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FRANCE VIOLENCE: ALL GATHERINGS, DEMONSTRATIONS BANNED IN MARSEILLE

PAGE 8



3 SUSPECTS HELD IN KOTA PLANNED TO FLEE TO NEPAL

PAGE 5

DELIMITATION BILL TALKS: RIJIJU WRITES TO KHARGE, HOPES CONGRESS WON'T OBSTRUCT FUTURE BILLS

PAGE 4



8 JUMADA AL-AWWAL 1448H

NAMAZ TIME

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

SUNRISE/SUNSET

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

MOONRISE/MOONSET

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

HOLIDAY NOTICE

On account of Dussehra, the office of THE FREEDOM PRESS will remain closed on 20th October, 2026. Consequently, there will be no issue of **THE FREEDOM PRESS** on 21st October, 2026.

Amid protests, Dushyant Kumar Gautam takes oath as Sikkim Governor

GANGTOK OCT 19

Dushyant Kumar Gautam was sworn in as the Governor of Sikkim at Lok Bhavan on Monday amid protests in Delhi and Dehradun against his appointment over allegations linking him to the 2022 murder of 19-year-old Ankita Bhandari in Uttarakhand.

The Congress and other parties have demanded that the BJP leader's appointment be revoked. Gautam has been alleged to be the "VIP" who sought favours from Bhandari, though no incriminating evidence establishing his involvement has been reported.

Protesters have demanded accountability and a fair investigation into the alleged VIP angle, which has come under renewed scrutiny amid an ongoing CBI probe.



Sikkim CM Prem Singh Tamang greets newly sworn in Governor Dushyant Kumar Gautam at Lok Bhavan.

A senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader and former national general secretary of the party, Gautam assumes the constitutional office at a time when Sikkim continues to focus on development, connectivity, tourism and the preservation of its distinctive cultural identity.

Sikkim became the 22nd state of the Indian Union on May 16, 1975, following a constitutional process that ended the monarchy under the Chogyal and established the state as an integral part of India. The state had previously functioned as a protectorate under India following the 1950 Indo-Sikkim Treaty.

Situated in the eastern Himalayas, Sikkim shares international borders with Nepal, Bhutan and China, besides its domestic boundary with West Bengal.

Its strategic location, particularly its proximity to the India-China border and the sensitive Siliguri Corridor, gives the state considerable importance in India's national security and regional connectivity planning.

Over the decades, Sikkim has witnessed political and administrative transitions while building its profile as a tourism destination and an important centre for biodiversity conservation.

The state is also known for its Himalayan landscapes, Buddhist monasteries and Kanchenjunga, the world's third-highest mountain. As Governor, Gautam will serve as the constitutional head of Sikkim, with responsibilities defined by the Constitution of India.

Telangana CM lays foundation for Rs 200 cr net-zero NIUM campus



TFP I ABDUL RAHMAN KHAN
HYDERABAD, OCT 19

Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Monday laid the foundation stone for the National Institute of Urban Management (NIUM) campus at Bharat Future City, with the State government setting a target to complete the Rs 200-crore project by June 2, 2028, Telangana Formation Day.

The government has allotted 20 acres of land free of cost for the campus, which is envisioned as a national-level centre for urban management, research and capacity building. The project was selected through a national-level competition in 2009 under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission, but remained pending for years due to the non-allocation of land.

Designed by Sanjay Puri Architects, the proposed net-zero campus will incorporate solar power, rainwater harvesting, wastewater recycling, energy-efficient buildings and locally sourced, low-carbon construction materials. Nearly two-thirds of the site will be dedicated to greenery and open spaces.

The campus will house six thematic research centres covering urban governance, infrastructure, transport, socio-economic development, climate change and innovation. It will also feature a capacity-building centre for municipal officials and elected representatives, an urban living laboratory for pilot-testing solutions and 122 residential units for trainees, researchers and visiting experts.

Centre step up financial inclusion drive

NEW DELHI, OCT 19

The Union Finance Ministry's Department of Financial Services (DFS) is organising a nationwide campaign for the saturation of financial inclusion schemes and other key interventions at the gram panchayat and urban local body level starting this week.

The campaign will run from October 21 to December 31, covering 2.70 lakh gram panchayats and urban local bodies in the country, according to a Finance Ministry statement issued on Monday.

During this period, banks will conduct camps for enrolments under the Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY) the Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY), and the Atal Pension Yojana (APY).

India, Saudi Arabia to advance Electrical Interconnection Initiative

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
NEW DELHI, OCT 19

India and Saudi Arabia held a high-level official discussion on ways to take forward the bilateral Electrical Interconnection Initiative between the two countries and explore avenues for strengthening cooperation in the power sector.

Pankaj Agarwal, Secretary, Ministry of Power, held a virtual bilateral meeting with Nasser Al-Qahtani, Assistant Minister of Energy for Electricity Affairs, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, to review the progress of the India–Saudi Arabia Electrical Interconnection initiative, according to an official statement issued after the meeting.



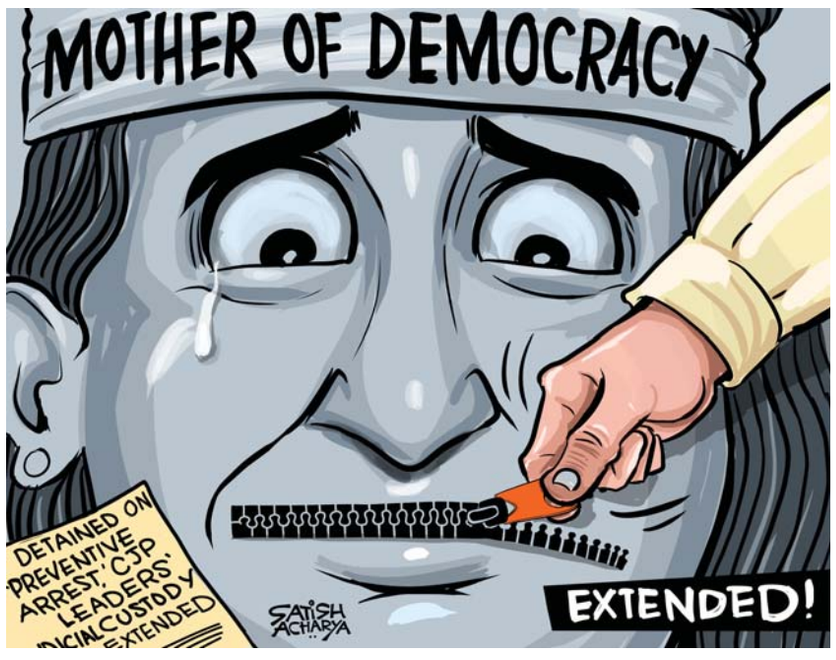
The discussions focused on the progress of the proposed electrical interconnection between India and Saudi Arabia, which holds significant potential to deepen bilateral energy cooperation. Both sides exchanged views on the way forward and underscored the importance of sustained engagement to advance the initiative, the statement said.

The two sides also explored opportunities to broaden cooperation in other areas of mutual interest in the power sector, with an emphasis on technical collaboration, knowledge sharing and the exchange of best practices.

The Saudi Arabian side expressed interest in enhanced cooperation in the areas of Extra High Voltage (EHV) transmission systems.



CARTOON CAROUSEL



Saurav, Ashutosh judicial custody extended

NEW DELHI, OCT 19

The judicial custody of Cockroach Janata Party (CJP) leaders Saurav Das and Ashutosh Ranka was extended by two days on Monday by the Special Executive Magistrate (SEM) in connection with the Jantar Mantar trespassing case.

Das and Ranka were produced before the SEM at Mandir Marg police station after their five-day judicial custody ended on Monday.

Agriculture Minister orders measures to boost Dummugudem dam storage

TFP I RAMARAJU
B. KOTHAGUDEM, OCT 19



Agriculture Minister Thummala Nageswara Rao has directed officials to take immediate measures to increase water storage at Dummugudem Dam to meet drinking water needs during the coming summer.

The minister said the dam's full storage capacity was 0.8 TMC, while its current storage potential was around 0.5 TMC. As the dam supplies drinking water to three districts, he directed officials to install sandbags up to one metre high to increase storage beyond 1 TMC, as instructed by Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy. He said the work should continue even on Vijayadashami and that drinking water needs must take priority over releasing surplus water to a private hydropower station.

Thummala said the government was pursuing project permissions with the Centre and had made progress in the Supreme Court. He directed officials to keep machinery and personnel ready to begin Seethammasagar project works in November, subject to the required approvals.

The minister advised farmers to choose crops according to water availability, particularly vegetables and pulses that require less water, and appealed to the public to conserve drinking water. Officials from the Irrigation and Agriculture departments and public representatives attended the programme.

15 injured as TGSRTC bus hits stationary lorry

TFP I TAHER ALI
RANGA REDDY, OCT 19

Fifteen people were injured when a Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TGSRTC) bus collided with a stationary lorry near Batasingaram in Abdullapurmet, in Ranga Reddy district on Monday.

The bus, belonging to the Khammam depot, was travelling from Khammam to Hyderabad with around 40 passengers on board when the accident occurred, police said. The injured were shifted to the Government Hospital in Vanasthalipuram for treatment.

Police have registered a case and launched an investigation into the incident.

El Niño threat looms, conserve water and power: Sridhar Babu



Minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu addresses media at Dhanwada village in Kataram mandal, Jayashankar Bhupalpally district.

TFP I MLN MURTHY
J. BHUPALAPALLY, OCT 19

Telangana IT and Industries Minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu has urged people to conserve water and electricity in view of the possible impact of El Niño and the likelihood of changing weather conditions.

Speaking to the media at Dhanwada village in Kataram mandal, Jayashankar Bhupalpally district, on Monday, he said groundwater levels were already declining in some areas and warned of tougher conditions in the coming months. He advised farmers to choose crops during the Rabi season based on water availability and exercise caution before cultivating paddy.

Sridhar Babu said the government, under Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, was preparing advance measures to protect food security and support farmers. He added that decisions concerning the Medigadda, Annaram and Sundilla projects were being taken based on NDSA reports and technical advice from irrigation officials. The government was also focusing on the utilisation of reservoirs, including Nagarjuna Sagar, to meet irrigation and drinking water needs.

The minister highlighted welfare initiatives, including the fine-rice distribution scheme, free bus travel for women and government recruitment, stating that around 70,000 jobs had been provided. He said the government was coordinating across departments to address possible drought conditions and assured people of support during difficult times.

He also extended Dasara and Vijayadashami greetings. Kataram Market Committee Chairman Tirumala Sammaiah, Aitha Prakash Reddy, District Library Corporation Chairman Kota Rajababu, Congress mandal presidents, public representatives and party workers attended the programme.

Singareni to implement revised pay scales for 1,800 officers

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
HYDERABAD, OCT 19



Singareni Collieries Company Limited has decided to implement revised pay scales for around 1,800 officers in Executive Cadres E-1 to E-7, fulfilling a long-pending demand of the officers following an assurance by Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka.

The revised pay scales, aligned with those of Coal India, will be effective from January 1, 2017, while the monetary benefits will be applicable from September 25, 2026, the date on which the Singareni Board approved the proposal. The revised salaries will be paid from October onwards.

Gautam Potru, Director (Personnel) of Singareni, issued the official orders on Monday evening.

Leaders of the Singareni Officers' Association expressed their gratitude to Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy and Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka for addressing their long-standing demand and fulfilling the assurance given to them.

Honey-trap racket busted; accused extorted Rs. 25.16 lakh

HYDERABAD, OCT 19

Saidabad police have arrested a 23-year-old man for allegedly operating a honey-trap racket using fake social media profiles of women to blackmail men and extort money.

The accused, Kondabhattula Pavan Kumar, allegedly created 13 fake Instagram accounts and 14 Facebook accounts using women's identities.

Police said the accused primarily used photographs of a woman from Kolkata under the name "Chandana" for his fake profiles. The woman was alerted through her workplace and the local police station in Kolkata.

According to investigators, the accused allegedly extorted Rs. 18 lakh and cheated victims of another Rs. 7.16 lakh, taking the total amount involved to Rs. 25.16 lakh.

The investigation is being conducted under the supervision of Charminar Zone DCP Khare Kiran Prabhakar, Additional DCP Md. Majeed and Saidabad ACP Soma Venkat Reddy. Saidabad SHO B. Chandra Mohan is the investigating officer.



Sangareddy Collector directs officials to ensure smooth TGPSC exams

TFP I HAJI ALI
SANGAREDDY, OCT 19



Sangareddy District Collector Prateek Jain, IAS said elaborate arrangements were being made to conduct the Telangana State Public Service Commission (TGPSC) computer-based examinations peacefully and transparently on October 24.

TGPSC Chairman Burra Venkatesham reviewed the examination arrangements with district collectors and police officials through a video conference on Monday. The examinations are being conducted for the posts of Assistant Scientist (Analyst Grade-II) and Assistant Environmental Engineer in the Pollution Control Board.

Prateek Jain said the examination centre had been established at GITAM University in Rudraram village of Patancheru mandal, where 150 candidates are expected to appear for the Assistant Scientist (Analyst Grade-II) examination in two sessions. The first session will be held from 10 am to 12.30 pm and the second from 2.30 pm to 5 pm.

Candidates will be allowed into the centre from 8.30 am for the first session, with gates closing at 9.30 am. For the second session, entry will begin at 1 pm and gates will close at 2 pm. Mobile phones, books and other electronic devices will not be permitted inside the examination centre.

The Collector directed officials from all departments to coordinate closely and ensure strict security, transparency and smooth conduct of the examinations. Additional SP Chaitanya Reddy, Additional Collector Pandu and District Youth and Sports Department in-charge officer Akhilesh Reddy attended the video conference.

Shabbir Naqshbandi questions TG govt's stand on Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025

TFP I CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, OCT 19



Shabbir Naqshbandi

Maulana Peer Syed Shabbir Naqshbandi Iftekhari, chairman of the Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed Memorial Committee at Ekta Bhavan, New Delhi, has written to Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, seeking clarification on the functioning of the Telangana State Waqf Board and the implementation of the 2025 Parliamentary Waqf Act in the state.

In his letter, Naqshbandi questioned whether the Minority Welfare Department had directed the Waqf Board not to hold meetings, alleging that no meetings had taken place for nearly two years, causing difficulties for people seeking resolution of Waqf-related issues.

He also raised concerns over a reported statement by the Waqf Board's Standing Counsel before the Telangana High Court that the Board no longer existed and that the state had implemented the 2025 Waqf Act. He sought clarification on the legal status of the Board, the position of its chairman and the provisions governing his salary and other facilities.

Naqshbandi pointed to an alleged contradiction between the reported court statement and the Congress party's opposition to the 2025 Waqf Act, as expressed by party president Mallikarjun Kharge and senior leader Rahul Gandhi. He urged Revanth Reddy to clarify the government's position and initiate appropriate legal action if officials had acted contrary to government policy.

Traffic restrictions near PVNR expressway

HYDERABAD, OCT 19

Traffic diversions will be in place near Pillar No. 37 of the PVNR Expressway towards Mehdipatnam from October 19 to 22 due to cement concrete road-laying works, Hyderabad Traffic Police announced.

Commuters travelling from Attapur to Nampally should take a U-turn at Pillar No. 92 and proceed via 100 Feet Road, Purana Pool and Jummerat Bazar. Those travelling from Shaikpet to Attapur should use Nanal Nagar, Balika Bhavan Junction, Lakshmi Nagar, the 59 U-turn and Attapur Road. Vehicles heading towards Langer House and Sun City should take the KFC U-turn and proceed via Shaikpet Nala, Banjari Darwaza, Makkai Darwaza, Ramdevguda and Tippu Khan Junction. Commuters from Lakdi-ka-pul to Attapur should divert at Azizia Mosque and use Meraj Cafe Junction, Yadav Bhavan, Gudimalkapur and Pillar No. 68.

The police advised commuters to follow updates on Facebook at facebook.com/HYDTP and the official X handle. For assistance, they can call 9010203626. (NSS)

ITDA urges tribal youth to utilise Girijana Udyoga Sethu

TFP I AMJAD KHAN
ADILABAD, OCT 19



Manda Makarand

ITDA Project Officer Manda Makarand, IAS, has urged tribal youth aspiring for government jobs to make effective use of the Girijana Udyoga Sethu website for employment updates and competitive examination guidance.

Speaking at a meeting at the ITDA office in Utnoor, Makarand said the platform aims to identify and nurture the potential of tribal youth by providing information on recruitment notifications issued by the UPSC, SSC, Railways, banking institutions and state governments.

He advised aspirants to understand examination syllabuses, analyse previous question papers, take mock tests and follow a regular study schedule covering General Studies, Current Affairs, Reasoning, Arithmetic and English

Karimnagar Collector directs officials to resolve Prajavani applications

TFP I PRAMOD KUMAR
KARIMNAGAR, OCT 19



Karimnagar District Collector Chitra Mishra, IAS directed officials to inspect Prajavani applications at the field level and take necessary steps to resolve public grievances without keeping them pending.

On Monday, the Collector, along with Additional Collector (Local Bodies) Srinivasa Reddy and other officials, received 44 petitions at the New Integrated District Offices Complex (IDOC). The Karimnagar Municipal Corporation received the highest number, with 19 applications.

Chitra Mishra instructed all departmental officials to clear the pending applications in their respective logins by Monday. She said that from next Monday, she would personally review pending petitions during the first hour and directed officials to resolve them before the review.

Collectorate superintendents Kali Charan and Madhavi, along with officials from various departments, attended the programme.

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CM inaugurates Future City Police Commissionerate



FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
RANGA REDDY, OCT 19

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Monday inaugurated the newly constructed Future City Police Commissionerate at Ibrahimpatnam ahead of his visit to Bharat Future City.

The Chief Minister inaugurated the Commissioner of Police's office and congratulated Police Commissioner Tarun Joshi on the occasion.

