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14 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

BUSINESS ▶P10



TOP 10 FIRMS LOSE RS 1.56 LAKH CRORE IN MARKET VALUE LAST WEEK

AI's global value could hit $2.5 trn

NEW DELHI, OCT 25

Artificial intelligence (AI) has the potential to generate $2.52 trillion in annual economic value worldwide by automating and enhancing existing work processes, but rising deployment costs could significantly reduce those benefits, according to a new report by consulting firm McKinsey.

The report, titled The AI Value Curve: The Economics of Applying AI to Existing Work, highlights a growing disconnect between the rapid adoption of AI technologies and the economic value organisations are actually able to capture. According to the study, many companies are prioritising AI implementation without adequately evaluating whether the technology is delivering sufficient returns on investment. (IANS)

France protests turn violent

PARIS, OCT 25



Almost 1,000 people have been arrested in France on Saturday as another wave of protests took place in the country, with over 40,000 residents taking part in the demonstrations, a report has said.

The majority of the protests took place peacefully. However, clashes erupted between protesters and police in several cities of France, including Marseilles, Rennes, Paris, Lyon, Bordeaux and Toulouse, Euro News reported.

Police fired tear gas and charged crowds around Porte de Vincennes in Paris while some of the protesters launched fireworks towards security personnel, as per the report. Police deployed a water cannon to break up protesters and conducted checks of people travelling through the Nation Square. French authorities had planned a ramped-up operation after the chaos erupted in France last weekend, when protests against rising inflation resulted in people setting fire to many places and looters breaking into dozens of shops to strip them bare. French authorities had mobilised around 70,000 security personnel ahead of planned protests on Saturday.

The Yellow Vests movement has said that another protest will be held on October 31, Euro News reported.

On Sunday, French Interior Minister Laurent Nunez thanked regional prefects, police officers, gendarmes, and firefighters for their commitment and professionalism in ensuring the safety of the people of France.

He said that people of the ultra-left and radical far-left tried to sow disorder in Marseille, Lyon, Grenoble, Nantes, Angers, Lille, Paris and many other cities, terming the acts "unacceptable." In a post on X, Nunez said: "I want to salute the exceptional commitment and professionalism of all the regional prefects, prefects, police officers, gendarmes, and firefighters mobilised across France to ensure the safety of our fellow citizens and allow the processions to proceed smoothly. But notably in Paris, Marseille, Lyon, Grenoble, Nantes, Angers, Lille, and many other cities, individuals from the ultra-left and radical far-left have once again sought to sow disorder, particularly during the dispersal of the processions. These acts are unacceptable."

"I also extend my full support to the police officers and gendarmes injured today. The violence inflicted on the internal security forces, once again, is intolerable. They are deliberately targeted because of their uniforms and, above all, because they are the bulwarks of our Republic that these radical militants seek to bring down," he added. (IANS)

Telangana CID registers 3 cases over Sanna Rakam rice diversion

14 rice millers arrested

TFP I ABDUL RAHMAN KHAN
HYDERABAD, OCT 25



The Telangana Police Crime Investigation Department (CID) has registered three criminal cases and arrested 14 rice millers over alleged irregularities in the supply of Sanna Rakam (fine) rice to the Food Corporation of India (FCI) during the Kharif 2025-26 season.

The CID took up the investigation following a complaint lodged by the General Manager (Procurement) of the Telangana Civil Supplies Corporation on October 24, 2026.

According to preliminary information, the State procured 71.86 lakh metric tonnes of paddy during the Kharif season against a target of 59.60 lakh metric tonnes of rice for delivery to the FCI. Certain millers allegedly diverted the allotted Sanna Rakam paddy to the open market and supplied cheaper coarse rice, including rice allegedly sourced from outside Telangana, in its place.

Inspections by Enforcement and Task Force (ETF) teams, followed by laboratory tests, reportedly found that rice samples supplied in the cases examined did not conform to the Sanna Rakam variety specified in the allotments.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Hormuz routes won't be the same: Iran

TEHRAN, OCT 25



Iran's Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi on Sunday reiterated that the administration of the Strait of Hormuz and routes in the waterway will not be the same as they were in the past, according to the official news agency IRNA.

Araghchi made the remarks at a ceremony in the Iranian capital Tehran, while stressing that "fundamental and strategic" changes have taken place in West Asia following the U.S.-Israeli war against Iran, Xinhua News Agency reported.

"We must accept that new realities have taken hold. The routes in the Strait of Hormuz will not be the same as they once were, and the strait's management will also not be as it was in the past," he said. "There are matters on which we have held negotiations, and these negotiations will continue."

The minister stressed that the region's security must be ensured by regional countries and without reliance on foreign forces, "who have come to the region aiming to safeguard their own interests and protect Israel, and whose continued presence will lead to nothing but insecurity for the entire region."

He added that Iran was ready to cooperate with all regional countries. Meanwhile, Iran's Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei has stressed the need for "serious" efforts to pursue the Iranian people's rights and ensure the payment of compensation for the damages inflicted on the country during the US-Israeli attacks.

The issues were highlighted in a meeting between the supreme leader and the country's Judiciary Chief Gholamhossein Mohseni-Ejei, according to a statement published on the leader's website on Saturday. (IANS/UNI)

CARTOON CAROUSEL



Govt extends FY26 annual filing date

NEW DELHI, OCT 25

The government has extended the deadlines for companies to file their financial statements and annual returns for the financial year 2025-26 by December 31 without paying additional fees.

The Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) said in a circular that companies can file financial statements through various versions of Form AOC-4, including consolidated financial statements.



Minister Thummala directs officials to store Godavari water for summer

TFP I RAMARAJU
B. KOTHAGUDEM, OCT 25

Agriculture, Cooperation, Marketing and Handlooms Minister Thummala Nageswara Rao has directed officials to conserve Godavari water to prevent drinking water shortages during the coming summer.



During a field inspection by boat from Ammagaripalli to Dummugudem in Ashwapuram mandal, the minister reviewed the dam's condition and proposed storing around one TMC of water by raising its level with sandbags. He said approximately 1.5 lakh sandbags would be required and instructed officials to accelerate the work by placing 10,000 to 15,000 bags daily, arranging additional workers and boats if necessary.

Citing the possible effects of El Niño on agriculture, electricity and public health, Thummala urged farmers to conserve water and prioritise vegetables, pulses and dry crops during the Rabi season, depending on reservoir storage and groundwater availability. He also called for filling the Mukamamidi ponds and taking up check dam and embankment works under the employment guarantee scheme.

Irrigation Superintending Engineer (SE), Ammagaripalli Sarpanch Kavitha, departmental officials and public representatives participated in the inspection.

CID registers 3 cases over Sanna Rakam rice diversion

14 rice millers arrested

FROM PAGE 1

The alleged substitution raises concerns over violations of the Custom Milled Rice (CMR) agreement and potential financial losses to the State exchequer.

In Nizamabad, Karimnagar and Mulugu districts, 16 rice mills reportedly supplied 3,385.820 metric tonnes of coarse rice, known as Doddu Rakam, against Sanna Rakam allotments. The estimated loss arising from the bonus component in these deliveries is around Rs 1.69 crore.

The authorities had also allocated 45,414.833 metric tonnes of paddy for conversion, involving a potential bonus-related financial implication of approximately Rs 242 crore.

However, timely intervention by Civil Supplies officials and orders halting further processing reportedly prevented additional potential losses.

The CID said the alleged substitution prima facie indicated violations of the Kharif Marketing Season (KMS) 2025-26 CMR agreement, criminal breach of trust, wrongful gain and conspiracy to cause loss to the government exchequer.

The investigation is underway to establish the alleged diversion and substitution of rice varieties, determine the roles of the millers concerned, examine how allotments and conversion requests were processed, and collect documentary, technical and other evidence.

Investigators will also quantify the actual financial loss and probe possible involvement of officials and other persons, as well as any criminal conspiracy or other offences, a CID release said on Sunday.

2 killed as auto-trolley rams water tanker on ORR

TFP I NIRANJAN RAO
SANGAREDDY, OCT 25

Two persons were killed in a road accident on the Outer Ring Road (ORR) within the limits of Kollur police station in Sangareddy district on Sunday.

According to the police, an auto-trolley travelling at high speed rammed into a water tanker being used to water plants along the ORR median. The driver of the auto-trolley vehicle, Srinath (25), was trapped inside the cabin and died of severe injuries. Srinivas (30), a GHMC worker who was watering the plants at the time of the accident, also died on the spot.

On receiving information, the police rushed to the scene and shifted the bodies to the Patancheru Government Hospital for post-mortem.

A case has been registered, and an investigation is underway.

Fire guts shops in Warangal

TFP I BASHEERUDDIN
WARANGAL, OCT 25

A major fire broke out at the Municipal Complex in Nehru Centre, Narsampet town in Warangal district, early on Sunday, gutting a fertiliser shop and an adjacent automobile shop and causing an estimated property loss of Rs 25 lakh.

According to preliminary information, an electrical short circuit is suspected to have triggered the fire. The flames rapidly spread to both shops, destroying the entire stock and other materials.

Firefighters rushed to the spot after receiving alerts from local residents and brought the blaze under control. Fortunately, no casualties were reported, as no one was present inside the shops at the time of the incident.

The police have registered a case and launched an investigation into the incident to ascertain the exact cause of the fire and assess the damage.

Red alert for extremely heavy rain on October 28

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
HYDERABAD, OCT 25

The Meteorological Centre in Hyderabad on Sunday issued a red alert, warning of heavy to very heavy rainfall, with isolated extremely heavy rainfall likely at isolated places across Telangana on October 28.

In its daily weather report, the Centre said heavy rainfall was likely at isolated places in the State on October 29.

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers are likely at isolated places across Telangana from October 27 to 31. Thunderstorms accompanied by lightning and gusty winds of 30-40 kmph are also likely at isolated places on October 27, 28 and 29.

Rain occurred at one or two places in Telangana during the past 24 hours, the report added.

TG govt steps in to bring Jagtial man's body back from Ukraine

Mortal remains to reach hometown on Oct 31

TFP I N.JAYAPAL
JAGTIAL, OCT 25

The Telangana government has taken steps to bring the mortal remains of Vavilala Sudarshan Goud, a native of Husnabad village in Jagtial Urban mandal, back to India from Ukraine. Sudarshan, who worked as a construction labourer in Ukraine, was killed in a Russian missile strike on September 1.



V. Sudarshan Goud

Following a request by his wife, Bhargavi, to the Telangana government's CM Pravasi Prajavani, officials coordinated with the Indian Embassy in Ukraine to facilitate the repatriation. Jagtial MLA Dr. Sanjay Kumar and Minister Adluri Lakshman Kumar also made special efforts to expedite the process.

Manda Bhim Reddy, Vice-Chairman of the Telangana Government's NRI Advisory Committee, said the government had taken prompt action. Ahmed Nadeem, Principal Secretary of the General Administration Department (Political), sent an urgent communication to Indian Ambassador to Ukraine Anjani Kumar on October 24.

As Ukraine's airspace remains restricted, the coffin will be transported by road to Poland and flown from Warsaw to Amsterdam and then to Hyderabad via KLM Royal Dutch Airlines. The mortal remains are expected to arrive at Hyderabad airport in the early hours of October 31, after which they will be taken to Husnabad for the last rites.

CPI(M) seeks High Court judge-led probe into ESI hospital contract scam

TFP I CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, OCT 25

The Telangana State Committee of the CPI(M) has demanded a comprehensive inquiry by a sitting High Court judge into alleged irregularities in cleaning contracts awarded to four major ESI hospitals in the State.

The party has also sought the immediate cancellation of the contracts, registration of criminal cases against those responsible and recovery of the alleged misappropriated funds.

In a statement, CPI(M) State secretary John Wesley alleged that cleaning charges had been increased from Rs 10 to Rs 49.50 per square foot, ignoring the reports of the employment committee and recommendations of officials. He demanded an investigation into the role of senior officials in approving the hike.

According to the party, the increase had pushed monthly expenditure on cleaning services from Rs 61.71 lakh to Rs 3.05 crore. Despite the nearly 260 per cent increase in charges, the wages of workers employed at the hospitals had not been raised, Wesley alleged.

The CPI(M) said a routine vigilance inquiry would not be sufficient to establish the facts and called for an independent, comprehensive investigation into the entire contract process. It also demanded stringent action against officials and the contracting agency if wrongdoing was established.

Referring to an earlier controversy over medicine procurement at ESI hospitals, Wesley said the latest allegations raised serious concerns about the management of funds meant for workers' healthcare and welfare.

The party urged the State government to cancel the disputed contracts and take immediate legal action against those found responsible for the alleged irregularities.

Wanaparthy MLA defends Congress rule, challenges BRS to debate on development

TFP I THIRUPATHAIAH
WANAPARTHY, OCT 25

Wanaparthy MLA Thudi Megha Reddy on Sunday criticised former minister and BRS leader Singireddy Niranjan Reddy, urging him to respect the people's electoral verdict and refrain from making what he described as arrogant and threatening remarks.



Addressing a press conference at the District Congress Party office, Megha Reddy alleged that Wanaparthy had witnessed intimidation of political opponents, youth, traders and journalists during the BRS government's tenure from 2014 to 2023. He also alleged that cases had been filed against BC leaders and journalists under various laws.

The Congress MLA challenged Niranjan Reddy to an open debate on the performance of the previous BRS government and the work undertaken by the Congress government, asking him to present documentary evidence of the BRS regime's achievements. He said people should compare the records of both governments and judge their performance.

Responding to the former minister's reported remarks about bringing supporters to Wanaparthy, Megha Reddy said he was prepared to face the challenge and asserted that threats and personal attacks had no place in a democracy. He urged political leaders to prioritise public service and development over confrontation.

District Congress Committee president Shiva Sena Reddy, district party office-bearers, Congress leaders and party workers attended the press conference.

ACB seizes Rs 2.40 lakh unaccounted cash from HMWS&SB Joint Director

TFP I RAOOF KHAN
HYDERABAD, OCT 25

The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) seized Rs 2.40 lakh in unaccounted cash from A Srinivas, Joint Director of the Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWS&SB), Khairatabad, during a surprise check on Raj Bhavan Road on Saturday evening.

According to the ACB statement on Sunday, its City Range-II team acted on an anonymous tip-off that a senior HMWS&SB official was allegedly carrying cash collected illegally from his office while proceeding to his residence.

At around 1900 hours on October 24, the ACB officials intercepted a Maruti Swift car bearing registration number TS08 GQ 3699 opposite Metro Residency Apartments on Raj Bhavan Road. The vehicle was found to belong to Srinivas.

During the check, the officials found Rs 2.40 lakh in unaccounted cash in his possession inside the car. When questioned about carrying the cash while returning from the office, Srinivas allegedly failed to provide a satisfactory explanation and gave inconsistent statements, the ACB said.

Dr. Satyam Srirangam elected as President of TG Throwball Association

TFP I RAVI KUMAR
MEDCHAL-MALKAJGIRI, OCT 25

TPCC Official Spokesperson Dr. Satyam Srirangam has been unanimously elected president of the Telangana Throwball Association at its general body meeting held on Saturday. Chitra Shanai was elected general secretary and Bhaskar Reddy treasurer. Aman Sharma attended as an observer representing the Throwball Federation of India (TFI).



Former Union Minister and Telangana Olympic Association Vice-President Samudrala Venugopala Chary and senior advocate Mokshagna attended as chief guests. Representatives, including presidents and secretaries from 26 districts, participated in forming the new executive committee.

Dr. Satyam Srirangam thanked the district representatives.

CETI Foundation trains 161 students through leadership programmes

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
HYDERABAD, OCT 25

CETI Foundation (Centre for Excellence in Training and Innovation) marked its first year at its Hyderabad campus by certifying 27 students who completed its Certificate Course in Applied Legal Skills. Entrepreneur and producer Elahe Hiptoola attended the certificate distribution ceremony at the foundation's Banjara Hills office and presented certificates to the students.



