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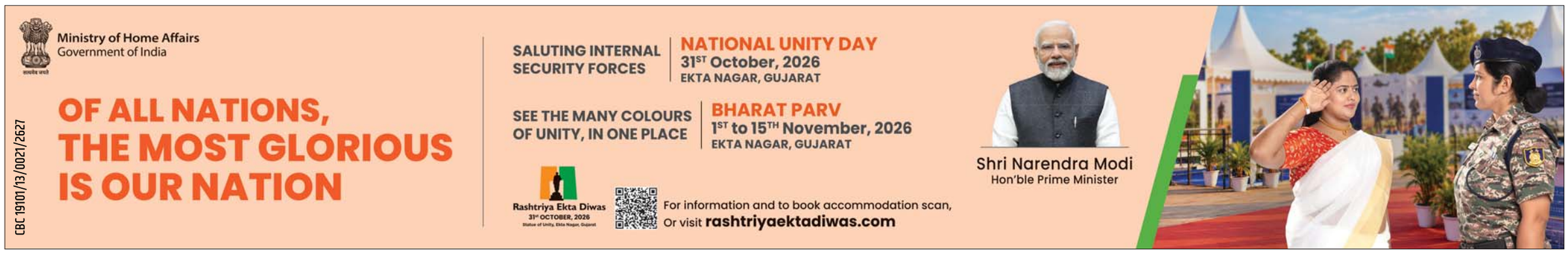
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Honest Journalism...



16 JUMADA AL-AWWAL 1448H

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ZOHAR	01:30 PM
ASAR	05:00 PM
MAGHRIB	06:15 PM
ISHA	08:15 PM

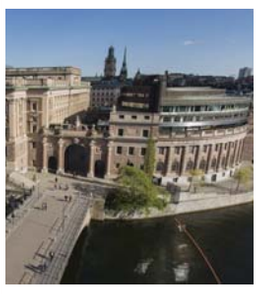
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13 HRS 10 MINS
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MOONRISE/MOONSET

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WORLD ▶P8



SWEDEN'S GOV'T FORMATION REMAINS DEADLOCKED

SC defers hearing on Rahul Gandhi, other Oppn leaders' plea against SIR



NEW DELHI, OCT 27

The Supreme Court on Tuesday deferred the hearing on a plea filed by Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and other INDIA bloc leaders challenging the Election Commission of India's (ECI) Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.

The Bench of Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V. Mohana directed the petitioners to file their response to the ECI's affidavit within 10 days.

It also granted the poll panel the liberty to file an additional affidavit, if required, within the same period. The matter will be taken up after the Diwali vacation.

The plea, filed by Rahul Gandhi and 12 other Opposition leaders, alleges large-scale voter deletions and irregularities in the SIR exercise.

The petitioners have challenged the manner in which the electoral roll revision is being conducted. The respondents in the matter include the ECI, Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar and Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi.

The Supreme Court had issued notice to the poll panel on October 15 and directed that the petition be tagged with other pleas already pending before it, challenging the validity of the SIR exercise in various states.

The CJI Kant-led Bench had also indicated that it would examine the conduct of one of the petitioners at the next hearing, later clarifying that the petition filed on behalf of Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut would be entertained provisionally, subject to his explaining his conduct.

The direction followed controversy over Raut's remarks concerning CJI Surya Kant after the latter declined to meet Rahul Gandhi and Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge to receive a memorandum on the SIR exercise.

The CJI had observed that holding a meeting to discuss pending cases would be contrary to the constitutional principle of separation of powers. Meanwhile, the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) has filed a criminal contempt petition against Raut and journalist Nikhil Wagle over their remarks against the CJI. (IANS/UNI)

Science must move from Lab to Land: PM Modi



NEW DELHI, OCT 27

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said that the true success of science is achieved when innovations move beyond laboratories and create a tangible impact in people's lives, asserting that India views science and technology as tools for serving humanity rather than instruments of power or conflict.

Addressing the Emerging Science, Technology and Innovation Conclave (ESTIC) 2026 in the national capital, the Prime Minister said that while the requirements of various technology-driven sectors differ, they all reflect a common message that India is rapidly building its technological strength and self-reliance.

"There has been a persistent challenge in how science and technology are viewed, often seen merely as tools of power or conflict. However, India firmly believes that science and technology are instruments for serving humanity," PM Modi noted.

"The true success of science is realised when it moves from the lab to the land, directly improving the lives of ordinary citizens," the Prime Minister stated.

Emphasising the societal role of innovation, PM Modi said science and technology should be judged not merely by their sophistication but by their ability to solve real-world problems and improve people's lives.

The Prime Minister noted that science and technology have often been viewed globally through the lens of power and conflict, but India believes they should be harnessed for the welfare of humanity.

"The success of a technology is not determined solely by how advanced it is. Its true strength lies in how effectively it solves major problems and how many people's lives it transforms," PM Modi noted.

Highlighting India's long scientific tradition, the Prime Minister said the country's culture has been rooted in knowledge and discovery, citing contributions ranging from the discovery of zero and the development of the number system to advances in astronomy.

"India is moving forward by evaluating itself against this very benchmark. We all know that a country's technology and its ability to create technology depend on its research. Research is the force that enables a country to find solutions to its problems and become self-reliant in critical technologies," PM Modi mentioned. (IANS)

The Prime Minister noted that science and technology have often been viewed globally through the lens of power and conflict, but India believes they should be harnessed for the welfare of humanity.

BRICS Parliamentary Forum condemns unilateral sanctions

Backs two-state solution to Palestinian conflict



NEW DELHI, OCT 27

The 12th BRICS Parliamentary Forum has condemned unilateral economic and secondary sanctions contrary to international law, calling for their elimination and warning of their adverse impact on development, health and food security. The forum also expressed concern over escalating tensions in the Middle East and West Asia, called for restraint and diplomacy, and reaffirmed its unwavering support for a peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on a two-state solution.

These positions were set out in the joint declaration adopted at the conclusion of the two-day forum in New Delhi on Tuesday. The participating parliaments underlined the negative consequences of unilateral coercive measures for the right to development and access to healthcare and food security, maintaining that such measures were contrary to international law and should be eliminated.

On the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the declaration reaffirmed the forum's "unwavering support for the peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on the two-state solution", with the two states living side by side in peace and security in accordance with international law and relevant United Nations resolutions. It also asserted the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, freedom and an independent, sovereign state. (IANS/UNI)

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

INDIA Bloc plans CEC impeachment campaign

NEW DELHI, OCT 27

Congress General Secretary, K.C. Venugopal, on Tuesday accused the PM Modi government of blocking the INDIA Bloc's planned protest and public campaign for the removal of Chief Election Commissioner, Gyanesh Kumar, over alleged irregularities in the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls.

He said the Opposition would not give up despite being denied permission to hold the programme at two proposed venues in the national Capital.

"Modi and Amit Shah are so scared. We announced a public impeachment," Venugopal told the media in Delhi.

He said the Opposition first approached the Ashoka Hotel lawn to hold the programme.

The venue initially agreed, but the police subsequently intervened and the hotel denied permission, he alleged.

The Opposition then booked Ramlila Maidan for nine days and permission was initially granted but was later withdrawn, Venugopal said.

He alleged that the decisions were not merely those of the Delhi Police.

Instead, he accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah of trying to protect Gyanesh Kumar.

"This means it is not a Delhi Police decision. Instead, Modi and Shah want to protect their pet Gyanesh," he said. (IANS)

India set to expand exports to China, ASEAN

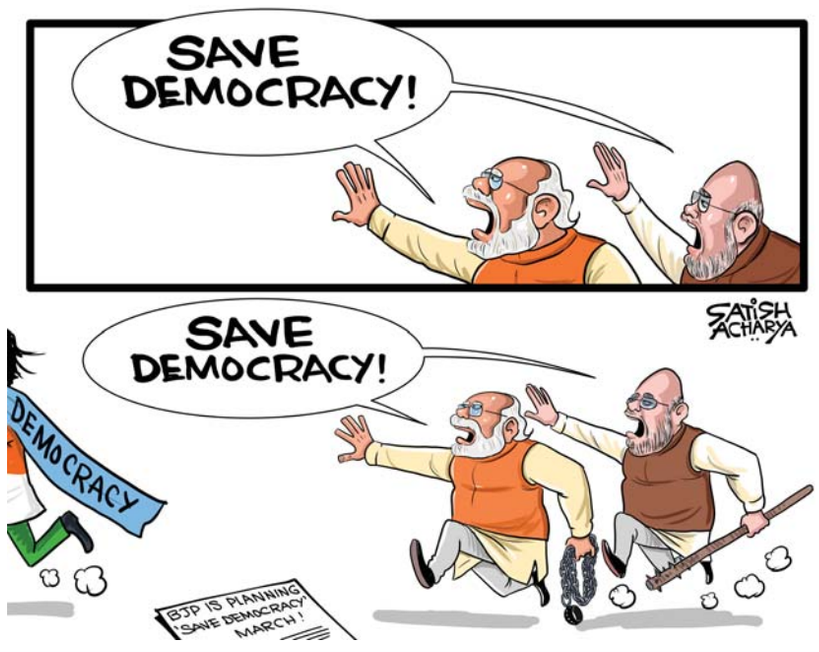
NEW DELHI, OCT 27

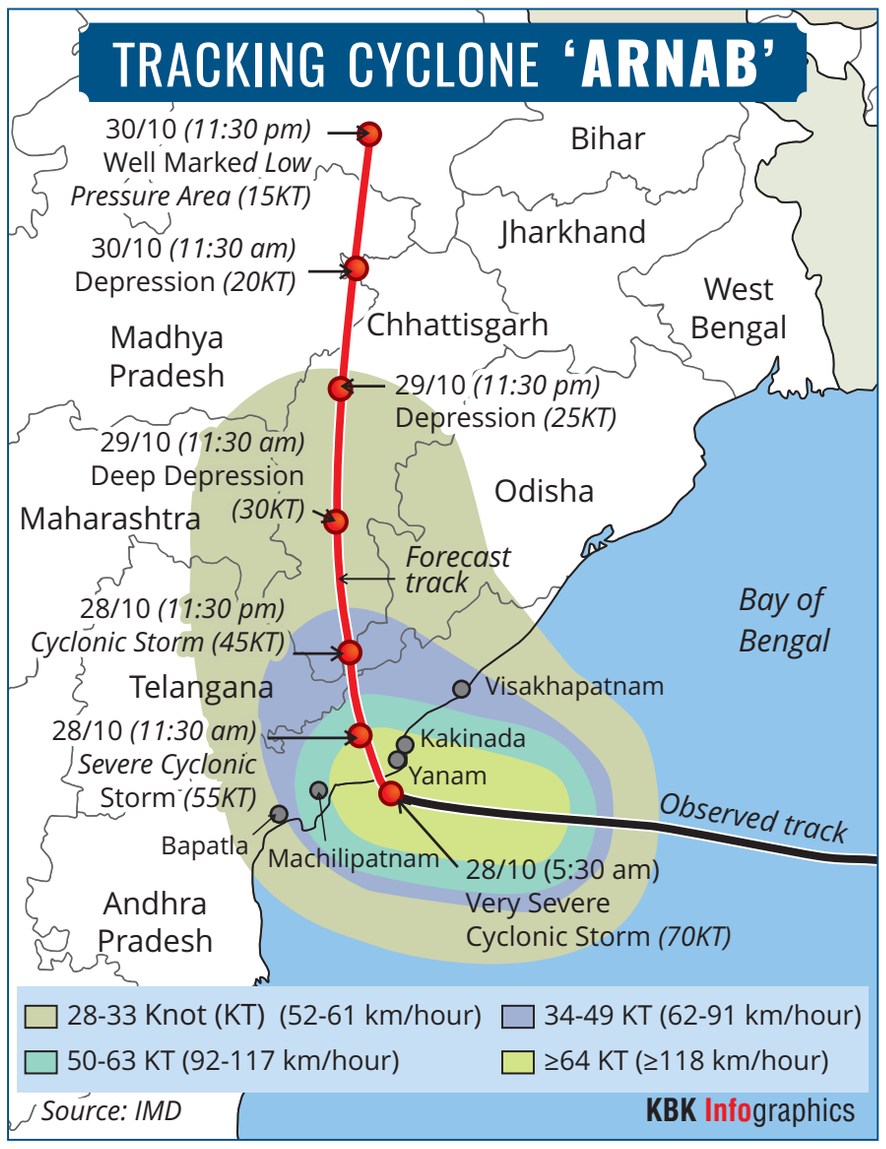
India is willing to allow Chinese suppliers to meet its rising import requirements, provided trade practices remain fair, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Tuesday. He added that the government would use established legal mechanisms to address cases of unfair pricing while seeking to expand India's exports to China and Southeast Asian markets.

Goyal said India supports open and fair trade with all countries. He noted that China supplies several important raw materials and intermediate goods required by Indian industries, making it an important source for meeting domestic demand.

The minister said Indian authorities would take appropriate action through established judicial processes if pricing practices for specific products were found to be unfair. (IANS)

CARTOON CAROUSEL





Minister Ponnam directs officials to expedite BC welfare schemes



TFP I SAUD SIDDIQUI
HYDERABAD, OCT 27

Telangana Transport and BC Welfare Minister Ponnam Prabhakar on Tuesday directed officials to expedite the implementation of BC welfare schemes, improve educational infrastructure and expand employment and self-employment opportunities for Backward Classes.

During a review meeting at the Secretariat, the Minister stressed transparency and efficiency in implementing welfare programmes and instructed officials to expedite Government Orders for the construction of 38 Atma Gaurava Bhavans for BC communities.

Reviewing the Indiramma Intinta Kuttu Machine scheme, he said around 4.80 lakh applications had been received and directed officials to prepare an action plan to distribute sewing machines to 1.90 lakh women on December 9.

Expressing concern over residential school infrastructure, Prabhakar noted that only 26 of the State's 327 BC residential schools had their own buildings, while the remaining 301 were functioning in private premises. He directed officials to expedite land acquisition and take steps to construct permanent buildings for the institutions.

The Minister also called for reforms in BC Study Circles to provide quality coaching for competitive examinations and improve employment prospects. He stressed the need for a special action plan to promote self-employment among BC communities and directed officials to constitute a dedicated committee to develop skill training opportunities for BC widows and single women.

He further instructed officials to take steps to establish modern dhobighats in every Assembly constituency to support the Rajaka community. He emphasised coordinated efforts to ensure welfare schemes effectively reach eligible beneficiaries.

SCR cancels 11 trains due to Cyclone Arnab

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
HYDERABAD, OCT 27

South Central Railway (SCR) has cancelled 11 trains and partially cancelled another train in view of the impending Cyclone Arnab, prioritising passenger safety.

The cancellations apply to trains scheduled to run on October 27 and 28, the SCR said in its bulletin on Tuesday.

The cancelled trains include Secunderabad-Howrah (12704), Secunderabad-Bhubaneswar New (17016), Hyderabad-Visakhapatnam (12728), Mahbubnagar-Visakhapatnam (12862), Secunderabad-Visakhapatnam (12740), Lingampalli-Kakinada Town (12776), Lingampalli-Narasapur (17256), Lingampalli-Kakinada Port (12738), H.S. Nanded-Sambalpur (20810) and Charlapalli-Srikakulam Road (07037), all scheduled for October 27.

The Srikakulam Road-Charlapalli train (07038) scheduled for October 28 has also been cancelled.

Bandi Sanjay announces mega rally in Karimnagar on voter roll issue



MoS for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar addresses BJP parliamentary constituency meeting in Karimnagar.

TFP I PRAMOD KUMAR
KARIMNAGAR, OCT 27

Union Minister of State (MoS) for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar on Tuesday announced that the BJP would organise a mega rally in Karimnagar on November 5 under the slogan "Protect Democracy - End Anarchy" to counter what he described as Opposition attempts to destabilise the Narendra Modi government.

Addressing a BJP parliamentary constituency meeting at Shubhamangala Convention Centre, he alleged that the Congress and other Opposition parties were spreading misinformation over the deletion of 13 crore entries from electoral rolls.

He said the entries included deceased persons, people who had migrated, individuals who could not be traced and duplicate registrations.

Bandi Sanjay also alleged that illegal immigrants, including Rohingyas, had obtained voter registrations in parts of Telangana and accused the Congress and BRS of benefiting from such votes. These claims were made by the minister amid the ongoing political debate over electoral roll verification.

He called upon BJP leaders and workers to mobilise people from all sections of society, including students, youth, professionals and beneficiaries of Central government schemes, for the rally.

He directed party cadres to conduct booth-level meetings, distribute pamphlets and make arrangements for transportation and accommodation.

BJP Telangana president N Ramchander Rao and national-level party representatives are expected to attend the rally, which Bandi Sanjay said would be organised on a large scale to draw nationwide attention to the issue.

Mahabubabad SP inspects Nellikudur Police Station



TFP I MUKESH VEERANTI
MAHABUBABAD, OCT 27

Mahabubabad District Superintendent of Police Dr. Shabarish, IPS, inspected the Nellikudur Police Station and reviewed staff performance, crime prevention measures and the functioning of technical systems.

During the inspection, he sought details from Sub-Inspector Karunakar about police station operations, CCTV camera monitoring and the use of the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS) for online services, case registration and record maintenance.

Dr. Shabarish instructed police personnel to perform their duties responsibly, remain vigilant and be accessible to the public. He stressed regular visits to villages, coordination with residents and close monitoring of local developments to maintain law and order.

The SP directed officers to intensify action against ganja smuggling and consumption, as well as the illegal manufacture and sale of gudumba. He also called for surveillance of suspected offenders and repeat criminals, and instructed staff to conduct cordon-and-search operations wherever necessary.

AIMIM distributes model papers to over 300 students in Mahabubnagar



Charminar MLA Mir Zulfiqar Ali distributes Salar-e-Millat All-in-One Model Paper Series 2026 at HB Palace Function Hall in Mahabubnagar.

