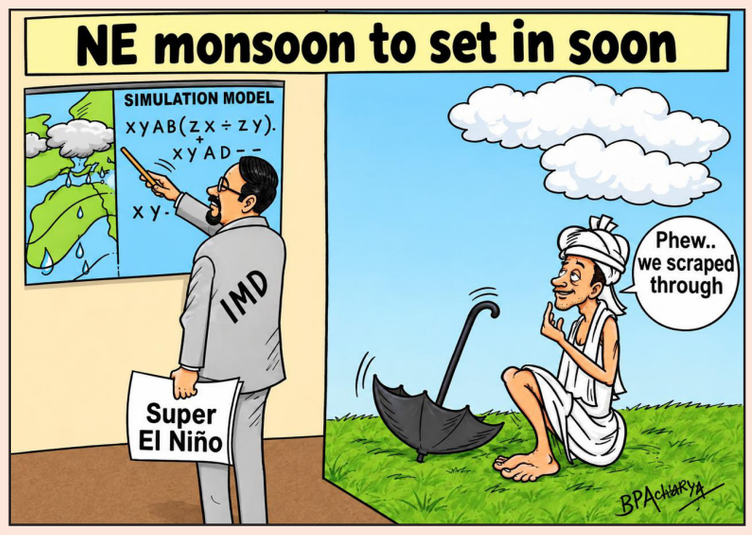
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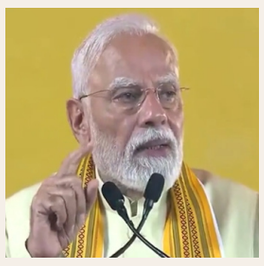
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OBTUSE ANGLE



by BP ACHARYA

Modi Calls for Unity Against Forces Dividing the Nation



NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 21

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday called upon political parties and national institutions to unite in the national interest and urged citizens to stand together against forces seeking to divide society and undermine the country's honour and culture. Addressing Dussehra celebrations at IP Extension in the national capital, Modi said the festival of Vijaya Dashami symbolises the triumph of good over evil and reinforces the enduring values of truth and righteousness. He called for a renewed resolve to

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Police Vacancies to Be Cleared by 2028: CM Revanth

CM Revanth Reddy announces all vacant posts in the Police department will be filled by 2028

CM declares increase of ex-gratia for Home Guards to Rs 10 lakhs from Rs 5 lakhs

CM participates in the Police Commemoration Parade at Police Martyrs Memorial , Goshamahal Police stadium in Hyderabad

Hyderabad, oct 21: Chief Minister Shri A Revanth Reddy has announced that all the vacant posts in the Telangana Police department would be filled by 2028. In a major decision, the Chief Minister declared that the ex-gratia amount would be increased to Rs 10 lakhs from Rs 5 lakhs for Home Guards in the service. Addressing a gathering at the Police Commemoration Parade in Hyderabad today, the CM instructed DGP CV Anand to take necessary measures towards increasing the ex-gratia to Home Guards to Rs 10 lakhs, who lost their lives while performing their duties.

Stating that the govt has already

issued notification to fill 5,000 vacancies in the Police department, the CM said that the government is committed to fill all vacancies in the police wing by 2028. CM Revanth Reddy noted that the recruitment of 112 DSPs posts is unprecedented in the history of Telangana state. Alongside, we were also appointing transgenders as traffic assistants and enhanced their self-respect and dignity in the society.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 ➤

Key Supreme Court Directives on AP Municipal Elections

Decision on Extension of Nomination Deadline by October 22; Publication of Final Candidates' List Postponed to October 25



New Delhi, October 21: The Supreme Court has issued important directives regarding difficulties faced by candidates during the nomination process for municipal elections in Andhra Pradesh. Following complaints that candidates were prevented from filing their nominations, the Court directed the State Election Commission to decide by October 22 whether the nomination deadline should be extended in the affected urban local bodies. It also ordered that the publication of the final list of candidates be postponed until October 25. A bench comprising Justice Joymalya Bagchi and Justice V. Mohan heard the petition filed by the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) on Wednesday. Lawyers representing YSRCP informed the Court that violence and intimidation had occurred during the election process in the state and that candidates from their party had been prevented from filing nominations. In particular, the petitioners' lawyers argued that more than 63.5% of their candidates were unable to file nominations in 19 municipalities out of the 100 urban local bodies.

However, lawyers representing the State Election Commission told the Court that security measures, including police deployment and the installation of CCTV cameras at nomination centres, had been implemented. After considering these arguments, the Supreme Court observed that conducting elections freely and fairly is a constitutional responsibility. It emphasized that the State Election Commission is responsible for ensuring that candidates can file their nominations without any obstacles. The Court directed the State Election Commission to examine complaints, supporting documents and electronic evidence.

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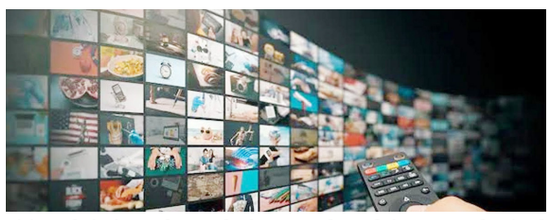
Mukesh Ambani welcomed US Secretary of State Marco Rubio

Jamnagar, October 21: Reliance Industries Limited Chairman and Managing Director Shri Mukesh Ambani and Executive Director Mr Anant Ambani welcomed US Secretary of State Mr Marco Rubio and US Ambassador to India Mr Sergio Gor to Jamnagar, home to the world's largest refinery. The Honorable visitors were given a tour of the world-class refinery complex, offering a first-hand view of its scale, advanced technology and integrated operations.

Secretary Rubio and Ambassador Gor were also explained Reliance's New Energy giga-factories, which are currently being commissioned in phases, and the data centres under construction. The tour provided an overview of the company's investments across energy and digital infrastructure, bringing together its well-established advanced manufacturing and deep-tech capabilities. Shri Mukesh Ambani and Shri Anant Ambani outlined Reliance's long-term vision for the Jamnagar complex and its development as a centre for deep-tech, innovation and advanced manufacturing.

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I&B Ministry Warns TV Channels



New Delhi, October 21: The Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has directed private satellite television channels to strictly comply with the Programme Code under the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995, warning that violations could invite legal action under the applicable provisions. In its advisory, the Ministry stressed the need for responsible news reporting, factual verification and stronger editorial oversight before news reports and visuals are aired. The Ministry cautioned channels against live coverage of ongoing anti-terror operations and urged restraint while broadcasting violent visuals. It also reiterated that the identities of victims of sexual offences must not be disclosed and that only standard maps accurately depicting India's geographical boundaries should be used. Broadcasters were further advised to avoid content that could promote communal hatred, disturb public harmony or violate prescribed norms. The Ministry also called for vigilance in the use of artificial intelligence-generated content to prevent the dissemination of misleading or inappropriate material.

The advisory emphasised that editorial teams must ensure adequate scrutiny of news reports and visuals before telecast. The Ministry warned that non-compliance with the Programme Code could lead to action under the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act and the rules framed under it. The Ministry urged broadcasters to uphold the prescribed standards and ensure that news and other programmes aired on television remain responsible, accurate and credible.

Telangana Sees Record Liquor Sales in Dasara Festival



Hyderabad, October 21: Telangana witnessed a massive surge in liquor sales during the Dasara festival, with liquor worth ₹755.14 crore sold in the four working days leading up to the celebrations, according to Excise Department officials. The figures indicate a sharp rise in liquor consumption during the festive season, generating substantial revenue for the state government. Sales peaked on October 19, the day before Dasara, when

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Synchronization of Unit - 5 of 5x800 MW YTPS



Hyderabad, October 21: Telangana Power Generation Corporation Limited (TGGENCO) is establishing Yadadri Thermal Power Station (YTPS) with 5 units each of 800 MW with a total installed capacity of 4000 MW at Veerlapalem Village, Damaracherla Mandal, Nalgonda District. The Project consists of 2 units of 800 MW each in Stage-I and 3 units of 800 MW each in Stage-II. Four units Unit#1, Unit#2, Unit#3 and Unit#4 were already commissioned and already put into commercial operation. Today, the Unit#5 is synchronized to grid at 11:06Hrs and was hand tripped for taking further COD operations. This significant milestone was achieved under the able guidance of the Hon'ble Chief Minister, Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister, Special Chief Secretary to the Government (Energy), and Chairman and Managing Director (CMD), TGGENCO.

Sri Dr. S. Harish, IAS garu Chairman and Managing Director of TGGENCO congratulated the combined efforts put by the teams of BHEL and TGGENCO in achieving the mile stone of Synchronization of Unit#5 of YTPS (5x800 MW). Sri. Y. Rajashekara Reddy, Director/Thermal & Projects, Sri. P.V. Srinivas, CE/TPC, Sri. J. Surya Narayana, CE/Construction/ YTPS/ Stage-II from TGGENCO were present during the Synchronization of Unit#5.

Eatala Leads March for Dump Yard Relocation

Jawaharnagar Dump Yard Ranks Fourth Globally in Methane Emissions, Says Eatala Rajender



Hyderabad, oct 21: BJP MP Eatala Rajender has demanded the immediate relocation of the Jawaharnagar dump yard, alleging that methane emissions from the site are causing serious environmental and public health problems for people living in the surrounding areas. He said the Jawaharnagar dump yard had earned the dubious distinction of ranking fourth globally in methane emissions. Despite the availability of advanced technologies for scientific waste management, the government was failing to utilise them to address the problem, he alleged. As part of the campaign against the dump yard, a meeting with affected residents of Jawaharnagar will be held on October 23. A roundtable conference involving intellectuals and environmental experts will be organised at the dump yard site on October 25. A protest march against the dump yard will begin on October 27. Methane is one of the major gases contributing to global warming and climate change. Reducing methane pollution has emerged as one of the world's biggest environmental challenges.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 ➤

A Celebration of Respect and Tradition

Dr. Satyam Srirangam Honours MP Vem Narender Reddy on Dasara

PCC Member and TPCC Official Spokesperson extends heartfelt Vijayadashami greetings and warm blessings during a family visit to the MP's residence.



Medchal-Malkajgiri, October 21: Marking the sacred festival of Vijayadashami with warmth and tradition, PCC Member and TPCC Official Spokesperson Dr. Satyam Srirangam, accompanied by his family, made a courteous visit to the residence of honorable Rajya Sabha Member Vem Narender Reddy. During the delightful meeting, Dr. Satyam Srirangam warmly honored MP Vem Narender Reddy and his respected spouse. In keeping with rich cultural traditions, he presented them with a vibrant bouquet of flowers and ceremonial shawls as a token of deep respect and affection.

Beyond festive exchange, the meeting served as a forum for political discussion. Both leaders held detailed discussions on strengthening the Congress party's organizational presence at the grassroots level and strategized on action plans for the upcoming Mahabubnagar–Ranga Reddy–Hyderabad MLC elections. They emphasized coordinated efforts among party cadres and targeted voter outreach to ensure a decisive victory for the party in the upcoming elections.

Conveying his heartfelt Dasara greetings, Dr. Satyam Srirangam offered sincere prayers for the MP's robust health, joy, and continued leadership, wishing him endless prosperity and even greater triumphs in his dedicated service to the public.

Beyond Politics: A Festive Display of Respect and Camaraderie

Kukatpally Leaders Celebrate Dasara with Nagarkurnool MP Dr. Mallu Ravi in a Soulful Gathering



Medchal-Malkajgiri, October 21: Beyond political duties lies the beauty of shared affection, tradition, and mutual respect. On the sacred and auspicious occasion of Dasara, Seri Satish Reddy, former President of Kukatpally Constituency Congress Party, paid a soulful courtesy visit to Nagarkurnool Member of Parliament and TPCC Disciplinary Committee Chairman, Dr. Mallu Ravi, turning the festival into a memorable celebration of deep-rooted relationships. Embracing the rich traditions of the festival, Seri Satish Reddy warmly greeted Dr. Mallu Ravi and honored the visionary leader by reverently draping a traditional shawl over his shoulders—a gesture symbolizing profound admiration and gratitude.

The highlight of the day was the genuine warmth and affection that filled the room. Moving away from routine political dialogue, the leaders spent cherishable moments together, conversing like family and sharing a heartwarming meal. Seeking the guiding light and wisdom of his senior, Seri Satish Reddy bowed to take Dr. Mallu Ravi's heartfelt blessings for the festive season ahead. Reflecting on the meeting with deep emotion, Seri Satish Reddy expressed that spending such intimate, joyful time with Dr. Mallu Ravi brought an overwhelming sense of happiness, peace, and spiritual satisfaction to his heart. Adding to the warmth of the memorable occasion, Kukatpally Constituency contested MLA candidate B. Sanjeeva Rao along with other key party members joined in, making the festivity a truly heartwarming gathering of camaraderie and shared purpose.

CM Revanth Attends Mysuru Dasara Celebrations



Mysore , October 21: During the Jamboo Savari, the most significant event of the Mysuru Dasara festivities, the Chief Minister had darshan of the processional idol of Goddess Chamundeshwari, placed in a golden howdah atop a beautifully decorated elephant. Folk artists, musical troupes, dance groups and various cultural performers showcasing Karnataka's rich Kannada heritage participated in the grand procession. The Karnataka Nada Habba (State Festival) reflects the country's rich cultural traditions, devotion, artistic heritage and historical legacy.

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy attended the celebrations at the invitation of Karnataka Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar. He witnessed the festivities alongside Kerala Chief Minister V.D. Satheesan and several prominent personalities from India and abroad. Before attending the Dasara celebrations held in front of the Mysuru Palace, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy visited the Chamundeshwari Temple, the revered shrine of the people of Mysuru, where he had darshan of the Goddess and performed special pujas.

Mukesh Ambani welcomed..



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The visit included wide-ranging discussions on the global energy landscape and opportunities for commercial partnerships across conventional and new energy. The exchange covered reliable and affordable energy supplies, technological advances, resilient supply chains and the investment required to meet growing demand.

Discussions also explored the increasing intersection of energy and digital infrastructure, including the role of dependable power in supporting data centres and the expansion of the digital economy. Shri Mukesh Ambani and Shri Anant Ambani shared their perspectives on opportunities for collaboration with US companies, drawing on complementary strengths in technology, engineering and advanced manufacturing. The interaction provided a constructive opportunity to exchange industry perspectives and explore areas of mutual commercial interest. We are extremely thankful to Secretary of State and the Ambassador for their esteemed visit.

Shriram Group Rebrands Way2Wealth as Shriram Financial Services

Mumbai, October 21: The Shriram Group has rebranded its broking business, Way2Wealth, acquired in 2020, as Shriram Financial Services Pvt. Ltd. (Shriram FS), strengthening its presence in India's capital markets. The company has appointed Amit Golia as Managing Director and CEO. With 26 years of experience, Golia has previously worked with Motilal Oswal, Axis Securities and SBI Securities. Shriram FS will focus on an Assisted DIY investment platform, combining technology-driven self-investing with expert guidance for retail and high-net-worth individual (HNI) investors. Its offerings will include equities, derivatives, mutual funds, IPOs, portfolio management, fixed-income products and wealth management services. Sanlam Group, the Shriram Group's long-term partner, will support the business with its global financial services and wealth management expertise. Subhasri Sriram, Managing Director and CEO of Shriram Capital, said the initiative would strengthen the Group's capital markets proposition by combining its trusted brand and distribution network with Sanlam's global expertise. Golia said the company would focus on building a transparent, technology-driven investment platform to support customers' long-term wealth creation.

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Eatala Leads March for Dump Yard Relocation

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Satellite-based monitoring has been used to identify locations with high levels of methane emissions. Students from the University of Hyderabad (Central University) explained to Eatala Rajender that a report by the UCLA School of Law at the University of California, Los Angeles, had identified the top 25 methane-emitting locations across 18 countries. According to the report cited by the students, the Jawaharnagar dump yard ranked fourth, behind Buenos Aires in Argentina, Jakarta in Indonesia and Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia.

Speaking on the occasion, Eatala Rajender said the Jawaharnagar dump yard was originally established to handle waste generated by a population of around two lakh people. However, it now receives garbage generated by approximately 1.6 crore people, he alleged.

He claimed that groundwater within a 25-kilometre radius of the dump yard had become contaminated and that people living within a 30-kilometre radius were exposed to polluted air, resulting in respiratory and skin-related problems.

He said economically disadvantaged families, including those earning their livelihoods by selling vegetables and working as domestic help, were being forced to spend a substantial portion of their meagre incomes on healthcare because of the alleged pollution-related health problems.

Rajender noted that a movement demanding the relocation of the dump yard away from residential areas had been continuing for several years. He said it was unacceptable that people were still facing such severe waste-related problems despite advances in technology.

He further stated that the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Bombay, had developed technological solutions for managing such waste disposal sites, but the government was not making use of them.

"People's lives are being put at risk. Instead of making tall claims, the government must provide a permanent solution to this problem," he said, urging Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy to intervene and resolve the issue.

Rajender observed that although an all-party meeting had been convened on the issue, no concrete solution had emerged. He also referred to research conducted by students of the Central University, who had highlighted the dump yard's alleged high levels of toxic emissions and warned of the potential risks to residents if immediate corrective measures were not taken.

He called upon the government to consider the students' recommendations, adopt advanced waste-management technologies and move towards a zero-pollution approach. Rajender further demanded that waste be diverted to appropriate facilities in different directions rather than allowing all the garbage to be brought to Jawaharnagar. He reiterated that the dump yard must be relocated away from residential areas and that the affected people must be provided with a permanent solution.

Modi Calls for Unity Against Forces Dividing the Nation

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identify and defeat forces that spread hatred and seek to harm the nation.

Referring to the life of Lord Ram, the Prime Minister said his struggles and commitment to principles offered lessons in compassion, love and brotherhood. He said his government sought to realise the ideals of Ram Rajya through good governance as India moved towards the goal of Viksit Bharat. President Droupadi Murmu also attended Dussehra celebrations at Dwarka in Delhi and extended her greetings to the people. She said Ramlila performances held across the world helped people remember and understand the values and principles of Lord Ram.

Murmu also highlighted the importance of environmental conservation, saying Lord Ram's life offered lessons on respecting nature. Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta was present at the event.

Police Vacancies to Be Cleared by 2028: CM Revanth

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Calling upon the police to deal with the cases involving women and children with greater sensitivity, the Chief Minister emphasized that there should be no delay in delivering justice to the victims. Ensuring the safety of women is not solely the responsibility of the police department. Every individual in society should also take the responsibility of women's safety. The CM worried about the drug menace and appealed to the police to ensure that the youth should not fall victim to the drug abuse. CM Revanth Reddy commended the 'Eagle Force' for their unstinted efforts in curbing drug trafficking and also appreciated the DGP's endeavour. Since the maintenance of law and order is crucial for the development of the state, the Chief Minister said that the government is giving top priority to strengthen the police department.

CM Revanth Reddy highlighted the initiatives taken to strengthen the police wing. We were leveraging modern technology in the police department to effectively address new challenges. Besides, the human-centric approach of the police force must remain unchanged, the Chief Minister said that 'TG SAFE' was established to take a firm and uncompromising stance against food adulteration.SHE teams were formed for women safety and also launched the 'Stand With Her' initiative to foster a greater sense of social responsibility in supporting women. 'Spandana'—a set of 'Immediate Protection Teams'— was another initiative enforced to provide instant safeguarding for women and children during emergencies. The 'Young India Police School' was established to provide educational opportunities for the children of police personnel from Home Guards to the rank of DGP.

The Chief Minister listed out the welfare measures for the police. The ex-gratia amount has been increased to Rs 1 crore from Rs 45 lakhs for Head Constables and ASIs, For Sub-Inspectors, the amount has been increased from ₹45 lakh to ₹1.25 crore, and for Inspectors, from ₹50 lakh to ₹1.25 crore. It was Rs 1.50 crore for officers at the rank of DSP and Additional SP. The compensation for SP and IPS officers was enhanced to Ra 2 crore from Rs One Crore. " The increased compensation is not merely financial assistance. It is a gesture of respect from the government toward the families of police martyrs"

Remembering the Police Martyrs who laid down their lives in their duties, the Chief Minister said that the discipline is police strength and the integrity is their honour. The sense of security police provide to the public is the greatest recognition to the cops. Police are not alone in their grief. The state Government stands with the bereaved family and the entire society of Telangana also stands with you". The CM asserted that police should continue to stand as a pillar of safety for the people as this government remains committed to their welfare and the future of families. " Let us honour the sacrifices of our martyrs and carry forward their vision. Together, let us build a peaceful, secure, and prosperous Telangana."

Paying tributes to the police personnel who sacrificed their lives for the sake of society, CM Revanth Reddy recalled that the martyrs Cops - Dev Singh, Pramod Kumar, and Gajula Soumya who laid down their lives while in thier duty.Their sacrifices in maintaining law and order can never be forgotten.

Telangana Sees Record Liquor Sales in Dasara Festival

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liquor worth a staggering ₹303.40 crore was sold in a single day. Although an increase in liquor sales ahead of Dasara is generally expected, this year's figures have surpassed previous records.

According to the sales data, liquor worth ₹102.17 crore was sold on October 14. There were no sales on October 15 due to a holiday at liquor depots. Sales resumed on October 16, with ₹126.32 crore worth of liquor sold, followed by ₹223.25 crore on October 17. Sales declined on October 18, a Sunday holiday, before reaching a record ₹303.40 crore on October 19. Total sales during the four working days amounted to ₹755.14 crore. In terms of volume, 6.83 lakh cases of hard liquor were sold during these four days, while beer sales were significantly higher at 10.44 lakh cases. The figures once again highlight the strong demand for beer in Telangana.