The fully sponsored, 60-hour course received 104 registrations, with 37 candidates selected after interviews. Weekend classes were held from April to September, followed by final presentations on October 10. Faculty included academics and legal practitioners from NALSAR, the Supreme Court and High Courts, along with experts in the judiciary, public prosecution, legislative research and corporate law.

During its first year, CETI conducted 19 programmes and trained 161 leadership trainees across three cohorts and its Interdisciplinary Leadership Program, attracting students from more than 50 colleges. The programme also engaged 20 students from Osmania University and affiliated colleges in projects addressing local issues, including TSRTC commuting, student wellbeing, placement gaps and Hussain Sagar governance.

Chairman Prof. Syed Basharath Ali said the foundation was preparing to integrate artificial intelligence into its Psychology, Law, Leadership and Public Policy programmes, while strengthening human skills such as critical thinking, decision-making and communication.

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TG govt seeks Korean investments, targets jobs and technology Transfer: Dy CM

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
HYDERABAD, OCT 25

Telangana Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka on Sunday said the State government was prioritising investments from South Korean companies, with a focus on job creation, technology transfer and skill development among youth.



Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka at the K-Harmony Festa - Korea Culture Day 2026, held at Shilpakala Vedika in Hyderabad

Speaking as the chief guest at the K-Harmony Festa - Korea Culture Day 2026, held at Shilpakala Vedika in Hyderabad, he said Telangana offered significant opportunities for collaboration with Korean companies in electronics, electric vehicles, advanced manufacturing, life sciences, renewable energy and emerging technologies.

Bhatti Vikramarka recalled that investment discussions during Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy's visit to South Korea in August 2024 had laid the foundation for stronger economic cooperation. He said the government was committed to expanding the partnership and creating more investment and employment opportunities.

Highlighting tourism as a promising sector, the Deputy Chief Minister said Telangana's Tourism Policy 2025-2030 aimed to attract investments worth Rs 15,000 crore and generate three lakh additional jobs over five years. He invited Korean companies to explore opportunities in tourism infrastructure, hospitality, film tourism, wellness tourism and cultural experiences.

He said Telangana could learn from South Korea's economic transformation, particularly its investments in education, skills, infrastructure and technology. He also called for stronger cooperation among industries, universities, research institutions, startups and small enterprises.

Describing cultural exchanges as an important part of India-South Korea relations, Bhatti Vikramarka said the festival would strengthen friendship between the people of the two countries.

He highlighted the global popularity of Korean music, films and television programmes and noted similarities between Indian and Korean societies in family values, traditions and respect for elders.

Referring to the legend of Queen Heo Hwang-ok, who is believed to have travelled to Korea from ancient India, he said it symbolised the historical links between the two countries.

The Deputy Chief Minister also showcased Telangana's cultural heritage and tourism attractions, including Bathukamma, Bonalu, Charminar, Golconda Fort, the UNESCO-listed Ramappa Temple and Buddhavanam near Nagarjuna Sagar. He invited Korean tourists to visit Telangana and encouraged young people from both regions to explore opportunities in education, research, employment and creative industries.

"Hyderabad is like a second home for our Korean friends," he said, emphasising that mutual understanding and people-to-people connections were as important as investments and trade agreements.

Republic of Korea Ambassador to India Lee Seung-ho welcomed Bhatti Vikramarka to the event.

Large turnout at 'No SIR' protest

TFP I CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, OCT 25



A large number of students, activists and members of various communities participated in a 'No SIR' protest dharna at Dharna Chowk, Indira Park, on Sunday, demanding the withdrawal of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.

The protest was organised by the Students Islamic Organisation (SIO), the Association for Protection of Civil Rights (APCR) and other organisations under the banner 'People Against SIR – Telangana for Democracy'.

The protesters demanded the scrapping of SIR, the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar and safeguards to ensure that no eligible voter was excluded from electoral rolls.

They also called for a transparent and accountable revision process, protection of voting rights for SCs, STs, BCs and minorities, and repeal of the Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023.

Raising slogans such as "Scrap SIR, Save Our Votes, Save Our Democracy," the participants expressed concern over the possible exclusion of eligible voters and urged the authorities to protect constitutional rights and ensure a fair electoral process.

Former NSUI leader joins BRS party

HYDERABAD, OCT.25

Adilabad district senior Congress leader and former NSUI president Bhargav Deshpande joined the BRS party. BRS party working president KTR warmly welcomed him into the party by covering him with a pink party scarf. Former minister and the party MLA Vemula Prashanth Reddy, and others participated in the program. (NSS)

Malkajgiri MP announces Padyatra for solution to Jawahar Nagar dumping yard



FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
MEDCHAL-MALKAJGIRI, OCT 25

Malkajgiri MP Etela Rajender has demanded a permanent solution to pollution caused by the Jawahar Nagar dumping yard, calling for waste recycling and modern, pollution-free waste management facilities.

Speaking at a round-table meeting at Hotel The Plaza in Begumpet, attended by environmentalists, intellectuals and residents affected by the dumping yard, Rajender alleged that authorities had failed to address the long-standing problems despite repeated representations. Professor Murali Manohar presided over the meeting.

Rajender alleged that residents within a 30-km radius were suffering from pollution-related problems and urged the government to process waste into electricity, biogas and organic manure. He also accused Ramky of failing to adequately address local concerns and called for compliance with court orders. He said he had raised the issue in Parliament and met Union Minister Bhupender Yadav to seek intervention.

Rajender said he had met Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy to seek a solution but expressed dissatisfaction with the progress made. He announced that he would begin a padyatra on October 27, seeking public participation and demanding that no additional waste be brought to Jawahar Nagar and that existing waste be recycled. He also assured residents that efforts would be made to secure central funds for a lasting solution.

Farmers should explore alternative crops amid El Niño concerns: TGSPDCL CMD



TFP I FAROOQ KHAN
RANGAREDDY, OCT 25

Telangana Southern Power Distribution Company (TGSPDCL) Chairman and Managing Director Jitesh V. Patil has urged farmers to explore alternative crops that require less water, investment and labour in view of changing weather conditions and the potential impact of El Niño.

Patil, accompanied by Director (Projects and IT) V. Shivaji, conducted surprise field inspections in Raikal, Vityala and Rameshwaram villages under the Shadnagar division of Rangareddy district on Sunday. They inspected agricultural electricity supply and distribution transformers and reviewed measures to ensure a stable and quality power supply to farmers.

Highlighting the high water requirements of paddy cultivation, Patil advised farmers to choose crops based on water availability, landholding and investment capacity. He encouraged the cultivation of vegetables, leafy greens and flowers on small plots as well as larger farms, and suggested supplementary income through dairy farming, fish farming, sheep rearing and poultry.

The CMD also interacted with the research and development team of Kheyti, which works in the Shadnagar region, to explore modern farming practices that can improve returns from limited land and water while reducing pesticide use.

Patil stressed the need for efficient use of water, capital and labour, and urged farmers to adopt diversified, locally suitable farming methods to improve agricultural profitability. He assured them that the power department would continue working to provide reliable electricity services.

Scrap shop explosion leaves owner critically injured

TFP I TAHER ALI
HYDERABAD, OCT 25

A scrap shop owner suffered severe burn injuries after an explosion triggered a fire at a shop on the ground floor of a G2 building in Church Colony, Ramanthapur, Hyderabad, on Sunday.

The incident occurred while metal was being cut at the shop.

The shop owner, Parasuram (43), sustained burns over nearly 70 per cent of his body while metal-cutting work was underway at the shop.

Special drive on sweet shops finds unhygienic conditions

TFP I MANVEER SINGH
HYDERABAD, OCT 25



Telangana Standards Authority for Food and Essential Drugs (TG SAFE) found various violations during a special drive on sweet manufacturing and retail units across all districts of Telangana.

The Food Safety Officers of TG SAFE conducted a special drive and inspections at 53 sweet manufacturing and retail units.

The TG SAFE said in a statement on Sunday that during the inspection conducted on Friday (October 23), the officials noticed various violations in some establishments.

The officials found damaged flooring with littering of food waste; an unclean washing area; drains clogged with food waste; walls with dirt, dust and spillage of food waste. There was an absence of records, such as pest control records, health records of food handlers, etc., food handlers found without hairnets, gloves, etc., greasy exhausts and chimneys and improper storage practices, like food articles being stored on the floor, keeping of food and non-food articles together.

The officials collected 38 samples on suspicion of adulteration. An improvement notice will be issued to 20 establishments for rectification of the lapses identified during the inspection.

The establishments will be revisited to verify status of compliance with food safety norms and further action will be taken based on re-inspection, and a show cause notice will be issued to one establishment for the violations reported during the inspections and further action will be initiated for imposing penalties, TG SAFE Commissioner said.

The special drive was conducted in districts such as Mancherial, Jangaon, Siddipet, Khammam, Narayanpet, Jogulamba Gadwal, Wanaparthy, Nalgonda, Suryapet, Peddapalli, Kamareddy, Nagarkurnool, Nirmal, Nizamabad, Hanumakonda, Medak, Warangal, Rajanna Sircilla, Jagtiyal, Mahabubnagar and Kothagudem.



MP Laxman launches cycling campaign to raise awareness about drug abuse

TFP I CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, OCT 25



BJP MP K. Laxman launched a cycling campaign in Hyderabad on Sunday to raise awareness among youth about drug abuse, and support the national goal of making India drug-free by December 31, 2029.

The campaign, being conducted every Sunday for the past three months, seeks to educate students, parents and the wider community about the dangers of drug addiction and the need for collective action against narcotics.

The initiative brings together members of civil society and seeks to encourage greater public participation in efforts to prevent drug abuse, particularly among Gen Z. Laxman said the campaign aims to support the commitment made by Union Home Minister Amit Shah to eliminate the drug menace by the end of 2029.

Speaking about the initiative, Laxman said, "To free the nation from drugs and realise that pledge, I have started a campaign to make Hyderabad and Telangana drug-free. For the last three months, we have been conducting a cycle rally every Sunday. With the participation of civil society and the Telangana government, we are carrying out this awareness programme. We want to fulfil the Home Minister's pledge of making India drug-free by December 31, 2029."

He further stressed the importance of making parents and students aware of the harmful consequences of substance abuse, while highlighting the need to take action against drug peddlers and encourage people struggling with addiction to seek rehabilitation.

"To make parents and students aware, we are conducting this programme. In Telangana too, drug peddlers are being arrested, and people are being made aware of the need to join rehabilitation centres across the country. We are especially focusing on making Generation Z more aware. The state government, along with the Central government, is working towards making India drug-free," Laxman said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has set December 31, 2029, as the deadline for making India drug-free, with HM Shah describing the target as a major national priority.

Congress demands ECINET disclosure, calls for SIR suspension and Gyanesh Kumar's removal

TFP I PRASHANT SHARMA
NEW DELHI, OCT 25

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh on Sunday accused the Election Commission of India (ECI) of withholding crucial information about its ECINET software and the alleged use of artificial intelligence in the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, demanding that the exercise be suspended immediately and Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar be removed. He said the poll body's refusal to disclose details about the technology being deployed had raised serious questions about transparency, accountability and the integrity of the electoral roll revision process.

In a post on social media platform X, Ramesh alleged that the Election Commission had declined to provide information sought through a Right to Information (RTI) application, including the name of the software used in the SIR, whether artificial intelligence was being deployed and the safeguards in place to prevent errors or misuse.



"The Election Commission of India continues to hide information about the controversial ECINET software at the heart of the disastrous SIR, that has been used to centralise manipulation of the electoral rolls," Ramesh said, accusing the Commission of relying on what he described as "flimsy excuses" to deny access to information sought under the RTI framework.

His remarks followed a report in a leading national daily that the ECI had refused to provide the requested details. Ramesh argued that the lack of clear disclosures about the technology underpinning the electoral roll revision had fuelled doubts about the process and weakened public confidence in the Commission's functioning.

He also questioned why the ECI had not transparently disclosed the role of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) in developing ECINET, arguing that the company's involvement had come to light through disclosures rather than an explicit announcement by the poll body.

"Why did Indians find out from disclosures of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) that they developed the ECINET software? Why has this not been transparently disclosed by the ECI?" he asked.

Ramesh further challenged the Commission's position on the use of artificial intelligence in electoral roll revision. "Why has the ECI repeatedly denied the use of AI in the SIR and electoral roll revision, when it is clearly being used?" he said, alleging a contradiction between the ECI's public position and the technology being employed.

The controversy centres on the use of digital systems in preparing and revising electoral rolls, a process that determines citizens' eligibility to exercise their voting rights. Technology can help identify duplicate entries, detect discrepancies and process large volumes of electoral data, but the criteria used to flag entries, the scope of automated decision-making and the availability of independent verification remain important questions for electoral transparency.

LS Speaker, Russian State Duma Speaker discuss parliamentary cooperation

NEW DELHI, OCT 25

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla met Russia's State Duma Chairman Vyacheslav Volodin on Sunday and held discussions on expanding parliamentary cooperation through sustained institutional engagement between the two parliamentary chambers, regular exchanges of parliamentary delegations, and greater interaction among young and women parliamentarians.



During the meeting, the two sides reaffirmed their commitment to further deepen the India–Russia Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership.

The meeting between the legislative presiding officers took place ahead of the 12th BRICS Parliamentary Forum 2026. BJP MP Sambit Patra, Secretary (West), Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Sibi George, and other officials were present during the meeting.

Sharing details about the meeting, Birla on X wrote, "Had a warm and fruitful meeting with H.E. Mr Vyacheslav Volodin, Chairman of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, ahead of the 12th BRICS Parliamentary Forum 2026. The enduring bonds of friendship, mutual trust and understanding between India and Russia form the bedrock of our long-standing partnership. As our two nations mark 80 years of diplomatic relations, we reaffirmed our commitment to further deepening the India–Russia Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership, rooted in mutual respect, trust and shared aspirations."

During the meeting, the Lok Sabha Speaker spoke about India's initiatives to leverage technology, including Sansad Bhashini, to make parliamentary proceedings more accessible, inclusive and citizen-centric. He expressed confidence that stronger parliamentary engagement will impart fresh momentum to the partnership between India and Russia.

During the meeting, the Lok Sabha Speaker spoke about India's initiatives to leverage technology, including Sansad Bhashini, to make parliamentary proceedings more accessible, inclusive and citizen-centric. He expressed confidence that stronger parliamentary engagement will impart fresh momentum to the partnership between India and Russia.

"We discussed expanding parliamentary cooperation through sustained institutional engagement between Lok Sabha and the State Duma, regular exchanges of parliamentary delegations, and greater interaction among young and women parliamentarians. I also shared India's initiatives to leverage technology, including Sansad Bhashini, to make parliamentary proceedings more accessible, inclusive and citizen-centric," Birla posted on X.

"We also exchanged views on strengthening cooperation among BRICS Parliaments, combating terrorism through concerted international efforts, and advancing reforms of the United Nations Security Council. I conveyed my appreciation for Russia's continued support for India's permanent membership of the Council. I am confident that stronger parliamentary engagement will impart fresh momentum to our time-tested partnership, further reinforcing the deep-rooted friendship and close ties between India and Russia," he added.

Earlier in the day, Volodin paid tribute to Mahatma Gandhi at Rajghat in New Delhi.

