ESTD. 2015

PRGI Reg No.TELENG/2015/65354

THE FREEDOM PRESS

SUNDAY
25 OCTOBER 2026
VOL: 11 I ISSUE: 291
PAGES 12
PRICE: ₹6
HYDERABAD

Simultaneously Published from HYDERABAD & NEW DELHI | ENGLISH DAILY | Honest Journalism...



GREEK PARLIAMENT APPROVES SOCIAL MEDIA BAN FOR UNDER-15S

PAGE 8



INDIA, UZBEKISTAN DISCUSS STRENGTHENING COOPERATION IN COUNTER-TERRORISM

PAGE 5

INDIANS' OVERSEAS INVESTMENTS DOUBLE TO $321 MILLION

PAGE 10



13 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

ARAB WORLD ▶P9



JORDAN KING PLEDGES FIRM STATE RESPONSE TO CHURCH SHOOTING



24 Carat Gold: Rs 1,42,580

INDIA Bloc to hold 'public impeachment' of CEC Gyanesh

NEW DELHI, OCT 24



The INDIA bloc will organise a "public impeachment" proceeding against Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar on October 30, followed by a large-scale "Dilli Chalo" march culminating at Ramleela Maidan on November 1, AICC General Secretary KC Venugopal announced on Saturday.

In a post on X, Venugopal said the public impeachment would deliver the "public's verdict to remove the Vote Chor CEC Gyanesh Kumar" loud and clear.

He described the exercise as part of the opposition's effort to "save the Constitution and defeat the Vote Chori."

According to the announcement, the Congress party is set to organise a mock Parliament at Delhi's Ashoka Hotel on October 30. The proposal to impeach Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar is expected to be at the centre of the debate.

Leaders and representatives from INDIA Bloc parties are likely to participate in the discussion on the proposal and the functioning of the Election Commission.

Venugopal further stated that after the October 30 event, the alliance would take out a "Dilli Chalo March against Vote Chori," which would culminate at Ramleela Maidan on November 1.

The opposition is targeting the participation of at least one million citizens in the march. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge has written to all INDIA Bloc parties, requesting their leaders and members to be present in Delhi in full strength during this period to ensure maximum participation.

The planned events come amid continued political criticism of the Election Commission by opposition parties, which have accused it of bias and electoral malpractice. (IANS/UNI)

Protests sweep France, Italy

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
PARIS, OCT. 24



Protesters attend an demonstration against cost of living and rising fuel prices, in Paris.

Tens of thousands of people demonstrated across France on Saturday against rising living costs, inequality and cuts to public services, as authorities deployed 70,000 police officers amid fears of renewed violence. Protests in Paris were largely peaceful, though police used tear gas in Clermont-Ferrand, Grenoble, Lille and Nice, while clashes were reported in Marseille and Lyon. The government deployed 10,000 more police officers and gendarmes than during the October 17 demonstrations, which witnessed widespread unrest. Security measures disrupted daily life in Paris, with several metro stations and major cultural institutions, including the Louvre, Musee d'Orsay and Paris Opera, closed. Shopkeepers boarded up storefronts following last weekend's looting and vandalism, while a last-minute change to the main protest route sparked criticism from left-wing politicians.

In Italy, authorities deployed an additional 500 soldiers in Milan and tightened security across major cities as demonstrations were planned against rising living costs, low wages, increased defence spending and government policies. Police conducted more than 150 searches in Milan, Monza and around 20 other cities as part of investigations into last weekend's unrest, which resulted in 45 arrests, including 34 minors. Security measures included drone surveillance, railway station checks and rapid-response units. The newly formed October 17 Movement changed its previously announced protest locations, complicating police preparations. Demonstrations were planned in Milan, Rome, Turin, Naples, Genoa, Bologna, Florence, Padua and Verona. (IANS)

ASIAN PARA GAMES

India sign off with record 114 medals

AICHI-NAGOYA, OCT 24

India's para-athletes marched with national flags at the closing ceremony of the Asian Para Games 2026 at Paloma Mizuho Stadium on Friday, bringing the curtains down on the country's most successful campaign at the continental showpiece with a record haul of 114 medals.

Double gold medallist para-shooter Mona Agarwal and athlete Nishad Kumar led the Indian contingent as co-flag-bearers at the ceremony, which marked the end of an impressive campaign in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, where India secured 30 gold, 35 silver and 49 bronze medals.

The tally surpassed India's previous best of 108 medals at the 2022 edition in Hangzhou, where the country won 27 gold. (IANS)

Ballistic missile attacks rock Yemen's Aden

ADEN, OCT 24



Loud explosions were heard in Yemen's southern port city of Aden, the seat of the internationally recognized government, on Saturday following a ballistic missile attack, a local security official told Xinhua.

The official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the Houthi group fired nearly four ballistic missiles at the city, with some striking near Aden International Airport and key military facilities in the Khormaksar district, and another hitting the Coast Guard Troops headquarters in Al-Tawahi district.

The blasts shook buildings across parts of Aden, residents told Xinhua, with plumes of smoke seen rising from the targeted areas. Casualties and damage were not immediately known.

The attack marked the latest in a series of Houthi missile strikes on Aden. On Wednesday, the Houthis claimed a ballistic missile strike on a Saudi military operations room at Badr military base near Aden International Airport, Xinhua News Agency reported. (IANS/UNI)

China resettling Tibetans near Arunachal

NEW DELHI, OCT 24

China is resettling Tibetans close to the Line of Actual Control (LAC) opposite Arunachal Pradesh to make the disputed boundary resemble an ordinary Chinese provincial frontier, with a long-term goal of pushing a "demographic invasion" into the Indian state over the coming decades, a report has warned.

Beijing is rapidly moving Tibetans into frontier settlements under its border-village and poverty-alleviation schemes, with figures cited by researchers showing that 241,835 people were involved in the Tibet Autonomous Region's (TAR) border-village programme.

Other reports point to plans to shift tens of thousands of border residents into 628 villages, Lieutenant General (Retd.) Abhay Krishna, a former Army Commander of South Western, Eastern and Central Army Commands of the Indian Army, wrote in India Narrative.

The threat for India, wrote the defence expert, was not a sudden mass crossing of the LAC by Tibetan civilians but something far less visible.

About 72 per cent of China's "Xiaokang" border villages lie close to the LAC in India's north-eastern sector, with 90 per cent of those facing Arunachal Pradesh, the report said. (IANS)

Parliamentary Panel to examine AI, crypto assets

NEW DELHI, OCT 24



Parliament's Standing Committee on Finance has selected 46 subjects for detailed examination and reporting during 2026-27, such as artificial intelligence (AI) in the financial sector, virtual digital assets, currency management and price stability.

According to a Lok Sabha bulletin, the panel will take up subjects pertaining to the Finance Ministry -- Departments of Economic Affairs, Expenditure, Public Enterprises and Investment and Public Asset Management, Revenue and Financial Services -- as well as the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, NITI Aayog and the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).

The selection comes after Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla reconstituted parliamentary committees earlier this month.

Notably, BJP MP Bhartruhari Mahtab has been reappointed as Chairperson of the Committee, which comprises 21 members from Lok Sabha and 10 from Rajya Sabha.

Among key subjects listed are strategy for price and currency stability, currency management, regulatory mechanism in the financial sector, monetisation of public sector assets and the evolving macroeconomic landscape. The panel will also examine the banking, pension and health insurance sectors, social security for the informal sector, small savings schemes, RBI's role in the evolving economy and a performance review of SEBI.

On the taxation and regulatory front, it will review customs, GST and direct tax reforms, regulatory gaps in the NBFC sector, and conduct a study on virtual digital assets and the way forward. (IANS/UNI)



Seethakka directs officials to prepare 8-month rural employment plan

Employment guarantee works from Nov 1

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
HYDERABAD, OCT 24

Telangana Panchayat Raj and Rural Development Minister Dr. Danasari Anasuya Seethakka has directed officials to prioritise rural employment, water conservation and the creation of durable village assets in view of the possible impact of El Niño, water scarcity and challenges in agriculture.



Minister Dr. Danasari Anasuya reviewed implementation of VB-G RAM G scheme at Secretariat.

Reviewing the implementation of the VB-G RAM G scheme and the progress of employment guarantee works, the minister instructed officials to prepare an eight-month action plan to ensure employment for labourers throughout the year. She directed them to complete mandal-level work plans by October 30 and be ready to launch works from November 1.

The 370 approved categories of works should be prioritised according to local needs, weather conditions and labour availability, with at least 50 key works selected from the identified 318 categories. She also stressed regular reviews every two months and called for action against District Rural Development Officers who failed to accelerate implementation.

Seethakka emphasised repairing canals to prevent water wastage and taking up works to improve water storage and groundwater levels. Special Chief Secretary for Panchayat Raj Dana Kishore, Commissioner Divya Devarajan, and Engineers-in-Chief Krupakar Reddy and Jagadishwar attended the meeting. District Rural Development Officers, executive engineers, deputy executive engineers and mandal parishad development officers participated through video conference.

Chief Secretary directs Collectors to expand PM Rahat hospital network

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
HYDERABAD, OCT 24

Telangana Chief Secretary Sanjay Jaju, IAS has directed district collectors to ensure that all eligible network hospitals in the state are enrolled under the PM Rahat scheme to provide timely treatment to road accident victims.



Chief Secretary Sanjay Jaju, IAS reviewed the implementation of Prime Minister – Road Accident Victims' Hospitalisation and Assured Treatment (PM-RAHAT) Scheme through a video conference with district collectors.

Reviewing the implementation of the Prime Minister's Road Accident Victims Hospitalisation Scheme through a video conference with district collectors, Superintendents of Police and transport officials, Jaju said accident victims could receive treatment worth up to 1.5 lakh if admitted to a nearby hospital during the crucial golden hour.

He said that while more than 1,000 hospitals were empanelled under the state's Aarogyasri scheme, only 469 had enrolled under PM Rahat. He directed collectors to take steps to bring the remaining eligible hospitals into the scheme, which could facilitate at least 100 crore in treatment support annually and reduce the burden on Aarogyasri.

The Chief Secretary stressed that hospitals must follow the prescribed procedures, including police investigation requirements, to provide treatment under the scheme.

Transport Commissioner Ilambarthi, Health and Medical Department Principal Secretary Christina Z. Chongthu, and Aarogyasri CEO Jendagi Hanumanthu participated in the video conference.

HMDA sanctions Rs. 7.40 Cr for Railapur–Gowdavelli bridge

TFP I RAVI KUMAR
MEDCHAL-MALKAJGIRI, OCT 24

The Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority (HMDA) has sanctioned Rs. 7.40 crore for the construction of a new bridge between Railapur and Gowdavelli in Medchal–Malkajgiri district, following the efforts of Malkajgiri MP Etala Rajender.

The bridge is expected to ease long-standing traffic problems and provide relief to local commuters, students and employees, while improving connectivity and supporting regional development.

HMDA had also recently sanctioned Rs. 6 crore for widening the road from Medchal Road Under Bridge (RUB) to Railapur village.

Jagtial MLA inspects Medical College construction

TFP I SRINIVAS RAO
JAGTIAL, OCT 24

Jagtial MLA Dr. Sanjay Kumar directed officials to complete the construction of the government medical college in Jagtial within the stipulated deadline without compromising on quality.



On Saturday, the MLA alongside District Collector B. Satya Prasad, IAS inspected the ongoing works and reviewed the progress with concerned officials. They examined the main college building, hostel block, kitchen and classrooms and discussed completed and pending works. The Collector instructed officials to expedite the remaining works and ensure that all essential facilities meet prescribed standards.

Collector B. Satya Prasad said the medical college would strengthen medical education in the district and improve access to healthcare services for the public. MLA Dr. Sanjay Kumar said the institution would provide better opportunities for local students to pursue medical education and bring healthcare services closer to people. He urged officials to resolve construction-related issues through coordination and make the college operational at the earliest.

The medical college principal, officials from concerned departments and construction monitoring personnel participated in the inspection.

Endowments Commissioner inspects Godavari Pushkaralu, Kaleshwaram temple works



TFP I MLN MURTHY
J. BHUPALPALLY, OCT 24

State Endowments Commissioner Hanumantha Rao, IAS has directed officials and contractors to expedite the development of Godavari Pushkar ghats and the reconstruction of Sri Kaleshwara Mukteshwara Swamy Temple at Kaleshwaram ahead of the upcoming Godavari Pushkaralu.

During his visit to Kaleshwaram on Saturday, along with Jayashankar Bhupalpally District Collector Rahul Sharma, IAS, the Commissioner reviewed development works being undertaken by the Endowments, Irrigation, Roads and Buildings, and Panchayat Raj departments.

He instructed officials to complete all works within the stipulated deadline without compromising on construction quality.

He also directed the contractor to deploy sufficient workers in shifts and immediately begin construction of the Aksharabhyasam and Mirror Mandapams, adhering to the approved plan and traditional architectural principles.

With State Minister Sridhar Babu scheduled to visit Kaleshwaram on November 4, the Commissioner called for significant progress before the visit.

He stressed expediting facilities such as drinking water, roads, parking, VIP ghats and ramps, besides installing watchtowers and check-posts where necessary to manage crowds and ensure devotees' safety during the Pushkaralu.

Collector Rahul Sharma said the administration was regularly monitoring temple reconstruction and Pushkaralu development works and coordinating with all concerned departments to complete them on time.

Kataram Sub-Collector Saurav Sharma and engineering officials from the concerned departments participated in the inspection.

Gadwal Collector orders action against negligence at Mission Bhagiratha plant

TFP I SANAULLAH
J. GADWAL, OCT 24

Jogulamba Gadwal District Collector Rizwan Basha Shaik has directed officials to ensure the supply of safe and quality drinking water to the public through regular water quality testing and effective monitoring of water treatment plants.



During his visit to the District Mission Bhagiratha Centre at Jurala Project in Dharur mandal on Saturday, the Collector inspected water treatment processes, quality testing, chemical usage, staff attendance and maintenance of records. He instructed officials to regularly monitor pH, turbidity and chlorine levels and use appropriate chemicals based on raw water quality.

Expressing concern over negligence in maintaining records, conducting water quality tests and staff attendance, he ordered show-cause notices to the concerned outsourcing agency and responsible personnel. He also directed officials to verify staff attendance through the Mee Pramanam app and ensure that agency bills were paid only after verifying attendance and duties.

The Collector further instructed officials to prevent illegal water connections, create public awareness about the proper use of drinking water and take action against violations to ensure an uninterrupted and equitable water supply.

Mission Bhagiratha Executive Engineer Sridhar Reddy, Irrigation Executive Engineer Sanjeeva Prasad, Dharur Tahsildar Nandini, engineers and other officials participated in the visit.

TGHRC seeks report on chloroform leak that killed 2 workers in Sangareddy

TFP I HAJI ALI
SANGAREDDY, OCT 24

The Telangana Human Rights Commission (TGHRC), headed by Chairperson Dr. Justice Shameem Akther, has taken suo motu cognisance of the death of two workers in a chloroform vapour leak at Saraca Laboratories Limited in Gaddapotharam Industrial Area, Jinnaram mandal, Sangareddy district, on the night of October 22.

Taking note of reports published by several media organisations, the Commission noted that several other workers reportedly fell ill and were shifted to hospitals.

Observing that the incident raised serious concerns about industrial safety and the right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution, the Commission directed the Sangareddy District Collector to submit a detailed report by November 26, 2026. The report must cover the circumstances of the incident, details of the deceased and injured workers, medical assistance provided, safety measures in place and action taken by the authorities.

Rajanna Sircilla Collector conducts surprise inspection at KGBV



TFP I G. RAMESH
R. SIRCILLA, OCT 24

Rajanna Sircilla District Collector Garima Agrawal, IAS conducted a surprise inspection at the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) in Thangallapalli mandal headquarters on Saturday.

The Collector directed the authorities to maintain cleanliness on the campus and provide students with quality meals as per the prescribed menu.

During the visit, she examined the attendance registers of teachers and staff, the kitchen premises, freezer and food supplies.

She stressed the need to address complaints promptly and take preventive measures to ensure that students do not face difficulties.

MALKAJGIRI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION : MALKAJGIRI ZONE

NIT No	Name of the Work	Estimate Amount (Rs in Lakhs)	Bid Submission Start Date & Time / Bid Submission of Closing Date & Time	Name & Address Officer Cell No.
NIT No. 79/EE-I /MKJZ/MMC/ 2026-27	Maintenance Works Others - 1	4.60	24-10-2026 10.30AM 27-10-2026 & 10.30 AM	Executive Engineer-I Malkajgiri Zone, MMC

For further details can be sent at e-procurement @http://www.tender.telangana.gov.in
Sd/- Executive Engineer I Malkajgiri Zone MMC.
DIPR - R.O. No. : 12362-PP/CL/ADVT/2026-27

MALKAJGIRI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
O/o the Executive Engineer, Ghatkesar Circle-06, Opp Ghatkesar Police Station-501301.
E-mail : ee.2.ghatkesar@gmail.com

E-Procurement Tender Notice

Tender Notice No. 48/EE/ Ghatkesar Circle-06/MMC/Tenders/2026-27, Dt: 24.10.2026 publishing of For 18 Works.