TFP I AHAD SIDDIQUI
MAHABUBNAGAR, OCT 27

The All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM), Mahabubnagar district unit, distributed the Salar-e-Millat All-in-One Model Paper Series 2026 to more than 300 students of Government High School, Urdu Medium, at a programme held at HB Palace Function Hall on Tuesday.

Charminar MLA Mir Zulfiqar Ali attended as the chief guest, while Jabir bin Saeed Al Jabri, coordinator-in-charge of the undivided Mahabubnagar district, presided over the meeting. Mir Zulfiqar Ali urged students to study diligently, make effective use of the model papers and secure high marks in their examinations. He said the material had been prepared under the guidance of experienced teachers to improve academic performance.

Jabir bin Saeed Al Jabri highlighted the importance of education and sought support for AIMIM's educational and welfare initiatives. AIMIM secretary and advocate Maqsood bin Ahmed Zakir encouraged students to pursue their academic goals with dedication, while Syed Sadatullah Hussaini, representative corporator and AIMIM town president of Mahabubnagar, wished them success.

The programme concluded with the distribution of model papers to the students as part of AIMIM's efforts to support educational development and examination preparation.

MALKAJGIRI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
O/o the Deputy Director, UBD Wing, Uppal Zone, MMC, E-mail :ddubduppal@gmail.com

Quotation
Quotation Notice: NIT No.01 /UBD/Uppal Zone /2026-27/Quotations, Dt: -10 -2026

Sealed Quotations for the below mentioned items are invited from reputed firms. The quotation will be received on or before 30-10-2026 upto 4.00 P.M. by this office and the same will be opened at 4.30 P.M. Other particulars can be obtained from the UBD Wing, Uppal Zone during the office hours.

S. No	Item	Size / Specification	Qty	Unit
1	Peacock – Full Plumage	Approx. 5 ft tall x 4 ft wide	1	No
2	Flamingo Group (3 birds)	Each bird approx. 3 ft tall	1	Set
3	King Cobra with Tortoise Pair	Cobra approx. 6 ft tall + 2 tortoises	1	Set
4	Giraffe – Landmark Piece	Approx. 8 ft tall	1	No
5	Twin Elephant Welcome Arch	Each elephant approx. 10 ft high	1	No
6	Galloping Horse Pair	Each horse approx. 6 ft	1	Set
7	Dolphin Dancing Fountain (VFD + PLC)	Pool approx. 3 m dia, jet up to 3 m, 3 dolphins	1	No
8	Roaring Lion with Chimpanzee & Lion Cub	Lion approx. 6 ft tall on plinth	1	No
9	Spotted Deer Pair	Each deer approx. 4 ft	1	Set
10	Snail Bench	Child seating bench, snail form	4	Nos
11	Panda Bench	Child seating bench, panda form	4	Nos
12	Bird bath	Each 3 ft tall 2ft wide	2	Nos

CONDITIONS:
TERMS AND CONDITIONS proposed to be included
1. Scope covers supply, fabrication, installation and commissioning of the above items at site.
2. Sizes and quantities are indicative and may vary as per site requirement and final approved drawings.
3. All FRP sculptures shall be fabricated with internal MS armature, gel-coat shell and UV-resistant paint finish. Colours and poses as per approved samples / drawings.
4. Civil works — RCC foundations, fountain pool, waterproofing, tiling/cladding, electrical earthing point and water source at site — are in client's scope unless separately quoted.
5. For the Dolphin Dancing Fountain, power supply, water source and drainage to be provided at site by the client. Fountain control logic programmed and demonstrated at commissioning.
6. Delivery / completion period: 15 days from date of work order, subject to site readiness.
7. Rates will be furnished separately. Work to commence only against a written work order.

Address of concerned officer: O/o the Zonal Commissioner, Uppal Zone, Uppal x roads, MMC, Hyderabad.
Sd/-
DD, UBD, Uppal Zone,
Malkajgiri Municipal Corporation.
DIPR - R.O. No. : 12570-PP/CL/ADVT/2026-27

MALKAJGIRI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION :MALKAJGIRI ZONE

NIT No	Name of the Work	Estimate Amount (Rs in Lakhs)	Bid Submission Start Date & Time / Bid Submission of Closing Date & Time	Name & Address Officer Cell No.
NIT No. 82EE-1 /MKJZ/MMC/ 2026-27	Maintenance Works Others -2	8.50	27-10-2026 11.00AM 28-10-2026 & 11.00 AM	Executive Engineer-I Malkajgiri Zone, MMC

For further details can be sent at e-procurement @http://www.tender.telangana.gov.in
Sd/-
Executive Engineer I
Malkajgiri Zone MMC.
DIPR - R.O. No. : 12545-PP/CL/ADVT/2026-27

Khanapur MLA lays foundation stone for new fire station building



TFP I AMJAD KHAN
NIRMAL, OCT 27

Khanapur MLA Vedma Bojju laid the foundation stone for the construction of a new Fire Station building at the Khanapur mandal headquarters in Nirmal district. The building is being constructed at an estimated cost of Rs. 2 crore.

Speaking on the occasion, Vedma Bojju said the Fire Department plays a vital role in protecting lives and property during fire accidents, natural disasters and other emergencies. He said the establishment of a Fire Station in Khanapur would help ensure a faster response to emergencies and improve public safety services in the region.

The MLA stated that the government was giving priority to the development of essential infrastructure for public safety. He expressed confidence that the new Fire Station would benefit residents of Khanapur and surrounding areas by enabling timely emergency response and strengthening fire safety services.

The programme was attended by Khanapur Municipal Chairperson Ankam Mounika, Atma Committee Chairman Thota Satyam, Municipal Vice-Chairman Soyab, Nirmal District Fire Officer Bhagawan Reddy, and Fire Station Officers.

Local councillors Rajura Satyam, Nimmala Ramesh, Indira, Ashok, Tirumala and Gangadhar also attended the programme. Market Committee Vice-Chairman Majeed, along with several other participated.

Over 400 donate blood at Police Martyrs' Memorial Camp in Vemulawada

TFP I G. RAMESH
RAJANNA SIRCILLA, OCT 27

More than 400 police personnel, youth, public representatives and media professionals voluntarily donated blood at a mega blood donation camp organised by the Rajanna Sircilla District Police as part of Police Martyrs' Memorial Week at Maha Lingeshwar Function Hall in Vemulawada on Tuesday.



Government Whip Aadi Srinivas and District Superintendent of Police Mahesh B. Gite, IPS inaugurated the camp. Addressing the gathering, Aadi Srinivas said blood donation was equivalent to saving lives and urged people, particularly youth, to come forward voluntarily.

The programme was attended by DSPs Srinivasulu, Nagendra Chary and Venkateswarlu; Municipal Chairman Raju; Vice-Chairman Shekhar; Circle Inspectors Veeraprasad, Srinivas, Ravinder, Ravi and Nageswara Rao; Reserve Inspectors Suresh and Ramesh; Red Cross Society Chairman Guduri Ravinder; along with Sub-Inspectors, police personnel, and others.

Ranga Reddy Employees' JAC seeks 24% HRA for employees within 8 km of GHMC

TFP I FAROOQ KHAN
RANGA REDDY, OCT 27

The Ranga Reddy District Employees' Joint Action Committee (JAC) has urged the District Collector and Magistrate to send proposals to the state government seeking financial approval for 24% House Rent Allowance (HRA) for employees working within an 8-km radius of the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC).



JAC Chairman Ootu Yashwanth and Convener Dr. K. Ramarao said the proposal was necessary in view of earlier orders concerning HRA for employees in the specified area. However, subsequent government instructions restricted increases or revisions in HRA, CCA and other allowances without specific government orders.

The JAC leaders appealed to the Collector to take up the matter with the government and secure the necessary financial approval in the interests of employees.

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TG: SIR process completed as 2.64 Cr electors included in draft electoral rolls

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
HYDERABAD, OCT 27

The Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Telangana was carried out in accordance with the prescribed procedures and guidelines, with enumeration forms (EFs) distributed to all electors and subsequently collected after being filled in. The draft electoral rolls were prepared after excluding the names of electors whose enumeration



forms were not received.

Of the total 3,38,26,448 electors in Telangana, 2,64,87,213 have been included in the draft electoral rolls, while 73,39,235 electors have been placed in the Absent, Shifted, Dead and Duplicate (ASDD) category. The ASDD category comprises 57,46,803 electors classified as absent or shifted, 9,22,229 electors recorded in the deceased category and 6,70,203 electors identified as duplicates.

The classification was carried out following house-to-house visits and due enquiries by Booth Level Officers (BLOs), and the names were not excluded unilaterally, according to the details of the revision process. The non-returned enumeration forms related to electors who had died, permanently shifted, were absent or were identified as duplicates.

The authorities also provided an opportunity for electors left out of the draft rolls to submit claims during the prescribed period for claims and objections. In addition, special camps were conducted on October 15 and 16, 2026, to facilitate the inclusion of eligible electors whose names had not appeared in the draft rolls.

The exercise was undertaken with the stated objective of ensuring that every eligible elector is included in the electoral rolls and that no ineligible elector remains on the list. The prescribed procedures, including field verification, enquiry and opportunities for filing claims, were followed during the revision process.

BRS demands withdrawal of 'Telangana Hate Speech Bill'

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
HYDERABAD, OCT 27



Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) has urged the State Legislature's Select Committee to withdraw the Telangana Hate Speech and Hate Crimes (Prevention) Bill, 2026, terming its provisions vague, disproportionate and liable to be misused against the Opposition, media and lawful criticism.

In a memorandum submitted to the Select Committee, BRS Legal Cell in-charge and General Secretary Soma Bharat Kumar said the party supported firm action against genuine incitement to violence and hatred, but argued that the proposed legislation went beyond what was necessary and raised serious constitutional concerns.

The BRS said existing laws, including provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), the Information Technology Act and Supreme Court directions, already provided a legal framework to deal with hate speech. It argued that the primary gap was in enforcement rather than the absence of legislation.

The party particularly objected to provisions making offences cognizable and non-bailable and prescribing punishment of up to seven years for a first offence and 10 years for repeat offences. It claimed that defining a repeat offender merely on the basis of an earlier charge could undermine the presumption of innocence and expose individuals to immediate arrest.

The BRS also questioned terms such as "injury", "disharmony", "enmity" and "ill-will", saying they were undefined and could potentially cover political speeches, satire, investigative journalism and criticism of public institutions. It warned that such provisions could have a chilling effect on the media and political dissent.

The party further opposed the proposed executive powers to order content removal, arguing that take-down decisions should instead be subject to judicial oversight and procedural safeguards.

If the Bill is not withdrawn, the BRS urged the committee to fundamentally redraft it by introducing clear definitions, protecting fair reporting and criticism of governments and political parties, restoring the presumption of innocence and ensuring judicial oversight over content blocking.

It also sought wider public consultation, open hearings and an extension of the memorandum submission period by at least 30 days before the Bill is considered further.

Malkajgiri MP launches Padayatra demanding relocation of Jawahar Nagar dumping yard

TFP I RAVI KUMAR
MEDCHAL-MALKAJGIRI, OCT 27

Malkajgiri MP Eatala Rajender on Tuesday launched a four-day Maha Padayatra demanding the immediate relocation of the Jawahar Nagar dumping yard, highlighting the health and environmental problems faced by residents of surrounding areas.



Malkajgiri MP Eatala Rajender addresses Maha Padayatra at Edulabad village in Ghatkesar Mandal of Medchal-Malkajgiri district.

Rajender began the foot march at Edulabad after offering special prayers at the Ranganatha Swamy Temple. Temple priests welcomed him with a Purna Kumbham, while several BJP leaders participated in the programme.

Speaking to the media, Rajender alleged that polluted water was seeping into borewells and open wells, while foul air from the dumping yard was contributing to respiratory ailments and skin problems. He also referred to reports of kidney diseases and cancer among residents, though these claims were not independently verified.

Rajender said the 60-km padayatra, which began at Edulabad, would culminate in a public meeting at Jawahar Nagar on October 30. BJP MPs, legislators and other party leaders are expected to participate in the campaign.

He criticised the State government for failing to resolve the issue despite earlier legal proceedings and representations, and demanded a comprehensive project report to process waste scientifically, generate electricity and produce organic manure. He also called for modern, pollution-free waste disposal facilities away from densely populated areas.

Warning of a larger agitation if the problem remained unresolved, Rajender said he would continue fighting for the affected residents, particularly fishermen and families dependent on traditional livelihoods.

BJP Telangana State President N Ramchander Rao joined the march and extended his support to the movement. He alleged that the dumping yard had contaminated the air and groundwater, causing serious health problems among local residents, including children.

He accused the State government of neglecting the hardships faced by people in the surrounding areas and asserted that the BJP would continue its agitation until the dumping yard was permanently relocated.

The four-day padayatra, scheduled from October 27 to 30, will cover several localities, including Marripalligudem, NFC Nagar, Annojiguda, Ghatkesar, Yamnampet, Rampally, Keesara, Chiryala, Nagaram and Dammaiguda, before culminating at Jawahar Nagar.

Guv to lead anti-drug rally today

HYDERABAD, OCT 27

Telangana Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla will lead a massive anti-drug awareness rally at Osmania University on Wednesday as part of the Nasha Mukt Bharat campaign to sensitise students and youth to the harmful effects of substance abuse.

The programme, organised by the Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS), Telangana State Branch, will begin at 1100 hours at Tagore Auditorium. (UNI)

US firm AssetMark opens GCC in Hyderabad

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
HYDERABAD, OCT 27

US-based wealth management platform AssetMark on Tuesday announced opening of its Global Capability Centre (GCC) in Hyderabad, with a capacity to accommodate around 500 employees, to strengthen its global technology and business operations.

The centre, named AssetMark Global Wealth, marks the next phase of the company's operations in India after nearly a decade of working through an outsourcing model, the company said in a release.

The new facility will bring a dedicated team in-house to support its global operations and expand its technology and engineering capabilities.

The centre will work closely with teams in the United States on technology, engineering, operations and product management initiatives.

Lou Maiuri, Chairman and Group Chief Executive Officer of AssetMark, said Hyderabad's technology and financial services ecosystem made it a suitable location for expanding the company's global capabilities.

Carrie Hansen, Chief Operating Officer of AssetMark, said bringing operations and technology teams together would improve collaboration, accelerate innovation and strengthen services for financial advisors and their clients.

Hanumantha Rao prays for good rains and farmers' prosperity

TFP I CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, OCT 27

The second day of the three-day Sri Vanadurga Maha Rudra Yagam and Varuna Yagam was held with religious fervour at Sri Mahankali Ammavari Temple in Amberpet, Hyderabad, under the leadership of Telangana Government Advisor V. Hanumantha Rao.



The rituals were organised to pray for timely and abundant rainfall across Telangana, full reservoirs and the prosperity and well-being of farmers and the public.

Speaking on the occasion, Hanumantha Rao expressed concern over the difficulties faced by farmers and people due to inadequate and delayed rainfall. He said prayers were being offered to Lord Varuna for sufficient rain, replenishment of lakes, ponds and reservoirs, and a good harvest in the coming days.

He expressed hope that the three-day rituals would bring prosperity to the state and happiness, good health and well-being to the people. He also appealed to devotees to attend the concluding day of the yagam on October 28 in large numbers and participate in the Purnahuti ceremony to seek the blessings of the Goddess.



Techie dies by suicide by jumping into lake

TFP I RAOOF KHAN
HYDERABAD, OCT 27

A techie allegedly died by suicide by jumping into Durgam Cheruvu Lake in the Madhapur area of the IT hub of Cyberabad.

Rajesh (25) jumped into the lake from the Cable Bridge in the HITEC City.

Hailing from Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh, Rajesh was working at a software company in Hyderabad

Rajesh, who was staying at a hostel in Nacharam, had come to Ayappa Society in Madhapur on Monday to meet a friend. He later went to Cable Bridge and allegedly jumped into the lake.

On a complaint by Rajesh's sister, Madhapur police registered a case and took up the investigation.

Teams of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) were searching for Rajesh's body in the lake.

3 apprehended in sexual assault case

TFP I TAHER ALI
HYDERABAD, OCT 27

Kanchanbagh police have apprehended three persons in connection with a case involving alleged repeated sexual assaults, wrongful confinement and criminal intimidation of an 18-year-old woman.

According to police, a case was registered under Sections 64(2)(m), 127(4) and 351 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), based on a complaint lodged by the woman on October 26.

As per the complaint, the woman came to Hyderabad in May 2026 with Mohammed Fayaz, who later brought three associates - Ahmad Mujeeb, Noor Kamal and Zia-ur-Rehman alias Ibrahim. They sexually assaulted her on different occasions.

Police said Noor Kamal, Ahmad Mujeeb and Zia-ur-Rehman alias Ibrahim had been apprehended and would be produced before a magistrate for judicial remand. Mohammed Fayaz is also named as an accused in the case.

TG govt invites 550-plus global companies for Investment Summit in Dec

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
HYDERABAD, OCT 27

The Telangana government is inviting more than 550 leading domestic and international companies to participate in the Invest Telangana - Global Summit 2026, scheduled to be held at Hyderabad Future City from December 7 to 9.



Chief Secretary Sanjay Jaju announced this during a review meeting with senior officials at the Secretariat on Tuesday.

He said the summit aimed to position Telangana as a leading global investment destination, attract major investments, accelerate industrial development and generate employment opportunities for youth.

The curtain-raiser programme will be held in New Delhi on October 29 in the presence of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, with ambassadors, industrialists and representatives of leading companies invited. Roadshows have already been conducted in Chennai, Bengaluru and Hyderabad, while more than 1,500 companies and organisations are being invited to the main summit.

Special emphasis will be placed on the defence and aerospace sectors, with around 100 companies and organisations being invited to participate in the Raksha Expo organised alongside the summit.

