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Honest Journalism...



NAVY'S MULTI-PURPOSE VESSEL SAMARTHAK COMMISSIONED

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BJP TO LAUNCH CAMPAIGN TO COUNTER CONG CLAIMS ON SIR, ECI

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INDIANS TOP KUWAIT'S DOMESTIC WORKFORCE

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5 JUMADA AL-AWWAL 1448H

NAMAZ TIME

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

SUNRISE/SUNSET

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

MOONRISE/MOONSET

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

WORLD▶ P8



5 DEAD FOLLOWING SHOOTING AT OREGON SCHOOL

BJP fears losing power, hence labelling opposition as 'anti-national': Congress

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
NEW DELHI, OCT 16

Congress leader Pawan Khera on Friday claimed that the ruling BJP was frightened of losing its grip on power and hence pushing a certain narrative of 'regime change' demand as "anti-national and anarchic". Addressing a press conference at Congress HQs here, Pawan Khera, Chairman of the party's Media and Publicity department, said that the anger of the youth and the general public was palpable on the streets across the country, and this is what has made the ruling dispensation nervous and jittery.

His response came after Union Minister Rajnath Singh rebuked the Congress party and its allies, claiming that they were attempting a Bangladesh-style regime change by inciting anarchy. Khera asserted that changing a regime through elections is an integral part of democracy while outlining the Opposition's goal to defeat the government and effect a change in the regime through elections and not by anarchic means.

"BJP, rattled by the fear of losing power, is characterising this democratic opposition as anti-national," he claimed. Khera further claimed that not just the Opposition but the people at large are also raising questions over electoral irregularities.

"Whenever the BJP faces such questions—a natural part of democracy—they perceive this very democracy as treason," he pointed out. Hitting back at Rajnath Singh and other BJP leaders' remarks, the Rajya Sabha MP remarked that the Modi government's narrative is weakening, and such statements are being made out of a fear of losing power.

"Have you ever seen an opposition take to the streets to protest in support of the government?" he asked the Union Minister. Citing examples of regime changes over the years, the Congress leader emphasised that changing a government through elections is a standard democratic process.



People carry out the 'Lehra Do Tiranga' protest march at Connaught Place in New Delhi.

India-US trade deal 99% done

WASHINGTON, OCT 16



A long-awaited trade agreement between India and the United States is almost complete, with only one or two per cent of negotiations remaining, a senior US official said, signalling that the two countries are approaching a breakthrough after months of high-level discussions.

The official said the biggest issues had already been resolved and that negotiations were continuing at the highest political levels, including between President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"The biggest items have been settled. I mean ...., it's pretty much done. We have that one, one or two per cent left," the official told reporters during a State Department briefing on Friday.

The remarks came ahead of Secretary of State Marco Rubio's scheduled visit to India, where he will hold discussions with Indian government officials and leading business executives in Mumbai and Jamnagar.

The official said the two governments remained in constant contact over the proposed agreement. (IANS/UNI)

Dipke, Neha Bora detained

NEW DELHI, OCT 16

All India Students' Association (AISA) National President Neha Bora was detained by the Delhi Police on Friday, minutes after the detention of Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) founder and Convener Abhijeet Dipke while on his way to take part in the 'Tiranga Assembly', called by him at the Central Park in Connaught Place (CP) at 5 p.m. Bora, along with workers of AISA and other left-wing parties, was detained from near Mandi House while on her way to take part in CJP's 'Lehra Do Tiranga' protest.

Dipke had called the 'Tiranga Assembly', urging people to gather at the Central Park in New Delhi's Connaught Place and wave the Tricolour in protest against the arrest of his party's Co-conveners Saurav Das and Ashutosh Rankа. (IANS/UNI)

Airlines cancel flights to Saudi cities until Oct 20

NEW DELHI, OCT 16



Indian carriers -- Air India and Air India Express -- on Friday announced the suspension of flights to several destinations in Saudi Arabia till October 20, citing the evolving security situation in the region.

According to travel advisories issued by airlines on social media platform X, services to key Saudi cities -- including Riyadh, Jeddah and Dammam -- will remain suspended for varying periods, with some carriers also cancelling flights to Madinah. "In view of the evolving situation in Saudi Arabia, all Air India flights to and from Riyadh, Dammam and Jeddah stand cancelled until 20 October 2026," Air India said.

The airline further stated that passengers affected by these cancellations are being offered a full refund.

"At Air India, the safety and security of our passengers and crew remain the highest priority," the airline wrote on X.

"We continue to closely monitor the situation and will proactively review and adjust our operations as necessary. Our teams are extending all possible support and assistance to impacted guests," says Air India Express. It also offered complimentary rescheduling or a full refund on cancellation. (IANS/UNI)

Census rules amended for enumerators

NEW DELHI, OCT 16

The Home Ministry on Friday notified the Census (Amendment) Rules, 2026, expanding the eligibility for enumerators to include teachers, government officials, local authority staff, and any other person considered suitable by the administration of the respective state governments or Union Territories. Under the revised rules, teachers from any government educational institution, local authority, aided or unaided private educational institutions, societies, or trusts can be appointed as enumerators.

Additionally, clerks or any official of the Central or State government, local authority or establishment, including public sector undertakings, statutory bodies, banks, companies, institutions, societies, and trusts may also be included. Also, any person whom the administration of a State or Union Territory considers suitable may perform the duties of enumerator.

Enumerators play a crucial role in conducting the Census of India, as they are responsible for visiting households, collecting accurate demographic, social, and economic information, and ensuring that every individual is counted.

`India conducts a population Census once every 10 years under the Census Act, 1948. The last such exercise was conducted in 2011, while the 2021 census was postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. (IANS/UNI)

PM Modi hails NSG for fight against terrorism

NEW DELHI, OCT 16



Narendra Modi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday hailed the National Security Guard (NSG) for leading the nation's fight against terrorism. In a post on social media platform X on the 42nd Raising Day of the elite, nodal anti-terror force, PM Modi said, "Greetings to the personnel of the National Security Guard on their Raising Day. They embody courage, precision and an unwavering commitment to duty."

"Their steadfast vigil against terrorism and their readiness to protect our people and vital national assets inspire immense confidence and pride," the Prime Minister said in the X post. Union Home Minister Amit Shah also praised the NSG's Black Cat commandos for their valour and service to the country.

"Raising Day greetings to the warriors of the National Security Guard. The @nsgblackcats has blown up every terror threat to India with the fury of the storms and guarded the nation with steely courage, flawless professionalism and valiant sacrifices. Salute to the martyrs of the force," Home Minister Shah said. In a post on X, the Army said, "#GeneralDhirajSeth, #COAS, and All Ranks of the #IndianArmy extend warm greetings and best wishes to All Ranks, #Veterans and Families of the National Security Guard, #NSG on the occasion of 42nd Raising Day."

NSG Director General (DG), Brighu Srinivasan, also extended warm greetings and best wishes to all ranks and their families on its 42nd Raising Day. In a post on X, Srinivasan said, "Built on a legacy of courage, sacrifice and operational excellence, the Black Cats embody the Nation's unwavering resolve against terrorism."

"On this proud occasion, NSG reaffirms the Force's commitment, as India's National Nodal Counter-Terror Force, to maintaining the highest standards of preparedness, professionalism and operational excellence in the service of the Nation," the NSG DG added. (IANS)

CARTOON CAROUSEL



EAM and Ras Al Khaimah Ruler discuss India-UAE ties, Gulf situation

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
ABU DHABI, OCT 16

External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar held a meeting with Ras Al Khaimah Ruler Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi on Friday, with discussions held on strengthening ties and the situation in the Gulf.

"An honour to meet HH Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi, the Ruler of Ras Al Khaimah and member of the UAE Supreme Council. Grateful for his insights on further strengthening India-UAE ties, and deepening engagements with the region. The situation in the Gulf also came up for discussion," EAM Jaishankar wrote on X after the meeting.



The External Affairs Minister is on an official visit to UAE from October 14-16. On Thursday, EAM Jaishankar participated in a discussion on 'The Continental Corridors: Who Connects the Heartland?' at Raisina Middle East Dialogue in Abu Dhabi. In his remarks at the discussion, he said that India is building its own strengths and establishing trusted partnerships amid evolving global landscape.

"A good discussion today on 'The Continental Corridors: Who Connects the Heartland?' at Raisina Dialogue Middle East. Made the following points: Competition has intensified, new chokepoints have emerged, and the willingness to leverage advantages has grown. Globalisation cannot be reversed, but it must be navigated with greater resilience. IMEC is already shaping regional thinking on connectivity. As the global landscape evolves, India is building its own strengths and establishing trusted partnerships," EAM Jaishankar mentioned on X.

The second edition of Raisina Middle East was hosted in partnership with the UAE's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in Abu Dhabi on October 14-15.

Bathukamma Gift: Indiramma housing sanctions for 109 beneficiaries in Mulugu



Minister Danasari Anasuya Seethakka distributes Indiramma house sanction letters to 109 beneficiaries in Govindaraopet mandal, Mulugu district.

TFP I MOHAMMAD RAFI
MULUGU, OCT 16

State Panchayat Raj, Rural Development, Rural Water Supply, and Women and Child Welfare Minister Danasari Anasuya Seethakka distributed Indiramma housing sanction letters to 109 beneficiaries from 13 villages in Govindaraopet mandal on Friday. The houses will be constructed with government assistance of Rs. 5 lakh each, involving a total allocation of Rs. 5.45 crore.

The programme was held at the Rythu Vedika in Govindaraopet in the presence of District Collector Borkhada Hemanth Sahadeva Rao. Seethakka said beneficiary selection was being carried out transparently and assured eligible applicants who were not selected in this phase that they would be considered in subsequent phases. She said around 5,000 houses had been sanctioned in the first phase in Mulugu constituency.

The minister urged beneficiaries to utilise the funds properly and begin construction promptly. Payments would commence after completion of the foundation, while eligible women's self-help group members could access loans of up to Rs. 1 lakh through their groups to meet initial construction expenses. She also directed officials to ensure the availability of sand and asked local representatives to support beneficiaries in completing their houses.

Seethakka highlighted government welfare schemes, including free electricity for eligible households, ration rice and free bus travel for women. She also urged village representatives to expand employment opportunities under the rural employment guarantee scheme and called on officials to take precautionary measures against difficulties arising from changing weather conditions.

District Superintendent of Police Sudheer Ramnath Kekan, Additional Collector (Local Bodies) Sampath Rao, Market Committee Chairperson Rega Kalyani, public representatives and concerned officials attended the programme.

Pawan Kalyan seeks support for JS candidate

HYDERABAD, OCT 16

Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister and Jana Sena (JS) Party president Pawan Kalyan on Friday appealed to Telangana graduates to elect Dr. Gadala Srinivasa Rao from the Khammam–Nalgonda–Warangal Graduate MLC constituency.

Launching the Jana Sena Graduate Express campaign vehicle, he said Telangana's youth had played a vital role in statehood, but several aspirations remained unfulfilled. He urged graduates to give Jana Sena an opportunity to represent their concerns in the Legislative Council.

The campaign vehicle will tour the region for 120 days, enabling graduates to share their problems and expectations with the candidate, he said. (NSS)

He called on graduates to support Gadala Srinivasa Rao and said he was seeking an opportunity to serve Telangana through the Graduate MLC constituency.

T-BJP credits Modi govt's welfare schemes for women's empowerment



Telangana BJP President N. Ramchander Rao addresses BJP Mahila Morcha state executive meeting in Hyderabad.

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
HYDERABAD, OCT 16

Telangana BJP President N. Ramchander Rao on Friday said welfare programmes launched by the Narendra Modi-led NDA government had benefited crores of women across the country, while accusing the Congress government in Telangana of failing to ensure women's safety.

Addressing the BJP Mahila Morcha state executive meeting here, attended by its national president and MP Roop Kumari Choudhary, Rao urged party women leaders to take the Centre's welfare schemes to every household.

He cited schemes such as Jan Dhan Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana and Shakti Sadan as initiatives aimed at improving women's financial inclusion, livelihoods and welfare.

He also accused the Congress, BRS and other INDIA bloc parties of obstructing women's reservation efforts, despite the passage of the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam providing for 33 per cent reservation for women in legislative bodies.

Rao alleged that the Congress and BRS had adopted an opposing stance on women's reservation and criticised the Congress government over the reported increase in crimes against women in Telangana.

Citing figures presented at the meeting, he said around 20,000 cases were registered in 2024 and approximately 21,000 in 2025, and demanded that the state government take responsibility and strengthen measures to protect women.

BJP Mahila Morcha Telangana in-charge Nalini, state president Dr. Mekala Shilpa Reddy, state office-bearers, executive committee members and other leaders attended the meeting.

Mahabubnagar MLA distributes house titles to 310 families after decade-long wait



TFP I AHAD SIDDIQUI
MAHABUBNAGAR, OCT 16

Telangana Government Whip and Mahabubnagar MLA Yennam Srinivas Reddy on Friday distributed legal ownership documents for double-bedroom houses to 310 families from Christianpally and Adarsh Nagar, resolving a decade-long delay linked to complications involving Survey No. 523. The programme was held at Annapurna Gardens in the presence of District Collector Khushboo Gupta.

Yennam announced 2 crore for infrastructure development in the colony and said steps would be taken to provide essential facilities, including an Anganwadi centre and a primary school, wherever required. He also highlighted the 603-crore underground drainage project aimed at improving sanitation across Mahabubnagar.

Emphasising education and employment, the MLA said 70 crore had been sanctioned for Mahabubnagar Degree College, with works worth 20 crore taken up in the first phase. New buildings are planned for MVS Junior College and the Government Girls Junior College. He also cited allocations for institutions at Nadigadda and the establishment of two Advanced Technology Centres to strengthen technical education and employment opportunities.

Yennam further proposed a Phule-Ambedkar Knowledge Centre with a model library to support students.

Mayor G. Mamatha, Deputy Mayor Marepalli Surender Reddy, MUDA Chairman Lakshman Yadav, senior Congress leader Siraj Khadri, Congress social media convenor CJ Benahar, town Congress working president Azmath Ali, Municipal Commissioner Ramanujul Reddy, 10th Division Corporator Ramesh, others, attended the programme.

BRS will fight for farmers if power supply issues persist: Zaheerabad MLA



TFP I HIMAYATH ULLA
ZAHEERABAD, OCT 16

Zaheerabad MLA Manik Rao has demanded a reliable and uninterrupted power supply to the agricultural sector, alleging that frequent power cuts under the Congress government are threatening standing crops and causing hardship to farmers.

Addressing a press conference at his camp office on Thursday, the BRS MLA said farmers were struggling to irrigate their fields, particularly paddy crops at the grain-filling stage. He alleged that agricultural power supply was limited to six or seven hours a day, with unscheduled cuts and low voltage damaging motors and affecting irrigation.

Manik Rao criticised the Congress government over irrigation facilities and alleged that inadequate operation of pumps under the Nettempadu project had deprived tail-end farmers of water, forcing some to migrate in search of livelihoods.

He demanded immediate relief for farmers whose crops were drying up, urgent repairs to damaged motors and transformers, a white paper on electricity generation and coal stocks, and a time-bound action plan to ensure dependable power supply. He also called for a review of planning failures at the government level.

Warning of an agitation, Manik Rao said the BRS would fight alongside farmers if the government failed to address their electricity-related problems.

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
Superintending Engineer (Projects)
'e'-Procurement Tender Notice

NIT No.	Name of the Work	Down Load Start date/Last date & time for receipts of Bids	Office Name, Address and Cell No.
NIT. No. 13/ SE(P)/GHMC/ 2026 - 27/ 2nd call, Dt: 15.10.2026	Remodelling of Afzal Sagar Nala from Osmangunj culvert through Allam Market upto new culvert at Kishangunj under Golkonda Zone, GHMC	23.10.2026 from 03.00 PM 30.10.2026 up to 03.00 PM	O/o Superintending Engineer (Projects), GHMC Ph.No. 7337364207

Further details can be seen at e-procurement @ http://tender.telangana.gov.in
Sd/- Superintending Engineer (Projects), GHMC.
DIPR - R.O. No. : 12068-PP/CL/ADVT/2026-27

Red Run marathon promotes HIV awareness

HYDERABAD, OCT 16

Around 136 participants from across Telangana took part in the State-Level Red Fest–Red Run Marathon 2026 in Hyderabad on Friday to promote HIV awareness, prevention, early testing and treatment.

Organised under the supervision of Telangana State AIDS Control Society (TGSACS) Project Director K. Vidya Sagar, the event began at Boats Club. Anuj Yadav of Vikarabad and K. Swapna of Hyderabad won the men's and women's categories, respectively. K. Sushanth Reddy, P. Uday Kumar, D. Kalyani and Amna Anjum also secured top positions. The programme was coordinated by B. Rajendar and A. Devaiah. (NSS)

In the men's category, Anuj Yadav of Vikarabad won first prize, followed by K. Sushanth Reddy of Rangareddy and P. Uday Kumar of Jangaon. In the women's category, K. Swapna of Hyderabad secured first place, followed by D. Kalyani of Suryapet and Amna Anjum.

Prepare micro-level plans to tackle El Nino impact: Nalgonda Special Officer



TFP I ANIL YADAV
NALGONDA, OCT 16

Secretary to Telangana Government for Labour, Employment and Training and Special Officer for the combined Nalgonda district Hari Chandana Dasari, IAS has directed officials to prepare micro-level plans to tackle the potential impact of El Nino on drinking water, agriculture, electricity and livestock.

