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ENGLISH DAILY

Honest Journalism...



INDIA HOSTS MAIDEN BIMSTEC MARITIME SECURITY EXERCISE

PAGE 5



MANIPUR HAS 36 COMMUNITIES, GOVT MUST PROTECT EVERYONE'S INTERESTS: CM

PAGE 4

FRANCE HEADS INTO THIRD WEEKEND OF PROTESTS

PAGE 8



20 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

13 HRS 10 MINS
RISE 05:42 AM
SET 06:52 PM

MOONRISE/MOONSET

13 HRS 52 MINS
RISE 05:31 AM
SET 07:23 PM

SPORTS ▶ P11



INDIA WIN 20 MEDALS AT WORLD ARMWRESTLING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Congress holds 'public impeachment' proceedings to seek CEC Gyanesh Kumar's removal

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
NEW DELHI, OCT 31

Accusing CEC Gyanesh Kumar of "treason against the nation and Constitution", the Congress on Saturday demanded the "removal" of the poll panel's chief at symbolic "public impeachment proceedings" organised at the official residence of party president Mallikarjun Kharge.



INDIA bloc leaders hold a public briefing on the proposed impeachment motion against Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar at 10 Rajaji Marg in New Delhi on Friday.

The event, held at a special set recreating the interiors of Lok Sabha including the Speaker's dais, kicked off with Kharge reading out a set of six key charges against Gyanesh Kumar and moving a "resolution" for consideration and passage during the mock proceedings.

With former Lok Sabha Speaker Meira Kumar chairing the proceedings, Kharge said the presence of Gyanesh Kumar at the helm of the Election Commission of India was a threat to "impartial polls, democracy and Constitution".

The resolution mentioned six charges against the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and alleged that Gyanesh Kumar conspired to steal elections; deleted 13.2 crore voters; rewrote Form 6 without Parliamentary approval; seized the electoral rolls through ECINET; shut out the other two commissioners and acted at the behest of PM Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah.

Attacking the government for wrongly accusing Congress leader Rahul Gandhi of inciting the youth, Kharge also trained his guns on the RSS for its alleged opposition to adult franchise since the adoption of the Constitution.

Kharge said, "We want to save the foundation of democracy which is being threatened by the BJP."

The Congress President and Leader of the House in the Rajya Sabha also sought the immediate cancellation of the Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023.

Quad unveils AI, minerals and maritime plans



ATLANTA, OCT 31

India and its Quad partners on Saturday outlined plans for more than $85 million in assistance to expand access to trusted AI across the Indo-Pacific, alongside a US commitment of $10 million for critical minerals recycling facilities in India and Southeast Asia.

The four countries also announced a business leaders' forum, plans to identify semiconductor supply chain vulnerabilities and new maritime cooperation activities. They pledged to dismantle cyber scam operations and expressed concern about economic coercion and arbitrary export restrictions.

The announcements came after EAM S Jaishankar, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi and Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong met in Atlanta.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

'Who is meeting whom abroad': PM Modi warns of attempts to 'divide' India

EKTA NAGAR, OCT 31

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday alleged that forces seeking to divide India were operating through networks that included foreign contacts and support, and urged citizens to identify what he described as patterns of activities aimed at weakening the country's unity.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi greets people during Rashtriya Ekta Diwas celebrations in Kevadia

Addressing the 'Rashtriya Ekta Diwas' gathering at Ekta Nagar in Gujarat, PM Modi said attempts are being made to create divisions among Indians and turn citizens against one another.

He accused such forces of exploiting political disappointment and using misinformation to create instability.

"Who is secretly meeting whom abroad? Whom are anti-India forces supporting? Who is speaking the language of India's enemies? We must recognise all these patterns," he said.

The Prime Minister called for a united response to what he described as "conspiracies" to divide the country. He also expressed concern over the use of social media as a tool to spread rumours and damage India's image.

"The way social media is being used as a weapon, rumours are being spread, and attempts are being made to tarnish India's image — citizens will have to deal with these together," he said.

PM Modi's remarks came as part of a wider appeal for national unity amid what he described as a period of global instability, marked by wars, economic difficulties, resource shortages and disruptions in global supply chains. He said, "India's unity had helped it withstand external challenges, including the recent global energy crisis."

According to the Prime Minister, while India is working to find solutions to external pressures, some forces within the country were attempting to create instability through misinformation.

"Citizens had remained united with the nation during the difficult period. The collective resolve is one of India's greatest strengths," he added.

The Prime Minister also accused the Opposition of moving away from its democratic responsibility and becoming an obstruction to development, adding that attempts to undermine constitutional values and national unity needed to be recognised. (IANS/UNI)

ISRO launches next-gen satellite

NEW DELHI, OCT 31

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on Friday launched India's next-generation navigation satellite, NVS-03, aboard the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle, GSLV-F18 rocket.

The launch took place at 11:51 pm at Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh. "GSLV-F18 carrying NVS-03 lifts off from Satish Dhawan Space Centre, SHAR, Sriharikota," India's space agency ISRO said on X.

"Liftoff of GSLV-F18 carrying NVS-03 at 11:51 PM IST from Second Launch Pad, SHAR! ISRO's rescue mission for NavIC is now underway," it added.

The 50-metre-tall, three-stage GSLV-F18 rocket lifted off with the 2,232 kg NVS-03 satellite, aiming to deploy it into a (GTO). (IANS)

Days after High Court relief, ED arrests Azam Khan in money laundering case

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
LUCKNOW, OCT 31

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Saturday arrested senior Samajwadi Party leader and former MP Azam Khan outside Rampur district jail, moments after he was released following nearly 11 months in custody. His son, Abdullah Azam, was also released and left for home. ED officials questioned Khan outside the prison before taking him into custody, with around 24 CRPF personnel deployed at the spot amid a gathering of his supporters.



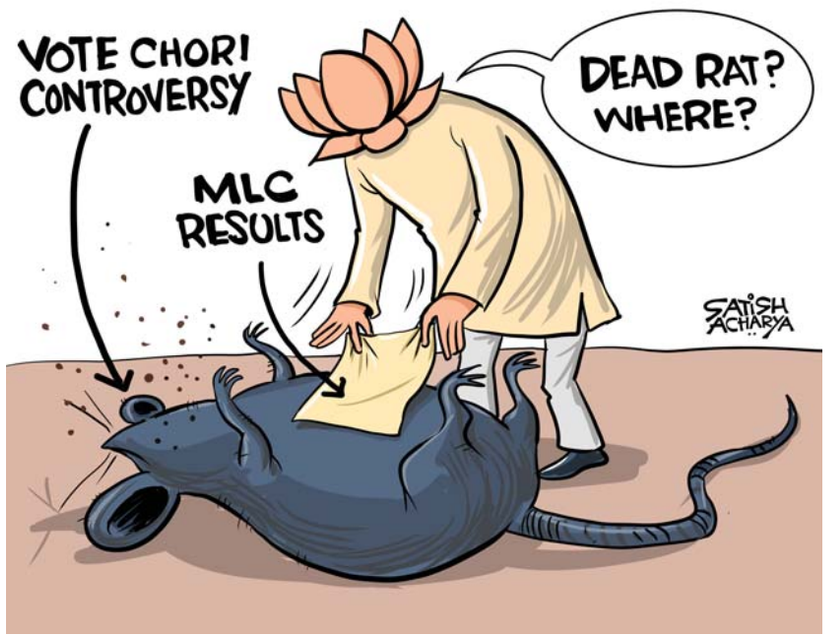
Azam Khan

Reacting to his arrest, Khan said, "What more can I say now? This is the punishment for being a Muslim. The mistake is that a Muslim built a university. That is our crime." His arrest came after the Allahabad High Court granted bail to him and Abdullah and suspended their sentences in the dual PAN card case on October 29, while declining to stay their convictions. Their disqualification from contesting elections, therefore, remains in force.

According to agency sources, Khan was arrested in connection with a 2019 Enforcement Case Information Report (ECIR) registered under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). The case relates to alleged financial irregularities and land-grabbing, including matters linked to the Maulana Mohammad Ali Jauhar Trust and the university established by it. He is likely to be produced before a court in Ghaziabad, sources said. During questioning, Khan reportedly had a heated exchange with ED officials.

Rampur jail superintendent Rajesh Yadav confirmed that the jail authorities had received release orders in 50 cases involving Azam Khan and 40 cases involving Abdullah. While both were released from the jail, the ED took Khan into custody in the separate money-laundering case.

CARTOON CAROUSEL



10th class student hacked with hacksaw machine in classroom

ANANTAPUR, OCT 31

In a gruesome incident, a 10 th Class girl student was hacked with a hacksaw machine in her classroom at Raptadu village of the district on Saturday and she was battling for life in the government hospital.

Police said that the victim Gopika Lakshmi (14) was studying 10 th class at ZP High School. When she was in her classroom, a miscreant attacked her with a hacksaw machine, which is used to cut trees. The victim suffered severe injuries on face and hand.

The profusely bleeding victim was taken to a nearby hospital and later she was admitted to the Government hospital where her condition is said to be very critical. Another girl student also suffered injuries when she went to rescue the victim Gopika Lakshmi.

The school teachers and students were shocked with the incident. After attacking the girl, the miscreant fled the scene leaving the hacksaw machine there. The police officials rushed to the school and launched a massive search for the miscreants.

The police began an investigation on why the miscreants attacked the girl with a hacksaw machine. The incident sent shockwaves in the school and the locality. The panic stricken parents rushed to the school. (IANS/UNI)

Government of India Accounts

April-September 2026-27

Total Receipts

₹ 18,35,422 crore
(50.3% of Budget Estimates for 2026-27)

Tax Revenue ₹ 12,76,088 crore

Non-Tax Revenue ₹ 4,80,732 crore

Non-Debt Capital Receipts: ₹ 78,602 crore

Total Expenditure

₹ 25,49,835 crore
(47.7% of Budget Estimates for 2026-27)

Revenue Account ₹ 18,95,288 crore

Capital Account ₹ 6,54,547 crore

₹ 6,99,409 crore transferred to states as devolution of share of taxes

Figures are Provisional

KBK Infographics

Source: Ministry of Finance

Agriculture Minister dismisses claims of 'Crop Holiday'

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
HYDERABAD, OCT 31



Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao on Saturday dismissed opposition allegations that the State government had declared a "crop holiday" and urged farmers not to be misled by political campaigns.

In an official statement, the Minister said the government had been implementing proactive climate-planning measures over the past six months to protect farmers from potential losses arising from the global El Niño phenomenon.

Anticipating possible water shortages, the Agriculture Department had prepared an action plan promoting alternative, rain-fed and integrated crops to minimise the risk of crop failure at later stages.

Tummala said El Niño was a global weather phenomenon that could affect rainfall and groundwater levels. He clarified that the government was not restricting cultivation but encouraging farmers to take up less water-intensive alternative crops to safeguard their investments.

Field-level surveys are underway in drought-affected mandals to assess crop losses, while officials have been directed to provide farmers with timely guidance.

The Telangana government has declared 365 mandals across 31 districts as drought-affected for Kharif 2026 due to severe rainfall deficits driven by strengthening El Niño conditions. The state recorded a 17% overall deficit (615.5 mm received against the normal 740.6 mm) during the Southwest Monsoon. (NSS)

Nizamabad MP urges water conservation amid El Niño concerns



Nizamabad MP Dharmapuri Arvind addresses DISHA meeting at Integrated District Offices Complex.

TFP I ATEEQ KHAN
NIZAMABAD, OCT 31

Nizamabad MP Dharmapuri Arvind has urged people and farmers to conserve water in view of the prevailing El Niño conditions and the possibility of prolonged dry weather. He also directed officials to expedite the Madhavnagar and Arsapalli Railway Over Bridge (ROB) works and complete them within the next four to five months.

Addressing the District Development Coordination and Monitoring Committee (DISHA) meeting at the Integrated District Offices Complex on Saturday, Arvind reviewed the progress of development and welfare programmes funded by the Central Government. He also directed officials to complete underground drainage works in Nizamabad city by February and ensure timely completion of drinking water projects and overhead tanks under AMRUT 2.0.

Arvind sought details about the release of pre-matric and post-matric scholarships to SC, ST and BC students. Officials informed him that the amounts had been credited directly to students' bank accounts. He welcomed the selection of Nizamabad as the venue for the national-level Khelo India Table Tennis competitions scheduled for December and assured support from the Centre for their successful conduct.

Collector Ila Tripathi said the government had declared 18 mandals in the district drought-affected. With no assured irrigation water available for the Rabi season, farmers were being encouraged to cultivate less water-intensive crops such as jowar and pulses instead of paddy. Subsidised seeds were also being distributed.

She said all available reservoir water would be reserved for drinking purposes until the next monsoon, as water levels had declined considerably. The Sriram Sagar Project currently holds 35 TMC against 80 TMC at the same time last year, while Nizamsagar has 9 TMC compared with 17 TMC last year. Groundwater levels were also falling, she added.

Nizamabad Urban MLA Dhanpal Suryanarayana, Armur MLA Paidi Rakesh, Mayor K. Uma Rani, National Turmeric Board Chairman Palle Ganga Reddy, Additional Collectors Raja Goud and Bhujanga Rao, DRO Geetha, DRDO Saianna, Nizamabad RDO Rajendra Kumar, officials from various departments and DISHA committee members attended the meeting.

Mahabubnagar Collector launches 'Future Readiness Programme' in 26 Govt Schools

TFP I AHAD SIDDIQUI
MAHABUBNAGAR, OCT 31



Mahabubnagar District Collector Khushboo Gupta, IAS on Saturday launched the 'Foundation of Future Readiness Programme' in 26 government schools across Mahabubnagar district to equip students with essential 21st-century skills beyond academic learning.

The initiative will focus on communication, creative and critical thinking, financial literacy and career planning through four components — Young Orators Club, Think and Make, Svatah and Future Dots. The programme will cover nine Zilla Parishad High Schools and 15 Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs). Unveiling the programme handbook at the Collectorate, Gupta said academic marks alone were not sufficient for future success and stressed the need to develop practical skills, problem-solving abilities and career awareness to meet changing employment requirements.

Young Orators Club will promote English communication and public speaking, represented by Keerthana Vepa, while Think and Make, represented by Nagesh, will encourage creativity and independent thinking. Svatah, represented by Santhosh Dinne and Yuvraj Sakkur, will focus on financial literacy and money management. Future Dots, represented by Pawan Kumar Kolli and Nikhil Dasari, will guide students of Classes IX and X on career opportunities and higher education.

District Educational Officer I. Vijayakumari said the programme would help bridge the opportunity gap between government and private school students and identify hidden talents among children.

AMO Dunkudu Srinivas, DSO Shamsheer, GCDO Asra Qadri, MEO Usharani, headmasters and Special Officers of KGBVs attended the programme.

Heavy rains likely in TG

HYDERABAD, OCT 31

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast rainfall across Telangana from October 31 to November 4 due to a low-pressure area over the Bay of Bengal.

Light to moderate rain, thunderstorms, lightning and gusty winds are likely in Hyderabad, Yadadri-Bhuvanagiri, Siddipet and parts of erstwhile Warangal, Khammam and Rangareddy districts. Heavy rainfall alerts have been issued for erstwhile Adilabad and Mahabubnagar districts on November 2 and 3. Authorities have advised people to avoid crossing overflowing streams and urged farmers to protect harvested paddy from rain damage. (NSS)

Medicover offers free heart surgery to 7-year-old boy



TFP I SHAIK RIAZUDDIN
ADILABAD, OCT 31

Medicover Hospital, Hyderabad, has come forward to provide free open-heart surgery worth approximately Rs. 7 lakh to seven-year-old Anji, a boy from Pusai village in Bhoraj mandal, following the initiative of District Collector Rajarshi Shah, IAS.

Anji, son of Tapre Renuka and Pochiram, was diagnosed with a serious heart condition during a free paediatric cardiology camp organised by Medicover Hospital at Adilabad RIMS on September 10. Doctors recommended immediate open-heart surgery. Considering the family's financial condition, the hospital management agreed to bear the entire cost and provide free food and transportation to the family.

During the same medical camp, doctors identified heart-related problems in 40 other children. Medicover has also agreed to provide necessary surgeries and medical treatment to them free of cost in phases, depending on their health conditions.

The children's families thanked Medicover Hospital, Collector Rajarshi Shah and the medical team for extending support. RIMS Director Dr. Jayasingh Singh Rathod, DMHO Dr. Sadhana and Dr. Kallem Venkat Reddy, along with other officials, participated in the programme.

Constable held for pledging seized gold

HYDERABAD, OCT 31

A police constable attached to Meerpet Police Station, Shravan Kumar, was arrested and remanded to judicial custody for allegedly misappropriating gold ornaments and cash seized in a dowry harassment case.