Reviewing preparations at Future City, the Chief Secretary said the venue was being divided into 25 sectors to accommodate plenary sessions, seminars, exhibitions, discussions and agreement-signing ceremonies. Cultural programmes showcasing Telangana's heritage will also be organised.

He directed all departments and committees to coordinate closely and ensure comprehensive arrangements for delegates, including transport, accommodation and meeting facilities. Senior officers will be designated as nodal officers to assist delegates and ensure the smooth conduct of the three-day summit.

CJI pulls up lawyer seeking listing of disproportionate assets case against Rahul

NEW DELHI, OCT 27

Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant on Tuesday reprimanded a lawyer seeking an urgent listing of a disproportionate assets case against Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, questioning whether the move was intended to generate media attention.



"There is no head, no tail to this mentioning," the CJI remarked, taking exception to the grounds cited by the lawyer for seeking an early hearing in the matter.

The lawyer sought the listing of the matter, contending that Rahul Gandhi had recently claimed at an event that he was in touch with 200 officials of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

Responding to the submission, CJI Kant asked the lawyer, "Have you spoken to any news channel for this?"

Following the exchange, the CJI orally instructed the court staff to discontinue live streaming of the mentioning proceedings henceforth.

The remarks came in the backdrop of the Supreme Court's earlier order staying proceedings before the Allahabad High Court in the disproportionate assets case and restraining the CBI and the ED from submitting any report before the High Court.

The case arises from a complaint filed by Karnataka-based BJP worker S. Vignesh Shishir, who alleged that Rahul Gandhi possessed assets disproportionate to his known sources of income.

In August, the Supreme Court had asked the Allahabad High Court to defer proceedings in the matter and also restrained the central agencies from submitting any report to it.

The top court also said that if any agency has knowledge of any disproportionate assets belonging to any individual, it can proceed on its own, and the same does not require court orders. (IANS)

BRICS Parliamentary Forum condemns unilateral sanctions

FROM PAGE 1

Expressing concern over rising tensions across the Middle East and West Asia, the parliamentary leaders urged all parties to exercise maximum restraint and avoid actions that could further aggravate the situation. They stressed the need to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure, respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states, and pursue dialogue and diplomacy to secure lasting peace. The declaration also highlighted the importance of regional stability for international trade, supply chains and energy flows.

The participating parliaments strongly condemned violations of international humanitarian law, including deliberate attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, the denial or obstruction of humanitarian access and attacks on humanitarian personnel. They emphasised the need to ensure accountability for such violations. (IANS)

INDIA Bloc gears up for Nov 1 rally at Ramlila Maidan against SIR, CEC

NEW DELHI, OCT 27

Preparations are underway for the INDIA Bloc's proposed protest rally at Ramlila Maidan on November 1 against alleged 'vote theft', the purported irregularities in the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls and Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar.



Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, is scheduled to visit the venue on Monday to review arrangements, including security, the stage and other preparations for the rally.

AICC General Secretary K.C. Venugopal also visited Ramlila Maidan ahead of the proposed rally, while Delhi Congress President Devender Yadav reviewed the preparations.

Speaking to IANS, Yadav said the INDIA Bloc was expecting a massive turnout, with nearly 10 lakh people likely to participate from across the country.

"We are all very happy that a mega rally of the INDIA Alliance is going to be held here at Ramlila Ground on November 1. Although many rallies have taken place at Ramlila Ground in the past, I expect this to be a historic rally where nearly 1 million people from across the country will participate," he said.

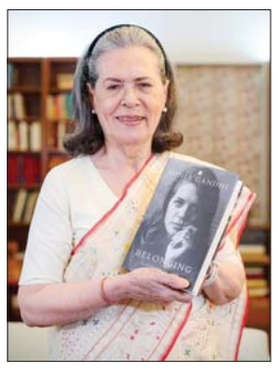
Yadav said the Congress would continue its demand to keep Jantar Mantar open for protests but added that Ramlila Maidan was a more suitable venue given the expected crowd.

He said the venue's location, with major roads, a railway station and Rajghat nearby, made it convenient for people travelling from different parts of the country. (IANS)

Sonia Gandhi predicts 'tamasha' after Nov 10 release of her memoir

NEW DELHI, OCT 27

Congress Parliamentary Party (CPP) Chairperson on Tuesday predicted political 'tamasha' after her memoir 'Belonging' is released worldwide on November 10. In a message on X, Sonia Gandhi wrote, "There's bound to be some tamasha when this book comes out. After all, others have spent decades telling my 'story', now it's my turn."



Sonia Gandhi

The social media post was accompanied by a short video showing Sonia Gandhi sharing the reasons why she decided to share her story, "After a lifetime of being written about".

The video clip's captions also mentioned that when her husband Rajiv Gandhi was asked to become the Prime Minister, she was "totally against" it.

Earlier on October 22, Sonia Gandhi made her social media debut by joining Instagram and sharing a post on her upcoming book 'Belonging: A Journey of Love'.

"Hello everyone, I'm truly grateful to share this moment with you all: The first look of 'Belonging: A Journey of Love'. It is a story of love, duty, loss, and finding a place to belong. I look forward to sharing it with you," Sonia Gandhi wrote on her first Instagram post, sharing the first look of her memoir.

In the video shared on Instagram, Sonia Gandhi is seen receiving the first copies of her book and sharing sweets with her daughter and Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra. The two were also seen hugging.

The CPP Chairperson did not have a social media account until now. She now has over 10,700 followers and follows her children, Rahul and Priyanka Gandhi, as well as the Indian National Congress. (IANS/UNI)

Jan Suraaj digital manager found dead in Ranchi

RANCHI, OCT 27

Devpalik Gupta, a 21-year-old digital communication manager for Prashant Kishor's Jan Suraaj Party, who went missing from a train from Ranchi to Patna, was found dead under suspicious circumstances.



According to Jan Suraaj, Devpalik went missing from a train while travelling from Ranchi to Patna on Monday. He was found dead on Tuesday afternoon in a forested area near Muri Junction in Ranchi.

Kumar Saurabh Singh, a national spokesperson for Jan Suraaj, confirmed that his body has been discovered and stated that the police are investigating the matter. However, it remains to be seen whether this was an accident or a criminal act.

Originally from Kushinagar in Uttar Pradesh and an alumnus of the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) in Delhi, Devpalik Gupta held a key role in managing digital media for the Jan Suraaj party.

According to his family and colleagues, he was travelling to Patna on Monday aboard the Ranchi-Patna Jan Shatabdi Express (Train No. 12366), occupying seat 50 in coach C-2, accompanied by two associates.

When his companions began searching for him after some time, they found his mobile phone switched off. A search was conducted throughout the train and at Muri station, with the assistance of the Train Ticket Examiner (TTE) and Railway Protection Force (RPF) personnel, but no trace of him was found. (IANS)

J&K CM Omar Abdullah inducts 4 new ministers, drops Satish

SRINAGAR, OCT 27

In the first cabinet expansion by J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, four National Conference (NC) legislators - Ali Mohammad Sagar, Mir Saifullah, Shamima Firdous and Altaf Ahmad Wani, also known as Kaloo- were sworn in as ministers on Tuesday

All four are from the Kashmir Valley.



The Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, administered the oath of office and secrecy to the newly inducted Ministers of the Jammu & Kashmir Council of Ministers at a swearing-in ceremony held at Lok Bhavan on Tuesday. The Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah, was also present on the occasion.

The ceremony was attended by Speaker, J&K Legislative Assembly Abdul Rahim Rather, JKNC President, Farooq Abdullah, Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary, Ministers Sakeena Masood Itoo, Javed Ahmed Rana, and Javid Ahmad Dar, Member of Parliament Gurvinder Singh Oberoi, along with several dignitaries and senior officials.

The newly inducted ministers include veteran politician Ali Mohammad Sagar, MLA from Khanyar in Srinagar; Mir Saifullah, MLA from Trehgam; Altaf Ahmad Kaloo, MLA from Pahalgam; and Shamima Firdous, MLA from Habbakadal in Srinagar. Sagar and Saifullah had previously served as ministers in Omar Abdullah's government from 2008 to 2014.

With these four inductions and the dropping of Satish Sharma, the Council of Ministers now has nine members, including the Chief Minister, which is the maximum permissible limit.

Omar Abdullah dropped independent legislator Satish Sharma from his council of ministers, leaving mainland Jammu without representation in the Cabinet. Sharma held the portfolios of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs; Transport; Science and Technology; Information Technology; Youth Services and Sports; and ARI and Trainings. (IANS)

MP govt transfer 5 IAS officers

BHOPAL, OCTOBER 27

The Madhya Pradesh government has ordered temporary postings of five senior officers on a stop-gap basis until further orders.

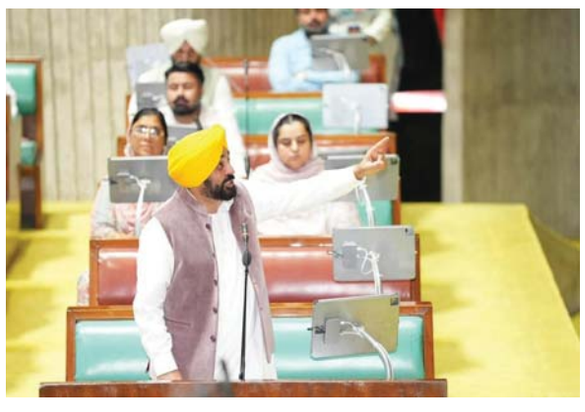
The General Administration Department issued the directive on 27 October 2026, transferring the officers to new responsibilities across the state.

According to the order, Pratibha Pal (2012 batch), currently serving as Collector of Sagar district, has been posted as Managing Director of the Madhya Pradesh State Tourism Development Corporation in Bhopal. The posting is against the cadre post of Additional Secretary in the state government. (IANS/UNI)

Punjab BJP slams AAP, Congress ruckus in Assembly on last day

CHANDIGARH, OCT 27

Punjab BJP President Kewal Singh Dhillon slammed the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the Congress for engaging in political bickering and creating a ruckus on the final day of the five-day Assembly session instead of focusing on the pressing issues facing Punjab.



Dhillon said that on the concluding day of the session, both parties chose to engage in mudslinging against each other instead of addressing Punjab's pressing issues, describing their conduct as highly condemnable.

He said that the dignity and decorum of the legislative Assembly were also disregarded.

"Crores of rupees are spent on each Assembly session, funded by the taxpayers of Punjab. However, instead of raising serious public issues, both parties wasted this valuable time in mutual bickering," the state BJP chief said in a statement.

He said that Punjab is currently grappling with the drug menace, deteriorating law and order, gangsterism, rising debt, and a worsening financial situation. However, no meaningful discussion on these serious issues took place during the entire five-day session.

Dhillon alleged that the Aam Aadmi Party government was evading discussion on these crucial issues because it had no answers to the questions being raised by the people.

He asserted that the people of Punjab would not allow the government to continue evading accountability.

He said the government will be held accountable for every betrayal of Punjab. The BJP will continue to raise these issues on every platform, serving as the voice of the people of Punjab.

Meanwhile, Dhillon slammed the government over the deteriorating law and order situation, describing it as a failure on every front. (IANS/UNI)

Naidu govt. resorting undemocratic tactics to win local body polls: Jagan

KADAPA, OCT 27

Former Chief Minister and YSRCP President YS Jagan Mohan Reddy on Tuesday lambasted the Naidu government, accusing it of unfair conduct in the civic elections by resorting to undemocratic tactics.



YS Jagan Mohan Reddy

Addressing party cadre in his home constituency Pulivendula, Jagan alleged that the nomination process itself witnessed irregulatiries and intimidation to prevent opposition candidates from filign their papers. "Unable to face the YSRCP, Chandrababu Naidu is using power to manipulate elections, while sections of the media are supporting the ruling party," he claimed.

The former Chief Minister charged that YSRCP women candidates were stopped at checkposts and on roads, attacked by TDP goons and subjected to saree-pulling, preventing them from filing their nomination papers.

"In Pulivendula town, nominations could be filed in only 20 of 40 wards. Of seven ZPTC seats, contests were allowed in only four. Nomination papers were snatched and torn, while others were rejected during scrutiny. On October 17, candidates were stopped in the morning and again in the afternoon. The YSRCP asked police to transport the candidates and facilitate nominations, but police refused," he alleged.

"The police fired 37 rounds, injuring two persons in the legs. Twenty stun shells, 40 smoke shells and seven hand grenades were used. Was filing a nomination a crime? Attempt-to-murder cases were registered against 924 people in Pulivendula after police fired on YSRCP workers," Jagan claimed.

Even after Supreme Court directions, the situation has not changed as the SEC, Collectors or SPs are working on the directions of Naidu, he said. "Our nomination papers were torn in the presence of police and officials. Our rights were snatched away. If tomorrow the same happens to our property documents, what will be the situation?" People are left to fend for themselves and protect their rights and Democracy, he added. (IANS)

PM Modi and Liechtenstein's Prince discuss deepening cooperation across sectors

NEW DELHI, OCT 27

Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a meeting with Liechtenstein's Prince Alois and Princess Sophie at the Hyderabad House in New Delhi on Tuesday, discussing ways to further deepen cooperation in trade, innovation, science and technology, skill development and people-to-people ties.

During the meeting, the two sides reaffirmed their commitment to working together to reform and strengthen multilateral institutions, including the United Nations. They welcomed the positive momentum generated by the India-European Free Trade Association (EFTA) Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) and reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen bilateral partnership.



PM Narendra Modi meets the Hereditary Prince Alois of Liechtenstein at Hyderabad House, in New Delhi.

"PM Narendra Modi held extensive discussions with H.S.H. Hereditary Prince Alois of Liechtenstein and H.R.H. Hereditary Princess Sophie at Hyderabad House today. The leaders reviewed the entire spectrum of India–Liechtenstein relations and discussed ways to further deepen cooperation in trade and investment, innovation, science and technology, skill development and people-to-people ties," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) wrote on X. (IANS)

Vande Mataram Row: SC seeks centre's reply

PARMOD KUMAR
NEW DELHI, OCT. 27

The Supreme Court on Tuesday sought the Central government's response on two petitions challenging the union Home Ministry's January 28 and July 9, 2026 orders requiring all six stanzas of Vande Mataram to be sung at formal State functions, with the petitioners seeking quashing of the orders on the ground that they depart from the long-standing practice of using the two-stanza version of the national song.



A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant, Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana issued notice on petitions filed by Nagpur-based Buddhist and civil rights activist B D Borkar and former IAS officer Balakrishnan Sathyabhama Mavoji.

Borkar has contended that the two orders replace a 79-year-old practice of singing the standalone two-stanza version of Vande Mataram with the full six-stanza version, which, according to his plea, contains religious and anti-Muslim references. He has described the two government orders as "Islamophobic".

His petition states that the two-stanza version, written before Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's novel Anandamath, is a tribute to the natural landscape and does not invoke any deity or sectarian conflict. It alleges that the later stanzas incorporated in Anandamath invoke Hindu goddesses and are embedded in a narrative directed against Muslims.

Mavoji, who heads the Anupathika Prathinidhya Prakshobha Samithi, has challenged the compulsory singing or playing of all six stanzas as violative of freedom of religion and conscience and contrary to the constitutional values of secularism and fraternity.

He has submitted that he belongs to a Scheduled Caste Hindu community which, according to the plea, rejects Vaishnavite, Saktheya and other sectarian theistic practices. Mavoji contends that such religious elements underpin Anandamath and the later stanzas of Vande Mataram, which he has characterised as a "religious war song".

His plea also maintains that there was no express constitutional or statutory decision declaring the full six-stanza version as the national song and that the two-stanza version came to be recognised through long-standing practice. (IANS)

JPSC EXAM SCAM

Ranchi court clears way for trial of 12 accused

RANCHI, OCT 27

A special court in Ranchi on Tuesday cleared the way for the trial of 12 accused, including former JPSC Chairman L. Khiangte and former Deputy Examination Controller Shweta Kumari Gupta, in a high profile Jharkhand Public Service Commission (JPSC) exam scam.

The court took cognisance of a 97-page charge sheet filed by the CID after the state government granted the prosecution sanction to go ahead.



The next hearing has been fixed on November 10.

The other accused include Ramveer Singh, Director of private examination agency TDPL; its Marketing Manager and alleged mastermind Abhay Kumar Tiwari; agency employees Mohammed Usman and Mohammed Ebad; and Hemant Kumar Verma, Pradeep Kumar Singh, Sanjay Kumar, Suman Saurabh and Arvind Kumar. (IANS)

524 arrested in Assam child marriage drive

GUWAHATI, OCT 27

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Tuesday said 524 people had been arrested and 441 cases registered under the ongoing crackdown on child marriage in the state, asserting that the government would not spare anyone involved in the illegal practice.

In a post on social media platform X, Sarma shared an update on the ongoing enforcement drive, stating that the figures were recorded as of 5 p.m. on Tuesday. "We will not spare anyone involved in this heinous crime and ensure that Assam is free from Child Marriage," the Chief Minister said.

The latest update comes amid the state government's renewed efforts to curb child marriage through police action and legal proceedings against those allegedly involved in facilitating or solemnising such marriages.

Sarma also shared a post highlighting that the crackdown had begun earlier than some people expected. Referring to speculation that the next phase of the operation would start in November, he indicated that enforcement action was already underway. (IANS/UNI)

SC rejects Asaram's plea for parole extension

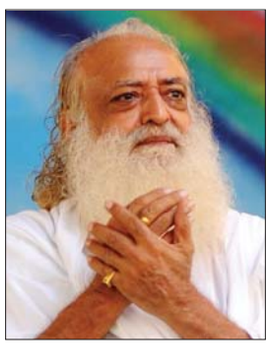
JAIPUR, OCT 27

The Supreme Court has rejected Asaram's plea seeking an extension of his medical parole, directing him to surrender upon the expiry of the existing period. He must surrender by 5 p.m. on Tuesday.

