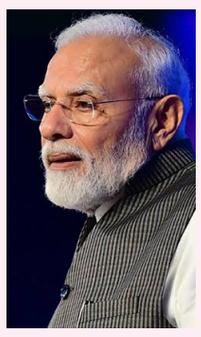
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PM Pushes 'Vocal for Local' Ahead of Diwali



New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has urged citizens to purchase locally made products during Diwali and strengthen the Vocal for Local movement. Addressing the 139th episode of Mann Ki Baat, he said Indian products were gaining recognition in international markets, citing Bihar's makhana and Karnataka's tur dal. He stressed that supporting local artisans, farmers, traders and small-scale industries would improve their incomes and strengthen the national economy. Modi also highlighted initiatives promoting organic cotton cultivation in Punjab and the revival of the Heval River in Uttarakhand. He expressed confidence that public participation would accelerate the goal of Atmanirbhar Bharat.

Delhi Activates Winter Pollution Control Plan



NEW DELHI, OCT 25

The Delhi government will implement a Winter Action Plan from November 1 to February 28 to control air pollution in the national capital. Under the plan formulated under the leadership of Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, the government will take steps to prohibit the sale of fuel to vehicles that do not have a valid Pollution Under Control (PUC) certificate. Restrictions will also be imposed on the entry of vehicles registered outside Delhi that do not comply with BS-VI emission standards.

Special measures will be introduced to control dust pollution caused by construction and demolition activities. Construction sites will be monitored using AI-enabled cameras to ensure compliance with pollution-control measures. The government also aims to reduce vehicular emissions by introducing a work-from-home policy for 50 per cent of employees in government and private offices. In addition, the use of electric buses and Metro services will be encouraged to reduce dependence on private vehicles.

Massive Rally Planned for November 1

INDIA Bloc Prepares Impeachment Move Against CEC

NEW DELHI, OCT 25

The INDIA bloc is preparing to intensify its protest against Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar. The opposition alliance has decided to hold a public impeachment-related programme against him in Delhi on October 30. During the event, an impeachment resolution is expected to be introduced, and opposition parties will voice their objections to the functioning of the Election Commission. The alliance has also drawn up plans to organise a massive public rally at Ramlila Maidan in Delhi on November 1.



The bloc intends to bring allegations of irregularities in the electoral process, the controversy over alleged "vote theft," and the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls to the public's attention. According to reports, the alliance aims to explain its concerns about the Election Commission's functioning and strengthen a nationwide movement to protect voters' rights.

The Congress estimates that around 10 lakh people from across the country may attend the rally.

Congress national president Mallikarjun Kharge has already appealed to leaders of INDIA bloc constituent parties to travel to Delhi. Efforts are underway to mobilise opposition leaders and party workers to ensure the rally's success.

Accountability of the Election Commission and transparency in the electoral process are expected to be the key themes of these programmes.

However, although the proposed event concerning the CEC is being described as a public impeachment process, it is not equivalent to the formal constitutional process of removing the Chief Election Commissioner through Parliament.

RSS Ideology Must Be Eradicated

Elections Should Be Held Using Ballot Papers: Kharge



NEW DELHI, OCT 25

Congress national president Mallikarjun Kharge has called for the eradication of the ideology of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) in the country. He demanded the immediate suspension of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls and called for elections to be conducted using ballot papers. Kharge also demanded the cancellation of Assembly elections held over the past two years. He alleged that the BJP had resorted to "vote theft" to come to power in four states. Describing the ongoing campaign against the SIR process as a "second freedom struggle," Kharge urged people across the country to support a nationwide movement to safeguard democracy and constitutional values.

He stressed the need to prioritise transparency in the electoral process and protect voters' rights. He made it clear that safeguarding the people's right to vote was the primary objective of the movement.

TG Sees Vast Potential for Korean Investments



Telangana Government prioritises cultural and economic ties with Korea

Plan to create three lakh additional jobs

Will Expand Partnerships with Korean Companies: Deputy CM Bhatti

HYDERABAD,OCT 25

Telangana Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka said the state government is prioritising investments from Korean companies, along with job creation, technology transfer and skill development among youth. He stated that Telangana offers vast opportunities for collaboration with Korean companies in electronics, electric vehicles, advanced manufacturing, life sciences, renewable energy and emerging technology sectors. He was speaking as the chief guest at the K-Harmony Festa – Korea Culture Day 2026, held at Shilpakala Vedika in Hyderabad on Sunday.

Bhatti Vikramarka recalled that the investment discussions held during Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy's visit to South Korea in August 2024 laid the foundation for economic cooperation between the two regions. He said the government would work to strengthen this partnership further and expand investments and employment opportunities.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 ➤

CM Leads Key Delegation for Water-Sharing Talks

HYDERABAD, OCT.25

In a major initiative to resolve prolonged inter-state river water disputes, Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has led a high-level official delegation to Mumbai for high-level bilateral talks with Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis scheduled for Monday. The delegation, including Minister for Irrigation Shri N. Uttam Kumar Reddy and senior administrative officials, will engage in high-level discussions aimed at reaching a consensus on the Thummadihatti barrage. The Telangana government is advocating for the barrage height to be established at 152 metres to meet the vital drinking and irrigation requirements of northern Telangana districts, particularly erstwhile Adilabad. Addressing prior apprehensions raised by Maharashtra regarding submergence and tribal displacement in border pockets, the Telangana government has formulated a comprehensive plan designed to mitigate local impact while protecting state water interests. The Telangana government remains committed to constructive inter-state dialogue to unlock sustainable irrigation solutions for the region.

Rahul Gandhi lacks courage to visit Telangana



HYDERABAD, OCT 25

Hyderabad, Oct.25 (NSS): Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) working president K.T. Rama Rao on Sunday launched a scathing attack on Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, labeling him one of the "biggest promise-makers" in Indian politics.

Sharif, a prominent leader froWm the Khairatabad constituency, joined the BRS at Telangana Bhavan in Hyderabad. BRS working president K.T. Rama Rao formally welcomed him into the party by draping a party scarf around his shoulders. Addressing the gathering, KT Rama Rao targeted the Congress leadership over its electoral commitments in Telangana. He alleged that despite promising six major guarantees within 100 days, alongside 13 declarations and 420 specific promises, the state government has shown no progress even after 1,000 days in office.

"Rahul Gandhi travels across the country speaking about 'Chhatron Ki Goonj' but lacks the courage to visit Telangana," Rama Rao stated, alleging that the Congress leadership remains silent on administrative irregularities. He further alleged that under Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, Telangana has been turned into an "ATM" for the central Congress leadership. KT Rama Rao further argued that the Congress lacks the political leverage to counter Prime Minister Narendra Modi or curb communal politics nationally, reiterating that the BRS would remain a focused regional force dedicated to safeguarding Telangana's state interests.

Rulers should not have personal grudges: Eatala



Hyderabad, Oct.25: A round table meeting was held at Haritha Plaza on Sunday to control pollution at Jawahar Nagar dumping yard and find a permanent solution to the dumping yard problems. Intellectuals, environmentalists and dumping yard victims participated in the meeting. Professor Murali Manohar presided over the meeting. Speaking On this occasion, MP Etala Rajender said that people were lining in Jawahar Nagar by risking their lives.

He also said that Even the verdicts given by courts with the money and influence of the Ramky company were not being implemented. He alleged that the rulers were indifferently to the problems of the people and added that People were losing faith in the laws. He claimed that Ramky's CSR Money was being spent in other states instead of being spent on drinking water and roads for the people of Jawahar Nagar . He demanded that garbage dumping centers should be set up with zero pollution technology and added that Garbage can be used for electricity generation, biogas and organic menure . He said that he was Starting the padayatra from the 27 of this month on the issue and added that he was not in a position to compromise.

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Cyclone Arnab: CM Orders High Alert

CM warns that any delay in restoring essential services will not be tolerated

Heavy rainfall likely in North Andhra and Central Coastal districts on October 27 and 28: Officials

Amaravati : Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu directed officials to remain on high alert, ensure maximum preparedness at every level to minimise the impact in view of the approaching Cyclone Arnab. As the Meteorological Department's forecast of severe weather conditions, the Chief Minister instructed all departments to work in close coordination and ensure that people do not face difficulties. In a review meeting here today, the Chief Minister directed district administrations to establish control rooms and provide timely guidance to the public.

Emphasising that there should be no loss of life and that property damage must be minimised, the Chief Minister instructed officials to send continuous alerts and updates to people's mobile phones. He also asked officials to persuade residents of coastal villages to follow government advisories and move to safer locations wherever necessary.

The Chief Minister said strong winds were expected during the cyclone and directed the Electricity Department to remain fully prepared to ensure the speedy restoration of power supply in the event of disruptions.He instructed officials to ensure that all boats at sea return to shore. If the cyclone disrupts transport and communication, pregnant women may face serious difficulties, hence they must be shifted to hospitals in advance," the Chief Minister said. He warned that any delay in restoring essential services will not be tolerated.

Officials informed the Chief Minister that the severe depression over the Bay of Bengal was likely to intensify into a cyclone. According to the current forecast, the system may cross the coast between Bapatla and Visakhapatnam by the afternoon of October 28, with the Konaseema–Yanam–Kakinada coastal belt among the areas being monitored for a possible landfall.Officials said the system was likely to intensify into a cyclone by the morning of October 26, a severe cyclone by that night and a very severe cyclone on October 27.At the time of landfall, wind speeds could reach 115–125 kmph, with gusts of up to 140 kmph on certain occasions.The Chief Minister directed officials to issue cyclone bulletins every four hours and ensure that updated information reaches the public and field-level officials without delay.Heavy to extremely heavy rainfall is likely in North Andhra and Central Coastal districts on October 27 and 28, with isolated places likely to receive exceptionally heavy rainfall.Kakinada, Anakapalli, Visakhapatnam, Konaseema and East Godavari districts, along with other parts of North Andhra, are expected to experience strong winds and heavy rainfall. The intensity of rainfall is likely to be particularly high on October 27 and 28 the officials informed.

Adopt Low-Water Crops to Boost Farm Income

Jitesh V. Patil conducts surprise inspections in Shadnagar; advises crop diversification and allied activities to tackle weather changes.



HYDERABAD, OCTOBER 25

Jitesh V. Patil, IAS, Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of Telangana Southern Power Distribution Company Limited (TGSPDCL), has advised farmers to shift toward alternative crops that require less water, lower investments, and less labor to maximize their income amid changing weather patterns. The CMD made these remarks during a series of surprise field inspections on Sunday across Rayikal, Vityala, and Rameshwaram villages in the Shadnagar Division of Ranga Reddy district. The visit was aimed at assessing agricultural power supply arrangements and reviewing the performance of distribution transformers.

Addressing the challenges posed by weather fluctuations and the potential impact of El Niño, Mr. Patil highlighted that traditional crops like paddy require high amounts of water. He encouraged farmers to utilize smaller land parcels—ranging from a few guntas to a couple of acres—to cultivate leafy greens, vegetables, flowers, and drumsticks. To further secure and diversify their income, the CMD suggested that farmers explore allied agricultural activities, including dairy farming, poultry, fish farming, and sheep rearing. During his visit to Vityala village, Mr. Patil inspected a local dairy farm to study its management practices and profitability firsthand. As part of his research into sustainable farming, Mr. Patil also met with the R&D team at Kheyti, an organization operating in the Shadnagar region. Their discussions focused on techniques for growing vegetables using less water and fewer pesticides, helping smallholder farmers make the most of limited land. During the field inspection, the CMD personally examined electrical infrastructure and instructed officials to address the root causes of recurring distribution transformer failures. He urged field staff and engineers to maintain strict coordination to ensure uninterrupted, high-quality power supply for the farming community.

The inspection was attended by TGSPDCL Director (Projects & IT) V. Shivaji, Shadnagar Rural Divisional Engineer Shyamsundar Reddy, local Assistant Engineers, and field staff.

Economic Highlights

N-Power: Uranium Crunch, High Costs RISKS PUBLIC SECTOR, PROFITS PRIVATE

The global energy crisis is spreading beyond petroleum, with the deepening Gulf and Red Sea disruptions threatening fuel supplies and shipping. India's nuclear ambitions face a parallel challenge: securing adequate uranium at affordable cost as the country targets 100 GW of nuclear capacity by 2047. Scarcity could raise procurement costs, delay reactor expansion and increase the cost of electricity. The world may face a painful economic transition marked by severe inflation as fuel prices and shipping costs surge, a temporary return to coal and domestic natural gas to bridge energy shortages, and strict fuel rationing that prioritises agriculture, emergency services and critical supply chains, all at the cost of slower economic growth.

The new Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India Act, 2025 (SHANTI Act) opens civil nuclear power to eligible private companies and joint ventures while retaining government control over sensitive activities, including nuclear fuel enrichment and spent-fuel reprocessing. It introduces capacity-based operator liability caps, ranging from ₹100 crore for micro-reactors to Rs 3,000 crore for large plants, and provides for government-backed compensation beyond the operator's cap.

Critics argue that limiting supplier liability weakens the polluter-pays principle and risks leaving the public to bear a substantial share of the cost of a major accident.The high-level nuclear waste and spent fuel management for 5000 years remains a government expense without, so far, a dedicated funds liability from private operators.

Uranium Scarcity & Thorium

The problem extends beyond accident compensation. High-level radioactive waste and spent-fuel management remain under government control. Although operators are expected to provide financial security for waste management and decommissioning, the absence of a dedicated, ring-fenced fund could leave taxpayers exposed to future disposal costs. Private companies may benefit from operating nuclear plants, while the state retains responsibility for some of the most expensive and technically demanding stages of the nuclear fuel cycle.

The IAEA in its global uranium report assesses 90,000 to 125,000 tonnes uranium demand by 2050. The present requirement is 60,000 tonnes. Shortage to accentuate by 2040 as uranium production to halve.For India, this supply-demand gap is not merely a market fluctuation but a systemic risk to its energy security and long-term decarbonisation goals. The widening deficit puts pressure on India's reliance on international imports to supplement its domestic reserves, escalation of operational cost and unaffordable power price as uranium prices zoom.

India has limited domestic reserves of low-grade uranium, forcing heavy reliance on foreign imports from countries like Kazakhstan, Canada, Russia, Australia, Uzbekistan and France. The Uranium Corporation mines in Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka sustained the domestic nuclear power needs for decades. But with the opening of the sector to the private companies, the situation is to change along with the issues of liabilities.

There are high thorium reserves (about 25% of the global total), yet commercial thorium power has not scaled due to a mix of scientific, economic, and strategic hurdles. So far, China operates the world's only active experimental thorium molten-salt reactor in Gobi Desert (Wuwei), while countries like India, the US, and Denmark continue active research, testing, and development programs.Scaling capacity requires massive capital investments (estimated in trillions of rupees), and draft regulatory frameworks still lack clear commercial guidelines on tariffs and investor returns.

Modular Reactor

India's uranium dependence adds another layer of risk. Domestic reserves are limited, and the country relies heavily on imports from suppliers including Kazakhstan, Canada, Uzbekistan, Australia, Russia and France. Global uranium demand is projected to rise substantially by 2050, while developing new mines can take 15–20 years. Long-term supply contracts and strategic reserves can provide some protection, but they cannot eliminate price volatility or logistical disruption.

India's thorium reserves—estimated at about a quarter of the global total—offer a possible long-term alternative, but not an immediate solution. Thorium is not fissile and must first be converted into uranium-233 inside a reactor. The process involves complex technology, expensive fuel reprocessing and difficult radiation-control requirements. The Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor at Kalpakkam reaching first criticality in April 2026 marks progress in India's second-stage nuclear programme, but commercial thorium power remains a longer-term objective.

Small modular reactors (SMRs) are another part of the expansion strategy. India's Nuclear Energy Mission, backed by Rs 20,000 crore, targets at least five indigenous SMRs by 2033, including the 220-MWe Bharat Small Modular Reactor. Yet smaller reactors are not automatically cheaper, and commercial viability will depend on construction costs, regulatory clarity, fuel availability and credible arrangements for waste management and decommissioning.

Indias nuclear expansion must not become a means of privatising profits while socialising costs. Securing uranium, strengthening domestic technology and reinforcing NPCIL must go hand in hand with transparent liability rules and properly funded waste disposal. Critics argue it weakens the polluter-pays principle.

Spent Fuel Cost on Public

With spent fuel management in the government sectors public cost to remain high and private liabilities limited. The profitable parts remain with the private sector.High-level radioactive waste remains under Central Government control, with spent fuel reprocessed and residual waste vitrified for secure storage, while plant operators handle routine low- and intermediate-level waste and maintain spent-fuel storage.

Operators are expected to provide financial security for waste management and decommissioning, but without a dedicated, ring-fenced fund financed through electricity-generation levies, the long-term cost of permanent disposal could ultimately fall on taxpayers rather than the companies generating the nuclear power.The critical question is whether the NPCIL should not be strengthened?

A 20-Year Supply Challenge

Despite global uranium resources exceeding 8.1 million tonnes, converting them into reliable supplies requires investment, infrastructure and 15–20 years to develop new mines. Expanding existing mines, reopening idle operations, strategic stockpiles and long-term import contracts can ease shortages, while seawater extraction and spent-fuel recycling remain longer-term options. Fast breeder reactors and thorium could reduce uranium dependence over time but cannot resolve immediate shortages. India must therefore balance nuclear expansion with fuel security, technological readiness, rising costs and long-term public liabilities. India cannot afford to abandon nuclear power, but it cannot pursue expansion by shifting its long-term costs and risks to the public. Uranium security, domestic technology and a stronger NPCIL must advance alongside transparent liability rules and properly funded waste disposal. Nuclear power may strengthen energy security, but private investment must not become a mechanism for privatising profits while leaving taxpayers to carry the residual risks.---



SHIVAJI SARKAR

Dr. Satyam Srirangam Takes the Helm as Telangana Throwball Association President

**** Elected unanimously with support from 26 districts, the new executive body vows to elevate throwball and nurture grassroots talent across the state.***

Medchal-Malkajgiri , October 25: TPCC Spokesperson Dr. Satyam Srirangam has been unanimously elected as the President of the Telangana Throwball Association during its General Body meeting. The election took place with the full support and endorsement of representatives from 26 districts across the state. Along with Dr. Srirangam, Chitra Shanoy was elected as the General Secretary, and Bhaskar Reddy was chosen as the Treasurer for the newly formed executive body.

The General Body meeting was attended by Aman Sharma, who served as the observer on behalf of the Throwball Federation of India (TFI). Former Union Minister and Vice President of the Telangana Olympic Association, Samudrala Venugopalachari, along with Senior Advocate Mokshagna, graced the occasion as chief guests. Representatives, including presidents and secretaries from 26 district throwball associations, participated in the meeting and unanimously voted to elect the new leadership.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Satyam Srirangam expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the district delegates and members for placing their trust in him. He stated that his primary objective as president will be to develop throwball across Telangana, nurture young athletic talent, and provide state players with the necessary support to excel at the national level. The event saw active participation from key members and district representatives, including Krishna Rajput, Sriramoju Shiva Kumar, Odelu Yadav, Vaddenna, Ravi, Anil, Vinisha, Alekhya, among others.



ACB seizes Rs. 2.40 lakh from HMWSSB joint director's car

Hyderabad, Oct.25: Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) officials seized Rs. 2.40 lakh in unaccounted cash from the car of A. Srinivas, a Joint Director with the Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWSSB), during a check on Raj Bhavan Road here on Saturday night. The officials intercepted Srinivas near Metro Residency Apartments at around 7 pm and recovered the cash during an inspection of his vehicle. They reportedly found his explanation regarding the source of the money unsatisfactory and are probing the matter from the angle of possible corruption. According to sources, the ACB had placed the official under surveillance after receiving a tip-off through a phone call from an unidentified person. The bureau is also expected to inform the Income Tax Department about the seizure.

CONTINUATION FROM PAGE 1

TG Sees Vast Potential for Korean Investments

➢FROM PAGE 1

He observed that Telangana had much to learn from South Korea's economic progress, adding that sustained investments in education, skill development, infrastructure and technology had played a crucial role in the country's development. The Deputy Chief Minister expressed the desire to strengthen cooperation among industries, universities, research institutions, startups and small enterprises.