At a meeting held at Udayaditya Bhavan at the Nalgonda District Collector's Office on Friday, she reviewed the situation with Nalgonda Collector B. Chandrasekhar, IAS, Suryapet Collector Tejas Nandalal Pawar, IAS and Yadadri-Bhuvanagiri Collector Anurag Jayanthi, IAS.

The Special Officer stressed the need to ensure drinking water reaches every village and household over the next four to five months.

Officials were instructed to identify fodder and drinking water sources for cattle, encourage solar energy and power conservation, and undertake groundwater recharge works under MGNREGS. Adequate drinking water, ORS packets, first aid and shade must also be provided to MGNREGS workers.

Hari Chandana Dasari warned that conditions could worsen in December and January and directed Mandal Special Officers to hold weekly meetings with sarpanches and panchayat secretaries to prepare and review village-level preparedness plans.

Nalgonda Collector B. Chandrasekhar reported a 34 per cent rainfall deficit across the district, with normal rainfall recorded in seven mandals. He said awareness was being created to promote pulses, red gram, green gram, horse gram and horticultural crops instead of paddy, alongside rainwater conservation and proposals for micro-irrigation equipment.

The meeting was attended by local bodies in-charge Additional Collector Prem Karan Reddy, Suryapet Additional Collector Hari Singh, Devarakonda Sub-Collector Carolina Chengthian Mavi, and officials from the Agriculture, Horticulture, Groundwater, Electricity, Mission Bhagiratha, Public Health and Irrigation departments.

Wanaparthy Champions Cup-2026 begins with athletes from 15 Mandals



TFP I THIRUPATHAIAH
WANAPARTHY, OCT 16

The Wanaparthy Champions Cup-2026, featuring athletes from all 15 mandals of the district, was inaugurated at the Polytechnic College grounds in Wanaparthy town on Friday as part of the Dasara festivities.

Telangana Sports Authority Chairman Kotha Kappu Sivasena Reddy, District Collector Adarsh Surabhi and District Superintendent of Police D. Sunitha Reddy jointly inaugurated the event. Competitions are being held in seven disciplines: cricket, kabaddi, volleyball, football, tug of war, carroms and chess.

Sivasena Reddy said the tournament would help identify and encourage rural sporting talent, adding that outstanding athletes would get opportunities to compete at state and national levels. He appreciated Collector Adarsh Surabhi for organising the event and said similar competitions could be organised in other districts during Sankranti.

Collector Adarsh Surabhi urged participants to uphold sportsmanship and announced that the Champions Trophy would go to the mandal winning the highest number of trophies. SP D. Sunitha Reddy highlighted the importance of teamwork, physical fitness and mental well-being, encouraging young people to participate in outdoor sports.

Sivasena Reddy and Adarsh Surabhi also played chess, while SP D. Sunitha Reddy tried her hand at carroms.

Additional Collector (Local Bodies) N. Kheemiya Naik, RDO Subramanyam, tehsildars, municipal commissioners, municipal councillors, public representatives, officials, athletes and sports enthusiasts attended the event.

BRAOU extends fee payment deadline

HYDERABAD, OCT 16

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University (BRAOU) has extended the tuition fee payment deadline to November 7, 2026, as a special case. The extension applies to second- and third-year undergraduate students (BA, B.Com and B.Sc) from the 2021–2025 batches and second-year postgraduate students (MA, M.Com, M.Sc and MBA) from the 2023–2025 batches. Diploma and certificate students can also pay through TS/AP Online centres or by credit/debit card. For details, contact 040-23680333, 444 or 555, or visit www.braouonline.in. (NSS)

The University, initially known as Andhra Pradesh Open University, was set up on 26th August 1982 through an Act of the A.P. State Legislature (APOU Act 1982).

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Hyderabad steps up preparations for El Niño

Calls for water and power conservation

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
HYDERABAD, OCT 16



Telangana Special Chief Secretary Jayesh Ranjan has called for coordinated efforts to address the possible impact of El Niño on water security and electricity consumption. The issue was discussed at a meeting held at the Collectorate conference hall on Friday.

The measures suggested include reducing household water consumption by 20%, setting air conditioners at 25°C, conserving electricity between 5 pm and 10 pm, expanding the reuse of treated water and improving groundwater recharge. Special officers will be appointed to monitor preparedness across all 16 mandals in the district.

District Collector Dr. Priyanka Ala stressed the need for field-level monitoring, coordination among government departments and extensive public awareness to ensure efficient use of water and electricity.

72-foot Bathukamma attracts thousands at Amberpet celebrations

RATNA CHOTRANI
HYDERABAD, OCT 16



A 72-foot-tall Bathukamma was the main attraction at grand Bathukamma celebrations held at Amberpet Municipal Grounds on Thursday, with more than 2,000 women participating in traditional dances and singing.

The event was organised by Devi Collective under the leadership of Dr. Neelima Vemula, Founder and Chairperson of DEWI (Dynamic Entrepreneurs, Women Innovators), to promote Telangana's cultural heritage and women's empowerment. The celebrations also featured a 108 Kanya Puja, special prayers to Goddess Durga and a traditional Ganga Aarti conducted under the guidance of a priest from Varanasi.

Union Minister for Coal and Mines G. Kishan Reddy attended as the chief guest and praised the organisers for showcasing Telangana's cultural identity and celebrating women's collective strength. The 72-foot floral arrangement was presented as an attempt to set a new world record.

CMC Commissioner inspects parks, development works in Kukatpally

TFP | RAVI KUMAR
MEDCHAL-MALKAJGIRI, OCT 16



Cyberabad Municipal Corporation (CMC) Commissioner G. Srijana, IAS, inspected parks, public amenities and ongoing development works in Kukatpally on Friday and directed officials to ensure quality, cleanliness and timely completion of works.

She inspected Dream View Colony Park, developed at a cost of 40 lakh, and directed officials to replace temporary flex banners with permanent information boards. At Vishvambhara Park, developed at a cost of 10 lakh, she instructed officials to relocate the watchman's room and install an entrance board. During her visit to Vishvambhara Park-II, she reviewed gym equipment and stressed proper maintenance of public facilities.

At Viveknagar graveyard, where development works worth 40 lakh are being undertaken, she directed officials to maintain grills, toilets and other facilities, prioritising cleanliness and visitor safety. She also reviewed the 70 lakh development works at the KPHB 5th Phase Central Median and instructed officials to maintain quality standards.

Kolampally Dargah Urs begins with All India Interfaith Conference

TFP I G. RAGHU
NARAYANPET, OCT 16



The 552nd annual Urs celebrations of Hazrat Syed Shah Ahmed Qattal Hussaini Ashrafi Jalali commenced at Kolampally Dargah with the 26th All India Interfaith Conference organised by the Ashrafia Educational Society. Religious leaders and political and social representatives from various communities attended the event.

The conference was presided over by Syed Shah Kaleemullah Hussaini, Sajjada Nashin of Gogi Sharif Dargah, while Makhdum Khwaja Syed Shah Jalal Hussaini Ashrafi Jalali, Sajjada Nashin of Kolampally Dargah, supervised the proceedings.

MANUU professors Waqar Insha and Muzaffar Hussain Khan, former MLAs S. Rajender Reddy and Chittem Ram Mohan Reddy, District Minority Welfare Officer M.A. Rasheed and District BC Welfare Officer Mohammed Khaleel were among the dignitaries present.

Speakers emphasised that all religions promote love, peace, brotherhood and humanity, urging people to respect different beliefs and maintain communal harmony beyond caste and religious divisions. They also highlighted the importance of education and healthcare.

Hyderabad home sales value rises 4%

HYDERABAD, OCT 16

Hyderabad recorded 55,715 residential property registrations during January–September 2026, remaining broadly stable year-on-year, while transaction value increased 4% to 39,910 crore, according to Knight Frank India.

However, September registrations fell 15% year-on-year and 5% month-on-month to 5,620 units. Transaction value declined 7% year-on-year and 2% month-on-month to 4,487 crore.

Homes priced above 1 crore accounted for 56% of September's transaction value, compared with 54% a year earlier. During the first nine months, registrations in this segment rose 2%, while transaction value grew 6%. Registrations of homes below 50 lakh fell 20% in September.

Knight Frank India Chairman and Managing Director Shishir Baijal said the market remained stable despite monthly fluctuations following guidance-value revisions. (NSS)

ED completes registration of nine auctioned properties in Heera Group Ponzi case

TFP I CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, OCT 16



Directorate of Enforcement (ED), Hyderabad Zonal Office, has completed the registration of two more immovable properties in Hyderabad for Rs. 88.23 crore in connection with the Heera Group Ponzi case.

The agency said registration of two properties, namely Karvy Centre and Naina Towers, situated at Banjara Hills, was completed on Friday.

With the earlier registration of seven properties on October 5, ED has completed the registration of nine properties for an aggregate consideration of Rs. 103.26 crore.

The auctions were conducted pursuant to the directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the case of Nowhera Shaik, Heera Group of Companies and others, intending to restitute proceeds to genuine victims and claimants, the agency said in a release.

ED investigation under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002 revealed that the accused entities had collected investments exceeding Rs. 5,978 crore from the public by promising annual returns of over 36%, but subsequently defaulted on repayments.

ED has issued five Provisional Attachment Orders covering properties valued at Rs. 428.83 crore and filed prosecution complaints before the Special Court under PMLA, Hyderabad.

Nowhera Shaik, whose bail was cancelled by the Supreme Court, was apprehended by ED on May 21, 2026 and remains in judicial custody.

These auction proceeds shall be transferred to the Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO) for onward disbursement to genuine victims/claimants, in accordance with the directions of the Supreme Court.

ED will continue with the auction of the remaining attached properties to facilitate restitution to victims. Further investigation is in progress, added the release.

ED on October 14 announced that it completed the registration of seven immovable properties, auctioned for Rs 15.03 crore in favour of the successful bidders.

The properties comprise six flats at H.S. Royal, Shaikpet Village, Hyderabad, and one house at MLA Colony, Road No. 12, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad.

The auction was conducted on October 6 pursuant to the directions of the Supreme Court.

In its order dated March 5, 2025, the Supreme Court allowed the application filed by ED seeking permission to auction immovable properties attached in the case of Nowhera Shaik, Heera Group of Companies and others, with a view to maximising realisation from the attached properties for restitution to the genuine claimants/victims.

Subsequently, the Supreme Court directed the Registrar General, Telangana High Court, to depute T. Venkateshwar Rao, Registrar (Protocol), for execution of the sale deeds on behalf of the petitioner-accused.

Karwan MLA inspects Shaikpet reservoir over drinking water issues

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
HYDERABAD, OCT 16



On the instructions of AIMIM president Barrister Asaduddin Owaisi, Karwan MLA Kausar Mohiuddin inspected the HMWS&SB Shaikpet High-Level Reservoir to review drinking water supply issues affecting Golconda, Hakeempet, Shaikpet, MD Lines, Tolichowki and Langar Houz.

The inspection was attended by HMWS&SB Executive Director Ashok Samrat, DOP-2 S. Kiran, General Manager Srinu Naik, Deputy General Manager Narahari and other officials. The water-level issue was reviewed, and officials said the problem had been rectified to restore smooth water supply to the affected areas.

A follow-up meeting with all HMWSSB stakeholders has been scheduled for tomorrow at 4 pm to discuss further measures to address the issue and ensure an uninterrupted drinking water supply in the constituency.

Police detain 725 vehicles in Operation Kavach

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
HYDERABAD, OCT 16

Hyderabad City Police detained 725 vehicles and apprehended 48suspects during a midnight crackdown under Operation Kavach, conducted from 1 am to 3 am on Thursday with nearly 3,000 personnel in over 100 teams.

Police registered cases involving minor driving, illegal weapon possession and narcotics violations. Commissioner V.C. Sajjanar inspected checks at key locations and warned against tampering with number plates to evade surveillance. He urged motorists to follow traffic regulations.

Police arrest 4 in Rs 37.4-lakh online trading fraud; 20 mule bank accounts identified

TFP I RAOOF KHAN
HYDERABAD, OCT 16

Hyderabad City Cyber Crime Police have arrested four people for allegedly providing mule bank accounts and SIM cards to cyber fraudsters to route proceeds of online investment and trading scams, police said on Friday.

Police have identified 20 mule bank accounts and seized nine mobile phones, 10 debit and credit cards, six bank passbooks and eight cheque books during the investigation.

Based on a complaint received on April 4, 2026, from a woman who alleged that unidentified persons contacted her through WhatsApp and lured her into investing in trading platforms with promises of high returns, a case was registered under relevant provisions of the Information Technology Act and the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), and Inspector Y. Gowru Naidu took up the investigation.

She reportedly lost Rs 37.40 lakh in the fraud.

Based on the evidence gathered, police arrested Maroju Subrahmanya Chari, Gedela Nani and Alamanda Manikanta in Bhimavaram, Andhra Pradesh.

Panduraju Abhishek was subsequently apprehended in Pocharam, Hyderabad, for his alleged role in the operation, Cyber crime police said in a release.

During interrogation, Abhishek reportedly disclosed that he had come into contact with a Chinese national through WhatsApp while facing financial difficulties.

He was allegedly offered commissions for arranging bank accounts and SIM cards to facilitate the movement of cybercrime proceeds.

Top CBIC officials clarify next-gen GST reforms at taxpayers' meet



CBIC Chairman Vivek Chaturvedi interacted with trade and industry representatives in Hyderabad.

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
HYDERABAD, OCT 16

As part of the government's outreach, Vivek Chaturvedi, Chairman of the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), along with Sanjay Mangal, Member (GST), interacted with trade and industry representatives here to highlight next-gen GST process reforms aimed at simplifying compliance and easing the burden on honest taxpayers.

Key measures included automated refunds, reduced manual interventions, rationalisation of arrest and prosecution provisions, and intelligence-based vehicle inspections. The officials also sought stakeholder feedback on the proposed centralised administration of GST for taxpayers under Central Government jurisdiction.

The interaction on Thursday witnessed participation of around 250 stakeholderS.

The top officials addressed participants' queries and welcomed suggestions for further reforms. They clarified the key recommendations of the 57th GST Council Meeting, according to a post by CBIC on X.

In a subsequent interaction with CBIC officers, the Chairman and Member (GST) stressed the need for transparent, friction-free and predictable tax administration.

As part of the taxpayer-friendly reforms, the GST Council has removed power of arrest of tax officers, and the Council has raised the threshold for prosecution from one crore rupees to 5 crore rupees. The punishment, whether fine or imprisonment, or both, has been left to judicial discretion in every case.

A taxpayer who files late, makes a mistake or falls behind on payment will face recovery, interest and a proportionate penalty but will not be subject to arrest and criminal proceedings in such cases.

The GST Council has recommended common standards for notices and proceedings, and no notices below the prescribed monetary threshold of Rs 10,000, including withdrawal of pending notices below the said threshold. The notices will not be issued for monetary thresholds of Rs 10,000 or below.

Kharge writes to PM Modi, seeks all-party meeting to discuss new bills

TFP I PRASHANT SHARMA
NEW DELHI, OCT 16



Congress President and Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, Mallikarjun Kharge, on Friday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, seeking an all-party meeting to discuss bills and other proposals.

Highlighting that the Constitutional Amendment Bill on Delimitation failed to muster the necessary two-thirds majority in the Lok Sabha on April 17, 2026, by a decisive margin, Kharge wrote, "Please convene an all-party meeting to have a detailed discussion on your new proposals before they are finalised for consideration in Parliament."

The LoP said, "All political parties must get sufficient time to deliberate among themselves, with each other and with all other stakeholders. Please do not once again try and bulldoze a far-reaching Constitutional Amendment Bill through Parliament as you attempted earlier and that met its well-deserved fate."

Kharge said, "You may kindly recall that I had first written to you on April 11, 2026 to convene an all-party meeting before bringing any Constitutional Amendment Bill on Delimitation. You did not do so. Thereafter, you made the Bills public on the late evening of April 14, 2026 and convened a special session on April 16, 2026."

"Thereafter, on July 16, 2026 and August 27, 2026, I again repeated my request for an all-party meeting. I am now doing so for a fourth time," wrote Khare.

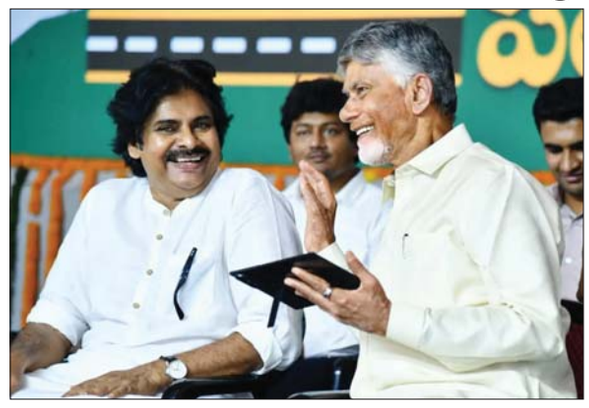
The Congress President also expressed concern over the fact that both Houses of Parliament are yet to be prorogued since the adjournment in August.