According to Meerpet Inspector Shobhan, police had seized 12 tolas of gold and a mobile phone during the investigation and kept them in the station's custody. Shravan Kumar, who had served in the police force for six years.

LOST OF PASSPORT

The Passport of THODETI SRIDHAR, S/o Lakshman, resident of H.No. 2-16/1, Kamalapur Village, Dharmapuri Mandal, has been lost. According to Sridhar, his passport bearing No.S1093366 went missing on October 30,2026, while he was travelling from Kamalapur to Dharmapuri. He has appealed to the public to inform him at mobile number 7729019801 if anyone finds the passport. He also announced that a suitable reward will be given to the person who returns it.

Nalgonda Collector calls for effective use of AgriStack platform

TFP I ANIL YADAV
NALGONDA, OCT 31



Nalgonda District Collector B. Chandrasekhar, IAS has directed officials to create widespread awareness among farmers about the AgriStack digital platform and ensure its effective implementation to improve access to government schemes, agricultural services and credit facilities.

Addressing a review meeting with Agriculture and allied department officials at his camp office on Saturday, the Collector stressed the importance of technology-driven farming and said AgriStack would help farmers access services through Farmer IDs, digital land records and crop surveys.

He directed officials to include tenant farmers in the Farmers Registry and Digital Crop Survey and ensure that farmers update their crop details after sowing. He said the platform would help improve crop planning, financial access, fertilizer distribution and market awareness through e-NAM. He also stressed the need to provide assistance to farmers without smartphones and encourage the use of local-language voice-based services.

The Collector said linking Farmer Producer Organisations with storage, processing and cold-chain facilities would help farmers secure better returns. He also highlighted the importance of digital records in improving access to bank credit and preventing multiple borrowing.

District Agriculture Officer Vinod Kumar, Horticulture Officer Shekar, NABARD DGM Vinay Kumar, CPO Srinivas Naik, DCO Mamata, Marketing AD Chayadevi, Survey and Land Records AD Devaraj, Civil Supplies Officer Venkatesham, Animal Husbandry AD Narasimha Reddy, EDM Durgarao, NIC representative Prem Kumar and other officials attended the meeting.

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
SE QCC, 4TH FLOOR, GHMC COMPLEX, GHMC

EXPRESSION OF INTREST CUM TENDER NOTICE
NIT No. 04/SE/QCC/GHMC/ STRUCTURAL EVALUATION /2026-27, Dated:30.10.2026.

Subject: Empanelment of Structural Evaluation agencies for carrying out structural Evaluation, Non-Destructive Testing (NDT), Load Assessment and Stability Analysis of Civil Structure and for providing recommendations to enhance structural stability.

The Superintending Engineer, Quality Control Circle, GHMC, on behalf of the Commissioner, GHMC, invites EOI/Tenders for Empanelment of Structural Evaluation agencies for carrying out structural Evaluation, Non-Destructive Testing (NDT), Load Assessment and Stability Analysis of Civil Structure and for providing recommendations to enhance structural stability under various Engineering Divisions of GHMC during the financial year 2026–27. The Agencies who are willing may submit complete details in prescribed formats in document form which can be downloaded from the website www.eprocurement.gov.in. The complete document in all respects with all other information as desired above should be uploaded on e-Procurement uploaded on e-Procurement platform from 03-11-2026, 2.00 P.M. to 17.11.2026 up to 2.30 P.M. and the technical bids will be opened on the same day at 4.00 P.M. Date: 17.11.2026

Any further information may be obtained from the Superintending Engineer, Quality Control Circle, 4th Floor, GHMC Complex, GHMC during office working hours (9000385544).

Date: 30.10.2026.
Hyderabad.

Sd/-
Superintending Engineer
Quality Control Circle, GHMC.

DIPR - R.O. No. : 12875-PP/CL/ADVT/2026-27

CYBERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
MIYAPUR CIRCLE-48, SLP ZONE

Nit No. 23/EE/CMC/CIR-48/2026-27 Dt: 31.10.2026.
Tender Notice
(Through 'e' procurement)

Tenders are called vide no. No. 23/EE/CMC/CIR-48/2026-27 (Item No. 01 to 19) Dt:31.10.2026 Through 'e' procurement for (19) work with an estimated cost of Rs.470.40 lakhs. The sale of bids is open on the website 'e' procurement market place from 2.00 PM on 02.11.2026 onwards and Last date for submission of bids is 09.11.2026 at 2.00 PM and Sale of bids closes one hour before the submission time. Further details can be seen on the website https://tender.telangana.gov.in.

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
Miyapur Circle-48,SLP Zone : CMC.

DIPR - R.O. No. : 12885-PP/CL/ADVT/2026-27

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
Executive Engineer Circle-23& Circle-24

'e' Procurement Notice

Nit. No.	Name of the Work	Estt. Cost (Rs in Lakhs)	Start Date / Last Date & Time for Receipts of Bids	Name & Address Officer, Cell No.
63/EE-23& 24 /RJRNZ/ GHMC/2026-27	(02) No. of Work	17.25	Download Start Date : 02.11.2026 at 5.00P.M Last Date for Receipt of Bids : 05.11.2026 at 5.00P.M	Sri B Narender Goud EE,Cir-23& Cir-24,RJNRZ, GHMC, Phoolbagh, Hyderabad Ph. No. 9989930608 Email id: eec23. chandrayangutta@gmail.com

For further details can be seen at e-procurement @ www.tender.eprocurement.gov.in

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
Cir-23,Chandrayangutta&
Cir-24, Jangammet/RJNRZ/GHMC.

DIPR - R.O. No. : 12893-PP/CL/ADVT/2026-27

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
Executive Engineer, 25-Santosh nagar, Charminar Zone

'e' Procurement Notice Maintenance Works

Nit. No.	Name of the Work	Estt. Cost (Rs in Lakhs)	Start Date / Last Date & Time for Receipts of Bids	Name & Address Officer, Cell No.
16/EE-25 /CRZ/GHMC /2026-27	Sl No 01 to 06	Rs. 79.75 Lakhs	Download Start Date : 02.11.2026 at 11.30 A.M Last Date Receipt of Bids: 09.11.2026 at 03.00 P.M	Sri. R Yadgiri, EE, Circle-25, Charminar Zone Masqati Ground, Darab Jung Colony, Santosh Nagar, Hyderabad Ph. No. 9030478364

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

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
25-Santosh nagar , CRZ , GHMC.

DIPR - R.O. No. : 12907-PP/CL/ADVT/2026-27

Nizamabad Police distribute free study material to 250 police job aspirants

TFP I YOUNUS KHAN
NIZAMABAD, OCT 31



Nizamabad Police Commissioner P. Sai Chaitanya, IPS, on Saturday distributed free study material to 250 unemployed youth preparing for police recruitment examinations as part of a 60-day free pre-recruitment training programme organised by the district police.

The programme, aimed at helping candidates secure Constable and Sub-Inspector posts in the Telangana Police Department, is being conducted at the Giriraj Government College auditorium. Experienced faculty and experts from Hyderabad-based Bhagya Kiran Institute are providing training daily from 9 am to 6 pm.

Addressing the candidates, Commissioner Sai Chaitanya said the initiative was intended to provide quality coaching and guidance without placing a financial burden on unemployed youth. He urged candidates to attend classes regularly, follow faculty guidance, revise lessons daily and prepare with discipline, determination and confidence.

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KTR questions valuation of IDBI Bank

Seeks transparency in proposed disinvestment

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
HYDERABAD, OCT 31

BRS Working President and former Telangana IT Minister K.T. Rama Rao (KTR) on Saturday questioned the valuation process in the proposed disinvestment of IDBI Bank and sought clarification from the Union Government over reports of alleged undervaluation.

In a post on 'X', KTR said public sector undertakings and public sector banks were national assets that needed to be protected.

Questioning the reported changes in rules and valuation methodology after bids fell below the reserve price, he asked whether the bank's valuable real estate assets, including prime land in Hyderabad, had been adequately considered in the valuation.



K.T. Rama Rao

He also sought to know why the concerns raised by IDBI Bank employees were not being addressed.

The Union Government owed the country clear answers before selling the public sector bank to a private player, KTR said, questioning the urgency behind the proposed disinvestment.

K.T. Rama Rao also hit out at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and Chief Minister Revanth Reddy for their plans to protest against "Vote Chori" in New Delhi on Sunday.

Hitting out at the INDIA bloc's proposed rally at Delhi's Ramlila Maidan, K.T. Rama Rao, popularly known as KTR, wrote in a social media message, "An MLA-Chor in tow with a Vote-For-Note-Chor protesting against Vote Chori in Delhi tomorrow!"

"Just Congress Things...I guess," he wrote.

"@RahulGandhi, who encouraged the defection of 10 BRS MLAs to Congress in Telangana, is sitting in a dharna with his 'Vote for Note' Champion scamster Revanth Reddy against Vote Chori in the Country," wrote KTR on X.

"I rest my case. Long Live Indian Democracy," wrote KTR.

The BRS leader's cryptic remark came on the eve of the Rahul Gandhi-led INDIA Bloc rally in Delhi.

Congress committed first 'Vote Theft' by choosing Nehru over Patel: Kishan Reddy

RATNA CHOTRANI
HYDERABAD, OCT 31

Union Minister for Coal and Mines G. Kishan Reddy on Saturday accused the Congress leadership of committing the first "vote theft" after Independence by choosing Jawaharlal Nehru over Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel as India's first Prime Minister.

Addressing a gathering after paying tributes to Patel on his birth anniversary at the BJP State Office, along with party president N. Ramchander Rao, Kishan Reddy alleged that Nehru was made Prime Minister despite Patel enjoying greater support within the party.



BJP leaders paid floral tributes to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel at Gun Park, Hyderabad.

He credited Patel with integrating more than 550 princely states and overseeing the Hyderabad Police Action, which ended the Nizam's rule. He also criticised Nehru's policies on Kashmir, saying they contributed to the prolonged dispute.

Praising Prime Minister Narendra Modi for abrogating Article 370 and honouring Patel through Rashtriya Ekta Diwas and the Statue of Unity, Kishan Reddy urged youth to draw inspiration from Patel's patriotism and commitment to national unity.

Ramchander Rao said Patel's contribution to India's unity and Telangana's liberation would remain unforgettable. He urged youngsters to follow Patel's ideals of discipline and selfless service.

Green tankers initiative to begin from Nov 1

Additional 40 MGD Mission Bhagiratha Scheme to be completed by Nov 15



Chief Secretary Sanjay Jaju reviewed the drinking water supply situation at Secretariat.

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
HYDERABAD, OCT 31

Telangana Chief Secretary Sanjay Jaju on Saturday directed all government departments to use treated water for construction, landscaping, cleaning and other non-drinking purposes as part of coordinated measures to conserve freshwater and groundwater resources and ensure uninterrupted drinking water supply in the core urban region.

Reviewing the drinking water supply situation at the Secretariat, he said the Green Tankers initiative would be launched in the core urban region from November 1 to promote the use of treated water for non-potable requirements.

He instructed officials to regularly test the quality of treated water supplied by Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) to ensure compliance with prescribed standards.

He also directed the Managing Director of Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWSSB) to submit daily reports on the quantity of treated water transported and supplied, measured in million gallons per day (MGD).

HMWSSB Managing Director Ashok Reddy informed the meeting that the additional 40 MGD scheme under Mission Bhagiratha would be completed by November 15.

He said bulk water supply under the mission would continue to all Urban Local Bodies merged into municipal corporations until August next year.

The Water Board would also supply treated water through Green Tankers on demand, similar to its existing drinking water tanker service.

The facility would be made available through a dedicated mobile application to enable consumers to access treated water conveniently.

TG SAFE suspends licences of 14 eateries over food safety violations

544 Kg of spoiled food discarded, 21 samples collected

TFP I TAHER ALI
HYDERABAD, OCT 31

The Telangana Standards Authority for Food and Essential Drugs (TG SAFE) has suspended the FSSAI licences of 14 restaurants and eating establishments in Hyderabad following inspections that revealed serious food safety and hygiene violations.



A total of 22 enforcement teams, comprising food safety officers and police personnel, inspected 22 establishments in the Golconda and Charminar zones on October 31. The violations included unhygienic kitchens, cockroach and rodent infestation, spoiled and expired food, improper storage of raw and cooked items, repeated use of cooking oil and failure to maintain mandatory records.

Officials collected 21 food samples for testing and discarded 544 kg of spoiled vegetables, leftover food, expired items and pest-infested food articles. Another 13 kg of used cooking oil was also discarded over suspected repeated use.

The licences of Hotel Sri Raghavendra Udupi Veg (Tolichowki), Lucky Restaurant, Shah Ghouse Cafe, Hotel Nayaab, Sri Balaji Family Dhaba, Siddique Kabab Central Kitchen, Alsaba Hotel, Mehfil Restaurant, Hotel Sri Raghavendra Udupi Veg (Santosh Nagar), Dine Hill Restaurant, Sohail Restaurant, Hotel Akshaya Tiffins, Hotel Venkateshwara and Aeezebo The Royal Arabian Restaurant were suspended, with instructions to immediately stop business operations.

Show-cause notices were issued to eight establishments, including Taj Falaknuma Palace, Hotel Sabzi, Pista House Restaurant, Sweekar Hotel, Mandi at 36 Arabian Kitchen, Golconda Hotel and Resorts, Imperial Multicuisine Restaurant and Taiba Bakery. Further action, including penalties, will be initiated for the violations, TG SAFE said.

PCI President calls on pharmacists to lead fight against antimicrobial resistance

HYDERABAD, OCT 31

Pharmacy Council of India (PCI) President Dr Montu Kumar M Patel has called on pharmacists to take the lead in combating antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and strictly prevent the over-the-counter sale and misuse of antibiotics.



Addressing a State-Level Mega Awareness Campaign on Antimicrobial Resistance at Sultan-ul-Uloom College of Pharmacy, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad, Dr Patel expressed concern over unethical practices in pharmacies, including the dispensing of antibiotics and narcotic drugs without following proper regulations. He stressed that registered pharmacists must personally oversee pharmacy operations and ensure medicines are dispensed with the correct dosage and prescription.

He said India is a global leader in the pharmaceutical industry but continues to lag in clinical pharmacy and ethical practices. Urging pharmacy students to serve society, he encouraged them to adopt villages, study medicine usage and identify cases of drug misuse and ineffective treatments.

Dr Patel said the PCI has introduced a revised pharmacy syllabus incorporating artificial intelligence and patient counselling, along with compulsory industry partnerships for practical training. Medical device education has also been included in pharmacy courses. He announced plans for teacher training programmes in southern India and further academic initiatives.

Sultan-ul-Uloom College of Pharmacy was selected to represent Telangana under the PCI's nationwide initiative to sponsor one institution in each state. More than 1,200 delegates from 75 pharmacy institutions participated in the campaign, while 732 teams and 965 students took part in awareness activities.

PCI Vice-President Jashubhai Hirabhai Chaudhari, JNTUH Vice-Chancellor Prof T Kishen Kumar Reddy, Pharmexcil Director General K Raja Bhanu, Drugs Control Director Dr Ramdhan, Telangana Pharmacy Council President Argonda Sridhar, PCI Member and State Convenor Dr M Venkatramana, Sultan-ul-Uloom Education Society Honorary Secretary Zafar Javed and college Principal Dr Anupama Koneru attended the programme.

Prof Kishen Kumar Reddy stressed the need to curb self-medication and unnecessary antibiotic use. He also announced that JNTU would introduce an apprenticeship-embedded degree programme for third- and fourth-year students to improve their industry readiness.

DLSA conducts POCSO awareness programme at Dawn High Schools

TFP I FAROOQ KHAN
HYDERABAD, OCT 31

Senior Civil Judge and District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Hyderabad Secretary R. Shalini said that ensuring child safety is the collective responsibility of society and urged students to report incidents of harassment without fear.



She was speaking at a child protection awareness programme organised at Dawn High Schools, Malakpet, as part of the nationwide 'Surakshit Bachpan Abhiyan', conducted from October 26 to 31 under the directions of the Supreme Court, with the support of NALSA and DLSAs.

Shalini explained the provisions of the POCSO Act, highlighting children's rights, personal safety and the importance of reporting abuse. She cautioned students against strangers offering gifts or money and advised them not to share personal information with unfamiliar persons. She assured that the identities of complainants and their families would remain confidential and said DLSA would provide legal assistance to victims.

She also informed students about the helpline numbers 15100 (NALSA), 1098 (Childline) and 1930 (Cybercrime). Senior advocate Aijaz Ali Qureshi explained key provisions of the POCSO Act, while students took an oath to respect personal boundaries and the dignity of others.

Dawn Group of Schools Chairman Fazlur Rahman Khurram thanked the DLSA and Shalini for conducting the programme. During her visit, Shalini inspected students' robotics models and interacted with them, answering their questions on child protection and the POCSO Act.