Volodin is on an official visit to India to attend the 12th BRICS Parliamentary Forum, set to be hosted by the Parliament of India at the Central Hall of Samvidhan Sadan here on October 26–27. Held under India's chairship, the forum will bring together parliamentary leaders from BRICS member and partner countries to deliberate on people-centric development and strengthen parliamentary cooperation. (IANS)

Fadnavis assured Sunetra would get Finance portfolio: Bhujbal

MUMBAI, OCT 25

Senior Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader and Maharashtra Minister Chhagan Bhujbal said Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has assured the party that the Finance portfolio would be allocated to Deputy Chief Minister Sunetra Pawar, possibly before the upcoming winter session of the state legislature.



Speaking to media persons after a meeting with Fadnavis at his official residence 'Varsha', Bhujbal said the NCP expected the Finance Ministry to be allotted to the party in accordance with the understanding reached during the formation of the Mahayuti alliance.

He said Fadnavis has responded positively to the demand and assured NCP leaders that Sunetra Pawar would be entrusted with the portfolio. However, the formal handover has been delayed as the state government is engaged in discussions and financial planning for drought relief assistance to affected farmers across Maharashtra, Bhujbal added.

Bhujbal remarked, "Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis is extremely positive regarding the allocation of the Finance Ministry to the NCP. Our MLAs feel that as per the understanding reached during the formation of the Mahayuti alliance. The Chief Minister has assured us that the portfolio will be given to Sunetra Pawar, and the formal responsibility will be handed over to her ahead of the upcoming winter session." (IANS)

Andhra's coalition govt mocking electoral process: YSRCP

TADEPALLI (ANDHRA PRADESH), OCT 25

The YSR Congress Party has attacked the coalition government in Andhra Pradesh for what it called making a mockery of the election process in the local body polls by indulging in all kinds of malpractices.

The opposition party said it will explore all avenues besides fighting it out in the people's court.

Speaking to the media at Nellore on Sunday, former Minister Kakani Govardhan Reddy said Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu is 'scared' of the Opposition, as his party did not dare to field candidates in the previous local body polls because then CM Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy had rolled out extensive welfare schemes and people were content.

"This time, due to the failures of the coalition government on all fronts, our candidates have entered the fray following the call given by Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy. This has become an eyesore for Chandrababu Naidu, prompting him to direct the official machinery to play foul in the election process," he said.

The former minister stated that even after the Supreme Court's directives, there has been no change in the pattern of atrocities in the local body polls.

"The same malpractices of preventing our candidates from filing nomination papers continue. If someone manages to cross that hurdle, goons snatch away or tear up their nomination papers. If a candidate manages to overcome that obstacle as well, the Returning Officer rejects the nomination papers on one flimsy ground or another," he said.

"In the subsequent phases, candidates are being arrested and threatened, while some of our active leaders are being kept in jail," he alleged. (IANS/UNI)

Anant Singh vows to launch party



Anant Singh

PATNA, OCT 25

Bihar MLA Anant Singh, after being expelled from the JD(U) party for six years over alleged anti-party activities, has said he has no regrets over the action and asserted that the party has no political future.

Speaking to reporters, Singh said, "I have no regrets. The public is like God, and whatever action they have taken, it was the right decision. I have no problem with it. The party belonged to Nitish Kumar, and he made the decisions himself. What is left in the party now? Who contributed to it? The party has expelled me, but what have those people done? What will we do next?

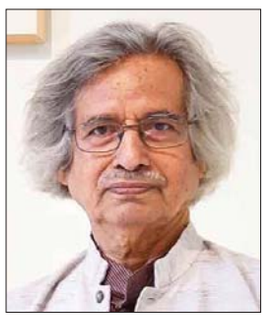
"Nitish Kumar is no longer there. The party belonged to him, and now that he is gone, the party is also finished. The JD(U) will face trouble in at least 10 seats. I do not know who ordered this action; perhaps those who have taken control of the party are responsible," he added.

Singh further mentioned, "I will make my own party. I will stay where I am; I never asked for a ticket. I believe the JD(U) has no future. It will become clear during the elections," Anant Singh said. (IANS/UNI)

Former MP Jogen Chowdhury passes away

KOLKATA, OCT 25

Renowned painter and former Trinamool Congress Rajya Sabha member Jogen Chowdhury passed away on Sunday. He was 87.



Jogen Chowdhury

The artist was admitted to a hospital in Kolkata with blood cancer and urinary tract infection. According to family sources, he breathed his last this morning.

According to hospital sources, Jogen Chowdhury had been suffering from cancer for the past 14 months. He was undergoing chemotherapy. He fell ill on the day of Shasthi (October 16) and was admitted to the hospital. His condition was critical at the time of admission. Symptoms of sepsis were also seen due to the infection. When his condition deteriorated on Saturday, he was put on ventilation.

Jogen Chowdhury was born on February 16, 1939, in Daharpara village of Faridpur in ABritish India. His father, Pramathanath Chowdhury, was a landlord. (IANS)

JDS alleges conspiracy to frame party in sting operation

BENGALURU, OCT 25

The Janata Dal (Secular) on Sunday alleged that the investigation into the Karnataka sting operation case was being manipulated to frame party leaders, and demanded that Chief Minister DK Shivkumar's mobile phone be seized and sent for forensic examination.



JDS spokesperson Devaraj, addressing a press conference, alleged that the state government and the Crime Control Bureau (CCB) were attempting to shift the blame for the controversy onto the regional party.

He questioned the circumstances surrounding searches at the residences linked to JDS social media functionaries Mohan Gowda and Chandan, alleging procedural irregularities and a lack of transparency in the investigation.

Devaraj sought clarification on the contents of a pen drive allegedly taken from Mohan Gowda's residence and questioned why the details had not been disclosed.

The JDS spokesperson demanded an apology from Home Minister Priyank Kharge, alleging that the department was selectively targeting people connected to the party while shielding those allegedly involved in the sting operation.

He also alleged that the police had not properly served notice to Chandan and were creating an impression that he had absconded.

The JDS spokesperson demanded an apology from Home Minister Priyank Kharge, alleging that the department was selectively targeting people connected to the party while shielding those allegedly involved in the sting operation.

Calling for an impartial investigation, Devaraj challenged the government to seize Shivakumar's mobile phone and send it to the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) for examination.

The allegations come amid an ongoing political controversy surrounding the sting operation and its implications for the state government. The claims made by the JDS spokesperson could not be independently verified from the information available. (IANS)

PM Modi witnesses IAF's air show, inaugurates garment facility in Varanasi

VARANASI, OCT 25

Varanasi witnessed the mega air show 'Wings Over Ganges' organised by the Indian Air Force (IAF) over the Ganga River here on Sunday to mark its 94th anniversary, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi among the audience at the Namo Ghat here.

The spectacular aerial display saw various aircraft showcase their capabilities.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel, and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath were also present at the event.



PM Narendra Modi witnesses Air Force Day Aerial Display 2026 at Namo Ghat in Varanasi.

The event gave spectators an opportunity to witness a wide variety of aircraft and aerial manoeuvres, showcasing the Indian Air Force's capabilities across different operational roles, from fighter operations and helicopter formations to transport and coordinated flying.

The air show was organised to commemorate the 94th anniversary of the Indian Air Force, bringing together a range of aircraft for an aerial display highlighting the force's operational capabilities, precision flying and coordination.

The event featured aircraft such as the Tejas, Light Combat Helicopter (LCH) Prachand, Su-30MKI and Rafale, along with several transport and other military aircraft.

The second phase of the programme began with three Mi-17 V-5 helicopters carrying the national flag and the Indian Air Force flag in an 'Omkar' formation. The formation was led by Group Captain Anuj Gupta, marking the beginning of another series of aerial manoeuvres during the event.

The air show also featured the 'Bhagirathi' diamond formation, comprising LCH and Apache helicopters, followed by the Tridev formation. (IANS/UNI)

Gun culture hinders Manipur peace: CM Khemchand

IMPHAL, OCT 25

Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh on Sunday said that the state cannot make progress or achieve lasting peace as long as gun culture persists, stressing the need to move towards a peaceful environment.



The Chief Minister appealed to the people of the state to shun violence, surrender illegal arms and join hands towards restoring peace and harmony in the state.

In a most significant move, Khemchand Singh on Sunday visited Sinai Camp, a designated camp of the militants under the Suspension of Operations (SoO) pact in Kangpokpi District.

The Sinai camp was disarmed and taken over by the CRPF last week following joint operations conducted by the CoBRA (Commando Battalion for Resolute Action) Unit of CRPF, Manipur Police and other security agencies. The operation was carried out in the aftermath of the recent killing of three innocent firewood collectors at Nongshum in the joint jurisdiction of Kangpokpi and Imphal East districts.

During the operation, 17 individuals impersonating registered SoO cadres using false identities were found only in the camp. The security personnel also recovered and seized more than 24 firearms, 38 magazines, a large quantity of ammunition, explosives, wireless communication equipment and other combat gear during the operation. The camp was supposed to house about 150 cadres.

The Sinai camp was the designated camp of the Kuki National Army (KNA) and Kuki Liberation Army (KLA), which are under the Suspension of Operations (SoO) agreement, signed with the Centre in August 2008. This is the first ever visit by a sitting Chief Minister to a designated camp under the SoO. The Chief Minister was accompanied by the government Spokesperson and MLA of Heirok Assembly Constituency, Thokchom Radheshyam Singh, during the visit. Upon his arrival at Sinai, Khemchand Singh inspected the entire camp premises and was briefed by officers of the CRPF and Assam Rifles on the operations conducted and the prevailing law and order situation in the area.

While interacting with senior security officers and personnel, the Chief Minister commended the CRPF's CoBRA Battalion for its courage and valour, particularly for its leading role in the successful operation that led to total control of the camp. He maintained that due care must be taken to ensure innocent civilians are not affected by combing operations.

Khemchand Singh directed the security personnel that they are here to protect the lives and properties of the people. Later, the Chief Minister also interacted with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and villagers of the area.

Inspector General of CRPF (Manipur and Nagaland Sector) Homkar Amol Vinukant, IG of Manipur Police Kamei Angam Romanus, DIG of Manipur Police N. Herojit Meetei, DIG of CRPF Rajesh Kumar, Colonel Radha Krishnan of Assam Rifles, Deputy Commissioner, Kangpokpi district, SPs of Kangpokpi and Imphal East districts and other senior officers of other security agencies were also present during the visit. (IANS/UNI)

Bengal CM targets previous govt over BGBS



Suvendu Adhikari

KOLKATA, OCT 25

West Bengal Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari accused the previous government of spending hundreds of crores of rupees in the name of the Bengal Global Business Summit (BGBS) without generating any significant industrial development in the state.

The Chief Minister said that his government would focus on continuous development and create employment opportunities for the youth.

"Hundreds of crores of rupees were spent in the name of the Bengal Global Business Summit, but nothing happened in terms of industry in the state," Adhikari said on Sunday, alleging that industrial development under the previous government had been marred by fraud.

The CM made the remarks after visiting the family of Kalpana Jana, a resident of Ramnagar in East Midnapore who died in the stampede at the Chorbagan Sarbojanin Durga Puja pandal in north Kolkata.

He handed over government assistance to the bereaved family on Sunday morning, the day of Kojagari Lakshmi Puja. (IANS)

Ex-Army Officer arrested for allegedly leaking key military data

CHENNAI, OCT 25

Close on the heels of the arrest of a 31-year-old Indian Navy sailor on espionage charges for leaking key and sensitive defence/maritime data linked to Visakhapatnam Naval base to a woman Pakistani Intelligence operative, a former Indian Army Officer was arrested in Vellore district of Tamil Nadu for allegedly leaking key and secret military data to an unidentified woman.



Reports said, the retired Army Officer, Babu (52), was lured into the honeytrap by the woman by befriending him through WhatsApp and video calls an year ago, and said to have obtained datas about Army equipment and other defence-related information from him.

Acting on specific intelligence, the Central Intelligence officials kept him under surveillance and arrested him on Friday from his residence. After extensive grilling for two days at the Vellore Taluk Police station by the Central Intelligence Agencies, he was handed over to the Tamil Nadu police last night.

During questioning it came to light that the woman had sought details on defence equipment and defence security related cases from Babu under the guise of working on a project for DRDO. He had shared whatever information sought by her. For some other details which he did not know, he was said to have got it from his former colleagues and present staff over phone and passed it on to her.

Having served in various divisions of the Indian Army, Babu had settled in native Keezhvallam village near Kaniyambadi in Vellore district after his retirement last year in the rank of Captain from the Army's equipment division.

After he was handed over to their custody, the Tamil Nadu police have started digging deep into the matter to ascertain the details of the undientified woman and whether she was acting as an operative for any other country's intelligence unit. (IANS)

Six graduates arrested for involvement in illegal arms trade

CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR (MAHARASHTRA), OCT 25

In another incident of educated individuals indulging in criminal activities coming to light, six youths were arrested from Maharashtra's Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar for their alleged involvement in illegal arms trade despite being graduates, officials said on Sunday.

In an operation conducted by a team of the CIDCO Police Station in Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar, the six youths were taken into custody, and four firearms along with 11 live cartridges were recovered from their possession.

The police personnel were left surprised that some of the arrested individuals have earned degrees such as B.Sc., B.Com., and BCS and instead of pursuing better career opportunities after completing their education, they were allegedly involved in the illegal arms business. The matter is now under further investigation.

According to Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Zone-2, Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar, Ratnakar Navle, the Detection Branch of CIDCO Police Station carried out an overnight operation leading to the arrest of the six accused.

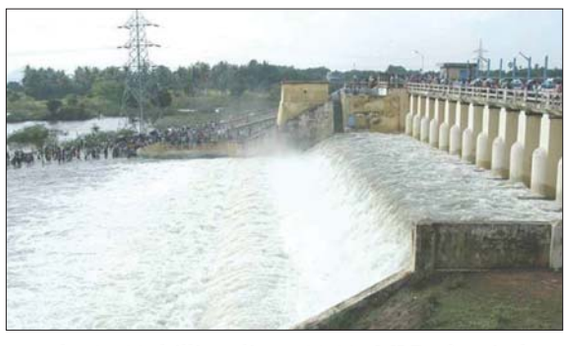
Preliminary investigations indicate that the weapons were being brought in from Madhya Pradesh and supplied to various locations across the city. Police suspect that an organised syndicate may be operating behind the network.

Police sources revealed that the accused were reportedly earning around Rs 40,000 to Rs 45,000 per weapon sold. However, investigators are still examining where the weapons were procured, who the buyers were, and who else may have been involved in the network. (IANS)

Chennai reservoirs record significant boost in storage

CHENNAI, OCT 25

Nine days of sustained rainfall have boosted Chennai's drinking water reserves, adding nearly one thousand million cubic feet (TMC) to the six reservoirs supplying the city as the northeast monsoon gathers strength.



Combined storage rose by 984.98 million cubic feet (mcft), from 4,485.68 mcft on October 15 to 5,470.66 mcft on October 24. The reservoirs now hold 41.38 per cent of their total capacity of 13,222 mcft, improving the city's water availability ahead of further monsoon rainfall.

The additional water amounts to approximately 27.89 billion litres. This is equivalent to nearly 29 days of the current withdrawal from reservoirs, or about 23 days of Chennai's total daily supply when other sources are included.

The Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (CMWSSB) supplies 1,237.71 million litres a day (MLD), including 61.29 MLD for industries, bulk consumers and municipal requirements.

Reservoirs contribute 968.41 MLD, accounting for approximately 78 per cent of the overall supply.

Other sources include two desalination plants at Nemmeli, which together provide 200 MLD. Quarries contribute 28 MLD, wells and borewells supply 16 MLD, sources in the added areas provide 14 MLD, and Porur contributes another five MLD.

Red Hills registered the largest increase among the six reservoirs, reinforcing its position as a major source of drinking water for Chennai. Its storage climbed by 539 mcft, from 1,876 mcft on October 15 to 2,415 mcft in the latest figures provided. The reservoir has reached 73.18 per cent of its capacity of 3,300 mcft. Its gain accounts for more than half the overall increase recorded across the six waterbodies during the period. (IANS/UNI)

Drug cartels trying to incite violence in Northeast to revive smuggling networks: Intel

VICKY NANJAPPA
NEW DELHI, OCT 23

Fresh Intelligence inputs suggest that there are attempts being made to incite widespread violence in several northeastern states with an intention to enhance drug trade in the region.

