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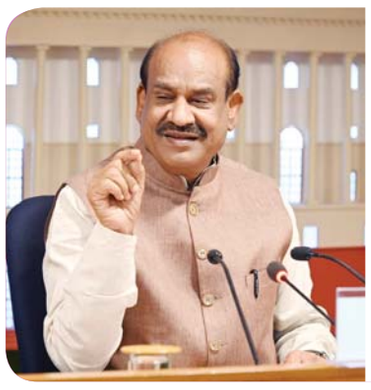
# THE FREEDOM PRESS

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Honest Journalism...



LS SPEAKER ASKS LAWMAKERS TO VALUE DISSENT AS STRENGTH OF DEMOCRACY

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SC CLOSES PLEAS SEEKING COURT-MONITORED PROBE INTO RAM TEMPLE DONATION THEFT CASE

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FROM OHIO TO LOS ANGELES, 57 INDIAN AMERICAN CANDIDATES TO FACE VOTERS

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22 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



ANTONELLI CROWNED YOUNGEST EVER F1 CHAMPION

# Cong trying to protect 3 Cr Bangladeshi infiltrators in voter list: Amit Shah

## *Home Minister says 'Rahul can never become PM'*

**TFP I RATNA CHOTRANI**
**HYDERABAD, NOV 2**

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday claimed that three crore 'Bangladeshi infiltrators' are among 'absent' voters sought to be deleted in the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) and accused the Congress party of trying to protect them.

He declared that the BJP will ensure that every infiltrator is removed from the electoral rolls and driven out of the country.

Amit Shah was addressing the 'Save Democracy Remove Anarchy' march organised by the BJP here as part of its nationwide campaign to counter the anti-SIR campaign of the INDIA bloc. Alleging that by stopping SIR, 'Congress and company' was trying to save Bangladesh infiltrators, he termed the rally organised by the INDIA bloc in Delhi on Sunday as a "Save the infiltrators" rally.



Union Home Minister Amit Shah addressing the 'Save Democracy Remove Anarchy' march in Hyderabad.

"Congress and company are trying to stop SIR because infiltrators are their vote bank. BJP workers stand firmly with SIR. Only citizens of this country will be allowed to vote here," said HM Shah, who led the foot march from Basheerbagh to Moazzam Jahi Market.

Amit Shah said Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi was lying that 13 crore votes were deleted in SIR.

The Home Minister stated that 6.25 crore voters had shifted while about 3 crore voters were dead. He said another one crore voters had double entries.

"The Congress party wants to capture elections through bogus voting. If one person has two votes, should one of them be cancelled or not? Now we come to the source of 'Rahul Baba's' stomach ache. Three crore votes are such that the people they belong to do not even exist. These are Bangladeshi infiltrators," he said.

He alleged that by opposing the SIR, the Congress party wants to protect Bangladeshi infiltrators in the country's electoral rolls.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

# Over 75 killed by gunfire in US over Halloween weekend



**WASHINGTON, NOV 2**

More than 200 people sustained gunshot wounds in the United States over the Halloween weekend, with at least 76 fatalities, according to data from analysts, while local law enforcement officials informed RIA Novosti that several holiday-themed parties had ended with mass hospitalizations.

In 2026, October 31 - All Hallows' Eve - fell on a Saturday, a relatively rare occurrence, it last happened in 2020, and the next time will be in 2037. The holiday is celebrated extensively in the United States featuring city-wide parades and large-scale costume events.

According to analysts and media reports, the string of incidents began on Friday morning in Tennessee, where a teenager brought a handgun to a high school. No one was killed, and the teen now faces charges for illegal weapons possession.

In a southern neighborhood of Chicago, a 35-year-old man was shot and killed during an argument, footage from the scene shows a private home decorated for Halloween.

In a small town in Missouri, a dispute at a house party escalated into a shooting, in which a 22-year-old wounded an 18-year-old. The list of incidents also includes cases involving the use of firearms during episodes of domestic violence. The police department in Fairfield, California, told RIA Novosti that a shooting had taken place at a local shopping mall, near a store selling Halloween costumes. (IANS)




# Defence Ministry signs Rs 53,866 crore deal for Navy warships




Defence Ministry signed contracts with GRSE and GSL in New Delhi.

**NEW DELHI, NOV 2**

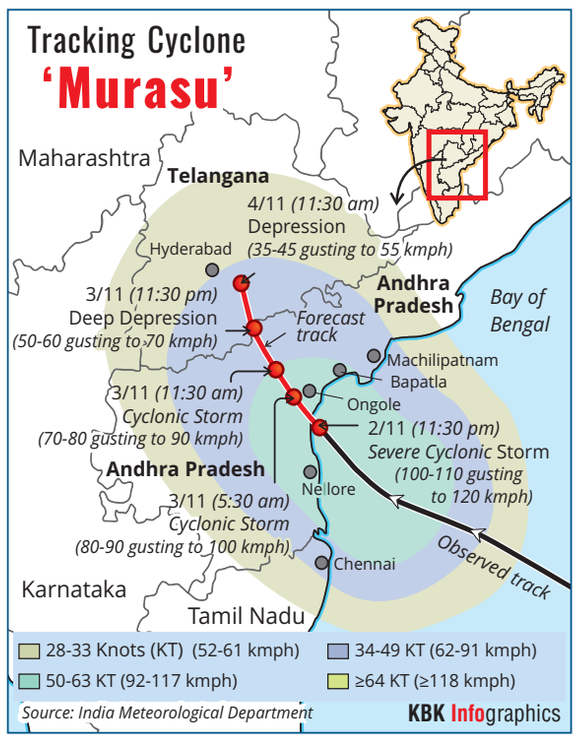
The Defence Ministry has signed contracts worth Rs 53,866.50 crore with Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Limited (GRSE) and Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL) for acquisition of eight Next Generation Corvettes (NGCs) for the Indian Navy, according to an official statement on Monday.

According to the Defence Ministry, the contracts were inked in the presence of Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh here. Under the contracts, GRSE will construct five corvettes while GSL will build three, the ministry said.

The project is the first in which ships will be indigenously designed by the Indian Navy and constructed by Defence Public Sector Undertakings selected through a competitive process, marking a major milestone in indigenous warship design and construction.

The NGCs will be equipped with advanced missiles, weapons and sensor suites, enabling them to undertake missions across air, surface and sub-surface domains. "The induction of these ships will significantly enhance the Indian Navy's operational capabilities in safeguarding maritime trade routes, conducting anti-surface and anti-submarine warfare operations, strengthening coastal defence, undertaking littoral combat operations, and carrying out maritime presence and surveillance missions," according to the Defence Ministry.

Moreover, the project is expected to generate about 72 lakh person-days of employment in shipyards and 460 lakh person-days in ancillary industries and MSMEs over the next ten years. (IANS/UNI)




## CARTOON CAROUSEL




# India and UAE discuss ways to strengthen investment ties, cultural exchanges

**ABU DHABI, NOV 2**

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri held a meeting with the Chairman of the Abu Dhabi Department of Finance and Managing Director and Group CEO of L'IMAD Holding Company, Jassem Mohamed Bu Ataba Al Zaabi, on Monday, holding discussions on prospects of scaling up economic engagement with a view to enhance investment flows and building long-term commercial partnerships that benefits both nations.



Additional Secretary (Gulf) in the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Aseem Mahajan, India's Ambassador to UAE Deepak Mittal and other officials were also present during the meeting.

"Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri met with HE Jassem Al Zaabi, Chairman of Abu Dhabi Department of Finance and CEO, L'imad. They exchanged views on avenues for enhanced cooperation and explored potential areas to strengthen investment ties," the Indian Embassy in the UAE stated on X.

According to the MEA, Misri also met Mohamed Khalifa Al Mubarak, Chairman of the Department of Culture and Tourism, Abu Dhabi, and discussed fresh avenues for cooperation in cultural and creative exchanges, including 'House of India', as well as tourism.

During his two-day visit, Misri held a meeting with UAE's Minister of State for International Cooperation and Special Envoy for India, Reem Al Hashimy, where they reviewed the strategic bilateral partnership across various sectors and discussed new avenues of cooperation. They also exchanged views on regional and global developments. (IANS/UNI)

# TG to introduce AI-powered digital market yards

## *Tenders for digital markets, Koheda Fruit Market within a week*

**FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU**
**HYDERABAD, NOV 2**

Telangana Agriculture, Marketing and Cooperation Minister Thummala Nageswara Rao has directed officials to introduce an Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based digital market yard system across the state to ensure transparency in agricultural trade and secure better prices for farmers.



**Ministers Thummala Nageswara Rao and Sridhar Babu at a review meeting on digital market yard system at Secretariat.**

At a review meeting held at the Secretariat on Monday, along with Minister Sridhar Babu, Thummala said the proposed system would digitally integrate every stage of the marketing process, from farmers' entry into market yards and crop registration to quality testing, online bidding, auctions, weighing, billing and payments. Each crop lot would be assigned a unique identification number, while farmers' approval of the sale price would be secured through OTP verification.

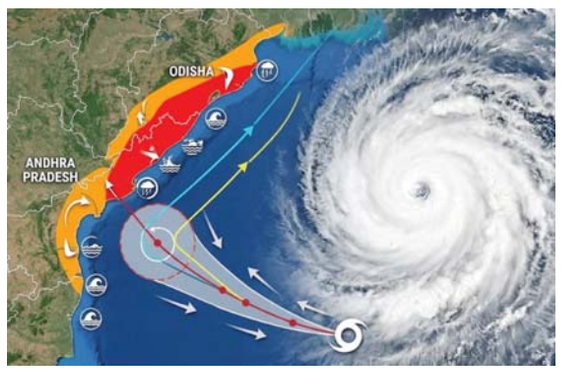
He directed officials to develop a comprehensive digital platform with a Management Information System (MIS), CCTV surveillance and digital screens displaying crop prices across markets. He also instructed the Marketing Department to coordinate with the IT Department and invite tenders within a week, initially implementing the system in major market yards before extending it across the state.

Reviewing the progress of the Koheda Integrated Fruit Market, the Minister directed officials to expedite construction and complete the first phase by March 2027. Expressing displeasure over delays in initiating the tender process, he instructed officials to obtain the Chief Minister's approval for proposed land-levelling modifications and invite tenders within a week.

He said the government aimed to develop the Koheda market with international standards and modern facilities to benefit farmers. Marketing Director Rahul Raj, senior marketing officials, engineering department representatives and officials of Hyderabad Growth Corridor participated in the meetings.

# Cyclone Murasu: Red alert issued for 2 TG districts

**TFP I RAOOF KHAN**
**HYDERABAD, NOV 2**




The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a red alert for Nalgonda and Nagarkurnool districts of Telangana, forecasting heavy to very heavy rainfall, with extremely heavy downpours at isolated places on November 3, under the influence of Severe Cyclonic Storm Murasu.

Heavy to very heavy rainfall is also likely at isolated places in Suryapet, Mahabubnagar and Wanaparthy districts on the same day. The IMD has warned of thunderstorms accompanied by lightning and gusty winds of 50-60 kmph, reaching up to 70 kmph, in these five districts. According to the IMD, Cyclone Murasu is moving northwestwards over the Bay of Bengal and is expected to cross the south Andhra Pradesh coast around midnight on Monday or during the early hours of Tuesday.

The weather department has also forecast rainfall across Telangana on November 2, 3 and 4, with gusty winds likely over the next six days.

# Anganwadi workers demand Rs. 18,000 salary, warn of statewide agitation

**TFP I RAMARAJU**
**B. KOTHAGUDEM, NOV 2**



**Kothagudem MLA Koonamneni Sambasiva Rao addresses Anganwadi protesters at Bhadradri Kothagudem Collectorate.**

CPI State Secretary and Kothagudem MLA Koonamneni Sambasiva Rao demanded that the state government honour its promise of increasing Anganwadi workers' salaries to Rs. 18,000 and immediately resolve their pending issues. He warned that workers would intensify their agitation if the assurance was not fulfilled.

Addressing a massive protest and Collectorate siege organised by AITUC at the Bhadradri Kothagudem Collectorate on Monday, he said the present monthly salary of Rs. 13,000 was insufficient to meet household expenses amid rising prices. He praised Anganwadi workers for their contribution to maternal and child welfare and preventing infant and maternal deaths.

CPI District Secretary S.K. Sabir Pasha and AITUC District General Secretary Narati Prasad demanded immediate payment of pending centre rents, gas and Aarogya Lakshmi bills, cancellation of tenders supplying substandard materials and removal of additional BLO duties imposed on Anganwadi teachers. They also sought PF, health cards and insurance facilities for workers, a minimum salary of Rs. 10,000 for helpers, recognition as government employees and filling of vacant Grade-II Supervisor posts.

AITUC District President Kancherla Jamalaiah, Velpula Mallikarjun, Bhukya Srinivas, Reddy Aruna, Vijaya, Bharathi, Sandhya, Indira, Meena Kumari, Krishna Kumari, Sammakka, Chinnari, Sridevi, Sunitha, Saraswathi, Sujatha, Shobharani, Gurram Venkateshwarlu, Prasad, Annarapu Venkateshwarlu, Itti Venkata Rao and Nimmala Rambabu were among those who participated.

# Nizamabad Collector orders advance measures to prevent water scarcity

**TFP I ATEEQ KHAN**
**NIZAMABAD, NOV 2**



Nizamabad District Collector Ila Tripathi, IAS said comprehensive measures were being taken in advance to prevent drinking water shortages anywhere in the district during the coming summer.

Addressing officials after the Prajavani programme at the Integrated District Offices Complex on Monday, she directed them to prepare plans to ensure adequate supply of safe drinking water to every habitation. She stressed regular field-level monitoring, identification of alternative water sources, including agricultural borewells, and speedy completion of water tanks and pipeline works. Mandal special officers were instructed to prevent water wastage and ensure optimum utilisation of available resources.

The Collector also directed engineering officials to expedite the construction of additional classrooms, improvement of school infrastructure and Bhavitha Centres. She asked Mandal Special Officers and education officials to ensure timely completion of the works.

Reviewing departmental court cases, she instructed officials to file counter-affidavits in High Court cases within the stipulated time and submit regular reports on the action taken. Regarding the Indiramma housing scheme, she stressed transparency and directed housing officials to ensure that benefits reached only eligible beneficiaries. She warned that irregularities in house sanctions and double-bedroom house allotments would invite strict action, including vigilance inquiries.

Additional Collectors Rajagoud and Bhujanga Rao, Trainee Collector Suresh, Municipal Corporation Commissioner Dileep Kumar, ZP CEO Saya Goud, DRDO Saianna and officials from various departments attended the meeting.

# BJP to organise Maha Padayatra in Nirmal today

**TFP I CORRESPONDENT**
**NIRMAL, NOV 2**



**N.V. Subhash**

The Telangana unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will organise another Maha Padayatra in Nirmal town on Tuesday under the slogan 'Save Democracy, Remove Anarchy'.

The padayatra is being organised by BJP MLA and Legislature Party Floor Leader Alleti Maheshwar Reddy. It will begin at Shanthi Nagar Crossroads at 11 am and culminate at Vivekananda Chowk at 2 pm, BJP State Chief Spokesperson N.V. Subhash said. The programme follows the first Maha Padayatra held in Hyderabad on Monday, which was attended by union Home Minister Amit Shah.

BJP Telangana president and former MLC N Ramchander Rao, union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar, BJP national general secretary Sunil Bansal, Telangana in-charge Abhay Patil and co-in-charge Rekha Sharma are among the leaders expected to participate. BJP MPs, MLAs, MLCs, party workers and members of the public are also expected to join the three-hour programme.

The party described the padayatra as a major political event in Nirmal.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday addressing the 'Save Democracy Remove Anarchy' march in Hyderabad organised by the BJP here as part of its nationwide campaign to counter the anti-IR campaign of the INDIA bloc.

# TRVK organises 'Khet Bachao' awareness programme in Gadwal

**TFP I SANAULLAH**
**J. GADWAL, NOV 2**



Telangana Rythu Vignana Kendram (TRVK) Jogulamba Gadwal Coordinator Dr P. Archana organised a farmers' awareness programme under the 'Khet Bachao' initiative at Aragidda village in Gattu mandal on Monday.

Addressing farmers, Dr Archana advised them to choose crops suited to prevailing weather conditions and prepare for possible climate changes due to the El Niño effect. She recommended cultivating alternative crops such as jowar, horse gram, cowpea and groundnut instead of water-intensive paddy and maize.

She also urged farmers to conserve water and electricity, use irrigation judiciously and adopt water-saving practices to minimise agricultural losses. Citing the possibility of El Niño conditions continuing until July 2027,

Gattu Mandal Agriculture Officer Hanumanthu, an ATMA representative and Agriculture Extension Officer from Aragidda, Aragidda Sarpanch, Panchayat Secretary and several farmers attended the programme.

# Mahabubnagar cracks down on Prajavani absentee officials

**TFP I AHAD SIDDIQUI**
**MAHABUBNAGAR, NOV 2**



Mahabubnagar Additional Collector (Local Bodies) P. Madhusudhan Naik, IAS on Monday warned that officials absent from the weekly Prajavani grievance redressal programme without prior permission would be issued show-cause notices and face disciplinary action.

Expressing displeasure over the absence of some district-level officials at the programme held at the District Collectorate, he directed them to submit explanations personally to the District Collector. He stressed that officials must give priority to Prajavani and ensure that citizens approaching the administration with grievances were not made to wait unnecessarily.

Accompanied by Revenue Additional Collector J.L.B. Haripriya, Naik received petitions from the public and instructed officials to examine each representation carefully and resolve the issues within the stipulated time through coordinated departmental efforts.

District Revenue Officer Nirmala and other officials were present.

# 1 killed in car-truck collision

**TFP I MALIM ISHAQ**
**J. GADWAL, NOV 2**



A 40-year-old man from Andhra Pradesh was killed after a car rammed into a parked DCM truck near Dharamavaram Stage in Erravalli mandal of Jogulamba Gadwal district on Monday.