Later, Revanth Reddy visited the Young India Skills University at Bharat Future City and laid the foundation stone for the campus of the National Institute of Urban Management (NIUM) on the premises of the Future City Development Authority (FCDA) office. He also inspected the model of the proposed campus.

Legislative Council Chief Whip Patnam Mahender Reddy, MPs Vem Narender Reddy, Mallu Ravi and Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy, MLAs Malreddy Rangareddy, Veerlapalli Shankar, Prakash Goud and Kale Yadaiah, chairpersons of various corporations, DGP C.V. Anand and senior officials attended the programmes.

JSW MG delivers 111 Hector Tomahawk EVs in single day

RATNA CHOTRANI
HYDERABAD, OCT 17

JSW MG Motor India delivered 111 Hector Tomahawk EVs in Hyderabad in a single day, as the newly launched model crossed 10,000 bookings within two months of its launch in August.

Organised by RAAM MG at Cyber Gardens Convention Centre in HITEC City, the event welcomed 111 new customers to the MG community, highlighting the growing interest in electric mobility in Telangana. Vinay Raina, Chief Commercial Officer of JSW MG Motor India, said Hyderabad was an important market for electric mobility and that the milestone reflected the company's commitment to making new-energy vehicles more accessible. Gunjeet Singh Sachdeva, CEO of RAAM MG, said the model had attracted strong interest for its performance.

Roblox creator payouts in India grow 72% annually

TFP I CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT 17

Roblox's daily active users in India grew 64% year-on-year, highlighting the country's expanding gaming ecosystem, said Sunil Rao, Managing Director, Roblox India and South Asia, at the UNBOX ROBLOX event in New Delhi.

According to an Economic Impact Report by Access Partnership, eligible Indian creators exceeded 250 in 2025, with payouts increasing 72% annually. Roblox creator activity contributed Rs. 123.9 crore to India's GDP between 2020 and 2025 and supported 510 jobs in 2025. India's gaming industry revenue is projected to reach Rs. 9,200 crore by 2028.

TG govt issues over 12.4 lakh pattadar passbooks under Bhu-Bharathi Act



FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
HYDERABAD, OCT 19

Telangana Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy on Monday said the Telangana government is engaged in restructuring the revenue system to ensure transparent services, secure land rights for farmers and resolve long-pending land disputes.

During a review meeting with senior Revenue Department officials at the Dr. BR Ambedkar Secretariat, the Minister reviewed the implementation of the Bhu-Bharathi Act, distribution of pattadar passbooks, land re-surveys and the resolution of land-related issues. He directed officials to expedite field-level work and ensure effective implementation of government decisions.

The Minister said 5,68,858 pattadar passbooks had been issued since the Bhu-Bharathi Act came into force on April 14, 2025. Including 6,71,508 passbooks issued earlier, the total stood at 12,40,366, according to the department.

He said re-surveys had helped grant land rights to 906 farmers covering over 1,600 acres in Narayanapuram village of Mahabubabad district. In 15 villages across Nutanakal and Maddirala mandals of Suryapet district, 2,400 farmers had received land titles covering 3,450 acres.

The Minister said the initiative would enable farmers to access bank loans, Rythu Bharosa and other government welfare schemes. He directed officials to extend similar surveys to other areas to resolve decades-old land disputes and provide legal ownership documents to eligible cultivators.

BRS serves legal notices to Congress leaders over allegations against KCR

TFP I CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, OCT 19

Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) has served legal notices to Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee President, Mahesh Kumar Goud, Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy, and MP Vamsi Krishna Gaddam for allegations made regarding the diversion of Kondapochamma Sagar water to the farmhouse of BRS President and former Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao.

BRS General Secretary and Legal Cell Incharge, Soma Bharat Kumar, issued notices to the Congress leaders, demanding them to unconditionally delete social media posts and retract the 'false propaganda'.

The Congress leaders had alleged that water from the Kondapochamma Sagar project was diverted to the farmhouse of K. Chandrashekar Rao (KCR).

According to the notice, the allegations are intended to damage KCR's reputation.

The notices to Congress leaders were issued a day after a similar notice was issued to the management and editor of the Telugu daily 'Velugu' on the same issue.

The BRS Legal Cell has demanded that they immediately and



Soma Bharat Kumar

unconditionally delete the relevant posts from their social media accounts and retract the allegedly false campaign.

The Congress leaders were told that if they fail to respond to the notices issued, further legal action—including proceedings for defamation—will be initiated in accordance with the relevant laws.

Earlier, the BRS strongly condemned a report published by 'Velugu' and alleged that it was politically motivated and intended to tarnish the reputation of KCR while creating misconceptions among the public about irrigation projects built by the BRS government.

Demanding the immediate withdrawal of the report that was on the front page on October 17, the party has called for an unconditional apology. Bharat Kumar served legal notices on the management and editor of the newspaper.

Questioning the basis of the report, which allegedly linked the irrigation needs of Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district and the Kondapochamma Sagar project and its canal network to KCR's agricultural land, the BRS sought clarification on the official records and evidence relied upon by the newspaper.

The party questioned whether the Irrigation Department's records had been examined, the actual routes of the canals had been verified, and explanations had been obtained from the officials concerned.

Publishing allegations with sensational headlines without addressing these questions, it said, was contrary to established journalistic standards.

The party stated that people were closely observing attempts to create controversies by invoking KCR's name, target the BRS, and discredit irrigation projects undertaken by the previous government for alleged political gains.

It warned that it would not remain a silent spectator if a newspaper were turned into a platform for political propaganda under the guise of press freedom, with allegations published without substantiated evidence.

Traffic police seize 100 vehicles with fake number plates



HYDERABAD, OCT 19

The Hyderabad Traffic Police have registered 100 criminal cases and seized 100 vehicles for using fake, forged, tampered or unauthorised number plates over the past eight months.

The seized vehicles include 88 two-wheelers and 12 four-wheelers. The special enforcement drive aims to curb the misuse of vehicle registration numbers, prevent evasion of traffic enforcement and enhance public safety.

Police warned that fake or altered number plates can conceal vehicle identities, obstruct investigations and help offenders evade legal accountability. The Traffic Police reiterated that all vehicle owners must comply with the registration plate standards prescribed under the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, and the Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989, including applicable High-Security Registration Plate (HSRP) requirements. Using fake registration numbers, altering digits, displaying unauthorised fonts or decorative lettering, and making modifications that obscure genuine registration details are prohibited.

The department said enforcement drives would continue and violators would face strict legal action. Motorists have been urged to ensure their number plates are genuine, clearly visible and compliant with prescribed standards. The public has also been asked to report suspected cases of fake or tampered number plates to the police. (NSS)



Major fire breaks out at textile shop near HC



TFP I CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, OCT 19

A major fire broke out at Bombay Hosiery, a wholesale textile shop and warehouse near Madina Crossroads, opposite the Telangana High Court, in the early hours of Monday.

Fire department personnel and Charminar police rushed to the spot after receiving information about the incident and brought the blaze under control.

Thick smoke billowed from the premises, causing concern among local residents. Officials took precautionary measures to prevent the fire from spreading to neighbouring shops.

As the premises house a wholesale textile business, officials suspect substantial damage.

A short circuit is suspected to have triggered the fire, but the exact cause is yet to be established.

Police have registered a case and launched an investigation.

Shamshabad ATM theft busted; Man arrested, 4 others at large



TFP I FAROOQ KHAN
RANGA REDDY, OCT 19

Shamshabad Zone Task Force police, in coordination with local police and Rajasthan Police, have arrested an alleged member of an interstate gang involved in the theft of Rs 7.40 lakh from an Axis Bank ATM near Satambrai in Shamshabad, Ranga Reddy district.

The accused, Rashid alias Kaku (34), a native of Rajasthan's Alwar district, was apprehended near Gollapalli X-Roads in Shamshabad based on technical evidence and call detail records. Police seized Rs 4,500 in cash, a Santro car, a Pulsar motorcycle, a gas cutter, a gas cylinder and two mobile phones, with the total value of the seized property estimated at Rs 1.84 lakh.

According to police, the gang struck the ATM in the early hours of October 6 after spraying paint on CCTV cameras, cutting the machine open with a gas cutter and disabling the siren wires. The suspects allegedly escaped with cash trays containing Rs 7,40,200 and later travelled to Rajasthan after abandoning the car near Patancheru.

Police said Rashid had received Rs 90,000 as his share of the stolen money and had spent Rs 85,500. He is reportedly involved in 46 cases, including theft, attempted murder and Arms Act violations, registered in parts of Haryana and Delhi.

Shamshabad Zone DCP B. Rajesh commended the police teams for solving the case and said efforts were underway to apprehend the remaining four suspects, who are believed to be in Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

Delimitation Bill talks: Rijiju writes to Kharge, hopes Congress won't obstruct future bills

NEW DELHI, OCT 19

Seeking cooperation on the Delimitation Amendment Bill, Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju on Monday wrote to Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge, hoping that the principal Opposition party will play a constructive role and not obstruct important future legislation.



Writing to the Leader of the Opposition, Rajya Sabha, in response to his October 16 letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Rijiju said, "The government has consistently sought the Opposition's support and cooperation for the consideration and passage of the Delimitation Amendment Bill. The government has reached out to the Congress Party, being the principal Opposition party, on several occasions."

"However, after repeated requests, the Congress Party didn't give dates for discussion, after which the government's outreach had extended to other political parties," he said.

"Consultations were held with representatives of parties including the DMK, SP, YSRCP, NCP, Shiv Sena (UBT), AIMIM and BJD with a view to facilitating dialogue and building a broader consensus in support of the proposed legislation," said Rijiju.

He said, "In these circumstances, it is not clear why the demand for consultation is being made repeatedly, when the government has already made sustained efforts for dialogue."

The Union Minister reiterated the government's commitment to the basic principles of parliamentary democracy and to facilitating meaningful dialogue through the effective functioning of Parliament.

"We value the participation of all political parties in deliberations and discussions on all matters of national importance. I also hope that the Congress Party will play a constructive role and will not obstruct important future legislation," said Rijiju.

The Minister told Kharge that he was writing to him in response to the latter's request to PM Modi seeking the convening of an all-party meeting before the Delimitation Constitutional Amendment is taken up for consideration in Parliament.

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)

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA
SPECIAL DEPUTY COLLECTOR (LA), (JLISP)

JAWAHAR LIFT IRRIGATION SCHEME PROJECT :: GADWAL JOGULAMBA GADWAL DISTRICT

FORM – VI (NOTIFICATION)

(SEE SUB – RULE (1) OF RULE – 19 AND SECTION – 11(1) OF THE ACT – 30/2013)

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION

Collector Proceedings No. G / 720 / 2026. Dt: 05.10.2026.
Special Deputy Collector Lr. Nos., B2/07/2026.
Gazette No. 62 / 2026, Dt: 29.09.2026.

Where as it appears to the Government of Telangana / Collector, Jogulamba Gadwal that a total of **Ac. 2.72 Cts** Land is required in the village namely **Yelkur Village of Maldakal Mandal**, Jogulamba Gadwal District for public purpose namely for Construction of BM1/M-10R/D-5L/P-105 under Package No. 105.

The said Land Acquisition for the project is exempted from the Chapter – II and Chapter – III of the LA Act 2013 i.e., Social Impact Assessment (SIA) and Food Security as per Section 10 (A) of Right to Fair Compensation and Resettlement 2013, (Telangana Amendment) Act 2016 (Act No. 21 of 2017)

Therefore, it is notified that for the above said project in the Village of Yelkur Maldakal Mandal, Jogulamba Gadwal District a piece of land measuring more or less (Ac. 2.72 Cts) of standard measurement, whose detail description is as following, is under acquisition.

SCHEDULE

Village : Yelkur Mandal: Maldakal Dist: Jogulamba Gadwal

Sl. No	Sy. No	Patta / Inam / Govt.	Wet / Dry	Total Extent to be acquired Ac. Cts	Name of the Pattedar	Boundaries North	South	East	West	Structures / Trees
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1	233	Patta	Dry	2.72	1) G.Krishnaiah S/o Thimmanna 2) G.Narsimhulu S/o Thimmanna 3) G.Ramudu S/o Thimmanna 4) G.Anjaneyulu S/o Thimmanna 5) Gongadigari Uligamma W/o Gongadigari Maldakal	–	–	–	–	–
TOTAL EXTENT:				2.72						

This notification is made under the provisions of Section 11(1) of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act (Telangana Amendment), 2016 (Act 21 of 2017) amended from the Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act (Amended by the Telangana) Act 2013 (Central Act. No. 30/2013) to all whom it may concern.

The plan related to the lands and other details can be inspected at the office of the District Collector, Jogulamba Gadwal and the Special Deputy Collector (LA), JLIP, Gadwal on any working day during the working hours. The Telangana Government / Collector –cum-Appropriate Government is pleased to authorize Officer and his Staff to enter into the land mentioned in the above schedule survey and take the measurements or to dig the land to check sub-soil and lay a bore to find out the quality of the land and are permitted to take up necessary steps under Section -12 of Act.

As per Section 11(4), no one is permitted to do any kind of transactions such as sales / purchases / mortgage with reference to such land in the above cited schedule without the notice of the District Collector, after the date of issuance of this notification. As per Section – (15) the owners of the land in the above mentioned schedule should bring to the notice of the Land Acquisition Officer / District Collector, Jogulamba Gadwal, or the official concerned, in writing, if they have any objections with regard to the acquisition of their land, duly submitting the necessary proofs within 60 (Sixty) days of the issuance of such preliminary notification.

Sd/- Spl.Dy.Collector,(L.A) JLIP (PJP)Gadwal.
Sd/- Additional Collector Jogulamba Gadwal.
Sd/- District Collector, Jogulamba Gadwal.

DIPR- 1053/LA/PP/ADVT/PUB/2026-27

Owaisi questions Akhilesh over Nathwani's nomination for Rajya Sabha

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
RAMPUR, OCTOBER 19

AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi questioned Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav over the nomination of industrialist Dhanraj Parimal Nathwani to the Rajya Sabha, accusing the SP leadership of maintaining contradictory political ties.



Owaisi said, "Akhilesh gave his uncle a Rajya Sabha seat and nominated Nathwani as the second candidate." "Nathwani's father, Senior Nathwani, defeated the All India Alliance candidate in Jharkhand. Now, Akhilesh has nominated Junior Nathwani as his candidate. The father is with the BJP, and the son is with you. Tell me, what is this relationship called?" Owaisi asked. The AIMIM chief made these remarks during a public meeting at Manshab Ali Stadium in Tanda, Rampur, on Sunday night. He alleged that Nathwani had congratulated Prime Minister Narendra Modi on completing 25 years in power, while AIMIM was repeatedly accused of being the BJP's "B-team" whenever it contested elections.

Further attacking the SP leadership, he said, "Nathwani had congratulated Prime Minister Narendra Modi on completing 25 years in power, while AIMIM was repeatedly accused of being the BJP's "B-team" whenever it contested elections. "Akhilesh, you made a deal with the BJP and gave a BJP man the SP ticket," Owaisi said, launching a sharp attack on the SP leadership and its political positioning.

Owaisi said, "I have given so many speeches. Name one sentence in any of my speeches in which I have said something against India or any of our Hindu brothers. I have certainly spoken against the BJP. I oppose the RSS ideology because I have studied it. I have read many books about the RSS and spoken to several experts. I know that the RSS's aim is to make India a Hindu nation." Owaisi said the Muslim community should develop its own political leadership rather than depend on established political families and parties from Nehru, Gandhi or Yadav families to represent it.. He accused the SP and other opposition parties of viewing Muslims primarily as voters rather than as equal stakeholders in political decision-making.

Taking aim at Akhilesh Yadav and the INDIA alliance, Owaisi said, "You do not consider Muslims human beings; you consider them merely voters. I consider them human beings, my sons, my brothers, my future and my leaders." "Our young men and women will rise from within our ranks. Muslim youth have as much potential as those from other communities, yet they lack a platform. The Majlis is giving them the opportunity to lead India and secure justice for their community," he said.

The AIMIM chief said Muslim youth has the potential to become legislators, MPs and political leaders but often lacked opportunities and platforms to advance. He said his party was seeking to create those opportunities and enable members of the community to participate more actively in politics. "Now Abdul won't just lay the carpet. Abdul, insha'Allah, will become a leader, an MLA and an MP," Owaisi said, calling for a change in the role played by Muslim party workers. He also defended his criticism of the BJP and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), asserting that his opposition was based on ideology. He challenged his critics to identify any statement in his speeches that was against India or Hindus.

Referring to the upcoming Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections, Owaisi said his opponents and the alliance's adversaries would become more active as the elections approached. "There will be silence for a while, and then there will be noise. Your time has come, Akhilesh and Baba. Your time has come; our time will come," he said. He urged AIMIM supporters to work at the booth level instead of merely chanting slogans at rallies. He said each party worker should connect with five people to strengthen the party.

Owaisi questioned opposition leaders over what he described as their lack of support for Muslim activists and individuals facing imprisonment. Referring to Shifa-ur-Rehman, Safoora Zargar, Ishrat Jahan and Sharjeel Imam, he alleged that opposition leaders did not demonstrate the same level of activism in their cases as they did for other political figures. He also expressed concern over the difficulties faced by senior SP leader Azam Khan and prayed for his well-being. Owaisi further called for the early release of Maulana Tauqeer Raza Khan, who, he said, was lodged in Fatehgarh Jail.

Cabinet expansion after LG's return: NC President

SRINAGAR, OCT 19

National Conference president Farooq Abdullah on Monday said the expansion of the Jammu and Kashmir Council of Ministers would take place once Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha returns.

"The Lieutenant Governor was not well. He was sick. When the Lieutenant Governor comes, there will be an expansion of the government," Abdullah told reporters in Budgam district.