Liquor sales across the state reached ₹2,055 crore during October up to October 19. By comparison, sales amounted to ₹3,209 crore in September and ₹3,482 crore in August. Excise officials expect liquor sales to remain substantial throughout October due to the Dasara festive season. Sales this year have also increased compared with the previous Dasara festival. During the corresponding four-day period last year, liquor worth ₹698 crore was sold. This year, sales rose to ₹755.14 crore, marking a significant increase. Liquor is sold across Telangana through 2,620 wine shops and approximately 1,200 bars and restaurants, pubs and clubs. Supplies are distributed through 17 liquor depots across the state.

Revenue from the Excise Department is one of the major sources of income for the Telangana government. The revenue generated from liquor sales plays an important role in funding welfare programmes and other government schemes. The Excise Department ranks among the state's highest revenue-generating departments, second only to the Registration and Stamps Department. Consequently, successive governments have placed considerable emphasis on liquor sales and the revenue they generate. The strong sales recorded during the Dasara festive season appear to have provided a substantial boost to the state's revenue. Tighten the article for newspaper styleClarify the daily sales timeline

Key Supreme Court Directives on AP..

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If it is established that candidates were unable to file nominations because of law-and-order problems, the nomination deadline must be extended. Wherever the deadline is extended, candidates must be given at least an additional 48 hours from the time the decision is announced. The Court also suggested making additional arrangements to accept nominations at district collectorates in areas where necessary. The Court directed the State Director General of Police (DGP) to ensure adequate police security, CCTV surveillance and protection for candidates at nomination centres. It further ordered both the State Election Commission and the DGP to submit compliance reports detailing the measures taken at the next hearing.

The next hearing has been postponed to October 27.

ESCI and TEZolutions Join Hands to Nurture Technopreneurs

Three-Month Weekend Programme "T3 – The Technopreneur Tribe" to Empower Aspiring Entrepreneurs in Emerging Technologies



HYDERABAD

The Engineering Staff College of India (ESCI), Hyderabad, with TEZolutionsto conduct "T3 – The Technopreneur Tribe,"released a Programme Poster of the three-month weekend programme designed to nurture entrepreneurial talent and promote innovation in emerging technologies. The programme is scheduled to run from 30 November 2026 to 13 February 2027.

Programme Poster is released on 21 October 2026 at the ESCI office by Colonel Harpal Singh Grewal, Director, ESCI, and Dr. NanditaSethi, Director, TEZolutions, marking a significant step towards strengthening the entrepreneurial ecosystem and encouraging technology-driven startups.

The programme aims to equip participants with knowledge of emerging technologies and their business applications, foster an entrepreneurial mindset, develop essential startup skills, provide access to mentorship and industry networks, and help participants validate and develop their own startup ideas.

Speaking on the occasion, Colonel Harpal Singh Grewal, Director, ESCI, said that the programme would provide an excellent opportunity for aspiring entrepreneurs to transform innovative ideas into viable business ventures. He encouraged undergraduate and postgraduate students, young professionals, researchers, innovators and all those passionate about entrepreneurship and emerging technologies to participate in the programme and make the most of the learning and mentoring opportunities.

Dr.NanditaSethi, Programme Director emphasized that the T3 programme is expected to bridge the gap between technological knowledge and entrepreneurial practice by offering participants exposure to business opportunities, expert guidance and industry connections. It will encourage participants to explore innovative solutions, identify market needs and develop technology-based ventures with potential for growth and impact.

The initiative reflects ESCI's commitment to promoting skill development, innovation and entrepreneurship while preparing young talent to respond to the evolving demands of the technology-driven economy.

K.A.S.Menon, Mentor, TEZolutions, Mr. Sai Kishore, Head, Faculty Development Programme Division, ESCI; Mr. NVSS Sagar; and Mr. Aliga Raju from the Design and Prototyping Centrewere present during the release of the Brochure.



Financial Aid of Rs. 70,000 to Underprivileged Engineering Student

BOMMALARAMARAM

In a gesture of support for higher education, the Best Runners Foundation has provided financial assistance of ₹70,000 to Soumya Sirimalle, an underprivileged student from Bommalaramaram village in Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district.

Soumya is pursuing her first year of B.Tech in Computer Science and Data Science at BVRIT Engineering College. Considering her family's financial difficulties and the challenges she faced in continuing her education, the assistance was extended to help her pursue her academic goals without financial obstacles.

Dr. Nathi Srinivas, founder of the NLN Foundation in the USA, came forward to support the student after learning about her circumstances through Excise Circle Inspector Saidulu Goud, Telangana journalist Purushotham Goud and Kadem Kumar.

The financial assistance was handed over to Soumya through CI Saidulu Goud and Nathi Ganesh, a local member of the NLN Foundation. She was also encouraged and guided to pursue higher education with determination and work towards achieving her future ambitions.

Speaking on the occasion, CI Saidulu Goud said that no student should be deprived of higher education because of poverty.

He appreciated the efforts of service organizations that identify deserving students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and extend financial support to help them continue their studies. He added that such initiatives boost students' confidence and provide a strong foundation for their future success.

SCR Intensifies Inspections of Water Quality at Charlapalli Railway Station

50 Water Samples Collected at Charlapalli Railway Station from 12th to 18th October 2026 Found Fit for Consumption.



HYDERABAD

South Central Railway is constantly monitoring the water quality in order to ensure supply of safe and potable drinking water across its railway network. As part of this, the zone has strengthened inspections, maintenance activities and water-quality monitoring at Charlapalli Railway Station in Secunderabad Division.

The inspections cover groundwater sources, municipal water supply, storage facilities, chlorination processes and distribution systems. To further strengthen water quality assurance, SCR has enhanced monitoring mechanisms through daily checks of residual chlorine levels and regular bacteriological testing to detect any possible E. coli contamination. Water samples collected from Charlapalli Railway Station between 12th to 18th September 2026 indicated satisfactory water quality across all parameters.

Key findings of the monitoring exercise include

42 drinking water samples tested for residual chlorine levels at the station, with all samples found satisfactory and no water sample was reported unfit. 08 drinking water samples were subjected to bacteriological examination, and none was found unsafe and no E. coli-positive sample was detected. Shri Sanjay Kumar Srivastava, General Manager, South Central Railway has advised officials to maintain continuous monitoring and ensure that drinking water remains completely free from contamination. He emphasized that the quality of water supplied at railway stations should meet the standards prescribed in the Indian Railways Medical Manual.

Taxpayer Funds Down the Drain: KPHB 7th Phase Energy Park Turns Into a Hazardous Eyesore

Residents raise alarm over civic apathy as GHMC's green lung space suffers zero maintenance, broken infrastructure, and overgrown wild vegetation.



Samudrala Kiran | Correspondent

MEDCHAL-MALKAJGIRI

Promised as a state-of-the-art "self-sustainable green lung space" designed to promote renewable energy, the Energy Theme Park in 7th Phase, KPHB Colony, under the Kukatpally Circle of the Cyberabad Municipal Corporation (CMC), has today turned into a glaring monument of civic negligence, squandered taxpayer funds, and administrative apathy. What was originally envisioned as an educational hub and recreational haven for local residents, children, and senior citizens now stands completely abandoned, broken, and dangerously dilapidated.

Constructed with significant public investment, the park was meant to feature cutting-edge clean energy installations—including solar panel pergolas, a mini wind turbine, interactive science models, and digital display screens. Today, the ground reality reveals a story of total neglect, as the high-tech solar canopy designed to harvest solar energy lies completely shattered, with its decorative roofing panels torn apart and dangling hazardously over open concrete grounds. Instead of generating clean power or offering shade, the broken structural framework now poses a direct physical threat to anyone stepping underneath.

The decay extends across every corner of the facility. An expensive outdoor LED display board, installed to educate visitors, sits completely dead and engulfed by thick, uncontrolled wild creepers and weed growth. The total absence of routine pruning and gardening has allowed overgrown foliage to swallow public infrastructure entirely. Meanwhile, what once served as a paved activity zone or plaza is now a dusty, barren expanse littered with broken, displaced interlocking paver tiles and plastic debris. Ground anchors where installations once stood now protrude dangerously from the eroded dirt, creating severe tripping hazards for children and elderly walkers. Furthermore, the park's micro wind turbine sits completely motionless, choked by dense, unmanaged tree canopies that block airflow and render the costly equipment entirely non-functional.

Adding to the utter ruin, the park presents a scorched and desolate landscape that looks as though a devastating El Niño cycle has swept through it, leaving the grounds parched, dry, and thoroughly degraded. The barren, cracked earth, stripped of healthy turf and proper landscaping, gives the impression of severe climatic neglect, where extreme weather and a total absence of watering have reduced a once-promising green zone into an arid, dusty wasteland.

Residents of KPHB Phase 7, who once welcomed the initiative, express deep frustration over the municipal authority's "build and forget" approach. Locals point out that after spending public money on solar panels, wind turbines, and interactive features, not a single light works, the overhead canopy is ruined, and wild vegetation has taken over the space. Senior citizens report being unable to walk safely due to the scattered, broken pavers, while parents are afraid to let their children play in the area due to structural hazards and exposed metal.

Beyond the visual eyesore and wasted public funds, the park has transformed into a severe public safety and health risk. Loose, hanging roof panels and exposed masonry pose immediate injury risks to visitors. Additionally, unmaintained bushes, stagnant areas, and scattered litter serve as ideal breeding grounds for mosquitoes and stray reptiles. Unlit and neglected public parks with compromised security also frequently invite anti-social elements after dark, raising safety concerns for neighboring households.

The appalling state of the 7th Phase KPHB Energy Theme Park highlights a critical flaw in municipal execution—allocating budget for initial construction while completely ignoring ongoing maintenance and operational accountability. Residents of Kukatpally Circle are demanding immediate intervention from the GHMC Commissioner and local zonal officials. The community is calling for the swift repair of the solar canopy and exhibits, thorough clearing of overgrown weeds, restoration of broken walkways, and the deployment of dedicated maintenance and security staff to restore the park to its intended purpose.

SOUTH COAST RAILWAY
VISAKHAPATNAM
Follow us on @SCoRailwayindia
website: www.scor.indianrailways.gov.in

Tender Notice No. : G/E.29/ Tr./Tender Notice/22/2026-27 Dated : 21-10-2026 PUB/SCoR-423

Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer / Traction / Guntakal acting for on and behalf of The President of India invites E-Tenders for the following works.

Tender No. : GTL-TRD-29-eTN-73-2026-27.

Name of Work : Guntakal Division - Public safety at stations / SP/SSP/TSS works of Guntakal Division.

Approximate Value : Rs. 63,48,600.16/-.

Earnest Money Deposit : Rs. 1,27,000/-.

Tender Closing date and time : 06-11-2026 at 15:00 hours.

Note : 1. Tender Document may be downloaded from **www.ireps.gov.in** by tenderers, free of cost.

For Bidding the tender and other details login to **http://www.ireps.gov.in**. Corrigendum if any will be issued online only.

Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer, Traction, Guntakal.

Tender No. : GTL-EM-54-58-2026-27, Dated : 21-10-2026 PUB/SCoR-424

Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer / Maintenance / Guntakal, acting for and on behalf of the President of India, invites E-Tenders for the following works.

Tender No. : GTL-EM-54-2026-27.

Name of the Work : Guntakal Division : Improvement to electrical wiring in Staff quarters (Type-II & Type-III Railway Quarters in HX, NRE and RU Sections).

Approximate Value : Rs.2,08,54,474.80.

Closing date and time : 09-11-2026 at 15:00 hours.

Tender No. : GTL-EM-58-2026-27.

Name of the Work : Guntakal Division : Gooty - Re-flooring of ROH shed and allied works at BOXN ROH depot /GY - Electrical Arrangements.

Approximate Value : Rs.1,08,96,450.05.

Closing date and time : 09-11-2026 at 15:00 hours.

For Bidding the tender and other details, login to **http://www.ireps.gov.in**. Corrigendum of tender, if any will be issued online only.

Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer, Maintenance, Guntakal.

E-Tender Notice No. : 28-2026 Dated : 19-10-2026 PUB/SCoR-425

Senior Divisional Engineer / Coordination / Guntakal acting for and on behalf of the President of India invites E-Tenders for the following works.

Closing date & Time : 12-11-2026 at 15:00 hours.

Sl. No. : 1. Tender No. : Engg-GTL-Central-2166. **Description of Work : SW-1 : Renigunta - Guntakal section :** TRR(P) - 3.410 km, TSR(P) - 11.00 Km, TTRR(FS+TWS-01 No), TTRR(WCMSC-05 Nos), TBR - 7.490 km, TTR(FS) : 33 Nos. **Nandyal - Dhone Section :** TSR(P) - 3.260 Km. **Gooty - Pendekallu Section :** CTR(P) - 20.380 Km, TTR(FS+TWS +WCMSC - 04 Nos). **Dhone - Guntakal Section :** TRR(P) - 2.400 Km, TTRR(FS+TWS - 05 Nos), TTR(FS) - 11 Nos, TBR(P&Cs) - 18 Nos. **Nandyal - Yerraguntla Section :** TTRR(FS+ TWS - 17 Nos).

Advertised Value in Rs. : 8,23,95,944.10ps. **Earnest Money Deposit in Rs. :** 16,47,900.00ps.

For Bid documents and other details log into **https://www.ireps.gov.in.** Any corrigenda will be issued online only.

Divisional Railway Manager/ Works / Guntakal.

Tender No. : BZA-GSU-Elec-45-2026-27, Dated : 13-10-2026 (Through ireps.gov.in) PUB/SCoR-426

Chief Project Manager, Gati Shakti, South Coast Railway, Vijayawada invites e-tender on behalf of The President of India for the following works in Open tender / Single packet system of tendering:

Sl.No. : 1. Tender No. : BZA-GSU-Elec-45-2026-27, Dated : 13-10-2026. **Description of the work : Gati Shakti Unit - Vijayawada -** Alterations to of 25 KV Conventional Type Regulated OHE for Proposed Lifts, Escalators (at GALA, GDV, TDD, MTM, TEL & NS)& Construction of New station building, COP at Kovvur (KVR) station.

Tender value (Rs.) : 1,02,65,798/-. **Earnest Money Deposit (Rs.) :** 2,05,300/-. **Completion Period :** 12 Months. **Cost of Tender form (Rs.) :** Nil. **Date of Closing & time :** 09-11-2026 @ 15:00 Hours.

For bid document and other details, please login to website **https://ireps.gov.in.**

Payment of Earnest Money Deposit should be paid only through Net Banking / Payment Gateway facilities made available online in IREPS (OR) Bank Guarantee towards Bids Security may be submitted in favour of FA&CAO/Con/S.Co. Railway, Visakhapatnam manually.

Tenderers can submit their offers online during tender Submission / Bidding period which is fifteen days period prior to closing of Tender.

Tenderers should watch for any corrigenda (issued online only) up to the date of commencement of the Tender Submission / Bidding period.

Divisional Electrical Engineer, SCoR-A468 Gati Shakti, Vijayawada.

For further tender conditions / details and for downloading the tender documents, please visit the website https://www.ireps.gov.in or www.scor.indianrailways.gov.in

INTEGRAL COACH FACTORY, CHENNAI - 600 038

The following e- tender is published in **IREPS** website. Firms are requested to login to **www.ireps.gov.in** and quote against the tender. Manual quotation will not be entertained for the tender.

Open Tender Number	Description of the item	Tender Value ₹	Date of Tender Closing Date & Time
22026476212349	Works contract of "Comprehensive Annual Maintenance Contract (CAMC) for CNC 3 Axis Pipe Bending Machine_Inv No.15731 available in Shop-37 of Furnishing Division/ICF for a period of three years".	₹ 36,88,680/-	28 / 10 / 2026 15:00 Hours

Hindi version of the above advertisement is available in the **http://icf.indianrailways.gov.in**

Dy. Chief Mechanical Engineer/Plant

SOUTHERN RAILWAY

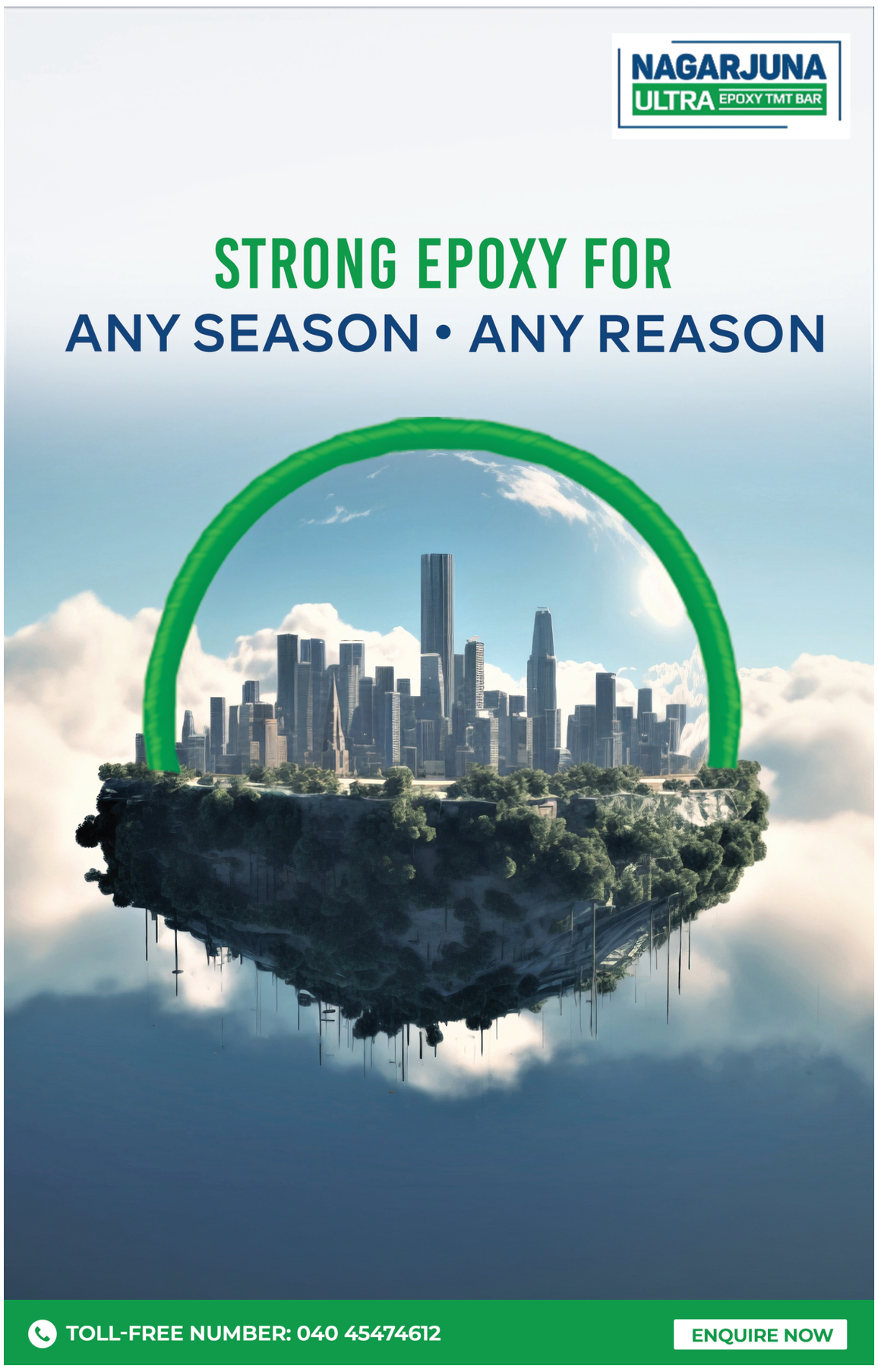
Chennai Division (Mechanical Branch)
GEM Bid No. GEM/2026/B/8149496, dated 16.10.2026

Divisional Railway Manager/Mechanical Branch/Chennai Division, Chennai-600 003 for and on behalf of the President of India invites ONLINE tenders for the following work as per tender notice given in the GeM Portal **https://gem.gov.in.** The tenderer(s)/contractor(s) intending to apply for GeM-tender for Mechanical works in Chennai Division, need to get enrolled in the e-tender portal **https://gem.gov.in** and only online tenders will be accepted.

Description	Location	Advertised Tender Value (₹)	Earnest Money Deposit (₹)	Similar Nature of Work	Period of Completion
Buffing of Stainless-Steel Items in Coaches at BBQ, GSN & TBM Coaching Depots for a period of two years	Chennai	₹4,45,19,401/-	₹3,72,600/-	Applicable	2 Years

Tender closing date and time: 06.11.2026, 16.00 hrs Details of value of tender and EMD are given in GeM portal **https://gem.gov.in.** For details of bid submission, please refer to web portal **https://gem.gov.in.**

Divisional Railway Manager (Mechanical) Chennai Division, Southern Railway, Chennai – 600 003



SHORT TAKES

TRS picks Srikanth Goud for Graduates' MLC seat

HYDERABAD: Telangana Rakshana Sena (TRS) president Kalvakuntla Kavitha announced Dr. Nalamasa Srikanth Goud as the party's candidate for the Warangal-Khammam-Nalgonda Graduates' MLC constituency. Dr. Srikanth Goud is a prominent activist of the Telangana movement. Alongside the candidacy, Kavitha named Syed Ismail as the State Party Observer to supervise campaign operations and coordinate party cadres across the constituency. Timed on the festival of Dasara, the announcements signal the party's formal launch of its election campaign for the Graduates' seat.

