exactly what we want from UPL. There are seven teams and around 77 players getting an opportunity through those teams. If you compare that with the limited number of places available in a Ranji team, UPL gives a much larger pool of players the opportunity to showcase their talent."

Joshi also praised the state's talent identification process, which actively scouts prospects from remote and mountainous regions before integrating them into the district and state framework.

"The system works from the village level to the district level and then from the district to the state. Children who play cricket in villages are identified and brought into the district system. Even if the facilities at that level are limited, the children continue to work hard and develop their skills.

"After that, they get the opportunity to come to bigger grounds and showcase their talent. Ultimately, their hard work is what takes them forward. Prema Rawat is one such example of a player who has come through a challenging background and reached this level," he said, while acknowledging the administrative efforts of former secretary Mahim Verma and PC Verma in building Uttarakhand's cricket ecosystem.

Joshi signed off by expressing confidence that the league will continue to produce future stars for Indian cricket. "Most of the boys playing are around 19 or 20 years old, and they simply need opportunities to play at this level. UPL is providing them with that chance. There are one or two quality players in every team, which is why the matches are so competitive, and we are seeing close contests.

Chess Olympiad: Gukesh secures India's victory over Germany; Women's team beats Uzbekistan

SAMARKAND



Reigning World Classical Chess Champion Dommaraju Gukesh secured a clutch win to help India beat overnight joint-topper Germany 2.5-1.5 in the ninth round of the Open section of the 46th FIDE Chess Olympiad in Samarkand, moving up to second position in the standings.

With this win, India roared back into title contention as they are in good position to challenge table toppers Uzbekistan for the title.

In the crucial clash on table 2, R. Praggnanandhaa, Arjun Erigaisi and Nihal Sarin were held to draws on the first three boards before Gukesh secured the lone victory of the match against Germany as India moved to 15 points, sharing the second spot with Uzbekistan 2 and Armenia. The main team of hosts Uzbekistan lead the standings with 16 points.

Praggnanandhaa, playing with white pieces, was held to a draw by top German GM Vincent Keymer while Arjun Erigaisi played out a draw with Bluebaum Matthias. With Nihal Sarin also being held by Frederik Svane on the third board, it appeared that India would drop points in the second successive round.

But Gukesh pulled out a grand Houdini act from a seemingly lost position to turn things in India's favour with a fine performance to secure a crucial win on the fourth board. Playing with black pieces against Alexander Donchenko, Gukesh was in trouble and heading towards defeat before he made a grand comeback with some precise moves and won the day for India.

In the women's section, B Savitha Shri's incredible run of seven successive wins came to an end but remained unbeaten after a draw against Karimova Guldona of Uzbekistan on the top table.

Koneru Humpy, playing with white pieces, was held by top Uzbek Afruza Khamdamova. But Women's World Cup winner Divya Deshmukh and Ventika Agrawal won their games to secure a 3-1 win for India.

The victory took them to 15 points from nine rounds as they shared the second spot with Kazakhstan and Mongolia. Armenia went down 1-3 to leaders China while Mongolia drew 2-2 with Kazakhstan.

China extended their lead to two points as they lead with 17 points, and Saturday's 10th-round clash with defending champions India will make things clear.

Gill suffers injury scare after being hit on elbow during net session ahead of first India-WI ODI

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM



India captain Shubman Gill has suffered a major injury scare on Friday after being struck on the right elbow by a rearing delivery from pacer Mohammed Siraj during a nets session ahead of the opening ODI against the West Indies, to be played on Sunday.

The incident occurred two days before the series opener at the Greenfield International Stadium when a length ball from Siraj climbed sharply and hit Gill flush on his elbow. The Indian skipper immediately dropped his bat and walked away writhing in pain, requiring medical attention from the team physiotherapist Kamlesh Jain for nearly 20 minutes.

A concerned Siraj and veteran batter Virat Kohli, who was batting in an adjacent net, rushed to check on Gill. Gill appeared in considerable discomfort as he sat on the sidelines while the support staff strapped his arm.

Though he spent the remainder of the evening recovering and did not return to bat, Gill was later seen sharing a light moment with young pacer Gurnoor Brar. With the first ODI to be played on Sunday, the Indian team management will keep a close eye on Gill's recovery. Notably, Gill had faced a similar fitness concern last month in Sri Lanka when he was struck on his ring finger during practice, though he recovered in time to play the full series, as India won 1-0. Before the blow to his elbow, Gill looked in fine touch while batting alongside Kohli, Rohit Sharma, and Ruturaj Gaikwad. Rohit and Kohli both logged extensive 20-minute sessions in the nets, facing a mix of national squad bowlers and local net options.

The injury scare comes at a time when the Indian team is already dealing with a spate of fitness issues, with key players like seam-bowling all-rounders Hardik Pandya and Harshit Rana remaining on the sidelines.

Meanwhile, the visiting West Indies side is yet to hold a training session despite arriving in the city on September 23. The team is expected to hit the nets on Saturday, on the eve of the match.

The visitors enter the series amidst off-field financial developments back home, where Cricket West Indies (CWI) recently announced a 25 percent pay cut in player retainer fees and suspended this year's men's Super50 tournament due to rising operational costs.

Nayanthara and Kavin's 'Hi' Streaming On OTT



Tamil cinema lovers have a new romantic drama to watch as Hi, starring Nayanthara and Kavin, premieres on ZEE5 on September 25, 2026. The film promises a different take on love, relationships and the emotional problems faced by young people today. Directed by Vishnu Edavan, Hi tells the story of two people who come from different situations but are connected by their search for love and acceptance. Kavin plays a young man who continues to believe in love even after facing heartbreak and rejection. His character is emotional, honest and determined to find a meaningful relationship.

