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INDIAN AMERICAN POPULATION IN US CROSSES 5.4M, CENSUS SURVEY SHOWS

PAGE 8



UCC WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IF BJP RETURNS TO POWER IN UP: AMIT SHAH

PAGE 5

FTAS PROVIDE PREFERENTIAL MARKET ACCESS TO 76% OF GLOBAL GDP

PAGE 7



19 JUMADA AL-AWWAL 1448H

NAMAZ TIME

FAJAR	05:20 AM
ZOHAR	01:30 PM
ASAR	05:00 PM
MAGHRIB	06:15 PM
ISHA	08:15 PM

SUNRISE/SUNSET

11 HRS 44 MINS
RISE 06:09 AM
SET 05:54 PM

MOONRISE/MOONSET

11 HRS 07 MINS
RISE 10:58 AM
SET 10:05 PM

ARAB WORLD▶ P9



HOUTHIS DENY LAUNCHING DRONE TOWARD MECCA REGION

KCR tried to grab Rs. 50,000 Cr Miyapur land: Telangana CM

TFP I ABDUL RAHMAN KHAN
NEW DELHI, OCT 30

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Friday alleged that former Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao tried to encroach on prime land valued at Rs 50,000 crore in Miyapur, Hyderabad. A day after the Supreme Court upheld Telangana government's claim over 550-acre land in Miyapur, the Chief Minister directed officials to take over the land and fence it.

At a press conference in Delhi, the Chief Minister termed the Supreme Court verdict in the 23-year-old case as 'historic', and thanked the apex court for upholding the state government's claim to the land. He alleged that former Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao (KCR), his close associate and Rajya Sabha MP Damodar Rao, and the CMD of 'Namasthe Telangana' attempted to grab the land using businessman Goldstone Prasad as a front.



Caption: Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy addresses a press conference in Delhi.

"By protecting this land, the Supreme Court has ensured that these valuable public assets remain with the people of Telangana. This is a monumental judgment in the interest of the state and its people," said CM Revanth Reddy.

Continued on Page 12

PM Modi counters fertiliser, LPG rumours amid Gulf conflict

BHILDI, OCT 30

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday accused some people of attempting to create panic in the country by spreading rumours about shortages of fertilisers and cooking gas amid the ongoing conflict involving Iran and countries in the Gulf region, claiming that the government had ensured uninterrupted fertiliser supplies to farmers despite rising international prices.

Addressing a gathering in Bhildi in Gujarat's Banaskantha district, PM Modi said India was collectively dealing with the international situation, but alleged that some groups were trying to create confusion and public anxiety.



PM Narendra Modi lays foundation stone of various projects at Banaskantha.

"When the country faces a crisis, some people seem to be happy. The latest example is the war involving Iran and the Gulf region. While India is united in dealing with the situation, these people have been spreading rumours," he said.

PM Modi alleged that farmers had been made to fear that fertilisers would not be available and that artificial queues had been created. He also accused these groups of spreading fears among women that cooking gas would run out, making it difficult for families to cook food or send their children to school.

"Their plan was to create chaos in the country so that they could defame Modi," he said.

The Prime Minister said he had assured farmers that the government would stand firmly with them and claimed that, despite the conflict continuing, it had not allowed farmers to face a shortage of fertilisers. (IANS/UNI)



Centre notifies Census 2027 schedule; enumeration from Jan 25

NEW DELHI, OCT 30

The Ministry of Home Affairs has notified the schedule for the long-awaited Census of India 2027. According to the official notification issued on October 30, 2026, the house-to-house population enumeration will be conducted from January 25 to 28 February 2027, across most States and Union Territories.

"Census in poll-bound States, Goa, UP, Punjab, Uttarakhand and Manipur to be conducted later," a government notification said.

The notification, issued by the Office of the Registrar General of India under the Census Act, 1948, excludes certain areas for the time being.



These include the State of Manipur (till further declaration), Goa, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Uttarakhand, the Union Territory of Ladakh, the snow-bound non-synchronous areas of Himachal Pradesh, and the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

Citizens will have the option of self-enumeration through an online portal from January 10 to January 24, 2027, just before the start of the house-to-house enumeration.

A revisional round will be held from March 1 to March 5, 2027, to verify and correct the recorded information. The reference date for the census has been fixed as 00:00 hours on March 1, 2027.

The last census in India was conducted in 2011.

The subsequent census planned for 2021 was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and has remained pending since then.

The upcoming exercise is expected to provide updated demographic data after a gap of 16 years, which will be crucial for policy planning, resource allocation and welfare schemes. (IANS/UNI)

Six killed in Uttarakhand helicopter crash

DEHRADUN, OCT 30

Five passengers and the pilot were killed as a helicopter, on its way from Badrinath to Sahastradhara, crashed near Chai village close to Joshimath in Uttarakhand on Friday, officials said. The bodies of all six individuals, including the pilot, have been recovered from the crash site by joint teams of the Uttarakhand Police, the State Disaster Response Force, and the Army, which swung into action for rescue and recovery operations after receiving the news of the accident.

The operation to transport all the bodies from the difficult-to-access crash site to a location connected by road is underway, officials said. The pilot of the helicopter, operated by a private aviation company, was identified as Capt. Himanshu Sabharwal, while the passengers were Prathapa, Arun, Shankar Gowda, Sudheer K., and H.S. Natraja, all from Karnataka, police said.

There were no women or children on board the helicopter, officials said. Addressing the media earlier, Chamoli Superintendent of Police Surjeet Singh Panwar said: "One helicopter belonging to 'Trans Bharat Aviation' took off from the Badrinath Civil Helipad for the Sahastradhara Helipad at approximately 1.12 p.m. At around 1.14 p.m., contact with the aircraft was lost near Joshimath."



"Local personnel stationed in the nearby area reported that the helicopter was seen heading into a valley below while flying at a considerable height," he said.

According to the Uttarakhand Civil Aviation Development Authority (UCDA), the helicopter lost communication when it was flying over Joshimath valley. (IANS)

CARTOON CAROUSEL



Binance halts deposits, withdrawals after security breach

NEW DELHI, OCT 30

Binance on Friday said it has suspended deposits and withdrawals as it investigates a security incident with an estimated impact of around $6.3 billion.

In a statement, the world's largest crypto exchange said its initial investigation suggests the incident may involve a compromised DevOps engineer's laptop which allowed an attacker to gain access to a service container and submit unauthorised withdrawal transactions.

Impact estimated at $6.3 billion



"We have found no evidence of any wallet private key leak. We will share a detailed technical post-mortem once the investigation is complete and the facts are fully verified," Binance said.

The exchange said it has worked with blockchain partners to freeze affected assets, with about $3 billion frozen on-chain so far. Binance will cover all losses from the SAFU fund and the company's funds, while user funds are safe.

"The estimated total impact sits at around $6.3B. We have worked with blockchain partners to freeze affected assets, with about $3 billion frozen on-chain so far. The crypto exchange platform further said that it will publish an updated 'Proof of Reserves' once remediation is complete." Binance said in a statement.

"As an immediate precaution, temporarily suspended deposits and withdrawals while security checks are completed," it said.

"Revoked the affected address authorisation and engaged law enforcement and blockchain intelligence partners to trace and recover funds," the exchange added.

"We are working closely with our law enforcement partners to confirm the identity of these criminals and bring them to justice," the exchange said. (IANS/UNI)

Sridhar Babu inaugurates power substation in Bhupalpally

12 new power substations set up in 2.5 years



Minister Sridhar Babu addresses a public meeting in Vadithala village of Chityal mandal, Jayashankar Bhupalpally district.

TFP I MLN MURTHY
J. BHUPALPALLY, OCT 30

Farmers' welfare and agricultural development remain the primary priorities of the Telangana government, said IT and Industries Minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu while inaugurating a 33/11 KV power substation built at a cost of Rs 2.2 crore in Vadithala village of Chityal mandal on Friday.

The minister inaugurated the substation along with MLA Gandra Satyanarayana Rao and District Collector Rahul Sharma, IAS. He said the government had established 12 new substations in the district over the past two-and-a-half years to strengthen power infrastructure and ensure uninterrupted electricity for farmers.

Babu said the government was also planning to supply Godavari water through DBM-38 to improve irrigation facilities. He highlighted welfare initiatives, including 200 units of free electricity for eligible households, fine rice distribution and free bus travel for women. He also announced that an integrated model residential school was being constructed at an estimated cost of Rs 200 crore to provide quality education.

MLA Gandra Satyanarayana Rao said the state's power generation capacity had increased from around 14,000 MW to 21,000 MW. He sought approval for another 33/11 KV substation at Gandhi Nagar Gutta and said plans were being prepared to provide irrigation to 44,770 acres through DBM-38 and connect another 70,000 acres under the SRSP network.

Collector Rahul Sharma, IAS said the newly inaugurated substation would improve electricity services in five villages and urged people to avoid wastage and use power responsibly.

SP Sirisetti Sankeerth, MPDCL Director Mohan Rao, District Library Corporation Chairman Rajababu, Municipal Chairman Burra Komuraiah, NPDCL SE Sadanandam, Sarpanch Bhagawan and other public representatives attended the programme.

Edulapuram to be developed as model municipality: Ponguleti

TFP I N.J. CHARY
KHAMMAM, OCT 30

Telangana Revenue, Housing and Information and Public Relations Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy has announced plans to develop Edulapuram Municipality as a model municipality in the state, with a major investment in roads and basic infrastructure.

Along with District Collector Divakar T.S., the minister laid foundation stones for 46 internal cement concrete roads in Ward No. 6, Singareni Colony, at a cost of Rs 4.96 crore and a BT road from Prakash Nagar Bridge to Kodad R&B Road via Kota Narayanapuram



Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy

Indiramma Colony at Rs 2.50 crore.

Ponguleti said over Rs 100 crore had already been allocated for development works in the municipality, with another Rs 100 crore to Rs 150 crore planned. He added that works worth Rs 79.79 crore had been taken up in Divisions 6, 7 and 8 since the Congress government came to power. Measures were also being taken to address drinking water, drainage and electricity issues.

The minister highlighted welfare schemes, including 200 units of free electricity, free bus travel for women, new ration cards, fine rice distribution and the Indiramma housing scheme.

Collector Divakar T.S. said foundation stones had been laid for works worth Rs 30 crore in the municipality within a week and assured that engineering officials would monitor progress to ensure timely completion.

8 Cases registered during rice mill inspections

TFP I ANIL YADAV
NALGONDA, OCT 30



Legal Metrology Department officials registered eight cases against rice mills and retail rice shops during inspections conducted in Miryalaguda town for violations of weights and measures regulations.

The inspections covered five rice mills and three retail shops under the supervision of the Assistant Controller, Legal Metrology, Nalgonda, and were conducted by the District Legal Metrology Officer. Five cases were booked against rice mills and three against retail shops.

Officials advised consumers to check the declared net weight of rice bags and verify the actual weight, excluding the weight of the packaging, before purchasing. They urged consumers to report discrepancies or violations to the concerned authorities.

Traders were warned to strictly comply with the Legal Metrology Act and Packaged Commodities Rules, failing which strict legal action would be initiated.

TGPCB orders immediate odour control measures

HYDERABAD, OCT 30

The Telangana Pollution Control Board (TGPCB) has warned chemical units in Jeedimetla and Balanagar against odour pollution following complaints from residents.

At a compliance meeting on Friday, officials directed industries to improve scrubber operations, monitor air quality every fortnight, maintain records and take immediate corrective measures.

Non-compliant units will face legal action. (NSS)

MUDA to prioritise drinking water, development works: Mahbubnagar MLA

TFP | AHAD SIDDIQUI
MAHBUBNAGAR, OCT 30

The Mahbubnagar Urban Development Authority (MUDA) will prioritise drinking water supply, basic infrastructure and completion of pending development works while allocating its funds, Government Whip and Mahbubnagar MLA Yennam Srinivas Reddy said on Thursday.



Y. Srinivas Reddy

Speaking after the MUDA General Body meeting chaired by its chairman Lakshman Yadav, Yennam said the authority would identify previously sanctioned but incomplete projects and restart stalled works. Incomplete function halls, community halls and meeting halls would also be completed and made available to the public. He stressed that public funds must be used effectively and that projects directly benefiting people would receive priority.

The meeting was attended by Jadcherla MLA Anirudh Reddy, Devarakadra MLA G. Madhusudhan Reddy, Mahbubnagar Mayor Gummala Mamatha Srinivas, officials and other public representatives. Yennam said MUDA had earlier supported educational infrastructure, including hostel facilities and study rooms.

He added that all MLAs within MUDA's jurisdiction would jointly meet Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and seek additional funds to complete pending works and take up further development projects across Mahbubnagar and its surrounding areas.

The Mahabubnagar Urban Development Authority will include Mahabubnagar, Jadcherla and Bhootpur municipalities and 142 peripheral villages in its preview.

Since the formation of Telangana, Mahabubnagar has seen unprecedented growth. Improved connectivity through bypasses and national highways has redefined the town's layout.

Congress posts carry responsibility: Satish Reddy

TFP I RAVI KUMAR
MEDCHAL-MALKAJGIRI, OCT 30



Sheri Satish Reddy

Former Kukatpally Congress Division President Sheri Satish Reddy has called on party leaders to treat organisational positions as responsibilities rather than status symbols, stressing the need for accountability and support for grassroots workers.

Addressing the media, Reddy said constituency in-charges must rise above caste considerations, respect party workers and support cadres from all sections. He emphasised that leaders should take personal responsibility for organising party activities, including arranging transport and food for workers, besides extending financial assistance to those facing difficulties.

Criticising leaders who use party positions for publicity or personal gain, he said, "Don't use the party for position; use the position for the party." He urged Congress leaders to stand by the workers whose sacrifices have strengthened the organisation and work collectively to uphold the party's values.

3 held for selling 83 mule bank accounts to cyber fraudsters

TFP I SAUD SIDDIQUI
HYDERABAD, OCT 30



The Commissioner's Task Force, Charminar Zone, along with Attapur Police, arrested three persons for allegedly procuring bank accounts from local residents and selling them to cyber fraudsters. Two other accused, identified as Vijay and Babu Lal of Jaipur, Rajasthan, are absconding, Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police K.S. Rao said.

The arrested were identified as Syed Abbas Ullah Hussaini (24), Mohammed Talha Khan (23) and Nawab Mohammed Rahemuddin Khan (20), all residents of Hussaini Alam. Investigations revealed that the gang had arranged 83 bank accounts across 22 branches of various banks in Hyderabad. Eleven of these accounts were allegedly linked to 14 cyber fraud transactions across several states and Delhi, involving a total of approximately Rs. 10.04 crore.

Cases have been registered at Attapur and Kalwakurthy police stations under relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and the Information Technology Act. The operation was led by Charminar Task Force Inspector C. Yadender and his team, along with Attapur Police.

Students sensitised on POCSO Act and Child Rights in Gadwal



TFP I SANAULLAH
J. GADWAL, OCT 30

The District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Jogulamba Gadwal, organised awareness programmes in four schools on Friday under the nationwide 'Surakshit Bachpan Abhiyan', focusing on the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012, and child rights.

The campaign, titled 'Kanoon Jaano, Bachpan Bachao' (Know the Law, Save Childhood), covered Saraswati Vidya Mandir, Visvesvaraya High School and Better Life Model School in Gadwal, and Zilla Parishad High School at Palwai in Maldakal mandal. Students were educated on preventing sexual offences, child labour and child marriage, protecting children's rights and accessing free legal aid.

At Saraswati Vidya Mandir, Special Sessions Judge and POCSO Court Judge V. Srinivas and DLSA Secretary G. Nishka Pathrudu urged children to report harassment without fear and called for collective efforts by parents, teachers and society to ensure child safety. Deputy Superintendent of Police Y. Mogalaiah, Principal Beechupalli and Paralegal Volunteer T. Venkatramudu also participated.

At Visvesvaraya High School, Nishka Pathrudu highlighted legal protection available to children, while Bharosa team member Sirisha, Principal Kishore Kumar Goud and Paralegal Volunteer Venkatramudu attended.

At Better Life Model School, Pathrudu, Assistant Government Pleader Varalakshmi Devi and Bharosa team member Sirisha addressed students. CDPO Ravi, Correspondent Sanjeeva Reddy, Principal Soujanya and Paralegal Volunteer P. Anandaraj also participated.

At Zilla Parishad High School, Palwai, Deputy Legal Aid Defence Counsel B. Srinivasulu explained the POCSO Act and the availability of free legal assistance through the DLSA. Headmaster Narasimhaswamy and Paralegal Volunteer Narender Kumar were present.

The campaign encouraged students to speak up against abuse and seek help.

Sex racket busted; three arrested, woman rescued

TFP I CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, OCT 30

The Golconda police, along with the Commissioner's Task Force busted an alleged prostitution racket operating in the Golconda police station limits and arrested three persons, including a woman organiser, her sub-organiser and a customer.

One woman was rescued during the raid.

The arrested persons were identified as Farha Begum (32), the alleged organiser, Farheen (25), the sub-organiser, and Fayaz Alam (32), the customer.