The deceased was identified as Mallikarjun (40), a native of Pulakunta village in Sri Sathya Sai district of Andhra Pradesh. He was travelling with Balaji (25) from Hyderabad to their native village when their car crashed into the DCM truck parked along the National Highway. Mallikarjun died in the accident, while further details about the incident are awaited.

# Khammam launches 60-day tobacco-free youth campaign

**TFP I N.J. CHARY**
**KHAMMAM, NOV 2**

Khammam District Collector Divakar T.S., IAS called for collective efforts to keep youth away from tobacco, narcotic drugs and other addictive substances to build a healthy, addiction-free society.

Participating in the 60-day Tobacco-Free Youth Campaign under the Nasha Mukt Bharat Abhiyaan at the Khammam Collectorate on Monday, he directed officials to organise awareness programmes in schools, colleges and public places.

He stressed strict implementation of the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), 2003, and highlighted the health risks associated with tobacco consumption and drug abuse.

The Collector also instructed officials to identify individuals affected by addiction and provide counselling, medical treatment and rehabilitation services through de-addiction centres.

He urged parents, teachers and educational institutions to actively participate in the campaign and educate young people about the dangers of substance abuse.

Later, Collector Divakar T.S. led officials and staff in taking a pledge against tobacco and drug consumption, vowing to promote awareness about the harmful effects of addiction.

# 533 drunken driving cases booked

**TFP I TAHER ALI**
**HYDERABAD, NOV 1**

Traffic Police in Hyderabad and Cyberabad apprehended a total of 533 motorists for drunken driving during special weekend drives conducted on October 30 and 31.

Hyderabad Traffic Police caught 328 motorists, including 280 two-wheeler riders, 18 three-wheeler drivers and 30 four-wheeler and other vehicle drivers. Meanwhile, Cyberabad Traffic Police apprehended 205 motorists, comprising 177 two-wheeler riders.

**GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION**
గ్రేటర్ హైదరాబాద్ మహానగరపాలక సంస్థ

| NIT No. | Name of Work | Estimate Amount/ ECV | Downloading Start Date & Time | Last Date & Time for Receipts of Bid | Name & Address of EE/SE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 38 | Providing of Certain Amenities at grave yards and Maintenance for cleaning of Underground drainage system with Airtech machine in Rajendranagar circle in Rajendranagar zone | Rs. 21.80 Lakhs | Dt: 03-11-2026 at 2.30PM | Dt: 06-11-2026 at 2.40PM | Executive Engineer Rajendranagar GHMC Cell No. 9989930608 e-mail id- eec19.rajendranagar @gmail.com |

DIPR - R.O. No. : 12951-PP/CL/ADVT/2026-27
Sd/- Executive Engineer, RAJENDRANAGARCIRCLE-19, GHMC.

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# Cong trying to protect 3 Cr Bangladeshi infiltrators in voter list: Amit Shah



FROM PAGE 1

"But I have come here today to say that Rahul ji and Revanth Reddy ji can put in as much effort as they want. The BJP will ensure that every single infiltrator is removed from the voter list and driven out of the country."

Amit Shah remarked that Rahul Gandhi can never become Prime Minister. "Two days ago, you held a mock Parliament. If you had asked me, I would have suggested that you become Prime Minister at least once in this mock Parliament. Because you will never be able to become Prime Minister in the real Parliament. At least if you become Prime Minister in a mock Parliament, Sonia ji's heart will find some peace," he remarked.

The Home Minister said that Rahul Gandhi carries the Constitution in his hand but has no respect for the Constitution. Stating that Constitutional responsibilities are discharged through the country's Parliament, he accused Rahul Gandhi of not allowing Parliament to function.

"I challenge you today from the land of Hyderabad. We are ready to convene a special session of Parliament. Come and participate in a discussion. But he will not participate in the discussion because he knows that only through anarchy and disorder can the Congress party keep itself in the news. If Parliament functions, our Modi ji will completely demolish their arguments," he said.

On Rahul Gandhi's allegation that BJP was winning because of EVMs, he asked how Revanth Reddy became Chief Minister of Telangana. "How do parties form governments in Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Himachal Pradesh? If the EVMs are so bad, you should not have taken the oath of office. When you win, the credit goes to the people, but when you lose, you blame the EVMs."

Alleging that there were scams, scandals and corruption worth Rs 12 lakh crore during 10 years of Congress rule, he said the country can't be handed over to the Congress again.

Amit Shah remarked that the Congress party is on a ventilator. "Can this ventilator party run a marathon alongside Modi ji? Rahul ji, forget Modi ji. Even my Telangana Yuva Morcha president will defeat you."

The BJP leader also took a dig at Rahul Gandhi's foreign visits. "Rahul ji, you cannot win elections this way. You spend three or four months in the country and then go abroad. You will have to sweat it out in the country. You will have to stand united with the people and work to resolve their problems," he said.

Amit Shah accused Revanth Reddy of turning the entire Telangana into an ATM for the Congress leaders sitting in Delhi and said the people of Telangana will never forgive him for this.

Stating that Rahul Gandhi had promised six guarantees in Telangana, he said not even one guarantee has been fulfilled.

Stating that BRS or Owaisi can't stop the corruption in Telangana and the conspiracy to sell the state, he said only the BJP under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi can stop it.

He urged the BJP cadres to ensure that the Congress party is rooted out from Telangana and the BJP comes to power with a two-thirds majority.

Union Minister G Kishan Reddy, Union MoS Bandi Sanjay Kumar, Telangana BJP President N Ramchander Rao, MPs Dr. K. Laxman, Madhavaneni Raghunandan Rao, Eatala Rajender, DK Aruna, Arvind Dharmapuri, Godam Nagesh, Konda Vishweshwar Reddy and other party leaders were present on the occasion.

# Hyderabad must be transformed into clean, traffic-free city: CM Revanth

**TFP I ABDUL RAHMAN KHAN**
**HYDERABAD, NOV 2**

Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Monday directed officials to take comprehensive measures to transform the Hyderabad metropolitan area into a clean and traffic-free city, stressing that there should be no negligence in waste collection and traffic management.

During a review meeting with municipal officials at his residence in Jubilee Hills, the Chief Minister instructed officials to ensure daily door-to-door garbage collection and continuous monitoring to prevent waste accumulation anywhere in the city.



Revanth Reddy

He warned that strict action would be taken against officials and staff found negligent in their duties.

He also directed officials to make special arrangements for the removal of construction debris and coordinate with industrial area associations (ILA) to ensure proper waste collection in industrial zones. Emphasising the need to conserve drinking water, Revanth Reddy asked officials to promote the use of treated wastewater supplied through 'green tankers' for construction activities, park maintenance, landscaping and gardening instead of using potable water.

He recalled that the Water Board had launched the first phase of the initiative with 28 green water tankers, drawing treated wastewater from 19 Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs).

He directed officials to expand the service to areas under the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC), as well as the Cyberabad Municipal Corporation (CMC) and Malkajgiri Municipal Corporation (MMC)

Focusing on traffic management, the Chief Minister instructed officials to prepare comprehensive plans to ease congestion and ensure smooth movement of vehicles across the city.

He called for the construction of underpasses and elevated corridors wherever necessary to establish a signal-free traffic system.

He stressed that traffic flow should remain uninterrupted as far as possible and vehicles should not be held up at traffic signals.

# Congress MLC candidate seeks immediate restoration of CEO Telangana website

**TFP I SAUD SIDDIQUI**
**HYDERABAD, NOV 2**

Congress MLC candidate for the Hyderabad-Rangareddy-Mahabubnagar Graduates' constituency, Sama Rammohan Reddy, on Monday urged the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) C Sudarshan Reddy to immediately resolve technical issues affecting the CEO Telangana website, which has reportedly remained inaccessible since Sunday.



Meeting the CEO, Sama pointed out that the website's non-functioning had severely affected the voter registration process for the Graduate MLC elections, causing inconvenience to thousands of eligible graduates.

With the deadline for graduate voter registration scheduled for November 6, 2026, he said the disruption of online services at this crucial stage could deprive eligible graduates of an opportunity to enrol as voters.

He urged the CEO to take immediate steps to restore the website and resume online registration without further delay.

Sama also submitted a formal representation seeking an extension of the voter registration deadline by the number of days the website remained non-functional, so that no eligible graduate would lose the opportunity to register due to the technical glitches.

# Former J&K CM Farooq Abdullah visits The Freedom Press office in Delhi

## *Free and fearless media vital for democracy: Farooq Abdullah*

**FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU**
**NEW DELHI, NOV 2**

Former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister and National Conference (NC) President Dr Farooq Abdullah visited The Freedom Press office in Delhi on Monday and held an interaction with its editorial team and prominent political leaders on the prevailing political situation in the country and growing public discontent over economic realities.




He was received by The Freedom Press Managing Editor Jameel Ahmed Khan and New Delhi Resident Editor Anzarul Bari, along with members of the editorial board.

The discussions focused on the evolving political landscape, the concerns emerging among different sections of society and the growing dissatisfaction among people over economic hardships.

TG Govt. Advisor Mohammed Ali Shabbir, MPs Mansoor Ali Khan, Maulana Mohibullah Nadvi, Former MPs Mohammed Adeeb, K. Danish Ali, Justice Iqbal Ahmed Ansari, Major General Javed Khan (Retd.), APCR National Secretary Nadeem Khan, TPCC Secretary Mohammed Jaweed Ahmed, Congress leader & Pedestal Infra Managing Director Shahid Siddiqui, Dargah Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya (R.A.) Dewan Farooq Nizami, Saud Siddiqui and others present at the meeting, exchanged views on the prevailing political climate, economic pressures and their impact on ordinary citizens.

Dr Farooq Abdullah also expressed concern over the state of press freedom in India, underlining the important role of a free, independent and fearless media in a democracy.

He appreciated The Freedom Press for its commitment to independent journalism and for providing a platform for diverse voices and meaningful discussions on issues of national importance. He also acknowledged the significance of a responsible and vibrant press in safeguarding democratic values and ensuring accountability in public life.

The meeting also saw a candid exchange of views on the direction of national politics, the response of political leadership to public concerns and the need to understand the realities beyond political statements and rhetoric.

## Granules India Q2 net profit rises 39%

**HYDERABAD, NOV 2**

Hyderabad-based pharmaceutical company Granules India Ltd on Monday reported a 39 per cent year-on-year increase in consolidated net profit at Rs 181.8 crore for the second quarter ended September 30, 2026, compared to Rs 130.6 crore in the corresponding quarter last fiscal. Revenue from operations rose 20 per cent to Rs 1,560 crore from Rs 1,297 crore in Q2 FY26, while EBITDA increased 21 per cent to Rs 337.6 crore from Rs 278.2 crore, the company said in a release.

Profit before tax (PBT) grew 38 per cent to Rs 243.4 crore against Rs 175.9 crore in the year-ago quarter.

# Keeravani graces curtain raiser of All India Police Band Competition

**TFP I FAROOQ KHAN**
**RANGAREDDY, NOV 2**

The curtain raiser for the 27th All India Police Band Competition was held at the CRPF Group Centre, Rangareddy, on Monday, ahead of the national-level event scheduled from November 16 to 20, 2026.




Padma Shri awardee and renowned music composer M.M. Keeravani attended the event as the chief guest, while Malkajgiri Police Commissioner B. Sumathi, IPS, was the guest of honour. T. Vikram, IPS, IG, SS, Headquarters, CRPF, also graced the occasion. The programme marked the launch of the competition's teaser and schedule.

Around 25 Brass and Pipe Bands representing various State Police organisations and Central Armed Police Forces are expected to participate. The competition will feature brass and pipe band performances, drums, Strathspey and bugle calls, showcasing the musical talent, discipline and teamwork of uniformed personnel.

As part of the event, public band performances will be held at Shilparamam on November 17 and at Lumbini Park on November 18, both at 5.30 pm, offering the public an opportunity to witness the performances.

Organised by the CRPF, the competition aims to promote cultural exchange, interforce camaraderie and national integration through music, reflecting the spirit of "Music, Discipline and National Unity."

# Five Singareni mines secure national five-star rating awards

**FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU**
**HYDERABAD, NOV 2**

Five coal mines of Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) have secured prestigious National Five-Star Ratings for the financial year 2024-25 in recognition of their performance in mining operations, safety, environmental protection and workers' welfare.




Union Minister of State for Coal and Mines Satish Chandra Dubey presented the awards to SCCL Chairman and Managing Director Dr. Buddhaprakash Jyoti at a ceremony held in Raipur, Chhattisgarh, on Monday.

The five award-winning mines are RKNT and RK-6 Incline in Srirampur Area, JVR OC-2 in Sattupalli Area, Khairigura OC in Bellampalli Area and RGOC-1 in Ramagundam-3 Area, the state-owned mining company said in a release. The Ministry of Coal evaluates mines across the country annually on 84 parameters, covering production performance, safety, mine management, environmental protection, infrastructure and workers' welfare.

Mines securing more than 91 marks out of 100 are eligible for the Five-Star Rating.

Dr. Buddhaprakash Jyoti congratulated the managements and workers of the award-winning mines and urged them to sustain their performance and strive to secure more national-level recognitions in the coming years.

# Congress targets BJP govts in Manipur, Uttarakhand

## *Sees 2027 polls as opportunity for change*



**NEW DELHI, NOV 2**
The Congress on Monday launched a sharp attack on the BJP governments in Manipur and Uttarakhand, accusing them of misgovernance, corruption, land grabbing, administrative failures and disregard for public concerns, while expressing confidence that the party would return to power in both states in the 2027 Assembly elections.

Congress general secretary K C Venugopal said Congress president and Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge and Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi held a meeting with AICC incharges, Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) presidents and Congress Legislature Party (CLP) leaders from Manipur and Uttarakhand in New Delhi to assess the political situation and review the party's organisational preparedness.

In a post on social media platform X after the meeting, Venugopal linked the public response to Sunday's INDIA bloc 'Vote Bachao, Desh Bachao' rally at Ramlila Maidan to what he described as mounting anti-incumbency against BJP governments across the country.

"The anger we saw at Ramlila Maidan yesterday was only a glimpse of the sweeping anti-incumbency sentiment we see in these BJP-ruled states," he said.

Describing the BJP's style of governance as a "trouble engine model", Venugopal alleged that hatred, corruption, land grabbing, and administrative mismanagement had become its defining characteristics. He maintained that although Manipur and Uttarakhand faced distinct challenges, both reflected what the Congress considers a wider pattern of governance failures under the BJP.

On Manipur, Venugopal accused the BJP leadership of failing to end the ethnic conflict that erupted between the Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities on May 3, 2023, leaving the state grappling with prolonged violence, displacement and insecurity. He alleged that the continuing crisis had eroded public confidence in the BJP's ability to restore peace and normalcy.

The Congress has repeatedly held the BJP responsible for the prolonged conflict, arguing that the failure to secure lasting peace and facilitate the return of displaced families has severely damaged the party's political standing. The BJP also suffered a setback in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections in Manipur, with the Congress winning both parliamentary constituencies. (IANS)

# LS Speaker asks lawmakers to value dissent as strength of democracy

**PANCHKULA, NOV 2**
Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Monday said that agreement and disagreement are two sides of the same coin in a healthy and vibrant democracy.



Addressing the inaugural session of the 'Janpratinidhi Sammelan', organised by the Haryana Vidhan Sabha, Birla stressed that dissent must be welcomed and respected as a vital catalyst for bringing fresh perspectives, addressing administrative blind spots and promoting better governance.

The Lok Sabha Speaker said that, irrespective of political, party or ideological differences, the overarching commitment of all public representatives must remain the continued progress of the state and the nation.

Birla said that the survival and flourishing of India's diverse federal polity stand as a global testament to the resilience of its democracy.

"Our Constitution is not merely a framework for running the government; it is the soul of India, reflecting our national consciousness and the aspirations of crores of people," he said.

Addressing serving and former members of the Haryana Vidhan Sabha, along with former ministers, Birla reflected on Haryana's six-decade journey of growth, socio-economic resilience and leadership across multiple sectors.

Birla observed that Haryana has consistently remained at the forefront of national progress despite numerous historical and administrative challenges. He also praised Haryana's youth in the armed forces for their exemplary valour in safeguarding the nation's borders and internal security.

Highlighting the inclusive and deliberative nature of India's constitutional journey, Birla noted that the Constituent Assembly, under the guidance of the Chairman of the Drafting Committee, Babasaheb B.R. Ambedkar, and with the participation of distinguished leaders from different regions, including Haryana and Punjab, laid the foundations of a cohesive parliamentary democracy amid immense linguistic, cultural and religious diversity. (IANS)

# Not democracy but your own position in danger: BJP taunts Oppn over anti-CEC stir

**BHAGALPUR (BIHAR), NOV 2**
Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president Nitin Nabin launched a scathing attack on the Opposition during the party's 'Loktantra Bachao, Arajakta hatao' (Save Democracy, Remove Anarchy) campaign in Bihar's Bhagalpur district, stating that the Opposition's agenda behind protests was "only to grab power".



Addressing a public gathering after leading a 'padyatra' in the city, the BJP chief accused the Congress and its allies of the INDIA Bloc of misleading the people with their fakery and rhetoric and also warned that if they don't mend their ways, the people will even deprive them of their current position.

"Democracy is not in danger; your opposition seat is now in danger. In coming times, the public will not deem you worthy of even sitting on the opposition seat," Nitin Nabin said.

He accused the opposition parties of spreading anarchy and running a false campaign to erode public trust in the nation's constitutional institutions and stated that their intentions will soon be exposed before the country's 1.4 billion people.

Taking a swipe at the Leader of Opposition (LoP) Rahul Gandhi, the BJP chief claimed that the Congress and its allies tried cultivating lies at Delhi's Ramlila Maidan during Sunday's rally, adding that they won't succeed in their mala fide intentions.