MVSR College student death: Three event managers arrested

HYDERABAD: Adibatla police have arrested three persons associated with Saket event Management Company in connection with the death of a student and injuries to 25 others after a lighting pole collapsed during a Dandiya event at MVSR Engineering College on the outskirts of Hyderabad. The deceased, Soni Narayana Das, succumbed to his injuries while undergoing treatment. The other injured students are receiving medical care. Shamshabad Zone DCP Rajesh, addressing media persons at his office in Shamshabad, said the investigation revealed serious lapses in the installation of the lighting structure. Police found that the heavy pole had been erected without adequate support or a firm foundation. Investigators seized mobile phones, event management agreement documents.

K-Harmony Festa 2026 to Strengthen India–Korea Cultural Ties: Minister Jupally Krishna Rao

- **Telangana's Rich Cultural Heritage to Be Showcased on International Platform**
- **Hyderabad to Host Korean Cultural Festival on October 25**

HYDERABAD



Telangana Minister for Tourism and Culture Jupally Krishna Rao said that international cultural festivals play an important role in strengthening cultural relations between India and the Republic of Korea, fostering mutual understanding and promoting friendship between their people. He said such initiatives provide an opportunity to showcase Telangana's rich historical heritage, diverse art forms and cultural traditions on an international platform.

The K-Harmony Festa 2026 will be held at Shilpakala Vedika in Hyderabad on October 25, under the auspices of the Korean Cultural Centre India, in cooperation with the Government of Telangana. The festival aims to promote cultural exchange between India and the Republic of Korea by bringing the artistic traditions and cultural expressions of the two countries together on a common platform.

The Minister said India is home to diverse cultures and traditions, while Telangana has a distinctive cultural identity reflected in its folk arts, festivals and traditional performances. The presentation of Telangana's Perini dance and Dappulu performances, alongside Korean cultural programmes, would provide an opportunity to introduce the State's artistic heritage to international audiences.

Observing that Hyderabad attracts people from different parts of the world through its historical legacy and cultural diversity, Mr. Jupally said that hosting international cultural events would further enhance the city's profile as a cultural destination and create new opportunities for tourism in Telangana.

He said the State Government was committed to promoting Telangana's historical monuments, heritage sites, folk arts and traditional festivals at the international level. Cultural exchange initiatives, he added, could create new opportunities for artists, encourage tourism and strengthen bonds of friendship among people from different countries.

The festival will feature Korean traditional arts, music, Taekwondo demonstrations and contemporary musical performances. A special performance by K-pop boy group NTX will be one of the major attractions. The programme will also showcase Telangana's cultural traditions alongside Korean traditional and contemporary art forms.

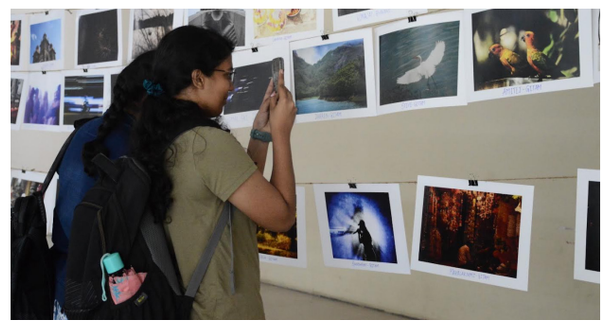
Mr. Jupally expressed the hope that K-Harmony Festa 2026 would contribute to closer cultural cooperation between India and the Republic of Korea, strengthen people-to-people relations and provide greater international visibility to Telangana's rich cultural heritage.

The festival is part of Korea Culture Day 2026, being organised under the theme "One Light, Two Cities", highlighting the cultural connection between Seoul and Hyderabad. The Hyderabad event will open to visitors at 1 p.m. on October 25, with the VIP opening ceremony scheduled for 5.30 p.m. at Shilpakala Vedika.



CineVaram 2026 Inaugurated at GITAM

HYDERABAD





G-Studio, a student club at GITAM Deemed to be University, Hyderabad, inaugurated CineVaram 2026, a two-day cinematic festival, on October 21, in association with MeeSeva. The event features an engaging mix of workshops, film screenings, photography exhibitions, games, and interactive sessions designed to nurture students' creativity and filmmaking skills.

The festival brings together cine industry experts and aspiring filmmakers, offering valuable insights into various aspects of cinema. Bobz Choudhari, Brand Ambassador at FujifilmX India, visited the photography exhibition to evaluate student entries, while Nikhil Nadella, Director conducted a workshop. The event also features lively game stalls, including Star Switch, Brain in a Cup, Fist and Fingers, Cup It, and a Polaroid Photo Booth, adding an element of fun and excitement to the celebrations.

Day two will feature a Storyboarding Competition, a session titled 'Documenting the World Around You' by Kishor Krishnamoorthi, Documentary Photographer, and an interactive session with Thaman, Indian music composer. Filmmaker Krishna Chaitanya will join as the guest for the Short Film Contest, celebrating the storytelling talent and creative vision of emerging filmmakers.

Students have been enthusiastically participating in the sessions, interacting with industry experts, and clarifying their doubts. They expressed appreciation for the diverse learning opportunities and thanked the university management for organizing such skill-enhancement initiatives.

Through CineVaram 2026, GITAM Hyderabad aims to provide a vibrant platform for students to explore cinema, exchange ideas, and develop their creative and technical abilities.

Indian Railways Maintains Consistent Punctuality Despite Heavy Passenger Demand; Performance Improves Over Pre-COVID Levels

HYDERABAD

Despite heavy demand Indian Railways takes its passengers safely, comfortably & with consistent & increased punctuality. This is being done through improved monitoring, timetable rationalisation, better maintenance and infrastructure upgrades. If we look at punctuality data, it has improved from 69.2% in 2018-19 to 77.43 in 2025-26 & 77.11% in 2026-27 (till now). Consistent performance on more than 77 percent punctuality in last three years, including the current year, is an improved performance from the year 2023-24, when it was 73.62 percent. The punctuality figures currently circulating on social media are being used out of context and are therefore misleading. One can not compare two years, when trains in India were not running in full capacity. Hence the higher punctuality of Indian trains during Covid period is definitely not an apt reference for comparison. Once normal operations resumed, punctuality returned closer to the long-term average and has been steadily improving again.

It is once again reiterated that the unusually high figures of 2020-21 and 2021-22 were recorded when very few trains were running due to the pandemic.

Telangana's Bathukamma Celebrations Draw 8,000–10,000 People in Australia

- **Dr. Ch. Preeti Reddy , Vice-Chairman of Malla Reddy Vishwavidyapeeth, Attends Grand Bathukamma Celebrations**

MELBOURNE





Australia witnessed a grand celebration of Bathukamma, Telangana's iconic floral festival, with an estimated 8,000–10,000 people participating in the festivities, according to the organisers. The presence of Dr. Ch. Preeti Reddy, Vice-Chairman of Malla Reddy Vishwavidyapeeth, was a special highlight of the event. According to the organisers, the celebrations traditionally attract around 2,000 participants, while this year's event witnessed a significantly larger turnout.

The celebrations brought together members of the Telangana community in Australia, showcasing the rich cultural heritage, traditions and festive spirit of Telangana on an international platform.

Bathukamma, a festival that celebrates the cultural identity and traditions of Telangana, continues to unite Telugu communities across the world. The celebrations in Australia reflected the community's deep connection with its roots and its commitment to preserving and promoting Telangana's cultural heritage. The event served as a vibrant platform for the Telangana diaspora to come together, celebrate their traditions and pass on their cultural legacy to future generations.

From Telangana to Australia, the spirit of Bathukamma continues to bring communities together and showcase Telangana's rich cultural heritage to the world.

SC steps in over alleged violence in AP Municipal polls; orders police protection

NEW DELHI



In a significant development, the Supreme Court on Wednesday directed the Andhra Pradesh State Election Commission (SEC) to consider extending the nomination deadline in urban local bodies where candidates were allegedly prevented from filing nomination papers due to violence, intimidation and law-and-order problems.

A special bench comprising Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V. Mohana directed the SEC to examine representations submitted by the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) and its candidates, along with supporting documentary and electronic evidence, and take a decision by October 22.

Wherever an extension is granted, candidates must be allowed an additional 48 hours from the publication of the decision to file nominations. The court also postponed publication of the final list of contesting candidates from October 21 to October 25.

The bench directed the Director General of Police to ensure adequate security for candidates, sufficient police deployment and CCTV surveillance at nomination centres. It also stressed the need for suitable arrangements at district headquarters to enable candidates to file nominations without fear or obstruction.

During the hearing, the court questioned whether the absence of police complaints could establish that the situation was normal, observing that candidates might hesitate to approach authorities if violence prevailed. It underscored the need to protect democratic rights and ensure a level playing field for all contestants.

The YSRCP had approached the Apex court challenging an Andhra Pradesh High Court order that declined to extend the nomination deadline. The party alleged that its candidates were attacked, intimidated or prevented from reaching nomination centres in Punganur, Rayachoti, Kadapa and Tirupati. The Supreme Court directed the SEC and the State government to file compliance affidavits and posted the matter for further hearing on October 27.

The directions seek to ensure that candidates allegedly prevented from filing nominations for reasons beyond their control receive a fair opportunity to contest the urban local body elections scheduled for October 28.

TTD thanks all for grand success of Navaratri Brahmotsavams; 6.46 l devotees had darshan

TIRUMALA



Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) Chairman B.R. Naidu and Executive Officer M. Ravichandra thanked the officials, priests, employees, Srivari Sevaks, police, district administration, media and devotees for the successful conduct of Srivari Navaratri Brahmotsavams held between October 12 and 20.

Addressing the media-persons at Annamayya Bhavan on Wednesday, the TTD Chairman said the nine-day festival concluded successfully due to coordinated efforts across the departments, despite heavy rains, particularly on Garuda Seva day.

According to TTD, 6.46 lakh devotees had darshan between October 12 and 19, while hundi offerings amounted to Rs.25.79 crore. The temple administration distributed 22.60 lakh Anna Prasadam packets, sold 34.34 lakh laddus and facilitated tonsure for 2.44 lakh devotees. The APSRTC operated 13,608 trips from Tirupati to Tirumala, carrying 4.01 lakh pilgrims, and 13,667 return trips, transporting five lakh devotees.

Around 6,777 artistes from 252 troupes representing 26 States, besides Qatar and Dubai, performed cultural programmes during the festival. Floral decorations used nearly 60 tonnes of flowers, five lakh cut flowers and 80,000 seasonal flowers.

Security arrangements included 2,800 police personnel and 2,000 vigilance staff, with an additional 1,000 police personnel deployed on Garuda Seva day. Medical services included 75 doctors, 60 paramedical staff, 20 ambulances and four mobile clinics.

About 4,500 Srivari Seva volunteers participated in the arrangements, while 3,500 sanitation workers were deployed on Garuda Seva day. TTD also operated 39 electric buses, which transported thousands of devotees in 6,900 trips over ten days.

Naidu expressed gratitude to devotees for their cooperation and praised all departments for ensuring pilgrim convenience and safety throughout the celebrations.

Scrap prior approval for ACB trap cases: FGG

HYDERABAD



The Forum for Good Governance has urged the Telangana government to dispense with the requirement of prior approval for prosecuting public servants caught accepting bribes, citing the Supreme Court's recent observations on Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988.

In a representation to the Chief Secretary of Telangana, Forum president M. Padmanabha Reddy called for instructions to the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) to proceed with prosecution in trap cases wherever prior approval is not legally required. Citing the Supreme Court's October 16, 2026 judgment in Tejaram vs State of Rajasthan case, the Forum said bribery cannot be treated as part of the bona fide discharge of official duties and should not receive protection under Section 17A.

"Corruption in administration is a serious concern in Telangana. The common man is often compelled to pay bribes even for obtaining services and benefits to which he is legally entitled. The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB), Telangana, is doing commendable work at the field level, registering an average of 20 to 25 cases every month. However, when the inquiry reports submitted by the Director General, ACB, seeking permission to prosecute the accused officials reach the Government, undue delays and alleged interference occur. Even clear-cut trap cases, in which officials are caught red-handed while accepting bribes, are kept pending for years and are eventually referred for departmental inquiries, thereby compelling the ACB to withdraw or discontinue prosecution proceedings before the court", the Forum president noted.

The Forum alleged that prosecution approvals in several ACB cases had been delayed or refused, with some cases reportedly kept pending for years or referred for departmental inquiries. It claimed that permission to prosecute was refused in 22 cases during the last couple of years, despite the ACB seeking approval.

Reddy also urged the government to review cases pending solely for want of prior approval and return them to the ACB for further action wherever such approval is not legally necessary.

He urged for issuance of necessary instructions for dispensing with the requirement of prior permission for prosecution in ACB trap and Disproportionate Assets (DA) cases. The Forum said timely prosecution of corruption cases was essential to prevent impunity among public servants and strengthen public confidence in the administration.

Revanth attends Mysuru Dussehra finale

HYDERABAD

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy attended the world-famous Mysuru Dussehra celebrations in Karnataka on Wednesday, participating in the grand finale of the state festival (Nada Habba).

Attending the festivities at the invitation of Karnataka Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, Revanth Reddy witnessed the traditional Jamboo Savari procession in front of the historic Mysuru Palace. He offered prayers to the processional idol of Goddess Chamundeshwari, which was carried in a golden howdah atop an embellished elephant. The event showcased Karnataka's cultural diversity, featuring folk artists, traditional music troupes, and dance ensembles. Revanth Reddy watched the proceedings alongside Kerala Chief Minister V.D. Satheesan and other visiting dignitaries. Prior to the procession, the Chief Minister, along with his family members, also visited the hillside Chamundeshwari Temple to offer special prayers to the presiding deity of Mysuru.

UP: ERO, VRC operator removed from duty after Cong alleges voter roll manipulation in Pilibhit

LUCKNOW: (OCT 21)

Uttar Pradesh Congress on Wednesday alleged large-scale manipulation of electoral rolls in Pilibhit Sadar Assembly constituency, claiming that names of 13,150 voters were changed while their EPIC and serial numbers remained the same.

Later in the evening, Chief Electoral Officer Navdeep Rinwa directed that the Electoral Registration Officer and the VRC operator of Pilibhit be immediately removed from voter-list-related duties and legal action be initiated against them after an inquiry into the matter confirmed irregularities.

Addressing a press conference at the Pradesh Congress Committee headquarters in Lucknow, AICC incharge for Uttar Pradesh Rajendra Pal Gautam alleged that the Election Commission had created a system through which "anyone can be defeated, and anyone can be made to win".





Indrakeeladri Turns into a Sea of Devotees

as Bhavani Devotees Arrive in Huge Numbers
Heavy Rush from Vinayaka Temple and Kummaripalem Centre
Temple EO and Police Personnel Working Round the Clock to Manage Crowds
Officials Effectively Control Rush at Seethamma Vari Padalu and Om Turning
Chairman Gandhi, EO V.K. Sheena Naik, Board Members and AEO Team Conduct Extensive Field Inspections
1.39 Lakh Devotees Have Darshan by 5 p.m.
31 Lakh Water Bottles Distributed in 10 Days on EO Sheena Naik's Instructions

INDRAKEELADRI, OCTOBER 21

All roads are leading to the Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam at Indrakeeladri in Vijayawada. With thousands of Bhavani devotees and other pilgrims arriving for the darshan of Goddess Sri Kanaka Durga, Vijayawada has turned into an ocean of devotion. A massive influx of devotees from Vinayaka Temple in One Town on one side and Kummaripalem Centre on the other has filled the temple surroundings with a sea of pilgrims. The large number of devotees observing Bhavani Deeksha has added a distinctive red hue to the entire area. By 5 p.m. on Tuesday, approximately 1,39,000 devotees had darshan of Goddess Kanaka Durga. Another 35,000 devotees were waiting for darshan in various holding areas along the ghat road and at bathing ghats. Bhavani devotees from the North Andhra districts and both Godavari districts have been arriving in Vijayawada in large numbers by special trains, APSRTC buses and private vehicles. Temple officials, staff and the city police are working tirelessly around the clock to manage the massive influx of devotees. Executive Officer V.K. Sheena Naik has been personally supporting the staff, ensuring that they receive the necessary facilities and continuously motivating them despite their exhaustion from prolonged duty. Although managing the continuous flow of devotees from Seethamma Vari Padalu towards Vinayaka Temple and those moving from Om Turning on the hill towards the Chinna Rajagopuram proved extremely challenging, the temple and police personnel responded promptly and coordinated their efforts to bring the situation under control. In view of the heavy rush, special crowd-management measures have also been implemented at the laddu prasadam counters to prevent overcrowding and ensure that no stampede-like situation occurs. Temple Chairman Borra Radhakrishna (Gandhi), Executive Officer V.K. Sheena Naik and board member Srinivasa Rao have been conducting regular inspections of the queue lines and ghat road premises. They are addressing devotees' difficulties on the spot and taking immediate steps to resolve issues as they arise. Temple Executive Engineer Rama Devi and Assistant Executive Officers Chandrasekhar, Ramesh Babu, Dr. K. Gangadhar, Sudharani and Lakshmi Prasanna are also actively supervising arrangements on the ground. Through close coordination with the police department and temple staff, the team is ensuring the smooth and orderly movement of devotees for darshan.

Considering the heavy rush, the temple authorities have arranged shower bathing facilities at Bhavani Ghat to provide convenience to pilgrims. In coordination with the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation and using temple funds, a record 31 lakh drinking-water bottles have been distributed free of charge over the past 10 days. The distribution of hot annaprasadam (free meals) is continuing uninterrupted at the Ann (Annaprasadam Bhavan) located at the foothills, ensuring that devotees receive food throughout the day. With the possibility of the crowd increasing further, officials and staff from all departments remain on high alert and are extending dedicated services to ensure the convenience, safety and smooth darshan of devotees.

Southern Railway to Launch Second AC EMU Service in Chennai

CHENNAI, OCTOBER 21

Southern Railway will introduce its second air-conditioned electric multiple unit (AC EMU) service in the Chennai suburban network on the Chennai Central–Arakkonam section from October 23 to December 24, 2026, on a trial basis. The services will operate five days a week, from Monday to Friday, excluding Saturdays and Sundays. Three pairs of AC EMU services will be operated on the Chennai Central–Avadi, Chennai Central–Arakkonam and Avadi–Arakkonam routes during the trial period. The first AC EMU service in Chennai was introduced on the Chennai Beach–Chengalpattu section on April 19, 2025, and has received an encouraging response from passengers. The new 12-car AC EMU trains, manufactured by the Integral Coach Factory (ICF), offer metro-like comfort and can carry around 5,000 passengers. The trains feature fully air-conditioned coaches, automatic sliding doors, sealed gangways, stainless steel seating, wide glass windows, GPS-based LED displays and CCTV surveillance. They are also equipped with a passenger talk-back system for emergencies. The trains feature energy-efficient regenerative electro-pneumatic brakes that can save up to 35 per cent of electrical energy, along with air-spring suspension for improved riding comfort. Southern Railway said the introduction of the service reflects its efforts to provide suburban commuters with a more comfortable, modern and reliable travel experience.



YSRCP alleges attacks on its leaders as nominations for MPTC, ZPTC polls begin

VIJAYAWADA, OCT 21

Filing of nominations for MPTC and ZPTC elections in Andhra Pradesh began on a violent note on Wednesday with attacks on candidates and leaders of the opposition YSR Congress Party, including Former Deputy Chief Minister K. Narayana Swamy. YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) blamed Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and its allies in the ruling coalition for the attacks. The opposition party alleged that violence, attacks and intimidation continued across the state. YSRCP candidates and leaders faced physical attacks, destruction of nomination papers, police restrictions and illegal arrests in several constituencies. TDP and coalition leaders obstructed opposition candidates from filing nominations, while police failed to prevent the violence, it alleged. Elections to Mandal Parishad Territorial Constituencies (MPTCs) and Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituencies (ZPTCs) are scheduled to be held on November 3. In Chittoor district, TDP cadres allegedly attacked former Deputy Chief Minister Narayana Swamy near the Zilla Parishad Chairman's office when he arrived to facilitate the filing of a ZPTC nomination from Penumuru. According to YSRCP, its leaders were injured in the attacks by TDP cadres in Chandragiri, Tirupati district. Former MPTC member Madan Reddy and YSRCP supporters Ramu and Lokesh suffered serious head injuries and were shifted to a government hospital. The attacks took place in the presence of Pulivarthi Vineel, son of TDP MLA Pulivarthi Nani, according to YSRCP leaders. They also accused him of bringing outsiders from Tamil Nadu to create violence. The opposition party alleged that police failed to prevent the attacks. In Srikalahasti in Tirupati district, a two-wheeler belonging to a YSRCP supporter who arrived to participate in the nomination process was damaged and set on fire near the MPDO office. TDP leaders also allegedly threatened YSRCP candidates attempting to file nominations. YSRCP alleged that Jana Sena MLA Arava Sridhar and Jana Sena leaders obstructed the filing of nominations in Railway Koduru in Tirupati district. The opposition party also alleged attack on its supporters. Local YSRCP leaders confronted the police and demanded that all YSRCP candidates be allowed to file nominations. Police placed former MLA Brahmanaidu under house arrest, preventing him from assisting YSRCP candidates during the nomination process in Narasaraopet in Palnadu district. Police arrested YSRCP State Executive Council member and Macherla constituency observer Kommineni Venkateswarlu when he arrived to support candidates filing MPTC nominations in Piduguralla Mandal in Palnadu district. TDP cadres allegedly attacked YSRCP candidates who arrived at the Mandal office to file MPTC nominations in Macherla in Palnadu district. The attackers forcibly snatched nomination papers from the candidates, obstructing the nomination process.