According to a police statement on Friday, the two women allegedly lured other women with attractive payments, and arranged customers in return for money.

Acting on credible information, the Task Force team raided the premises and rescued the victim.

A case has been registered at Golconda Police Station under Crime No. 406/2026 under Sections 143(2) and 144(2) of the BNS and Sections 3, 4 and 5 of the PITA Act.

"e" Procurement Tender Notice

e-NIT No.06/DSE/SEK/R&B/KMNR/2026-27, Dt.26.10.2026

1. Online tender is invited for the work of "Repairs & Renovation to Male Surgical Ward Block at GGH, Karimnagar" with estimate amount of Rs.76.00 Lakhs under e-procurement platform in R&B Department.
2. Tenderers schedules can download from e-market place i.e https:/ tenders.telangana.gov.in. from 28.10.2026 at 4.00 P.M onwards. The last date of receipt of tenders is on or before 04.11.2026 up to 3.30 P.M.

Sd/- Superintending Engineer, (R&B) Circle, Karimnagar.

DIPR - R.O. No. : 12809-PP/CL/ADVT/2026-27

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER-II, KHAIRTABAD ZONE, HYDERABAD

No.11/EE-II/Circle-38/ Khairatabad Zone/GHMC/2026-27, Dt: 29-10-2026

NIT. No	Name of Work	Estimate Amount / ECV	Start Date / Down Load End Date & time	Name & Address of the Officer
11/EE-II/CIRCLE -38/ KZ/ GHMC /2026-27	Civil works (04 Nos)	Rs.4.50 Lakhs	For Works at Sl.No.01 to 04 31-10-2026 @ 12.00 P.M to 02-11-2026 upto 2.00 P.M Only	Executive Engineer-II, KZ, GHMC.

Further details can be seen at e-procurement @ https://www.tender.eprocurement.gov.in
e-mail address : eec38.yousufguda@gmail.com
Mobile No : 7331189501

Sd/- EXECUTIVE ENGINEER-II KHAIRATABAD ZONE, GHMC.

DIPR - R.O. No. : 12793-PP/CL/ADVT/2026-27

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, DIVN. NO. 28, CHARMINAR ZONE

Short Tender Notice No.41/EE/Div-28/GHMC/2026-27, Dated:29.10.2026

Nit No.	Description of the work	Estimate Amount	Star Date / Last Date & Time for Receipts of Bids	Name & Address Officer Cell no
Short Tender Notice No.41/EE. Div. No.28/ GHMC/26-27 Dated: 29.10.2026	Maintenance works (01) No.	Rs.1.25 Lakhs	Starting Date 30.10.2026, @ 12.00 PM Last date & Time of Receipts of 02.10.2026 12.00 PM	Smt. R. Indira Bai 9963025505

Sd/- EXECUTIVE ENGINEER DIV.28, CRZ, GHMC.

DIPR - R.O. No. : 12743-PP/CL/ADVT/2026-27

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

NIT	Name of work	Estimate Amount (Rs. In Lakhs)	Start Date / Last Date & Time for receipts of Bids	Name & Address Officer
NIT No. 09/SE(GZ)/ GHMC/2026-27 Dated: 29-10-2026	Various Civil Engineering works under Golconda Zone, GHMC.	497.00	Bid document Download Start Date : 31-10-2026 @ 11.00 AM Bid document Download End Date: 09-11-2026 @ 11.00 AM Technical Bid Opening Date: 09-11-2026 @ 11.30 AM Price Bid Opening Date: 10-11-2026 @ 11.00 AM	Superintending Engineer, Golconda Zone, Ghmc 5th Floor Abids Parking Complex, Abids, Hyderabad.

For further details can be seen at e-procurement website www.tender.telangana.gov.in

Sd/- SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER (FAC) GOLCONDA ZONE, GHMC.

DIPR - R.O. No. : 12747-PP/CL/ADVT/2026-27

MALKAJGIRI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

'e' NIT No.	Name of Work	Start Date / Last Date & Time for Receipt of Bids	Name & Address Officer Cell No.
NIT No:02/IT/ MMC/2026-27, Dt: 30.10.2026	Procurement of Identification Cards (Id), (Card Holders And Id Tags) for Regular and Outsourcing Employees working In Malkajgiri Municipal Corporation (MMC).	Start date: 02.10.2026 @ 04:00 PM onwards End date: 05.10.2026 @ 03:00 PM	O/o Additional Commissioner (IT), HMDA Building, 1st Floor, Tarnaka - 500007 Phone: 7995007399 deeitmmc@gmail.com

Sd/- Dy. Executive Engineer (Information Technology),MMC.

DIPR - R.O. No. : 12830-PP/CL/ADVT/2026-27

CHANGE OF NAME

I **GULAM HAQHANI MOHAMMAD** (Old Name), S/o **MOHAMMED KHAJA MOINUDDIN** R/o.H.No 14 - 8 - 277 NIZAM PURA, WARANGAL, DIST: WARANGAL, T.G. 506002, India, have changed my name to **MOHAMMED SAMIUDDIN AFROZ** here after my name is know as **MOHAMMED SAMIUDDIN AFROZ**

CHANGE OF NAME

I **YASMI NNUSA BEGUM** (Old Name), W/o **MOHAMMED SAMIUDDIN AFROZ** R/o.H.No 14-8-277, NIZAM PURA, WARANGAL, DIST: WARANGAL T.G. 506002, India, have changed my name to **NOORJAHAN BEGUM** here after my name is know as **NOORJAHAN BEGUM**

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TG plans Rs. 84,790 Crore investment in Hyderabad region; Musi works to begin soon: Dy CM Bhatti

Rs. 55,000 Cr worth of development works underway



Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, Welfare Minister Adluri Laxman Kumar at 16th NAREDCO Telangana Property Show 2026 at HITEX Exhibition Centre.

RATNA CHOTRANI
HYDERABAD, OCT 30

Telangana has drawn up an investment plan of Rs. 84,790 crore for the development of Hyderabad and its surrounding areas, with works worth Rs. 55,000 crore already designed, tendered or under execution, Deputy Chief Minister and Finance Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka said on Friday.

Speaking after inaugurating the 16th NAREDCO Telangana Property Show 2026 at the HITEX Exhibition Centre, Bhatti announced that the first phase of the Musi rejuvenation project, estimated at Rs. 7,500 crore, would begin soon. Sewerage Treatment Plants have also been sanctioned for 21 major drains joining the river to prevent untreated wastewater from entering it.

He said Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy was personally monitoring major urban development initiatives, HMDA, including the Regional Ring Road, Musi rejuvenation and Bharat Future City. The government has earmarked Rs. 52,736 crore for Hyderabad Growth Corridor and Hyderabad Metro Rail, besides allocations for water supply, municipal bodies and road infrastructure.

Bhatti said Bharat Future City was being developed across 30,000 acres, with nearly 15,000 acres reserved for green spaces. He also highlighted plans to shift industries outside the Outer Ring Road in phases, promote electric vehicles and strengthen infrastructure to support Hyderabad's expansion. He urged real estate developers to focus on affordable housing and submit suggestions on construction costs and revenue mobilisation.

The Deputy Chief Minister said the government was pursuing development alongside welfare measures, citing allocations for rural roads and financial assistance to farmers under Rythu Bharosa. He added that a Skills University was being established at Future City and 65 ITIs were being upgraded into Advanced Technology Centres.

The event was attended by Minister for SC and ST Welfare Adluri Laxman Kumar and MLC T. Bhanu Prasad Rao as guests of honour. Bhanu Prasad Rao urged the government to expedite NALA certifications and called on the media to project Hyderabad positively as an investment destination. The dignitaries also released the NAREDCO annual magazine Horizon.

NAREDCO Telangana President Sreedhar Reddy Koppula, Secretary General R. Venkateswara Rao, Executive Vice-Presidents Kali Prasad Damera and K. Gopala Krishna, and Treasurer Kondala Sudhakar Reddy also addressed the gathering. The three-day property show, featuring more than 500 projects, apartments, villas, plots and commercial properties, will be open at HITEX from October 30 to November 1.

3-day 'Beyond the Divide' exhibition begins at Nampally



Telangana Govt Advisor Mohammed Ali Shabbir inaugurated three-day exhibition and seminar, "Beyond the Divide - Countering Hate, Building Harmony".

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
HYDERABAD, OCT 30

A three-day exhibition and seminar titled 'Beyond the Divide – Countering Hate, Building Harmony', organised by Jamaat-e-Islami Hind (JIH), Greater Hyderabad, opened at the Exhibition Grounds in Nampally on Friday. The programme features thematic galleries, visual presentations and interactive exhibits aimed at challenging stereotypes, countering misinformation and promoting communal harmony.

Inaugurating the exhibition, Telangana Government Advisor Mohammed Ali Shabbir (SC, ST, OBC and Minorities) said India's strength lay in its diversity and shared history. Recalling the contribution of Muslims, particularly religious scholars and ulema, to the freedom struggle, he said people from different communities had made sacrifices for the country's independence.

Shabbir Ali said attempts to divide people on religious lines or portray any community as outsiders would not succeed as long as citizens and organisations upheld constitutional values and communal harmony. He appreciated Jamaat-e-Islami Hind for creating a platform to address misconceptions through dialogue, facts and public awareness.

JIH Telangana former President Hamed Mohammed Khan and JIH Greater Hyderabad City President Dr. Md. Mubashir Ahmed, along with other organisers, said the initiative aimed to replace fear and suspicion with understanding and mutual respect.

The programme, being held from October 30 to November 1, also includes seminars and panel discussions involving educationists, journalists, historians, religious scholars and intellectuals. The exhibition will be open from 12.30 pm to 9.30 pm on October 31 and November 1, with free entry.

CEO warns of legal action over fake graduate voter certificates



TFP I RAVI KUMAR
MEDCHAL-MALKAJGIRI, OCT 30

Telangana Chief Electoral Officer C. Sudarshan Reddy has directed electoral officials to ensure transparency and accuracy in graduate voter registration, warning that strict legal action will be taken against applicants submitting fake certificates.

He issued the directions during a review meeting at the Alwal Municipal Office on Friday, attended by Medchal-Malkajgiri District Collector Manu Chaudhary and Additional Collector Vijayender Reddy.

Reviewing the progress of enrolment and field-level verification, the CEO instructed officials to expedite the process without compromising accuracy. He directed them to thoroughly scrutinise Form-18 applications, degree certificates and supporting documents before approving voter registration.

Malkajgiri Revenue Divisional Officer Shyam Prakash, Alwal Tahsildar Ramulu and other civic officials also attended the meeting.

BJP opposes sale of 550 acres of Miyapur land



N Ramchander Rao

TFP I CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, OCT 30

BJP Telangana president N Ramchander Rao on Friday strongly opposed any move by the Congress government to sell or auction 550 acres of valuable Miyapur land following the Supreme Court verdict in favour of the State government.

In a statement, he alleged that the previous BRS government had attempted to transfer the land to private parties, but the Supreme Court had rejected the claims. However, he criticised the Congress government for announcing plans to auction the land immediately after the verdict, without considering its long-term public utility.

Rao said the government should formulate a proper plan to utilise the valuable property, keeping local development requirements and public interest in mind.

He described the proposed hurried sale of government land to mobilise funds as an inappropriate approach, particularly when the government was facing financial constraints in meeting welfare commitments, including employees' DA, PRC and pension payments.

He warned that the BJP would strongly oppose any attempt to hand over the land to private parties through an immediate sale or auction, and demanded that the government ensure its utilisation for public benefit.



ED searches 3 premises in cyber fraud case



TFP I MANVEER SINGH
HYDERABAD, OCT 30

In a crackdown against cyber fraud, the ED collected digital evidence and seized Rs 6.40 lakh in cash and froze 11 bank accounts with a balance of Rs 14 lakh during search operations at three premises in Hyderabad, an official said on Friday.

The Directorate of Enforcement, Kochi Zonal Office, conducted searches in Hyderabad on October 28, 2026, under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002. The searches were at the premises related to Allamraju Satyanarayana Murthy and were conducted in connection with a cyber fraud case registered at Ernakulam, the official said in a statement.

The ED investigation was initiated on the basis of an FIR registered by the Cyber Police Station, Ernakulam.

As per the FIR, the complaint was lodged by Nimesh alleging that he was induced by the accused through telephonic communications and chat messages using the Telegram app to make investments by promising high returns, the ED said.

Accordingly, the accused deceived the complainant into transferring an aggregate sum of Rs 24,76 crore in several instalments to various bank accounts maintained by or under the control of the accused, it said.

The investigation revealed that the complainant was cheated of Rs 26.02 crore during the period from May 23, 2023, to May 27, 2024. After receiving the money, the accused transferred it to various mule accounts operated by them, the ED said.

These entities included BTR Industries, Velugu Trading Company, Aasritha Mega Solutions Pvt Ltd., Aasritha Infra Projects and Aasritha Infra Projects Pvt Ltd, it said.

The ED said a Villa Project in Hyderabad was launched in the name of Aasritha Infra Projects and Aasritha Infra Projects Pvt Ltd. The accused has acquired multiple immovable properties from the Proceeds of Crime, the ED said.

During the search, incriminating evidence in the form of documents and digital evidence was seized. The ED said it also identified immovable properties, plots and a villa, valued at about Rs 5 crore.



OCTOPUS Conducts Security Mock Drill at Secretariat



TFP I TAHER ALI
HYDERABAD, OCT 30

The OCTOPUS (Organisation for Counter Terrorist Operations) team conducted an operational mock drill at the Telangana Secretariat on Friday to assess the preparedness and coordination of security and emergency response agencies.

Led by B. Mariya Dasu, SOC/DSP, Echo SWAT Team, the exercise involved 130 personnel from OCTOPUS, Law and Order Police, Fire Department, CSG, Telangana Special Police Force (TGSPF), Traffic Police, medical services and the Bomb Disposal Team, along with an assault dog.

Ragunandan Rao, Additional SP, OCTOPUS, P. Devidas, Chief Security Officer, TGSPF, Secretariat, Sankar, ACP, Secretariat, Rama Krishna, Deputy SP, OCTOPUS, Mohan Rao, ACP, Traffic, Pavan Kumar, Assistant Commandant, TGSPF, and Sattaiah, Assistant Commandant, TGSPF, participated in the exercise.

Thousands join INDIA Bloc rally in Agartala, demand removal of CEC Gyanesh Kumar

AGARTALA, OCT 30

Thousands of people, including a large number of women, took part in a massive protest rally organised by the INDIA Bloc parties here on Friday, demanding the removal of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar over allegations of electoral malpractices and alleged irregularities in the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.



Carrying thousands of Tricolours, singing patriotic songs and raising slogans, the protesters marched through the streets of the state capital, Agartala, demanding the removal of CEC Gyanesh Kumar over allegations of "vote theft and various other electoral malpractices".

The Tripura unit of the INDIA Bloc, comprising eight political parties -- the Congress, CPI(M), CPI, Revolutionary Socialist Party, All India Forward Bloc, CPI(ML), Gana Mancha and Tripura People's Party -- jointly organised the protest rally and vowed to continue their agitation until their demands were met.

The protesters marched through different parts of the city, raising slogans and expressing their anger over what they described as serious irregularities in the electoral process.

The rally witnessed a massive public turnout, with participants waving the national flag and calling for greater accountability and transparency in the country's electoral system.

The protest rally was followed by a public meeting in the state capital, where the demonstrators reiterated their demand for the removal of Gyanesh Kumar and the suspension of the ongoing SIR of electoral rolls.

Former Tripura Chief Minister and veteran CPI(M) leader, Manik Sarkar, Leader of the Opposition (LoP) Jitendra Chaudhury, former Minister Manik Dey, Tripura state Congress President Asish Kumar Saha, former Minister and Congress Working Committee member Sudip Roy Barman, along with several other senior leaders of the INDIA Bloc, led the protest rally and addressed the gathering.

The four-point charter of demands includes the removal of Gyanesh Kumar from the post of Chief Election Commissioner, withdrawal of the ongoing SIR process, a review of provisions allegedly affecting the independence of the Election Commission, and opposition to the legal protections granted to the Chief Election Commissioner.

CPI(M) Tripura state secretary and Jitendra Chaudhury alleged that the SIR exercise could lead to the exclusion of genuine voters from electoral rolls if adequate safeguards were not put in place.

He also questioned the neutrality of the Election Commission and accused the BJP-led Central government of weakening the country's democratic institutions.

"Nearly 13.50 crore voters have already been removed from electoral rolls across the country through the SIR exercise, and there are apprehensions that over 2.50 lakh voters could be deleted from Tripura's electoral rolls during the upcoming SIR process," Chaudhury said.

Tripura state Congress Committee President, Asish Kumar Saha, echoed similar concerns, alleging irregularities in voter registration, including duplicate entries and unusually large numbers of voters registered at certain addresses. (IANS)

Congress accuses BJP of scorning Parliament, links mock session to CEC appointment

TFP I PRASHANT SHARMA
NEW DELHI, OCT 30

Senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh on Friday sharply criticised the BJP for organising a mock Parliament, alleging that the ruling party has consistently undermined the institution of Parliament since 2014.