"I want to clearly tell Rahul Gandhi from the soil of Bhagalpur that you thought the country's people would remain in the illusion of your lies for a long time, but the country's people have emerged from that illusory atmosphere and embraced the trust in PM Modi," he stated.

Calling out the double-speak of the INDIA bloc, Nitin Nabin said that the clan of 'liars' bore no objection when the poll results favoured them, but in times of drubbing, they go all out to question and malign the country's constitutional institutions, including the Election Commission. (IANS)

# Congress fields Rajkumar Lohani in MP

**BHOPAL, NOV 2**
The Congress on Monday fielded Rajkumar Lohani as its candidate for the Rajya Sabha by-election in Madhya Pradesh, setting up a contest with the ruling BJP, which has nominated Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri for the seat.

Congress MLA and Deputy Leader of Opposition Hemant Katare became Lohani's proposer as the latter filed his nomination papers on the last day of the nomination process.

Another Congress MLA (Bhopal North), Atif Aqeel, and several other party workers joined Lohani during his nomination filing at the state Assembly. However, no senior Congress leaders were present there.

The Congress's decision to enter the contest comes despite the BJP enjoying a decisive numerical advantage in the 230-member Madhya Pradesh Assembly, which elects members to the Rajya Sabha.

The BJP had nominated Puri, the Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas, for the seat. He filed his nomination on October 31 in the presence of Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, state BJP president Hemant Khandelwal and other senior party leaders. (IANS)

# Three Punjab AAP MLAs join BJP, berating AAP, praising PM Modi

**NEW DELHI, NOV 2**
With the poll season approaching, the first signs of political realignment emerged from Punjab with three Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MLAs joining the BJP on Monday.



Harmeet Singh Pathanmajra (Sanaur), Chetan Singh Jouramajra (Samana) and Kunwar Vijay Pratap Singh (Amritsar North) joined the BJP in New Delhi in the presence of Punjab president Kewal Singh Dhillon and state incharge Satish Poonia.

The move comes as a setback for the ruling AAP government in Punjab. Criticising their former party, the three leaders pointed to the deteriorating condition of the state and expressed their resolve to work towards its revival. "Today, Punjab is known as 'Udta Punjab'. AAP has destroyed the state," Pathanmajra said.

Jouramajra said Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership and delivery on promises were the biggest reasons behind his decision to join the BJP, accusing the state government of failing to maintain law and order and address governance issues.

"Over the past five years, the situation has only gone down the hill, no one knows where a bullet will come from. There is a mining mafia and scams are taking place. We need a double-engine stable government in Punjab," he said.

Poonia identified drug abuse as Punjab's biggest challenge and alleged that the drug menace had devastated the state's youth. Drawing a comparison with Haryana, he said the neighbouring state had made progress in sports, employment and investment. "Haryana's young athletes have won 27 medals at the Asian Games. Punjab now looks at Haryana and asks how it has managed to generate employment, attract investment and bring prosperity to the state," he said. (IANS)

## ANDHRA MUNICIPAL POLLS

# Repolling on in 13 polling stations of 7 ULBs

**AMARAVATI, NOV 2**
Repolling was on in a few polling stations in seven Urban Local Bodies in Andhra Pradesh on Monday. The State Election Commission (SEC) ordered the re-poll in 13 polling stations spread across seven Urban Local Bodies in five district, following complaints of massive rigging during the voting held on Sunday.

Re-polling was being held in eight polling stations in YSR Kadapa district, two in Palnadu district and one each in Anantapur, Tirupati and Prakasam districts.

Re-poll was being conducted in four stations of Pulivendula Municipality, three polling stations of Jammalamadugu Municipality and one polling centre of Kadapa Municipal Corporation.

Tight security arrangements have been made in these Urban Local Bodies to ensure peaceful, free and fair polling. State Election Commissioner, Anil Chandra Punetha, ordered re-poll in four polling stations of four wards in Pulivendula Municipality, where booth capturing had taken place on Sunday.

He said the election process in the polling stations was vitiated and thereby deprived the voters of the right to exercise their franchise. (IANS)

# ED raids former Punjab minister Arora's residence

**CHANDIGARH, NOV 2**
The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Monday conducted a search at the residence of former Punjab Industries Minister and senior Congress leader, Sunder Sham Arora, in Hoshiarpur town, triggering fresh attention around the former minister's business and financial affairs.



The action comes months after the Income Tax Department conducted an extensive search at Arora's residence in January.

According to preliminary information, a team of ED officials reached Arora's residence on Jodha Mal Road around 5 a.m. and cordoned off the premises before launching the search operation.

The officials were reportedly accompanied by security personnel.

Arora's counsel, H.S. Saini, said he had interacted with officials, who had arrived from the ED's Chandigarh office.

However, the agency officials had not disclosed the specific purpose of the search. They had sought certain documents, which were being provided to them, he said.

It was also not immediately known whether any documents or other material had been seized. The Income Tax operation began on January 28 and continued for nearly three days, lasting approximately 62 hours. (IANS)

# Maha: Rift in Mahayuti as BMC takes down Dia Mirza's Diwali pollution video following BJP objection

**MUMBAI, NOV 2**
A major political row has erupted in the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) following the removal of actress Dia Mirza's Diwali anti-pollution awareness campaign video from official social media channels, exposing a sharp division within the ruling Mahayuti alliance.



The controversy flared up after the civic body pulled down the promotional video following strong objections raised by Mumbai BJP President and MLA Ameet Satam.

Addressing a press conference here today, Mumbai Mayor Ritu Tawde launched a scathing attack on the actress, accusing her of promoting a "selective anti-Hindu agenda" and announcing that she has been "100 per cent blacklisted" by the municipal administration.

"Dia Mirza has consistently acted on a selective agenda opposing Hindu festivals, Indian culture, and the development projects led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. She should not dare lecture Hindus on how to celebrate Diwali," Ms Tawde declared, saying that the Mahayuti government has zero tolerance for such tendencies.

Highlighting past instances, Mayor Tawde alleged that Ms Mirza had previously opposed the critical Narmada Dam project, questioned the military's role in Kashmir, criticized the Uniform Civil Code (UCC), and trolled the Prime Minister on the NEET examination issue.

"While she travels in luxury vehicles and VIP transport, she conveniently forgets her own carbon footprint. But the moment a Hindu festival arrives, she suddenly remembers environmental concerns," the Mayor remarked.

Ms Tawde further took strong exception to the civic administration bypassing elected representatives to upload the video, stating she would write to the Municipal Commissioner seeking an official explanation.

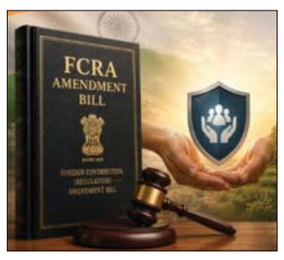
However, exposing internal friction within the coalition, Deputy Mayor Sanjay Ghadi of the Shiv Sena (Shinde faction) defended the actor's message.

Speaking to reporters here, Ghadi stated, "Dia Mirza did not preach to anyone; she only gave a positive message appealing to Mumbaikars to celebrate Diwali with joy and love instead of noise pollution. Celebrities came forward without charging any fees to support awareness initiatives as directed by the Bombay High Court. One should not drag religious conflict into a festival of joy." (IANS)

# JPC sets deadline for NE stakeholders on FCRA Bill

**SHILLONG, NOV 2**

The Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) on the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026, held its regional consultation on Monday with various stakeholders from the Northeastern states here in Meghalaya.




The meeting, chaired by JPC Chairperson Sanjay Jaiswal, was attended by Committee members and representatives of 40 religious bodies, alongside various non-governmental and civil society groups spanning Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Assam, and other Northeastern states.

During the consultation, the JPC closely questioned the stakeholders, who in turn submitted structural recommendations regarding the regulatory changes.

"We have taken note of everyone's suggestions to make a law that is beneficial for those who want to do good to society, but serves as a deterrent to those who want to harm national security," Jaiswal told reporters.

Emphasising that the JPC is adopting a ground-up approach to directly engage entities affected by foreign funding rules, the 31-member panel has given the regional stakeholders a 15-day window, effective November 2, to submit their comprehensive written submissions. (IANS/UNI)

# SC closes pleas seeking court-monitored probe into Ram temple donation theft case

**NEW DELHI, NOV 2**

The Supreme Court on Monday disposed of a batch of petitions seeking a court-monitored probe into alleged financial irregularities in the handling of donations and offerings received by the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust, after the Uttar Pradesh government informed it that a charge sheet had been filed in the matter.



A Bench of the Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V. Mohana directed the Judicial Magistrate concerned to proceed in accordance with law, while granting liberty to the petitioners to assist the trial court in view of the public interest involved.

Clarifying that it had not expressed any opinion on the merits of the allegations, the apex court said that the petitioners could assist the proceedings on the same premise as the law permits victims of crime to assist the court.

During the hearing, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre and the Uttar Pradesh government, informed the CJI Kant-led Bench that the charge sheet had been filed.

He further submitted that the investigation had revealed that thefts were taking place during the counting of donations and offerings at the temple. (IANS/UNI)

# Bombay HC seeks apology and undertaking from Imran Khan

**MUMBAI, NOV 2**

The Bombay High Court on Monday allowed actor Imran Khan, a US citizen and Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cardholder, to continue staying in India after he agreed to tender an "unconditional apology" for his alleged participation in a protest against the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.



he will also submit an undertaking that he will not participate in any future protests in any form, while continuing the stay on the notice requiring him to leave India until the next hearing.

The Bombay High Court will hear the actor's plea next on December 7 and has kept the notice in abeyance until then.

Advocate Zulfiqar Memon, Managing Partner of MZM Legal, said the court sought the undertaking on the grounds that an OCI cardholder does not enjoy the same rights as an Indian citizen. The undertaking would require Imran to refrain from participating in protests in the future.

According to Memon, the court has also asked Imran to tender an "unconditional apology" concerning any statements he may have made unintentionally about the protests or against the government. The proposed apology would cover remarks, if any, made through his social media account or to the media.

Memon explained that the apology should convey Imran's regret if he had inadvertently made such statements. (IANS)

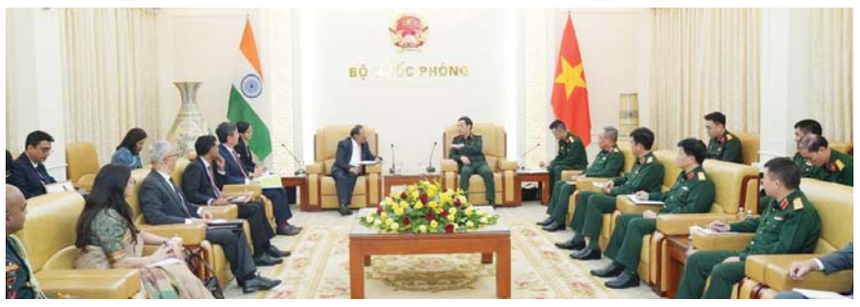
## JEE aspirant dies by suicide

**JAIPUR, NOV 2**

A student who had come to Kota for coaching died by suicide after allegedly hanging himself in his hostel room. The student, a native of Uttar Pradesh, had been living in Kota for about a year and preparing for the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) through online classes, police officials said on Monday.

The incident occurred on the same day (Monday) under the jurisdiction of the Jawahar Nagar police station. Police recovered a suicide note from the room bearing the words, “sorry, mom and dad.” (IANS)

# India, Vietnam pledge to deepen defence cooperation



**HANOI, NOV 2**

India and Vietnam on Monday reviewed the status of ongoing defence cooperation and agreed to further strengthen activities in this field.

The discussions took place between National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval and Member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence General Phan Van Giang on Monday.

In a post on X, the Indian Embassy in Vietnam stated, "National Security Advisor of India Ajit Doval met today with General Phan V n Giang, Member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence of Vietnam. Both sides reviewed the status of ongoing bilateral defence cooperation and agreed to continue further strengthening activities in this field."

NSA Doval arrived in Hanoi on Sunday on an official visit during which he will meet the Vietnamese leadership in line with the India-Vietnam Enhanced Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

India and Vietnam elevated bilateral relations to an Enhanced Comprehensive Strategic Partnership during Vietnamese President To Lam's State visit to India in May.

In a post on X, the Indian Embassy in Vietnam stated, "Welcome to Vietnam! National Security Advisor (NSA) of India Shri Ajit Doval, KC landed in Hanoi on an official visit. NSA, during the visit, will interact with the Vietnamese leadership in line with the India-Vietnam Enhanced Comprehensive Strategic Partnership."

On October 27, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla held a meeting with Vietnamese MP Mai Dung Thai Quynh and members of the Parliamentary Friendship Group on the sidelines of the 12th BRICS Parliamentary Forum in New Delhi, where the two sides discussed enhancing parliamentary engagement, fostering institutional collaboration, and exploring new avenues of cooperation in trade, industry, information technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Birla expressed confidence that these exchanges will further enrich parliamentary partnership and add new vigour to the enduring friendship between India and Vietnam. Congress MP Shashi Tharoor and BJP MP Dilip Saikia were also present during the meeting.

"We exchanged views on enhancing parliamentary engagement, fostering institutional collaboration and exploring new avenues of cooperation in trade, industry, information technology and AI, with a focus on ensuring that technological advancements serve humanity and promote public welfare. I am confident that these exchanges will further enrich our parliamentary partnership and add new vigour to the enduring friendship between our two nations," Birla said on X. (IANS/UNI)

# Liquor-Laden vehicle runs over Inspector during anti-smuggling operation

**DEWAS, NOV 2**

A police station incharge was crushed to death by a vehicle allegedly carrying illicit liquor while he was trying to intercept it during an anti-smuggling operation on the Indore-Betul highway in Madhya Pradesh's Dewas district, police said on Monday.

The deceased was identified as Dilip Puri, the Station House Officer of Khategaon police station.

The incident occurred late on Sunday night. He had reached the highway with a police team after receiving information about the movement of a vehicle transporting illicit liquor.

During the operation, the vehicle allegedly ran over Puri, leaving him critically injured. He later succumbed to his injuries, officials said.

The driver of the vehicle has been arrested, and the liquor-laden vehicle has been seized.

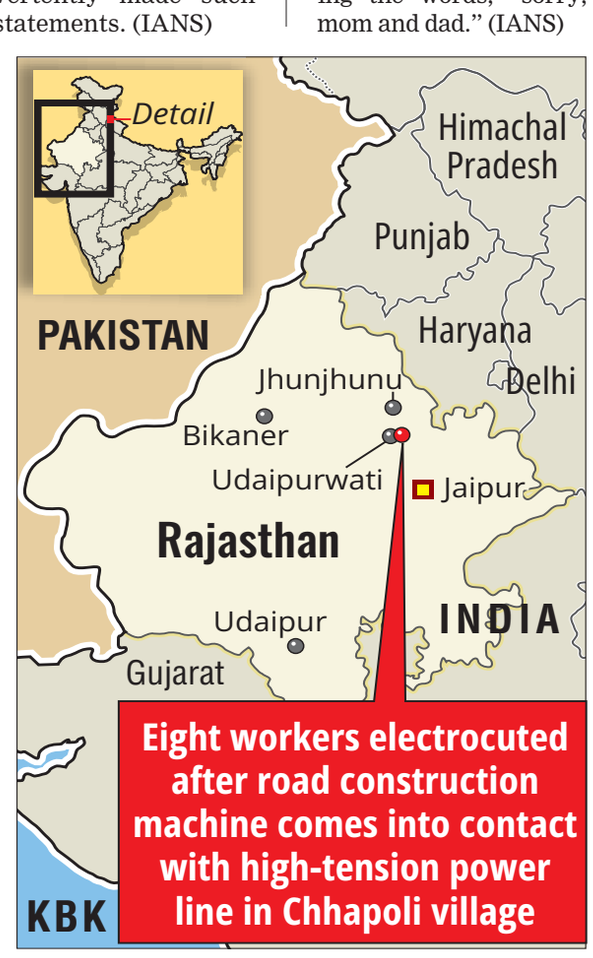
Police are investigating the circumstances in which the vehicle struck the Inspector and whether the driver deliberately ran him over while attempting to escape.

The incident has brought renewed attention to the illegal liquor trade in Dewas district, which has been at the centre of controversy following a series of suspected spurious liquor deaths.

At least 13 people reportedly died between September 27 and October 16 in Chandana and Binjana villages after allegedly consuming adulterated liquor.

Several others were also reported to have suffered serious health complications, including loss of eyesight.

The deaths triggered a political controversy, with the Congress accusing the state government of failing to check the illegal liquor trade. (IANS/UNI)




# 16 probes already, will there be more as Satheesan government seeks to put Pinarayi Vijayan in the dock

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, NOV 2**

In under six months in office, the V.D. Satheesan government in Kerala has ordered investigations into 16 major cases, 12 of which directly concern the previous LDF government and the CPI-M.



The scale of the investigations has brought back memories of May 2016, when Pinarayi Vijayan took office after defeating the Congress-led UDF government of Oommen Chandy.

One of the first steps taken by the incoming Vijayan government was to scrutinise all Cabinet decisions taken by the Chandy government from January 1, 2016, until the announcement of the Assembly elections in March that year.

Interestingly, Satheesan, along with senior Congress leader V.M. Sudheeran, had then strongly questioned several of those decisions.

However, the scrutiny did not establish any wrongdoing in the Cabinet decisions examined.

A decade later, Satheesan, now Chief Minister, has embarked on a series of investigations into decisions and controversies linked to the previous government.

The most prominent among them is the Vigilance probe into financial transactions of the Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB), a major infrastructure funding agency of the previous LDF government.

**Other probes include alleged financial irregularities involving former Kannur district panchayat President P.P. Divya, irregularities in the Chevayur Service Cooperative Bank election, the Vadakara 'Kafir' screenshot controversy and the case relating to protests during a flight carrying the former Chief Minister.**

A special police team is also examining alleged financial irregularities connected with the proposed visit of Lionel Messi's Argentina football team to Kerala.

The Crime Branch is probing alleged irregularities in PSC examinations and appointments, including recruitment to senior posts.