Tourism Offers Significant Investment Opportunities

Highlighting the opportunities in tourism, Bhatti Vikramarka said Telangana's Tourism Policy 2025–2030 aims to attract investments worth ₹15,000 crore and create three lakh additional employment opportunities over five years. He welcomed Korean companies to participate in developing tourism infrastructure, hospitality, film tourism, wellness tourism and cultural experiences across the state.

Cultural Ties Strengthen India–Korea Relations

Bhatti Vikramarka said the festival, showcasing Korean culture, arts, music and traditions, would further strengthen the bonds of friendship between the people of India and South Korea. He praised South Korea for overcoming challenges such as war and poverty to emerge as one of the world's developed economies. He said the country's achievements in technology, manufacturing, education and innovation were commendable.



Korean music, films and television programmes have attracted young audiences across the world, demonstrating how cultural influence can enhance a country's international recognition, he noted.

The Deputy Chief Minister highlighted the similarities between Indian and Korean societies in areas such as education, family values, traditions and respect for elders. He also referred to the legend of Queen Heo Hwang-ok, who is believed to have travelled to Korea from ancient India, describing it as a symbol of the historical friendship between the two countries.

Telangana's Heritage Deserves Global Recognition

Bhatti Vikramarka said Hyderabad had served for centuries as a meeting point of diverse cultures, languages and traditions. He highlighted Telangana's distinctive cultural heritage, including Bathukamma, Bonalu, Telugu traditions and historic monuments. The state has several tourist attractions, including the Charminar, Golconda Fort and the Ramappa Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

He also noted that Buddhist heritage destinations such as Buddhavanam near Nagarjuna Sagar could further strengthen cultural connections between India and East Asian countries.

The Deputy Chief Minister invited Korean tourists to visit Telangana and encouraged young people from both regions to explore opportunities in education, research, employment and creative industries.

He emphasised that while investments and trade agreements are important, mutual affection and understanding between people form the lasting foundation of international relations. "Hyderabad is like a second home for our Korean friends," he said. Republic of Korea Ambassador to India, H.E. Lee Seung-ho, welcomed Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka to the event.

'Mann Ki Baat' Offers Direction to Youth: NRR

HYDERABAD, OCT 25



BJP State President N Ramachandar Rao today emphasized that Prime Minister Modi's 'Mann Ki Baat' program provides immense inspiration and direction to students, youth, and all sections of society.

Rao was speaking after watching the 139th episode of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Mann Ki Baat' program live along with locals at Lakshmi's Emporia Apartment in Miyapur, Serilingampally Constituency.

He praised the Prime Minister's call given in view of the upcoming Diwali and Chhath festivals, urging everyone to prioritize cleanliness, keep their surroundings clean, and become active participants in nature conservation.

Rao mentioned that inspired by 'Vocal for Local', domestic products are gaining international recognition. Success stories such as the rejuvenation of the Heval River in Uttarakhand, the organic cotton revolution in Punjab, the packaging of tribal products from Maharashtra receiving Japan's 'Good Design Award', and the export of Bihar Makhana and Karnataka Toor Dal to foreign countries stand as testaments to a self-reliant India (Atmanirbhar Bharat).

On the same occasion, BJP state chief also spoke about the voter registration process for the upcoming elections to the two Graduates' MLC constituencies in Telangana (Mahabubnagar-Rangareddy-Hyderabad and Warangal-Khammam-Nalgonda). He said that, according to the Election Commission of India guidelines, all eligible graduates who completed their degree by October 31, 2023, must compulsorily register as voters through Form-18 by November 6. He clarified that even those who had voting rights previously must reapply for the fresh electoral roll and urged graduates to come forward in large numbers to strengthen the democratic system.

Later, BJP Telangana State Co-in-charge and MP Mrs Rekha Sharma criticized the Congress party, stating that it is attempting to destabilize democratic systems and constitutional institutions through conspiracies to divide the country and society along caste and religious lines.

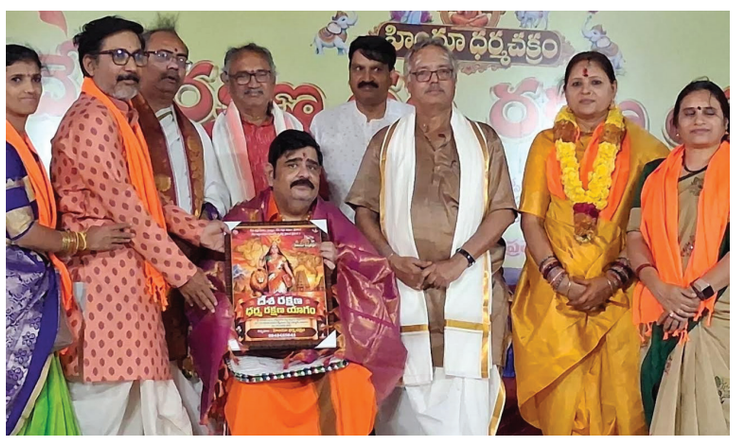
She announced that under the auspices of the BJP, a massive mega padayatra titled 'Loktantra Bachao – Bheedtantra Hatao' (Save Democracy – Drive Out Mobocracy) will be organized in Telangana on November first to strongly expose Congress's divisive conspiracies and malicious propaganda in the public domain and to protect the Constitution and democracy. She called upon the people and intellectuals to extend their support to this movement to protect Telangana and democracy from Congress's anarchic and mob-rule politics.

BJP Telangana State Co-incharge Mrs Rekha Sharma , party's State General Secretary Gautam Rao, District President Srinivas Reddy , Ravi Kumar Yadav, other prominent leaders, and local citizens participated in this program.

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Shri Narendra Modi
Hon'ble Prime Minister


Maha Yagna for National Security and Protection of Dharma Concludes on Third Day





MALLAPUR

The Maha Yagna for National Security and Protection of Dharma, organised under the leadership of Hindu Dharma Chakra President Maddikunta Srikanth Sharma, entered its third day on October 25, with Pushpagiri Peethadhipathi Sri Sri Sri Vidya Shankara Bharati Swamiji participating in the Purna Ahuti ceremony.

Addressing the gathering, Swamiji said that lighting a lamp at home every day is also a form of yagna. He stated that such religious rituals help enrich the spiritual wealth of society. He added that the divine beings look forward to the performance of such yagnas and other sacred rituals.

BJP National Council member Geeta Murthy and her husband are serving as the yagna kartas (principal sponsors and performers of the ritual).

Speaking at a meeting held after the ceremony, Geeta Murthy said that, according to the organisers, the yagna was being performed for Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who has been bringing happiness to the people of the country through various welfare schemes. She described Prime Minister Modi as a leader who protected people during a pandemic like COVID-19 and appealed to the public to continue extending their support to him.

The Purna Ahuti ceremony concluded under the guidance of Brahma Sri Raghava Sharma and Karanam Naresh Sharma. Religious discourse speakers Dr. Anantha Lakshmi, Devika Rani, Rangi Satyanarayana Sastry, Yamuna Pathak, the Darshanam brothers, Vani and Sri Krithi, along with a large number of devotees and members of the public, participated in the event.

The Maha Yagna was successfully completed at VNR Gardens in Mallapur.

GITAM Alumna Creates History with 31 Guinness World Records

Hyderabad: GITAM Deemed to be University alumna Shivali Srivastava (2016–2020 batch) has achieved a remarkable milestone by securing 31 Guinness World Records, becoming the individual with the highest number of such titles in India. Her latest record is for the largest display of 3,000 handmade paper dolls, achieved alongside her parents, Kavita and Anil Srivastava. Recognised for their excellence in origami and paper art, the family has handcrafted lakhs of paper creations. GITAM congratulated Shivali and her family on their achievement.



Temporary government teachers should be made permanent: R. Krishnaiah

HYDERABAD

Rajya Sabha member and BC Welfare Association President R. Krishnaiah has demanded that 8,000 temporary teachers working in BC, SC and ST Gurukul schools be made permanent immediately. Speaking at the State Temporary Employees Association meeting held at BC Bhavan on Sunday, R. Krishnaiah reminded that there were Supreme Court and High Court judgments to regularize these employees, who have been working for 10 to 20 years. He said that In many states, especially in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, West Bengal, Punjab and other states, lakhs of temporary employees had been made permanent and added that In the past, contract daily wage employees were made permanent in the state too . "But there are still thousands of outsourcing, part-time, guest teachers and guest lecturers. Injustice is done to them and labor is exploited," he rued . He asked Chief Minister Revanth Reddy to take the initiative and take a policy decision in the issue .

CHITTARANJAN LOCOMOTIVE WORKS
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No. COS/CRJ/PUB/e-Tender/19/0162, Date: 22/10/2026. The following **E-Tenders** can be accessed under the link **www.ireps.gov.in**. Offers for such e-Tender can be submitted only electronically by accessing the link **www.ireps.gov.in → login → E-Tender Stores/Supply**. Vendors may also contact the following officials to obtain clarification regarding particular tender or IREPS related information if any, Dy. CMM/M-I/CLW/Chittaranjan, 9163340707 or AMM/M, 9163340706. **Office Address:** Office of The PCMM/CLW/Chittaranjan. **Sl. No.; Tender No.; Brief Description of Item; Quantity; Earnest Money Deposit (Rupees); Tender Closing Date & Time (IST)** are as follows: **[01]; 74263785**; Set of Mn Pins and Bushes for Brake Gear Arrangement and details for WAG-9HC Loco. Details of drawing as per Category No. V/9/0025 specn: IRS-R 65/78 [**Warranty Period:** 30 Months after the date of delivery]; **50.00 Set**; ₹ 111000.00; **13/11/2026 at 11:00 AM. [02]; 74263784**; Brake Gear Arrangement and Details without Mn Pins and bushes and without Air Brake Cylinder for WAG-9HC locomotive. as per Drg.No. 1209-01.116-059 Alt-5, Category No. V/9/0028. [**Warranty Period:** 30 Months after the date of delivery]; **50.00 Set**; ₹ 225800.00; **17/11/2026 at 11:00 AM**.
PR6/526 PCMM/CLW/Chittaranjan
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INTEGRAL COACH FACTORY - CHENNAI - 600 038
ICF HOSPITAL, CHENNAI - 600 038
NOTIFICATION NO. MD / ICF / HVS / 2026
Last date of receipt of Application: 17.11.2026
ENGAGEMENT OF HONORARY VISITING SPECIALISTS
Applications are invited **FOR HONORARY VISITING SPECIALIST (Opthalmologist)**, from the Doctors fulfilling following qualifications and experience. **The duly filled-in application with required documents should reach this office on or before 17.11.2026.**
ELIGIBILITY / QUALIFICATIONS:
Specialist: Post-Graduate degree from a recognized University. Minimum 3 years experience in the professional work related to concerned Specialty after obtaining P.G.degree.
Where Suitable candidates with PG degree are not available PG Diploma holders with 5 years experience in the professional work related to concerned specialty after obtaining P.G. Diploma may be awarded.
Age: During first time engagement, the preferred age is between 30 years to 64 years. Upper age limit of continued engagement is 65 years.
REMUNERATION

Hours of Duty	Specialist
2 hours a day for 6 days a week	₹67,000/-
2 hours a day for 4 days a week	₹41,000/-
2 hours a day for 2 days a week	₹20,000/-
4 hours a day for 6 days a week	₹1,00,000/-
4 hours a day for 4 days a week	₹61,000/-
4 hours a day for 2 days a week	₹30,000/-

Note: 1. The candidate may select any one of the above Hours of Duty of their Choice.
2. There will be deduction in remuneration for any absence beyond 12 days per annum as per extant Rly Board order.
Other terms and conditions related with this engagement may kindly be seen in ICF website http://www.icf.indianrailways.gov.in
Principal Chief Medical Officer

Gutha Sukhender Reddy slams DK Aruna's remarks on Dindi project

HYDERABAD

Legislative Council Chairman Gutha Sukhender Reddy on Sunday criticised BJP MP DK Aruna's remarks on the Dindi Lift Irrigation Project, stating that calling for its cancellation was unwarranted.

Speaking to the media at his camp office in Nalgonda, Gutha Sukhender Reddy advised Aruna, a senior BJP leader, to focus on securing the development of irrigation projects rather than fuelling differences among regions.

He urged her to press the Centre for national project status for the Palamuru-Rangareddy Lift Irrigation Scheme, which would help mobilise the required funds and expedite pending works.

Gutha Sukhender Reddy said the Dindi project was not merely an irrigation scheme but a vital initiative aimed at improving the lives of people in the Devarakonda and Munugode regions, who had suffered from fluoride contamination for decades. The project was conceived to provide safe drinking water to fluoride-affected areas, taking into account the recommendations of the World Health Organisation (WHO), he said.

Opposing the division of water resources along regional lines, Gutha Sukhender Reddy said the argument that water originating in a district should be used exclusively within its boundaries was not justified. If other States adopted the same approach, Telangana would not receive even a drop of water from Karnataka, he remarked.

The Council Chairman pointed out that 30 TMC of water was being supplied to Hyderabad through the Alimineti Madhava Reddy Project (AMRP), stressing the need to prioritise the State's overall interests over regional differences in water utilisation.

Gutha Sukhender Reddy welcomed Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy's decision to allocate 0.5 TMC of water to the Dindi Lift Irrigation Project, saying it marked a step towards fulfilling the long-standing aspirations of people in the erstwhile Nalgonda district.

Explosion at scrap shop, owner critical

HYDERABAD

A man sustained critical burn injuries in an explosion at a scrap shop in Church Colony, Ramanthapur, on Sunday morning.

The explosion occurred while metal was being cut at the shop located on the ground floor of a G+2 building. The blast triggered a fire, leaving the shop owner, Parashuram, seriously injured.

Parashuram, who suffered severe burns, came out of the shop and was rushed by locals in an ambulance to Gandhi Hospital for treatment.

According to reports, around 70 per cent of his body had suffered burn injuries, and his condition was stated to be critical. Fire personnel rushed to the spot and brought the blaze under control using two fire engines.

IMD forecasts intense rain in Telangana from October 27

HYDERABAD



After a prolonged dry spell, Telangana is likely to receive heavy rainfall, thunderstorms and gusty winds from Tuesday, October 27, with extremely heavy rain forecast in isolated areas on Wednesday, October 28.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD), Hyderabad, has warned of extremely heavy rainfall in parts of Telangana on October 28, under the influence of a developing weather system over the Bay of Bengal.

According to the IMD's forecast issued on Sunday, rainfall activity is expected to intensify over the State from Tuesday. Heavy rain is likely at isolated places on October 27, followed by extremely heavy rainfall on October 28. Heavy rain and thunderstorms are also likely on October 29.

The IMD has issued a red alert for Mulugu, Bhadradri Kothagudem and Khammam districts, where heavy to very heavy rainfall, with isolated extremely heavy downpours, is likely on October 28.

Thunderstorms accompanied by lightning and gusty winds are also forecast in parts of Telangana as the weather system approaches the Andhra Pradesh coast.

An orange alert has been issued for several districts, including Jayashankar Bhupalpally, Warangal, Hanumakonda, Mahabubabad and Suryapet, where heavy to very heavy rainfall is likely at isolated places. Other districts may also receive heavy rain.

The IMD has forecast heavy rainfall at isolated places on October 29, with thunderstorms and lightning likely in parts of the State.

Residents, particularly those in eastern Telangana districts, should monitor official weather bulletins as the system develops and rainfall warnings may be updated.

Indian culture is getting popular abroad : Medak MP Raghunandan Rao

HYDERABAD

Medak MP Raghunandan Rao has claimed that the popularity of Indian culture and traditions was increasing abroad. He said that there were articles in the newspapers that the number of Ayyappa devotees was gradually increasing in America as well. A grand Alai Balai program was organized in Siddipet on Saturday.

These celebrations were held under the auspices of senior BJP leader Dudi Srikanth Reddy at Konda Mallaiah Garden. MP Raghunandan Rao participated and spoke as the chief guest at these celebrations.

Speaking on the occasion, he said that India was the abode of great culture and traditions and added that he was happy that everyone, regardless of parties, castes and religions, had come together at the event . He said that it was commendable that Alai Balai was organized not only in Hyderabad but also in tier-2 cities. He said that the spirit of Alai Balay was that all people should come together regardless of the politics. He said that Bathukamma celebrations were also being held in Islamic countries like the Gulf countries.

The MP also said that even though the countries have changed, the admiration for the Indian culture and traditions had not diminished. He said that it was a matter of pride for them that Indian culture was spreading all over the world.

He hoped that more programs should be held to increase the intimacy between people by leaving aside the caste and religious differences. MP Raghunandan Rao stated that it was the responsibility of everyone to pass on the Indian culture and traditions to future generations.



SHORT TAKES

Bandru Foundation holds Alay Balai celebrations

HYDERABAD: *The Alai Balai celebrations were organized by Bandru Foundation in Aleru assembly constituency under the auspices of the former Chairperson of the state Women's Cooperative Development Organization Bandru Shobha Rani. This ceremony, which stands as a symbol of Telangana culture and spirituality, was attended by many public representatives, political and social figures. Former Union Minister and former Haryana Governor Bandaru Dattatreya, Bhuvanagiri MP Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy and former Minister Motkupalli Narasimhulu attended the event and addressed the gathering as the chief guests. The guests praised the organization of the Alai Balai program to promote unity and brotherhood in Telangana. MP Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy said the Alai Balai program has a special place in the culture and traditions of Telangana and added that it was a great tradition that unites everyone, leaving aside caste, religious and political differences. He said that It was very commendable that Bandru Shobha Rani, under the auspices of the Bandru Foundation, was organizing the program to promote brotherhood and brotherhood in the society. Government Whip and MLC Addanki Dayakar, Arunodaya Cultural Association President Vimalakka, Former MLA Gongidi Sunitha Mahender Reddy, RTI Commissioner Boreddy Ayodhya Reddy.*

'Vote Bachao – Desh Bachao' Campaign Must Be Made a Grand Success

- **AICC Observer Rambhupal Reddy Calls Upon Congress Cadres to Participate in Large Numbers**
- **Comprehensive Probe Must Be Conducted into Allegations Against the Electoral System: AICC Member Ramreddy Sarvotham Reddy**





SURYAPET

All Congress party leaders and workers should participate in large numbers and make the 'Vote Bachao – Desh Bachao' campaign, scheduled to be held at Ramlila Maidan in New Delhi on November 1, a grand success, said AICC observer Rambhupal Reddy and AICC member Ramreddy Sarvotham Reddy, Congress candidate for the Khammam–Warangal–Nalgonda Graduates' MLC constituency.

They were speaking at a press conference held on Sunday at the District Congress Committee (DCC) office in Suryapet, along with DCC president Gudipati Narsayya. They shared their views on the value of votes, the protection of democracy and the prevailing political situation in the country.

The leaders stated that the 'Vote Bachao – Desh Bachao' campaign was being organised across the country with the objective of safeguarding democracy and the Constitution. They called upon Congress leaders to coordinate their efforts and mobilise party leaders and workers in large numbers for the massive public meeting to be held at Ramlila Maidan in New Delhi on November 1, in collaboration with the INDIA bloc parties.

Referring to the allegations being raised against the electoral system, the leaders said there was a need to address and dispel the doubts prevailing among the public. Drawing a comparison between the present situation and the Simon Commission of nearly a century ago, they expressed concern over the allegations surrounding the electoral process.

They demanded a comprehensive and impartial investigation into the allegations against the electoral system. They also called for the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar and urged the Supreme Court to take up the matter for investigation. The leaders emphasised that the vote is one of the most valuable rights in a democracy. They said the concerned institutions have a responsibility to take transparent measures to ensure that people retain confidence in the electoral process. They urged the authorities to bring the facts concerning the doubts raised about the electoral system before the public.

They asserted that the Congress party would continue its struggle to protect democracy under the slogan 'Vote Bachao – Desh Bachao'. They further stated that safeguarding the right to vote is the responsibility of every Indian citizen.