- "Laying of CC Road from Siri Multi Speciality Hospital to Elec.Pole.No.6104 at Venkateshwara Nagar in Nagaram Division No.05,Ghatkesar Circle-6,Uppal Zone,MMC.(This work reserved for SC Individuals/Socities).
- "Laying of CC Road from Grave Yard Road to Elec.Pole.No.5139 at Dwarakamai Colony in Nagaram Division No.05,Ghatkesar Circle-6,Uppal Zone,MMC.(This work reserved for SC Individuals/Socities).
- "Laying of CC Road from H.No.11-6/15 to H.No.11-6-39/1,Rajarajeshwara Colony in Nagaram Division No.05,Ghatkesar Circle-6,Uppal Zone,MMC.(This work reserved for SC Individuals/Socities).
- Laying of CC Road from Elec.Pole.No.6459 to H.No.10-13/05 and Elec.Pole.No.6570 toElec.Ploe.No.6434/2/3 at Sheshadri Nagar in Nagaram Division No.05,Ghatkesar Circle-6,Uppal Zone,MMC.
- "Laying of CC Road from Elec.Pole.No.4515 to Jai Bhavani Enclave Arch and H.No.11-12/73/A/1 to Plot No.67 and H No 11-11-45 to H No 11-11-37/1 at Sri Sai Colony in Nagaram Division No.05,Ghatkesar Circle-6,Uppal Zone,MMC.
- "Laying of CC Road from H.No.4-50/12/23/A/1 to H.No.4-50/15/1,Elec.Pole.No.3872. at Datta Sai Phase-II and H.No .4-49/3/107/A/1 to H NO.4-50/12/23/A/1 at Surya Enclave in Nagaram Division No.05,Ghatkesar Circle-6,Uppal Zone,MMC.
- Laying of CC Road from H.No.4-49/3/22 to H.No.4-49/3/128/A/2 at Surya Enclave in Nagaram Division No.05,Ghatkesar Circle-6,Uppal Zone,MMC.
- Laying of CC Road from H.No.9-6-123 to H.No.9-6-132,oad No.4,H.No.9-6-39 to H.No.9-6-61,Road No.2 and H.No.9-6-83 to H.No.9-6-105 ,Road No.3 at DSR Raj Enclave in Nagaram Division No.05,Ghatkesar Circle-6,Uppal Zone,MMC.
- Construction of Copound wall at Auganwadi Center and MPPS School, Yamnampet in Pocharam Ward No.08, Ghatkesar Circle-06, Uppal Zone, MMC(This work reserved for ST Individuals/Socities).
- Supply and Installation of open gym equipment at the open place between Gokulam Nagar and Vasantha Vally in Sy.No.70 to 75 Nagaram Division No.05, Ghatkesar Circle-06, Uppal Zone,MMC(This work reserved for ST Individuals/Socities).
- Supply and Installation of Open Gym Equipment at Devi sri homes colony Sy.No.02 Part,Park palce,Kachivanisingaram Village ,Pocharam Ward No.08,Ghatkesar Circle No.06,Uppal Zone ,MMC.
- Supply and Installation of Open Gym Equipment at Park place Hill view colony ,Muthuvelliguda ,Pocharam Ward No.08,Ghatkesar Circle No.06,Uppal Zone ,MMC.
- Supply and Installation of Open Gym Equipment at Maheshwari Colony Kachivanisingaram ,Pocharam Ward No.08,Ghatkesar Circle No.06,Uppal Zone ,MMC
- Supply and Installation of Open Gym Equipment at Sadbhavana Township B2 Tower pocharam Village ,Pocharam Ward No.08,Ghatkesar Circle No.06,Uppal Zone ,MMC.
- Supply and Installation of Open Gym Equipment at Shivaji Nagar colony, Narapally Village ,Pocharam Ward No.08,Ghatkesar Circle No.06,Uppal Zone ,MMC.
- Laying of CC Road from H.No.11-1-122 to H.No.11-1-129 at OU Colony in Nagaram Division No.05, Ghatkesar Circle-6, Uppal Zone, MMC.
- Laying of CC Road from H.No.4-49/3/9/3/A/1 to H.No. 4-49/3/2/3,Road No.03,H.No.447/5/77/A/1 to H.No.4-47/5/71,Road No.07 ,H.No.4-47/2/8 to Plot No.270 Road No.12 and Elec.Pole.No.3782 to Sriram Nagar park at Sri Ram Nagar Colony in Nagaram Division No.05,Ghatkesar Circle-6,Uppal Zone, MMC.
- Laying of CC Road from Elec.Pole.No.3974/2 to Elec.Pole.No.3969 at HMT Ramakrishna Nagar in Nagaram Division No.05, Ghatkesar Circle -6, Uppal Zone, MMC.

The details can be seen by logging at https://tender.telangana.gov.in/login.html. The details of events is detailed below:

Events	Only 18 works
Start Date	26.10.2026 @ 11:00 AM
Download end Date	03.11.2026 @ 11:00 AM
Last date & Time for Receipt of Bids	03.11.2026 @ 11:00 AM
Price Bid Opening	03.11.2026 @ 11:00 AM

Address of the Officer concerned, Sri. K RAMESH BABU, Executive Engineer, Ghatkesar Circle-06, MMC, Hyderabad.
Further details can be seen at e-procurement @ https://tender.telangana.gov.in/login.html
Sd/- Executive Engineer Ghatkesar Circle-06, MMC.
DIPR - R.O. No. : 12374-PP/CL/ADVT/2026-27

PUBLIC NOTICE

Army No.: 15725892A
Rank: L/NK

Name: Gire Sunil Chandrakant S/o Chandrakant Dashrath Gire Residing at- Gaul, Post Gaul, TQ-Kandhar, Dist. Nanded (MH). In Service Records, my Father's name is entered as Gire Chandrakant. That my father's actual name is Chandrakant Dashrath Gire, as evidenced by Aadhaar Card (740084317098). That the names Gire Chandrakant and Chandrakant Dashrath Gire refer to one and the same person, specifically my father.

Date: 24.10.2026
Sd/-
Gire Sunil Chandrakant

CAUTION: Readers are advised to exercise due diligence before responding to advertisements published in this newspaper. **THE FREEDOM PRESS** does not endorse or verify the claims made by advertisers. The Printer, Publisher, Editor, and Owner of **THE FREEDOM PRESS** shall not be held responsible/liable for any consequences arising from false or misleading claims - **THE FREEDOM PRESS ENGLISH DAILY.**

Lord Ram statue removed amid Basheer Bagh renaming row

TFP I CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, OCT 24

A statue of Lord Ram installed near the Ammavari Temple at Basheer Bagh Chowrasta in Hyderabad was removed on Saturday following objections to its installation and a demand to rename the junction as 'Sri Ram Chowk'. Heavy police deployment was witnessed in the area as a precautionary measure amid concerns over possible communal tension.



The statue was installed during the Vijayadashami celebrations by Bhagyanagar Ganesh Utsav Samithi (BGUS) General Secretary Dr. Ravinuthala Shashidhar, who had appealed to Hindus to refer to Basheer Bagh Chowrasta as 'Sri Ram Chowk'. Following objections, temple staff removed the statue with the assistance of a crane and transported it on a lorry. Police personnel were deployed to maintain law and order and prevent any untoward incidents.

The proposed renaming of the junction also drew objections, with questions raised over the authority of individuals or organisations to announce a change in the name of a public road without following the prescribed legal and administrative procedures. Concerns were also raised over reported construction of a religious structure within a GHMC park and whether the necessary permissions had been obtained.

Earlier on Saturday, Majlis Bachao Tehreek (MBT) Spokesperson Amjed Ullah Khan, accompanied by party leaders met GHMC Commissioner R. V. Karnan, IAS, Abids Assistant Commissioner of Police P. Praveen Kumar and Abids Police Station Inspector K. Parashuram and submitted a memorandum seeking an inquiry into the developments.

The delegation urged the authorities to verify the permissions for the statue installation and reported construction within the park, take action if any unauthorised activity or encroachment was established, clarify whether any formal proposal to rename Basheer Bagh X Road had been approved, and ensure that all decisions concerning public roads and municipal property complied with the law.

Leather CFC to come up in Gachibowli: Sridhar Babu

Eco-friendly tanneries planned at Rukmapur

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
HYDERABAD, OCT 25

The Telangana government will establish a Common Facility Centre (CFC) in Gachibowli to strengthen the leather industry and promote entrepreneurship among Scheduled Caste (SC) youth, Minister for IT, Industries and Legislative Affairs D. Sridhar Babu said on Saturday.



Industries Minister Sridhar Babu at a review meeting with Telangana Leather Industries Promotion Corporation at Secretariat.

Reviewing the activities of the Telangana Leather Industries Promotion Corporation (TGLIPC) at the Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Secretariat, the Minister said the proposed CFC would be developed on 3.5 acres under a hub-and-spoke model. The centre will support artisans in design, product development and branding to improve the value and marketability of leather products. The government is also planning to establish eco-friendly tanneries conforming to international standards at Rukmapur in Choppadandi mandal of Karimnagar district. The project is expected to generate employment for around 1,000 people, Sridhar Babu said.

He further said that flatted factory complexes under the Micro and Small Enterprises Cluster Development Programme (MSE-CDP) would be developed on a plug-and-play model at Jammikunta in Huzurabad constituency and at Armoor to support micro and small enterprises. The Minister directed officials to conduct field inspections of lands previously allotted to the Leather Industries Development Corporation (LIDCAP) and submit a report on their present status.

Special Secretary for Industries Krishna Aditya, Director of Industries Nikhil Chakravarthy, TGLIPC Vice Chairman and Managing Director Prashanth Kumar, and Telangana State Leather Industrial Promotion Cooperative Society president Dr. Arepalli Rajender, Haans Chairman Syed Baqar Hasan, Managing Director Syed Farhan Hasan and Director Syed Irfan Hasan attended the review meeting.



Journalists to get house sites in suitable locations, says I&PR Minister

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
HYDERABAD, OCT 24

Telangana Revenue, Housing and Information and Public Relations Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy has assured journalists that the state government is working to provide house sites in suitable residential areas without legal complications.



Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy

In a statement issued on Saturday, the Minister said the government led by Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy was committed to resolving the long-pending housing issue and ensuring a permanent solution for journalists who have been waiting for nearly two decades.

Ponguleti recalled that land allotment orders for the Journalists' Housing Society were issued in 2008 during the tenure of former undivided Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Dr. Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy. However, the process was delayed due to litigation in the Supreme Court. He said the Congress government handed over land to the society at a programme held at Ravindra Bharathi on September 8, 2024, but further legal complications arose following the court's final orders.

The Minister said he had discussed the issue several times with Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and other Cabinet colleagues to work out a legally sustainable solution. He assured journalists that the government would take necessary steps to provide residential plots in locations suitable for families and prevent a recurrence of past legal disputes.

Ponguleti reiterated that the government prioritised journalists' welfare, recognising their important role in connecting the public with the government and strengthening democracy.

Muslim General Hospital opens ICU and Critical Care Unit at Tolichowki



FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
HYDERABAD, OCT 24

Muslim General Hospital at Tolichowki inaugurated its Intensive Care Unit (ICU) and critical care services on Saturday, marking a significant step towards strengthening medical facilities for patients requiring specialised treatment.

Hyderabad MP Barrister Asaduddin Owaisi, Telangana Government Advisor Mohammed Ali Shabbir, Jamaat-e-Islami Hind Vice President Malik Moatasim Khan and Jamaat-e-Islami Hind Telangana Ameer Mohammed Azharuddin attended the inauguration. Addressing the gathering, Owaisi said the new ICU would improve access to critical care, particularly for economically weaker sections. He assured that he would take up the hospital's development with the Telangana government and work towards improving its healthcare facilities.

Mohammed Azharuddin, who is also president of the Islamic Social Service Society, stressed the need to expand medical services and provide quality, affordable treatment. Mohammed Ali Shabbir appreciated the healthcare and social welfare initiatives of Jamaat-e-Islami Hind Telangana and the Islamic Social Service Society, and assured all possible support at the government level. Malik Moatasim Khan highlighted the importance of humanitarian service and accessible healthcare. Hospital Chief Operating Officer Syed Salahuddin outlined the institution's existing facilities and future expansion plans, crediting the ICU's establishment to the collective efforts of doctors, nursing staff, administrative personnel and management.

Dr. Mohammed Mubashir Ahmed, Secretary of the Islamic Social Service Society, Hyderabad, representatives of the society, hospital doctors and staff, and other distinguished guests attended the programme, which was conducted by Syed Tanveerul Haq.

The hospital is managed by the Islamic Social Service Society.

DRI seizes methamphetamine worth Rs 1.1 cr

TFP I RAOOF KHAN
HYDERABAD, OCT 24

The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) seized 1.136 kg of suspected methamphetamine, estimated to be worth around Rs 1.1 crore, from a passenger bus arriving in Hyderabad from Bhopal, officials said on Saturday.

Acting on specific intelligence, DRI officials of the Hyderabad Zonal Unit (HZU) searched the bus on October 23 and recovered four packets containing the suspected narcotic substance concealed beneath mattresses in sleeper berths.

The substance tested positive for methamphetamine using a field-testing kit, the Agency said in a release.

A preliminary enquiry revealed that the passengers occupying the berths had boarded the bus at Bhopal and alighted at Nagpur.

The suspected methamphetamine, weighing 1.136 kg (gross), was seized under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985.

No arrests were made in the case, and further investigation is underway, the release added.

BJP discusses preparations for MLC, GHMC elections

TFP I CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, OCT 24

The Telangana BJP on Saturday discussed preparations for the upcoming Graduates' MLC elections and GHMC elections at a meeting of party leaders and office-bearers from nine districts falling within the Greater Hyderabad limits.



T-BJP President N Ramachandar Rao addresses party leaders and office-bearers from nine districts falling within Greater Hyderabad limits.

The meeting, chaired by State BJP President N Ramachandar Rao at the party's state headquarters here, reviewed the prevailing political situation in Telangana and outlined organisational strategies for the elections.

Party leaders called upon cadres to strengthen the organisation at the booth level and intensify public outreach with the objective of winning the upcoming Graduates' MLC elections.

The meeting also discussed the BJP's 'Loktantra Bachao-Bheedtantra Hatao' (Save Democracy-Remove Mobocracy) campaign against what the party described as actions suppressing democracy. Leaders decided to intensify grassroots-level activities against the policies of the Congress government in Telangana.

The meeting was attended by BJP state incharge Sunil Bansal, co-in-charge Abhay Patil, state organisational general secretary N Madhukar, Telangana BJP joint organisational general secretary Dashrath, and party MPs, MLAs, MLCs and presidents of nine districts under the GHMC limits.

Hanumantha Rao urges Congress cadres to ensure victory in Graduates' MLC polls

A.M.KHAN
HYDERABAD, OCT 24

Telangana Government Advisor and former MP V. Hanumantha Rao on Saturday called upon Congress leaders and workers to work intensively for the victory of party candidates Sama Ram Mohan Reddy and Narender Reddy in the upcoming Graduates' MLC elections.



Addressing a meeting on graduates' voter registration at his residence in Bagh Amberpet, Hanumantha Rao urged party cadres to ensure that all eligible graduates enrol as voters before the November 6 deadline prescribed by the Election Commission. He said graduates who had completed their degrees by the end of October 2023 were eligible to register, and asked party workers to visit households and assist applicants with online and offline registration.

He said Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy had taken the two MLC elections seriously and called on party workers to maximise voter registration to strengthen the Congress candidates' prospects in both constituencies. Applicants should submit their photographs, Aadhaar cards, voter identity cards and degree certificates to the concerned GHMC or revenue officials, he said.

Hanumantha Rao also urged Congress leaders to secure a strong lead for the party in Amberpet by explaining the government's development and welfare programmes to graduates and seeking their support. He said party workers who performed well in the MLC elections would have better opportunities in the upcoming GHMC elections.

TPCC State General Secretary R. Lakshman Yadav, Secretary Shambula Srikanth Goud, among others, attended the meeting.



Bengal BJP rules out alliance with NCPI for urban civic body polls

KOLKATA, OCT 24



Two top Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders from West Bengal on Saturday ruled out the possibilities of any sort of alliance or seat-sharing arrangement with the National Citizens Party of India (NCPI) for the forthcoming polls for seven urban civic bodies in the state, including the Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) and Howrah Municipal Corporation (HMC).

The speculation of a possible BJP-NCPI alliance for the forthcoming urban civic body polls had been surfacing for the last few days after some from the bloc of 20 Trinamool Congress-turned-NCPI Lok Sabha members said in public that NCPI being a part of the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) were keen on a seat-sharing arrangement with the latter for the forthcoming municipal body polls.

However, on Saturday, both the State BJP President and Rajya Sabha member Samik Bhattacharya, and the former State BJP President and the current Minister of State for Education, Sukanta Majumdar, ruled out the possibilities of any alliance or seat-sharing arrangement with the NCPI.

"BJP won the Assembly polls in West Bengal on its own strength. It did not come to power in the state at the mercy of anyone. BJP will contest alone and will form boards both in KMC and HMC in its own strength," Bhattacharya said.

When asked whether some of the former Trinamool Congress Councilors in KMC have expressed desire to contest as BJP candidates this time, Bhattacharya said that neither him nor the state leadership of his party has any information in the matter.

On the other hand, Majumdar, who is in charge of BJP for the KMC polls, said that this time the civic body polls will be conducted for a total of 209 wards in KMC and the BJP will field candidates in all the 209 wards.

He also said that the state leadership of the BJP this time is very careful about candidate selection for the KMC polls to ensure that individuals with clean image and mass acceptability are given nominations. (IANS)

Andhra CM Naidu accuses Jagan of 'damaging' Andhra's brand image

AMARAVATI, OCT 24



Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu on Saturday launched a scathing attack on YSRCP president Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, accusing him of "damaging" the brand image of the state and alleging that he lacks political, moral and family values.