Govt inks Rs 770 crore deal for low radars to help Indian Army fight drone threats

NEW DELHI, OCT 21



The Ministry of Defence has signed a contract with Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) to procure Improved Low-Level Lightweight Radar (LLLR-I) at a cost of approximately Rs 770 crore to boost the air defence capability of the Indian Army. The LLLR(I) system has the capability of detecting and tracking fighter jet-sized targets as well as mini and micro drones. It has the additional capability of prioritising aerial targets. This will enable the Army to successfully counter the threat of Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS), the statement said. The contract with the defence PSU was signed in the presence of Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh. Aligning with the government's vision of Viksit Bharat @2047, the procurement is a significant step towards indigenisation of air defence platforms with a boost to India's Defence manufacturing ecosystem, including Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and building a resilient, self-reliant and globally competitive defence industry, the statement added. India's defence sector has undergone a transformational change over the past decade to emerge as a stronger, more self-reliant and globally credible force, with the country's production of military hardware recording an over fourfold increase to touch Rs 1.78 lakh crore in 2025-26 compared with a mere Rs 4, 746 crore in FY 2013-14, according to official figures.

While production from public-sector entities accounted for 76 per cent of this output, the private sector contributed the remaining 24 per cent. Defence exports rose from a mere Rs 686 crore in FY2013–14 to ₹38,424 crore in FY2025–26, with the country's military hardware finding markets in over 80 countries.The private sector contributed Rs 17,353 crore or 45.16 per cent of total defence exports in FY2025–26, while Defence Public Sector Undertakings contributed Rs 21,071 crore or 54.84 per cent. The Government has fixed targets of Rs 3 lakh crore for annual defence production and Rs 50,000 crore in exports by 2029. The R&D allocation for the defence sector rose from Rs 13,716.14 crore in 2014–15 to Rs 29,100.25 crore in 2026–27, which represents an increase of over 112 per cent.

APPCB Boosts Green Cover Across 2,234 Acres in Andhra Industries

Total Green Cover in Industrial Areas Reaches 27,384 Acres
Industrial Growth Must Go Hand in Hand with Environmental Protection: APPCB Chairman Dr. P. Krishnaiah

VIJAYAWADA, OCTOBER 21, 2026



Industrial development must go hand in hand with environmental protection, Andhra Pradesh Pollution Control Board (APPCB) Chairman Dr. P. Krishnaiah has emphasised. He stated that enhancing green cover around industrial premises, along with measures to minimise the adverse impacts of industrial pollution, is essential for maintaining ecological balance. Accordingly, APPCB is according priority to the development of green belts in industrial areas across the State. The Chairman observed that industries play a vital role in the economic development of the State and the country. However, it is equally important to ensure that industrial activities do not adversely affect the environment. He emphasised that sustainable industrial growth can be achieved by encouraging industries while ensuring compliance with environmental standards and promoting greenery in and around industrial premises.

Special Focus on Green Belt Development Over the Last Three Months

Following the directions of the Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister to strengthen green belt development and expand existing green cover in industrial premises, APPCB has accorded special attention to the initiative over the past three months. The Board has been encouraging industrial managements to take proactive measures for plantation and expansion of green cover within their premises. According to official APPCB data, 2,234.15 acres of green cover were developed in industrial areas during 2026, following the Deputy Chief Minister's directions. Consequently, the total existing green cover across industrial areas in Andhra Pradesh has reached 27,384.34 acres, covering 2,913 industries across the State. These figures reflect the progress made towards promoting greenery and strengthening environmental protection in industrial areas.

Green Belt Development in Accordance with Applicable Environmental Norms

APPCB is promoting green belt development in accordance with the guidelines of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) and the environmental clearance conditions applicable to individual industries. The extent of green cover required depends on the category of the industry, its location, pollution potential and the applicable regulatory requirements. Greenery plays an important role in absorbing carbon dioxide, helping reduce the dispersion of dust particles and supporting local ecological balance. Adequate green cover around industrial premises can contribute to improving the surrounding environmental quality. The Chairman stressed that green belt development should not be limited to planting saplings alone. Industrial managements must also ensure the survival and maintenance of planted trees, select species suited to local climatic conditions and make effective use of available space to expand greenery. He urged industries to undertake sustained efforts to maintain and improve their green cover.

APPCB Reaffirms Commitment to Sustainable Industrial Growth

Dr. P. Krishnaiah reiterated that industrial managements must comply with environmental regulations and give due importance to green belt development alongside pollution control measures. He called upon industries and the concerned departments to work in coordination to further expand green cover across the State.APPCB will continue its efforts to promote environmentally responsible industrial development while safeguarding natural resources and ensuring a healthier environment for future generations, the Chairman stated.

Kittur Chennamma's Victory Anniversary to Be Celebrated at Prerna Sthal

on October 23 Under the Leadership of Union Minister V. Somanna

Hubballi : Union Minister of State for Railways and Jal Shakti and Tumakuru Member of Parliament Shri V. Somanna has consistently encouraged efforts to preserve and promote Kannada art and culture in New Delhi since assuming office as an MP and Union Minister. The successful and special celebrations of the birth anniversaries of Shri Basaveshwara and Rani Chennamma in the Parliament complex in New Delhi over the past three years stand as testimony to these efforts. This year, the 202nd birth anniversary and victory celebration of Veer Rani Kittur Chennamma, the brave woman freedom fighter and a proud icon of Karnataka, will also be organised at Prerna Sthal in the Parliament complex on the morning of October 23, 2026, under the leadership of Union Minister Shri V. Somanna. Minister Shri V. Somanna stated that he had personally invited Lok Sabha Speaker Shri Om Birla and Union Ministers Shri Pralhad Joshi, Shri H.D. Kumaraswamy, Kumari Shobha Karandlaje, Union Minister for Railways Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw, Union Minister for Tourism and Culture Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, and Union Minister for Jal Shakti Shri C.R. Patil to participate in the floral tribute ceremony. Shri V. Somanna expects admirers of Veer Rani Chennamma from Karnataka, heads of religious institutions and members of the Kannada community residing in Delhi to participate in the programme. Expressing his happiness, Shri V. Somanna said that the annual celebrations in Delhi provide an opportunity to remember and honour distinguished personalities from Karnataka who dedicated their lives to the nation and their motherland.

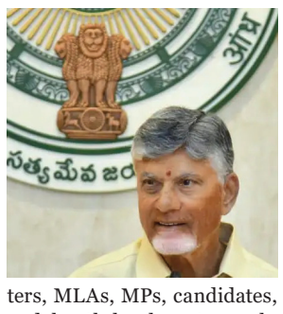
Union Minister Shri V. Somanna also conveyed his appreciation, on behalf of the people of Karnataka, to Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and Lok Sabha Speaker Shri Om Birla for facilitating the annual observance of the birth anniversaries of such eminent personalities in the Parliament complex.

He also acknowledged the contributions of officials from the Lok Sabha Secretariat and the Ministry of Railways, who have extended their cooperation every year to ensure the success of the programme.

Clarify the anniversary wordingTighten the headline and lead

YSRCP trying to stall polls by approaching courts, alleges Chandrababu Naidu

AMARAVATI, OCT 21



Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Wednesday accused the YSR Congress Party of trying to stall elections and development by approaching courts. He also alleged that YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) president and former Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy is plotting acts of sabotage by sitting in Bengaluru. He remarked that only "criminal litigants" like Jagan would conceive of a strategy that involves instigating destruction themselves and then rushing to the courts. The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) chief held a teleconference with ministers, MLAs, MPs, candidates, and booth-level party workers and gave them directions to ensure victory of the TDP and its allies in the local body elections. Chandrababu Naidu alleged that when the government dealt firmly with the destructive acts of YSRCP, it approached courts to stall the elections. "Whenever their attempts at sabotage are thwarted, they rush to the courts to try and halt the elections. This is how those who lack faith in democracy think," he said. He also accused the YSRCP of hatching conspiracies to distort even the verdicts delivered by the courts. The TDP chief was apparently referring to the YSRCP's reaction to the Supreme Court order on its petition in connection with urban local body elections. Calling YSRCP 'Axe Party', he said that while the NDA was busy selecting strong candidates for the elections, the president of the 'Axe Party' who sits in Bengaluru was plotting acts of sabotage. "As we work on finalising candidates for various municipalities, Jagan is busy hatching conspiracies—planning to bring in goons from other states to target specific areas," he alleged. He said the YSRCP criticised the voter list and approached the court, demanding that local body elections be halted until a new electoral roll is prepared. He alleged that they also obstructed BC (Backward Class) reservations—filing nearly 60 such petitions across the High Court and the Supreme Court. Chandrababu Naidu also remarked that they are forced to engage in politics with an individual who possesses a 'twisted' mindset.

EDITORIAL

Clean Air Cannot Remain a Seasonal Priority

Air pollution is no longer a problem that emerges only during winter or disappears with the arrival of summer rains. It has become a year-round public health and environmental challenge that demands sustained attention from governments, industries and citizens. While pollution levels often attract greater public attention during periods of smog and poor visibility, the underlying causes remain active throughout the year. Treating clean air as a seasonal priority rather than a permanent public responsibility will only prolong the problem. Across Indian cities, vehicle emissions, construction dust, industrial pollution, waste burning and road dust contribute to deteriorating air quality. Weather conditions can worsen the concentration of pollutants, particularly during winter, when lower temperatures and stagnant air restrict their dispersion. However, the absence of visible smog does not necessarily mean that the air is safe to breathe. Air pollution must therefore be addressed through continuous monitoring, preventive measures and effective enforcement rather than emergency responses alone.

The consequences extend far beyond environmental damage. Exposure to polluted air can aggravate respiratory illnesses, increase the risk of cardiovascular problems and affect overall well-being. Children, older people, outdoor workers and those with existing health conditions are particularly vulnerable. The economic consequences are equally significant, as pollution can contribute to healthcare expenses, lost working days and reduced productivity. Clean air is consequently not a luxury or a matter of urban aesthetics; it is fundamental to public health and quality of life. A major weakness in pollution management is the tendency to respond only when air quality deteriorates sharply. Temporary restrictions, public advisories and special enforcement drives may provide some immediate relief, but they cannot replace long-term planning. Pollution sources must be identified and controlled throughout the year. Authorities need to strengthen emissions testing, improve public transport, enforce construction dust-control regulations and prevent the open burning of waste. Industrial units must comply with environmental standards, while municipal bodies should ensure regular road cleaning and scientific waste management. Urban planning also deserves greater attention. Rapidly expanding cities such as Hyderabad face the challenge of accommodating growing populations, increasing vehicle numbers and extensive construction activity. Better public transport connectivity, safer pedestrian facilities, cycling infrastructure and well-planned residential development can reduce dependence on private vehicles. Protecting urban lakes, parks and green spaces is equally important for creating healthier and more resilient cities, although greenery alone cannot compensate for uncontrolled emissions. Air-quality monitoring must become more accessible and actionable. Reliable monitoring stations, transparent public reporting and timely health advisories can help citizens understand local pollution levels and take appropriate precautions. Governments should also strengthen coordination between pollution control boards, municipal authorities, transport departments and industrial regulators. Since pollution does not respect administrative boundaries, neighbouring urban areas and states must cooperate wherever emissions and atmospheric conditions affect shared regions.

Citizens, too, have a role to play. Maintaining vehicles, using public transport where practical, avoiding waste burning and reducing unnecessary energy consumption can contribute to collective progress. Yet individual responsibility must not become an excuse for weak enforcement. The principal responsibility for establishing effective regulations, providing sustainable infrastructure and ensuring compliance rests with public authorities and polluting entities. India's clean-air efforts must move from seasonal firefighting to year-round revention. Pollution-control plans should have measurable targets, regular public assessments and clear accountability for implementation. Funding must support not only emergency measures but also durable improvements in transport, industrial practices, waste management and urban infrastructure. Clean air cannot be secured through a few weeks of heightened vigilance. It requires consistent policies, scientific planning and public participation in every season. The real measure of success is not whether a city looks clearer after a temporary intervention, but whether its residents can breathe healthier air throughout the year. Protecting the atmosphere must become a continuous public commitment, not an annual reaction to smog.

A POLICEMAN

Clutching the biscuit in one hand,
for his little sister to have,
he lifted the right hand in salute
to the tri-colour flag.
Happy, for the Teacher had said,
no bags to school,
it was Independence Day!
The flag fluttered against a sky,
tormented by winds of terrorism,
hissing hate.
Two decades later,
his mom sobbed to see the
saffron flow on her blood,
discolouring white and green.
He lay immortalized in each dictionary,
song, frontier, whispering love,
not hate.
To be reborn in the oath of each recruit,
in the empty cartridge at an ambush,
in the ions that make medals,
in the sinews that gift medals,
in the lap of martyrdom,
bravery and valour.
Born a patriot.
Died a soldier.
Became God.
Was, a policeman.

..: Tejdeep Kaur Menon :..
Minnaminni, Sterling Publishers Private Limited (2002)

From Punishment to Prevention: Rethinking India's Drug Crisis

" Modern Indian youth are trapped in an unrelenting hyper-competitive matrix—from cutthroat entrance exam coaching cultures to the grueling performance metrics of the gig economy and corporate entryism "

The front lines of India's substance abuse crisis have shifted dramatically. Historically, the discourse surrounding drug addiction in the country was mapped onto predictable margins: localized urban pockets, traditional cannabis use, or socio-economic destitution. Today, that map is completely obsolete. A silent, systemic public health emergency is unfolding across India's college campuses, corporate dorms, and Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities. The new consumer of mind-altering substances is not the social outcast of mid-century morality plays, but the hyper-connected, high-achieving, yet psychologically fractured contemporary youth. Understanding why this generation is turning to narcotics in unprecedented numbers requires moving past tired tropes of peer pressure and examining the structural, neurobiological, and socio-cultural shifts redefining modern Indian life.

At the root of this crisis is the hyper-commodified attention economy and the ruthless "nootropic" hustle. Modern Indian youth are trapped in an unrelenting hyper-competitive matrix—from cutthroat entrance exam coaching cultures to the grueling performance metrics of the gig economy and corporate entryism. The rise of lifestyle pharmaceuticals, such as methylphenidate, modafinil, and prescription amphetamines, is rarely about escapism initially; it is about optimization. Students use smart drugs not to get high, but to survive grueling 18-hour study schedules. What begins as functional enhancement rapidly devolves into chemical dependency as the brain's baseline tolerance resets under unbearable societal expectations.

Compounding this academic and professional pressure is the algorithmic numbing of emotional distress. While past generations processed alienation through community structures, modern youth process it through a screen, experiencing the profound paradox of hyper-connectivity leading to deep isolation. Social media algorithms engineered for outrage and validation have hyper-sensitized the adolescent reward pathway. When digital dopamine fails to satisfy, youth turn to exogenous chemicals to artificially recreate emotional regulation, aided by pop culture and streaming series that normalize and aestheticize chemical escapism.



Furthermore, the logistics of drug supply have undergone a silent, dangerous revolution that fuels this epidemic. The traditional neighborhood peddler has been replaced by decentralized, digital distribution networks. End-to-end encrypted messaging apps like Telegram, darknet marketplaces operating with cryptocurrencies, and prompt home-delivery startups have made procuring synthetic drugs as frictionless as ordering fast food. At the same time, traditional plant-based narcotics have been sidelined by cheap, laboratory-synthesized chemical variants—synthetic cannabinoids, MDMA, and designer bath salts—which are deadlier, cheaper, and far harder to detect by conventional testing.

This technological shift is matched by the erosion of the traditional intergenerational safety net. Rapid urbanization and the nuclearization of families have fractured the emotional buffers that once protected Indian adolescents. With both parents often navigating high-stress corporate environments, urban households frequently substitute material provision for genuine emotional presence. Mental health struggles among youth are frequently misdiagnosed by families as mere defiance or laziness, leaving young people to self-medicate their psychological distress in total secrecy.

Addressing this complex reality requires abandoning the state's historical reliance on punitive policing, moral panic, and criminalizing the user, which has proven to be a catastrophic failure. A sophisticated crisis demands an equally sophisticated multi-pronged policy framework. India must transition from penal justice to public health through medical decriminalization, treating addiction as a chronic brain disorder rather than a moral failing, much like successful international models that redirect users into evidence-based rehabilitation. Simultaneously, law enforcement must adapt to the digital age by establishing specialized cyber-intelligence units to monitor darknet transactions, cryptocurrency laundering loops, and encrypted channels, while imposing strict digital tracking and randomized audits on pharmacies to prevent the leakage of prescription cognitive enhancers into the black market.

Institutional reforms must also reach deep into academia and public life. Schools and universities can no longer remain passive bystanders; every educational institution must legally mandate licensed clinical psychologists on campus, free from administrative stigma, while regulatory bodies actively dismantle toxic coaching cultures. Finally, public policy must pivot toward pragmatic harm reduction rather than ideological abstinence-only programs that fail to deter experimentation. Implementing anonymous substance-checking initiatives in nightlife and university districts to screen for lethal adulterants, alongside launching peer-led, science-backed awareness campaigns on neurochemistry and emotional resilience, will prioritize saving lives over moral posturing. The modern Indian youth is navigating a world demanding superhuman productivity while offering subhuman emotional security, and protecting India's demographic dividend requires an ecosystem built on structural empathy, systemic reform, and scientific realism.



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Bhagwat's Call for Unity, Harmony and National Strength

India is not merely a country defined by geographical boundaries; it is a civilizational consciousness shaped by diversity, a nation that has embraced different ideas, faiths, languages, traditions and ways of life for thousands of years. Our true strength lies not in erasing these differences, but in respecting them while strengthening our shared national identity. The annual Vijayadashami address delivered by Mohan Bhagwat, Sarsanghchalak of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), deserves to be viewed in this broader perspective. His message serves as a powerful call for national unity, social harmony, civic discipline and vigilance in the face of challenges confronting the country. Such a message should not remain confined to any particular organization, ideology or political camp; rather, it should become an occasion for collective introspection on the state and direction of our national life.

India is advancing in a global environment in which economic growth, technological capabilities, democratic institutions and expanding international influence are opening up immense possibilities. Yet a nation's true strength cannot be measured merely by its economic achievements, military might or international standing. Its greatest strength lies in the mutual trust among its citizens, their respect for institutions and their ability to stand united in times of crisis. When distrust deepens within society, dialogue gives way to bitterness, and political or ideological differences turn into hostility, a crisis begins to emerge from within—one that can prove more serious than external threats.

India's neighbourhood presents persistent security challenges, particularly from Pakistan, along with the threats of terrorism and the risks of regional instability. India's relations with the United States and other global powers involve both cooperation and competition. Therefore, the policies of any country must be assessed on the basis of facts, national interests and diplomatic prudence rather than emotion. It would be unwise to assume that every foreign power is necessarily working to weaken India. At the same time, we must recognize that every nation places its own interests first in international politics. In such circumstances, India's security rests not only in the hands of soldiers guarding its borders, but also in the trust that binds its citizens together within those borders. External forces can exploit our internal weaknesses only when we allow our differences to deepen to the point where we begin to regard one another not as fellow citizens with differing views, but as enemies. National unity, therefore, is not merely an emotional slogan; it is a strategic necessity. Protecting our borders is as essential as strengthening the bonds of trust among the people who live within them.



The social and political upheavals witnessed in Bangladesh and France, though arising from different circumstances, remind us that both ignoring public discontent and allowing it to escalate into violence can have damaging consequences. Listening to genuine public grievances is a democratic responsibility, while violence in the name of protest, damage to public property and the spread of hatred can never be justified. In a vast and pluralistic democracy like India, differences of opinion are natural. Citizens have every right to raise questions about unemployment, inflation, corruption, education, social justice and administrative accountability, and to engage in peaceful protest. Governments have a duty to listen seriously to these voices and work towards meaningful solutions. At the same time, citizens and political parties must ensure that public sentiment is used to bring about positive change rather than divide society. Dissent in a democracy is not anti-national, nor does questioning those in power amount to a lack of faith in the nation. The true test of national commitment lies in preserving constitutional propriety and social harmony even when we disagree.

An emerging challenge to national unity today arises from the unchecked and irresponsible use of digital platforms. Social media has given ordinary citizens a powerful medium to express themselves, but it has also made it possible for fake news, misleading videos, AI-generated deepfakes and half-truths to spread at alarming speed. Such content can damage social relationships by creating fear, anger and distrust. The situation becomes particularly dangerous when one-sided or inflammatory material about a religion, caste, language or community is circulated to encourage suspicion towards an entire section of society. A single false message can inflict serious damage, within moments, on relationships of mutual trust built over many years. Digital literacy must therefore be accompanied by ethical discernment. Verifying a message before forwarding it, refusing to be provoked by inflammatory content and standing against the spread of falsehood are all modern expressions of national service. Technology can become a true blessing only when it is guided by responsibility and human sensitivity.