Those who attended the meeting included Vaddera Corporation Chairperson Gunja Renuka; senior state Congress leader Pothu Bhaskar; Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Commission member Cheviti Venkanna Yadav; Municipal Chairperson Morishetti Niveditha Lakshadi; Town Congress president Velugu Venkanna; Municipal Floor Leader Kummariguntla Venugopal; Mandal Congress presidents Kothi Gopal Reddy, Dharavath Veeranna Naik and Musku Ramachandra Reddy; District Congress Working President Abdul Rahim; District Mahila Congress president Tirumalagada Anuradha; INTUC District President Balakrishna; NSUI District President Praveen; Congress councillors, sarpanches, party leaders and workers, among others. Tighten the report for newspaper styleClarify the opening attribution



Ex-Paramilitary Personnel Must Unite to Resolve Their Grievances : Bura Saidaiah Goud



BHUVANAGIRI

Telangana Former Paramilitary Welfare Association State President Bura Saidaiah Goud called upon former paramilitary personnel and their families to unite and fight for the resolution of their long-pending grievances.

Speaking at the general body meeting of the Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Ex-Paramilitary Association, held in Bhuvanagiri town on Sunday, he discussed the various issues faced by former personnel of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) and their family members across the district. He also guided district-level leaders on ways to extend necessary assistance and support to the affected families.

Bura Saidaiah Goud urged the association leaders to pursue the welfare benefits and facilities due to former personnel and their families from the Central and State Governments.

He stressed the need for a united and determined struggle to ensure that eligible families receive the benefits and support to which they are entitled. He further called upon all association members and leaders to work together in the future to address the issues faced by ex-paramilitary personnel and safeguard their welfare and rights.

The meeting was attended by Association State General Secretary Macherla Devender, Official Spokesperson M. N. Reddy, Vikarabad District President K. Lingamaiah, and Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Association leaders Mohammed Ali, K. Sudhakar, M. Ashok, and others.

Bura Saidaiah Goud congratulated the Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Association leaders for successfully organizing the meeting.

"We Don't Want the District Agriculture Officer!"

- **Women AEOs Break Down in Tears in Mancherial**
- **Employees Appeal to Inquiry Officer Over DAO's Alleged Conduct**

MANCHERIAL

The Agriculture Department in Mancherial district is facing controversy following complaints by several employees over the alleged conduct of the District Agriculture Officer (DAO). The government has reportedly ordered an inquiry into the complaints, with proceedings held at the Mancherial Collectorate on Saturday.

Employees Voice Grievances Before Inquiry Officer

Several employees had reportedly lodged complaints against the DAO with higher authorities, including the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) and the Commissioner's Office. Following these complaints, an inquiry officer was appointed to examine the allegations. On Saturday, Kishan, a DRDA official appointed to conduct the inquiry, summoned the employees who had filed complaints and recorded their statements. The employees reportedly detailed the difficulties they faced at work and the issues they encountered while discharging their duties.

Women AEOs Break Down During Inquiry

Several women Agricultural Extension Officers (AEOs) reportedly became emotional while describing the mental stress and workplace difficulties they said they had experienced. According to reports, some broke down in tears while presenting their grievances before the inquiry officer.

Government Report Awaited

The inquiry officer is expected to prepare a comprehensive report based on the employees' statements and the complaints received and submit it to the government. The findings of the inquiry are awaited. The matter has sparked considerable discussion within the Mancherial District Agriculture Department, with employees hoping that the inquiry will be conducted fairly and their grievances addressed.

Over 1,100 Women Participate in the 6th Edition of Starlight Strides – Women's Night Run 2026

HYDERABAD

The Hyderabad Runners Society organised the 6th Edition of Starlight Strides – Women's Night Run 2026 at Gachibowli on Saturday night, bringing together over 1,100 women runners for an evening dedicated to fitness, safety and empowerment.

Arun Kumar, President of the Hyderabad Runners Society, said, "It is inspiring to see so many women come together for a night run dedicated exclusively to them. Starlight Strides is a celebration of womanhood and a tribute to the significant role women play in the socio-economic progress of society. Through this initiative, we aim to encourage women to prioritise their physical and mental well-being, build confidence and become stronger."

Adding colour and tradition to the event, several women participated in sarees, drawing enthusiastic cheers from fellow runners and spectators. The event featured three categories — 10K Timed Run, 5K Timed Run and 5K Fun Run — welcoming women across age groups and fitness levels. Under the Society's Gift a Run initiative, complimentary registrations were extended to women from NGOs, including SABA, to promote inclusive participation.



Another key highlight was the graduation run of the Women's Couch25K, a six-week structured training programme by the Hyderabad Runners Society. More than 180 women completed their 5K graduation run under the guidance of 17 women mentors, who were felicitated for their contribution to the initiative.

The evening also featured the much-anticipated "Run in Saree, Win Big" contest, presented by Mandir. Participants who embraced traditional attire competed for gift vouchers worth a total of ₹2.5 lakh, adding a festive touch to the celebrations.

TGSRTC launches new Rs.600 bus pass for Passengers in Hyderabad

HYDERABAD

For the convenience of commuters, tourists and those coming to the city for business and other work in Greater Hyderabad area, Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TGSRTC) has launched a new scheme. It has launched a 'Weekly Bus Pass' priced at Rs. 600 with the aim of reducing the financial burden on passengers and providing easier travel. This pass is valid for seven consecutive days from the date of purchase. With this new weekly pass, the passengers can travel unlimitedly on all types of city buses including AC buses within the Greater Hyderabad area. However, the corporation has clarified that this pass is not applicable only to the 'Pushpak Airport Liner' services.

In addition to the currently available Daily Pass and Monthly Pass facilities, the corporation has taken this new decision to provide another affordable and convenient travel option to the passengers. With this weekly pass, the passengers do not need to buy separate tickets for each journey they make within a seven-day period. Once they buy a pass, they can travel freely and quickly on any city bus (except Pushpak bus) in the city for seven days.

These weekly passes are available at all the city bus pass counters in the city. Those, who need them can purchase them at their nearest bus pass counters.

Khairatabad MLA Danam accuses BRS of politicising El Niño crisis



HYDERABAD

Khairatabad MLA Danam Nagender launched a scathing attack on the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) on Sunday, accusing the main opposition party of politicising environmental crises like El Niño for political mileage.

Speaking to the media here, Nagender said that while the world was grappling with the impact of El Niño, BRS leaders had visited the Medigadda barrage on what he termed a "joy trip". He alleged that the BRS was indulging in politics even over a crisis with serious implications. Danam Nagender defended the Congress party's track record in addressing Hyderabad's chronic drinking water needs, stating that previous Congress administrations successfully brought 10 TMC of water to the city via the Godavari River and the Yellampally project.

In contrast, Danam Nagender targeted the previous BRS government over the failure of the ₹1 lakh-crore Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Scheme (KLIS), alleging that the collapsed project had failed to supply even a single TMC of water from Medigadda to meet the capital's drinking requirements.

Looking ahead, Danam Nagender reassured the people that Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy is executing a structured roadmap to secure the state capital's long-term water supply, with plans underway to import an additional five TMC of drinking water by January 2027.

Shifting to national politics, the Khairatabad MLA accused the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of retaining power by illegally deleting voters' names in Bihar, West Bengal, and Uttar Pradesh.

He urged the people and party supporters nationwide to join the upcoming "Chalo Delhi" mega-rally called by Rahul Gandhi at Ramlila Maidan on November 1 to protest electoral malpractices.

Vishwakarmas Must Emerge as a Political Force

- **BRS Legislative Council Opposition Leader Sirikonda Madhusudhanachari**

HYDERABAD

Former Speaker of the Telangana Legislative Assembly and BRS Legislative Council Opposition Leader Sirikonda Madhusudhanachari has said that if Vishwakarmas unite and emerge as a strong political force, all political parties will be compelled to take notice of them.

He stated that no community could progress without political recognition. Society, he said, consists of communities that hold political power and those that do not. Despite their significant population, Vishwakarmas have not received their due share in political power.

Madhusudhanachari made these remarks while addressing a round-table meeting at the Vishwakarma Political Summit organised by the Vishwakarma Community Joint Action Committee (JAC) at the Hyderabad Press Club on Sunday. He expressed confidence that Vishwakarmas were no less politically aware than any other community.

He expressed the hope that at least 10 Vishwakarma representatives would be elected to legislative bodies by the next elections. Pointing out that the Vishwabrahmin community has a population of approximately 15 lakh, he called on its members to fight for their rights and rightful share in political power.



He urged Vishwakarmas to contest elections at every level, from ward member to Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA).

The meeting was attended by JAC convener Devarakonda Kalidas, co-convener Adluri Ravindrachari, senior BJP leader Talloju Achari, Congress leader Tangellapalli Ravikumar, Bhuvanagiri Municipal Chairperson Vani, BC JAC leader Kundaram Ganesh Chari, community elder Lal Kota Venkata Chari, and JAC leaders Bairoju Shekhar Chari and Rajamouli Chari, among others.

Several speakers at the meeting called on Vishwabrahmins to demonstrate their leadership abilities and secure appropriate positions in all political parties. They urged community members to prepare to contest elections to legislative bodies and emphasised the need to encourage Vishwakarma youth and women on a large scale.

The participants noted that the previous government had nominated two Vishwakarma representatives to the Legislative Council and demanded that the Congress government also give the community due representation.

Claiming that their community ranks among the top four or five Backward Classes (BC) communities in terms of population, they appealed to all political parties to provide Vishwakarmas with appropriate political representation and opportunities.

PCI India Highlights Public Procurement Opportunities for SHG Women at National SARAS Mela–2026

VIJAYAWADA, ANDHRA PRADESH:

PCI India, in partnership with the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), Government of India, is promoting public procurement opportunities for Self-Help Group (SHG) women through a National Resource Cell. At a special session held during the National SARAS Mela–2026 in Vijayawada, representatives highlighted successful models and emerging opportunities for SHG-led enterprises to access government markets by leveraging the Government of India's public procurement policy.

Mr. Vishal Sinha, Team Lead, National Resource Cell, and Ms. Jaya presented examples of SHG enterprises successfully delivering products and services to government institutions. These included Didi Ki Rasoi, SHG-managed canteens and laundry services in government hospitals, school uniform stitching by SHG women in West Bengal, waste management services, and water services at Kochi Metro. Mr. Rajiv Singhal, National Mission Manager, National Mission Management Unit (NMMU), MoRD, emphasised that public procurement can significantly expand market access and strengthen livelihood opportunities for rural women. By enabling government departments to procure products and services from SHG enterprises, while ensuring quality standards, public procurement can help women-led businesses grow sustainably.



Uttar Pradesh's Take Home Ration Initiative: A Successful Model

Sharing Uttar Pradesh's experience, Mr. Adeel Abbas, Associate Director – Women Economic Empowerment, PCI India, highlighted the Take Home Ration (THR) initiative, jointly implemented by the Uttar Pradesh State Rural Livelihood Mission (UPSRLM) and the Department of Child Development. Through this initiative, SHG women have established 204 THR manufacturing units, providing regular employment to approximately 4,000 women. According to the information shared during the session, these enterprises have produced 43.2 lakh metric tonnes of THR and generated revenue exceeding ₹1,830 crore through supplies to the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) programme.

The initiative has enabled participating women to become Lakhpati Didis, contributing to the vision of the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India for women's economic empowerment. Mr. Abbas explained that several key measures contributed to the initiative's success. These included a long-term seven-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), advance payments equivalent to two months' requirements to SHGs, and settlement of the advance in ten instalments. These arrangements helped ensure regular payments through the ICDS system. SHG members also received comprehensive training in THR production, quality control, and timely delivery to Anganwadi Centres (AWCs).

Fisheries as an Alternative Livelihood through Interdepartmental Convergence

Mr. Abbas also highlighted the collaboration between UPSRLM and the Department of Fisheries to promote tank-based fisheries as an alternative livelihood opportunity for SHG women. Under this model, women make an initial investment of ₹60,000 and receive a ₹30,000 subsidy through the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY). The initiative has created livelihood opportunities for more than 1,000 SHG households. The model demonstrates how coordination between government departments can facilitate access to resources, create additional income opportunities for rural women, reduce poverty, and promote the productive utilisation of government schemes.

Public Procurement: A Catalyst for Women's Economic Empowerment

The session underscored the potential of public procurement as a powerful instrument for rural economic transformation. By identifying procurement opportunities, facilitating market linkages, providing appropriate preference and support to SHG enterprises, and ensuring quality standards, state governments can help women-led businesses access stable markets and expan d their operations. The approach is aligned with the Government of India's Viksit Bharat @2047 vision and can contribute to inclusive economic development, sustainable livelihoods, and the long-term economic empowerment of rural women.

V-P Radhakrishnan's 2-day visit to Andhra begins tomorrow

NEW DELHI, OCT 25



Vice President C. P. Radhakrishnan will visit Andhra Pradesh on October 26–27 to offer prayers at Tirupati and take part in an event organised by a university, an official said on Sunday. On October 26, the Vice-President will be the Chief Guest at the 40th (Ruby Jubilee) Anniversary Celebrations of Dr NTR University of Health Sciences in Vijayawada, the official said in a statement. During the visit, he will offer prayers at Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple in Tirupati and Sri Padmavathi Ammavari Temple in Tiruchanur, the statement said. Earlier, Radhakrishnan inaugurated a conference on 'Co-operative Federalism and Law Reforms: National and State Perspectives' in Delhi, highlighting the need to modernise India's legal framework for Viksit Bharat @ 2047. Emphasising the spirit of 'Team India', he called for greater consultation, coordination and shared responsibility between the Centre and States, noting that political differences must never come in the way of the larger public interest. He highlighted the importance of cooperative and competitive federalism and said that the vision of 'Team India', under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, calls for consultation, coordination and shared responsibility between the Centre and the States. He noted that political differences should never come in the way of working together for the larger public interest. Emphasising the importance of legal reforms in achieving Viksit Bharat @2047, Radhakrishnan said that development must be supported by sound laws, transparent institutions, efficient administration and justice for all. The Vice-President highlighted the replacement of three colonial-era criminal laws and the repeal of over 1,700 obsolete laws in the last 12 years as major steps towards modernising India's legal framework. He urged State Law Commissions to identify and recommend the amendment or repeal of outdated laws to promote ease of living and efficient governance. Stressing that co-operative federalism in law reforms does not imply uniformity in every matter, the Vice-President said that the Union and States must work together where their constitutional responsibilities converge, while preserving the States' legitimate space to address their specific needs. He called for stronger coordination among the Law Commission of India, State Law Commissions and State Law Departments through inter-State consultations, sharing of best practices and systematic review of outdated laws.

In Gujarat village, one farmer's avocado crop draws fellow cultivators

BHAVNAGAR, OCT 25

A farmer in Gujarat's Bhavnagar district is turning to avocado cultivation to increase his income, with 15 of the trees he planted beginning to bear fruit and each yielding around 60 kg, highlighting the potential of alternative crops alongside traditional farming. Danubhai Solanki, a farmer from Kodhiya village in Talaja taluka, began planting avocados three to four years ago, initially starting with 50 plants. He has since adopted scientific farming practices and regular irrigation to grow the fruit, which has a market in India as well as overseas. "Three to four years ago, we planted avocado trees. Initially, we started with 50 plants. This year, 15 plants have started bearing fruit, with each plant yielding around 60 kg," Solanki said. He added that avocados came in two or three varieties that could be grown in Gujarat, but not all varieties found buyers easily. "There are other varieties that do not sell well in the market. Some avocado fruits are difficult to sell," he said, pointing to marketing challenges alongside the opportunities offered by the crop.

21 disaster response force teams deployed as Andhra Pradesh braces for cyclone

AMARAVATI, OCT 15



A total of 21 teams of the NDRF and the SDRF have been deployed in Andhra Pradesh as the state braces for severe cyclonic storm 'Arnab'.

Ten teams of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and 11 teams of the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) have been deployed for relief operations.

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu on Sunday reviewed preparedness regarding the evacuation of people from vulnerable areas, establishment of relief centres, and the provision of food, drinking water, medical care, and power restoration.

He asked all the government departments to work in coordination to tackle the threat posed by the cyclone.

He reviewed the situation at a meeting with top officials amid the forecast by the Met Department that a severe cyclonic storm is likely to cross Andhra Pradesh coast on October 28.

The review meeting was attended by Chief Secretary Sai Prasad, DGP Harish Gupta, District Collectors, RTG (Real-Time Governance) officials, and representatives from the Agriculture, Power, Irrigation, Home, Health, Civil Supplies, Municipal Administration, and Panchayat Raj departments.

As a deep depression currently over the Bay of Bengal is likely to intensify into a cyclone, the Chief Minister reviewed the potential impact on the state and proactive preparedness measures.

Naidu directed officials to remain constantly vigilant, maintain the highest level of preparedness, and implement advance planning to ensure people do not face any hardships.

Officials were directed to ensure that all fishing boats currently at sea return to the shore.

The Chief Minister directed that all necessary measures be taken to utilise floodwaters from heavy rains to fill reservoirs.

The cyclone is expected to make landfall between Bapatla and Visakhapatnam sometime between the morning and afternoon of October 28. Current projections indicate a potential landfall in the coastal region spanning Konaseema, Yanam, and Kakinada.

The deep depression is currently located approximately 850 km east-southeast of Visakhapatnam and about 930 km from Kakinada. The system is expected to intensify into a cyclonic storm by the morning of October 26, a severe cyclonic storm by that night, and a very severe cyclonic storm by October 27.

At the time of landfall, wind speeds are expected to reach 115–125 kmph, with gusts potentially reaching up to 140 kmph.

Strong winds are likely to begin affecting coastal areas as early as the morning of October 27.

Heavy to very heavy rainfall is expected across North Andhra and the central coastal districts on October 27 and 28, with the possibility of extremely heavy rainfall in some locations.

Districts including Kakinada, Anakapalli, Visakhapatnam, Konaseema, and East Godavari, along with other parts of North Andhra, are likely to be impacted by these strong winds and heavy rains. The intensity of rainfall is expected to be particularly high on October 27 and 28, with forecasts indicating heavy to very heavy rain—and potentially extremely heavy rain in isolated areas—across North Andhra and the central coastal region. Anakapalli district is expected to record the highest average rainfall, projected at 292.55 mm. Rainfall estimates for other districts include 281.17 mm for Alluri Sitarama Raju district, 253.87 mm for Visakhapatnam, and 249.18 mm for Srikakulam. The average total rainfall across the state over the five-day period is estimated at 95 mm. An average rainfall of 22–29 cm is expected in the affected districts. As the sea will be extremely rough, fishermen have been advised not to venture out for fishing.

Remain Alert in View of Cyclone Warnings

Home Minister Anitha Issues Key Directives to Officials

AMARAVATI, OCTOBER 25

The Andhra Pradesh government has gone on high alert as a depression over the Bay of Bengal is likely to intensify into a severe cyclonic storm. With widespread rainfall expected from Monday and heavy to extremely heavy rain forecast in the coastal districts on Tuesday and Wednesday, Home Minister Vangalapudi Anitha has issued key directives to the officials concerned. She stressed the need to take precautionary measures in advance to prevent loss of life and property. The cyclone is likely to make landfall between the Bapatla and Visakhapatnam coasts on Wednesday, with strong winds reaching speeds of 115 to 125 kmph, the minister said. She instructed district collectors, superintendents of police (SPs) and field-level officials in the cyclone-affected districts to remain on high alert. She also directed officials to immediately remove dangerous hoardings and make advance arrangements to shift people in coastal areas to safer locations, if necessary.

Keep Rescue and Relief Teams Ready

The Home Minister directed officials to keep National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) teams ready to ensure that relief and rescue operations in cyclone-affected areas are carried out without any hindrance.

She instructed officials to continuously monitor the situation through district control rooms and take immediate action in accordance with changing weather conditions.

Fishermen Advised Not to Venture into the Sea

In view of the cyclone warnings, the Home Minister advised fishermen not to venture into the sea for fishing. She also directed officials to prohibit tourists from entering beaches. She appealed to the public not to take selfies or engage in other dangerous activities in areas where high waves are expected.

Do Not Believe Rumours; Follow Official Advisories

Home Minister Anitha urged farmers and the public to take precautionary measures in their respective activities in view of the anticipated cyclone.