Nayanthara plays a strong and independent woman who has her own struggles. She is dealing with family pressure and is also trying to avoid a marriage that she does not want. When the two characters meet, their lives slowly begin to change. Their relationship takes them through love, confusion, family problems and self-discovery. The film brings together Nayanthara and Kavin in an interesting combination. Their different personalities and emotional journeys are expected to be one of the major attractions of the movie. The story also focuses on the fears, doubts and expectations that people face while dealing with relationships.

Hi also features senior actors Radhika Sarathkumar, Prabhu and the late K. Bhagyaraj in important roles. K. Bhagyaraj's presence makes the film special, as it is among his final appearances on screen. The music is composed by Jen Martin. The song Rasagulla has already attracted attention among music and cinema fans for its energetic tune and catchy presentation. The background score is also expected to add emotional value to the story. Nayanthara has described her character as a woman who is strong but also has her own fears and emotional struggles. According to her, the film looks at modern relationships in a realistic and relatable way. Kavin has also spoken about the emotional side of his character. His role shows a young man who is not afraid to express his feelings.

Keerthy Suresh's Show-Stopping Corset Look

National Award-winning powerhouse Keerthy Suresh effortlesslycommands attention, bringing sleek sophistication and high-fashion allure to her latest photoshoot. The actress makes a striking statement in a strapless black corset top paired with a draped cream skirt, creating a contrasting, sleek silhouette that is both timeless and edgy. Accessorized with a statement snake-motif necklace and matching cuffs, her ensemble exudes refined luxury and confidence.

Framed against a warm, architectural showroom glow, Keerthy completes the look with soft, voluminous waves and glowing, natural-toned makeup. The dark cape draped casually over her arms adds an undeniable sense of drama and flair. On the cinematic front, Keerthy Suresh continues to solidify her versatile footprint across multi-language industries. Her recent and upcoming movie slate includes high-profile films such as the action thriller Baby John alongside Varun Dhawan, the quirky comedy-drama Revolver Rita, Raghu Thatha, and the suspense feature Dorothy. She was also widely celebrated for lending her voice to the iconic vehicle BU-JZ-1 (Bujji) in the sci-fi spectacle Kalki 2898 AD. Combining captivating screen presence with elite style, Keerthy remains one of Indian cinema's absolute finest.

The Paradise Hits Rs.100 Crore Worldwide; Scores Big in North India Too



Nani's The Paradise is continuing its strong run at the box office. The film had a powerful opening on Day 1 and has now achieved another major milestone on Day 2. According to the latest trade update, The Paradise has crossed the ₹100 crore gross mark worldwide in just two days.

The film is also showing good momentum in the Hindi market. The Hindi version collected around ₹2.15 crore net on Day 1 in North India. This is being reported as Nani's biggest opening in North India. The achievement is notable because the Hindi version released on a limited number of screens and opened on a Thursday.

The Day 2 response is reportedly even stronger. The film has seen increased interest from audiences, helping it move towards the ₹100 crore worldwide milestone very quickly. The strong performance of the Hindi version is also giving the movie a wider reach outside the Telugu market. According to figures cited by NDTV from Sacnilk, The Paradise collected around ₹34.65 crore net in India on Day 1. Its India gross was around ₹54.90 crore, including preview shows. The overseas market contributed around ₹22 crore, taking the worldwide gross to approximately ₹76.90 crore on the first day.

Priyanka Mohan Sets New Benchmarks in Ethnic Glamour

South Indian cinema darling Priyanka Arul Mohan continues to enchant fashion aficionados, bringing a breathtaking blend of traditional heritage and modern poise to her latest portrait series. The actress stuns in a rich purple Bandhani saree crafted by Naina Jain Kolkata, beautifully framed with intricate gold embroidery and vibrant floral borders. Matched with a sleeveless solid blouse, her look strikes an exquisite balance between regal heritage and subtle minimalism. Styled by Open House Studio, Priyanka complements her drape with ornate antique jhumkas from Prade Jewels.

Her beauty look features cascading wind-swept hair styled by Ganesh and soft, luminous makeup with bold kohl-rimmed eyes by Pavitra J Rukmani. Photographed by Abhilash Rangi, the warm aesthetic captures her serene, magnetic allure effortlessly. On the career front, Priyanka Mohan remains a top choice across multi-language industries. Following acclaimed performances in action spectacles like Captain Miller, Saripodhaa Sanivaaram, and Brother, her recent and upcoming lineup features big-ticket ventures including Pawan Kalyan's They Call Him OG and the international trilingual drama Made in Korea. Seamlessly combining stellar acting prowess with classic fashion statements, Priyanka continues to shine bright.

Ramayana Jai Jai Ram Telugu: Deeply Devotional



Ranbir Kapoor, Yash, Sai Pallavi starrer epic Ramayana has released the Telugu version of its first song, Jai Jai Ram. The highly anticipated track serves as a soulful invocation of Shri Ram. The original Hindi version became a monumental success and now, Telugu lyrics are written to bring similar devotional magic. Composed by the legendary A.R. Rahman, the song beautifully combines the deep spiritual essence of a traditional aarti with a grand cinematic sound. Sung by Deepali Sahay and Raghav Kaushik, with profound Telugu lyrics by Rakendu Mouli, it captures the devotional core of the epic. Namit Malhotra shared that while the project is massively scaled, its true foundation lies in emotion and devotion. A.R. Rahman noted that the musical intention was to preserve the intimate purity of a prayer while elevating it for a grand cinematic experience. Following the massive success of the film's trailer, which crossed one billion views in just six days, this release builds unprecedented anticipation. Directed by Nitesh Tiwari and produced by Namit Malhotra and Yash's Monster Mind Creations, the epic saga is set for a worldwide theatrical release this Diwali 2026.

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