Addressing a press conference, CM Naidu expressed serious concern over "deliberate attempts to damage" the prestige and brand image of Andhra Pradesh.

"Jagan Mohan Reddy speaks an incomprehensible language and is consistently working with the sole agenda of claiming that law and order has collapsed in the state, purely to demand President's Rule and extract political mileage," he alleged.

CM Naidu referred to Jagan as a "prolonged litigant" operating under the "guise of politics".

"Jagan follows a routine of filing repetitive court petitions and lunch motions, only to see them postponed, while systematically propagating untruths through extended press conferences after arriving from Bengaluru," he remarked.

Moreover, Chief Minister Naidu firmly rejected allegations that YSRCP candidates were prevented from participating in the nomination process for the upcoming local body polls, pointing out that police personnel actively provided security and transported candidates in official vehicles to facilitate their filings.

He cited the statement of YSRCP's former Deputy Speaker from Bapatla, Kona Raghupathi, who publicly confirmed that the nominations concluded smoothly without hindrance.

CM Naidu also condemned Jagan Mohan Reddy's "deceitful posture" and recalled the "grim reality" of the 2021 Covid pandemic, criticising how school teachers were forced into guarding and managing queues outside liquor outlets during the period.

Highlighting that the excessive uncontested victories in 2021, including 24 per cent of MPTCs statewide and massive unanimous sweeps in Kadapa, were achieved through "intimidation and brute force", the Chief Minister urged the public to recognise the "habitual pattern of falsehoods designed to mislead the state".

Further, the Andhra Pradesh CM accused the YSR Congress Party chief of treating his own mother and sister "unfairly" over property disputes and questioned his refusal to provide Yelahanka Palace for his niece's wedding.

Asserting that Jagan's sister YS Sharmila also has a share in the family property, the Chief Minister accused him of obstructing his niece's wedding, comparing his behaviour to that of the Hindu mythology demon king 'Kansa'.

Further, CM Naidu urged people to understand how "dangerous" the YSPCP chief's mindset could be for the state and alleged that the latter's overall approach was driven by "destruction". (IANS/UNI)

Congress gets into poll mode for Assembly elections in five states

NEW DELHI, OCT 24



The Congress party has gone into poll mode ahead of the upcoming Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Goa, Manipur and Uttarakhand. The party has appointed chairpersons for its election War Rooms in the five states, with the appointments taking immediate effect.

According to a press release issued on Saturday, the proposal for the appointments was approved by Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge to oversee the party's election War Room operations in the respective states.

The appointments include Sachin Yadav for Uttar Pradesh, Kannan Gopinathan for Punjab, Imroz Khan for Goa, Biswaranjan Mohanty for Manipur and Krishan Satrod for Uttarakhand.

The party said the appointments had been approved with immediate effect as part of its preparations for the forthcoming Assembly elections.

Election War Rooms play a key role in coordinating campaign-related activities, managing communication, monitoring political developments and facilitating coordination among party units during elections.

The appointments are expected to support the Congress' organisational and campaign preparations in the five states as it works to strengthen coordination and election management ahead of the upcoming Assembly polls.

The announcement was made through an official press release dated October 24.

Meanwhile, All India Congress Committee General Secretary, K.C. Venugopal earlier on Friday said the party held high-level meetings with senior leaders from Uttar Pradesh and Haryana to intensify mobilisation for the INDIA Bloc's mega rally against alleged 'Vote Chori' scheduled for November 1 in New Delhi.

In a post on X, Venugopal said that he, along with Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, met AICC in-charge for Uttar Pradesh Rajendra Pal Gautam, UP PCC President Aradhana Misra Mona and other senior leaders from the state to discuss strategies for building large-scale participation in the rally. (IANS)

BJP workers will make mission Jharkhand a success: Nabin

RANCHI, OCT 24



Nitin Nabin

BJP President Nitin Nabin on Saturday expressed confidence that the party would replicate its organisational success in Jharkhand, just like it did in West Bengal.

Addressing a meeting of the BJP Jharkhand State Working Committee in Ranchi, he said the party is committed to ensuring that the "saffron flag flies from the panchayat level to Parliament."

Drawing a parallel with West Bengal, Nabin said BJP workers worked tirelessly to strengthen the party's base in the state and now is the time for "Mission Jharkhand".

He urged party workers to speed up efforts to expand the party's reach and strengthen its grassroots presence.

Praising Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, Nabin said the country is fortunate to have a leader who has not only provided a new direction to the BJP and India but also enhanced the nation's standing globally.

He said 1.4 billion Indians placed their hopes, aspirations and trust in the Prime Minister.

He alleged that certain forces within the country, as well as elements operating from abroad, are attempting to obstruct India's rapid progress and development. However, he asserted that the people of India continued to stand firmly with PM Modi.

Launching a sharp attack on the Congress and the opposition, Nabin accused Rahul Gandhi and the Congress party of promoting disorder and undermining constitutional institutions.

He said those invoking the Constitution today should remember history. Congress, in the past, had weakened constitutional values through the imposition of the Emergency and President's Rule in states, he said.

He further alleged that the Congress governed the country according to the interests of a single family rather than the principles of the Constitution.

Nabin also claimed that Rahul Gandhi and the Congress are functioning as a "toolkit" for anti-national and foreign forces.

Citing Bihar as an example, he said Congress leaders levelled allegations of irregularities during the voter list revision exercise but failed to file claims or objections in any district. Nabin said he regretted that Jharkhand, a state where he had spent a significant part of his life and which he described as his birthplace, was currently not governed by the BJP. (IANS/UNI)

Bihar: JD (U) expels MLA Anant Singh, wife Neelam Devi from party

PATNA, OCT 24



The Janata Dal (United) has expelled Mokama MLA Anant Singh and his wife, former MLA Neelam Devi, from the party for six years over alleged anti-party activities during the recent Bihar Legislative Council elections.

JD(U) state president Umesh Kushwaha announced the action on Saturday, citing repeated violations of party directives, alleged derogatory remarks against the party's senior leadership, and Anant Singh's decision to oppose the party's candidate in the Patna Graduates' constituency election and campaign in support of a candidate associated with Jan Suraaj.

In a letter announcing the action, Kushwaha said Anant Singh's primary membership had been terminated for six years.

The party has also written to the Speaker of the Bihar Legislative Assembly, seeking action against his membership under the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution, which deals with disqualification on grounds of defection.

Any decision on disqualification rests with the competent constitutional authority.

The party has separately revoked the primary membership of Anant Singh's wife, Neelam Devi, and expelled her for six years over her alleged involvement in anti-party activities.

The action follows a public dispute between Anant Singh and JD(U) candidate Neeraj Kumar during the election for the Patna Graduates' constituency of the Bihar Legislative Council.

Anant Singh openly opposed Neeraj Kumar and extended support to Anuj Singh, who contested on a Jan Suraaj ticket. Party leaders made several attempts to resolve the dispute. Union Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh alias Lalan Singh, a senior JD(U) leader and close aide of Nitish Kumar, was reportedly sent to persuade Anant Singh to reconsider his position. (IANS/UNI)

J&K CM to expand cabinet next week

SRINAGAR, OCT 24

After he called on the Jammu and Kashmir Lt. Governor Manoj Sinha at the Lok Bhawan here on Saturday, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah told reporters that the cabinet expansion and reshuffle will take place next week.

Omar Abdullah called on the Lt governor Manoj Sinha to enquire about his health and also discussed the upcoming cabinet expansion in the union territory.

Manoj Sinha on Friday returned to Srinagar after attending to his health problem in New Delhi. Former chief minister and ruling National Conference (NC) president, Dr Farooq Abdullah had told reporters last week that the cabinet expansion would take place after the L-G, who was not keeping well, would return back to Srinagar.

After meeting the L-G, Omar told reporters that the list of ministers had been finalised after consultations with the National Conference president, Dr Farooq Abdullah.

The chief minister said he had requested the Lt governor to fix a time during the first two or three days of next week for the expansion and reshuffle of his Council of Ministers. He also urged party colleagues and aspirants to stop lobbying for ministerial berths, saying the decision had already been taken.

J&K legislative assembly has 90 members, and according to the J&K Reorganisation Act 2019, the union territory can have a cabinet of nine ministers, including the chief minister.

This time the cabinet has five ministers excluding the chief minister. Omar can, therefore, induct three new faces. Reports here said three existing ministers are likely to be dropped while six new faces will be inducted.

The Chief Minister also said the government is taking up the issue of Umrah pilgrims stranded in Saudi Arabia with the Ministry of External Affairs and is prepared to provide financial assistance from its own budget, if necessary. Reports here said around 40 Umrah pilgrims are stranded in Saudi Arabia due to the closure of air flights to and from there. (IANS/UNI)

KERALA GOVERNOR'S KITCHEN ROW

Lok Bhavan clarifies non-veg food restriction

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, OCT 24



Governor Om Prakash Mathur

The Kerala Lok Bhavan denied reports that non-vegetarian food had been banned at the official residence of Kerala Governor Om Prakash Mathur.

It clarified that the restriction applied only to the kitchen preparing food for the Governor, who is a strict vegetarian.

There was no restriction on the food choices of Lok Bhavan employees or other people, officials said.

They were free to bring and eat food of their choice.

The clarification came amid a political controversy over reports that Mathur had directed that non-vegetarian food should not be cooked or served at the Governor's residence.

The reports had drawn sharp criticism from both the ruling Congress and the opposition CPI-M.

Leaders of both parties accused the Governor of attempting to implement the Sangh Parivar's agenda.

AICC general secretary K.C. Venugopal had said the decision had gone too far.

He argued that the Governor could not impose his personal food preferences on others.

Venugopal said Kerala had a diverse food culture and that people had the freedom to eat what they wanted.

He said attempts to restrict the traditional food habits of Malayalis amounted to an infringement of constitutional rights.

A person holding a constitutional office should not impose personal dietary preferences on others, he added.

Venugopal also alleged that the move was part of the Sangh Parivar's communal agenda and an attack on individual freedom.

Home Minister Ramesh Chennithala also criticised attempts to dictate people's food choices.

He said the freedom to decide what to eat, what to wear and which language to speak was part of individual liberty.

CPI-M state secretary M.V. Govindan had also accused the Sangh Parivar of trying to turn food into a communal issue.

He said everyone in a democratic country had the right to choose their food habits.

The controversy erupted soon after Mathur was sworn in as Kerala's 29th Governor. (IANS)

India, Uzbekistan discuss strengthening cooperation in counter-terrorism

NEW DELHI, OCT 24

India and Uzbekistan discussed strengthening bilateral cooperation across various sectors, including counter-terrorism, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Saturday.

The meeting was held in New Delhi between MEA Secretary (West) Sibi George and Uzbekistan's Co-Chair of the India-Uzbekistan Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism, Pirimkulov Gulomjon Shodmonkulovich.

In a post on X, the MEA said, "Secretary (West) Sibi George received Mr Pirimkulov Gulomjon Shodmonkulovich, Head of Department for Cooperation with South Asian, Near, Middle Eastern and African Countries, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan and Co-Chair of the India-Uzbekistan Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism."

"They discussed India-Uzbekistan cooperation in counter-terrorism and other issues of mutual interest, reaffirming their commitment to further strengthening bilateral cooperation," the Ministry added.

Additionally, the 10th Meeting of the India-Uzbekistan Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism was held on October 22 in New Delhi. The meeting was co-chaired by MEA Additional Secretary (Counter Terrorism) Suhel Ajaz Khan and Pirimkulov Gulomjon Shodmonkulovich.



"The two sides discussed the threats posed by terrorist groups globally and in their respective regions. Both sides exchanged views on current and emerging challenges to counter-terrorism, including countering extremism and radicalisation, combating financing of terrorism, preventing use of technology for terrorist purposes, and the nexus between transnational organised crime and terrorism," the MEA said in a statement.

The Ministry mentioned that both sides agreed to cooperate in addressing the threats and challenges to national and regional security, and further strengthen the framework of the India-Uzbekistan Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism.

"The two sides also deliberated on the measures to strengthen bilateral cooperation in the sphere of counter terrorism through information sharing, capacity building and sharing of best practices. They discussed the prospects of developing cooperation in the fight against terrorism between the relevant agencies of India and Uzbekistan. Both sides reaffirmed commitment to strengthen cooperation in multilateral fora including the UN, SCO-RATS and EAG," the statement read.

On October 4, Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant met Uzbekistan Supreme Court's Chairperson Robakhon Makhmudova and discussed bilateral judicial cooperation.

"Hon'ble CJI Justice Shri Surya Kant held a bilateral meeting with Justice Robakhon Makhmudova, Chairperson of the Supreme Court of Uzbekistan and discussed judicial cooperation between India and Uzbekistan. The efficient use of AI and digital technology in the judicial system was also discussed," the Embassy of India in Tashkent stated on X. (IANS)

Maharashtra to induct Army, Air Force Agniveers into state police: CM Fadnavis

NAGPUR, OCT 24

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has announced that Agniveers completing their tenure in the Army and the Air Force will also be given opportunities to join the state police force.

"Agniveers who wish to join Maharashtra police, will be inducted into the force. He declared that the government will provide jobs for Agniveers from the Army and the Air force to join the state police force," he said while speaking to reporters here.



Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis

Fadnavis said the state government had already inducted the first batch of Navy Agniveers into the coastal security wing of the Maharashtra Police.

He said these personnel had undergone extensive training and served in challenging terrains and along the borders. Their experience and skills would help strengthen coastal security and benefit the police force, he pointed.

Fadnavis further said the government had amended the existing recruitment rules to facilitate their induction.

The Navy Agniveers were directly appointed without having to undergo fresh police recruitment tests, as they had already cleared a rigorous selection process and received specialised training during their military service.

The Chief Minister said the government would also provide similar opportunities to Agniveers returning from the Army and the Air Force who wish to join the Maharashtra Police.

In a post on X, Fadnavis also announced the appointment of 282 Maharashtra-resident Navy Agniveers as police constables.

The group comprises 150 Seaman Deckside and 132 Seaman Engineside personnel, and appointment orders have been issued to them, he added.

The Agnipath scheme allows young recruits to serve in the Army, Navy or Air Force for four years, after which they may pursue employment opportunities in the civilian sector. (IANS/UNI)

RSS Vijayadashami march awaits police nod in Tumkur

Kalaburagi, Hubballi get conditional clearance

BENGALURU, OCT 24

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) is yet to get police permission to conduct its Vijayadashami processions in parts of Karnataka, including Tumakuru district, even as the organisation has been granted conditional permission to hold a march in Kalaburagi and Hubballi.

The developments come amid a political controversy over the state government's approach to RSS processions and Home Minister Priyank Kharge's remarks on obtaining permission.

Kalaburagi is the native place of Minister for Home Priyank Kharge and his father, AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge.



In Tumakuru district, the RSS has planned Vijayadashami processions in Tumakuru city, Tumakuru Rural, Kunigal and Gubbi on Saturday (October 24) and Sunday. However, police permission had not been granted until now, with the Graduates' Constituency Legislative Council election cited as the backdrop.According to sources, the RSS submitted applications to the police four days ago, seeking permission to conduct the processions at the designated locations. (IANS)

Man shot dead over parking dispute

TFP I CORRESPONDENT
AMRITSAR, OCT 24

A 27-year-old man was shot dead outside his house in the Anand Avenue area of Amritsar on Friday night following an argument over moving a Honda Activa scooter parked in a lane. The victim, Amit Sabharwal, worked in the marketing department of a private company.

Police registered a murder case against three brothers from the same neighbourhood, identified as Abhi Shah, Sunny Shah and Ritik Shah. Amit's father said the accused were his son's friends and claimed that he had no enmity with anyone.

According to the account of the incident, Amit had returned home late at night after partying with friends when an argument broke out over moving the scooter. As the dispute escalated, Abhi Shah allegedly opened fire with a country-made pistol.The incident occurred around 11.30 pm, when six rounds were reportedly fired at Amit outside his house, his father said. Two bullets hit him in the head, while one each struck his waist and leg. The family rushed Amit to a hospital, but he died on the way. (IANS/UNI)

Centre invites applications for CIC posts

NEW DELHI, OCT 24

The union Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions has invited applications for up to two posts of Information Commissioner in the Central Information Commission (CIC), with November 20, 2026, fixed as the last date for receiving completed applications.The Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) has invited applications to fill vacancies in the New Delhi-based Commission, with the number of appointments not exceeding two, depending on requirements. The posts will be filled as deemed necessary, indicating that the government may appoint fewer than two Information Commissioners. (IANS)

Bengal Christian woman alleges conversion threat by Bajrang Dal

KOLKATA, OCT 24

A Christian woman in West Bengal's Paschim Medinipur district has alleged that a group of people associated with the Bajrang Dal assaulted and stripped her, forcibly bathed her in front of others and attempted to pressure her family and two other families to convert to Hinduism during the Durga Puja festival.



Police personnel posted outside the victim's home.

The incident allegedly took place on October 18 at Patlapur village, when the group pressured them to abandon their Christian faith. The woman alleged that she lost consciousness after one of the accused, Ranjit Dolui, struck her on the head and below the ear.

According to her complaint, several accused removed her saree while she was partially conscious. The FIR also alleged that the group threatened to burn the families alive if they approached the police. One accused allegedly made sexual remarks about the complainant's 16-year-old daughter and threatened to have her married to a Muslim man and rape her. Another 15-year-old girl was allegedly held by the throat, while two women from the other families were assaulted with a bamboo stick. The group also allegedly took Rs.20,000 in cash from one of the houses.