She advised people not to believe rumours circulating on social media or forward such messages to others. She appealed to the public to remain alert and regularly follow official warnings issued by the Disaster Management Authority and the Real Time Governance Society (RTGS).

IMD Warns of Severe Cyclonic Storm Crossing Andhra Coast on October 28

VISAKHAPATNAM, OCT 25



The depression over East-central and adjoining Southeast Bay of Bengal is likely to intensify into a very severe cyclonic storm on October 28 and cross the Andhra Pradesh coast between Bapatla and Visakhapatnam. According to India Meteorological Department (IMD) bulletin on Sunday morning, the depression moved southeastwards with speed of 5 kmph during past six hours, and lay centered at 0530 hours over the same region, about 440 km north-northwest of Sri Vijaya Puram (Andaman Islands), 880 km east-southeast of Vishakhapatnam, 980 km east-southeast of Kakinada, 1080 km east of Machilipatnam and 1150 km east of Bapatla. It is very likely to move nearly southwards, intensify into a deep depression and then gradually recurve west-northwestwards over the East-central and adjoining Southeast Bay of Bengal on Sunday. Continuing to move west-northwestwards, it is very likely to intensify further into a cyclonic storm over the Eastcentral and adjoining Westcentral Bay of Bengal by October 26 morning, and into a severe cyclonic storm over Westcentral Bay of Bengal around the morning of October 27, the IMD said. Thereafter, it is very likely to move northwestwards, intensify further into a very severe cyclonic storm, and reach the Westcentral Bay of Bengal near the Andhra Pradesh coast around the morning of October 28. It is very likely to cross Andhra Pradesh and Yanam coasts between Bapatla and Visakhapatnam as a very severe cyclonic storm, with a maximum sustained wind speed of 115-125 kmph, gusting to 140 kmph by the forenoon of October 28. Andhra Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority has advised people to remain extremely vigilant. Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu held a review meeting with officials, including Chief Secretary Sai Prasad and representatives from the Real-Time Governance Society (RTGS). The Chief Minister directed the administrative machinery to remain on high alert and issue advance advisories for the public. Officials informed the CM that a low-pressure area, currently centered in the east-central Bay of Bengal, is likely to intensify into a cyclone, potentially bringing heavy to very heavy rainfall to the coastal Andhra region on Tuesday and Wednesday. Given the possibility of strong gale-force winds along the coast, the CM instructed that measures be taken to prevent fishermen from venturing into the sea. He further directed that residents in low-lying areas within the potential impact zone be alerted. Additionally, the Chief Minister ordered that toll-free numbers be made available for the public seeking emergency assistance or information.

Police, election officials colluded with TDP, allege YSRCP leaders

TADEPALLI (ANDHRA PRADESH), OCT 25



YSR Congress Party MP Maddila Gurumoorthy and former minister Gudivada Amarnath alleged on Sunday that police and election officials in Andhra Pradesh have colluded with TDP leaders to favour the ruling party in the local body elections. The MP stated that an election mafia and massive money scam is unfolding in Andhra Pradesh.

"This nexus is collecting Rs 40 lakh to Rs 50 lakh from each TDP candidate in return for securing an uncontested victory, turning the electoral process into a money-making operation under Chandrababu Naidu's government," Gurumoorthy said in a post on X. "The modus operandi is disturbing. TDP leaders obstructed YSRCP candidates from filing nominations, threatened and physically attacked them, and tore up nomination papers even inside Returning Officers' chambers. Police stood as silent spectators, while election officials rejected opposition nominations on minor technical grounds and through manipulated scrutiny procedures," he said. The YSRCP leader claimed that the objective was to eliminate electoral competition and ensure uncontested victories for TDP candidates.

"The reported Rs 40 lakh to Rs 50 lakh collected from each candidate was then distributed among those facilitating these outcomes, including police and election officials," he said. The Lok Sabha member from Tirupati remarked that this is not merely an election controversy. It raises serious concerns about an organised corruption racket in which electoral victories are allegedly being sold for money, with those entrusted to protect democracy becoming part of the operation. The MP said Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu must answer for the violence, manipulation and corruption surrounding these elections. "The State Election Commission must order an independent investigation into the money trail, disputed nominations and the conduct of the officials involved," he added. Former minister Gudivada Amarnath alleged that the local body elections have turned into a massive election mafia and money-making scandal in Andhra Pradesh. He claimed that TDP leaders, police personnel and election officials are operating an organised nexus to collect Rs 40 lakh to Rs 50 lakh from each candidate in exchange for securing an uncontested victory. The financial dimension exposes the scale of the suspected corruption. Rs 40 lakh to Rs 50 lakh is being collected from each TDP candidate seeking an uncontested victory, with the money distributed among police personnel, election officials and others facilitating these outcomes. Instead of facing the voters, TDP candidates are securing uncontested victories through a process surrounded by intimidation, manipulation and serious financial irregularities," he said. The YSRCP leader said Chandrababu Naidu must explain why the police and election machinery under his government have become the subject of such grave accusations. "Is this his model of democracy, where opposition candidates are prevented from contesting and uncontested victories become a source of income for a political and official nexus?" he asked.

Farmer who borrowed Rs 10,000 found hanging in Nanded finance firm's office; 3 detained

NANDED: (OCT 25)

A farmer who had allegedly borrowed Rs 10,000 from a private finance company was found hanging inside its office in Maharashtra's Nanded city, following which police detained three persons, officials said on Sunday.

A case of murder, kidnapping and wrongful confinement was registered at the Vazirabad police station after the body of Chandrakant Shinde (40) was recovered from the office of KF Enterprises on Chikhaliwadi Road on Saturday afternoon. The family of Shinde, a resident of Malkoutha village in Mudkhed tehsil, has claimed that the finance company allegedly demanded Rs 70,000 from him against a loan of Rs 10,000.

EDITORIAL

Digital India Must Also Protect Citizens from Cybercrime

India's digital transformation has made financial transactions, communication and public services faster and more accessible. From mobile banking and digital payments to online shopping, technology has become an integral part of everyday life. However, the rapid expansion of digital services has also created opportunities for cybercriminals, making online security a major concern for citizens, financial institutions and the government. Cybercrime is no longer limited to technology experts or large businesses. Ordinary citizens, including students, senior citizens, small traders and rural communities, are increasingly exposed to online fraud. Fraudulent calls, phishing links, fake investment schemes and impersonation scams are among the methods used to deceive people and steal their money or personal information. Even digitally experienced individuals can become victims of sophisticated fraud.

One of the biggest challenges is the lack of awareness about safe digital practices. Many people unknowingly share confidential information, click suspicious links or respond to messages demanding urgent payments. Public awareness campaigns must therefore become a continuous effort rather than an occasional initiative. Schools, colleges, banks and local institutions should educate people about protecting passwords, verifying payment requests and recognising suspicious online activity. Awareness programmes in regional languages can be particularly effective in reaching first-time internet users. Banks and digital payment platforms also have an important responsibility. They must strengthen fraud detection systems, provide timely transaction alerts and make complaint procedures simple and accessible. When suspicious transactions occur, rapid coordination between banks and law enforcement agencies can improve the chances of preventing further losses. Citizens who encounter financial cyber fraud should immediately contact their bank and report the incident through official channels, including India's national cybercrime helpline, 1930.

Law enforcement agencies need trained personnel, modern investigative tools and better coordination to investigate cybercrime effectively. Since online criminals frequently operate across state and national borders, cooperation between different agencies is essential. Investigations must be timely, while victims should receive clear information and appropriate support throughout the process. Emerging technologies present additional challenges. Artificial intelligence can be misused to create convincing fake voices, videos and messages that imitate relatives, officials or business representatives. Technology companies must improve safeguards against such manipulation and respond promptly to fraudulent accounts. At the same time, cybersecurity measures must respect individual privacy and protect legitimate users from unnecessary surveillance.

Ultimately, digital literacy must go beyond teaching people how to use technology. Citizens must also understand its risks and know how to respond when something goes wrong. Government agencies, financial institutions, technology companies and individuals must share responsibility for building a safer digital environment. India's digital progress will be sustainable only when people can use online services with confidence. Digital India must represent not merely faster payments and greater connectivity, but also stronger protection, institutional accountability and accessible remedies for victims. Cybersecurity is not an optional feature of digital development; it is essential to preserving public trust and ensuring that technological progress benefits everyone.

THE RAIN THAT NEVER SOAKED THE SOIL



The sky signs its name in silver rain,
Yet the earth keeps its wounds unhealed.
Clouds empty their ancient grief,
But not a single scar of drought is erased.
Raindrops descend; the seedlings do not smile.
Reservoirs swell empty bowls remain empty.
The heavens surrender all their waters,
Yet hunger survives the generosity of clouds.
A farmer buries tomorrow's sunrise in a seed
And waits for dawn beneath a mountain of debt.
The hand that wrote civilisation with a plough
Now trembles over a ledger of unpaid loans.
His sweat has baptised a thousand fields
His tears are the only harvest he can claim.
He who places bread upon the world's table
Returns to a home where hunger waits for him.
Rain enters through a poor man's broken roof,
Carrying his children's dreams into the dark.
On the windows of mansions, droplets glitter like pearls
In the hut below, they become another night's sorrow.
We have severed the green lungs of forests,
Then asked the heavens why they cannot breathe.
We have torn the living pages from the earth
And bound our ambitions in books of concrete.
We have chained the rivers in the name of progress,
Drained the secret springs beneath the soil,
And planted deserts in the womb of tomorrow,
While calling the slow extinction of green a triumph.
Oh Rain, what is the worth of falling
If the roots remain thirsty beneath your song?
What is the worth of a nation's abundance
If the hands that feed it must beg for bread?
Let justice reach the farmer like a long-awaited monsoon
Let compassion seep where water cannot reach.
For the deepest drought is not beneath our feet
It is the silence of hearts that refuse to feel.
The cruelest rain is not the rain that fails the land,
But the compassion that never reaches a human hand.

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The Crucible of Discontent: Unravelling the Roots and Fury of the Ongoing Unrest in France



DR. CHITYALA RAVINDER
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France, a nation globally celebrated for its rich cultural heritage, intellectual legacy, and economic prosperity, is currently gripped by a profound and volatile socio-economic crisis. From the historic streets of Paris to the bustling urban centres of Marseille, Lyon, Toulouse, Clermont-Ferrand, Bordeaux, and Nantes, widespread protests have transformed daily life into a scene of intense civil agitation. Thousands of citizens, university students, school teachers, healthcare workers, transport operators, and industrial laborers have united to voice their deep-seated frustration against government policies. What began as localized grievances over deteriorating educational facilities has rapidly escalated into a nationwide mass movement, severely testing the nation's law and order infrastructure. Iconic landmarks and world-famous cultural institutions have been forced to temporarily shut their doors, while luxury boutiques and commercial establishments along major avenues have boarded up their storefronts with wooden panels to shield themselves from sporadic vandalism. Public transportation has been severely crippled as bus networks and train services grind to a halt, compounded by widespread strikes at major airports that have thrown the country's travel infrastructure into disarray.

Beneath the immediate chaos lies a complex web of structural grievances that have been festering within French society and its economic framework for decades. The deterioration of the public education system served as the primary catalyst for the eruption of anger. A severe shortage of permanent teaching staff resulted in millions of lost instructional hours during the previous academic year, leaving students and parents profoundly disillusioned. Classrooms plagued by inadequate infrastructure, coupled with the indignity of makeshift sheds lacking proper heating during harsh winters and adequate ventilation in the summer months, fueled intense student outrage. Furthermore, budgetary cuts threatening the survival of public schools and the escalating dominance of private educational institutions placed an unbearable financial burden on ordinary families.

Compounding this educational crisis is the relentless surge in the cost of living. Surging energy prices, escalating electricity tariffs, and soaring prices for basic household commodities have heavily squeezed working-class budgets. Because wage growth and state pensions have failed to keep pace with persistent inflation, the economic divide between affluent segments and the lower-middle classes has widened dramatically. A prevailing sentiment has taken deep root among the populace that citizens are shouldering exorbitant tax burdens while receiving diminishing returns in terms of public services, free healthcare, and robust social security protections. The perception that state welfare budgets are being systematically slashed while tax exemptions continue to be granted to the wealthy has further added fuel to the fire, turning simmering discontent into widespread public fury.

The current wave of unrest is primarily concentrated around three distinct yet deeply interconnected spheres of conflict. First, the student-led movement centred on educational reform has assumed an intensely militant character. Across the nation, students have blockaded hundreds of secondary schools and university campuses, completely boycotting classes and marching onto major thoroughfares. Student unions have established roadblocks at critical urban intersections, effectively cutting off vital transport corridors linking industrial hubs. Their demands remain steadfast: an increase in student subsidies, a freeze on soaring student housing rents, the immediate recruitment of educators to fill vacant positions, and the comprehensive rehabilitation of school facilities. When student demonstrations reached a boiling point outside government ministry offices, security forces responded with heavy deployments of tear gas to disperse the crowds.

Second, broader societal frustrations over the soaring cost of living have catalyzed massive nationwide strikes and labor mobilizations. Major labor confederations and public service unions have thrown their weight behind the student movement, bringing industrial production and transport networks to a virtual standstill. Workers at oil refineries and power generation plants have walked off the job, triggering widespread fuel shortages and snaking queues of stranded motorists at petrol stations across the country. In major metropolitan areas like Paris and Marseille, municipal garbage collection has ground to a halt, leaving streets piled high with refuse and creating mounting public health hazards. Industrial workers are intensifying their agitations day by day, demanding that the government abandon policies skewed in favor of the elite, alleviate the financial pressures weighing down ordinary citizens, and index wages to actual inflation rates.

Third, direct physical confrontations between security forces and demonstrators have plunged the nation into a severe law and order crisis. What often began as peaceful processions have been infiltrated by radical fringe elements intent on destroying public property, setting vehicles ablaze, and looting commercial banks and shopping malls. Despite the imposition of strict overnight curfews by regional authorities, defiant protesters have continued to occupy public spaces, prompting security forces to employ aggressive crowd-control tactics. The government has mobilized thousands of specialized paramilitary police personnel, deploying tear gas, water cannons, and rubber bullets to regain control of volatile districts. These clashes have resulted in numerous injuries among both civilians and law enforcement officers, alongside hundreds of arrests that have filled detention facilities. Civil rights organizations have strongly criticized the administration's heavy-handed response, urging restraint and warning against the excessive use of force.

Although the government has attempted to appease the populace by announcing temporary subsidies, targeted financial allocations, and commitments to future teacher recruitment, civil society organizations and labor leaders have firmly rejected these measures as insufficient, demanding structural reforms instead. The prolonged disruption threatens to inflict lasting damage on the nation's tourism sector, international commerce, and daily industrial output, raising serious concerns about a broader economic slowdown in France. International observers are closely monitoring the unfolding situation as the government navigates this delicate crossroad. Ultimately, only through genuine, transparent dialogue and a willingness to address the democratic grievances of its citizens can France hope to navigate out of this deep socio-economic crisis and restore social harmony.

India's Road Safety Crisis Is Also an Economic Challenge



India's roads are vital to economic growth, connecting markets, moving goods and supporting livelihoods. But when expansion comes at the cost of safety, the gains are eroded by preventable deaths, lost productivity and financial hardship. Road infrastructure must therefore be judged not only by how efficiently it moves people and goods, but also by how safely it gets them to their destinations.

According to figures released by Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari, India recorded 5,13,563 road accidents and 1,83,382 deaths in 2025. In 2024, the country reported 4,87,707 accidents and 1,77,175 fatalities. That year, national highways accounted for 64,772 deaths and state highways for 39,277. Two-wheeler users constituted 46.2 per cent of road fatalities, while pedestrians accounted for 20.6 per cent. The scale of these losses makes road safety an urgent public policy and economic priority. The economic costs extend well beyond the immediate aftermath of a crash. When an earning member dies or suffers a permanent disability, families can lose their financial security. Medical bills, lost wages and long-term care can deepen their hardship. Employers and transport operators face workforce losses, delivery delays, vehicle repair costs and insurance claims. Preventing crashes is therefore not simply a public safety obligation; it is an investment in livelihoods, productivity and economic resilience.

Responsibility cannot rest solely on individual drivers. Dangerous road layouts, poorly marked junctions, inadequate lighting, roadside encroachments and the absence of safe pedestrian crossings can all contribute to crashes. If safety is considered only after a road has been built, costly and sometimes inadequate corrective measures become inevitable. It must instead be built into the planning, design and construction of roads.

Regular safety audits of national and state highways should identify accident-prone stretches and establish the reasons behind recurring crashes. The findings must lead to practical changes, including safer junctions, clearer signs, improved lighting and better pedestrian infrastructure. Speed-control measures are particularly important near schools, hospitals and busy residential areas. Road agencies should also be held accountable for correcting identified hazards within specified timelines.

Enforcement remains indispensable. In 2024, 3,45,024 accidents were recorded in the category associated with overspeeding. Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, travelling on the wrong side and using mobile phones while driving are other serious risks. Consistent enforcement, supported by speed cameras and other appropriate technology, can make violations harder to escape. Licensing procedures must also ensure that drivers possess the practical skills and knowledge required to use roads safely. Penalties alone, however, cannot compensate for unsafe road design or inadequate infrastructure.

The needs of vulnerable road users deserve greater attention. Two-wheeler users and pedestrians account for a substantial share of road deaths, yet their safety is often compromised by infrastructure designed primarily around motor vehicles. Continuous footpaths, safe crossing points, well-designed traffic-calming measures and effective enforcement of helmet and seat-belt requirements can reduce risks. Road planning must recognise that pedestrians, cyclists and two-wheeler users are integral to the transport system, not obstacles to faster traffic movement.

Commercial transport requires a separate focus. Excessive driving hours, insufficient rest, poorly maintained vehicles and overloading can turn routine journeys into serious hazards. Transport operators must monitor working hours, provide adequate rest and maintain vehicles to prescribed standards. Fitness inspections need to be credible rather than merely procedural. Cutting operating costs cannot justify practices that endanger drivers, passengers or other road users.

Even with stronger prevention, some crashes will occur. The quality and speed of emergency care can determine whether victims survive. Ambulances, trauma-care facilities and coordinated emergency response systems must be available along heavily travelled and accident-prone routes. Delays in reaching a hospital can worsen injuries that might otherwise be treatable. Reliable accident data should also guide decisions on where to deploy medical resources and which stretches require urgent safety improvements.

The Union government's four-pronged approach—education, engineering of roads and vehicles, enforcement, and emergency care—offers a framework for action. Its success depends on implementation, coordination and accountability. The Union and state governments, local authorities, police, road agencies and transport operators must work towards shared safety outcomes.

Responsibilities should be clearly assigned, and progress assessed against reductions in deaths and serious injuries rather than the number of inspections conducted or measures announced. India's commitment to reducing road deaths and injuries by 50 per cent by 2030 demands sustained action, not periodic campaigns triggered by public concern. Road safety must become an integral part of transport policy, urban planning and industrial development. Funding for new roads must be matched by investment in maintenance, safety audits, enforcement and emergency medical services. The aim should be to prevent predictable risks before they become tragedies.

India needs roads that support growth without imposing an avoidable human cost. Every preventable death represents not only a personal and family tragedy but also a loss of productive capacity and economic security. Safer infrastructure, credible enforcement and effective emergency care must therefore be treated as essential components of development. The measure of progress is not simply how fast the country moves, but whether its people can travel safely.



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NFR to Promote "Probity for Prosperity" during the Observance of Vigilance Awareness Week 2026

MALIGAON, 25 OCTOBER, 2026:

Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) will observe Vigilance Awareness Week from 26th October to 1st November, 2026, reaffirming its commitment to integrity, transparency and accountability in railway administration. Guided by the theme "Probity for Prosperity", aligning with the guidelines of the Central Vigilance Commission, the observance will bring together railway employees, students and the public through several programmes highlighting the importance of ethical conduct and collective action against corruption.

The week will begin on 26th October with the administration of the Integrity Pledge at NFR Headquarters and the General Manager (Construction)'s office at Maligaon. Walkathons at both locations will carry the message of honesty and shared responsibility in combating corruption. A street play at Kamakhya Coaching Depot on 27th October will further promote vigilance awareness through an engaging public outreach initiative.