Recent actions by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) have dented the operations of the drug cartels largely and this explains why certain elements are trying to incite violence.

An Intelligence Bureau official said that several states in the region remain vulnerable to violence. The idea is to break the security chain so that drugs can flow freely into the region and then be smuggled across other parts of the country, the official said.



Despite several challenges such as operations on rugged terrains and riverine areas, the security agencies have managed to largely contain major drug operations that emanate out of Myanmar. This has led to operations by the cartels being hampered, the official said.

An official said that peace is a major deterrent for drug operations. The security agencies remain completely focussed on tackling drug related issues and smuggling. However when peace is disrupted, the focus of the security agencies completely shifts and this gives drug cartels the window to bring in narcotics and then supply them in several other parts of the country, the official said.

- **There are multiple agencies working together and in the last year have achieved immense success in putting down drug operations from Pakistan, Myanmar and also South Indian states.**
- **Drugs such as heroine and Yaba which is a combination of methamphetamine and caffeine are pumped in large numbers into the region. These drugs form the backbone of the Myanmar based cartels. With supplies being hit largely due to conducive action by the Indian security agencies, these cartels are getting desperate.**

The PM Modi government had taken the initiative to make India drug free. Union Home Minister Amit Shah has emphasised on numerous occasions that the war on drugs would be taken to its logical conclusion.

The Intelligence agencies warn that these cartels are desperately trying to break the morale of the security agencies. This can be achieved by ensuring that their focus completely shifts to domestic issues. The idea is to run disinformation campaigns while trying to incite tensions, the official said. The end goal is to ensure that the whole of northeast burns.

Another official said that violence in the northeast is never good news. There are several elements across the border waiting to capitalise on the same. This helps them not just in smuggling narcotics, but also supplying arms and ammunition, while also pushing in illegal immigrants and terrorists into the region, the official said.

They would look to use every tool at their disposal to ensure that the supply chains and routes function properly, officials say.

Officials say that this is a critical time for the security agencies. While there are attempts to run disinformation campaigns to incite violence, these cartels would also look to exploit the upcoming elections in Manipur slated for 2027. (IANS/UNI)

THE FREEDOM PRESS

MONDAY 26 OCTOBER 2026

Digital sovereignty must guide satellite internet policy

India's expanding digital infrastructure has become an important part of its development story, with internet subscriptions reaching a record 1,114.17 million. As the country seeks to extend connectivity to remote villages, border regions and island communities, satellite-based broadband offers significant opportunities. However, connectivity must advance alongside national security, data protection and strategic autonomy. The continuing debate over Starlink's entry into India highlights the need to balance technological innovation with the country's sovereign interests.

India has progressively opened its space sector to private participation since the reforms introduced in 2020. The liberalisation of foreign direct investment in the space sector in 2024, allowing up to 74 per cent through the automatic route for satellite operations and higher investment with government approval, created opportunities for domestic and international companies. Starlink received its Global Mobile Personal Communication by Satellite (GMPCS) authorisation in June 2025, IN-SPACe authorisation in July and provisional spectrum allocation in August. However, its commercial launch remains subject to security clearance. This regulatory approach reflects India's objective of expanding connectivity while ensuring that satellite communication services meet national requirements.

The Department of Telecommunications introduced 29 additional security conditions for satellite communication licensees in May 2025. These include locating gateways and essential network control functions in India, integrating lawful interception with the Centralised Monitoring System, establishing monitoring zones near international borders and coastal waters, and enabling restrictions on services during hostilities. The framework also provides for 20 per cent indigenisation of the ground segment after five years of commercial operations and a transition to the Navigation with Indian Constellation (NavIC) system by 2029. These safeguards demonstrate that India recognises the strategic importance of satellite networks. Their effectiveness, however, will depend on consistent enforcement and the ability to maintain operational control during emergencies.

aInternational developments illustrate why such safeguards matter. During the Ukraine conflict, Starlink service availability became a subject of controversy after Elon Musk declined requests to activate coverage over Crimea in 2022, citing concerns about escalation. Reports also described restrictions on connectivity affecting Ukrainian military operations. In Iran, Musk announced in 2025 that Starlink coverage was active despite the country's restrictions, while unauthorised terminals reportedly continued to operate. These episodes raise questions about the extent to which a private operator can influence communications during geopolitical crises. For India, the central issue is ensuring that decisions affecting critical connectivity remain consistent with Indian law and the authority of the government.

The strategic implications extend beyond military operations. In 2025, reports emerged that US negotiators had discussed the possibility of restricting Ukraine's Starlink access during negotiations over a proposed agreement concerning critical minerals. Such developments illustrate how dependence on foreign-controlled infrastructure can create leverage in international relations. Moreover, US legal provisions, including the CLOUD Act and other surveillance authorities, may create obligations for American technology companies concerning data under their control, even when stored abroad. These concerns are not exclusive to Starlink, but the global reach of its network and its links to US defence programmes make operational independence, data governance and accountability important considerations for Indian policymakers.

Special Parliament session back on the agenda as government courts Opposition on Women's quota, delimitation bills

SHAHID K ABBAS



The possibility of the union government convening a special session of Parliament later this month to revive crucial constitutional amendments on women's reservation and delimitation has gained fresh momentum, with highly placed Lok Sabha sources indicating on Thursday that such a sitting "cannot be ruled out".

The proposed session would mark a renewed attempt by the government to secure parliamentary approval for the contentious legislative package after its earlier bid suffered a setback during the Budget Session, when the bills failed to secure the requisite two-thirds majority in the Lok Sabha. Government sources have indicated that the ruling establishment is now working to consolidate support, reaching out to regional parties and smaller Opposition groups in an effort to ensure that the constitutional amendments clear the legislative hurdle this time.

The proposed legislative exercise carries far-reaching political implications, bringing together two sensitive issues: the implementation of women's reservation in legislative bodies and the delimitation of constituencies.

The existing constitutional framework links the implementation of the one-third quota for women in the Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies to a future census and the subsequent delimitation exercise. Any changes to this framework are likely to reignite debate over the timing of women's reservation, the redrawing of constituency boundaries and the distribution of parliamentary representation among states.

Sources said the government has been reaching out to Opposition parties, including the DMK, to secure the numbers required for the constitutional amendments. The outreach suggests that the ruling establishment is keen to avoid another legislative defeat and wants to establish that it has sufficient support before formally announcing a special sitting.

The procedural position has also fuelled speculation about the timing of the proposed session. The Monsoon Session of Parliament was adjourned sine die but has not been formally prorogued, leaving open the possibility of convening another sitting of the existing session, subject to the necessary procedural steps. Government sources have indicated that MPs could be given around a week's notice if the decision to proceed is taken.

Although a sitting around the festival calendar had been discussed earlier, the latest indications point towards a short session timed around the 12th BRICS Parliamentary Forum. No formal announcement has been made, however, and the dates and legislative agenda remain subject to a final decision by the government.

The proposed move comes amid an intensifying confrontation between the government and the Opposition over the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls and the functioning of the Election Commission, particularly Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar. Opposition parties have stepped up their campaign over electoral transparency and the integrity of the voting process, adding to the political tensions ahead of the next round of major electoral contests.

Against this backdrop, the government's efforts to build support for the constitutional amendments are expected to face demands for wider consultation and detailed parliamentary scrutiny. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju has recently written to Congress leaders seeking constructive cooperation, while Congress president and Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge has called for an all-party meeting to discuss the proposed legislative business and ensure adequate deliberation before a special session is formally notified.

The Opposition's concerns are likely to centre on the constitutional and political consequences of delimitation, particularly the distribution of parliamentary seats among states and the safeguards needed to preserve a fair federal balance. Southern states have expressed apprehension that a population-based redistribution of seats could diminish their relative representation despite their progress in controlling population growth.

The government will therefore have to address concerns that extend beyond the immediate question of securing a parliamentary majority to the broader issues of federal equity and political representation.

Under Article 368 of the Constitution, constitutional amendment bills generally require a majority of the total membership of each House of Parliament and a two-thirds majority of members present and voting. Certain amendments also require ratification by at least half of the state legislatures. The precise requirements will depend on the provisions of the bills proposed. Given the government's earlier difficulty in securing the necessary numbers, the support of regional parties could prove decisive.

For the government, a special session would provide an opportunity to revive its legislative agenda and demonstrate that the earlier setback has been overcome through political negotiations. For the Opposition, it would present another test of its ability to coordinate across party lines on legislation that combines constitutional reform with potentially significant electoral consequences.

For now, the government has stopped short of making a formal announcement. But the indication from highly placed Lok Sabha sources that a special session "cannot be ruled out", coupled with reported efforts to win over regional parties, has brought the possibility of an October sitting back into sharp political focus. The immediate questions are whether the government will formally convene the session, whether it can secure the requisite numbers and whether the Opposition will be given adequate time to examine and debate the proposed constitutional changes before Parliament is called upon to vote.

Evidence-based budgeting can accelerate SDG goals

With four years remaining until the 2030 deadline, countries are facing the challenge of accelerating progress towards the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The UN's Sustainable Development Goals Report 2026 found that only 36 per cent of 139 assessable targets were on track or making moderate progress. Against this backdrop, India's efforts to link public expenditure with development targets reflect an important step towards strengthening accountability and ensuring that government spending delivers measurable outcomes.

On September 29, 2026, NITI Aayog, the West Bengal government and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) brought officials from 32 of India's 36 states and Union Territories to Kolkata, where NITI Aayog released the *Guide on Mapping State Budgets to the SDGs*. The initiative aligns with the 2025 Sevilla Commitment, which encourages countries to frame national budgets in support of sustainable development. By establishing a common framework, India aims to improve the tracking of public expenditure against development priorities.

The Guide recommends mapping individual budget lines to relevant SDG indicators, allowing governments to identify how much they allocate towards specific development objectives. This approach can strengthen transparency and help policymakers assess the relationship between expenditure and outcomes. India's composite score on the SDG India Index rose from 57 in 2018 to 71 in 2023-24, reflecting progress across development indicators. Better budget mapping can help explain the resources supporting such improvements and identify areas requiring greater attention.

Several states have already introduced different approaches to SDG budgeting. Assam has linked its outcome budget to the goals since 2016-17 and reports coverage of around 82-83 per cent of spending. Haryana identified 91 per cent of its 2024-25 budget, amounting to Rs. 1.74 trillion, as SDG-aligned. Odisha's SDG outlay increased to Rs. 2.96 trillion for 2026-27, while Meghalaya has mapped its entire Rs. 320 billion budget. These experiences offer valuable lessons for other states, although differences in their methods make consistent measurement essential.

A central challenge arises when a government scheme contributes to several SDG indicators. The NITI Aayog Guide recommends an equal-weightage method for such expenditure, dividing the amount equally among the relevant indicators. Assam follows a similar approach, while Odisha and Meghalaya generally assign entire budget lines to a single primary development goal. Haryana, for instance, maps the mid-day meal scheme to nutrition, health and education. Each method offers administrative simplicity, but neither necessarily captures the actual contribution of expenditure to different outcomes.

The limitations become clearer when the mid-day meal scheme is examined. Research on the programme found that it eliminated the protein deficit among the children studied, reduced their calorie deficit by around 30 per cent and lowered their iron deficit by approximately 10 per cent. Of its combined nutritional effect, about 71 per cent was attributable to protein, 21 per cent to calories and 7 per cent to iron. An equal split would assign one-third of the expenditure to each area, potentially overstating the programme's contribution to reducing iron deficiency. This illustrates why budget classification should increasingly draw on evidence about actual programme results.

A robust framework should therefore distinguish between expenditure that can be directly separated and spending that produces several outcomes simultaneously. Where a budget line covers clearly identifiable activities, allocations should be divided using actual expenditure recorded under relevant sub-schemes or object heads. For programmes with interconnected outcomes, equal-weighted estimates can initially provide a practical baseline, while effect-based estimates can offer a more accurate assessment as evidence improves. Publishing both sets of figures would help policymakers understand how different methods influence reported SDG spending.

Fiscal consolidation anchors the Indian growth story after Covid-19

SRIRAM BALASUBRAMANIAN
PRAKASH LOUNGANI



The recently concluded IMF-WBG meetings featured several interesting presentations. While much of the discussion around the meetings focused on AI and related topics, one paper caught our attention. This new IMF paper argues that fiscal discipline rewards investment in low-income countries. We argue that this not only applies to India but also reveals that the Indian growth story could be its fiscal prudence after the Covid episode.

The IMF paper argues that fiscal credibility plays an important role in driving capital into countries, and that key policy initiatives such as the development of special economic zones (SEZs) and tax holidays work well only when fiscal credibility is present. For instance, low-income countries (LICs) with stronger fiscal ratings saw a larger, more persistent rise in foreign direct investment (FDI) after SEZ approval, while those with weaker fiscal ratings showed little durable response. Therefore, the paper argues that fiscal credibility is key to greater investment. In our view, these lessons are not restricted to LICs but apply to most, if not all, economies, including emerging markets such as India. How has macro-fiscal management shaped the Bharat story?

There is unequivocal evidence to suggest that stronger macro-fiscal management reduces policy uncertainty and improves investors' risk-adjusted returns. This emphasis has deeper institutional roots in the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act era, which marked a greater post-2000s focus on fiscal issues, as reflected in Montek Singh Ahluwalia's profile in Finance & Development. This applies clearly to India after the Covid-19 pandemic. Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman had promised in Parliament a credible fiscal glide path after Covid-19, and current Cabinet Secretary TV Somanathan later reinforced the commitment. He added that from 2026-27, the deficit would be set so that the Centre's debt-to-GDP ratio remains on a declining path.

The numbers vindicate this commitment. India's fiscal deficit came down from 9.2 per cent of GDP in 2020-21 to 4.4 per cent in 2025-26 (revised), with a targeted 4.3 per cent for 2026-27. There was also an emphasis on the Centre shifting to debt-to-GDP as a primary fiscal anchor, which added further credibility. At the same time, as fiscal consolidation was being pursued, capex was expanding, rising from Rs 2 lakh crore in 2014-15 to Rs 12.22 lakh crore in 2026-27. How did capital respond during this period? More importantly, how does this compare with previous large shocks such as the global financial crisis?

Consider two shocks and two exits, as shown in the figure below. After the 2008 global financial crisis, India's fiscal deficit averaged 5.6 per cent of GDP over the next five years, but with no linear and calibrated path downward. Gross FDI stalled at around $35-47 billion a year, and the period ended in the 2013 taper tantrum. After the pandemic, the deficit was higher at its peak, at 9.2 per cent in 2020-21, but it came down on schedule every year to 4.4 per cent by 2025-26. Gross FDI climbed to a record $94.5 billion. The lesson is not that India now runs small deficits; on average, it does not. It is that investors can now credibly believe that the deficit will keep falling, adding legitimacy and a premium to the government's commitment. Hot money still moves with global risk as portfolio investors pulled out $16.4 billion last year as conflict erupted in the Middle East. But long-horizon capital, the kind that builds factories, follows credibility.

This leads to the important story of why fiscal credibility matters and why it has anchored high growth after Covid-19. Several factors reinforce this trend. First, rating agencies have taken notice. The Japan Credit Rating Agency upgraded India to A- for the first time in decades. S&P raised India to BBB in August 2025—its first upgrade in 18 years—citing sustained fiscal consolidation and improved quality of public spending. Notably, India's weak fiscal settings had long been the most vulnerable part of its ratings profile, as even past IMF reviews have concurred.

