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AFTER RATE OVERHAUL, GST SET FOR NEXT SWEEPING REFORM

➔ Council may scrap officers' arrest powers, raise prosecution bar to Rs 5 crore.
➔ Centre plans major overhaul after 887 arrests by Central GST authorities

NEW DELHI

The GST Council is likely to consider this week a sweeping rewrite of GST enforcement that would take arrest powers away from tax officials and require a court order for any arrest.

The proposed changes are part of the government's Next-Generation GST reforms and could mark a shift towards a more civil, recovery-focused approach to tax enforcement.

Under the proposal, GST officers would no longer be able to authorise arrests under Section 69 of the Central GST Act. Any arrest would instead require an order from a court, the sources said.

The Council is also likely to consider raising the threshold for launching criminal prosecution from Rs 1 crore to Rs 5 crore. The proposal would seek to reserve criminal proceedings for more serious cases involving significant tax evasion or fraud.

The proposed changes would also narrow the scope of prosecution provisions so that routine disputes over classification, valuation or input tax credit (ITC) are not treated as criminal offences when they arise from differing interpretations of tax rules.

Tax recovery powers to remain

The proposed changes would not affect the government's ability to recover unpaid taxes or impose interest and penalties. Taxpayers found to have short-paid tax or wrongly claimed ITC would continue to face recovery proceedings



and other statutory consequences. Compounding provisions would also allow certain offences to be settled upon payment of the prescribed tax, interest and penalty.

Serious cases involving deliberate tax evasion or fraud could continue to be prosecuted through the courts.

The proposals include changes to 24 offences currently covered under the prosecution provisions of the GST law. Nine offences are proposed to be removed entirely, while 11 would be retained in their existing form.

The minimum sentence provision is also proposed to be removed, meaning courts would not be required to impose imprisonment in such cases.

A fine would be available as an option in every case, while the maximum sentence in the middle category could be reduced from three years to two years. The Council may also consider waiving late fees for small taxpayers and rationalising penalties.

Shift towards data-based enforcement

The proposed changes come after the government's major GST rate rationalisation in September 2025, which simplified the structure around a 5 per cent merit rate and an 18 per cent standard rate, along with a 40 per cent rate for select luxury and demerit goods.

The next phase of reforms is expected to focus on simplifying administration, reducing compliance costs and making enforcement more proportionate.

A wider package under consideration includes easier GST registration, faster refunds, simpler ITC procedures and changes to show-cause notices and penalties.

The government is also looking at the reforms in the context of its wider effort to decriminalise economic and regulatory offences.

When GST was introduced in July 2017, arrest powers were intended to act as a deterrent against serious tax evasion and fake invoicing.

Since then, improvements

PROPOSED GST 2.0 overhaul

The GST Council is set to discuss removing direct arrest powers from tax officers and raising the criminal prosecution threshold to Rs 5 crore during its upcoming meeting on October 7.

Key changes on the cards

➔ **No direct arrests:** Tax officers may lose the power to arrest without a court order.

➔ **Higher threshold:** Criminal prosecution limit may rise from Rs 1 crore to Rs 5 crore.

➔ **Civil focus:** Routine tax disputes will face civil penalties instead of criminal charges.

Expected impact

➔ **Less harassment:** Businesses will have fewer fears of regulatory overreach.

➔ **Better trust:** Boosts confidence for traders and corporate leaders.

➔ **Clear focus:** Authorities will focus on financial recovery rather than detention.

in invoice matching and GSTN data systems have made it easier for authorities to detect suspicious input tax credit claims and identify fraud closer to the point where it occurs.

If approved, the proposed changes would require amendments to the GST law. The Council's recommendations would therefore need to go through the legislative process before taking effect.

CM: Don't just seek jobs, build businesses in hometowns

He called for local enterprise, improved tourism infrastructure and stronger economic opportunities across coastal Karnataka and Malnad.

BENGALURU

Chief Minister DK Shivakumar has urged people from Karnataka's coastal and Malnad regions to build businesses in their hometowns by leveraging local resources instead of migrating for employment.

Speaking at the Kail Muhurtha Jambara-2026 organised by the Kodagu Gowda Samaja here, he said the government had formulated a special tourism policy for the coastal and Malnad regions to create local economic opportunities.

He described Kodagu as the "Kashmir of Karnataka" and urged people to preserve its traditions, culture and heritage. He said the region had a rich history of valour, culture and religion and highlighted the importance of the Cauvery, which originates in Kodagu.