"It has already been 64 days since the Monsoon Session of Parliament was adjourned on August 13, 2026, and both Houses of Parliament are yet to be prorogued. This scenario is unprecedented," said Kharge.

The Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026 — along with the companion Delimitation Bill, 2026 and Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026 — was introduced in the Lok Sabha on April 16 by Minister of State for Law and Justice Arjun Ram Meghwal, but failed to pass after being rejected in the Lok Sabha on April 17. (IANS)

URBAN LOCAL BODY POLLS

NDA partners in AP finalise seat-sharing



AMARAVATI, OCT 16

Partners in the ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in Andhra Pradesh have reached a seat sharing agreement for Urban Local Body elections.

After several rounds of talks among leaders of the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), Jana Sena Party (JSP) and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) during the last four days, the allies finalised the seat sharing on Thursday night.

Initially there was a deadlock in the talks between TDP and JSP but both the parties adopted a give and take approach to reach an understanding.

The NDA partners finalised the seat sharing in line with the aspirations of their leaders and cadres at the field level.

As per the agreement for the posts of mayor for 17 municipal corporations, the TDP will contest 11 posts, Jana Sena four and BJP two.

The coalition also reached an understanding for the posts of chairpersons of municipalities/nagar panchayats. The TDP will field candidates for 78 posts while Jana Sena will contest in 21 places. Seven posts have been left for the BJP.

As per the agreement for all Urban Local Bodies, TDP has been allotted 72.35 per cent of the posts. Jana Sena got a share of 20.33 per cent and BJP 7.32 per cent.

If one ally gets the post of mayor/chairman, the other allies will be given the post of deputy mayor/vice-chairperson.

The TDP will contest for the posts of mayors of Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam, Machilipatnam, Mangalgiri-Tadepalli, Guntur, Ongole, Nellore, Kurnool, Kadapa, Tirupati and Chittoor. (IANS)

BJP to launch nationwide campaign to counter Cong claims on SIR, ECI

NEW DELHI, OCT 16



The BJP is preparing to launch a nationwide campaign next week to counter what it describes as misleading claims by the Congress party regarding the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls and the Election Commission of India (ECI).

Through the proposed campaign, the BJP aims to present facts to the public and address questions and allegations raised by the opposition concerning the SIR exercise and the functioning of the Election Commission.

Party MPs, MLAs and other leaders are likely to be assigned responsibilities to take the campaign to the people in their respective constituencies.

The initiative is expected to involve public outreach activities across the country to explain the party's position on the issue.

As part of its preparations, the BJP is developing a detailed 24-page document containing responses to questions and allegations raised by opposition parties. The document is expected to serve as reference material for party leaders and workers during public interactions and outreach programmes.

The party also plans to use social media and other communication platforms to reach a wider audience and communicate its arguments regarding the SIR and the Election Commission.

In addition to addressing the Congress's current allegations, the BJP intends to highlight what it alleges were instances of the misuse of the Election Commission and other institutions during previous Congress-led governments.

Party leaders are expected to use these examples to counter the opposition's criticism and present the BJP's account of the functioning of constitutional institutions under successive governments.

The proposed campaign comes amid a political debate over the SIR process and the role of the Election Commission. The BJP intends to use the initiative to explain its position on the issue and respond to the concerns and accusations raised by the Congress.

Sudha Yadav sworn in as Karnataka Governor

BENGALURU, OCT 16



Sudha Yadav, a former Lok Sabha member and BJP Parliamentary Board member, was sworn in as the Governor of Karnataka at Raj Bhavan here on Friday, succeeding Thaawarchand Gehlot, whose tenure has ended.

Karnataka High Court Chief Justice Vibhu Bakhru administered the oath of office in the presence of Chief Minister D K Shivakumar and other dignitaries.

Yadav was appointed Governor by President Droupadi Murmu as part of a wider reshuffle involving gubernatorial appointments in six states.

A former MP from Mahendragarh in Haryana, Yadav holds an MSc and a PhD in Chemistry from IIT Roorkee. She served on the National Commission for Backward Classes from 2019 to 2022 and has held several organisational positions in the BJP.

She entered electoral politics following the death of her husband, Sukhbir Singh Yadav, a BSF Deputy Commandant who was martyred during the Kargil War. She subsequently represented Mahendragarh in the Lok Sabha and emerged as a prominent OBC leader in Haryana.

Under the latest reshuffle, Dhal Singh Bisen has been appointed Governor of Uttarakhand, Braj Mohan Ram Governor of Odisha and Dushyant Gautam Governor of Sikkim. (IANS)

High Court allows Punjab CM to travel to France after Centre's denial

CHANDIGARH, OCT 16



The Punjab and Haryana High Court on Friday allowed Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann to travel to France amidst the Centre's denial of political clearance, citing the security threat to him and the absence of a formal invitation from the French government.

The state government, however, accused the Centre of adopting a discriminatory approach towards the Chief Minister's foreign visits.

A bench of Justice Tribhuvan Dahiya passed the order after hearing arguments from the state government and the Centre.

The government had approached the High Court after the Ministry of External Affairs denied political clearance for Mann's proposed visit to France from October 15 to 21, along with Chief Secretary K.A.P. Sinha and Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister Ravi Bhagat. The delegation's visit was aimed at promoting Punjab's agricultural and food-processing products in international markets and exploring trade opportunities.

According to the state government's petition, the proposed visit was linked to SIAL Paris 2026, an international food industry exhibition scheduled to take place from October 17 to 21 at Paris Nord Villepinte.

The Punjab State Cooperative Supply and Marketing Federation Ltd (MARKFED) was allotted a stall in the India Pavilion organised under the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA).

The government argued that the visit would help showcase Punjab's agricultural produce, connect local businesses with overseas buyers and attract investment. It also submitted that MARKFED would bear the expenses of the visit.

In its petition, the state government challenged the denial of political clearance, arguing that the decision had been communicated without assigning reasons or providing an opportunity to explain the purpose of the visit. (IANS)

Bihar: Anant Singh clarifies 'nine murders' remark

PATNA, OCT 16

Mokama MLA Anant Singh on Friday clarified his controversial remark about "nine murders" made while describing his long-standing association with former Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar.

Singh said that his remarks were 'misinterpreted' by the media and that he was referring to the killing of nine of his associates, not claiming that he had arranged their murders.

The clarification came amid tensions within the Janata Dal (United) over the Bihar Legislative Council elections.

Singh had earlier invoked his sacrifices and support for Nitish Kumar while questioning the contributions of JD(U) leader Neeraj Kumar.

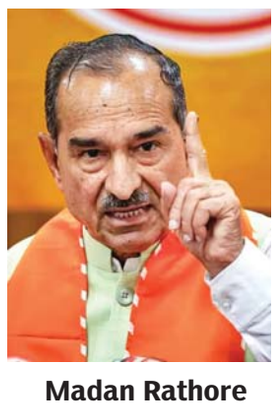
Addressing the media in Patna, Singh recounted the political events surrounding his association with Nitish Kumar, dating back to the period when Nitish Kumar and RJD chief Lalu Prasad Yadav were allies.

According to Singh, Nitish Kumar had helped secure an Assembly election ticket for his brother by speaking to Lalu Prasad.

Singh said he continued to support Nitish Kumar even after the two leaders eventually parted ways. (IANS/UNI)

Rajasthan BJP chief clarifies 'siding with Pak' remark

JAIPUR, OCT 16



Madan Rathore

Rajasthan Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) President Madan Rathore on Friday issued a clarification on his previous controversial remark, saying that his statement was "distorted" by some people with "malicious intent".

Earlier, Rathore triggered a row, saying that India would stand with Pakistan if a war broke out between the neighbouring country and the United States.

Speaking to IANS, the Rajasthan BJP Chief said: "This has actually been distorted. My statement was in the context of an India-Pakistan cricket match. I was speaking at an event for the Muslim community, where the topic came up that if India were to lose a cricket match against Pakistan, anyone who sets off firecrackers at that moment is not a patriot of this country."

"I did add that it would be a different matter if Pakistan were playing against America. People have distorted what I said, which is not right. I believe that whoever presented it this way did so with malicious intent," he added.

Rathore asserted that India's stance regarding Pakistan is very clear, "there is no possibility of us ever reuniting".

Maintaining that the current situation and the sequence of events between India and Pakistan are defined by tension, the State BJP chief said: "It is unfortunate that people have misrepresented my words, this is not right."

Madan Rathore alleged that only the last two lines of the video clip, depicting his speech, were edited and presented out of context. (IANS/UNI)

ED summons Pinarayi Vijayan in CMRL-Exalogic case

KOCHI, OCT 16



Pinarayi Vijayan

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday summoned former Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan to appear before it on Friday (October 23) in connection with the CMRL-Exalogic case.

An Enforcement Case Information Report (ECIR) was registered on October 14, adding a fresh dimension to the legal troubles surrounding the alleged payments by Cochin Minerals and Rutile Ltd (CMRL) to Exalogic Solutions, a company linked to Vijayan's daughter Veena.

The development comes amid a setback for Vijayan and his son-in-law, Mohammed Riyas, in the Kerala High Court.

The two have now approached the Supreme Court, challenging the High Court's order directing the registration of a corruption case in the CMRL-Exalogic transaction.

The petitioners have sought a stay on the Vigilance proceedings for registering an FIR.

The appeal has been assigned a diary number, but the Supreme Court did not take it up on Friday after their request for an urgent hearing was rejected.

The High Court's Division Bench had on Thursday rejected their plea for permission to appeal against a single judge bench order directing the registration of a case under the Prevention of Corruption Act.

The order followed an ED communication concerning the alleged transactions. (IANS)

SC notice to centre on kids' social media use

NEW DELHI, OCT 16
The Supreme Court on Friday issued notice to the Centre on a plea seeking a comprehensive and enforceable regulatory framework to protect children from the risks associated with social media platforms, including age-based restrictions on access and safeguards against online exploitation.

A Bench of Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi issued notice on the petition filed by The Emerald Heights International School and its Director (Academics), Siddharth Singh Girnar, and tagged it with a pending petition raising a similar issue.

The apex court has listed the matter for further hearing on December 3. The petition, filed against the Union of India, the Ministry of Women and Child Development, the Ministry of Law and Justice, and the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, raises concerns over unrestricted access to commercial social media platforms by children and the alleged inadequacy of the existing legal and regulatory framework to address the risks posed by their use.

The plea contends that social media platforms generally prescribe a self-declared minimum age of 13 years, which does not correspond to the protection accorded to children under Indian law. (IANS)

SC to hear pregnant journalist's plea against Rahul

NEW DELHI, OCT 16
The Supreme Court on Friday agreed to hear, on October 26, an application concerning a pregnant journalist's allegation that Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi pushed and pulled her during the Opposition INDIA bloc leaders' march to the apex court premises over the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.



The application was mentioned before Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant by senior advocate Gaurav Bhatia, who sought a date for hearing the application and clarification on whether notice had been issued in the connected matters.

Responding to Bhatia's query, the CJI-led Bench clarified that notice had already been issued in all the matters mentioned before it on Thursday and said the application would be listed on October 26. (IANS)

Rules on airline fares finalised: Centre to SC

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SC stays trial in Twisha Sharma death case

Issues notice on plea to shift case to Delhi

NEW DELHI, OCT 16
The Supreme Court on Friday stayed the ongoing trial before a Bhopal court in the case relating to the death of former model and actress Twisha Sharma and issued notices to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), her husband Samarth Singh, and mother-in-law Giribala Singh on a plea seeking transfer of the trial outside Madhya Pradesh, preferably to Delhi.

A Bench of Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi passed the order on a transfer petition filed by Twisha's father, Navnidhi Sharma, who has expressed apprehension that his daughter would not get a fair trial in Madhya Pradesh.

Appearing for the petitioner, advocate Abhijeet Sinha submitted that Giribala Singh, a former judge, was an influential person in Bhopal, raising concerns about the fairness of the trial in the state. Sinha also informed the apex court that certain material had been placed before it in a sealed cover in support of the transfer plea.

Navy's first indigenous multi-purpose vessel Samarthak commissioned

KARWAR, OCT 16
Vice President C. P. Radhakrishnan on Friday commissioned INS Samarthak, the Indian Navy's first indigenous Multi-Purpose Vessel at Karwar in Karnataka, observing that self-reliance in defence is no longer merely an aspiration but an emerging reality.



Speaking at the ceremony, the Vice President said that, with over 75 per cent indigenous content, INS Samarthak reflects India's growing self-reliance in defence manufacturing, contributing to India's strategic autonomy and the vision of a Viksit and Aatmanirbhar Bharat articulated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The commissioning marks a significant milestone in India's journey towards self-reliance in defence manufacturing and the development of advanced indigenous naval capabilities, said an official statement.

Highlighting India's rich maritime heritage, Radhakrishnan recalled the naval traditions of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and the Chola dynasty, which extended India's maritime influence across the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia.

Highlighting the significance of INS Samarthak, the Vice-President said that the vessel will serve as a versatile platform for trials and evaluation of next-generation weapons, sensors and emerging technologies.

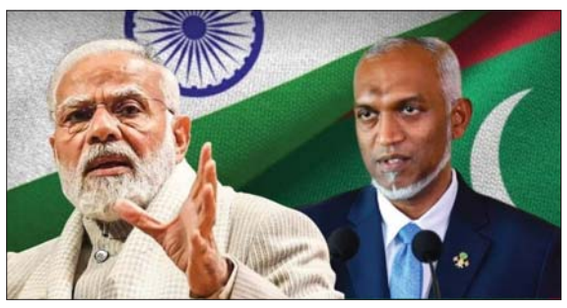
Its capabilities will also support maritime surveillance and reconnaissance, offshore patrolling, launch and recovery of targets, operations involving unmanned systems, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, he said.

The Vice President observed that such a platform would enable the Navy to adapt more rapidly to emerging technological developments and translate indigenous innovation into operational capabilities.

Referring to Karwar's strategic importance, Radhakrishnan said that its deep natural harbour and proximity to the Arabian Sea make it a vital component of India's maritime security architecture. (IANS/UNI)

India agrees to Maldives request for rollover of Rs 30 bnllion swap facility

NEW DELHI, OCT 16
India has approved the request of the Maldives government for the rollover of a Rs 30 billion currency swap facility as part of New Delhi's 'Neighbours First' policy and the commitment to deepening bilateral relations with the island nation, according to an official statement issued on Friday.



The facility is being extended under the Framework on Currency Swap Arrangement for SAARC countries, signed between the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Maldives Monetary Authority during Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu's state visit to India in October 2024.

The first drawdown of Rs 30 billion was extended to the Maldivian government on April 23 this year.

The currency swap arrangement provides the Maldives with access to Indian rupees, helping support liquidity and financial stability when needed. For India, continued financial assistance also forms part of its broader engagement with a strategically important Indian Ocean neighbour.

Under the 2024–27 framework, the bilateral currency swap arrangement provides concessions, including favourable interest rates and other conditions. Since the framework was introduced in 2012, the RBI has provided aggregate swap support of more than $1.1 billion to the Maldives.

India has also supported the Maldives through investments in government securities. It subscribed to two long-term treasury bonds worth $250 million and $100 million. In addition, three treasury bills worth $150 million subscribed by India have been settled by the Maldives, with the Indian government paying $42.8 million in interest incurred on the securities. (IANS)

AP: TDP, YSRCP activists clash in Annamayya

RAYACHOTI, OCT 16
Violence broke out in Rayachoti and Punganur in Andhra Pradesh's Annamayya district on Friday, the first day of filing nominations for the Urban Local Body (ULB) elections, with vehicles set ablaze and damaged and several activists injured in clashes between the ruling Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and opposition YSR Congress Party (YSRCP).

According to police, activists of the two parties clashed, hurling stones and attacking each other with sticks. Several activists and some police personnel sustained injuries in the clashes.

Cars were set on fire in SN Colony in Rayachoti, while eight cars were damaged in Punganur. The violence erupted as candidates from both parties arrived at nomination centres to file their papers, accompanied by party leaders and supporters.

TDP leaders said four of their leaders, including Madhu Royal, were injured in the clashes and admitted to hospital. Police said tensions escalated when leaders and supporters of both parties reached the nomination centres at the same time. (IANS)

ED attaches Rs 136.44 crore assets in illegal coal mining case

NEW DELHI, OCT 16
The Directorate of Enforcement (ED) has provisionally attached assets and proceeds of crime worth Rs 136.44 crore under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) as part of its ongoing probe into alleged large-scale illegal coal mining and pilferage in the leasehold areas of Eastern Coalfields Limited (ECL), an official statement said on Friday.



According to ED, the illegal activities were allegedly carried out by a syndicate led by Anup Majee alias Lala.

The agency said its investigation revealed that the syndicate was involved in the illegal excavation and large-scale pilferage of coal, which was subsequently sold for cash to various factories in West Bengal with the purported assistance of local administration officials.

To conceal and layer the proceeds generated from the alleged illegal activities, the syndicate acquired and operated several shell or jamakharchi companies, the ED said. These companies were allegedly beneficially owned and controlled by Majee but held in the names of his relatives, employees and key associate Gurupada Majee.

The agency alleged that cash generated from the illegal sale of coal was routed through these entities using accommodation entries and deposited into their bank accounts to obscure the origin and ownership of the funds.