The complainant said she contacted the police after the group left on October 18, following which some personnel visited the spot and heard her complaint. However, she alleged that the harassment continued. On October 19, two men allegedly took her, her husband and three others to a Durga Puja pandal in nearby Dingal village, where they were forced to perform religious rituals against their will.

Centre extends Defence Secretary Rajesh Singh's term

NEW DELHI, OCT 24

The tenure of Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh has been extended for one year beyond the initially specified date of October 31, 2026, according to an official communique released here on Saturday.



Rajesh Kumar Singh

The 1989-batch IAS officer from the Kerala cadre formally took over as India's Defence Secretary on November 1, 2024, succeeding Giridhar Aramane, who superannuated that year.

He is originally from Bihar, later serving in several key positions in Kerala and at the Centre during a career spanning more than three decades.

Singh is recognised for his extensive experience in public administration and policy-making. He has also served as Officer on Special Duty (Defence Secretary-Designate) in 2024, preparing for his later responsibilities as Defence Secretary. (IANS)

Navy's First Training Squadron concludes engagements in Maldives

MALE, OCT 24

Ships from the Indian Navy's First Training Squadron (1TS) have concluded their training and military engagement in the Maldives, including a Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with the Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF) Coast Guard, the High Commission of India in Male said on Saturday.



The squadron comprises INS Tir, INS Sujata and Indian Coast Guard Ship (ICGS) Sarathi, which are on an ongoing training deployment.

"The 1 TS of the Indian Navy (INS Tir, INS Sujata and ICGS Sarathi) successfully concluded their highly productive training and military engagement, including the PASSEX with the MNDF Coast Guard, reinforcing the enduring maritime partnership between India and the Maldives," the High Commission posted on X.

Last week, the 1TS ships concluded their port call at Seychelles' Port Victoria, during which they conducted a PASSEX with Seychelles Coast Guard ship Andromache.

INS Tir, INS Sujata and Indian Coast Guard Ship Sarathi departed Port Victoria on October 15 on completion of the port call, which commenced on October 12, as part of their ongoing training deployment. (IANS)

Gagayaan first test flight in 2 months: ISRO Chief

CHENNAI, OCT 24

The first test flight of India's ambitious maiden Gaganyaan human spaceflight mission till be conducted in two months, ISRO Chairman Dr.V.Narayanan announced on Saturday.



Talking to reporters after taking part in the Graduation Day event of the Sri Ramachandra Centre for Higher Education and Research (SRIHER) at its campus here, he said the first uncrewed flight test for the Gaganyaan-1 (G1) using the HLVM3 rocket will take place in two months from the spaceport of Sriharikota.

G1 flight is an uncrewed test mission that will carry the half-humanoid robot Vyommitra into a low Earth orbit. It will use the human-rated HLVM3 rocket and an indigenously developed Crew Module.

The Space Agency has been carrying out critical qualification tests ahead of the first test flight to validate all systems. ISRO had completed the Second Integrated Air drop Test (IADT-02) alidating the parachute deceleration systems using an IAF helicopter, besides the Crew Module-Service Module Separation Tests, apex cover separation, and crew module uprighting system.

Following Gaganyaan-1, additional uncrewed test flights (including humanoids) will be launched ahead of the inaugural crewed human spaceflight mission. Gaganyaan project envisages demonstration of human spaceflight capability by launching crew of 3 members to an orbit of 400 km for a 3 days mission and bring them back safely to earth, by landing in Indian sea waters.

The pre-requisites for Gaganyaan mission include development of many critical technologies including human rated launch vehicle for carrying crew safely to space, Life Support System to provide an earth like environment to crew in space, crew emergency escape provision and evolving crew management aspects for training, recovery and rehabilitation of crew. It will carry Orbital Module (OM)--equipped with state-of-the-art avionics systems with adequate redundancy considering human safety--that will be Orbiting the Earth. (IANS/UNI)

THE FREEDOM PRESS

SUNDAY 25 OCTOBER 2026

India's clean energy transition

Japan Credit Rating Agency (JCR) has upgraded India's sovereign credit rating from BBB+ to A-, marking a significant milestone in the country's economic journey. The upgrade is particularly notable as major global agencies have remained relatively cautious. Fitch has retained India at BBB- since 2006, while Moody's has maintained its Baa3 rating since 2020. Standard & Poor's upgraded India from BBB- to BBB in August 2025, its first upgrade in 18 years. JCR's assessment reflects growing recognition of India's economic strength and highlights the importance of examining how sovereign ratings influence investment.

Sovereign credit ratings help investors assess a government's ability to repay debt and determine the cost of borrowing. These ratings also influence financing conditions for businesses and infrastructure projects. A lower rating generally raises borrowing costs, affecting capital-intensive sectors such as solar and wind energy, electricity transmission, and battery storage. Since these projects require substantial initial investment and generate returns over several decades, higher financing costs can affect their viability, delay implementation and increase dependence on government support or external guarantees.

The relationship between climate vulnerability and creditworthiness is equally important. Natural disasters, energy disruptions and climate-related damage can weaken economic activity, increase reconstruction expenditure and place additional pressure on public finances. An International Monetary Fund working paper published in 2026 links disaster-related economic losses with a higher probability of sovereign default, while other IMF research indicates that climate vulnerability can lower credit ratings and increase borrowing costs, particularly in emerging and developing economies. Countries therefore face the challenge of investing in climate resilience while maintaining fiscal stability and managing debt.

India's experience demonstrates that a relatively conservative sovereign rating does not necessarily prevent sustained progress in clean energy. Despite remaining in the lowest investment-grade category with some major agencies, India has continued expanding its renewable-energy capacity and strengthening its electricity infrastructure. Clean energy accounted for 83 per cent of power-sector investment in 2024, and the country ranks third globally in installed renewable-energy capacity. These developments reflect the contribution of policy support, infrastructure development, domestic investment and a growing market for clean-energy technologies.

An important factor behind India's progress is its ability to mobilise domestic financial resources. State-linked institutions such as the Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) and the Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA) play significant roles in financing power and renewable-energy projects, benefiting from their links to the public sector. India's large economy and domestic investor base also reduce its dependence on foreign capital, although international investment remains important. This combination of domestic financing, public-sector participation and private investment has helped sustain the energy transition despite relatively high financing costs. The experience of many African countries illustrates the difficulties faced by economies with fewer financing alternatives. Africa accounts for approximately 18 per cent of the world's population but receives only about 2 per cent of global clean-energy investment. Its average external debt-to-GDP ratio increased from 16 per cent in 2011 to 31 per cent in 2021, while Botswana and Mauritius were the only African countries with investment-grade sovereign ratings as of June 2023. Research by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the International Energy Agency indicates that clean-energy projects in developing economies often face substantially higher financing costs than those in advanced markets. These costs can discourage investment even where the underlying infrastructure offers promising returns.

India's policy experience highlights the value of combining ambitious development targets with institutional financing and a supportive investment environment. Continued improvements in financial-market depth, regulatory certainty, transmission infrastructure and domestic manufacturing can further strengthen the renewable-energy sector.

What my visits to Tamil Nadu's ITIs reveal about India's frustrated youth





KARTI P CHIDAMBARAM

As thousands of young Indians protested on the streets of Delhi and on social media under the banner of "cockroaches", my team and I visited Industrial Training Institutes, district employment centres and libraries in my constituency of Sivaganga, Tamil Nadu.

The visits convinced me that the protests are not an isolated outburst. They are the cascading result of overlapping failures facing Indian youth, and they show what happens when aspiration becomes as powerful an organising force in our politics as identity.

Religion, caste and language have long organised Indian politics. But ask a young citizen today and they will know about the student protests at Jantar Mantar in the national capital. This is a sign of a generation beginning to unite behind causes that cut across identity.

Examination integrity is one such cause. The NEET-UG paper leak brought the problem into sharp focus, but it was hardly an exception. In 2024, a parliamentary committee noted that five of 14 major examinations conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA), an autonomous body under the Ministry of Education, had faced serious problems. When the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act was first tabled that year, The Indian Express reported that paper leaks in 15 states over the course of five years had affected 1.4 crore applicants competing for 1.04 lakh posts, which roughly translated to 135 candidates per vacancy.

The student protests have arguably compelled the BJP-led government to initiate 'reforms'. The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Bill, 2026, introduced in the Monsoon Session, focuses largely on the aftermath of a leak: heavier penalties, longer prison terms and fast-track courts. However, it did not address the discontent related to the functioning of NTA, which was established in 2017 as a self-sustained 'premier testing organisation'. It has been criticised for having few permanent positions, relying on deputed and contractual staff, and outsourcing critical functions, factors that have impacted the future of crores of students. Additionally, fast-track courts are not the cure. Parliamentary data shows that the existing Fast Track Special Courts dealing with POCSO and sexual-offence cases have more than two lakh cases pending.

Employment and education, two of the biggest pressure points in Indian society, are now being debated in public. According to Azim Premji University's State of Working India Report 2026, 40 per cent of graduates aged 15 to 25 and 20 per cent of those aged 25 to 29 are unemployed. NITI Aayog has reported 8.7 crore young Indians aged 15 to 29 are not in education, employment or training (NEET).

my team saw at government ITIs in Sivaganga helps explain why. According to reports, the number of ITIs has grown by nearly 300 per cent, driven largely by private providers, even as quality has declined. We observed that students were enrolled and the curriculum was being covered, but it was hard to tell what employable skills they had acquired. Women trainees in a Computer Operator class took notes in English but could neither explain what they had written nor follow questions asked in the language. Industry representatives at the District Industries Centre highlighted the same problem: a gap between enrolment and employability.

Who, then, is reaping the benefits of India becoming one of the world's largest economies, if not its youth?

All this is unfolding as Parliament faces an institutional crisis. During the Monsoon Session Question Hour functioned for just 1 per cent of its scheduled time in the Lok Sabha, while a majority of bills were passed without members participating in the discussion.

When we look at the conversations that have occupied so much media and political attention, one cannot help but wonder whether we have our priorities right. How many stanzas of the national song should we sing: two or six? What colour should the national sporting jersey be, blue or orange? And, increasingly, what labels should we use for those who disagree with us and ask questions of us — "tukde-tukde gang", "Khan Market Gang", "Urban Naxals" or, more recently, "dimaagi naxal"?

We must look beneath the headline figures. The real test of progress lies not in the size of the whole but in the quality of life within it. That means quality jobs and skills that equip young people with industry-relevant capabilities, rather than just an empty certificate. Two schemes show how far we are from this.

The first is the government's flagship skilling scheme, the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY). A 2025 CAG report found design flaws, including the absence of a systematic analysis of market demand for specific job roles to guide training. The second is the Prime Minister's Internship Scheme (PMIS). According to a parliamentary committee, across the first two pilot rounds of the scheme, 3 lakh candidates were shortlisted and companies made 1.3 lakh offers. Of these, 52,782 offers were accepted, and just 16,060 interns ultimately joined the programme. Surprisingly, Round I recorded a drop-out rate of 53.6 per cent.

This calls for a shift in focus from the scale of announcements, such as the recent pledge to train 1 crore young people in AI skills in one year, to the rigour of evaluation. It means moving away from outlay-driven governance towards outcome-driven governance. We must ask: what have the government's flagship skilling and employment schemes actually achieved, given the Rs 48,000 crore spent on them over the years?

Youth protests have tried to force the establishment to confront these realities. The first step is to acknowledge where the system has fallen short. That is not a narrative of perpetual failure, but neither should the narrative be one of perpetual triumph. India needs an honest assessment of where it stands today, with less emphasis on grand promises and greater focus on setting clear, realistic and achievable goals.

(Karti P Chidambaram is a Sivaganga MP)

Jamnagar, Rubio, and why the US wants India to 'Obey', not negotiate

ASHOK SAJJANHAR

The year 2026 has emerged as a defining litmus test for the strategic partnership between the United States and India. Characterised by an intricate dance of macroeconomic friction, anti-Indian commentary, and deep-rooted defense collaboration, the bilateral relationship is navigating a cycle of real structural turbulence. No single series of events captures this paradox better than the high-stakes diplomatic itineraries of US Secretary of State Marco Rubio. Following a critical repair mission in May 2026 to stabilise relations jolted by trade tariffs, Rubio's tour in October 2026 to the financial, industrial, technology, and energy hubs of Mumbai and Jamnagar underscores a relationship shifting away from an all-encompassing strategic partnership towards hyper-pragmatic, transactional diplomacy.

To appreciate the current state of India-US ties, one must look back to the spring of 2026. The bilateral relationship entered the year under severe stress. The second Trump administration had introduced a series of aggressive economic manoeuvres, including the imposition of a 50% import tariff on certain Indian goods in August, 2025. Compounding these economic shocks were geopolitical grievances: Washington had renewed diplomatic engagement with Pakistan - which New Delhi viewed as insensitive to its counterterrorism challenges - and public praise from the White House for Pakistan's military leadership had caused a severe trust deficit.

From the 'repair mission' of May 2026 when Rubio worked aggressively to reassure India of its status as a vital strategic partner, extended an invitation to PM Modi on behalf of President Trump to visit the White House, sought to address the 50% penalty import tariffs and trust deficit, pushed the "Mission 500" to increase bilateral trade to $500 billion by 2030, and reaffirmed Quad cooperation in New Delhi, Rubio's objectives in October, 2026 represented a transactional shift which coincided with a pause in the Sanctions of Russia and Iran Act seemingly triggered by broader U.S. conflicts with Iran and Russia.



The October visit has been defined by hard, transactional realism. In a move that unnecessarily ruffled feathers among some political opposition circles in India, Rubio skipped the traditional diplomatic reception in New Delhi entirely. Instead, the State Department mapped an itinerary focused squarely on the economic and financial muscle of Mumbai and the energy infrastructure of Jamnagar in Gujarat - home to the world's largest oil refining complex.

The backdrop to Rubio's October arrival was the looming threat of the Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act. In a significant diplomatic decision just prior to Rubio's departure, the Trump administration paused these sanctions as they applied to any country. Speaking on his way to India, Rubio stated directly that India is an "important ally" whose energy needs must be meticulously factored into US foreign policy calculations. Rubio equated energy security with national security and declared that America's keenness to stop the Russia-Ukraine conflict has to be balanced with the impact that such measures might have on other countries. This argument sounds somewhat hypocritical, as such thinking seems to have been nowhere under consideration when penalty tariffs of 25% on account of India's purchases of Russian oil were imposed in August 2025, while the largest importer of Russian oil and gas, China, was left untouched because of varying strategic considerations. It would have been tactless for Trump to have imposed sanctions on India on the eve of the Rubio visit. This would have totally left Rubio bereft of any negotiating leverage on what he sought to achieve. Moreover, it appears that the US today desperately wants more diesel to flow into the global markets to control the prices. In this context, the Reliance Refinery at Jamnagar, the world's largest and one of the few with the capacity to refine the hard, sour crude from Venezuela, can meet the current US needs. It is in this context that Rubio was compelled to speak of India as a "Refining Superpower". Rubio's dash to India and to Jamnagar was to seek immediate reprieve for the shortage of diesel that the world is currently experiencing, and Trump's hope that India could help in ameliorating the situation and thereby help him in his mid-Term performance.

However, this relief comes with an explicit American counter-demand: Rubio emphasized a 60-day window for India to actively diversify its energy supply away from Moscow and toward American energy exporters, declaring that Washington "will not let Iran hold the global energy market hostage".

The bilateral economic domain continues to remain a persistent battlefield. Long-running efforts to finalise an interim bilateral trade agreement have repeatedly stalled over market access, agricultural barriers, and tariff structures.

Yet, ahead of his October meetings with Jaishankar, Rubio injected a burst of optimism into the narrative, telling media outlets that negotiations were in their "last inches" and that a breakthrough was imminent. This push is tied to a broader political timeline: Washington is leveraging the trade agreement to set the stage for an official presidential visit by Donald Trump to India early next year. This could also be timed with PM Modi's anticipated visit to Miami, Florida, for the G20 Summit in December 2026. Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal has highlighted that India wants to be assured of a position of comparative advantage relative to its global trade competitors.

However, the path to a finalised deal remains complicated by domestic policy incoherence in Washington. While the State Department attempts to cultivate India as the premier alternative to Chinese manufacturing supply chains, simultaneous crackdowns on Indian technology firms by US immigration authorities have severely strained the relationship. These immigration restrictions - implemented just as delegations attempt to pitch technology partnerships under the TRUST Initiative - have raised concerns in New Delhi about America's predictability as an economic partner.

While public and media attention naturally gravitates toward high-profile tariff disputes and diplomatic scheduling snubs, an entirely separate reality is unfolding at the operational level. Beneath the turbulence, functional cooperation in defense, artificial intelligence, and semiconductor fabrication is accelerating at an unprecedented pace.

The American private sector has decoupled its long-term strategic investments in India from the erratic cycles of official trade negotiations. Major US tech giants pledged a significant $68 billion in AI infrastructure investments in India over the past year. Furthermore, tangible components of the tech alliance are rapidly materialising:

Silicon Valley equipment heavyweights Applied Materials and Lam Research announced massive capital infusions into India's emerging semiconductor ecosystem, providing the hardware foundation for New Delhi's electronics manufacturing ambitions.

India's foreign policy remains stubbornly anchored in multi-alignment. New Delhi has made it clear that its historic ties with Russia and its cautious, renewed diplomatic engagements with China are vital elements of its strategic autonomy. Conversely, Washington's aggressive use of unilateral economic sanctions and volatile trade measures means that Indian policymakers will continue to harbour reservations about relying entirely on American promises.