A Vigilance Bulletin will be released on 28th October, followed by a workshop on "Preventive Vigilance in Contract Management". The workshop will highlight measures to strengthen transparency and prevent irregularities in the execution of works and management of contracts. Extending the message to young minds, essay and drawing competitions will be held at Netaji Railway School, Maligaon, on 29thOctober and Railway Higher Secondary School, Maligaon, on 30th October, encouraging students to explore the values of honesty and integrity.

The observance forms part of a wider three-month preventive vigilance campaign being conducted from 17th August to 16th November, 2026, across NFR's headquarters, divisions and construction organisation. Through awareness, participation and preventive measures, NFR aims to embed integrity in everyday working and strengthen public confidence in a transparent, accountable and citizen-oriented railway administration.

PM Inaugurates RBI Data Centre, Cybersecurity Institute in Odisha

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated RBI's new data centre and Cybersecurity Training Institute in Bhubaneswar. The Rs 169-crore facilities will reinforce digital finance infrastructure and sector-wide cyber resilience.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday inaugurated the Reserve Bank of India's Rs 169-crore data centre and Cybersecurity Training Institute in Bhubaneswar, news agency Press Trust of India reported, citing officials. The facilities are intended to strengthen the security, reliability and reach of India's digital financial services, while supporting cybersecurity training, research and skills development across the financial sector. Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra, Odisha Governor Brajmohan Ram, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, Union Tribal Affairs Minister Jual Oram, and Deputy Chief Ministers Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo and Pravati Parida attended the inauguration. The RBI facility is spread over 18.55 acres at Info Valley-II in Jatni. Its foundation stone was laid by then RBI governor Shaktikanta Das on March 22, 2023. The data centre will host essential payment and settlement systems, along with other key RBI initiatives, the government said in a statement. It said the facility would help improve the reach, efficiency and reliability of digital financial services and provide a secure foundation for India's increasingly technology-driven financial economy.

The Cybersecurity Training Institute will provide a dedicated platform for training and research in cybersecurity and enterprise technology, while helping build capabilities across the sector, the statement said.

An official told Press Trust of India that the site was chosen because of its geographical stability and its distance from earthquake-prone zones and high-risk international border areas. This would reduce its exposure to natural disasters and geopolitical risks. PM Modi arrived at Biju Patnaik International Airport at 4.15 pm aboard a special Indian Air Force aircraft. He travelled by helicopter to Khurda and then proceeded by road to the RBI facility.

Officials said the Prime Minister was likely to spend an hour at the data centre before returning to the airport by road and departing around 6.30 pm. Around 2,100 police personnel were deployed for the visit, according to officials quoted by Press Trust of India. Traffic restrictions were also imposed from 5.40 pm to 6.40 pm on the route between the RBI data centre and the airport. Majhi said in a social media post that the data centre would contribute to Odisha's development. He said this was PM Modi's ninth visit to the state since the BJP government was formed there in 2024. The chief minister said the Jatni data centre was the second such facility after the one in Navi Mumbai. Officials said the new facilities were designed to meet the RBI's computing needs and provide a secure, resilient, scalable and future-ready technology system for the central bank and the wider financial sector. The data centre and training institute are expected to support digital financial services and strengthen cybersecurity capabilities.



Manipur Bags Best Award in GI Rice Category at Bharat International Rice Conference for Chak-Hao Innovation

NEW DELHI/IMPHAL, OCTOBER 25, 2026

Showcasing its rich indigenous rice heritage on the national stage, Manipur won accolades on the second day of the Bharat International Rice Conference (BIRC) 2026 at Bharat Mandapam, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi. Manipur was honoured with the prestigious Global Excellence Award for Best Award in GI Rice Category for best indigenous product presentation and innovation in value-added rice products. The Department of Agriculture, Government of Manipur, led by Director Peter Salam, Director Agriculture, along with MOVCDNER Nodal Officer Kh. Nimaichand Singh, departmental team, entrepreneurs and Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) from the state, successfully displayed the state's indigenous scented rice varieties and value-added products at the three-day conference, which concludes today, October 25.

Manipur's stall was a major attraction, featuring its GI-tagged Chak-Hao (Black Scented Rice), Angouba (White Scented Rice) and a range of innovative value-added products including Instant Chak-Hao Kheer, Chak-Hao Cookies, Chak-Hao Gulla and Chak-Hao Bhujia. A key highlight was the live culinary demonstration where a chef showcased Korean-style kimbaps and Japanese sushi rolls prepared using Chak-Hao and Angouba. During the exhibition, a free tasting of Chak-Hao Kheer was served to visitors, which received an overwhelming response.

Delhi CM Rekha Gupta slams Kharge's objectionable remarks against PM Modi

NEW DELHI, OCT 25

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Sunday criticised Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge's objectionable and uncouth remarks, directed at Prime Minister Narendra Modi during an event in Patna.

In a message on X, the Chief Minister wrote, "Shri Mallikarjun Kharge ji, such vulgar language is the pinnacle of the Congress party's moral and ideological decline. The Congress party's problem is not just with Modi ji. Its real problem is with that common Indian who shook the throne of dynasticism and made a son from an ordinary family the Prime Minister of the country." She wrote, "This is the truth that the Congress courtiers' arrogance has not been able to accept to this day." "Shri Kharge ji, the common citizen of the country knows the power of his vote as well as his future. They have full faith that under the leadership of the esteemed Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji, India is moving forward towards becoming a developed nation. Remember, making indecent remarks about the esteemed Prime Minister ji's family is not political courage, but ideological poverty," remarked Gupta.

Rs 100-crore hawala trail exposed as Op Trident hits drug cartel in Northeast states

Operation Trident targeted 38 locations across Assam, Mizoram and Manipur, leading to 18 arrests, the freezing of 1,424 bank accounts and the attachment of properties worth Rs 17.82 crore. The multi-agency crackdown also uncovered a Rs 100 crore hawala trail linked to a transnational drug trafficking network across India, Myanmar and Bangladesh.



The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), in a major crackdown on transnational drug trafficking networks, launched 'Operation Trident' on Friday, October 23, conducting simultaneous raids at 38 locations across Assam, Mizoram and Manipur. The multi-agency offensive targeted the operational and financial networks of an international drug cartel involved in trafficking narcotics across the India-Myanmar-Bangladesh corridor.

In a major breakthrough, the operation exposed hawala transactions worth nearly 100 crore, led to the freezing of 1,424 bank accounts, and resulted in the attachment of properties worth 17.82 crore. The agencies also seized 500 detonators and 12 lakh in cash, while 18 people were arrested.

Aligned with the Vision Document on Narcotics Control (2026-2029), Operation Trident highlights the government's commitment to eliminating drug networks through intelligence-led investigations, inter-agency coordination and financial disruption.

AMIT SHAH REAFFIRMS ZERO TOLERANCE AGAINST DRUGS

Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Amit Shah hailed the operation, congratulating the anti-narcotics teams and police forces of the three states for their coordinated action. In a post on X, Shah said the Modi government's offensive against drugs continued with simultaneous crackdowns at 38 locations across Assam, Mizoram and Manipur on October 23, targeting an international narco-cartel. NCB's Operation Trident raids 38 northeast sites, uncovers Rs 100 crore hawala trail Highlighting the scale of the operation, he said the agencies had uncovered hawala transactions worth 100 crore, frozen 1,424 bank accounts, attached properties worth 17.82 crore, seized 500 detonators and 12 lakh in cash, and arrested 18 people.

He also congratulated the central agencies and police forces of Assam, Mizoram and Manipur for their efforts in executing the operation.

38 TEAMS STRIKE SIMULTANEOUSLY TO DISMANTLE CARTEL

Spearheaded by the NCB in coordination with Mizoram Police, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and other enforcement agencies, Operation Trident was launched in the early hours of October 23 following extensive intelligence gathering, joint target mapping and coordinated operational planning. Under a unified command structure, 38 composite multi-agency teams simultaneously conducted searches and investigations at 38 identified locations across the three northeastern states.

The operation covered key locations and border corridors, including Aizawl, Champhai and Zokhawthar in Mizoram, along with linked operational bases in Churachandpur, Manipur, and the Cachar transit corridor in Assam. The coordinated action targeted both the cartel's logistical infrastructure and its financial channels, with investigators focusing on suspected facilitators, shell entities, money mules and illicit financial transactions.

The operation followed sustained intelligence-led investigations by the NCB, Mizoram Police and the ED, which uncovered the extensive reach of the transnational syndicate. Financial profiling and digital forensics conducted during earlier phases of the investigation helped investigators identify a wider network of operatives and financial intermediaries, paving the way for the simultaneous raids.

CROSS-BORDER DRUG AND HAWALA NETWORK EXPOSED

Investigations have identified Myanmar-based kingpin Thangcintuang, also known as Chintuang or Tluanga, as a key figure in the syndicate. He was wanted in more than 10 cases under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act involving the NCB, Champhai Police and Mizoram Excise authorities, and was subsequently arrested in Delhi following inter-state surveillance and sustained follow-up operations. The cartel allegedly orchestrated the movement of methamphetamine and heroin originating in Myanmar through Mizoram, Manipur, Assam and Tripura, with onward trafficking into mainland India and Bangladesh.

KEY ASSOCIATES ARRESTED

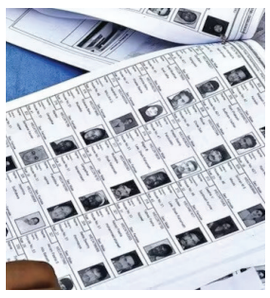
Earlier investigative breakthroughs had also led to the arrest of key associates and facilitators. Vungkhanthawna, identified as a key facilitator responsible for coordinating the movement and delivery of Myanmar-origin drug consignments, was arrested and subsequently detained under the Prevention of Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (PITNDPS) Act. Lalrampari, identified as a primary hawala operator, was arrested by the NCB on August 8, 2024. Investigations into the financial network uncovered nearly 100 crore in suspected illicit hawala transactions, prompting coordinated action with the ED and the freezing of assets linked to the alleged illegal activities. Another key operative, Abu Saleh alias Saifuddin, described as the logistics head for the Assam corridor, was arrested in Cachar on November 20, 2025. He was allegedly involved in coordinating narcotics transportation through Assam and was linked to multiple NDPS cases. These breakthroughs, supported by financial investigations and digital forensics, helped expose the cartel's wider network and laid the groundwork for Operation Trident.

SCINDIA CALLS FOR NASHA MUKT BHARAT

Union Minister Jyotiraditya M Scindia also welcomed Operation Trident, describing it as a strong message that the Northeast would not be allowed to become a corridor for contraband. In a post on X, Scindia said the operation demonstrated the government's resolve under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, with Home Minister Amit Shah driving the nationwide fight against drugs.

Massive manipulation: Congress targets EC over refusal to disclose ECINET details

Congress accused the Election Commission of withholding details about ECINET software used in electoral roll revision. The dispute has intensified concerns over transparency, artificial intelligence safeguards and institutional accountability.



The Congress on Sunday accused the Election Commission of withholding information about the ECINET software used during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, news agency PTI reported. The party alleged that the information was being withheld because it would reveal what it called "massive, centralised manipulation" during the exercise. It also reiterated its demand for the removal of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar and the immediate suspension of the SIR. Congress general secretary in charge of communications Jairam Ramesh shared a media report claiming that the Election Commission of India had declined to disclose the name and version of the software used to identify errors and anomalies in voter rolls during the SIR.

According to the report, the poll body said the information concerned "commercial confidence, trade secrets and intellectual property" and was exempt from disclosure under the Right to Information Act.

In a post on X, Ramesh alleged that the Election Commission continued to "hide" information about the ECINET software, which he claimed was at the "heart of the disastrous SIR" and had been used to centralise the manipulation of electoral rolls. "Today, a leading national daily revealed that the ECI has refused to provide information on the software being used in the SIR in its response to a Right to Information (RTI) application. Using flimsy excuses, the ECI has refused to name the software being used in the SIR, or confirm whether AI is being used and what safeguards are in place," Ramesh said, according to PTI. He said the lack of transparency surrounding the ECINET software and the use of artificial intelligence had damaged citizens' confidence in the entire process. Ramesh alleged that the Election Commission was repeatedly refusing to provide the information because it would reveal the extent of what he described as massive and centralised manipulation.

He asked why Indians had learnt through disclosures by Tata Consultancy Services that the company had developed the ECINET software, and why the Election Commission had not disclosed this transparently.

Counter Congress's Misinformation on SIR Process: Call at BJP National Meeting

High-Level Meeting Held in Delhi Under the Chairmanship of BJP National President Nitin Nabin in the Presence of Union Home Minister Amit Shah

Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar, MP Konda Vishweshwar Reddy, Telangana BJP Chief Spokesperson N.V. Subhash and Others Attend

Hyderabad, October 25: At the direction of the BJP central leadership, a high-level meeting of prominent leaders and experts from across the country was held in New Delhi under the chairmanship of BJP National President Nitin Nabin and in the presence of Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar, Chevella Member of Parliament Konda Vishweshwar Reddy, and Telangana BJP chief spokesperson and media in-charge N.V. Subhash were among those who attended the meeting.

The meeting was also attended by Union ministers from various states, Members of Parliament, national general secretaries of the party, Rajya Sabha MP Tarun Chugh, BJP Telangana state in-charge Sunil Bansal, Daggubati Purandeswari from Andhra Pradesh, intellectuals, nationalist thinkers, senior journalists and prominent media representatives from across the country.

Extensive discussions were held on strategies for party cadres to build comprehensive awareness of the implementation of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process across the country and explain its significance to people at the grassroots level.

The party leadership called on its members to counter what it described as false allegations and misinformation being spread by the Congress and other opposition parties regarding the reform measures undertaken by the Central Government in the national interest. Leaders stressed that such claims should be rebutted before the public with supporting evidence.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP National President Nitin Nabin issued clear directions, emphasising that every party worker, elected representative and media representative must play an active role in communicating the facts to the public in a simple, clear and direct manner.

Rahul Gandhi thanks BJP for 'promoting' INDIA bloc's vote chori rally, urges it to maintain 'same energy'

Rahul Gandhi sarcastically thanked the BJP and its allies for publicising the INDIA bloc's November 1 Delhi rally. The exchange sharpened the Opposition's campaign over alleged voter deletions and electoral irregularities.



Rahul Gandhi sarcastically thanked the BJP and its allies for publicising the INDIA bloc's November 1 Delhi rally.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday sarcastically thanked the BJP and its allies for publicising the INDIA bloc's November 1 rally against alleged "vote chori" and helping its message reach more people, news agency Press Trust of India reported.

The rally is part of a series of Opposition protests against the Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls and alleged poll irregularities by the Chief Election Commissioner. Gandhi, the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, alleged that people's votes were being stolen and said, "We will not tolerate this silently under any circumstances." "Names have been struck off the electoral rolls. Rules and laws have been flouted. And those who dared to ask questions were met with batons. Now, the nation will provide an answer," Gandhi said in a Hindi post on X, according to PTI. Calling on people to join the protest, Gandhi said, "November 1st — Chalo Delhi. 'Vote Bachao, Desh Bachao' people's march and mega rally." He added, "Students, farmers, labourers, women, the youth, and traders — everyone who cares about democracy must join us." "The vote is yours. The fight is also yours," Gandhi said. In a swipe at the BJP, he added, "PS: A heartfelt thank you to the BJP and its allies for promoting this event so enthusiastically and ensuring its call reaches as many people as possible." He asked them to maintain the same "energy and dedication" for the next seven days.The BJP had on Saturday criticised the Congress over the INDIA bloc's proposed rally in Delhi, alleging that Gandhi was "adamant" on holding it on November 1 to rub salt into the wounds of victims of the 1984 anti-Sikh riots. At a press conference at the BJP headquarters, party MP Ravi Shankar Prasad claimed that several INDIA bloc constituents were not convinced by the Congress's plan to hold the rally on November 1 and wanted it rescheduled, PTI reported. Leaders of the Opposition alliance will hold what they have called a "public impeachment" of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar on October 30 and announce a public verdict against him.

Congress general secretary in charge of organisation K C Venugopal described the "Dilli Chalo" march to Ramlila Maidan as the party's biggest protest against alleged "vote chori".

The November 1 rally will focus on allegations of deleted voter names and electoral irregularities, with the INDIA bloc calling on different sections of society to join its campaign to "save votes" and "save the country".

Riyadh airport announces partial reopening

RIYADH

The King Khalid International Airport in the Saudi capital Riyadh was set to partially reopen after previous attacks suspended operations, authorities said on Sunday. The airport said it would designate Terminal 1 for domestic flights and Terminal 2 for international flights operated by national carriers. The airport was previously targeted in attacks causing multiple deaths and injuries, which prompted Saudi Arabia's General Authority of Civil Aviation to temporarily suspend airport operations, Xinhua News Agency reported. The Houthis have recently intensified attacks on Saudi Arabia as Saudi-backed Yemeni government forces launched military operations to retake areas held by the group. Meanwhile, Yemen's Houthi group and the Saudi-led coalition exchanged heavy attacks, as the Houthis claimed widespread missile and drone strikes.

'Governor's rule in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa risks deepening political alienation'

ISLAMABAD



The imposition of emergency and Governor's Rule in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province on October 11 and the removal of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf-led provincial government of Chief Minister Sohail Afridi and his subsequent arrest could have key political consequences, a media report said.

Noting that the Federal government cited "escalating militant violence and the provincial administration's alleged failure to co-operate adequately with counter-terrorism operations as the reason for the decision", journalist Raja Muneeb, in an article titled "Islamabad's Governor's Rule Gambit: How Pakistan's Political Interventions Deepen Alienation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa" for 'The Pamphlet', argued that while the security threat is real, forceful removal of the government can't be the solution because, rather than controlling the militant activities, it would deepen the political alienation that would undermine the democratic institutions of the state.

The PTI has rejected the Federal government's allegation, calling the move politically motivated and an attempt to overturn its electoral mandate.

The article highlights that Pakistan has a history of removing provincial governments and cited the example of how Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto removed the provincial government of Chief Minister Sardar Inayatullah Khan Gandapur in NWFP, as the province was then called, in 1975.

According to Muneeb, the dismissal was part of the wider confrontation between Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and the National Awami Party (NAP). "NAP was banned in 1975, and the confrontation between Islamabad and its nationalist opponents escalated into a broader political crackdown," he wrote.

Muneeb further said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's "present crisis extends far beyond Governor's Rule", as he identified the key historical roots that gave birth to the militancy crisis in the province.

Firstly, the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan made Pakistan a major centre of the Afghan mujahideen campaign, helping create networks that outlasted the conflict.

Secondly, the 2007 emergence of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), which marked a major escalation of militant violence inside Pakistan.

Also, military operations and displacement in Swat, South Waziristan, North Waziristan, and other districts experienced militant control, military operations, and mass displacement.

The article further sheds light on PTI's history of governing Khyber Pakhtunkhwa since 2013 and retaining a substantial political base in the 2024 general elections. The now-removed government provided an important political platform for the supporters of former Prime Minister Imran Khan. Muneeb stated that removing an elected government with a substantial constituency raised questions about the political motivations of the federal intervention.

The article states that the Federal government invoked articles 232 and 234 of Pakistan's Constitution, citing militant violence and provincial administrations' alleged failure to respond effectively.

Meanwhile, PTI has rejected the allegations of the government that the former was unable to contain the militant activities in the region and said that the removal of the Chief Minister was politically motivated to weaken a political rival.

Iran's FM says Hormuz Strait's routes, management not to return to pre-war era

TEHRAN



Iran's Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi on Sunday reiterated that the administration of the Strait of Hormuz and routes in the waterway will not be the same as they were in the past, according to the official news agency IRNA.

Araghchi made the remarks at a ceremony in the Iranian capital Tehran, while stressing that "fundamental and strategic" changes have taken place in West Asia following the U.S.-Israeli war against Iran, Xinhua News Agency reported.

"We must accept that new realities have taken hold. The routes in the Strait of Hormuz will not be the same as they once were, and the strait's management will also not be as it was in the past," he said. "There are matters on which we have held negotiations, and these negotiations will continue."