The investigation also found that proceeds of crime were invested in resorts beneficially owned by Anup Majee, according to the ED. (IANS/UNI)

Five women drown in reservoir in Andhra Pradesh

AMARAVATI, OCT 16
Five women drowned in a reservoir in Andhra Pradesh's Sri Sathya Sai district on Friday, police said.

The incident occurred in the Gollapalli reservoir near Penukonda.

According to the police, one Gayatri (50), resident of Dargapet along with her daughter Ashwini and neighbours Pushpa, Haseena and Maheen had gone to see the reservoir.

The group of women accidentally drowned in the reservoir. Locals pulled out their bodies.

Ashwini had married recently and she along with her husband were staying in Mumbai. She had gone to her parents for Dasara holidays.

Penukonda Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Siva Prasad said that the police have launched an investigation into the incident.

The bodies are being shifted for post-mortem examinations.

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has expressed shock over the death of five women. He conveyed his deep condolences to the bereaved families.

The Chief Minister inquired with officials about the incident.

Officials said that the women had gone to visit the Gollapalli reservoir, where they slipped and fell into the water.

Local fishermen recovered their bodies. They also said that all the victims were residents of Durgapet in Penukonda mandal.

Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan also expressed grief over this event. He has asked the District Collector to investigate the reasons behind the accident.

He said that the loss of five lives during a pleasure trip has caused profound grief. He conveyed his deepest condolences to the families of those who lost their lives in this incident. (IANS)

India reiterates call to end Gulf conflict

UNITED NATIONS, OCT 16
India has reiterated its call for an immediate end to the conflict that encompasses the entire Gulf region and has taken a toll on its economy that has strong links to the region and on its people there.



India's Permanent Representative to UN P Harish

The conflict must be de-escalated immediately and resolved through dialogue and diplomacy, India's Permanent Representative P Harish said on Thursday at the Security Council's quarterly open debate on the Middle East.

"India has very high stakes in the safety, security and stability of the Middle East", he said. "Our political, economic, investment, energy and people-to-people relations with the region are extremely strong".

With the six countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council alone, India's annual trade is $180 billion, cumulative Foreign Direct Investment is $31 billion, and remittances are more than $52 billion, he said.

The "safety, security and wellbeing" of the ten million Indians living in those countries "is a core interest and a vital part of our bilateral relationships", he added.

Another priority area for New Delhi is the safety of its seafarers and shipping, Harish said.

"All attacks on commercial shipping and merchant mariners are legally and morally indefensible", he said.

"Freedom of navigation, and the safe and unimpeded flow of maritime commerce through international waterways, in accordance with international law, must be upheld", he said.

Harish cited the attacks on India-flagged MV DP World Cauvery this week, and in recent weeks on ships under other flags, MT Petro Dolphin, MT Valthera, MT On Peace, and MT Kazimah III.

Many of the ships have Indian sailors, he said, thanking Oman and the United Arab Emirates for helping ensure their safety.

He did not name either the attackers of the ships, or the principal adversaries in the conflict that began on February 28 with a joint attack by Israel and the United States on Iran.

To deal with the plight of seafarers and protect them, Harish said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has proposed establishing a Seafarers Emergency Support Network (SESN), Harish said.

The network, which PM Modi proposed at the BRICS summit, "could connect the Maritime authorities and embassies of the countries concerned, and facilitate distress alerts, medical assistance, communication with families, and support for evacuation", he said. (IANS/UNI)

BSF-BGB exchange detained cops

AGARTALA, OCT 16
Two Bangladesh Police personnel who crossed into Indian territory near the Ashabari border area in Tripura's Sepahijala district on Thursday night were handed over to Bangladeshi authorities on Friday following a flag meeting between the BSF and Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB), officials said.

The two policemen were identified as Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) Imran Hossain and Constable Rohit Dewan, who are reportedly posted at a police station in Bangladesh's Comilla district.

According to officials The two personnel were conducting an anti-narcotics operation near the international border.

THE FREEDOM PRESS

SATURDAY 17 OCTOBER 2026

AI-Biology Convergence

Artificial intelligence (AI) is opening new possibilities in biological research, but its growing capabilities also raise questions about biosecurity and responsible innovation. In August 2026, Stanford University scientists reportedly used AI-assisted methods to identify a bacteriophage capable of killing E. coli and 16 other potential viruses, bringing the debate over AI-enabled biological risks into sharper focus. The findings highlight the need to balance scientific progress with safeguards against misuse.

The significance of this development lies in the transition from computational predictions to biological experimentation. The Stanford research did not demonstrate the creation of a virus harmful to humans or establish that people without biological expertise could independently develop dangerous pathogens using AI. Nevertheless, it provides further evidence that AI-designed biological systems can be evaluated in laboratory settings. Governments must therefore prepare for emerging risks without exaggerating the demonstrated capabilities of the technology.

Earlier AI biosecurity red-teaming exercises, including work conducted by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 2024, highlighted potential weaknesses in DNA synthesis screening and the risks of AI-assisted biological design. These concerns remain relevant, although generating a DNA sequence is fundamentally different from creating a functioning organism. Recent developments underline the importance of connecting computational assessments with laboratory evidence. Regulation must be based on demonstrated capabilities, credible risk assessments and proportionate safeguards rather than either worst-case assumptions or complacency.

Effective biosecurity cannot depend solely on restrictions imposed on AI models. Biological research involves several interconnected stages, including AI-assisted design, scientific assessment, laboratory validation, DNA synthesis and subsequent experimentation. AI developers may understand their models but lack visibility into how they are used, while synthesis companies may screen genetic sequences without knowing their origins. Laboratory biosafety systems may also operate independently of AI-related risk assessments. A coordinated framework is therefore necessary to establish accountability across the entire research process.

The expansion of private-sector infrastructure adds another dimension to this challenge. Anthropic announced in September 2026 that it had opened a wet biology laboratory in San Francisco to conduct fundamental biological research, support drug discovery and combine AI systems with physical experimentation. Its proposed research approach involves using Claude to analyse biological data, formulate hypotheses and test them experimentally. Such initiatives illustrate how AI companies are moving beyond software development into laboratory research, making transparency, independent evaluation and effective public oversight increasingly important.

For India, the convergence of AI and biotechnology presents both an economic opportunity and a public policy responsibility. The country has established pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries, a growing AI ecosystem and expanding capabilities in genomics. AI-assisted biology could support the development of new antibiotics, vaccines, diagnostic tools and medicines, while also improving agricultural research. Research into bacteriophages, for instance, offers promising avenues for tackling antibiotic-resistant bacteria. India's approach should encourage these benefits while ensuring that public health, environmental safety and national security remain central to scientific advancement. India can build on its existing institutional framework by strengthening the role of the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) and the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC). Three to five selected Bio-AI hubs could serve as public-private testbeds, bringing together Indian AI companies, research institutions and international developers such as Anthropic and Google DeepMind. With controlled access to appropriate biological datasets and laboratory facilities, these hubs could evaluate AI models under defined biosecurity protocols. Such partnerships would support innovation while enabling Indian researchers to assess technological capabilities and limitations in domestic laboratory conditions.

The DBT could also establish a structured biosecurity sandbox with frontier AI companies and research organisations. Under this arrangement, developers could work with Indian scientists to assess biological risks, test safeguards and identify weaknesses under controlled conditions. A further step would be to develop a voluntary screening framework connecting AI design-software providers, BIRAC-supported enterprises, DNA synthesis companies and laboratory biosafety committees. The resulting evidence could help the government formulate proportionate standards for high-risk AI-assisted biological research and DNA synthesis, while strengthening cooperation between public institutions and private innovators.

India's framework should also account for broader socioeconomic and environmental consequences. Agricultural biotechnology demonstrates the importance of evaluating new technologies beyond immediate scientific or commercial benefits. Lessons from the Bt cotton experience underline the need for appropriate assessment, monitoring, public consultation and accountability when technologies have wide-ranging effects on farmers and communities. A multidisciplinary process involving scientists, medical professionals, security experts, agricultural specialists and technology policymakers could help India assess such consequences alongside conventional biosecurity risks.

India's decentralisation push needs stronger state finance commissions

SAURABH BANDYOPADHYAY

India has spent more than three decades building the constitutional architecture of local government. The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments gave Panchayats and municipalities constitutional recognition and envisaged them as institutions of self-government. Yet India's decentralisation remains unfinished. The problem is not simply that local governments do not receive enough money.

It is that the institutional chain through which resources, responsibilities, and accountability are devolved remains weak. The Sixteenth Finance Commission's treatment of State Finance Commissions (SFCs) brings this problem into sharp focus.

The Commission acknowledges the crucial constitutional role of SFCs in determining the resources available to rural and urban local bodies. At the same time, it points out that successive Finance Commissions have found it difficult to use SFC recommendations because many states do not constitute these commissions on time and the reports that are available vary considerably in their methodology, coverage, and quality. This leads to an uncomfortable but important question: if SFCs are too weak to inform fiscal devolution, should India bypass them – or make them work? The answer should be the latter.

India's fiscal federalism is usually discussed as a relationship between the Union and the states. Decentralisation, however, introduces a third tier of government, making the institutional architecture considerably more complex.

The Union Finance Commission has a constitutional role in recommending measures for local bodies, while SFCs are expected to examine the finances of Panchayats and municipalities within individual states.

In principle, this creates a powerful chain of fiscal federalism – from the Union to the state, from the State to local governments, and ultimately from local governments to citizens. When the SFC is weak, however, the middle of this chain becomes fragile.

This matters because the Sixteenth Finance Commission itself recognises that the primary responsibility for providing the funds and functionaries required to perform functions devolved to local governments rests with state governments. Finance Commission grants are supplementary.



The Commission has recommended a substantial Rs.

7.91 lakh crore in grants for duly constituted rural and urban local bodies over 2026-27 to 2030-31. But even such a large transfer from the Union cannot substitute for a functioning system of state-level fiscal devolution.

The real question, therefore, is not simply how much money the Union gives local governments, but how systematically states transfer resources and responsibilities to them. That is precisely where SFCs should matter.

The Sixteenth Finance Commission's response to the weakness of SFCs is particularly interesting.

On the one hand, it recommends removing from Articles 280(3)(bb) and 280(3)(c) the constitutional requirement that the Union Finance Commission make its recommendations on local bodies "on the basis of" recommendations made by SFCs.

The Commission argues that the practical difficulties in obtaining meaningful and comparable SFC recommendations are unlikely to disappear in the foreseeable future. It has instead suggested that NITI Aayog study the functioning of SFCs across states and document good practices.

On the other hand, the Commission has strengthened the incentive for states to constitute SFCs. It recommends that every state comply with the constitutional requirement to constitute an SFC after the expiry of five years from the constitution of the previous one and that the Action Taken Report on the SFC's recommendations be placed before the state legislature within six months. Compliance with these requirements is made a condition for accessing local-body grants from 2026-27.

In other words, the Commission is simultaneously reducing the formal dependence of Union-level devolution on SFC recommendations while strengthening the incentive for states to maintain functioning SFCs.

What appears at first to be a paradox may actually point towards a sensible transition.

The next step should therefore be to make the SFC report a kind of public fiscal contract between the state and its local governments. Its recommendations should clearly identify the functions assigned to each tier,

the expenditure requirements associated with those functions, the revenue that local governments can reasonably mobilise, and the transfers that the state is expected to provide. The Action Taken Report should then show, transparently, what the state accepted, what it rejected, and what it actually implemented.

This would shift the SFC from a constitutional formality to an institution of fiscal federalism. It would also address a fundamental weakness in India's decentralisation model:

the tendency to treat local governments primarily as recipients of schemes and grants rather than as governments with their own responsibilities, revenue bases, and accountability to citizens.

The objective, therefore, should not be to make the Union Finance Commission permanently substitute for weak SFCs.

Nor should India wait indefinitely for every SFC to become perfect before transferring resources to local governments. A better approach is a parallel-track strategy.

The Union Finance Commission should continue to provide predictable, formula-based grants to local governments, while those transfers should create stronger incentives for states to institutionalise credible SFCs. Over time, SFCs should become the principal institutions for answering a fundamental question within each state: what does decentralisation actually cost, who should finance it, and how should those resources be shared among local governments?

The Sixteenth Finance Commission has already put substantial resources behind local government.

The larger opportunity is to ensure that these resources become the foundation for genuine self-government rather than another layer of intergovernmental transfers. India does not need to choose between bypassing weak SFCs and relying on them blindly.

It should use the Union Finance Commission to ensure continuity and predictability of local financing while using that same financial leverage to build stronger SFCs.

The real test of the Sixteenth Finance Commission, therefore, will not simply be whether local governments receive more money between 2026 and 2031. It will be whether, by 2031, SFCs have become strong enough that India no longer has to ask whether they can be trusted with the job.

That is the real unfinished business of fiscal decentralisation in India:

not merely transferring more money to local governments but building the institutions that allow them to govern with money, responsibility, and accountability.

(Saurabh Bandyopadhyay is a Senior Fellow at the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER))

Imran Khan, and the perils of having an 'Opinion' in bollywood

KAVEREE BAMZAI

In July, when actor Imran Khan first joined the protests against the NEET paper leak, he said, "True art is going to have an individual artist point of you embedded within it, and as part of our human nature, we are going to have opinion and perspective. If you can't stand by your opinions and if you do not pour your own heart into your art, your art has no value".

By October, when he joined the protest demanding the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, his mere presence was enough to get him a deportation order from the Mumbai Police. He is contesting it, but it has opened up the debate on the relationship between actors and politics. Those who are chastising Khan for airing his views while being an American citizen and Overseas Citizen of India are the same ones who demand that actors speak up on national issues, from the Union Budget to the Cockroach Janata Party (CJP)-led protests.

There are several assumptions here. One, that actors are making art. In a film industry that gravitates around commerce, films are judged by box office revenue, not artistic merit. And the fear of social and commercial boycott of films and advertisements is not conducive to freedom of aesthetic expression. One only has to look at the social media heckling of actor Aamir Khan (also Imran's uncle) after his then-wife Kiran Rao's remark at a media event in 2015 about rising religious intolerance in India. His subsequent silence on all controversial political issues gives credence to why the industry is called 'show business'. Because that is what it is, a business.

The second assumption is a deeper, philosophical issue: the inability of those in positions of authority to



distinguish between the state and the nation. One can love one's nation but not necessarily agree with the actions of the state. This extends to another distinction, that between the karmabhoomi (land of work) and the janmabhoomi (land of birth). It's the same sentiment that motivates so many NRIs to be devoted and vocal supporters of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), even though they are not citizens of India.

The third assumption is that filmmakers and actors in the film industry have informed opinions on important issues. One only has to look at the exaggerated importance attached to actor and now MP Kangana Ranaut's political views, despite her repeated own goals, among which is the memorable comment that India won true independence only in 2014. She is, as we all know, since 2024, the honourable MP from Mandi, Himachal Pradesh. She comes from a long line of actor MPs whose sole contribution has been to add themselves to the Gaffe Hall of Fame.

It's a far cry from when the industry was not afraid to be identified with a political party, of whatever persuasion it may be. Dev Anand, a staunch critic of Indira Gandhi, launched, albeit unsuccessfully, the National Party of India after his refusal to praise Sanjay Gandhi led to his films not being screened on television, and All India Radio (AIR) forbade any reference to his name. The mercurial singer and actor Kishore Kumar suffered a similar erasure for three months on AIR and Doordarshan when he refused to sing at Geeto Bhari Shaam, a state-sponsored charity event under the aegis of the Indian Youth Congress, in Delhi's Ambedkar Stadium in 1976.

The spectacle state, to borrow scholar Brahma Prakash's term, needs to sustain itself through emotion and sentiment. No one embodies this better than the magic-makers of cinema. A series of actors, such as Amitabh Bachchan and Rajesh Khanna, plunged into politics as Congress candidates, while their contemporary Vinod Khanna became a much-loved four-time BJP MP from Gurdaspur. Dharmendra contested and won from Bikaner in Rajasthan. His son, Sunny Deol, became an MP from Gurdaspur.

But most actors in the North have treated politics as a side hustle. As Dharmendra said to the media upon being elected, "Films had made me what I am." And, therefore, he refused to quit films after having joined politics. It is not so in the southern film industries, which give the actors greater freedom to say what they want through their cinema, as was evident in the body of work of Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay, capped by his "final film", Jana Nayagan, which took on everyone from established politicians to AI-controlled drone warriors.

When Dev Anand launched his party, his reasoning was simple: "If MGR could spell magic in Tamil Nadu, why not me in the whole country?" But that is where he was mistaken. In Tamil Nadu and in the case of NTR Rama Rao in undivided Andhra Pradesh - who rode to power on back of playing mythological characters - their cinema was their own, designed to please audiences who formed formidable fan clubs that performed the function of vote banks. Unlike in Mumbai cinema, there is very little second-guessing. The star leads, and the audiences follow. In Mumbai, the star and filmmaker, usually products of the restrictive Juhu-Bandra spectrum, don't have the cultural capital to articulate the collective unconscious, which is usually a step ahead of the state's response.

In the West, too, speaking one's mind can cost actors and filmmakers their careers, and not only in the McCarthy era but even now with stars such as Susan Sarandon and Mark Ruffalo, who have made it a point to highlight the horrors of Gaza and come up against a powerful, permanent establishment. As actors, they believe humanity comes before borders, protest has no specific provenance, and conscience comes with global citizenship.