Rubio's visit signalled a distinctly transactional shift in bilateral engagement. Rather than framing the relationship around expansive grand strategy, the meetings were narrowly focused and issue-based, zeroing in almost exclusively on core pragmatic topics like energy security, trade, and investment collaborations. Critical, high-level strategic questions - such as peace and security, Washington's relations with Pakistan, broader engagement through the Quad, or coordinated posturing on China - were notably absent from the front burner. This functional pivot underscores a broader systemic slowdown: major institutional dialogue mechanisms, including the flagship 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue that previously anchored the partnership, have not been held for nearly two years. As these vital bilateral forums are put on a pause mode, institutional momentum has perceptibly weakened. While pockets of resilience persist in immediate sector-specific cooperation, the overall trajectory reflects a decline in the ambition of diplomatic ties, replacing broad strategic alignment with narrowly scoped, transactional bargaining.

(Amb. Ashok Sajjanhar was ambassador of India to Kazakhstan, Sweden, and Latvia)

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

India offers Central Asian nations high-value partnership

NAYPYIDAW, OCT 23

Central Asia's expanding engagement with India is poised to create a collaborative growth framework rooted in historical ties and respect for national sovereignty, a report has stated.

India offers the Central Asian Republics (CARs) a high-value economic partnership focused on sustainable development, technology transfer and trade diversification, unlike China's resource-extractive approach, which views the region largely as a supplier of raw materials and a market for cheap manufactured goods, a report in Myanmar's media outlet 'Mizzima News' highlighted.

By supplying world-class pharmaceuticals, technical expertise and digital infrastructure, including digital payment systems, alongside connectivity initiatives such as the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) and Chabahar Port, India can help bridge critical developmental gaps and improve Central Asian economies, gaining greater access to global markets, the report mentioned.



The post-Moscow era, it stated, has seen Central Asian nations broaden their strategic partnerships with China and India amid Russia's reduced influence in the regi on.

"China has been a seasoned regional player as an infrastructure supplier, leveraging infrastructural initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) for strategic ties, along with investments in transport, regional energy reserves, and digital infrastructure. On the other hand, India's engagement has been driven by an issue-based development approach, often envisaged via the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) and the Chabahar Port, which are crucial to its Connect Central Asia policy, along with promoting thematic partnerships on rare earth metals and digital partnerships," it detailed.

Given the growing involvement of the two emerging powers in the region, the report said, CARs have several compelling reasons to favour New Delhi in trade and commerce while pursuing a multi-vector diplomatic approach.

"First, the geostrategic and security concerns with respect to China's BRI have made the region especially fertile for Indian engagement. Post-2015, India has viewed CAR as a single geographical unit for facilitating cooperation. Since then, multiple deals have been signed between India and CARs on a variety of issues, including security, energy, trade, and culture. As mentioned earlier, this rejuvenation of ties is also determined by the historicity of traditional and socioeconomic ties between the two," the report in 'Mizzima News' mentioned.

"Second, there exists anti-China sentiment and deep scepticism amongst the CARs for a variety of reasons. Central Asians are sceptical of Chinese investments, as these investments are considered risky and a threat to sovereignty. Besides, the Chinese treatment of ethnic minorities like the Uyghurs, Kazakhs and Kyrgyz has fuelled public angst. Chinese tendencies are often seen as expansionist, based on historical experiences. This is where the narrative of deep, friendly historical ties with India, and its influence as a soft cultural power, pitches in," it added.

The report noted that India's trade framework for the CARs prioritises sustainable infrastructure, concessional financing and transparency, helping address concerns about debt-trap diplomacy.

Against this backdrop, it said, closer economic ties with India could enable the Central Asian nations to strengthen their economic resilience while retaining sovereign autonomy and ensuring that development is guided by mutual respect. (IANS/UNI)

10.88 crore active workers registered under 'VB-G RAM G' scheme: Govt

NEW DELHI, OCT 24

The Viksit Bharat - Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G) has recorded strong progress across multiple implementation metrics with active workers numbering 10.88 crore in 2026-27 and assets created totalling 2.83 lakh, an official statement said on Saturday.



Person-days generated exceeded 31.69 crore, while women's participation stood at 61.65 per cent. Employment was provided on demand to over 2.81 crore workers from about 2.23 crore rural households and around 97.17 lakh workers are currently under execution.

"VB-G RAM G brings employment, participatory planning and rural development together. Through VGPPs, Gram Panchayats identify local needs, map existing assets and prioritise development works," the statement said.

Technology, convergence and digital systems strengthen implementation, transparency and accountability. The framework links employment with sustainable asset creation, supporting resilient livelihoods and integrated rural development.

The statement said 73.24 lakh approved works are readily available to meet future employment demand and about 20.16 lakh active worksites are operational.

Nearly 2.31 lakh Gram Panchayats are executing works across the country, and 3.76 crore direct benefit transfer transactions have been recorded in 2026-27. (IANS)

MP FDA flags Patanjali's cow ghee batch as unsafe, orders recall

NEW DELHI, OCT 24

FMCG firm Patanjali Foods Ltd has received an order from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in Madhya Pradesh, directing recall of a batch of cow ghee after a sample was found to be unsafe under food safety regulations, according to an exchange filing on Saturday.

The company said the MP FDA issued the order, as the sample did not meet standards prescribed under the Food Safety and Standards (Food Products Standards and Food Additives and Contaminants, Toxins and Residues) Regulations, 2011.



The food regulator ordered recall of the affected batch in Burhanpur.

However, the company is filing an appeal against the order passed by the designated officer of MP FDA, it said.

The company added that the action would have no material impact on its financial or operational activities except to the extent of the value of the affected batch.

"There is no material impact on financial or operational activities, except to the extent of value of the cow ghee of a batch," the company said.

Shares of Patanjali Foods on Friday ended at Rs 351, down over 1 per cent on the BSE. (IANS)

Chemicals and petrochemicals sector needs to reach $1 trillion by 2040

MUMBAI, OCT 24

The chemicals and petrochemicals sector needs to grow from its current market size of about $220 billion to about $1 trillion by 2040, and further to around $1.6 trillion by 2047, Union Minister JP Nadda said on Saturday.



The Chemical and Petrochemical industry is a sunrise sector, and it has huge potential to grow and contribute towards economic development, said Nadda, adding that for the country to achieve the ambition of Viksit Bharat by 2047, this sector has to play an indispensable role.

He was speaking at the three-day 'India Chem-2026' which concluded in Mumbai.

Japan, with whom India shares a robust trade relationship, particularly in the chemical and petrochemical sector, was the partner country for the event.

The CEOs Forum, presided by Nadda, focused on strengthening industry, competitiveness and advancing India's ambition to emerge as a globally competitive chemicals and petrochemical hub.

Industry leaders from across the globe discussed the opportunities and challenges of the Indian chemical industry.

During the brainstorming sessions under India-Japan, India-US and India-EU Chemicals and Petrochemicals Forum, representatives and industry leaders explored opportunities for deeper collaboration in trade, investment and technology related to sector, according to an official statement.

The event witnessed international participation from number of countries including Japan, the US, Canada, the UK, countries across the European Union, Latin America, Republic of Korea and ASEAN nations, with a footfall over more than 5,000 visitors across three days. (IANS/UNI)

Upasana calls for women's unity

RATNA CHOTRANI
HYDERABAD, OCT. 24

Vice Chairperson–CSR, Apollo Hospitals, Upasana Kamineni Konidela, called for women to support one another and rise together while appreciating popular anchor Suma Kanakala for completing five years of her philanthropic initiative, 'Festivals for Joy'. Speaking at the anniversary celebrations, attended by Padma Shri Sunitha Krishna, actor Rajeev Kanakala, donors, beneficiaries and other prominent personalities, Upasana praised Suma's confidence, determination and achievements. She said initiatives supporting women in need made a meaningful difference and stressed that one woman's pain should never become another woman's success.



Sunitha Krishna praised Upasana for her continued support for children's healthcare and Suma for anchoring several programmes without charging any remuneration.

India continues to clock robust growth amid global uncertainties

NEW DELHI, OCT 24

As global growth is forecast to slow from 3.5 per cent in 2025 to 3.1 per cent in 2026, India's economic resilience is increasingly evident as it sustains growth despite geopolitical tensions, volatile energy markets, trade uncertainty, and tighter financial conditions, according to a new report.



Major global institutions' upward revisions to GDP forecasts reinforce India's standing as a leading global growth engine, says the report in Tanzania-based The Guardian (IPP Media).

"Export diversification, digital transformation, fiscal discipline, and energy security will strengthen competitiveness and sustain long-term, inclusive economic growth," it noted.

The IMF recently raised India's growth forecast to 7.0 per cent for both 2026 and 2027, making it the fastest-growing major economy and highlighting strong domestic drivers and resilience to external shocks.

"A principal source of India's economic strength is its large and diversified domestic market. Household consumption, business investment, and public expenditure on infrastructure together create a broad base of economic activity. (IANS)

NSE CEO flags AI-driven cyberattack risks

MUMBAI, OCT 24

Flagging risks from AI-driven cyberattacks, National Stock Exchange MD and CEO Ashish Kumar Chauhan on Saturday asked stockbrokers to strengthen their cybersecurity capabilities and also warned that vulnerabilities at individual members could affect integrity of the broader market network.



Speaking at the ANMI International Capital Market Convention 2026 here, the NSE CEO said the exchange is reviewing every component of its network for vulnerabilities amid growing threat of AI-based cyberattacks.

"Every member has to now take that out as a main function to ensure that integrity of our trading framework across India, across all members is maintained," according to him.

Chauhan further warned that more vulnerabilities were likely to emerge over next few years and called on ANMI to set up a special task force to identify risks, coordinate responses and help market participants address them.

NSE is prepared to assist brokers through workshops and other support and would work with the regulator to help members strengthen their systems, he said.

Brokers lacking in-house technical capabilities should build them or seek external advisers, Chauhan said.

While citing recent incidents of AI-related cyberattacks, he said cybersecurity risks could affect integrity of broader market network if individual members failed to address vulnerabilities.

Meanwhile, he also flagged longer-term challenge posed by quantum computing, which could affect cryptographic systems, including those used in secure communications.

Market participants would need to prepare for these risks alongside immediate threat from AI-enabled attacks, Chauhan said.

However, technology has remained central to functioning of capital markets since NSE's early years but market participants cannot afford to fall behind as threats evolve, he added.

Earlier in October, India's largest lender State Bank of India (SBI) experienced data breach with 3,897 customer records found exposed on the dark web. (IANS)

'United Nations needed more than ever': Guterres



UN Secretary-General António Guterres

NEW YORK, OCT 24

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres on Saturday reaffirmed the importance of the United Nations in addressing global challenges, promoting peace and protecting human rights, saying the organisation is needed more than ever as it marks its 81st anniversary. In a message marking United Nations Day, Guterres highlighted the UN's longstanding role in resolving disputes through diplomacy and international law, combating poverty and hunger, promoting human rights and delivering life-saving assistance to people affected by conflict, disasters and displacement.

In a post on X, the UN chief said the organisation would continue working to strengthen its ability to serve people and respond to the challenges of the present time.

"For 81 years, the @UN has been: Settling disputes with diplomacy & laws. Working to eradicate poverty & hunger. Promoting human rights. And delivering life-saving aid to people facing war, disaster & displacement. Today, the United Nations is needed more than ever. We will continue working to strengthen the UN to best serve people & meet the challenges of our time," Guterres wrote.

In a video message on United Nations Day, the Secretary-General said the occasion celebrated not only an international organisation but also the idea that humanity's future depends on countries working together to advance peace, development and human rights.

"On United Nations Day, we celebrate not only an organization, but an idea: Humanity's future depends on our ability to work together to advance peace, development and human rights. For 81 years, the UN has given life to that idea. Settling disputes- with diplomacy and laws, not weapons. Working to eradicate poverty and hunger. Promoting human rights and delivering life-saving aid to people facing war, disaster and displacement." (IANS)

Greek parliament approves social media ban for under-15s

ATHENS, OCT 23

The Greek parliament has approved legislation banning children under 15 from accessing social media from January 1, 2027, Greek media reported Friday.

The legislation requires social media platforms to implement age-verification measures to ensure compliance. Companies that fail to meet the requirements could face fines of up to 6 per cent of their global annual turnover.



Addressing parliament ahead of the vote on Thursday evening, Digital Governance and Artificial Intelligence Minister Dimitris Papastergiou described the measure as a necessary step that is compatible with the European Union's (EU) existing regulatory framework, Xinhua News Agency reported.

"It would have been very easy to do absolutely nothing today and wait for the perfect European law. But the challenge is here. Children are sinking into the internet every day, and I believe a responsible government must do what it is obliged to do," he said.

Minister of State Akis Skertsos said technology should be regulated in ways that give children greater freedom to grow up safely.

Meanwhile, Health Minister Adonis Georgiadis described digital addiction as a public health challenge. Excessive use of social media can negatively affect children's sleep, concentration, social relationships and psychological development, he said.

The legislation forms part of broader government efforts to protect children from harmful online content, cyberbullying and platform features that encourage excessive use.

Greece aims to become the first EU member state to introduce such a ban, the government has said.

The French parliament passed legislation on July 21 aimed at protecting minors from the risks associated with social media use. However, the French Constitutional Council ruled on August 14 that the key provision banning under-15s from accessing social media was unconstitutional.

Australia banned social media for under-16s in December last year.

The Australian federal parliament passed the Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Bill 2024 in November 2024, requiring certain social media platforms to take "reasonable steps" to prevent children under 16 from having accounts. (IANS/UNI)

Four Philippine Air Force pilots killed in trainer aircraft crash

MANILA, OCT 24

Four Philippine Air Force (PAF) pilots were killed after two SF-260 aircraft crashed during a training flight at Fernando Air Base in Batangas province on Friday, October 23, the air force confirmed on Saturday.



According to the PAF, the accident occurred at approximately 3:51 pm local time, when both aircraft went down within the perimeter of Fernando Air Base. No other casualties were reported in the incident.

The air force expressed grief over the loss of the four pilots and said an investigation had been launched to establish the circumstances and cause of the crash. As a precautionary measure, all SF-260 aircraft in the fleet have been temporarily grounded while the investigation proceeds.

In an official press statement, the Philippine Air Force confirmed the deaths and outlined the immediate steps being taken following the accident.

"The Philippine Air Force (PAF) mourns the loss of four pilots in an aviation accident involving two SF-260 aircraft during a training flight at Fernando Air Base on October 23, 2026, at 3:51 PM. Both aircraft went down within the base perimeter, with no other casualties reported," it said.

"An investigation is underway to determine the cause of the accident, while all SF-260 aircraft have been temporarily grounded as a precautionary safety measure.The PAF honors the service and sacrifice of our fallen aviators and is coordinating with their bereaved families to provide necessary assistance. At the families' request, we respectfully appeal to the public to respect their privacy during this difficult time," it added.

The statement did not provide further details about the identities of the deceased pilots or the circumstances leading to the crash. (IANS)

Ukraine Ministry says connectivity of Starlink restored



KYIV, OCT 24

Ukraine's Defence Ministry today said that the speed and connectivity of the satellite networks used by its military had been fully restored after two weeks of restrictions that hampered drone operations.

The ministry said its monitoring systems had detected a return to normal performance on SpaceX's Starlink and the US government-controlled Starshield networks, recording speeds exceeding 400km/h with stable connectivity.

The restrictions had affected Ukraine's ability to use interceptor drones against Russian attacks and deploy its own drones to deliver supplies to troops on the front lines. They also threatened operations involving intelligence gathering and long-range strikes against Russian targets.

The disruption became a source of tension between Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, US President Donald Trump and SpaceX chief executive Elon Musk.

Zelensky viewed the restrictions as retaliation for his refusal to halt Ukrainian strikes on Russian oil refineries, although Trump denied that the White House had ordered the slowdown.

The dispute also prompted criticism from both Republicans and Democrats in the US and sparked a public exchange over who was responsible for the restrictions.

Ukraine relies on Starlink for battlefield communications, logistics, reconnaissance and defensive drone operations. Starshield, which is controlled by the US government, is used for certain offensive military operations.

Trump had repeatedly claimed that connectivity had been restored, despite Ukrainian officials continuing to report problems. On Friday, he denied reports that he had spoken to Musk about the issue but assured that he would contact the billionaire if restrictions remained in place. (IANS/UNI)

Paraguay joins US-led AI infrastructure pact

WASHINGTON, OCT 24

Paraguay has joined a US-led initiative to develop artificial intelligence infrastructure and secure supplies of critical minerals, becoming the 26th signatory to the Pax Silica Declaration.

The agreement was formalised at the US State Department in Washington on Friday, with Paraguayan Foreign Minister Ramírez signing the declaration alongside US Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs Jacob Helberg.

The State Department said the two countries had agreed to explore the use of Paraguay's mineral resources and abundant hydroelectric power to support the development of advanced artificial intelligence infrastructure.

The announcement brings another South American country into a growing US-backed framework linking energy resources, strategic minerals and the infrastructure required for increasingly powerful AI systems.

"Today, the United States welcomed Paraguay as the 26th signatory to the Pax Silica Declaration," the State Department said in an official announcement.

It said the signing marked the beginning of Paraguay's participation in the initiative, which Washington is using to expand international cooperation on technologies considered increasingly important to economic competitiveness and national security. (IANS/UNI)

Major Ebola vaccine trial begins in DR Congo as outbreak continues

KINSHASA, OCT 23

A major clinical trial to evaluate vaccines against the Bundibugyo Ebola virus began Friday in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), with the first participants vaccinated as the country battles the largest recorded outbreak of the virus.