National unity does not mean that every citizen must think alike, follow the same mode of worship or agree on every political question. The true meaning of unity is that, despite our differences, we recognize and respect one another's dignity, rights and existence. The Constitution has given us the principles of equal citizenship, religious freedom, freedom of expression and justice. These principles form the very foundation of India's coexistence as a diverse nation. What we need today is the resolve not to place our narrower identities in opposition to our national identity. Religion should inspire ethical conduct, politics should serve public welfare, education should cultivate discernment, and social organizations should promote service and social harmony. Any ideology can serve the nation meaningfully only when it contributes to improving society, supporting the vulnerable and nurturing a sense of responsibility among citizens.

The canopy of national unity must be broad enough for every Indian—regardless of religion, language, region, caste or ideological background—to stand beneath it with dignity and respect. No one's patriotism should be judged solely by religious identity, political preference or ideological disagreement. Commitment to the nation should be assessed through conduct, respect for constitutional values and contributions to society. An important dimension of Mohan Bhagwat's address is the emphasis on civic responsibility. Nation-building is not the responsibility of governments, political leaders, armed forces or social organizations alone. Every citizen, through individual actions, influences the country's direction. Working honestly, obeying the law, protecting public property, respecting women, helping those in need and exercising restraint during periods of social tension are all practical expressions of national service. At the same time, the cause of national unity must never be invoked to justify injustice, discrimination or the neglect of genuine public grievances. A strong nation is one in which citizens can express themselves without fear, institutions function impartially and every individual can reasonably expect justice. Today, India needs a national consciousness that teaches us to stand with one another, not against one another. Differences of opinion may remain, but divisions of the heart must not deepen. Our ideas may differ, but our responsibility towards the nation must remain shared. Political competition is inevitable, but it must not breed hostility in our social relationships. We must resolve that no external challenge or internal tension will be allowed to weaken India's unity, the dignity of its Constitution or respect for humanity. India's greatest victory will come when a shared sense of trust continues to flourish amid a multitude of ideas and perspectives. We may be different in our beliefs, languages, customs and convictions, but our future is shared, our land is one, and our nation is India. This is the broader message that Bhagwat's Vijayadashami address invites us to reflect upon—and this is the call of the hour.



LALIT GARGG
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Drug-free India by December 2029: Amit Shah calls for united nationwide campaign

Amit Shah urged police forces nationwide to eliminate narcotics by December 31, 2029. The campaign seeks to protect future generations and disrupt funding for anti-national organisations. Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday called on police forces across the country to work towards eliminating narcotics by the end of 2029, warning that drug abuse threatens future generations and funds organisations involved in anti-national activities, the Press Trust of India reported. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has set December 31, 2029, as the deadline for achieving the goal of a drug-free India. Shah said the remaining months of 2026, along with 2027, 2028 and 2029, would be devoted to a united campaign against drugs. Paying tribute to police personnel who died in the line of duty at the National Police Memorial in New Delhi on Police Commemoration Day, Shah described the fight against drugs as a major national priority.

Odisha Minister Assures Action on Kotia Border Row

BHUBANESWAR, OCT 21



Odisha Revenue and Disaster Management (R&DM) Minister Suresh Pujari on Wednesday said the state government is committed to taking all appropriate measures necessary for an early and lasting resolution of the long-standing border dispute involving Kotia gram panchayat in Koraput district. The Minister's remarks come amid renewed tensions over the Kotia panchayat in Pottangi block of Koraput district following recent moves by neighbouring Andhra Pradesh to hold panchayat elections in some villages of the disputed area. As soon as the Minister came to know about the development, he directed the district administration to keep a close watch on the situation. On Wednesday, Pujari conducted a detailed review, through a virtual meeting, of the recent developments concerning the border dispute involving Kotia gram panchayat in Koraput district. The officials stated that the minister held detailed discussions with Odisha Advocate General Pitambar Acharya during the meeting and sought his advice on taking appropriate legal measures to protect the state's interests. The Revenue Minister emphasised the need to expedite the necessary legal steps to resolve the dispute and strengthen Odisha's administrative presence in the border areas. "Maintaining peace, stability, and public trust in the Kotia region, alongside protecting the state's legal rights and interests, is the state government's priority. The state government is working with commitment to take all necessary and appropriate steps for a speedy and permanent resolution to this long-standing dispute," said Pujari. He added that this dispute over villages in the Kotia region has been the subject of bilateral talks and legal proceedings between Odisha and Andhra Pradesh for the past several years.

Targeting the previous BJD government, Pujari said, "After the interstate boundary dispute case filed by the then Odisha government was dismissed by the Supreme Court in 2006, the review petition and curative petition filed subsequently were also dismissed. However, instead of taking immediate steps, the then government filed another case in 2022, after a gap of 16 years. The case is currently pending before the court." The issue became more complicated when Andhra Pradesh conducted panchayat elections in the disputed villages in February 2021. Odisha subsequently filed a petition in the Supreme Court alleging contempt of court. As the cases are pending before the court, the Advocate General has been entrusted with taking all necessary legal steps. The Additional Chief Secretary of the R&DM department and the Koraput Collector have been directed to provide him with all required documents and extend the necessary assistance. Citing the sensitive legal nature of the dispute, the Minister called for close coordination between key departments, legal experts, and district officials to build a cohesive approach based on historical records, census data, and administrative facts. The state government continues delivering essential services and welfare projects in Kotia. A ministerial committee regularly reviews regional development under the Chief Minister's directions.



Those who lie, divide people cannot be Sanatani: Akhilesh Yadav

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Wednesday said those who discriminate, lie and divide people cannot be called Sanatani, in a veiled attack on the BJP.



Speaking to reporters in Lucknow, Yadav invoked "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam", or the world is one family, and questioned the claims of those practising divisive politics. "The sun is Sanatani. The wind does not discriminate against anyone. Those who discriminate, do not speak the truth, do not love others and divide people cannot be Sanatani," he said. Yadav also accused the BJP of relying on electoral manipulation and urged voters to back SP candidates in the October 23 graduate and teacher constituency elections to the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Council. "The BJP itself is the real crisis. The crisis will end only when the BJP is removed," he said.

AKHILESH WARNS OFFICIALS OVER POLL MALPRACTICE

Yadav appealed to the Election Commission to ensure free and fair polls and asked officials to remain impartial, according to PTI. If they act as political workers, they should be prepared to go to jail," he said. He accused basic education officers and district inspectors of schools of threatening voters over the phone in areas going to the polls. He asked teachers, school managements and others receiving such calls to record them and share the evidence with the SP. Yadav said officials involved in electoral malpractice would be held accountable if his party came to power. He also referred to alleged irregularities in transfers, postings and other education department matters. The SP chief questioned how BJP leaders and ministers were sending voice messages to voters when, he claimed, electoral rolls were not readily available to others. "How have voter lists reached ministers? They must have hired a company, which may have recorded their voices and sent the messages. Voice messages can be sent only when you have the data," he alleged.

FULL TEACHER STATUS FOR SHIKSHA MITRAS

Yadav promised to work towards granting full teacher status and government benefits to shiksha mitras, or ad hoc primary teachers, if the SP returned to power. He said a separate budgetary provision would be made without affecting the jobs of existing teachers. Asked what the beneficiaries would be called, he said the decision would be taken after forming the government, suggesting "Samajwadi teachers" as a possible name.

Ladakh to Hold First Panchayat Elections Since Becoming UT on November 21

The State Election Commission of Ladakh has announced that panchayat elections will be held across all Gram Panchayats on November 21, marking the first such polls since the region became a Union Territory in 2019. The entire election process, including the declaration of results, will be completed before November 30. The Model Code of Conduct has come into force with immediate effect. In a significant step towards strengthening grassroots governance, Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena has notified 100 constituencies for Ladakh's Autonomous Hill Development Councils, nearly doubling the earlier number of 52. The administration has also initiated several structural reforms to improve local governance and administrative efficiency. These measures include the creation of new tehsils, reorganisation of revenue villages and the establishment of Sankoo as Ladakh's eighth district. The upcoming elections are expected to strengthen democratic participation and representation at the grassroots level across the Union Territory.

Sambit Patra Accuses Rahul of Seeking Regime Change Lessons Abroad

BHUBANESWAR: (Oct 21) BJP national spokesperson Sambit Patra on Wednesday attacked Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and accused him of hatching a conspiracy to bring about a "regime change" without elections and taking guidance from abroad. Addressing a press conference here, the Puri MP alleged that the Congress was attempting to create unrest in the country. "An attempt is being made to spread anarchy in the country to relaunch Rahul Gandhi, who has failed several times earlier," Patra alleged.

Gujarat to spend Rs 1,000 crore on solar subsidy, households to pay as little as 5 pc of installation cost

GANDHINAGAR, OCT 21



More than three lakh families in Gujarat will benefit from an additional state subsidy for rooftop solar systems, with general-category households required to pay only 10 per cent of the installation cost and those belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (SC/ST) just five per cent, the state government announced on Wednesday. The decision was taken at a Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel. "The state government is expected to spend around Rs 1,000 crore on the additional subsidy under the Centre's 'PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana'," spokesperson minister Jitu Vaghani said. The subsidy will apply to residential rooftop solar systems with capacities of up to 2 kW. After deducting the assistance available from the Centre and the beneficiary's contribution, the state government will cover the remaining cost. Under the revised arrangement, a general-category household installing a 1 kW system, with a benchmark cost of Rs 54,000, will pay Rs 5,400, while an SC/ST household will pay Rs 2,700. The Centre's contribution is Rs 32,400, with the state government providing an additional subsidy of Rs 16,200 for general-category beneficiaries and Rs 18,900 for SC/ST beneficiaries.

For a 2 kW system, benchmarked at Rs 1,07,200, the beneficiary's contribution will be Rs 10,720 for the general category and Rs 5,360 for SC/ST households.

The Central Government provides Rs 62,800 towards the cost, while the state subsidy will amount to Rs 33,600 for general-category beneficiaries and Rs 38,960 for SC/ST beneficiaries.

"The decision is aimed at making rooftop solar installations more affordable and allowing more households to reduce their dependence on conventional electricity," he said. Gujarat has so far recorded more than 14 lakh households installing solar systems on their rooftops, according to the state government. Of these, more than 8.5 lakh installations have been made under the PM Surya Ghar scheme, placing the state first nationally under the programme. The scheme is intended to help households reduce their electricity bills through rooftop solar generation. Families can also earn income by supplying surplus electricity, subject to the applicable arrangements.

Devbhoomi Cricket Academy Opens in Tunalka, Offering Training Opportunities to Youngsters

CAU Secretary Kiran Verma, Naugaon Nagar Panchayat Chairman Vijay Kumar and Uttarkashi District Cricket Association Secretary Ajay Bhatt inaugurate academy

SUNIL THAPLIYAL





BARKOT (Uttarkashi): Devbhoomi Cricket Academy was inaugurated at Tunalka in the Naugaon area of Yamunaghati, marking a significant step towards promoting cricket among young people in the region. The academy was formally opened following a traditional religious ceremony, with Cricket Association of Uttarakhand (CAU) Secretary Kiran Verma, Naugaon Nagar Panchayat Chairman Vijay Kumar and Uttarkashi District Cricket Association Secretary Ajay Bhatt jointly cutting the ribbon. The academy aims to provide local youngsters with access to structured cricket training and opportunities to develop their sporting abilities. It is described as the only cricket academy in the Yamunaghati region, offering a platform for aspiring players who wish to pursue a future in the sport. CAU Secretary Kiran Verma said the hill regions have considerable cricketing talent and that proper coaching and guidance could help young players improve their skills and progress. Naugaon Nagar Panchayat Chairman Vijay Kumar welcomed the initiative, saying the academy would encourage local children to take up sports and strengthen cricket activities in the area. Uttarkashi District Cricket Association Secretary Ajay Bhatt said regular practice and technical coaching were essential for improving performance, adding that the academy would provide youngsters with a valuable local training opportunity. Academy founder and coach Mahavir Singh said training would be provided to children aged 12 to 19 years. He said the academy had been established despite limited resources, with the objective of nurturing cricket talent in the hills. The initiative is expected to benefit aspiring cricketers from Naugaon, Barkot and nearby villages, reducing the need to travel elsewhere for training. Jogendra Singh, Anil Rawat, Brijmohan, Sunil Chauhan, Nikhil and several others attended the inauguration.

Dipke Hails Saurav Das, Ashutosh Ranka After Release

NEW DELHI: (Oct 21) The Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) on Wednesday welcomed the special executive magistrate's order releasing its leaders Saurav Das and Ashutosh Ranka, with founder Abhijeet Dipke calling them "much, much bigger leaders" than him. CJP's legal head Ratna Singh said the decision should have come earlier. Das and Ranka were released after the expiry of judicial custody in connection with the October 14 protest at Jantar Mantar.

Gujarat Tells HC Business Rights Can't Override Pilgrimage Sanctity

AHMEDABAD: (Oct 21) The Gujarat government told the High Court on Wednesday that the right to carry on business cannot be stretched into a right to disregard the religious, historical and cultural character of a pilgrimage destination. The government made the submission when the Gujarat HC was hearing a plea challenging a state notification banning sale and storage of non-veg food within 500-metre periphery of the famous Somnath Temple, a shrine dedicated to Lord Shiva. Defending the ban, the government told a bench of Justice Nisha M Thakor that Somnath cannot be viewed merely as a commercial town, ignoring its extraordinary religious, historical and spiritual significance to millions of Hindus across the country.

All India Radio Varanasi to Broadcast Live the Historic Bharat Milap of Nati Imli

Listeners Across India and Abroad Can Also Tune In Through the NewsOnAir App, Waves OTT and DTH Services

VARANASI, OCTOBER 21, 2026

In keeping with its commitment to bringing the historic, religious and cultural traditions of Kashi to a wider audience, All India Radio (AIR), Varanasi, will broadcast the world-famous Bharat Milap celebrations at Nati Imli live on October 22, 2026, from 3:45 p.m. The live broadcast will be available on Medium Wave 1242 kHz and the Vividh Bharati FM channel at 100.6 MHz. Listeners across India and abroad can also join the historic event through the NewsOnAir app, Waves OTT and DTH services. The Bharat Milap celebration at Nati Imli holds a special place among Varanasi's major religious and cultural events. Based on the emotionally moving reunion of Lord Shri Ram and his younger brother Bharat, the event symbolises Kashi's rich Ramlila tradition, popular faith and cultural heritage. The live broadcast by All India Radio will provide an opportunity for listeners who cannot be physically present at the venue to experience and participate in this cherished tradition. The special broadcast will feature commentary by Prof. Ram Mohan Pathak, a renowned educationist, senior journalist and media expert, along with Arun Kumar Pandey, a senior announcer of All India Radio. Through his commentary, Prof. Pathak will highlight the historical background, religious significance, cultural traditions and emotional essence of the Bharat Milap, particularly the reunion of Lord Shri Ram and Bharat. Senior announcer Arun Kumar Pandey will guide listeners through the proceedings in a systematic manner, explaining the major moments of the celebration, their distinctive features and other relevant details. Ashutosh Kumar will provide on-the-spot commentary from the event venue. He will present a live account of the atmosphere, the gathering of devotees, the preparations and the major scenes and activities unfolding before him. His direct commentary will enable listeners to experience the vibrant atmosphere and festive spirit of the celebration. All India Radio, Varanasi, has consistently worked to preserve the region's cultural, literary, religious and folk-art heritage and bring it to a wider audience. The live broadcast of the Nati Imli Bharat Milap is an important part of this ongoing endeavour. Broadcasting such events associated with popular faith not only helps pass the region's cultural heritage on to the younger generation but also connects listeners living in different parts of the country with the time-honoured traditions of Kashi. Mr. Prafull Kumar Sinha, Programme Head of All India Radio, Varanasi, has appealed to listeners to tune in to the special live broadcast and become part of this unique celebration of Kashi's glorious cultural heritage.

Tighten this into a sharper news releaseClarify the broadcast details earlier

NER Prioritises Clean Drinking Water for Passengers, Staff

GORAKHPUR, OCTOBER 21, 2026

North Eastern Railway has accorded priority to the continuous monitoring and maintenance of water tanks, water coolers, taps, filters, distribution points and pipelines at railway stations, offices and residential colonies to ensure the availability of clean and safe drinking water to passengers and railway employees. Chief Health Inspectors and Health Inspectors of the Railways are regularly conducting residual chlorine tests, bacteriological culture tests and chemical analyses to ensure the safety of drinking water. Providing pure drinking water to passengers and railway employees is one of the top priorities of the railway administration, and the initiative will continue as an ongoing campaign. In Lucknow Division, under the joint guidance of Dr. Ramesh Chand, Chief Medical Superintendent, Divisional Railway Hospital, Badshahnagar, and Shri Bhuvanesh Singh, Additional Divisional Railway Manager (Infrastructure), Chief Health Inspectors and Health Inspectors conducted 540 residual chlorine tests and 16 bacteriological culture tests on October 19 and 20, 2026, covering 25 major railway stations and eight major railway residential colonies. Following the tests, all water samples were found to comply with the prescribed standards. Similarly, regular residual chlorine tests and bacteriological culture tests were conducted at major stations in Izzatnagar Division. In Varanasi Division, Chief Health Inspectors and Health Inspectors inspected water tanks, water coolers, water filters, pipelines and pumping systems at railway stations, residential colonies, coaching depots, hospitals and health centres, running rooms, crew lobbies and offices. The inspection campaign will continue across all railway stations, residential colonies and offices under North Eastern Railway to ensure the availability of pure drinking water. Health inspectors are conducting regular tests to ensure that passengers and railway employees receive clean drinking water that meets the prescribed quality standards.

Providing clean drinking water to railway passengers and employees remains a priority for the railway administration, and continuous monitoring of water quality will be maintained.

Pakistan in active conflict with Afghan regime it once considered strategic asset: Report

ISLAMABAD



Pakistan believed that the Taliban's return to power in Afghanistan would become strategic leverage in the region. However, it has resulted in recurring security liability for Islamabad as the Taliban is not ready to subordinate its own political authority and security priorities, a report has detailed.

In June, Pakistan carried out airstrikes in Afghanistan, which the Taliban said claimed the lives of 13 civilians and injured 14 others, while Islamabad said it killed 26 militants. Different statements from Pakistan and Afghanistan have become routine, with each country describing the same strikes as either counterterrorism or civilian slaughter. The recent airstrike is just the latest in the conflict that has been building for more than a year between Afghanistan and Pakistan, which in 2021 were allies, a report in Columbia Political Review mentioned.

During the US occupation of Afghanistan, Pakistan provided a safe haven and intelligence support to the Taliban. After the Taliban seized power in Afghanistan, it was assumed that ties between Pakistan and Afghanistan would deepen. However, the assumption was proven wrong as a military confrontation erupted between the two nations, the report highlighted.

Ties between Pakistan and Afghanistan became strained as Tehreek-e-Taliban (TTP) increased attacks in Pakistan and militants of the group operated from safe havens in Afghanistan. In response, Pakistan carried out cross-border strikes and began deportation of undocumented Afghan refugees, further straining ties between the two nations.

"Islamabad assumed that the Taliban's comeback into power would become strategic leverage in the region, but instead it led to a recurring security liability as the Taliban government was unwilling to subordinate its own political authority and security priorities. Pakistan increasingly viewed Afghanistan as a security threat, and by 2025 the relationship had moved into direct military confrontation," Anaya Qayyum wrote in Columbia Political Review.

Tensions have erupted between Pakistan and Afghanistan as legitimacy in Afghanistan is historically connected to resisting control of foreign powers and Afghans know and are sensitive to Pakistani influence. Taliban have contended they are independent Islamic nationalists who freed Afghanistan from foreign invaders.

According to the report, Pakistan wants the Taliban to suppress the TTP, a group that shares the same ideology as the Taliban and whose members are connected across arbitrary borders. The Pashtun identity also holds importance as it creates a transnational ethnic bond that supersedes the official border, making the Taliban's any action on the TTP appear like a betrayal of their own people to please a hostile Pakistani state.

It said that Pakistan is now involved in an active conflict with the regime it once considered a strategic asset, and Afghan people face violence from Pakistan's airstrikes and the Taliban's rule, which has stopped girls from attending secondary school and higher education. As the conflict between Pakistan and Afghanistan escalated after October 2025, aid organisations have reduced services in the border areas amid funding shortages, leaving refugees and transiting families with little resources at a time when they need them the most.

In July, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) said that 57 people were killed and 342 others injured in cross-border armed violence in Afghanistan between April 1 and June 30. UNAMA stated that airstrikes and ground engagements were the primary causes of civilian harm. It attributed all cross-border civilian casualties recorded during this period to Pakistani security forces. Apart from airstrikes, Pakistan has also continued to deport Afghan refugees, over 146,000 in 2026 alone.

"Decades of policymaking and attempts to build security have been reduced to a policy measured in deportations and bombs. While Pakistan sought to enhance security, it instead got a war. Pakistan miscalculated the Taliban's loyalty, but its bigger mistake was assuming that dependence could be converted into control. Once the Taliban had to govern Afghanistan rather than fight to retake it, it did not necessarily need Pakistani direction to retain that power," Kayyum wrote in Columbia Political Review.