Second, record gross FDI numbers have also come in, with many investors arguing that fiscal consolidation matters. The World Bank's latest report argues that improving institutional quality, promoting macroeconomic stability, and easing trade and investment restrictions can help reinvigorate FDI inflows in emerging economies.

Third, the criticism of net FDI numbers is something we have addressed in an earlier article, but repatriation could be seen as a sign of a maturing economy. In the previous piece, we had emphasised the need for more legal reforms to retain more capital. Gross flows determine the level of investor interest in the country, especially through the FDI lens. Concerns remain about debt levels, especially at the state level, and about regulatory constraints on businesses, among other issues. In retrospect, this year, both the World Bank's flagship report and the IMF's new research find that stronger fiscal and institutional credibility is associated with higher FDI. The calibrated fiscal consolidation during the years following Covid-19 has been one of the most important anchors of the growth we are seeing today, a rarity in post-Independence India. On fiscal consolidation after Covid-19, the government and civil servants have been spot on.

(Sriram Balasubramanian is a former IMF economist. Prakash Loungani is director of the MS in Applied Economics programme at Johns Hopkins University)

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

Climate change is outpacing evolution

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
SAN DIEGO, OCT 25

Evolution works over millennia. Climate change is moving far faster.

That mismatch is killing some of the planet's most vital ecosystems, from California's towering redwoods to the seagrass meadows along its coast, both of which store vast amounts of carbon and support complex webs of life.

Marine heat waves, record wildfires and coastal development are pushing these systems beyond their limits as climate change, driven by emissions of fuels like oil and gas, accelerates. An estimated 1 million species face extinction, many within decades, largely due to human activities such as habitat destruction, pollution and overuse of natural resources, according to a 2019 report by a United Nations-affiliated intergovernmental scientific body.

Scientists are working to close the gap with an emerging discipline called conservation genomics: sequencing an organism's complete genetic blueprint to pinpoint individuals with traits suited to survive drought, disease and other climate extremes, then using that information to guide restoration.



Coral reefs are among the first ecosystems where these genomic tools are being put to use. Repeated marine heat waves, which have caused mass bleaching, have devastated reefs worldwide. By sequencing corals and the algae that live inside them, researchers have identified colonies that naturally withstand higher temperatures and are beginning to test whether selectively breeding and growing those more resilient corals can support reef recovery.

In Southern California, researchers are applying the approach to eelgrass, a type of seagrass, as traditional restoration methods falter. The plant provides habitat for fish, crabs and plankton, feeds migratory birds and locks away carbon and methane — both heat-trapping greenhouse gases — in coastal sediments.

Conditions in San Diego's bays are changing. Waters are warming. King tides — the year's highest tides, which climate change is making more frequent and severe — stir up sediment and reduce the light that reaches the seafloor. Development sends runoff into bays, further clouding the water.

As a result, efforts to replant what's been lost fail about half the time.

"Conservation genomics is becoming particularly important because right now, the climate is changing — a plant that was growing great in San Diego Bay, now San Diego Bay might be too hot for it," said Todd Michael, a research professor at the Salk Institute for Biological Studies.

In Mission Bay, Michael and his colleagues discovered a clue to improving those odds: a naturally occurring hybrid eelgrass that outperformed its parent species. The plant, a cross between shallow water eelgrass Zostera marina and deeper water Zostera pacifica, persisted where both parent species struggled.

By sequencing its genome, the team identified genes tied to the plant's circadian clock that stayed active longer under low light conditions, a pattern scientists believe may help it photosynthesize more efficiently in murky water. (IANS/UNI)

Elon Musk unveils X Money feature

NEW DELHI, OCT 25

Elon Musk on Sunday announced a proposed X Money feature that would allow users to send $1 to another user by long-pressing the Like button, furthering his vision of turning X into an all-in-one platform for social networking and financial services.



Announcing the feature in a post on social media platform X, Musk suggested that the functionality could provide a simple way for users to transfer small amounts of money to others on the platform.

The feature is expected to make it easier for users to tip content creators and support posts they appreciate without leaving the app.

The proposed payment mechanism is part of Musk's broader strategy to transform X, formerly Twitter, into an "everything app" that combines social networking, messaging, payments and other digital services within a single ecosystem.(IANS)

Very severe cyclonic storm likely to cross Andhra coast on Oct 28

VISAKHAPATNAM, OCT 25

The depression over East-central and adjoining Southeast Bay of Bengal is likely to intensify into a very severe cyclonic storm on October 28 and cross the Andhra Pradesh coast between Bapatla and Visakhapatnam.



According to India Meteorological Department (IMD) bulletin on Sunday morning, the depression moved southeastwards with speed of 5 kmph during past six hours, and lay centered at 0530 hours over the same region, about 440 km north-northwest of Sri Vijaya Puram (Andaman Islands), 880 km east-southeast of Vishakhapatnam, 980 km east-southeast of Kakinada, 1080 km east of Machilipatnam and 1150 km east of Bapatla.

It is very likely to move nearly southwards, intensify into a deep depression and then gradually recurve west-northwestwards over the East-central and adjoining Southeast Bay of Bengal on Sunday. Continuing to move west-northwestwards, it is very likely to intensify further into a cyclonic storm over the East-central and adjoining Westcentral Bay of Bengal by October 26 morning, and into a severe cyclonic storm over Westcentral Bay of Bengal around the morning of October 27, the IMD said.

Thereafter, it is very likely to move northwestwards, intensify further into a very severe cyclonic storm, and reach the Westcentral Bay of Bengal near the Andhra Pradesh coast around the morning of October 28.

It is very likely to cross Andhra Pradesh and Yanam coasts between Bapatla and Visakhapatnam as a very severe cyclonic storm, with a maximum sustained wind speed of 115-125 kmph, gusting to 140 kmph by the forenoon of October 28.

Andhra Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority has advised people to remain extremely vigilant. (IANS)

BHASHINI AI can support multilingual access in academic

NEW DELHI, OCT 25

Voice-first multilingual AI, speech-to-text, translation, optical character recognition (OCR) and document translation can support multilingual access in academic and research settings, according to government officials.



BHASHINI's broader multilingual AI ecosystem brings together language datasets, AI models, APIs and applications to support a range of language technology use cases.

BHASHINI has recorded over 10 billion cumulative AI inferences and supports 36 Indian languages for text, 23 Indian languages for voice and 35 international languages.

Its website translation plugin enables multilingual access across more than 800 government websites, according to an official statement.

The Digital India BHASHINI Division (DIBD), under Digital India Corporation (DIC), MeitY, participated in the 29th International Symposium on Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETD-2026), held at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi from October 23-25. (IANS)

US H-1B restrictions risk undermining strategic partnership with India

WASHINGTON, OCT 24

Citing that with a population of over four million, the Indian American community is one of the strongest foundations of India-US relations, a report has highlighted that immigration policies that treat foreign professionals as economic liabilities, rather than recognise their role in driving growth and innovation, risk eroding the trust and goodwill that have long sustained bilateral relations.



Indian students, researchers, entrepreneurs and professionals have built enduring links between the two countries, a recent report in 'Khalsa Vox' mentioned.

"For decades, the United States has built much of its economic and technological supremacy on a simple proposition: the world's brightest minds should find their greatest opportunities on American soil. From Silicon Valley to leading research institutions, this openness has helped transform the country into an unrivalled centre of innovation. Yet Washington's increasingly restrictive approach to the H-1B visa programme now threatens to undermine that very advantage, while placing an extraordinary strain on its relationship with India," it mentioned. (IANS/UNI)

NASA adopting Apollo's urgency to build a moon base and land astronauts within two years

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
CAPE CANAVERAL, OCT 25

NASA is moving fast on its plans to build a moon base and return astronauts to the lunar surface in as little as two years.

Administrator Jared Isaacman said Friday that the space agency is still on track to launch Artemis III next summer on a docking exercise with Elon Musk's and Jeff Bezos' lunar landers. The two-week mission featuring four astronauts will be confined to orbit around Earth — no moon trip this time.

The all-important Artemis IV — NASA's first moon landing by astronauts since Apollo — remains scheduled for 2028, Isaacman said. His update came six months after the successful Artemis II flight around the moon by four astronauts, humanity's first lunar trip in more than half a century.



NASA will keep its options open as long as possible before choosing between SpaceX and Blue Origin for the Artemis IV lunar lander, according to officials.

Isaacman said the "new space race" to land astronauts on the moon — racing against China now versus the Soviet Union during the Apollo era — will be "much closer than it ever needed to be" because of slow going in past years.

But the space agency is now accelerating its pace, he noted, eliminating endless meetings and bureaucratic inertia, as SpaceX, Blue Origin and other companies scramble around the clock to meet the deadlines and NASA bolsters its workforce.

Adopting Apollo's urgent and intense approach from 1968 through 1972, a period which saw 24 astronauts fly to the moon and 12 land on it, is not "tech industry pixie dust or some new management philosophy," Isaacman said. (IANS)

IndiGo and Adani Airports announce phased expansion of international flight operations at Navi Mumbai Airport

MUMBAI, OCT 25

Adani Airport Holdings Limited (AAHL) and IndiGo on Sunday announced plans to expand operations at Navi Mumbai International Airport (NMIA), with the airline set to commence international services from the greenfield airport from February 2027.



As part of the phased transition, IndiGo will gradually shift 12 daily international departures from Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) to the NMIA.

The transferred routes will include services to Bahrain, Riyadh, Dammam, Jeddah, Madinah, Kuwait, Ras Al Khaimah, Fujairah, Muscat, Dhaka, and Jakarta.

The airline will also launch a new daily flight to Kathmandu from the NMIA, taking its international network at the airport to 12 destinations between February and July 2027.

To support the international operations, IndiGo will also move the necessary domestic connectivity from the CSMIA to the NMIA, enabling seamless onward travel for passengers connecting to international flights. (IANS)

Violent protests erupt again in Albania

Students demand PM Rama's resignation

TIRANA, OCT 25

Albanian riot police fired tear gas, used water cannons and rubber bullets to disperse demonstrators in the capital as student-led anti-government protests intensified over alleged corruption, rising living costs, poor education standards and a controversial luxury resort project linked to US President Donald Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner.



Protesters burn chair cushions, amid anti-government protests, in Tirana.

Thousands of protesters gathered in central Tirana, throwing stones at police, setting fires at government buildings and demanding the resignation of Prime Minister Edi Rama, who has led the country since 2013. The demonstrations, which began earlier this month, have spread to other Albanian cities after months of largely peaceful protests over a proposed coastal development.

The unrest has become a broader expression of public dissatisfaction with the government, bringing together students, environmental activists and citizens frustrated by economic pressures, limited employment opportunities and allegations of official misconduct.

On Saturday afternoon, demonstrators assembled outside the Education Ministry before moving through the capital.

As per local media, protesters threw rocks at police and started a fire at the entrance to the Agriculture Ministry. Clashes subsequently broke out at several locations as officers attempted to disperse the crowds.

A separate report by The New York Times described a fire at the building housing the Environment Ministry after Molotov cocktails were thrown through its doors. Protesters later moved towards the headquarters of the governing Socialist Party near Skanderbeg Square, where they confronted riot police guarding the premises.

The prime minister has rejected calls to step down and has invited students to talks, while accusing political opponents of exploiting their grievances.

The student demonstrations began on October 13 in support of an environmental campaign opposing the proposed luxury development associated with Kushner and his business partners.

The movement quickly expanded as students raised concerns about education costs, living expenses and what they described as a lack of dignity and opportunity for young people.

"After more than 130 days of a national peaceful protest, we, as students, wanted to show that we have many other reasons to protest," Emir Lecini, a member of a student group involved in launching the movement, told The New York Times.

"Our system of education is unacceptable, cost of living is high, and students are not treated with dignity," he said.

The demonstrations are being held targeting Rama's government, with protesters accusing it of failing to address economic hardship and corruption allegations. Some demonstrators have characterised the political system as authoritarian.

Albanians have awakened to the situation, describing the government as a "dictatorship with the clothes of democracy," a protester said

Another protester, Orgeta Likaj, said demonstrators wanted Rama to understand that many Albanians no longer supported him because of corruption allegations and political scandals.

The protests also reflect a wider sense of frustration among young people, some of whom see their movement as connected to student-led demonstrations elsewhere in Europe.

Redjan Shkembi, who initially joined protests against the resort project, told The New York Times that he wanted Albania to be a country not governed like a dictatorship.

"We feel connected to the youth protests we are seeing across Europe," he said.

The escalation has placed the conduct of the police under growing scrutiny. Officers used tear gas, water cannons and rubber bullets as they sought to disperse demonstrators who threw stones and other objects during Saturday's clashes.

The violence has also resulted in damage to public and private property. Reuters reported that demonstrators had set fire to government buildings and banks, smashed shop windows and pulled up paving stones to throw at police.

According to figures cited in The New York Times report, authorities said 283 people had been arrested and 363 charged since the protests began this month. (IANS/UNI)

Shooting near Florida university stadium

TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA, OCT 25

Twelve people, including six children, were injured in a shooting near a football stadium in Tallahassee on Saturday, police said, hours after a homecoming game at Florida A&M University.



Eleven of the victims suffered gunshot wounds, while the 12th, a grandmother of one of the victims, was injured while fleeing the scene, CNN quoted Tallahassee Police Chief Lawrence Revell as saying to reporters.

One victim was in critical condition, three sustained serious injuries and eight were in stable condition, police said. The youngest injured child was 11 years old.

No arrests had been made, Revell said, adding that the preliminary investigation indicated that a fight had broken out before the shooting.

The shooting occurred near Florida A&M's Bragg Memorial Stadium, following a homecoming football game in which the Arkansas-Pine Bluff Golden Lions defeated the Florida A&M Rattlers 31-28. Police have not established whether the shooting was connected to the game.

The university said the incident occurred near its campus on Perry Street on Saturday evening and that police were investigating.

The campus remained safe, the university said, urging people to avoid the area to allow law enforcement officials to conduct their investigation.

The department's Violent Crimes Unit is leading the investigation, Revell said, adding that detectives are gathering evidence and working to identify those responsible.

"We're still working the scene," Revell told reporters, saying investigators and forensic personnel were processing evidence. (IANS)

Serbia holds a parliamentary election as Vucic faces students

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
BELGRADE, OCT 25

Long lines of voters formed outside polling stations across Serbia on Sunday for a parliamentary election that is seen as a showdown between the Balkan country's strongman leader Aleksandar Vucic and a diverse movement of university students who have led protests against him for almost two years.



People enter a polling station that just opened its doors to cast their votes in a parliamentary election in Novi Sad.

Though Serbia's 6.4 million voters get to choose from 18 parties hoping to enter the 250-member Parliament, the election has taken shape as a referendum between Vucic's right-wing Serbian Progressive Party and the youth-backed Students' List.

The main contenders are believed to be polling neck-and-neck, making Sunday's election the most uncertain in recent years. Turnout is expected to be high and could push most smaller parties below the 3% threshold needed to make it into the assembly.

While the increasingly authoritarian Vucic has routinely outplayed Serbia's fractured opposition in the past, the leaderless youth movement has proved to be a tough opponent that rattled his firm grip on power in Serbia like no one else could in the 14 years since his party took office.

A students' victory likely would resonate beyond Serbia as countries across Europe face youth and student protests.

Voters queued at polling places around the country early Sunday as local election monitors said turnout in the first three hours of voting was more than a double what it had been in the last parliamentary election in 2023.

Bus-truck crash kills at least 22 in Kenya

NAIROBI, OCT 25

At least 22 people were killed and six others injured on Sunday morning following a head-on collision between a passenger bus and a truck along the Nairobi-Mombasa highway in south-eastern Kenya.



Makueni County Commissioner Abdullahi Khalif confirmed that the crash, which involved a tipper truck and a bus carrying 45 passengers, occurred at about 7:45 am (0445 GMT) in the Kanga area.