The remarks came amid speculation over a long-awaited expansion of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's Council of Ministers, with the National Conference-led government completing two years in office on October 16.

The government, which took office in October 2024, is yet to undertake a cabinet reshuffle, and the proposed expansion has remained a subject of political discussion.

Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary recently dismissed speculation about resignations within the government, asserting that no minister had stepped down.

"No minister has tendered a resignation," Choudhary had told reporters in Jammu.

The Congress, the National Conference's electoral ally, has also been at the centre of discussions surrounding the expansion. (IANS/UNI)

Singer Nautiyal's father Ramsharan joins Congress

NEW DELHI, OCT 19

Senior Uttarakhand leader Ramsharan Nautiyal, father of Bollywood singer Jubin Nautiyal, joined the Congress on Monday, days after resigning from the BJP, even as the opposition party launched a scathing attack on the Pushkar Singh Dhami government over the Ankita Bhandari murder case and corruption allegations.

Nautiyal makes his reentry into the Congress, which he left in 2014. His move comes months ahead of the 2027 Uttarakhand Assembly elections, as political parties begin preparing for the crucial electoral contest in the hill state.

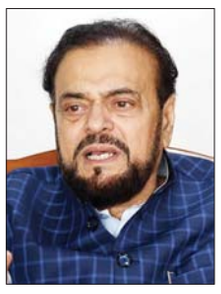
Nautiyal, a former Dehradun district panchayat president who had also contested an Assembly election on a BJP ticket, joined the Congress at the party headquarters in the presence of Uttarakhand Congress in-charge Kumari Selja, state party president Ganesh Godiyal, Leader of Opposition Yashpal Arya and Congress Working Committee member Gurdeep Sappal.

Welcoming him, Congress leaders said his political experience and influence would strengthen the party in Uttarakhand.

Addressing the press conference, Selja questioned the impartiality of the CBI investigation into the Ankita Bhandari murder case, alleging that several crucial aspects, including the alleged VIP angle, had not been properly investigated. (IANS/UNI)

Abu Azmi demands lowering of age of juvenile offenders to 14

MUMBAI, OCT 19



Abu Asim Azmi

Samajwadi Party (SP) Maharashtra President and MLA, Abu Asim Azmi, on Monday demanded that the age threshold for treating an accused as a minor be lowered, arguing that juveniles aged 15 or 16 should face the same punishment as adults if they commit murder.

Speaking to IANS, Azmi said, "First and foremost, my demand is that the age threshold for a minor be lowered from 17 years to 14 years. At 15 or 16, young people have 'hot blood'; they fear no one and are capable of doing anything. This age limit should be reduced to 12, 13 or 14 years. If they commit murder, they should face the same punishment as anyone else."

Reacting to the firing incident involving actor Tiger Shroff in Mumbai, Azmi criticised Mumbai's law and order situation, alleging that several incidents of murder and violence had taken place without receiving adequate public attention.

"First Baba Siddique, now Tiger Shroff, and it doesn't end there. Many other murders have occurred previously as well. However, since those victims were not prominent or famous figures, their cases haven't been highlighted. Murders are rampant in Mumbai. In Mankhurd-Shivaji Nagar, people are being murdered over the most trivial matters. The law and order situation is in a dire state," he said.

Azmi also criticised the Maharashtra government, alleging that it was focussing its efforts on targeting Muslims rather than addressing law and order concerns.

"I want to tell Chief Minister Fadnavis that this government is focussing all its energy on humiliating Muslims. I ask, why don't such murders happen in Singapore? Why does no one dare to commit such acts there? Why are there no murders in Arab countries? And if a murder does occur, how quickly is a verdict reached? Just look back at the pages of history," he said.

He added that people in Mumbai were living in constant fear and said it was shameful for the government when individuals openly claimed responsibility for such crimes. (IANS)

YSRCP using Gen-Z as pawns for its political ends, alleges Andhra CM Naidu

AMARAVATI, OCT 19

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister, N. Chandrababu Naidu, on Monday alleged that the YSR Congress Party was using Gen-Z as 'pawns' for its political ends.

The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) National President alleged that YSRCP was "willing to do anything and commit any crime to secure political power."

Addressing a press conference, Naidu alleged that the YSRCP creates disturbances and then attempts to blame him.

The Chief Minister also accused YSRCP President and former Chief Minister, Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, of adopting double standards on the Election Commission.

He said Jagan's party earlier supported the process for selecting the Chief Election Commissioner but was now making various allegations after suffering electoral setbacks.



AP Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu addresses a press conference at Undavalli.

Naidu was reacting to Jagan's remarks at a press conference on Sunday, where he called for restoring the earlier system of appointment of Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners by a panel including the Chief Justice of India to restore public confidence in the Election Commission.

Naidu alleged that YSRCP allegedly manipulated local body elections for large-scale unopposed victories when it was in power.

He claimed that under the YSRCP rule, the then State Election Commissioner (SEC) was forced to write to the Centre seeking protection. When the SEC reported large-scale irregularities in local body elections, he was criticised instead of being supported.

During the previous YSRCP government, 24 per cent of MPTC seats and 19 per cent of ZPTC seats were won unopposed. Those unopposed victories were allegedly secured through the misuse of official power, Naidu alleged.

Naidu alleged that the previous government introduced legislation aimed at disqualifying Opposition candidates and that liquor bottles were allegedly planted in the homes of Opposition candidates to implicate them and Opposition parties were prevented from filing nominations.

"Candidates were not even allowed to file nominations in Pulivendula (Jagan Mohan Reddy's constituency). In contrast, candidates from various parties, including the YSRCP, have filed nominations in Kuppam, Pithapuram and Pulivendula in the current elections," he said.

The TDP chief claimed that there were no instances of such a large number of nominations being filed during the YSRCP's tenure. He alleged that YSRCP relied on violence both in the past and in the present elections.

He said the government will take appropriate action against the alleged excesses of YSRCP leaders. The coalition will also confront the party politically and expose its actions. The previous government misused official power, while its leaders are now resorting to attacks and intimidation, he claimed.

Chandrababu Naidu alleged that when Y.S. Vivekananda Reddy was murdered attempts were made to shift the blame on to him. He said that he was now being held responsible for violence allegedly committed by the YSRCP.

"Violence has no place in my life. But I will not run away from criminals and rowdies. Those who take action against rowdies and goons may become targets of retaliation, but I will not be intimidated by their threats," the TDP national President said. (IANS)

TIGER SHROFF FIRING CASE

3 suspects held in Kota planned to flee to Nepal, says police

JAIPUR, OCT 19

The Kota City Police in Rajasthan have made a major breakthrough in the firing incident involving Bollywood actor Tiger Shroff in Mumbai by apprehending three suspects, including a minor, at Kota railway station. According to Kota Superintendent of Police (SP) Tejaswani Gautam, preliminary questioning has revealed that the suspects planned to travel to Delhi before fleeing to Nepal.



Acting on intelligence that the suspects were travelling to Kota aboard the Pune-Jaipur Express, a police team surrounded and searched the train. The operation was completed in approximately 15 minutes, following which all three suspects were taken into custody.

The arrested suspects have been identified as Rehan alias Sukka, a resident of Sonipat in Haryana; Hrithik Kurmi alias Roshan, a resident of Begusarai in Bihar; and a minor.

According to the SP, Hrithik had been living in Mumbai for the past few years.

SP Gautam said preliminary questioning indicated that Rehan alias Sukka was in contact with Anil Pandit, who is reportedly linked to the Lawrence Bishnoi gang. Police are investigating whether this connection had any role in the firing incident.

The weapon allegedly used in the shooting has not yet been recovered. Investigators will question the suspects further to establish where the weapon was taken after the incident and identify others who may have been involved.

A team from the Mumbai Police has reached Kota, and the process of handing over the suspects to the Mumbai Police is underway.

The incident took place on Sunday at around 7 p.m., when Tiger Shroff was returning by car from a football ground in Mumbai's Juhu area.

According to the police, the assailants fired at the vehicle with a pistol, injuring the driver. Another person present at the scene was also hit by a bullet.

A Mumbai Police official said Tiger Shroff managed to lean forward when the shots were fired, helping him avoid a direct hit. However, he sustained an injury from a fragment of shattered glass. The investigation is continuing to establish the motive behind the attack, trace the weapon used in the shooting and determine the possible involvement of other individuals. (IANS/UNI)

Bishnoi's cousin warns Salman

Ramesh Bishnoi, cousin of jailed gangster Lawrence Bishnoi, said on Monday that Bollywood superstar Salman Khan should apologise to the Bishnoi community and if he does not, there will be dangerous consequences.

The Lawrence Bishnoi gang has an animosity with Salman Khan due to his alleged involvement in the 1998 blackbuck poaching case in Rajasthan during the filming of the blockbuster 'Hum Saath Saath Hain'. The actor was convicted by a trial court in 2018, a verdict he has contested in higher courts, and maintains his innocence.

Speaking to IANS in the aftermath of an attack on Tiger Shroff, which the Bollywood star narrowly escaped, Ramesh Bishnoi said, "As you heard in the audio, I heard the same thing: That we have stopped him and want to warn him again that anyone who works with Salman Khan could face consequences."

He added that he was just quoting the Lawrence Bishnoi gang, "These are not my words, I'm just citing their emotions on the matter."

"I want to tell Salman Khan's family to give up their stubbornness. This is an issue affecting the entire community, and there is widespread anger within it," he added.

Ramesh Bishnoi further said that there was anger within the Bishnoi community, and Lawrence is just expressing the entire community's anger. "Lawrence has no personal dispute with Salman Khan, nor is it a personal dispute with the community.

4 killed, several injured in Manipur

IMPHAL, OCT 19

Four people were killed, several others injured, and three reported missing in separate incidents in Manipur's Imphal East and Thoubal districts, police said on Monday.



A police official said that two people were shot dead and two others were injured when unidentified militants reportedly opened fire on a group of firewood collectors in Imphal East on Monday.

According to the police official, around 10 people had gone to the hilly forested areas near Nongshum village in the morning to collect firewood. While they were busy collecting the firewood, suspected militants ambushed them, killing two people on the spot and injuring two others.

The third victim succumbed to his injuries at a private hospital in Imphal, where he was undergoing medical treatment.

The deceased were identified as Arubam Ronil, 55, Lairenlakpam Inaobi, 44, and Kh. Sushil, 32. All three were residents of Nongshum.

Three more people were missing after the incident.

Efforts were underway to retrieve the bodies of the victims. Additional security forces have rushed to the areas and launched a massive search operation to locate the missing people and nab the attackers.

In a separate incident, one person was killed and several others injured in clashes between members of two communities in Thoubal district, prompting the authorities to impose prohibitory orders in two affected areas.

A police official in Imphal said that the violence erupted at Khangabok village, under Thoubal police station and around 25 km south of Imphal, on Sunday night when a group of people allegedly pelted stones at a ground where a music concert was being held.

The incident escalated into stone-pelting between members of the two communities in Khangabok and neighbouring Sangaiyumpham. A few houses and vehicles were also set on fire during the clashes. (IANS)

DRI seizes smuggled foreign-origin gold

AHMEDABAD, OCT 19

The DRI arrested three accused and seized 13.017 kg of foreign-origin gold valued at Rs 19.41 crore in an operation that dismantled a syndicate that was smuggling the precious metal through Ahmedabad and Surat airports, an official said on Monday.

The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) arrested the three accused under the Customs Act, 1962 for their involvement in organised gold smuggling into India through Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport, Ahmedabad, and Surat International Airport, the official said in a statement.

Acting on specific intelligence, the DRI officers kept the suspects under surveillance and carried out coordinated searches over 42 hours beginning October 16, said the statement.

The operation uncovered the full chain of the racket: smuggling by air passengers, hand-over to handlers, illegal melting, and sale through a jewellery outlet, it said.

The DRI operation exposed dealings involving 13.017 kg of foreign-origin gold valued at approximately Rs 19.41 crore, said the statement. (IANS)

TN CM announces projects for Madurantakam, Dharapuram



CHENNAI, OCT 19

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, C. Joseph Vijay, on Monday announced a series of development projects for Madurantakam and Dharapuram, including a 1,439-crore combined drinking water scheme, a government women's college, irrigation improvements and housing initiatives.

The announcements follow the recent Assembly bypoll victories of Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam candidates Maragatham Kumaravel in Madurantakam and Sathyabama in Dharapuram.

According to a government release, Chief Minister Vijay has directed the departments concerned to expedite implementation.

A major announcement for Tiruppur district is a new Cauvery-based combined drinking water scheme, estimated to cost 1,439 crore, covering 1,232 rural habitations that remain outside the existing supply network.

The scheme will serve habitations in Dharapuram, Kangeyam, Kundadam, Pongalur and Vellakoil panchayat unions, besides seven panchayats in Mulanur and 17 in Palladam.

Of the district's 2,455 rural habitations, 1,223 currently receive water through the Cauvery combined drinking water system.

In Dharapuram constituency, 2,700 free house-site pattas will be distributed to homeless beneficiaries. The government will also take appropriate steps to provide pattas to about 87 families who have lived for two decades at Guruvappa Naickenpalayam in Chinnaputhur village.

Across Tiruppur district, 159 works costing approximately 10 crore will be undertaken to desilt and clean irrigation channels.

In Dharapuram constituency, channels extending about 271 km will be cleared of silt, bushes and other obstructions.

New overhead water tanks will be built in Dharapuram, Mulanur and Kundadam blocks, where approximately 13,000 drinking water connections will also be provided. (IANS/UNI)

Amritsar police bust Pakistan-linked arms, drug smuggling network

CHANDIGARH, OCT 19

Amritsar police have busted an alleged Pakistan-linked arms and drug smuggling network, arresting three men and seizing 10 sophisticated pistols, 1.25 kg of heroin and a motorcycle, Police Commissioner Harmanbir Singh Gill said on Monday.



The arrests were made in the Cantonment area following an operation against cross-border smuggling. Police said the suspects were part of a network that used drones to transport weapons and narcotics from Pakistan into Punjab for distribution among local criminals and extortion gangs.

The arrested men were identified as Rajbir Singh alias Raja (24), Gautam alias Ajay (28) and Ravi Sher Singh (22).

Addressing a press conference, Gill said the recovered weapons included three Glock pistols and seven .30-bore pistols.

"Earlier, illegal weapons were largely sourced from states such as Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Now, sophisticated and more lethal firearms are being smuggled from Pakistan through drones," Gill said.

Police investigations have revealed that Ravi Sher Singh allegedly maintained links with Pakistan-based smugglers, while Rajbir and Gautam collected consignments from designated dropping points and passed them on for further distribution.

Gill said the network was suspected of supplying firearms to criminals involved in extortion and other serious offences. Investigators are now tracing both the suppliers and intended recipients of the seized consignments. (IANS)

UGC seeks action over fee refund violations

NEW DELHI, OCT 19

The University Grants Commission has requested governors' offices to enforce its fee refund policy, with copies sent to higher education secretaries of states and union territories. The UGC notes that several universities and colleges continue to ignore its directives, leaving students' refund complaints unresolved.

In a letter, UGC Secretary Prof. Shyama Rath stated that repeated reminders, consultations, and follow-ups have not achieved compliance, resulting in hardship for students who cancelled their admissions within the stipulated period.

"Despite repeated written communications and telephonic follow-ups with the concerned universities and their affiliated colleges, several institutions continue to disregard the UGC directives, thereby causing undue hardship to students," Rath wrote.

The letter was addressed to principal secretaries to governors of states and union territories, with copies marked to their higher education secretaries. The commission requested that governors' offices ensure strict enforcement of the refund policy and caution institutions against further violations. (IANS)

Polish PM Tusk to visit India this week

NEW DELHI, OCT 19

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk will be on an official visit to India from October 21-23 at the invitation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. This would be PM Tusk's second visit to India in his capacity as Polish PM, the first being in his earlier tenure in 2010, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) announced on Monday.

Tusk will hold bilateral talks with Prime Minister Modi on October 22, during which both leaders shall review the entire spectrum of bilateral ties, which were elevated to a Strategic Partnership during the visit of PM Modi to Poland in August 2024. The two leaders will also discuss regional and global issues of mutual interest, the MEA stated.

For his visit to India, Tusk will be accompanied by Poland's Minister of Finance and Economy Andrzej Domanski and a large business delegation.

After concluding his engagements in Delhi, PM Tusk will travel to Bengaluru, where he will engage with various business stakeholders, including those from the Information Technology (IT) and space sectors. An India-Poland Business Forum will be held in New Delhi on October 22 and Bengaluru on October 23. (IANS)

Govt asks Meta to review Facebook and Instagram recommendation systems

NEW DELHI, OCT 19

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has asked technology giant firm Meta to review the content recommendation and ranking systems that power Facebook and Instagram, stepping up regulatory scrutiny of how social media algorithms amplify information in India, according to multiple reports.



In an advisory issued to the company, the ministry had asked Meta to ensure that its recommendation systems do not lead to the disproportionate exposure of users to a single or limited set of narratives and instead provide greater access to diverse, relevant and credible information, according to them.

The ministry also directed Meta to strengthen mechanisms for rapidly identifying, reviewing and escalating content that gains significant reach through recommendation systems when such material has the potential to contribute to public confusion, violence or disruption of public order.

Apart from that, the US-based company has been asked to implement the measures immediately and inform the government of the action taken.

The advisory specifically highlights photographs, videos and graphics related to ongoing public events where the authenticity, timing, location or surrounding circumstances may be unclear.

It calls for additional context where old or unrelated visuals are presented as current, where footage has been selectively edited or where unverified claims are made regarding emergencies, police action or other official measures.

Additionally, this marks the latest escalation in the government's scrutiny of Meta's moderation and recommendation systems.

Earlier in August, government officials questioned Meta executives over content recommendation algorithms, deepfakes, synthetic media and safeguards against unlawful content.

Meta has separately tightened content and advertising safeguards following concerns related to child sexual exploitation material.