Canada, India ties improving at rapid pace: Report

NEW DELHI

The relations between Canada and India continue to improve at a rapid pace. There is growing confidence that negotiations on a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) are nearing a conclusion. That momentum should allow leaders to conclude negotiations during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Canada in December, according to an article published by the Business Council of Canada.

The CEPA would be an important achievement and featured regularly in recent discussions among Canadian and Indian business leaders seeking stronger economic ties. But in the broader context of Canada-India relations, the agreement should be viewed as the beginning, not the end, of the bilateral journey.

Parallel negotiations are ongoing for the Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement. Canadian businesses remain deeply interested in stronger investment protections, making an investment treaty the logical next priority once the CEPA is concluded. Canada must also ensure that the CEPA is fully implemented and that businesses are equipped to take advantage of the opportunities it creates, the article states.

It highlights the importance of Mumbai, India's financial hub, as poised to play an important role in the next stage of economic relations between the two countries. The scale of construction across Mumbai is remarkable. It is difficult to imagine another city undergoing as much transformation, at such speed and scale, as Mumbai will over the next decade or so, the article observes.

It underlines that both Canadian and Indian business leaders see the need for the two countries to work more closely so that they are less vulnerable to economic coercion. India has faced significant disruptions to its supply chains and trade, and it is actively pursuing reliable partners such as Canada. This was a useful reminder that the bilateral relationship is not only about market access. It is also about diversification, economic resilience, and building dependable partnerships in a more uncertain global economy.

Canada must conclude the CEPA, pursue a modern investment agreement, implement the trade deal effectively and engage more deliberately with fast-growing states such as Maharashtra. India is building quickly, Canadian capital is already present, and the political relationship is improving.



Save Energy to Save Future Generations

(On the occasion of "World Energy Day" on 22 October)

The "World Energy Forum" took the initiative of raising awareness about energy use and promote sustainable energy solutions, the "World Energy Day" is observed annually on 22 October since 2012. The objective of the day focuses on ensuring affordable, safe, and sustainable energy for all, while working to reduce carbon emissions and improve energy access globally. The World Energy Day may includes lot of activities to increase awareness of the importance of conservation and use of energy and to promote sustainability of energy. It is heartening to learn that over 1.1 billion people worldwide, mostly sub-Sahara Africans, are living without access to electricity in this digital age. One in five people do not have electricity to satisfy their basic needs. The theme of World Energy Day-2026 is "Sustain It - Turn Action into Impact" emphasises the urgent need for tapping the renewable energy resources to the fullest possible extent worldwide.

Save Energy for Universal Accessibility:

Saving energy increasing efficiency and conservation are for the most part terms used to depict ways we can decrease our overall energy consumption. Energy can be saved at homes by switching off or unplug any charger or appliances we don't need and check the energy label to make sure you're buying an efficient product. The UN has set 2030 year for universal access to sustainable energy for their normal living. This day must demonstrate our commitment to efficient energy management and environmental protection. The main focus should be on the positive and sustainable practices that help reduce the use of electricity, water, and fossil fuels. The actions like using efficient electrical technologies, use of low-consumption LED bulbs, resorting to public transport, and adopting the right to repair approach rather than replacement can save energy significantly. The planet's energy sources are increasingly exploited, leading to the depletion of natural resources. Therefore, it is important to use electrical energy nationally, opt for renewable energies, and raise awareness.

- Capt Dr Burra Madhusudhan Reddy
9949700037.

'Like wrecking ball', El Nino to create shocks to global economy: UN

UNITED NATIONS



The United Nations (UN) is warning that the El Nino is a "wrecking ball" that will create "shocks for the global economy" and hit Asia and other regions in the Global South with droughts, floods and extreme heat.

"This El Nino is a behemoth. It is a wrecking ball. It will tear through, as you've heard, Latin America, Eastern and Southern Africa, Asia and the Pacific with extreme heat, droughts and floods," UN Under-Secretary-General Tom Fletcher said on Wednesday. "The damage will not stay in the countries in the immediate path of this El Nino," he said.

"It will create economic shocks for the global economy and drive further conflict, displacement, migration."

"The next two weeks are the critical window to act before that damage is done" and "Asia and the Pacific must prepare for droughts, floods and cyclones," Fletcher said at a news conference in Geneva.

The UN Under-Secretary-General proposed "a much wider global mobilisation of solidarity, expertise and action across governments, civil societies, academics, businesses".

"I'm writing to countries with existing disaster response capacity, part of our coordinated emergency network, to ask them to place that capacity on immediate standby to support the effort," Fletcher said. India has taken on an international role in weather disaster forecasting and relief in the aftermath. New Delhi's India–UN Development Partnership Fund has sponsored projects for early warning systems, and disaster risk reduction in seven Pacific Island countries.

India along with the other members of the Quad, the US, Japan and Australia, also has Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) programmes for the Indo-Pacific region. Neither Fletcher nor the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) Head Celeste Saulo, who spoke at the briefing, gave country-specific information.

"It would be an extraordinary failure to see this crisis coming, to hear the predictions from the experts, and yet still squander the opportunity to protect people in its path," Fletcher said, whose portfolio is humanitarian and emergency relief.

Saulo said that although the El Nino will peak towards the end of this year, "its impacts will be felt long after that".

It "could be (of) unprecedented in strength, literally off the monitoring charts that we have used for the past four decades," she added.

For Southeast Asia, she foresaw "warmer conditions and rainfall deficits increase the risk of heat exposure and place additional pressure on agriculture and water supplies, like the increasing wildfire and smoke hazards risks we are already seeing".

A news bulleting from the WMO last week said that "normal to above normal maximum and minimum temperatures are likely" over most parts of the southern part of South Asia for the rest of the year.

US plans new command for autonomous warfare

WASHINGTON

The United States plans to establish a four-star Autonomous Warfare Command by October 1, 2027, as the Pentagon moves to fundamentally change how its military develops, purchases and deploys drones, robotics and other autonomous weapons systems in response to rapidly evolving battlefield threats.

The initiative, outlined in a letter from the Department of War's Project Agincourt leadership, seeks to place operational commanders at the centre of military technology development, allowing frontline forces to work directly with defence companies and accelerate the deployment of new capabilities. The proposed command, known as Autowarcom, would represent a major institutional shift in American military planning. The roadmap was presented by Owen West and Senior Chief Max Strasiser, who said the changing economics of warfare demanded a different approach to military innovation. "Low-cost drones have changed the character, speed and economics of war," the letter said. The Pentagon's Project Agincourt has been assigned two principal missions. The first is to establish Autowarcom by October 1, 2027, with the authority required to coordinate autonomous warfare capabilities across the armed forces. The second is to continue the work of the Direct Reporting Portfolio Manager for Unmanned Systems while developing a new acquisition model that connects autonomous technology and robotics companies directly with operational military units.

Nearly 16 million people face acute food insecurity in Afghanistan: UN

KABUL

Nearly 16 million people in Afghanistan are experiencing acute food insecurity, including 3.4 million facing emergency levels of hunger, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said, adding that the conditions are likely to worsen during the winter months, local media reported on Wednesday.

UN OCHA spokesperson Olga Cherevko made the statement after visiting southern and northeastern Afghanistan. She said millions of families still cannot buy enough food due to unemployment, low incomes, and limited access to essential services, Afghanistan-based news agency Khaama Press reported. The UN's warning comes as Afghanistan prepares for the winter season, when people often face more difficulty in earning money and buying food.

Olga Cherevko said years of conflict, economic problems, drought and repeated crises have weakened the ability of people to deal with further shocks in Afghanistan.

She emphasised that humanitarian assistance is needed for saving lives, but it cannot permanently replace public services, jobs and sustainable sources of income.

Cherevko called for making more investments in agriculture, rural livelihoods, local markets, employment, water systems, health services and increasing economic opportunities for women.

She urged the international community to take action before winter, warning that assistance must reach vulnerable families before they exhaust their remaining resources, Khaama Press reported.

Indian-American Republican candidate gets Vance's backing on controversial ad

WASHINGTON



Indian-American Vivek Ramaswamy, the Republican candidate for Ohio governor, received strong backing from Vice President JD Vance on Wednesday, rebuking fellow Republicans for "whining" about a Ramaswamy campaign advertisement featuring the mother of his Democratic rival Amy Acton.

Vance, speaking at a press conference in Cincinnati on the administration's anti-fraud drive, said: "Whether the ad was appropriate or not is not really my concern."

"I'm a little bit disgusted when I see Republicans across the country who are whining more about that advertisement than they are about what the Congressional Democrats and other Democrats want to do to the United States of America," Vance said in reply to a question. Some Republicans have distanced themselves from the advertisement.

Vance said the real question for voters was a different one. "Do you actually think that Amy Acton is unfit to serve as governor of the state of Ohio? I do," he said.

He said, "The reason that John Husted should be a United States Senator is that he's the right man for the job, and because Vivek should be the governor of Ohio."

Vance pointed out that Ramaswamy, the son of Indian immigrants, had himself been the target of harsh attacks. "People have called Vivek Ramaswamy a murderer in some of the advertisements run against him," he said. "Politics is a tough business, and my message to my fellow elected Republicans is, if you actually believe in the things you say you believe in, stop whining about an advertisement and go win the race in 13 days," Vance said.

The Vice President, who represented Ohio in the US Senate, said he understood the state "instinctively" and would make the case for the Republican ticket at a rally later in the day.

At the rally at the Sharonville Convention Centre, with Ramaswamy and Husted seated in the front row, Vance said: "Vivek believes that the American dream should be within reach for every single Ohioan."

He defended Ramaswamy for having "the audacity to run a TV commercial which calls it out like it is," according to a pool report. Vance also targeted Democrat Sherrod Brown, who is running against Husted for the Senate. "He is a rubber stamp for Chuck Schumer and the far-left agenda," he said.

A few hundred people attended the rally. A protester was escorted out during the event.

Ramaswamy, a biotech entrepreneur who ran for the Republican presidential nomination in 2024 before endorsing Donald Trump, faces Acton in the November 3 election. A Ramaswamy win would make him one of the most prominent Indian-American elected officials in the country.

The Cincinnati press conference was called to announce an update from the administration's fraud task force. Attorney General Todd Blanche said, "We have uncovered $42 million in fraud associated with the SNAP program," with indictments "in 13 different districts" since September 1.

Vance described the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program as one of the most important social service programs in the country and said the administration was "fighting and winning the war against fraud" in it.

'First Russian tanker carrying 40,000 tonnes of diesel to depart in 2-3 days'

SAINT PETERSBURG



The first tanker carrying 40,000 tonnes of Russian diesel fuel will depart in two to three days, Russian President Vladimir Putin said Wednesday. Russia is currently preparing shipments of several tankers carrying diesel fuel, Putin said during his meeting with US special envoy Steve Witkoff at the Konstantinovsky Palace in St. Petersburg. The fuel is for the global and US markets, Xinhua news agency reported.

Putin held a telephone conversation with US President Donald Trump on October 9, during which considerable attention was paid to prospects for resolving the Ukraine crisis, the Kremlin said.

On global energy developments, Russia reaffirmed its readiness to supply oil and petroleum products to US and global markets, according to the Kremlin.

On Tuesday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky discussed proposals for various ceasefire formats with Witkoff in Oslo, Norway, Ukraine's state-run Ukrinform news agency reported.

The meeting was also attended by Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Store and Finnish President Alexander Stubb. Speaking after the meeting, Zelensky said the talks also covered security guarantees for Ukraine and the country's recovery.

Following the meeting, Witkoff travelled to St. Petersburg in Russia, where he met Russian leadership to discuss peace efforts.

Global energy markets have faced sustained pressure since the outbreak of hostilities in the Middle East earlier this year. The conflict has triggered what the International Energy Agency termed the "largest supply disruption" in the history of global fuel markets.

Last week, US President Donald Trump said that "massive" oil, gas and mineral exploration is "getting ready" to begin in Greenland.

Writing on his Truth Social platform, Trump suggested that experts believe the Arctic island owns an amount of "easily available oil" which is "far greater than that of almost any land, anywhere in the world." He did not provide any specific estimates or elaborate on the exploration plans. Trump also said any future attack on the United States would "have to come across Greenland, where our Defence will routinely knock down drones, missiles, or any other form of weapon not yet even conceived."

Trump's remarks followed a wide-ranging deal signed in late September by the United States, Denmark and Greenland to expand the US military presence on the island.

The deal came after months of pressure from Trump, who repeatedly called for acquiring the autonomous Danish territory and did not rule out the use of military or economic means. The proposal has drawn strong opposition from NATO allies and Greenlanders.

Sensex, Nifty gives up gains to close lower; IT stocks shine

Indian markets surged as IT shares rallied and Jio Platforms opened its IPO. Earnings optimism and trade deal hopes offset concerns over elevated crude prices.



Stock markets reversed course on Wednesday after the Sensex surged more than 800 points in early trade, with rising crude oil prices, foreign investor selling and profit-booking across sectors erasing the gains. IT stocks bucked the broader weakness, supported by optimism over quarterly earnings, while heavy selling in auto, financial, metal and realty shares weighed on the benchmarks.

The BSE Sensex closed at 73,709.69, down 143.21 points or 0.19%. The index had climbed to an intraday high of 74,682.19, gaining more than 800 points from its previous close, before reversing course. The NSE Nifty 50 fell 77.60 points, or 0.34%, to settle at 22,811.35. The reversal came as investors weighed optimism around the launch of Jio Platforms' record-breaking IPO against concerns over elevated crude oil prices and continued foreign investor selling. The market also saw a sharp divergence between IT stocks and the broader market, with the Nifty IT index rising even as most other sectoral indices ended in the red.

IT STOCKS EMERGE AS THE BIGGEST GAINERS

IT stocks were the strongest performers on Wednesday, with the Nifty IT index rising 2.88%. HCLTech gained 3.40%, Infosys rose 3.31%, Tech Mahindra advanced 3.21% and TCS climbed 2.68%. Wipro also remained firm, supported by the broader rally in technology shares. Recent quarterly results from major IT companies have improved sentiment, while the global sell-off in AI-linked stocks has prompted investors to reassess opportunities in Indian IT services companies.

The sector's resilience helped limit the losses in the benchmark indices. However, gains were concentrated in IT stocks, with weakness across several other sectors pointing to a lack of broad-based buying.

AUTO, FINANCIAL AND METAL STOCKS DRAG

Selling pressure was widespread across the market. The Nifty Auto index fell 1.54%, while the Nifty Financial Services 25/50 index declined 0.96%. The Nifty Metal index dropped 1.71% and the Nifty Realty index lost 1.25%. Among Sensex stocks, Bajaj Finance was the biggest loser, falling 3.33%. Eternal declined 2.71%, Trent dropped 2.32%, Axis Bank fell 2.11% and Maruti Suzuki lost 1.94%. Bajaj Finserv, Indigo and Kotak Mahindra Bank also ended lower. The Nifty Private Bank index declined 1.05%, while the Nifty PSU Bank index fell 0.51%. The Nifty FMCG index slipped 0.58%, and consumer durables stocks also came under pressure.

The weakness was more pronounced in the broader market. The Nifty 100 fell 0.56%, the Nifty 200 declined 0.76% and the Nifty 500 dropped 0.92%.

The Nifty Midcap 50 fell 1.60%, while the Nifty Midcap 100 declined 1.58%. The Nifty Smallcap 100 dropped 2.37%, indicating that smaller companies faced greater selling pressure than the benchmark indices. India VIX, a gauge of expected market volatility, rose 6.29% to 15.70, signalling increased nervousness among investors.

CRUDE OIL AND FII SELLING WEIGH ON SENTIMENT

Crude oil prices remained elevated, adding to concerns over India's import bill, inflation and corporate margins. Brent crude rose 1.79% to $110.74 a barrel, while US West Texas Intermediate crude gained 2.13% to $99.93 in the latest supplied snapshot. Higher oil prices are a concern for India because the country imports a large share of its crude requirements. A sustained increase can put pressure on the rupee, raise input costs for businesses and complicate the inflation outlook. Foreign institutional investor (FII) flows also remain an important factor for the market. While FIIs were net buyers in the cash market in the previous session, their persistent selling through much of 2026 has left Indian equities vulnerable to shifts in global sentiment. Domestic institutional buying and improving earnings have offered support, but Wednesday's weak market breadth highlighted the caution among investors. Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Investments Limited, said Indian equities gave up their strong early gains as elevated crude prices and continued FII selling overshadowed optimism surrounding India-US trade negotiations. He said profit-booking intensified across auto, financial, metal and realty stocks amid concerns over inflation and margin pressures, while IT stocks showed relative resilience on improving earnings visibility and renewed investor interest in the sector. Nair added that resilient second-quarter earnings and robust domestic institutional flows remain important supports for the market. However, weak market breadth and persistent foreign selling point to continued caution. He said the near-term direction would depend on the breadth of earnings delivery, progress on trade negotiations and foreign investor flows. A sustained moderation in crude oil prices, global bond yields and currency volatility would also be crucial for market stability.

Investors will track the next set of quarterly earnings, movements in crude oil prices, foreign investor flows and developments around India-US trade negotiations. The performance of IT stocks will also remain in focus as markets assess whether earnings-led gains can continue to offset weakness elsewhere. Wednesday's sharp intraday reversal shows that positive company-specific developments may not be enough to sustain a broader rally while oil prices remain high and foreign selling persists. The next test for the market will be whether buying spreads beyond IT stocks and supports a more durable recovery.

Jio IPO Gets 100% Subscription in Just 100 Minutes in a Blockbuster Opening

Strong investor demand for Jio IPO, with the QIB category subscribed 3.68 times
Over 1 million applications received on Day 1; anchor investors had placed bids worth more than 30 times the shares on offer
Rs 2,500 crore reserved for Reliance shareholders, offering an additional opportunity for share allotment

MUMBAI, OCTOBER 21, 2026

Investors have given a strong response to Jio Platforms' ₹30,213-crore IPO, the largest public offering in India's history. The IPO, which opened on Wednesday morning, was fully subscribed within just 100 minutes. According to the latest figures, the issue has been subscribed 1.14 times, while the portion reserved for Qualified Institutional Buyers (QIBs) has been subscribed 3.68 times. The IPO has received over 1 million applications so far. The issue will remain open for subscription until October 23. Investor enthusiasm for Jio's IPO was evident even before the public issue opened. The anchor investor portion, comprising shares worth approximately ₹8,110 crore, attracted bids exceeding ₹2.5 lakh crore, translating into demand of more than 30 times the shares on offer. LIC received the largest allocation, worth approximately ₹500 crore. Jio has also set a new record in terms of IPO size. Until now, Hyundai Motor India held the distinction of conducting India's largest IPO, valued at ₹27,870 crore. Jio's IPO has been priced in the range of ₹1,065 to ₹1,119 per share. Notably, even though the IPO has been fully subscribed, eligible shareholders of Reliance Industries have an additional opportunity to secure an allotment. Shares worth up to ₹2,500 crore have been reserved for them. Eligible investors can apply under both the shareholder and retail categories, potentially giving them an additional opportunity to receive shares.

AgriVoltaics policies must suit needs of small, marginal farmers: Shivraj Singh Chouhan

NEW DELHI, OCT 21



Union Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Wednesday said agrivoltaics policies should be tailored to the needs of India's small and marginal farmers, stressing that the adoption of solar energy in agriculture can help farmers emerge as both food producers and energy producers.

Speaking at the inaugural session of the three-day AgriVoltaics World Conference 2026 here, which he jointly inaugurated with Union Minister Pralhad Joshi, Chouhan said the integration of agriculture and solar power has the potential to enhance farmers' incomes while contributing to broader economic and environmental goals. Union ministers stressed that agrivoltaics — installing solar panels above cropland while continuing cultivation — can help farmers become both Annadatas and Urjadatas and boost economic prosperity, according to an official statement.

Chouhan called for designs that allow ploughing, crop changes and proper rainwater drainage, the statement from the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy said. He called for the active involvement of Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) and training for rural youth and women in equipment operation, repair and maintenance to create employment opportunities in villages. Agriculture minister emphasised that farmers could become both Annadatas and Urjadatas by adopting solar energy alongside farming. Chouhan highlighted that the integration of agriculture and solar power could promote global welfare and enhance farmers' economic prosperity.

He noted that electricity had become indispensable to modern life and agriculture, making the integration of energy generation with farming an important step towards farmers' welfare. The minister said that India's foodgrain stocks are adequate and that the agricultural sector had sustained a growth rate of 4.5 per cent, with agricultural exports touching a record $52.55 billion. The Union Agriculture Minister drew attention to the structural challenges faced by the agriculture sector, noting that the average landholding in the country was only 0.96 hectares. He emphasised that agrivoltaics models must allow farmers to continue cultivation instead of replacing farming with solar power generation. Pralhad Joshi said that India's non-fossil fuel-based installed electricity capacity had reached 308.03 GW, accounting for more than 55 per cent of the country's total installed electricity capacity of approximately 560 GW. Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh together accounted for nearly 50 per cent of India's estimated agrivoltaic potential.

Joshi highlighted that agrivoltaics could be adapted to different agricultural activities, including fruit and plantation crops, vegetables, spices, horticulture, floriculture and fodder, as well as livestock rearing in suitable settings. He noted that field studies had indicated potential yield improvements of 10–20 per cent for certain crops and reductions of around 30 per cent in water consumption under suitable systems. The minister announced that one of the world's most ambitious agrivoltaic programmes would be launched under the next phase of PM-KUSUM. He stated that the initiative would provide an opportunity to further expand solar energy in agriculture by aligning the scheme with existing agricultural programmes.