As a viral Instagram meme notes, in his most iconic role as Jai Singh Rathore, aka 'Rats', aka 'Ranjore ka Rathore' in the 2008 hit, Jaane Tu ...Ya Jaane Na, Imran Khan has to ride a horse, go to jail, and stand up for what - and who - they love before he can become a man. As far as he is concerned, two out of three in real life is not too bad.

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

The cost of delayed mental health care



VANGEEPURAM SRINIVASA CHARY



Emotional distress does not always announce itself loudly. Sometimes, it appears as sleepless nights, persistent worry, withdrawal from loved ones or an inability to cope with everyday responsibilities. People may continue fulfilling their duties while silently struggling within. Even when they recognise that something is wrong, many postpone seeking professional help, hoping that time, determination or a change in circumstances will resolve their difficulties. Such delays can prolong suffering and make recovery more challenging.

The Amaha Mental Health Report 2026: Understanding the Journey to Care in India, published by Mumbai-based mental healthcare organisation Amaha, highlights the gap between experiencing psychological difficulties and seeking professional support. Based on responses from 13,825 people who approached Amaha for care between October 2025 and September 2026, the report found that 53 per cent had experienced mental health concerns for more than a year before seeking professional help. Only 11.3 per cent accessed care within a month of experiencing their concerns. These findings describe the experiences of people who sought care through Amaha; they should not be interpreted as representing the entire Indian population.

The delay raises an important question: why do people hesitate to seek help? Fear of social judgement, misconceptions about psychological difficulties, financial constraints and limited awareness can all create barriers. Some believe that asking for help reflects weakness, while others worry that their families, colleagues or communities may misunderstand them. Many attempt to manage their distress alone, sometimes until it begins to affect their relationships, education, work or physical well-being.

One of the report's most concerning findings is that 56.2 per cent of respondents reported thoughts of self-harm before seeking care. This figure must be understood in the context of the report's sample, rather than treated as a measure of prevalence across India.

Nevertheless, it underlines the seriousness of distress experienced by some people before they reach professional support. Expressions of hopelessness or thoughts of self-harm should never be dismissed as attention-seeking or weakness; they warrant a compassionate response and appropriate professional assessment.

Before seeking professional care, many respondents had turned to friends, family or self-help resources. The report found that 54.5 per cent had spoken to friends or family, while 44.6 per cent had tried self-help.

Although these approaches can provide support, they cannot always replace professional assessment. Excessive screen time, oversleeping, overworking or relying on harmful substances may offer temporary distraction without addressing the underlying difficulty.

Families and friends can make a meaningful difference by listening without judgement, recognising persistent changes in behaviour and encouraging appropriate assistance. Telling someone to be strong, stop worrying or think positively may unintentionally make them feel misunderstood.

A patient conversation and practical help in finding professional support can be far more constructive. Where someone expresses thoughts of self-harm or appears to be in immediate danger, the situation must be taken seriously and urgent professional assistance sought.

Educational institutions and workplaces also have a responsibility to create environments in which seeking psychological support does not invite ridicule or discrimination. Young people should learn to recognise emotional difficulties and understand where help is available.

Employees should be able to seek support without automatically fearing that doing so will undermine their professional standing. Awareness campaigns are important, but they must be accompanied by accessible services, qualified professionals and clear information about obtaining care.

The cost of delayed mental health care cannot be measured solely in money or time. It may be reflected in strained relationships, interrupted education, reduced work performance and diminished quality of life. Yet the answer is not to frighten people into seeking help. It is to remove unnecessary barriers, challenge harmful misconceptions and make appropriate support easier to access.

A compassionate society does not expect people to endure every difficulty in silence. It recognises emotional well-being as an essential part of human health and encourages people to seek help before distress becomes overwhelming.

The true cost of delayed mental health care lies not only in the suffering prolonged, but also in the support that could have been offered earlier. No one should have to reach a breaking point before feeling entitled to seek help.

(Author, is a counsellor, and human development trainer)

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA
REVENUE (LA) DEPARTMENT

FORM - VII

[See sub rule (1) of rule – 25 and Section -19(1) of the Act – 30/2013]

DECLARATION

LAO/RDO, KORUTLA No. E/395/2025 Dated: .10.2026.
COLLECTOR, JAGTIAL No. G1/671/2025 Dated: .10.2026.

Whereas it appears to the Government of Telangana / Collector, Jagtial that a total of Ac.2.38 Gts. of land of Kalikota Village of Kathalapur Mandal, Korutla Division of Jagtial District is required as specified in the schedule below for the public purpose of Tank Bund Extension of Kalikota Suramma Cheruvu under Sripada Yellampally Project Stage-II Phase-I Canal Network Package-II.

Therefore, declaration is made that piece of land measuring, more or less total Ac 2.38 Gts. of standard measurement under acquisition for the above said project in Kalikota Village of Kathalapur mandal, Korutla Division of Jagtial District whose detail description is as following.

SCHEDULE

VILLAGE: KALIKOTA MANDAL: KATHALAPUR DISTRICT: JAGTIAL

Sl. No	Sy. No	Type of Title	Type of Land	Area under Acquisition (Acres)	Name & Address of person interested	Boundaries				Structures / Trees
						North	East	South	West	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7				8
1	90/1	Patta	Dry	1.00	Muniganti Raj Kumar S/o Nadipanna	89	138	91	93	Nil
2	91/1	Patta	Dry	0.22 ½	Muniganti Rajanarsaiah S/o Narsimlu	90, 93	138	138	92	
3	91/2	Patta	Dry	0.22 ½	Muniganti Raj Kumar S/o Nadipanna	90, 93	138	138	92	
4	92/3	Patta	Dry	0.09	Gadanaveni Mallesham S/o Komuraiah	93	91	138	138	
5	92/1	Patta	Dry	0.03	Munikota Gangaram S/o Hanmaiah	93	91	138	138	
6	92/2	Patta	Dry	0.03	Munikota Kalavathi W/o Brahmaiah	93	91	138	138	
7	93/2	Patta	Dry	0.09	Markam Mallesh S/o Narsaiah	94, 96	90, 91	92	98	
8	93/1	Patta	Dry	0.09	Markam Hanmandlu S/o Narsaiah	94, 96	90, 91	92	98	
TOTAL EXTENT:				2.38						

This declaration is made as per the section 19(1) of the Act, as no objections have been received on the issues mentioned in the section 15(1) of the Act No.30/2013 from the persons interested. Because of Land Acquisition none of the family has been displaced and livelihood affected. Therefore Rehabilitation & Resettlement is not applicable.

Mines of coal, iron-stone, slate or other minerals lying under the said land or any particular portion of the said land, except such parts of the mines and minerals which may be required to be dug or removed or used during the construction phase of the project for the purpose of which the land is being acquired, are not needed.

A plan of the land may be inspected in the office of the Land Acquisition Officer & Revenue Divisional Officer, Korutla on any working day.

Sd/– Land Acquisition Officer & Revenue Divisional Officer Korutla.
Sd/– Additional Collector Jagtial.
Sd/– District Collector, Jagtial.

DIPR- 1036/LA/PP/ADVT/PUB/2026-27

Govt cuts gold duty drawback rate by 3.1%

NEW DELHI, OCT 16

The central government on Friday reduced the duty drawback rates applicable to the export of gold and silver jewellery, as well as other precious metal products. According to a notification issued by the Ministry of Finance, the duty refund on gold jewellery has been cut by 3.1 per cent, while the refund on silver jewellery and other such products has been reduced by approximately 9 per cent. (IANS)

Welcome competition in satellite comm.: Reliance

MUMBAI, OCT 16



Reliance Industries Ltd (REL) on Friday said that India's rules apply equally to domestic and foreign companies in the field of satellite communications, amid Elon Musk's criticism of the regulatory hurdles facing Starlink in the country.

In a statement, the company said, "we welcome competition in satellite communications, including Starlink."

"Every player, Jio included, must serve the people of India and abide by the laws and policies of the land," said REL in its statement.

"In light of recent remarks about Reliance and the Indian market, we wish to place the facts on record. Like every Indian enterprise, Reliance has grown in an India that welcomes investment and innovation, homegrown or international, that improve the lives of the people," the company added.

It further stated "that openness rests on the rule of law. As the Government of India has stated, it applies the same process to every applicant, Indian or foreign. Jio's own satellite services await clearances".

At Reliance, "we have never feared competition. We see it as the truest test of who serves the customer best. Jio itself entered India's crowded telecom market in 2016 as the newest player, with not a single customer", the company noted.

In just 10 years, Jio has earned the trust of over 530 million customers and given Indians some of the best digital infrastructure and most affordable data in the world.

Starlink has secured a licence to provide satellite communication services in India, but the company still requires security-related clearances and other approvals before it can commercially launch its service.

Last week, Musk took a swipe at billionaire Mukesh Ambani over Starlink's entry into India, calling him "Dear Prime Minister Ambani," and accusing him of seeking to maintain a monopoly and questioning whether he would allow the satellite internet service to compete in the country. (IANS)

ED files charge sheet against FIITJEE, directors in money laundering case

LUCKNOW, OCT 16



The Enforcement Directorate's (ED) Lucknow Zonal Office has filed a charge sheet before a Special PMLA Court in Ghaziabad against FIITJEE Limited and its directors, Dinesh Kumar Goel and Monila Goel, in a money laundering case linked to the alleged misappropriation of fees collected from students, according to an official statement issued on Friday.

The charge sheet was filed on Thursday. The ED has sought the conviction of the accused and confiscation of properties worth Rs 71.88 crore seized and provisionally attached during the investigation.

The ED launched its probe on the basis of four FIRs registered by police in Noida and Greater Noida in Uttar Pradesh and Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh under provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) corresponding to Sections 406, 420, 120B and 34 of the IPC.

According to the FIRs, FIITJEE allegedly collected between Rs 2.8 lakh and Rs 3.5 lakh per student in advance for coaching programmes lasting two to four years, including preparation for competitive examinations such as the JEE, on the assurance that the courses would be completed.

However, the ED alleged that faculty members left due to unpaid salaries and several centres subsequently shut abruptly without prior notice.

The agency further alleged that the management diverted students' fees and continued enrolling new students despite the departure of faculty members. The ED investigation claimed that FIITJEE abruptly closed 32 centres between May 2024 and February 2025, affecting 14,411 enrolled students who had already paid for coaching. (IANS/UNI)

India needs 2.9 million more hospital beds by 2035

NEW DELHI, OCT 16



India will need an additional 2.6 billion sq. ft. of healthcare real estate by 2035, as the country needs nearly 2.9 million incremental hospital beds to align with global healthcare infrastructure benchmarks, a report said on Friday.

The report from CBRE South Asia said the country currently has nearly 1.6 hospital beds per 1,000 people, well below the global average of 3.3 per 1,000, and that India's total healthcare real estate footprint would need to expand substantially from an estimated 2.1 billion sq. ft. in 2025 to close the gap.

"The requirement presents a significant opportunity for developers, investors and healthcare operators to create purpose-built and scalable healthcare assets across markets," the report said.

Healthcare investment is increasingly shifting towards specialised facilities, day-care formats and acquisition-led expansion. Southern states such as Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Karnataka have higher existing healthcare infrastructure relative to their non-communicable disease (NCD) burden.

Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand have low bed density relative to non-communicable disease burdens, while Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Telangana have stronger infrastructure and household incomes, supporting further expansion of specialised healthcare facilities and medical ecosystems.

"Healthcare is emerging as one of India's most consequential real estate opportunities, not simply because demand for care is increasing, but because the country needs a far deeper and more distributed physical healthcare network," said Anshuman Magazine, Chairman and CEO, India, South-East Asia, Middle East and Africa, CBRE. (IANS/UNI)

Truzon bags Rs. 236-crore Solar project order

RATNA CHOTRANI
HYDERABAD, OCT. 16



Hyderabad-based Truzon Clean Energies Pvt. Ltd., formerly Suntek Energy Systems Pvt. Ltd., has secured a Rs. 236-crore engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) order from Hariom Power & Energy Pvt. Ltd. to develop 72 MW of ground-mounted solar projects in Maharashtra under Component C of the PM-KUSUM scheme. The projects are spread across Hingoli, Latur, Parbhani and Beed districts, with 15 MW already executed. Once commissioned, they are expected to generate around 89.89 million units of electricity annually.

Under the turnkey contract, Truzon will undertake design, engineering, procurement, construction, installation, testing, commissioning and performance demonstration. Truzon Solar Managing Director Charugundla Bhavani Suresh described the order as a significant milestone and reaffirmed the company's commitment to long-term project performance. CEO Srinivas Jakkula said execution across four districts would require coordinated planning, engineering precision and a focus on safety.

The order was disclosed by listed company Hari Om in accordance with SEBI guidelines.

US senators move to block Saudi nuclear deal

WASHINGTON, OCT 16

Two Democratic US senators introduced a resolution seeking to block President Donald Trump's civilian nuclear cooperation agreement with Saudi Arabia, warning that the deal lacks safeguards needed to prevent a nuclear arms race in the Middle East.

Senators Jeff Merkley of Oregon and Edward Markey of Massachusetts introduced the joint resolution of disapproval, setting the stage for a Senate vote after November 29, before the proposed agreement takes effect.

The move marks a new congressional challenge to the administration's nuclear diplomacy with Riyadh.



Under federal law, Congress has a 90-day review period to examine the agreement. Unless Congress adopts a resolution blocking it, the agreement can enter into force after the review period.

Merkley, a senior member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said the United States must insist on strong safeguards before transferring civilian nuclear technology to Saudi Arabia.

"Giving Saudi Arabia access to US civilian nuclear energy technology without ironclad protections to make sure it doesn't provide a foundation for a nuclear bomb is unacceptable," Merkley said.

"We can't sleepwalk into a decision this consequential," he said, stressing Congress's responsibility to scrutinise the agreement.

Markey went further, warning that the proposed arrangement could destabilise an already volatile region.

"The US-Saudi nuclear deal is about megatons, not megawatts," he said.

He accused the administration of pursuing an agreement that falls short of established non-proliferation standards, particularly by allowing uranium enrichment without requiring the strongest international inspections.

"This deal is the starting gun for a Middle East nuclear arms race. Congress must reject it," Markey said.

The senators contend that the agreement fails to meet two safeguards they consider essential.

The first is the so-called gold standard for civilian nuclear cooperation, under which a recipient country commits not to enrich uranium or reprocess spent nuclear fuel.

Both activities can have legitimate civilian applications but also involve technologies that could contribute to the production of nuclear weapons material.

The second is adherence to the International Atomic Energy Agency's Additional Protocol, which provides inspectors with broader access and information to help detect undeclared nuclear activities. (IANS/UNI)

5 dead following shooting at Oregon elementary school

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
OREGON, OCT 16

Authorities believe at least five people are dead following a shooting at an elementary school in Bend, Oregon, United States.



That's according to two law enforcement officials with knowledge of the case who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss it publicly. Both officials said the death toll was preliminary and could change.

Bend police spokesperson Sheila Miller earlier confirmed the suspect is dead. It wasn't clear if the suspect was included among the five.

She also said multiple victims were children.

"We don't have a number at this point. We know children are among the victims," Miller said during a media briefing.

Authorities received a call about a shot fired into a car outside Silver Rail Elementary at 12:59 p.m. and arrived on scene within minutes. Further 911 calls came from inside the school, she said.

The attacker was shot and went down inside the school soon after police arrived, Miller said.

World faces 800 million jobs gap: Ajay Banga



World Bank Group President Ajay Banga addresses Annual Meetings Plenary at the IMF/World Bank 2026 Annual Meetings in Bangkok.

WASHINGTON, OCT 16

The world faces a staggering shortfall of nearly 800 million jobs over the next 10 to 15 years, World Bank President Ajay Banga has warned, calling for a fundamental shift in global development financing to create employment opportunities for a rapidly growing young population.

In his address to the World Bank Group's 2026 Annual Meeting plenary in Bangkok, Banga said about 1.2 billion young people would enter the global workforce over the next decade and a half, while only 400 million jobs were projected to become available.

"The jobs gap is a projection. It does not have to be our future," Banga said, outlining an ambitious strategy to combine public finance, private investment, philanthropy and technology to accelerate economic development.

He warned that persistent conflicts, mounting debt burdens, shrinking fiscal space and high energy and fertiliser costs were making the challenge more difficult for developing economies.

Banga said the World Bank had undertaken sweeping institutional reforms since he assumed office in June 2023, aimed at increasing lending capacity, reducing bureaucracy and mobilising private capital.

Project preparation time had been reduced from 19 months to nine months, while the institution's performance indicators were cut from 153 to 22.

The reforms had also created more than $100 billion in additional lending capacity for the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development over a decade.

Private capital mobilisation had risen from approximately $35 billion in fiscal 2022 to $112 billion last year, a threefold increase. Combined with the World Bank Group's own financing, total financing exceeded $230 billion.

India emerged among the leading sources of private investment mobilised by the institution. (IANS)

Zelenskyy seeks more F-16 jets, ammunition from Belgium

BRUSSELS, OCT 16

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Friday called for additional F-16 fighter jets and ammunition from Belgium to strengthen Ukraine's air defences as Russian attacks on energy infrastructure left thousands without electricity and disrupted power supplies in parts of Kyiv.