The minister stressed that the region's security must be ensured by regional countries and without reliance on foreign forces, "who have come to the region aiming to safeguard their own interests and protect Israel, and whose continued presence will lead to nothing but insecurity for the entire region."

He added that Iran was ready to cooperate with all regional countries. Meanwhile, Iran's Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei has stressed the need for "serious" efforts to pursue the Iranian people's rights and ensure the payment of compensation for the damages inflicted on the country during the US-Israeli attacks. The issues were highlighted in a meeting between the supreme leader and the country's Judiciary Chief Gholamhossein Mohseni-Ejei, according to a statement published on the leader's website on Saturday.

Among the issues underlined during the meeting were promoting justice, safeguarding public rights, fighting corruption and its root causes effectively, handling judicial cases promptly, precisely and decisively, enforcing judicial rulings in a timely and deterrent manner, and bringing about a "comprehensive and tangible" transformation in the country's judicial apparatus.

Curbs on female aid workers continue to hamper humanitarian access

KABUL

Restrictions on female aid workers and interference in relief work continue to obstruct humanitarian access across Afghanistan, with the United Nations recording 30 access-related incidents in the country in September, local media reported on Sunday.

According to Khaama Press, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said humanitarian partners logged 30 such incidents during the month, 27 per cent fewer than in August.

The agency, however, cautioned that the drop in reported cases did not necessarily point to an improvement on the ground, as some incidents may have gone unreported. Of the incidents recorded in September, 18 involved interference in humanitarian activities, while four were linked to physical constraints on access, OCHA said. Military operations, ongoing conflict, violence against humanitarian personnel and the detention of aid workers were also listed among the obstacles hampering relief operations in the country.

OCHA said four districts in Afghanistan were facing severe restrictions on humanitarian access, with administrative and programme-related interference, along with curbs on female aid workers and on women receiving assistance, among the main factors behind the situation. Limits on women's participation in humanitarian work make it harder for aid agencies to reach women and others in need of help, the report noted.

Egypt's water security cannot be compromised: president

CAIRO



Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi said here on Sunday that Egypt faces a unique water challenge due to its geographic nature and reliance on the Nile River, warning that the country's water security cannot be compromised.

In a recorded address opening the ninth Cairo Water Week, Sisi noted that the Nile provides Egypt with more than 98 per cent of its renewable water resources, reiterating his country's willingness to cooperate with other basin states based on international law, consultation, coordination, good neighbourliness, and the principle of causing no harm.

The Egyptian president noted that Egypt has consciously chosen the path of cooperation and dialogue, saying "Egypt respects and supports the right of all Nile Basin states to development."

Highlighting cooperation with southern Nile Basin countries on proposed projects in energy, agriculture and irrigation, Sisi said Egypt looks forward to reinforcing cooperation in the Eastern Nile Basin as well "in a manner that serves the interests of Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia."

Meanwhile, Sisi emphasised, "Any wager that Egypt will accept a fait accompli or compromise its water security is a losing wager," stressing that the state will not neglect its responsibility to protect the interests of the Egyptian people.

Zimbabwean president calls for unconditional lifting of sanctions

HARARE



Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa on Sunday called for the unconditional lifting of sanctions imposed by Western countries on Zimbabwe, saying the measures constrain economic development.

In a speech marking the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Anti-Sanctions Day held annually on October 25, Mnangagwa said Zimbabwe was making progress in its development aspirations despite the sanctions, stressing that regional integration was crucial to achieving the country's development goals.

The SADC Anti-Sanctions Day was established by the 16-member regional organisation in 2019 as a collective initiative to denounce the sanctions, which were imposed on Zimbabwe following the country's land reform program that redistributed land from minority white farmers to indigenous black Zimbabweans.

"Sanctions not only punish our country, but the entire SADC family and infringe Zimbabwe's role in advancing an integrated Africa," said Mnangagwa, who also expressed appreciation to SADC member states for supporting the call to remove the unilateral sanctions, Xinhua News Agency reported. "This reflects our shared commitment to a just and fair global order, where the principles of sovereign equality, non-interference in the internal affairs and the sovereign right of every country to chart its own destiny are respected," said Mnangagwa.

He called for increased regional integration, saying SADC and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa offered opportunities to improve regional connectivity and strengthen cooperation in trade, industry, agriculture, energy and infrastructure.

Mnangagwa said Zimbabwe would broaden international partnerships and deepen regional integration to drive economic transformation, while pursuing diplomatic and domestic measures to lift sanctions and boost industrial competitiveness.

He also reaffirmed Zimbabwe's commitment to multilateralism, international cooperation, and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. The United States enacted the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act in December 2001, restricting its support for multilateral financial assistance to Zimbabwe.

B'desh reports 2,249 new dengue cases, seven deaths in past 24 hours

DHAKA



As many as 2,249 dengue cases have been reported in Bangladesh in the past 24 hours till Sunday morning, the highest single-day tally so far in 2026, local media reported.

As many as seven people died due to dengue in Bangladesh during the same period, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

The latest figures raised the total number of dengue cases to 123,948, and the death toll rose to 384 in 2026, the United News of Bangladesh (UNB) reported.

The new fatalities reported include two each in Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) area and Mymensingh division, while one each was reported in Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) area, Khulna, and Rajshahi divisions. Among the total number of dengue-related fatalities reported in Bangladesh, 52.8 per cent were female while 47.2 per cent were male.

As many as 117,400 dengue patients have been discharged from hospitals in Bangladesh after recovering from the disease, according to the DGHS, the UNB reported.

Bangladesh's State Minister for Fisheries and Livestock Sultan Salauddin Tuku had, last month, warned that the dengue situation in Dhaka and other districts could worsen further in the coming months, urging people to stay alert.

"The risk of dengue may increase further in the coming months, so everyone needs to become aware from now," Tuku said, as per UNB.

Meanwhile, health experts attributed the rising dengue deaths to delayed hospitalisation, inappropriate treatment, and the heightened vulnerability of high-risk groups, with many patients seeking testing and medical care only after their condition turns critical, Bangladesh's The Daily Star reported.

Dhaka's Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital Associate Professor H.M. Nazmul Ahsan said that the recent spike in dengue deaths is largely a consequence of the rapid increase in infections nationwide.

According to Ahsan, three broad sets of factors are behind the fatalities: viral factors, patient-related vulnerabilities, and treatment-related complications. Public health expert Mushtuq Husain called for strengthening dengue care through a three-tier system of primary, secondary and tertiary healthcare.

Instrument of Accession Signed by Maharaja Hari Singh



(On the occasion of "J & K Accession Day" on 26 October)

The Maharaja Hari Singh of Jammu - Kashmir princely state signed the historic Instrument of Accession, a legal document that ceded J & K to the Dominion of India on 26 October 1947. During Indian Independence from British colonial rulers, India was headed towards a 'two nation' split, a horrible pain experienced by common public of both sides viz., India and Pakistan. During that short period around 570 princely states across India's length and breadth were given option to choose to merge with India or Pak. By 15 Aug 1947 over 560 states joined India leaving Jammu-Kashmir, Hyderabad and Junagadh didn't join either side. Maharaja Hari Singh signed a standstill agreement with Pak but there was no agreement with India. The J & K Accession Day was observed on 26 October as Accession Day involving rallies, cultural activities, bursting fire crackers, singing national anthem by foisting national flag.

Instrument of Accession Signed by Hari Singh:

In October 1947, the Pakistani Pashtun tribes invaded Kashmir to take it by force resulting in the law and order problem in the state. On October 26, 1947 more than 11,000 people from Baramulla region were killed by invaders. Then Hari Singh came down and approached the then Indian Government's intervention to stop the atrocities of invaders. Indian government told Hari Singh to merge in India so that they can attack invaders. On 26 October 1947, the Instrument of Accession was signed by Hari Singh and attacked the invaders within two weeks. From that day onwards J & K has become an integral part of India. The Instrument of Accession was refused by Pakistan and started war like situation. This issue was raised in UN in 1948 on the advice of Lord Mountbatten. A ceasefire agreement was accepted both sides on 01 Jan 1949 with Line of Control decided. 2/3rd of state was under India whereas 1/3rd was with Pakistan in the areas of Gilgit and Baltistan were accupied by them.

Now J & K is UT

J & K is now a UT of India revoked the special status granted to the state under 370 Articles. Even now the Pakistani government, militants raise slogans in favour of their beliefs towards J & K. Since muslim domination is more in J & K, the word of advice by Hari Singh was rejected by Pak army and the same Kashmir issue was raised by Pakistan time and again. Now the Kashmir being an Indian UT, is facing tremendous militant operations, Pakistani army unnecessary involvements to destabilise India to the extent possible, but they were ably answered by Indian defence forces time and again.

Let the Jammu - Kashmir be the beautiful blob on the forehead of Mother India for ever.

- Capt Dr Madhusudhan Reddy Burra
Principal (Rtd)
(9949700037).

Nepal plans flood warning systems, glacial lake mitigation after deadly floods

KATHMANDU

The Nepali government plans to expand flood early warning systems across six major river basins and lower water levels in four high-risk glacial lakes following devastating floods on August 26. The initiatives are part of efforts to strengthen disaster preparedness amid growing climate-related risks in the Himalayan region.

The recent floods claimed around 1,500 lives, while more than 5,000 people remain missing. They also caused damage to physical assets worth $1.81 billion, according to the Nepali government's preliminary Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment (RDNA).

The floods in the Bhotekoshi and Trishuli river basins caused extensive damage to hydropower projects, solar energy facilities, electricity transmission infrastructure and transport networks, with the energy sector, particularly hydropower projects, among the hardest hit. According to a government white paper, the centre will install flood early warning systems across six river basins under the Priority River Basin Flood Risk Management Project, which runs from 2022 to 2028, with an investment of $7.54 million.

The six river basins covered by the project are Mawa-Ratuwa, Bakraha, Lakhandehi, East Rapti, West Rapti and Mohana-Khutiya.

The centre will also provide round-the-clock flood forecasting and early warning services from mid-May to mid-October, covering the country's main monsoon season, according to the white paper. In recent years, rising temperatures have accelerated glacier melting in the Himalayas, raising concerns about glacial lake instability, avalanches and potentially destructive downstream floods.

The Nepali government also plans to implement the Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF) Sanjeevani Project, which aims to lower water levels in four high-risk glacial lakes: Thulagi in Manang district, Lower Barun in Sankhuwasabha district, and Lumding Tsho and Hongu-2 in Solukhumbu district.

The project is scheduled to run from 2026 to 2033, with an estimated budget of $49.9 million. Nepal has previously lowered water levels in Tsho Rolpa in Dolakha district and Imja Lake in Solukhumbu district to mitigate the risk of glacial lake outburst floods.

Likewise, the Department of Hydrology and Meteorology, another government agency, plans to prioritise artificial intelligence, machine learning and high-performance computing systems to improve the accuracy and reliability of forecasts.



AI could create $2.5 trillion in annual value globally: Report

NEW DELHI, OCT 25

Artificial intelligence (AI) has the potential to generate $2.52 trillion in annual economic value worldwide by automating and enhancing existing work processes, but rising deployment costs could significantly reduce those benefits, according to a new report by consulting firm McKinsey.

The report, titled The AI Value Curve: The Economics of Applying AI to Existing Work, highlights a growing disconnect between the rapid adoption of AI technologies and the economic value organisations are actually able to capture. According to the study, many companies are prioritising AI implementation without adequately evaluating whether the technology is delivering sufficient returns on investment.

McKinsey estimated that a 30 per cent increase in the effective cost of AI deployment could erase as much as $850 billion in annual economic value. Under such a scenario, the technology's projected global impact would decline from $2.52 trillion to $1.67 trillion per year.

In the United States, the report found that annual economic value generated by AI could fall from $960 billion to $640 billion if costs rise by a similar margin. McKinsey noted that these figures represent a modelled scenario rather than a prediction of future outcomes. The findings come at a time when businesses are spending heavily on AI infrastructure, software platforms and automation technologies. The report estimated that global investments in AI infrastructure could reach approximately $7 trillion by 2030, requiring annual profit pools of around $760 billion to justify those expenditures. Among industries, financial services emerged as the sector with the highest potential gains from AI adoption, with estimated annual economic benefits of $530 billion. The education sector ranked second, with potential gains of $410 billion, followed by technology, media and telecommunications at $360 billion. Healthcare could generate an estimated $310 billion in annual value through AI-enabled applications.

Medicover Hospital Organises 10-Km Cyclothon to Promote Breast Cancer Awareness

'Pedal Against Cancer' Initiative Marks Pink October at Financial District, Hyderabad

HYDERABAD, OCTOBER 25, 2026



With the aim of raising awareness about breast cancer and highlighting the importance of early detection, Medicover Cancer Institute, Financial District, in association with the Bike-O-Holics Cycling Community, organised a 10-km cyclothon on Sunday as part of Pink October. The initiative was held under the theme 'Pedal Against Cancer' to encourage public awareness and promote a healthier lifestyle. The cyclothon commenced at 5:30 AM, with Ms. Dasyam Geetha Bhaskar attending as the chief guest. The event brought together healthcare professionals and cycling enthusiasts to spread the message of breast cancer awareness, early detection and timely medical consultation. During the programme, participants were encouraged to recognise the warning signs of breast cancer and seek medical advice without delay if they noticed any unusual changes in their breasts. Doctors emphasised that regular screening, based on age, individual risk factors and medical advice, plays a vital role in the early detection of breast cancer. They also highlighted that early diagnosis and timely treatment can significantly improve treatment outcomes.

The 'Pedal Against Cancer' initiative also expressed solidarity with those battling cancer and aimed to encourage people to overcome fear and misconceptions surrounding the disease. Through this initiative, Medicover reiterated the importance of preventive healthcare, awareness and early diagnosis in the fight against breast cancer.

Cyclothon Route: The ride began at Medicover Hospitals, Financial District, and proceeded via GT Reddy Circle, Nanakramguda Circle, Narsingi Service Road, ORR Service Road and Wipro Circle before returning to Medicover Hospitals, Financial District, where it concluded. The programme was attended by oncologists Dr. Prithvi Raj, Dr. Kavitha Naragoni and Dr. Ravi Krishna Madala, along with Dr. Swaroop and Sharath Chandra, Centre Heads, as well as other doctors and members of the cycling community. Through initiatives such as this cyclothon, Medicover Cancer Institute continues to promote cancer awareness, emphasise the importance of early detection and encourage people to adopt healthier lifestyles.

FPI selling stands at Rs 53,337 crore in Oct so far amid elevated crude oil prices

NEW DELHI, OCT 25



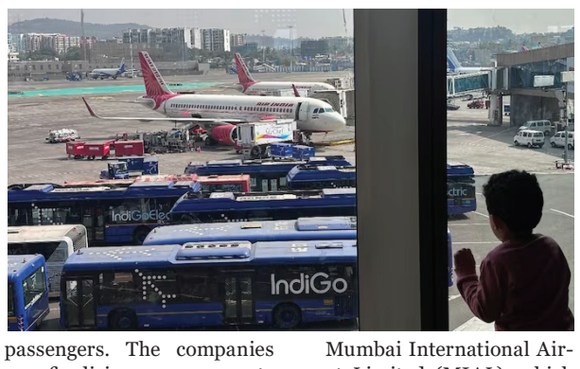
As long as Brent crude remains above $100 a barrel, there will be pressures on the economy and the foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) are likely to sell the dip, analysts said on Sunday. The total FPI selling in October stands at Rs 53,337 crore so far, and the net FPI investment through the IPO market during this period stands at Rs 5,281 crore. "The total FPI selling through the exchanges for this year stood at Rs 3,69,164 crore," said Dr VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Investments Ltd. On the flows front, FIIs remained net sellers for the 10th straight week. For the week ended October 23, FIIs significantly reduced their selling and even turned buyers on two days. The moderation in US bond yields with the 10-year yield declining from 5.36 per cent to around 5 per cent, appreciation in the rupee to 94.94 to the dollar and the low valuations, particularly of the large-caps, contributed to the moderation in FII selling. Going ahead, the steady moderation in FII selling offers some comfort, though elevated crude and sharp broader-market weakness keep the downside risk alive. A significant market trend during the week was the sharp correction in the mid-and small-caps. The Nifty Mid-cap 100 plunged 5.6 per cent and the Nifty Small-cap 100 crashed 7.3 per cent during the week while the Nifty 50 was relatively resilient with a cut of only 2.35 per cent. Forced liquidation in the margin-funded long positions in the broader market is rumoured to have triggered the crash in the broader market, said analysts. The resilience of the large-caps is mainly due to the accumulation of the fairly valued large-caps by the DIIs which are flush with funds. The high crude prices is acting as a strong headwind for the economy and market, said analysts.

Budget outlay hiked 10-fold to give big push to urban sector: Top official

Bhubaneswar, Oct 25: The budgetary outlay for the urban sector has grown 10-fold post-2014 with the launch of concerted efforts through several large missions like Smart Cities, AMRUT, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Swachh Bharat, and the Urban Livelihoods Mission to accelerate development in Indian cities, NITI Aayog member Rajiv Gauba said on Sunday. Huge investments of about Rs 3.7 lakh crore have also been made in metro rail and bus systems. Addressing the valedictory session of the 2nd National Urban Conclave, Gauba, a former Cabinet Secretary, outlined NITI Aayog's growth hub initiative, pointing to the Rs 1 lakh crore Urban Challenge Fund announced in the 2025-26 budget to develop cities as growth hubs, and this year's budget allocation of Rs 5,000 crore each for 7 city economic regions over five years. He underscored that having empowered city governments, in the true sense of the term, is essential to improve service delivery and ensure effective citizen participation. Referring to the report 'Moving Towards Effective City Governance', jointly developed by NITI Aayog and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), he called for cities to have directly elected mayors with 5-year terms, introduce a Mayor-in-Council system and ensure timely municipal elections. He emphasised the need for states to devolve all 18 functions to urban local bodies in line with the 74th Amendment, including master planning, water supply, fire services, and traffic. He stressed that cities cannot be effectively governed from state capitals and city governments must have the authority and institutional capacity to respond to local needs. This alone will ensure meaningful citizen participation. Gauba said that municipal revenues remain low and called for improving property tax and user-charge recovery.
He pointed out that while Central Finance Commission grants to ULBs have more than doubled the previous allocation, with their share increasing to 45 per cent from 36 per cent, fund devolution from states to cities remains low. He said that State Finance Commissions should be regularly constituted and that adequate fiscal transfer to urban local bodies must be ensured.
Addressing urban planning and housing, Gauba highlighted the need to overhaul the current planning paradigm. He called for reforms to remove restrictive FARs and building norms that constrain land supply and drive up costs for residential and commercial users. He stressed the need for adoption of mixed-use zoning, development around transit hubs and land pooling to increase land supply and reduce costs for housing as well as for economic activities.

IndiGo to move 12 international flights to Navi Mumbai, free up Mumbai airport

The phased move will cover all its existing services from CSMIA to Bahrain, Riyadh, Dammam, Jeddah, Madinah, Kuwait, Ras Al Khaimah, Fujairah, Muscat, Dhaka and Jakarta.



IndiGo plans to shift 12 daily international departures from Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) to Navi Mumbai International Airport from February 2027, after a broader transfer plan was deferred following opposition from airlines. The phased move will cover all its existing services from CSMIA to Bahrain, Riyadh, Dammam, Jeddah, Madinah, Kuwait, Ras Al Khaimah, Fujairah, Muscat, Dhaka and Jakarta. A new daily Kathmandu service will take IndiGo's international network at Navi Mumbai to 12 destinations between February and July 2027, the airline and Adani Airport Holdings Limited (AAHL) said in a joint statement. Some domestic flights will also shift to provide connections for international passengers. The companies are finalising arrangements for transfers between domestic and international services.

Final dates and schedules will be announced once coordination is complete and operating approvals are secured. The transfer will free up capacity at CSMIA for IndiGo to launch international services across Asia, Africa and Europe in 2027 using its expanding A320, A321 and A321XLR fleet, the joint statement said. Shifting some domestic flights will also help accommodate capacity cuts needed for the redevelopment of Terminal 1 by 2030, it added.