School Administrator Arifa, Shajiullah Firasat, advocates, teachers and other school representatives attended the programme.

Cyberabad Traffic DCP inspects Kukatpally Traffic PS

TFP I RAVI KUMAR
MEDCHAL-MALKAJGIRI, OCT 31

Cyberabad Traffic DCP-II Seshadrini Reddy, IPS, conducted an annual inspection of the Kukatpally Traffic Police Station on Saturday and reviewed its functioning, staff performance and traffic management measures.



During the inspection, she examined station records, assessed the performance of personnel and checked the maintenance of the station premises. She stressed discipline, dedication and commitment in discharging daily duties.

The DCP directed officers to take proactive measures to ensure smooth traffic movement, closely monitor major junctions and strictly enforce traffic rules to prevent violations and improve road safety.

Additional DCP Traffic-II Veeranna, Kukatpally Traffic ACP Giri Prasad, Inspector Thimmappa and other traffic police personnel participated in the inspection.

BJP accuses oppn of 'maligning' democracy

RAIPUR, OCT 30

Union Minister Jagat Prakash Nadda on Friday launched a sharp attack on the Congress and Rahul Gandhi, accusing them of targeting constitutional institutions to mask repeated electoral defeats.



JP Nadda

Participating in the 'Loktantra Bachao, Arajakta Hatao' (Save Democracy, Remove Anarchy) Yatra here, Nadda said the Congress, which had imposed the Emergency and stifled democracy, was now posing as its protector.

Nadda said the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls was purifying the voter list by removing names of deceased persons, duplicates, shifted voters, and those not found at their registered addresses. He alleged that the Congress was more concerned about the deletion of infiltrators' names than the voting rights of genuine Indian citizens. Referring to border districts in West Bengal, he claimed abnormal increases in voter numbers and said the SIR process had exposed such irregularities.

The Union Minister criticised Rahul Gandhi for making allegations of vote theft without filing affidavits. He pointed out that 477 days had passed since the claim of one lakh fake votes in Mahadevapura, Karnataka, yet no evidence had been submitted to the Election Commission. Similar allegations in Maharashtra and Haryana were also left unsubstantiated, Nadda said.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi Ji has made it clear that no foreign national or ineligible person has the right to vote in India. India is not a dharamshala where anyone can come and settle down at their own discretion and get their name registered as a voter," he asserted.

He added,, "If we want to take the country forward, we must extend our full support to SIR. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji says that infiltrators must be detected, deleted and deported. On the other hand, the Opposition says that votes should be normalised, foreigners should also be treated as our own, recognised and formalised. In other words, they want to facilitate their inclusion through voter registration and Aadhaar cards."

He contrasted the present selection process for Election Commissioners, which includes the Leader of the Opposition, with the Congress era when Election Commissioners were often rewarded with political posts, governorships or other appointments after demitting office. (IANS)

India bloc braces for massive show of strength against Centre at Ramlila Maidan

Opposition Parties Unite Over Electoral Irregularities, Demand Removal of Chief Election Commissioner; Rahul Gandhi to Lead Mega Gathering

DR. MUMTAZ ALAM RIZVI
NEW DELHI, OCT 31

In a major show of opposition unity, the Congress-led INDIA bloc is preparing to organise a massive public rally at the historic Ramlila Maidan in New Delhi on November 1, targeting the PM Narendra Modi-led government over allegations of electoral irregularities and demanding the removal of the Chief Election Commissioner.



INDIA bloc leaders hold a public briefing on the proposed impeachment motion against CEC Gyanesh Kumar at 10 Rajaji Marg in New Delhi.

The proposed mega gathering is expected to witness participation from lakhs of people representing different states, with Congress leaders claiming that a large number of supporters, party workers and political activists are travelling to the national capital. According to Congress sources, preparations are in full swing, with extensive arrangements being made at Ramlila Maidan to accommodate the expected crowds.

The large-scale mobilisation has reportedly resulted in heavy demand for accommodation, with several hotels in Delhi witnessing substantial bookings as participants from across the country arrive to attend the rally. Congress leaders have appealed to citizens, party workers and supporters of democratic institutions to participate in the gathering and raise their voices against what the opposition describes as threats to electoral transparency and democratic accountability.

Several prominent opposition parties are expected to join the programme, including the Samajwadi Party, Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), Shiv Sena led by Uddhav Thackeray, Indian Union Muslim League and National Conference, among others. The participation of leaders and representatives from various INDIA bloc constituents is expected to underline the opposition's attempt to present a united political front against the ruling establishment.

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi is expected to attend the mega rally as the chief guest.

A major focus of the rally will be the opposition's allegations concerning electoral manipulation and its demand for greater transparency and accountability from the Election Commission. The INDIA bloc has repeatedly raised questions over the conduct of elections and has called for institutional safeguards to protect the credibility of India's democratic process. The demand for the removal of the Chief Election Commissioner is also expected to feature prominently in the speeches and political resolutions at the gathering.

Meanwhile, the choice of Ramlila Maidan has attracted attention after restrictions were reportedly imposed on holding protest demonstrations at Jantar Mantar, while permission was granted for the November 1 gathering at Ramlila Maidan.

The Congress, along with other opposition groups, has been organising protests and raising concerns over alleged electoral irregularities for several months. The opposition maintains that electoral transparency, institutional independence and accountability are essential for protecting democratic values.

Manipur has 36 communities, govt must protect everyone's interests: CM Khemchand

IMPHAL, OCT 31

Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh on Saturday emphasised the need for inclusive governance, stating that the state is home to 36 different communities and cannot be governed by prioritising the interests of any one community over others.

Khemchand Singh made the above statement while attending the observance of Rashtriya Ekta Diwas, 2026, at the 1st Battalion Manipur Rifles Parade Ground, Imphal on Saturday.

The Chief Minister appealed to the people to understand that community-centric ideas cannot bring integrity, a peaceful atmosphere or economic progress in the state.

Highlighting the significance of the observance, he said that the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel has been observed across the nation as Rashtriya Ekta Diwas or National Unity Day. The day commemorates the unwavering efforts and contributions of Patel towards strengthening national unity and building a strong nation. The observance was initiated in 2014 under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he added.

The Chief Minister further highlighted the statesmanship of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, who led the country through various movements against British rule, including non-violence, the Civil Disobedience Movement and the Quit India Movement. Following India's independence, the princely states across the country were brought together through his efforts. (IANS/UNI)

NC dissidents chosen to challenge J&K CM Omar Abdullah's authority

SRINAGAR, OCT 31

The closed-door meeting of nearly 20 disgruntled MLAs of J&K's ruling National Conference (NC) on Friday evening might not have yet become a situation where the knives have been drawn, but the dissidents challenging the authority of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah are in the open now.



The trigger for the dissent in the otherwise family-driven NC was provided by the recent reshuffle/expansion of the cabinet by Omar Abdullah. Many senior NC MLAs like Mubarak Gul, Abdul Majeed Larmi, and Nazir Ahmad Gurezi had been expecting inclusion in the council of ministers, or at least someone at the top had given them an impression of being considered for elevation.

To their surprise, Omar Abdullah included one of the senior-most NC leaders and MLAs, Ali Mohammad Sagar, in his cabinet, but chose to retain others in the outgoing cabinet, except Satish Sharma, an independent MLA from the Chhamb constituency of Jammu district, who had supported the NC government.

The first voice to rise against the reshuffle of the cabinet was the six-time MLA Mubarak Gul. As he left the oath-taking ceremony of the new cabinet, he told reporters that he had attended 20 swearing-in ceremonies of ministers, but had been dropped each time.

To pacify, Gul, NC President, Dr Farooq Abdullah nominated Gul as the new General Secretary of the party at the Nawa-e-Subha party headquarters as others like Sagar and Nasir Aslam Wani, advisor of the Chief Minister, garlanded and hugged him. (IANS/UNI)

AAP releases first list of 40 candidates for Punjab polls

CM Mann to recontest from Dhuri

NEW DELHI, OCT 31

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Saturday sounded the election bugle in Punjab, releasing its first list of 40 candidates for the 2027 Assembly elections following a survey.



The names were finalised after deliberations at the Political Affairs Committee (PAC) meeting chaired by AAP national convenor Arvind Kejriwal here.

Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann will again contest from Dhuri, with the early announcement giving candidates several months to reach out to voters and highlight the work of the AAP government and jailed minister Sanjeev Arora, who is facing money laundering charges, from Ludhiana West.

Kejriwal congratulated all 40 candidates and called upon the party to surpass its 2022 performance in the 2027 elections, stating: "The party has given tickets to these candidates following a survey conducted among the people. I congratulate all 40 candidates and call upon everyone to break even the record set in 2022 in the 2027 elections."

Following the conclusion of the Political Affairs Committee (PAC) meeting, CM Mann also congratulated all the candidates and stated, "The Aam Aadmi Party has released its first list of 40 candidates for the upcoming 2027 Punjab Assembly elections. The early announcement of candidates reflects the party's strong preparations, transparency and unwavering confidence in the work done by our government."

"I congratulate all the candidates and call upon party 'karyakartas' to connect even more strongly with people at the grassroots. Let us continue our journey of progress towards a 'Rangla Punjab'." (IANS)

Congress demands removal of Kerala PSC Chairman, members

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, OCT 31

With the Crime Branch tightening its investigation into the Kerala Public Service Commission (PSC) recruitment scandal, senior Congress leader M.M. Hassan on Saturday demanded that the state government recommend to the President the removal of the PSC Chairman and all its members, saying their continuation in office was no longer legally or morally justifiable.

The demand comes amid a series of developments in the investigation, with PSC Chairman M.R. Baiju and three Commission members already questioned by the Crime Branch Special Investigation Team (SIT).

PSC Secretary Saju George appeared before the SIT on Saturday for questioning.

On Friday night, the SIT arrested R. Hari, a suspended Additional Secretary in the PSC examination wing, from a relative's house in Kochi.

He had been absconding for the past few days. Retired Deputy Secretary P. Satheesh, another accused in the examination scam, was arrested two days earlier and is currently in judicial custody.

In a significant development, the SIT has also registered a separate case naming Chairman Baiju, commission members, and officials as accused in alleged irregularities in the recruitment of Fisheries Extension Officers.

The investigators allege that official powers were misused to favour ineligible candidates by manipulating rankings, denying deserving candidates their rightful opportunities and damaging the credibility of the constitutional institution. The investigation has also exposed alleged irregularities in recruitment to the State Planning Board, where officials are accused of manipulating the evaluation process. The High Court had recently come down heavily on the slow pace of the investigation, questioning why key accused had not been arrested or interrogated.

NCP (SP faction) launches protest against four projects at Ujani dam; BJP plans counter-mobilisation

PUNE, OCT 31

The political confrontation over four proposed projects at Ujani Dam, including an AI data centre, has intensified, with the NCP (Sharadchandra Pawar) faction launching a road blockade on Saturday to oppose the projects.



NCP MLA Rohit Pawar joined the protest at Ranjani village in Madha taluka, where protesters blocked the Pune-Solapur National Highway.

The BJP, meanwhile, is preparing a counter-protest in support of the projects under the leadership of MLAs Sachin Kalyanshetti and Devendra Kothe.

The developments have raised the possibility of a direct confrontation between the BJP and the Sharad Pawar-led NCP faction over the proposed investments.

The four projects, involving a proposed investment of Rs 1.65 lakh crore, include an AI data centre, floating solar panels, a small nuclear power plant and a green hydrogen project.

Speaking at the protest, Rohit Pawar questioned the government's claims regarding the projects' water requirements and accused the Chief Minister and the administration of misleading people.

He said the water requirements of the data centre had already been presented by his party and reiterated his opposition to the AI data centre and nuclear power plant at Ujani.

Let the BJP do whatever it wants. Our commitment is to farmers, Pawar said, questioning why the projects were being proposed at Ujani if they required so little water.

He clarified that his party was not opposed to development but expressed concern over the limited employment opportunities expected from the projects.

According to him, the projects would provide jobs to only around 400 people.

A day earlier, Pawar had raised serious questions about the government's intentions, arguing that Ujani Dam was established as part of former Chief Minister Yashwantrao Chavan's vision.

Drawing a parallel with the controversy surrounding development activities near Bhimashankar, he questioned whether there was an attempt to damage Ujani Dam as well. (IANS/UNI)

India hosts maiden BIMSTEC maritime security exercise in Andaman and Nicobar Islands

NEW DELHI, OCT 31



India is hosting the maiden BIMSTEC Maritime Security Exercise in Sri Vijaya Puram, the capital of the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, to strengthen maritime cooperation, enhance operational coordination and interoperability among member countries, the Ministry of External Affairs announced on Saturday.

The exercise, which commenced on Friday and will continue until November 3, 2026, is among the key initiatives announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the 6th BIMSTEC Summit in Thailand last year.

It features three days of Tabletop Exercises followed by a two-day Harbour Phase, with ships from BIMSTEC member countries participating.

In a post on X, the MEA said: "The exercise translates the shared vision of BIMSTEC leaders into action, reinforcing maritime cooperation, enhancing operational coordination and interoperability, and contributing towards a safe, secure and stable maritime environment in the Bay of Bengal."

According to Andaman and Nicobar Command, the maiden BIMSTEC Maritime Security Exercise was inaugurated at Sri Vijaya Puram on Friday by Vice Admiral Vineet McCarty, Commander-in-Chief, Andaman and Nicobar Command. (IANS)

CYCLONE ARNAB

Odisha intensifies multi-agency rescue, relief operations

BHUBANESWAR, OCT 31



The Odisha government has intensified its multi-agency rescue, relief and restoration operations in cyclone-affected Ganjam district, deploying specialised search equipment, additional personnel and technical teams to accelerate the search for missing persons and restore essential services in the affected areas.

As part of the search operation, an Indian Navy helicopter brought three advanced search devices - a seismic life-detection unit, a vibration detection unit and a victim location camera - to G. Udayagiri to assist in locating missing persons in the landslide-hit Gidipabali area of Tadama revenue village under Baibali Gram Panchayat, bordering Kandhamal district.

However, adverse weather conditions prevented the helicopter from descending at the designated location. (IANS)

Air Chief Marshal Ashutosh assumes charge as 29th Chief of Air Staff

NEW DELHI, OCT 31



Air Chief Marshal Ashutosh Dixit assumed charge as the 29th Chief of the Air Staff on Saturday, succeeding Air Chief Marshal A.P. Singh, who superannuated after 42 years of distinguished service to the nation.

An alumnus of the National Defence Academy, Air Chief Marshal Ashutosh Dixit was commissioned into the Fighter Stream of the Indian Air Force on December 6, 1986.

Over a career spanning four decades, the Air Chief has rich experience across diverse domains such as Operations, Flight Testing, Capability Development and Joint Staff assignments.

"An accomplished Fighter Pilot, Qualified Flying Instructor and Experimental Test Pilot, he has over 3,300 hours of flying experience on a wide range of aircraft, including the Mirage-2000, various MiG variants, Jaguar and several transport aircraft," the Indian Air Force (IAF) said in a statement.

The IAF said that Air Chief Marshal Dixit is widely recognised for his contribution to the modernisation of the Indian Air Force and was instrumental in finalising the Jaguar and MiG-27 upgrade projects and in the completion of the Initial Operational Clearance (IOC) and Final Operational Clearance (FOC) activities of the LCA Mk-I Tejas.

"His operational command assignments include command of a Mirage-2000 Squadron, a Forward Base Support Unit in the Western Sector and Air Force Station Bidar, a premier fighter training base of the IAF," the force said. (IANS)

Mekedatu project reaching decisive stage: K'taka govt

MANDYA, OCT 31



Karnataka Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar on Saturday said that the Mekedatu balancing reservoir project was reaching a decisive stage, with the state government moving ahead on resolving pending forest and land-related issues.

The Mekedatu project, proposed across the River Cauvery near the Karnataka-Tamil Nadu border, aims to construct a balancing reservoir with a storage capacity of 66 TMC to supply drinking water to Bengaluru and surrounding areas and generate hydropower.

However, the project has faced strong opposition from Tamil Nadu, which argues that it could affect its share of Cauvery water and violate the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal award and Supreme Court directions.

Tamil Nadu has repeatedly opposed the project, insisting that Karnataka cannot construct the reservoir without its consent.

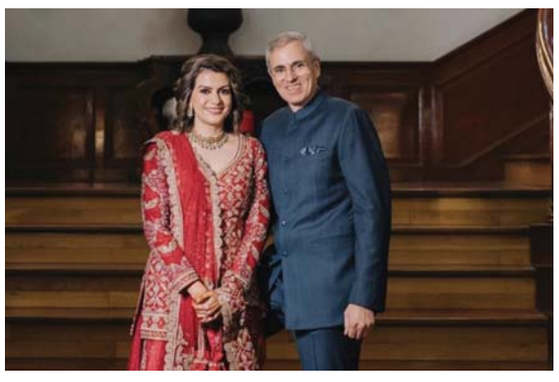
Speaking to media persons in Bengaluru, Shivakumar said the project would help Karnataka manage water during crisis periods by storing Cauvery water and better handling the state's obligation to release the prescribed quantity of water to Tamil Nadu.