During talks with Belgian Prime Minister Bart De Wever, Zelenskyy said Russian strikes on energy facilities had left nearly 15,000 people without electricity in the Volyn region, while some districts of Kyiv and the surrounding region were also experiencing power outages.

Zelenskyy said repair crews in some communities were unable to begin restoration work because of the threat of further Russian strikes targeting the same locations.

"F-16s are helping significantly in repelling attacks by jet-powered 'Shaheds'," Zelensky said, adding that Ukraine is working with Belgium to secure additional aircraft as quickly as possible. The two leaders also discussed the possibility of supplying more ammunition for the fighter jets.

Zelenskyy separately met Belgium's King Philippe, thanking him, the government and the Belgian people for their continued support. He stressed that strengthening Ukraine's air defences against Russian missile and drone attacks remained a priority.

He also called for frozen Russian assets to remain immobilised throughout the war, saying Moscow should not regain access to funds that could be used to finance further attacks or destabilise Europe.

The Ukrainian president raised similar concerns during meetings with European Council President Antonio Costa, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen, seeking further military and financial assistance. (IANS)

Migrant boat sinks off coast of Gambia

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
BANJUL, OCT 16

Rescuers have recovered 12 bodies after a boat transporting migrants sank off the coast of Gambia, with an unknown number still missing, the Red Cross said.

The boat had set sail from the village of Jinack Kajata, which sits on an Atlantic island that residents say has become a frequent departure point for migrants trying to reach Spain's Canary Islands.

The long journey from west Africa is extremely dangerous due to strong currents and the often ramshackle, overloaded vessels used.

"The number of missing remains unclear. Further information is expected as rescue operations continue," the Gambia Red Cross Society said Thursday in a statement.

The latest incident follows another deadly sinking off Jinack Kajata in December 2025 that killed more than 40 people and left around 100 missing.

The recent implementation of tighter patrols off Morocco, Mauritania and Senegal has forced migrants farther south in their attempts to reach Europe — lengthening the dangerous journey.

Eight US states sue AI giant OpenAI

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
HARRISBURG, OCT 16

At least eight states are suing artificial intelligence giant OpenAI, saying the company's popular chatbot model violated state consumer protection laws by hurting children and deceiving adults in what prosecutors described as a reckless pursuit of profit.

The company's chatbot model, ChatGPT, is giving dangerous medical advice, encouraging paranoia and coaching people to commit suicide or hurt or kill others, the lawsuits said.

At the same time, the lawsuits contend that chatbots are pretending to be agreeable and compassionate while



preying on the vulnerable and on teenagers, the first generation to grow up with artificial intelligence.

"OpenAI is hurting kids and they are lying to Iowans," Iowa Attorney General Brenna Bird said in a statement.

The states also accused OpenAI of giving life to rogue AI models — or "cyberhacking agents" as one lawsuit called them — that hacked into other companies, lied to human users and wrote themselves new mission instructions.

In a statement, San Francisco-based OpenAI said it has built safety protections into ChatGPT for children, and that it would continue to do so to improve the model. It also said it is reviewing what it calls "misaligned models" and that it had found nothing close to the rogue incident discovered in July when an AI agent hacked into another AI company.

The wave of lawsuits is the latest filed by states under their consumer protection laws, accusing tech giants that offer AI chatbots and social media platforms of harming children. The states that filed separate lawsuits Wednesday in state courts are Arizona, Arkansas, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska and West Virginia.

Matthew Bergman, the founding attorney of the Social Media Victims Law Center, called the lawsuits "the most significant coordinated state action ever taken against an artificial intelligence company."

In its lawsuit, Arizona said ChatGPT encourages teens to share personal information with it and, at times, discourages them from sharing that information with parents, authorities or friends.

The states say that the risks and harms — to teenagers and to the broader public from rogue agents — were foreseeable, but that OpenAI has misled people into thinking that ChatGPT undergoes adequate safety testing while the company undermines safety in the pursuit of profit.

Greenland plans banning deep-sea mining

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
COPENHAGEN, OCT 16

Greenland's parliament on Thursday unanimously adopted a proposal asking the government to draft legislation banning deep-sea mining and exploration until at least the end of 2029.

Fisheries are the driver of Greenland's economy, while hunting plays a crucial role for livelihoods in many local communities.

WWF Greenland hailed the move as an "important step in the right direction," adding: "There is still relatively limited scientific knowledge about the potential consequences of deep-sea mining for the marine environment."

Inhabitants of the Danish autonomous territory are wary of the consequences that deep-sea mining could have on the environment.

But the unexploited minerals believed to lie under the vast Arctic island's ground and seabed — which could play a crucial role in many new tech and defense industries — are also seen as a potential springboard to the territory's independence from Denmark, a goal backed by a majority of the island's 57,000 inhabitants.

Greenland has long received subsidies from the Danish government that account for about 20 percent of its economy, and it would need massive investment to survive on its own.

Under the proposal adopted Thursday, Greenland's government can extend the moratorium in two-year increments.

Microsoft's Brad Smith hits back at Vance over H-1B, green-card curbs

WASHINGTON, OCT 16

Microsoft President Brad Smith has rejected Vice President JD Vance's charge that the company abuses the H-1B visa programme as "completely off base", and warned that blocking skilled immigrants' path to green cards could cripple the US technology sector for more than a generation.

"Someone had failed to inform the vice president accurately about our numbers," Smith said in an interview with Politico, published on Thursday.

He said the "vast majority" of Microsoft's green-card applications were for long-time em-



Brad Smith

ployees, not new hires. "Unfortunately, it's just because the green card backlog is so long," he said.

Smith also denied that Microsoft paid foreign workers less than Americans. "It doesn't matter whether you came on a visa or you're an American worker, everybody has the same compensation system," he said.

He said Microsoft hired more than 9,000 US-born workers last year, and that they had been "left out of the narrative".

"We will stand by our record," Smith said. "And I hope that folks at the White House might look again and look at what we think is a more accurate picture."

The interview, given on Wednesday on the sidelines of an AI summit in Dublin, came less than a week after Vance announced that Microsoft and seven other companies would be barred from seeking green cards for their skilled foreign workers.

The Labour Department on October 8 suspended permanent labour certification, or PERM, filings by the eight employers, including Indian IT majors Infosys, Tata Consultancy Services, Wipro and HCLTech. PERM is the first step in most employer-sponsored green cards.

Vance accused Microsoft of fraud, saying it used the H-1B programme to avoid hiring Americans at higher salaries. "You're a great American company, but you've got to hire great American workers," he said of Microsoft. He said the suspension would "last as long as it needs to". (IANS/UNI)

IMF warns AI boom could spark market turmoil

WASHINGTON, OCT 16

The International Monetary Fund has warned that the rapid expansion of artificial intelligence could trigger financial market instability if soaring investment, rising corporate borrowing and expectations of future profits run ahead of actual productivity gains.

IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said the AI boom was already supporting economic growth, particularly in the United States and Asian economies supplying technology hardware, but cautioned that financial risks were building alongside its potential benefits.



Kristalina Georgieva

In an article published on Thursday, Georgieva said investment in artificial intelligence infrastructure could eventually exceed the enormous sums spent developing railways, electricity networks and the internet.

The immediate impact has been positive, with spending on data centres, computing infrastructure and related technologies generating additional demand across several economies.

However, the IMF chief warned that the financial structures supporting this expansion could become vulnerable if expectations about AI profitability prove overly optimistic.

A particular concern is the increasing reliance of major technology companies on debt markets to finance their investments.

According to Georgieva, the share of investment-grade bond issuance accounted for by large technology companies financing AI infrastructure has increased more than tenfold. (IANS)

Indians top Kuwait's domestic workforce



FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
KUWAIT, OCT 16

Four nationalities account for about 86.1 percent of all domestic workers in Kuwait, with 760,744 out of a total of 883,308, according to statistics from the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI).

Indians top the list with 344,532 domestic workers, or about 39 percent of the total, well ahead of all other nationalities. Sri Lankans rank second with 157,901 workers, or 17.9 percent, followed closely by Filipinos with 151,369, or 17.1 percent. Bangladeshis are fourth with 106,942 workers, or 12.1 percent.

Together, the four nationalities make up more than 8 in every 10 domestic workers in the country. The remaining 13.9 percent, about 122,564 workers, are spread across all other nationalities.

The figures show how concentrated Kuwait's domestic workforce is among a small number of nationalities, with Indians alone making up nearly 4 in every 10 workers in the sector.

Earlier, Kuwait's Interior Ministry has issued a new circular restricting the recruitment of domestic workers to 10 approved countries, while banning recruitment from 27 others, as part of updated regulations governing the domestic labour sector, local media reported.

The measure was adopted based on observations and recommendations from several government bodies, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Health and the Public Authority for Manpower.

Under the directive, domestic workers may be recruited from South Africa, Benin, Eritrea, Ethiopia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, India, Vietnam and Nepal, as well as Senegal, where recruitment is limited to male workers only. Recruitment procedures will be completed through the country's governorates.

Israeli settlers attack Palestinians during olive harvest

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
WEST BANK, OCT 16

Israeli settlers attacked Palestinians in multiple villages across the occupied West Bank on Friday and trees and cars were set on fire, according to local officials and emergency responders with the Palestinian Red Crescent Society.

The Palestinian Red Crescent Society said six people were injured in two attacks it responded to in the town of Abu Falah outside Ramallah. A 63-year-old woman and a 40-year-old man were taken to a hospital after being beaten by settlers, The Associated Press quoted the Red Crescent as saying.



Firefighters douse a burnt car after Israeli settlers attacked a group of Palestinians harvesting olives in the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

"The settlers want to attack us and force us from our homes," said Moutaz Abdelhadi, 42, a farmer who witnessed the attack in Abu Falah.

Partway through the attack, at least two Israeli military jeeps sped through the area, kicking up dust as villagers ran out of their way.

The attack continued after the military's arrival, with Israeli soldiers firing tear gas in the direction of the Palestinians who had dodged the jeeps. The sound of live gunfire could be heard in the area, and a Reuters photographer saw at least one armed settler fire a gun.

Among the injured was Heidi Levine, a photojournalist with the Washington Post. The newspaper did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Israel has imposed new rules on the olive harvest this year, prohibiting Palestinians from working in what's known as Area C, which is under Israeli security control and encompasses the majority of the territory's agricultural land.

At least four Palestinians have been killed and more than 100 injured since the harvest season began earlier this month, according to Palestinian officials.

Qatar reiterates support for Lebanese army

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
DOHA, OCT 16

Qatar's Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani on Friday reiterated his country's support to Lebanese army. Sheikh Mohammed, who is also Qatar's foreign minister, made the remarks after meeting with Lebanon's President Joseph Aoun at the presidential palace in Baabda. Aoun thanked the Qatari leadership "in their constant pursuit of restoring stability to the countries of the region, through bringing viewpoints closer and removing the causes that lead to escalation," a statement from the Lebanese presidency noted.

Saudi Arabia to enhance energy cooperation with countries

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
RIYADH, OCT 16

Minister of Energy and Minister of Industry and Mineral Resources Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman held a series of bilateral meetings over two days with ministers and senior officials participating in the 25th WPC Energy Congress, which will conclude in Riyadh. These include ministers from Germany, Algeria, Iraq, Tunisia, Uzbekistan, Libya and Yemen.



During their meeting, Prince Abdulaziz and Germany's Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Energy Katherina Reiche discussed issues of mutual interest and ways to strengthen cooperation, particularly in the energy and industrial sectors.

Prince Abdulaziz and Mongolia's Deputy Prime Minister Togmid Dorjkhand met to discuss opportunities to expand bilateral cooperation in energy and industry, as well as other areas of mutual interest.

Dubai Police arrest 8 over driving licence scam

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
DUBAI, OCT 16

Dubai Police have arrested eight suspects accused of running a fraudulent driving licence scheme that allegedly allowed customers to obtain licences from a neighbouring country without travelling there, taking driving lessons or passing mandatory tests.

The gang charged Dh10,000 per licence, exploiting international driving licence exchange agreements to help customers convert the fraudulently obtained foreign licences into UAE driving licences, Dubai Police said.



The arrests were carried out by Dubai Police's General Department of Criminal Investigation in cooperation with the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Dubai's Roads and Transport Authority (RTA).

The force's Economic Crimes Department uncovered the scheme, which allegedly exploited legitimate arrangements allowing eligible holders of driving licences issued by certain countries to exchange them for UAE licences without additional training or testing.

Investigations revealed that the suspects used offices belonging to transaction processing companies in the UAE to approach potential customers and promote their illegal services.

Jordanian and Qatari Interior Ministers Discuss Joint Cooperation

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
AMMAN, OCT 16

The Minister of Interior of Jordan, Mazen Al-Faraya, met his Qatari counterpart, Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, Qatar's Minister of Interior and Commander of the Internal Security Force (Lekhwiya), along with his accompanying delegation, at his office, Thursday.



The meeting was attended by Public Security Directorate Chief Major General Dr. Obaidullah Al-Maaytah, Civil Status and Passports Department Director Engineer Ghaith Al-Tayeb, and several ministry officials.

The two sides discussed a number of issues of mutual interest and the importance of cooperation in the security field. They also reviewed the overall situation in the region and the need to strengthen consultations and deepen coordination between the two countries.

The ministers also discussed mechanisms for exchanging expertise and

enhancing cooperation between their respective ministries at all levels.

During the meeting, Al-Faraya emphasized the depth of the fraternal relations between Jordan and Qatar.

He praised Qatar's role in promoting security and stressed the importance of full coordination between the two countries on various issues of mutual concern.

Iraq parliament approves al-Zaidi's cabinet amid growing economic concerns

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
BAGHDAD, OCT 16

Iraq's parliament has completed the formation of Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi's government after lawmakers approved previously vacant cabinet posts and three deputy prime ministers, including one who is under US sanctions.



Iraqi Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi attends a parliamentary session in Baghdad.

Lawmakers voted, approving 11 portfolios, including Nayef al-Shammari as defence minister, Yasir al-Maliki as interior minister, a planning minister, a culture minister and a minister of higher education and scientific research.

Lawmakers postponed a vote on the nominee for migration and displacement minister due to disagreement among parties.

Lawmakers also approved three deputy prime ministers, including Laith al-Khazali, a senior leader of the Iran-backed Asaib Ahl al-Haq movement and brother of the group's leader, Qais al-Khazali.

The US designated Asaib Ahl al-Haq as a foreign terrorist organisation in 2020 and named both brothers as "specially designated global terrorists", citing attacks including a 2007 assault that killed five US soldiers. The Treasury Department had sanctioned the brothers in 2019 over the killing of protesters in Iraq.

In a statement following the cabinet approval, al-Zaidi thanked parliament and called upon his fellow deputy prime ministers and ministers to "fulfil their responsibilities with the highest levels of commitment, competence and integrity". He said the government was embarking on a phase of accelerated, diligent work to address exceptional economic and security challenges imposed by the US-Israel war on Iran, which began on February 28.

To cover essential public spending and government salaries, al-Zaidi, a former banker, devalued the dinar by almost 15 percent against the US dollar.

Oman to host 6th Session of International Dates Council

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
MUSCAT, OCT 16

The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, will host the sixth session of the Council of Members of the International Dates Council next Sunday to discuss issues related to developing the date palm and dates sector and strengthening international cooperation in this field.



The meeting, attended by representatives of several member states, will discuss a range of administrative and technical matters, review the council's annual report and highlight key achievements during the past period, as well as its plans, programmes and initiatives to support and develop the date palm and dates sector at regional and international levels.

The council will also discuss ways to strengthen cooperation among member states and facilitate the exchange of expertise, knowledge, studies, research, technologies and promising practices in production, quality, processing, marketing and international trade. These efforts aim to enhance the competitiveness of date products and expand their presence in global markets.

Istanbul's Yedikule Gate bears traces of Byzantine, Ottoman history

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
ISTANBUL, OCT 16

Istanbul's historic Yedikule Gate, located along the southern section of the city's ancient land walls near the Sea of Marmara, bears traces of both the Byzantine and Ottoman periods through its surviving architecture and centuries of restoration work.



The gate, located near Yedikule Fortress and north of the Golden Gate, is featured in the ninth installment of Anadolu's media series "Gates Opening onto the City's History."

Situated between Towers 11 and 12 of the land walls, the gate features a pointed arch built with two courses of brick and a restoration inscription dating to the reign of Ottoman Sultan Ahmed III.

Only the passageway through the main wall survives today, while a second passageway in the outer section of the walls has disappeared.

The gate and surrounding walls underwent repairs during the reigns of Ahmed III and Osman III, reflecting the structure's continued use during the Ottoman period.

Once connecting the area within the city walls to the surroundings of Yedikule, the gate remains an important part of Istanbul's Byzantine and Ottoman architectural heritage.

Kadir Pektas, a professor of art history at Istanbul Medeniyet University, told Anadolu that Yedikule Gate stands near the southern end of Istanbul's land walls, which extend toward the Sea of Marmara.

He said the gate served defensive purposes during the Byzantine period and was used for both defense and security during the Ottoman era.

"Today, only the section of the gate that opens onto the main, large walls—the arch—remains. The outer wall section has not survived to the present day," Pektas said.

He noted that 19th-century photographs suggest a second arched gateway once stood at the site, while archaeological research indicates that it may date to the Byzantine or Late Byzantine period.