In a post on X, Ramesh said it was "not at all surprising" that the BJP ecosystem had held a mock Parliament, as he accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah of repeatedly mocking parliamentary democracy by bulldozing bills, denying debates on issues of public importance, denigrating parliamentary institutions and converting both Houses into platforms for self-glorification.

Ramesh specifically referred to the December 2023 episode when a Bill granting unprecedented life-long immunity to the Chief Election Commissioner was passed by both Houses while 145 Opposition MPs were under suspension.

He alleged that soon after the passage of the Bill, Gyanesh Kumar was positioned as Chief Election Commissioner to implement what he described as "nefarious Modi-Shah designs" aimed at stripping crores of Indians of their constitutional right to vote.

The Congress leader's remarks come against the backdrop of the ongoing political confrontation over the Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls and the opposition's campaign questioning the functioning of the Election Commission.

The INDIA bloc has been demanding the resignation of the CEC and has organised a series of programmes, including a mock parliamentary session, to highlight its allegations of "vote chori".

The BJP has consistently rejected such allegations, asserting that parliamentary proceedings are conducted according to rules and that the Election Commission functions independently.

The ruling party has described the opposition's campaign as an attempt to discredit constitutional institutions after facing electoral setbacks.

INDIA bloc's 'public impeachment' event postponed

Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, on Friday said that the INDIA bloc's "public impeachment" event against Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar over alleged irregularities in the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls has been postponed to Saturday, due to adverse weather in the national capital.

The event has been rescheduled for 2 p.m. on Saturday and will be held at its previously decided venue, Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge's official residence.

"The event was originally scheduled to be held today, but due to rain, it has been postponed and fixed for tomorrow afternoon," a statement said.

Following the postponement, Gandhi, addressing the media, said.

Nipah drug supply under probe

KOZHIKODE, OCT 30

Kerala Health Minister, K. Muraleedharan, on Friday raised fresh questions over the medicines supplied to Nipah patients in the state during former Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan's regime, saying there were doubts whether a drug meant for clinical trials had also been administered to patients and that some medicines supplied lacked manufacturing dates.


K. Muraleedharan

Speaking to reporters in Kozhikode, Muraleedharan said a comprehensive investigation had been ordered based on information provided by the Superintendent of Kozhikode Medical College.

The enquiry would also examine the foreign pharmaceutical companies involved in the supply, the intermediaries who facilitated the transactions and the financial benefits they received.

The latest revelations follow the Minister's disclosure in the Assembly on Thursday that Remdesivir purchased in 2021, with an expiry date of May 30, 2023, was suspected to have been used in subsequent years.

The Kerala Medical Services Corporation (KMSCL) had purchased 3,000 vials of the drug on June 3, 2021, at a cost of Rs 42 lakh.

Records from Kozhikode Medical College showed that 102 vials were used in 2023-24, 34 in 2024-25 and 10 in 2025-26.

The Minister said the 50 vials used in 2026 were separately procured from Bahrain on June 12, 2026.

A medical board headed by Dr R. Aravind, head of the Infectious Diseases Department at Thiruvananthapuram Medical College, has been constituted to examine whether the suspected use of expired medicines was linked to patient deaths and whether other recipients suffered adverse effects.

Muraleedharan also said the letter sent to him by Leader of the Opposition, Pinarayi Vijayan, had only cautioned against giving cheaper medicines to patients and contained no reference to clinical trials or expired drugs.

He said the government would take appropriate action after the investigation brought out all the facts. Incidentally this took place when former Pinarayi Vijayan headed the state from 2016-26. (IANS)

BJP holds large scale 'Save Democracy' march in Indore, MP CM Yadav targets Congress over SIR

INDORE, OCT 30

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Friday organised a massive 'Loktantra Bachao-Arajkata Hatao' (Save Democracy, Remove Anarchy) foot march in Indore, with Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav and senior party leaders accusing the Congress of undermining democratic institutions and opposing the revision of electoral rolls for political gains.



The march, which marked a major political mobilisation by the BJP in the state, was attended by Union Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, State BJP President Hemant Khandelwal and party's National General Secretary and Madhya Pradesh Incharge Biplab Kumar Deb, along with several Ministers, MPs and MLAs.

Addressing the gathering, Chief Minister Yadav said the people of Madhya Pradesh would never accept the Congress' politics of anarchy and negativity.

He described the large turnout in Indore as a clear message to Rahul Gandhi and other opposition leaders.

"The massive gathering in Indore is a clear warning to Rahul Gandhi, the Congress and other opposition parties. Those attempting to create anarchy in the country out of their lust for power should understand that no force can stop the BJP's lotus from blooming," CM Yadav said.

He alleged that the Congress, having failed to secure power through democratic processes, was now attempting to discredit elected governments and create an atmosphere of instability by questioning constitutional institutions.

The Chief Minister also accused the Congress and its allies of trying to create situations similar to those witnessed in Bangladesh and Nepal by challenging elected governments and autonomous institutions.

Emphasising the need to uphold the dignity of constitutional bodies, CM Yadav said respecting the Election Commission and the Supreme Court was essential for strengthening democracy.

He also administered an oath to participants to protect democratic values and uphold the dignity of constitutional institutions.

State BJP President Khandelwal targeted the Congress over its opposition to the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, alleging that the party wanted the names of foreign nationals and deceased persons to remain on voter lists. (IANS)

HC seeks reply on Saurav Das's identity, nationality

CHENNAI, OCT 30

Is Cockroach Janata Party (CJP) co-convenor Saurav Das an Indian? A Public Interest Litigation (PIL) petition has raised this question and sought cancellation of his passport and Aadhaar card if he is found not to be, and the Madras High Court on Friday has ordered notice to the union Government, directing the Home Ministry to probe his nationality.


Saurav Das

Hearing a petition filed by one R Ganesh Kumar, a businessman of Chennai, the First Bench of Chief Justice SA Dharmadhikari and Justice G Arul Murugan also ordered notice to Das. The petitioner also prayed for a direction to block X and Instagram handles of Das to prevent him from posting derogatory statements against Supreme Court Judges.

The petitioner, claiming that the actual name of Das was Yogesh Sharma, alleged in his affidavit that the CJP leader had roots in Nepal. He had deliberately concealed the facts and fraudulently obtained an Aadhaar card and passport, besides a voter ID as well.

Describing Das as a 'jobless person with no genuine work and a self-styled representative of the CJP', the PIL litigant accused him of 'spreading hatred among the youth through his social media handles, posting false and unsubstantiated allegations'.

According to the affidavit, one does not know how many passports Das was holding, which required a 'deeper probe in the interest of the nation'. (IANS)

Residents allege drug trade, extortion in Asansol

KHURSHID ALAM
ASANSOL, OCT 30

Residents have raised concerns over alleged drug trafficking, extortion and intimidation in the red-light area under Ward No. 59 of the Asansol Municipal Corporation.

According to local residents, some people visiting the area from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand are allegedly threatened and pressured into paying large sums of money, with demands reportedly ranging from Rs. 1 lakh to Rs. 2 lakh for a single night.

Residents also alleged that middlemen approach outsiders in nearby areas and take them to the locality, where they are subsequently pressured to pay.

Advocate and Congress leader Rajeshwar Sharma, speaking to the media, alleged that drug-related activities were flourishing in the area and expressed concern over their potential impact on young people.

He also raised concerns about alleged extortion and intimidation, urging the state government and administration to conduct an impartial investigation and take strict legal action against those found guilty. Local residents have also called for a thorough probe and effective measures to maintain law and order in the area. (IANS)

J&K LG reviews security preparedness

SRINAGAR, OCT 30

Jammu and Kashmir's Lt Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday chaired a high-level security review meeting at Lok Bhavan here to assess the prevailing security situation and preparedness across the Union Territory. All Deputy Commissioners and Senior Superintendents of Police attended the meeting, during which the overall security scenario and the preparedness of the district administration and police machinery to tackle emerging challenges were reviewed. Officials said the meeting focused on assessing the security situation in different districts and strengthening coordination between the civil administration.

AP accelerates post-cyclone relief



AMARAVATI, OCT 30
Authorities in Andhra Pradesh have stepped up efforts to restore normalcy in areas affected by Cyclone Arnab.

Various departments were active on the ground, focusing on the restoration of power, transport, and communication systems, officials said on Friday.

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu conducted a review of the relief and restoration works before heading for a field visit to the affected areas in West Godavari district.

Officials reported progress in the restoration of power, roads, and communication systems. He was informed that power restoration work accelerated with support from other states.

Reviewing relief operations being carried out by various departments at the village level, the Chief Minister instructed officials to maintain their commitment until aid reaches everyone and all issues are fully resolved.

With the Chief Minister personally interacting with field-level staff, the administration has been completing tasks on a war footing.

Within the jurisdiction of Andhra Pradesh Eastern Power Distribution Company Limited (APEPDCL), power supply has been restored to 4,881 out of the 5,404 villages that experienced outages.

Out of the 552 substations affected within the APEPDCL jurisdiction, 513 have been restored. With about 93 per cent of the restoration work completed, 39 substations remain to be restored. According to officials, power supply has been fully restored to all affected villages in the Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam, Anakapalli, Kakinada, and Eluru districts. (IANS)

UCC will be implemented if BJP returns to power in UP: Amit Shah

LUCKNOW, OCT 30
Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday stated that the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) will be implemented in Uttar Pradesh if the BJP-led NDA forms the government for the third time following the 2027 Assembly polls.



HM Shah made the remarks while speaking at the inauguration of the BJP's state executive committee meeting in Lucknow, as part of preparations for the Assembly elections.

UP BJP President and Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, both Deputy Chief Ministers, and other senior party leaders were present at the event.

Addressing the meeting, Amit Shah urged party workers to set aside personal grievances and ambitions, strengthen the organization, and consider the next Assembly election as their own battle.

Launching a sharp attack on Lok Sabha Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi, he said the BJP would answer the LoP's "meaningless statements" by forming the government again in 2027.

Shah also hit out at the Samajwadi Party and its chief Akhilesh Yadav, saying: "Today was the day when unarmed Ram devotees and kar sevaks were fired upon indiscriminately in Ayodhya during the then SP government and the water of the Saryu river turned red with their blood."

He questioned the SP, asking how he can stake a claim to form the government in the state again?

Further, HM Shah warned that the BJP government in Uttar Pradesh is "Angad's leg," which the opposition parties cannot shake, referring to the Hindu Mythological figure in the Ramayana.

The Home Minister also recalled the contribution of former UP CM late Kalyan Singh, saying that the latter had taken a historic decision for the Ram Temple movement "without caring about his government then".

Further targeting the Congress and the SP, he said that under Akhilesh Yadav's leadership, "SP had been losing elections continuously, while the Congress under Rahul Gandhi had failed to return to power".

"If the opposition continued on the same path, it would remain out of power for a long time," he remarked.

Maintaining that the government's achievements are important, Amit Shah stressed that the BJP's greatest strength is its cadre. "The Centre and the state government have undertaken extensive developmental work, and it is now the responsibility of the party organization to communicate these achievements to the public," he said. (IANS)

ED probes Rs. 290-cr Jharkhand power plant loan scam

DURGAPUR, OCT 30
The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday conducted simultaneous searches at several locations in Kolkata, Howrah, Hooghly, Durgapur and Asansol in connection with an alleged multi-crore scam involving a loan secured for setting up a 66-megawatt power plant in Jharkhand.



According to ED sources, a private company had obtained a loan of approximately Rs 290 crore from a bank, ostensibly for establishing the power plant. However, investigators suspect that the money was not utilised for the stated purpose and was allegedly diverted elsewhere. The investigation is also understood to be linked to allegations of fund diversion through the creation of shell companies.

In Kolkata, an ED team raided the residence of chartered accountant Ashok Sarathi at an upscale housing complex in Lake Town. Sarathi is suspected of having direct links with the company under investigation. The team arrived in the morning, accompanied by central armed forces personnel, who cordoned off the housing complex. Investigators questioned those present and examined documents during the search.

Another ED team reached the residence of chartered accountant Sudipta Ghosh on Shibtala Street in Uttarpara, Hooghly. Central forces cordoned off the premises as officials conducted searches and enquiries. Ghosh, however, has reportedly denied having any connection with the alleged financial irregularities. (IANS)

SC acts against misuse of court proceedings



NEW DELHI, OCT 30
The Supreme Court on Friday directed the Centre to incorporate measures for taking action against those violating its interim restrictions on the unauthorised use and commercial exploitation of audio-video recordings of judicial proceedings into the proposed policy framework.

A Bench of Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V. Mohana directed the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) to ensure compliance with the interim directions issued by the apex court in July this year.

"The MeitY is directed to ensure the compliance of interim directions... Necessary measures for taking action against those who fail to comply with the directions will also be incorporated in the policy regime," the CJI Kant-led Bench ordered.

The directions came after Solicitor General Tushar Mehta informed the top court that the Centre was considering suggestions received from various High Courts and members of the legal fraternity for formulating a policy to regulate the use of recordings of judicial proceedings.

The Centre's second highest law officer told the CJI Kant-led Bench that the suggestions had been forwarded to the apex court registry and that a framework incorporating the inputs would be prepared and placed before the Supreme Court for consideration. He also apprised the top court of instances of violations of its earlier directions and suggested that material uploaded in breach of the interim restrictions should be taken down.

The CJI Kant-led Bench agreed that the directions needed to be effectively implemented and said the proposed policy framework should provide for appropriate action against those failing to comply with them. (IANS)

India, Belgium and Luxembourg agree to deepen economic ties

NEW DELHI, OCT 30
India, Belgium and Luxembourg have agreed to strengthen economic ties and explore opportunities to deepen cooperation in aerospace, research, innovation and higher education, according to a statement issued by the Commerce Ministry on Friday.



The 19th session of the India-Belgium-Luxembourg Economic Union (BLEU) Joint Economic Commission (JEC) was held in Luxembourg. The meeting provided a platform for India, Belgium and Luxembourg to review bilateral trade and investment relations and discuss opportunities to further strengthen economic cooperation across key sectors, the statement said.

The JEC was co-chaired by Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal; Director-General for Geo-Economy and Economic Diplomacy, Belgian Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, Filip Vanden Bulcke; and Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, Defence, Development Cooperation and Foreign Trade, Luxembourg, Henri Schumacher.

The discussions covered a broad range of priority sectors, including logistics, with a focus on air connectivity and ports, renewable energy and clean technology, financial services and FinTech, digital transformation and information and communication technology (ICT), healthcare and life sciences, Ayurveda and traditional medicine, and the agro and food processing industry.

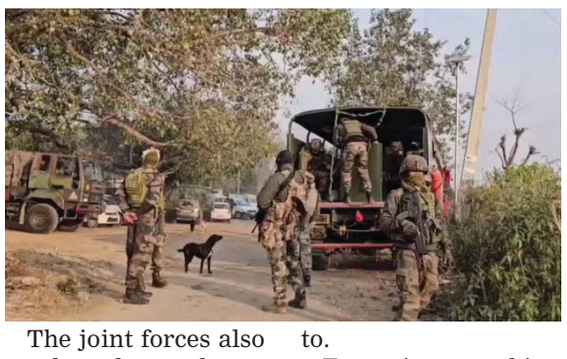
The meeting resolved to explore opportunities to deepen cooperation in aerospace, research and innovation, higher education, and skill development. Market-related issues were also discussed with a view to addressing trade concerns, facilitating market access and identifying opportunities to further strengthen economic ties.

The JEC provided an opportunity for the three sides to exchange views on their economic priorities, review sectoral cooperation and identify avenues for enhancing business engagement and investment partnerships. The discussions reaffirmed the importance of sustained dialogue and cooperation in advancing mutually beneficial economic relations between India, Belgium and Luxembourg.

After the JEC session, Rajesh Agrawal interacted with CEOs of Luxembourg-based companies. He highlighted India's strong economic growth and investment potential and underscored opportunities for collaboration in financial services, advanced manufacturing, logistics, clean energy, digital technologies, healthcare, and research and innovation. (IANS/UNI)

Joint search op launched in border areas of Jammu, Kathua districts

JAMMU, OCT 30
Joint forces on Friday launched a search operation in the border areas of Kathua and Jammu district after they found an abandoned police uniform in the area, setting off alarm bells among the Indian security forces.



Officials said the joint forces started search operations in border areas of Jammu and Kathua districts after a damaged police uniform was found abandoned.

During a routine search operation, security forces recovered a damaged police uniform, boots and a rucksack from Bana Chak village in Kathua district, prompting a security concern.

The joint forces also conducted search operations along the International Border in Jammu district after the recovery of the uniform.

Joint teams comprising the Jammu and Kashmir Police, Special Operations Group, Indian Army, CRPF and the BSF are taking part in the search operations to find the person whom the uniform belongs to.

Extensive combing and search operations are underway along the International Border sectors in Kathua and Jammu districts, as well as neighbouring areas like Samba. Border security has been further tightened amid heightened vigilance after the alarming discovery.