"Mandya is known as the cradle of rice, and the River Cauvery flows through the district. During my time, I ensured that an affidavit was filed in the Supreme Court, following which the Apex Court gave its consent to the Mekedatu project," he said.

Shivakumar said the Deputy Commissioner of Mandya had been made the chairman of a committee dealing with the identification of forest land and allocation of parallel land for the project. (IANS/UNI)

Quiet wedding, new beginning for Omar Abdullah & Nidhi Razdan

SRINAGAR, OCT 31



J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, on Saturday, announced that he has begun a new journey of life as he posted pictures of himself and noted journalist Nidhi Razdan.

Omar Abdullah posted on X, saying, "A new journey began yesterday."

Nidhi was attired in a beautiful bridal 'Lehenga' and Omar, as usual, wore an immaculately stitched suit.

Responding to Omar's X post, Nidhi Razdan said, "It's done bro @ OmarAbdullah."

Omar Abdullah's intention to marry Nidhi was no secret in J&K after he became estranged from his wife, Payal. Omar could not marry Nidhi since he had not been legally released from the wedlock with Payal.

The Supreme Court dissolved the marriage between Omar Abdullah and Payal by mutual consent on July 31, 2026.

The couple had married on September 1, 1994, had been living separately since 2009, and have two sons (Zahir and Zamir)

After court-directed mediation, both parties agreed to part ways. (IANS)

TN raises DA from 60% to 63%, effective July 1

CHENNAI, OCT 31

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay has ordered a three-percentage-point increase in dearness allowance for government employees and teachers, with pensioners and family pensioners also benefiting from the revision announced ahead of Deepavali.

The increase, which raises the allowance from 60 per cent to 63 per cent, will take retrospective effect from July 1, 2026. Approximately 16 lakh employees, teachers, pensioners and family pensioners will benefit, according to a notification issued by the state government.

The measure will impose an additional annual expenditure of Rs 1,858 crore on the state exchequer. The government said it would allocate the additional funds required to implement the revision as part of its commitment to the welfare of serving and retired personnel.

The decision follows the Union government's increase in dearness allowance for central government employees from 60 per cent to 63 per cent, effective July 1. Tamil Nadu has adopted the same revised rate and commencement date for its employees and teachers. (IANS)

RS 500 CR CRYPTO FRAUD

ED conducts raids in Chandigarh, Mohali, Zirakpur

SHIMLA, OCT 31



The Enforcement Directorate (ED) conducted search operations at various locations across Chandigarh, Mohali and Zirakpur in connection with a Rs 500 crore cryptocurrency fraud involving Korvio Coin (KRO) and seized property documents and Rs 72 lakh in cash, an official said on Saturday.

The searches were conducted by ED's Shimla Sub-Zonal Office on October 28 under Section 17(1) of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002, the official said in a statement.

During the search operation, various incriminating documents, including property-related documents, multiple digital devices and records pertaining to bank accounts, along with cash amounting to Rs 72 lakh, were seized. (IANS/UNI)

India calls on UNHRC to give 'sustained attention' to terrorism threat

UNITED NATIONS, OCT 31



India has asked the Human Rights Council to continue giving "sustained attention" to the threat of terrorism, which poses one of "the gravest threats" to human rights.

"Terrorism remains among the gravest threats to the enjoyment of human rights, above all, the right to life", Bhavika Mangalanandan, a first secretary in India's UN mission, told the General Assembly in New York on Friday,

She said the Human Rights Council has recognised this danger in its resolution on international cooperation this year, and India "would encourage the Council to give this threat the sustained attention it warrants on the basis of zero tolerance".

The resolution, adopted by the Council in July in Geneva, where it is located, called on the international community to "take the steps necessary to enhance cooperation to prevent and combat terrorism".

The resolution "re-emphasises that acts, methods and practices of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations are activities aimed at the destruction of human rights, fundamental freedoms and democracy, threatening the territorial integrity and security of States and destabilising legitimately constituted governments".

This resolution runs counter to attempts by some countries, especially Pakistan, to create tendentious distinctions between terrorist acts and justify some.

Mangalanandan, who spoke at the General Assembly's debate on the Human Rights Council's report.

She criticised the Council's attempts to "weaponise" the issue of human rights and to follow double standards, which undermines its credibility.

"Human rights are best advanced through dialogue, capacity building and genuine partnerships, and not by politicisation, selectivity or double standards", she said. "This is critical if the Council is to speak in one voice and dispel the allegation of weaponisation of human rights".

Stressing the importance of cooperation and dialogue, she said, "Country-specific mandates pursued without the engagement of the country concerned seldom improve the situation on the ground".

"On the contrary", she warned, "they deepen 'divisions within the Council '".

"The Universal Periodic Review, which was built on cooperation, engagement with member states concerned and treats all states equally, remains the appropriate platform", she said.

The review, done every four or five years, is based on reports by the countries themselves on the human rights situation, reports by UN bodies and experts, and inputs from civil society groups, rather than a unilateral critique.

Mangalanandan was also critical of the blinkered approach to human rights that focuses mostly on political and civil rights at the expense of other rights.

"All human rights must be treated in a fair and equal manner on the same footing and with the same emphasis", she said. (IANS)

THE FREEDOM PRESS

SUNDAY 1 NOVEMBER 2026

UPI: India's digital payments revolution

India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) has emerged as one of the country's most significant digital public infrastructure achievements, transforming the way millions of people conduct financial transactions. Its growing international recognition, including praise from French President Emmanuel Macron, reflects the scale of India's digital transformation. However, UPI's success should not be viewed merely as a technological breakthrough but as the outcome of years of institutional development, policy decisions and collaboration among financial institutions.

The transition from a cash-dependent economy to digital payments was a major challenge in a country as diverse as India. Cash remained deeply rooted in everyday social and economic activities, while limited banking access, uneven digital literacy, smartphone availability and internet connectivity posed barriers to adoption. Moving people towards mobile-based payments therefore required more than technology. It demanded public trust, wider financial inclusion, accessible services and a gradual change in consumer behaviour.

The November 2016 demonetisation exercise provided a significant impetus to digital transactions by encouraging consumers and merchants to explore alternative payment methods. However, expanding digital payments beyond the immediate impact of cash shortages required a reliable and accessible ecosystem. UPI's growth was supported by sustained efforts to improve payment acceptance, strengthen banking connectivity and make transactions simple and convenient across different sections of society.

UPI's foundations were laid through successive developments in India's financial infrastructure. The Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007, bank computerisation, electronic clearing systems, RTGS and NEFT improved the efficiency of financial transactions. Financial inclusion initiatives through business correspondents and Jan Dhan accounts expanded banking access, while Aadhaar provided a portable digital identity framework. These developments collectively created the institutional and technological foundation for the expansion of digital payments, with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) playing a central role in developing a common payments platform.

The book *Cashless Nation: How UPI Changed Everything*, authored by Santanu Paul and B. Sambamurthy, offers an account of the institutional and human efforts behind this transformation. Both authors have been associated with India's digital payments ecosystem, with Sambamurthy also heading the Institute for Development and Research in Banking Technology (IDRBT). The book traces the evolution of payment systems, including the competition between banks and telecom companies over mobile payments and the emergence of NPCI as a neutral platform. Its anecdotes, including an account of Infosys founder N. R. Narayana Murthy's emphasis on punctuality and institutional discipline at NPCI's first board meeting in 2009, illustrate the importance of leadership and execution in building public institutions.

The evolution of UPI also involved regulatory negotiations and difficult policy choices concerning transaction charges, merchant discount rates (MDR) and the distribution of operational costs. While keeping payments free for users has encouraged widespread adoption, questions about the financial sustainability of the system have become increasingly important. RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra highlighted this concern during a July 2025 discussion, observing that someone ultimately has to bear the cost of maintaining the infrastructure. Government compensation for certain MDR expenses has supported the ecosystem, but rising transaction volumes require a sustainable funding model involving the government, banks, payment service providers and merchants.

Industrial clusters can accelerate clean energy Transition

India's Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS) is emerging as an important instrument in the country's efforts to reduce industrial emissions while supporting economic growth. Covering 748 industrial plants across eight sectors, the scheme provides a framework for monitoring emissions and encouraging industries to adopt cleaner technologies. Its coverage includes 255 iron and steel plants whose emission targets are still in draft form. The concentration of emissions in a limited number of industrial districts presents an opportunity to accelerate renewable energy adoption through coordinated procurement and stronger regional infrastructure.

The geographical distribution of covered emissions highlights the importance of industrial clusters, particularly in eastern India. The 10 districts with the highest emissions account for 36.4 per cent of CCTS-covered carbon despite hosting only 17 per cent of obligated plants. Raipur in Chhattisgarh has the highest number of covered facilities at 37, followed by Sundargarh in Odisha with 24 and Ballari in Karnataka with 21. Eastern states, including Odisha, West Bengal, Jharkhand and Bihar, together account for 30 per cent of covered emissions and 36 per cent of the emission reductions required during the first compliance cycle. Iron and steel industries are responsible for much of this concentration. Chhattisgarh's Raigarh district illustrates the potential of a cluster-based approach. Its 16 steel plants account for approximately 22.6 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions, nearly three per cent of the scheme's total covered emissions. Since these facilities operate within the same electricity distribution area and face similar regulatory conditions, collective renewable energy procurement could offer economic and operational advantages. Pooling demand through industry associations could also help smaller sponge-iron units access long-term renewable power agreements that may be difficult to secure individually.

The CCTS measures emissions across industrial operations, including indirect emissions associated with purchased electricity. By keeping the grid emission factor constant between baseline and assessment years within a compliance cycle, the framework encourages industries to procure cleaner electricity rather than depend solely on improvements in the national grid. This makes renewable energy an important compliance option. Aggregating demand among neighbouring plants could support larger solar, wind and energy storage projects, improving their financial viability and attracting investment. Such an approach also complements India's objective of adding approximately 200 GW of non-fossil fuel capacity to achieve its 500 GW target by 2030. By July 2026, the country had reached 300.5 GW of non-fossil capacity.

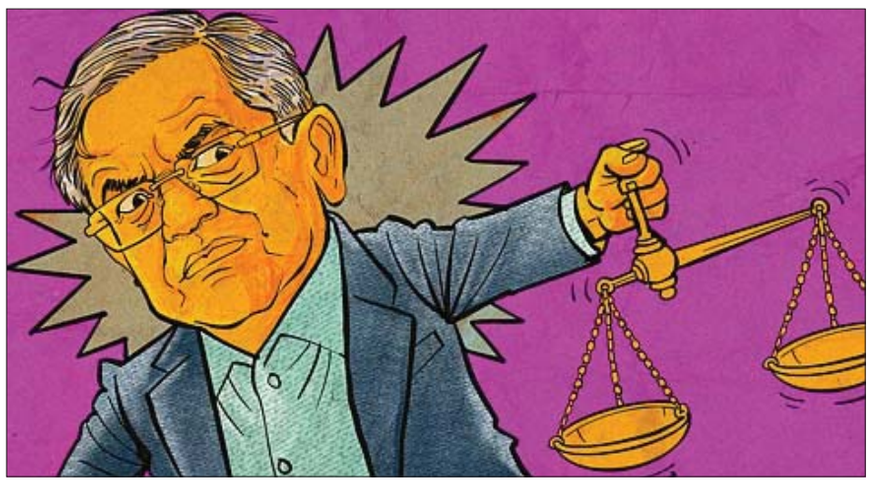
Developments in the electricity market further underline the importance of local renewable energy solutions. The gradual withdrawal of interstate transmission charge waivers for solar and wind projects is expected to increase costs, with the full charges scheduled to apply from July 2028. Average charges of around Rs.0.65 per unit are significant compared with renewable generation cost differences between states. This could strengthen the economic case for renewable generation closer to industrial demand centres. Energy storage will also become increasingly important, with the Central Electricity Authority estimating a requirement of more than 400 GWh by 2031-32. Although round-the-clock renewable electricity remains relatively expensive, estimated at around Rs.9.5 per unit, meeting nearly half of industrial electricity demand through solar and wind is already considered economically viable.

However, the carbon market alone cannot deliver the required transformation. Electricity generation, which accounts for nearly 40 per cent of India's emissions, remains outside the CCTS, placing much of the responsibility for reducing electricity-related emissions on industrial consumers. At an estimated carbon price of US$10 per tonne, the financial incentive from carbon credits remains relatively modest, making the actual cost of renewable electricity a more significant factor in procurement decisions. Delays in open-access approvals, cross-subsidy surcharges, wheeling charges and electricity banking regulations also influence the affordability of clean power.

Battle intensifies as CEC Gyanesh faces public trust scrutiny over SIR



TANVEER ALAM



Accurate electoral rolls are essential, but so are transparency, procedural fairness and the protection of every eligible citizen's right to vote.

India's democratic strength rests not only on regular elections but also on public confidence in the institutions conducting them. Since the controversy surrounding the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) has intensified, the ongoing debate surrounding the SIR of electoral rolls under Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar has brought electoral integrity and institutional accountability into national focus.

Maintaining accurate voter lists is unquestionably necessary. Removing deceased voters, eliminating duplicate entries and identifying ineligible registrations are legitimate administrative objectives. The Election Commission of India (ECI) has the constitutional responsibility to ensure credible electoral rolls. However, the legitimacy of these objectives cannot automatically justify every method adopted to achieve them.

The central concern is whether SIR adequately protects due process and ensures that no eligible citizen loses voting rights because of administrative errors, documentation difficulties or procedural complications.

Under Gyanesh Kumar's leadership, the exercise has attracted political, legal and public scrutiny. Questions have been raised about documentation requirements, procedural clarifications, digital accessibility, logical discrepancies and the Commission's internal decision-making. These concerns deserve examination because electoral registration is directly linked to democratic participation.

Reports of differences involving the Chief Election Commissioner and the other Election Commissioners have added another dimension to the controversy. While such disagreements have attracted public attention, the ECI has maintained before the Supreme Court that the relevant decisions were unanimous. Independent judicial scrutiny and transparent institutional records are therefore important in establishing the facts.

The Supreme Court proceedings must also be viewed in their proper context. On October 27, the Court granted petitioners ten days to respond to the Commission's affidavit. On October 28, it clarified that the legality of the 'logical discrepancy' category had not been finally adjudicated. Consequently, allegations and institutional explanations must not be confused with settled judicial findings.

The human dimension of electoral revision is equally significant. Migrant workers, women who relocate or change surnames after marriage, economically disadvantaged families and citizens lacking historical documents may encounter difficulties in meeting administrative requirements. A process designed for efficiency must recognise these practical inequalities.

Safeguards are therefore essential. Proposed deletions must be based on verifiable reasons, individual notice and a meaningful opportunity to respond. Accessible correction procedures, reasonable timelines and effective appeals can help prevent genuine voters from being excluded through administrative mistakes.

Political parties also have a responsibility to approach the issue constructively. Opposition parties should substantiate their concerns with evidence, while the government must recognise that questioning constitutional institutions is a legitimate aspect of democratic accountability. The Election Commission, in turn, must communicate its decisions transparently and address public concerns through facts rather than institutional assertions alone.

For Gyanesh Kumar, the challenge involves ensuring that the Commission's constitutional responsibilities are accompanied by impartiality, openness and accountability. Equally, criticism of the officeholder must remain evidence-based rather than treating allegations as established facts.

Ultimately, the success of SIR should be measured by whether it improves electoral accuracy while protecting every eligible citizen's right to participate. India need not choose between clean electoral rolls and inclusive democracy; both are essential to credible elections.

The right to vote is more than an entry in a government database. It represents a citizen's voice in shaping the nation's future. Electoral reforms must protect that voice while strengthening public confidence in democratic institutions.

(Tanveer Alam is a Delhi-based independent journalist, writer, and commentator)

Rubio's India visit shows US is putting energy and business before diplomacy

SESHADRI CHARI



In a striking departure from traditional diplomatic protocol, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio bypassed India's political capital, New Delhi, during his official visit in October, heading straight to the financial hub of Mumbai and then to Reliance Industries Limited's massive private oil refining complex in Jamnagar, Gujarat, making it the centrepiece of his visit.

The unconventional itinerary signals a major pivot in Washington's approach to India in particular and South Asia in general, reflecting a new US priority: raw economic pragmatism and energy security over standard political optics and diplomacy. This comes at a time when US-India relations face persistent friction over trade tariffs and visa restrictions. Unlike during his visit in May, when Rubio formally conveyed US President Donald Trump's invitation to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to visit the White House, this time there was neither a meeting with the PM nor a letter from Trump to hand over.