India-Arab trade likely to touch $500 billion as economic ties get stronger

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
NEW DELHI, OCT 16

Trade between India and Arab countries already exceeds $150 billion, while new investment opportunities in India could drive the figure to $500 billion over the next 10 to 20 years, according to a report in TV BRICS news website.



India's trade with Arab countries could more than triple to $500 billion over the next 10 to 20 years as Gulf investors increase their presence in the Indian market, says Waiel Awwad, Secretary General of India and Arab Countries Chamber of Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture (IACCIA).

Speaking ahead of the 'India-Arab Business Conclave 2026', scheduled for December 18-19 in New Delhi, Awwad said bilateral trade has already surpassed $150 billion.

Representatives from all 22 Arab countries have been invited to the Delhi event, which aims to facilitate investment partnerships and strengthen commercial ties.

According to Awwad, India's expanding investment opportunities across multiple sectors could attract more capital from Arab countries. He said that government incentives and a platform for direct engagement between businesses could further encourage Gulf investors to enter the Indian markets, according to the report.

India and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) are working to unlock the full bilateral trade potential through the India-GCC Free Trade Agreement (FTA) which was discussed between the two sides, on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York recently.

The trade talks were held between External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Gulf officials, including Saudi Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Adel Al-Jubeir and GCC Secretary General Jasem Mohamed Albudaiwi.

GCC-India bilateral trade was worth more than $178 billion in the 2025-26 fiscal year, with the Gulf region also home to about 10 million Indian diaspora, according to an article in the Arab News.

"Commencing Free Trade Agreement negotiations between the GCC and India marks a pivotal milestone toward broadening economic and investment horizons," said a statement from the GCC Secretariat.

Canada trade mission secures $300 million via 30 partnerships in India

NEW DELHI, OCT 16

Canadian Minister of International Trade Maninder Sidhu on Friday termed his India visit as very useful, saying the Team Canada Trade Mission concluded with over 30 commercial partnerships between Canadian and Indian entities valued at close to $300 million (Canadian).

Speaking to IANS, the Canadian minister said, "It was very useful. If I have talked to all the delegates, you saw the partnerships being signed -- over 30 commercial partnerships between Canadian and Indian entities, valued at close to $300 million, in different sectors -- aerospace, energy, cleantech, autos, and so much more. And so, this is what these trade missions are all about: opening doors and making sure that partnerships are formed."

He said the mission was building on the momentum created by Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal's visit to Canada in May with the largest ever delegation from India.

Sidhu told IANS that he had promised Goyal that he would be back and was happy to see concrete results from the return visit. (IANS/UNI)

Govt raises petrol export duty to Rs 2.5 per litre

NEW DELHI, OCT 16

The government has raised the windfall tax on exports of petrol to Rs 2.5 per litre and cut the duty on diesel, effective from Friday.



As per the Finance Ministry notification, the export duty on petrol was raised to Rs 2.5 per litre from Rs 0.5 per litre.

While the duty on diesel exports was cut to Rs 8.5 per litre from Rs 16 per litre, effective October 16, according to the ministry's order.

In addition, the export duties are reviewed every fortnight and adjusted in line with movements in international crude oil and petroleum product prices.

The latest revision follows several changes to petroleum export duties in recent months amid volatility in international oil prices and geopolitical tensions.

In September, the government had reduced the windfall tax and export levies on petrol, diesel and aviation turbine fuel (ATF) as part of its fortnightly review. The duty on petrol exports was cut to Rs 0.5 per litre, comprising Special Additional Excise Duty (SAED) of Rs 0.5 per litre. (IANS)

SEBI revises closing auction timings

NEW DELHI, OCT 15

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) on Thursday issued final framework on Closing Auction Session (CAS), while retaining the 30-minute volume-weighted average price (VWAP) methodology for determining expiry-day settlement prices of index and stock derivatives.

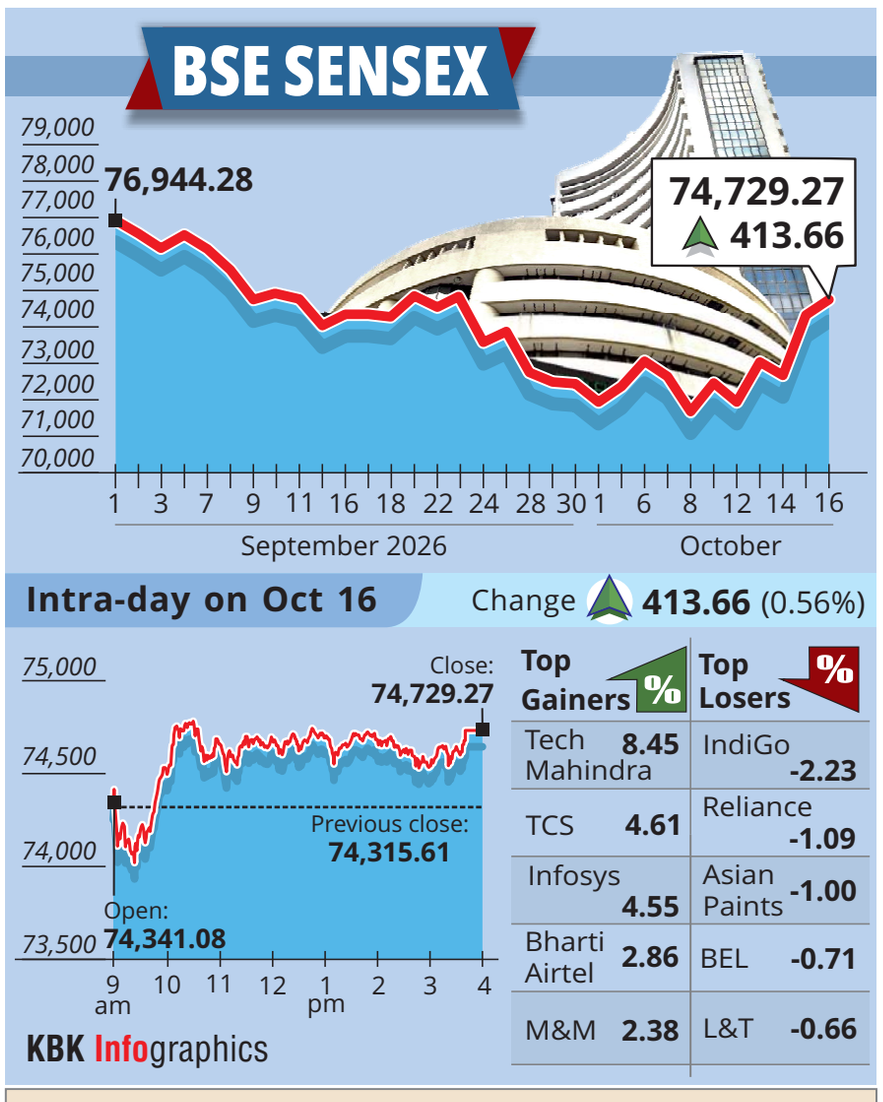
The markets regulator also revised the timings and operational framework of the CAS in the equity cash market.

The CAS will operate from 3:30 pm to 3:40 pm on all trading days.

The changes will take effect from December 7, 2026, except for provisions governing the transition of unexecuted limit and iceberg orders from the continuous trading session, which will come into effect on February 8, 2027, according to a notification.

According to SEBI, the session will begin with a one-minute reference-price calculation and transition period from 3:30 pm to 3:31 pm.

Both limit and market orders will be permitted from 3:31 pm to 3:36 pm. (IANS/UNI)



India, IOM discuss global migration, mobility trends

NEW DELHI, OCT 16

India and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) on Friday discussed global migration and mobility trends and ways to expand India's opportunities in this situation.



The discussions took place during a meeting between Secretary (CPV and OIA) in the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Sripriya Ranganathan and IOM Director General Amy Pope in New Delhi.

"Secretary CPV OIA Sripriya Ranganathan and Ms. Amy Pope, Director General of the International Organization for Migration held discussions about global migration and mobility trends and ways of expanding India's opportunities in this situation," the MEA posted on X.

Earlier on Thursday, Amy Pope met Union Minister of State for Labour and Employment Shobha Karandlaje in New Delhi, where they discussed cooperation skills recognition, ethical recruitment and regular labour pathways that protect workers and expand opportunity.

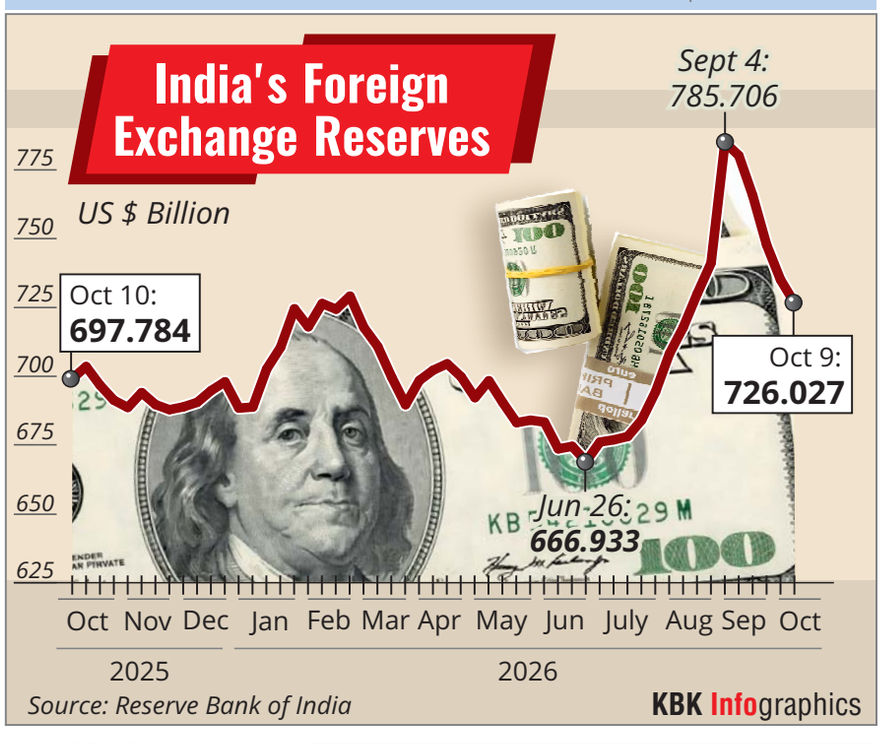
Following the meeting, Amy Pope on X wrote, "Skills can open doors, but mobility must be safe and work for people. With Labour Minister Shobha Karandlaje today, we discussed practical cooperation on skills recognition, ethical recruitment and regular labor pathways that protect workers and expand opportunity."

Pope met workers in Chennai who receive help from IOM through Mobile Worker Resource Centres.

"In Chennai, I met workers who get help from IOM right where they live and work, through Mobile Worker Resource Centres. Good information, at the right time, can change a life. With private sector partners, UN Migration is helping more workers get this support," Amy Pope posted on X.

Earlier this year, in May, Union Minister of State (MoS) for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh held a meeting with IOM Director General Amy Pope on the sidelines of the International Migration Review Forum 2026 in New York, where they discussed expanding and diversifying regular migration pathways and India's proactive approach to the implementation of GCM and IOM activities in India.

"Had a meeting with Director General of International Organization for Migration, Ms. Amy Pope on the sidelines of #IMRF2026 in New York. Discussions focused on expanding and diversifying regular migration pathways and on India's proactive approach to the implementation of GCM and IOM activities in India," Singh posted on X. (IANS/UNI)



Elon Musk unveils flying car prototype, says will redefine urban travel

NEW DELHI, OCT 16

Tesla CEO Elon Musk on Friday unveiled a new version of its Roadster sports car, showcasing a prototype that briefly lifted off the ground during a demonstration at a SpaceX facility in Texas.



A social media post on X -- shared by Musk -- highlighted the event in which the vehicle navigated an elevated curved track before becoming airborne for a short distance and landing safely, drawing comparisons to the concept of a flying car.

However, videos of the demonstration were later shared on social media by the company as well, marking the latest attempt by the electric vehicle maker to revive a project first announced nearly a decade ago.

Moreover, the showcase highlighted a specialised propulsion system that combines the electric vehicle platform with high-pressure air tanks and thruster technology.

According to Tesla, the system can generate lift and improve vehicle dynamics through strategically placed thrusters that help control movement while off the ground.

The successful test prompted enthusiastic reactions from company executives who described the demonstration as evidence that flying-car technology is moving closer to reality.

However, Tesla did not provide a timeline for commercial deployment of the feature. (IANS)

Real estate sees $1.3 billion private equity investment in Q3

NEW DELHI, OCT 16

Private equity (PE) inflows into Indian real estate stood at $1.3 billion in Q3 2026, down 33 per cent quarter-on-quarter, as investors remained cautious amid geopolitical and macroeconomic uncertainties, a report said on Friday.

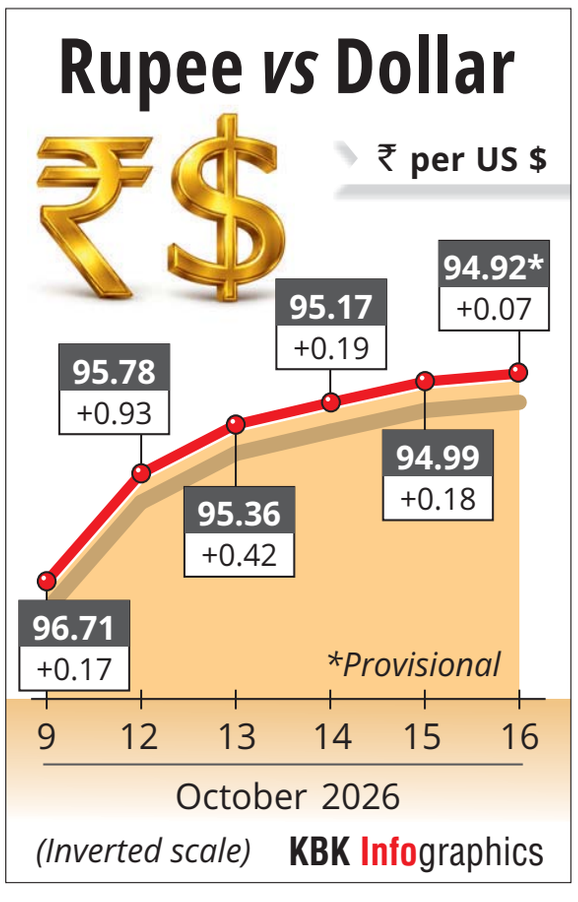


A report by Savills India, excluding $167 million of asset acquisitions by REITs or InvITs during the quarter, YTD (January–September 2026) PE inflows reached $4.5 billion, 16 per cent higher than the corresponding period in 2025.

In Q3 2026, the hospitality segment emerged as the leading recipient of PE inflows, accounting for 26 per cent of total investments, supported by rising consumption and continued investor interest, it added.

Industrial and logistics made a strong comeback after a brief lull, securing the second-largest share at 22 per cent, driven by sustained demand from e-commerce, manufacturing and supply-chain expansion.

"Private equity investment in Indian real estate has remained resilient in 2026, with YTD inflows reaching $4.5 billion, despite a more cautious global investment environment. The growing participation of domestic investors is particularly encouraging and reflects the increasing. (IANS)



Bhuvneshwar added to India squad for Bengaluru T20I



BENGALURU, OCT 16

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has added Bhuvneshwar Kumar to the squad for the fifth and final T20I against the West Indies in Bengaluru after Arshdeep Singh suffered a blow during the fourth T20I in Hyderabad. "The Men's Selection Committee has added Bhuvneshwar Kumar to the India squad for the fifth T20I against West Indies.

The final match of the ongoing T20I series will be played at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium, Bengaluru on October 17, 2026," BCCI wrote in a statement.

Arshdeep has not been ruled out of the fifth T20I; however, the decision on his participation will be taken prior to the game, the BCCI added. "Bhuvneshwar Kumar was added to the squad after Arshdeep Singh sustained a blow to his bowling shoulder during the fourth T20I of the series against West Indies on Wednesday in Hyderabad.

A decision on his participation for the final T20I will be taken prior to the game based on his recovery," BCCI added.

Bhuvi's addition comes after Arsheep suffered a blow to his left shoulder while batting in the fourth T20I at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium. While batting in the final over of the 248-run chase, Arshdeep was hit on his bowling arm off a bouncer from Shamar Joseph. The Indian seamer was in pain and batted the next ball before getting retired hurt as the Windies won by 24 runs to level the series.

Meanwhile, Bhuvneshwar was previously sent a call-up for India's T20I series against New Zealand, which begins on October 22 in Christchurch. The 36-year-old last represented India in the T20 World Cup semi-final against England at the Adelaide Oval in November 2022. A strong run in the Indian Premier Leagu-e over the last two seasons has helped the experienced seamer force his way back into the national setup. Bhuvneshwar claimed 45 wickets across the last two IPL editions for Royal Challengers Bengaluru and played an important role in the franchise's title-winning campaigns. His consistency with the new ball and wealth of experience have now earned him another opportunity in India's T20I setup. (IANS/UNI)

Smriti Mandhana calls six T20Is crucial

RAIPUR, OCT 16

Newly appointed Indian women's cricket team captain Smriti Mandhana has called the six T20I matches scheduled to take place this year crucial for the team ahead of the inaugural Champions Trophy 2027.