The company said earlier this month it deployed new AI-driven advertising review systems and removed 5.3 million pieces of child sexual exploitation content in India during January-June 2026, with more than 98% detected proactively. (IANS/UNI)

THE FREEDOM PRESS

TUESDAY 20 OCTOBER 2026

RBI'S RATE HIKE

Balancing inflation control and economic stability

The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) decision to raise the repo rate by 25 basis points to 5.5 per cent on October 7 marks a cautious approach to containing inflation amid rising global uncertainties and domestic supply-side pressures. The first rate hike since February 2023, accompanied by a shift in the monetary policy stance to "calibrated tightening", signals the central bank's determination to prevent price pressures from becoming entrenched. However, higher interest rates alone cannot reduce crude oil prices or compensate for a weak monsoon, highlighting the need to complement monetary measures with effective supply-side policies.

The RBI expects inflation to average 5.2 per cent in FY2026-27 and reach 5.7 per cent in the fourth quarter, largely due to rising food prices and disruptions in global crude oil supplies. September's Consumer Price Index inflation stood at 5.58 per cent, bringing it closer to the RBI's upper tolerance limit of 6 per cent. While these developments underline the challenges ahead, the rate hike demonstrates the importance of acting before temporary price shocks translate into persistent inflation. Monetary policy can influence expectations through borrowing costs, savings returns, bond yields and exchange rates, even when the underlying causes of inflation remain beyond its direct control.

Inflation expectations among households remain a significant concern. Urban households expect prices to rise by around 10 per cent over the next year, compared with 7.9 per cent among rural and semi-urban households. Since food and fuel account for a substantial share of household expenditure, consumers often base their expectations on changes in these essential prices. Persistent expectations of higher inflation can influence wage demands and business pricing decisions, potentially creating a cycle of rising costs. The RBI's policy response is therefore intended not only to manage present inflation but also to reinforce confidence in its commitment to price stability.

The impact of higher interest rates on households will vary according to their borrowing arrangements. Around 68 per cent of floating-rate bank loans are linked to external benchmarks and generally reset at least once every three months. The transmission is stronger among private banks, where about 91 per cent of loans are benchmark-linked, compared with 54 per cent at public sector banks. For a home loan of Rs.20 lakh with 20 years remaining, the monthly EMI could rise from approximately Rs.16,345 to Rs.16,654. Although the increase is relatively modest, repeated borrowing-cost pressures can affect household budgets and consumption. At the same time, informal rural borrowing, where interest rates averaged 17-18 per cent in 2025, remains largely outside the direct reach of conventional monetary policy.

The benefits for savers are likely to be limited in the immediate term. A 25-basis-point repo rate increase would add only about Rs.250 annually to a deposit of Rs.1 lakh if banks passed on the entire increase to deposit rates. Moreover, fresh term deposit rates had declined by around 95 basis points following the 125-basis-point repo rate reduction between February 2025 and August 2026. Banks' access to alternative funding, including non-resident deposits under the Foreign Currency Non-Resident (Banks) scheme, may also limit pressure to raise deposit rates. Small savings rates remain unchanged. These developments highlight the need for balanced financial conditions that protect savers while ensuring affordable credit for productive investment.

External economic pressures further complicate the RBI's task. The rupee closed at Rs.96.78 on the day of the rate hike, declining by 0.45 per cent amid foreign capital outflows. The US Federal Reserve's reported rate increase to 3.75-4.00 per cent on September 16 has also constrained the benefits of India's tightening, as the interest-rate differential remains broadly unchanged. Meanwhile, foreign exchange reserves fell by approximately US$51 billion in the four weeks to October 2, reaching US$734.6 billion. The RBI's dollar window for oil marketing companies and measures to manage currency risks reflect efforts to limit volatility and protect essential imports. These steps illustrate the importance of coordinated monetary and foreign exchange management in a globally interconnected economy.

Financial conditions have tightened through channels beyond the immediate repo rate increase. The 10-year government bond yield has risen for eight consecutive weeks to around 7.4 per cent, its highest level since 2023. The RBI's liquidity management measures, including bond sales and stricter cash reserve requirements, have contributed to the adjustment, while elevated US Treasury yields have added pressure. With the US 10-year Treasury yield above 5.2 per cent, foreign investors have withdrawn approximately US$32 billion from Indian equities this year. Higher domestic bond yields can increase borrowing costs for the government and businesses, potentially affecting infrastructure spending, private investment and economic activity. Maintaining orderly financial conditions is therefore essential alongside controlling inflation.

The exchange rate also presents a mixed picture for India's trade performance. Merchandise exports grew by 17.9 per cent during April-August 2026, but imports expanded slightly faster, widening the goods trade deficit to US$147.1 billion from US$123.9 billion a year earlier.

Non-petroleum exports rose by 14.4 per cent, indicating that export performance extends beyond petroleum products. However, oil imports respond slowly to price changes, meaning rupee depreciation increases the domestic cost of energy purchases. Imported inputs account for roughly one-third of manufacturing raw materials, limiting the benefits of a weaker currency for sectors such as electronics, chemicals, textiles and leather. Food and agro-based exports may gain more from favourable exchange-rate movements, but reducing dependence on imported energy and strengthening domestic production remain important priorities.

India's policy challenge is to balance inflation control with economic growth, employment and household welfare. The RBI's decision signals a commitment to price stability, while the government's broader policy response can help address the causes of inflation that interest rates cannot directly resolve. Improving agricultural productivity, strengthening irrigation and storage facilities, reducing food supply-chain bottlenecks and diversifying energy sources can help moderate price pressures.

Targeted assistance for vulnerable households can provide relief without creating excessive demand-side pressures. Measures that support domestic manufacturing, improve export competitiveness and reduce dependence on imported inputs can also strengthen the economy's resilience to global shocks.

Ultimately, the effectiveness of monetary tightening will depend on how well it is supported by wider economic policies. The festive season may sustain demand, while weather-related disruptions and international energy prices remain important inflation risks. Clear communication from the RBI, prudent fiscal management, efficient food distribution and sustained investment in domestic production can reinforce the benefits of the rate decision. India's policy approach must remain responsive to changing global conditions without losing sight of domestic priorities. Higher interest rates can help anchor inflation expectations and maintain financial stability, but durable price stability will depend equally on stronger production, resilient supply chains and a more secure energy and food economy.

'Ghuspaithiye' is Amit Shah's smokescreen for 'Vote Chori'

AMITABH DUBEY



Trying to divert attention from a dodgy Special Intensive Revision and the oppressive policing of protesters, Union Home Minister Amit Shah has once again rolled out the charge that Opposition parties who demand accurate electoral rolls are supporting "ghuspaithiye", or "infiltrators". This outlandish claim would not ordinarily merit a response, were it not for the many people who live in a parallel reality created by Modi-fied media and social media.

The question naturally follows: how is it that an "all-powerful" Home Minister, assisted by the most intrusive and brutal weeding-out exercise in history, has been unable to tell us one simple thing — how many illegal immigrants has the SIR found?

It's not as if the Modi government lacks the authority to do so. The Supreme Court's 27 May 2026 SIR judgment clearly instructed the Election Commission of India (ECI) to refer every suspected non-citizen to the "competent authority" (paras 178, 186(g)). It required that authority to decide such cases "within a reasonable timeframe" and, in any event, before the next election in the state concerned, and allowed the ECI four weeks to make the Bihar referrals. This was to ensure, as the court put it, that voters' electoral rights are not left "in a state of prolonged uncertainty".

The net result? Nothing. Almost five months later, the ECI has released no data on referrals, and the Home Ministry hasn't said who the competent authority is. We know this because RTI activist Venkatesh Nayak filed two RTI requests on 10 August 2026 with the ECI and the Home Ministry, respectively, asking (1) how many cases had been referred to the competent authority and (2) who that authority was. The ECI replied that it held none of the information. The Home Ministry passed the request to the Law Ministry, which passed it to the ECI, which sent the question about the competent authority back to the Home Ministry. Nobody knows nothin'.

More recently, the Home Ministry's grandly named High-Level Committee on Demographic Changes asked the ECI for data on Bihar voters purged in the SIR as "non-citizens". The Bihar rolls had been finalised on 30 September 2025, more than a year ago, but all the committee got from the ECI was silence.

One explanation emerged after a Reporters' Collective investigation published on 16 October found that ERONET, the software officials used at SIR hearings in West Bengal, has no option to mark a voter as a non-citizen. Yes, you read that right.

It would appear that the "ghuspaithiye" have no better ally than Shah himself. Either that, or Shah has no real interest in identifying non-citizens, only in harvesting votes through anti-Muslim sentiment by invoking the word "ghuspaithiye".

Anyone hear that dog whistle? (Trick question.)

Contrast this two-facedness with the record. The UPA deported 82,255 illegal immigrants to Bangladesh between 2005 and 2013, without stoking communal passions. The Modi government deported a mere fraction of that number — 3,568 — between 2014 and 2024, according to Home Ministry data reported in May 2026. (These figures broadly confirm earlier Congress claims.) Those shouting "detect, delete, deport" have delivered little more than political theatre and the mass disenfranchisement of Indian citizens.

The SIR itself shows how hollow Shah's "ghuspaithiye" rhetoric is. In Bihar, the SIR removed about 68.5 lakh names, most of them because the voters were dead, absent, had shifted or were registered in more than one place. A team of journalists who scanned the Bihar rolls with optical character recognition software found only about 9,500 names marked under a fifth category, "ineligible", and more than 85 per cent of them were in four districts bordering Nepal.

The journalists tracked down about 100 of these voters. At least 70 were not foreign nationals; the foreigners they did find were about 30 Nepali women who had moved to Bihar after marrying local men. So, at most, a fraction of the 0.013 per cent of voters declared "ineligible" were foreigners, many of whom have the right to live and work in India and are not "ghuspaithiye".

Even in West Bengal, where the BJP campaigned non-stop on illegal immigration, nine in ten of the appeals decided by the tribunals had resulted in voters being restored to the roll, according to the West Bengal Chief Electoral Officer's own RTI reply to Congress MP Isha Khan Choudhury (data as of 7 August). No tribunal decision reported so far has found a foreigner.

Of the 23 Murshidabad labourers detained in Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh, on 4 September as suspected Bangladeshis, 19 were released two weeks later after officials checked their voter-list entries and residence records. The remaining four, whose names were struck off during the SIR, are still being held while their appeals are pending.

So it's glaringly obvious — the infiltrator rhetoric is being used to cover up Vote Chori on a massive scale. The BJP hopes that waving the "ghuspaithiye" red flag will distract a section of voters from the disenfranchisement and gaming of the electoral rolls.

Yet the evidence of centralised vote-rigging continues to mount: two Election Commissioners objected 14 times in ten months, one of them calling a change to Form 6 "unauthorised and illegal"; the Commissioners questioned the centralisation of the electoral-roll database on ECINet; and in Uttar Pradesh, the ECI's software generated 85,854 deletion forms in election officers' names with no reason recorded.

And however Shah tries to distract, a united Opposition will keep opposing Vote Chori and asking: How many infiltrators did the SIR find?

(Amitabh Dubey is a Congress member)

Great 'Exceptions': How the Oil India was attacked for is the oil trump now seeks

ADITYA SINHA



Brent crude closed at $109.86 a barrel on October 16, crossing $110 intraday for the first time since May 20. Retail diesel in the United States averaged $6.18 a gallon on October 1, up from $3.48 at the start of the year. US' Consumer Price Index rose 0.6% in September, taking annual inflation to 3.7%. Midterm elections fall on November 3. On October 9, President Donald Trump announced a deal with President Vladimir Putin. Russia would immediately supply more than 300,000 tonnes of diesel (2.25 million barrels) to American and global markets, with 500,000 tonnes in November, a million tonnes thereafter, and 3 million tonnes depending on the state of its refineries, 4.8 million tonnes in all. The Treasury issued a temporary licence suspending sanctions on Russian diesel deliveries until April 2027.

Scarcity during run up to the elections should be "blamed". The Iran war took Brent above $120 in late April. Ukrainian strikes on Russian refineries removed the diesel supply precisely when diesel was scarce. It left a global deficit that Kpler estimates at 130,000 tonnes, or about a million barrels, a day. The Group of Seven released 100 million barrels of emergency stocks. The International Energy Agency added over 20 million barrels of diesel on October 15. Prices barely moved. The diesel crack spread, the refiner's margin on converting crude to diesel, stood at $72.51 a barrel on October 6 against a 2021 to 2025 average of $31.50. A president who promised cheap energy faced $6 diesel three weeks before polling.

Now the implications. First, scale. The full 4.8 million tonnes is 35.76 million barrels, roughly ten days of American distillate demand and a single day of global demand. Released all at once, it would cover the world for about three weeks. The 300,000 tonnes arriving this month cover three-quarters of one day of American consumption. Goldman Sachs estimates the October and November cargoes will shave $1 to $2 a barrel off wholesale American diesel, against a crack spread running $41 above its five-year average. Second, the fiscal transfer to Moscow. Sergey Aleksashenko of the NEST Centre estimates the first 1.8 million tonnes would earn Russia up to $1.25 billion over three months, about 1% of its commodity export revenue in that period, with under $30 million a month, or 0.07% of monthly federal revenue, reaching the budget of a war now in its fifth year. The money is marginal. Which brings us to the statute. The Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act of 2026 passed the Senate 86 to 11 on August 7 and the House 262 to 159 on September 16, and was signed on September 18. It provides for duties of 500% ad valorem on Russian goods and 100% on all goods from the five largest importers of Russian crude oil or natural gas that knowingly make new purchases on or after October 18, besides sanctions on Russia's defence and energy sectors and its shadow fleet.For India, squarely in the Act's sights with China and Turkey, the sequence matters. The 25% penal duty of August 2025, which took the tariff on Indian goods to 50%, was rescinded under the interim framework of February 2, 2026, which set the reciprocal rate at 18% against Indian commitments on Russian crude. Purchases nonetheless ran at 2.6 million barrels a day in June and 2.57 million in July before easing to 1.82 million in September, by Kpler data, still the world's largest, against China's 1.49 million. Russia's share of India's basket fell from 56% in July to about 35% in September, less because of Washington than because Urals now prices near par with Gulf grades. The crude import bill rose 48.4% to $74.8 billion in April to August by Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell data, with the Indian basket at $90.19 a barrel in August against $69.11 a year earlier, and petroleum at 22.5% of merchandise imports.

Is The Waiver A Respite?

In cash flow, yes. A 100% duty stacked on 18 % has died before birth, conveniently before Secretary of State Marco Rubio lands in Mumbai on October 20. In structure, no. The waiver is revocable with a signature, the top five list is recalculated every 180 days, and India will remain on it. A law written to punish the buyers of Russian oil was suspended to protect a purchase of Russian oil. India spent fourteen months being lectured for less.

(Author was with the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister)

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

ED searches in six cities in'pump-and-dump' fraud

MUMBAI, OCT 19



The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has conducted searches at 29 premises across six cities in Maharashtra and Gujarat as part of a money-laundering probe into an alleged WhatsApp-driven "pump-and-dump" scheme involving the shares of two listed companies, an official statement said on Monday. The ED's Mumbai Zonal Office-I carried out the searches on Friday at premises in Mumbai, Nashik (Maharashtra), Ahmedabad, Gandhinagar, Surat, and Bhavnagar (Gujarat) under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

The investigation relates to alleged manipulation in the shares of R M Drip and Sprinklers Systems Ltd (RMDSSL) and R&B Denims Ltd.

The premises searched included the offices of the two companies, residences of their promoters and persons who had been allotted shares at low prices, offices of stock-broking and finance firms, and premises linked to individuals suspected of operating promotional WhatsApp groups.

According to ED, its investigation found that between April 2023 and March 2024, the two companies issued more than 3.5 crore shares and convertible warrants to selected individuals and entities. A substantial portion of the money used for these allotments came from a small group of connected persons, firms, and lenders.

The agency alleged that the share prices were subsequently pushed up while a large proportion of the shares remained with the same set of holders.

From late December 2025 to February 2026, WhatsApp communities with names such as "Multibagger Stocks" allegedly circulated daily "buy" recommendations for the shares among retail investors.

The ED said the groups operated using SIM cards obtained in the names of other persons in Haryana and Mumbai, while their operations were allegedly run from Bhavnagar.

The agency claimed the promotional campaign led to a sharp increase in buyers, trading volumes and share prices. Preferential allottees allegedly took advantage of the increased buying interest to sell part of their holdings to a large number of investors.

During the searches, the ED said it identified clusters of family-linked beneficiaries, including entities associated with Affluence Gems, Kawa HUF, and Komalay Consultancy. These beneficiaries had allegedly acquired shares at low prices through preferential warrants.

According to the agency, the shares were subsequently promoted through WhatsApp, X, SMS and other channels to generate buying interest.

The ED said it has frozen trading accounts worth about Rs 200 crore belonging to the persons and connected entities under investigation. The agency also seized documents, digital devices, share transaction records and property-related papers during the searches. Further investigation is underway.

The ED is now examining the financial trail, share transactions and digital evidence collected during the searches to establish the alleged links between the beneficiaries, promoters and operators of the WhatsApp groups. The findings are expected to help the agency identify the flow of suspected proceeds of crime and determine the role of the individuals and entities under investigation. (IANS/UNI)

China Pursues Gold Amid Rising Tensions

NEW DELHI, OCT 19

China has stepped up purchases of gold as a safe haven asset amid rising geopolitical tensions. The People's Bank of China (PBOC) reportedly added 23 tonnes of gold in September 2026, its largest monthly purchase in nearly three years, extending its buying streak to 23 consecutive months. China's reported holdings of gold have now risen to approximately 2,410 tonnes, according to an article in Nile Post.