EARLIER TRANSFER PLAN WAS DEFERRED

Mumbai International Airport Limited (MIAL), which operates CSMIA, had proposed moving 265 of its 770 weekly international departures to Navi Mumbai from October 25, affecting around 46 airlines.

The shift was intended to ease congestion at CSMIA and free up capacity for the redevelopment of its ageing Terminal 1. Airlines raised concerns over passenger convenience, schedules, capacity and consultation. The Civil Aviation Ministry asked MIAL to defer the move and work out an agreed transition. On October 13, MIAL said existing international flight allocations would remain unchanged through the winter schedule, which ends on March 27, 2027. Subsequent transfers would follow consultations with individual airlines, it added.

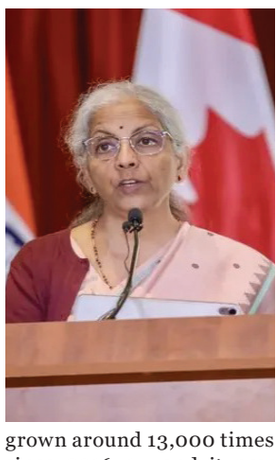
NAVI MUMBAI OPERATIONS BEGAN IN DECEMBER 2025

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated Phase 1 of Navi Mumbai International Airport in October 2025. It was built at a cost of around Rs 19,650 crore. Commercial operations began on December 25, 2025, with IndiGo operating the first arrival from Bengaluru and first departure to Hyderabad. International flights began on July 15, 2026, with an Air India Express service to Abu Dhabi.

The airport's planned layout includes four terminals and two parallel runways, with an Automated People Mover connecting the terminals. It also includes storage infrastructure for sustainable aviation fuel. The Adani Group controls both airports. AAHL owns 74 per cent of MIAL, which in turn holds a 74 per cent stake in Navi Mumbai International Airport Limited.

FM Sitharaman: UPI Handles Nearly 80 Crore Transactions Daily

NEW DELHI, OCT 25



India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) has become the world's largest real-time payment system, processing more than 2,400 crore transactions a month, or nearly 80 crore transactions every day, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Sunday.

Addressing the inauguration of the Reserve Bank of India's Greenfield Data Centre and Training Institute by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Khordha, Odisha, FM Sitharaman said UPI's annual transaction volume has increased around 13,000 times since 2016-17.

She noted that the platform now processes more than 2,400 crore transactions in a single month, equivalent to nearly 80 crore transactions every day, underscoring the scale and adoption of India's digital payments infrastructure. "UPI has become the world's largest real-time payment system. Its annual transaction volume has grown around 13,000 times since 2016–17, and it now handles over 2,400 crore transactions in a single month, or nearly 80 crore transactions every day," the finance minister noted. The finance minister said the rapid growth of UPI has helped foster a vibrant fintech ecosystem that is bringing credit, insurance and investment opportunities to millions of first-time users across the country. Highlighting the importance of digital infrastructure, FM Sitharaman described data centres as the "vaults of the digital age" and said the government has taken several measures to boost the sector. "The vibrant fintech ecosystem built on these initiatives is bringing credit, insurance and investment opportunities to first-time users. A data centre is the vault of the digital age," FM Sitharaman noted. She pointed out that data centres were granted infrastructure status in 2022, while the Union Budget 2026-27 announced a tax holiday for foreign companies providing global cloud services from data centres located in India. According to FM Sitharaman, the newly inaugurated RBI facility will further strengthen India's domestic digital infrastructure and support systems that form the backbone of the country's payments architecture. "This campus will house the Reserve Bank's mission-critical systems, including RTGS and NEFT. The training institute, with its own research wing, will build expertise in cybersecurity, artificial intelligence and data centres," the minister noted.

What Could Derail India's 7% Growth Outlook?

The IMF raised India's FY27 growth forecast to 7% from 6.4% after stronger-than-expected economic activity, but risks from the Middle East conflict, energy prices, tighter global financial conditions, AI-related uncertainty and adverse weather could threaten the outlook, said IMF's Krishna Srinivasan.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has raised India's FY27 growth forecast to 7% from 6.4%, offering reason for optimism, but the road ahead is far from free of risks. An energy crisis triggered by disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz that shows no signs of easing, a rupee under pressure, rising borrowing costs, uncertainty over the AI boom and the threat of El Nino could all complicate India's growth outlook. But, the real danger, IMF Asia chief Krishna Srinivasan said, is when these risks converge. "The biggest worry is if all of these come together, the confluence of risks come together, that can have a significant bearing on prospects for India and for the region," Krishna Srinivasan, Director of the IMF's Asia and Pacific Department said in an exclusive interview with India Today. The IMF revised its forecast after India's economic performance in FY26-27 exceeded expectations, with the Fund projecting medium-term growth at around 6.9%. However, Srinivasan cautioned that sustaining this momentum would depend on how India navigates mounting global uncertainties, particularly the prolonged energy shock and its impact on inflation and growth. "The energy shock is likely to get worse before it gets better," Srinivasan added. For India, which relies heavily on imported energy, a prolonged disruption could fuel domestic inflation, weaken external balances and weigh on growth. Higher energy costs can erode household purchasing power, raise production expenses for businesses and complicate the task of containing inflation.



At the same time, allowing inflation to remain elevated can undermine growth over the longer term. Srinivasan said central banks must respond proactively to rising price pressures, with price stability remaining their primary objective. "The overarching objective of central banks should be on price stability," he said, adding that policymakers must remain agile as inflationary pressures build. The IMF Asia chief also highlighted the pressure on Asia, which remains heavily dependent on imported oil and gas, with energy consumption accounting for around 4% of the region's GDP, roughly twice the share in the European Union.

DIVERSIFICATION OF ENERGY NEEDS VERY IMPORTANT: IMF'S SRINIVASAN

India has already diversified its energy import sources, Srinivasan noted. But the room to absorb higher costs through fiscal measures is not unlimited. "Fiscal buffers are thinning, not just in India, but across the region, because of the shocks we've had back to back," he said. The longer the disruption in the Hormuz continues, the harder it could become for the government to prevent international price increases from feeding into domestic fuel costs.The longer-term response, he argued, must go beyond managing the immediate crisis. India and other Asian economies need to diversify their sources of energy, reduce their dependence on fossil fuels and improve energy efficiency. "This shock has clearly underscored the need for diversification of your, you know, where you import from, and also to reduce your energy intensity," he said.

IMF ASIA CHIEF ON WEAKENING RUPEE

While answering a question on the weakening rupee, Srinivasan said the energy shock, a stronger US dollar and capital outflows were adding to the pressure. He said the rupee should be allowed to adjust, with the central bank stepping in if its fall pushes up inflation or markets become unstable. "The rupee should be the first line of defence, allowing it to move to reflect the shock is important," he said. "If the rupee depreciates, and it has passed through inflation, then monetary policy should respond accordingly," Srinivasan added. He also stressed that the focus should be on protecting people rather than defending the currency at all costs.

IMF'S SRINIVASAN ON INDIA'S RECENT TRADE DEALS

With global trade restrictions tripling between 2019 and 2025, Srinivasan welcomed India's trade agreements with the European Union and the UK as a way to diversify trade and investment. "I think it's a very important step. I think it's a much needed step," he said. He also highlighted that the IMF estimates that deeper trade integration within Asia could raise the region's GDP by around 2%. Srinivasan said India's trade deals could open up new avenues for trade and investment, but stressed that more reforms were needed to attract foreign capital. He pointed to the need for labour and land reforms, an easier business environment and steps to reverse the decline in net foreign direct investment. "A lot of reforms are needed, not just in the near term, but which will actually attract investment and so that it can boost growth over the medium term or medium to long term," he said.

'AI BOOM CARRIES BOTH OPPORTUNITY AND RISKS'

Responding to an IMF analysis of 19 Asian economies, which found that labour demand in AI-exposed sectors fell by around 10% relative to other sectors after ChatGPT's launch, Srinivasan said the decline had since stabilised, while demand for AI skills continued to rise. "In India, if you look at the services sector, the GCC and so on, there's actually been a rise in jobs," he said. He stressed the need to reskill workers to help them adapt to changing job requirements. "The point is that, you know, skills, it's very important that, you know, the workers are well retooled. They are skilled to adapt to this change," he said.

EL NINO ADDS TO GROWTH RISKS

El Nino poses another risk to India's growth outlook, particularly if adverse weather hits agriculture and pushes up food prices. Srinivasan said its impact across Asia could vary, bringing drought, excessive rainfall or higher temperatures. "If El Nino significantly affects agriculture, it could weigh on growth, given India's continued dependence on the sector," he said, adding that a severe impact on agriculture could add to inflationary pressures.



Why 70,000 Indian Students Are Choosing Germany?

Germany has emerged as one of the leading destinations for Indian students seeking quality higher education, advanced research facilities and international career opportunities. The country's expanding Indian community, relatively affordable university education and demand for skilled professionals have contributed to a steady rise in the number of Indians choosing to study and work there. According to Indian Ambassador to Germany Ajit Vinayak Gupte, approximately 70,000 Indian students are currently studying in Germany, reflecting the growing educational and professional links between the two countries.

In an interview with NDTV, Gupte highlighted the rapid expansion of the Indian diaspora in Germany and explained why the country has become increasingly attractive to young Indians. The availability of diverse academic programmes, comparatively low tuition fees at public universities, research funding and opportunities for employment after graduation are among the major factors driving this trend.

The growing movement of Indian students and professionals to Germany also reflects broader changes in India-Europe relations. As Germany looks for skilled workers to address demographic and labour-market challenges, Indian students are finding opportunities to combine higher education with professional experience. At the same time, their experiences have raised questions about how India can strengthen its own research ecosystem and encourage talented scholars to return home.

Indian Community in Germany Expands Rapidly

The Indian community in Germany has grown considerably over the past decade, establishing a stronger presence in the country's academic, professional and business sectors. According to Ambassador Gupte, the Indian diaspora has expanded particularly rapidly during the past six to seven years. The Indian community in Germany currently numbers approximately 3,32,000 people, while another 70,000 people of Indian origin have acquired German citizenship, the ambassador said. These figures demonstrate the increasing social and economic connections between India and Germany. The scale of the change becomes more apparent when compared with earlier figures. In 2014, the Indian community in Germany numbered around 50,000, according to Gupte. The subsequent increase reflects migration for higher education, employment, research and business, alongside the settlement of families and professionals. The ambassador said more than 60,000 Indians had moved to Germany annually over the previous two years. Many of these arrivals were young people who initially travelled to pursue university education and subsequently found employment in the country. For many Indian students, studying abroad is no longer viewed exclusively as an academic experience. It is also an opportunity to acquire international qualifications, gain exposure to advanced technologies and develop professional networks that can support long-term career growth. Germany's industrial base, internationally recognised universities and demand for specialised skills have helped strengthen its appeal. The country offers opportunities in engineering, information technology, manufacturing, scientific research and several other fields in which Indian students and professionals have established a growing presence.

Indian Student Numbers Reach 70,000

The expansion of the Indian student population has become one of the most visible aspects of India-Germany relations. According to Gupte, the number of Indian students studying in Germany has increased substantially in recent years. Approximately six years ago, Germany hosted around 25,000 Indian students. That figure had doubled to approximately 50,000 by 2024, before reaching nearly 70,000 in the latest figures cited by the ambassador. This growth reflects a combination of educational, financial and professional considerations. Indian students are increasingly comparing international study destinations not only on the basis of university rankings but also by examining tuition fees, living expenses, access to research facilities and employment opportunities after graduation. Germany offers a broad selection of academic programmes, including courses in engineering, computer science, natural sciences, management and other specialised disciplines. Its universities and research institutions have established international reputations in several technical and scientific fields. For students seeking advanced qualifications, the opportunity to study in an environment closely connected with industrial research and technological development is particularly attractive. Germany's manufacturing sector, engineering companies and research institutions also provide opportunities to understand how academic knowledge can be applied to practical problems. The increase in student numbers has therefore become part of a wider relationship involving education, skilled migration and economic cooperation. However, the growing popularity of Germany also means prospective students must carefully assess admission requirements, language expectations, accommodation costs and the availability of suitable programmes before making a decision.

Germany-India Investment Relations Gain Momentum

Education and migration are only part of the growing relationship between India and Germany. Investment, trade and industrial cooperation have also become important areas of engagement.

Gupte described Germany as a significant investor in India and highlighted efforts to strengthen business links between the two economies. According to Indian statistics cited by the ambassador, German investment in India has reached approximately $15 billion. German figures place the total at around $28 billion when reinvested earnings are included. The difference between the figures reflects the accounting methods used to measure investment flows and accumulated investment. Reinvested earnings, in particular, can affect the overall totals reported by different statistical systems. The ambassador said the Indian Embassy had organised numerous events over the previous two years to encourage greater business engagement. He noted that international companies increasingly view India as a rapidly growing economy with an expanding middle class and a large consumer market. These characteristics have attracted interest from businesses seeking new customers, manufacturing opportunities and partnerships in emerging industries. German companies have announced investment decisions worth approximately $7.4 billion over the previous two years, according to Gupte. The investments are expected to flow into India over the coming years, with a significant portion already having arrived, he said. The actual pace of investment will depend on project implementation, business conditions, regulatory requirements and market demand. Nevertheless, the announcements indicate the potential for further economic cooperation. Gupte also suggested that the proposed India-European Union Free Trade Agreement could improve investment prospects once it comes into effect. Such an agreement could influence market access and trade conditions, although its eventual effects would depend on the terms and implementation arrangements. Indian businesses have also expanded their presence in Germany.

Affordable Tuition Fees Make Germany Attractive

One of the most important factors attracting Indian students is the relatively low cost of tuition at many German public universities. According to Gupte, tuition fees at some state universities can be as low as 750 euros per semester, amounting to approximately 1,500 euros annually. This can make higher education in Germany considerably more affordable than programmes at many private institutions and universities in other popular international destinations. The precise cost depends on the university, programme and state. Some institutions charge additional fees, and certain programmes or locations may have different tuition arrangements. Students must therefore verify the latest fee structure of their chosen university rather than assume that every course is tuition-free or available at the same price.

Nevertheless, the availability of low-cost public university education remains a significant advantage for students who want an international qualification without taking on excessive tuition-related financial commitments. Affordable tuition does not eliminate all expenses. Students must still budget for accommodation, food, transportation, health insurance, semester contributions and other living costs. Housing availability and rental prices can vary considerably between cities, making financial planning an essential part of the application process. Part-time employment can help students manage some of these expenses. Gupte noted that opportunities to work while studying contribute to Germany's attractiveness among international students. However, students should not rely entirely on future part-time earnings to finance their education. Finding work can take time, and employment opportunities depend on location, language ability, experience and applicable regulations. A realistic financial plan remains important before travelling.

German Language Skills Improve Employment Prospects

Although many universities offer programmes taught in English, learning German can provide students with additional advantages in the employment market. Gupte emphasised that German-language skills could improve the career prospects of Indian graduates. The ability to communicate in the local language can help international students participate more fully in university life, interact with employers and adapt to professional environments. English-taught courses allow students to pursue higher education without necessarily having advanced German proficiency at the beginning. However, language expectations may change when students seek internships, part-time jobs or full-time employment. Many workplaces require employees to communicate with colleagues, customers, suppliers and public institutions in German. The level of proficiency needed depends on the industry and the specific role. Technical positions in international companies may offer different language requirements from jobs involving customer service, administration or direct interaction with the public.

Learning German while studying can therefore make the transition from university to employment smoother. It can also help students build social connections and understand the country's workplace culture. The ambassador linked these opportunities to Germany's demographic challenges. With an average population age of around 45 years, as cited by Gupte, Germany faces pressures associated with an ageing population and the need to maintain a skilled workforce. Indian graduates with qualifications in relevant fields may find opportunities in sectors seeking trained professionals. Their prospects, however, depend on the skills they possess, employer demand, professional requirements and the applicable residence and employment rules. For students considering a long-term future in Germany, language learning and career preparation can be as important as selecting the right university course.

Post-Study Employment Encourages Students to Stay

The possibility of finding employment after graduation is another important reason Indian students choose Germany. Students interviewed by NDTV said post-study opportunities influenced their decisions to pursue education in the country. One student described the process of obtaining a post-study work visa as relatively straightforward, while emphasising the importance of learning German to enter the professional workforce. Residence and employment rules can change, and eligibility depends on an individual's circumstances and the applicable regulations. Students should therefore consult official German government and immigration sources for current requirements rather than rely exclusively on informal accounts. For many graduates, however, the prospect of moving from university into employment remains a significant attraction. A student from Kerala, who pursued a research project in Germany before continuing with a PhD, said access to research opportunities and social security and other benefits available to researchers had influenced her decision to remain in the country. Such experiences illustrate how academic opportunities can lead to longer-term professional and personal commitments. Students who develop expertise in a particular field may prefer to continue working where they have access to suitable facilities, established research teams and opportunities for career progression. Germany's demographic pressures may also support demand for skilled workers, although employment outcomes differ across industries and professions. International graduates still need to demonstrate relevant qualifications, language skills and the competencies employers require. The decision to remain abroad is therefore influenced by a combination of factors, including career prospects, research support, living conditions and personal circumstances.



Research Opportunities Draw Indian Scholars

Beyond undergraduate and postgraduate education, Germany has become an important destination for Indian researchers seeking specialised facilities, funding and opportunities to work on advanced scientific projects. Researchers interviewed by NDTV identified research infrastructure, access to grants, academic collaboration and the possibility of developing new technologies as major reasons for choosing German institutions. Angel Joseph, a postdoctoral researcher at Technische Universität Berlin, or TU Berlin, highlighted the opportunities available to researchers at the university. She said the institution provided an environment in which researchers could pursue scientific work, access grants and explore startup ideas. The combination of academic research and entrepreneurship can be particularly valuable for scholars who want to move beyond publishing research papers and develop practical applications for their work. Universities that support collaboration between researchers, industry partners and entrepreneurs can help turn scientific discoveries into technologies, products and commercial ventures. Such an environment may also allow researchers to develop professional networks and explore different career paths. Other Indian students and researchers pointed to the availability of funding as an important advantage. When research projects receive adequate financial support, scholars can concentrate on their work without facing the same degree of uncertainty over laboratory access, equipment and project expenses. Funding also influences the pace and quality of scientific research. Projects involving advanced equipment, specialised materials or interdisciplinary collaboration often require sustained financial support. Reliable funding can help researchers plan experiments, recruit research assistants and complete projects within defined periods. Germany's research ecosystem, as described by the students, offers opportunities to combine academic learning with practical investigation.

Can India Attract Researchers Back Home?

The growing number of Indian students and researchers abroad has also renewed discussion about what India can do to encourage talented professionals to return. The students interviewed by NDTV said they would consider returning if Indian institutions offered comparable research facilities, reliable funding and stronger professional opportunities. However, they identified infrastructure limitations, lengthy project timelines and difficulties in translating research into practical outcomes as important obstacles. One student referred to the Prime Minister's Research Chair Scheme, which aims to attract distinguished Indian-origin researchers, scientists and professionals with international research experience to strengthen higher education and research in India. The scheme represents an effort to bring experienced researchers into the country's academic system. However, the student argued that its limited number of positions and coverage across disciplines could restrict its reach.

SHORT NEWS

Chattisgarh Hockey League

Mainpat Titans produce special 5-2 victory against RR



RAIPUR: Rajdhani Royals succumbed to yet another defeat on Sunday, as Pardeep Mor's Mainpat Titans thrashed the opposition 5-2 in the evening encounter of the Chhattisgarh Hockey League. This loss has paved the way for Royals' early ouster from the tournament, as they failed in every department. Nonetheless, the first quarter looked flat for the better part of 15 minutes, where both the teams were more than happy to just maneuver the ball in the midfield and get a rare circle penetration. But then a hurried attack towards the end saw Mainpat create a chance in the circle, with Manish Vatti scoring for the first time in the match. Rajdhani too swung into action, with Aniket coming in with an equalizer after being fed a ball from outside the circle by Raushan. Surprisingly enough, about 30 seconds later Raushan did beat the Titans keeper Alfaz Khan to score, but the goal was disallowed, leaving the forward in utter disbelief. Mainpat made full use of this lifeline and struck again when Sandeep Thakur got a great.