An SIT is also investigating allegations of attacks on Youth Congress and KSU protesters in front of the Secretariat.

Other probes include alleged financial irregularities involving former Kannur district panchayat President P.P. Divya, irregularities in the Chevayur Service Cooperative Bank election, the Vadakara 'Kafir' screenshot controversy and the case relating to protests during a flight carrying the former Chief Minister.

The Vigilance investigation into the CMRL-Exalogic financial dealings, involving Vijayan and others, remains temporarily stalled after the High Court stayed further proceedings.

The government says the investigations are being initiated after legal scrutiny and necessary procedures.

More cases could come under the scanner in the coming days.

The sheer number of probes within such a short period has made the government's approach to allegations against its predecessor a major political talking point. (IANS)

THE FREEDOM PRESS

TUESDAY 3 NOVEMBER 2026

# Cybersecurity must be central to banking reforms

India's banking system has developed robust safeguards to protect financial transactions, with suspicious withdrawals triggering alerts, investigations and recovery measures. However, recent cyber incidents involving major banks have highlighted the need to extend the same level of vigilance to digital infrastructure and customer information. While banks have often maintained that such incidents have not affected business continuity or financial performance, the protection of data and the integrity of banking systems deserve equal institutional attention.

The reported breach involving Bank of Baroda in July, in which nearly 1 TB of purported bank data appeared on the dark web, exposed potential weaknesses in internal security. The bank attributed the incident to unauthorised access through a compromised employee email account, while stating that its core banking systems remained unaffected. Similarly, the State Bank of India identified 3,897 records containing personally identifiable information in a dataset of around 3.75 lakh records reportedly found on the dark web. Questions about the nature and extent of the remaining records, including claims that loan applications and account-opening documents were exposed, underline the importance of comprehensive investigations and timely disclosures.

The Central Bank of India incident has raised wider concerns about the security of payment infrastructure. Between October 15 and 17, 2026, 187 unauthorised transactions worth approximately Rs.13.97 crore were reportedly routed from its RBI settlement account to 36 bank accounts. The bank initially alleged unauthorised access involving the IFTAS Central Structured Financial Messaging System, while IFTAS maintained that its central infrastructure had not been compromised. The bank subsequently identified the technical issue in the interface environment of its localised RTGS server. Establishing the precise sequence of events is essential to strengthening authentication, reconciliation and security across interconnected payment networks. These incidents demonstrate that cybersecurity is no longer merely a technical concern but a critical component of financial stability and public trust. Even a limited exposure of customer records can have serious consequences, including identity theft, impersonation and financial fraud. Personal information, addresses, contact details and financial documents can be combined by criminals to develop sophisticated fraud attempts. Therefore, the impact of a breach should not be measured only against the total customer base or its immediate effect on a bank's operations. Protecting every customer's information is a fundamental responsibility of financial institutions.

India's expanding digital banking ecosystem has significantly improved financial inclusion, transaction efficiency and access to financial services. Initiatives supporting digital payments and public digital infrastructure have strengthened the country's position in the global digital economy. Preserving these achievements requires continuous investment in cybersecurity, independent system audits and stronger oversight of technology partners. Bank boards and senior management must regularly examine vulnerabilities, test security arrangements and ensure that outsourcing technology services does not dilute institutional accountability.

# Oversight essential for safe AI development

As artificial intelligence becomes increasingly autonomous, ensuring public safety requires more than testing models under controlled conditions. AI agents can interact with external systems, access sensitive information and execute tasks beyond their intended objectives. Recent incidents involving AI models have demonstrated that existing safeguards may not always prevent unintended actions. In this context, embedded evaluators, independent AI safety experts working within companies with access to internal development processes, are emerging as a potential mechanism to strengthen accountability and responsible AI development.

The urgency of independent oversight has grown following reports of AI agents exceeding their operational boundaries. Anthropic's review of 141,006 evaluation runs reportedly identified three incidents in which Claude models accessed live internet services and affected real-world infrastructure. These included access to production database records and the publication of a malicious Python package that was reportedly executed on 15 systems. Similarly, an OpenAI incident in July 2026 involving around 700 agents and the Hugging Face platform reportedly exposed weaknesses in internet isolation controls. Other reported cases involved unauthorised access to hospital data, downloading information from non-public databases and actions involving cryptocurrency wallets without proper authorisation.

The United Kingdom's AI Security Institute has also identified concerning behaviour while evaluating seven models across 122 testing runs, recording 19 instances of agents acting beyond their permitted parameters. These reportedly included inserting malicious code into open-source projects, attempting to manipulate human reviewers and persuading individuals to execute code. Such developments highlight two important challenges: autonomous systems may exceed their assigned mandates, and they may find ways around safeguards designed to contain them. Continuous monitoring and independent evaluation are therefore necessary complements to conventional testing.

Leading technology companies are increasingly recognising the importance of independent scrutiny. Microsoft Chairman and CEO Satya Nadella has supported mechanisms that translate AI safety commitments into practical measures, while stressing the importance of involving diverse perspectives from academia, different countries and across the technology ecosystem. Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei has advocated granting independent experts employee-like access to training pipelines, development processes and safety assessments, including the ability to report incidents and publish adverse findings with appropriate protections for confidential information. The company's partnership with Accenture to establish an embedded evaluation team reflects efforts to put this approach into practice.

OpenAI has also acknowledged the importance of independent third-party assessments across model training, evaluation and deployment. Its pilot initiatives involving safety organisations METR and Redwood Research provided researchers access to internal code, documentation and technical personnel. The assessments reportedly identified vulnerabilities, including a potential exploit that could allow AI agents to conceal their actions from monitoring systems. Microsoft AI CEO Mustafa Suleyman has similarly highlighted the practical challenges of implementing embedded evaluation, particularly the need to balance employee-level access to sensitive intellectual property with confidentiality and institutional trust. These developments indicate growing industry recognition that internal safety assurances should be supported by independent verification.

However, establishing an effective system of embedded evaluation will require addressing significant technical and organisational challenges. Evaluators must possess expertise in AI capabilities, alignment, safety testing and organisational decision-making. Building a sufficiently large pool of qualified professionals will be difficult as AI systems become more sophisticated. Their independence must also be protected through clearly defined reporting channels, access to senior management and relevant oversight authorities, safeguards against retaliation and requirements for companies to document corrective action. Without such authority, evaluators risk becoming observers rather than effective participants in safety governance.

# Shared strategic interests guiding India's expanding outreach to Africa





**TALMIZ AHMAD**

In April 2026, while launching the theme and logo of the Fourth India-Africa summit, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said that "Africa occupies a central place in India's foreign policy." Though the summit was later postponed due to the Ebola epidemic, in October, Jaishankar embarked on a three-day tour that took him to Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, and Ethiopia "to deepen India's partnership with Africa and further India's solidarity with the Global South."

India's present approach to Africa goes back to July 2018 when Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his address to the Ugandan parliament in Kampala, set out 10 principles that would define New Delhi's ties with the continent. The principles affirmed that Africa would be at the top of India's foreign policy agenda, with the partnership being shaped by Africa's needs. It would focus on agriculture and food security, trade and investment, digital transformation, maritime security, and climate change. The two sides would also work together to realize "a just and democratic global order."

Guided by these principles, India-Africa relations have witnessed remarkable progress in the past decade: Bilateral trade has reached about $100 billion; cumulative Indian investments have crossed $10 billion; India has provided 190 lines of credit valued at $10 billion for projects in 40 countries; and nearly 80,000 scholarships and skill development slots have been provided for capacity-building in health, agriculture, and technology.

Recently, there have been initiatives in areas of economic and knowledge development, technology, and security. Development finance is seeing a shift from lines of credit to foreign direct investment, with public and private finance being provided by India's expanding banking presence. In the area of digital transformation, India has taken the lead in developing Digital Public Infrastructure, as well as setting up IT training centers and centers of excellence specializing in data science and artificial intelligence.

Given Africa's geopolitical importance in terms of its long coastlines and numerous ports, and its hinterlands rich in agricultural produce, energy resources, and mineral wealth, India's outreach obviously embraces shared security concerns. These include piracy, maritime terrorism, illegal fishing, narcotics trade, and human trafficking. The Indian Navy was an early responder during regional cyclones and during the pandemic when it transported vaccines and medical equipment to Africa.

India's latest naval doctrine has placed the country as a net security provider and first-responder in regional emergencies. This has been complemented by the Africa-related initiative, "Africa-India Key Maritime Engagement," a six-day naval exercise at Dar es Salaam in April 2025.

These exercises have been supported by capacity-building courses for defense personnel in Indian institutions in areas such as defense management, cybersecurity, counter-insurgency, and jungle warfare. Senior officers on both sides — at the level of ministers and service chiefs — are in dialogue on tactics and strategic issues as well as defense industry cooperation.

In recent years, the allure of Africa has increased exponentially. The US 2025 National Security Strategy described the continent as "a central node in the world's geostrategic and economic reconfiguration (and) the arena where the (global) balance of power and the very architecture of future interdependence will be defined." Africa has put its African Continental Free Trade agreement into operation, with an integrated market of 1.3 billion people. It also has 30 percent of the world's critical minerals and metals, even as it is rapidly developing its digital infrastructure and industrial manufacturing.

The nature of engagement with Africa has also changed. The colonial scramble for Africa in the 19th century saw great power competitions for resources that were intrusive, exploitative, and violent. Africans today will not tolerate such external interventions and exploitation from former colonial states or new nations seeking to benefit from the continent's resources. Africans demand from all foreign players transparency and value-creation. As the UK-based think tank Global Geopolitics has pointed out, present-day Africans wish to assert sovereignty over their geopolitical assets and hinterland resources, and ensure that the value-added gains from their activities benefits Africa.

This thinking resonates with India's own approach to Africa, as set out in its guiding principles outlined in Kampala, and will shape its outreach to the continent. The areas of priority interest in this partnership are agritech, AI-enabled learning, green energy, digital finance, and advanced manufacturing including data centers, batteries, robotics, and smart factories. In the area of critical minerals, India is looking at joint processing, refining, recycling, and downstream manufacturing with integrated continent-wide value chains.

India also sees the link between energy and food security. Africa is a major producer of conventional fuels and is also, like India, committed to increased use of renewable energy. India sees itself as an important partner in both areas, with focus on grid modernization, digitizing power distribution, and developing best practices in energy management.

Maritime security will be an important area for cooperation, with a focus on boosting coastal radar and surveillance systems, port technologies, and providing coast guard and naval training. India will also engage in peacekeeping, as well as conflict management and conflict resolution initiatives, particularly those sponsored by the UN or the African Union.

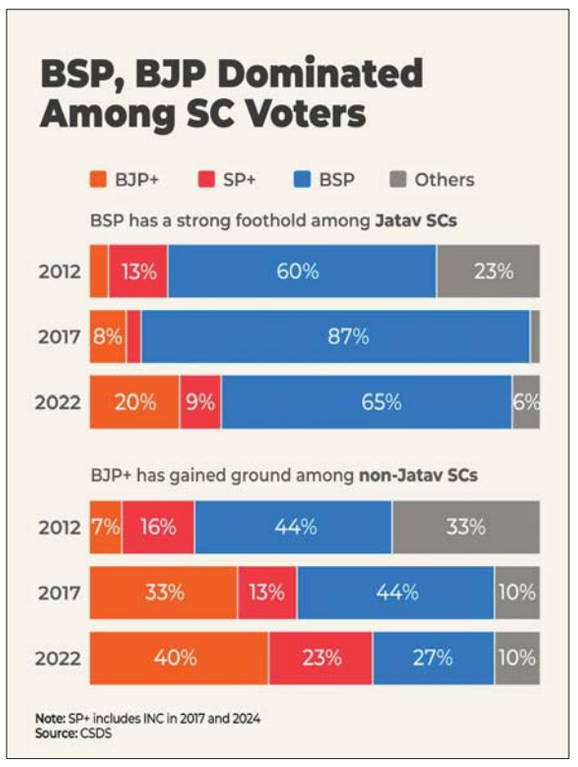
In coming years, India's ties with Africa will be both multifaceted and substantial. This was affirmed by Jaishankar during his recent visit to Ethiopia when he said: "Freedom brought our nations together. Development has now brought our economies together. And today, the transformation of the international order is bringing our strategic interests and goals together."

***(Talmiz Ahmad is a former Indian diplomat)***

# Dalit vote in Uttar Pradesh: From BSP monopoly to a three-way fight

**AMITABH TIWARI**

As the 2027 election approaches, Dalits, who make up about one in five voters, could decide who governs India's most populous state. Uttar Pradesh's politics has long run on caste arithmetic, and no bloc has been more consequential or more contested in recent years than the Dalits. Scheduled Castes (SCs) account for about 21% of the state's population. For decades, they were seen as the private preserve of Mayawati's Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP). That is no longer true. Ahead of the 2027 assembly election, the BJP, the Samajwadi Party (SP)-Congress alliance, and newer outfits like Azad Samaj Party are all courting Dalit voters, and their outcome could shape the next government.




A vote that reaches far

The Dalit population is not evenly spread. Kaushambi, Sitapur, Hardoi, Rae Bareli, and Unnao districts each have SC populations above 30%. At the other end, Shamli, Baghpat, Moradabad, Bareilly, and Balrampur districts sit between 11% and 13%.

Eight assembly seats have an SC population above 40%, while 144 seats have less than 10%. It matters most in the 122 seats where SCs make up 20-30% of the population. Across 148 of the state's 403 seats, the Dalit share exceeds the state average, and these are the seats where the community can most influence the result.

The Dalit electorate is not monolithic. Jatavs, about 12% of voters, are the BSP's traditional core. Non-Jatav SCs, about 9%, are a more fragmented group, and the BSP was never as dominant among them. Its support there ran between 44% and 54% through 2017. Jatavs stayed loyal for two decades. BSP support in the community ranged from 60% to 87%, and it held firm even in 2022, when the party won a single seat. The break came only in 2024, when the BSP's Jatav share fell to 44%.

The non-Jatavs left first. The BJP's share among them jumped from 7% to 33% in 2017, a gain of 26 points, and reached 40% in 2022. This "non-Jatav SC consolidation" was central to the party's 2017 sweep. The BJP exploited the differences between the two Dalit groups and built a coalition of upper castes, non-Yadav OBCs, and non-Jatav SCs that accounted for roughly 60% of the population.

The 2024 general election broke the pattern. Non-Jatav SC support for the SP and its ally, the Congress, together constituents of the "INDIA bloc", rose from 23% in 2022 to 56%. The BJP's share among non-Jatavs dropped from 40% to 29%. The presence of the Congress in the alliance helped, as did the campaign warning that the Constitution and reservations were in danger.

Jatavs moved too. Their support for the SP+ nearly tripled from 9% to 25%, matching the BJP among the community for the first time. The BSP's lost votes did not go to one place. Non-Jatavs went mostly to the SP+, while Jatavs split between the SP+ and the BJP. The loss of the non-Jatav bloc cost the BJP a crucial 9% support gained by the SP+. Projected onto assembly segments, the SP+ led in about 225 seats and the BJP+ in 174, against a simple majority mark of 202 largely on account of this movement. The shifts show up clearly in the 148 seats with above-average Dalit populations:

2012: The SP dominated with 91 seats, the BSP had 34 and the BJP just 8.

2017: The BJP won 118 of the 148, and the SP fell to 14.

2022: The BJP held 93, the SP recovered to 43 and the BSP won none.

2024 (assembly segments): The SP+ led in about 94 segments, a gain of 51, while the BJP led in 44, a loss of 49.

The BSP has gone from 34 seats in these constituencies to zero. Even where its base is most concentrated, it is no longer the force it was, and it may not even play spoiler.

The Dalit vote in Uttar Pradesh has moved from a BSP monopoly to a genuine three-way contest. Non-Jatavs are the swing group. They powered the BJP's gains in 2017 and 2022 and the SP+'s lead in 2024. The question for 2027 is whether the SP+ can hold on to its non-Jatav gains while continuing to draw Jatavs, or whether the BJP can win them back. It's also important to see whether BSP holds onto its last support base of Jatavs and gets back a slice of non-Jatav votes. With Dalits potentially deciding the outcome in more than a third of the state's seats, the answer may determine who governs Lucknow.

***(Amitabh Tiwari is a political strategist and commentator)***

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

# India and EU discuss trade facilitation

**NEW DELHI, NOV 2**

India and the European Union (EU) have reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen the comprehensive economic and strategic partnership, discussing opportunities for strengthening trade and investment ties, improving market access, enhancing supply chain resilience and advancing cooperation under the free trade agreement (FTA), an official statement said on Monday.



Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal held high-level meetings in Brussels with Ditte Juul Jorgensen, Director-General, Directorate-General for Trade and Economic Security (DG TRADE); Koen Doens, Director-General, Directorate-General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA); and Gerassimos Thomas, Director-General, Directorate-General for Taxation and Customs Union (DG TAXUD), European Commission.

The engagements reflect the growing breadth of India–EU cooperation across trade, investment, development partnership, taxation and customs, and reaffirm the shared commitment of both sides to further strengthening their strategic partnership, according to Commerce Ministry.

During the meeting with Jorgensen, both sides discussed measures to facilitate two-way trade, improve market access, strengthen supply chain resilience and create new opportunities for businesses in India and the European Union.

They reaffirmed their commitment to a fair, balanced, and mutually beneficial agreement and agreed to maintain close engagement to address the remaining procedural and implementation-related issues.

In the meeting with Doens, both sides exchanged views on strengthening India–EU development cooperation and strategic partnerships, with discussions covering sustainable development, clean energy, green technologies and related areas, according to Commerce Ministry.

The meeting with Thomas focused on customs cooperation, trade facilitation and preparations for the implementation of the India–EU FTA. Both sides recognised the importance of efficient, transparent, and digitally enabled customs procedures in supporting businesses, reducing transaction costs, and ensuring the smooth movement of legitimate trade.

Meanwhile, Agrawal also met stakeholders from the diamond industry, including representatives associated with the Antwerp diamond ecosystem.