He said tourism-related entrepreneurs could benefit from longer loan repayment periods, with the government consider-



Coastal-Malnad tourism push

- **Tourism policy:** Special policy for coastal and Malnad regions
- **Coastline:** 327-km stretch proposed for tourism development
- **Business support:** Longer repayment period for eligible tourism ventures
- **Mangaluru:** 10 acres allotted to TTD for a temple
- **Dasara:** Armed forces and cultural groups to feature in celebrations

Instead of becoming employees, you should become entrepreneurs. Start businesses in your own hometowns and turn them into assets.

-DK Shivakumar, CM

ing extending the period from five-six years to up to 20 years. He also said 10 acres would be provided in Mangaluru to the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams for a temple.

He urged people to protect their voting rights and said eligible voters should not be removed during electoral roll.

Local enterprise boost

The government's coastal and Malnad tourism policy aims to encourage local entrepreneurship by improving infrastructure and supporting tourism-related businesses. Shivakumar urged residents to use local resources, including coffee, spices, culture and natural attractions, to create livelihoods. He said longer loan repayment periods could strengthen new ventures and help ensure that people from these regions need not migrate elsewhere in search of employment.

5 children drown in Bihar's 2 districts

Siwan/Gopalganj (Bihar):

Five children, including three girls, have drowned in Bihar's Siwan and Gopalganj districts, police said on Sunday.

Aditya Kumar and Sagar Kumar, both aged 13, drowned in the Daha river in Gopalganj district on Saturday while bathing during Jitiya, a regional festival during which mothers pray for the long life and prosperity of their children. SHO of Mirganj police station Rajeev Ranjan Singh said.

In another incident, Anshu

Kumari (14), Anisha Kumari (16) and Anjali Kumari (16) drowned in a pond in Rampur village of Siwan district on Saturday evening.

The incident occurred when one of the girls was gasping for breath while bathing in the pond, and the other two attempted to rescue her, a police official said.

Their families have refused to allow a post-mortem, the officer said, while clarifying that the deaths did not occur during Jitiya celebrations.

Ambulance carrying soldier's body crashes, 4 killed

HALIYAPUR: An Army ambulance carrying the body of a subedar-major collided with a stationary truck on the Purnvanchal Expressway here on Sunday, leaving three of his family and the driver dead, police said. The body was being brought to his native village in Deoria in Uttar Pradesh from Chandigarh when the accident took place around 8 am in Haliyapur, close to the Ayodhya-Sultanpur border. Subedar Major Satyawar's son, brother and nephew and the ambulance driver died in the accident. Gaurav Singh (28), son of the soldier, and ambulance driver Jaspal (30), died on the spot, while Rajan Chaudhary (35), the soldier's brother, and nephew Ram Samujh Singh (40) succumbed during treatment at a hospital in Pithla-Kumarganj in Ayodhya district, police said. The four were accompanying the body of Satyawar from Galiya Dudhaila village in Rudrapur of Deoria district.

Keralam orders vigilance probe against CEC in 2006 case

KOCHI: Kerala Home Minister Ramesh Chennithala has ordered a probe by the Vigilance and Anti-Corruption Bureau (VACB) against Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar over alleged irregularities during his tenure as the southern state's Public Works Department secretary in 2006.

The matter is linked to the alleged death by suicide of Malaysian civil engineer Lee See Been, who was with the PATI-BEL consortium tasked with upgrading a road under the Keralam State Transport Project (KSTP).

The engineer's "suicide note" had reportedly named Gyanesh Kumar. The fresh probe was initiated following allegations that the original preliminary investigation conducted in 2006 was derailed due to external pressure.

Navy sailor caught in honey-trap, arrested for espionage

COIMBATORE

An Indian Navy sailor has been arrested for allegedly leaking classified maritime intelligence to a Pakistani intelligence operative through a social media-based "honey-trap" operation, officials said on Sunday.

The Andhra Pradesh Police Counter Intelligence (CI) cell

arrested 31-year-old Pradeep Mukherjee on October 3 at INS Agrani, a naval leadership training facility in Coimbatore.

Mukherjee, a native of West Bengal, joined the Navy in 2014 and was posted with the Eastern Naval Command in Visakhapatnam. He was attending a management development course at the Coimbatore facil-

ity and had been there for about a week when he was arrested.