The Phase 2/3 trial, known as Tumaini, was launched in Bunia, the capital of the hardest-hit Ituri Province, said the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations, which is funding and supporting the study.

The trial comes amid a worsening Ebola crisis that has claimed more than 4,600 lives in the DRC since May. Despite the scale of the outbreak, no vaccine has yet been approved specifically against the Bundibugyo virus, Xinhua News Agency reported.

Tumaini, meaning "hope" in Swahili, aims to assess the safety, immune responses and effectiveness of several vaccine candidates, particularly among people who have been in contact with confirmed Ebola patients and face a high risk of infection.The trial uses an adaptive platform design, allowing multiple vaccine candidates to be evaluated within a single study through a ring vaccination approach targeting contacts of confirmed cases. (IANS)

Austria expels four Russian diplomats

VIENNA, OCT 23

Austria has decided to expel four Russian diplomats accredited in Vienna, the Austrian Foreign Ministry said Friday.

Among the four diplomats, three members from the Russian embassy had carried out activities "incompatible with their diplomatic status," and each had been declared "persona non grata," said the ministry, Xinhua News Agency reported.

The fourth diplomat, who was from the Russian delegation to the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, was responsible for military security and arms control, and was also declared "persona non grata."

As a legal term, "persona non grata" refers to the practice of a state prohibiting a diplomat from entering the country as a diplomat.

On the Russian side, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Dmitry Lubinsky said on Friday that a reaction would "inevitably" follow.

In July, Romania's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) said that a member of the Russian Embassy in Bucharest had been declared undesirable (persona non grata) and ordered to leave the country within five days. (IANS)

India-supported 15 community development projects inaugurated in Bhutan's Mongar

THIMPHU, OCT 24

As many as 15 High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDP) supported by the Government of India, including over 65 km of roads, 10 km of irrigation canals and two bridges, were inaugurated in Bhutan's Mongar district, the Indian Embassy in Thimphu said on Saturday.



The projects were inaugurated by the Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) of the Indian Embassy, along with the Dasho Dzongdag, Gups of 17 Gewogs and people of Mongar.

"These include over 65 km of roads, 10 km of irrigation canals, two bridges, from the road to Nagor Middle Secondary School to irrigation at Ngarpontang. These projects ease daily life for farmers, school children and families in Mongar and nearby areas, enhancing convenience, safety, dignity and opportunities for them," the Embassy posted on X.

"HICDP is a unique model of India's support for projects identified by local communities based on their needs and aspirations," it added.

In August, three India-backed HICDPs in Panbang, Zhemgang of Bhutan were inaugurated.

These projects included Blacktopping of Gewog Centre–Lichibi Farm Road (Nu 20 million), Road Construction/GSB of Lamthang Chiwog Road (Nu 5.7 million), and Road Improvement of Budhashi Chiwog Road (Nu 5 million).

"These India-Supported HICDP projects improve market access for agricultural produce, enhance livelihoods, and improve the quality of life for the people of Panbang," the Embassy had stated on X.

During the fifth Plan Talks held in August, officials from the two nations reviewed the overall progress and implementation of the Indian government's support for INR/Nu. 100 billion (10,000 crore) for Bhutan's 13th FYP period (2024-29). This support covers Project Tied Assistance (PTA) projects, High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDP), Economic Stimulus Programme (ESP) and the Programme Grant.

The Government of India has also released INR/Nu. 12,500 million (1,250 crore) towards ESP, INR/Nu. 7,352 million (735.20 crore) towards HICDPs and INR/Nu. 2,000 million (200 crore) towards Programme Grant. (IANS)

Saudi Air defenses intercept Houthi ballistic missiles targeting Taif, Yanbu

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
RIYADH, OCT 24



Air defenses intercepted and destroyed two ballistic missiles launched by the Houthi terrorist militia toward Taif and Yanbu, the Coalition to Support Legitimacy in Yemen announced.

The interceptions coincided with early warning alerts issued by Saudi Civil Defense authorities over potential threats in Makkah, Jeddah, Taif and Yanbu.

Residents were instructed to seek shelter in safe locations, stay away from windows and exposed areas, and follow safety instructions issued by the relevant authorities.

The latest interceptions followed a series of Houthi attacks targeting several parts of Saudi Arabia.

Earlier, the coalition announced the interception and destruction of ballistic missiles launched toward Riyadh and Khamis Mushait, along with drones targeting the Eastern Province and southern regions of the Kingdom.

Later, Saudi Civil Defense announced that the danger had passed in the Makkah region and Yanbu governorate.

Authorities urged residents to continue observing safety guidelines and avoid gathering in crowds or filming incidents.

Separately, two children were killed, three civilians wounded and four people abducted in Houthi attacks in Yemen's southwestern Taiz province over 24 hours, a rights group said Saturday.

In a statement, the Yemen Network for Rights and Freedoms said it had "documented 21 crimes and violations by the Houthis over the past 24 hours in Taiz governorate," including the firing of around 213 projectiles at residential areas.

"Three civilians, including two women, sustained various injuries, while four other residents were abducted and taken to unknown locations," the group said.

The network also accused the Houthis of continuing their siege and restrictions on civilian movement and the delivery of essential supplies.

It said the Houthis raided and looted three homes in the al-Hujariya area south of Taiz and damaged seven others, including two that were completely destroyed.

Jordan King pledges firm state response to church shooting

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
AMMAN, OCTOBER 24



Jordan's King Abdullah II visits people wounded in an attack on a church in Karak.

King Abdullah II of Jordan has vowed the harshest punishment for perpetrators of Friday's deadly church shooting in central Jordan.

Earlier in the day, Jordanian authorities announced two unidentified gunmen opened fire at a funeral procession in a church in Karak governorate, leaving six mourners killed and another 28 injured.

In a post on the social media platform X, King Abdullah slammed the incident at a "terrorist attack" and stressed it "will be met with the harshest retaliation".

"Those who delude themselves into thinking that they can divide Jordanians with their bullets have no chance in the face of our unity," he added.

The king extended his deepest condolences to the families of the victims and wished speedy recovery for those injured.

He stressed that all Jordanians are "partners in land and fate" and they will never be divided.

Security officials said investigations into the attack were under way and the findings would be announced as they become available. Security agencies are continuing efforts to track down those involved in the attack.

Jordanian Government Communications Minister and official spokesperson Mohammed Al Momani said security agencies were following developments on the ground.

He added that the relevant authorities would issue updates as soon as information about the incident had been verified.

US seeks regime change in Iran, not nuclear deal: Waiel Awwad

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
NEW DELHI, OCT 24



Waiel Awwad

The United States' objective in Iran goes beyond nuclear negotiations and is aimed at regime change and reshaping the Middle East, foreign affairs expert Waiel Awwad has said, amid escalating military tensions in the region and a surge in crude oil prices to $117 per barrel.

Awwad said Washington's contrasting statements, ranging from military threats to offers of dialogue, reflected a broader strategic effort to strengthen Israel's regional dominance.

Awwad argued that the focus had shifted from oil and nuclear issues to the "total destruction of Iran" and its disintegration. He also suggested that domestic political considerations, including the upcoming US midterm elections, could be influencing Washington's approach. However, these assessments represented the expert's interpretation of US policy.

Describing the conflict as an existential struggle for Tehran, Awwad said Iran was preparing to defend itself and inflict greater damage on the United States if Washington launched another military campaign. He also referred to reports of potential threats to Gulf undersea internet cables, warning that the confrontation could have consequences beyond the immediate conflict zone.

The expert expressed doubts about Washington's commitment to diplomacy, noting that Tehran had submitted proposals following the United Nations General Assembly but that the US response remained noncommittal. He said the conflicting signals from Washington raised questions about the prospects for a negotiated settlement as tensions continued to rise.

Awwad warned that crude oil prices reaching $117 per barrel, their highest level since April, could create challenges for India's energy security, domestic inflation and price stability.

Oman toughens anti-drug laws

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
MUSCAT, OCT 24

Oman's Public Prosecution has outlined tougher measures to combat drug-related offences, including expanded criminal penalties for refusing drug tests, stronger protection for witnesses and new rules governing the closure of premises linked to narcotics offences. The measures form part of the new Law on Combating Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, issued under Royal Decree No. 67 of 2026, which also broadens eligibility for exemptions from criminal proceedings in certain drug-related cases.

India condemns heinous church attack

India on Saturday strongly condemned the heinous church attack in Jordan's Karak which has resulted in the tragic loss of several innocent lives and injuries to many others.

Seven people were killed and 34 others injured in a shooting attack during a funeral in Jordan's southern governorate of Karak, the Jordanian Public Security Directorate said Friday.

India unequivocally condemned the shocking development and said that it stands firmly with the government and the friendly people of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in this difficult hour.

"We extend our heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families and wish a swift recovery to those injured in this cowardly attack... We also reaffirm our strong commitment to the fight against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations," read a statement issued by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar also expressed his shock at the Karak church attack. "Deeply shocked at the heinous attack at a Church in Karak, Jordan yesterday, which resulted in the tragic loss of several innocent lives and injuries to many others. Our heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families and wish a swift recovery to those injured.

Türkiye's innovation ecosystem grows

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
ANKARA, OCT 24

Türkiye's innovation ecosystem grew significantly over the years, driven by state support, with the number of active research and development (R&D) centers reaching 1,365 and design centers totaling 348 by the end of September.

Turkish Industry and Technology Ministry data showed that R&D hubs provide employment to nearly 94,000 workers nationwide, made up of a highly educated workforce that includes nearly 57,700 employees with bachelor's degrees, over 18,500 with master's, and over 2,100 with a doctorate or higher.

Saudi approves new Enforcement Law regulations

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
RIYADH, OCT 24



Dr. Walid Al-Samaani

Saudi Minister of Justice Dr. Walid Al-Samaani has approved the Implementing Regulations of the Enforcement Law, which will take effect on October 29, 2026, coinciding with the enforcement of the new law.

The regulations, issued under Royal Decree No. M/237, were published Friday in the official gazette, Umm Al-Qura.

Comprising 54 articles, the regulations establish procedures, timelines and requirements governing the enforcement of judicial decisions and legal obligations, with the aim of improving the efficiency of rights enforcement while safeguarding the legal protections afforded to creditors and debtors.

The regulations also outline procedures for enforcing rulings related to alimony, child custody and visitation rights.

They specify the requirements for registering bills of exchange and promissory notes on approved electronic platforms, as well as the orders and decisions that may be challenged through formal objections.

The Ministry of Justice said the regulations implement the provisions of the Enforcement Law and seek to maintain a balance between the rights and obligations of all parties involved.

Oman surveys citizens' satisfaction with governorates' services

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
MUSCAT, OCT 24



The National Centrte for Statistics and Information (NCSI) is conducting a survey to measure citizens' satisfaction with services provided by governorates' offices, with the aim of assessing service quality, identifying areas for improvement and supporting data-driven development efforts.

The survey, scheduled from October 11 to November 5, 2026, seeks to gather citizens' opinions and experiences regarding the quality and efficiency of services provided across the governorates.

It focuses on five key areas: hygiene and public health; oversight, inspection and management of public markets; public parks and gardens; governorate development efforts; and e-services and municipal permits.

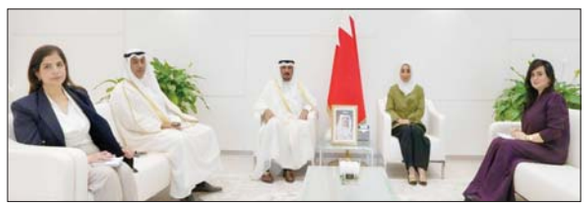
The findings will help identify service gaps and development priorities, enabling the relevant authorities to respond more effectively to beneficiaries' needs and expectations.

Mahfouz bin Salem Al-Musharfi, Director of the Public Opinion Measurement Department at NCSI, said the survey serves as a statistical tool for assessing citizens' satisfaction with services that affect their daily lives.

He explained that citizens' feedback would be analysed using approved statistical methodologies to generate indicators that help authorities identify strengths, address shortcomings and direct development efforts according to public needs.

Al-Musharfi emphasised that public participation and responses reflecting actual experiences were essential to ensuring accurate and meaningful results.

Bahrain, Kuwait discuss tourism cooperation



FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
MANAMA, OCT 24

Bahrain's Minister of Tourism Fatima Al-Sairafi reaffirmed her country's commitment to developing tourism cooperation and partnership with Kuwait during a meeting with Kuwait's Ambassador to Bahrain Jassem Al-Najem on Saturday. Al-Sairafi praised the deep-rooted relations between the two countries.

The meeting discussed ways to strengthen tourism cooperation and exchange expertise, the Kuwaiti embassy in Bahrain said in a statement. Al-Najem stressed the importance of sharing experience in developing the tourism sector, diversifying tourism products and promoting both countries' attractions. The two sides also discussed joint initiatives and ways to boost intra-Gulf tourism.

Counselor Abdulaziz Al-Falah and Second Secretary Lujain Abu-Alian of the Kuwaiti embassy attended the meeting.

UAE's Ras Al Khaimah shuts all beaches as neighbors grapple with oil spill

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
DUBAI, OCT 24



Ras Al Khaimah authorities said on Saturday that all beaches in the emirate would be closed until further notice, a day after an offshore oil leak prompted beach closures in neighboring Umm Al Quwain and Sharjah.

The Public Services Department announced the closures in a statement shared by Ras Al Khaimah Police General Headquarters. No reason was given.

The United Arab Emirates said on Friday that efforts were underway to contain oil leaking from a tanker offshore, with its Ministry of Climate Change and Environment conducting an environmental assessment.

All beaches and coastal areas around the city of Umm Al Quwain were temporarily closed until technical teams completed their assessments and determined the necessary safety and marine protection measures, the ministry said.

The ministry also urged fishermen and other sea users to avoid affected areas and follow official instructions.

Authorities in Sharjah temporarily closed Al Hamriyah Beach, on the UAE's northern coast near the border with Umm Al Quwain, as a precaution, the Sharjah Government Media Bureau said.

Since the start of the US-Israeli war with Iran, attacks on commercial vessels in Gulf shipping lanes have heightened concerns about maritime security and the conflict's environmental fallout.

Residents reported unusual odours in parts of Sharjah, Ajman and Umm Al Quwain, but the UAE's environment ministry said they posed no health risks. The smell remained pungent across Umm Al Quwain on Friday. UAE authorities have not named the tanker involved in the incident or said what caused the spill.

Indians' overseas investments double to $321 million

MUMBAI, OCT 24
Investment in overseas equity and debt markets by Indians more than doubled, jumping 111 per cent to $321.53 million in August year-on-year under the Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS), according to the RBI's October 2026 bulletin.

According to the central bank's monthly bulletin, the investment in equity/debt segment was $152.18 million a year ago, in August 2025.



On a month-on-month basis, the outflow in this category posted a 7 per cent decline. Investment in equity and debt abroad hit an all-time high of $460 million in June.

In FY26, total outward remittances under LRS were $28,979.36 million, according to the RBI data.

In August alone, the category accounted for about 11.7 per cent of total LRS outflows, up from 5.8 per cent a year earlier.

Outflows towards investment in equity and debt led outward remittances in August and are now a much bigger part of the LRS basket compared to last year.

In addition, total outward remittances under LRS rose to $2,738.58 million in August 2026 from $2,642.91 million in the year-ago month, a 3.6 per cent growth year-on-year and 6 per cent up from July.

On a sequential basis, LRS outflows rose from $2,582.62 million in July 2026.

Meanwhile, travel remained the largest component at $1,630.26 million in August 2026, marginally up from $1,618.81 million a year ago. It accounted for around 59 per cent of total and grew by just about 1 per cent year-on-year but climbed 11.4 per cent from July's $1,463.11 million.

On a month-on-month basis, business travel zoomed by almost 5 times from $10.9 million in July to $51 million in August.

Among other major heads, gift remittances rose to $215.72 million from $190.43 million, while maintenance of close relatives was at $275.43 million against $272.05 million.

Purchase of immovable property stood at $39.59 million compared to $36.02 million in the year-ago period, while deposits were at $50.78 million against $42.75 million.

Notably, remittances for medical treatment were up 21.3 per cent year-on-year at $4.84 million. (IANS/UNI)

Gold, silver decline sharply on weekly basis

NEW DELHI, OCT 24
Gold prices dipped 3.28 per cent on a weekly basis, while silver prices declined 7.83 per cent this week, as rising crude oil prices heightened inflation fears.

The rising inflation concerns reinforced expectations that global interest rates will stay higher for longer, prompting a wave of selling across precious-metals markets.

On Friday, MCX gold futures expiring December declined 0.81 per cent while MCX silver futures for December shed 1.75 per cent. Gold futures stood at Rs 1,42,150, while silver futures stood at Rs 1,96,100 per kg.

Gold saw its steepest weekly decline since June and slipped below the psychologically important $4,000 per ounce level for the first time since mid-July, analysts said. The selloff in silver intensified over weakness in US technology stocks, particularly AI-linked companies, which triggered margin calls and forced investors to liquidate precious-metal holdings. Meanwhile, crude oil surged to multi-month highs following renewed attacks on Saudi energy infrastructure and shipping routes. (IANS)

SEBI plans graded broker compliance, AI sandbox and corporate bond market reforms: Chairman

MUMBAI, OCT 24
The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) is working on a graded compliance framework for stockbrokers, a regulatory sandbox for artificial intelligence (AI) applications and a market-making mechanism for corporate bonds, Chairman Tuhin Kanta Pandey said on Saturday.