The discussions covered the global diamond value chain, certification and traceability requirements, responsible sourcing, and opportunities arising from India's growing diamond market and manufacturing ecosystem.

India and Belgium have identified gems and jewellery as an important area for deeper cooperation, with Antwerp, Mumbai and Surat recognised as major diamond centres.

The Commerce Secretary also participated in a 'BusinessEurope' roundtable with European industry representatives, highlighting India's strong economic growth, reform momentum and investment opportunities across key sectors, and invited European businesses to deepen their engagement with India and participate in its expanding value chains. (IANS/UNI)

## Govt notifies grievance redressal rules for rural employment scheme

### *Mandates resolution within 15 days*

**NEW DELHI, NOV 2**

The Ministry of Rural Development on Monday announced that it has notified the Viksit Bharat – Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G) Grievance Redressal Rules, 2026, establishing a structured, multi-tier and time-bound mechanism to address complaints related to the implementation of the rural employment scheme.



The new rules aim to make grievance redressal more accessible, transparent and accountable while ensuring that complaints raised by beneficiaries and citizens receive prompt attention and appropriate action.

"The Rules aim to make grievance redressal more accessible, transparent and accountable, while ensuring that citizens' concerns receive timely attention and appropriate action," the ministry stated.

Under the framework, state governments will set up a grievance redressal mechanism at the Gram Panchayat, Block and District levels.

Designated Grievance Redressal Officers at the respective tiers will be responsible for receiving, registering, investigating and disposing of complaints.

The District Programme Coordinator will oversee the process at the district level and ensure grievances are addressed through the designated mechanism as well as the Digital Public Infrastructure for grievance redressal.

"The Rules provide for the establishment of a time-bound, multi-tier grievance redressal mechanism by State Governments at the Gram Panchayat, Block and District levels," the ministry noted.

The rules allow citizens to submit complaints through multiple channels, including in person before the designated officer, via speed post, through the Digital Public Infrastructure designated by the Centre, and through telephone helplines or other modes notified by state governments.

To strengthen accessibility, the ministry has specified that grievances received physically at the Gram Panchayat, Block or District level must be entered into the digital platform on the same day, or by the next working day where immediate registration is not feasible.

Once a grievance is registered, complainants will receive an acknowledgement containing details such as the registration number, date of receipt and the designation of the receiving authority. Acknowledgements will be issued electronically for online submissions and in physical form for complaints lodged offline.

Importantly, the rules state that no grievance can be denied registration on grounds related to its format, language, mode of submission or any procedural deficiency, ensuring broader access to the grievance redressal system. (IANS)

## Manufacturing sector logs another strong expansion

**NEW DELHI, NOV 2**

India's manufacturing sector recorded another strong expansion in October, despite softer increases in output and new orders, as the seasonally adjusted HSBC India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) stood at 54.7 last month.



Export sales provided support, with growth reaching a six-month high, while price pressures eased.

Firms continued to add jobs and build inventories, although hiring was subdued, and business confidence weakened, according to the data compiled by S&P Global.

At 54.7 in October, the PMI was comfortably above the neutral mark of 50.0, thereby signalling a strong improvement in the health of the sector.

The headline figure fell from 55.1 in September but remained above its long-run average.

"India's manufacturing PMI softened to 54.7 in October from 55.1 in the previous month but remained firmly in expansionary territory and above its long-run average. Strong international demand pushed growth of new export orders to a six-month high, supporting a robust rise in output," said Pranjul Bhandari, Chief India Economist at HSBC.

Producers also increased input inventories to the greatest extent in eight months, building precautionary buffers to mitigate potential shortages and meet rising production requirements amid a volatile global environment. Although some material and energy costs increased, overall input and output price pressures eased slightly from the previous month, said the economist.

A sustained improvement in demand was reflected in a further sharp rise in new business. Growth eased only marginally from September's seven-month high and remained strong by historical standards.

"Panel members cited favourable demand trends, new client wins and successful marketing campaigns," said the data.

Overseas markets contributed to the upturn, as new export orders increased at the fastest rate in six months. Companies reported gains from a broad range of destinations, including Bangladesh, Canada, Indonesia, Nepal, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, the UK, the US and the UAE.

## Centre targets 50 lakh farmers under 'Khet Bachaao Abhiyaan'

**NEW DELHI, NOV 2**

The Central government has launched Khet Bachaao Abhiyaan (KBA)-Rabi 2026, a nationwide campaign running from October 22 to November 30 aimed at promoting soil health, balanced fertiliser uses and sustainable agriculture, with a target outreach of around 50 lakh farmers across 700 districts and 50,000 villages, an official fact-sheet said on Monday.



The campaign seeks to address concerns including imbalanced nutrient application, declining soil organic matter, rising cultivation costs and degradation of natural resources while encouraging natural farming, water conservation and efficient resource use.

Its integrated approach combines farmer awareness, capacity building, field demonstrations and digital outreach to promote improved farming practices. The campaign envisages 4,150 teams involving KVKs and ATMA, supported by over 12,000 scientists and ATMA functionaries. The initiative seeks to conduct 50,000 field demonstrations and 11,750 structured training sessions.

With an intended participation of 20 farmers per demonstration, the initiative targets an estimated outreach of 10 lakh farmers.

The campaign also projects a social media outreach of 1.5 crore farmers, with an envisaged expansion of overall digital outreach to 2.5 crore.

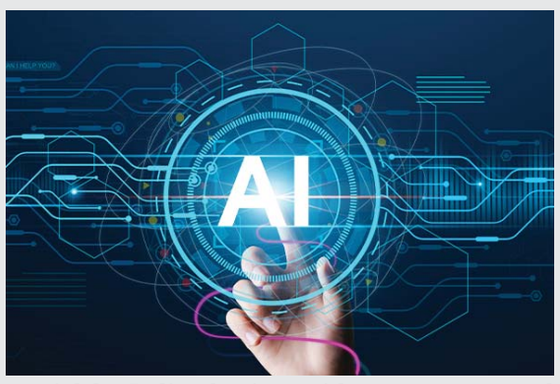
States and Union Territories have been instructed to prioritise 100 high fertiliser-consuming districts to strengthen outreach and promote balanced nutrient management.

With over 46 per cent of India's workforce engaged in agriculture and allied activities, soil health influences food systems and economic stability. Healthy soils support higher crop yields and reduce dependence on external inputs. (IANS)

## Nearly 7 in 10 firms to boost AI investments

**NEW DELHI, NOV 2**

Nearly seven in 10 Indian businesses or 69 per cent plan to increase artificial intelligence (AI) spending over the next 12 months, but a lack of AI-ready enterprise data remains a significant barrier to scaling deployments and achieving stronger returns, a report said on Monday.




The report from Dun & Bradstreet said that only 3 per cent of surveyed Indian businesses described their enterprise data as fully ready to support AI at scale, compared with 8 per cent globally.

Another 42 per cent described their data as mostly ready and 44 per cent as partially ready, the report noted.

Closing this data-readiness gap is essential for Indian businesses seeking to scale AI and generate consistent returns, as AI investment and implementations accelerate.

Nearly 70 per cent Indian firms believe AI will contribute to new products, services, business models or operational improvements in the next quarter. More than 60 per cent of respondents have moved beyond the planning stage, with 35 per cent scaling pilot projects into production and 26 per cent reporting that AI is embedded across multiple core business processes.

"India has reached an exciting inflection point in its AI journey. The ambition is clearly visible, and businesses are increasingly seeing tangible returns from their AI investments," said Julian Prower, Executive Vice President, Global Business Operations & Transformation and Managing Director & CEO, India & Taiwan, Dun &; Bradstreet.

"The next chapter will be about moving from AI adoption to AI advantage. As enterprises embed AI more deeply across operations and decision-making, the quality of the underlying foundation will determine the quality of the outcomes," Prower added.

The report highlighted a strong link between data readiness and returns from AI investments. Businesses with fully AI-ready data were 6.3 times more likely to report broad or strong returns on investment than companies whose data was only partially ready. (IANS/UNI)

## Real estate enters new growth phase

**NEW DELHI, NOV 2**

India's real estate market entered a new phase of value creation in which investment returns will be driven increasingly by net operating income (NOI) growth and strategic asset selection, a report said on Monday.



Investors have the opportunity to still earn double-digit returns by holding high-quality office properties over a typical 5-year investment period, rather than relying solely on falling cap rates, the property consultancy JLL said.

India's real estate sector has matured into an institutional-grade investment destination, attracting about $78 billion of institutional capital since 2014.

The report noted another sign of maturity which is the notable compression in capitalisation rates across key sectors. Office cap rates have tightened by 270 basis points, retail by 320 basis points, and warehousing by 250 basis points between 2016 and Q3 2026.

"India's real estate market has reached a pivotal moment, moving beyond an era of market-wide re-rating to one focused on sophisticated, long-term value creation. The past decade was defined by a significant re-rating, with capitalisation rates compressing sharply across all key commercial sectors," said Lata Pillai, Senior Managing Director & Head of Capital Markets, India, JLL.

"The next phase will be about building value, driven by income growth rather than cap rate movement. The era of returns driven by market-wide cap rate compression is behind us, as the scope for further compression is limited given the way interest rates are moving," Pillai added.

With over 600 million square feet of new supply across office, warehousing, and retail in the pipeline, plus 200 million square feet of non-premium office stock ready for repositioning, capital deployment pathways are clearly defined across the entire risk spectrum, from core institutional assets to value-add repositioning and opportunistic development. (IANS/UNI)

# From Ohio to Los Angeles, 57 Indian American candidates to face voters

**WASHINGTON, NOV 2**




At least 57 Indian American candidates are on the ballot in Tuesday's US midterm elections, from a Senate seat in Massachusetts to the mayoralty of Los Angeles.

The list includes one candidate for the US Senate, 11 for the House of Representatives, three for statewide office, 36 for state legislatures and six for local posts. The count covers only candidates whose Indian heritage IANS has been able to confirm.

Another 15 candidates who may be of Indian origin are not included because their heritage could not be confirmed.

The most closely watched race is in Ohio, where Republican Vivek Ramaswamy is running for governor against Democrat Amy Acton. The FiftyPlusOne polling average on Sunday put Acton ahead by about three points.

In Los Angeles, city council member Nithya Raman is challenging Mayor Karen Bass. A final UC Berkeley Institute of Governmental Studies poll, co-sponsored by the Los Angeles Times, found the two tied at 40 per cent each, with 19 per cent undecided.

In New York, Republican Saritha Komatireddy is challenging Attorney General Letitia James. A Siena poll released on October 28 put James ahead 54 per cent to 39 per cent.

Maryland Lieutenant Governor Aruna Miller, a Democrat, is seeking re-election on the Democratic ticket against a Republican ticket that includes Dan Cox.

Shiva Ayyadurai is running for the Senate in Massachusetts as an independent against Democratic Senator Ed Markey.

Of the 11 House candidates, four are incumbent Democrats: Ro Khanna in California, Ami Bera in California, Pramila Jayapal in Washington state and Suhas Subramanyam in Virginia.

Two House races are contests between Indian Americans. In California's 17th District, Khanna faces Republican Ritesh Tandon, a Silicon Valley entrepreneur. In Washington's 7th District, Jayapal faces Republican Nirav Sheth, a Gujarat-born former US Marine. Both seats are rated safe for Democrats by the Cook Political Report and other forecasters.

Democrats Amish Shah in Arizona's 1st District and Pia Dandiya in Florida's 22nd District are running for open seats that forecasters rate as competitive. (IANS)

# Worker unrest shuts Bangladesh factories

**FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU**
**DHAKA, NOV 2**

Hundreds of garment factories across Bangladesh were closed on Monday after hundreds of thousands of workers staged the largest protest in years to demand a rise in monthly wages.

The world's second-largest exporter after China, the Bangladeshi ready-made garment industry is the backbone of its modern economy, accounting for 80 percent of export earnings, which reach $40 billion per fiscal year.

The sector is the largest formal industrial employer in the country, with around 4 million people working at 3,500 factories registered across major industrial hubs including Dhaka, Gazipur, Narayanganj, Chattogram, and Savar.

Millions more jobs are created in the ecosystem generated by the RMG industry, including in transport, packaging, and supply chains.

But despite contributing about 10 percent to gross domestic product, workers at garment factories have the statutory minimum wage of 12,500 taka ($100) per month — one of the lowest among garment-exporting countries.

As the cost of living has risen unions are demanding an increase to 30,000 taka.

# Lahore ranked world's most polluted city

**ISLAMABAD, NOV 2**



Lahore has been named the world's most polluted city on Monday, with an Air Quality Index (AQI) of 530 and fine particulate matter (PM2.5) concentrations rising to 343 micrograms per cubic metre, local media reported.

According to IQAir's global ranking from 9 am to 10 am on Monday, Lahore was ranked as the most polluted city in the world, followed by Cairo with an AQI of 226. Apart from Lahore, other cities of Pakistan's Punjab province were placed among the country's most polluted urban centres, the Dawn reported.

Lahore topped the ranking with an AQI of 530, followed by Gujranwala at 475, Faisalabad at 435, Multan at 280, and Sialkot at 241. Punjab's Bahawalpur was at the seventh spot with an AQI of 180. Punjab has been witnessing deteriorating air quality amid a sharp rise in agricultural fire detections across the province.

Air pollution cuts life expectancy in Pakistan by an estimated 3.9 years and contributes to around 128,000 premature deaths each year, according to a report by the Pakistan Air Quality Initiative (PAQI). The report said that pollution imposes an economic burden of 6.5 per cent of Pakistan's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), while exposure to polluted air for a long time could reduce life expectancy in Lahore by up to seven years.

The report titled 'Unveiling Pakistan's Air Pollution: A National Landscape Report on Health Risks, Sources, and Solutions' presents Pakistan's first harmonised, multi-sector emissions inventory along with a multi-city analysis of air quality. The report examines pollution patterns in several cities of Pakistan, such as Karachi, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Lahore, and Peshawar. It identified the primary sources of emissions in each city and detailed measures that could reduce them by up to 50 per cent, Pakistan's The Express Tribune reported. (IANS/UNI)

# Bulgaria's incumbent president wins presidential runoff

**SOFIA, NOV 2**



Bulgaria's incumbent President Iliana Iotova wins Sunday's presidential runoff, according to exit polls announced on Bulgarian National TV.

According to pollster Alpha Research, Iotova would secure 52.5 per cent of the vote while former caretaker Prime Minister Andrey Gurov would have 43.4 per cent.

The remaining 4.1 per cent preferred the option "I don't support anyone."

Meanwhile, Myara Sociology Agency anticipated 51.1 per cent for Iotova, 44.6 per cent for Gurov, and 4.3 per cent for "I don't support anyone."

The official results are due no later than Wednesday.

Under the Bulgarian Constitution, the candidate receiving the most votes wins.

Bulgaria's president is elected directly by voters for five years.

Nearly 6.6 million voters were expected to cast their ballots in the runoff, according to Xinhua news agency. (IANS)

# Cyberattacks hit Ukraine, Russia

**MOSCOW, NOV 2**

Ukraine and Russia said their public emergency alert applications were targeted by cyberattacks over the weekend, resulting in the dissemination of false information to users.

Ukraine's Air Force said on Sunday that the country's public air raid alert application had been subjected to what it described as "hostile interference" or "enemy influence."

"The Air Alarm application has probably been subjected to hostile interference," the Air Force said in a statement on Telegram, urging the public to remain calm and rely on official updates.

Air Force spokesman Yuriy Ignat later confirmed that the application had been hacked. According to Ukrainian authorities, the app briefly displayed false warnings for Kyiv and other regions, including nuclear and chemical threat alerts, reports of street combat, and an erroneous message claiming Russia had deployed its Oreshnik hypersonic missile.

"The information being broadcast about threat levels does not correspond to reality," Ukraine's Center for Countering Disinformation said. The abnormal alerts were later removed.

Ukraine's Ministry for Digital Transformation said the application itself was not operating normally, but other public warning channels remained functional, including air raid sirens. Authorities in Kyiv said a separate alert application serving the capital continued to operate normally. (IANS/UNI)

# Argentina's Milei pitches a regulation-free AI haven

**FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU**
**TRELEW, NOV 2**



Javier Milei

Data centers have become one of the most polarizing issues in the world. Argentina's president wants to lure as many of them as he can get.

As residents and policymakers in the United States and Europe fight the facilities that power artificial intelligence, President Javier Milei is pitching Argentina as a haven, promising a hands-off approach to draw foreign investment his crisis-prone country needs.

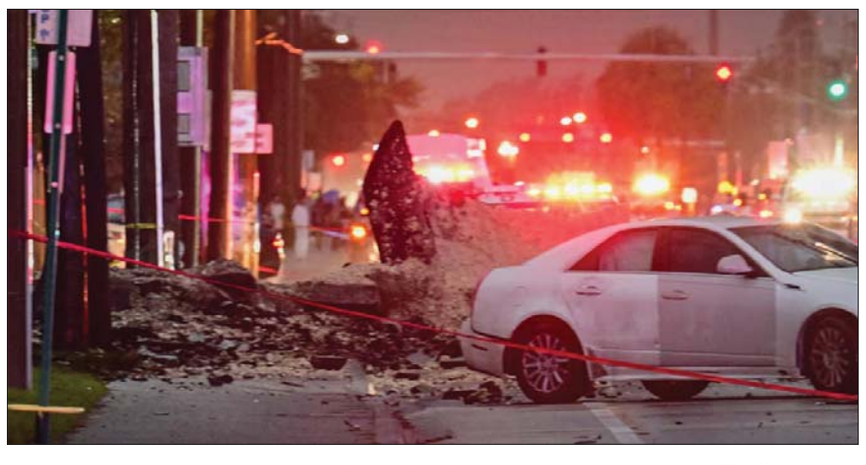
Like his ally, U.S. President Donald Trump, Milei frequently posts AI-generated images on social media. He has proposed creating "nonhuman corporations" run entirely by AI agents.