Security forces have significantly enhanced vigilance and expanded search patterns in response to continuous reports of suspicious movements across the Jammu border grid.

Earlier this month, a large-scale sweep by the J&K Police, Special Operations Group, Army, and CRPF was initiated in the Karnadi forest area of Kathua after villagers reported the presence of suspected individuals near the border.

In August 2026, in the Billawar belt of Kathua, an operation was triggered after unidentified individuals knocked on a villager's door late at night. The family did not open the door, but discovered the next morning that their stored food had been stolen. (IANS)

AI, maritime security priorities in India's pursuit of UNSC election

UNITED NATIONS, OCT 30
As threats to maritime security emerge from new technology, India has urged international cooperation to counter them and said it would be a priority for it in pursuing election to the Security Council.



"India has identified AI (artificial intelligence) and maritime security as important priorities for its candidature to the Security Council for 2028–2029", India's Permanent Representative P Harish said on Thursday.

"Our objective is clear: technology must strengthen human security, not undermine it; it must expand opportunity, not inequality; and it must make our shared maritime commons safer, not more contested", he said.

India is contesting the election next year for a non-permanent Council seat with a two-year term starting in 2028.

He was speaking at an open debate at the Council on "Emerging Technologies and Maritime Security: Implications for Peace and Security" that was convened by Greece as Council president and chaired by its Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis.

Harish recalled that External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Greece's Foreign Minister George Gerapetritis had co-chaired a high-level discussion last month on AI and maritime security and said this was an opportunity to build on it.

The Council debate took place on a day when Iran's Navy said three oil tankers in the Strait of Hormuz had hit sea mines and were ablaze, highlighting the maritime perils.

Harish said, "India strongly condemns attacks against commercial vessels and reiterates the importance of freedom of navigation, unimpeded lawful maritime commerce and the safety of seafarers, in accordance with international law".

The "attacks against commercial shipping threaten seafarers, disrupt supply chains and disproportionately affect developing countries through higher costs and economic uncertainty", he said. (IANS)

THE FREEDOM PRESS

SATURDAY 31 OCTOBER 2026

Integrated food governance vital

India's rapid urbanisation and changing dietary habits have brought urban nutrition into sharper focus, highlighting the need for coordinated policies on food access, public health and municipal infrastructure. The ICMR-INDIAB study reported adult prevalence rates of 11.4 per cent for diabetes, 35.5 per cent for hypertension and 28.6 per cent for generalised obesity, with metabolic diseases generally more prevalent in urban areas. Among urban women aged 15 to 49, overweight or obesity increased from 13 per cent in 2005-06 to 30.7 per cent in 2023-24. The coexistence of undernutrition, obesity and diet-related diseases calls for an integrated approach that addresses the diverse nutritional challenges facing Indian cities.

Urban food environments are shaped not merely by the number of shops but also by affordability, accessibility, convenience, food quality and transport facilities. Women, daily-wage workers and residents of informal settlements often face additional barriers due to travel costs, limited time and restricted access to affordable, nutritious food. Research across eight low- and middle-income countries, covering 251 studies, found that food availability and vendor characteristics received greater attention than affordability and accessibility. For India, these findings underline the importance of assessing travel time, opening hours, transport expenses and the practical difficulties households face in obtaining nutritious food.

India's urban food supply chains depend on an interconnected network of wholesale markets, small traders, street vendors and informal distribution channels. Research from Bengaluru and Colombo highlights how these networks help sustain affordable and diverse food supplies, including during periods of disruption. A study covering nine Indian cities found that food supply-chain distances ranged from 196 km in Pondicherry to 1,137 km in Chennai, alongside significant differences in nutritional inadequacy. Strengthening wholesale markets, improving transport links and diversifying supply sources can help cities maintain reliable food access while reducing their vulnerability to supply disruptions. Street vendors are an important component of India's urban food economy, providing affordable meals near workplaces, transport hubs and residential areas. However, inadequate access to potable water, sanitation, storage, temperature control and waste disposal can create food-safety risks. A study of 170 street-food vendors in Pune identified significant infrastructure gaps affecting hygienic food handling. The Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014, provides a framework for protecting vendors' livelihoods and regulating vending activities. Effective implementation should combine proportionate inspections and hygiene training with investments in basic services, enabling vendors to operate safely without unnecessarily restricting affordable food access.

Urban nutrition challenges also reflect differences in income, lifestyle and the built environment. A 2026 multi-city Indian model identified low physical activity as a leading health concern, while evidence indicates that urban and metropolitan households devote a greater share of expenditure to processed foods and meals consumed outside the home than rural and smaller-city households. Lower-income communities often face inadequate basic infrastructure and limited access to healthier food choices, while affluent groups may experience greater exposure to lifestyle-related risks. Addressing these challenges requires policies that promote balanced diets, physical activity and healthier food environments while recognising the influence of commercial marketing and the growing availability of packaged foods.

Despite growing recognition of these concerns, urban food systems and public health are frequently addressed through separate administrative frameworks. Better coordination among municipal bodies, health departments, agriculture agencies, food-safety authorities and transport planners can help bridge this gap. Bhubaneswar illustrates the potential and limitations of community interest in urban agriculture: while 70 per cent of residents surveyed reportedly expressed willingness to adopt it, only 35 per cent were actively practising it.

India's Africa strategy

The Kenyan government's decision to halt the operations of Tata Chemicals Magadi Limited (TCML), an Indian company with a century-old presence in the country, has raised questions about investment, economic sovereignty and bilateral relations. The dispute emerged in late July 2026, when Kenya's Ministry of Mining suspended the company's mining operations over regulatory and statutory concerns. While the developments pose challenges for the company, they also offer India an opportunity to assess its economic engagement with Africa and strengthen its long-standing commitment to mutually beneficial partnerships.

Kenya's position reflects a broader shift in Africa's economic priorities, with governments increasingly seeking greater domestic benefits from their natural resources. African countries want foreign investment to generate local employment, promote industrialisation, facilitate technology transfer and strengthen domestic supply chains. Zimbabwe's 2022 ban on raw lithium exports and Namibia's 2023 restrictions on unprocessed critical minerals reflect this approach. These measures underline the growing emphasis on value addition and economic diversification rather than dependence on the extraction and export of raw materials.

India's engagement with Africa has traditionally emphasised development cooperation, capacity building, respect for sovereignty and partnerships based on the priorities of the countries concerned. India and Kenya share historical connections, commercial interests and strategic stakes in the Indian Ocean, alongside common experiences of colonialism and cooperation within the Global South. However, shared history alone cannot guarantee equitable economic outcomes. Indian companies must also recognise the changing expectations of African governments and local communities, ensuring that commercial operations contribute meaningfully to host-country development.

The Tata Chemicals–Kenya dispute should not be viewed as evidence that South–South cooperation has failed. Instead, it highlights the need to align commercial interests with the development aspirations of both partners. African governments are not necessarily rejecting foreign investment; they are seeking greater influence over how investments translate into jobs, revenues, skills and industrial capacity. For India, understanding this distinction is essential to maintaining its economic presence and strengthening its credibility as a reliable development partner.

At the same time, individual corporate disputes should not overshadow the broader India-Kenya relationship. India can legitimately protect the interests of its companies while respecting Kenya's regulatory authority and economic priorities. Constructive dialogue, transparent regulatory processes and mutually acceptable solutions can help prevent commercial disagreements from escalating into wider diplomatic concerns. A balanced approach would protect legitimate business interests while preserving the foundations of bilateral cooperation and creating opportunities for future investment.

India's future Africa strategy should place greater emphasis on local value creation. Indian investments can strengthen their long-term prospects by expanding domestic processing, employing and training local workers, transferring technology, engaging local suppliers and supporting community development. Such an approach would help demonstrate that Indian businesses are not merely extracting resources but also contributing to industrial growth and economic diversification. Country-specific investment strategies, tailored to the priorities of individual African governments, would be more effective than a uniform approach across the continent.

India should also broaden its engagement beyond government-to-government cooperation by encouraging stronger links among businesses, local authorities, universities, civil society and communities. Such an ecosystem-based approach can improve understanding of local requirements, facilitate skills development and create more sustainable commercial partnerships. As African countries diversify their international partnerships and exercise greater bargaining power, Indian companies will need to remain competitive through responsible investment, technological cooperation and a clear commitment to shared economic gains.

The Opposition's 'vote chori' campaign has a language problem

AJAY GUDAVARTHY



India is witnessing student protests that have expanded from the issue of NEET paper leaks and education to the integrity of the electoral process. After successfully securing the resignation of the education minister, the protesters have now turned to demanding the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar. Many activists and political analysts argue this could be the final nail in the coffin of the Modi government.

While the protests have undoubtedly dented the infallible, larger-than-life image of Narendra Modi, do they really hold the potential to bring down the current government? Not only does that seem unlikely, but the idea also comes across as a consciously concocted booby trap that has engulfed Opposition parties into a movement that may not have a deeper reach and is largely confined to urban pockets, educated youth and activists. Why is it so?

Firstly, the Opposition parties' "save the Constitution" and "save democracy" narrative may seem too abstract to the common person on the street. These ideas are not as self-evident as their proponents project them to be.

Historically, the language of constitutional morality and constitutional principles has rarely resonated directly with popular politics and mass mobilisation. The demand to uphold constitutional propriety, however important it may be to protecting the democratic structure, is severely constrained by the technicalities and legal provisions involved. This is not the language people speak or through which they understand or navigate their everyday lives. They approach everyday life through cultural ethics and ethos.

Even as these protests remain important to safeguarding the fairness of the electoral process, the challenge is to translate their demands into the experiential realities of people in mofussil towns and rural India. The last person to successfully translate the modern ideals of democracy and equality into everyday cultural symbolism was MK Gandhi. Consider how he framed the question of sovereignty in terms of the right to produce and consume salt. Salt became a cultural symbol of reclaiming sovereignty, dignity and swaraj. The commonplace act of consuming salt cut across caste, class, rural-urban and other social divisions.

For the "vote chori" campaign to resonate with people living on the margins of society and the economy, the language of the "right to vote" will have to be connected to their growing anxieties about quality of life, including access to education, healthcare and employment, among other basic needs. Opposition parties and social activists have yet to invent a political discourse that connects the "right to vote" with welfare.

Part of the problem is that the BJP is already delivering the kind of transactional welfare that the Opposition is also promising, including free rations, free bus passes for women and other such schemes. The BJP has combined transactional welfare with what has been described as the "new welfarism", which involves building infrastructure such as roads and highways. It may also be acknowledged that the BJP performs marginally better in service delivery because of its hold over the bureaucracy and its organisational heft.

For ordinary people to take notice, Opposition parties will have to move towards what I call structural welfarism. This could involve large-scale social transformation through greater budgetary allocations for education, healthcare and other social sectors. Are Opposition parties willing to move beyond neoliberal, transactional welfare? As of now, that is certainly not the case. They have the same libertarian economic imagination as the BJP, which is why "vote chori" has become a stand-alone demand.

The fact that this may not succeed electorally was evident in Bihar, despite mass demonstrations and large crowds at the campaign led by Rahul Gandhi and Tejaswi Yadav. In fact, the Opposition may have let the ruling dispensation off the hook in Bihar by not capitalising on growing anti-incumbency fuelled by poor healthcare and educational facilities, as well as youth unrest over widespread underemployment and unemployment. One may recall how Tejaswi Yadav's promise of 10 lakh jobs in the previous Assembly election cycle yielded better electoral dividends.

The Opposition's counterargument is that even if it makes greater promises, how can it ever win if the electoral process itself is compromised? This is the classic chicken-and-egg quandary into which the Opposition has been pushed.

Second, the BJP has floated the entire bogey of Special Intensive Revision (SIR) not just to win elections through malpractice and manipulation of electoral rolls. There is a larger and deeper strategy of social polarisation through the SIR campaign. The recent data has clearly reflected that deletions from voter lists are not random but targeted. An overwhelming majority of those removed are Muslims and Dalits.

This is the reason why Opposition parties, despite campaigning relentlessly against "vote chori", have been unable or unwilling to mobilise those whose names have been deleted. Such mobilisation would involve bringing large numbers of Muslims onto the streets, which will feed into the BJP's dominant narrative of Hindu-Muslim polarisation and its rhetoric of 'appeasement'.

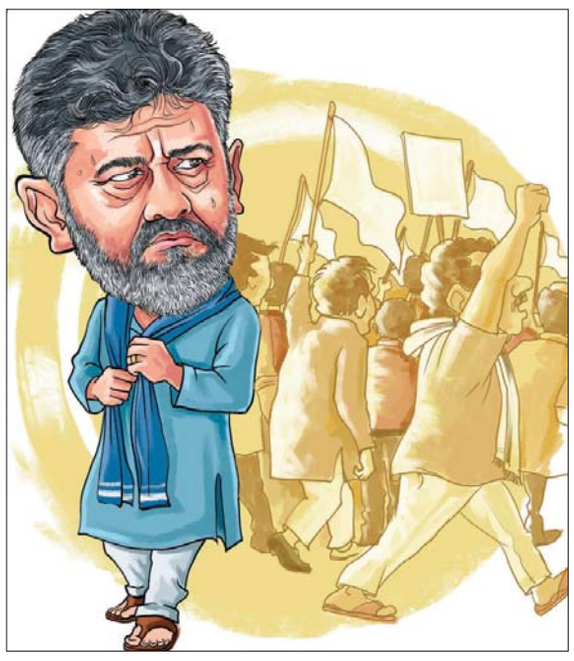
The BJP, it seems, is eyeing to consolidate its support among upper castes and OBCs while excluding Muslims and Dalits from the electoral processes. The Opposition is therefore on the back foot, condemned to rely on its own party cadres and, now, Gen Z to sustain the protests. It has no clear strategy to overcome this impasse. As a result, Opposition parties are talking about voter deletions without mentioning the social composition of those deleted.

By default, the protests have become a movement of the privileged. The narrative of a democratic crisis remains trapped at Jantar Mantar. This scale of crisis may not be enough to get the BJP worried.

(Ajay Gudavarthy is an Associate Professor of Political Science at the Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU))

Why Karnataka's MLC verdict is a bigger problem for Congress than it appears

RAMAKRISHNA UPADHYA



The ruling Karnataka Congress party's "grand zero" performance in the Legislative Council elections has not only become a "national embarrassment" because it failed miserably despite switching from EVMs to ballot papers, but the success of the BJP-JD(S) alliance in these polls will give the Congress party nightmares ahead of the 2028 Assembly elections.

The Congress won just one of the 28 Legislative Council seats for which elections were held in four states, but Karnataka's results began "trending" on social media and national television channels because Chief Minister DK Shivakumar had insisted on, and got, the state election body to adopt ballot papers in place of EVMs to highlight his party's "vote chori" campaign.

A hugely disappointed Shivakumar admitted, "We did not expect these results," adding, "We accept the people's decision. There are lessons to learn. We will find out what went wrong." But the two stalwarts of the JD(S) and BJP, HD Kumaraswamy and BS Yediyurappa, were ecstatic. While Kumaraswamy said, "It is the people's befitting reply to the misrule of the Congress-led government in Karnataka," Yediyurappa thundered, "In all upcoming elections, we will fight them together. We will do all it takes to oust this corrupt government."

Shivakumar, who replaced Siddaramaiah as Karnataka Chief Minister on June 3 in none-too-happy circumstances, has found the going tough on multiple fronts. Even four months after taking charge, he has neither been able to complete the cabinet formation exercise nor get a firm grip on the administration. The worst drought in over five decades has left the water reservoirs in a precarious state, leading to poor cultivation and farmers in distress, besides low energy levels that threaten to disrupt power supply and economic activities. The state is also faced with constant directions from the Supreme Court to release Cauvery water to neighbouring Tamil Nadu "as per the tribunal's award."

Politically, too, Shivakumar is mired in trouble as a rift has developed between him and Siddaramaiah over a mysterious "sting operation" involving the latter. While opposition leaders have been gleefully accusing Shivakumar of having "instigated" the sting operation allegedly involving a woman and targeting Siddaramaiah to keep him in check, Siddaramaiah's minister-son, Dr Yatindra, has sought an impartial investigation into the "involvement of any Congress party functionaries" in the alleged scam.

Siddaramaiah, who has been invited to participate in the INDI Alliance's mega protest rally in New Delhi on Sunday against the Election Commission of India's "flawed SIR exercise across the country" and to demand the resignation of CEC Gyanesh Kumar, has said that he has sought an appointment with Rahul Gandhi on November 2 to "explain" his position on the allegations made against him. Sources close to him say that he would also express his misgivings to Rahul about Shivakumar's possible role.

Considering that it was the joint effort of Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar that led to the Congress winning a handsome majority of 136 seats during the 2023 Assembly polls, the growing trust deficit between the two top leaders spells greater worry for the Congress after the "MLC poll debacle". It is important to note that, though the voting numbers were small compared to those in Assembly constituencies, the four teachers' and graduates' MLC seats were spread over 19 districts and 133 Assembly constituencies, including the capital city of Bengaluru - a fairly representative sample of the entire state.