The article highlights that Beijing has taken a cue from the freezing of Russian foreign exchange reserves by Western governments, following Moscow's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. The seizure showed that dollar and euro-denominated assets held abroad can become vulnerable to sanctions. However, gold stored domestically carries no foreign issuer's liability and is less directly exposed to such restrictions. At the same time, this does not mean China is preparing to abandon the dollar. Rather, Beijing appears intent on reducing its dependence on a financial system in which Washington and its allies retain considerable influence, the article observes.

It points out that the trend extends beyond China. The World Gold Council (WGC) data showed net central bank purchases of approximately 39 tonnes in August, following 23 tonnes in July. Reserve managers increasingly view bullion as a source of diversification amid expectations of a more multipolar monetary system. However, the article also underlines that gold has limitations as a reserve asset. It generates no interest, can suffer sharp price corrections and cannot match the dollar's liquidity or the depth of US Treasury markets. (IANS/UNI)

2.76M pieces of customers' information at Hollys leaked

SEOUL, OCT 19



Customer information held by local coffee chain Hollys has reportedly been leaked via hacking of its memberships programme, the franchise said on Monday, the latest in a string of cyberattacks targeting local companies.

A total of 2.76 million pieces of personal information, including the customers' dates of birth, phone numbers, addresses and emails, was stolen by the hackers sometime between September 3 and October 7, when the company detected unauthorised access to its system, according to a notice posted on the company's website.

"We understand that the leaked data consists of temporary data files provided for a past membership service overhaul, not the data from the currently active customer database," the notice read, adding the company is still investigating the exact scope of the incident.

"We sincerely apologize for causing customer concern from this incident. We will make our utmost efforts to protect customer data and minimize damage from the breach," it added.

The cybersecurity violation at Hollys follows back-to-back leaks of customer data at local financial firms early this month. Around 100,000 cases of leaked personal information are presumed to have taken place at 16 financial institutions in a recent series of hacking attacks as of Friday, according to financial regulators.

Hollys currently has around 530 outlets across the country and is owned by KG Group, a local conglomerate whose business ranges from steelmaking to car manufacturing and logistics services.

Last week, around 100,000 cases of leaked personal information, such as e-mails, names and phone numbers, are presumed to have happened at 16 financial institutions so far in a recent series of hackings, the financial regulator said. (IANS)

Kenya Ebola outbreak: India hands over second consignment of medical assistance

NAIROBI, OCT 19



India on Monday handed over the second consignment of 11 tonnes of medical assistance to Kenya to support its Ebola preparedness and response.

India's High Commissioner to Kenya, Adarsh Swaika, handed over the second consignment of medical assistance to the Principal Secretary of Kenya's Public Health, Mary Muthoni Muriuki, on Monday.

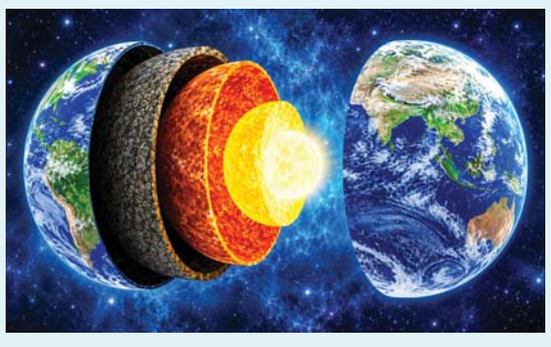
"India hands over the second consignment of 11 tonnes of medical assistance to Kenya to strengthen Ebola preparedness and response," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) posted on X. The 11-tonne consignment includes PPE kits, powered air-purifying respirators, biosafety cabinets and cold-chain refrigerators to protect front-line healthcare personnel and strengthen laboratory safety and public-health capacity. The Indian High Commission in Kenya affirmed India's support to Kenya in its efforts to contain Ebola.

In a post on X, the Indian High Commission in Kenya stated, "High Commissioner handed over the second consignment of medical assistance to Principal Secretary of Public Health of Kenya Mary Muthoni Muriuki today to support its Ebola preparedness and response, in continuation of the assistance provided in July this year."

Director-General of health in Kenya's Ministry of Health Patrick Amoth said that the patient attendant is in isolation and mentioned that the existing patients are showing positive recovery. (IANS)

Govt, AcSIR Sign MoU for Earth Sciences PhDs

NEW DELHI, OCT 19



Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) and the Academy of Scientific and Innovative Research (AcSIR) entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) here, recognising all ten MoES research institutes as AcSIR Associated Research Institutes and paving the way for joint doctoral programmes, an official statement said on Monday.

The institutional collaboration integrates MoES's state-of-the-art research facilities and scientific expertise with AcSIR's flexible academic framework to offer doctoral (PhD) programs across diverse domains of earth system sciences, including atmospheric, ocean, and polar sciences, the statement from the Ministry of Earth Sciences said.

The partnership bridges MoES and its ten institutions with AcSIR, establishing a unified ecosystem for advanced scientific research and educational capacity building across oceanography, atmospheric sciences, hydrology, and planetary systems.

The joint framework aims to foster interdisciplinary research, streamline resource and infrastructure sharing among national laboratories, and provide upgraded academic opportunities for early-career scientists and students.

Secretary of the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) Dr. Srinivasa Kumar Tummala said that the ministry will benefit significantly from the partnership, and that it will ensure that the collaboration "becomes a great association going forward for the benefit of the entire earth science faculty, science, and technology researchers." (IANS/UNI)

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA
OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR
JOGULAMBA GADWAL

File No. A2/264/2019. Date: 03.10.2026.

FORM – VII

As per Section -19 (1) of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in land Acquisition Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 (Central Act No. 30/2013) and sub Rule (1) of Rule -25

DECLARATION

District Collector, Jogulamba Gadwal Proceeding Date: 24.06.2026 No. G/399/12/25
Dist Gazette No. 54/2026

Where as it appears that total of **Ac 7.275 Cts** land is required for acquisition in the Setty Atmakur Village of Gadwal Mandal Jogulamba Gadwal District, for public purpose, namely for providing of D8 /6L of RMC Minor under Package No. 99(B)

Therefore declaration is made for the land measuring **Ac. 7.275 Ct** in Setty Atmakur village of Gadwal Mandal Mandal Jogulamba Gadwal District, which is needed for construction of above said project, whose detail description is as following, is proposed for acquisition.

SCHEDULE

Sl No	Sy. No	Patta/ Inam/ Govt.	Wet / Dry	Total Extent to be acquired Ac. Cts	Name of the Pattedar/ Name of the enjoyer	Type of trees - Number - type of construction area in S.q. Mtrs
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	372	Patta	Dry	1.325	1. Kothakapu Narsamma W/o Bheem Reddy 2. Kurva Ramanna S/o Govindu 3. Kurva Jyothi W/o Ramudu 4. Kurva Venkatanna S/o Govindu 5. Kurva Pedda Savaramma W/o Edhanna 6. Kurva Chinna Savaranna S/o Sayanna 7. Kurva Mahadevamma W/o Savaranna 8. Kurva Chinna Ramudu S/o Palle Govindu 9. Sanjanna S/o Bagombavi Pedda Savaranna 10. Chinna Sanjanna S/o Bagombavi Pedda Savaranna 11. Kurva Chinna Savaranna S/o Chinna Savaranna 12. Kurva Mairamudu S/o Chinna Savaranna 13. Anasuya W/o Chinna Gopal 14. Kurva Maheshwari W/o Kurva Jangilappa Enjoyers:– 1) Gyang Ramudu S/o Gang Hanumanthu 2) Hotel Krishna 3) Kurva Jyothi W/o Ramudu 4) Kurva Venkatanna S/o Govindu 5) Kurva Chinna Ramudu S/o Palle Govindu 6) Kompally Govindu 7) Kurva Ramanna S/o Govindu	No
2	373	Patta	Dry	0.325	1. Harijan Narsihulu S/o Mutyalu 2. Kurva Linganna S/o Buchanna 3. Kurva Savaranna S/o Sanjenna 4. Kukkala Ramanna S/o Santenna 5. Kurva Pedda Govindu S/o Buchanna 6. Kurva Chinna Govindu S/o Buchanna 7. Kukkala Raju S/o Beesanna 8. Kurva Gopal S/o Kukkala Beesanna 9. Krishna S/o Hanumathu 10. Anjaneyulu S/o A.Ramanna 11. Sandhya Nagaratnam W/o Anji 12. Pedda Eeranna S/o Kurva Mallanna 13. Chinna Eeranna S/o Kurva Mallanna Enjoyers:– 1) Kukkala Ramudu S/o Karrenna 2) Kukkala Raju S/o Roshanna	No
3	374	Patta	Dry	1.20	1. Kurva Govindu S/o Sanjanna 2. Kurv Manikyamma W/o Govindu 3. Kurva Ramudu S/o Santenna 4. Kurva Linganna S/o Buchanna 5. Kurva Eeramma W/o Satyanna 6. Kurva Savaranna S/o Santenna 7. Kukkala Ramanna S/o Karrenna 8. Kurv Pedda Govindu S/o Buchanna 9. Kurva Chinna Govindu S/o Buchanna 10. Grlapati Narsamma W/o G.Rami Reddy 11. Sanjanna S/o Bagombavi Pedda Savaranna 12. Kurva Chinna Savaranna S/o Chinna Savaranna 13. Kurva Gopal S/o Kukkala Beesanna 14. Urabai Bheechupalli S/o Yarranna 15. Pedda Yarranna S/o Kurva Mallanna 16. Chinna Eeranna S/o Kurva Mallanna 17. Savaramma W/o Kurva Mallanna Enjoyers:– 1) Pedda Govindu 2) Aloor Savaranna S/o Santenna 3) Aloor Ramulu S/o Santenna 4) K.Mallanna S/o Buchana 5) Linganna S/o Buchanna 6) Pedda Govindu S/o Buchanna 7) T.Chinna Govindu S/o Buchanna 8) Aloor Savarann S/o Santenna 9) Aloor Ramanna S/o Santenna 10) Kukkala Ramudu S/o Kukkala Karrenna	No
4	375	Patta	Dry	0.275 0.125 0.40	1. Kurva Yellappa S/o Kurva Hanumanthu 2. Kurva Govindu S/o Lodda Beesanna 3. Kurva Jayamma W/o Pedda Yellappa 4. Kurva Doulanna S/o Savaaranna 5. Kurva Narsamma W/o Gudise Sayanna 6. Gopal S/o Kunda Hanumanthu 7. Kurva Bheemanna S/o Eedhanna 8. Yashodamma W/o Kurva Govindu 9. Kurva Venkateshwarlu S/o Male Yellappa 10. Kurva Sayanna S/o Gudise Bajaranna 11. Kurva Ramudu S/o Hanumanthu 12. Kruva Ramanna S/o Sayanna 13. Kurva Amaresh S/o Sayanna 14. Saraswathi Narsimhulu S/o Narsimulu 15. Venkatesh S/o Male Ramudu 16. Sujatha W/o Kurva Yellappa Enjoyers:– 1. Gopal S/o Kundha Hanumanthu	No
5	376	Patta	Dry	0.175	1. Bendekayala Satyamma W/o Yella Reddy 2. Kurva Govindu S/o Sanjanna 3. Kurva Jayamma W/o Pedda Yellappa 4. Kurva Chinna Beesanna S/o Nisari Sanjanna 5. Kurva Bheemanna S/o Eedhanna 6. Kurva Eeramma W/o Satyanna 7. Kurva Venkateshwarlu S/o Male Yellappa 8. Kurva Hanumanthu S/o Jammanna 9. Venkatesh S/o Male Ramudu 10. Sujatha W/o Kurva Yellappa Enjoyers:– 1) Kurva Hanumanthu S/o Jammanna	No
6	395	Patta	Dry	0.625	1. Kothakapu Narsamma W/o Bheem Reddy 2. Subb Rao S/o Venkataiah 3. Kurva Narsimhulu S/o Kurva Hanumanthu 4. Kurva Ramudu S/o Hanumanthu 5. Kurva Gopal S/o Kurva Savaranna 6. Kalvakurthi Chandrasekhar S/o Subba Rao 7. Sanjanna S/o Bagombavi Pedda Savaranna 8. Kurva Chinna Savaranna S/o Chinna Savaranna 9. Kurva Mairamudu S/o Chinna Savaranna 10. Renamma Alias Sujatha W/o B.Tirupathi 11. K.Krishnamma W/o K.Krishna Enjoyers:– 1) Gang Ramudu S/o Gang Hanumathu 2) Gang Narsimhulu S/o Gang Hanumanthu 3) Bata4)Subba Rao S/o Venkataiah	(35+5 = 40) Citrus Trees
7	398	Patta	Dry	1.00	1. Konreddy Konda Reddy S/o Nagi Reddy 2. Kurva Dharenna S/o Karrenna 3. K.Narsimhulu S/o Savaranna 4. Kurva Pedda Huseni S/o Ramanna 5. Kurva Pedda Sanjanna S/o Savaranna 6. Savaranna S/o Madanna 7. Bosolla Bheemeshwar Reddy S/o Govindu Reddy 8. Kurva Pedda Ramudu S/o Savaranna 9. Kurva Chinna Sanjanna S/o Kurva Savaranna 10. Garlapati Narsamma W/o G.Rami Reddy 11. Kurva Mahadevamma W/o Pedda Beesanna 12. Kurva Ramulamma W/o Nadipi Beesana Enjoyers:– 1) Bheemesh Reddy S/o Govindu Reddy 2) Pola Narsimhulu S/o 3) Dharenna S/o Karrenna 4) Kurva Hussain S/o 5) Kothinti Savaranna S/o Chinna Reddy	No
8	399	Patta	Dry	1.05	1. Busolla Kishore Kumar Reddy S/o Bhemeshwar Reddy 2. Busolla Bheemeshwar Reddy S/o Govindu Reddy 3. Busolla Sudhakar Reddy S/o Govindu Reddy 4. Garlapati Narsamma W/o G.Rami Reddy 5. G.Sabitha W/o G.Maheshwar Reddy Enjoyers: 1) Sudhakar Reddy S/o Govardhan Reddy 2) Neesari Pedda Beesanna 3) Kishor Kumar Reddy S/o Bheemesh Reddy	No
9	400	Patta	Dry	1.175	1. Kurva Chandhranna S/o Ramanna 2. Busolla Bheemeshwar Reddy S/o Govindu Reddy 3. Busolla Sudhakar Reddy S/o Govindu Reddy 4. Garlapati Narsamma W/o G.Rami Reddy 5. G.Sabitha W/o G.Maheshwar Reddy Enjoyers: 1) Bheemesh Reddy S/o Govindu Reddy 2) Sudhakar Reddy S/o Govindu Reddy 3) Bheem Reddy S/o Govindu Reddy 4) Sudhakar Reddy S/o Govardhan Reddy	No
TOTAL				7.275		

This declaration is made after considering the objections from interested persons as provided under section 15 (Central Act No. 30/2013)

As there are No displaced Families/No livelihoods lost due to acquisition R&R Scheme provisions are not applicable.

Mines of coal, Iron, stone or other minerals lying under the said land or any particular portion of the said land, extent 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 public purpose of which the land being acquired are not need.

A plan of the Land may be inspected in the office of the Special Deputy Collector,(Land Acquisition), JLIP, Gadwal on any working day during the working hours .

Sd/– Spl.Dy.Collector,(L.A) JLIP (PJP)Gadwal.
Sd/– Additional Collector Jogulamba Gadwal.
Sd/– District Collector, Jogulamba Gadwal.

DIPR- 1053/LA/PP/ADVT/PUB/2026-27

UN BIODIVERSITY CONFERENCE

World gathers in Armenia to 'save' nature



YEREVAN, OCT 19

With a new UN report showing where the world stands in delivering on its commitments to address biodiversity loss and four years remaining to achieve the 2030 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF), representatives of governments, indigenous peoples and local communities and stakeholders gathered in Yerevan on Monday for the 2026 UN Biodiversity Conference.

Yerevan marks the halfway point between the Framework's historic adoption in 2022 and the 2030 deadline for meeting its ambitious set of interconnected targets.

The new global report on collective progress, State of Biodiversity Action, reveals strong engagement with the Framework: nearly 90 per cent of parties have set national targets, more than 70 per cent have submitted national reports, and action is underway across all 23 targets.

However, implementation remains insufficient, with fewer than half of national targets assessed by parties as on track. The need for accelerating implementation will run across the 2026 UN Biodiversity Conference, consisting of the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 17) and meetings of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing (MOPs 12 and 6, respectively).

Priorities include assessing collective progress and strengthening support for implementation, advancing science and policy guidance, addressing the financial and economic conditions shaping biodiversity outcomes, strengthening biosafety and advancing the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources.

The 2026 UN Biodiversity Conference that will last till October 30 includes the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 17) to the Convention on Biological Diversity and meetings of the Parties to the Cartagena and Nagoya Protocols (CP-MOP 12 and NP-MOP 6).

At COP 17, parties will undertake the first global review of collective progress alongside decisions on protecting biodiversity and its sustainable use and addressing the drivers of biodiversity loss.

Enabling faster action through mobilising finance, capacity-building and cooperation constitutes another focus of work, in addition to work undertaken to strengthen the role and participation of indigenous peoples and local communities.

CP-MOP 12 will focus on strengthening the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol, including through updating guidance on risk assessment and management and stronger capacities for informed biosafety decision-making. (IANS/UNI)

France violence: All gatherings, demonstrations banned in Marseille

PARIS, OCT 19

The police prefecture of Bouches-du-Rhone in southern France on Monday banned all gatherings and demonstrations throughout the city of Marseille from noon to 8 pm local time (1800 GMT), according to a post on X by the police prefecture.

French President Emmanuel Macron has vowed legal action against those responsible for violence during protests across the country on Saturday.

Tens of thousands of people flooded streets across major European cities over the weekend, venting mounting anger over surging living costs, housing shortages, and strained public services, Xinhua news agency reported.