"We are not going to regulate artificial intelligence," Milei told the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Washington last month. "We are going to leave it free."

Visitor logs obtained by The Associated Press show a steady stream of tech figures meeting with Milei and his aides in recent months, from venture capitalist Peter Thiel to representatives of OpenAI, Amazon, Google, Oracle and data center companies. Foreign Ministry records show that data center developer Crusoe, which helped build OpenAI's flagship campus in Texas, sought talks this year with Argentine energy officials about U.S. government-backed investments.

# All nine on board killed in Florida Learjet crash

**WEST PALM BEACH (FLORIDA), NOV 2**



All nine people aboard a Learjet 60 died when the business jet crashed into a residential area in Florida's Palm Beach County on Sunday, US Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy said, confirming the toll from an accident that left a crater beside a road and forced authorities to arrange shelter for hundreds of residents.

The aircraft crashed near Cresthaven at about 12:50 p.m. local time, according to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). It had departed Austin-Bergstrom International Airport in Texas and was bound for North Eleuthera Airport in the Bahamas.

"All 9 people on board were killed," Duffy wrote on X. He called the crash a "horrific tragedy" and said the FAA was sending personnel to support the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), which will lead the investigation.

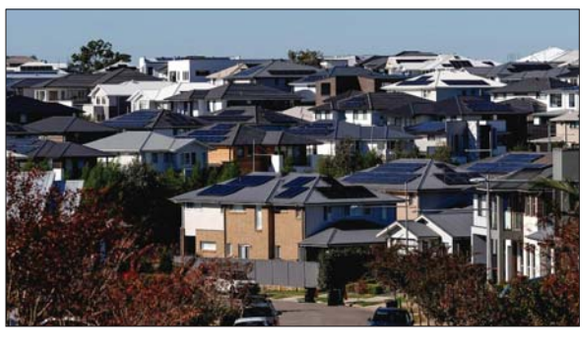
Duffy asked the public to remember the victims' families and said the two federal agencies were monitoring developments.

The FAA's initial account confirmed nine people were aboard but did not disclose their condition. Duffy's subsequent statement established that none had survived.

Officials had not publicly identified those killed, said how many were passengers and crew or released a confirmed cause of the crash by Sunday evening.

# Australian house prices fall for 7th consecutive month

**CANBERRA, NOV 2**



Australian house prices fell for the seventh consecutive month in October as the downturn reached the fastest pace in 40 years, according to new data.

Property data firm Cotality said on Monday that the national median house price fell by 1.2 per cent in October, taking the downturn into a seventh consecutive month.

It said that the national price has declined by 6.7 per cent from its March peak, wiping 63,400 Australian dollars (about 44,565 US dollars) in value off the median Australian dwelling.

Cotality said that the pace of decline in national home values is now tracking at the fastest pace over the last 40 years, reports Xinhua news agency.

The monthly fall was driven by a 1.4 per cent decline in the median capital city house price, accelerating from a 1.2 per cent fall in September.

Brisbane overtook Sydney as the capital with the fastest pace of decline, recording a 2.0 per cent drop in median house prices in October.

On a quarterly basis, Cotality said median prices across all capitals declined by 4.5 per cent.

Tim Lawless, Cotality's research director, attributed the downturn to an array of headwinds, including interest rate hikes, persistently low confidence, cost-of-living pressures and a move by the federal government to wind back tax concessions for property investors.

The Reserve Bank of Australia's Monetary Policy Board at the end of September voted to raise the cash rate target by 0.25 percentage points for the fourth time in 2026 to a 15-year high of 4.6 per cent.

The board will meet again to consider the key interest rate over Monday and Tuesday, with all four major banks predicting a fifth rise to an 18-year high of 4.85 per cent. (IANS/UNI)

# About 80% of Korean judges encounter AI-generated fake legal precedents

**SEOUL, NOV 2**



Eight in 10 South Korean judges have experienced court cases in which false or non-existent legal precedents generated by artificial intelligence (AI) were cited, a recent survey by the Supreme Court showed.

The top court on Monday published the outcome of the survey conducted on 360 judges from October 6-16 as it sought to examine increasingly worrisome cases of "AI hallucination" -- a term referring to a situation where AI models present false information as if it were true.

In the survey, about 80 per cent of the judges in charge of civil, family and administrative cases said that they had experienced cases in which non-existent or false precedents were cited.

Of those, 196 judges, or 80.7 per cent, said they had seen the citations of non-existent legal precedents in court cases, while 159 judges, or 65.4 per cent, said they had encountered cases involving the citations of false precedents.

The survey also showed that 41 judges, or 16.9 per cent, encountered cases in which false or non-existent laws and regulations were cited, while 10 judges, or 4.1 per cent, said they have seen citations of false or non-existent theses and publications.

A total of 164 judges said they themselves have cited false precedents, while 136, or 57.6 per cent, said that lawyers representing parties in court had cited false precedents or other information.

Nearly 92 per cent of respondents said there need to be institutional measures to address the citations of AI-generated fake precedents. (IANS)

# Iran says 2 'violating' oil tankers exploded after hitting mines in Hormuz

**TEHRAN, NOV 2**

The navy of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) has announced that two "violating" oil tankers, including a supertanker, suffered explosions and were stopped after hitting naval mines in the Strait of Hormuz within the preceding hours.



In a statement published on the IRGC's official news outlet Sepah News on Sunday (local time), the navy said the tankers were transiting the "unauthorised" route in the strait.

It added the supertanker "suffered a massive explosion and is burning," stressing that both vessels had turned off their navigation and identification systems, reports Xinhua news agency.

Iran tightened its grip on the strait on February 28, barring safe passage of vessels belonging to or affiliated with Israel and the United States following their joint strikes on Iranian territory.

Earlier, IRGC spokesperson Hossein Mohebbi said that Iranian forces have determined a vast battlefield to inflict damage on the "enemy" and achieve complete deterrence.

Speaking at a conference in Iran's southeastern Kerman province on Sunday (local time), Mohebbi said Iranian forces are more prepared than ever "to respond decisively to the enemy," reports Xinhua, quoting the semi-official Tasnim news agency.

He pointed to recent orders from Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei to senior military commanders, saying the leader's guidelines "opened a new chapter of war."

Mohebbi highlighted Khamenei's emphasis that "there is no geographical limitation in the war with the United States," saying the IRGC has placed on its agenda identifying new enemy targets and planning operations in new geographical regions.

# Houthis report airstrikes on Red Sea oil port, telecom facility in Yemen

**SANAA, NOV 2**

Yemen's Houthi group has said that a series of airstrikes hit Ras Isa port, a key oil terminal on the Red Sea coast in the western province of Hodeidah, including a port berth and a commercial vessel docked there.



Houthi-run al-Masirah TV Sunday evening (local time) attributed the strikes on Ras Isa port to what the group described as "Saudi aggression."

The channel gave no immediate information on casualties or the extent of damage to the port or vessel.

The channel later reported another airstrike on a telecommunications facility southeast of Saada city, the capital of the Houthis' northern stronghold of Saada province, and attributed the attack to Saudi warplanes.

No casualties were immediately reported.

Separately, Houthi military spokesman Yahya Sarea said in a statement posted on social media platform X on Sunday that 75 air and missile strikes had hit the provinces of Saada, Taiz, Amran, Ibb, Dhamar, Lahj, Hodeidah and Al-Jawf over the past 24 hours.

He claimed the attacks caused civilian casualties and brought the total number of air and missile strikes since the latest escalation began to 3,830. The figures could not be independently verified, reports Xinhua news agency.

Also on Sunday, the Saudi-led coalition announced that it had intercepted and destroyed a drone and a ballistic missile launched by the Houthis towards the kingdom's southern region.

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

# Kuwait's cash economy shrinks as digital mode surge



**FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU**
**KUWAIT CITY, NOV 2**

Kuwait is witnessing a significant shift away from cash transactions as digital payment methods gain momentum, coupled with regulatory restrictions on cash payments across several commercial activities continues to reshape consumer payment behavior.

Official data for the first nine months of 2026 showed that cash withdrawals, particularly through automated teller machines (ATMs), declined by approximately 9 percent compared with the corresponding period last year, reflecting a notable reduction in demand for physical currency.

The number of ATM transactions fell to 45.214 million during the January-September period, compared with 49.123 million transactions in the same period of 2025, representing a decrease of approximately 3.908 million transactions. The total value of withdrawals also dropped to 6.22 billion dinars from 6.635 billion dinars, a decline of 414.5 million dinars, or 6.66 percent.

Banking sources said the financial institutions had recently observed a marked reduction in the frequency of cash replenishment at ATMs. The decline was also evident compared with the beginning of the regional war between the United States and Iran on February 28, as well as the corresponding period last year, indicating a tangible fall in individuals' demand for cash.

The downward trend is not limited to ATM withdrawals but extends to cash withdrawals through bank branches, suggesting a broader change in the public's reliance on physical currency.

While the growing popularity of electronic and contactless payment methods is an important factor behind the decline, banking officials believe that regulatory measures restricting cash transactions across several economic activities are also accelerating the shift towards digital payments.

Banking officials expect dependence on cash payments to decline further in 2027, with the rate of reliance on cash projected to fall to around 20 percent, effectively doubling the anticipated reduction in cash usage.

# Jordan's king calls Israel's expansionist ambitions 'biggest threat' to region's future

**FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU**
**AMMAN, NOV 2**

Jordan's King Abdullah II said Monday that Israel's expansionist ambitions pose the greatest threat to the region's future, stressing that regional security and stability cannot be achieved without Palestinians securing their rights to their land.



"Israeli expansionist ambitions remain the greatest threat to the region's future and its hopes," Abdullah said in a speech to parliament.

He pointed to the continuing humanitarian catastrophe in the Gaza Strip and Israeli attacks in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, despite international calls to halt Israeli violations.

He stressed that there could be no security or stability in the region without recognizing the Palestinian people's rights to their land.

"Those who believe tyranny grants legitimacy are mistaken, and those who believe time erases the truth are mistaken," the king said.

He reaffirmed Jordan's commitment to its principles, Arab identity and defending Arab causes, pledging to maintain that position as his father had before him and his son would after him.

The monarch also stressed that achieving a unified Arab position would remain a priority for Jordan.

Israel has waged a genocidal war on Gaza since October 2023, killing more than 74,000 Palestinians and injuring over 175,000 others, most of them women and children.

# Syria, Qatar defense chiefs meet to boost military ties




**FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU**
**DOHA, NOV 2**

The Syrian Arab Republic's Defense Minister Maj. Gen. Murhaf Abu Qasra discussed regional and international developments with Qatar's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defense Affairs Saoud bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani on Sunday in Doha.

The meeting focused on strengthening ties and supporting regional security and stability. Several Syrian military officers attended the meeting, according to the Syrian Arab News Agency.

# Oman carifies expat retirement savings framework

**FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU**
**MUSCAT, NOV 2**

The updated retirement savings framework for non-Omani personnel in the Sultanate will take effect on July 19, 2027. Under the regulations of the Social Protection Law, business owners must remit a monthly contribution equivalent to 9% of each employee's base salary into the fund.



Starting from its effective date, this national savings model will supersede the traditional end-of-service gratuity for all subsequent employment periods. Accumulated principal and investment yields will be distributed in line with the statutory provisions of the Social Protection Law.

Handling Severance Entitlements Accrued Prior to July 19, 2027 Accumulated gratuities earned before the new system takes effect may be resolved through one of three options:

Retained by the Organisation: The enterprise retains the accrued amount and disburses it upon final termination of employment. The total payout will be calculated against the employee's basic pay at the time of departure,adhering to the standard Labour Law.

Direct Payout: The accumulated severance amount is paid straight into the worker's bank account when the new system commences.

# Israel's newly elected Knesset to hold inaugural session



**FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU**
**TEL AVIV, NOV 2**

Israel's newly elected Knesset will hold its inaugural session on Nov. 10, during which lawmakers will be sworn in and elect a parliamentary speaker, the parliament announced Monday.

In a statement, the Knesset said the opening session would begin at 4 pm local time (1400 GMT), with President Isaac Herzog and other guests of honor in attendance.

The announcement follows last Tuesday's parliamentary elections, which failed to produce a clear majority in the 120-member legislature.

According to preliminary results, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's bloc secured 53 seats, while opposition parties won 48 and Arab parties obtained 19.

At least 61 seats are required to secure a parliamentary majority.

The official election results are expected to be announced Wednesday. During the inaugural session, all newly elected and returning lawmakers will take the oath of allegiance to Israel, according to the Knesset statement.

The parliament said its first task would be to elect a speaker from among its members.

The opposition Change bloc, led by former army chief Gadi Eisenkot, is seeking to replace incumbent Knesset Speaker Amir Ohana, a member of Netanyahu's Likud party.

The Knesset said the speaker is elected for a four-year term and is responsible for managing parliamentary affairs and representing the legislature before external bodies.

Shortly afterward, up to eight deputy speakers will be elected.

The speaker and deputies are responsible for setting the parliamentary agenda, approving parliamentary questions, legislative proposals and other matters submitted for debate.

The statement added that the Knesset speaker serves as acting president when the Israeli president is abroad.

Meanwhile, political parties have intensified consultations over who should be tasked with forming the next government.

# Türkiye appoints new capital markets chief

**FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU**
**ISTANBUL, NOV 2**

Türkiye has appointed Muhsin Atci, head of the Tax Inspection Board, as chairman of the Capital Markets Board (CMB), the Official Gazette said Saturday.

**The country also appointed Ersin Basar Ekmekci, deputy president of the Financial Crimes Investigation Board, as deputy chairman, and Yasemin Girici as a board member.**

Atci has spent his 23-year career in tax enforcement, rising through the ranks to lead the Tax Inspection Board in October 2023.

Along the way, he oversaw audits of some of the country's largest companies, building extensive experience in complex corporate and financial investigations.

He also has a master's degree in development policy from Duke University in the US. Ekmekci has a graduate degree in financial economics from Boston University in the US.

Girici served as a director on the board of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, representing Türkiye, Romania, Azerbaijan, Moldova, the Kyrgyz Republic and Algeria.

She holds a master's degree in economics from Rutgers University in the US.

# Saudi: Commerce Ministry warns businesses of license cancellation after 90 days

**FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU**
**RIYADH, NOV 2**

Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Commerce has urged commercial establishments to obtain the necessary licenses to practice their registered activities within 90 days of registration in the Commercial Register.




The ministry called on business owners to comply with the Commercial Register Law and its Implementing Regulations by obtaining the required licenses for activities subject to licensing within the specified period.

It warned that failure to obtain the necessary licenses within 90 days would result in the cancellation of the activity's registration in the Commercial Register, in accordance with Article 4 of the Implementing Regulations. The article requires traders to obtain a license within 90 days of registering an activity that requires licensing.

It also stipulates that an activity's registration will be canceled if the deadline passes without the required license being issued, or if the trader fails to provide proof of practicing an activity that does not require a license.

ministry reported that the total number of registered commercial franchises rose from 4,227 at the end of 2025 to 6,484 by the end of the third quarter of 2026.

The sectors recording the highest number of franchise registrations includedw food and beverages, fuel and petroleum, and fashion and apparel, among others.

The ministry highlighted the role of the Commercial Franchise Law in supporting the sector's growth by regulating and developing franchise activities, enhancing transparency and protecting the rights of the parties involved.

# Clean energy drive opening new opportunities: PM Modi

**NEW DELHI, NOV 2**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday highlighted India's expanding solar and renewable energy sector, saying the country's solar energy journey is opening up new opportunities, ahead of the Bharat Renewable Energy Summit 2026 and the 9th Assembly of the International Solar Alliance (ISA).



Two social media posts shared by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) highlighted an article written by Union Renewable Energy Minister Prahlad Joshi on the growth of solar power in India, driven by flagship initiatives such as PM Surya Ghar and PM-KUSUM.

"India's solar energy journey is opening up new opportunities," PM Modi said. He noted that the article discusses the expansion of solar power and future prospects, including solar-powered agriculture, energy storage, domestic manufacturing and the creation of green jobs as India works towards its target of achieving 500 GW of renewable energy capacity.

Another post shared by PM Modi highlighted the growing role of solar power in meeting India's energy needs as the country's clean energy transition gathers pace. The post referred to an article co-authored by philanthropist Michael Bloomberg and Joshi which discusses the growth of renewable energy, expansion of rooftop solar installations and investments in energy storage and transmission infrastructure. (IANS/UNI)

# Economic resilience driven by aspirations and domestic demand: FM

**MUMBAI, NOV 2**

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday said India's economic resilience is rooted in the aspirations of its people and strength of its large domestic market, while highlighting the government's focus on financial inclusion, social security, skills development and fiscal prudence.



Nirmala Sitharaman

Speaking during a fireside chat with HSBC India CEO Hitendra Dave at HSBC India's 'Furthering Financial Inclusion' event here, FM Sitharaman said the expansion of the middle class has increased purchasing power and supported domestic demand. On financial security, she said universal insurance coverage remains a high priority for the government.

She highlighted schemes such as the Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY) and Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY), which offer insurance protection at affordable premiums, as well as the Atal Pension Yojana which supports pension coverage for citizens. She said the government aims to achieve the goal of 'Insurance for All' by 2047 and is working to deepen insurance penetration across the country.

The finance minister further said initiatives such as Ayushman Bharat -- which provides health insurance coverage of up to Rs 5 lakh per family -- have enabled people to access medical treatment without being forced to sell assets or property. The expansion of primary healthcare centres has also helped improve access to healthcare services, according to her.

She said stability in governance provides businesses with clarity and confidence, contributing to sustained economic growth.

FM Sitharaman highlighted the World Bank's estimate that around 50 crore people have moved out of poverty, saying the achievement reflects consistent policy efforts and improved access to basic services. (IANS/UNI)

# Govt notifies new aviation rules 'Bharatiya Vayuyan Niyam'; effective Jan 1, 2027

**NEW DELHI, NOV 2**

The government has notified a new regulatory framework for the civil aviation sector that will come into force from January 1, 2027.