As per officials, a female Pakistani intelligence operative had contacted Mukherjee on social media several months ago and gradually developed an online relationship with him. She allegedly used the relationship to obtain sensitive information about strategic na-

val assets, fleet movements and the operational framework of the Visakhapatnam naval base.

The CI cell, which probes cross-border espionage and terror threats, launched an investigation after detecting suspicious digital activity linked to Mukherjee. He was subsequently placed under surveillance before his arrest.

MUNICH SECURITY CONFERENCE

JAISHANKAR STUNS US WITH 'LONELIER' JAB

He says the US is becoming a 'lonelier power by choice' as China's rise reshapes the global order.

NEW DELHI

External affairs minister S Jaishankar on Sunday said the global landscape was being shaped by a "radical repositioning" of the United States and the rise of China, while asserting that India has the potential to move rapidly up the global power hierarchy in the coming years.

Speaking at the Munich Leaders Meeting being held here on October 4 and 5, bringing together senior decision-makers and experts to discuss international security and foreign policy issues, he said the US had "deliberately become a lonelier power" as part of a chosen change in its posture.

"No one in the room would disagree with the fact that the landscape today is primarily

marked by a radical repositioning of the United States. A repositioning which is a posture of choice and, in a way, it has deliberately become a lonelier power," he said.

China's rise another key feature

He identified the rise of China as the second major feature of the changing global order, pointing to the increasingly sharp competition between the two powers. "That competition today, not limited to these two countries, has led to a weaponization of any leverage that any country has. And that competition coexists with the complexity of interdependence."

On India's prospects, Jaishankar said the country had "decades of high growth" ahead and a demographic profile capable of supporting that growth. He also said India may not have to follow the traditional industrialisation path taken by earlier economies. "I would even argue, a world that is much more creative, where many new possibilities are there, so that we don't necessarily have to tread the earlier path of industrialization."



'Energy shocks from conflicts hitting jobs, kitchens'
External Affairs Minister has warned that energy and trade disruptions caused by the West Asia conflict are already hitting households and jobs as global food, fuel, fertiliser prices increase. Speaking at the 62nd Munich Security Conference, he said the immediate concern was "the energy and trade disruptions which have happened as a consequence of this (West Asia) conflict." Energy markets, he added, "are deeply unsettled." "This is people's kitchens, jobs, and their livelihoods, and these are all on the line for us because we were primarily dependent on that part of the world," he said. India wanted "a restoration of that uninterrupted flow of energy, trade, and mobility, because we are paying the price in many ways for conflicts in which we have no part and are often very distant from us." He also hoped that "whatever emerges is in consonance with international law."

Middle powers seek more self-reliance

"The orthodox path will have to devise something much more contemporary for what awaits us," he added, adding that countries currently classified as middle powers could follow different trajectories as the global order evolves. "Among

the middle powers, some will peel off, some will stay put, some may drop down a bit," he said. "That is the reality. That will be part of the evolution of the global order," he added.

Today's evolving global order

Jaishankar said countries were increasingly coming together

when their interests required cooperation, even when they were not among the world's leading powers. He described this as part of the world's "evolving global order", shaped by countries seeking flexibility, resilience and partnerships based on areas of common interest.

CHANGING GLOBAL ORDER

➔ **US' radical repositioning by choice:** Jaishankar observed that the global landscape is primarily defined by a structural shift in how the US engages with the world. He emphasized that this "lonelier" status is not because the US has run out of options, but rather a deliberate policy choice and strategic calculation by Washington.

➔ **Rise of China:** He identified the second pillar of the modern global landscape as the rise of China. He noted that Beijing views itself as a unique global entity—a self-perception that is increasingly reflecting reality—creating intense, multi-dimensional geopolitical rivalry.

➔ **India's position:** Despite global volatility, Jaishankar expressed strong optimism regarding India's future, highlighting decades of high economic growth ahead, backed by robust demographics and contemporary pathways to industrialization and technological creativity.

➔ **Rise of flexible alliances:** Middle and emerging powers are pursuing self-reliance, de-risking, and flexible, agenda-based partnerships (such as the Quad or BRICS) rather than joining rigid, traditional military alliances.

QUICK READ

1 killed as Russian drone hits Indian-run pharma in Ukraine

KYIV
A pharmaceutical manufacturing facility operated by the Indian-run Kusum Group in Ukraine's Sumy region was severely damaged in a Russian drone attack, with one person killed and several others injured, according to reports.