Asaram is serving a life sentence in a 2013 rape case involving a minor in Rajasthan. He was convicted by a POCSO court in Jodhpur and sentenced to life imprisonment for raping a teen girl in his ashram. He is serving a life sentence in Central Jail, Jodhpur.

The Rajasthan High Court had granted him 20 days of parole on October 6, which now expires.

His counsel approached the Supreme Court, seeking an extension on medical grounds. According to the plea, Asaram is undergoing treatment at the Government Dhanwantari Ayurvedic Hospital in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh.



Asaram

His counsel argued that his treatment was continuing and requested additional time on medical grounds.

The Supreme Court declined to extend the parole period. However, it directed the Rajasthan government to ensure that Asaram's medical needs were adequately addressed.

The Supreme Court rejected Asaram's plea seeking an extension of his medical parole, directing him to surrender by 5 p.m. on Tuesday as his parole has already expired.

Significantly, the Supreme Court will hear his appeal against conviction on November 6 after parole ends on October 27.

The Supreme Court has directed its Registry to summon the trial court records, in both physical and digital form, in the appeal filed by Asaram against his conviction for sexually assaulting the minor devotee in Jodhpur in 2013. The Court listed the matter for further hearing on November 6 at 2 p.m.

Earlier, the Gujarat High Court had rejected an interim bail plea of the self-styled godman, who had sought 20 days of temporary release on humanitarian grounds to meet his 83-year-old wife, who is undergoing treatment at a hospital. However, the court allowed him to seek permission to speak to her through video conferencing.

Asaram was convicted by a trial court in Gujarat for raping a woman disciple on several occasions at his Surat ashram in 2013. (IANS)

India-Indonesia exercise Garuda Shakti



NEW DELHI, OCT 27

The 11th edition of the India-Indonesia Joint Special Forces Exercise, Garuda Shakti, commenced at Banyuwangi in Indonesia on Tuesday, with troops from the Indian Army's Parachute Regiment (Special Forces) and Indonesian Special Forces participating in the joint training exercise.

The exercise, being conducted from October 27 to November 6, aims to enhance mutual understanding, cooperation and operational interoperability between the Special Forces of the two countries.

The training programme focuses on special operations in jungle terrain, with troops undertaking exercises involving obstacle crossing, combat marksmanship, mountaineering, air assault and combat-hardening drills.

The contingents will also exchange expertise and information on weapons, equipment and operational procedures.

The joint training will culminate in a validation exercise involving simulated operational scenarios to assess the endurance, coordination and combat readiness of both contingents. (IANS/UNI)

Actor Imran Khan gets major relief as Bombay HC stays 'Leave India' notice

MUMBAI, OCT 27

Bollywood actor Imran Khan secured interim relief from the Bombay High Court on Tuesday as the court stayed the implementation of a 'Leave India' notice issued against him by the Centre.

A division bench of the High Court, hearing Khan's petition challenging the notice, directed that no coercive action be taken against him until the next hearing.

The court also stayed the operation of the impugned notice, which had required the actor to leave India by October 28.



Imran Khan

During the hearing, the Additional Solicitor General (ASG), appearing for the Centre, sought time and requested that the matter be adjourned until next week.

The ASG also gave a verbal assurance to the court that no punitive action would be initiated against Khan in the meantime.

Taking note of the submissions, the court scheduled the next hearing for November 2 at 3 p.m. and granted interim protection to the actor by keeping the notice in abeyance until then.

The controversy stems from a notice issued to Khan following his participation in a protest demanding the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar. Authorities alleged that Khan violated provisions of the Foreigners Act by taking part in a political demonstration despite not being an Indian citizen.

Khan, however, challenged the action before the High Court, arguing that the order was arbitrary and violated principles of natural justice. In his petition, he contended that he was given only 14 days to leave the country without any prior inquiry, show-cause notice, or opportunity to present his case.

The petition further stated that the protest was held at a location that was not designated as a restricted area and that Khan had not breached any barricades or violated any law during the demonstration. (IANS/UNI)

CYCLONE 'ARNAB'

Several flights from Vizag, Vijayawada cancelled

VISAKHAPATNAM, OCT 27

Very severe cyclonic storm 'Arnab' in the Bay of Bengal has disrupted air services in Andhra Pradesh, with airlines cancelling several flights at Alluri Sitarama Raju International Airport at Bhogapuram near Visakhapatnam and Vijayawada International Airport on Tuesday.

With heavy rains accompanied by gusty winds lashing the coastal region under the impact of the cyclone on Tuesday, various airlines have cancelled their services as a precautionary measure.

Sixteen flights scheduled to depart from Bhogapuram on Tuesday have been cancelled. Services to destinations like Delhi, Hyderabad, Kurnool, Tirupati, Bengaluru, Kolkata and Chennai were cancelled. Five flights from Gannavaram Airport in Vijayawada were also cancelled in view of the cyclone. Airlines have cancelled Chennai, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Kadapa and Bhogapuram flights. With the cyclone set to cross the coast on Wednesday, more flights are likely to be cancelled. Authorities had already issued an advisory that, in view of the approaching cyclonic weather, heavy rainfall and strong winds may affect flight schedules and travel to and from Alluri Sitarama Raju International Airport. (IANS)

Govt issues notification for first set of GST changes to kick in on Nov 1

NEW DELHI, OCT 27

The new Goods and Services Tax (GST) reforms for post-sale discounts and speeding up provisional refunds for businesses facing inverted duty structures will come into effect from November 1, 2026, as the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) has issued the required notifications dated Oct 26.



Simplified rules and credit note provisions that come into effect from next month will make it easier for distributors and retailers to manage discounts.

Businesses facing an inverted duty structure (where GST on inputs is higher than GST on outputs) can claim 90 per cent provisional refunds upfront, subject to risk checks.

In a major relief for small exporters, the previous minimum limit of 1,000 for tax-paid export refunds is removed, allowing small courier and postal exporters to claim refunds without a minimum threshold.

As far as intermediary services are concerned, the "place of supply" for services provided through intermediaries shifts to the location of the service recipient rather than the intermediary, giving Indian service exporters better clarity.

The next set of changes, which involve major structural and procedural reforms requiring formal legislative amendments to the GST laws, are targeted for implementation on April 1, 2027.

The decisions stem from the 57th GST Council meeting held on October 8, 2026, in New Delhi under the chairmanship of Union Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. The meeting concentrated on process and structural reforms to cut taxpayer compliance burden, smooth the flow of input tax credit (ITC), and speed up refunds.

The rollout of these GST reforms will happen in stages based on the system upgrades needed, a senior official said. (IANS)

THE FREEDOM PRESS

WEDNESDAY 28 OCTOBER 2026

Competing AI governance models

The global debate on artificial intelligence (AI) governance is increasingly shaped by competing approaches from the United States and China. At their September 2026 meeting in Washington, US President Donald Trump rejected attempts to establish a "globalist" framework for governing AI, while Chinese President Xi Jinping called for cooperation to prevent misuse and keep the technology under human control. The two sides also established a USA-China AI dialogue track centred on an incident hotline, highlighting the need for crisis communication despite their differences.

China has pursued a parallel institutional approach through the World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organisation (WAICO), whose founding agreement was signed by 35 states on July 16, 2026. Headquartered in China, the organisation promotes AI cooperation without political or value-based conditions, with an emphasis on narrowing the technological gap between developed and developing countries. Its membership includes most BRICS countries except India and overlaps substantially with partners in China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and Digital Silk Road (DSR), raising questions about the relationship between technological dependence and support for Beijing's governance model.

China has consistently advocated human-centred AI, ethical safeguards and multilateral cooperation in international forums, including the UN General Assembly's First Committee, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons' discussions on lethal autonomous weapons systems and the Responsible AI in the Military Domain (REAIM) process. Its 2023 Global AI Governance Initiative and 2025 Global AI Governance Action Plan emphasised state sovereignty and the central role of the United Nations. However, China's proposals have generally avoided specific limits on military applications and intrusive verification mechanisms. Neither China nor the US signed the final declaration at the 2026 REAIM Summit in Spain, illustrating the difficulty of translating broad principles into concrete commitments.

WAICO seeks to extend China's influence through development partnerships and institutional cooperation. Xi described its establishment as a milestone in AI development and pledged 5,000 training places for developing countries, alongside proposed cooperation centres with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the African Union and BRICS. Analysts view the organisation as a potential counterweight to the US-led Pax Silica initiative, which focuses on securing AI supply chains among a narrower group of partners. However, WAICO's long-term effectiveness remains uncertain because questions concerning funding, decision-making and enforcement mechanisms remain unresolved.

Military AI represents a significant gap in the emerging governance architecture. Autonomous drone swarms, AI-assisted targeting and algorithmic logistics are becoming increasingly relevant to modern warfare, yet WAICO largely leaves military applications outside its agenda. China's civilian technology partnerships also have potential dual-use implications. Pakistan, a WAICO founding member and major DSR partner, has acquired Chinese satellite capabilities that analysts say could support military data fusion and network-centric operations. Chinese smart-surveillance and safe-city systems have also spread across African countries, including Nigeria, Zambia, Kenya and Egypt, demonstrating how civilian infrastructure can have wider security applications.

China is also advancing AI integration within its armed forces through its intelligentised warfare doctrine and military-civil fusion strategy. Reports indicate that the People's Liberation Army is testing DeepSeek-based systems for planning and decision support, while defence conglomerate Norinco has displayed an AI-enabled combat-support vehicle. These developments suggest that military deployment is progressing alongside, rather than waiting for, international governance arrangements. The principal high-level US-China commitment on military AI remains their 2024 pledge to maintain human control over decisions involving nuclear weapons. The extent to which either country will support broader, enforceable restrictions remains an open question.

The emerging AI order therefore comprises competing governance models. The US combines domestic regulation with initiatives such as Pax Silica, while China promotes an inclusive framework emphasising sovereignty, development and flexibility. UN-led initiatives, including the Independent International Scientific Panel on AI and the Global Dialogue on AI Governance, offer broader participation but lack binding enforcement powers. Carnegie analyst Scott Singer has argued that practical cooperation may be more achievable through technical channels insulated from wider geopolitical tensions than through ambitious political agreements. The challenge is to ensure that widely supported principles translate into meaningful safeguards and accountability.

Middle power myths, and why the West needs to stop putting India in a 'Box'

KANWAL SIBAL



Canada has faced insults and contempt from US President Donald Trump as well as economic pressure. This has goaded Prime Minister Mark Carney to widen his country's geopolitical and economic options. At the Davis Economic Forum, he spoke of "middle powers" joining together to carve out a more autonomous role for themselves at the international level.

This has triggered discussions on many platforms on the international role of "middle powers" in the light of huge geopolitical, economic, technology and security disruptions caused by the Trump administration.

There is no agreed definition of the attributes of "middle powers". It would seem that major European countries, such as the UK, Germany and France, are now seen as "middle powers". Former UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak in a panel discussion at the recent Munich Security Conference in Delhi on "middle powers" was comfortable with the idea of the UK being a "middle power". Japan, Brazil, Turkey and Indonesia are also classified as such in the current discourse.

The genesis of this "middle powers" concept is essentially the disarray in the western world because of the manner in which the Trump administration is bullying Europe and its other allies. Trump has discomposed the NATO alliance at a time when the alliance is deeply involved in a proxy war against Russia in Ukraine. Trump, Vance and others are openly interfering in the internal political affairs of Europe, attacking personally some European leaders, supporting right wing parties, lambasting European policies on uncontrolled migration to the point of wondering whether the European allies can remain dependable when political power slips eventually into the hands of Muslim migrants.

With Trump's hectoring of Europe and a growing recognition that Europe faces a structural change in its relations with the US, Europe sees the necessity of re-ordering its ties with the non-western world. Drawing closer to India is an option, which explains the FTA with India as well as an intensive engagement of India by major European countries. This, of course, is in India's interests too as the Trump administration has delivered serious blows to bilateral ties on a number of issues. Once again the issue of trust has arisen in India-US ties, which in the last couple of decades had begun to dissipate.

Is India a "middle power" is a question now being discussed in think tank and other circles. The question got attention when at the Munich Security Conference organised in New Delhi, a "middle powers" panel was organised in which India participated.

India is obviously not a "great power" yet. It is not a permanent member of the UN Security Council. It is, however, a nuclear and missile power as well as a space power. It possesses large and strong military although its domestic defence manufacturing base is still deficient. India exercises strategic autonomy but it still has many vulnerabilities and external dependencies.

But India is not a "middle power". Its status is sui generis. It is the biggest country in the world population-wise. It has a young population. Its economy is growing, with a general international consensus that it will be the third largest economy in the world in a few years. In PPP terms, India is already the third largest. It has very considerable human talent, which in scale is a big national and even an international asset.

The big European countries are still powerful but they are not rising powers. They are declining powers, with a declining population, and the issue before them is to manage their decline and preserve their prosperity. Unlike India they are dependent on their security on the US. Germany hosts several US bases and US nuclear weapons are stationed on its soil. In a sense, Germany is still an occupied country.

Unlike most of the other "middle powers" which are compelled by alliances to operate in blocs, India engages all sides, be it US, Russia and even China. Europe today has essentially cut off ties with Russia. How many "middle powers" have the capacity to straddle the rich North and poor South. India has more geopolitical manoeuvrability. That India has dependencies does not make it a "middle power", as we are not unique in this regard in this interdependent and connected world. Even the hands of the US are tied to a degree because of its dependence on China for critical raw materials and technologies.

India is a rising power. It is managing its security challenges, and serious ones at that, without hosting foreign bases on its soil and joining any military alliance. Canada and the European "middle powers", despite two them being permanent members of the UNSC and nuclear powers, are dependent on their security on NATO which is US-led. They see themselves as "middle powers" bracketed by the US on one side and China on the other.

India does not have the same perspective. It defines itself as a civilisational power, which means that unlike the US which is 250 years old and Europe's limited historical depth as a civilisation (Gandhi disputed the idea of a European civilisation) India posits its contribution to human civilisation over thousands of years, and today India believes it can contribute once again globally its way of looking at and dealing the world rooted in its civilisation.

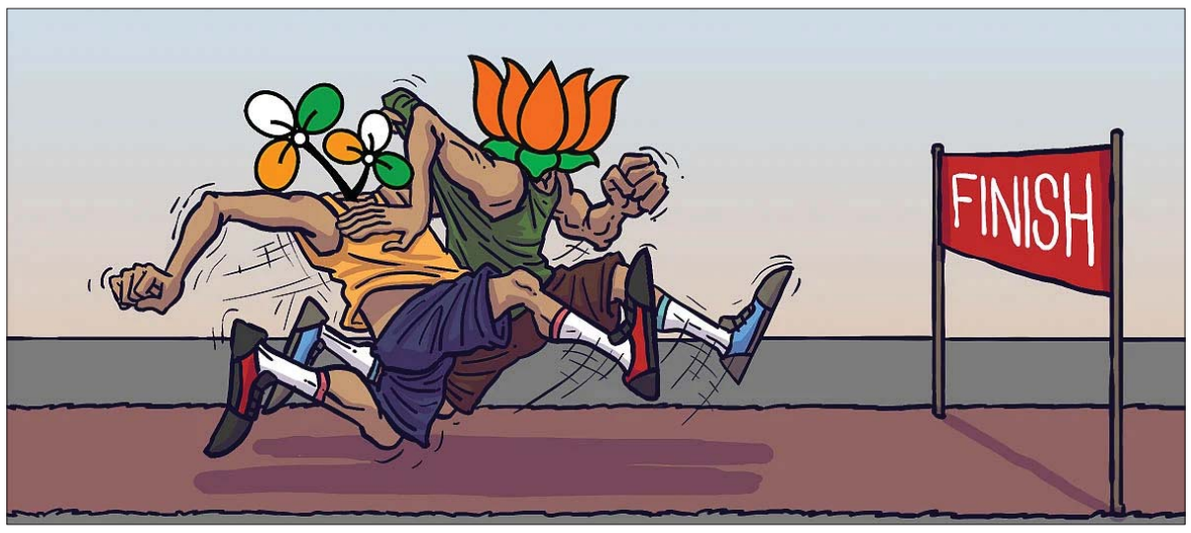
India has never seen itself as the centre of the universe, as some sort of a heavenly kingdom. It has no history of colonialism, slavery, physically exterminating people, races, even animals, using religion to subjugate other people and commit atrocities in the name of faith. India has accepted diversity in thought, language, culture and religion. Its civilisation has respected nature. India historically has been a strong trading nation, both eastwards and westwards.

This is the legacy that India as it rises can contribute to the functioning of the global community. India can be a force for peace and stability in the world as it becomes more influential.

(Kanwal Sibal was Foreign Secretary and Ambassador to Turkey, Egypt, France and Russia, and Deputy Chief Of Mission in Washington)

BJP rules out Trinamoolisation' ahead of civic polls, but can it afford to?

JAYANTA GHOSAL



BJP state president Samik Bhattacharya has made the party's position clear, saying that the BJP will contest the Kolkata Municipal Corporation election independently and does not need any other party's support. According to this position, there will be no coalition or electoral adjustment with any faction of the Trinamool Congress. However, on the occasion of Lakshmi Puja on Sunday, Adhikari visited the North Kolkata residence of MP and NCPI leader Sudip Bandyopadhyay at his invitation. He was accompanied by Transport Minister Arjun Singh.

The BJP had so far been maintaining a distance from the TMC. Former BJP state president and Union Minister of State Sukanta Majumdar had also said that dissident Trinamool workers may ring the BJP's doorbell, but the party will not open the door to them.

The BJP's public position is therefore unambiguous: it intends to fight the civic elections on its own and does not want to be seen as accommodating disgruntled Trinamool leaders simply to strengthen its electoral prospects.

But how much of this confidence reflects the party's actual internal assessment, and how much is intended to shape public perception before the elections?