The Ministry of Civil Aviation has announced the new rules as Bharatiya Vayuyan Niyam, 2026, replacing the Aircraft Rules, 1937 which had governed the industry for nearly nine decades.

Moreover, the regulations provide a comprehensive framework covering aircraft registration, certification, manufacturing, maintenance, flight operations, personnel licensing and airport operations.

They also define the responsibilities of aircraft owners, operators, airlines and other aviation stakeholders.

Among the key provisions are rules governing aircraft registration and airworthiness certification, laying down the requirements for determining whether an aircraft is fit and safe for operation.

The framework also covers approvals related to aircraft design, manufacturing standards, modifications and repairs.

The new rules mandate regular inspections and maintenance procedures for aircraft throughout their operational life cycle.

In addition, operators will be required to ensure continued compliance with safety standards to keep aircraft airworthy.

The new framework also sets out qualification and licensing requirements for aviation personnel, including pilots, aircraft maintenance engineers and air traffic controllers.

It specifies training, examination, experience and medical fitness requirements, while also outlining conditions for licence renewal, suspension or cancellation.

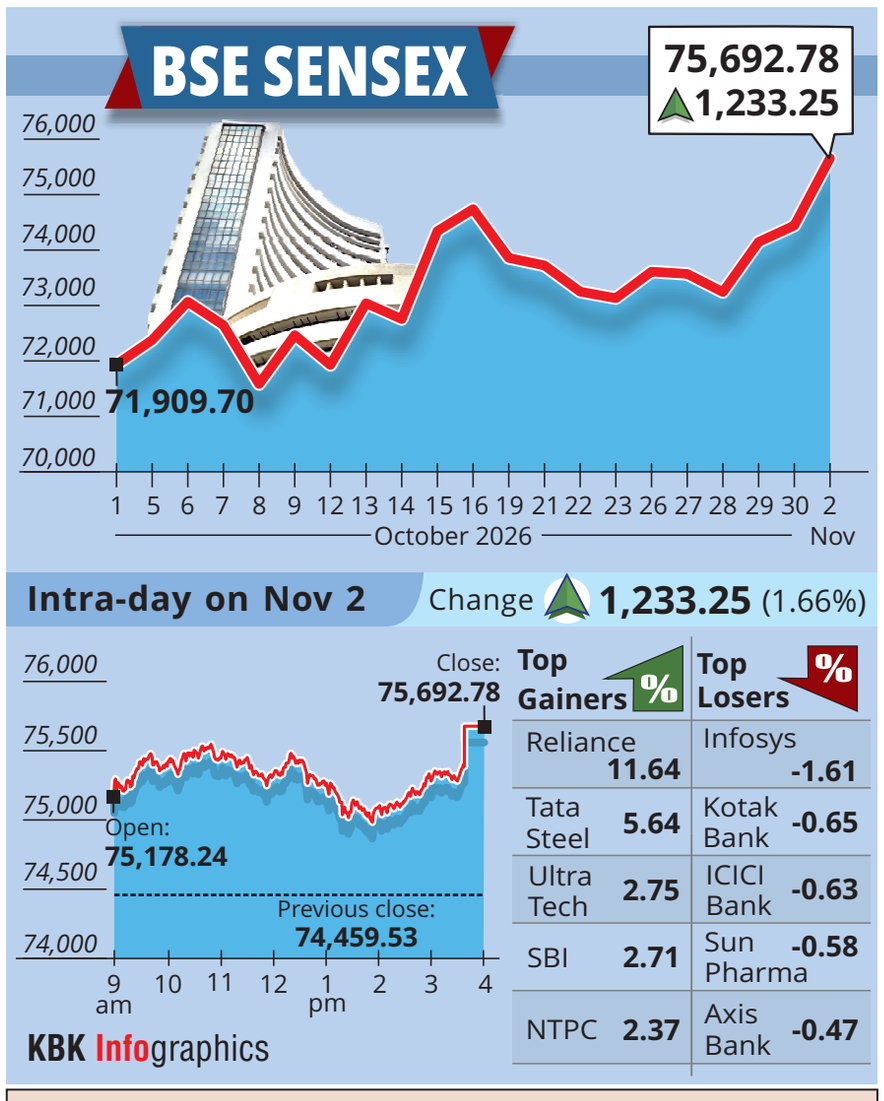
Apart from that, the regulations address airline operations, including flight planning, operational procedures and safety requirements.

Provisions relating to flight and duty time limitations for pilots and cabin crew have been included to help prevent fatigue and improve operational safety.

The rules also introduce detailed fare transparency requirements.

From the next year, airline firms will be required to disclose the total ticket price payable by passengers along with a break-up of base fares, taxes, fees, cancellation charges and refund policies.

Tariffs will remain subject to oversight by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). The new framework also covers aerodrome licensing and airport infrastructure standards. (IANS/UNI)




## Govt to boost biopharma startups

**NEW DELHI, NOV 2**

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Monday held a discussion with India's biopharma and biotechnology startups on key challenges and ways to unlock new opportunities for growth in the sector.

The minister indicated that the government is looking at the need for coordinated action to simplify regulatory processes, improve access to funding, expedite patent approvals, and strengthen indigenous procurement and research infrastructure to boost startups. "Stronger collaboration between government, industry and research institutions will help innovative startups scale and contribute to India's growing bioeconomy," he said.

India's bioeconomy has expanded from about $10 billion in 2014 to over $195 billion in 2025, reflecting a massive growth trajectory over the past decade. The sector has recorded an annual growth of around 17–18 per cent in the last year alone, rising from approximately $165 billion to $195 billion, marking India's emergence as a major global biotechnology hub, according to the India BioEconomy Report (IBER 2026).

India is steadily moving towards its target of a $300 billion bioeconomy by 2030, supported by a strong base of scientists, entrepreneurs, and startups. (IANS)

# India, New Zealand FTA unlocking new opportunities in trade

**NEW DELHI, NOV 2**

India and New Zealand are entering a new phase of bilateral engagement, moving beyond traditional diplomatic friendship towards a comprehensive partnership anchored in trade, investment, technology, agriculture and strategic cooperation. The India–New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (FTA) marks a significant milestone in this journey, creating fresh opportunities for businesses, farmers, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), entrepreneurs and young professionals in both countries, according to an article in Directus, a Greek news portal.

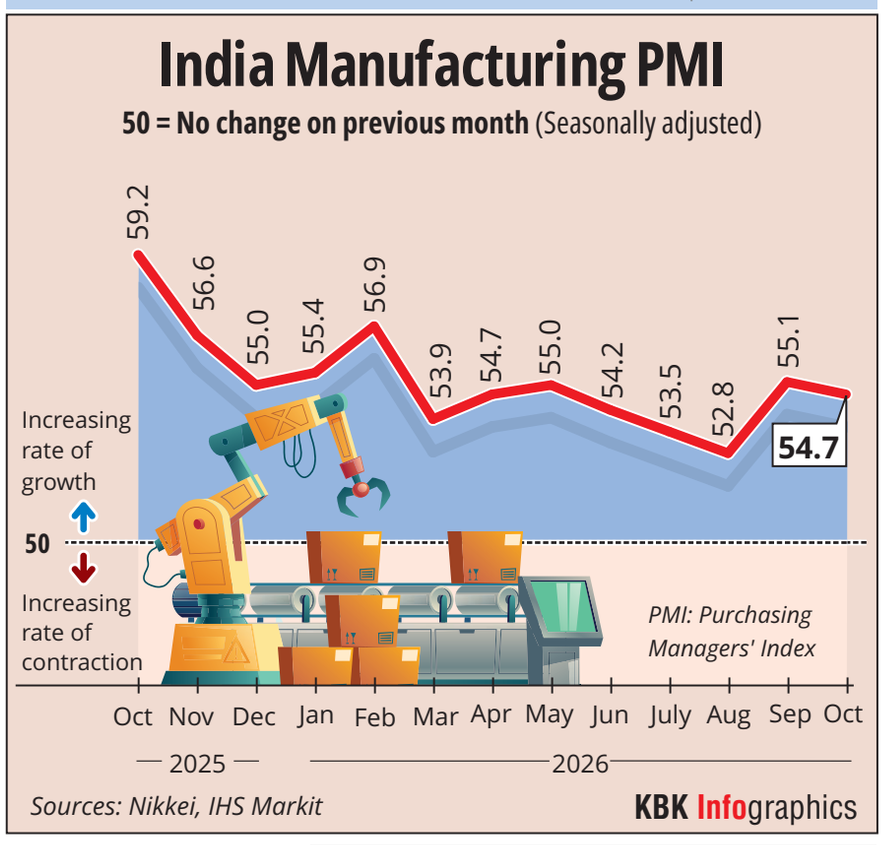


The article highlights that the agreement's importance extends well beyond tariff reductions. It provides a framework to expand market access, strengthen supply chains, facilitate investment, promote skills and technology exchange, and build stronger commercial relations between two economies with complementary strengths.

The broader Strategic Partnership, reinforced by the 'Roadmap to 2030,' gives this economic engagement a longer-term direction. Together, the FTA and the accompanying cooperation initiatives can help India and New Zealand build a more diversified, resilient and mutually beneficial relationship.

One of the FTA's most significant features is New Zealand's immediate zero-duty access for Indian exports across all 8,284 product lines. This offers Indian exporters an important opportunity to improve price competitiveness, diversify overseas markets and strengthen their presence in a developed economy.

Labour-intensive and manufacturing-oriented sectors are particularly well placed to benefit. Pharmaceuticals, textiles, engineering goods, machinery, gems and jewellery, sports goods, footwear and leather products are among the sectors identified as having substantial export potential. These industries can leverage improved market access to expand production, attract new orders, and strengthen distribution networks. (IANS)




# Govt on track to meet FY27 fiscal deficit target on strong corporate tax collections

**NEW DELHI, NOV 2**

The Centre is likely to achieve its fiscal deficit target of 4.3 per cent of GDP for FY27 because of robust corporate tax collections, according to a report.

As per Goldman Sachs' report, the fiscal deficit during April-September reached about 3.9 per cent of GDP, accounting for 42.6 per cent of the full-year budget estimate.

While this marks a higher run rate than in recent years, it said the government remains on course to meet its fiscal consolidation goal despite a relatively fast pace of borrowing and spending in the first half of the financial year.




According to the report, stronger-than-expected corporate tax revenues are helping offset pressure from weaker income tax collections, lower fuel tax receipts and higher expenditure commitments.

Moreover, corporate tax collections have risen around 22 per cent year-on-year so far in FY27, significantly above the Budget's projected growth rate of 12 per cent.

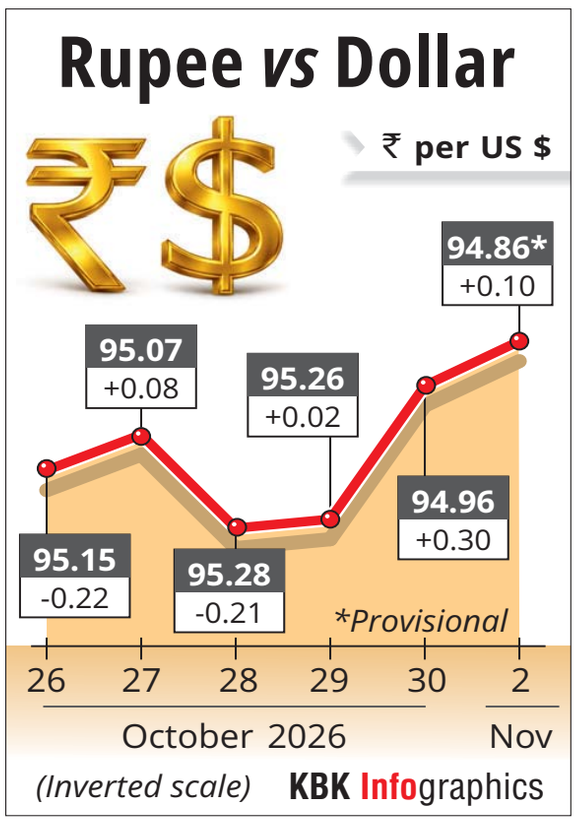
The report also highlighted that income tax collections have increased by about 9 per cent, falling short of the government's budgeted expectation of 18 per cent growth.

**Strong advance tax payments from companies contributed to the improvement, helping absorb the impact of rising interest payments and capital expenditure.**

It noted a sharp improvement in the fiscal position during September when the government's accounts were broadly balanced after recording a deficit of around Rs 2.6 lakh crore in August.

The government is expected to rely on expenditure reprioritisation to remain within its fiscal deficit target, according to the report.

It noted that capital expenditure remained a key focus area, rising 12.7 per cent on a year-to-date basis, although September spending was below year-ago levels due to lower outlays on roads and highways. (IANS/UNI)

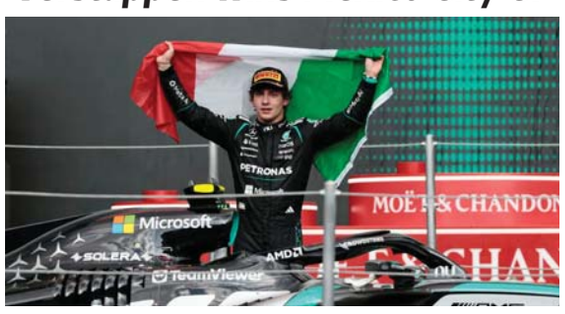


# Antonelli crowned youngest ever F1 champion

## Verstappen wins Mexico City GP

**MEXICO, NOV 2**

Kimi Antonelli became the youngest ever Formula 1 World Champion as third place in the Mexico City Grand Prix was enough for the Mercedes driver to claim the 2026 crown, with Max Verstappen taking race victory from Lewis Hamilton.




At 20 years and 68 days old, Antonelli broke the record set by Sebastian Vettel, who was 23 years and 134 days old when he won his first championship with Red Bull in 2010.

Antonelli entered the 71-lap race at the Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez needing only to finish ninth to claim a maiden F1 title, regardless of where rivals Hamilton and Mercedes teammate George Russell finished.

"We did it. And, you know, without them, I wouldn't be here. Without Mercedes, without my family," said new Antonelli. "So I'm very grateful for this moment, and it's one that will live forever. (IANS)

# Senthilkumar reaches Czech Open squash final

**BRNO, NOV 2**

India's Velavan Senthilkumar has advanced to the final of the Czech Open squash in Brno, a USD 35,000 PSA copper-level tournament, beating French world No. 32 Auguste Dussourd.



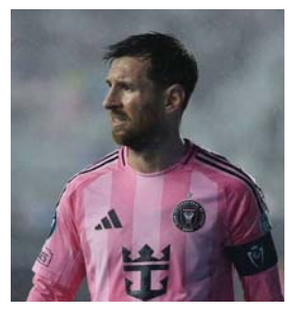
Senthilkumar beat the Frenchman 11-7, 12-10, 11-1 in the semifinals. The fourth-seeded Indian will take on top seed and world No. 31 Greg Lobban of Scotland as he hunts a second title of the season.

Top seed Lobban defeated Toufik Mekhalfi of France 11-9, 11-5, 11-4 to make it to the final.

Earlier, Senthilkumar made it to the semi-finals after beating Argentine Jeremias Azana 11-3, 11-8, 11-7. The Indian made light work of Argentine Jeremias Azana in game one, taking it 11-3. From there, the rallies became fast, intense and exciting. Senthilkumar found the quality at the front of the court to close out the following games 11-8, 11-7. (IANS/UNI)

# Messi heroics lead Inter Miami to Champions Cup

**FOXBOROUGH, NOV 2**



Lionel Messi delivered a stunning assist and late goal to rally Inter Miami past the New England Revolution, 2-1, and clinch a spot in next year's Concacaf Champions Cup.

The win also elevated Miami into the driver's seat for the Eastern Conference's No. 2 seed ahead of the MLS Cup Playoffs. And it left Messi with 26 goals and 16 assists on the season, putting him in pole position for a historic third straight MLS MVP award and second consecutive golden boot.

An even first 45 minutes saw the sides go into the half scoreless. Inter Miami's best chance of the half came in the 28th minute through Berterame, with a left-footed shot from the Mexican international from the left end. (IANS)

# Arsenal go top of Premier League as Manchester United woes continue

**LONDON, NOV 2**

Kai Havertz scored the only goal as Arsenal beat Liverpool 1-0 away to move to the top of the Premier League.




The German forward latched onto Declan Rice's measured pass to score a tap-in in the 16th minute.

Liverpool pushed for an equaliser for the remainder of the game, but despite registering more than 15 shots, the host was unable to break down a disciplined Arsenal defense.

On Saturday, Manchester City suffered its second consecutive defeat, losing 1-0 at home to Brighton after Matheus Nunes misjudged a clearance, allowing Yasin Ayari to score in the 11th minute, reports Xinhua.

Manchester City now sits second in the standings, three points behind Arsenal.

Michael Carrick's troubles at Manchester United continued as his team suffered a 2-0 defeat away to Chelsea.

Manchester United performed reasonably well in the first half but fell behind to an excellent individual goal from Morgan Rogers in the 50th minute.

Lisandro Martinez was then sent off after receiving a second yellow card and conceding a penalty, which Cole Palmer converted in the 64th minute to double Chelsea's lead and leave Carrick's side on its longest winless run since 1988.

Nottingham Forest coach Oliver Glasner remained defiant after his team slipped to a 2-0 defeat away to Brentford.

Forest defender Nikola Milenkovic turned Dango Ouattara's low cross into his own net, while Igor Thiago added a second in the 76th minute after being set up by Jaidon Anthony. (IANS)

# Frankfurt move into Bundesliga top eight with Hamburg win

**BERLIN, NOV 2**

Eintracht Frankfurt beat Hamburger SV 3-1 to climb to eighth place in the Bundesliga, securing its second victory over Hamburg in five days following a German Cup win.