The main structure of the facility was reportedly largely destroyed in the strike. Videos and visuals from the site showed thick smoke rising from the area following the attack. The damage to the facility is estimated at at least Rs 400 crore, as per reports. Local authorities said the casualty figures could change as rescue teams and officials assess the extent of the damage. The Kusum Group, headed by Indian national Rajeev Gupta, has not publicly commented on the attack so far.

Scrap SIR, EVMS: Thackerays lead Mumbai stir against CEC

MUMBAI
Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray and Maharashtra Navnirman Sena chief Raj Thackeray on Sunday led a protest march in Mumbai against Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar, demanding his resignation over alleged irregularities in the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. The Thackeray cousins began a march -- dubbed the Virat Garjana Morcha (Grand Roar March) -- from the Metro Cinema and traversed the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation headquarters in south Mumbai, with leaders of Congress and the Sharad Pawar-led NCP (SP) also joining them. They alleged that elections have been compromised by Kumar, and demanded the cancellation of the SIR. "If the purpose of the SIR exercise was to remove Bangladeshis from voters' list, how many Bangladeshis did you find," Uddhav asked.

Chalavadi challenges Cong over ‘vote theft’ claims

The BJP leader questioned Congress allegations over electoral rolls, asking the party to act against governments where it holds power

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Council Chalavadi Narayanaswamy has challenged the Congress over its allegations of “vote theft”, asking whether similar irregularities could have occurred in Karnataka and Kerala, where the party is in power.

SIR vote dispute

■ Form 7: Application used for objections/deletion of voter entries

■ 40-50 lakh: Names Congress has alleged were deleted, according to Narayanaswamy’s statement

■ 5,000-6,000: Voters Congress allegedly said were removed in Babaleshwar

■ Karnataka & Kerala: States cited by Narayanaswamy

Reacting to Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge’s letter to the Election Commission seeking cancellation of



If vote theft has happened in Karnataka and Kerala too, then your governments are in power there. Let us see you get your Chief Ministers to resign.”

– Chalavadi Narayanaswamy Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Council

elections held after the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) and demanding ballot-paper voting, Narayanaswamy said the demands should have a logical basis. Narayanaswamy defended the SIR exercise, saying it was being conducted according to the Constitution. He said similar revision exercises had taken place when the Congress was in power and claimed there was no reason to oppose the process now. On the Congress’ proposed complaint to the Election Commission, he alleged that the party was opposing SIR

through a “toolkit”. He maintained that SIR had no connection with either the BJP or Congress. He said Form 7 applications should be used to remove names of deceased persons, duplicate entries and ineligible voters from electoral rolls. He alleged that the Congress wanted such names to remain on the lists, including those of Bangladeshi residents, deceased persons and people holding voter IDs at two locations. “People do not vote for thieves”, Narayanaswamy said, accusing the Congress of making allegations without

KSRTC to equip 100 buses with ADAS systems

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) will install Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) in 100 buses across

The system will detect forward collision risks, lane departures, pedestrians, inadequate following distance and other hazardous situations. Drivers will receive visual, audible and buzzer warnings



The safety upgrade will use cameras, sensors and satellite connectivity to detect hazards and monitor driver behaviour in real time.

its divisions to strengthen road safety and monitor driver behaviour. The systems will be deployed across 17 KSRTC divisions, with installation and commissioning scheduled between November 2026 and October 2027, according to officials. The ADAS units will integrate cameras, sensors, GPS and connectivity features to monitor the road environment and the driver. A forward-facing camera and driver-monitoring camera, along with other hardware, will track potential risks and driver behaviour.

when potential dangers are detected. The driver-monitoring component will identify signs of fatigue and distraction, including drowsiness, yawning, prolonged eye closure, mobile-phone use, distraction and driver absence. It will also monitor certain aspects of driver posture and attention while the bus is moving. The systems will have 4G LTE connectivity and GPS/NavIC support, enabling vehicle and event-related information to be transmitted for monitoring and analysis. On-board storage will retain recorded video and event data.

KSRTC will also connect the systems to a cloud-based fleet management and analytics platform. Authorised personnel will be able to monitor buses, review safety alerts and access footage linked to

ADAS expansion in public transport

KSRTC’s move follows BMTC’s plan to introduce ADAS technology in 50 buses under a pilot project. The systems are intended to combine road monitoring with driver-behaviour assessment.

incidents. The technology will facilitate analysis of events such as sudden braking, collision warnings and driver-related alerts. Officials expect the data to provide a broader picture of safety-related incidents and driver behaviour across the fleet. The selected agency will supply, install and commission the equipment. The tender also requires comprehensive warranty support for three years and availability of spare parts for at least 10 years.