The BJP believes it can perform exceptionally well in the coming civic polls, drawing confidence from its recent electoral performance, including the Assembly by-elections. The real question is whether this confidence is backed by a detailed understanding of the ground situation or is primarily part of the party's public messaging.

The internal electoral strategy will be crucial in determining whether the BJP can translate its political momentum into victories at the municipal level.

The upcoming contest is not limited to the Kolkata Municipal Corporation. According to the election preparations reported so far, the first phase is expected to cover seven urban local bodies: the Kolkata and Howrah municipal corporations, along with the municipalities of Bally, Haldia, Dhupguri, Kalimpong and Kurseong. The State Election Commission has been preparing for the polls, although the final schedule remains subject to official notification.

The elections are politically significant because municipal bodies deal directly with the everyday concerns of urban residents. They also provide parties with an opportunity to assess their organisational strength beyond Assembly and parliamentary elections.

For the BJP, therefore, the civic polls will be a test not only of its popularity but also of its ability to identify suitable candidates, manage local political equations and address issues that directly affect voters.

The BJP's assessment is that the Trinamool Congress leadership in Kalighat, associated with Mamata Banerjee, has become increasingly disconnected from the realities on the ground. According to this view, the anti-incumbency that has accumulated over 15 years of Trinamool rule remains a significant factor in the political atmosphere.

The BJP believes that this discontent extends to the Kolkata Municipal Corporation, where dissatisfaction with the existing administration could create an opportunity for the opposition.

Several sitting TMC councillors remain politically active and have established their own local networks. They continue to hold their positions after the Assembly elections, and some may have personal support bases that do not depend entirely on the popularity of the Trinamool leadership.

This creates a dilemma for the BJP. Should it maintain a strict policy of keeping all Trinamool dissidents at a distance, or should it consider making room for individuals who could improve its chances of winning particular wards?

The BJP is a pan-Indian party, and its national political identity will inevitably influence the civic campaign. Moreover, after only five months of governance in West Bengal, the new government may still enjoy a degree of political goodwill or a honeymoon period.

The BJP can draw on its campaign against the previous regime, including allegations of corruption and the anti-incumbency associated with 15 years of Trinamool rule. These issues are likely to remain part of its broader political messaging.

However, a municipal election is neither a national election nor an Assembly election. It is a local contest in which the everyday experiences of residents can have a decisive influence on voting behaviour.

The civic elections will therefore test the BJP on two fronts. It must demonstrate that its confidence is backed by a credible understanding of local conditions, while ensuring that its candidate-selection strategy does not contradict its public commitment to maintaining a distinct political identity.

There is also a possibility that some candidates may contest officially as independent or dissident Trinamool candidates, even if informal political calculations operate in the background. If the BJP does not have a strong candidate in a particular ward, it may decide that allowing a dissident TMC candidate to contest could serve its broader electoral interests. Such a candidate could potentially divide the Trinamool vote or weaken the party's local organisation.

The BJP's central leadership in Delhi is also reportedly in touch with some of these individuals. The question is whether these contacts will lead to any concrete electoral arrangements or remain informal discussions.

All these possibilities are currently part of the BJP's wider electoral calculations. Its final strategy will depend on the strength of its own candidates, the possible seat-sharing arrangements among opposition parties, the influence of dissident Trinamool councillors and the political circumstances in each ward.

Disclaimer: Views expressed by writers in this section are there own do not nessarily reflect The Freedom Press' point-of-view.

Defence Ministry arm, Sarvam sign pact for tri-service AI projects

NEW DELHI, OCT 27

AI firm Sarvam on Tuesday said that it has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff (HQ IDS) -- under the Defence Ministry -- for AI projects across the Indian Army, Indian Navy and Indian Air Force.



The framework also extends to the joint, tri-service and integrated organisations under HQ IDS, it said.

Under the pact, Sarvam will design, develop and deploy AI applications for operational, training and decision-support requirements of the three services and provide follow-on technical support.

However, work under the agreement spans several projects across all three services, with HQ IDS facilitating the engagement.

The agreement is a step in the government's drive towards Atmanirbharta in defence and indigenisation of defence equipment and capability.

That imperative now extends to artificial intelligence which is becoming as consequential to military capability as the platforms it runs on.

Through the pact, the three services and joint organisations gain access to the same foundation models, agentic infrastructure and geospatial and perception systems. Doctrine and lessons learnt from one service's projects can then feed the next. (IANS)

Viral claims of new Rs 1,000 note debunked

NEW DELHI, OCT 27

The Press Information Bureau's (PIB) Fact Check unit on Tuesday dismissed as fake a series of viral social media claims suggesting that a new Rs 1,000 currency note has been issued or is set to be introduced in India.



The clarification came after several posts circulated across platforms such as Instagram, X and Telegram, showing individuals holding a purported yellow-coloured Rs 1,000 note.

Some social media users and content creators claimed that the currency note was newly introduced or would be launched on a specific date.

Rejecting the claims, PIB Fact Check said that the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has made no announcement regarding the issuance of a new Rs 1,000 banknote.

In a post on X, the government agency urged citizens to verify information only through official sources and refrain from sharing unverified content online.

"Several social media posts claim that a new Rs 1,000 note has been issued. This claim is fake," it said.

"The RBI has made no announcement regarding the issuance of a new Rs 1,000 note," PIB Fact Check added.

The clarification seeks to curb misinformation surrounding the viral images of the purported banknote, which sparked speculation among social media users. Authorities have advised people to exercise caution while consuming and sharing such content and to report suspicious claims to PIB Fact Check.

At present, India has banknotes in active circulation in denominations of Rs 10, Rs 20, Rs 50, Rs 100, Rs 200 and Rs 500 under the RBI's Mahatma Gandhi (New) Series. (IANS/UNI)

'India, Mexico can unlock new avenues of growth'

NEW DELHI, OCT 27

India and Mexico can unlock new avenues for growth, build resilient supply chains and contribute to a more dynamic and prosperous global trading order, Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal said on Tuesday.

The Commerce Secretary arrived in Mexico City for a two-day official visit to advance trade and economic ties. The visit will see the launch of Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) negotiations with the signing of the Terms of Reference (ToR), alongside engagements with the Mexican government and business community to deepen bilateral cooperation. The Department of Commerce said in a post on X that Agrawal held a fruitful discussion with Fernando Gonzalez Saiffe, Director General for Asia-Pacific, Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores (SRE), on India-Mexico relations and opportunities to learn from each other through mutual cooperation, leveraging our respective strengths and advancements.

Green hydrogen sector eyes up to 200 billion investment

NEW DELHI, OCT 27

India's ambitions to become a major producer of green hydrogen will be supported by investments of $180 billion-$200 billion through 2030, a report said on Tuesday.



High production costs, limited commissioned capacity, infrastructure gaps and evolving international certification requirements remain significant barriers to large-scale adoption, the report from CARE ESG Ratings Limited said.

Green hydrogen is increasingly being viewed not only as a decarbonisation tool but it is also linked to export competitiveness, energy security and India's ability to establish itself as a competitive producer of low-carbon industrial materials.

The report highlighted that sectors such as steel, fertilisers, refining and chemicals could benefit from green hydrogen push.

Indian steel exporters could face estimated costs of $70–190 per metric tonne on EU-bound shipments, potentially exceeding $270 per metric tonne where default emissions values apply.

The urgency is underscored by the European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), which could impose carbon-linked costs on exports of emissions-intensive products.

"India's green hydrogen ambitions must translate into commercially viable projects, supported by reliable offtake agreements, competitive production costs and robust infrastructure," said Nikunj Dube, Chief Ratings Officer at CareEdge-ESG.

Green hydrogen currently costs nearly Rs 350–450 per kg, compared with Rs 160–200 per kg for conventional grey hydrogen.

Costs could decline to around $2.4 per kg by 2030 as renewable electricity becomes more competitive, electrolyser costs fall and projects scale up. Until then, adoption will depend partly on policy support, carbon pricing and assured industrial demand.

India consumes approximately 17–19 million metric tonnes of ammonia annually, primarily produced using natural gas. Green ammonia could reduce fossil-fuel import dependence and emissions. (IANS)

Crude oil prices decline

NEW DELHI, OCT 27

Crude oil prices decreased by up to 1 per cent on Tuesday, extending the decline for the second day as high-level diplomatic talks in Tehran helped temper immediate supply disruption fears.



However, prices remained close to six-month highs on persistent security risks in the Middle East.

Brent crude futures -- the international oil benchmark -- fell as much as 1.17 per cent or $1.36 to $114.45 per barrel.

Similarly, US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude dropped over 1 per cent or $1.16 to $100.60 per barrel.

The pull-back followed a diplomatic meeting in Tehran where representatives from Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Pakistan held talks with Iranian officials to defuse regional tensions, according to reports.

Analysts said crude remains elevated with WTI around $100.90 and Brent near $115.10. On MCX, immediate support is seen in the Rs 9,300-9,060 range, crucial for sustaining momentum.

"Despite concerns over potential renewed strikes against Iran, recovery of Middle Eastern crude exports to levels close to those seen before the war has eased some supply concerns. However, possibility of further geopolitical escalation continues to pose upside risk to prices," analysts said

They further noted that crude is likely to remain volatile with developments in Middle Eastern supply flows key to its next direction.

However, Saudi officials said the visit sought to establish open negotiating channels to prevent return of military escalation.

Reports claim all four countries agreed to continue dialogue to strengthen cooperation on peace and security

While hopes of diplomatic resolution eased some fears of supply disruption, tensions flared again after Iran-aligned Houthi forces launched renewed attacks on key producer Saudi Arabia, limiting the downside. (IANS)

Carbon capture, utilisation and storage to play key role in Net Zero vision



NEW DELHI, OCT 27

Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage (CCUS) is an important pathway for reducing emissions from hard-to-abate sectors and can support India's Net Zero by 2070 vision, while strengthening industrial competitiveness and resource efficiency, according to an official statement issued on Tuesday.

The government is fostering an ecosystem that brings together research institutions, public sector enterprises and private industry. This growing ecosystem spans operational projects, projects under execution and proposed initiatives across multiple states. These efforts are laying the foundation for indigenous CCUS capabilities, carbon utilisation and secure carbon storage.

Renewable energy can significantly lower emissions, but some industrial processes cannot be easily electrified. These include processes requiring very high temperatures or carbon-based inputs. CCUS involves capturing carbon dioxide from industrial sources before its release into the atmosphere.

The captured carbon dioxide can then be utilised in productive applications or stored securely underground. CCUS can, therefore, complement renewable energy and support India's transition towards a lower-carbon industrial economy.

NITI Aayog identifies CCUS as critical for decarbonising hard-to-abate sectors, including steel, cement, oil and gas, petrochemicals, chemicals and fertilisers. These industries contribute significantly to industrial emissions and face technological challenges in achieving deep decarbonisation.

CCUS can help reduce emissions from existing facilities while supporting the continued production of essential goods. It can also create opportunities for developing new technologies, infrastructure and industrial capabilities in India.

By connecting carbon capture with utilisation and secure storage, the approach can address emissions across multiple stages. CCUS can thus support India's climate goals while maintaining industrial growth and economic development, according to the statement.

'ESTIC-2026', the second edition of India's Emerging Science, Technology and Innovation Conclave, is being held from October 27–29, 2026 at Bharat Mandapam in the national capital.

Organised by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), the conclave follows the theme "Creative Minds, Catalyzing Science, Empowering Technologies. (IANS)

Startup India supports more than 2.5 lakh startups

NEW DELHI, OCT 27

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) on Tuesday said that a series of reforms aimed at reducing regulatory burdens and promoting ease of doing business have helped transform India's business environment from a permission-based system to a trust-based framework, driving growth in startups, investment, employment and digital service delivery.



According to the Commerce and Industry Ministry, DPIIT has recognised more than 2.5 lakh startups across over 770 districts and 56 sectors, which have collectively generated more than 25.42 lakh jobs.

Nearly 52 per cent of the recognised startups are based in non-metro cities, while 48 per cent have at least one woman director, the Ministry of Commerce & Industry said.

Government-backed funding initiatives have also expanded significantly. Under the Startup India Seed Fund Scheme, over Rs 775 crore has been approved for more than 4,100 startups through 244 incubators across 32 states and Union Territories.

The Fund of Funds for Startups, managed through SIDBI, has committed over Rs 12,600 crore to alternative investment funds, which in turn have invested more than Rs 28,000 crore in nearly 1,500 startups.

The Credit Guarantee Scheme for Startups has supported over 500 loans worth Rs 1,662 crore, benefiting startups that employ more than 41,000 people.

To further improve access to finance, the government has doubled the guarantee cover available to startups from Rs 10 crore to Rs 20 crore and reduced annual fees for priority sectors.

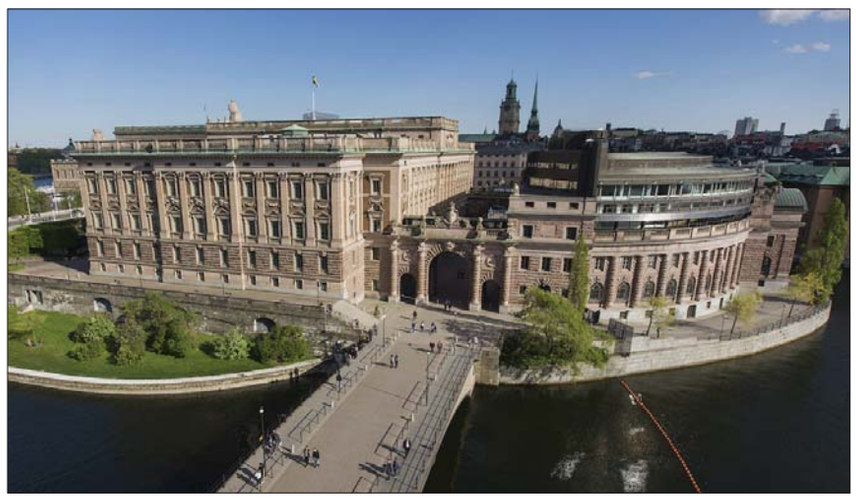
DPIIT said reforms in the startup sector include measures such as the abolition of angel tax, rationalisation of capital gains taxation for listed and unlisted shares and allowing institutional investors, including insurance companies and retirement funds, to invest in alternative investment funds. More than 4,400 startups have also received eligibility certification under Section 80-IAC.

Government procurement opportunities for startups have expanded sharply through the Government e-Marketplace (GeM). The number of startups registered on the platform has increased from fewer than 8,000 in 2021 to more than 43,000, with cumulative orders worth over Rs 68,000 crore placed by public buyers.

The ministry highlighted that regulatory compliance reforms have gathered pace, with nearly 48,000 compliances reduced across central ministries and states.

More than 22,000 compliances have been digitised, while thousands have been simplified, decriminalised or eliminated altogether. The Jan Vishwas Acts have decriminalised 900 provisions under central laws in an effort to promote ease of doing business. (IANS)

Sweden's gov't formation remains deadlocked



HELSINKI, OCT 26
Swedish Centre Party leader Elisabeth Thand Ringqvist said on Monday that there was insufficient parliamentary support to form a centrist government, highlighting the continuing deadlock in the country's government formation process.

Thand Ringqvist made the remarks at a press conference after meeting Parliament Speaker Andreas Norlen to report on her exploratory talks with other political parties.

She said that while centrist policies have majority support in parliament, support for cooperation in a coalition government was insufficient, Xinhua News Agency reported.

The Centre Party leader described her discussions with other parties as open and constructive but acknowledged that major political divisions remained unresolved.

She reiterated her party's opposition to allowing either the Left Party or the Sweden Democrats to enter government, urging other parties to reconsider their political red lines to break the impasse.

Her talks explored the possibility of a government involving the Social Democratic Party, the Green Party, the Centre Party, the Liberal Party and the Christian Democrats, with Social Democratic leader Magdalena Andersson as a potential prime minister, according to Swedish Television (SVT). "We were prepared to allow a single-party Social Democratic government to take office, but this was blocked by the Left Party and the Green Party," she told SVT.

Thand Ringqvist also called on the Social Democrats to clarify what kind of government they intended to form, saying this would help move negotiations forward.

The Social Democratic Party, Left Party, Green Party and Centre Party together won 176 seats in the 349-member parliament in September's election, giving them a narrow majority but leaving them divided over the composition of a new government.

She said the matter was now back in the hands of the speaker.

In a statement issued on Monday, Norlen said he would hold telephone consultations with party leaders to discuss the next steps in the government formation process. No further decision was immediately announced. (IANS)

India decries 'disguised, de facto veto' preventing UNSC reform advancing

UNITED NATIONS, OCT 27
India has decried the "disguised, de facto veto" that is preventing the Security Council reform process from going forward.

During the General Assembly debate on Monday on the veto rights of the five permanent members, India's Permanent Representative P. Harish pointed out that this issue was one of the matters before the Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN) for Security Council reforms, but the process stalled due to a virtual veto that some countries are using.

"The argument of consensus has been harnessed as a disguised, de facto veto in the IGN process as well", he said.



India's Permanent Representative P. Harish

A small group of countries that call themselves Uniting for Consensus has blocked the IGN from adopting a negotiating text by using procedural manoeuvres.

The group is led by Italy and includes Pakistan.

The 2008 General Assembly resolution that is "the foundational decision for the IGN, is clear: the guiding principle is the widest possible political acceptance, not consensus", Harish said.

But even after 17 cycles of the negotiations, "we have no outcome to show for it" because of the de facto veto, which has no basis in the resolution constituting the IGN, he pointed out.

The starting point for comprehensive reforms "is early commencement of text-based negotiations, with clearly defined timelines and milestones", he said.

There are also other secret vetoes that are not sanctioned by the UN Charter, yet even non-permanent members are allowed them in certain vital matters.