One cannot overlook the fact that Rubio's October visit highlighted deep, systemic frictions in India-US bilateral ties, even if officials on both sides could dismiss these as the compulsions of a business trip. While public statements framed the diplomatic engagement as productive, the underlying circumstances and the visit's transactional nature suggest that current US policies are straining ties and could hurt Indian economic, strategic and diaspora interests.

The Trump administration introduced plans to severely restrict certain H-1B visas and freeze permanent residency pathways. When asked how these policies disproportionately affect Indian tech talent and professionals, Rubio defensively brushed off the concerns, stating that the measures "were not targeted at India", but quickly added that the US would always prioritise American workers.

Besides putting its energy agenda on the table, Rubio's visit also made sufficient noise about efforts to clear regulatory roadblocks that were stalling broader bilateral trade. Following meetings with top Indian conglomerates, including the Tata and Adani groups, and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, Rubio announced that a long-awaited US-India Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) was "very close" to finalisation, asserting that roughly 99 per cent of the groundwork was complete.

It is difficult to believe that the US is seriously interested in concluding the BTA any time soon. Washington's sudden urgency and unsubstantiated assertions that the agreement would be signed soon appear to be a knee-jerk reaction to New Delhi successfully securing free trade agreements (FTAs) with the European Union and other global partners while the US dithered.

Rubio's visit to RIL's petrochemical facility in Jamnagar suggests a clear U-turn by the Trump administration and decisively underscores its desperation to address the energy crisis facing the US, a tragedy brought upon the country by its own policies. Although Trump has reached out to Russia for energy supplies and is keen on weaning India away from Russian oil, the inherent weaknesses in America's economic and diplomatic strategies are too glaring to ignore.

While the US announced a temporary waiver of sanctions for countries importing Russian energy, Rubio explicitly noted that the waiver was temporary and would expire in 60 days. This forces a ticking clock on India's strategic autonomy and energy security, particularly its ability to procure cheaper crude.

For New Delhi, volatile policy changes and a fluctuating relationship with Washington present a complex geopolitical balancing act. India currently relies on imports for nearly 90 per cent of its energy needs, requiring roughly 5.6 million barrels per day to fuel its expanding economy. While the 'tariff-free' US consumer market offers lucrative opportunities, economic prudence demands that India approach Washington's overtures with cautious optimism.

Rubio's agenda reportedly includes pressing India to increase its investments in the United States—a proposal that conflicts with New Delhi's domestic goals of promoting Make in India, advancing Atmanirbhar Bharat and stimulating the manufacturing sector.

India is pushing to scale up its manufacturing output from $501 billion to $7.5 trillion by 2047, a cornerstone of its long-term strategy to build a $30 trillion economy. Achieving this requires retaining domestic capital and aggressively easing restrictions on inward foreign direct investment, rather than exporting capital to the West.

Rubio's visit has clearly demonstrated that Washington is ready to set aside geopolitical fallout to transact on purely commercial terms with any country, more so with India. Amid talk of a G2 or G3, the US, China and Russia are strategising to navigate their competing national interests. With the outcome of the Israeli election and the US midterm elections uncertain, the political fortunes of the countries' top leadership could change. This would also have far-reaching consequences for the ongoing Russia-Ukraine and West Asia conflicts, as well as the broader global geopolitical trajectory.

India cannot be content with serving global interests as the "refinery of the world" without securing economic, strategic and security benefits in return. As an emerging economy, India is well-positioned to reciprocate and engage with the world not out of obligation, but from a position of absolute economic equality and strength.

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

India now has 4 navigation satellites



SRIHARIKOTA, OCT 31
The GSLV-F18 mission successfully deployed the NVS-03 navigation satellite into its intended orbit, leading ISRO Chairman V. Narayanan to express satisfaction with the mission's precise outcome as he announced plans for five more launches, including the uncrewed 'Gaganyaan G' mission, within this financial year.

Speaking to IANS after the successful deployment of NVS-03, Narayanan said, "For enhanced PNT (Positioning, Navigation and Timing) services, a minimum of four satellites are required, and with today's launch, we now have four satellites in orbit.

"However, to ensure uninterrupted services and highly accurate positioning, we need a constellation of seven satellites in orbit. Two more satellites are in the final stages of preparation, while approval for another satellite is in process. With this, India will join a select group of nations that possess their own navigation satellite constellation."

The ISRO chief also outlined the agency's upcoming missions for the current financial year, including the much-anticipated Gaganyaan programme.

He said, "Our target is to carry out five more launches during this financial year, including the uncrewed 'Gaganyaan G' mission. In addition, we plan to launch at least two PSLV missions and two Small Satellite Launch Vehicles (SSLVs). We are also planning one private-sector launch. Overall, we are looking at six launches, but completing at least five missions remains our primary objective."

Highlighting the significance of the human spaceflight programme, Narayanan said, "'Gaganyaan' is a highly prestigious, technologically intensive and important programme. Its objective is to send Indian astronauts, or Gaganyatris, into space using an indigenous launch vehicle. So far, we have completed more than 8,000 tests. Before sending humans into space, we must successfully execute three missions without any crew on board."

Emphasising that astronaut safety remains ISRO's top priority, he said, "The safety of our Gaganyatris is of utmost importance. Therefore, our current focus is on the uncrewed missions first. The Director of LPS and the team have developed several critical systems, while multiple simulation tests are being conducted under the leadership of the Director of URC. The teams at IPRC and BSSE have prepared the entire launch vehicle. (IANS)

Social protection coverage increased from 19% in 2015 to 68.4%



NEW DELHI, OCT 31
India has significantly expanded the reach of social protection in recent years and social protection coverage increased from 19 per cent in 2015 to 68.4 per cent in 2026, bringing more than one billion people within the social protection framework, an official factsheet said on Saturday.

EPFO's contributing membership has increased significantly over the period. Contributing members rose from 3.49 crore in 2014-15 to approximately 7.98 crore (as on September 16, 2026). This represents an increase of approximately 4.49 crore contributing members over the period.

"As of September 2026, 7.68 lakh establishments are contributing to EPFO. This provides a broad institutional base for extending social security coverage to eligible workers," the factsheet highlighted.

Pension support has expanded alongside membership. EPFO paid pensions to 51.04 lakh pensioners during 2014-15. Till September 2026, around 82 lakh pensioners are receiving pension benefits. This represents an increase of over 31 lakh pensioners.

The scale of social security benefits has also grown substantially. About 1.30 crore claims were settled during 2014-15. In the last one-year period (as of October 2026), EPFO settled 6.42 crore claims. This reflects the increasing scale of services delivered to EPFO members and beneficiaries, the factsheet noted.

The wage ceiling for mandatory EPFO coverage was last revised in September 2014, from Rs 6,500 to Rs 15,000 per month.

In September 2026, a further increase to Rs 25,000 per month was approved. The revision is expected to extend mandatory coverage to over 51 lakh additional employees.

It reflects changes in wage levels and the expansion of formal employment over the intervening period. The revised ceiling broadens the pool of employees eligible for mandatory coverage, subject to applicable statutory provisions, said the government.

EPFO has consolidated 13 provisions governing partial withdrawals into three categories: Essential Needs, Housing Needs and Special Circumstances. Essential Needs cover expenses related to illness, education and marriage. This categorisation simplifies the withdrawal framework, facilitating easier access to provident fund savings for eligible members.

Employees can make partial withdrawals from their PF savings to meet specific financial needs during their working years. This allows them to access savings without withdrawing the entire accumulated balance. EPFO has simplified these provisions by allowing up to 10 withdrawals for education and 5 for marriage.

EPFO also increased the auto-settlement limit for eligible advance claims to Rs 5 lakh. This enables faster processing of eligible withdrawals without manual intervention.

Moreover, the Pradhan Mantri Samajik Sahayata Yojana provides social assistance to eligible elderly persons, widows, persons with disabilities, and bereaved families. It has been revised from the existing National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) in October 2026. The scheme will continue from 2026–27 to 2030–31. (IANS/UNI)

DR Congo Ebola death toll nears 5,000



KINSHASA, OCT 30
The death toll from the ongoing Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is approaching 5,000, according to the latest official report released Friday, as the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) paid tribute to a doctor who died from the disease in the country's conflict-hit east.

The latest situation report from the DRC's National Institute of Public Health (INSP) showed that the country had recorded 10,274 confirmed Ebola cases, including 4,992 deaths, as of October 28, with a case fatality rate of 48.6 per cent. The outbreak has affected 67 health zones across eight of the country's 26 provinces.

Meanwhile, Africa CDC paid tribute on social media platform X to Dr. Marie-France Shogogo, who died of Ebola in Beni, North Kivu Province, calling for greater protection of frontline health workers.

"Protect those who protect us," the continental health agency said, Xinhua news agency reported.

According to local health sources, three doctors died of Ebola within less than 72 hours at an Ebola treatment centre in Beni, underscoring the risks facing medical personnel battling the outbreak.

The Beni health zone reported in total 661 cases, including 443 deaths, with a case fatality rate of 67.0 per cent, according to the INSP report.

Across North Kivu, a total of 2,391 confirmed cases and 1,341 deaths have been recorded. The report also highlighted mounting pressure on the province's healthcare system, with Ebola treatment facilities operating at 86.3 per cent capacity and only 82.2 per cent of identified contacts being monitored, below the target of 95 per cent. (IANS)

China's cyber espionage becomes harder to contain



NEW DELHI, OCT 31
China-linked cyber operations, particularly by state-aligned hacking groups, are becoming harder to contain as artificial intelligence (AI) and automation allow attackers to conduct credential attacks and access attempts at unprecedented speed and scale, a new report has said.

The report from Colombo-based publication Asian News Post also pointed to a pattern of attack that can create risks across a much broader network of organisations unlike traditional attacks that targeted a single organisation.

The report mentioned the 2026 breach of US software provider ConnectWise-- a trusted technology supplier done by a China state-aligned group tracked using an AI-enabled penetration-testing framework that automated parts of its campaign.

The campaign targeted organisations across the defence, energy, finance, government and technology sectors creating concerns of access that persisted even after the initial breach was contained.

ConnectWise's software has trusted connections to other organisations, using which the attackers could reach multiple customers without breaking into each organisation independently. (IANS/UNI)

RASHTRIYA EKTA DIWAS

Security forces parade at Ekta Nagar showcases anti-Naxal operations, sacrifices



EKTA NAGAR (GUJARAT), OCT 31
Security forces involved in operations against Left-Wing Extremism, including the Border Security Force (BSF), Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Chhattisgarh Police and Andhra Pradesh Greyhounds, featured prominently in the Rashtriya Ekta Diwas parade at Ekta Nagar on Saturday, with the march-past highlighting their operational roles and sacrifices in the campaign against Naxalism.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi witnessed the parade at the Parade Ground, organised on the 151st birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

The presentation brought together personnel from central and state forces, including decorated officers and units deployed in Naxal-affected regions.

The march-past was led by Superintendent of Police (SP) Subodh Ramesh Mankar, a 2021-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer of the Gujarat cadre, with Deputy Superintendent of Police (DySP) Brij Kishor Yadav of Chhattisgarh Police as his deputy.

The BSF contingent was led by Assistant Commandant Rohan Badhawat. According to the officials, 16 BSF battalions were deployed in areas including Kanker and Abujhmad in Chhattisgarh and Malkangiri and Swabhiman Anchal in Odisha.

The force's operations were credited with eliminating 118 Naxalites, securing the surrender of 2,297 and arresting 1,908.

The announcer said 40 BSF personnel had made the supreme sacrifice. The CRPF's elite CoBRA unit, led by Assistant Commandant Ashutosh Tiguyat, was also featured.

Ten CoBRA battalions were deployed in the forests of Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand, where they took part in operations, including 'Operation Black Forest'.

The regular CRPF contingent was led by Assistant Commandant Pratishtha Rai. The parade presentation attributed 1,387 Naxalite deaths, 29,237 arrests and 15,766 surrenders to the force's anti-Naxal operations, while 781 personnel were said to have lost their lives.

Chhattisgarh Police's women Bastar Fighters, led by Deputy Superintendent of Police (DySP) Amrita Paikra, represented the role of women personnel in building trust with local communities in Naxal-affected Bastar.

The state's Special Task Force and District Reserve Guard also marched, with their commanders identified as DSP Om Prakash Singh and DSP Kunti Banjare, respectively.

Officials said the Chhattisgarh STF had eliminated 597 Naxalites and secured 870 surrenders, while 47 personnel had been killed and 175 injured. The DRG was credited with eliminating 1,240 Naxalites and securing 9,767 surrenders, with 72 personnel killed and 242 injured.

Other contingents included the CRPF's decorated personnel and Jammu and Kashmir Police officers honoured with the Shaurya Chakra.

The presentation also recognised the bravery of officers who took part in counter-terrorism operations and actions against armed insurgents. Andhra Pradesh Greyhounds, led by DSP K Srinivasa Rao, were credited in the announcement with eliminating 746 Naxalites, arresting 767 and securing 451 surrenders.

The force's 57 personnel who died in operations were also remembered. The parade included the CISF and its role in securing national mining installations in Naxal-affected states.

The announcer said 50 CISF personnel had made the supreme sacrifice in the campaign.

The march-past sought to recognise the role of police and central forces in internal security, while remembering personnel who lost their lives in operations against Naxalism and terrorism. (IANS)

France heads into third weekend of protests

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
PARIS, OCT 31

France prepared Saturday for a third consecutive weekend of protests over living costs and education, deploying 70,000 police and gendarmes and rerouting the Paris march to the capital's edge as youth-led demonstrations spread across Europe.

Interior Minister Laurent Nuñez warned of a "very high risk" of disorder, especially after dark on Halloween.

Paris police banned union and "yellow vest" marches through the city center, ordering demonstrations to follow a single route along the capital's outer boulevards, from Porte de Bagnolet to Porte de Charenton. Unions and student groups challenged the restrictions in court, but lost.



Protesters attend a rally in Valenciennes.

President Emmanuel Macron said Monday that marches would stay out of city centers to protect shops.

Police also barred entry to Place de la Republique and Les Halles, both hit by rioting and looting on Oct. 17, from 11 p.m. to 6 a.m. Saturday and Sunday.

Unaccompanied minors face a separate 9 p.m. curfew around the Champs-Elysees. A Paris court on Wednesday suspended an earlier curfew on minors as a serious and illegal infringement of freedom of movement.

The movement began with high school students protesting school conditions and broadened into anger over living costs.

Canada moves to become EU's first 'Associate Member'

WASHINGTON, OCT 31

Canada and the European Union have agreed to work towards making Canada the bloc's first "Associate Member", a partnership short of full membership, as the two sides launched what they called an "Alliance for the Future" at a summit in Montreal.



"Canada and the EU are working towards the deepest possible partnership — short of full membership — with Canada becoming the European Union's first Associate Member," Prime Minister Mark Carney posted on X on Friday.

"Today in Montréal, we took a major step forward with more than twenty new measures that will create greater affordability, opportunity, and sovereignty on both sides of the Atlantic," he wrote.

European Council President Antonio Costa said the summit had broken new ground. "At today's EU-Canada Summit, we made history," Costa posted. "We agreed to an ever-closer association - everything short of a full EU membership."

According to the Canadian Prime Minister's Office, Canada and the EU "will determine the substance, scale, and scope of this form of membership" over the coming months.

The 21st Canada-EU summit was held in Montreal on October 29 and 30, with Carney hosting Costa and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen. The European Council said the leaders agreed on a joint statement.

Among the measures announced, Canada and the EU concluded a Digital Trade Agreement and negotiations on a Competition Agreement, and Canada joined the European High Performance Computing Joint Undertaking, giving its researchers access to the JUPITER supercomputer, the Prime Minister's Office said. (IANS/UNI)

Canada signed a treaty framework allowing the European Investment Bank to invest in Canadian critical minerals projects, and the two sides will study increasing Canadian LNG exports to Europe and a new transatlantic data cable. Canada will also negotiate wider participation in Erasmus+ and joining the next Horizon Europe research programme.

Japan urges G20 to strengthen oil stockpiles



ATLANTA, OCT 31

Japan urged G20 countries to strengthen oil stockpiles and keep energy trade free and transparent, while outlining plans for closer cooperation with Gulf nations to improve energy security.

Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi presented the proposals during a session on energy and economic growth at the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Atlanta, according to an official Japanese readout.

His intervention focused on international coordination to address energy supply instability affecting Asian countries and on closer cooperation between producing and consuming nations.

The session discussed energy security, including the current energy crisis against the backdrop of developments in the Middle East.

Motegi identified three priorities: ensuring free and transparent energy trade, strengthening oil stockpiles through international coordination, and improving cooperation between energy producers and consumers.