Quick Read



Maharani University guest lecturers protest over unpaid remuneration

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

More than 100 guest lecturers have boycotted classes for a week, seeking payment of pending remuneration and clarity on deductions. About 106 guest lecturers appointed by the Department of Collegiate Education (DCE) at Maharani Cluster University have been protesting for a week over non-payment of remuneration for two months. The lecturers, who teach Arts, Science and Commerce subjects, have boycotted classes and warned of a hunger strike if their concerns are not addressed. The dispute centres on remuneration and tax deductions. DCE-appointed guest lecturers receive ₹35,000 to ₹40,000, while those directly appointed by universities can receive up to ₹50,000. The lecturers said TDS deductions would further reduce their already limited earnings.



Paid reviews become new headache for Kannada cinema

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Paid social-media campaigns are reshaping Kannada film promotions, raising concerns over genuine audience reviews and credibility. Kannada cinema is witnessing a growing trend of paid reviews, with film teams reportedly engaging social-media influencers to post scripted messages on X and Instagram ahead of releases. Industry insiders said public relations teams often identify users with sizeable followings and pay them to promote films using pre-decided messaging. Similar promotional campaigns are also being used by people who present themselves as film reviewers. Filmmakers and industry observers, however, said repeated posts with similar wording can make promotional content easily identifiable.

SIT uncovers use of original labels on fake medicines

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the fake medicine racket in Karnataka has uncovered details about how original labels were allegedly used to pass off counterfeit drugs as genuine products.

The revelations came after the arrest of prime accused Prashanth, who allegedly travelled to Turkey several times a year to obtain original Pfizer medicine labels. His frequent visits reportedly resulted in the cancellation of his Turkish visa, following which he began travelling to neighbouring countries, including Azerbaijan. According to the SIT investigation, Prashanth allegedly obtained the original labels through intermediaries in Turkey. The gang then reportedly affixed the labels to counterfeit medicines before packaging and supplying them. Investigators have also found that fake medicines were allegedly supplied along with genuine medicines on several occasions. The practice was apparently intended to make it difficult to detect



the counterfeit products. Prashanth, who had returned from Azerbaijan, was arrested at Kempegowda International Airport in Bengaluru on September 28. A lookout notice had been issued against him, following which airport officials detained him at the arrival gate and handed him over to a team led by ACP Anjan Kumar. Veeresh Jain is another key accused in the case. Investigators have reportedly found that he played a role in the production and supply network of counterfeit medicines. Veeresh allegedly supplied fake medicines to hospitals and medical stores in Bengaluru. Officials have estimated that the racket had an annual turnover of around Rs 15 crore. The SIT is continuing its investigation to identify others allegedly involved in sourcing original labels, manufacturing counterfeit medicines and distributing them through the supply chain.

Four KPSC members may face ED scrutiny over recruitment irregularities

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Four members of the Karnataka Public Service Commission (KPSC) could come under the Enforcement Directorate’s (ED) scanner in connection with alleged irregularities in the recruitment of veterinary officers. According to information reportedly disclosed during questioning, accused Jnanendra named four KPSC members, including former KPSC chairman Shivashankarappa Sahukar, B.V. Geetha and Shantha Hosamani. The names have emerged during the ongoing investigation into alleged recruitment irregularities. Jnanendra reportedly told investigators that some KPSC members and staff had allegedly collected money from candidates in return for helping them secure government jobs. According to the reported statement, some members and officials obtained details of candidates who figured in the merit list. They allegedly contacted the candidates through intermediaries and assured them of assistance in securing appointments. Candidates were reportedly asked to pay an advance rang-

ing between Rs 5 lakh and Rs 10 lakh. However, the accused allegedly did not disclose the total amount that would ultimately have to be paid for securing the appointment.



The investigation is examining the alleged role of KPSC members, officials and intermediaries in approaching candidates and collecting money. The agency is also expected to examine financial transactions and the possible money trail linked to the alleged recruitment racket. The information provided during questioning could lead to further questioning of the KPSC members and other officials whose names have surfaced during the probe. Investigators are also examining how confidential merit-list information was allegedly accessed and passed on to intermediaries and candidates. Further investigation is expected to establish the extent of the alleged irregularities and identify others who may have been involved in the recruitment process.