Pointing these out, Harish said, "The veto is not only what is cast in the open. There is also the 'effective or de facto veto' that every Council member, elected and non-elected, holds over presidential statements, press statements and the decisions of sanctions committees". This is because of "the unwritten rule of consensus allows a single member to hold or block a proposal, most often without explanation".

China has at times blocked the sanctioning of Pakistan-based terrorists like Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi and Shahid Mahmood of the Lashkar-e-Taiba, and Sajid Mir and Masood Azhar of Jash-e-Mohamad in the secret meetings of the sanctions committee. (IANS/UNI)

Two charged in UK

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
LONDON, OCT 27
UK anti-terrorism police said Tuesday that two men have been charged with national security offenses after an incident last month at a British air base used by the United States.

The head of National Counter Terrorism Policing, Laurence Taylor, said two British nationals have been charged: one with assisting a foreign intelligence service, believed to be in Iran, and another with entering a prohibited place for a purpose "prejudicial" to the UK.

Dozens of residents were evacuated and a large cordon was put up in the area around the base.

Trump announces $1 million reward for voter fraud tips ahead of midterms

WASHINGTON, OCT 27
President Donald Trump has said he will offer a $1 million reward to anyone who reports voter fraud that leads to an arrest and conviction, days before the November 3 midterm elections.

Speaking to reporters on Monday before boarding Air Force One, Trump also said his administration was "starting that process" on deporting non-citizens who vote.

"I'm also going to be issuing $1 million bonus or reward or whatever you want to call it, for anybody that reports voter fraud, leading to the arrest and conviction of



somebody. We're giving that person $1 million," Trump said.

A reporter told the President that he had "made it very clear that any non-citizen that votes would be automatically deported," and asked whether that would "clean up elections" and whether he should say so at all his rallies.

"Well, I think so. And we do that and we're starting that process," Trump replied.

The White House has not released details of how the reward would be paid, which agency would administer it, or what legal authority it would rest on.

Voting by non-citizens in federal elections is already a federal crime. Under existing law, it can lead to fines, imprisonment and removal from the country.

The remarks are expected to draw attention from immigrant communities, including the large number of Indian nationals living in the US on green cards and temporary work visas. They are not eligible to vote in federal elections. Community groups have previously voiced concern that aggressive voter-roll checks could wrongly flag naturalised citizens. (IANS)

Meta faces scrutiny over political speech

WASHINGTON, OCT 27
Meta is facing questions from Democratic senators and state attorneys general over the suspension of an anti-Trump protest group's Instagram account, raising concerns about the company's handling of political speech just days before the November 3 congressional elections.

A coalition of 14 attorneys general on Monday demanded that Meta explain why the No Kings Coalition's Instagram account was suspended during nationwide demonstrations on October 17 and what safeguards it has put in place to prevent similar disruptions.

The move followed an October 22 letter from five Democratic senators to Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg seeking answers about the company's automated content moderation systems and whether political organisations could be wrongly targeted. Meta has acknowledged that the suspension was a mistake, attributing it to unusually high online activity that its systems apparently identified as suspicious automated behaviour.

The No Kings Coalition said its Instagram account was suspended around 1:30 p.m. Eastern Time on October 17, as demonstrations were underway across the country. (IANS/UNI)

Brazil's SC orders Flavio Bolsonaro to surrender passports

Bars him from leaving country

RIO DE JANEIRO, OCT 27
Brazilian Supreme Federal Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes has ordered defeated presidential candidate Flavio Bolsonaro to surrender his passports to the Federal Police and barred him from leaving the country, Brazilian media reported.

The confidential ruling is part of an investigation involving Bolsonaro and lawyer Willer Tomaz, according to Brazil's public news agency Agencia Brasil.

Moraes also prohibited Bolsonaro from contacting Tomaz, Bra-



Flavio Bolsonaro

zilian media reported. Both men are under investigation by the Federal Police on suspicion of money laundering and illegal foreign exchange transactions, reports Xinhua news agency.

Meanwhile, Brazilian incumbent President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, candidate of the ruling Workers' Party, won Sunday's presidential runoff, according to results released by Brazil's Superior Electoral Court on Sunday night.

With all the votes counted, Lula received 51.79 per cent of the valid votes, compared with 48.21 per cent for Flavio Bolsonaro, the Liberal Party's presidential candidate and son of former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, according to the official tally. (IANS)

Many killed in Somali clash

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
MOGADISHU, OCT 27
Clashes between Somali government forces and militants from the Al-Shabab insurgent group on Monday may have left dozens dead, according to accounts given later by both sides.

The Al-Qaeda-linked group has been fighting the government for two decades and still controls large swathes of central Somalia despite a massive international operation against it. It said it launched an attack on Monday afternoon on Turkish-trained government troops and an allied militia in the Lower Shabelle region, resulting in the deaths of 321 troops.

Nepal on high alert as Cyclone 'Arnab'

KATHMANDU, OCT 27
Nepal's National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA) has urged authorities and the public to remain on high alert from October 29 to 31 as Cyclone 'Arnab', brewing over the Bay of Bengal, is expected to bring rainfall, strong winds and thunderstorms across several parts of the country.

According to a special post-monsoon bulletin issued by the Department of Hydrology and Meteorology, the cyclone is likely to make landfall in India on October 28, with its effects expected to reach the country from the night of October 29.

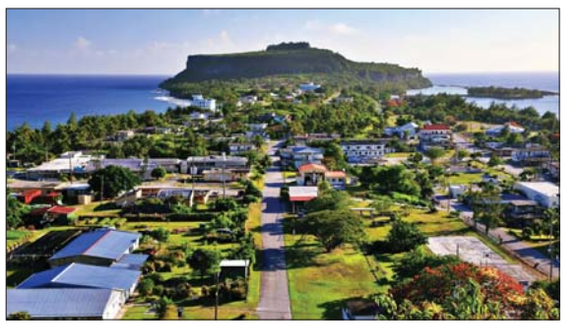
On October 30 and 31, Koshi, Bagmati, Madhesh, Gandaki and Lumbini provinces are likely to experience moderate rainfall in many places and heavy rain in some areas. Simultaneously, Karnali and Sudurpashchim provinces may also receive moderate rain, with heavy rainfall possible at isolated locations.

Moreover, high-hill and Himalayan areas face risks of heavy snowfall, snowstorms and avalanches, Nepal news reported.

The authority has advised tourists to avoid high-altitude travel, urged people to stay away from flood-prone riverbanks. (IANS/UNI)

US suspends visa-free entry for Chinese visitors to Northern Mariana Islands

WASHINGTON, OCT 27
The Trump administration is suspending a programme that allowed prescreened Chinese nationals to visit the Northern Mariana Islands without a visa, citing risks of espionage near US military bases, illegal onward travel to Guam and birth tourism.



The suspension of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Economic Vitality and Security Travel Authorization Program (EVS-TAP) takes effect at 2 pm EDT on October 30, according to a Department of Homeland Security notice in the Federal Register signed by Homeland Security Secretary Markwayne Mullin.

It applies both to new applicants and to "previously approved travelers with an existing EVS-TAP travel authorization". Chinese nationals already in the CNMI under the programme may stay for their authorised period but "will need to obtain a visa for any future travel".

The notice said that in fiscal year 2025, "more than 3,000 PRC nationals utilized EVS-TAP to enter the CNMI". These travellers were vetted by US Customs and Border Protection "instead of by a State Department consular officer".

"DHS judges that PRC nationals are almost certainly exploiting EVS-TAP," the notice said, adding that the volume of visa-exempt entries "presents unacceptable security and law enforcement risks".

The department said the programme "may be exploited to facilitate PRC espionage and intelligence collection directed against sensitive U.S. defense infrastructure in the region". It noted that the Department of War is restoring the Tinian Air Base, while neighbouring Guam hosts several military installations "critical to homeland defense". (IANS)

Australian PM flags improved security for politicians following attack

CANBERRA, OCT 27
Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said on Tuesday that the government is reviewing new safety measures for politicians after an attack on Member of Parliament (MP) Helen Haines.

Albanese told a meeting of his governing Labour Party in Canberra that he has asked for a review of MPs' security arrangements to be fast-tracked after Haines was critically injured in the attack earlier this month.

He said that MPs had proposed a series of options, including duress alarms or panic buttons to alert authorities if they are attacked, and pledged



Australian PM Anthony Albanese

a swift government response.

"I know so many of you have experienced an increase in aggressive and threatening behavior online and in person. There have been vile threats towards you and your family and damage to your electorate offices," he said.

"This is particularly acute for women members of the caucus, who often receive vile and misogynistic threats to their safety and increased hatred online, often of a violent and sexual nature," he added, Xinhua news agency reported. Haines, who has served as an independent MP representing an area northeast of Melbourne since 2019, lost both legs after she was struck by a car outside her electorate office on Oct. 19 in an incident described by Albanese as a deliberate attack.

She remained in hospital as of Tuesday in a serious but stable condition.

Minister for Finance, Women, Government Services and the Public Service Katy Gallagher said earlier on Tuesday that nine MPs will receive security upgrades at their electorate offices after they raised concerns in the wake of the attack on Haines. (IANS/UNI)

Makkah Alliance countries, Iran discuss regional de-escalation



FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
RIYADH, OCT 27

The countries of the Makkah Defense Alliance and Iran have agreed to continue discussions aimed at enhancing cooperation and de-escalate tensions in the region.

The three countries—Saudi Arabia, Turkiye and Pakistan—and Iran reached the agreement during a quadrilateral meeting hosted by Tehran on Monday, according to Iranian state television. The parties agreed to continue discussions aimed at enhancing cooperation, and promoting regional peace and security.

The meeting brought together Saudi Defense Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman, Pakistan Army Chief of Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir, and Turkish Intelligence Chief Ibrahim Kalin, representing the countries of the "Makkah Defense Alliance." They met with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi, and Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council Mohsen Rezaei.

During the talks, Pezeshkian expressed support for agreements aimed at strengthening regional security and signaled Tehran's readiness to resolve differences through cooperation. Pezeshkian told the visiting delegation that Iran supported any understanding that would enhance security in the region and was prepared to take steps toward greater regional cooperation and resolving disputes.

Iran's security chief Mohsen Rezaei also struck an optimistic tone following the meeting, describing discussions with representatives of the three alliance member states as "very good." "I feel that a new atmosphere is emerging in the region. I sensed a very positive atmosphere in the discussions," Rezaei told state television.

Netanyahu dismisses suggestion by IDF chief to end army's Hebron operation

TEL AVIV, OCT 27

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has reportedly rejected a recommendation from the IDF Chief of Staff Lt Gen Eyal Zamir to end the military operation in the occupied West Bank city of Hebron, despite the army chief's assessment that its objectives had been met.



Israel's Kan public broadcaster reported that the military had wanted to announce the operation's conclusion as early as Saturday night, after completing a day of house searches. Netanyahu, however, insisted that the raid continue ahead of Tuesday's election.

Around 3,000 Palestinians have been displaced from their homes in the Hebron area since the operation began following a shooting attack by Palestinian gunmen at a checkpoint that killed two Israeli soldiers.

During a security assessment with senior military officials at Tel Nof air base on Sunday, Zamir reportedly argued that there was no operational justification for continuing the raid, and no legal basis for continuing to prevent Palestinians from returning to their homes, according to Kan.

A military source told the broadcaster that the operation's stated objectives -establishing deterrence, locating what Israel describes as terrorist infrastructure and gathering intelligence - had been achieved. Troops had searched 500 structures in the city but seized only two guns, the source said.

Several soldiers taking part in the operation also questioned its continued purpose in interviews with Kan.

Israel bars international delegation from entering West Bank

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
WEST BANK, OCT 27

Israel prevented an international delegation that included Western politicians from entering the occupied West Bank as part of a tour to meet Palestinian children, farmers and civil society leaders, The Guardian reported.

The delegation, comprising 23 people, came from countries including Britain, Switzerland, the US, Greece, Ireland, the Netherlands, France, Spain and Luxembourg.

"We were detained, taken aside and then interrogated … People were shouted at. We were asked why we were going in, what was happening, why our stories were one way or the other. The bottom line was it was a deeply unpleasant experience," Clive Lewis, an MP with the UK's governing Labour Party, told The Guardian. The delegation was set to attend Progressive International's Second Ramallah Congress, an event to oppose Israel's occupation of Palestine hosted in partnership with Birzeit University.

The event included a series of talks among Palestinian academics, students and civil society organizations.

QSE index opens higher

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
DOHA, OCT 27

The Qatar Stock Exchange (QSE) index increased by 0.71% at the start of Tuesday's trading, gaining 62.93 points from the previous session's close to reach 8,915 points, supported by six sectors. QSE data attributed positive performances in Transportation (+1.72%), Telecoms (+1.38%), Consumer Goods and Services (+1.17%), Banks and Financial Services (+0.51%), Industrials (+0.18%), and Insurance (+0.18%). Meanwhile, performance was negative for Real Estate (-1.18%).

Egyptian parliament authorises Sisi to take measures to support Saudi Arabia

CAIRO, OCT 26

Egypt's parliament on Monday approved authorising President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi to take measures to support Saudi Arabia, according to a statement by the parliament's general secretariat.



The parliament approved the authorisation by a two-thirds majority during a plenary session, the statement said.

The authorisation allows the president to take necessary measures to support and defend Saudi Arabia, its sovereignty and its holy sites against any external attacks, in accordance with a decision adopted by Egypt's National Defence Council on October 18, the statement added.

On October 17, Sisi said Egypt was prepared to take "any measures" requested by Saudi Arabia to defend the kingdom's security and sovereignty, but stressed that such action "requires parliamentary approval."

He called for an emergency parliamentary session to authorise intervention if requested, while stressing that he was speaking "strictly in terms of defence" rather than waging war.

Later on, Egypt's official MENA news agency reported that Egypt's parliament postponed a vote on authorising the military to defend Saudi Arabia until October 26.

North Kabd Plant to boost water reuse

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
KUWAIT, OCT 27

Minister of Public Works Dr Noura Al-Mashaan on Monday laid the foundation stone for the North Kabd wastewater treatment plant project, which covers the study, design, construction, operation and maintenance of the facility and its associated infrastructure. The ceremony was attended by Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait Yang Xin, senior ministry officials and representatives of the Chinese company executing the project.

The project is the second agreement signed between Kuwait and China during the visit of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to China when he was Crown Prince.

In a speech at the ceremony, Al-Mashaan said the project was being implemented in line with the directives of the Amir, the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, who attach great importance to infrastructure development and sustainable development to secure a better future for Kuwait's citizens.

She said the project reflected the depth of friendship and cooperation between Kuwait and China, describing it as one of the Ministry of Public Works' major strategic initiatives.

Libya says international aviation restrictions lifted

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
TRIPLO, OCT 27

Libya's Ministry of Transport said on Monday that airspace restrictions issued by the UN's International Civil Aviation Organization in 2015 during the country's civil war have been removed.



The ministry said the decision, which was formally issued on October 23, was announced by ICAO Secretary General Juan Carlos Salazar at the opening of a meeting of civil aviation officials from the Middle East in Doha.

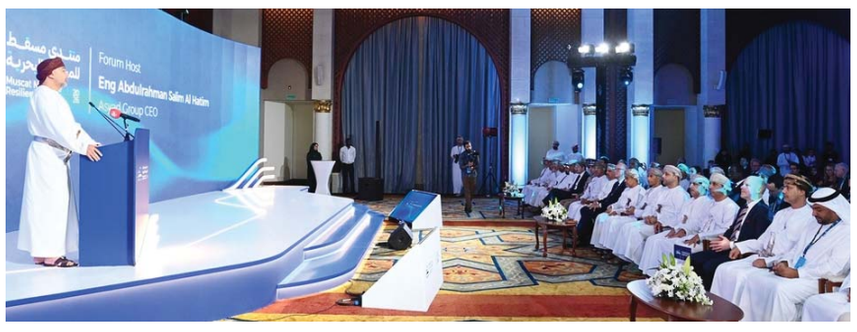
"This measure comes as a result of the notable progress made and the confidence placed in the capabilities of the Libyan civil aviation sector in recent times," the Tripoli-based Ministry of Transport said in a statement on its verified Facebook page.

The ministry, in a separate statement, said the North African country has received requests for permits to transit Libyan airspace that it characterized as "unprecedented demand from international airlines."

"The total number of permits registered for 2026-2027 winter season has surged to 61,968 flights per month, effective from this November," the ministry said, calling it a significant jump from an average of 2,000 transit flights per month during the 2025-2026 season.

"Such an increase will generate substantial financial revenues using Libyan airspace," it added.

Muscat forum reviews maritime networks readiness



FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
MUSCAT, OCT 27

The proceedings of the "Muscat Maritime Resilience Forum 2026" began in Muscat today to review challenges facing the maritime sector and practical experiences, as well as to explore opportunities to enhance cooperation among various components of the maritime and logistics system.

This contributes to developing practical solutions to enhance the resilience and readiness of maritime networks, while supporting the continuity of supply chains and the flow of global trade amid rapid developments.

The opening of the forum was held under the auspices of Eng. Said Hamoud Al Maawali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology.

The forum features the participation of a number of leaders and experts, organized by Asyad Group in partnership with the Foreign Ministry, the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, and Oman Investment Authority, within the framework of efforts aimed at consolidating the Sultanate of Oman's position as a hub for international dialogue.

Saudi domestic non-oil exports rise 8.5% in August

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
RIYADH, OCT 27



Saudi Arabia's domestic non-oil exports increased by 8.5 percent year-on-year in August 2026, despite an overall decline in merchandise exports, according to the General Authority for Statistics (GASTAT).

The authority's International Merchandise Trade Statistics report showed that plastics, rubber and their products accounted for the largest share of non-oil exports at 22.6 percent, recording a 7.5 percent increase compared with August 2025.

Meanwhile, the ratio of non-oil exports, including re-exports, to imports edged up to 36.51 percent, compared with 36.48 percent in August 2025.