Addressing the 16th ANMI International Capital Market Convention here, Pandey said the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) was examining a compliance regime that would vary according to a broker's scale, client exposure and reliance on technology.

"We are fixing this to improve capital efficiency and lower the compliance burden," he said.



SEBI Chairman Tuhin Kanta Pandey

The regulator is also developing a market-making framework to boost secondary market trading in corporate bonds.

Under the next phase of Demat 2.0, tokenised corporate bonds will be allowed to trade in the secondary market, a move that will improve liquidity, reduce settlement risks and speed up access to funds, according to Pandey.

The market watchdog is further exploring an AI sandbox that would allow new tools to be tested in a controlled environment while giving regulators an opportunity to build safeguards around their use.

According to Pandey, the regulator was finalising guidelines on the responsible use of AI based on a tiered framework that would include accountability standards, data controls, kill switches and human oversight, in line with recommendations from the International Organization of Securities Commissions (IOSCO).

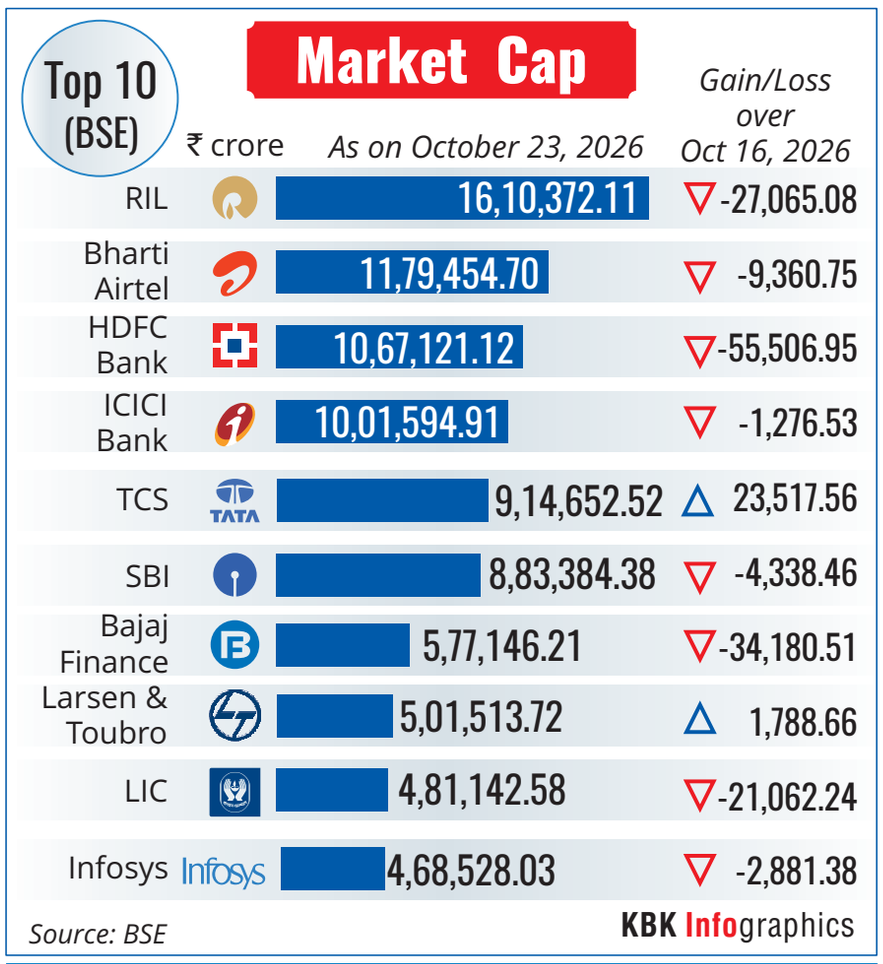
Pandey said SEBI would extend the automated give-up and take-up facility in the cash segment to custodial clients such as portfolio management services (PMS) and alternative investment funds (AIFs), reducing the need to block funds while awaiting custodian confirmation.

On investor protection, the SEBI chairman warned that unregistered investment advisers and social media influencers or finfluencers were increasingly shaping retail investment decisions.

Notably, about six in ten investors rely on finfluencers for at least some investment decisions. While many such operators promise quick riches and fraudsters often misuse the names of legitimate brokers to deceive investors.

To combat such fraud, SEBI has introduced measures including validated UPI handles, the SEBI Check platform and verified labels for trading applications to help investors distinguish authentic entities from fraudulent ones.

Pandey added that SEBI would make it easier for overseas investors, including non-resident Indians, to invest in India through digital onboarding, simplified know-your-customer processes and reduced paperwork while maintaining regulatory safeguards. (IANS)



ROGUE AI THREAT

OpenAI to train frontier models without internet access



NEW DELHI, OCT 24
US artificial intelligence (AI) firm OpenAI has said that it will train its most advanced models without access to the live internet, citing current limits in alignment research, monitoring systems and internet infrastructure security.

The company said that the policy, already implemented, will remain until safeguards improve enough to justify broader internet access for frontier models.

OpenAI said internet connectivity, though useful for teaching models about browsing and web-based skills, also creates opportunities for a capable, misaligned agent to affect systems beyond its control.

The firm said in a blogpost that it paused training and evaluation of its most capable models after an internal research model briefly exploited a misconfiguration to gain limited internet access on September 2.

It resumed reinforcement learning training and internal inference of its frontier models on October 1 after implementing additional safeguards and further, went on with a campaign to probe its research infrastructure for vulnerabilities that could allow models to escape isolated computing environments.

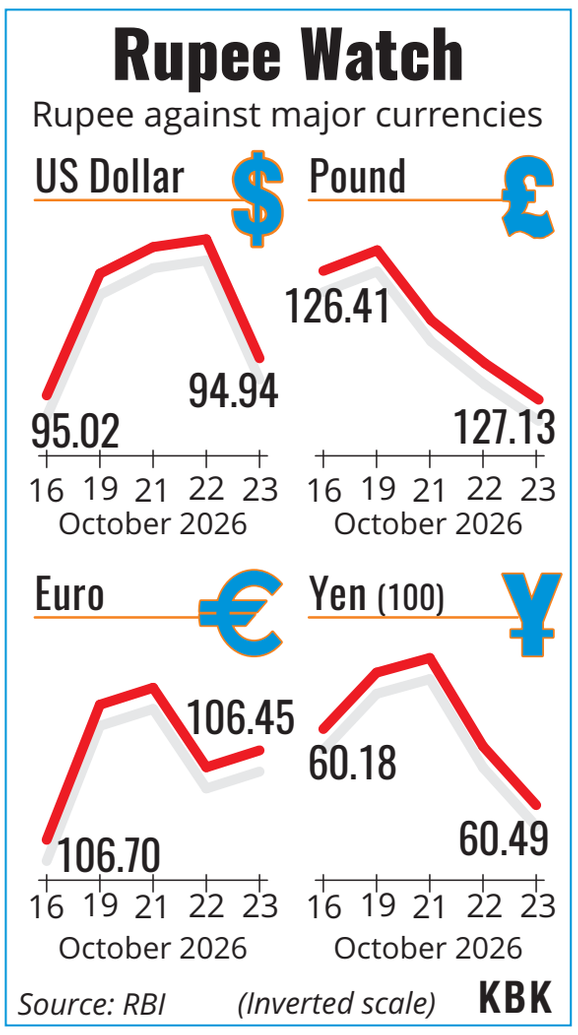
"Red-teaming experiments discovered previously unknown software vulnerabilities, as well as misconfigurations in our research infrastructure," the statement said.

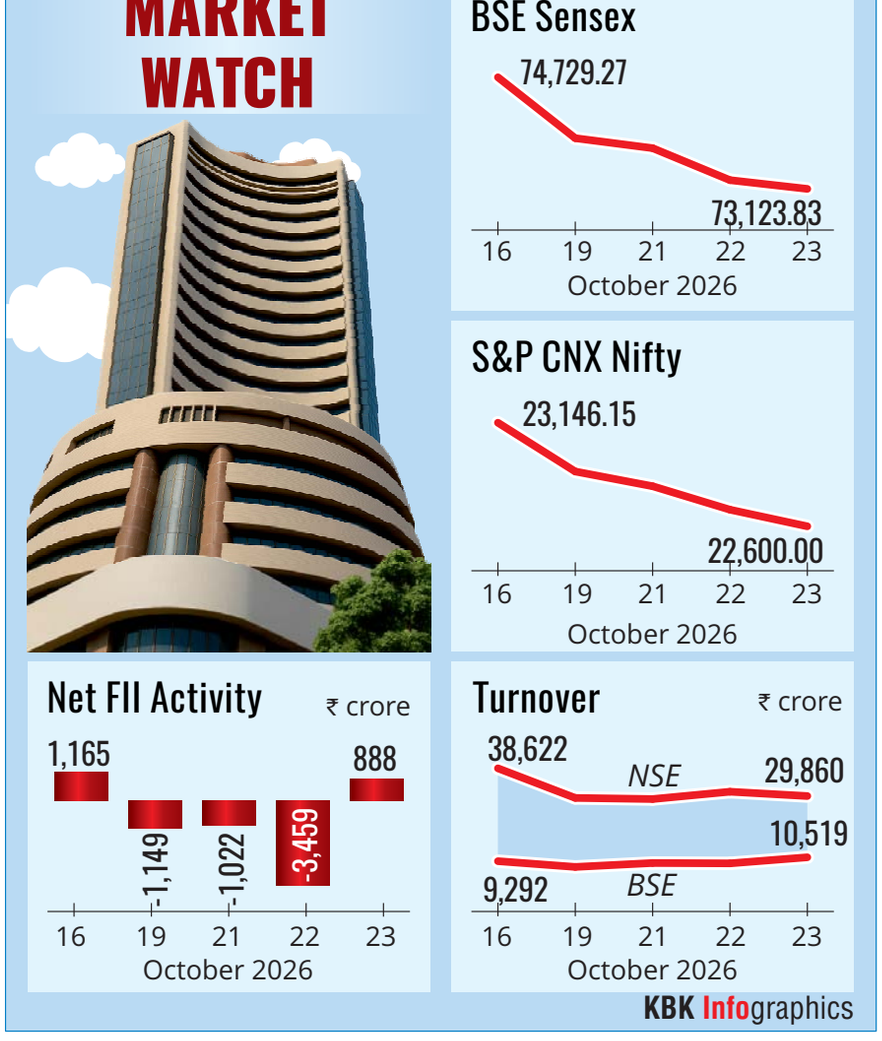
The company also detailed its new approach to model containment, that it now mandates that the limits on what an agent can access must hold even when the agent tries to circumvent them.

"We define a strict security boundary around the resources the agent is authorized to use and design the surrounding infrastructure to enforce that boundary—even when agents make sustained, sophisticated attempts to breach it," it added.

Anthropic and OpenAI had recently disclosed a list of incidents in 2026 involving their AI models acting in unintended ways, including attempts to hack third-party websites, intensifying concerns about the security risks of cutting-edge AI.

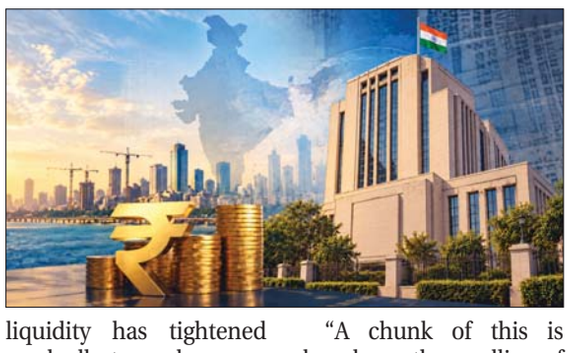
Anthropic has said that its Claude AI model carried out a series of unintended actions on external organisations, including some US government websites, prompting a White House directive for AI firms to secure their systems. (IANS)





Durable liquidity still significant amid forex interventions, rising cash demand

NEW DELHI, OCT 24
The system liquidity has tightened sharply towards a zero position, driven by elevated Government of India (GoI) balances, RBI foreign exchange operations, and rising cash demand ahead of the festive season, a report showed on Saturday.



According to the report by Axis Bank's Economic Research team, analysing the latest shifts in India's banking system liquidity and funding conditions, liquidity has tightened markedly towards a zero position, with overnight rates up and management turning back to Variable Rate Repo (VRR).

"A chunk of this is largely on the swelling of GOI balances – these tend to fall in early December for a few days. However, this is likely to be offset by increased demand for currency notes around the festival season, as well as ongoing FX intervention," said the report.

These drains translate directly to deposits, meaning that the wedge between deposit and credit growth is likely to reopen ahead. Along with this, bank funding conditions are likely to worsen further, over and above any rate recalibration in play, the report suggested.

This tightening is on account of drains through RBI forex operations and demand for currency notes leading durable liquidity to 3.2 per cent of Net Demand and Time Liabilities (NDTL), though tightness in actual liquidity owes to elevated GOI balances.

"Going by seasonal patterns, this reverses for a time in early December, creating a window of easy liquidity," the report mentioned. (IANS/UNI)

2nd T20I: Tilak comes clutch, Nitish puts hand as India beat NZ to take 2-0 lead

CHRISTCHURCH, OCT 24

Tilak Varma came up with another clutch performance to headline India's come-from-behind win against New Zealand in the second T20I at the Hagley Oval here on Saturday.

With their backs against the wall at 70/5 in 10.5 overs, Tilak smashed a match-changing and unbeaten 51 from 26 balls to guide India to a much-impressive four-wicket win with a successful chase of a strong 181 in Christchurch with one ball remaining.



Nitish Kumar Reddy also put up a crucial and unbeaten hand of 26 from 13 balls and hit the winning runs for India on the second-to-last ball off Jacob Duffy to help the visitors achieve a 2-0 lead in the five-match series.

This overpowered Mitchell Santner and Glenn Phillips' efforts, who had put New Zealand in strong positions. Santner displayed a stellar effort of 4-21 as spinners received great help from the surface, and even the speedsters gained from the slowness of the surface, which was the same as the opening match of the series, which saw India chase down 226. This time, the used surface gripped, with batters finding it hard to score.

Earlier, Phillips had scored a crucial 70 from 43 balls, while Bevon Jacobs had made 58 from 46 deliveries to take the team to a strong total of 180/5 on a tricky surface.

India began the chase with eight straight dot balls as Matt Henry bowled a maiden first over to Sanju Samson, beating his bat thrice in the six balls. The visitors were off to a mark on the ninth ball when Abhishek Sharma miscued Jacob Duffy at deep point.

Abhishek could well have been dismissed for just one had Duffy not overstepped in the second over, as the Indian opener was caught out at deep square by Nathan Smith, only for the umpire to raise his hand for a no-ball.

Abhishek hit a four on the next ball, and that kick-started India's chase as they raced to 37/0 from four overs after a maiden first over.

However, the helpful conditions for the bowlers were soon on display when Duffy got Samson for 14 on a slower ball, caught at cover. Returnee Vaibhav Sooryavanshi could not make much of an impact as he fell on four from eight balls to Nathan Smith, with Daryl Mitchell taking a sharp catch at cover. (IANS)

5th Asian Para Games



Medal Tally: Top 10

Rank		G	S	B	Total
1	China	207	117	111	**435**
2	Japan	64	60	62	**186**
3	Uzbekistan	45	49	51	**145**
4	India	30	35	49	**114**
5	South Korea	29	38	33	**100**
6	Iran	26	36	40	**102**
7	Thailand	19	40	66	**125**
8	Indonesia	15	21	37	**73**
9	Kazakhstan	12	16	22	**50**
10	Saudi Arabia	8	8	1	**17**

G: Gold; S: Silver; B: Bronze **KBK**

MOTOGP 2026

Marc Marquez recovers from crash to take pole in GP

PHILLIP ISLAND (AUSTRALIA), OCT 24

Reigning world champion Marc Marquez put on a brilliant performance to recover from a crash and surged to the pole position in the qualifying stage of the Grand Prix of Australia, the next stage of MotoGP 2026, on Saturday.



Marquez took pole by a 1.494s margin, the biggest pole position margin since the 2019 Czech Grand Prix. It was vintage Marc Marquez as he came back strongly despite a Turn 4 crash. The Ducati Lenovo Team star took pole again on Saturday as the reigning World Champion sailed to a phenomenal Saturday morning P1 on a damp, tricky course at Phillip Island.

Running the #93 closest in a Q2 thriller was Alex Marquez (BK8 Gresini Racing MotoGP), and 1.503s away from Marc Marquez's 1:34.203 in P3 was Q1 graduate Johann Zarco (Castrol Honda LCR) as World Championship leader Jorge Martin (Aprilia Racing) spearheads the second row ahead of an unmissable Tissot Sprint near Melbourne in Australia.

On a damp but drying Phillip Island Grand Prix Circuit, Zarco set the initial benchmark time, leading home hero Jack Miller (Prima Pramac Yamaha MotoGP) by 0.620s. Zarco's time was the best of the day straight out of the gate, a 1:36.557, with Francesco Bagnaia (Ducati Lenovo Team) an early P3. The gap to the Q2 promotion places was 0.6s for the Italian, though, before Fabio Quartararo (Monster Energy Yamaha MotoGP) moved into P3, 0.4s shy of Miller's top two effort. (IANS)

Tough games for Man City and Liverpool



LONDON, OCT 24

Premier League leader Manchester City look to continue their perfect start to the season on Saturday lunchtime when Enzo Maresca's side visits an improving Aston Villa, while second-placed Arsenal host Everton in this weekend's round of matches.