Travelling from Nairobi toward Mombasa, the bus reportedly lost control while attempting to overtake a line of vehicles, skidded off course, and collided with the oncoming truck, Xinhua News Agency reported.

"Unfortunately, a total of 22 passengers from both vehicles have been confirmed dead, while six others injured have been admitted to hospital," Khalif said on the phone. The official said the violent impact temporarily brought traffic to a standstill along the key transport corridor, drawing emergency responders and onlookers to the site.

According to reports, the bus was carrying passengers returning from a burial ceremony when it collided with the truck. (IANS/UNI)

Ukraine and Russia eye new peace talks

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
KYIV, OCT 25

Ukraine and Russia have signaled their willingness to resume U.S.-brokered peace talks and are backing a humanitarian mission led by U.S. first lady Melania Trump. But deep disagreements over territory and security guarantees that re-emerged this week underscore obstacles to ending the war.

The new diplomatic push comes after more than 4½ years of fighting, bringing with it a surprise announcement on Friday: Kyiv and Moscow have agreed to a local ceasefire to allow aid next week into a stranded town in Ukraine's southern war-divided region of Kherson, following secret consultations between Melania Trump and civilian negotiators from Russia and Ukraine.

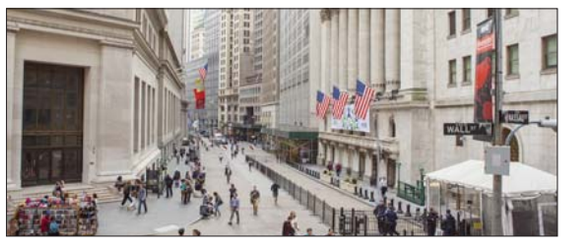
While the initiative raised hopes of similar humanitarian missions in the future, there were few indications that any of the key positions have shifted. Russia continues to demand Ukrainian territory it does not fully control, while Kyiv insists any agreement must include ironclad guarantees against another invasion.

Within hours of Russian President Vladimir Putin saying he agreed "in principle" to restart talks, Russia launched a deadly barrage of ballistic missiles and drones on Kyiv.

Wall Street loses ground under pressure from rising oil prices

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
NEW YORK, OCT 25

Stocks on Wall Street closed broadly lower Friday as oil prices climbed to their highest level in more than four years, ratcheting up pressure on the market.



The S&P 500 fell 0.5%, adding to its decline from a day before. The index posted its second-straight weekly loss. The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 1.2%, and the Nasdaq composite slipped 0.2% after giving up a modest gain.

Rising oil prices weighed heavily on the market, where nearly three out of every four stocks within the benchmark S&P 500 index fell. The price for a barrel of Brent crude oil rose 3.1% to settle at $116.72. It has surged from less than $97 at the start of October and is now at its highest level since June 2022.

Several AI-related companies rallied, helping ease some of the impact from the broader market slide. Micron Technology rose 2.5%, Intel gained 1.7%, Microsoft added 0.7%, and Advanced Micro Devices closed 1.7% higher.

The tech sector's influence is also capable of quickly switching over to a heavy weight. Stocks that have benefited from the frenzy over AI have been swinging over rising worries about their path ahead. Investors are worried about whether their high prices are justified. Many of those companies have been borrowing to fund investments in AI technology.

US administration demands county election officials identify noncitizen voters in California

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
WASHINGTON, OCT 25

Less than two weeks before US midterm elections, the Department of Justice has warned election officials across California they could be targets of federal "scrutiny" if they refuse to help identify suspected noncitizens on voter rolls and set aside their mail ballots pending citizenship checks.



Election workers extract ballots as they help process mail-in ballots at the Registrar of Voters facility in San Diego.

According to letters dated Friday, local officials were given 48 hours to help determine the citizenship status of individuals on federal government lists. The Justice Department shared with Reuters texts of six of the letters on Saturday, which were signed by Bilal Essayli, first assistant US attorney for the Central District of California.

He warned counties that continuing to process ballots from individuals on the list without verifying citizenship status risked "significant federal scrutiny and legal exposure."

Officials who knowingly counted ballots cast by individuals identified by federal agencies as noncitizens risked becoming "aiders and abettors to a federal crime," Essayli wrote.

Each letter includes local statistics drawn from a previously distributed list of 20,000 people who the Justice Department alleges are noncitizens registered to vote.

For those whose "citizenship status cannot be confirmed, we request that you immediately instruct the appropriate elections official to segregate — not cancel — those individuals' vote-by-mail ballots until their citizenship status can be determined," Essayli wrote.

The Justice Department said it identified 1,754 suspected noncitizens registered to vote in Orange County, 1,355 in Riverside County, 1,133 in San Bernardino County, 334 in Ventura County, 180 in Santa Barbara County and 63 in San Luis Obispo County.

Another letter separately shared by Contra Costa County listed "407 likely aliens" registered.

"This letter came to us 11 days before Election Day with an unenforceable 48-hour deadline," said Dawn Kruger, a spokesperson for Contra Costa County's Elections Department, adding: "Our office is conducting this election in accordance with federal and state laws and that is what we will continue to do."

Versions of the letters were sent to all 58 California counties, according to the New York Times.

Trump votes early in Florida

US President Donald Trump on Saturday voted early in his home state of Florida for the November 3 midterm elections, in which his Republican Party is battling to maintain control of Congress.

Trump and his wife, Melania, cast their ballots ahead of an appearance by the president at a campaign rally in the southern US state of Georgia.

Trump said he voted party line, or exclusively for members of his Republican Party.

Asked by reporters after voting about corruption as a major issue for voters, Trump insisted that it was happening in districts and cities controlled by Democrats.

"You ought to look at the real corruption -- it's Democrat corruption," he said.

The Republican billionaire, who has consistently refused to accept his defeat in the 2020 presidential election, baselessly alleging widespread voter fraud, reiterated allegations along those lines Saturday.

Israel admits forcing 2,000 Palestinians out from homes

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
TEL AVIV, OCT 25

Israel's defense minister acknowledged Saturday that Israeli forces had forcibly displaced around 2,000 Palestinians from their homes in Hebron in the southern occupied West Bank.

Defense chief Israel Katz told public broadcaster KAN that displaced residents would not be allowed to return until what he called "Hamas infrastructure" in the city was dismantled.



His remarks came as an Israeli military operation in the city of Hebron entered its second day, disrupting education and municipal services.

Hebron's education directorate suspended school Sunday and Monday, while Hebron University and Al-Quds Open University moved Sunday's classes online. The municipality said rubbish was accumulating as the closure of the city's entrances prevented access to disposal sites outside it.

Israeli forces sealed off Hebron and nearby Halhul on Friday after two Palestinians attacked an Israeli checkpoint. Two Israeli soldiers were killed and three others were also wounded, while Israeli forces killed both attackers, according to Israeli figures.

The army announced late Friday that it had launched an operation expected to last several days, involving Shin Bet and Border Police forces.

The occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, has seen escalating Israeli military attacks and occupier violence since the start of Israel's genocidal war on the Gaza Strip in October 2023.

The attacks have included killing and detaining Palestinians, demolishing homes and other structures, burning mosques and vehicles, bulldozing farmland, preventing farmers from accessing their fields, and displacing Palestinian communities, alongside illegal settlement expansion.

An Israeli rights group said Saturday that Israel is extending its "ethnic cleansing" campaign to the West Bank city of Hebron, with plans for mass displacement and destruction already being put into action.

The group called B'Tselem urged governments and international institutions to use all means available under international law to prevent the forcible displacement of Palestinian civilians, collective punishment, and extensive unlawful destruction.

"Israeli leaders are openly declaring their intentions, and actions on the ground have already begun," it said.

Following a shooting near Hebron on Friday that killed two Israeli soldiers, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Israel Katz announced plans to forcibly displace Palestinian residents and carry out extensive destruction, said B'Tselem.

Saudi military spending localization reaches 27.3%

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
RIAYDH, OCT 25

Saudi Arabia's localization of military spending reached 27.30 percent by the end of 2025, exceeding the annual target of 24 percent, according to figures announced by the General Authority for Military Industries (GAMI).

The figures, unveiled during the Military Industries Forum, showed that the localization rate increased from 20 percent in 2024 to 27.30 percent in 2025, surpassing the annual target by 3.30 percentage points.

The authority's figures also showed that the localization of military spending increased from 4 percent in 2018 to 27.30 percent in 2025.

The rate reached 6 percent in 2019, followed by 7 percent in 2020, 9 percent in 2021, 10 percent in 2022, 15 percent in 2023 and 20 percent in 2024.

The figures also showed that the growth rate of local content in military spending reached 40.91 percent.

In terms of economic impact, the authority reported a contribution of SR7.468 billion to the Kingdom's gross domestic product (GDP), alongside a contribution of SR5.243 billion to employment. GAMI highlighted the continued efforts to increase the localization of military spending, with the Kingdom targeting a 50 percent localization rate by 2030.

Oman warns against offensive social media posts

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
MUSCAT, OCT 25

Oman's Public Prosecution has urged the public to exercise caution and responsibility when expressing opinions, particularly on social media, warning against posts that could offend other countries, their symbols or their people.



In a statement, the Public Prosecution called on individuals to demonstrate awareness and wisdom in their words and actions, stressing the importance of avoiding content that could harm the relations maintained by the Sultanate of Oman with other countries.

It warned that legal action would be taken against anyone who violates the law, whether through publishing, republishing, sharing or inciting others to circulate content, or through any other act criminalised under applicable legislation.

Saad Al-Otaibi elected Arab Parliament president unopposed

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
CAIRO, OCT 25

Saudi Shoura Council member Saad Al-Otaibi was elected unopposed as president of the Arab Parliament on Saturday during a procedural session held at the Arab League headquarters in Cairo.

The session was convened to elect the president and bureau of the Arab Parliament, with Al-Otaibi securing the presidency by acclamation.

In his inaugural address, Al-Otaibi expressed his gratitude to Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman and Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman for their continued support and empowerment of Saudi national talent.



Saad Al-Otaibi

He said his election reflected Saudi Arabia's prominent regional standing, influential role and longstanding commitment to strengthening joint Arab action, cooperation and solidarity.

Al-Otaibi also thanked Shoura Council Speaker Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Al Al-Sheikh for his guidance, support and confidence, describing his election as the result of coordinated institutional efforts.

He expressed appreciation to the heads of Arab legislative councils and parliaments for supporting the Arab Parliament, as well as its members for their contributions.

Outlining his priorities, Al-Otaibi said the next phase would require a renewed vision and more effective institutional performance, with a greater emphasis on translating parliamentary ambitions into concrete achievements.

He called for clear programs and initiatives capable of delivering measurable results, alongside improved efficiency, stronger partnerships and performance indicators to assess progress and impact.

Jordan PM calls for rooting out extremism and takfiri ideology

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
AMMAN, OCT 25

Prime Minister Jafar Hassan stressed the need to continue and intensify efforts to eradicate extremist and takfiri ideology from its roots, emphasizing that there is no place for extremism or takfiri thinking in Jordanian society.



"Over the past 40 years, unfortunately, extremism, fanaticism and takfiri ideology have begun to spread, and we must continue and intensify efforts to eradicate them from their roots," the Prime Minister said.

"There is absolutely no place for extremism and takfiri ideology in our country and society. We have fought takfiri extremists throughout the past decade, and we continue to do so," he added.

Hassan stressed that the battle is not solely a security battle, but also "a battle of awareness and ideas."

He said diversity, cohesion and openness are what foster intellectual, scientific, civilizational and cultural prosperity and build outstanding societies. He noted that these principles are among the foundations upon which the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan was established.

The Prime Minister also said all state institutions are working to apprehend those responsible so they can receive the punishment they deserve.

UAE plans backup suppliers to protect food supplies

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
DUBAI, OCT 25

The UAE is strengthening its food security system by diversifying import sources, expanding domestic production and developing strategic reserves, with plans to secure between three and five alternative suppliers for each major food category to protect supplies against disruptions.

The approach is part of the National Food Security Strategy 2051, which seeks to ensure the continued availability of essential food products through coordinated measures covering production, trade, transport, storage and agricultural inputs.

The Ministry of Climate Change and Environment told the Emirates News Agency (WAM) that the strength of a food security system cannot be measured solely by domestic production or the availability of products in shops, but also by its ability to maintain supplies under pressure.



The ministry explained that assessments of the country's preparedness take into account the diversity of countries of origin and suppliers for essential food products, strategic stock levels relative to consumption, the time required to secure alternative suppliers and trade routes, and the efficiency of transport and storage.

Food loss and waste across the supply chain are also among the indicators used to evaluate resilience.

Under the National Food Security Strategy 2051, alternative supply plans cover between three and five sources for each major food category. The national programme to reduce food loss and waste also aims to cut both by 50 per cent by 2030.

The ministry emphasised that protecting the flow of food products and agricultural supplies begins before any disruption occurs.

This involves identifying priority commodities and agricultural inputs, assessing the risks associated with importing them, and diversifying countries of origin, suppliers and transport routes. The approach is supported by the National Food Security Strategy 2051 and the National Programme to Enhance Supply Chain Resilience, which focuses on identifying essential goods, mapping their supply sources and establishing partnerships to ensure their continued availability.

Kuwait: Fatwa and Legislation Department holds seminar on new commercial concealment law

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
KUWAIT, OCT 25

The Fatwa and Legislation Department has opened its second annual legal cultural season with a panel discussion on Kuwait's new law against commercial concealment, a practice in which businesses are run by people not licensed to operate them, often behind a licensed front. The seminar, held under the patronage of the department's president, Counselor Salah Al-Majed, examined Decree-Law No. 78 of 2026 on combating commercial concealment, issued in August.



The law aims to tackle economic activity carried out without the required licenses and to regulate the business environment in a way that ensures transparency, fairness and equal opportunity, while strengthening the state's ability to monitor, regulate and collect revenue.

The department's undersecretary, Haitham Al-Ruwaished, told KUNA that the seminar and others planned this season aim to raise legal awareness and help specialists and everyone affected by the law fully understand its provisions. He said this would make it easier to apply and help bring all types of economic activity, from commercial, investment and industrial to agricultural, service and professional work, into line with the law.

The seminar discussed the law's legal, economic and regulatory dimensions, its legislative philosophy, the breadth of its scope and its role in supporting and protecting economic activity. Government officials and academics who took part stressed the law's importance in safeguarding the economic system and creating a business environment where success depends on efficiency and compliance.

Al-Ruwaished said the department is committed to raising legislative awareness and building cooperation with other bodies. The legal cultural season runs until February and will cover a range of legal and legislative topics.

Iraq to rehabilitate border crossing with Saudi

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
BAGHDAD, OCT 25

Iraqi Prime Minister Ali Al-Zaidi has approved funding for the construction of facilities and buildings at the Al-Jamima border crossing with Saudi Arabia. The move aims to complete the requirements for its expected opening in 2027 and boost trade ties between the two neighbors.

In a statement on Saturday, Governor of Al-Muthanna Tawfiq Al-Hassani said that rehabilitating the highway linking the city of Samawah to the border crossing with Saudi Arabia, alongside the construction of its facilities, will help stimulate trade activity and boost the local economy.

The project will also enable the governorate to benefit from border crossing revenues in accordance with established legal frameworks, he added.

The local government, in cooperation with the provincial council, is working to complete the requirements necessary to operate the crossing, he said, noting its economic and developmental significance for Al-Muthanna.

Former MP Haider Al-Mulla said the move reflects the Iraqi government's efforts to build economic relations with neighboring Arab and non-Arab countries through trade, energy, and transportation.