He said the G20, which accounts for more than 80 per cent of global gross domestic product and energy consumption, shared responsibility for addressing the crisis.

Japan also disclosed that it was formulating a comprehensive cooperation plan with Gulf countries to strengthen their economic and energy resilience. The readout did not specify a timetable, funding amount or the countries that would participate.

The proposed plan formed part of Japan's broader approach to connecting Middle Eastern oil producers with Asian consumers, Motegi said.

Japan intended to play an active role in that relationship through cooperation covering energy supplies, storage and infrastructure, according to the account of his remarks.

Motegi pointed to work already under way to expand stockpiles in Asia. He also cited Japanese financing and engineering cooperation for desalination plants and liquefied natural gas liquefaction facilities in Middle Eastern countries.

Deepening those activities would contribute to global energy security, he said. (IANS/UNI)

N. Korean hackers linked to Binance theft

WASHINGTON, OCT 31

North Korean hackers purportedly stole an estimated US$6.36 billion in cryptocurrency from Binance, the world's largest cryptocurrency exchange, in what would be the biggest cryptocurrency theft on record, according to a U.S. blockchain intelligence firm.

TRM Labs said Thursday's attack against Binance was most likely carried out by TraderTraitor, a North Korean hacking group, which stole digital assets from Binance across 10 blockchain networks. Most of the funds were taken in about 20 minutes, it said.

The firm said it had "high confidence" that the group was behind the attack, citing its analysis of cryptocurrency transactions and similarities with previous North Korean hacking operations, reports Yonhap news agency.

According to TRM Labs, the hackers began preparing for the attack at least 36 hours in advance. The firm believes they gained access to systems used to authorise cryptocurrency transfers, allowing them to move funds without permission. (IANS)

Bangladesh death toll from dengue rises

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
DHAKA, OCT 31

Bangladesh recorded its highest monthly dengue death toll of the year in October, with experts warning the outbreak is unlikely to ease significantly before December.

The outbreak has killed 418 people and led to more than 133,000 hospital admissions this year as of October 30, according to health ministry data. October alone accounted for 173 deaths, surpassing September's 148 and making it the deadliest month of 2026 so far.

The surge comes as Bangladesh is also battling the world's worst measles outbreak, which has killed more than 1,200 people, placing additional strain on an already stretched health care system.

Doctors said many dengue patients were only seeking hospital admission after developing severe complications. At the state-run Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital in Dhaka, 279 dengue patients were being treated after 67 new admissions in a single day, hospital director Mirza Golam Sarwar said.

"We are getting many patients in shock. Their blood pressure is sometimes too low to measure, and their oxygen levels are dropping," he said.

Polish president turns back from Senegal as court row sparks protests in Warsaw

WARSAW, OCT31

Polish President Karol Nawrocki cut short his official trip to Senegal and returned to Warsaw on Friday after a dispute over the suspension of the head of the country's Constitutional Tribunal triggered protests and heightened political tensions.



Nawrocki said he had decided to return while his aircraft was flying over southern Spain, arguing that the situation required his presence in Poland. "At a moment like this, the President must be in Poland. I am cutting short my flight to Senegal. I am returning," he wrote on X.

The crisis erupted after orders appeared on the Constitutional Tribunal's website temporarily removing its president, Bogdan Swieczkowski, and vice-president, Bartlomiej Sochanski, from their duties. However, the tribunal's official account on X rejected the move as illegal, insisting that both officials remained in office and describing the attempt to remove them as a "coup".

Police were deployed around the tribunal in Warsaw amid fears of unrest. Officers said three people have been detained after allegedly climbing over the court's perimeter fence, while some protesters were accused of throwing objects at police personnel.

The demonstrations drew supporters of the opposition Law and Justice (PiS) party, with several politicians, including party leader Jaroslaw Kaczynski, gathering outside the court. They accused the government of attempting to take control of the judiciary and called on Nawrocki to intervene.

At the centre of the latest confrontation is Judge Anna Korwin-Piotrowska, who said she had ordered Swieczkowski and Sochanski to stop performing their duties. She told public broadcaster TVP Info that seven judges were inside the tribunal and that police had not entered the building. (IANS)

US warns of risks in overseas money transfers

WASHINGTON, OCT 31

The US Treasury warned banks and money-transfer firms about risks in certain overseas payments, citing more than $8 billion in potentially suspicious wire transfers identified in reporting covering 2021–25.

The Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, or FinCEN, issued an alert on payments directed by overseas agents through US-based money services businesses. It also released a notice on the misuse of charities and non-profit organisations.

The documents formed part of anti-fraud initiatives announced by Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent in St. Cloud, Minnesota. Treasury said the measures supported the White House Task Force to Eliminate Fraud.

FinCEN cautioned that suspicious activity reports provide investigative leads and do not establish criminal wrongdoing. The alert focuses on arrangements in which an overseas commercial agent tells a US money-transfer company to pay another foreign business. That recipient may be described as the agent's supplier or partner. Banks handling these payments may have little information about the overseas agent, the final recipient or the underlying business transaction, the alert said. (IANS)

All-Han Chinese politburo exposes deepening ethnic exclusion under Xi Jinping

NAYPYIDAW, OCT 31

Under China's ethnic autonomy law, the head-of-government post in autonomous regions is reserved for a member of the local ethnic minority, but the more powerful party secretary position has generally been occupied by a Han Chinese official, a report has stated.

It noted that for decades, minorities have accounted for roughly 10 to 11 per cent of full and alternate Central Committee members, yet the majority have remained in the alternate tier.

"No ethnic minority official has ever joined the Politburo Standing Committee. A handful reached the wider Politburo: Zhuang General Wei Guoqing and Mongolian leader Ulanhu served there during the Mao and early reform years; Hui Liangyu later served in the body and became a Vice Premier. Those cases show the barrier isn't formal, but they also highlight how rarely it has been crossed," a report in Myanmar's media outlet 'The Irrawaddy' detailed.



According to the report, ethnic policy under Chinese President Xi Jinping has increasingly focused on "forging a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation."

At the 2021 Central Ethnic Work Conference, it said, Xi tied the standards for officials to their firm backing of centralised party leadership and commitment to his national community agenda.

The report noted that the approach prioritises political cohesion, a shared national identity and security over representation of distinct ethnic groups.

"Perhaps this policy did not directly cause the all-Han Politburo. Public records don't reveal the bargaining, vetting or rejected candidates behind elite appointments. Still, the roster fits a system where minority identity can warrant representation in congresses and autonomous governments but offers little access to the center," it mentioned.

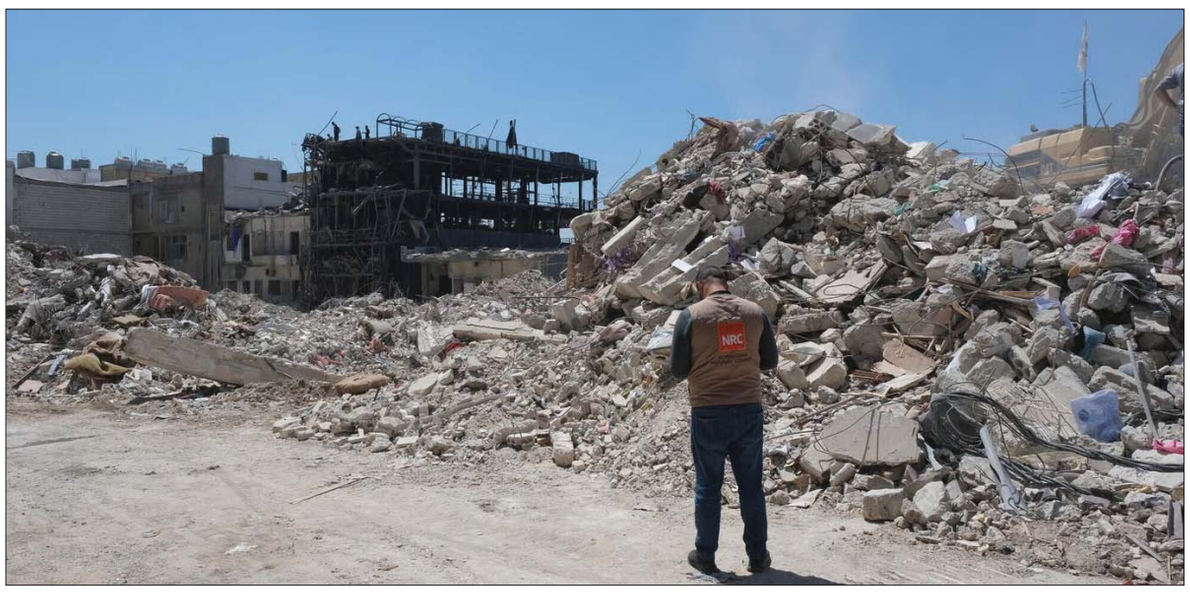
The report highlighted that China's Communist Party appointed its 24-member Politburo in October 2022, with every member being a Han Chinese man. For the first time in 25 years, it said, the body had no women, while none of China's 55 officially recognised ethnic minority groups secured a place. Four years later, the group has become even more exclusive.

"In October 2025, the party expelled Central Military Commission Vice Chairman He Weidong. Former Xinjiang Party Secretary Ma Xingrui followed in July 2026, and top general Zhang Youxia last month. Official notices accused all three of serious violations; the notice on Zhang also alleged disloyalty, 'faction-building' and a remarkably large number of bribes," the report detailed.

"Their removal leaves an active Politburo of 21—a concentration that tells us something important about power under Xi Jinping. Diversity exists farther down the political system, often through quotas and administrative rules. It disappears where the most consequential decisions are made," it added. (IANS/UNI)

Israeli military activity blocking Lebanon's recovery as 300,000 remain displaced: UN

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
BEIRUT, OCT 31



The Israeli military's ongoing presence and activities in southern Lebanon are preventing displaced families from returning home safely and rebuilding their lives, the UN said on Friday, as it warned that the country's humanitarian crisis was "far from over."

While nearly 970,000 people have returned to their communities in southern areas, more than 300,000 remained internally displaced as of Wednesday, UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said, citing data from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

More Israeli demolitions, fires and strikes were reported across southern Lebanon this week, he added, both inside the so-called "combat zone" declared by Israel, from which residents were ordered to evacuate, and in communities outside of it.

Many of those who have gone home returned to find their houses damaged, livelihoods difficult to resume and essential services disrupted, Dujarric said.

In Nabatieh governorate, the olive harvest has been disrupted by insecurity and restrictions on access to crops, and farmers in some villages were able to collect fruit for only two days before the Israeli army forced them to stop.

The Lebanon Humanitarian Fund has allocated $91 million to support displaced persons, returnees, refugees and others in communities affected by the escalation this year.

"Without safety, access to essential services and opportunities to earn a living, families cannot rebuild their lives," Dujarric said, as he renewed the UN's call for civilians and civilian infrastructure to be protected, unimpeded humanitarian access, and for all parties to facilitate "the safe and dignified return of people to their homes."

Israeli attacks devastate agriculture in Quneitra

Livestock farming in Ruwayhina village in Quneitra countryside has become an increasingly dangerous activity for residents, as continued Israeli attacks and restrictions prevent farmers and herders from accessing their land and pastures.

Direct attacks on livestock and grazing areas have undermined residents' ability to continue agricultural and livestock activities, causing significant losses to local agricultural and animal production.

Several villagers described the difficult conditions they face.

Daily attacks and gunfire from Israeli occupation forces have been compounded by the repeated targeting of their herds, leaving barns and pastures increasingly quiet.

Agriculture and livestock raising, long the main sources of livelihood in the village, have become fraught with danger for farmers and herders alike.

Kuwait calls for balanced approach to codification of international law



FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
KUWAIT CITY, OCT 31

Kuwait has emphasized the importance of respecting state sovereignty and taking national practices into account when drafting and progressively developing international law, stressing that legal reforms must be based on accurate assessments of international practices and relevant legal evidence to strengthen legal certainty and the rule of law.

The position was outlined by Second Secretary of Kuwait's Permanent Mission to the United Nations, Jassim Al-Amiri, during a meeting of the UN General Assembly's Sixth Committee discussing Item 78 on the report of the International Law Commission's 76th and 77th sessions.

Al-Amiri commended the Commission's efforts to codify and progressively develop international law, highlighting the importance of constructive engagement with the Sixth Committee and giving due consideration to the views and national practices of member states.

He stressed the need to distinguish between the codification of existing international legal rules and proposals for their progressive development, cautioning against prejudging states' positions on the legal nature or implications of the Commission's conclusions and proposals.

Addressing rising sea levels, Al-Amiri acknowledged the serious environmental, economic, social and legal challenges facing coastal and island states, calling for continued international cooperation to address climate change and mitigate its effects.

He also highlighted the importance of following up on the Sea Level Rise Declaration adopted during the UN General Assembly's 81st session, while taking into account the concerns of affected states.

Al-Amiri further stressed that discussions on rising sea levels must be grounded in relevant international legal principles, particularly the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. On the subject of general principles of law, he called for due consideration of the diversity of national legal systems and international practices, as well as clear criteria for identifying such principles and determining their scope of application without undermining other sources of international law.

He concluded by reaffirming Kuwait's appreciation for the Commission's work and the importance of continued dialogue with member states to strengthen the codification and progressive development of international law.

Saudi air defenses intercept hostile drone in Riyadh region, no injuries reported

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
RIYADH, OCT 31



Air defenses intercepted and destroyed a hostile drone in the Riyadh region, Coalition to Support Legitimacy in Yemen spokesperson Maj. Gen. Turki Al-Maliki announced Saturday.

Al-Maliki said debris from the interception fell in the area, with no injuries reported.

He added that the relevant authorities were responding to the site.

Earlier, air defenses intercepted and destroyed two missiles and three drones launched by the Houthi militia toward several regions of the Kingdom on Friday and Saturday, according to the Coalition to Support Legitimacy in Yemen.

Coalition spokesperson Maj. Gen. Turki Al-Maliki said air defense forces intercepted and destroyed a cruise missile launched by the Houthi militia toward the western region and a ballistic missile targeting the southern region.

Al-Maliki added that three drones launched by the Houthis toward Riyadh, Makkah and Madinah were also intercepted and destroyed.

The latest interceptions followed similar incidents Thursday, when Saudi air defenses intercepted and destroyed two ballistic missiles launched by the Houthis toward Riyadh and another ballistic missile targeting the Eastern Province, according to Al-Maliki.

Meanwhile, Saudi Civil Defense urged citizens and residents to follow safety instructions during warning periods, including staying away from open areas and glass windows and avoiding balconies and rooftops.

Debris from the intercepted ballistic missile injured a Saudi citizen in Riyadh on Thursday, according to the spokesperson of the Civil Defense.

Dubai rental contracts can be cancelled over deception

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
DUBAI, OCT 31



Landlords and tenants in Dubai can ask to cancel a signed rental contract before the tenancy begins if they can prove they were misled when making the agreement, under a new judicial principle established by Dubai's Rental Disputes Center.

The ruling, announced on Thursday, means that signing a rental contract does not always make it final. If deception is proven, either party may seek to have the agreement cancelled before it takes effect, provided the legal conditions are met.

Dubai's Rental Disputes Center said the principle "confirms that legal safeguards may extend beyond the signing of a contract, provided the applicable legal requirements are met."

The decision follows a dispute involving a landlord who wanted to cancel a signed rental agreement after discovering that the company he planned to rent his property to had a history of unpaid rent and court cases.

The landlord had agreed to rent his property to a company. Before handing over the property, he discovered that the company had previously faced court cases and judgments for failing to pay rent on other properties it had leased for subletting to third parties.

Several arrest and bring-in orders had also been issued against the company's manager in cases involving unpaid rental obligations, bounced cheques and delayed payments.

Concerned that the company might fail to meet its obligations, the landlord approached Dubai's Rental Disputes Center to have the agreement cancelled before the tenancy began.

His request was initially rejected. The case was later reviewed on appeal by the General Authority of Dubai's Rental Disputes Center. After examining the evidence, the Authority found that the circumstances amounted to deception under the UAE's Civil Transactions Law.

Dubai's Rental Disputes Center said the Authority "ruled that the lease agreement must be annulled and the parties restored to the position they had been in before signing it." In simple terms, the contract was cancelled, and both sides were to return to their positions before the agreement was signed.

The ruling does not mean landlords or tenants can simply walk away from a signed agreement because they change their minds. There must be evidence of deception, and the legal requirements must be met.

Dubai's Rental Disputes Center said the ruling confirmed that "annulment may be sought before implementation begins where deception is demonstrated and the applicable legal grounds are satisfied."

This means a landlord or tenant may have grounds to challenge an agreement even after signing it, as long as the tenancy has not yet begun and deception can be established.