From violent clashes in France and Italy to widespread rallies in Portugal, the simultaneous wave of social unrest underscores a deepening socio-economic divide and growing public frustration across the continent.

Macron said Saturday on the social platform X that there is no place for violence in France.

"Those who have engaged in destruction, attacked government offices and businesses, and even looted our town halls, will be prosecuted and punished," he said. (IANS/UNI)



Protester runs through tear gas while a flea market is taking place during clashes between protestors and police officers in Paris.

US intelligence blackout hurt Ukraine: Zelensky

WASHINGTON, OCT 19

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said that the United States temporarily suspended crucial intelligence sharing with Ukraine for three days, leaving its forces without American warnings of Russian ballistic missile attacks during that period.

In an interview with NBC's Meet the Press, Zelensky also said restrictions on satellite communications used by Ukrainian forces had not been fully lifted, raising fresh questions about Washington's military and intelligence support for Kyiv.

The Ukrainian leader said the intelligence interruption affected information that only the United States could provide, particularly advance warnings of ballistic missile strikes.

"We didn't see attacks of Russia using ballistic missiles," Zelensky said.

He said Ukraine continued receiving intelligence from European governments and other international partners, but their capabilities could not fully replace American systems.

"We have dozens of countries who help. But only United States has this unique intelligence to say, to tell us, to tell our side when Russia uses ballistic missiles," he said.

"And we didn't get it during ballistic attacks during three days."

Zelensky said the intelligence-sharing arrangement had since been restored.

"It was blocked for some period of time. And then it was deblocked by American side. We are very thankful for this. Now it works," he said.

The disclosure came amid growing tensions between Washington and Kyiv over President Donald Trump's handling of the war with Russia.

Zelensky also raised concerns about restrictions affecting Starlink, the satellite internet network operated by Elon Musk's SpaceX, and its military-related services. (IANS/UNI)



People look at damaged office center after a Russian missile attack in central Kyiv, Ukraine.

Early voting opens in Indian-American battlegrounds from Texas to Florida

WASHINGTON, OCT 19

Voters in Texas and Florida's Palm Beach County begin casting early ballots on Monday in races where Indian-American candidates are fighting for state and congressional seats ahead of the November 3 midterms.



In Texas, Democrat Pooja Sethi is running in House District 47. A win would make her the first Hindu and the first Indian American in the state Legislature.

Democrat Sandeep Srivastava faces a steeper climb in House District 66 against Republican Matt Shaheen, who chairs the House Elections Committee and won 61.1 per cent in 2024. Srivastava lost a 2024 congressional race to Republican Keith Self 62.5 to 37.5.

In Florida's 22nd District, Democrat Pia Dandiya's race against Republican Casey Askar is close to a dead heat. Cook Political Report and Sabato's Crystal Ball rate it a Toss-up, while Inside Elections has it at Tilt Republican. Forecasts are split: PollingForecast gives Dandiya a 56 per cent chance, and Call the Map gives Askar 54 per cent.

Palm Beach County early voting runs through November 1 at 28 sites, according to the county elections office.

In Arizona's 1st District, Inside Elections on October 15 moved Democrat Amish Shah's race against Republican Jay Feely from Toss-up to Tilt Democrat. Cook rates it Lean Democrat and Sabato a Toss-up. About $7.6 million has been spent against Shah, led by Safety & Affordability PAC's $3.76 million.

Outside money keeps pouring in. Federal filings show No Going Back PAC has spent about $3.8 million against Dandiya. Groups backing her, including Progressive Turnout Project, LCV Victory Fund and House Majority PAC, have spent more than $560,000.

The two super PACs targeting Shah and Dandiya have yet to reveal their donors. Both switched to monthly filing in September, and their first reports, covering donors through September 30, are due on October 20.

In Ohio, where early voting is already under way, Democrat Amy Acton has refused to debate Republican Vivek Ramaswamy in the governor's race.

"I absolutely will never stand on a stage with someone who has lied in the egregious ways he has, who has a chronic history of lying," Acton said in an interview with The Vindicator.

Ramaswamy told the newspaper he "was shocked" when he learned she would not debate.

New York early voting begins October 24. Republican Saritha Komatireddy is challenging Attorney General Letitia James. A poll commissioned by her campaign, conducted by OnMessage Inc and reported by the New York Post, put James ahead 50.7 to 44.7. The last independent poll, by Siena in September, had James up 52-39.

Los Angeles County vote centers also open on October 24, in a mayoral race where Nithya Raman is challenging Mayor Karen Bass. (IANS/UNI)

Kim Yo Jong warns 'very unstable' border

Pyongyang weighs military measures



SEOUL, OCT 19

Kim Yo-jong, sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, said Monday the situation at the southern border is "very unstable," noting the North is reviewing a possible resumption of loudspeaker broadcasts along the border.

The remarks came after Pyongyang has repeatedly denied responsibility for a land mine explosion last month that severely injured two South Korean soldiers and dismissed Seoul's findings that land mines deliberately planted by North Korea were the cause of the blast.

"Now the situation of the southern border is very unstable. A grave situation is prevailing along the southern border due to the reckless behavior of the ROK military gangsters," Kim said in an English-language statement carried by the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA).

ROK refers to the acronym of the Republic of Korea, South Korea's official name.

Kim accused the South Korean military of threatening North Korean soldiers and heightening tension, saying such actions have "gone beyond the red line" following what she called "a fabricated 'mine explosion farce.'"

She claimed the South conducted 2,870 rounds of loudspeaker broadcasts and fired 201 warning shots between Aug. 1 and Oct. 17, Yonhap News Agency reported.

The North Korean leader's sister also lashed out at President Lee Jae Myung's government, saying it "has far outpaced the die-hard conservative regime of Yoon Suk Yeol," while advocating reconciliation and peace.

Kim said the North Korean military is considering deploying more tactical strike means along the border and resuming loudspeaker broadcasts to deal with the situation, alongside other measures she did not further elaborate on. In response to Seoul's suspension of loudspeaker broadcasts along the border last year, as part of Lee's push to restore inter-Korean trust, the North also halted its own border broadcasts. (IANS)

Man charged over southwest Sydney firearm incident

SYDNEY, OCT 19

A man has been charged over a firearm incident that triggered a lockdown and major emergency response in Australia's southwest Sydney.

Police said on Monday that a 32-year-old man was arrested in Sydney's inner-west around 11:30 pm on Sunday and charged with seven offences, including possessing a shortened firearm without authority and robbery while armed with a dangerous weapon.

The arrest followed a three-day search after emergency services were on Friday morning called to reports of a stolen vehicle in Dulwich Hill, six kilometres southwest of central Sydney, Xinhua News Agency reported.

Officers were told at the scene that a man was armed with a firearm inside a stolen vehicle before he allegedly set fire to the vehicle and left the area on foot.

The incident triggered a major emergency response, with local residents, businesses and schools placed into lockdown for over three hours while police searched for the man.

The firearm was not recovered by police during the arrest.

On September 22, two men were hospitalised after they were assaulted during a home invasion in western Sydney.

Emergency services were called to reports of the attack in Lalor Park, 28 km west of central Sydney, around 7:30 am local time on September 22.

A police statement said that responding officers were told that two men had entered a home and assaulted a 64-year-old man and a 44-year-old man before leaving the location.

The victims were treated by ambulance paramedics and taken to the hospital in serious condition.

The Australian Broadcasting Corporation reported that they both suffered injuries to their heads. (IANS)

Police burn nearly one tonne of illegal drugs in Afghanistan's Farah

KABUL, OCT 19

Police burned nearly one tonne of illegal drugs in the western Afghan province of Farah on Sunday, provincial police spokesman Kalimullah Nangyal said on Monday.

The narcotics, including 955 kg of opium-type drugs, hashish and 36 kg of methamphetamine, were seized during a series of operations recently and publicly burned on Sunday, the official said, Xinhua News Agency reported.

Police also arrested a suspected drug smuggler, who would be handed over to the judiciary after the completion of a preliminary investigation, the official added.



On October 16, the provincial Directorate of Information and Culture said that counter-narcotics police seized 136 kg of opium-type drugs and detained three suspected smugglers in Afghanistan's southern Helmand province.

The contraband was recovered from two cars in Sangin district on October 15, the statement said, adding that the three suspects had been detained for investigation.

The suspected drug smugglers would be handed over to the judiciary after the completion of a preliminary investigation, the statement added. (IANS/UNI)

GCC urges global designation of Houthis as terrorist group



FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
MANAMA, OCT 19

The Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) called for designating the Houthi militia as a terrorist group and dealing with it in the same manner the international system addresses terrorist groups that threaten security, peace, development, and prosperity.

In a final communique, issued at the end of the 168th session of the Ministerial Council, held in Manama on Sunday, the council also underlined the need to halt all support that enables the militia to acquire missiles and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs).

Dr. Abdullatif Al Zayani, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bahrain and Chairman of the current session of the Ministerial Council, presided over the session. The Council condemned in the strongest terms the continuous attacks launched by the Houthi militia on Saudi Arabia, including the targeting of the Two Holy Mosques and surrounding areas, as well as civilian airports and vital facilities, which have resulted in civilian casualties and injuries, in flagrant violation of international law and international humanitarian law. The council expressed its sincere condolences to the families of the victims and its wishes for a swift recovery to the injured.

The Council underscored the GCC member states' full solidarity with Saudi Arabia, their united stance alongside it, and their support for all measures it undertakes to safeguard its sovereignty and protect its security and interests. The Council stressed that the security of the GCC member states is indivisible, and that any aggression against any member state constitutes a direct aggression against all GCC states, pursuant to the Joint Defense Agreement. It further reaffirmed the inherent right of the GCC member states to self-defense, individually and collectively, in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations (UN) Charter, and to take all necessary measures to protect their citizens and residents, and preserve their sovereignty, security, stability, and interests.

The Ministerial Council called for the implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions adopted regarding Yemen and the Houthi rebellion, and attacks on vessels in the Red Sea. The Council demanded that the UN and the international community ensure the rigorous enforcement of the arms embargo on the Houthi militia stipulated in those resolutions. It further called upon the Security Council, and its permanent members in particular, to shoulder their responsibilities in maintaining international peace and security, enforce its resolutions, and treat the freedom of maritime and aerial navigation as a shared international interest that admits no selectivity.

The Council welcomed the Presidential Statement adopted by consensus by the UN Security Council on October 15, which condemned the continuous and escalating Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia, including the targeting of Aramco facilities, affirmed its right to self-defense in accordance with international law, and condemned attacks and threats against commercial shipping in the Red Sea and the Bab Al Mandeb Strait.

Israel's Ben-Gvir uses fines against mosques in election campaigning

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
TEL AVIV, OCT 19

Extremist Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir on Monday used penalties imposed on mosques to promote his election campaign, boasting about a fine issued to a mosque in the southern town of Tel Sheva.

The move comes amid intensifying competition among Israeli political parties ahead of elections scheduled for Oct. 27, with Arab parties accusing Ben-Gvir of exploiting measures against the Arab community in Israel for electoral purposes and to intimidate Arab voters.


Itamar Ben-Gvir

On Sunday, Israeli police, who fall under Ben-Gvir's authority, raided Al-Rahma Mosque in the Abu Anza neighborhood of Tel Sheva and issued a fine over the alleged excessive volume of its loudspeakers.

Posting a photo of the mosque on Telegram on Monday, Ben-Gvir said police officers had arrived at the site, measured the noise level and issued a fine for causing "unacceptable noise."

"This is not limited to Tel Sheva," he said, adding that police were enforcing regulations on noise violations involving mosques across the country under a policy he introduced.

Ben-Gvir claimed the issue had been neglected for decades and said he had changed the policy since taking office.

"Although the situation is not yet perfect and there is still room for improvement, we are undoubtedly moving in the right direction," he added.

In recent weeks, Ben-Gvir has also highlighted the demolition of Arab homes in Israel as part of his election campaign.

On Sunday, the Joint Arab List, an alliance of three political parties, announced that it had filed an urgent petition with the head of Israel's Central Elections Committee against Ben-Gvir, his Jewish Power party, the police and Israeli land enforcement authorities.

Türkiye to host Istanbul Mediation Conference

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
ANKARA, OCT 19

Türkiye will host the ninth Istanbul Mediation Conference on Oct. 23-24 under the theme "Partnerships and New Perspectives for Peace: Mediation in a Changing World," the Turkish Foreign Ministry said Monday.

The conference will be held under the auspices of Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan amid rapid and profound changes in global dynamics, the ministry said in a statement.

Over 21 million faithful visit Prophet's Mosque in September



FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
MADINAH, OCT 19

The General Authority for the Care of the Two Holy Mosques announced that a total of 21,615,977 people visited the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah in September 2026.

The authority said 1,449,791 visitors prayed in Al-Rawdah Al-Sharifah. It noted that 355,130 visitors used wayfinding services, while 287,886 used the guest care centers.

As part of efforts to enrich visitors' knowledge, 81,243 people visited the Prophet's Mosque Library, while the mosque's exhibitions received 137,867 visitors.

Saudi tourist accommodation registrations rise 29%

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
RIYADH, OCT 19

Saudi Arabia's active commercial registrations for tourist accommodation facility management increased by 29 percent year-on-year by the end of the third quarter of 2026, according to the Ministry of Commerce.



The Kingdom recorded 20,560 active commercial registrations for tourist accommodation facility management by the end of Q3 2026, an increase of 4,595 registrations compared with 15,965 during the same period in 2025.

The ministry also revealed the top five regions with the highest number of active commercial registrations in the sector.

Makkah topped the list with 8,075 registrations, followed by Riyadh with 7,110 and Madinah with 1,988.

The Eastern Province ranked fourth with 1,456 registrations, followed by Asir with 5

"U.S. citizens are reminded to follow the guidance of national alerts released by Saudi Arabia's Civil Defense via cellular broadcast. Private car, train, and bus options may provide alternatives to air travel to or from Saudi Arabia... All land border crossings, including the King Fahd Causeway to Bahrain, remain operational. All highways and roads in and around Riyadh, Jeddah, and Dhahran remain operational," it noted.

Syria, World Bank agree to set up fund for recovery and reconstruction

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
BANGKOK, OCT 19

Syria and the World Bank announced on Sunday that they have agreed to set up a fund to carry donor money into the country's reconstruction, but the joint statement, as reported by TASS and The National, puts no figure on how much that money will be. The Syria Recovery and Reconstruction Trust Fund, known as START, is meant to provide concessional financing, investment guarantees and technical assistance.



The agreement follows Syria's attendance at the International Monetary Fund and World Bank annual meetings in Bangkok, the latest gatherings Syrian officials have joined since the fall of Bashar al-Assad's rule in December 2024, according to The National. A delegation of about 50 US companies visited Syria last month, the same report said, weeks after Washington took Syria off its state sponsors of terrorism list.

The World Bank will manage the fund jointly with donors and development partners, following priorities set by the Syrian authorities, TASS reported, citing the joint statement as published by Syria's state news agency SANA. Finance Minister Yisr Barnieh said the agreement opens a new phase of cooperation with international partners. Ousmane Dione, the bank's vice president for the Middle East, North Africa, Afghanistan and Pakistan, said the bank looks forward to working with all partners. Partners in the United States, Europe and the Middle East expressed support, The National reported, but the statement did not name them.

The scale of the need is large and poorly measured. The World Bank said in October 2025 that rebuilding Syria's damaged physical assets would cost a best estimate of $216 billion, inside a range of $140 billion to $345 billion, and that its findings were "subject to significant uncertainty." The bank described the figure as nearly ten times Syria's projected 2024 gross domestic product. It came from what the bank called a rapid nationwide assessment of physical assets.

UAE firms to get stronger protection against cyberattacks under new agreement

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
ABU DHABI, OCT 19

Government entities and private companies across the UAE will have access to advanced cybersecurity services following a new agreement between Abu Dhabi-based PureCS and Dell Technologies.

The partnership aims to help organisations detect cyberattacks earlier, respond to security threats more quickly and protect sensitive information from potential breaches.



Under the agreement, Dell Technologies will use PureCS's Security Operations Centre (SOC) in Abu Dhabi to provide cybersecurity services to organisations across the country.

PureCS, which operates under PureHealth, specialises in digital infrastructure and cybersecurity solutions.

The collaboration will introduce advanced Managed Detection and Response (MDR) and Extended Detection and Response (XDR) services.

These technologies help organisations monitor their computer systems, identify suspicious activities and respond to potential cyberattacks before they cause serious damage.

The services will be delivered through PureCS's Abu Dhabi-based security centre, combining Dell's international cybersecurity expertise with locally operated infrastructure.

The partnership also aims to help organisations protect essential services and maintain the security of their digital operations.

Rashed Humaid Al Neyadi, Chief Operating Officer of PureCS, said cybersecurity is becoming increasingly important as more government services and businesses move towards digital platforms.

He explained that protecting sensitive information and essential systems is necessary to ensure organisations can continue operating safely.

"As the UAE accelerates its digital transformation, the ability to protect critical systems, sensitive data and essential services is becoming increasingly important," he said.

Al Neyadi added that the partnership would help organisations benefit from international cybersecurity expertise while maintaining access to locally delivered services.

Walid Yehia, Managing Director of Dell Technologies UAE, said the agreement would provide organisations with greater protection against increasingly complex cyber threats.

He added that PureCS's local expertise and infrastructure would help strengthen cybersecurity services across the country.

The agreement comes as demand for cybersecurity services continues to increase across the Middle East.

According to research firm MarketsandMarkets, the region's cybersecurity market is expected to grow from $18.56 billion in 2026 to $29.39 billion by 2031.