Top 10 firms lose Rs 1.56 lakh crore in market value last week



MUMBAI, OCT 25

The combined market capitalisation of eight of India's 10 most valuable listed companies declined by Rs 1.55 lakh crore last week as a broad-based sell-off in equities weighed on valuations, with HDFC Bank and Bajaj Finance accounting for the largest share of the losses.

The decline came during a holiday-shortened trading week in which the benchmark indices witnessed significant pressure. The Sensex dropped 1,605.44 points, or 2.15 per cent, while the Nifty fell 546.15 points, or 2.36 per cent.

Reflecting the weakness in the broader market, the total market capitalisation of all BSE-listed companies fell by Rs 20.79 lakh crore over four trading sessions, ending at Rs 451.83 lakh crore compared with Rs 472.62 lakh crore on October 16.

Among the top 10 most valued firms, eight companies together lost Rs 1,55,671.9 crore in market value. In contrast, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) and Larsen & Toubro (L&T) were the only companies in the elite club to end the week with gains in their market capitalisation

Among the top 10 most-valued firms, eight companies together lost Rs 1,55,671.9 crore in market value. In contrast, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) and Larsen & Toubro (L&T) were the only companies in the elite club to end the week with gains in their market capitalisation.

HDFC Bank recorded the sharpest erosion in value, with its market capitalisation declining by Rs 55,506.95 crore to Rs 10.67 lakh crore. The lender's shares fell around 5 per cent during the week.

Bajaj Finance was the second-largest loser as its valuation dropped by Rs 34,180.51 crore to Rs 5.77 lakh crore.

Reliance Industries also witnessed a substantial decline, with its market capitalisation falling by Rs 27,065.08 crore to Rs 16.10 lakh crore. The valuation of Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) decreased by Rs 21,062.24 crore to Rs 4.81 lakh crore.

Telecom major Bharti Airtel saw its market value shrink by Rs 9,360.75 crore to Rs 11.79 lakh crore, while State Bank of India's valuation fell by Rs 4,338.46 crore to Rs 8.83 lakh crore.

Similarly, the market capitalisation of Infosys declined by Rs 2,881.38 crore to Rs 4.69 lakh crore, while ICICI Bank's valuation slipped by Rs 1,276.53 crore to Rs 10.02 lakh crore. (IANS/UNI)

FPI selling stands at Rs 53,337 crore in Oct



NEW DELHI, OCT 25

As long as Brent crude remains above $100 a barrel, there will be pressures on the economy and the foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) are likely to sell the dip, analysts said on Sunday.

The total FPI selling in October stands at Rs 53,337 crore so far, and the net FPI investment through the IPO market during this period stands at Rs 5,281 crore.

"The total FPI selling through the exchanges for this year stood at Rs 3,69,164 crore," said Dr VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Investments Ltd.

On the flows front, FIIs remained net sellers for the 10th straight week. For the week ended October 23, FIIs significantly reduced their selling and even turned buyers on two days.

The moderation in US bond yields with the 10-year yield declining from 5.36 per cent to around 5 per cent, appreciation in the rupee to 94.94 to the dollar and the low valuations, particularly of the large-caps, contributed to the moderation in FII selling.

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Going ahead, the steady moderation in FII selling offers some comfort, though elevated crude and sharp broader-market weakness keep the downside risk alive.

A significant market trend during the week was the sharp correction in the mid-and small-caps.

The Nifty Mid-cap 100 plunged 5.6 per cent and the Nifty Small-cap 100 crashed 7.3 per cent during the week while the Nifty 50 was relatively resilient with a cut of only 2.35 per cent.

Forced liquidation in the margin-funded long positions in the broader market is rumoured to have triggered the crash in the broader market, said analysts.

The resilience of the large-caps is mainly due to the accumulation of the fairly valued large-caps by the DIIs which are flush with funds. (IANS/UNI)

Govt extends deadlines for FY26 annual filing

Waives additional fees for companies



NEW DELHI, OCT 25

The government has extended the deadlines for companies to file their financial statements and annual returns for the financial year 2025-26 by December 31 without paying additional fees.

The Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) said in a circular that companies can file financial statements through various versions of Form AOC-4, including consolidated financial statements, filings for financial statements in XBRL (machine-readable digital reporting) format and applicable non-banking financial company (NBFC) forms, by December 31, 2026, without additional fees.

According to the circular, the deadline for filing annual returns through Forms MGT-7 and MGT-7A has been extended to January 31, 2027.

The ministry took the decision after stakeholder representations seeking more time to complete statutory filings.

The MCA granted two extensions for annual filings for FY 2024-25 last year, through circulars dated October 17, 2025, and December 30, 2025.

AOC-4 forms are used to file companies' financial statements with the Registrar of Companies (RoC).

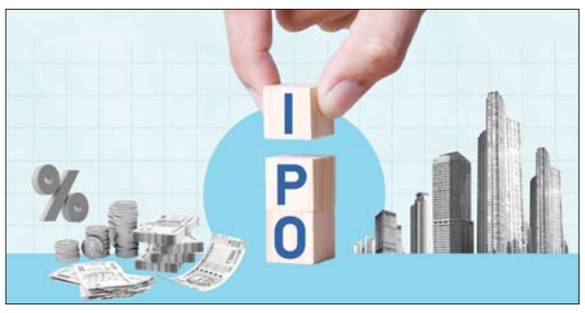
MGT-7 is used to file a company's annual return, while MGT-7A is the annual return form for one-person companies and small companies.

The extension comes amid concerns raised by company secretaries and other professionals over technical difficulties on the MCA-21 Version 3 portal.

The MCA-21 Version 3 (V3) portal is the Ministry of Corporate Affairs' online platform through which companies submit statutory filings and access corporate registry and compliance services. (IANS)

Five key IPOs to hit Dalal Street

Aim to raise Rs 2,600 crore



NEW DELHI, OCT 25

India's primary market is set for another busy week, with five companies preparing to launch their initial public offerings (IPOs) between October 26 and October 29. The companies are collectively looking to raise nearly Rs 2,600 crore, offering investors opportunities across alternative investments, wastewater treatment, polymers, steel processing and jewellery retail.

The upcoming IPOs come on the heels of a strong month for the primary market, which witnessed the launch of Jio Platforms' Rs 30,213-crore public issue, the country's largest-ever IPO. So far in 2026, 104 companies have raised more than Rs 1.4 trillion through public offerings, indicating sustained fundraising activity despite volatility in the broader equity market.

The five companies entering the market next week are EAAA India Alternatives, SFC Environmental Technologies, M K Sons Fine Jewels, BLS Polymers and Bombay Coated and Special Steels. Their offerings will cater to different investor segments, with proceeds intended for purposes such as debt repayment, working capital and business requirements, while some issues will provide an exit opportunity for existing shareholders.

Several more companies, including Gujarat Victory Forging, Milestone Gears, Avaada Electro, Swara Baby Products, Integris Medtech and AGS Health, are also preparing to enter the primary market. These companies are expected to announce their price bands and IPO launch schedules by November 5, ahead of the extended Diwali holiday period in Gujarat. The post-Diwali observance of Labh Pancham, scheduled from November 6 to 15, is expected to affect market operations and business activity.

EAAA India Alternatives, an alternative investment business backed by Edelweiss Financial Services, will open its Rs 1,200-crore IPO for subscription on October 26. The issue will close on October 28, with the price band set at Rs 1,585-1,665 per share. At the upper end of the band, the company will have a valuation of approximately Rs 10,765 crore.

The public offering consists entirely of an offer for sale (OFS) by the Edelweiss Group. Consequently, the company will not receive any funds from the issue, as the proceeds will go to the selling shareholders. Ahead of the IPO, EAAA India Alternatives has secured approximately Rs 360 crore from anchor investors.

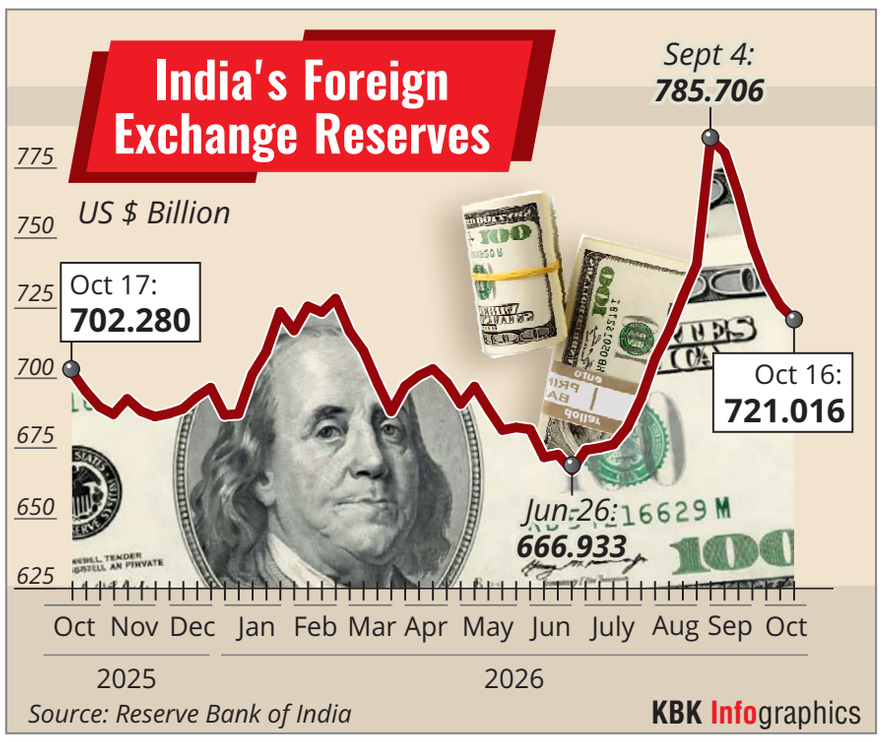
Wastewater treatment solutions provider SFC Environmental Technologies will launch its Rs 668-crore IPO, which will close on October 29. The company has set a price band of Rs 313-330 per share, translating into a valuation of around Rs 3,233 crore at the upper end.

The issue includes a fresh share sale worth Rs 150 crore, alongside an offer for sale of up to 1.57 crore shares by promoters and existing shareholders. The company plans to utilise the proceeds from the fresh issue towards debt repayment and working capital requirements.

M K Sons Fine Jewels Ltd will open its Rs 275.4-crore public offering on October 28, with the subscription window closing on October 30. The company has fixed the price band at Rs153-162 per share.

The IPO comprises a fresh issue of 1.36 crore equity shares and an OFS of 34 lakh shares by promoter and selling shareholder Ramchand Murlidhar Raimalani. The offering will provide the jewellery company with an opportunity to raise fresh capital while enabling the promoter to sell part of his stake.

BLS Polymers Ltd will launch its Rs 255-crore IPO on October 27, with bidding closing on October 29. The company has set a price band of Rs 142-150 per share. (IANS)



Budget outlay hiked 10-fold to give big push to urban sector



BHUBANESWAR, OCT 25

The budgetary outlay for the urban sector has grown 10-fold post-2014 with the launch of concerted efforts through several large missions like Smart Cities, AMRUT, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Swachh Bharat, and the Urban Livelihoods Mission to accelerate development in Indian cities, NITI Aayog member Rajiv Gauba said on Sunday.

Huge investments of about Rs 3.7 lakh crore have also been made in metro rail and bus systems. Addressing the valedictory session of the 2nd National Urban Conclave, Gauba, a former Cabinet Secretary, outlined NITI Aayog's growth hub initiative, pointing to the Rs 1 lakh crore Urban Challenge Fund announced in the 2025-26 budget to develop cities as growth hubs, and this year's budget allocation of Rs 5,000 crore each for 7 city economic regions over five years.

He underscored that having empowered city governments, in the true sense of the term, is essential to improve service delivery and ensure effective citizen participation. Referring to the report 'Moving Towards Effective City Governance', jointly developed by NITI Aayog and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), he called for cities to have directly elected mayors with 5-year terms, introduce a Mayor-in-Council system and ensure timely municipal elections.

He emphasised the need for states to devolve all 18 functions to urban local bodies in line with the 74th Amendment, including master planning, water supply, fire services, and traffic. He stressed that cities cannot be effectively governed from state capitals and city governments must have the authority and institutional capacity to respond to local needs. This alone will ensure meaningful citizen participation.

Gauba said that municipal revenues remain low and called for improving property tax and user-charge recovery. He pointed out that while Central Finance Commission grants to ULBs have more than doubled the previous allocation, with their share increasing to 45 per cent from 36 per cent, fund devolution from states to cities remains low. He said that State Finance Commissions should be regularly constituted and that adequate fiscal transfer to urban local bodies must be ensured.

Addressing urban planning and housing, Gauba highlighted the need to overhaul the current planning paradigm. He called for reforms to remove restrictive FARs and building norms that constrain land supply and drive up costs for residential and commercial users. He stressed the need for adoption of mixed-use zoning, development around transit hubs and land pooling to increase land supply and reduce costs for housing as well as for economic activities. (IANS/UNI)

India beat Cameroon at FIFA U15 World Cup & Festival

BAKU, OCT 25

India continued their winning start at the inaugural FIFA U15 World Cup 2026, defeating Cameroon 2-1 in their second Group K match at the Hovsan Competition Complex Pitch 1B on Sunday.



An own goal by Fareil Ngobo (1') gave the Blue Colts an early lead, but Cameroon equalised through Muhammad Sohil Khan's own goal (20') at the stroke of half-time (20').

R Lalremruatfela (27') restored India's advantage in the second half, while goalkeeper Jenit Ningthoujam produced a series of saves, including a penalty stop, to secure the victory. India are now the only team in Group K to have won both their matches so far.

Despite the rainy conditions, India made an immediate impact. Deepak Singh Arambam's corner in the first minute caused confusion in the Cameroon box, with Ngobo attempting a headed clearance that sent the ball into his own net.

Cameroon gradually increased the pressure, but India defended resolutely, closing down opponents in one-on-one situations and making timely sliding tackles to keep their lead intact.

Bibiano Fernandes' boys nearly doubled their advantage in the 14th minute. Deepak's kick-in caused further uncertainty in the Cameroon defence, as goalkeeper Sunny-Hansel Ndeh failed to gather the ball. (IANS)

Antonelli secures pole position in qualifying at United States GP

AUSTIN, OCT 25

Kimi Antonelli secured pole position at the United States Grand Prix, edging out the Red Bull pair of Max Verstappen and Isack Hadjar to set the fastest time in qualifying.



On a weekend when the Italian could be crowned the World Champion, his first lap of 1m 34.035s in Q3 was enough to take pole, with no one able to find the improvements needed to challenge him in the final minutes, with the Italian sealing pole position for the seventh time in 2026, F1 reports.

"We got a pole, so we'll try to win tomorrow," said Antonelli. "Max has been very quick, and also Isack did an incredible job in qualifying. It's not going to be easy, but we'll try to get a good start and hopefully lead into Turn 1, and then we'll try to set the pace, even though it's going to be very tight. I'm very happy with qualifying – Q3 was very tough with the wind, very gusty and unpredictable. I'm happy that we stuck it on the pole," he added.

Verstappen was nearly two-tenths off the pace in P2 as he went marginally quicker than Hadjar and Ferrari's Charles Leclerc, while Lewis Hamilton settled for fifth place.

Mercedes' George Russell was a frustrating P6 ahead of McLaren driver Oscar Piastri, who moved up a place after his teammate Lando Norris' time was deleted for track limits, relegating the Briton to P8. (IANS)

Atletico move to within 2 points of Barcelona as Villarreal win in Valencia

MADRID, OCT 25

Julian Alvarez scored the only goal of the game as Atletico Madrid beat Deportivo a Coruna to move to within two points of FC Barcelona.



The Argentinian, who wanted to join FC Barcelona over the summer, scored his first league goal in the Metropolitano Stadium in almost a year as he slipped the ball home after a pass from Alex Grimaldo in the 47th to bring an otherwise dull game to life.