Jordan stops fighters attempting to enter from Syria



FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
AMMAN, OCT 31

Jordanian border guards stopped a group of 14 armed individuals attempting to cross into northern Jordan from Syria, the armed forces said in a statement on Saturday.

The group tried to infiltrate on Friday under heavy fire and direct engagement, causing numerous casualties among the armed group, while the remaining members fled back into Syria, the armed forces said.

Tensions between the neighbors are high after Jordanian strikes in southern Syria in retaliation for a deadly church attack in the kingdom last week that Amman linked to militants operating across the border.

10 dead and 24 injured in collision in Giza

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
CAIRO, OCT 31



The Egyptian Ministry of Health and Population reported that 10 people were killed and 24 others were injured in a collision between a microbus and a heavy truck in the vicinity of 6th of October City in Giza Governorate at the intersection of the Middle Road and the Dabaa Road on Saturday.

The ministry's spokesperson stated in a statement that "the Egyptian Ambulance Authority dispatched twenty ambulances to the scene of the accident immediately upon receiving the report, transporting the injured to nearby hospitals," noting that these figures are preliminary and that counting and monitoring operations are still ongoing.

The spokesperson explained that "there are 10 injured individuals in critical condition, and 14 have injuries ranging from minor to moderate, while 10 fatalities were transferred to the morgue of October Central Hospital," pointing out that Minister of Health and Population Khaled Abdel Ghaffar has directed to raise the state of readiness in hospitals located in the area of the accident and surrounding areas.

Türkiye, Uzbekistan ink new deals

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
ANKARA, OCT 31

Türkiye and Uzbekistan signed new trade deals to expand bilateral cooperation across sectors and target an annual trade volume of $5 billion in the short term.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his Uzbek counterpart, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, held a meeting in Ankara alongside the 13th summit of the Organization of Turkic States (OTS).

The two leaders focused on trade, investment, mining, transportation and the defense industry. This dialogue builds on Mirziyoyev's visit to Türkiye in January for the High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council, when deals were signed on health, energy, finance and culture.

The two leaders signed five additional deals on trade, social security and business support during their latest meeting in Ankara, including a protocol expanding the scope of the preferential trade agreement between the two countries.

The leaders also established the Türkiye-Uzbekistan Business and Investment Council to generate momentum for joint commercial projects and strengthen ties between public institutions and the private sectors.

UAE contains oil spill

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
DUBAI, OCT 31

The United Arab Emirates announced Friday that it contained an oil spill from a tanker involved in an incident in its territorial waters, while efforts continued to address marine pollution affecting several coastal areas.

The Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure said it was coordinating with the Ministry of Climate Change and Environment, the National Emergency Crisis and Disaster Management Authority, and other agencies to secure the oil tanker GEM NO. 2 and minimize potential risks, according to the state news agency WAM.

CCI okays Adani Energy Solutions' Rs 3,050-crore acquisition of IntelliSmart Infrastructure

NEW DELHI, OCT 31

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has approved the acquisition of equity share capital of IntelliSmart Infrastructure Private Ltd by Adani Energy Solutions Ltd.



"The proposed combination envisages the acquisition of 100 per cent of the equity share capital of the target (IntelliSmart Infrastructure Pvt Ltd) by the acquirer (Adani Energy Solutions Ltd) from National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) and Energy Efficiency Services Ltd (EESL)," the regulator said in a statement on Saturday.

IntelliSmart Infrastructure is involved in providing advanced metering infrastructure for electricity in the country. It is also engaged in deploying smart gas meters.

The CCI said it has cleared the proposed deal. "The Commission approves the acquisition of 100 per cent of the share capital of IntelliSmart Infrastructure Pvt Ltd by Adani Energy Solutions Ltd," the regulator said.

Earlier in June, Adani Energy Solutions announced that it had executed a binding securities purchase and subscription agreement to acquire a 100 per cent equity stake in IntelliSmart Infrastructure. The Rs 3,050-crore transaction includes the acquisition of 100 per cent equity share capital of IntelliSmart and redemption of optionally convertible debentures held by NIIF.

NIIF is India's sovereign-anchored alternative asset manager, while EESL is a joint venture of leading public sector undertakings under the Ministry of Power.

The Acquirer is part of the Adani Group and is a public listed company incorporated in India, listed on the BSE and the National Stock Exchange of India. (IANS/UNI)

Quad unveils AI, minerals and maritime plans

FROM PAGE 1



Their joint statement set out initiatives spanning economic security, technology, maritime cooperation and disaster response. A separate Japanese account detailed discussions on regional tensions and North Korea.

The ministers expressed their intention to provide more than $85 million in technical and financial assistance to support access to trusted technology, including through the Quad SI Accelerator.

The release used the term "Super Intelligence", with a footnote explaining that it refers to artificial intelligence in Australia, India and Japan. It highlighted the importance of this technology and initiatives such as Pax Silica to future economic growth.

The statement did not specify individual country contributions or how the assistance would be distributed.

The partners will launch an effort to identify semiconductor and AI supply chain chokepoints before they cause disruptions. They stressed the need for secure and trusted supplies of advanced semiconductors and AI hardware.

They will identify priority countries for cooperation on 5G, 6G, Open Radio Access Networks and AI-enabled radio access networks. (IANS/UNI)



Cumulative 50-75 bps hike likely

NEW DELHI, OCT 31

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI), which raised policy rates for the first time by 25bps in nearly four years with a change in stance to calibrated tightening from neutral, is expected to act in a pre-emptive manner and "we expect a cumulative 50-75bps hike in this tightening cycle", a report said on Saturday. The glut in system liquidity has been absorbed by RBI's measures and "we expect RBI to hike rates in next policy," said the report by Bank of Baroda. Consumption in the month of September paints a strong picture overall as reflected by high frequency indicators such as non-oil and non-gold imports, electronic imports and auto sales data amidst festive cheer. (IANS)

WINDFALL TAX RESET

Petrol exports exempt, duties increased on diesel and ATF

NEW DELHI, OCT 31

The government on Saturday withdrew the special additional excise duty on petrol exports while increasing export levies on diesel and aviation turbine fuel (ATF).

According to notifications issued by the Finance Ministry, petrol exports will no longer attract any export duty, compared with the earlier levy of Rs 2.50 per litre.

At the same time, the duty on diesel exports has been increased to Rs 11.50 per litre from Rs 8.50 per litre, while the export levy on ATF has been raised to Rs 11 per litre from Rs 10.50 per litre.

The revised rates come as the government continues its fortnightly review of fuel export duties in response to fluctuations in international crude oil and refined product prices.



The latest revision reverses part of the October adjustment, when the government raised the levy on petrol exports to Rs 2.50 per litre from Rs 0.50 per litre while simultaneously reducing the duty on diesel exports to Rs 8.50 per litre from Rs 16 per litre.

Fuel export duties have undergone multiple revisions in recent months as authorities sought to balance domestic supply requirements with changing global market conditions.

The export levies were reintroduced in March this year after geopolitical tensions in the Middle East triggered a sharp rise in global crude prices and disrupted established energy supply routes.

The government had said the measures were aimed at ensuring adequate domestic fuel availability by discouraging refiners from diverting supplies to overseas markets when export margins were more attractive.

India's energy security concerns intensified following disruptions to shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, a critical transit corridor through which a significant share of the country's crude oil imports traditionally moved. (IANS/UNI)

Centre extends customs duty exemption on cotton imports

NEW DELHI, OCT 31

In a bid to augment the availability of cotton for the domestic textile sector, the government on Saturday extended the existing customs duty exemption on cotton imports till December 31, 2026.



Through the amendment, the existing exemption, which was available until October 31, 2026, has now been extended by two months.

The aim is to address specialised cotton requirements and support value addition across the textile and apparel value chain, the Ministry of Textiles said in a statement.

"The measure is expected to provide greater flexibility to textile and apparel manufacturers in meeting their raw material requirements, help ease input cost pressures, support Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), and strengthen the competitiveness of Indian textiles in domestic and international markets," the statement said.

According to the government, this move is expected to facilitate uninterrupted availability of raw materials, improve operational flexibility for the textile industry, and promote greater value addition across the cotton-based textile and apparel sector. (IANS)

AT1 BONDS

Axis Trustee warns contempt proceeding against Yes Bank

NEW DELHI, OCT 31

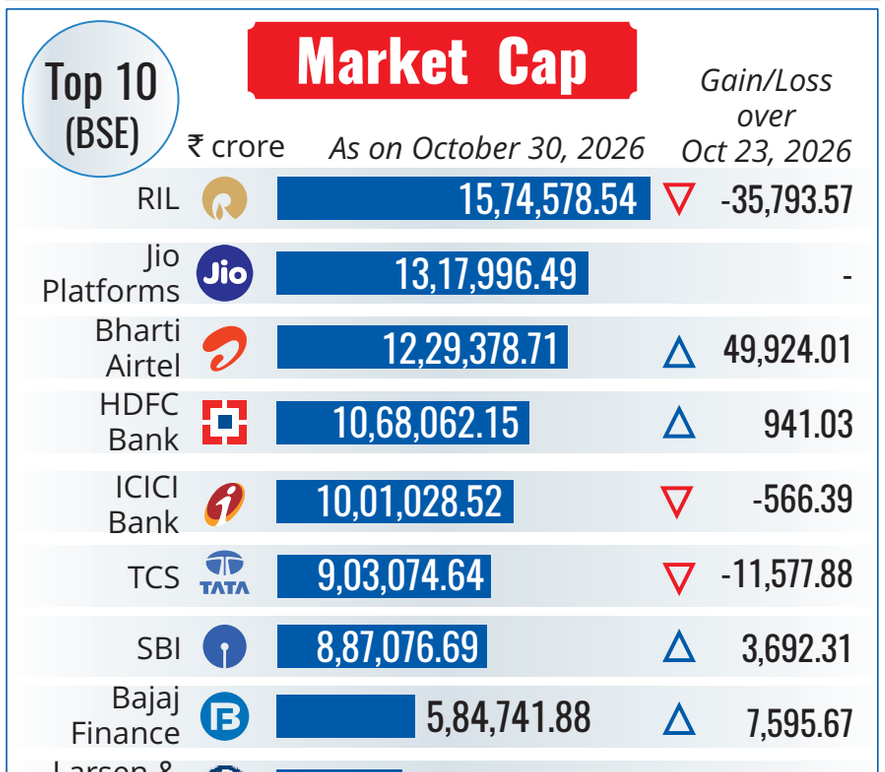
Axis Trustee Services Limited, the trustee for the Additional Tier 1 (AT1) bonds issued by Yes Bank, called upon the private sector lender to reinstate the bonds and take necessary corporate actions within three days, failing which the former would initiate contempt proceedings in Supreme Court against the bank.

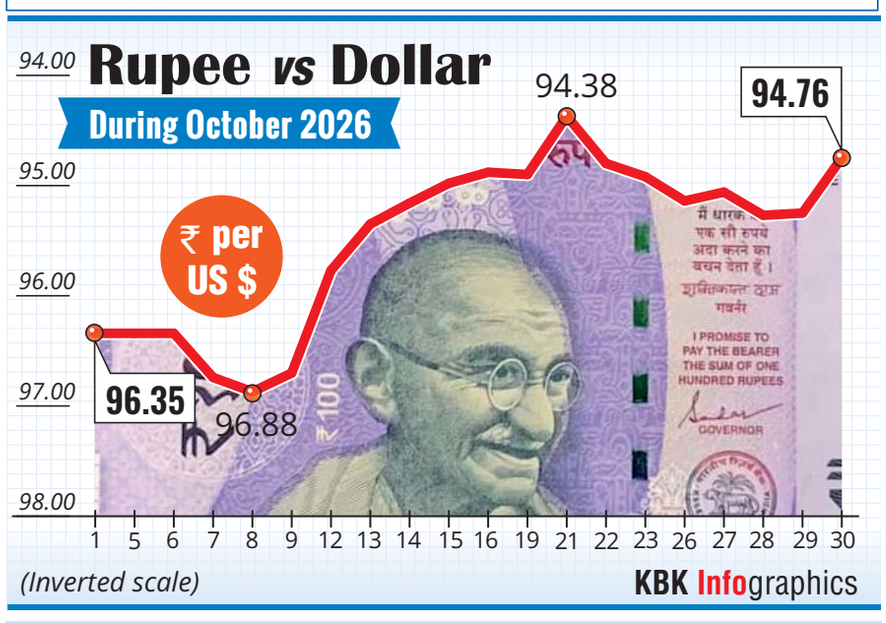
The trustee said in a filing that non-compliance will constitute "wilful disobedience by the lender of the Supreme Court's October 15 judgment".

Yes Bank said it had responded to the trustee, acknowledging the Supreme Court judgment and reiterating that it was fully committed to acting in accordance with the ruling and applicable law, according to an exchange filing.

The Bank replied to the Trustee that it is cognisant of the matters and is examining the SC Judgment and its implications in detail.

"The Bank will take all such steps and measures as are necessary and permissible under applicable law," Yes Bank said. (IANS)





SEBI focus remains on facilitating capital formation

NEW DELHI, OCT 31

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) Chairman, Tuhin Kanta Pandey, said on Saturday that the capital markets regulator continuously works towards making India's capital markets more accessible, efficient and resilient, focusing on facilitating capital formation, improving ease of doing business and strengthening investor protection.

Speaking at the 'Bharat Chamber of Commerce Investors Forum' in Kolkata, Pandey noted strong expansion of market capitalisation in India over the past decade, with companies raising on average more than Rs 10 lakh crore annually through equity and debt issuances.

"While we continue to strengthen markets for businesses, an equally important priority is investor protection. World-class markets must be not only efficient during normal times, but also resilient during periods of stress," Pandey said.

He said that the market capitalisation has grown strongly over the past decade, with companies raising on average more than Rs 10 lakh crore annually through equity and debt issuances. "While we continue to strengthen markets for businesses, an equally important priority is investor protection.

Rupee should be India's 'first line of defense' against energy shock: IMF

WASHINGTON, OCT 31

The International Monetary Fund has said the rupee should be India's "first line of defense" against the energy shock from the war in the Middle East, signalling a preference for exchange rate flexibility over heavy central bank intervention, even as it kept its 7 per cent growth forecast for the Indian economy.

Responding to a question at her regular press briefing in Washington on Thursday about the Reserve Bank of India's recent intervention to support the rupee, IMF Communications Director Julie Kozack said she was echoing the head of the Fund's Asia and Pacific Department, Krishna Srinivasan.



IMF Communications Director Julie Kozack

"Given the ongoing energy shocks that India is confronting, like all countries, our view is that the rupee should be the first line of defense in the face of these shocks," Kozack said. "So, allowing the exchange rate to move freely to reflect the impact of these shocks is important to help the Indian economy adjust to these shocks," she said.

Kozack said the Fund's advice would change if a weaker currency started to push up prices across the economy. (IANS)

India win 20 medals at World Armwrestling Championships

NEW DELHI, OCT 31

Indian armwrestlers clinched four gold, two silver and 14 bronze medals across the first two days of finals at the 47th World Armwrestling and 28th World Para Armwrestling Championships 2026, placing fourth in the overall medal standings behind Russia, Kazakhstan and Türkiye.



The championships, being held in India for the first time, are taking place with more than 1,700 athletes from over 60 countries participating in the competition.

The event was inaugurated on Thursday in the presence of Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs and Minority Affairs Kiren Rijiju and Hamirpur MP and former Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports Anurag Singh Thakur. The championship is hosted by the People's Armwrestling Federation of India (PAFI) under the World Armwrestling Federation (WAF).

WAF president Assen Hadjitodorov, general secretary Mircea Simionescu-Simicel, Asian Armwrestling Federation president Jeenbek Mukambetov and Armwrestling Australia president Phil Rasmussen also attended the inauguration.

India's Masters contingent led the medal charge on October 29, collecting four gold, one silver and seven bronze medals. Jincymol Sebastian emerged as the standout performer, winning gold in both arms in the Grand Master Women's 80kg category. (IANS)

Verstappen, Lawson handed grid penalties

MEXICO CITY, OCT 31

Max Verstappen and Liam Lawson have been handed grid penalties for their "unacceptable" and "clumsy" incident during the second practice session at the Mexico Grand Prix here.



Having missed the first practice for rookie drivers Ayumu Iwasa and Nikola Tsolov, Verstappen and Lawson were back on the field for the second practice, where they made contact.

Verstappen made a move on Lawson into Turn 12, but the Racing Bulls driver fought back at the next left-hand turn, forcing the Red Bull driver to bounce over the kerb and rejoin alongside Lawson. Both cars took damage: Verstappen's Red Bull sustained floor damage, while the Racing Bulls car sustained front-wing damage.

The incident called for a brief red flag to clear the debris left on the track as the two drivers continued their runs, with Verstappen finishing P5 and Lawson P9. Speaking about the incident, the stewards confirmed that it was unacceptable and that a penalty had been handed down.