Harmanpreet, Deepti, Vaishnavi take India to series win over Zimbabwe

VADODARA



Harmanpreet Kaur and Deepti Sharma struck centuries before left-arm spinner Vaishnavi Sharma claimed her maiden four-wicket haul in international cricket as India beat Zimbabwe by 121 runs in the second women's ODI here at the BCA Stadium on Sunday to seal the three-match series 2-0 with a game to spare.

After Pratika Rawal made 61, Harmanpreet (126) and Deepti (106 not out) shared a record 153-run stand for the fifth wicket to power India to 328/6 after an early wobble. Zimbabwe made a spirited start in reply through Modester Mupachikwa (49) and Chipo Mugeri-Tiripano (46), but Vaishnavi's spell in the middle overs triggered a collapse as the visitors were bowled out for 207 in 48.5 overs.

Vaishnavi, who came into the playing eleven in place of the rested Kranti Gaud, ripped through the Zimbabwe line-up to finish with impressive figures of 4-39 from her 10 overs. Deepti then returned in the death overs to pick up 3-32 and round off a commanding all-round display. Apart from Vaishnavi and Deepti, Jintimani Kalita, Sayali Satghare and N Sree Charani picked a scalp each.

After electing to bat first, India were off to a shaky start. Nomvelo Sibanda struck in the very first over when Smriti Mandhana went for an ill-judged pull off a short, wide delivery and was caught at short third. Sibanda claimed her second scalp when Shafali Verma (8) pulled one low towards midwicket, where Nyasha Gwanzura held a sharp catch inches off the ground, a decision upheld by the TV umpire.

With India at 19/2, Harmanpreet and Pratika set about repairing the damage with a 124-run third-wicket partnership. Harmanpreet looked in control with her back-foot and off-side shots, while taking a liking to Sibanda and Tendai Makusha and finding the boundary ropes with a series of crisp drives and cuts. Pratika, who looked pristine, struck the first six of the match by lofting Makusha over long-on in the 10th over.

The pair brought up India's hundred in the 16th over, before Pratika completed her half-century off 57 balls and celebrated by stepping out to loft Loryn Phiri for a six straight down the ground. An over later, Harmanpreet reached her fifty off 51 deliveries.

Zimbabwe's fielding effort was also hit by injuries, with Mugeri-Tiripano hurting her right knee and captain Josephine Nkomo leaving the field after a diving stop. Nyasha finally broke the third-wicket stand in the 23rd over when Pratika, who was dropped on 59, swept straight into the hands of deep midwicket. She made 61 off 67 balls, laced with four boundaries and two sixes.

Leg-spinner Olinder Chare struck in the next over, as Tejal Hasabnis (3) skied a slog-sweep to mid-on. Harmanpreet, who was dropped on 66 by Nkomo at short midwicket, and Deepti then steadied the innings.

After Harmanpreet cut Nyasha for four, Deepti cashed in on some wayward bowling down the leg side, sweeping repeatedly to the fine-leg boundary while also cutting and pulling to race to 45 off 35 balls, with Harmanpreet unbeaten on 88 off as many balls at the second drinks break. Deepti then brought up her fifty off 37 balls in the 35th over by sweeping a Sibanda full toss past square leg.

Harmanpreet, meanwhile, moved through the nineties with a classy drive through extra cover off Makusha before completing her century off 101 balls with a fine sweep off Beloved Biza in the 41st over. It was her eighth ODI hundred, but Harmanpreet kept her celebration low-key - settling for a handshake with Deepti as the Indian dressing room rose to applaud.

Zimbabwe's woes in the field continued, with Harmanpreet getting two more lives. Michelle Mavunga failed to hold on to a diving chance at long-on, while Nomvelo spilled a chance at backward point.

The pair helped India race past 300 in the 46th over before Michelle finally ended Harmanpreet's stay by luring her into a big hit with a slower, fuller delivery that was caught by at long-off. Harmanpreet, who hit 15 boundaries in her 121-ball 126, walked back to a standing ovation from her teammates.

Her 153-run stand with Deepti is now India women's highest partnership for the fifth wicket or lower in ODIs, eclipsing the 122-run association between Sneh Rana and Pooja Vastrakar against Pakistan in the 2022 ODI World Cup.

Richa Ghosh (7) fell soon after, holing out to long-on off a Tendai full toss in the 48th over. Deepti, however, made sure India finished strongly. She reached her second ODI hundred off 83 balls – her first ton since 2017 - in the final over by sweeping Tendai between short fine leg and square leg, and remained unbeaten on 106 off 86 balls, laced with 15 boundaries.

The sweep alone fetched her 36 runs, including eight boundaries. Deepti's 83-ball century is the fifth fastest ton by an India women's batter in ODIs, and she also became the first Indian woman to score a hundred at number six or lower, bettering Richa's 94 coming against South Africa in the 2025 ODI World Cup in Visakhapatnam.

Zimbabwe made a bright start to the chase as Modester cracked two boundaries off the first two balls from Sayali. The Indian seamers struggled with their lines early on as Modester continued to cash in on anything short or on the pads. But India struck through spin in the ninth over when Charani had Loryn Phiri (6) caught by short midwicket and end a 38-run opening stand.

Chipo then took the attack to the spinners, hitting three fours in a Charani over. She added 69 for the second wicket with Modester before Sayali got a breakthrough in the 23rd over by castling her for 46 through the gate with one that nipped back in.



India, New Zealand esports federations draft MoU during centenary celebrations

AUCKLAND

The Esports Federation of India (ESFI) and the New Zealand Esports Federation Incorporated (NZ Esports) have drafted a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen cooperation between the two countries, with the initiative taking place during celebrations marking 100 years of sporting ties between India and New Zealand.

The proposed agreement aims to establish a framework for knowledge exchange, shared learning and practical collaboration between the two federations and their respective esports communities, with a focus on building a long-term partnership. The Indian delegation is visiting Auckland at the invitation of NZ Esports and the New Zealand government as part of the centenary programme, titled 100 Years of Unity Through Sport. The MoU proceedings were attended by NZ Esports General Secretary Ben Lenihan, CEO Jonathan Jansen and Sport NZ representative Brent Sheldrake.

Cricket has brought New Zealand and India together for generations. Esports gives us a new way to build on that connection with the young people of today. By bringing our players together, we're creating opportunities to compete, share our cultures and build friendships. That's what excites me about this relationship: the chance to strengthen the connection between our countries for generations to come," said Jansen.

Sheldrake highlighted the role of international sporting events in fostering cultural exchange and building relationships beyond competition, saying, "International matches like these create opportunities for people to connect through a shared passion for sport and competition. Bringing players from India and New Zealand together offers a chance to learn about each other's cultures and build relationships. It is encouraging to see that emphasis on connection alongside the competition itself."

The centenary programme features several sporting disciplines, including cricket, football and esports. India's esports contingent is competing in eFootball and Clash Royale as part of efforts to strengthen sporting ties and promote friendship and mutual learning between the two nations.

French Open: 'You have to be at your 100% every single point,'

PARIS

India's PV Sindhu said she needed to give her best on every point against top players after finishing runner-up at the BWF French Open, where she lost to world No. 1 An Se Young of South Korea in the women's singles final here on Sunday.

The two-time Olympic medallist suffered a 21-16, 11-21, 12-21 defeat against the top seed at the Arena Grand Paris, missing out on becoming the first Indian woman since Aparna Popat in 1998 to win the French Open title.

Sindhu started strongly and took the opening game 21-16, but An fought back to win the next two games and secure the title in 61 minutes. The victory extended the Korean's head-to-head record against Sindhu to 11-0.

Reflecting on the final, Sindhu said competing against the world's best demanded complete concentration and consistency throughout the match. "When you're playing with the top athletes, you have to be at 100% every single point. I know it's not going to be easy, and you have to fight for every point. That's what we were doing," Sindhu said.

The Indian acknowledged the challenge of sustaining her level against a player of An's quality, adding that the experience would provide valuable lessons as she looks to improve her performances in the coming tournaments.

Despite the defeat, Sindhu remained positive about her recent form and stressed that she wanted to raise her level further.

"I'm absolutely looking forward to much better badminton from me. I'm happy with this, but I think there's a lot of space, a lot of room still there. So I'm looking forward to it," she said.



The runner-up finish marked Sindhu's second BWF World Tour Super 750 final of the season. She won the Japan Open in July, defeating Japan's three-time world champion Akane Yamaguchi in the final to claim her first BWF title since December 2024.

World No. 11 Sindhu reached her maiden French Open final after overcoming Japan's Hina Akechi 21-10, 20-22, 21-16 in the semifinals. Earlier, she survived a tough opening-round contest against Thailand's Supanida Katethong before beating Japan's Riko Gunji and Chiu Pin-chian of Chinese Taipei in straight games.

An continued her remarkable season with another title. The reigning Olympic champion entered the final with a 65-1 win-loss record in 2026 and extended her winning streak to 50 matches with Sunday's victory. Sindhu's run also marked the 10th time an Indian entry had reached a BWF World Tour final at a Super 300 or higher-level event outside India this season, surpassing the previous record of nine finals set in 2023.



Anderson to leave Lancashire after 25 years after club denies new contract to speedster

NEW DELHI

England and Lancashire legend James Anderson will be leaving his boyhood county after he was informed that he won't be offered a new deal after the end of the 2026 season. Anderson expressed his disappointment over the exit, calling that, had it been up to him, "it wouldn't have ended like this" as he shared a statement on social media. "I've supported Lancashire since I was a kid, and so to get to play for them for 25 years was a dream come true.

"I have always found it special walking out to play at Old Trafford and have some incredible memories of doing so, including the honour of being captain - if it was up to me it wouldn't have ended like this, but I wish the players and fans all the best for the future," Anderson wrote on his social media. During a meeting last Monday, Lancashire's incoming director of cricket Paul Farbrace and newly appointed chief executive Richard Kenyon informed Anderson that he would not be offered a new deal as they cited that they are looking to rebuild their first-team squad. He had intended to play next season after putting up strong performances this season, where he picked 50 wickets at 17.68 and was also named Lancashire's Championship player of the year.

Confirming Anderson's departure, Farbrace hailed the legendary speedster. "Jimmy is without doubt the greatest bowler Lancashire and England have produced. He has been a fantastic competitor throughout his career, with exceptional skill and an unwavering commitment to setting the highest standards in every dressing room he has been part of.

"Following a meeting with Jimmy and Richard Kenyon at Emirates Old Trafford on Monday 19 October, I spoke to Jimmy about our ambitions to rebuild our men's squad that is capable of securing promotion from Division Two of the County Championship and then challenging to win Division One over the next three to four years.

He reasoned that the club is looking to build a new squad and that Anderson was informed that he won't be given a contract for the next season. "We are keen to begin that rebuild now, both in terms of the playing squad and the wider professional cricket set-up, and to make important progress over the coming months. As part of those plans, I informed Jimmy that we had taken the incredibly difficult decision not to extend his playing contract for the 2027 season.

"I would like to thank Jimmy for everything he has given to Lancashire Cricket over the course of his career. His contribution to the Club has been immense, both on and off the field, and he leaves a lasting legacy. We have enormous respect for what he has achieved, and we will always be proud that he has represented Lancashire for so many years," he added.

Green surprised by quick recovery, available for series decider against South Africa

CAPE TOWN



Australia all-rounder Cameron Green has admitted he was surprised by how quickly he has bounced back from an abdominal muscle tear, adding the he is now available for selection for the third and final Test against South Africa, with the series currently locked at 1-1.

Green picked up the injury during the ODI series between the two sides and has been sidelined since then. But Green, 27, trained in the nets ahead of the series decider at the Newlands Cricket Ground and is now in contention for selection for the match starting on Tuesday.

"Pretty surprised with how quickly it's actually healed, or how functional I feel only a few weeks after. It was really bizarre. I think there's definitely a pretty clear link between getting hit and then doing the injury. I think it's too much of a coincidence for them not to be related.

"Basically I got hit where you don't want to get hit and then two balls later, I went to play a shot just behind the wicket – obviously had to lengthen my muscle, and I think my muscle was pretty keen to not move at that stage after I got hit.

"It's quite a unique injury. There are not many people that have done the injury and then tried to play a few weeks later. The (medical staff) didn't have much to go off ... (but) it's all good to go for the last game," Green was quoted as saying by the ICC on Sunday. Australia won the opening Test by 214 runs in Durban before South Africa bounced back in the second game in Gqeberha to win by an innings and 31 runs. Green was part of the Australian side that lost to South Africa in last year's World Test Championship (WTC) final at Lord's, where he batted at number three, and said the experience had taught him plenty about the challenge posed by the Proteas fast bowling attack. "(Batting at three in the WTC final) was a tough experience for sure. Pretty unique that you're playing South Africa with the Dukes ball in England. I think there's a lot of good learnings, a lot of tough learnings.

"Obviously they're such a quality bowling line-up that you've got to be on your game at all times to succeed against them, regardless of where you bat. But certainly up the top of the order is incredibly difficult – their opening bowlers are so great with the new ball, you've got to work really hard, especially at the start," he added.

La Liga: Real Madrid's Courtois ruled out of El Clasico against Barcelona

MADRID

Real Madrid have suffered a major setback ahead of El Clasico against Barcelona, with goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois ruled out of the La Liga clash due to flu symptoms. The club confirmed Courtois' last-minute withdrawal in a statement on its official website, adding that goalkeeper Ilya Voloshyn had joined the squad as his replacement for the match.

"Thibaut Courtois has been confirmed as a last-minute absentee from the Real Madrid versus Barcelona match, scheduled for this Sunday evening as part of the tenth round of the Spanish league, due to suffering from flu symptoms," the club said.

With Courtois out, Ukraine player Andriy Lunin is now expected to start between the posts for Real Madrid in the high-profile encounter.

Courtois has made 12 appearances across all competitions this season, conceding 14 goals and keeping two clean sheets. His absence comes at a crucial stage of the campaign, with Real Madrid looking to reduce the gap at the top of the La Liga standings. The Belgian had earlier underlined the importance of responding against Barcelona after Real Madrid suffered defeats in some of their recent encounters with their arch-rivals.



Is Kayadu Lohar replacing Sreeleela in a big-budgeted Tamil film?

Sreeleela is making inroads into Tamil cinema. She has acted opposite Sivakarthikeyan in "Parasakthi" and Dhanush in "OM", which is scheduled to hit theatres shortly. Her name was also shortlisted for the female lead in Ajith Kumar's upcoming film, directed by Adhik Ravichandran. Many believed that the film with Ajith would further boost Sreeleela's standing in Tamil cinema. However, the considerable age gap between the two, with Ajith being 55 and Sreeleela 25, also drew attention. Now, reports suggest that the makers have dropped the idea of casting Sreeleela. Instead, Kayadu Lohar is said to be the frontrunner for the female lead. Kayadu has already gained popularity among Tamil audiences through her work in Tamil films. After appearing in Nani's upcoming film "The Paradise", she has reportedly signed another Tamil project. She is now said to be in consideration for Ajith's film as well.

RAJINIKANTH'S 'DHARMAN' WELCOMES NAYANTHARA



Superstar Rajinikanth and Nayanthara have shared screen space in several films since their first pairing in "Chandramukhi" in 2005. Two decades later, the popular combination is coming together once again, with Nayanthara joining the cast of Rajinikanth's upcoming film "Dharman". The film is being produced by Kamal Haasan and Mahendran and directed by Ashwath Marimuthi. The cast includes Simran, Sreeleela and Raashi Khanna. While Simran and Raashi Khanna have reportedly completed most of their portions, Nayanthara joined the shoot today. The makers officially announced her inclusion and welcomed her on board. Rajinikanth recently scored a major success with "Jailer 2" and is now focused on completing "Dharman", in which he plays a doctor.

Although Sreeleela and Raashi Khanna are not paired romantically with Rajinikanth, the presence of Simran and Nayanthara has generated interest. Their roles and the dynamics between the characters remain a point of curiosity. The film also features Ram Pothineni in a crucial role.

Taapsee Raises the Glam Quotient in Stunning New Shoot

Actress turns heads in a chic, high-fashion look as she gears up for her upcoming projects

Taapsee Pannu is raising the glamour quotient with her latest photoshoot, showcasing a striking blend of elegance and contemporary fashion. The actress looks stunning in an ivory bustier top featuring a glossy black peplum waist, paired with a burgundy patent leather midi skirt. Black pointed pumps, red-soled stilettos, voluminous curls, soft pink lips and pearl earrings complete her polished look. On the professional front, Taapsee was recently seen in Gandhari, an action thriller directed by Devashish Makhija that premiered on Netflix last month. She played Bani, a mother on a desperate search for her missing daughter. However, the film received a lukewarm response from viewers, with reviews pointing to its predictable storyline and lack of freshness. Looking ahead, Taapsee is set to appear in the comedy Zamana Kya Kahega, which also features Fardeen Khan and Ammy Virk. Meanwhile, reports suggest that the actress is in talks for Aitraaz 2, reportedly being produced by Subhash Ghai. While further details about the project remain awaited, Taapsee continues to balance her on-screen assignments with her growing fashion presence.

Javed Backs RASHMIKA

Veteran lyricist condemns accent-based trolling, while his reference to Rashmika as a Tamil actress draws attention

Veteran lyricist and screenwriter Javed Akhtar has come out in support of actress Rashmika Mandanna amid online trolling over her South Indian accent. However, his attempt to defend the actress has sparked a fresh debate after he referred to her as a Tamil actor. Rashmika, popularly known as the National Crush, has often faced criticism over her accent while working in Hindi cinema. The Kannada actress has built a career across multiple film industries, including Kannada, Telugu, Tamil and Hindi. The issue reportedly came into focus during Rashmika's appearance on Koffee with Karan, where she spoke about the criticism she faces for her accent. Pointing out the irony of the trolling, she said that being from South India naturally meant she had a South Indian accent. Supporting her, Javed Akhtar took to X and criticised those who mock actors for their pronunciation. He argued that people who question Rashmika's accent should first try speaking Tamil themselves, adding that linguistic superiority and such criticism were unjustified.

However, while Akhtar's intention was to stand up against language-based discrimination, his reference to Rashmika as a Tamil actress caught attention. Rashmika hails from Karnataka and is primarily associated with the Kannada film industry, although she has worked extensively across several languages. The mix-up has added another dimension to the discussion, particularly among sections of Kannada-speaking audiences who have previously criticised the actress. What began as a defence against accent-based trolling has now triggered a wider conversation about regional identity, language and the importance of getting facts right while addressing online prejudice. Meanwhile, Rashmika continues to maintain a strong presence across Indian cinema, with her multilingual career reflecting the increasingly pan-Indian nature of the film industry.

Naga Chaitanya Hails 'Vrushakarma' as a Mega Epic

Naga Chaitanya is gearing up for one of the most ambitious projects of his career with Vrushakarma, a big-budget visual spectacle directed by Karthik Dandu. The film recently grabbed attention after members of the media visited its specially constructed cave set, which impressed them with its intricate detailing and realistic design. Directed by Karthik Dandu and produced by BVSN Prasad in association with Sukumar Writings, the film features Meenakshi Chaudhary as the female lead, with Sparsh Srivastav playing a prominent role. The makers are planning a worldwide theatrical release on December 4.

Speaking during the media interaction, Karthik Dandu revealed that the team spent nearly four months discussing and developing miniature models before finalising the set designs. Every element was reportedly planned to strengthen the film's emotional depth and build intrigue among audiences. The director also credited Chaitanya for placing his trust in the vision and contributing valuable inputs to enhance the cinematic experience. Karthik further described Vrushakarma as a plot-driven film, adding that Chaitanya's character would leave a lasting impression on viewers.

Chaitanya, meanwhile, stressed the importance of creating authentic cinematic experiences rather than relying entirely on visual effects. "Such realistic sets push even actors to perform at their best, and I am thrilled to see the audience's reaction in theatres for these mind-blowing sequences," he said. The actor also revealed that he had spent more time working closely with Karthik than with any other director in his career. He particularly enjoyed the workshops and extensive pre-production process, which gave him a deeper understanding of the film's potential.

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