While the BJP is in a resurgent mood after an impressive response to its 10-day "Ballari Chalo" padayatra, led by its state president, BY Vijayendra, against the KPSC exams scandal and the Rs 187-crore Valmiki ST Development Corporation scandal in September in northern Karnataka, the JD(S), under Kumaraswamy, is also going hammer and tongs, accusing the Shivakumar government of grabbing farmers' lands in Bidadi and Kanakapura in the name of development projects. He recently released documents claiming that Shivakumar had "acquired" 300 acres of prime land from Ashok Keni, the controversial promoter of the failed Bengaluru-Mysuru highway project, and registered them in his daughter Aishwarya's name. Shivakumar, commenting later, defended the deal, saying, "My daughter is also a businesswoman. Can she not do business?"

It appears that the corruption allegations against the BJP that unseated its government in the 2023 Assembly polls are coming full circle to haunt the Shivakumar government well ahead of the Assembly elections, which are less than two years away.

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

FTAs provide preferential market access to 76% of global GDP



NEW DELHI, OCT 30

india will have preferential market access covering approximately 76 per cent of the global GDP of $115 trillion, with negotiations underway for another eight bilateral or multilateral agreements, which would add a further $15 trillion, according to Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal.

Addressing the curtain raiser of the 'Invest Telangana Global Summit' here, the minister congratulated Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, saying the state's ambition to become a $3 trillion economy by 2047 was achievable through collective efforts by the Central Government, State Government, industry, investors and citizens.

Goyal said India's existing trade agreements had provided preferential market access to a global GDP of $70 trillion, including $10 trillion through agreements finalised more than a decade ago and an additional $60 trillion through the nine recently finalised agreements.

He noted that the IMF had projected global trade growth of barely 1.9 per cent amid global challenges. Against this backdrop, India set a target of $1 trillion in exports, aiming for 15 per cent growth in the current year. He said the target reflected the collective conviction of exporters, industry associations, and businesses to surpass conventional forecasts.

Highlighting India's economic performance, Goyal said the country had moved from the "Fragile Five" a decade ago to the world's fifth-largest economy and the fastest-growing large economy. He cited growth of 7.7 per cent in the previous year and 7.8 per cent in the first quarter of the current year, expressing the expectation that growth would remain above 7 per cent in the quarter ending September.

Referring to Telangana's historical trading traditions, Goyal recalled the Motupalli Abhaya Shasana, a maritime charter issued in 1244 by Kakatiya ruler, Ganapati Deva, which promoted stability and predictability in trade. He drew parallels with the present, noting that investors continue to seek certainty and continuity in policy.

Referring to Telangana's aspiration to grow from an economy of approximately $200 billion to $3 trillion by 2047, he welcomed the target set by the state government. (IANS)

India acts as world's economic buffer and growth engine

NEW DELHI, OCT 30



Against a backdrop of the global economy leaning on a few nations to drive output, India has emerged as a major contributor to global growth and is expected to remain the world's fastest-growing major economy through 2027, a new report has said, highlighting the 2026 World Economic Outlook, unveiled at the IMF-World Bank Annual Meetings that concluded recently.

India is currently the world's economic buffer and remains the engine that keeps "global machinery moving, masking the fact that the traditional powerhouse economies in the West are currently slowing down and getting weaker," the report from South Africa-based IOL said.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) projected 7 per cent growth for India in both 2026 and 2027, while global growth was forecast at 3.1 per cent in 2026 and 3.4 per cent in 2027, with a relatively small group of economies accounting for the majority of global expansion.

India's growth is supported by strong domestic demand, a large consumer market, a robust services sector and favourable demographics, it said.

"If India's economy were to suddenly cool down or flatline, the global economy would face severe consequences as India accounts for roughly 15 per cent to 17 per cent of total global growth," the report said.

"Without India, the projected global growth of 3.1 per cent would likely plummet toward 2.5 per cent, a threshold the IMF historically considers a global recession," it added.

Further, with the US coasting at a modest 2.3 per cent growth and Europe's growth nearly flat at 1.1 per cent, Western engines cannot pick up the global economy and the world would slip into an era of structural low growth. (IANS)

PM Modi to visit Brussels to sign India-EU FTA

NEW DELHI, OCT 30



Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Brussels in December to formally sign the India-European Union free trade agreement in major step to strengthen economic ties between the two sides, European Council President Antonio Costa said on Thursday.

"Prime Minister Modi will come in December to sign the deal,: Costa said at an event organised by the Montreal Council on Foreign Relations in Canada.

The visit is expected shortly before a meeting of European leaders in Brussels scheduled to begin on December 17. Costa is in Montreal for a two-day EU-Canada summit. focused on strengthening ties.

India and the EU concluded negotiations on the trade agreement earlier this year. The pact is projected to create a market covering more than two billion people and accounting for around a quarter of the global economy.

India's proposed free-trade agreement with the European Union could become operational within four to five months after it is signed, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said last week.

Prime Minister Modi and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen had jointly announced the conclusion of the India–European Union Free Trade Agreement (India–EU FTA) during the visit of the European leaders to India. This announcement marked a historic milestone in India–EU economic relations and trade engagement with key global partners.

The conclusion of this FTA positions India and the European Union as trusted partners committed to open markets, predictability, and inclusive growth.

The European Union is one of the largest trading partners of India, with bilateral trade in goods and services growing steadily over the years. In 2024–25, India's bilateral trade in goods with the EU stood at Rs 11.5 lakh crore ($136.54 billion), with exports worth Rs 6.4 lakh crore ($75.85 billion) and imports amounting to Rs 5.1 lakh crore ($60.68 billion). India-EU trade in services reached Rs 7.2 lakh crore ($83.10 billion) in 2024. (IANS)

India must focus on adaptation finance to reach 500 GW goal

NEW DELHI, OCT 30



India's clean energy transition is advancing rapidly to the 500 GW goal and requires a greater focus on climate investment, adaptation finance, technology cooperation and industrial competitiveness, an industry chamber said on Friday, ahead of the 11-day COP31 climate summit in Turkey starting on November 9.

The statement from ASSOCHAM said India's non-fossil fuel power capacity reached 300.5 GW in July 2026, following a record 55.29 GW addition in FY26, including 44.6 GW of solar capacity.

India achieved over 54 per cent of non-fossil power capacity, five years ahead of the 2030 target, it said.

"The country has demonstrated that a fast-growing economy can scale clean energy, achieving over half of its installed electricity capacity from non-fossil sources five years ahead of schedule," said ASSOCHAM President Nirmal K. Minda, adding that COP31 should focus on implementation with industry playing a central role.

Minda said achieving India's 2030 climate goals would require nearly $2.5 trillion in investment, while battery storage demand is projected to rise from 37 GWh by 2027 to 236 GWh by 2031-32. Strengthening grid infrastructure, storage and commercially viable clean power will be essential to translate installed capacity into reliable electricity, he added.

Govt doubles down on fisheries sector

NEW DELHI, OCT 30



The government has significantly stepped-up public investment in the fisheries sector, committing Rs 39,272 crore through key schemes and programmes. These interventions are aimed at expanding infrastructure, strengthening production and post-harvest systems, and creating employment and livelihood opportunities for 74.66 lakh fishers and fish farmers across the country, according to an official statement on Friday.

The key interventions are the Blue Revolution Scheme, Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund (FIDF), Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY), Pradhan Mantri Matsya Samridhi Sah Yojana (PM-MKSSY) and Kisan Credit Card (KCC), according to the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying.

A parallel focus has been placed on strengthening transportation and logistics networks, with 46,500 facilities, including fish transportation systems, retail and wholesale fish markets, kiosks, feed mills, ice plants, cold storages and value-added enterprise units, added with an investment of Rs. 3,393.85 crore.

In addition, five modern and smart fish markets are under development, integrating advanced IT systems, green technologies and logistics supply chains, and are expected to generate 15,900 employment opportunities, said the ministry.

The emphasis on value addition is also creating a stronger platform for women's participation in post-harvest activities and fisheries-based enterprises.

Their empowerment has been prioritised under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY), under which projects worth over Rs. 4,155 crore -- with a central share of Rs 1,572 crore -- have been approved over the last five years for the benefit of more than 1.28 lakh women beneficiaries.

This support has enabled women to participate in diverse such as fish drying, preparation of fish pickles and papad, smoked fish products, fish powder, and packaging and retailing, the ministry observed.

India's fisheries sector is evolving from a production-focused activity into a dynamic, technology-driven and value-oriented pillar of the national economy.

It plays a vital role in strengthening food and nutritional security, generating employment, supporting rural livelihoods and contributing to export earnings.

The government has supported the formation of 2,195 Fisheries Farmer Producer Organizations (FFPOs) enabling producers to aggregate output, pool resources and participate more effectively in processing, branding and marketing activities.

Several of these organisations have also been integrated with the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC), widening their access to digital markets and improving prospects for fair price realisation.

Under PM-MKSSY, 5,500 fisheries cooperatives are being strengthened to function as FFPOs in collaboration with intermediary agencies such as NCDC, NAFED, SFAC and NERAMAC. (IANS)

Bengaluru leads India's office rental growth at 11.5%

NEW DELHI, OCT 30



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Indian American population in US crosses 5.4 million, Census survey shows

WASHINGTON, OCT 30

The number of people in the United States who identify as Indian American alone rose to about 5.41 million in 2025, according to new American Community Survey (ACS) 1-year estimates released by the US Census Bureau.

The figure, from the bureau's detailed Asian-group table, was up from about 5.09 million in 2024, an increase of more than 315,000 in a year. The 2025 estimate carries a margin of error of about 77,000.

When people who reported Asian Indian alone or in any combination with other groups or races are counted, the total rose to about 5.91 million, up from about 5.56 million a year earlier.



That makes Asian Indians the largest single Asian group counted alone, ahead of Chinese (except Taiwanese) at about 4.65 million. Counted alone or in any combination, the Chinese (except Taiwanese) figure, about 5.97 million, was roughly level with the Asian Indian total. The US population as a whole was about 341.8 million in 2025, according to the survey.

The survey also showed that India remained the second-largest country of birth for the US immigrant population after Mexico. About 3.40 million residents were born in India in 2025, up from about 3.16 million in 2024.

Mexico-born residents numbered about 10.61 million. India was followed by China, excluding Hong Kong and Taiwan, at about 2.40 million, and the Philippines at about 2.24 million. The total foreign-born population was about 50.41 million.

California had the largest Asian Indian population among the states, at about 1.02 million, followed by Texas at about 708,000, New Jersey at about 471,000, New York at about 420,000 and Illinois at about 288,000. Florida came sixth at about 239,000.

The ACS data also showed rising household incomes. The national median household income was $84,780 in 2025, compared with $81,604 in 2024.

The Census Bureau led its release with new data on electric vehicles, collected for the first time.

California had the largest share of households, about 14 per cent, that owned or leased an electric vehicle, more than twice the national estimate of 5.5 per cent, the bureau said.

"Western states have led the way in switching to electric vehicles. California overall had the highest rate of EV adoption per household, followed by Washington, Hawaii and Nevada," said Tricia Holley, a survey statistician at the Census Bureau. (IANS)

Vance targets firms over foreign worker hiring

US Vice President JD Vance said the administration was pursuing visa fraud involving companies that replace American workers with foreign labour, placing job protection at the centre of his economic message at a campaign rally in Texas.

Speaking in Weatherford, Vance said corporate executives and foreign companies were among the targets of the administration's efforts. He presented the action as part of a broader push to ensure government policy served American workers.

"You know, sovereignty is about going after the visa fraud that we've been going after we're going after the CEOs and the foreign corporations who would dare lay off an American worker and replace them with a foreign indentured servant, because sovereignty means American jobs got to go to American citizens."

Bhutan glacial lake burst triggers flood alert in north Bengal, residents evacuated

KOLKATA, OCT 30

A glacial lake outburst flood (GLOF) at Shintaphu Lake in Bhutan has prompted the West Bengal government to prepare for possible flooding in north Bengal. The outflow has raised fears of inundation in the region.

The Torsa, Jaldhaka, Sankosh and Raidak rivers enter north Bengal from Bhutan. Residents living along the banks of the Sankosh are particularly anxious following the sudden release of water from the lake.

Although an alert was issued on Thursday night, the river's water level had not risen significantly by Friday morning. The situation changed in the afternoon, when the water level began rising sharply in several stretches, raising concern.



On Thursday evening, a large volume of water suddenly flowed out of Shintaphu Lake in Gasa district in Bhutan. The lake was formed by the accumulation of glacial water. The outflow damaged infrastructure near the Gasa Shachu hot spring and led to a rise in the water level of the Mo Chhu River.

The full extent of the damage in Bhutan is not yet known. Preliminary reports suggest that an irrigation project in Punakha has suffered partial damage. A stretch of the Punakha-Gasa road has also been washed away by floodwaters, disrupting traffic.

On preparations following the GLOF at Shintaphu Lake and its impact on north Bengal, state Minister Nisith Pramanik said, "Reports have just come in regarding a glacial lake outburst in Bhutan. Water from the lake is overflowing and flowing downstream into the Mo Chhu River, heading towards the Sankosh River. Residents living along the Sankosh River and its tributaries have been alerted. They have been advised to move to a safe place immediately to ensure their safety."

The minister further said, "The flood water is expected to reach the plains within the next 5 to 6 hours, creating a high risk of significant flooding in the area. To manage the situation, the State Disaster Management Team has been activated, and the NDRF has also been notified. Disaster management volunteers have been instructed to be present on-site. The government is taking proactive measures and closely monitoring the situation to prevent any loss of life or property."

Shintaphu is among 17 lakes in Bhutan identified as dangerous due to glaciers. The lake had also witnessed a sudden rise in water on August 26, 2021, causing the Mo Chhu River to overflow and change its course. The hot spring was washed away then.

The Sankosh is known as the Puna Tsang Chhu in Bhutan. Originating in northern Bhutan, the river flows through Assam and West Bengal before joining the Brahmaputra. The Mo Chhu is one of its two largest tributaries. A substantial rise in the Mo Chhu after the outburst could, therefore, affect the water level of the Sankosh downstream. (IANS)

Head-on collision kills five in Afghanistan

KABUL, OCT 30

Five commuters were killed and 20 others injured, some of them critically, when a passenger bus collided head-on with an oil tanker in Afghanistan's northern Baghlan province on Friday, the official Bakhtar News Agency reported.

The deadly accident occurred early Friday morning on the Salang Highway and was attributed to driver negligence, the media outlet reported, adding that all the injured were taken to nearby health centres for treatment, Xinhua News Agency reported.

Bakhtar provided no further details, saying that an investigation into the incident was underway.

On October 24, at least four people were killed and eight others injured when a passenger vehicle overturned in Afghanistan's remote northern province of Badakhshan, local media reported.

The accident occurred as the car was heading from Kofab and Yaftal districts of the province, Ariana News quoted a local official as saying.

Authorities did not disclose the cause of the crash. The injured were transferred to the provincial hospital for medical treatment. (IANS/UNI)

Thousands of students, workers protest in Italy under heavy security



People take part in a demonstration during a general strike organized by the USB Piemonte union in Turin.

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
ROME, OCT 30

Thousands of students and workers took to the streets across Italy on Friday, calling for more school funding and relief from the soaring cost of living, amid a high police presence to avert possible clashes.

Friday's Italy-wide protest comes after weeks of demonstrations, led by students who have set up tent camps and occupied schools to make their demands heard, fueled by similar movements in nearby France and Spain.

A general strike called by Italy's USB trade union attracted thousands of workers to Friday's protests, including truck drivers, taxi drivers and farmers who have rallied in recent weeks over the spike in fuel prices and to oppose rising defense spending.

Marches were held in dozens of cities up and down the country, including in Bologna, Genoa, Naples, and Turin — where a few minor skirmishes between protesters and riot police occurred at the start of the protest.

In Rome, university student Beatrice Chilelli told AFP students were "at a breaking point."

"They can't afford to pay exorbitant tuition fees, and rent... which weighs heavily on their parents' shoulders," said the 21-year-old, citing student housing in Rome that could reach 1,200 euros per month for a single room.

Thousands of people left Rome's central Termini train station, accompanied by two tractors and a taxi, making their way past the Colosseum as they waved flags, unfurled banners and shouted into megaphones.

An AFP photographer witnessed a heavy police presence outside the Economy Ministry, which the procession passed by.

"We need more houses, not bombs!" sang one group in the crowd, as a troupe of protesters gave a brief performance imitating terrified civilians in a Gaza bombing raid.

The Milan protest also began at the central train station, but then headed outside the city — far from the center where young vandals had looted stores, destroyed property and clashed with police two weeks ago after another sanctioned cost-of-living demonstration.

"Let's reclaim our future" read one banner unfurled by students in Milan.

Police in riot gear blocked off streets, but no major clashes had been reported as of midday.