"On the approach to Turn 12, Car 3 (Verstappen) was on a preparation lap, and Car 30 (Lawson) was on a cool down lap preparing for another push lap," read the stewards' decision document. "The drivers of both cars behaved in a manner that was considered unacceptable by the stewards, particularly in view of the warning that had been given at the Team Managers meeting earlier this day. Both drivers admitted the moves were unnecessary and 'clumsy'.

Verstappen reacted to the incident, stating that it was a result of a "not very smart behaviour". (IANS/UNI)

Acosta wins chaotic Malaysian GP Sprint

SEPANG, OCT 31

Pedro Acosta won a chaotic dry-wet Sprint race at the Sepang International Circuit here, as title leader Marc Marquez increased the championship gap with a second-place finish.



Acosta overcame a four-way battle in a 10-lap Sprint that was threatened by rain late on, as he held Marquez by 0.578s. Marco Bezzecchi took the third place as Ai Ogura, who was once leading, fell behind and finished P4.

The result saw Marquez increase his title lead from the absent Jorge Martin to 19 points after he collected nine points for his second-place finish. Bezzecchi is now 52 points behind the seven-time MotoGP champion after he finished fourth and collected six points.

Alex Marquez began the Sprint in the lead after having outclassed his elder brother during the qualifying earlier. He was leading until four laps before he slid out at Turn 14. The lead was then inherited by Ogura, as the battle between the top four continued.

Due to spots of rain, the white flag came out as riders were allowed to change their bikes for tyres. Iker Lecuona, Joan Mir and Franco Morbidelli went to change their bikes, with Maverick Vinales opting for a change later.

Acosta attacked Ogura for the lead when three laps were left. He looked to fight back but could not and was later overtaken by Marquez and Bezzecchi as he struggled in the slightly wet conditions.

Earlier, Martin was ruled out of the remainder of the Malaysian GP weekend due to his fractured wrist. "He made a superhuman effort, but it's official: Jorge Martin (Aprilia Racing) will not be able to race in the Malaysian GP. Just six days after breaking his wrist in Australia, the 2024 Champion and 2026 title contender returned to the track on Friday at Sepang, doing 12 laps in the morning session and then a few more in the afternoon before ending his day early, intending to recharge for more on Saturday," MotoGP wrote in a statement.

"Unfortunately, after more time on track in FP2 ahead of qualifying, it was confirmed: Martin has withdrawn from the event. The #89 will remain on the sidelines, targeting next time out for another shot at his return," it added. (IANS)

Auqib Nabi added to India squad

MUMBAI, OCT 31

Jammu and Kashmir fast bowler Auqib Nabi has received an extended opportunity in India's ODI setup after the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) included him in the squad for the first three matches of the five-game series against New Zealand, having initially been picked only for the final two games.



The selection committee's decision, announced on Saturday, means Nabi will now be available for the entire five-match series, which begins on November 4. His inclusion comes a day after Prasidh Krishna was ruled out of the tour, with the pacer requiring additional time to recover from a hamstring injury and regain the workload needed for competitive cricket.

Nabi's recent performances in New Zealand appear to have strengthened his case. The 29-year-old was among India's standout bowlers in the opening unofficial Test between India A and New Zealand A at Lincoln last week, claiming six wickets and exploiting the assistance on offer from the surface. He was originally named in the India A squad for all three unofficial Tests but was subsequently withdrawn from the groups for the second and third matches. (IANS)

ENTERTAINMENT

Director Sanjay Gupta passes away



M.A.SALAM
Film Journalist



According to the Mumbai Police, the family members of filmmaker Sanjay Gupta discovered him the following morning and alerted the police after he passed away aged 59 by falling in the bathroom on October 30.

The Versova Police are investigating the matter. Sanjay Gupta fell in the bathroom of his house on October 30, following which he died.

A Mumbai Police official said that other people were present at the house at the time of the incident. However, as the incident took place late at night, the family members could not immediately become aware of it. The family members spotted him the following morning and immediately informed the police. The police also received information about the incident only in the morning. According to the police, the family has not expressed any suspicion so far. The necessary procedures in the case are currently being carried out.

The forensics team has also reached the late filmmaker's residence in Mumbai.

Sanjay Gupta was best known for directing films such as 'Kaante', 'Kaabil' and 'Shootout at Wadala ' along with producing movies such as Shootout at Lokhandwala, Jazbaa and Acid Factory.

Diljit Dosanjh hits back over 'Satluj' jibes during CJP protest

Punjabi singer-actor Diljit Dosanjh hit back during his Aura India Tour concert in New Delhi on Friday, addressing the backlash over his earlier "I'm an artist, bro" remark.



In a befitting reply, he responded to those who allegedly mocked his film 'Satluj' during the CJP protests in Delhi a few months ago, for him choosing to not getting involved in politics and not supporting CJP's protest.

Performing in Delhi on the opening day of his India tour, Diljit addressed the controversy surrounding his decision to stay away from the student protests earlier this year.

His remarks had drawn criticism from members of the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), including its leader Abhijeet Dipke, who had questioned his stance, particularly in the context of his association with politically charged projects such as 'Satluj', based on the life of human rights activist Jaswant Singh Khalra.

the audience, Diljit said, "I love all of you because I am an artist, bro. I am being quiet, so let me stay quiet. I support all of you. But don't teach Punjabis how to fight."

He then addressed the alleged mocking of his film on stage, saying, "The film you are making fun of on stage, Jaswant Singh Khalra's film, we fought for that film for a long time.

R. Madhavan to star in Vishal Furia's scary next



Actor R Madhavan, who has worked in horror films 13B and Shaitaan, is joining hands with filmmaker Vishal Furia for a horror feature film.

For Furia, there was never any doubt about who would lead the film.

The filmmaker said in a statement: "Madhavan sir was always my first and only choice. I'm stoked that he has come on board and has already started getting into the world of the film. He is the true OG horror star of the cult classic Indian horror '13B' - one of my favourite films of all times."

"His conviction, his experience and his understanding of serious horror are very rare, and I couldn't think of anyone better for this film," he said.

The film will be produced by Rohit Ranjan under his banner, Frostlit Production Limited.

Vishal has carved a niche for himself in the horror space. Starting with the Marathi film 'Lapachhapi'. He was then seen building the 'Chhorii' universe and recently delivered 'Maa', starring Kajol. The film also had a cameo by the star.

Adnan Sami shares glimpses of Taj Mahal visit

Singer-composer Adnan Sami recently visited the Taj Mahal in Agra with his wife Roya Sami Khan and family.

He shared glimpses of their visit to the iconic monument on social media and posted pictures from the family outing



In one of the pictures, Adnan is seen posing with his wife in front of the Taj Mahal. While the singer is dressed in a black outfit, Roya is seen wearing a grey sweater, blue jeans, sunglasses and a beige hat.

Sharing the pictures, he wrote, "Visited Agra earlier this week, No matter how many times I come to this magnificent monument of 'Love' - The Taj Mahal, it always looks stunning... Especially when I'm embraced by the love of my beloved family."

While the pictures offered a glimpse into his family time, it was also Adnan Sami's physical transformation that caught attention. The singer, who once weighed approximately 230 kg, has undergone a remarkable transformation over the years and has reportedly shed around 120-130 kg.

In many interviews, Adnan has spoken about his weight-loss journey, revealing that it was a matter of survival for him. He had earlier shared that doctors warned him about the serious consequences of his weight, prompting him to make significant lifestyle changes.

The singer has credited a disciplined diet and regular exercise for his transformation and has denied undergoing weight-loss surgery. He revealed following a high-protein diet while eliminating bread, rice, sugar and oil from his meals.

Adnan carved a special place for himself in the Indian music industry first with his collaboration with legendary singer Asha Bhosle on the album 'Kabhi To Nazar Milao'. He became a household name with his album 'Tera Chehra', which featured popular tracks such as 'Lift Kara De' and the title song 'Tera Chehra'.

TG earmarks Rs. 120 Crore to tackle water shortage in Singur districts

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
HYDERABAD, OCT 31



The Telangana government has sanctioned special funds to set up alternative drinking water systems across the State in view of possible shortages due to the El Niño phenomenon, Minister for Panchayat Raj, Rural Development and Rural Water Supply Dr. Danasari Anasuya announced on Saturday.

The government has allocated Rs. 120 crore to address drinking water requirements in Singur-dependent districts — Sangareddy, Medak, Kamareddy and Nizamabad. Another Rs. 1 crore has been sanctioned for each of the remaining districts to meet immediate local needs.

During a teleconference with officials of Mission Bhagiratha and the Public Health Engineering department, Seethakka directed them to expedite field-level measures and ensure an uninterrupted drinking water supply.

She asked officials to identify villages vulnerable to disruptions in Mission Bhagiratha supplies and areas facing severe groundwater depletion, and make alternative arrangements based on local requirements.

The Minister said the government was taking all precautionary measures to ensure that no household faced drinking water shortages during the lean season. (NSS)

Irrigation Minister Uttam pushes for green Tummidihatti barrage design

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HYDERABAD, OCT 31



N. Uttam Kumar Reddy

Irrigation and Civil Supplies Minister Capt. N. Uttam Kumar Reddy on Saturday directed officials to explore technically feasible and environmentally sustainable solutions to address Maharashtra's concerns over the proposed Tummidihatti barrage, particularly its potential impact on submergence and the environment.

Reviewing the project's technical aspects and proposed alignments following recent discussions with Maharashtra, the Minister called for a comprehensive assessment of the land likely to be submerged at different reservoir levels.

He asked officials to prepare detailed maps identifying riverbed areas, forests, eco-sensitive zones, protected core areas, revenue lands and habitations to determine the extent of submergence.

Uttam Kumar Reddy stressed the need to examine engineering modifications that could minimise environmental impact and address Maharashtra's concerns without affecting the project's irrigation objectives.

Telangana has proposed raising the barrage's Full Reservoir Level (FRL) from 148 metres to 152 metres to improve water storage and utilisation.

The proposal was discussed at the October 26 meeting in Mumbai attended by Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, Uttam Kumar Reddy and Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis.

Indiramma Towers flat allotment lottery on Nov 3 & 4

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The e-lottery for allotment of flats in Indiramma Towers to applicants from four Assembly constituencies will be held on November 3, Housing Board Vice-Chairman V.P. Goutham announced.

The lottery will cover applicants from Musheerabad, LB Nagar, Chandrayangutta and Goshamahal constituencies, whose applications have completed preliminary scrutiny. A mop-up e-lottery will be conducted on November 4 to allot vacant flats in 16 constituencies, which became available after earlier allotments were cancelled due to ineligibility, change of residence, inability to pay or applicants already owning houses.

Goutham said both lotteries would be conducted online in a transparent manner and live-streamed on the Housing Department's YouTube channel and other social media platforms.

He said applicants who had mistakenly applied under constituencies other than their residential areas would also be considered based on address verification. Using geocoding and Google Maps, officials mapped applicants to their respective constituencies and included eligible names in the mop-up lottery. The government aims to ensure that eligible applicants get housing in the constituencies where they reside, he added.

TG needs 8% annual growth to become $3 trillion economy

122 Advanced Training Centres to be ready by next year: Minister Vivek

TFP I ABDUL RAHMAN KHAN
HYDERABAD, OCT 31



Minister Vivek Venkataswamy addresses valedictory session of national conference on Economic Growth, Sustainable Development and Public Policies at MCR HRDI.

Telangana Labour, Employment, Training, Mines and Geology Minister Gaddam Vivek Venkataswamy has stressed the need for 8 per cent annual economic growth to help India become a $5 trillion economy and Telangana a $3 trillion economy by 2047. He called for stronger coordination between industries and educational institutions to equip youth with job-oriented skills.

Speaking at the valedictory session of a two-day national conference on Economic Growth, Sustainable Development and Public Policies, organised as part of the golden jubilee celebrations of Dr MCR Human Resource Development Institute (MCR HRDI), the Minister said skill development must keep pace with changing industrial requirements.

He said the state was modernising 65 Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) into Advanced Training Centres and had plans to establish another 54. The government aims to make 122 such centres operational by next year to provide industry-oriented technical training.

Referring to employment opportunities abroad, Vivek said countries such as Japan and Germany faced shortages of skilled workers due to ageing populations. He urged young people to acquire the technical skills and qualifications required to access international job markets. The Minister said Telangana had secured investment commitments worth Rs 5.74 lakh crore through the Telangana Rising Global Summit last year. Skilled manpower would be crucial to converting these investments into industrial growth and employment opportunities. He also emphasised balancing economic growth with environmental protection and sustainable development.

MCR HRDI Director General Shanti Kumari, Additional Director General Anita Ramachandran and IIT Hyderabad Director Prof. B. Murthy attended the programme along with academicians, researchers and other delegates. Around 200 paper presenters, academics and policy experts from nearly 12 states participated in the two-day conference.



Sharmila shifts daughter's wedding venue amid property dispute

AMARAVATI, OCT 31



Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee president Y.S. Sharmila Reddy has decided to shift the venue of her daughter Y.S. Anjili Reddy's wedding from the family's Yelahanka residence amid the ongoing property dispute.

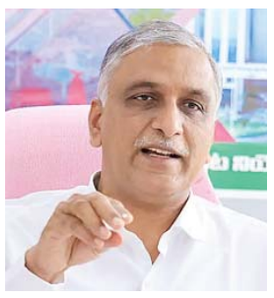
In a statement posted on X, Sharmila said the wedding of Anjili and Somala Raghuram Reddy would be held at an alternative venue to ensure that the occasion passes off peacefully in the presence of family members, relatives and friends, without further controversy.

She maintained that the Yelahanka property had been allotted to her and her children as part of the family property distribution after her brother, Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, became Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh. The family had initially planned to hold the wedding there in keeping with her daughter's wish, as the house held sentimental value for them.

Expressing disappointment over being unable to fulfil her daughter's wish, Sharmila said ensuring that the wedding takes place without disputes was now the priority. She thanked those who had expressed concern and wished the couple a happy married life. (NSS)

Harish Rao calls Revanth 'Brand Ambassador of Lies'

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
HYDERABAD, OCT 31



T. Harish Rao

Former Minister and BRS leader T. Harish Rao on Saturday accused Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy of making baseless allegations against BRS leaders over the Miyapur lands issue, branding him the "brand ambassador of lies" and saying he deserved an Oscar for his alleged falsehoods.

Strongly reacting to the Chief Minister's remarks following the Supreme Court's observation that the Miyapur lands belonged to the Telangana government, Harish Rao accused Revanth Reddy of attempting to take credit for the outcome through misleading claims.

Addressing the media at Telangana Bhavan, Harish Rao alleged that the Chief Minister was in a hurry to sell the Miyapur lands even before a copy of the Supreme Court judgment was available.

He recalled that the BRS government, after K. Chandrashekar Rao became Chief Minister, had appointed senior advocate Vaithyanathan and pursued a legal battle to secure the lands for the State.

Referring to 142 acres at Manchirevula, Harish Rao said the BRS government had worked to protect the land, while alleging that the Congress government had attempted to hand it over to private parties. He further claimed that 10 acres at Manchirevula had been handed over to private individuals.

He also said the BRS government had made efforts to protect government lands at Bhupalpally and Hayathnagar. Accusing the Chief Minister of mortgaging land belonging to the Central University, Harish Rao alleged that Revanth Reddy had raised a loan of Rs. 10,000 crore against it. (NSS)

IndiGoReach sets up skill development centre at Shadnagar

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
RANGAREDDY, OCT 31

IndiGoReach, the corporate social responsibility (CSR) arm of IndiGo, has set up a skill development centre at Shadnagar, outskirts of Hyderabad in collaboration with Pratham Education Foundation to train rural and economically disadvantaged youth for employment opportunities in the travel, tourism, logistics and hospitality sectors.

The centre was inaugurated on Friday as part of the initiative to improve employability through industry-oriented training programmes, the airline said in a statement.

The programme, launched in August 2024, aims to train more than 5,000 youth over the next three years through residential hospitality training courses at centres in Hyderabad, Jodhpur and Jalpaiguri.

The Hyderabad facility will serve as a dedicated training hub for travel, tourism, logistics and hospitality (TTLH), addressing the growing demand for skilled manpower in these sectors and creating a pool of job-ready candidates for the regional employment market.

Rohini Bhatia, Chairperson of InterGlobe Foundation and Advisor to the CSR Committee of IndiGo, said the initiative was aimed at equipping young people with industry-relevant skills and enabling them to pursue sustainable livelihood opportunities.

She said the programme would help youth acquire the skills, confidence and knowledge required to build careers in the growing travel, tourism, hospitality and logistics industries.

Representatives of IndiGoReach, Pratham Education Foundation, industry partners, trainees and alumni attended the event.



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