THE VAULT IS PICKED 3,897 INDIANS LAID BARE ON THE DARK WEB, AND SBI BRIEFED THE STOCK MARKET BEFORE IT BRIEFED THEM

BANK LEARNT OF THE LOOT FROM OUTSIDERS, A FACELESS GROUP BRAGS OF 3,75,000 ROWS, AND THE LAW OF THE LAND SLUMBERS TILL MAY 2027!



State Bank of India has confirmed 3,897 customer records among 3,75,000 entries put up on a dark web forum by a group called Siriusim. The bank learnt of it on October 16 from outside sources, and told the stock exchanges before the customers. The Internet Freedom Foundation says the law in force does not compel the bank to inform the people affected, because the data protection rules bite only in 2027. Phishing and fraud now stalk the ordinary account holder.

The country's biggest bank has been caught with its pockets turned out, and the first to be told were the brokers and the bourses, not the borrowers. The exposed information reportedly included registered mobile numbers, dates of birth, names, gender, email and residential addresses, besides branch and customer file identifiers and metadata on loan and lead records. That is the farmer's loan file, the clerk's housing finance and the shopkeeper's working capital, parked on a forum where thieves go shopping. The claim came from a group calling itself Siriusim. The group says it holds 375,000 customer records and 2,722 PDF documents, and posted four free samples to prove its bona fides. The Free Press Journal tested those samples. The phone numbers were active, and one WhatsApp profile photo matched the passport size photo in the attached KYC papers. Real citizens, then, with real faces and real numbers. SBI's answer deserves a fair hearing, and it gets one here. The bank says it learnt of the matter on October 16 through threat intelligence sources, set its response protocols in motion, brought in an independent firm for a full investigation, and saw no disruption to operations. The figure it has confirmed, 3,897 records, is a little over one per cent of the 3,75,000 entries flagged. The bank's defenders will say this is a contained problem, handled promptly and disclosed under stock exchange rules. That is a fair argument, and it is only half the argument. The other half belongs to the account holder, who still has not heard a word from his own bank. The Internet Freedom Foundation points out that SBI did not detect this breach itself and learnt of it from outside agencies after the data had already been published. A bank that holds the savings of crores of Indians must be the first to know when its doors are forced, not the last.

A bank that tells the market first and the customer never has mistaken its shareholders for its constituency. The depositor's trust is the only capital that no regulator can recapitalise.

Why has the customer not been told? Because the law does not yet oblige the bank. Section 8(6) of the Digital Personal Data Protection Act requires intimation to the Data Protection Board and to each affected person, and Rule 7 prescribes the method. Yet the main duties, breach reporting among them, are scheduled to apply only from 13 May 2027. The statute book carries a promise, and the promise is not yet payable. The Internet Freedom Foundation says as much, and asks the Reserve Bank to direct regulated entities to notify customers within a fixed period, and the IT Ministry to bring Section 8(6) and Rule 7 into force immediately. It also wants a helpline and anonline facility so that customers can check whether they are affected. Strict legal duty is one thing and plain public duty another. Nothing in law stops SBI from sending an SMS or an email to every identified customer tonight. The risk is real: identity theft, financial fraud and targeted phishing are what such leaks invite. A fraudster who knows your name, your branch and your loan details can ring you up sounding exactly like your banker. Every day of silence leaves the customer defenceless against that call. Questions remain that only the bank and the investigators can answer. Nobody has confirmed whether the data came from SBI directly, from a subsidiary, or from a third party service provider, or whether it is fresh or recycled from older incidents. If a vendor in the chain was the weak link, the bank must say so and say what has been done about it. Sovereignty over the personal data of Indian citizens is not an abstraction. It is the security of the Indian household, and no outside contractor or anonymous forum may treat it as loose change. The record also gives the bank no comfort. In 2019 an unprotected server allowed anyone to view data from SBI Quick, including bank balances and recent transactions of millions of customers. The bank's then chairman said no customer data was lost, only a gap in process. Seven years later the gap has a number and a dark web listing. And SBI is not alone, for Bank of Baroda acknowledged a significant leak this July. The pattern is a sector problem that has outgrown a single institution's press note. What must happen now is plain. SBI must write to every affected customer, open a helpline, publish the findings of the independent probe, and name the point of failure. The Reserve Bank must set a hard deadline for all banks. The Government must stop treating the commencement date as a holiday. The Indian depositor has done his duty by trusting the bank, and the bank must now do its duty by telling him the truth.

Punjab farmers procure 21,019 crop residue management machines

CHANDIGARH, OCT 21



Punjab has taken another significant step towards eliminating stubble burning, with farmers procuring 21,019 crop residue management (CRM) machines during the current season. The Super Seeder emerged as the most preferred equipment among farmers, Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister Gurmeet Singh Khudian said on Wednesday. He said the large-scale procurement, supported by subsidies ranging from 50 to 80 per cent, reflects a significant shift in the state's approach to crop residue management, with farmers increasingly adopting sustainable alternatives to stubble burning. The Super Seeder topped the list of the five most popular machines, with farmers purchasing 14,274 units. It was followed by the mulcher, with 1,721 units, and the Hydraulic Reversible MB Plough, with 1,346 units. The zero till drill and baling machine ranked fourth and fifth, with 1,123 and 927 units, respectively. Straw rakes also witnessed considerable demand, with 874 units procured, the minister added. Attributing the growing adoption of CRM equipment to the state government's subsidy support, Khudian said individual farmers are being provided a 50 per cent subsidy on machinery purchases, while Custom Hiring Centres (CHCs), Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), cooperative societies and panchayats are eligible for an 80 per cent subsidy. He said the state government's efforts are backed by a substantial Rs 576-crore action plan for 2026-27. These initiatives have contributed to a sharp decline in stubble-burning incidents, which fell by nearly 90 per cent, from 49,922 in 2022 to 5,114 in 2025. The progress has earned Punjab national recognition for its crop residue management strategy. "Substantial subsidies and extensive awareness campaigns have encouraged farmers to view crop residue as a valuable resource rather than a liability," Khudian said.

The minister highlighted the environmental and agricultural benefits of CRM machinery, noting that Super Seeders and zero-till drills enable farmers to sow wheat directly into paddy residue. This helps save time and conserve soil moisture while reducing the need to burn crop residue. Meanwhile, balers and rakes support the collection and utilisation of straw for purposes such as power generation and animal fodder.

India's core sector growth rate surges to 30-month high in September

NEW DELHI, OCT 21



The growth rate of India's core sector industries surged to a 30-month high of 7.9 per cent in September, compared to the same month of the previous year, driven by the strong performance of the iron ore, electricity, coal refinery products, cement, and steel sectors, according to figures released by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry on Wednesday.

The production of iron ore surged by as much as 18.4 per cent in September. Owing to intensive use of iron ore in the production process and its contribution to industrial development, it has been included in the list of core industries as a new item in the revised series of the index of core industries (ICI). Accordingly, the number of core industries has increased from eight to nine in the new series, which kicked in for the first time last month.

Electricity generation grew by 11.4 per cent during September while coal production went up by 10.7 per cent. The output of refinery products increased by 10.7 per cent during the month as demand for petroleum goods rose due to the higher level of economic activity. The cement sector clocked a robust growth of 10.3 per cent while steel production was up 4.9 per cent during the month as demand stayed buoyant due to large government investments in big-ticket infrastructure projects such as highways, ports and railways. However, fertilisers, natural gas, and crude oil witnessed negative growth in September. The final index for the month of August 2026 has been revised from 119.2 to 120.4. Accordingly, the year-on-year growth rate has been revised from 4.8 per cent to 5.9 per cent.

Cumulative growth rate of the index of core industries during April-September 2026 now works out to 5.1 per cent compared to 2.5 per cent in the corresponding period of the previous year, reflecting the acceleration in the growth of the infrastructure industries.

FSSAI issues notices to Nestle India, Zydus Wellness over 'misleading claims' in products

NEW DELHI: (Oct 21) Food regulator FSSAI has issued notices to Nestle India and Zydus Wellness over "misleading claims" in certain products and has asked the companies to provide scientific proof to support their advertisements. In a social media post, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) said it has issued notices to Nestle India for misleading claims and non-compliant promotions involving two food products, 'Lactogen Pro 1 Powder' and 'Nan Excella Pro Stage 1'. The regulator also issued a notice to Zydus Wellness Products Ltd citing misleading claims and advertisement on its food product Complan.





Chernobyl Particles Retain Structure After 40 Years

Nearly four decades after the Chernobyl nuclear disaster shocked the world, scientists have discovered that some radioactive particles released during the accident have retained much of their internal structure. The finding offers fresh insights into how nuclear contamination behaves over long periods and could help researchers improve their understanding of the environmental and health risks associated with radioactive materials.

The Chernobyl disaster, which occurred in April 1986 in what was then the Soviet Union and is now Ukraine, remains one of the most serious nuclear accidents in history. The explosion and subsequent fire at Reactor No. 4 released radioactive substances into the atmosphere, contaminating extensive areas of land and spreading radioactive fallout across parts of Europe. Although emergency operations, containment measures and decades of monitoring have reduced certain risks, radioactive materials continue to pose challenges for environmental scientists. A recent study by researchers from Leibniz University Hannover and the Helmholtz-Zentrum Dresden-Rossendorf (HZDR) in Germany has examined microscopic radioactive particles collected from the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone. The research, published in the *Journal of Hazardous Materials*, found that several particles retained significant features of their original internal structure despite being exposed to environmental conditions for almost 40 years. The results challenge the assumption that radioactive particles necessarily undergo substantial structural changes over time. They also highlight the complexity of predicting how nuclear contamination evolves in soil and other environmental materials. However, the researchers have cautioned that the study is limited in scope. The analysis covered only six particles collected from two locations, meaning further investigation is necessary before the findings can be applied to the wider exclusion zone.

The Chernobyl Disaster and Its Lasting Legacy

The Chernobyl accident occurred on April 26, 1986, during a safety test at the nuclear power plant near the city of Pripyat in northern Ukraine. A combination of reactor design weaknesses and operational errors led to an uncontrolled power surge, explosions and a fire that damaged the reactor and released radioactive material into the atmosphere. The accident forced the evacuation of nearby communities and led to the establishment of an exclusion zone around the damaged facility. Large quantities of radioactive substances were deposited across the surrounding landscape, while airborne contamination travelled much farther, reaching several countries in Europe. The disaster had immediate consequences for workers, emergency responders and nearby residents. It also created long-term environmental challenges involving contaminated soil, forests, water systems and abandoned settlements. The persistence of certain radioactive isotopes has required continued monitoring and restrictions on activities in affected areas. Over the years, scientists have investigated how radioactive materials move through ecosystems, interact with minerals and organic matter, and enter plants and animals. These processes are influenced by factors such as rainfall, soil chemistry, temperature, biological activity and the physical characteristics of the contaminated material. The latest research adds another dimension to this work by examining the internal structure of individual radioactive particles rather than focusing only on the distribution of radioactive substances across the landscape. Understanding these particles is important because radioactive contamination does not always exist in a uniform or easily predictable form. Some materials remain attached to soil particles, while others dissolve or become more mobile under particular environmental conditions. The rate at which radioactive substances are released can therefore vary considerably.

Microscopic Particles Reveal Unexpected Stability

The researchers examined six microscopic radioactive particles recovered from the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone. Their sizes ranged from approximately eight to 50 micrometres, making them extremely small and difficult to study using ordinary observation methods. For comparison, a micrometre is one-millionth of a metre. These particles are therefore much smaller than a typical grain of sand, although their dimensions vary. Despite their small size, they can provide valuable information about the physical and chemical processes that occurred during the reactor accident. The particles originated from nuclear fuel and other materials exposed to the extreme conditions created by the explosion and subsequent fire. During the accident, high temperatures and chemical reactions transformed some of the reactor materials, producing particles with different compositions and internal structures. The researchers identified three broad categories of particles based on how they formed. Some retained characteristics resembling the original nuclear fuel, uranium dioxide. Others had become partially or completely fused with material containing zirconium, which is associated with nuclear fuel cladding and related reactor components. A third category formed under conditions involving the burning of the reactor's graphite moderator, which altered the chemical composition of the fuel-bearing material. These differences are important because the way a particle forms can influence its later behaviour. Particles produced under different temperature and chemical conditions may react differently when exposed to oxygen, moisture and minerals in the surrounding environment. The study found that significant portions of the internal crystal structures had survived the decades following the accident. In particular, the researchers identified uranium oxide phases that retained much of their structural integrity.

The finding suggests that at least some particles can preserve features inherited from the original reactor fuel for far longer than might be assumed from a simple view of environmental ageing. Nevertheless, structural stability does not mean that every part of a particle remains unchanged. Radioactive particles can undergo chemical alteration, weathering and other processes even when important elements of their crystal structure remain intact.

How X-Ray Diffraction Helped Scientists Study the Particles

To investigate the microscopic particles, the research team used X-ray diffraction analysis, a scientific technique widely employed to determine the crystal structure of materials. Crystalline substances contain atoms arranged in organised patterns. When X-rays interact with these arrangements, they are scattered in specific ways. By measuring the resulting diffraction patterns, researchers can identify structural characteristics and determine which crystalline phases are present in a sample. The technique is particularly useful for studying uranium-bearing materials because changes in their crystal structures can provide clues about their formation, chemical composition and subsequent transformation. The researchers analysed the particles from numerous angular positions to develop a detailed understanding of their internal structure. Examining them from different orientations helped reveal features that might not have been apparent through a limited measurement. The resulting data enabled the scientists to identify uranium oxide phases and assess how closely their structures resembled those associated with the original nuclear fuel. Uranium dioxide is a major component of many types of nuclear fuel. Its crystal structure and chemical behaviour are important in determining how uranium interacts with its surroundings. Changes to that structure can influence the ways in which uranium-bearing material reacts with water, oxygen and other environmental substances.

The persistence of recognisable uranium oxide structures after almost four decades indicates that the physical and chemical history of the particles remains preserved to a considerable extent. The study demonstrates how advanced materials analysis can help scientists investigate the long-term consequences of nuclear accidents at a scale that cannot be addressed through landscape-level measurements alone.

Implications for Soil, Water and Ecosystems

Radioactive contamination in the Chernobyl region is not distributed evenly. The amount and type of contamination can differ substantially between locations, depending on the pattern of radioactive fallout, local weather conditions and the characteristics of the landscape. Forests, agricultural land, wetlands and waterways may interact with radioactive substances in different ways. Soil can retain some contaminants, while rainfall and surface runoff may transport others. Plants can absorb particular radioactive elements, and animals may encounter them through food, water or contact with contaminated surroundings. Understanding the stability of radioactive particles can help scientists develop more accurate models of these processes. Such models are used to estimate how contamination changes over time, identify areas requiring monitoring and assess potential pathways through which radioactive materials could reach people or wildlife. The latest findings may be particularly relevant to questions about the long-term behaviour of fuel-derived particles. If some particles preserve their original structure for decades, their environmental behaviour may differ from that predicted by models that assume more extensive structural transformation. At the same time, the discovery should not be interpreted as evidence that contamination is necessarily less dangerous than previously thought. Greater structural stability could limit the release of some substances under certain conditions, but it may also mean that radioactive material remains present in the environment for extended periods. The overall risk depends on the radionuclides involved, their activity, the quantity of material present, the likelihood of exposure and the pathways through which contamination can move.

What the Findings Mean for Nuclear Waste Management

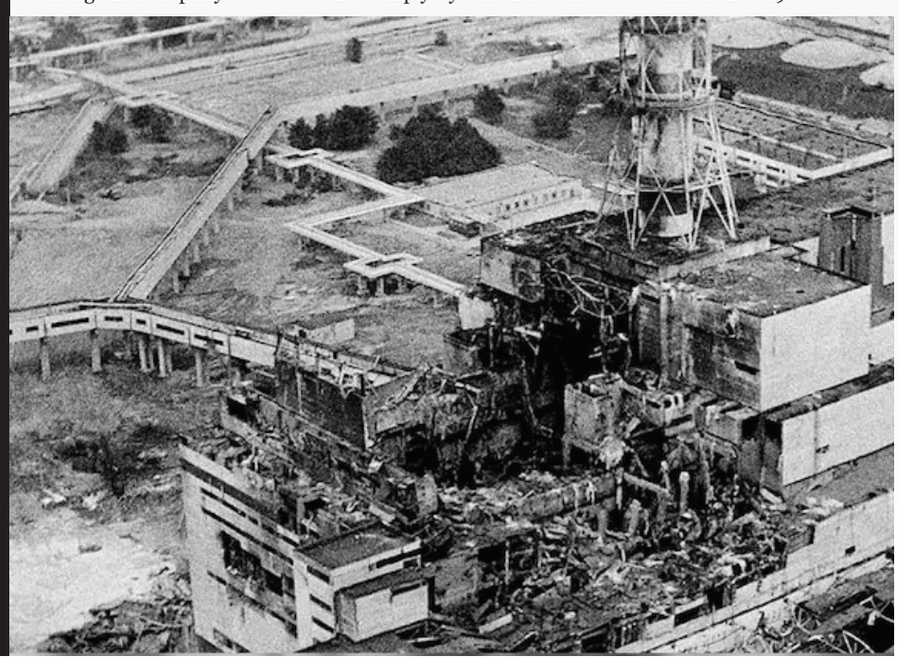
The behaviour of radioactive particles is relevant not only to Chernobyl but also to wider questions concerning the management of radioactive waste and contaminated sites. Nuclear accidents can produce complex mixtures of materials with different physical and chemical properties. Some may remain relatively immobile, while others can migrate through soil and groundwater. Reliable assessments require detailed information about how these materials respond to environmental conditions over long periods. The Chernobyl findings could help researchers improve methods for characterising fuel-derived contamination and predicting the behaviour of similar materials in other settings. Such knowledge may contribute to the development of more reliable environmental monitoring strategies and the assessment of contaminated land. It could also inform research into the long-term stability of radioactive materials stored or contained following nuclear incidents. However, the results cannot be directly transferred to all forms of nuclear waste, because waste materials vary widely in composition, structure and exposure conditions. Waste management decisions must continue to rely on material-specific assessments, established safety standards and long-term monitoring. The persistence of a particular crystal structure alone is not enough to determine whether a radioactive material can be safely contained or whether a site requires additional protective measures. The study's greatest value may lie in demonstrating the need to understand radioactive materials at a detailed structural level. Such knowledge can strengthen the scientific basis for evaluating how contamination changes and what measures may be appropriate for managing it.

Are the Radioactive Particles Still Dangerous?

The discovery that some particles have retained their internal structure does not mean that they have become harmless. Radioactivity is determined by the properties of unstable atomic nuclei, not simply by whether a material's crystal structure has changed. Radioactive substances continue to emit radiation as their nuclei decay. Different radionuclides have different half-lives, which determine how quickly their radioactivity decreases. Some decay relatively quickly, while others persist for much longer periods. The potential danger posed by a radioactive particle depends on several factors, including the radionuclides it contains, its activity, its location and the likelihood of human exposure. The route of exposure also matters. External exposure, inhalation of airborne particles and ingestion of contaminated material can involve different patterns of risk. The microscopic size of the particles examined in the study is also relevant to how they might behave physically. Depending on their characteristics and environmental conditions, fine particles may be transported by air or water. If radioactive material becomes airborne and is inhaled, the health implications depend on the substances involved and the amount entering the body. However, the study did not establish the health effects of the six particles or demonstrate that they pose a particular level of risk to people living near the exclusion zone. Its focus was on their internal structure, not on measuring human exposure or determining the incidence of disease. The findings also do not change the need for appropriate controls in contaminated areas. Access restrictions, radiation monitoring and other protective measures remain important wherever radioactive contamination presents a potential hazard. A clearer understanding of particle stability can help improve risk assessments, but it cannot replace direct measurements of radioactivity, environmental contamination and exposure.

Why More Research Is Needed

Although the study offers valuable evidence, its small sample size limits the conclusions that can be drawn. Only six particles from two locations were examined, and the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone covers a much larger and environmentally diverse area. The particles may not represent the full range of radioactive materials produced during the accident or the variety of changes that have occurred since 1986.



SHORT NEWS

WPL

England players free to skip T20Is against Sri Lanka if reach knockouts



NEW DELHI: England players, including skipper Nat Sciver-Brunt, will be free to skip the three-match T20I series in Sri Lanka if their respective franchises reach the knockout stage of the Women's Premier League (WPL) 2027, which runs from January 14 to February 7 next year. Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) announced the white-ball tour itinerary on Wednesday, with the T20Is in Pallekele on February 1, 3 and 5 as preparation for the inaugural Women's T20 Champions Trophy, to be played in India from February 14 to 28. After the tournament is over, England will return for three ODIs in Dambulla on March 4, 6 and 8 respectively. "If the England players are in the knockouts of the WPL, then they can continue to play for their respective WPL team due to the late-changing nature of the itinerary for the Champions Trophy.