Besides students, the demonstrators at Friday's protest included teachers, workers and retired people, with one man in Rome bearing a sign that read "Pensioners — Pissed Off and Furious." Many pro-Palestine flags were seen in the crowds in major cities. (IANS)

Russia vows continued support for Cuba

MOSCOW, OCT 30

Russia will continue to support Cuba in seeking the lifting of the US economic, commercial and financial embargo, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs said.

In a statement published on its website, the ministry said that the UN General Assembly on Wednesday adopted a resolution calling for an end to the embargo, with 130 votes in favor, 17 against and 25 abstentions.

Russia supported the resolution, said the ministry, adding that the outcome of the vote once again confirmed "the international community's near-unanimous and resolute condemnation of the illegal and inhumane embargo against Havana."

The ministry said an unprecedented escalation of economic and military pressure on Cuba this year, coupled with an energy blockade, has pushed ordinary Cubans to the brink of survival, Xinhua news agency reported.

A socioeconomic collapse in Cuba could trigger a mass exodus to neighbouring countries and a major regional migration crisis, the ministry warned. Russia praised the Cuban government and people for their resilience in defending the country's sovereignty and independence. (IANS)

Bangladesh lifts hilsa fishing ban

NEW DELHI/DHAKA, OCT 30

Fishermen in Bangladesh resumed their efforts early Friday at landing what is largely the Bengali's most treasured fish after a 22-day ban imposed by the government to protect spawning hilsa during the breeding season that ended a minute before midnight, according to reports.



Around 42,000 fishermen in Chandpur resumed fishing in the Meghna and Padma rivers as the ban on catching, selling, and transporting hilsa officially ended at 11:59 p.m. Thursday, reported Bangladesh's The Business Standard on Friday, adding their return was "after weeks of hardship". Now the question is whether supply will be sufficient to satisfy the enormous Bengali appetite for hilsa.

Hilsa migrates from the sea to freshwater rivers for spawning, and breeds mainly during the monsoon and winter seasons, thus limiting availability.

Bangladesh ranks first in the world in hilsa production, being third in inland open-water capture fisheries, fourth in tilapia production and fifth in aquaculture overall, the report said further.

Overall, Bangladesh is among the world's top fish producers, where in 2023-24, it produced 5.02 million metric tonnes of fish, worth about $20.44 billion, according to a separate report.

The fisheries sector accounts for 2.43-2.53 per cent of GDP and over 22 per cent of agricultural GDP, it said, adding that it provides nearly 60 per cent of the animal protein Bangladeshis consume each day and supports the livelihoods of 19 to 20 million people, directly and indirectly. (IANS)

New Zealand voter enrolment rate falls below previous election levels

WELLINGTON, OCT 30

Nearly 3.8 million people have enrolled to vote in New Zealand's 2026 general election scheduled for November 7, with the provisional enrolment rate at 93.6 per cent, below the final rates recorded in the previous two elections.

The Electoral Commission said on Friday that the enrolment rates were 94.7 per cent in 2023 and 94.1 per cent in 2020. The final rate for this year's election will not be confirmed until after voting ends.



The provisional enrolment rate for people aged 18 to 24 was 74.2 per cent, up from 53.9 per cent at the end of July and close to the 76.7 per cent recorded in 2023, the commission said in a statement, Xinhua News Agency reported.

Among voters of Maori descent, the provisional enrolment rate was 85.9 per cent, with 603,968 Maori voters enrolled, up from 567,012 in 2023, according to the commission. Chief Electoral Officer Karl Le Quesne said the figures showed awareness of the new requirement to enroll before voting began. He said the commission would review its efforts to increase enrolment and report back to parliament after the election.

New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon's center-right National Party is seeking a second term after taking office in 2023, while Labor, led by former Prime Minister Chris Hipkins, is campaigning to return to power amid public concerns over the cost of living, economic growth, jobs and public services. (IANS/UNI)

Houthis deny launching drone toward Mecca region

SANAA, OCT 30

Yemen's Houthi group denied launching any attacks against Saudi Arabia on Friday, after the Saudi-led coalition said it had intercepted a Houthi drone over the Mecca region.

In a statement posted on the social media platform X, Houthi military spokesperson Yahya Sarea rejected a Saudi claim that a drone had been intercepted over Mecca, calling it "false", Xinhua news agency reported. Sarea said the group carried out "no operations toward Saudi territory" on Friday.

The response came after Saudi-led coalition spokesperson Turki Al-Maliki wrote on X earlier in the day that a drone launched by the Houthi group was intercepted and destroyed in the Mecca region, home to Islam's holiest city.

Recent weeks have seen escalating cross-border hostilities between the two sides, with Saudi strikes hitting Houthi-held areas in Yemen and the Houthis launching missiles and drones toward Saudi Arabia.

Yemen has been mired in conflict since late 2014, when the Houthis seized Sanaa and much of northern Yemen, prompting the Saudi-led coalition to intervene in 2015 in support of the Yemeni government.

In September, Yemen's Houthi leader Abdul-Malik al-Houthi had rejected accusations that his group had attempted to attack the Islamic holy city of Mecca, calling the allegation "fabrication and misinformation" amid escalating hostilities with Saudi Arabia.



In a televised address carried by Houthi-run al-Masirah TV, al-Houthi said claims that Houthi forces had targeted Mecca were a "lie," arguing that the accusation was being used to mobilize broader support for what he described as "military measures imposed on Yemen."

Al-Houthi also accused Saudi Arabia of failing to advance a political settlement during the period of relative calm preceding the latest escalation.

Instead, he said, restrictions affecting Houthi-controlled areas in Yemen had been tightened, with limitations on airport operations and imports remaining among the key unresolved issues.

Saudi Defense Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman held telephone talks with NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte to discuss military and defense cooperation and coordinate efforts in response to ongoing regional developments.

During the call, the two sides reviewed joint coordination regarding the current situation in the region, with a focus on supporting regional and international security and stability.

Prince Khalid and Rutte also discussed several issues of mutual interest.

Separately, the Saudi defense minister held telephone conversations with Canadian Defense Minister David McGuinty, German Defense Minister Boris Pistorius and Spanish Defense Minister Margarita Robles to discuss regional developments amid the condemned Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia.

The calls focused on coordinating efforts between Saudi Arabia and the three countries in response to regional developments and exploring ways to strengthen joint action to support security and stability in the region.

Prince Khalid also reviewed bilateral military and defense relations with his Canadian, German and Spanish counterparts, including opportunities to further develop cooperation.

During his conversation with McGuinty, Prince Khalid extended his condolences over the deaths of several military personnel in a fire at a military base in Canada's Alberta province.

Vessel catches fire in Hormuz off Oman's coast: UKMTO

LONDON, OCT 30

A vessel sailing outbound through the Strait of Hormuz caught fire, approximately 25 nautical miles northeast of Khasab, Oman, according to the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO).

Taking to social media platform X, UKMTO said that it has received a report of an incident 25NM Northeast of Khasab, Oman in the Strait of Hormuz.

"…A third-party has reported that a vessel transiting outbound is on fire, the cause is unknown at time of report. Status of crew, damage assessment, and environmental impact are unknown at present. Vessels are advised to transit with caution and report any suspicious activity to UKMTO, whilst authorities investigate," it said.



Earlier in October, the Kuwait-flagged oil product tanker M/T Al Dasma, carrying 21 Indian seafarers, was struck by an unknown projectile while transiting the Strait of Hormuz. All crew members are safe, Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal announced.

UKMTO also tracked the strike at 11 nautical miles west of Bukha, Oman.

According to Times Kuwait, the incident sparked a fire aboard the vessel, which was later extinguished. The report stated that the tanker remained stationary, and all crew members were reported safe.

This attack occurred amidst a series of regional commercial shipping incidents in the Gulf.

Meanwhile, two Singapore-registered container vessels were reportedly struck by unknown projectiles while transiting the Strait of Hormuz earlier this month, Singapore time, the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) said.

Flash floods kill five in Syria

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
DAMASCUS, OCT 30

Flash flooding and heavy rains in northern and eastern Syria killed five people, including four children, authorities said Thursday.

Four children died by drowning in the governorates of Raqqa and Deir ez-Zor, the ministry of emergency and disaster management said in a statement.

Another man died in an accident at a bridge in Raqqa.

State news agency SANA said the heavy downpours and subsequent flooding caused a bridge to collapse in Raqqa, closing a road linking the region to neighboring Aleppo.

Opposition parties slam Netanyahu over allegations of foreign interference in elections

JERUSALEM, OCT 30

Israel's main opposition leader, Gadi Eisenkot, and leaders of Arab political parties have criticised Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu over allegations of foreign interference in the election, after his coalition failed to secure a parliamentary majority.



Netanyahu's Likud party accused Arab-led parties of "stealing" the election, while the Shin Bet security agency is investigating suspicions of illegal funding from Qatar and Turkey. Qatar has rejected the allegations, describing them as "ridiculous and dangerous" and accusing Israeli politicians of conducting a disinformation campaign against Doha.

Final results showed that neither Netanyahu's bloc nor the wider Jewish opposition secured a majority in the 120-seat Knesset. The two Arab-led lists, the Joint List and Ra'am, defied expectations to win a record 19 seats after a surge in turnout among Arab voters. Netanyahu's bloc won 53 seats, while Eisenkot's secured 48, leaving the Arab parties in a potentially decisive position.

The controversy intensified on Thursday after Likud alleged that voters had been bribed to support Arab parties. The allegations followed a request by Central Elections Committee (CEC) chairman Justice Noam Sohlberg for the Shin Bet to investigate "serious suspicions" of foreign interference.

Both Arab parties rejected the claims, with the Joint List describing them as baseless. The dispute has been viewed by Netanyahu's critics as an attempt to undermine the Arab parties' legitimacy and make it politically harder for Eisenkot to secure their support - currently the only apparent route for his bloc to form a government.

Israeli media reported that the CEC had received allegations that Qatar provided funding to increase turnout in Arab communities. Doha's foreign ministry categorically denied the claims.

Netanyahu and Likud described the allegations as a "political earthquake" and "an attack on democracy" aimed at removing their right-wing government. The Shin Bet subsequently clarified that its investigation did not implicate an entire community that had voted legally. Acting CEC director general Dean Livne also said there was "no basis for allegations of systematic violations of election integrity".

Eisenkot, who was briefed on the investigation, said it was too early to establish what had happened, or whether any wrongdoing had taken place. He accused Netanyahu of running "an orchestrated and organized campaign to delegitimize the election results".

Balad chairman Sami Abu Shehadeh, who is part of the Joint List, dismissed the allegations as "a racist blood libel" by the losing side, accusing it of calling on security agencies to use force to overturn the election result.

Netanyahu's criticism of Arab voters had begun before the results were announced. On election day, he repeatedly posted on social media that high turnout among Arab voters was an "emergency" and a "matter of life or death" for the Israeli right. He also shared AI-generated images of Arab voters at polling stations in an effort to encourage right-wing supporters to vote.

Gaza patients lose access to specialized burn treatment amid materials shortage

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
DUBAI, OCT 30

Doctors without Borders has stopped producing specialized 3D-printed masks for patients with severe facial burns in Gaza after restrictions on medical supplies prevented the organization from obtaining essential materials

The organization has warned children may be left with permanent disabilities as a result of the shortages, which come amid wider restrictions affecting humanitarian institutions operating in Gaza.

In December 2025, Israeli authorities revoked the registration of MSF and 37 other international NGOs, raising concerns about their ability to continue delivering humanitarian assistance.



"We produced the last 3D-printed mask for victims of severe burns in Gaza on October 14, 2026. Due to restrictions and blockages by the Israeli authorities of essential items, we are unable to continue supporting patients who have suffered extensive injuries and burns on their faces," said physiotherapist manager Dr Feras Swairjo.

MSF told Arab News that many patients in Gaza had suffered severe burns, with some having extensive injuries as a result of Israeli airstrikes and others suffering burns while cooking in overcrowded tents or on open fires.

"Without these specialized masks, patients face the risk of permanent facial disfigurement and disabilities that can affect their ability to move, see, or even breathe normally," reported MSF.

The agency said they had the medical expertise and capacity to provide aid in Gaza, but they were being deprived of the basic materials needed to do the work and access of resources into the strip was limited.

"The blockages of these essential supplies risk leaving children with preventable disabilities for the rest of their lives. It is a man-made problem that can be solved today," Swairjo said.

MSF reported in April that children accounted for 85 percent of its 88 active patients receiving treatment for severe facial burns in Gaza.

The organization said it was the only provider of 3D-printed physiotherapy masks in the territory, making the suspension of production particularly concerning for patients who depend on the specialized treatment.

Saudi: Commercial Transactions Law strengthens contractual stability

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
RIYADH, OCT 30

The Commercial Transactions Law keeps pace with developments in the commercial and investment environment through its comprehensive scope and consistency with laws that promote contractual stability and enforceability and protect the interests of parties to commercial transactions. It complements the Civil Transactions Law.

The Commercial Transactions Law stipulates that the provisions of the Civil Transactions Law apply to cases not expressly addressed by the former when no commercial custom or practice exists, making the Civil Transactions Law a supplementary source for filling legislative gaps in the commercial environment. In establishing certain provisions, the law also relies on general rules codified in the Civil Transactions Law to address matters for which no specific commercial provisions exist. The Commercial Transactions Law, which governs commercial transactions, draws on the terminology and theoretical framework set out in the draft Civil Transactions Law to ensure consistency and harmony between the two laws.



Oman participates in General Assembly of ICDO

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
GENEVA, OCT 30

The Sultanate of Oman participated in the work of the 27th session of the General Assembly of the International Civil Defence Organisation (ICDO), which commenced today at the Geneva International Conference Centre.

The Sultanate of Oman's delegation is headed by Maj. Gen Sulaiman Ali Al Hussaini, Chairman of the Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority.

The Sultanate of Oman's participation comes within the framework of its keenness to enhance international cooperation in the fields of civil defence, emergency response, and disaster management.

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Türkiye tourism revenue reaches $51.3B

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
STANBUL, OCT 30

Türkiye's tourism revenue climbed 2.4% year-on-year to reach a record $51.28 billion in the first nine months of 2026, Turkish Culture and Tourism Minister Mehmet Nuri Ersoy said on Friday.

Speaking at a news conference at the Ataturk Cultural Center in Istanbul, Ersoy presented the sector's performance for the third quarter and the January-September period.

The country welcomed 49.13 million visitors during the first nine months of the year, including 23.37 million in the third quarter alone.

Russia topped the list of source markets with 5.7 million visitors, followed by Germany with 5.17 million and the UK with 3.2 million.



Average visitor stays stood at 10.34 nights in the first nine months and 10.69 nights in the third quarter.

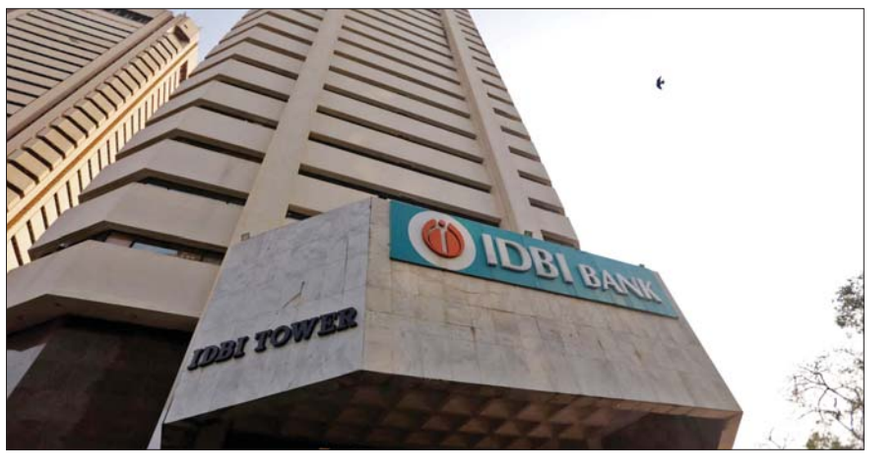
Average spending per night rose 4.6% year-on-year to $107.70 across all visitors in the nine-month period, with foreign tourists spending an average of $119.90 per night and expatriate citizens spending $72.20.

Ersoy noted that regional conflicts, airspace restrictions and rising energy prices have driven up aviation costs and pressured international travel demand throughout the year.

Govt issues clarification on 'strategic restructuring' process of IDBI Bank

NEW DELHI, OCT 30

The government on Friday issued a clarification on the process of 'strategic restructuring' of IDBI Bank, saying the government of India and the LIC retain residual shareholdings to get further benefit from the "upside that is expected from the value enhancement following strategic restructuring of the IDBI Bank going forward in future".



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had earlier described the IDBI Bank deal as a "strategic restructuring" rather than a strategic disinvestment -- highlighting that both the government and LIC will remain shareholders in the lender after the transaction is completed.

The Finance Ministry said in a fresh statement that the first or initial bid round was conducted in the financial year 2025-26 by DIPAM as per its internal practices, which are in the nature of indicative guidelines and not hidebound rules or regulations.