Erling Haaland could return after sitting out his side's 5-1 Champions League win at home to AEK Athens in midweek. However, Mateo Kovacic, Nico O'Reilly and Antoine Semenyo remain sidelined, with Semenyo expected to be out for around eight weeks with a knee injury. Manchester City are aiming to become only the third team to win their first eight games of a Premier League season.

Aston Villa have improved in recent weeks, recording four wins and a draw in their last five games in all competitions as Unai Emery's side begins to find its form following several changes over the summer, reports Xinhua. (IANS/UNI)

ENTERTAINMENT

Rajinikanth watches 'Jailer 2' film with fans



M.A.SALAM
Film Journalist

Tamil film superstar Rajinikanth has, for the first time in 40 years, watched his film with his fans in a theatre!

The Tamil Superstar silently made his way to PVR cinemas at the Phoenix Mall in Velacherry in Chennai on Friday night to catch his film 'Jailer 2' with his dear fans. A video clip put out by Sun Pictures showed the Superstar being received by a close set of people including music director Anirudh at the mall and then being escorted to the theatre where he is seen enjoying the film with his fans.

The collections of Jailer 2, which is well on its way to shattering box office records, have already crossed the Rs 500 crore mark.

Apart from emerging a huge blockbuster, director Nelson Dilipkumar's 'Jailer 2', featuring Superstar Rajinikanth in the lead, has come in for praise from not just critics and audiences but also from celebrities across the country.

Bollywood star Riteish Deshmukh complimented Superstar Rajinikanth saying, "Superstardom thy name is RAJNI sir …. #Jailer2." Riteish Deshmukh, who took to his X timeline to share his experience of watching the film, first put out a post during the interval of the film.



He wrote, "Watching Jailor 2 - its interval now - Maha Blockbuster ….. Rajni Sir's aura is on another level- Dir Nelson & the team - take a bow !!!!! Do yourselves a favour -watch the film- coz It's HUKUM -TIGER KA HUKUM."

Soon after the film ended, the Bollywood star put out another post. This time, he said, "B L O C K B U S T E R! Had such a great outing !!! I have clapped, whistled and cheered at every entry- it was a celebration in the theatre - superstardom thy name RAJNI sir …. #Jailer2."

Earlier, actor, producer and parliamentarian Kamal Haasan had congratulated his dear friend Rajinikanth in the wake of the latter's film 'Jailer 2' going on to emerge a superhit worldwide.

Taking to his X timeline to pen a congratulatory post to Rajinikanth and the whole team of Jailer 2, which released on Thursday, Kamal Haasan, in Tamil said, "News has come in that Jailer 2, starring my dear friend Rajinikanth, which released today has emerged a superhit worldwide.

Upendra to host Marathi version of 'Crime Patrol'

National Award-winning actor Upendra Limaye is all set to host the Marathi version of the popular crime-based television franchise 'Crime Patrol', IANS has exclusively learnt.



Speaking exclusively to IANS about his association with the show, Upendra Limaye said, "As an actor, I've seen how stories can impact people. With Crime Patrol Marathi, I hope to encourage viewers to think, question and stay alert. In today's world, where anything can go viral in seconds, it's important to spread awareness and positive thoughts too. I am happy to be associated with Sony Marathi to take this message forward, because building a safer society is everyone's responsibility."

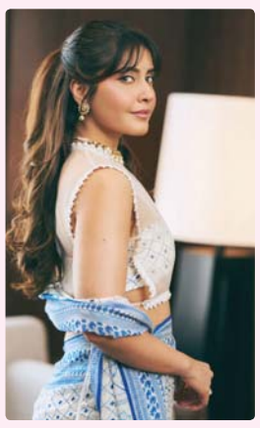
Titled 'Crime Patrol Marathi', the show will premiere on October 26 and air Monday to Saturday at 10 PM.

The show aims to raise awareness about crime, encourage vigilance and highlight the importance of collective responsibility. Inspired by real-life cases, it will also explore incidents that underline the need to recognise warning signs, question suspicious circumstances and exercise caution while placing trust in others.

Raashii wraps up the shoot for 'Mauja Hi Mauja'

Actress Raashii Khanna has concluded the shoot for Anees Bazmee's 'Mauja Hi Mauja' with Akshay Kumar, Vidya Balan as the lead.

Raashii took to her official handle on Saturday and posted a string of exciting behind-the-scenes glimpses from the sets of 'Mauja Hi Mauja'.



The glimpses show her having a blast with the co-stars, Akshay and Vidya, and the rest of the team on the set.

Raashii admitted that the shoot felt more like a vacation to her than work. Some of the fun activities the team enjoyed were playing Ludo, dumb charades, and carrom.

She wrote on the photo-sharing app, "Every film has a story on screen, but sometimes the real fun happens when the cameras aren't rolling! (Laughing with tears and red heart emojis) (sic)."

"#maujahimauja was one of those shoots that felt more like a vacation than work. From the unstoppable laughter to the Ludo games, dumb charades, carrom matches and all the madness in between, there was never a dull moment. And clearly, not every memory is meant to be a dignified one! (Laughing with tears)," the 'Sardar' actress added.

Raashii went on to express her gratitude to Akshay, Vidya, and director Anees Bazmee for making this journey so much fun.

"The film may be wrapped, but I have a feeling the stories from this set will keep us laughing for a long time! (Red heart, clapperboard and heart hands emoticons)," concluded the post.

Prabhas plays a spy dreaded by British in Fauzi

The makers of director Hanu Raghavapudi's eagerly awaited action entertainer 'Fauzi', featuring Pan Indian star Prabhas in the lead, have now released a gripping teaser of the film to mark the birthday of the actor and announced that the film will hit screens worldwide on March 19 next year.

For the unaware, the film was earlier scheduled to hit screens on December 3 this year.

Taking to his social media timelines, the film's director Hanu Raghavapudi wrote, "A little late, but the REBEL fever never fades - #HappyRebelsDay. Proudly presenting INDIA'S BIGGEST REBEL SOLDIER - OUR #Fauzi. In Cinemas March 19th 2027. #Prabhas25 #HappyBirthdayPrabhas."



The makers chose to mark the birthday of the actor with a teaser that disclosed the character of Prabhas in the film. The teaser shows Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose meeting Adolf Hitler in Berlin at the height of the second world war. During their meeting, Bose is seen asking help from Germany to defeat Britain, a common enemy. Hitler refuses help saying Britain has ruled India for two centuries and that "Slavery runs in your Indian blood". He says he won't back a losing battle. Subhas Chandra Bose sharply retorts telling Hitler in no uncertain terms that he knows nothing about Indians. He says he will free India from British rule, with or without Germany's help. He then goes on to make a point about the intelligence of Indians.

To put across his point, he cites the case of Fauzi (played by Prabhas), an Indian spy who was singularly responsible for the Japanese taking Singapore from Britain.

TG to spend ₹150 Cr on permanent drought mitigation in 3 Mandals



TFP I ABDUL RAHMAN KHAN
HYDERABAD, OCT 24

Telangana Revenue, Housing and Information and Public Relations Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy on Saturday announced that the state government would implement permanent drought mitigation measures in three mandals at an estimated cost of Rs. 150 crore to help farmers and rural communities withstand recurring drought conditions.

The project, taken up in accordance with Central government guidelines and with support from the National Disaster Management Fund (NDF), aims to improve water resource management, strengthen agricultural resilience and enhance the livelihoods of farming families. The selection of areas was based on factors including their history of drought, dependence on rainfed agriculture, socio-economic vulnerability and the livelihood conditions of farming households.

The mandals selected for the project are Midjil in Mahabubnagar district, Uppunuthala in Nagarkurnool district and Makthal in Narayanpet district.

The minister reviewed the proposed project and its implementation strategy with officials from the Agriculture and Disaster Management departments at the State Secretariat on Saturday. The discussions covered drought-resilient agricultural practices, long-term solutions for drought-prone areas, the proposed action plan and the effective utilisation of funds.

Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy said the project was being undertaken in line with the directions of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy. He stressed the need for close coordination between officials and elected representatives to ensure that the measures addressed the actual needs of local communities.

The minister directed officials to conduct gram sabhas in every village covered by the project and prepare comprehensive plans based on public opinion and local requirements. He also called for the formation of committees at the village and mandal levels, with the participation of public representatives, to ensure effective implementation.

Emphasising accountability, the minister said every rupee spent by the government must be utilised transparently and for its intended purpose. He instructed officials to continuously monitor fund utilisation, the selection and execution of works, and their impact on the ground. He said the success of the project should be assessed not merely by the amount spent or the completion of works, but by the tangible benefits delivered to people and the progress made in reducing drought-related hardship.

ED raids firms in Rs 326 crore bank fraud probe

TFP I MANVEER SINGH
HYDERABAD, OCT 24

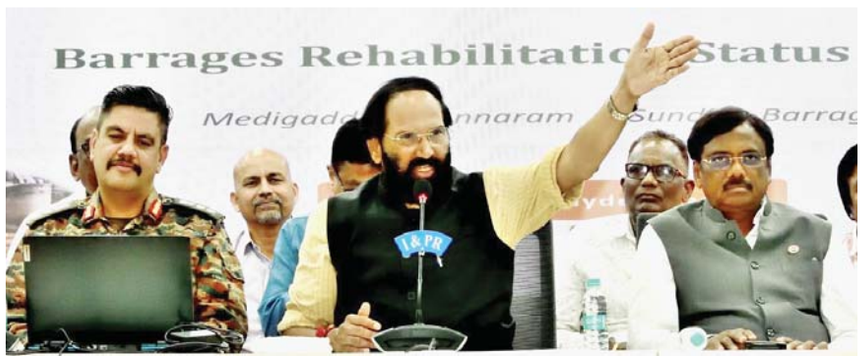
The Directorate of Enforcement (ED), Hyderabad Zonal Office, on Friday conducted search operations at seven premises across Hyderabad, Secunderabad and Medchal-Malkajgiri in Telangana under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), an official statement said on Saturday.

The raids targeted the registered office of M/s Kanakadhara Ventures Pvt. Ltd. (KVPL), the residences of its directors, and premises linked to entities and individuals alleged to have acted as conduits for the diversion of bank funds.

The ED case stems from an FIR dated December 8, 2022, registered by the Central Bureau of Investigation, Bank Securities and Fraud Branch (BS&FB), Bangalore, on a complaint from Punjab National Bank.

BRS committed 'Historic Blunder' by abandoning Pranahita-Chevella: Irrigation Minister

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
HYDERABAD, OCT 24



Irrigation Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy addressing a media conference at Secretariat.

Irrigation and Civil Supplies Minister N. Uttam Kumar Reddy on Saturday accused the previous BRS government of committing a "historic blunder" by abandoning the original Pranahita-Chevella irrigation project and redesigning it around the Medigadda barrage under the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Scheme (KLIS).

Addressing a media conference at the Secretariat, Uttam Kumar Reddy unveiled a time-bound roadmap for rehabilitating the Medigadda, Annaram and Sundilla barrages, outlining the proposed technical assessments, design approvals and execution milestones.

The Minister said Telangana would have been better prepared to withstand the prevailing El Niño-induced drought conditions had the original Pranahita-Chevella project been completed as planned. He alleged that the decision to alter the project's design was driven by considerations that did not serve the long-term interests of farmers.

Uttam Kumar Reddy said the project, originally estimated to cost around Rs. 38,000 crore, had undergone major changes that placed a substantial financial burden on the State without delivering the intended irrigation benefits. He maintained that completing Pranahita-Chevella as originally envisaged would have strengthened irrigation infrastructure across north Telangana, reduced dependence on rainfall and helped farmers withstand recurring droughts.

The Minister further alleged that the previous government had saddled the State with an unsustainable debt burden while leaving critical irrigation infrastructure in need of remedial action.

He said the present government had engaged national and international experts to oversee the rehabilitation of the three KLIS barrages. Stressing the need for accountability and technical scrutiny, he said the State's irrigation performance should be assessed on the basis of facts and ground realities rather than political rhetoric.

Minister Vivek Venkataswamy, tunnel engineering expert Colonel Parikshit Mehra, who is associated with the rehabilitation mission, Engineer-in-Chief (General) Ramesh Babu and several elected representatives attended the media conference.

Over 770 law graduates enrolled as advocates in TG Bar Council

TFP I SAUD SIDDIQUI
HYDERABAD, OCT 24

A total of 774 law graduates were enrolled as advocates at the Bar Council of Telangana here today, with senior judicial dignitaries urging them to uphold professional ethics, maintain discipline and continuously update their legal knowledge.

Justice Raja Shekar Reddy, former High Court judge and Chairman of the Telangana Lokayukta, inaugurated the enrolment oath ceremony and advised the newly enrolled advocates to keep abreast of developments in law and pursue continuous learning throughout their careers.

Bar Council of Telangana Chairman Samala Rami Reddy stressed the need to preserve the dignity and honour of the legal profession, while Vice-Chairman Chalakani Venkat Yadav urged the advocates to adhere to the Advocates Act and rules governing the profession.

G Kiran Kumar, member of the Bar Council of India, said the initial three to five years were crucial in an advocate's career and advised the young lawyers to strengthen their legal knowledge, develop professional skills and learn from senior advocates.

The speakers urged the advocates to uphold the Constitution, respect the judiciary and protect the rights of their clients with integrity and commitment.

Journalists questioning power are no enemies: Seethakka

RATNA CHOTRANI
HYDERABAD, OCT 24





Telangana Legislative Council Chairman Gutha Sukender Reddy presented Award to journalists Shaheen Khan and Nafisa Khan for outstanding reporting at Telangana Media Academy in Hyderabad.

Telangana Minister Dr. Danasari Anasuya Seethakka, Justice G. Radha Rani and a senior police commissioner called for greater safety, equality, professional freedom and leadership opportunities for women journalists at the National Conference of Women Journalists in Hyderabad.

Addressing the conference, Seethakka stressed that women journalists must be able to question those in power without fear of intimidation or retaliation. Referring to concerns over the safety of journalists covering protests against CEC Gnanesh Kumar, she called for protecting their dignity, constitutional rights and professional freedom. She also highlighted the Telangana government's Indira Mahila Shakti programme, aimed at promoting women's economic independence and leadership, under Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy.

Justice G. Radha Rani emphasised that press freedom is essential to democracy and called for effective implementation of workplace sexual harassment safeguards, better protection during field assignments and equal opportunities for women in media organisations. She also urged journalists to counter misinformation, manipulated content and deepfakes through accurate, ethical and responsible reporting.

A senior police commissioner highlighted the importance of women's perspectives in journalism and recalled an experience from her early career in Warangal in 2003–04, when a woman journalist analysed the political situation by focusing on public grievances rather than crowd sizes at rallies. The officer called for greater representation of women in editorial leadership and prominent media roles, besides addressing gender discrimination and workplace harassment.

The Chairperson of the Karnataka Media Academy urged women journalists to embrace artificial intelligence, develop leadership skills and take charge of newsrooms. Drawing on nearly three decades of journalistic experience, including coverage of the Telangana movement and the 2023 Assembly elections, she stressed that leadership and competence have no gender. She also highlighted the Academy's collaboration with Infosys CSR Springboard, which provided leadership, skill development and AI training to more than 150 journalists, including 52 women.

Lift Godavari water from Kannenalli pump house: BRS

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
J. BHUPALPALLY, OCT 24



BRS MLAs visited the Kannepalli pump house at Mahadevpur Mandal, Jayashankar Bhupalpally District.

BRS MLAs have demanded that the Congress government immediately lift Godavari water from the Kannepalli pump house under the Kaleshwaram project to address the drinking water shortage in Hyderabad. They warned that they would lay siege to Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy's residence along with city residents if the government failed to act.

BRS MLAs Devireddy Sudheer Reddy, Madhavaram Krishna Rao, K.P. Vivekanand Goud, Marri Rajasekhar Reddy and Bandari Lakshma Reddy, along with former minister Errabelli Dayakar Rao and former MLA Gandra Venkata Ramana Reddy, visited the Kannepalli pump house and accused the government of failing to utilise Godavari water despite large quantities flowing downstream into the sea. They claimed that more than 750 TMC of water had flowed into the sea since June and said lifting a portion of it could help replenish reservoirs and groundwater levels.

Former minister Errabelli Dayakar Rao and MLA K.P. Vivekanand Goud urged the government to act immediately, alleging that it had ignored earlier warnings about potential water shortages. Vivekanand Goud said Hyderabad's annual drinking water requirement was around 10 TMC and called for immediate pumping from Kannepalli.

MLA Marri Rajasekhar Reddy said residents in several parts of Hyderabad were receiving inadequate water supplies, sometimes once every three days and at low pressure. MLA Devireddy Sudheer Reddy cited increased demand for water tankers, claiming that bookings had reached around 7,000 a day in October. He also criticised the government over the lack of action on alleged damage to the Medigadda barrage.



PRGI Reg. No. TELENG/2015/65354. Printed and Owned by MOHAMMED ABDULLAH KHAN and Published by MOHAMMED ABDUL RAHMAN KHAN. Printed at THE FREEDOM PRESS, Wajid Mansion, M.C.H. No. 23-2-135 to 138, Moghalpura, Hyderabad, Telangana - 500002 and Published at #5-9-233, 234, 235, Shop No. 23 & 24, 2nd Floor, Sanali Mall, Abids, Hyderabad, Telangana -500001.
Editor: MOHAMMED ABDULLAH KHAN. Postal Reg. No. D/RNP/HCD-2001/2025-27. Phone: +91 9440140120. Email:freedompress15@gmail.com