RANJI TROPHY

Thyagarajan sets up Hyderabad's big win; Kerala register victories



NEW DELHI: Tanay Thyagarajan finished with 11 wickets, after hitting an unbeaten half-century as Hyderabad thrashed Andhra by 267 runs in an Elite Group B Ranji Trophy match in Mulapadu on Wednesday. Thyagarajan, who had taken five wickets in Andhra's first innings, returned to claim six more as Andhra, set 398 to win, were dismissed for 130. He was named Player of the Match for the second game running, after having won the award against Tripura last week. In Thiruvananthapuram, veteran off-spinner Jalaj Saxena's five-wicket haul helped Kerala beat Odisha by an innings and 36 runs in Elite Group C game. Following on, Odisha resumed on 102/4, and Kerala needed just 23.3 overs on the fourth morning to bowl them out for 143.

F4 Title Fight Heads to Chennai as Indian Racing League Opens 2026 Season at Madras International Circuit

Kichcha's Kings Bengaluru's Aris Kyriakou leads Goa Aces JA Racing's Luviwe Sambudla by five points ahead of Round 3 of the F4 Indian Championship

CHENNAI

The Indian Racing Festival (IRF) 2026 heads to the Madras International Circuit (MIC) on October 22–23, with a closely contested F4 Indian Championship title race and the opening round of the Indian Racing League (IRL) set to bring two days of action to Chennai. Two championships, one circuit, and a weekend that will set the tone for the rest of the season

With just five points separating championship leader Aris Kyriakou of Kichcha's Kings Bengaluru and Goa Aces JA Racing's Luviwe Sambudla, Round 3 of the F4 Indian Championship could prove crucial in the title race. The weekend will also mark the start of the new IRL season, as six city-based teams begin their campaign for the championship.

Chennai has already delivered competitive racing in the previous season. At the MIC in 2025, Sachel Rotgé won three races, while Shane Chandaria of Chennai Turbo Riders secured a race victory, underlining the circuit's potential to produce close contests. With the F4 title battle now taking shape and the IRL returning to action, the Chennai round promises an important weekend for the championship.

F4 Indian Championship: Kyriakou and Sambudla Set for Title Battle

Kyriakou heads into Chennai with 93 points after a consistent showing in the opening rounds, but Sambudla is close behind on 88 points. The South African driver enjoyed a strong Round 2 at Kari Motor Speedway in Coimbatore, winning Race 1 from pole position and returning to the top step in Race 3 after retiring from Race 2.

Kyriakou, meanwhile, continued to collect valuable points, including podium finishes across all three races, to maintain his



championship lead. With 25 points available for a race win, the five-point gap leaves little room for error for either driver. Hyderabad Blackbirds' Bhuvan Bonu, who won Race 2 in Coimbatore after starting from reverse-grid pole, sits third in the standings on 51 points. Mahlori Mabunda (46) and Aaron Mehta (42) complete the top five and will be looking to close the gap in Chennai.

Ntiyiso Mabunda also arrives with momentum after securing two podium finishes in Round 2, while Swarnav Das and Chennai Turbo Riders' Sai Aditya will be looking to make their mark. Aditya impressed in Coimbatore with a charge from 10th on the grid to finish strongly in Race 3.

With three more rounds to follow after Chennai, the championship remains open. Qualifying, reverse-grid races and the ability to convert opportunities into points will all be important as the drivers look to gain an advantage in the title race. Indian Racing League: Defending Champions Begin Their Campaign

The Indian Racing League returns with six city-based franchise teams competing in India's only four-wheel racing league and the world's first gender-neutral racing championship series.

Goa Aces JA Racing will begin the season as defending champions after securing the 2025–26 IRL title. Led by Raoul Hyman and Fabienne Wohlwend, the team will be looking to carry forward the form that helped it finish ahead of its rivals last season. Hyman has been a key figure in the team's success, while Wohlwend made headlines with a feature-race victory at the Goa Street Circuit in February 2026.

Chennai Turbo Riders will have the advantage of racing on home soil, with local support adding to the occasion. The team will be aiming to make a strong start to its campaign against a competitive field that includes Kichcha's Kings Bengaluru, Hyderabad Blackbirds, Kolkata Royal Tigers and Speed Demons Delhi.

The IRL brings together Indian and international drivers, including women racers in every team's line-up, in a format designed to broaden the appeal of circuit racing in India. With the opening round taking place alongside the F4 Indian Championship, the Chennai weekend will offer fans the opportunity to follow both emerging single-seater talent and the city-based team competition.

Formula Ride now live on Google Play and the App Store



India-developed racing title brings together speed, strategy, career progression and real-time multiplayer for players in India and international markets

HYDERABAD

7Seas Entertainment Limited (BSE: 540874) is pleased to share that Formula Ride, its mobile racing game developed in India for domestic and international audiences, is now live and available for download on Google Play and the App Store in the markets where it has been released.

Formula Ride combines the excitement of high-speed racing with strategic gameplay, career progression and real-time multiplayer competition, creating an experience designed for both casual players and committed racing enthusiasts. Its commercial availability represents another important step in 7Seas Entertainment's continuing journey to develop and publish original gaming intellectual property from India for players across wider markets.

Management commentary

"The commercial launch of Formula Ride is a proud milestone for the entire 7Seas team. The game reflects our ambition to create original, engaging and globally relevant gaming experiences from India.

By bringing together high-speed racing, strategy, career progression and real-time multiplayer, we have built a strong platform that can evolve with player feedback and future content. We are excited that Formula Ride is now live and look forward to welcoming players from India and international markets."

— L. M. Sanker, Managing Director, 7Seas Entertainment Limited

About 7Seas Entertainment Limited

7Seas Entertainment Limited is a developer and publisher of digital games and interactive content headquartered in Hyderabad, India. The Company develops original gaming intellectual property and digital experiences across mobile, PC and web platforms and works across game design, software development, animation, quality assurance, publishing and AI-assisted content production.

2nd Test: South Africa quicks push Australia to the brink despite Head's unbeaten fifty

GQEBERHA



Opener Travis Head struck an unbeaten 87 in the second innings to rescue Australia despite being forced to follow-on after being bowled out for 99 in their first innings on the fourth day of the second Test against South Africa at the St George's Park in Gqeberha on Wednesday.

Bundled out for a paltry 99 in the first innings, Australia lost opener Nic Maddinson for eight before Head and Marnus Labuschagne shared a 92-run partnership in the second innings as they reached 156/4 at stumps, still trailing South Africa by 170 runs.

The fourth day of the second ICC World Test Championship Test between South Africa and Australia saw the Proteas quicks come out all guns blazing, ripping through Australia's batting line-up to secure a sizeable first-innings advantage.

Starting the day at 3/1 after losing Nic Maddinson for a duck late on Day 3, Australia struggled to get their innings going from the outset.

Scott Boland was the first to fall, with Ryan Rickelton and Marco Jansen combining to dismiss Australia's five-wicket star from the first innings. Jansen then produced a beauty to remove Head for 14, leaving Australia reeling at 22/3. Labuschagne and Steve Smith attempted to steady the innings, but Anrich Nortje struck again before leaving the field with a suspected groin injury.

Jansen then returned to dismiss Australia's star performer from the first Test, Matt Renshaw, and Alex Carey in the space of three deliveries, piling further pressure on the visitors. The pacer continued his remarkable spell, bringing Beau Webster's resistance to an end, with Aiden Markram taking the catch to hand the seamer his fifth wicket of the innings, which he concluded with bowling figures of 5-33.

As wickets continued to tumble at the other end, Smith reached the landmark of 11,000 Test runs, joining Australian greats Ricky Ponting and Allan Border in an exclusive club. However, Wiaan Mulder cut short his milestone innings, dismissing him for 28 off 88 balls. Australia were eventually bowled out for just 99, with the Proteas securing a mammoth 326-run first-innings lead.

South Africa enforced the follow-on, and Kagiso Rabada struck early, dismissing Maddinson for eight.

Labuschagne and Head took charge of things after the first wicket and combined for a 92-run stand to anchor the innings for Australia. Labuschagne, however, bit the dust when he was dismissed for 39 by Simon Harmer. Rabada struck again soon after, toppling the stumps of Renshaw to pile on more trouble for the visitors as they found themselves at 123/3 with over 200 runs to catch up on. Webster came in and wasn't able to match up to Harmer's spin, who trapped him leg-before soon after. Head fought on at the other end, ending the day unbeaten at 87, as Australia finished with 156/4 on the board, staring at a substantial 170-run deficit to save the second Test in Gqeberha.

Brief scores:
South Africa 425/9 decl. lead Australia 99 all out in 42.3 overs (Marco Jansen 5-33, Wiaan Mulder 2-14, Kagiso Rabada 2-33) & (f/o) 156/4 in 54 overs (Travis Head 87 not out, Marnus Labuschagne 39.

Neeru, Suruchi, Himanshu among shooters to begin World Championship preparations

NEW DELHI

India's shooters selected for the ISSF World Championship Doha 2026 will begin a preparatory camp at the Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Range in New Delhi from October 22, 2026, bringing together participants across rifle, pistol and shotgun disciplines.

With this camp, the Indian squad steps up preparations for the World Championship, scheduled to be held in Doha, Qatar, from November 1 to 14, 2026.

The Indian team's preparatory programme in New Delhi has been divided into phases according to the respective disciplines. The 10m Rifle and Pistol athletes, along with the Men's 25m Rapid Fire Pistol squad and Skeet athletes, will train from 22 to 29 October. The 50m Rifle and Women's 25m Pistol athletes will remain in camp from 22 to 31 October, while the Trap contingent will train from 28 October to 4 November. The 10m Air Rifle group features Parth Rakesh Mane, Himanshu Dhillon and Paarth Makhija in the men's section, while the women's squad comprises Shambhavi Kshirsagar, Sonam Uttam Maskar and Elavenil Valarivan.

In 10m Air Pistol, the men's squad includes Ravin Kumar, Jaypal Malviya and Kamaljeet, while Sainyam, Suruchi and Manu Bhaker form the women's team.

The skeet contingent comprises Mairaj Ahmad Khan, Bhavtegh Singh Gill and Anantjeet Singh Naruka in the men's squad, while Parinaaz Dhaliwal, Ganemat Sekhon and Raiza Dhillon make up the women's squad.

The 50m Rifle group, which will remain in camp until October 31, features Niraj Kumar, Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar and Akhil Sheoran in the men's team, and Vidarsa K. Vinod, Ashi Chouksey and Anjum Moudgil.

Haryana crowned champions of Senior Men National Hockey Championship

JHANSI

Hockey Haryana came from behind to beat Hockey Madhya Pradesh 2-1 in the Division 'A' final and win the title in the 16th Hockey India Senior Men National Championship 2026 in Jhansi on Wednesday. Uttar Pradesh beat Punjab 3-1 in the third-place match.

In the final, Hockey Haryana prevailed over Hockey Madhya Pradesh 2-1.

Mohammad Zaid Khan gave Madhya Pradesh the lead with a field goal in the 14th minute. Haryana equalised in the second quarter when Navraj Singh scored a penalty corner in the 21st minute. The match stayed level until the 50th minute, when Joginder Singh scored the winner from another penalty corner. Haryana reached the final by beating Punjab 4-2 in a shootout after a 3-3 draw in the semi-final. Madhya Pradesh beat Uttar Pradesh 5-3 in their semi-final.



Hockey Punjab went down 1-to-3 to Uttar Pradesh Hockey in the third-place match.

Akash Pal scored two field goals (15', 21') to give Uttar Pradesh a 2-0 lead at half-time. Pawandeep Singh pulled one back for Punjab with a field goal in the 41st minute. Chandan Yadav sealed the bronze medal with a penalty corner in the 58th minute. Uttar Pradesh lost 3-5 to Madhya Pradesh in the semi-final, and Punjab lost on a shootout to Haryana.

Earlier, Hockey Haryana defeated Hockey Chandigarh 5-1 in the quarterfinals. Haryana scored five field goals. Manjeet gave them the lead in the 20th minute, and Harpal scored twice (26', 28') to make it 3-0 at half-time. Pankaj added a fourth in the 51st minute. Captain Singh scored Chandigarh's only goal in the 59th minute, and Shubham restored the four-goal margin with a field goal in the final minute.

Hockey Punjab had a tougher time as they got the better of Hockey Maharashtra 5-4 in the shootout) after their match ended 1-1 in regulation time.

Ujwal Singh gave Punjab the lead with a penalty stroke in the 7th minute, and they held it until the 49th minute. Ravi Paresh Bharadia then levelled for Maharashtra with a penalty corner. In the shootout, Gurjot Singh, Simranjot Singh, Lovenoor Singh, Dilraj Singh and captain Harjeet Singh all scored for Punjab. Maharashtra scored four times, through Dhairyashil Jadhav, Babu Venkati Metkar and Prajwal Moharkar. Punjab goalkeeper Paras Malhotra saved Ajinkya Jadhav's attempt in the third round.

Gujarat's sports support hits the bullseye: Elavenil Valarivan's success story

AHMEDABAD

Gujarat's talented rifle shooter Elavenil Valarivan has brought pride to the state and the nation with her outstanding performance at the Asian Games 2026, held in Japan. Elavenil won two silver medals in the women's 10-metre air rifle event, securing one each in the individual and team competitions and strengthening her position as an inspiration for aspiring athletes.

Recognising her achievement, Gujarat Deputy Chief Minister Harsh Sanghavi presented Elavenil with a cheque of Rs 1.33 crore under the state government's Khel Pratibha Puraskar on September 28. The recognition was intended to celebrate her success and encourage her to achieve greater milestones. Before this, Elavenil had also received Rs 74 lakh under various other state government schemes.

Expressing her gratitude, Elavenil said she was thankful to the government, particularly the Gujarat government, for introducing initiatives that empower athletes both physically and mentally.

Donga Naa Koduku Teaser Packs Fun



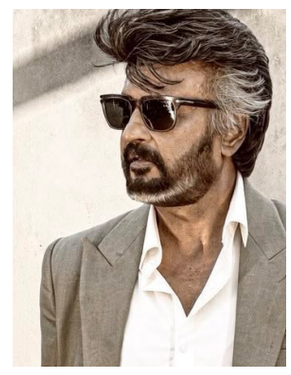
Naveen Yerneni and Y Ravi Shankar of Mythri Movie Makers are producing a wholesome entertainer Donga Naa Koduku. Mouli Tanuj Prasanth who shot to fame with Little Hearts plays the lead in the film directed by first-timer Sreenu Kambala. The makers came up with the film's teaser today. What happens when a young man values money more than relationships? Donga Naa Koduku explores this funny idea through Eeshwar, a B.Tech student who quit his studies and has a strange way of looking at life. His choices lead to a series of funny situations, with robbery and crime adding more twists to the story. Debutant director Sreenu Kambala impresses big time with his humorous writing. His clever inclusion of crime and robbery elements make it intriguing, offering a different experience altogether. Suriya Balaji's slick visuals and Sinjith Yerramilli's lively score elevate the fun quotient. Mouli Tanuj Prasanth entertains once again. His comic timing stands out in the tiffin sequence and other humorous moments, while his casual delivery adds to the character's appeal. Sushmitha Shetty plays his love interest, while Ali and Rajitha portray his parents. Donga Naa Koduku is gearing up for its release on November 13, while the teaser assured a laugh riot.

Rashmika's Sparkling Blue Look

Rashmika Mandanna's period drama Ranabaali, her first film with husband Vijay Deverakonda after their wedding, has collected Rs 36 crore in India in five days. She plays Jayamma, the wife of the lead hero, in the film. She celebrated Diwali at a Swarovski event in an Amit Aggarwal outfit that had a strapless corset bodice in deep blue with crystal work and a draped satin skirt with a slit. A matching satin drape with gold woven borders flowed behind her. She added a layered crystal necklace, hoop earrings, bracelets and rings, and kept her hair straight and centre parted. Next, she will be seen in Mysaa, a Telugu action drama directed by Rawindra Pulle, and fans are waiting for her next big role.

A Winning Dasara for Tollywood





Dasara 2026 has turned out to be a very good festive season for Telugu cinema, with Jailer 2 (Dubbed), Ranabaali and Garividi Lakshmi registering encouraging numbers at the box office. While the three films belong to different genres, their performance during the holiday period has brought a smile to the trade. Interestingly, all three movies have managed to show first-Sunday-range numbers, with Garividi Lakshmi delivering an especially surprising performance. The film has witnessed a notable pickup in collections, benefiting from good audience appreciation.Jailer 2 has emerged as a sure-shot blockbuster, enjoying strong collections despite mixed talk. The Rajinikanth starrer has benefited from the star's massive fan following, festive holidays, and the film's commercial appeal, making it one of the biggest winners of the season. Meanwhile, Ranabaali is performing better than its initial talk. Although the Vijay Deverakonda starrer received mixed reactions, the film has managed to attract audiences during the holiday period, but its performance in the coming days will be crucial. The biggest surprise among the three is Garividi Lakshmi. Without the advantage of a major star, the film has recorded a noticeable improvement in collections especially in Uttharandhra region, with positive word of mouth helping its theatrical run. However, the real test begins now. With the Dussehra holidays ending from today, weekday collections will reveal how strongly these films can hold their ground. Stay tuned for more.



Should Anupama Change Her Script Strategy?



Anupama Parameswaran has been trying to explore different roles and prove her acting abilities, but her recent box-office performance raises questions about her script selection. Except for Kishkindapuri, her recent films have all failed to make any impact at the box office. Many of these projects gave Anupama a central role without depending on a leading star hero to attract audiences. While this approach offered her an opportunity to carry films on her shoulders, the commercial results have not been encouraging. Some of her performances and film choices, like Paradha and Crazy Kalyanam, have received appreciation from critics, proving that she is willing to experiment. However, critical acclaim alone is not enough to sustain in today's time. Anupama has the talent and experience to choose interesting characters, but she now needs to strike a better balance between performance-oriented roles and commercially appealing subjects. All eyes are now on her upcoming film Bhogi, starring Sharwanand, which is releasing next month. Her character has already generated some curiosity, and the role looks promising. If Bhogi performs well commercially, it could provide a much-needed boost to Anupama's career.

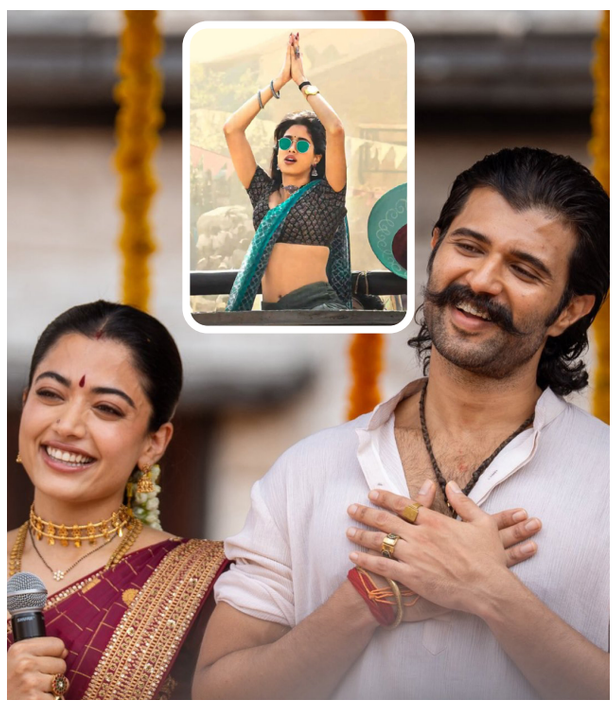


Kerala CM Visits Bethlehem Kudumba Unit

Kerala Chief Minister Satheesan has publicly praised the Malayalam sensation Bethlehem Kudumba Unit, starring Nivin Pauly and Mamitha Baiju. In a Facebook post, he shared his experience of watching the film with his daughter and her friend after a long gap. Satheesan said the film reminded him of his childhood and the village life he had witnessed growing up. He appreciated the way the film portrayed ordinary people, their relationships and the warmth of romance. The CM said the film kept him engaged throughout, making him laugh and occasionally feel emotional. He also praised the performances, noting that even actors appearing in just one or two scenes made their presence felt. Satheesan revealed that he rarely writes appreciation notes after watching films, but this experience left him refreshed. He also called director Girish and actor Sangeeth Prathap to congratulate them, while he could not reach Nivin Pauly and Mamitha Baiju. He also singled out Glikson, played by Roshan Shanavas, as a character who won his heart. Satheesan congratulated the entire team, describing the film as a complete team effort.

Janhvi's Peddi Episode Gets Rashmika-Vijay Talking

Rashmika Mandanna and Vijay Deverakonda are busy promoting Ranabaali. In a candid conversation with Karan Johar in Koffee with Karan, Rashmika and Vijay were quizzed about Janhvi Kapoor's role and her controversial skin show in Peddi and how she would deal with such. Rashmika said she will not do something that is not comfortable and added that she takes Vijju's (Vijay's) advise when she was asked to wear any uncomfortable clothes for a commercial film. Rashmika admits certain commercial films do require actresses to wear certain skin revealing clothes and she said directors wants actresses to do wear such clothes and do skin show. Vijay Deverakonda intervenes and says it's okay to say no. Vijay says actresses should put down foot and stick to say no when they wanted to. He said actresses need strong support system in such challenging situations. Rashmika says she is quite aware of the requirements of certain characters and she says they should muster courage and asks questions to filmmakers and clarify their doubts beforehand. She says there is nothing wrong in asking questions and doubts. Vijay says actresses need not do what they are not comfortable. But in some cases, they fear being seen as unprofessional, so they approach things pessimistically. After the release, however, they turn out to be negative. It is interesting to see how fans and audiences react to the controversial Janhvi Kapoor episode from Peddi, which shook the film industry across the nation.



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