Despite the growth in domestic non-oil exports, total non-oil exports, including re-exports, declined by 9.1 percent, while re-exported goods fell by 34 percent.

Overall merchandise exports decreased by 11.5 percent year-on-year, driven by a 12.5 percent decline in oil exports, while merchandise imports fell by 9.1 percent.

The Kingdom's merchandise trade surplus also decreased by 21 percent compared with August 2025.

The United Arab Emirates was Saudi Arabia's largest merchandise export destination, accounting for 11.4 percent of total exports.

Bahrain: SCIA holds fifth regular session of sixth term

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
MANAMA, OCT. 27

The Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (SCIA), chaired by Shaikh Abdulrahman bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Khalifa, President of the Council, held its fifth regular session of the sixth term today.



Shaikh Abdulrahman bin Mohammed expressed gratitude to King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa for patronising the reopening ceremony of the Shaikh Ahmed Al Fateh bin Mohammed Al Khalifa Mosque in Gudaibiya, following its expansion and reconstruction in line with His Majesty's royal directives.

The council commended His Majesty's continued commitment to serving and maintaining places of worship, preserving Bahrain's historical and cultural landmarks, and safeguarding the historical and cultural identity of its buildings, cities and villages.

It also praised the King's close attention to the reconstruction of the mosque, which bears the name of a distinguished figure in Bahrain's history, Shaikh Ahmed Al Fateh bin Mohammed Al Khalifa, and is located next to his grave. The council expressed appreciation for the support of the government, led by Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, and its efforts to overcome all obstacles to implementing the royal directives.

The council affirmed that the mosque represents a beacon of knowledge and culture commemorating the founder of the State of Bahrain. It also serves as an Islamic landmark that promotes the values of tolerant Islamic culture, builds bridges of understanding and strengthens civilisational exchange among the world's diverse cultures and peoples.

The council expressed its profound appreciation for King's commitment to upholding the values of loyalty to the nation's founding figures, as well as his emphasis on the Kingdom's continued efforts to renovate and reconstruct mosques, expand existing facilities and build new places of worship across all governorates.

These efforts enable mosques to fulfil their religious role and civilisational mission by promoting noble Islamic values that encourage goodness, righteous deeds, coexistence, tolerance, solidarity and love among members of society. They also reflect the tolerant teachings of Islam and Bahrain's noble message of brotherhood, compassion, peace, coexistence and respect for others.

In another context, the council commended the important messages conveyed in the royal address delivered by the King at the opening of the fifth session of the sixth legislative term of the Shura Council and the Council of Representatives.

TATA SONS ROW

Noel Tata challenges Chandrasekaran's reappointment, alleges procedural lapses

NEW DELHI, OCT 27
Noel Tata has escalated his challenge to N Chandrasekaran's reappointment as Executive Chairman of Tata Sons, alleging procedural lapses in the board decision and raising questions over potential conflict of interest.

In a letter dated to Tata Sons Company Secretary Suprakash Mukhopadhyay, Noel Tata has sought extensive records and disclosures within seven days, arguing that the reappointment resolution is void.


Noel Tata

According to Noel Tata, the reappointment of Chandrasekaran for five years from February 21, 2027 was improperly introduced.

He said neither the original nor the revised board agenda identified a resolution on the Executive Chairman's reappointment with Item 7 described only as Debriefing from Nomination and Remuneration Committee (NRC).

The resolution was moved under that item even though the committee's agenda and minutes had not been circulated to directors, he added.

He also questioned the absence of a selection committee under Article 118 of Tata Sons' Articles of Association and said the affirmative vote required from directors appointed under Article 104B read with Article 121 was not obtained.

Noel Tata further objected to the company secretary certifying the resolution and filing it with the Registrar of Companies before board minutes were finalised.

He has demanded the original audio-video recording and transcript of the September 17 meeting, final minutes, individual voting records and audit trail of changes to board papers. (IANS/UNI)

No pressure from US to cut Russian oil imports: Hardeep Puri

NEW DELHI, OCT 27
India has faced no pressure from the US to reduce its Russian crude imports, Union Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said on Tuesday.

Speaking at an event, the minister noted that Middle East oil supplies have been rising as the region is able to ship out more cargoes.

"I never felt anything," he said.

He noted that India was getting only 0.2 per cent of its oil imports from Russia before the Ukraine war, while imports surged after the war started due to discounts on Russian oil.



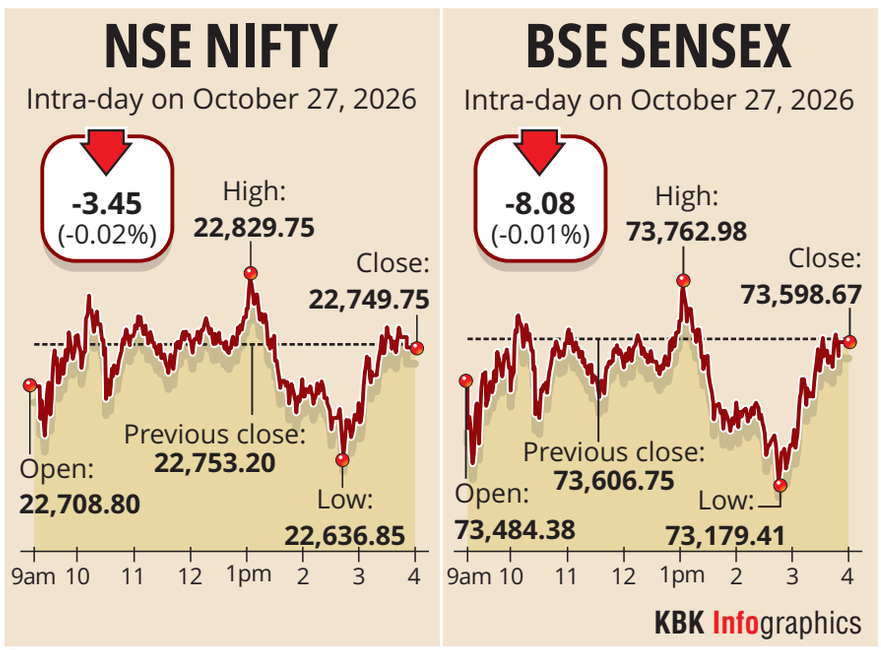
India's imports of Middle Eastern crude surged in September, returning to pre-war levels, while refiners cut back purchases of Russian oil amid stiff competition from China, ship-tracking data showed.

The minister also stated that purchase of Russian oil is linked to discounts and pricing when compared with other grades. Russian oil imports have been reduced as refiners are buying more Gulf oil sold at a discount, he added.

Ultimately, every decision is anchored in self-interest, the minister noted.

Earlier in October, US President Donald Trump invoked national interest provisions to waive fresh sanctions, restrictions and duties on Russian energy exports under a law enacted last month, providing relief to India from potential tariffs of up to 100 per cent.

Earlier in September, Puri had said that India has navigated the recent supply-chain disruptions amid the geopolitical crises and maintained steady energy imports, reflecting the success of its energy diplomacy under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. (IANS)



Microsoft offers voluntary exits to staff in India, US as AI spending bites

WASHINGTON, OCT 26
Microsoft has opened a voluntary exit programme for employees in India, the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom, in a move that reports say could reach about 60,000 workers as the technology giant balances a costly artificial intelligence buildout against its payroll.

The company announced the Voluntary Exit Offer (VEO) on Monday in a message to employees from Amy Coleman, Executive Vice President and Chief People Officer, which Microsoft published on its official blog.



"This offer will be available to eligible employees in participating teams in Canada, India, the United Kingdom and the United States at level 70 and below," Coleman wrote.

"This is a time-limited, voluntary program that gives those who are eligible the opportunity to leave Microsoft with financial support and career planning resources," she said.

Microsoft did not give a figure for the number of eligible employees in its announcement. CNBC, citing a person familiar with the matter, reported that around 60,000 people are eligible, or about 27 per cent of the company's workforce of about 223,000.

Microsoft also did not say how many of the eligible staff are in India, where it runs large engineering and support operations. Not every team is taking part. "Some organisations are providing the Voluntary Exit Offer, and some are not. Participation varies based on each business's priorities, customer commitments and workforce needs," Coleman wrote. (IANS)

Anup Bagchi takes charge as HDFC Bank MD



MUMBAI, OCT 27
HDFC Bank, India's largest private lender, on Tuesday announced a leadership transition, with Anup Bagchi taking charge as Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer.

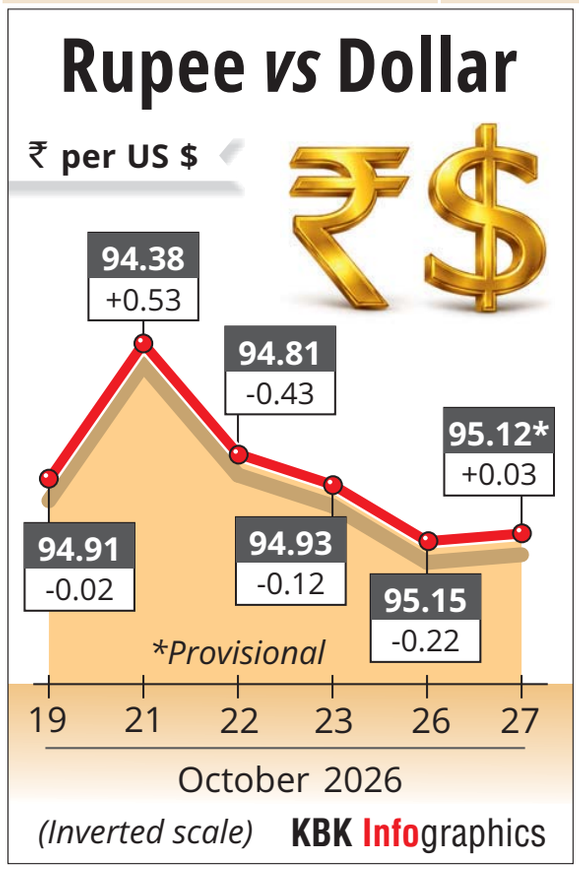
The transition follows the completion of Sashidhar Jagdishan's tenure.

In an exchange filing, the private bank said Sashidhar Jagdishan vacated office as MD & CEO at the close of business hours on October 26, 2026, on account of completion of his tenure and Anup Bagchi assumed charge effective October 27, 2026.

However, the bank thanked Jagdishan for his strategic vision and commitment, crediting his leadership with strengthening its performance, organisational culture and customer-centric approach.

It also acknowledged his pivotal role in the successful completion of one of corporate India's largest mergers.

Bagchi takes charge at a time when the lender is navigating a mixed earnings environment. (IANS)



Maruti Suzuki Q2 profit falls

NEW DELHI, OCT 27
Maruti Suzuki India on Tuesday reported a 26.4 per cent year-on-year (YoY) dip in consolidated net profit for the second quarter of FY27 to Rs 2,466.1 crore due to higher commodity costs linked to the West Asia conflict. The profit dip came despite a 26 per cent increase in revenue from operations to Rs 53,355.5 crore as the benefit was also outweighed by mark-to-market losses on invested surplus. Operating profit (EBIT) fell 17.1 per cent year-on-year to Rs 2,803.7 crore in Q2 FY27 from Rs 3,382 crore a year earlier. (IANS)

Meta outlines $95 billion AI financing plan

WASHINGTON, OCT 26
Meta Platforms on Monday launched offerings worth approximately $35 billion and outlined a further $60 billion share-sale programme to support its Artificial Intelligence expansion.

The combined USD 95 billion figure represents planned financing, rather than money already raised. The larger, future programme remains conditional.

The initial offerings comprise about $22.5 billion in common shares through forward sale agreements and $12.5 billion in securities representing mandatory convertible preferred stock.

Meta said it would not initially receive proceeds from the common shares sold by the forward purchasers. It would receive funds upon future settlement of those agreements.



The planned $60 billion programme would involve its new Class C shares and is not expected to begin before the first quarter of 2027. Meta said no agreement for that programme had been entered into.

Chipmakers Nvidia, AMD and Broadcom have indicated interest in buying a combined $5 billion of shares in the common-stock offering. Those indications are not binding commitments.

Morgan Stanley and Goldman Sachs are leading the offerings. Meta said the financing would support its investment in AI infrastructure and personal superintelligence.

The announcement follows company executives' explanation last week of the substantial computing costs involved in expanding AI services.

During Meta's October 21 earnings call, chief financial officer Susan Li said the company's capital expenditure, including principal payments on finance leases, reached $34.9 billion in the third quarter. The spending covered servers, data centres and network infrastructure. Free cash flow was negative $2.1 billion during the quarter, she said. (IANS)

Apple 'iPhone 18 Pro' series posts 3.1% growth

NEW DELHI, OCT 27
Apple's iPhone 18 Pro series recorded 3.1 per cent year-on-year sales growth globally during the first three weeks after launch, according to a report released on Tuesday.

As per analysis by Counterpoint Research, global sales of the iPhone 18 Pro and Pro Max rose 3.1 per cent from a year earlier during the three weeks following the devices' September release.

However, the new series sales have outperformed the iPhone 17 Pro series over the same period last year, it added.

The report attributed the increase to improved early supply compared with last year's launch and higher prices for competing flagship smartphones from Chinese Android manufacturers.



The contribution from China masked weaker performance elsewhere.

Moreover, sales declined year-on-year in the United States and Japan where higher prices weighed on demand.

The report further showed China contributed growth of 29 per cent year-on-year.

In the US, consumers have not viewed the latest models as offering significant improvements in features or design over their predecessors, it added.

In Japan, a weaker exchange rate amplified price increases, contributing to softer demand.

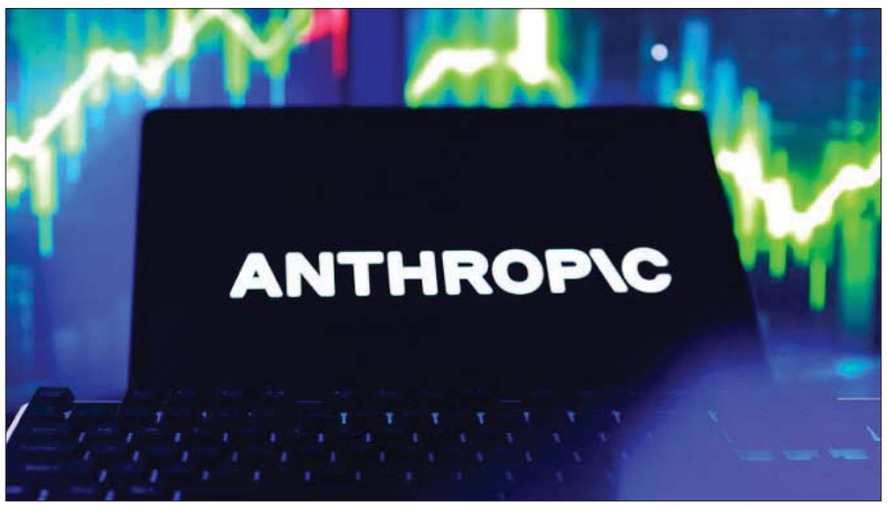
The iPhone 18 Pro Max accounted for 56 per cent of total iPhone 18 Pro series sales during the launch period, down slightly from 57 per cent a year earlier. Higher pricing and stronger demand growth in emerging markets such as India and Southeast Asia which favoured the Pro model over the Pro Max, contributed to the shift.

"Whether China's outperformance reflects durable demand or front-loaded buying will become clearer in the coming weeks," said Sujeong Lim, associate director at Counterpoint Research. (IANS)

AI firm Anthropic files for Nasdaq IPO, reports $16.3 billion half-year revenue

WASHINGTON, OCT 27
Artificial intelligence company Anthropic, the maker of the Claude chatbot, has filed for an initial public offering in the US, disclosing explosive revenue growth alongside heavy losses as it prepares to list on the Nasdaq under the symbol "ANT".

The San Francisco-based company said on Monday that Anthropic, PBC had filed a registration statement on Form S-1 with the US Securities and Exchange Commission for a proposed offering of its Class A common stock. "The number of shares of Class A common stock to be offered and the price range for the proposed offering have not yet been determined," the company said. According to the filing, Anthropic's revenue was $41 million in 2023, $386 million in 2024 and $4.6 billion in 2025. In the six months ended June 30, 2026, revenue reached $16.3 billion, "representing a year-over-year growth rate of 1,300 per cent."



"We do not expect our revenue will continue to grow at comparable rates, and we cannot assure you that it will continue to grow at all," the company cautioned.

The filing shows a net loss of $41.97 billion for 2025 and $80.75 billion for the first six months of 2026.

Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley are leading a large underwriting syndicate that includes J.P. Morgan, Citigroup, Barclays and Wells Fargo Securities.

Founded in 2021, Anthropic is a public benefit corporation. Its Long-Term Benefit Trust, which the filing describes as "a financially disinterested trust", generally has the power to elect and remove a majority of the board. Chief Executive Dario Amodei and President Daniela Amodei, together with five other co-founders, will hold a special Class F stock through a founders' entity. (IANS)

Harry Kane wins Ballon d'Or



LONDON, OCT 27
England captain Harry Kane has won the 2026 Ballon d'Or in a ceremony at the London Palladium Theatre.

The 70th edition of the prestigious award was held outside of the French capital for the first time this year – as a tribute to its inaugural winner from 1956 Stanley Matthews.

The England captain becomes just the fifth Englishman to win the award, after Stanley Matthews (1956), Bobby Charlton (1966), Kevin Keegan (1978 and 1979), Michael Owen (2001).

Kane's 36 goals for Bayern Munich in the Bundesliga in 2025/26 earned the striker a second European Golden Shoe, while his 61 goals across all competitions for the German giant made headlines around the globe.

The Three Lions striker and joint all-time appearance maker enjoyed a goal-laden season with Bayern Munich and England, scoring 73 times in 65 games – 61 of which came for his club and 12 for his country.