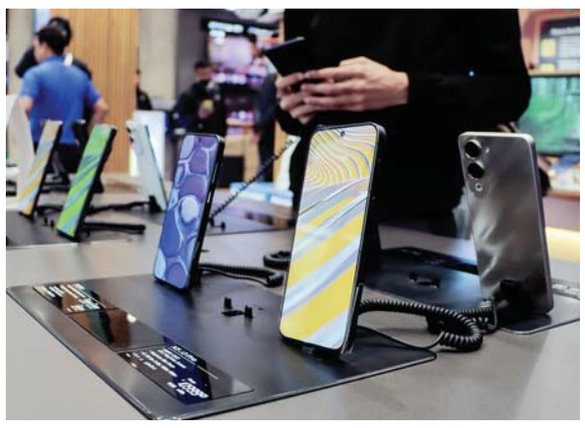
Smartphone shipments fall 26%

NEW DELHI, OCT 19

India's smartphone shipments fell 26 per cent year-on-year to 35.8 million units in the third quarter of 2026, while Samsung regained the top position in the market, a report said on Monday.

According to a report by Omdia, the decline was driven by higher smartphone prices, cautious consumer spending and weaker replacement demand, prompting vendors to adopt more conservative inventory strategies.

A slowdown in online-focused shipments and the later timing of Diwali also weighed on volumes, as a significant portion of festive inventory build-up shifted from September to October, it added.



Moreover, Samsung regained the top position in the Indian smartphone market for the first time since the first quarter of 2024, shipping 6.7 million units during the quarter.

The company benefited from demand for its Galaxy A07, A17 and A27 models, while the Galaxy S26 series, foldable devices and S26 FE strengthened its premium portfolio.

Promotional offers including cashback schemes, exchange benefits and extended financing plans also supported upgrades.

Apple rounded out the top five with shipments of 3.9 million units, supported by dealer stocking ahead of anticipated price increases and continued demand for the iPhone 17 and iPhone 16 models. However, sales were also aided by cashback offers, exchange programmes and no-cost financing schemes.

Meanwhile, vivo slipped in rank with shipments of 6.4 million units, down 34 per cent from a year earlier, the sharpest decline among the top five brands.

The report attributed the fall to repeated price increases, inventory planning disruptions and constrained supplies in the entry-level segment. (IANS/UNI)

Foreign banks investing more in India

NEW DELHI, OCT 19

Foreign banks are finding it easier to expand in India through acquisitions and partnerships, compared with China where high capital requirements and intense competition constitute obstacles to their growth, according to an article in the Asian Banking & Finance news website.



"India is becoming easier to plan for, especially for banks willing to commit local capital or buy into an Indian platform," Saumitra Sehgan, a partner at Roland Berger, told the publication.

The report highlights that India attracted several major foreign investments in 2025, including Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corp.'s $1.6 billion purchase of a 20 per cent stake in Yes Bank. Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group, Inc. also agreed to pay $4.3 billion for a 20 per cent stake in Shriram Finance Ltd., a nonbank lender. Emirates NBD announced a $2.75 billion acquisition of 60 per cent of RBL Bank, closing the deal in June.

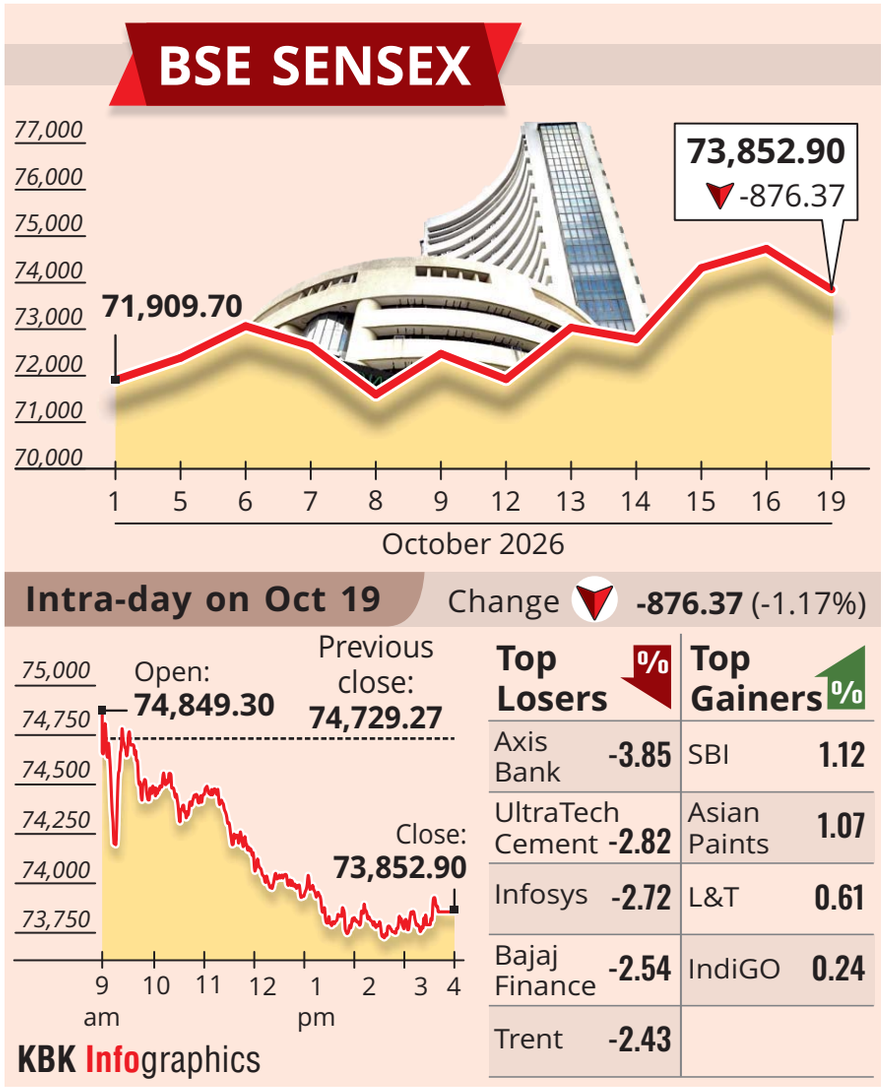
Sehgan said these deals showed that foreign banks increasingly regard acquisitions and partnerships as practical ways to expand in India's $3.65 trillion banking market.

The report points out that China, on the other hand, is finding it difficult to attract more foreign investments despite easing restrictions since 2001.

Foreign banks' share of China's $70.93 trillion banking market fell to 1.2 per cent in 2024 from 1.5 per cent in 2020, according to Laurent Doucet, a partner at Roland Berger.

The report cites Roland Berger as saying that foreign banks establishing locally incorporated units in China need at least $149 million in capital, compared with $53 million for wholly owned units in India.

China also allows foreign bank branches with minimum operating funds of $29.9 million (RMB200m), although restrictions limit their retail banking activities. (IANS)



RBI's 'Samvad 2026' kicks off, focuses on monetary policy, AI and financial stability

NEW DELHI, OCT 19

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Monday inaugurated 'Samvad 2026', an international seminar for central banks, in the national capital with RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra delivering the welcome address and Union Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman giving the keynote address.



The two-day event brings together Central Bank Governors, senior policymakers, representatives from international organisations and subject matter experts from across the world to discuss emerging challenges and opportunities facing the global financial system.

According to the RBI, discussions during the seminar will focus on a broad range of issues, including monetary policy, the growing role of Artificial Intelligence in finance, financial inclusion, financial stability and the evolution of payment systems.

"Samvad 2026, an international seminar for central banks organised by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), commenced today in New Delhi with a welcome address by the Sanjay Malhotra, Governor, RBI, and a keynote address by the Union Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman," the central bank wrote in a post on social media platform X.

The seminar is aimed at fostering dialogue and cooperation among central banks and policymakers as they navigate a rapidly changing economic and technological landscape.

Participants are expected to exchange views on strengthening financial systems, promoting inclusive growth and harnessing technology to improve the efficiency of financial services.

"The two-day seminar brings together Central Bank Governors, senior policymakers, representatives of international organisations and experts to deliberate on key issues, including monetary policy, Artificial Intelligence, financial inclusion, financial stability and payment systems," it added.

The RBI said the event provides a platform for policymakers and experts to share experiences and best practices on issues that have gained increasing importance for central banks globally, particularly amid evolving economic conditions and accelerating digital transformation in the financial sector. (IANS/UNI)

IDBI Bank staff plan strike against Fairfax takeover

NEW DELHI, OCT 19

The United Forum of IDBI Officers and Employees has issued a notice to the bank's management for a strike planned across all the bank's branches and offices to protest against its proposed sale to Canada-based Fairfax Financial Holdings Group.

The two-day nationwide hunger strike will be held on November 2 and November 3, aimed at shelving the transaction that involves the dilution of the government's and LIC's shareholdings and the transfer of management control to the Fairfax group, according to a statement issued by the union. The forum, comprising the All India IDBI Officers' Association and the All India Industrial Development Bank Employees' Association, has demanded that the government halt the proposed sale and acquire at least 6 per cent equity in IDBI Bank, either from Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) or through the market, to maintain its shareholding at a minimum of 51 per cent. It said this would honour assurances made in the Parliament in December 2003 that the government would maintain majority ownership of the bank.

The forum has also sought written statutory assurances that existing service conditions, welfare measures, pension benefits and reservation policies would be protected. It has demanded the continuation of industry-level wage revisions and pension benefits. (IANS/UNI)

New Zealand to now build with 'Made in India' JCB machine: Goyal

NEW DELHI, OCT 19

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Monday said that New Zealand will now build with a 'Made in India' JCB machine, as the free trade agreement (FTA) between the two nations kicks in from Tuesday.

The minister flagged off the first-ever JCB machine export to New Zealand, made in Pune, Maharashtra.

"The India New Zealand FTA is unlocking new opportunities for our manufacturing," Goyal posted on X.

Tomorrow, on the auspicious occasion of Vijayadashami, India & New Zealand will begin a new chapter in their economic partnership as the #IndiaNewZealandFTA comes into force. Truly a 'Vijay' for both nations!



With duty-free access for 100 per cent of Indian exports to New Zealand, the FTA will unlock significant opportunities for MSMEs, farmers, women, youth and labour-intensive sectors.

"It also opens new pathways for our professionals, while safeguarding India's core interests. Our farmers will gain wider market access for fruits, vegetables, spices and other agricultural produce, alongside cooperation to improve productivity, support higher incomes, and strengthen livelihoods. Sensitive sectors, including dairy, remain protected, keeping farmers' welfare at the heart of our approach," said Goyal.

New Zealand's commitment to facilitate $20 billion in investment into India holds immense potential to strengthen manufacturing, infrastructure, services and innovation, supporting enterprise and employment.

According to the Trade Promotion Council of India (TPCI), the India-New Zealand FTA marks a transformative milestone for Indian trade policy. (IANS)

Microsoft accounts for 33% of brand phishing attacks

NEW DELHI, OCT 19

Phishing that impersonates well-known brands entered a new phase in the third quarter, with Microsoft accounting for 33 per cent of all brand phishing attempts tracked, up from 23 per cent in Q2, a report said on Monday.

The report from Check Point Research said the top five brands — Microsoft, Apple, Google, LinkedIn and Amazon — together accounted for over half of all brand impersonation attempts.

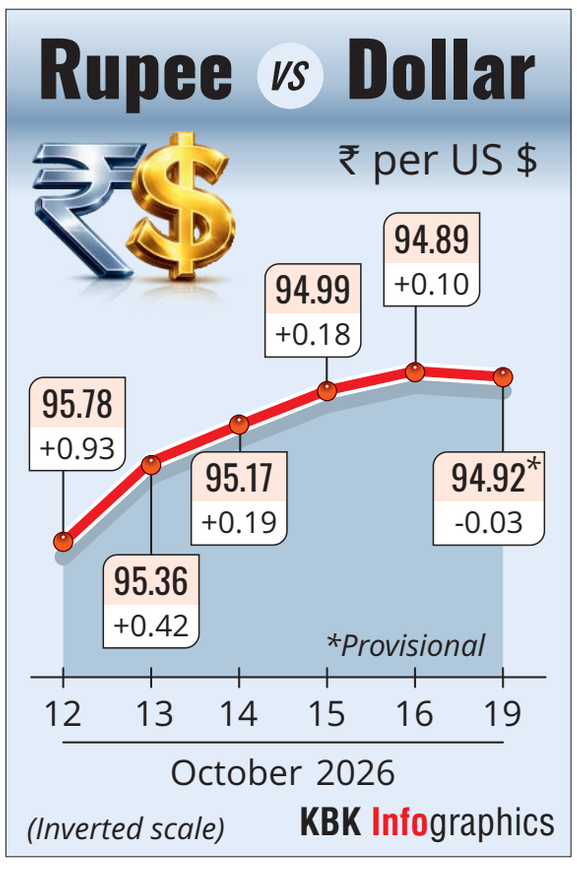
Apple rose two places to second accounting for 8 per cent of attempts, while Google tied at 8 per cent, LinkedIn at 6 per cent and Amazon at 4 per cent. Microsoft's 33 per cent share was roughly four times that of any other brand.

Attackers impersonated AI and developer platforms such as Claude and Google Antigravity, using fake billing alerts and malicious installation commands, the report noted.

Other campaigns moved beyond credential theft by persuading victims to run terminal commands or install legitimate remote access software themselves.

The evolution was also visible at industry level with technology remaining the most impersonated sector, followed by Social Networks and Banking.

These were areas where people keep some of their most valuable accounts, from work email and cloud storage to social profiles and financial information, the report noted. (IANS)



Musk pledges a share of his SpaceX company to 'every kid in America'

Billionaire Elon Musk on Monday pledged to give one share of his company SpaceX to "every kid in America" next year.

The offer arrived a day after artificial intelligence company Anthropic announced in a social media post that it will commit 5% of its shares to a new "public benefit" fund.

In a response to that Sunday post, Musk wrote, "I recommend giving the shares directly to the public."

Shares of SpaceX, which will report its quarterly earnings on Tuesday, closed at $146.03 on Friday.

Anthropic said Sunday that the shares it is committing will go to the Anthropic Public Benefit Fund, a new entity within the company. The fund's worth will potentially increase as the shares grow in value.



Musk did not provide further details on how his share pledge will be carried out, but did add in his post that "This will be the first of many."

The announcements by Musk and Anthropic arrive as Americans grow increasingly wary of AI. A new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research finds that most Americans, 64%, think AI is developing "too fast," while 27% say its development has been "about right" and only 8% say it's moving "too slow."

Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei and the company's five other cofounders established Anthropic as a public benefit corporation, a designation that for-profit companies select to balance financial goals and social impact.

Anthropic is planning a massive initial public offering as soon as November. In June the company said that it had submitted a confidential filing with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission for its proposed IPO.

That same month, Musk's SpaceX made its Wall Street debut as a publicly traded company and made Musk the world's first trillionaire. (IANS/UNI)

Asian Para Games: Soumya, Radha clinch gold and silver; Rakshita Raju bags bronze

NAGOYA, OCT 19

India's medal tally kept rising at the Asian Para Games as Soumya, Radha Venkatesh and Rakshita Raju added more medals with stellar outings in para-athletics at the Nagoya City Mizuho Park Athletic Stadium in Nagoya, Japan, on Monday. Soumya (with guide Bharath Kumar) clinched a gold in the Women's 1500m T12/T13 final, while Radha (with guide Govind Solanki) won the silver in the same event. Soumya (T12 athlete) took the top prize with a time of 5:12.39s (621 Raza points),



while Radha (T12 athlete) came second with a time of 5:30.90s (421 Raza points). Behind them, Japan's Mana Sasaki (T13) won the bronze medal. Although Sasaki clocked 5:12.15s, she accumulated 336 Raza points and took the bronze.

The Raza point system is a mathematical way to compare and rank athletes with different disabilities on a fair and level playing field.

In a separate event- the Women's 1500m T11 final- India's Rakshita (with Guide Tabres Khan) won a bronze medal after finishing third with a time of 5:31.45. China's He Shanshan (Guide Zheng Canran) won gold with a time of 4:41.19, while her compatriot Huang Zengli (Guide You Junjie) won silver with a time of 4:55.54.

Another Indian, Ravanni Valasanaini (Guide Rahul Balakrishna), was also in the field. However, she finished fourth with a time of 5:41.85 and missed out on a medal.

Soumya is a Karnataka-based athlete. Before the Asian Para Games, she won the gold medals in the Asian Youth Para Games (2025), New Delhi Grand Prix (2026), and the Indian Open (2026). Radha is also a Karnataka-based athlete. She won the gold medal in the 2023 Asian Para Games too, and a silver and a bronze in the 2018 Asian Para Games. (IANS/UNI)

Rinku, Ajeet Singh clinch gold, silver in men's javelin F46

NAGOYA, OCT 19

India delivered an outstanding performance in the Men's Javelin Throw F46 event, with Rinku and Ajeet Singh securing the top two positions and bringing glory to the nation.

Rinku clinched the gold medal with an impressive throw of 65.11 metres, showcasing exceptional strength, precision, and consistency.

Ajeet Singh secured the silver medal with a remarkable throw of 65.02 metres, finishing just 9 centimetres behind his compatriot. His outstanding performance highlighted his determination, competitive spirit, and excellence in para-athletics.

The duo's remarkable achievement resulted in a proud one-two finish for India, underlining the country's growing prominence in para-athletics on the international stage. Saktyono R. of Indonesia secured the bronze medal with a throw of 55.30 metres. Earlier, Asian Championship silver medallist Kokila (TOPS athlete | WR-3) lost to Kyrgyzstan's Aibike Ulanbek Kyzy (WR-2), the 2026 World Championship silver medallist and 2025 Asian Championship gold medallist, by Ippon in 21 seconds to settle for the silver medal.



Kokila had previously won a bronze medal at the 2022 Asian Para Games in Women's J2 -48Kg. For the LA 2028 cycle, the weight categories have been changed, and Kokila now competes in -52kg.