"The foreword itself states that the procedure suggested is not to be construed as a rigid, legal framework, which may require due adaptation/modification in the best interest of successful execution of the transaction in a time bound manner. Given the complex nature of strategic transactions, the indicative guidelines give flexibility to ensure cost and time spent in lengthy processes is not wasted," it explained.

The press note "dated 14.10.2026 clearly explains that there is not a-priori benchmark for bidding".

The bidders do their own valuation and submit their bids in a confidential manner. Independent agencies are hired to do a fair valuation of the enterprise contemporaneously, which is then used as a comparator to assess the reasonableness of the bids submitted. The bid discovered price and the comparative valuation can, therefore, be above or below each other, the ministry statement further added.

To handle this situation, provision is ex-ante built into Para 5.3.6(iii) the RFP: "In the event the Financial Bid of the Highest Bidder is lower than the reserve price, the GoI will decide the further course of action and the QIPs shall not subsequently question any decision taken by the GoI in this regard." (IANS/UNI)

AU Small Finance Bank probes alleged data leak



NEW DELHI, OCT 30

AU Small Finance Bank on Friday said that it is investigating a potential data leak involving a software-as-a-service (SaaS) platform hosted by Salesforce after a hacker group claimed to have breached the lender's systems and accessed sensitive customer information.

In a statement, the bank said it is examining a possible data leak related to a Salesforce-managed platform that contains limited data pertaining to vehicle loan customers.

"AU Small Finance Bank is investigating a potential data leak involving a software-as-a-service (SaaS) platform managed and hosted by Salesforce, which holds limited data relating to our vehicle loan customers," according to the bank's statement.

However, the lender's own systems have not been impacted and all banking services continue to operate normally, it added.

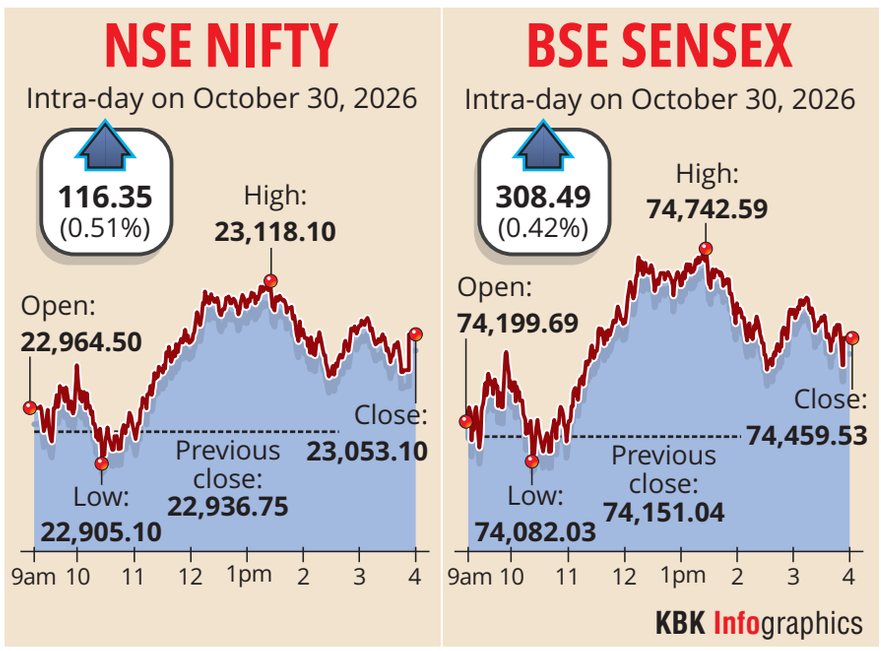
"We reaffirm that the bank's own systems remain unaffected and all banking services are operating normally," the bank said.

The development comes after reports that hacking group Scarlett-Group claimed responsibility for an alleged breach at AU Small Finance Bank.

According to them, the threat actor claimed to have obtained customer and internal corporate data, including KYC records, personal identification documents, PAN and Aadhaar details, credit reports, bank statements, loan applications, signed agreements, insurance records, CRM data, employee information, login histories and audit logs.

Following this, shares of AU Small Finance Bank on Friday traded about 2 per cent lower at Rs 860.45 apiece on the BSE. The stock has recorded a 52-week high of Rs 1,144.65 and a 52-week low of Rs 832, as per the exchange data.

Earlier in October, state-owned State Bank of India (SBI) experienced a data breach with 3,897 customer records found exposed on the dark web. (IANS)



Govt notifies social security boards for gig and unorganised workers

NEW DELHI, OCT 30

The Centre has notified the constitution of the National Social Security Boards for Unorganised Workers and Gig and Platform Workers to strengthen the social security framework for workers in the informal workforce, an official statement said on Friday.

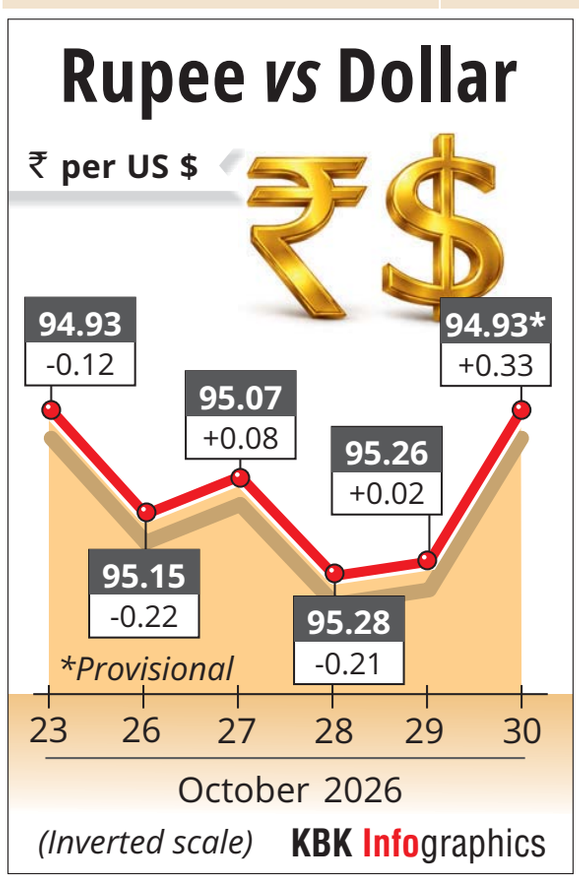


Established under the Code on Social Security, the boards will recommend and monitor welfare schemes for unorganised workers, gig workers and platform workers, the Ministry of Labour & Employment said in a statement.

The boards will be headed by the Union Minister for Labour and Employment and comprise representatives of the Central and state governments, aggregator companies, employers, civil society organisations, workers' unions and gig and platform worker associations, it added.

The boards will recommend suitable social security schemes for different categories of workers and advise the Central government on matters arising out of the administration of the Code.

They will also monitor social welfare schemes administered by the Centre for these workers, review record-keeping functions performed at the state level and examine expenditure from the fund and account. (IANS)



Sun Pharma's Q2 profit drops 36%

MUMBAI, OCT 30

Sun Pharmaceutical Industries Limited on Friday reported a 36.2 per cent year-on-year (YoY) decline in consolidated net profit to Rs 1,988.53 crore for the quarter ended September 2026 (Q2 FY27), impacted by a one-time loss of Rs 1,269 crore.

Despite the hit to profitability, the country's largest drugmaker posted double-digit revenue growth, with sales rising nearly 12 per cent during the quarter, according to its stock exchange filing.

Excluding exceptional items, profit before tax stood at Rs 4,428.2 crore, marking a 6.3 per cent increase from the year-ago period. Revenue from operations rose 11.9 per cent year-on-year to Rs 16,198.71 crore in the July-September quarter, compared with Rs 14,478.31 crore a year earlier.

At the operating level, earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation (EBITDA) increased 4.8 per cent to Rs 4,744 crore from Rs 4,527 crore in the year-ago quarter. However, EBITDA margin narrowed to 29.3 per cent from 31.3 per cent, as per its regulatory filing.

The drugmaker continued to invest in innovation, with research and development expenditure standing at Rs 778.4 crore during the quarter, equivalent to 4.8 per cent of sales. The company's India business remained a key growth driver. Domestic formulation sales rose 17.3 per cent year-on-year to Rs 5,552.3 crore from Rs 4,735 crore, accounting for 34.5 per cent of consolidated sales during the quarter.

Sun Pharma also increased its market share in the Indian pharmaceutical market to 8.6 per cent from 8.3 per cent, according to the Pharmarack MAT September 2026 report.

In contrast, formulation sales in the United States declined 8.2 per cent to $455 million during the quarter. The US business contributed approximately 27 per cent of total consolidated sales. (IANS/UNI)

Fiscal deficit stands at 42.1% of full year target

NEW DELHI, OCT 30

India's fiscal deficit for the first six months (April-September) of the current financial year touched the Rs 7.14 lakh crore mark, which constitutes 42.1 per cent of the budget estimate for the full year, official figures released showed on Friday.



The Centre has budgeted a fiscal deficit of Rs 16.96 lakh crore for the financial year 2026-27.

Revenue receipts stood at Rs 17.57 lakh crore, which constitutes 49.7 per cent of the budget estimate. Of this, the net tax revenue was Rs 12.76 lakh crore, while non-tax revenue was Rs 4.81 lakh crore.

Net tax revenue rose to 44.5 per cent of the full-year estimate, compared with 43.3 per cent during the same period last year.

Non-tax revenue increased to Rs 4.8 lakh crore, compared with Rs 4.7 lakh crore during the same period last year.

The total government expenditure during the six-month period stood at Rs 25.5 lakh crore, compared with Rs 23 lakh crore a year earlier. Of this, capital expenditure on big-ticket projects in the highway rail and port sectors, which spur growth and create jobs, shot up to Rs 6.5 lakh crore compared with Rs 5.8 lakh crore in the first half of the previous financial year. (IANS)

Centre sets up committee on 'Banking for Viksit Bharat'



NEW DELHI, OCT 30

The Centre has constituted a high-level committee on Banking for Viksit Bharat to undertake a review of India's banking sector and recommend structural, institutional, regulatory and legislative reforms necessary to make it globally competitive, financially inclusive, and resilient for Viksit Bharat, 2047, according to a Finance Ministry statement issued on Friday.

The committee will be chaired by former Central Vigilance Commissioner Suresh N. Patel and will include RBI Deputy Governor Shirish Chandra Murmu, former Indian Bank MD and CEO Padmaja Chunduru, and former RBI Deputy Governor N S Vishwanathan as members. The Joint Secretary, Banking, in the Department of Financial Services will serve as its Member Secretary, the statement said. (IANS)

PE and VC investments surge 46% to $17.1 billion

NEW DELHI, OCT 30

Private equity and venture capital (PE/VC) investments in India rose 46 per cent year-on-year to $17.1 billion across 348 deals in Q3 2026, driven by a surge in infrastructure and health care transactions, a report said on Friday.

The report from EY-IVCA said investment value rose 124 per cent from the previous quarter's $7.6 billion, although deal volume was 9 per cent lower than the 384 deals recorded a year earlier.

However, the deal volume was 44 per cent higher quarter-on-quarter, it added.

Meanwhile, September emerged as the strongest month of 2026 so far, attracting $7 billion of investments and marking the highest monthly investment value since May 2024.

"While the Indian capital markets have largely consolidated over the past few weeks, the upcoming quarterly earnings season is being closely watched given prevailing inflationary pressures. The recent repo rate hike by the Reserve Bank of India reflects a proactive approach as high crude oil prices persist," the report said.

It forecasted PE/VC investors to remain cautious and selective and prioritise resilience of future profitability and return on capital.Infrastructure emerged as the top sector, attracting $7.2 billion, followed by healthcare at $3.1 billion and real estate at $1.4 billion. Together, the three sectors accounted for 69 per cent of overall PE/VC investments during the quarter.

Buyout investments accounted for the largest share of PE/VC activity in the quarter by deal type, with $5.1 billion deployed, a 419 per cent increase in value compared to Q3 2025.

In addition, start-up investments ranked second with an investment of $4.8 billion, an increase of 55 per cent from $3.1 billion in Q3 2025. (IANS)

TRAI releases draft guidelines on responsible use of AI in telecommunication networks

NEW DELHI, OCT 30

Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) on Friday released draft 'Guidelines on responsible use of artificial intelligence (AI) in telecommunication networks and provision of telecommunication services' for stakeholders' comments.



TRAI has decided to frame guidelines to ensure consistent and responsible implementation of the India AI Governance Guidelines in the telecommunication sector. The guidelines will increase clarity, predictability and accountability in the ecosystem, an official statement said.

Stakeholders can submit written comments on the draft guidelines till November 27, 2026, the statement from the Ministry of Communications said.

The central government had released the 'India AI governance guidelines' in February 2026 to harness the transformative potential of artificial intelligence for inclusive development and global competitiveness, and to address risks it may pose to individuals and society.

The guidelines are anchored in seven guiding principles that prioritises trust, people-centricity, innovation, fairness & equity, accountability, safety, resilience & sustainability etc. (IANS/UNI)

Fell short in our bowling: Iyer after India's 87-run loss

NEW DELHI, OCT 30



India captain Shreyas Iyer admitted that his side's bowling fell short in the fourth T20 International against New Zealand in Auckland on Friday, with the hosts' 87-run victory exposing areas that need attention ahead of the final match of the series.

New Zealand, who had already conceded the series after losing the first three matches, bounced back with a commanding batting display to post 259 for seven. Glenn Phillips led the charge with a blistering 107 off 49 balls, while Michael Bracewell hammered 65 off just 25 deliveries.

Phillips took 32 runs off Nitish Kumar Reddy in the 16th over, smashing four consecutive sixes. The Phillips-Bracewell assault produced 16 of New Zealand's 20 sixes in the innings and left the Indian bowlers with few answers.

Reflecting on the defeat, Iyer felt India lost control during the powerplay, allowing the New Zealand batters to seize the initiative. (IANS)

Recuperating Prasidh ruled out of NZ ODIs

SIRAJ ADDED TO INDIA 'A' SQUAD

MUMBAI, OCT 30



India pacer Prasidh Krishna, who is recuperating from a left hamstring injury, has been ruled out of the five-match ODI series against New Zealand, starting from November 4, and will join the India 'A' squad for the final four-day game against New Zealand A, "subject to him clearing the Return to Play (RTP) assessment," the BCCI said on Friday.

Prasidh sustained an injury during an ODI against the West Indies in Guwahati and his availability for the 50-over series against New Zealand was subject to fitness clearance.

"The right-arm pacer, who is recovering from the hamstring injury, will need additional time to build up the workload required to be ready for matches," the BCCI said in a statement.

The board further said that Prasidh will join India 'A' squad for the third and final four-day game against New Zealand. (IANS)

Arshdeep races into T20I record books, becomes fastest pacer to 150 wickets



AUCKLAND, OCT 30

India's Arshdeep Singh is making wickets fall at a remarkable pace. The left-arm pacer has not only become the fastest fast bowler to reach 150 wickets in T20 Internationals but has also set a new benchmark for the most wickets taken by a bowler from a Full Member nation in a calendar year.

Arshdeep needed just 2,143 deliveries to reach the 150-wicket landmark, putting him ahead of every fast bowler who has achieved the feat. Bangladesh's Mustafizur Rahman previously held the record, having taken 2,532 balls.

Only Sri Lanka's Wanindu Hasaranga (2,035 balls) and Afghanistan's Rashid Khan (2,098 balls) have reached the milestone in fewer deliveries, placing Arshdeep third overall among bowlers.

What makes the achievement even more striking is the speed with which he has built his wicket tally. Arshdeep took just 1,577 days from his T20I debut to reach 150 wickets, breaking Hasaranga's previous record of 2,325 days to become the quickest bowler to the landmark in terms of elapsed time.

The Indian pacer has another reason to celebrate. With 40 T20I wickets in 2026, he has become the highest wicket-taker in a calendar year among players from Full Member nations.

He has moved past Ireland's Josh Little, who claimed 39 wickets in 2022. Hasaranga took 38 in 2024, while India's Bhuvneshwar Kumar finished with 37 in 2022.

From breaking the long-standing pace-bowling benchmark to setting a new annual record, Arshdeep's double milestone highlights his growing stature as one of India's most dependable weapons in T20 cricket. (IANS)

Struff stuns Djokovic, Kym upsets Shelton in Basel

BASEL, OCT 30



Jan-Lennard Struff earned one of the biggest victories of his career as the German stunned 102-time tour-level titlist Novak Djokovic to reach the Swiss Indoors Basel quarter-finals.

The 36-year-old, who made his first Grand Slam quarter-final at Wimbledon, played aggressive tennis behind his booming serve to stay on top of Djokovic and take the racquet out of the Serbian's hands.

He hit 27 aces, including one down the T on match point to seal the 6-7(4), 7-5 7-6(5) win in two hours and 36 minutes. Struff saved all six break points he faced to advance to set a quarter-final clash against Nuno Borges.