Villarreal fought back from 1-0 down to win 2-1 away to Valencia on Saturday, leaving new Valencia coach Javier Aguirre without a win in his first three games in charge, reports Xinhua.

Villarreal had been on top in the first half but again failed to take their chances and fell behind when defender Renato Veiga was penalized for a foul on Dani Raba, allowing Pepelu to put Valencia ahead against the run of play from the penalty spot in the 38th minute. (IANS)

New Zealand reshuffle pace attack

AUCKLAND, OCT 25

New Zealand have begun reshaping their fast-bowling combination for the remainder of the T20I series against India, with Matt Henry ruled out of the remaining matches and Lockie Ferguson set to miss the third encounter as the hosts balance their immediate challenge with a demanding schedule ahead.

India are leading the five-match series with consecutive four-wicket victories in Christchurch. With three matches still to come, New Zealand will make several personnel changes under a planned workload management programme, while also preparing for the subsequent ODI and Test assignments against India.

Henry, who featured in the first two matches, will remain in Christchurch before linking up with the ODI squad in Auckland ahead of the opening one-day international on November 4. The fast bowler bowled just two overs in the second T20I before leaving the field with a tight calf, an issue captain Mitchell Santner disclosed after the match. (IANS/UNI)

Beier strikes late as Dortmund reclaim Bundesliga lead

BERLIN, OCT 25

Substitute Maximilian Beier scored a late winner as Borussia Dortmund edged Eintracht Frankfurt 1-0 to move provisionally top of the Bundesliga ahead of next week's showdown with defending champion Bayern Munich



Dortmund made a commanding start at Signal Iduna Park, with Serhou Guirassy twice threatening to break the deadlock. Frankfurt goalkeeper Noah Atubolu denied the striker with a sharp save in the 15th minute before thwarting his attempted lob moments later.

The visitors gradually settled into the contest and began creating opportunities of their own. Jonathan Burkardt threatened before Younes Ebnoutalib found himself through on goal following a mistake by Felix Nmecha, only for Gregor Kobel to deny him, reports Xinhua. Dortmund came closest before halftime when Daniel Svensson's effort struck the crossbar following a deflection off Frankfurt defender Nnamdi Collins in the 31st minute. (IANS)

ENTERTAINMENT



M.A.SALAM
Film Journalist

AICWA supports Shilpa Rao



Singer Shilpa Rao was extremely disappointed after she was not allowed to complete her performance during an event in Mumbai on Saturday. She could not even sign off as her mic was cut off in the middle of the performance.

, the All Indian Cine Workers Association (AICWA) has released a statement on their official social media handle, condemning the disrespectful behaviour shown towards the singer.

They shared on X (Earlier known as Twitter), "Shilpa Rao was performing live on stage when her microphone and lights were forcibly switched off by the organisers. She remained on stage for some time. After her mic was switched off, another performer, Kutle Khan of the Kutle Khan Project, was allowed to sing in her place, and he began singing midway through her address. Forcibly cutting a performing artist's sound and lighting mid-show, and then handing the stage to another act, is completely unacceptable. (sic)."

They further pointed out how the audience kept calling out Shilpa's name even after the mic was cut off.

"To treat an artist of her stature this way, on the stage of an anniversary edition, is a direct insult to her dignity and to the honour she has earned.

Anaswara Rajan-starrer Itlu Arjuna's release postponed



The release of director Mahesh Uppala's upcoming romantic entertainer 'Itlu Arjuna', featuring actors Anish and Anaswara Rajan in the lead, has been postponed, its makers have now announced.

For the unaware, the film was slated to hit screens worldwide on October 30 this year.

Taking to its X timeline to make the announcement, What Next Entertainments, the production house producing the film, wrote,"We regret to inform that #ItlluArjuna will not be arriving on October 30th as planned. A new release date will be announced very very soon!! Until then, we seek your continued love and support for this young team. Rest assured, Arjun's love will be heard in theatres with a double bang! King @iamnagarjuna presents A @MusicThaman musical."

For the unaware, the film is being produced by popular director Venky Kudumula under the banner of What Next Entertainments. More significantly, it is being presented by Telugu star Nagarjuna.

Well known actress Anaswara Rajan plays the female lead in this film in which actor Anish is making his debut as a hero. The film also marks the debut of Mahesh Uppala as a director.

The film's title glimpse and two songs that have been released have triggered huge excitement among film buffs.

The chemistry of the lead pair, which has been seen in the promotional content released for the film so far, has caught the attention of film buffs.

Sources in the industry say that Anish will be seen playing the role of a speech and hearing impaired youth in the film.

Delnaaz Irani on beauty standards in Bollywood

Actress Delnaaz Irani has opened up about the beauty standards prevalent in Bollywood, saying women in the industry are often expected to have a certain kind of skin and maintain a particular appearance.



Delnaaz Irani on beauty standards in Bollywood: 'Women are expected to look a certain way'

Mumbai, Oct 25 (IANS) Actress Delnaaz Irani has opened up about the beauty standards prevalent in Bollywood, saying women in the industry are often expected to have a certain kind of skin and maintain a particular appearance.

Speaking about the pressure to look good in the entertainment industry, the 'Kal Ho Na Ho' told IANS, "Generally speaking, yes, there is pressure. Women are expected to have a certain kind of skin and look a certain way. Even I feel that pressure a little bit sometimes, but then I tell myself, 'Maa ki, mast raho, khaao piyo, aish karo, zindagi jiyo.'"

Janhvi Kapoor shares glimpses of her past month

Actress Janhvi Kapoor has offered a glimpse into her life over the past month. She shared a series of candid moments featuring driving lessons, her first experience of a hailstorm, pancakes and unfiltered selfies.



Taking to Instagram, the actress reflected on the recent weeks through a collection of pictures, giving followers a peek into her everyday experiences and lighter moments. Janhvi also added a playful touch to her post by mentioning "questionable body doubles", explaining that she had only learnt how to drive very recently.

"Good skin days using questionable body doubles because I learnt how to drive like 3 minutes ago, my first hail storm!!! Golden Hof pancakes, and exhausted ugly selfies to keep the fam updated about my mental state but thank you god for what this past month has been no place like back to the grind," she wrote.

From capturing her first hailstorm to sharing pictures of food and tired selfies, the actress gave a candid look at the little moments that made up her month. The photo carousel features Janhvi flaunting her glowing skin and striking goofy faces, alongside candid selfies and glimpses of her recent experiences.

Janhvi's post also reflected her gratitude for the experiences of the past few weeks as she prepared to return to her work routine.

The actress, who continues to remain active on social media, often shares glimpses of her personal and professional life.

Telangana, Maharashtra CMs to discuss Tummidihatti project today



TFP I ABDUL RAHMAN KHAN
HYDERABAD, OCT 25

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy will meet his Maharashtra counterpart, Devendra Fadnavis, in Mumbai on Monday to discuss the construction of the Tummidihatti Barrage.

A delegation led by Revanth Reddy was slated to leave for Maharashtra on Sunday evening.

After an overnight stay, the delegation will call on the Maharashtra Chief Minister at the Sahyadri State Guest House at 11 a.m. on Monday.

According to the Telangana Chief Minister's Office (CMO), the Chief Ministers will hold discussions regarding the Tummidihatti project.

The meeting will also be attended by Telangana Irrigation Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy and senior officials from the department.

The Telangana delegation will be seeking Maharashtra Chief Minister's approval for construction of Tummidihatti Barrage across the Pranahita River, a tributary of the Godavari, at a height of 152 meters. Telangana will be trying to convince the upper riparian state to give its nod for building the barrage at 152 metres instead of the previously agreed 148 metres.

The long-pending project is expected to address irrigation and drinking water requirements of northern Telangana. At a meeting on October 23, CM Revanth Reddy had asked the officials to be prepared for talks with Maharashtra on Tummidihatti Barrage, by building a case to convince the upper riparian State.

The Telangana delegation will impress upon the Maharashtra Chief Minister that increasing the barrage height to 152 metres would enable Telangana to divert a large volume of water from the Pranahita River and thus improve irrigation facilities in the undivided Adilabad district and other parts of northern Telangana

Revanth Reddy told the meeting that Fadnavis has expressed his willingness to hold talks. Engineers of the Irrigation Department briefed the Chief Minister on the details about possible quantities of water diversion/lifting to the Yellampally project with 152 metres Full Reservoir Level (FRL) and 150 metres FRL of the Tummidihatti Barrage. They stated that no villages would be submerged in Maharashtra with the construction of the barrage and only 2,300 acres would face submergence with 152 metres FRL and less than 1,000 acres with 150 metres FRL.

The Chief Minister instructed the authorities to estimate the submergence in Maharashtra so that the state could be convinced for diversion of maximum possible water by Telangana. He told the officials to share all necessary information sought by the Central Water Commission (CWC) following a meeting between the officials of the two states held at New Delhi last month.

Stating that the barrage was being planned to irrigate 2 lakh acres ayacut in the most backward Adilabad district comprising mostly forest and tribal areas, Revanth Reddy expressed hope that those who fought with the slogan of 'jal, jungle, jameen' would get benefit from the project.

He pointed out that Maharashtra had agreed to 148 metres FRL in the past, but such a low-height barrage would not enable Telangana to get/divert expected quantities of water.

He told the officials to be prepared with all technical reports, water availability, and extent of submergence to convince Maharashtra to permit 152 metres FRL.

TG govt to build Young India Integrated School in Jagtial at Rs 200 Crore



Ministers Ponnam Prabhakar, Adluri Lakshman Kumar, Govt Whip Adi Srinivas, MLA Dr. Sanjay Kumar, and Collector B. Satya Prasad laid foundation stone for Young India Integrated School at Thatipalli Mandal in Jagtial district.

TFP I SRINIVAS RAO
JAGTIAL, OCT 25

Telangana Transport and BC Welfare Minister Ponnam Prabhakar said the government was establishing Young India Integrated Schools to provide quality, corporate-level education to underprivileged students.

Ponnam Prabhakar, Welfare Minister Adluri Lakshman Kumar, Government Whip Adi Srinivas, Collector B. Satya Prasad and MLA Dr. Sanjay Kumar laid the foundation stone for an integrated school at Thatipalli in Jagtial Rural mandal on Sunday. The school will be built on 25 acres at a cost of Rs 200 crore and is expected to be completed within 18 months.

The institution will accommodate around 2,600 students from Class VI to Intermediate, with modern classrooms, sports grounds and a library. The initiative aims to provide quality education to students from SC, ST, BC and minority communities on a single campus.

Ponnam Prabhakar said the government aimed to begin classes at least 10 integrated schools by the next academic year. Adluri Lakshman Kumar assured that construction would be completed within the stipulated period, while Adi Srinivas stressed the need to improve educational opportunities for poor students.

Collector B. Satya Prasad directed officials to maintain construction quality and meet deadlines, noting that works worth around Rs 500 crore had been taken up to improve educational infrastructure in the district over the past two years. Dr. Sanjay Kumar thanked the government for sanctioning the project.

Additional Collector N. Prasannamba, Municipal Chairperson Samindla Vani, other public representatives and officials attended the programme.

TGSRTC introduces Rs 600 weekly bus pass

TFP I CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, OCT 25

The Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TGSRTC) has introduced a weekly bus pass priced at Rs 600 to provide an affordable and convenient travel option for commuters, tourists and business visitors travelling within the Greater Hyderabad region.

The pass is valid for seven consecutive days from the date of purchase and allows unlimited travel on all types of city buses, including AC buses. However, it is not valid on Pushpak Airport Liner services.

The new facility supplements the existing daily and monthly bus passes and is expected to benefit people who need to travel frequently within the city over a short period. Passengers can travel without purchasing individual tickets for each journey during the validity period.

The weekly passes are available at all city bus pass counters across Hyderabad.

KTR calls Telangana an 'ATM' for Rahul Gandhi

Slams Congress over unfulfilled promises



BRS Working President K.T. Rama Rao addresses party leaders at Telangana Bhavan.

TFP I CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, OCT 25

BRS Working President K.T. Rama Rao (KTR) on Sunday accused the Congress government in Telangana of failing to fulfil its election promises and alleged that the State had become an "ATM" for Rahul Gandhi under Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy's administration.

Addressing party leaders at Telangana Bhavan during the induction of senior minority leader Jibran Sharif from Khairatabad into the BRS, KTR questioned the delay in implementing the Congress's six guarantees, 13 declarations and 420 promises.

He demanded answers on commitments relating to two lakh jobs, minority welfare, enhanced pensions and financial assistance to farmers.

KTR also alleged irregularities in land transactions and business deals involving the Chief Minister's family and called for transparent investigations. He recalled the BRS government's record on electricity supply, drinking water and communal harmony in Hyderabad, while criticising the Congress over its alleged failure to protect farmers and other sections. Attacking the BJP-led government at the Centre, KTR criticised the alleged use of central investigative agencies against opposition leaders and said the BRS would continue to fight for Telangana's interests.

He expressed confidence that the BRS would return to power in 2028, with K. Chandrashekar Rao becoming Chief Minister again.

Jibran Sharif's joining was described by BRS leaders as a move to strengthen the party in the Khairatabad constituency and among minority communities.

National Women Journalists' Conference calls for independent media regulatory body



FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
HYDERABAD, OCT 25

Prof. Padmaja Shah, former head of the Department of Journalism at Osmania University, has called for an independent media regulatory body with mandatory membership for media organisations and powers to take strict action against ethical violations.

Speaking at a two-day National Women Journalists' Conference organised jointly by the Indian Journalists Union (IJU), MEFI and TUW, she said the pursuit of TRPs, clicks and viral content was undermining journalistic ethics and democratic values.

Prof. Shah stressed the need for responsible language and visuals, particularly in reporting cases involving women and children. Citing the Disha case, she criticised media organisations for disclosing victims' details and highlighted inconsistencies in enforcing ethical standards. She also called for reforms in journalism education to strengthen constitutional values and democratic awareness.

Karnataka Media Academy Chairperson Ayesha Khanum said ethical values were fundamental to journalism and urged media professionals to protect credibility through responsible reporting rather than sensationalism.

The conference highlighted the need for stronger accountability, consistent enforcement of ethical standards and safeguards for victims' privacy.



Ramchander Rao calls for greater participation in graduate MLC polls



T-BJP President N Ramchander Rao addresses the residents of Lakshmi's Imperia Apartments in Miyapur.

RATNA CHOTRANI
HYDERABAD, OCT 25

BJP Telangana State President N Ramchander Rao on Sunday urged eligible graduates to register as voters for the upcoming Legislative Council elections in the Mahabubnagar-Rangareddy-Hyderabad and Warangal-Khammam-Nalgonda constituencies, while stressing the importance of strengthening democracy.

He appealed after listening to the 139th episode of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Mann Ki Baat' along with residents at Lakshmi's Imperia Apartments in Miyapur.

Ramchander Rao said the Prime Minister's monthly radio programme served as a source of inspiration and guidance for students, youth and the public. He highlighted Modi's call to maintain cleanliness, keep surroundings tidy and protect nature ahead of the Diwali and Chhath festivals.

Referring to the 'Vocal for Local' initiative, he cited examples of Indian products gaining international recognition, including tribal product packaging from Maharashtra receiving a Good Design Award in Japan and the export of Bihar's makhana and Karnataka's tur dal. He also referred to river rejuvenation efforts in Uttarakhand and organic cotton cultivation in Punjab as examples of progress towards a self-reliant India.

On the graduates' MLC elections, Ramchander Rao said those who had completed their degrees by October 31, 2023, in accordance with Election Commission of India guidelines, should submit Form 18 by November 6. He clarified that even graduates who had registered previously must apply afresh for inclusion in the current electoral rolls and urged eligible voters to complete the process within the deadline.

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