Mandhana has taken over as the captain across the formats from Harmanpreet Kaur as Indian cricket enters a new era. Her first assignment as full-time skipper will be leading the Women in Blue in a three-match T20I series that starts on Friday. With India having three more T20Is scheduled until the January-February Women's Premier League 2027,



Mandhana has called the limited opportunities crucial for the team to identify the style of cricket that they want to play.

"In the T20 format, we have six matches before the Champions Trophy. Of course, before that, the WPL will happen, but as an Indian team, three here and the three against South Africa for us to take it forward.

"So, it's going to be extremely important to see what style of cricket you want to play, what brand of cricket you want to play, and who's fitting where. So yeah, there will be a lot of takeaways from this series as well," Mandhana said, as quoted by JioStar.

Mandhana also reflected on being named the captain of the team, calling it a huge honour, something which she hadn't thought she would be doing before. "Personally, it's a huge honour to represent a country where cricket is almost a religion. In a way, you always start playing cricket to play and win matches for India.

"Never thought of leading the team, but again, it's a big responsibility because when you step into this role, you have a job to do; you have to deliver. I always say this: though the captain's name is first on the list, you're always the last on the list in terms of keeping everyone ahead," she added.

Mandhana also heaped praise on outgoing captain Harmanpreet, who led India for a long time, and highlighted how crucial she would remain in helping the youngsters. "She's led India, she's the longest-serving captain, and has been such a great leader. So I'm sure that her experience, especially with a lot of youngsters coming into the team now, and the way she works towards the game, is going to be inspiring for a lot of people. (IANS)

Premier League: Man City chase seventh straight win

NEW DELHI, OCT 16

Manchester City will look to maintain their perfect start to the 2026-27 Premier League season when they host Ipswich Town in Matchweek 7, while Leeds United will aim to strengthen their position above arch-rivals Manchester United in a weekend featuring several key encounters.



City have won all six of their league matches so far and could become only the third team in Premier League history to win their opening seven games of a season. Chelsea achieved the feat in 2005/06, followed by Liverpool in 2019/20. Enzo Maresca could also become the first manager in the competition's history to win his first seven games in charge of a club.

United have registered the most shots, with 125, and the most touches in the opposition box, with 205, in the league this season. However, they have yet to keep a clean sheet, a problem that has also affected them at the start of the previous campaign. (IANS/UNI)

Warangal student qualifies for National Chess C'ship

TFP I CORRESPONDENT
HANAMKONDA, OCT 16



Kumari Pulluri Lakshmi Sharvani, an Intermediate second-year MPC student of S.R. EDU Centre, Waddepally, has qualified for the national-level SGFI Under-19 Chess Championships after securing second place in the State-Level Inter-District Chess Tournament held at Hayathnagar, Hyderabad, on October 15, 2026. She had earlier secured first place in the erstwhile Warangal district-level Under-19 chess tournament held at JNS, Hanamkonda, on October 5. Varada Reddy, Chairman of S.R. Colleges, congratulated Lakshmi Sharvani on her achievement and expressed confidence in her performance at the national level.

ENTERTAINMENT

Ben Affleck warns cinegoers about 'Digger'



Hollywood actor Ben Affleck has come out in support of 'Digger' which stars Tom Cruise as the film struggles at the box-office.

He appeared on the 'Happy Sad Confused' podcast, and said that the movie was a brave attempt, and warned moviegoers what exactly their trashing of the movie will result in. Mainly, publicly bashing 'Digger' will only lead the major Hollywood studios to make "s*****" movies that don't stand out from each other. He said, "It's a little bit like the high-school bullying thing, with people who hadn't even seen movies. You see it happening now, frankly, with 'Digger'. Everybody wants to celebrate this bomb as if it's the most exciting thing to happen. And you think like, it's a pretty ambitious, interesting movie made by interesting people who have talent".



Affleck has weathered his own box office flops over the course of his decades-long career. 'Digger' from director Alejandro G. Inarritu, tells the story of an oil baron, who is faced with the end of the world after one of his rigs in Antarctica malfunctions and sends ice caps hurtling towards Europe. The film has only earned $15 million at the US box-office since it debuted in theatres on October 2. With a production budget north of $160 million and a marketing budget pegged at $100 million, the film needs to earn $350 million just to break even in theaters.

Earlier, Hollywood actress Anne Hathaway defended Tom Cruise. The actress gave the dark comedy a superb review after it struggled at the American box office and received a mixed response from critics.

Imran Khan's partner Lekha Washington breaks silence



Actor Imran Khan's partner, Lekha Washington, has shared her maiden reaction after superstar Aamir Khan's nephew was asked to leave India for attending a protest in Mumbai, marking her first response to the development. On October 15, Imran was issued a notice by the Mumbai Police asking him to leave India by October 28, days after he participated in a protest demanding the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar.

Action has been taken against Imran under Sections 7 and 29 of the Immigration and Foreigners Act, and the actor has received a copy of the notice. The actor was detained by the police on October 10 in connection with the protest. The action has been taken against Imran under the relevant provisions of the Immigration Act for allegedly participating in such a protest despite not being an Indian citizen.

After the actor was ordered to leave India, his partner Lekha shared a picture of them from the prison van after they were detained on October 10. Lekha captioned the picture: "Just" along with a gamut of heart emojis. Imran Khan is now set to approach the Bombay High Court to challenge the notice issued by the FRRO.

Imran is considering filing a Writ Petition in the Bombay High Court against the notice from FRRO and for which he has engaged MZM Legal LLp as his counsel. Zulfiqar Memon, the managing partner of MZM Legal, was contacted for his input on the matter. He refused to comment at this stage. On October 13, BJP leader and former MP Kirit Somaiya approached the Union Ministry of Home Affairs and immigration authorities, urging them to issue a Look Out Circular (LOC) against actor Imran Khan.

Talking about Imran, he first appeared as a child artist in the films Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak in 1988 and Jo Jeeta Wohi Sikandar in 1992. He made his adult acting debut in 2008 with the romantic comedy Jaane Tu... Ya Jaane Na, which was a success.

He was seen in a cameo appearance lately in the Vir Das film Happy Patel: Khatarnak Jasoos. It also stars Mithila Palkar, Mona Singh, Sharib Hashmi and Srushti Tawade.

Kareena celebrates wedding anniversary with Saif Ali Khan



As they complete 14 years of marital bliss, Bollywood diva Kareena Kapoor Khan penned an anniversary note for her husband Saif Ali Khan and said that the couple have "forever to go". Kareena took to Instagram to share a string of pictures capturing different chapters of her journey with Saif, from their dating days and family moments to luxurious holidays and heartwarming glimpses of their sons.

"Another year around the sun...Forever to go," Kareena wrote as the caption. Kareena and Saif got married on October 16, 2012, in Mumbai after they dated for 5 years after meeting on the set of the 2008 film Tashan directed by Vijay Krishna Acharya.The film follows a call centre executive, a gangster's aide, and a con woman involved in a chaotic pursuit across India. A private registered marriage at Saif's Bandra residence, followed by traditional wedding celebrations, a sangeet, a nikah, and a reception. The couple has two sons, Taimur and Jeh.

Set against the complex world of crime and justice, Daayra positions its lead pair in roles that harness their full dramatic prowess. Prithviraj steps into the shoes of a police inspector, while Kareena embodies a fierce, enigmatic character whose presence adds a striking edge to the narrative.

Janhvi, Sreeleela and Siddharth shoots for upcoming thriller

The upcoming yet-to-be-titled film starring Janhvi Kapoor, Sreeleela, and Siddharth Gupta has gone into production. The 1st schedule of the film is underway in Nainital. The film is a romantic-thriller, and is directed by Umesh Bisht, who is known for helming projects such as 'Pagglait', 'The Trial' season 2, 'Gyaarah Gyaarah' and others. The film follows the story of 2 women who become obsessed with the same man, setting the stage for an intriguing narrative.

A source close to the development said, "The team has commenced the first shooting schedule in Nainital, and there is a lot of enthusiasm surrounding the project. With Siddharth Gupta, Sreeleela and Janhvi Kapoor coming together for this thriller, it is an exciting combination to look forward to. The team is now focused on bringing the story to life, and the shoot has officially begun as planned".



The film is backed by Ektaa Kapoor and Guneet Monga Kapoor, the film is expected to explore the darker and more complex facets of romance and relationships. Further details about the film's title, characters and additional cast members remain under wraps. "It is surprising that it still seems too nuanced for some people to understand that even if a woman says yes five days in a row and no on the sixth, that no must be respected", she added.

CM Revanth invites Hyundai to set up car manufacturing facility



A delegation of Hyundai Motor India Engineering, led by its Managing Director Changyeon Cho, met Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy at Bodhi Pavilion at Zaheerabad.

TFP I ABDUL RAHMAN KHAN
HYDERABAD, OCT 16

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Friday invited Hyundai Motors to establish a car manufacturing facility in the state and directed officials to expedite pending approvals for the company's proposed Rs 8,528-crore Global Innovation R&D Centre at Zaheerabad.

A delegation of Hyundai Motor India Engineering (HMIE), led by its Managing Director Changyeon Cho, met the Chief Minister at the Bodhi Pavilion and discussed the progress of the proposed integrated research and development facility in the National Investment and Manufacturing Zone (NIMZ) at Zaheerabad, an official release said here.

The delegation informed the Chief Minister that the project was expected to be ready for groundbreaking in the next few months.

Revanth Reddy assured the company of all necessary support for the project and instructed officials to expedite pending clearances.

The facility is proposed to be developed across 678 acres, with an investment of Rs 8,528 crore and an employment commitment of 4,276 jobs.

The Chief Minister said Telangana was well-positioned to attract automobile manufacturing investments, citing its central location, transport connectivity and industrial infrastructure.

He highlighted Hyderabad's cosmopolitan character and quality of life, and said the government was committed to supporting companies seeking to expand their manufacturing operations in the state.

He also highlighted plans to develop dedicated mobility clusters and promote industrial expansion through spatial development frameworks such as the Peri-Urban Region (PURE).

The proposed Zaheerabad facility is expected to strengthen Hyundai's research, engineering, testing and validation capabilities.

The company has maintained a presence in Hyderabad for around two decades, with its Hitec City facility serving as a major research and development centre for advanced vehicle engineering.

The project follows investment discussions held during the World Economic Forum in 2024, when a delegation led by the Chief Minister met Hyundai representatives to explore investment opportunities in Telangana.

In June 2025, the state Cabinet sub-committee on industrial and investment promotion approved Hyundai's proposal to establish the R&D centre.

Revanth Reddy also outlined the state's plans for Bharat Future City and invited the Hyundai leadership to participate in the Invest Telangana Global Summit 2026.

Changyeon Cho said Hyundai's plans to strengthen Hyderabad as a global hub for technology and advanced engineering aligned with the Telangana Rising 2047 vision.

The company would continue to contribute to the state's growth, he added.

K. Ramakrishna Rao, Advisor and Ex-officio Special Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister, Sangareddy Collector Prateek Jain and other senior officials attended the meeting.

TG to draft Rohith Vemula Bill within 3 months to protect students' rights: Dy CM

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
HYDERABAD, OCT 16



Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka chaired 2nd meeting of Committee of Senior Civil Servants at Secretariat.

The Telangana government will prepare a preliminary draft of the proposed Rohith Vemula Telangana Bill within three months to strengthen legal safeguards for students and address caste-based discrimination in universities and higher educational institutions, Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka said on Friday.

Chairing the second meeting of the Committee of Senior Civil Servants at the Secretariat, Bhatti directed officials to formulate a clear action plan and complete the drafting process within the stipulated deadline.

The preliminary draft must be submitted to the committee for further examination, he said.

The proposed legislation aims to protect students' rights, ensure equal opportunities and prevent discrimination based on caste and social background in educational institutions.

The Deputy Chief Minister suggested that the Scheduled Castes Development Department lead the drafting exercise, with representation from the Law Department and other relevant departments and institutions.

He directed officials to examine the involvement of the Education and Home departments, the University Grants Commission (UGC) and other stakeholders.

Emphasising the need for wider consultations, Bhatti asked officials to identify stakeholders, including students, faculty members, legal experts, educationists and civil society organisations, and obtain their views on the proposed legislation.

The draft should reflect the problems faced by students at the grassroots level and provide practical, enforceable measures to address discrimination, he said.

The meeting also discussed obtaining legal and technical assistance from NALSAR University of Law. Scheduled Castes Development Department Secretary Vijayendra Boyi informed the Deputy Chief Minister that the university had agreed to support the drafting process.

The government intends to incorporate suggestions from relevant departments and experts while framing provisions and identifying institutional mechanisms for effective implementation of the proposed law.

Bhatti directed officials to constitute the committee at the earliest, initiate consultations without delay and ensure coordination among departments to meet the three-month deadline.

Ministers Ponnam Prabhakar and Adluri Lakshman Kumar, Special Chief Secretary Savyasachi Ghosh, senior IPS officer Devendra Singh Chauhan, IAS officers Yogita Rana and Vijayendra Boyi, advocate Disha Wadekar and other officials attended the meeting.

Minister Tummala seeks Centre's support for key TG development projects

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
HYDERABAD, OCT 16



Telangana Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao met Union Minister for Coal and Mines G. Kishan Reddy on Friday and submitted representations seeking central support for key development projects in the state.

Tummala urged the Centre to allocate Mahanadi coal to the Yadadri Thermal Power Plant, as requested by the Chief Minister, and to find a permanent solution to issues affecting the Ramagundam Fertilizers and Chemicals Limited (RFCL) to ensure uninterrupted urea supplies to farmers. He also sought 100 crore in Coal India CSR funds for Kothagudem Earth Sciences University and the allocation of the Sattupalli Block-III coal block to Singareni Collieries Company Limited.

The minister further requested that the proposed greenfield airport in Bhadradri Kothagudem district be expedited and that approvals for railway projects in Telangana be granted promptly. He urged the Centre to prioritise the Sattupalli–Kovvur and Penuballi–Kondapalli railway lines and expedite completion of the Pandurangapuram–Malkangiri railway line up to Sarapaka.

BRS seeks sitting Judge's probe into Singareni, Foreign coal purchases



BRS Working President K.T. Rama Rao addresses a meeting of Narsampet constituency at Telangana Bhavan in Hyderabad.

TFP I CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, OCT 16

BRS Working President and former Minister K.T. Rama Rao (KTR) on Friday challenged Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy to order an inquiry by a sitting judge into alleged irregularities in Singareni Collieries, proposed foreign coal purchases and other corruption allegations against the Congress government.

Addressing a meeting of the Narsampet constituency at Telangana Bhavan, KTR alleged that the government was creating crises in coal production, power supply and irrigation to justify expensive purchases and commissions.

He demanded a probe into the alleged Rs 10,000-crore Singareni scam and an alleged solar power scam.

"Revanth Reddy says he will order an inquiry if we write to him. If he has the courage, let him order a sitting judge's inquiry into our allegations," KTR said.

Calling Revanth Reddy an "EMI Chief Minister", the BRS leader alleged that proposed coal imports from Australia were intended to generate commissions and meet political obligations to the Congress high command.

He claimed that domestic coal was available at around Rs 3,800 per tonne, while imported coal could cost Rs 10,000 to Rs 12,000 per tonne.

KTR alleged that coal production had been reduced and that around Rs 60,000 crore in dues to Singareni remained pending, even as the company was being blamed for shortages.

He accused the government of creating a crisis before citing the need to procure coal and electricity at higher prices.

Questioning the state's power situation, KTR said Telangana was facing shortages despite the previous BRS government providing 24-hour electricity.

He contrasted the Congress's earlier criticism of a power purchase agreement with Chhattisgarh at Rs 3.90 per unit with what he described as the present government's consideration of electricity purchases at Rs 15 per unit.

With nearly 30 lakh agricultural pump sets, irrigation projects and industries dependent on electricity, reliable power supply was essential, he said, accusing the government of allowing power cuts to return.

KTR also accused the Congress government of failing to utilise available water through the Kaleshwaram project despite repeated calls by the BRS to take timely action.

KTR expressed confidence that the BRS would hoist its pink flag in Narsampet within two years.

He said he would adopt the constituency after the party returned to power and oversee development initiatives planned by former MLA Peddi Sudarshan Reddy.

He also assured support to the former MLA's family and party workers.

Cotecna acquires Energon Labs

HYDERABAD, OCT 16

Cotecna, a global provider of testing, inspection and certification services, on Friday said it has acquired Hyderabad-based analytical testing laboratory Energon Labs to strengthen its life sciences platform and expand its pharmaceutical testing capabilities.

The acquisition expands Cotecna's services across the pharmaceutical, biopharmaceutical, medical device and packaging sectors, the company said in a release.

Energon serves customers in India, the United States, the Asia-Pacific region and the Middle East.

Energon Labs is a cGMP-compliant, USFDA-inspected laboratory certified to ISO 9001:2015 and ISO 17025:2017 standards. Located in Hyderabad, a major pharmaceutical and biotechnology hub, the laboratory brings specialised scientific expertise, testing infrastructure and established customer relationships to Cotecna's global operations. The acquisition is expected to enhance Cotecna's ability to provide regulatory-compliant testing services to Indian and international customers, while improving responsiveness, scalability and operational efficiency across key markets. Energon will complement Cotecna's existing pharmaceutical testing network, which includes Cotecna Life Sciences, Shiva Analyticals and Neotron Pharma.



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