Kane's contributions helped England to finish third at the FIFA World Cup 2026 earlier this summer, the Three Lions' best finish at a World Cup since winning it in 1966.

The forward – Europe's top scorer last season – also won the Bundesliga title, DFB-Pokal and Franz Beckenbauer Supercup with Bayern Munich.

"It was an incredible year for me last year – to score the amount of goals I did was something I'm extremely proud of," he said. "It was the best season of my career without a doubt. It wouldn't be possible without many people along the way. My Bayern Munich teammates, my England teammates, the coaches – Thomas Tuchel, Vincent Kompany. (IANS/UNI)

Lamine Yamal wins young talent of the year award

LONDON, OCT 27
Spain and FC Barcelona striker Lamine Yamal won the Young Talent of the Year award at the 2026 Ballon d'Or ceremony for the third consecutive year, a historic achievement that confirms his position among the brightest young talents in world football.



The young forward ranked third in the Ballon d'Or, behind Harry Kane in first place and Kylian Mbappe in second.

At just 19 years of age, the youngster from Rocafonda in Mataro continues to build an extraordinary career. His first award in 2024 was already significant, recognising his precocious talent, while his second, in 2025, made him the first player ever to successfully defend the title. (IANS)

Luis de la Fuente named coach of the year

Unai Simon wins best goalkeeper award

LONDON, OCT 27
Luis de la Fuente has been awarded the Coach of the Year prize at the 2026 Ballon d'Or ceremony after leading Spain to victory at the 2026 World Cup.



The coach from La Rioja has crafted a true 'signature team', characterised by dominance in possession, relentless vertical aggression and a suffocating tempo. De la Fuente's coaching philosophy reached its zenith at the 2026 World Cup, where Spain marched to the trophy with overwhelming superiority.

Under De la Fuente's guidance, Spain not only returned to the pinnacle of world football but also re-established the undisputed dominance of its golden era, back in 2010. (IANS)

Smriti loses No.1 ODI batter spot

DUBAI, OCT 27
India skipper Smriti Mandhana lost her position at the top of the Women's ODI batting rankings, while Harmanpreet Kaur and Deepti Sharma made significant gains following their performances in the ongoing series against Zimbabwe.

South Africa captain Laura Wolvaardt reclaimed the No.1 spot in the ODI batting rankings after Mandhana lost valuable ranking points for scores of 32 and zero in India's first two matches against Zimbabwe. Mandhana scored 32 in the opening ODI before being dismissed for a duck in the second match.

India have already clinched the three-match series in Vadodara after winning the first two games, with several players making progress in the latest rankings update. Former India captain Harmanpreet moved up two places to eighth among ODI batters, while Deepti climbed four spots to 23rd in the same category. Both players scored centuries in the second ODI, earning significant gains in the rankings. (IANS)

PSG beat Lyon to go top of Ligue 1 table

PARIS, OCT 27
Stunning second-half goals from Senny Mayulu and Mika Godts secured Paris Saint-Germain a 2-0 victory over Olympique Lyonnais at the Parc des Princes.



It was a fifth consecutive Ligue 1 victory - an eighth win in a row in all competitions - that sent the champions to the top of the table for the first time this season.

It was the Parisians who got off to a better start, led by the Ferran Torres, who was denied by Dominik Greif (22'). The capital club were in fine form, forcing Lyon to defend deep in their own half.

On the half-hour mark, the visitors finally responded with a swift counter-attack as Matfey Safanov made a brilliant save to stop Julien Duranville (31'). The Paris goalkeeper was called upon again moments later, this time to deny Zachary Athekame (33'). It was a tight and competitive affair as Luis Enrique's men stepped up a gear once more, but Maghnes Akliouche couldn't find the opener (40').

After the break, Paris were quickly back on the front foot, and Joao Neves, following a fine lay-off from Achraf Hakimi, saw his acrobatic overhead kick fly just over the opposition goal (53').

It was then Ferran's turn to shine once more, but his shot from the right-hand side of the box was once again denied by an imperious Dominik Greif (57'). The Slovakian goalkeeper was keeping his side in the contest as Les Rouge et Bleu further upped the ante. (IANS/UNI)

ENTERTAINMENT



M.A.SALAM
Film Journalist

Udit reunite with Kumar Sanu for 'Suniyo Zara'



Veteran playback singer Udit Narayan has reunited with fellow singing legend Kumar Sanu for the song 'Suniyo Zara' from the upcoming movie, "Suryaa: Ant Se Aarambh Tak."

Narayan described the collaboration as a nostalgic experience that brought him back to a cherished chapter of his musical journey. Reflecting on working with Kumar Sanu again after several years, Udit said the reunion brought back fond memories of his career.

Speaking about the song, Udit said, "Singing with Kumar Sanu again after so many years felt like reliving a beautiful chapter of my career. With Anupam joining us, the energy was fresh yet familiar, and I believe listeners will feel that bond in every note."

Kumar Sanu added, "This song is special because it's not just about music it's about friendship, memories, and the joy of coming together. I'm glad we could give audiences something heartfelt and timeless."

Anupam Amod stated, "Being part of this collaboration with Udit ji and Sanu ji is an honour. Suniyo Zara carries emotions of companionship and journey, and I'm proud to lend my voice to such a meaningful track."

"Suniyo Zara" features Sunny Deol and Ravi Kishan. The track celebrates friendship and shared memories through a musical collaboration that brings together three distinctive voices. "Suniyo Zara" features the voices of Udit Narayan, Kumar Sanu and Anupam Amod. Composed by RAAHEE and written by Priya Saraiya, the song is the first track from the film 'Suryaa: Ant Se Aarambh Tak'.

Mika on performing despite health issues

Singer Mika Singh has shared his views on live performances and audience expectations amid the controversy surrounding singer Daler Mehndi's performance at a religious event in Uttarakhand.



When asked whether artists should perform despite health concerns and whether they have a responsibility to deliver their best to fans, Mika said audiences are honest in expressing their reactions to a performance. He explained that audiences do not hesitate to voice their disappointment when they are not enjoying a show. According to him, fans may even ask an artist to change a song if they find the performance slow or boring.

"If someone doesn't like you, there are fans who hoot for you go get lost. This happens. I have a lot of hit songs, and sometimes, when I start singing a boring song, people ask me to change it. And the audience at Daler Mehndi's concert was enjoying, and Minister Sahib is only getting angry. The whole audience was enjoying the performance and dancing. You can watch the video. You can see the comments on Instagram. You can see the kind of respect the minister has received."

Mika also spoke about how audiences respond to his popular tracks, saying that people often react enthusiastically to songs they enjoy.

"These days, when you give a poor performance, your fans are the ones who shout, 'Get out of here! We're not enjoying this.' It still happens to me that when I start singing a slow song, people walk away," he said.

Daler Mehndi's performance at the Siddhpeeth Maa Kunjapuri Tourism and Development Fair in Uttarakhand drew attention after state minister Subodh Uniyal halted the show before it could conclude. The minister allegedly accused the singer of being intoxicated and lip-syncing at the Navratri event, which was held in a religious setting.

Following the incident, several members of the entertainment industry, including Mika Singh, Palash Sen, Kapil Sharma, Ila Arun, Anupam Kher, and Sudesh Lehri, came forward to express their support for Daler Mehndi.

SRK unveils new 'King' poster

Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan on Tuesday treated his fans with a new poster of his upcoming film "King" and added a punchline saying 'Qaatil nahi... Aashiq hoon'.



Shah Rukh took to Instagram, where he dropped the poster. The glimpse showed the superstar with a rose between his lips, holding a gun in his hand and an intense look in his eyes.The poster also had December 24, 2026 written on it.

Sharing the poster on social media, SRK wrote, "Aaj phir yaad aaya... Qaatil nahi Aashiq hoon #KING In cinemas 24.12.26."

The upcoming Hindi action-thriller film King, directed by Siddharth Anand. It is reported to be an adaptation of the 1994 French crime film Léon: The Professional. The film also stars SRK's daughter Suhana Khan. The primary antagonist is a dark and violent villain played by Abhishek Bachchan.

This will be the first time Shah Rukh will be seen sharing screen space with his daughter Suhana. The film also stars Abhishek Bachchan, Deepika Padukone, Anil Kapoor, Rani Mukerji, Jaideep Ahlawat, Jackie Shroff, Raghav Juyal, and Abhay Verma.

US rapper Macklemore launches 'Free Palestine Tour'

US rapper Macklemore on Monday launched his new "Free Palestine Tour" in Dublin after being dropped as a supporting act by British pop star Ed Sheeran over pro-Palestinian comments.

Standing in lines outside the venue for the first show in the Irish capital, which promoters said had sold out, excited fans praised the 43-year-old's stance.

"Macklemore's support for Palestine is huge. He's stood up and he's put himself on the line instead of taking the easy way out," said Michael Keating, a 31-year-old who works in insurance, told AFP.

"He's risking his popularity, his future, his family's future — everything just for peace. And it is very important."

The "Thrift Shop" star was removed from Sheeran's tour after shouting "Free Palestine!" on stage and telling Palestinians they were "not forgotten."

Kesha's 2009 'Backstabber' music video finally released in 2026

Singer Kesha has finally released her first-ever music video for her song "Backstabber", which she shot in 2009 with her friends in downtown Los Angeles, recalling how she made the video to convince everyone that the track deserved to be a single.



Sharing the story behind the video on Instagram, Kesha, whose real name is Kesha Rose Sebert, shared that she and her friends stayed up all night, did their own glam and filmed it themselves.

Sharing a look on the photo-sharing and reel making application, Kesha wrote: "In 2009, I knew I wanted "Backstabber" to be a single, so I took it upon myself to make this video to convince everyone that it deserved its moment. My friends and I stayed up all night, did our own glam, and shot this video!! Everyone in it is one of my best friends.

She described the project as an authentic reflection of that phase of her life, before her career took off and she went from hanging out at the Drunk Tank to touring the world a year later.

TG govt to hold all-party meeting on El Niño, drought today

TFP I ABDUL RAHMAN KHAN
HYDERABAD, OCT 27



The Telangana government will hold an all-party meeting on Wednesday to discuss the impact of El Niño, rainfall deficits and prevailing drought conditions across the State.

Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka will chair the meeting at 1400 hours in Room No 33 on the sixth floor of the Dr B.R. Ambedkar Telangana State Secretariat.

The meeting will focus on measures to minimise the impact of drought on the general public and the farming community. The government will seek suggestions from leaders of various political parties on ensuring drinking water supplies, conserving water resources, providing electricity for irrigation and encouraging alternative crops in view of the rainfall shortage.

The meeting will also discuss strategies for drought mitigation and proactive measures to address the emerging challenges. The government is expected to urge all political parties to cooperate in tackling the situation and protecting the interests of farmers and the public.



Revenue Minister directs officials to complete land resurvey within 18 months

TFP I HAJI ALI
SANGAREDDY, OCT 27



Ministers Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy, Damodar Rajanarasimha and Vivek Venkataswamy reviewed the functioning of Revenue, Registration and Housing departments of erstwhile united Medak district.

Telangana Revenue, Housing and Information and Public Relations Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy warned that strict action would be taken against revenue officials and employees if their performance did not improve. He said delays in resolving land disputes and difficulties faced by farmers would not be tolerated.

The Minister reviewed the functioning of the Revenue, Registration and Housing departments of the erstwhile united Medak district at the Sangareddy Zilla Parishad meeting hall on Tuesday, along with Ministers Damodar Rajanarasimha and Vivek Venkataswamy and district officials.

Ponguleti said the government had undertaken land resurvey to resolve disputes permanently and improve transparency in land records. He directed Tahsildars and surveyors to conduct surveys accurately, explain land boundaries and extent clearly to farmers, and resolve pending applications promptly.

District Collectors and revenue officials were instructed to inspect survey work in the field and ensure that farmers faced no difficulties. The government aims to complete the resurvey of agricultural lands and abadi properties within 18 months, with the first phase covering 70 villages in each district.

The Minister also said houses would be sanctioned in phases to every eligible poor family. Measures were being taken to supply cement bags at Rs. 230 to reduce construction costs for Indiramma house beneficiaries. He directed officials to expedite incomplete double-bedroom housing projects and ensure that house allotments were transparent and based on eligibility.

The meeting was attended by CCLA Commissioner Lokesh Kumar, Registration and Stamps Department Special Secretary Rajiv Gandhi Hanumanthu, Housing Department Managing Director Goutham, MP Raghunandan Rao, Suresh Shetkar, MLC Anjireddy, and MLAs Chinta Prabhakar, Sunitha Lakshma Reddy, Manik Rao, Kotha Prabhakar Reddy and Sanjeeva Reddy.

Sangareddy, Siddipet and Medak District Collectors Prateek Jain, Haimavathi and Pratima Singh, along with additional collectors, the sub-collector, Revenue Divisional Officers, Tahsildars and officials from various departments, also participated.

Congress targets 100 seats in TG: TPCC chief

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
HYDERABAD, OCT 27



Mahesh Kumar Goud

Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) president Mahesh Kumar Goud on Tuesday said the Congress was targeting 100 seats in the next Assembly elections and expressed confidence that the party would return to power in the State.

Speaking to the media at the Secretariat, Goud said all pending issues would be resolved by November, after which the party would focus directly on preparations for the elections.

He claimed that Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy had given the party leadership a free hand and that coordination within the Congress was strong.

He also criticised former Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao over the State's debt burden and dismissed the BRS leader's remarks on El Niño, saying the weather phenomenon affected the entire country.

Goud said the Congress would benefit electorally from its welfare initiatives, including the fine-quality rice distribution and Indiramma housing schemes, free electricity and the creation of 90,000 jobs. Targeting the BJP, the TPCC chief ruled out the party coming to power in Telangana in the near future.

He also predicted that the BJP would lose several of its existing Assembly and Lok Sabha seats in the State.

KTR blames Cong govt for drought

BRS public meeting in Nirmal on Nov 11

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
HYDERABAD, OCT 27



BRS Working President KT Rama Rao (KTR) on Tuesday accused the Congress government of mismanaging water resources and worsening drought-like conditions in Telangana, alleging that farmers were suffering from shortages of irrigation water, electricity and urea.

Speaking at Telangana Bhavan amidst several Congress and BJP leaders from Nirmal constituency joining the BRS, KTR claimed that waters from the Godavari and Krishna rivers were flowing into the sea instead of being used for irrigation. He alleged that the government's failure to operate lift irrigation pumps had contributed to the crisis and said the situation could have been avoided through better water management.

KTR criticised the Congress government over delays in Rythu Bandhu payments and the implementation of election promises. Recalling the BRS government's initiatives, including 24-hour free power, irrigation facilities, Rythu Bandhu, KCR Kit, Kalyana Lakshmi and Shaadi Mubarak, he claimed that farmers and other sections had benefited during KCR's tenure.

Accusing Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy of neglecting farmers' problems, KTR expressed confidence that Telangana would return to the path of development and welfare under former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao's leadership. He also criticised the BJP and Congress over their performance in Nirmal constituency.

KTR called upon BRS leaders and workers to strengthen the party at the grassroots level and announced a grand public meeting in Nirmal on November 11. He said more leaders were expected to join the party at the meeting and assured party workers that appropriate responsibilities would be assigned to those working for the organisation.

T-BJP Chief criticises Congress demand to halt SIR

Calls vote theft assertions baseless

RATNA CHOTRANI
HYDERABAD, OCT 27



N. Ramchander Rao

Telangana BJP President, N. Ramchander Rao, on Tuesday criticised Congress leaders, including party President Mallikarjun Kharge and Leader of the Opposition (LoP) in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, for demanding a halt to the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls over allegations of alleged irregularities, calling the demand baseless and accusing the Opposition of misleading people with allegations of vote theft.

Speaking to media, Rao said the SIR process had progressed significantly and questioned the Congress' demand to stop it without presenting evidence of alleged voter deletions.

"Congress leaders, including Mallikarjun Kharge, have time and again been asking for the SIR process to be stalled. In fact, the first phase of the SIR is over now. The second phase of the SIR for the remaining voters has been completed," he said.

He added that Kerala, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka were among the states where the second phase of the exercise had been completed, claiming that the overall process was now almost complete.

"How can it be stopped without any proof? Kharge or Rahul Gandhi, it is their demand to stop the SIR without any basis," Rao claimed.

The BJP leader alleged that the Congress had failed to substantiate its claims that legitimate voters had been removed from electoral rolls. He claimed that neither the party's leaders nor the individuals allegedly affected had provided evidence to establish where or how valid votes were deleted.

Reiterating the BJP's stance on the matter, Rao alleged that the Opposition questioned the credibility of EVMs and the Election Commission of India (ECI) primarily when the BJP emerged victorious in elections.

He maintained that the allegations against the electoral process were false and reiterated that the Congress should provide evidence to support its claims rather than demand that the SIR exercise be stopped.

Singareni CMD seeks Angul Collector's support for Naini Coal Mine Projects

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
ANGUL (ODISHA), OCT 27



Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) Chairman and Managing Director Dr. Buddhaprakash Jyoti met Angul District Collector Mohammad Abdaal Akhtar in Odisha on Tuesday to seek support for land allocation, rehabilitation and coal transportation infrastructure for the company's Naini coal mine projects. The Collector assured the company of necessary cooperation.

Dr. Buddhaprakash Jyoti sought land for a rehabilitation and resettlement (R&R) colony for 40 project-affected families and requested an early meeting of the Rehabilitation and Periphery Advisory Committee (RPDAC). He also sought assistance in acquiring land in Tukuda and Jarapada villages for a proposed thermal power plant near the Naini mine.

The CMD requested support for completing the proposed bypass road connecting Chandipara and Jarapada villages to the railway junction. Singareni has deposited Rs. 35 crore towards the project. He also sought land for a company office and staff colony in Odisha, along with assistance for the Majhika bypass road, for which the company offered to fund land acquisition.



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