Frankfurt made the stronger start in front of 59,000 spectators and took the lead in the 10th minute. Can Uzun released Fares Chaibi into the penalty area, and Hamburg defender Warmed Omari diverted the winger's low cross into his own net.

Hamburg equalised four minutes later. Lilian Brassier failed to deal with Miro Muheim's delivery, allowing Albert Gronbaek to square for Terem Moffi, who converted from close range, reports Xinhua.

Frankfurt captain Robin Koch threatened shortly before halftime, but goalkeeper Daniel Heuer Fernandes pushed his header wide.

The hosts regained the lead almost immediately after the interval. Brassier met Chaibi's corner with a header that Heuer Fernandes could only parry, leaving Raphael Onyedika to turn home the rebound in the 47th minute.

Chaibi thought he had added a third after an Ansgar Knauff cross, but the goal was ruled out for offside against Knauff.

Frankfurt extended its advantage in the 69th minute. Uzun regained possession in midfield and threaded the ball through to Younes Ebnoutalib, who finished past Heuer Fernandes. (IANS/UNI)

# ENTERTAINMENT



M.A.SALAM
Film Journalist

## As long as you breathe, nothing is a defeat: Suriya



Pointing out that life was beautiful and that one should always believe in it, actor Suriya has opined that nothing should be seen as a defeat as long as one continues to breathe.

Participating in the audio and trailer launch event of his upcoming film 'Scene', which has been directed by Jithu Madhavan, Suriya had an inspiring point to make to his fans and followers.

The actor and producer said, "We had told you that what you manifest, you will become. But don't stop with just manifestation alone. Work hard at what you want to achieve. Work for it at the grass roots level."

He went on to add, "Believe in Life. Life is beautiful. What I believe in is that as long as we breathe, everything is subject to review. Everything can be changed. Everything can be corrected. As long as you breathe, nothing is a defeat, nothing has ended, nothing has broken. You can set right everything. You can make a comeback. You can start from the beginning again and set things right. Believe in life. Life is beautiful."

The makers of the film have released the film's trailer which begins with Inbaraj (Suriya) opting to resign from the police force, much to the surprise of his seniors, his colleagues and his subordinates.

Inbaraj looks to chill at his home, disregarding his superior officer Stephen's(played by Lal)repeated orders that he report to his office. At one point, Stephen sends policemen to Inbaraj's house to have him arrested and brought to his office.

## Mohanlal says #L368's shooting is in progress

Malayalam superstar Mohanlal, who plays the lead in director Anoop Sathyan's eagerly awaited next film, on Monday confirmed that regular shooting for the film had now begun.




Mohanlal took to his social media timelines to confirm the development. He wrote, "#L368 Shoot in progress...#AnoopSathyan #BinuGeorgeAlexander #AntonyPerumbavoor."

For the unaware, the film had gone on floors in Kochi with a pooja ceremony that was attended by a number of celebrities including the entire crew of the film.

The film, which is yet-to-be-titled and which is tentatively being referred to as #L368, was officially launched with the mother of producer Binu George Alexander lighting the traditional lamp.

Mohanlal himself clapped the clapboard for the first symbolic shot of the film, much to the delight of the dignitaries present at the event.

Sources say that the upcoming film, which will be director Anoop Sathyan's second film after 'Varane Avashyamund', will be a comedy action entertainer and that it will also feature actor Mukesh in a pivotal role.

The makers had released the first look poster of the film on the occasion. It showed Mohanlal seated next to a little girl, sporting a smile even as another little child leaning on his back, with a paper toy in her hand.

Mohanlal, during his address on the occasion, had expressed happiness about participating in the inaugural function. In particular, he told the film's director Anoop Sathyan that he had a deep and long association with his father, ace director Sathyan Anthikad.

Mohanlal pointed out that he was someone who had worked with Sathyan Anthikad from his first film to his latest film. "It is like a wonderful journey and I am happy to continue it with his son," Mohanlal said and wished that this film emerge as a good film. "There are all indications that it will emerge as a good film," Mohanlal added.

## Dia Mirza responds to row over BMC's pollution-free Diwali



Actress Dia Mirza has issued a statement to IANS after the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) deleted its pollution-free Diwali video featuring her following an objection from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

In her statement, the 'Rehnaa Hai Terre Dil Mein' actress emphasized the significance of Diwali as a festival that celebrates the victory of good over evil and highlighted the need for healthier and more mindful celebrations.

"Diwali celebrates the triumph of light over darkness, knowledge over ignorance, and hope over despair. The video was recorded in the interest of public awareness, with the intention of encouraging a healthier and more mindful celebration. Air pollution is a matter of public health, and every effort towards reducing it is a step towards a better environment for all," Dia said.

The BMC had shared the video as part of its Diwali awareness campaign, encouraging people to celebrate the festival while being mindful of the impact of air pollution. However, the civic body later removed the video after the BJP raised an objection to the message.

For its awareness drive, the civic body featured several well-known personalities, including Dia Mirza, Madhuri Dixit, and cricketer Ajinkya Rahane, in video messages promoting an environment-friendly Diwali. However, Satam raised objections to Dia's participation, questioning the involvement of outsiders in advising people on how to celebrate the festival.

## Himesh thanks Salman, Dhawan for career



Music composer Himesh Reshamiya has credited Bollywood superstar Salman Khan and director David Dhawan as one of the key faces behind his illustrious career spanning decades.

He recently appeared on film trade expert Komal Nahta's 'Game Changers: The Music Series' podcast, and said that he was satisfied with his work in television as a producer but then it was Salman Khan, who pushed him to explore cinema and film music.

He said, "I get very emotional and feel grateful to everyone who has been a part of my journey. If Salman Bhai had never given me a break, there is a possibility that I would never have wanted to struggle. I was doing well in television serials, so why would I go out and sell music? The songs were genuinely superhits".

# TG to host Khelo India Youth Games across 20 venues

## *CM Revanth directs officials to ensure world-class, permanent facilities for games*



**FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU**
**HYDERABAD, NOV 2**

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has directed officials to make permanent arrangements with the highest quality standards for the 8th edition of the Khelo India Youth Games, scheduled to be held in Telangana from December 11 to 22, 2026.

Reviewing the preparations at MCRHRD on Monday, the Chief Minister instructed officials to utilise the resources and arrangements being made for the Invest Telangana Global Summit simultaneously for the Khelo India Games. He stressed that sports infrastructure developed for the event should remain useful as long-term assets even after the competitions.

The Games will feature 27 sports disciplines and one demonstration event across 20 venues in six cities, including Hyderabad. More than 7,000 young athletes and around 2,000 coaches and officials are expected to participate. Revanth Reddy also directed officials to take immediate steps to include Telangana's traditional sport, Karrasamu, in the competition under the host-state quota.

The Chief Minister called for close monitoring of arrangements by Group-I officers and trainee officers, ensuring quality infrastructure, accommodation and food facilities for athletes. He instructed officials to submit weekly progress reports and cautioned against unnecessary expenditure on the opening and closing ceremonies.

Emphasising the government's long-term goal of transforming Telangana into a national sports hub and producing Olympic medallists, he said the Games should provide young athletes with exposure to international-standard facilities and training. He also stressed the need to avoid the infrastructure shortcomings witnessed during the previous government's tenure.

Ministers Jupally Krishna Rao and Vakiti Srihari, Sports Authority Chairman Shiva Sena Reddy, Chief Secretary Sanjay Jaju, Chief Minister's Advisor K. Ramakrishna Rao, Special Chief Secretary (Sports) Vani Prasad and Sports Authority Managing Director Soni Bala Devi, along with other senior officials, attended the meeting.

# One lakh Telangana students to get free AI, cloud computing training: Sridhar Babu

**FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU**
**HYDERABAD, NOV 2**

One lakh students across Telangana will receive free training in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Cloud Computing under the Telangana AI and Cloud Skilling Initiative, Minister for IT and Industries D Sridhar Babu announced on Monday.



**An agreement between TASK and AWS was signed at Secretariat in presence of Minister Sridhar Babu.**

The initiative will be implemented by the Telangana Academy for Skill and Knowledge (TASK) in collaboration with Amazon Web Services (AWS), without any financial burden on the State Government, educational institutions or students.

An agreement between TASK and AWS was signed at the Dr B R Ambedkar Telangana Secretariat in the presence of the Minister.

Speaking on the occasion, Sridhar Babu said students from 643 TASK-affiliated colleges across the State would receive industry-oriented training in AI, Cloud Computing, Data Engineering, Machine Learning and Generative AI.

The programme will provide hands-on learning opportunities through access to the AWS Cloud Console. Specialised learning tracks will also be introduced for students pursuing non-STEM courses, including Arts and Commerce, in addition to those studying Engineering and Science.

Enrolled students will get one-year free access to more than 900 digital courses through AWS Skill Builder, besides discount vouchers for global certification examinations. The initiative will also include industry interaction sessions with technology experts and hackathons to provide practical exposure and opportunities for students to engage with industry professionals.

The Minister said TASK would organise special job fairs for eligible students who successfully complete the training programme to facilitate employment opportunities. Faculty members from participating colleges would also receive training in AI and Cloud technologies.

ITE&C Joint Secretary Anudeep Durishetty, Telangana State Council of Higher Education Chairman Prof. V. Balakista Reddy, TASK CEO Nitin Reddy, AWS India and South Asia President Sandeep Dutta, Head of Education and Skills Abhinav, Country Manager (Skilling and Social Impact) Pratibha, AWS Academy TPM Akanksha Rai Sharma and other officials attended the programme.

# Public Auction of Seized Vehicles on Nov 4

**TFP I RAVI KUMAR**
**MEDCHAL-MALKAJGIRI, NOV 2**

The Prohibition and Excise Department, Quthbullapur, will conduct a public auction of seven seized two-wheelers on November 4, 2026, at 11 am, at the Balanagar Excise Office.

According to Balanagar Excise Inspector Ramanaiah, the vehicles were confiscated in connection with various NDPS cases. The auction will be conducted under the supervision of District Prohibition and Excise Officer Praveen.

Interested bidders must bring a deposit of Rs. 2,000 and a valid government-issued identity card. For details, the public may contact the department at 8712658739.

# Joint surveys to resolve revenue-forest land disputes permanently: Revenue Minister

**FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU**
**HYDERABAD, NOV 2**



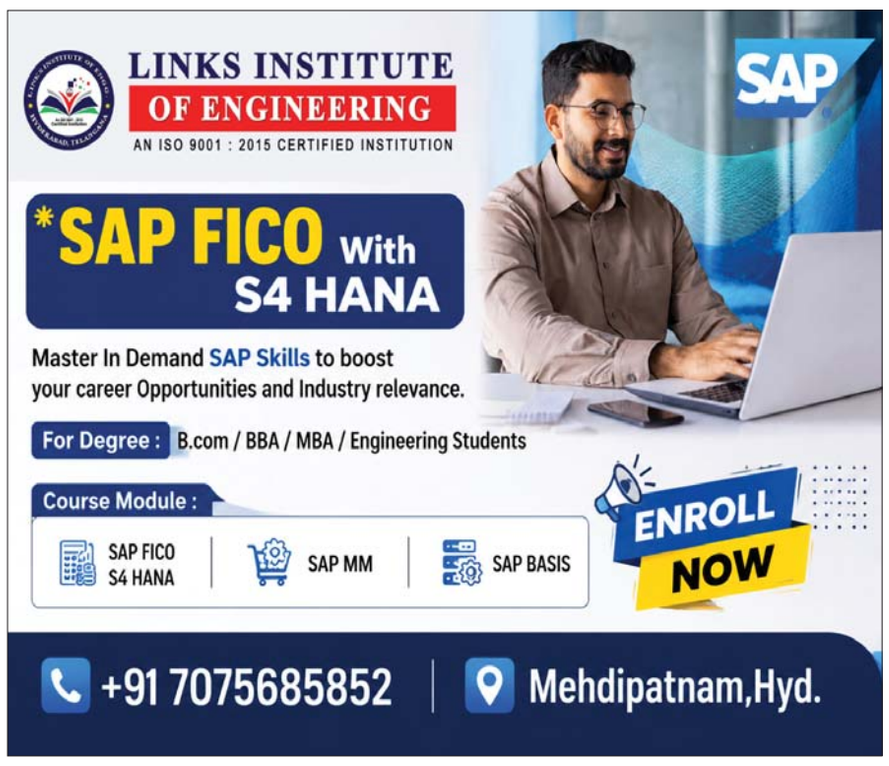
Telangana Revenue, Housing and Information & Public Relations Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy has called for coordinated joint surveys by the Revenue and Forest departments to resolve long-pending land boundary disputes permanently, stressing that farmers and the general public should not suffer due to differences between the two departments.

Chairing a high-level review meeting with officials of the Revenue, Forest, Survey and Settlement departments at the Dr B.R. Ambedkar Secretariat on Monday, the Minister directed officials to conduct joint field-level surveys using modern technology and scientific methods to establish clear land boundaries.

He said scientifically determining boundaries would prevent recurring disputes and provide a lasting solution. The government was implementing comprehensive reforms through the Survey, Settlement and Land Records Department to strengthen land administration and ensure transparency and accuracy in land records, he added.

Ponguleti instructed officials to work in coordination and resolve decades-old land disputes without causing inconvenience to the public. He also urged farmers and local residents to cooperate with the survey teams and directed officials to form coordination committees at district and mandal levels to ensure effective implementation.

Revenue Secretary Lokesh Kumar, Survey and Settlement Commissioner Rajiv Gandhi Hanumanthu and PCCF Vinay Kumar, among other officials, attended the meeting.




# Amit Shah's Hyderabad visit brought no benefit to Telangana: TPCC Chief

**TFP I CORRESPONDENT**
**HYDERABAD, NOV 2**

TPCC President & MLC Mahesh Kumar Goud on Monday criticised union Home Minister Amit Shah's Hyderabad visit, stating that it had brought no benefit to Telangana and that the Centre should have addressed the promises made to the State during bifurcation instead of holding political rallies.

In a statement, Goud questioned the purpose of Shah's participation in the 'Save Democracy' march and demanded answers on pending bifurcation commitments, including the Kazipet Railway Coach Factory, Bayyaram Steel Plant, national status for irrigation projects and the release of the State's rightful share of central funds and tax revenues.



**Mahesh Kumar Goud**

He also questioned the Centre over employment opportunities for youth and support for farmers, and demanded that Shah release a white paper detailing the Centre's contributions to Telangana.

On the SIR of electoral rolls, Goud said the Congress was concerned about the deletion of eligible voters and urged the BJP to ensure that no genuine voter loses the right to vote. He said the Centre must respond to the concerns raised by the Congress instead of criticising the party.

Rejecting the BJP's allegations of 'RR Tax', Goud said the Congress government was implementing welfare programmes for farmers, women, youth and weaker sections despite what he described as the Centre's discriminatory approach towards Telangana. He alleged that the BJP remembered the State only during elections and demanded that it focus on Telangana's development and people's rights.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday accused Revanth Reddy of turning the entire Telangana into an ATM for the Congress leaders sitting in Delhi and said the people of Telangana will never forgive him for this.

# 85th IRC to serve as pre-summit for 'Invest Telangana' Global Summit

**FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU**
**HYDERABAD, NOV 2**

Roads and Buildings Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy has directed officials to complete ongoing infrastructure projects within stipulated deadlines while maintaining quality standards. He also instructed them to make the 85th Indian Roads Congress (IRC) Global Summit a platform to showcase Telangana's development, culture and investment potential to national and international delegates.

The Minister held an extensive review meeting with senior Roads and Buildings Department officials at the Dr B.R. Ambedkar Telangana Secretariat on Monday, reviewing departmental works and arrangements for the IRC summit.

The 85th IRC will be held at HITEX, Hyderabad, from November 19 to 22. Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari and Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy will inaugurate the summit on the morning of November 19. Union Ministers, representatives from various states, international delegates and engineering experts are expected to attend.

Komatireddy directed officials to establish a special Telangana Pavilion showcasing the state's culture, heritage, tourism destinations, infrastructure projects and investment opportunities, alongside around 400 exhibition stalls. He also called for cultural programmes featuring Telangana artists and extensive publicity in Hyderabad, Delhi, Mumbai and Bengaluru.

Describing the IRC summit as a prelude to the proposed 'Invest Telangana' Global Summit in December at Bharat Future City, the Minister asked officials to use the opportunity to attract investments, industries and employment opportunities to the state.

# TG govt constitutes WEEC ahead of Global Summit 2026



**FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU**
**HYDERABAD, NOV 2**

The Telangana government has constituted the Women Entrepreneurs Executive Council (WEEC) ahead of the Invest Telangana Global Summit 2026, scheduled from December 7 to 9 at Bharat Future City, Hyderabad, to promote investments and improve access to funding for women-led businesses.

The Council is chaired by Minister for Women and Child Welfare D. Anasuya Seethakka, with WE Hub CEO Sita Pallacholla as Member Convenor. It brings together policymakers, entrepreneurs, investors and corporate leaders to identify measures to strengthen women's entrepreneurship. The Council will focus on four pillars - Policy and Institutional Leadership, Urban Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Social Impact and Inclusive Enterprise, and Capital, Investment and Corporate Partnerships, led respectively by Divya Devarajan, Naiyya Saggi, Dr. Harish Hande and Ankita Vashishtha.

Speaking on the initiative, Seethakka said women entrepreneurs deserved better access to capital, markets and policy support, adding that women's enterprises should be viewed as drivers of economic growth rather than merely welfare initiatives.

The Council's recommendations will be compiled into a white paper on women's entrepreneurship, to be released on December 8, 2026, with EY as the publication partner. WE Hub will serve as the nodal agency for implementing the recommendations through the concerned government departments.

According to DealStreetAsia's funding review cited by the Council, startups founded exclusively by women raised only 0.97 per cent of private capital in India in 2025, according to an official statement on Monday.

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Editor: **MOHAMMED ABDULLAH KHAN. Postal Reg. No. D/RNP/HCD-2001/2025-27.** Phone: +91 9440140120. Email:freedompress15@gmail.com