Valmiki Tapovan to come up near Legislators’ House

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Karnataka government has decided to develop the two-acre area housing the Maharshi Valmiki statue in front of the Legislators’ House near Vidhana Soudha, Minister for Scheduled Tribes Welfare and Chitradurga district in-charge T. Raghumurthy said. The decision was announced after a meeting with senior officials of the Scheduled Tribes Welfare, Public Works, Police and Information and Public Relations departments at Vidhana Soudha. The site will be developed as a Tapovan, based on the life and works of Maharshi Valmiki and the Ramayana. Stone carvings depicting themes associated with Valmiki and the epic will be installed across the area. The development will also include decorative electrical lighting and a sound system. The Tapovan will be designed on the lines of Hampi’s Hazara Rama Temple, with special landscaping planned to enhance the surroundings. “The Tapovan will be de-

veloped on the model of Hampi’s Hazara Rama Temple, with stone carvings based on Valmiki and the Ramayana, along with special landscaping and lighting,” Raghumurthy said. The minister directed the Public Works Department to



The government plans a cultural landmark near Vidhana Soudha, combining Ramayana heritage, landscaped spaces, art and public access.

prepare a detailed project report for the proposed development. He and senior officials also inspected the site for more than an hour and discussed the facilities and features to be incorporated.

Public access under consideration The site has so far not been open to the public. The gov-

Tapovan project	
LOCATION	In front of Legislators’ House
AREA	Two acres
THEME	Valmiki and Ramayana
MODEL	Hampi’s Hazara Rama Temple
FEATURES	Stone carvings, landscaping, lighting and sound system
DPR	Public Works Department to prepare

ernment is now examining the possibility of allowing public entry. Police officials said permission from the Secretariats of the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council would be required from the security perspective. Raghumurthy said the matter would be discussed with the concerned authorities and a decision taken soon. If public access is permitted, the Police Department will have to make arrangements for round-the-clock security at the site.

FIR filed over alleged misuse of Form 7 in Bengaluru

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

An FIR has been registered against two people in Bengaluru over alleged misuse of Election Commission Form 7 during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. The FIR was registered at Vyalikaval police station based on a complaint filed by Congress leader Anoop Ayyangar. The complaint alleges irregularities in Ward No. 64 of the Malleshwaram Assembly constituency. Two people, including booth agent G.S. Vasanthalakshmi, have been booked for allegedly submitting false Form 7 applications seeking deletion of voters from the electoral rolls. According to the complaint, 778 applications were submitted despite the concerned voters allegedly continuing to reside in the constituency. The applications reportedly stated that the voters were either absent or had permanently shifted from their registered addresses. The alleged applications were filed across several polling stations. These included 122 applications at polling station No. 157, 233 at No. 155, 28 at No. 156, five at No. 158, 47 at No. 154, 171 at No. 205, 88 at No. 203 and 14 at No. 153.

Form 7 applications by polling station	
No. 155	233
No. 205	171
No. 157	122
No. 203	88
No. 154	47
No. 156	28
No. 153	14
No. 158	5

The complaint further alleges that individuals associated with the BJP and RSS targeted voters belonging to a particular community with the alleged intention of removing eligible voters from the electoral rolls. It also alleges that several applications were submitted in the name of Vasanthalakshmi, described as a BJP-associated booth-level agent. The complainant claimed that signatures on the forms differed significantly, raising suspicion of possible forgery. Vyalikaval police have registered the case and launched an investigation into the allegations.

ROAD OFFENCES RISE

Bengaluru traffic violations cross 24.5 lakh in eight months

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Bengaluru recorded 24.54 lakh cases of five major traffic offences in the first eight months of 2026, surpassing the annual totals recorded for these offences in each of the previous five years. The offences are wrong parking, signal jumping, ‘No Entry’ violations, footpath riding and reckless driving. Reports showed that the five categories together accounted

PROPOSED TOUGHER ACTION

A points-based driving licence system for repeat offenders

– Higher fines of up to Rs 5,000, vehicle detention and blacklisting

– Stricter action against unregistered electric bikes

– Safety training and orientation before licence suspension or revocation

– Community service as an additional penalty

– Stronger regulation of habitual offenders and violations that cause congestion or threaten public safety