Earlier, Soumya and Radha Venaktesh added more medals to the tally with their stellar outings in para-athletics at the Nagoya City Mizuho Park Athletic Stadium in Nagoya, Japan, on Monday.

Soumya (with guide Bharath Kumar) clinched a gold in the Women's 1500m T12/T13 final, while Radha (with guide Govind Solanki) won the silver in the same event. Soumya (T12 athlete) took the top prize with a time of 5:12.39s (621 Raza points), while Radha (T12 athlete) came second with a time of 5:30.90s (421 Raza points). Behind them, Japan's Mana Sasaki (T13) won the bronze medal. Although Sasaki clocked 5:12.15s, she accumulated 336 Raza points and took the bronze.

Soumya is a Karnataka-based athlete. Before the Asian Para Games, she won the gold medals in the Asian Youth Para Games (2025), New Delhi Grand Prix (2026) and the Indian Open (2026). Radha is also a Karnataka-based athlete. She won the gold medal in the 2023 Asian Para Games too, and a silver and a bronze in the 2018 Asian Para Games. (IANS/UNI)

Mona Agarwal, Avani Lekhara secure gold, silver in 10m air rifle standing

TOYOTA, OCT 19

Indian shooters Mona Agarwal and Avani Lekhara clinched gold and silver medals in the women's 10m air rifle standing SH1 event at the Aichi Pref. General Shooting Gallery here on Monday. Mona shot an Asian Para Games record score of 250 to bag the gold, while Avani shot 249.6 to win the silver as India opened their medal tally in the ongoing Games.

Mona made a brilliant comeback in the final after she was reeling in the fifth place to storm into the podium positions before fending off the challenge from others to win the coveted gold. Behind Mona and Avani, South Korea's Yunri Lee won the bronze with a score of 227.9. Mona broke her compatriot Avani's Asiad Para Games record of 249.6 that the shooter had set while winning the gold in the previous Games in Hangzhou. She missed out on the world record of 252 held by Slovakia's Iryna Shchetnik.

With this performance, Avani has also secured the quota place for the 2028 Paralympic Games. Mona had secured her spot last month during the World Championships.

Earlier in the day, Mona and Avani had topped the qualification round too. Mona led the field with 629.1 points after 6 series, setting a new Asian Para Games qualification record and surpassing the previous mark held by China's Zhang Cuiping. The Indian shooter came agonisingly close to the world record of 629.4, jointly held by compatriot Avani, Slovakia's Veronika Vadovicova. (IANS)

Davidovich Fokina Hits ATP Career High

NEW DELHI, OCT 19

Alejandro Davidovich Fokina achieved a career-high of World No.13 in the latest ATP rankings update on Monday after his Shanghai Masters win.

Davidovich Fokina defeated Rafael Jodar in the Shanghai final on Sunday to clinch his maiden ATP Masters 1000 title. For his stellar run, he has jumped 13 places from No.26 to reach a new career-high of No. 13, according to the rankings update.

With Djokovic sliding down, Alex de Minaur (No.8), Frances Tiafoe (No.9), Arthur Fils (No.10) and Jodar (No.11) are all up by one place each in the latest rankings.

Frenchman Arthur Gea has also achieved his career-high of No.44 with a 12-place jump following his quarterfinal appearance in Shanghai. France's Arthur Rinderknech is 28 places down to No.61 after missing the latest Masters 1000 event due to an injury, as Portugal's Jaime Faria is four places up for his career best of No.56. (IANS/UNI)

ENTERTAINMENT

Riteish Deshmukh comes onboard Ram Pothineni's #Rapo23 unit



The makers of director Ram Pothineni's upcoming Telugu film, tentatively being referred to as #Rapo23, on Monday welcomed Bollywood actor Riteish Deshmukh on board the unit of the film. Interestingly, this film will mark the Telugu debut of the Bollywood star. RAPO cinematics, the production house producing the film, took to its social media timelines to welcome Riteish Deshmukh on board the unit of the film.

It wrote, "Welcoming the ever-versatile @Riteishd on board for a very EXCITING ROLE. #RAPO23 New Schedule Begins. #HappyDussehra.



Written & Directed by #RAPO. Produced by Krishna Pothineni. A @RAPO_Cinematics Production.Energetic Star @ramsayz. @iamsamyuktha_ @SamCSmusic @DOP_Tirru #ASPrakash #KevinKumar @PeterHeinOffl." The makers also released a Behind The Scenes video clip on the occasion. The BTS video offers a glimpse of the film's set, with Riteish's face kept out of view. It captures his arrival on set and his interaction with Ram as the two come together for the film.

For the unaware, the unit of the film, which has Telugu star Ram Pothineni both directing and playing the lead in it, had wrapped up a schedule in September this year. The unit, during this schedule, had canned a massive night action sequence, which the makers claimed would be a never-before-seen visual spectacle. Sources close to the unit had claimed that the high-intensity night action sequence had been shot across a massive one-kilometre stretch. The entire stretch was illuminated with lights, creating a visually striking canvas that perfectly complemented the film's distinctive neo-noir world.

Action choreographer Kevin Master had designed the intense sequence, while National Award-winning cinematographer Thirunavukarasu (Tirru) captured the visuals, the sources added. It may be recalled that the makers of the film had only recently welcomed actress Samyuktha on board the unit of their film. The film is being produced by Krishna Pothineni under the Rapo Cinematics banner on a lavish scale. National-Award winning cinematographer Thirunavukarasu (Thirru) is the cameraman for this film, which has music by Sam C S.

Karan Deol Calls Himself Lucky



Actor Karan Deol penned a heartfelt birthday wish for his father and actor Sunny Deol. He expressed gratitude for his presence, guidance, and the special moments they have shared. Taking to Instagram, Karan shared a loving note for his father, highlighting the laughter, lessons, and memories that have made their bond special.

"Happy Birthday, Papa! So lucky to have you by my side. From all the laughs we share to everything you've taught me, every moment with you is special. Love you always," he wrote. The doting son also shared a candid picture of himself alongside his father. In the photograph, Karan and Sunny are seen sitting together and sharing a laugh. Through his message, Karan celebrated not just his father's birthday but also the close bond they share, acknowledging the valuable lessons he has learned from him over the years.

Karan, who made his acting debut with "Pal Pal Dil Ke Paas" in 2019, is the elder son of Sunny Deol and grandson of veteran actor Dharmendra.

On his special day, the 'Gadar' actor also received warm birthday wishes from his friends in the film industry. Filmmaker Siddharth P. Malhotra penned a heartwarming note saying, "Happy happy birthday, Sunny Sir @iamsunnydeol To a true hero, a true legend, an incredible father, a wonderful son, a great friend, and above all, a genuinely beautiful human being."

'Wicker' to be out in India on October 30

Alex Huston Fischer and Eleanor Wilson's romantic fantasy comedy 'Wicker' will be available to Indian audiences on 30 October 2026.

Distributed in the country by PVR INOX Pictures in association with Superfine Films, the romantic entertainer will see Academy Award-winner Olivia Colman and Alexander Skarsgård as the lead pair, along with Peter Dinklage, Elizabeth Debicki and Richard E. Grant in crucial roles. 'Wicker' premiered at the Eccles Theater in Utah, USA, as part of the Sundance Film Festival on January 24, 2026. The movie also closed the 59th Sitges Film Festival on 18 October 2026.

The project is expected to be released in the cinema halls of the United States on October 23, 2026. A week after that, it will be out in the United Kingdom on 30 October, 2026, the same day as its Indian release.



Speaking about their next, directors Alex Huston Fischer and Eleanor Wilson shared in their production notes, "You can't love another person until you accept that you are deserving of love." They also went on to describe their vision for the film. They revealed that they wanted to create "a satirical comedy about sex and marriage, a unique visual spectacle, and a strange love story that would ground it all."

Vishwak Sen's 'Cult' promises a chilling slasher thriller!

The makers of actor-director Vishwak Sen's upcoming film,'Cult', have now released a gripping trailer of the film, much to the delight of fans and film buffs.

Produced by Sandeep Kakarala under the banner of Tarak Cinemas, 'Cult' is being promoted as India's first authentic slasher thriller, inspired by disturbing real-life incidents. For the unaware, Vishwak Sen, apart from playing the lead role in the film, has also taken on the responsibilities of story, screenplay and direction. The trailer offers a glimpse into a terrifying world filled with danger, violence and unpredictable twists.

The trailer sets up a chilling premise with more than 300 people trapped inside an isolated island estate in Goa. With electric fencing surrounding the property and the main entrance rigged with RDX explosives, escaping the



premises appears almost impossible. Their only chance of survival lies in participating in a series of deadly games, where every decision could have fatal consequences.

Among those caught in this nightmare is DSP Sankalp Nayak, a tough police officer who must navigate the increasingly dangerous situation as the fight for survival intensifies.

Dy CM directs departments to speed up SC, ST sub-plan fund utilisation

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
HYDERABAD, OCT 19

Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka has directed officials to accelerate the utilisation of funds allocated under the SC and ST sub-plans and ensure that the budgetary provisions are fully spent on the welfare and development of the respective communities. He also called for comprehensive measures to strengthen the State's finances through departmental reforms, revenue mobilisation and debt restructuring.



Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka at a review meeting with senior Finance Department officials at Secretariat.

At a review meeting with senior Finance Department officials at Dr B.R. Ambedkar Telangana State Secretariat on Monday, Bhatti Vikramarka examined the implementation of the SC and ST sub-plans, department-wise budget allocations and expenditure, along with broader issues concerning the State's financial management.

He stressed that there should be no delay in spending funds earmarked for the social and economic empowerment of SC and ST communities. Officials were instructed to ensure that allocations made on the basis of population were utilised effectively for the intended welfare and development programmes, in accordance with statutory provisions and budgetary guidelines. He also called for identifying gaps in expenditure and taking immediate corrective measures.

The Deputy Chief Minister directed Finance Department officials to hold special reviews with departments lagging in fund utilisation and accelerate spending. He proposed meetings with the secretaries of departments, including Agriculture, Medical and Health, Energy, Municipal Administration, Panchayat Raj, Social Welfare, Industries and Tribal Welfare, to examine allocations, expenditure to date and measures needed to utilise the remaining funds. The officials were asked to prepare a comprehensive report on the progress.

Finance and Planning Secretary Gaurav Uppal, Finance Special Secretary Sikta Patnaik and other senior Finance Department officials attended the meeting.

Every eligible poor family will get an Indiramma house: Minister Ponguleti

TFP I N.J. CHARY
KHAMMAM, OCT 19

Revenue, Housing and Information and Public Relations Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy has said the Telangana government, under Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, is committed to providing Indiramma houses to every eligible poor family, irrespective of caste, religion or political affiliation.



Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy distributes sanction letters to beneficiaries under Indiramma Housing Scheme for Kusumanchi mandal in Palair constituency.

The Minister launched the distribution of sanction letters to beneficiaries under the second phase of the Indiramma Housing Scheme for Kusumanchi mandal at his camp office in Kusumanchi, in Palair constituency, on Monday.

Ponguleti said the government had sanctioned 4.5 lakh houses in the first phase and 2.5 lakh in the second phase across the state. Plans were also underway to construct one lakh houses in Hyderabad, where work on Indiramma Towers had begun. He said approximately 2.3 lakh to 2.4 lakh houses had already been completed statewide.

Assuring that financial constraints would not interrupt welfare programmes, the Minister said eligible families would also receive houses in the third and fourth phases, as required. He stressed that beneficiary selection was being carried out transparently, without discrimination, including in constituencies represented by opposition MLAs.

Ponguleti said the government was implementing several welfare schemes, including fine rice distribution, new ration cards, free electricity up to 200 units, Rythu Bharosa, farm loan waivers and Rythu Bima. He also extended Dasara greetings to the people of Telangana.

Additional Collector P. Srinivasa Reddy, Housing Project Director Bhukya Srinivas, Kusumanchi Mandal Parishad Development Officer Jashwanth Kumar, Tahsildar Saidulu, the Housing Department's Deputy Executive Engineer, officials from various departments and public representatives attended the programme.

El Niño Threat: TG draws up water, power contingency plans

- CS orders micro-level action to avert water and power shortages
- Hyderabad to supply treated STP water to construction sites from Nov 1

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
HYDERABAD, OCT 19

Chief Secretary Sanjay Jaju, IAS directed officials to prepare micro-level contingency plans to prevent drinking water and electricity shortages due to the effects of El Niño.



He conducted a video conference with senior officials appointed by the government to oversee the situation in the erstwhile districts of Telangana and reviewed the prevailing conditions in view of El Niño.

During the meeting, Chief Secretary stated that the state government had already prepared department-wise contingency plans to address the severe conditions expected due to El Niño and was issuing appropriate instructions from time to time. He emphasized that similar plans should also be prepared at the grassroots level.

Although electricity generation in the state has not been encouraging, the government is continuing to supply power for agricultural and domestic requirements. He stated that no power cuts were being imposed on industries in the state and that industrial managements need not worry about electricity supply.

He said instructions had already been issued to all government offices to use electricity economically. Air conditioners should be operated at a temperature setting of 25 degrees Celsius only when necessary during the daytime, while their use should be significantly reduced after 6:00 PM.

He directed officials to take all necessary measures to ensure maximum electricity generation at all thermal power stations in the state. He also instructed the five special officers specifically assigned to the Yadadri Thermal Power Station to take dedicated measures to maximize electricity production at the facility.

He said that an all-party meeting would soon be held to explain the impact of El Niño. A Cabinet Sub-Committee meeting would also be convened shortly.

Electricity & Water Supply Concerns

Officials from the Energy Department explained that water was being illegally drawn from local water sources for agricultural purposes using dedicated motor pumps. This excessive withdrawal was increasing the electrical load and causing local transformers to burn out.

As water supplies from the Manjeera and Singur reservoirs were unavailable, officials said that the 110 million gallons per day (MGD) normally supplied from these reservoirs was being supplemented through alternative sources. These included 60 MGD from Mission Bhagiratha and additional supplies from the Krishna River and other sources.

Measures to Address Hyderabad's Drinking Water needs

Jayesh Ranjan, Special Chief Secretary to the government, stated that permission to drill borewells in Hyderabad should be granted only for drinking water purposes and in accordance with established regulations. No new borewells should be permitted for construction or other activities. However, permission was being granted to deepen existing borewells exclusively for drinking water requirements.

He also said that a special enforcement drive was underway in Hyderabad to address the illegal installation of motor pumps on municipal water taps to draw excessive quantities of water. The operation was being conducted in coordination with HYDRA and other agencies to identify and remove illegal water pumps.

He announced that, beginning November 1, treated water from Sewerage Treatment Plants (STPs) would be supplied to construction sites in Hyderabad through green water tankers.

District-Level Preparedness

Vikas Raj, Special Chief Secretary, said that groundwater levels in Rangareddy district were declining significantly. Therefore, alternative plans were being prepared and implemented to ensure that there would be no shortage of drinking water.

Nalgonda district special officer Harichandana stated that employment guarantee works were being intensified in the district.

B.D.Ekka, Special Chief Secretary to the government, said that Karimnagar district would not face any drinking water shortage until June.

IlamBarthi stated that advance plans were being prepared and implemented in Adilabad district to prevent shortage of fodder for livestock.

Water Requirements in Khammam and Neighbouring Districts

Anudeep Durishetty, Special Officer for Khammam district, stated that the Paleru Reservoir would need to contain four thousand million cubic feet (TMC) of water to ensure drinking water supplies to Mahabubabad, Khammam and Suryapet districts until June. However, the reservoir currently held only two TMC of water.

The video conference was attended by Naveen Mittal, Special Chief Secretary Energy, Agriculture Secretary Surendra Mohan, Municipal Administration Secretary T. K. Sridevi, Northern Power Distribution Company Chairman and Managing Director Varun Reddy, and the Chairman and Managing Director of SPDCL, Jithesh Patil among other officials.

BRS seeks CBI probe into 22-A land registration linked to CM's brother

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
HYDERABAD, OCT 19

BRS Spokesperson Manne Krishank has demanded a CBI inquiry into alleged irregularities in the registration of 4.2 acres of land in Survey No. 363/3 at Chandanvelli village in Chevella mandal. He questioned how the land was registered when neighbouring parcels were reportedly classified as assigned lands.



Manne Krishank

Krishank alleged that the transaction involved R9 Constructions, whose director, Anumula Krishna Reddy, is the brother of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy. He urged the government to make the relevant registration documents, company ownership details and land records public to establish the facts.

He also sought clarification on business interests and land transactions allegedly linked to the Chief Minister's family, naming entities including Maxbien Pharma, Medicover Hospitals, MindVault Corporate Schools and Tesseract Aerospace and Defence. Accusing the Congress government of diverting attention from public concerns through political allegations, he called for transparency on the issues raised.

Referring to the Section 22-A list of prohibited properties, Krishank said its implementation had caused difficulties for ordinary landowners across Telangana. He questioned the alleged disparity in the treatment of the Chandanvelli property and demanded an impartial investigation into its classification and registration.

"The government must answer the questions people are asking. If it believes no irregularities have taken place, it should agree to an impartial inquiry.

Kavitha Seeks ₹25-Crore Cofferdam at Kannepalli to Tackle Drought

HYDERABAD, OCT. 19

Telangana Rakshana Sena (TRS) president Kalvakuntla Kavitha has urged the State government to construct a 93-metre cofferdam near the Kannepalli pump house to divert Pranahita River waters and provide irrigation relief to drought-hit farmers.



After inspecting water levels at the site with party leaders on Monday, Kavitha said the temporary structure could be built within 45 days at an estimated cost of 25 crore. She called for its completion by November, noting that substantial quantities of water continued to flow through the Pranahita despite drought conditions across the State.

Presenting a technical proposal, she offered to share the blueprints with government engineers and said experts could modify the design if required. She urged the government not to delay the project over issues concerning the Medigadda barrage and warned of agitation if the demand was ignored. (NSS)

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