"The last serve went in the corner like many balls today. I knew I had to play my best tennis to have a chance. Last eight times he beat me very, very easily. So, very, very happy and pleased with the performance," said Struff.

The loss is a critical blow to Djokovic's hopes of qualifying for the ATP Finals in Turin. Rafael Jodar, the ninth-placed player in the ATP Live Race To Turin, lost earlier in the day, which opened the door for Djokovic to pass him with a title in Basel. But instead, Djokovic trails the Spaniard by 319 points with just the Rolex Paris Masters remaining before the season finale for both men, ATP reports. Djokovic is tied with Roger Federer for the most qualifications in ATP Finals history with 18.

Later, Swiss wild card Jerome Kym held upset top seed Ben Shelton 6-3, 6-7(4), 7-6(1) in a topsy-turvy second-round clash. With the win, Kym advanced to his second tour-level quarter-final and became the first Swiss man to earn a Top 10 win since Stan Wawrinka defeated then No. 7 Andrey Rublev in Stockholm in 2024. (IANS)

Sports village plans Japan-India Sports exchange

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
HYDERABAD, OCT. 30



Sports Village, Hyderabad, has proposed a Japan-India Sports Exchange Programme to promote scholarships, international training, coaching exchanges and collaboration with Japanese sporting institutions.

Sports Village CEO Mohammad Shamsuddin and Japanese language exchange programme coordinator P. Ajay Kumar discussed the initiative with Tokyo-based hotelier Anil Raj of the Y.K. Raj Group at the Sports Village office in Jubilee Hills.

Raj expressed support for the initiative, which includes plans to introduce traditional Japanese sumo wrestling in Hyderabad through an international exhibition featuring Japanese wrestlers and technical experts, besides exploring judo training and coaching camps.

ENTERTAINMENT

Raghubir Yadav suffered heart attack



M.A.SALAM
Film Journalist



Veteran actor Raghubir Yadav, who is receiving a lot of positive response to his work in the streaming series 'Hunkkaar: The Roar', has a scary medical situation before shooting for a key scene for the series.

Director Karan Kapadia and Raghubir Yadav recently took audiences behind the scenes to discuss pivotal moments from the series as they shared insights into the creative process and memorable onset anecdotes in a special scene breakdown.

Adding a surprising twist to the conversation, Karan recalled that the team was shooting the crucial testimony scene when, the night before, Raghubir Yadav had suffered a heart attack. Recounting the incident with characteristic humour, Raghubir jokingly remarked that the scene was so intense that he rather enjoyed having a heart attack more. The anecdote offers a glimpse into the demanding nature of the sequence and the candid, unexpected moments that unfold behind the camera.

'Hunkkaar – The Roar' is set against a world of power, faith and influence, and follows the accusation made by 17-year-old Meenu Rawat against a spiritual figure. The show is directed by Karan D. Kapadia and Nitya Mehra.

Actress Aneet Padda, who broke out on the scene with 'Saiyaara', essays the role of Meenu Rawat. Her allegations trigger a high-stakes investigation and a courtroom battle, exposing the complex relationship between faith, power and justice.

Fatima Sana Shaikh plays ACP Jasleen Singh Soin, while Mohammed Zeeshan Ayyub, Raghubir Yadav, Ram Kapoor and Arjun Mathur feature in pivotal roles. Backed by Applause Entertainment, Birla Studios and Purple Pebble Pictures, the series explores truth, institutional influence and a young woman's fight to be heard.

Produced by Birla Studios and Applause Entertainment, in association with Purple Pebble Pictures, a Mangata Films Production, 'Hunkkaar: The Roar' is available to stream on JioHotstar.

Hrithik Roshan shares cryptic note on wisdom

Bollywood superstar Hrithik Roshan left fans intrigued with a philosophical and rather cryptic note on wisdom, clarity and spirituality.



In the post, he reflected on how the pursuit of understanding life can sometimes make one realise that perhaps ignorance was bliss.

Taking to his social media account, Hrithik shared a close-up selfie along with a reflective note that began, "You spend so much of your life chasing wisdom and clarity, only for the penny to drop that ignorance was bliss all along."

He went on to describe the world as a "fool's world" and wrote, "Maybe the last step of wisdom, or spirituality itself, is taking that conscious step back. Back into being the fool again."

is not the first time Hrithik has shared lengthy, philosophical thoughts on social media. In an earlier post, he had described one of his reflections as a "senseless morning rant" while writing about emotions, sadness and the tendency to analyse one's feelings.

On the professional front, Hrithik made his acting debut as a leading man with his father Rakesh Roshan's 2000 film "Kaho Naa... Pyaar Hai", which turned him into an overnight star. He went on to feature in films such as "Fiza", "Mission Kashmir", "Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham", "Koi... Mil Gaya", "Lakshya", "Krrish", "Dhoom 2" and "Jodhaa Akbar".

Manoj talks about actresses overtaking male-dominated Bollywood



Actor Manoj Bajpayee believes that while mainstream Bollywood has traditionally revolved around male protagonists, women have been leading films for years slowly and steadily.

The actor inorder to prove his point cited the work of actresses Vidya Balan and Kajol as examples of the gradual shift in the industry.

During a discussion on whether the big screen continues to be male-dominated and whether female actors will take considerable time to be accepted as protagonists in the same way as male actors, Manoj Bajpayee said the change had already been taking place, albeit gradually.

"The heroine has been coming as a hero for a long time. I remember so many films of Vidya Balan. I remember Kajol's movies too. It is taking its time, but it's happening. What is good that is happening. And it has been happening for a long time, right?" he said.

Selena celebrates 25 years of friendship with Demi

Actress-singer Selena Gomez celebrated her over 25-year-long friendship with singer Demi Lovato, calling her one of the most real and honest human beings in her life.



Selena, who featured Demi in the latest campaign for her beauty brand, shared an emotional note on Instagram looking back on their journey of friendship, growth and the dreams they shared since childhood.

"Over 25 years of ups and downs in life and friendship and growth, there has always been a constant that has brought me back to you, @ddlovato. You were the person who knew the seven-year-old me who just had a dream, and I knew that you had a very big dream, too."

Selena went on to add: "I love what we've been through. I'm proud of what we've been through. Thank you for still being one of the most unbelievably real honest human beings in my life. Thanks for making me blush extra hard for this campaign. I love you with all my heart.

Hope you like our campaign, guys! Having Demi be a part of this chapter means so, so much to me. Selena."

Selena began her career as a child actress on the children's television series Barney & Friends and emerged as a teen idol .

KCR tried to grab 50,000 Crore Miyapur land: Telangana CM



FROM PAGE 1

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy said that the Congress party, which was in opposition during the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) regime, fought against the then State government to protect the land. After the Congress came to power, the State government argued the case and secured a favourable decision. He claimed that his government has so far protected Rs 1.50 lakh crore worth of government lands.

He listed a series of cases of alleged land-grabbing by KCR and his family members. He claimed that they tried to tamper with the revenue records to encroach on lands. He also accused them of exchanging luxury cars and cash as bribes.

The Chief Minister alleged that K. T. Rama Rao (KTR) attempted to grab IMG lands in collusion with the Bhalerao family.

He said BRS leaders also attempted to take over valuable government lands at Kancha Gachibowli and Mamidipally, but the Congress government protected them through legal battles.

Revanth Reddy said KTR's associates attempted to encroach upon forest land at Gurramguda. The Supreme Court upheld the land's forest status.

He alleged that KTR and Rayalaseema Builders attempted to grab 143 acres at Manchirevula. The government protected the land and established a school for police personnel's children.

He claimed that 400 acres of forest land in Jayashankar Bhupalpally district were handed over to an MLA who defected to BRS. The government fought the case in the Supreme Court.

Revanth Reddy dared KCR and KTR to debate in the Assembly on their alleged land encroachment and illegal deals

The Chief Minister said the government lands in Miyapur land protected through legal battles by the government will be utilised to generate resources for irrigation, education, healthcare and other development projects.

He said after a decision by the Cabinet, the proceeds from Miyapur land will be used for education. A Cabinet subcommittee on resource mobilisation will study the proposals and decide how the funds should be utilised for public development.

CM Revanth urges Centre to expedite high-speed rail projects in TG

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
NEW DELHI, OCT 30

Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Friday urged Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw to expedite approvals for several major railway projects in the State, including the proposed Hyderabad-Pune, Hyderabad-Bengaluru and Hyderabad-Chennai high-speed rail corridors.



Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, accompanied by Congress MPs, met Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw at Rail Bhawan in New Delhi.

During a meeting at Rail Bhawan in New Delhi, the Chief Minister said the State government had reviewed the Centre's proposals for the three corridors and submitted revised proposals with suggestions.

He clarified that land acquisition would begin only after the Centre finalised and approved the alignments.

Revanth Reddy also sought immediate sanction for the 130-km Vikarabad-Krishna railway line, citing the potential to develop a cement and textile hub in view of large limestone deposits near Tekalkode.

He proposed that the 360-km Regional Ring Rail be aligned alongside the Regional Ring Road (RRR) to boost connectivity and employment.

He further requested approvals for the Dornakal-Gadwal, Kalwakurthy-Macherla, Kacheguda-Jaggayyapeta, Patancheru-Adilabad, Bodhan-Latur and Akannapet bypass railway lines.

The Chief Minister also urged the Railway Minister to establish the proposed Mega Coaching and Freight Maintenance Depot at Anantharam village near Mahabubabad.

He informed the Centre that the State government had agreed to hand over 409 acres and one gunta of land required for the project.

State Minister Vivek Venkataswamy, MPs Dr. Mallu Ravi, Vem Narender Reddy, Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy, Balram Naik, Gaddam Vamshi Krishna and Anil Kumar Yadav, along with senior state officials, attended the meeting.

TG announces Rs 419 crore Diwali bonus for Singareni employees

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
HYDERABAD, OCT 30

The government of Telangana on Friday announced that a Diwali bonus of Rs 419 crore will be paid to employees of state-owned Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) on November 5.

Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Energy, Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, made the announcement while extending advance Diwali greetings to the employees of the coal company.

He directed the company's management to disburse the Performance-Linked Reward Bonus (Diwali bonus).

The decision is expected to benefit about 38,000 employees. Every employee will get Rs 1,10,250 as a Diwali Bonus. The company will spend a total of Rs 419 crore on the bonus.

This is the second bonus to be received by Singareni employees within a month. On October 13, the state government had Rs 596 crore as a bonus for Dasara.



Following directives from the Deputy CM, SCCL management has initiated Diwali bonus disbursement.

Singareni CMD Buddha Prakash Jyoti consulted with the personnel and finance officials concerned and instructed them to make the necessary arrangements to credit the Diwali bonus into the workers' bank accounts by November 5.

The company stated that the Diwali bonus applies exclusively to employees covered under the National Coal Wage Agreement (NCWA) and does not extend to executive/officer-level staff. Workers who completed 190 working days in underground mines, or 240 working days in opencast and surface operations during the previous financial year, will be eligible for the full bonus.

For those with fewer working days, the bonus will be calculated and paid on a pro-rata basis, proportional to the number of days worked. However, a minimum attendance of 30 days during the previous financial year has been set as the eligibility threshold to qualify for this bonus.

On October 13, the state government had declared a 34% profit share for permanent employees as a Dasara gift.

Permanent employees of the company were paid an average profit share of Rs 1,53,912 each, while contract employees were given Rs 5,500 each.

The Singareni management has disbursed a total of approximately Rs 1,020 crore to the workforce across these two bonuses.

Within the span of a single month, employees are set to receive an average of nearly Rs 2,65,000 through Dussehra and Diwali bonuses.

Minister Sridhar Babu calls on medical students to put service before profit

Inaugurates Rs 15 Cr Girls' Hostel in Bhupalpally



TFP I MLN MURTHY
J. BHUPALPALLY, OCT 30

IT, Industries and Legislative Affairs Minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu has urged medical students to pursue their education with dedication and a spirit of service, stressing that medicine is a noble responsibility devoted to humanity.

Addressing first-year students at the White Coat Ceremony at Bhupalpally Government Medical College on Friday, he said doctors must combine medical knowledge with compassion, patience and concern for patients, particularly those from economically weaker sections. He also urged students to develop skills in emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and robotics.

The minister said the government was undertaking infrastructure works worth Rs 130 crore, including the medical college building and boys' and girls' hostels. He inaugurated the newly constructed girls' hostel, built at a cost of Rs 15 crore, and announced that the boys' hostel would be opened within 15 days. He also said Rs 80 lakh had been sanctioned through Singareni for purchasing two buses for students and assured that additional facilities would be provided.

MLA Gandra Satyanarayana Rao said efforts were underway to improve the college's classrooms, library, playground, washrooms and hostel facilities. District Collector Rahul Sharma appreciated the college for achieving a 91 per cent pass rate and highlighted the importance of quality healthcare in the district.

SP Sankeerth, GENCO Chief Engineer Sri Prakash, Municipal Chairman Burra Komuraiah, Vice-Chairman Ambala Srinivas, Medical College Principal Sridhar Rao, DMHO Dr Madhusudan, Government General Hospital Superintendent Dr Venkataratnam, public representatives, faculty members, medical staff, students and parents attended the programme.

Final voter lists in Telangana to be published on Nov 30

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
HYDERABAD, OCT 30

With the Election Commission of India (ECI) again revising the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) schedule in both Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, the final electoral rolls in both states will now be published on November 30.

For Telangana, the Election Commission has extended the deadline for notices and disposal of claims and objections to November 26. In Andhra Pradesh, the deadline has been extended till November 20.

The final electoral rolls in both the Telugu states are now scheduled for publication on November 30.

The schedule has been revised at the request of the Chief Electoral Officers of both states.

In separate communications to the CEOs, the Commission informed them about its decision to revise the schedule.

The ECI has directed the CEOs to inform all officials about the revised schedule and ensure wide publicity through all available media. Political parties must also be informed of the modified schedule in writing.

The Commission has revised the SIR schedule multiple times in both Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.



Shabbir Ali questions BRS-era Kaleshwaram restrictions

Compares drought responses in 2015 and 2026

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
HYDERABAD, OCT 30

Advisor to Telangana Government Mohammed Ali Shabbir on Friday accused BRS Working President K. Tarakarama Rao of misleading farmers by claiming that the Congress government had declared a "crop holiday". He said no such decision had been taken; farmers were merely advised against water-intensive Rabi crops, particularly paddy, without assured irrigation.

"Farmers risk losing their investment in seeds, fertilisers and labour if water runs out midway. How does warning them become a crop holiday?" he asked,



Mohammed Ali Shabbir

responding to KTR's Thursday press conference.

He recalled restrictions along the Nagarjunasagar left canal in 2023 and BRS-era advisories to reduce paddy cultivation during low-storage years. Why were similar precautions now called anti-farmer, he asked.

He also challenged KTR's claim that the drought was man-made and water was being allowed to go waste. "Fine. Let us talk about the assets you left behind. Kaleshwaram was sold as the ultimate drought-proofing project. Today the Medigadda, Annaram and Sundilla barrages face National Dam Safety Authority restrictions. Several pumps cannot be run the way you advertised," he said.

He said much of the system remained incomplete, under safety review or unable to store promised volumes. Major and medium reservoirs held around 180 TMC against a combined capacity of 585 TMC, he said, arguing rainfall was only part of the problem.

"You had years in power to finish the canals, fix structural issues and make the system fully usable. Instead, we inherited restricted barrages and incomplete works. Now you complain that we are not running projects your own safety record does not allow us to run. That is not opposition. That is complaining about the condition of the homework you submitted," he said.

He questioned why Kalwakurthy, Nettempadu, Bhima, SLBC, Sita Rama, Pranahita-Chevella and Devadula remained incomplete despite heavy spending. Rehabilitation designs were being finalised under technical oversight, with works targeted to begin by December-end and finish before the next monsoon.

Turning to drought relief, Shabbir Ali recalled that the BRS government had declared 231 mandals drought-hit in November 2015, after the monsoon had ended. It then sought NDRF assistance, with approximately Rs 791 crore sanctioned, and arranged tankers, private borewells, additional MGNREGA employment and livestock support.

Bandi Sanjay calls for innovative research to improve farm productivity

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
HYDERABAD, OCT 30

Union Minister of State (MoS) for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar called on agricultural scientists to develop improved crop varieties and promote modern farming technologies to help farmers increase yields, reduce costs and protect the environment. He was speaking at Farmers' Day celebrations and PM-KISAN Utsav Diwas organised at the ICAR–Indian Institute of Rice Research (ICAR-IIRR), Rajendranagar, Hyderabad, marking the release of the 24th instalment of the PM-KISAN scheme.



The Minister highlighted the role of farmers in achieving the vision of Viksit Bharat@2047 and stressed the need for research and innovation to address farmers' challenges. He urged farmers to follow the recommendations of ICAR-IIRR scientists and ensure that all eligible beneficiaries receive government scheme benefits.

ICAR-IIRR Director Dr. M. Srinivas Prasad outlined the institute's research initiatives aimed at improving crop productivity, plant health and farmers' income.

Scientists interacted with farmers, showcased newly developed rice varieties.

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