1.28 crore cases in six years by offence



for nearly 1.28 crore violations over six years. Wrong parking remained the biggest offence, with 62.58 lakh cases, accounting for 48.56% of the total. Signal jumping followed with 46.34 lakh cases, or 35.95%, while ‘No Entry’ violations accounted for 18.78 lakh cases or 14.57%. Footpath riding contributed 88,328 cases, while reckless driving accounted for 40,362 cases during the six-year period. Karnataka DG & IGP and Head of Police Force Dr M A Saleem attributed the increase to enhanced enforcement as well as widespread indiscipline among motorists. He said fines alone would not solve illegal parking, which

reduces road capacity and creates congestion bottlenecks. Saleem called for marked parking spaces, sustained towing operations, camera-based enforcement, physical patrols and action against repeat offenders. He also stressed the need for civic agencies to create scientifically planned parking and loading zones. On signal jumping, he said strict enforcement was essential because of the immediate collision risk. AI-enabled ANPR and violation-detection cameras have been deployed at major junctions, but engineering improvements such as proper stop lines, pedestrian phases and clearer signals were also necessary.

CHObserver

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Unchecked civic neglect is endangering pedestrians across Bengaluru as broken footpaths, uncollected construction debris, and open stormwater drains plague major thoroughfares in Seshadripuram, Palace Road, Vasanth Nagar, and Jasma Bhavan Road. From unbarricaded gaps near busy vehicular turns and unfit tourist corridors to overflowing garbage dumps and unprotected canals running directly beside high-profile offices like the KPCC, residents and commuters face daily hazards. Local communities are demanding urgent municipal intervention and structural safety barriers before these unaddressed urban traps result in fatal accidents.

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Residents of Seshadripuram 2nd Main Road warn that an unbarricaded, missing footpath slab near Hercules Tyres poses a severe hazard. Uncleared construction debris and deep gaps right at a busy vehicular turning point endanger pedestrians daily.



Pedestrians walking toward Bengaluru Palace along Palace Road—opposite MSI Services Private Limited—face a hazardous missing footpath slab. Compounding the danger in this high-footfall tourist and student corridor, the area lacks proper streetlights, prompting urgent calls for immediate municipal repairs.



Uncollected construction debris on Vasanth Nagar's 8th Main Road—right outside Ganga Bakery on the route to Mount Carmel College—has morphed into an unhygienic garbage dumping ground, drawing mounting complaints from surrounding eateries and residents over municipal neglect.



An unbarricaded, open rajakaluve canal on Jasma Bhavan Road—running right beside the main road. Right next to it is the KPCC Office where official vehicles regularly park—poses a fatal hazard for pedestrians. Lacking retaining walls or proper street lighting, the gaping drop threatens to sweep anyone into the channel in the dark, prompting urgent demands for safety barriers.

Canadian vlogger shines light on broken Indiranagar walkways

Canadian creator Caleb Friesen's viral video exposing Indiranagar's broken footpaths prompted swift municipal repairs in Bengaluru.

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

A viral social media post by Canadian content creator Caleb Friesen has triggered swift remedial action from municipal authorities in Bengaluru, highlighting the persistent disconnect between the city's global reputation as a premier technology hub and the harsh realities of its deteriorating civic infrastructure.

Friesen, who frequently documents India's rapid technological and urban evolution, turned his lens toward the bustling commercial and



ly jarring was a cavernous hole filled with discarded waste, which Friesen dryly likened to an impromptu neighborhood dustbin.

"In any other country, a footpath like this would be unacceptable, and Bengaluru is a pretty important city here in India," Friesen remarked in the video. "It's one of the tech capitals of the country. Yet, one of the central hubs of that tech capital... has footpaths like this. It's pathetic."

The candid critique struck a resonant chord online, igniting intense discussions among local residents and urban planning advocates. Commentators expressed widespread

frustration over normalized urban decay, with many pointing out that citizens often become desensitized to hazardous infrastructure until external scrutiny forces official acknowledgement.

Others emphasized that safe, walkable pathways represent the bare minimum requirement for any modern metropolitan administration.

In a rare display of administrative agility, the viral exposure prompted immediate intervention from civic bodies. Local pedestrian advocacy groups, including campaigner Arun Pai, confirmed that municipal teams from Team Domlur and the central

city corporation mobilized equipment to initiate comprehensive repair operations along 12th Main, Indiranagar.

Friesen later acknowledged the rapid turnaround in a follow-up post, praising the prompt response from local authorities while echoing a sentiment shared by many residents: a desire for proactive governance rather than reactive fixes sparked solely by public shaming or viral media attention. As repair crews work to restore the damaged walkways, urban activists continue to push for broader systemic upgrades to make Bengaluru genuinely pedestrian-friendly.

Lokayukta targets 'waste management' lapses

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Stepping up pressure on municipal authorities, the Karnataka Lokayukta has issued formal notices to senior civic officials over rampant administrative negligence and severe lapses in solid waste collection and disposal across West Bengaluru.

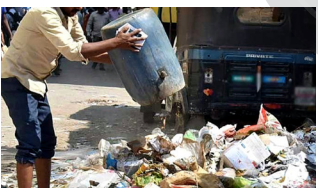
The strict judicial intervention follows a comprehensive investigative report filed by Lokayukta Deputy Superintendent of Police Vasanth C, who spearheaded surprise field inspections across multiple urban localities, including Vijayanagar, RPC Layout, Shamanna Garden, Pipeline Road, and Sunkadakatte.

During the unscheduled site visits, investigative teams documented deeply concerning environmental and sanitary hazards using detailed photography and videography. The evidence revealed massive piles of garbage dumped indiscriminately along public roadways, abandoned construction debris, and hazardous deposits of mixed animal and hotel waste strewn across residential neighborhoods.

The Lokayukta observed that such unhygienic practices pose an immediate, severe threat to public health and municipal well-being. Despite repeated administrative warnings and standing monitoring protocols, the persistence of

these sanitation failures points directly to systemic dereliction of duty among municipal handlers.

Consequently, formal notices have been served on top-tier administrators, including the chief commissioner, zone commissioner, joint commissioner, and chief engineer of the western zone, alongside



key executives from the Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Ltd (BSWML).

The accused officials have been officially directed to appear before the Lokayukta on October 5 at 3:30 PM to present a formal explanation for the documented lapses. The anti-corruption watchdog has warned that failure to appear or provide a satisfactory justification will invite immediate punitive legal action.

The Lokayukta's proactive stance underscores growing judicial intolerance toward administrative apathy in managing Bengaluru's solid waste infrastructure, aiming to fix absolute accountability and enforce strict sanitation standards across the Silicon Valley of India.

GBA to launch tree-felling online portal

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

In a major administrative push to enhance civic transparency and accountability, the forest wing of the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) is set to launch a dedicated web portal in October for processing tree-felling applications.

Designed to eliminate cumbersome manual paperwork and bureaucratic delays, the digital platform will allow citizens, utility providers, and infrastructure agencies to submit tree removal requests online while tracking application statuses in real time.

The initiative addresses long-standing citizen grievances regarding opaque administrative workflows and slow response times. According to Shilpa Nag, GBA Special Commissioner for Environment and Climate Change, Forests, Elections, and Disaster Management, the end-to-end digital system removes human touchpoints and establishes clear institutional oversight.

"The portal will eliminate manual intervention and make the process completely online. Citizens or agencies can apply for tree-felling permission directly, along with the required documents, and the application will be assigned to an official. The portal will also show the stage of the applica-



tion and the primary contact for queries," Nag stated.

Crucially, the system features a dedicated priority triage mechanism. Applicants can flag urgent scenarios—such as unstable, decayed, or storm-damaged trees threatening public safety and property—allowing emergency requests to bypass standard procedural bottlenecks.

The software development is currently in its final testing phase, with secure payment gateway integrations being finalized. Beyond processing routine permissions, the digital database will generate a comprehensive, searchable archive of all authorized tree removals across Bengaluru.

The administrative overhaul comes in the wake of strict judicial directives from the Karnataka High Court, which recently mandated that the GBA prioritize arboreal safety complaints and adhere to strict timelines, following a major compensation ruling regarding hazardous tree maintenance.

Chemicals suspected in Doddagubbi lake fish kill



CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Environmental alarm bells have sounded across East Bengaluru following a massive fish die-off at the expansive 125-acre Doddagubbi Lake, situated within the rapidly developing Mahadevapura Assembly constituency. Thousands of dead fish were discovered floating on the water's surface and washing ashore, triggering widespread panic and intense public scrutiny among local residents and environmental groups.

The shocking phenomenon has ignited fierce speculation regarding severe chemical pollution. Residents near the waterbody reported unusual discoloration and pungent chemical odors emanating from the aquatic basin in the days leading up to the disaster, prompting urgent demands for comprehensive water quality testing and strict punitive measures against industrial polluters.

Responding to the mounting public outrage, state environmental pollution control officials and lake conservation teams inspected the site to determine the primary catalyst behind the mass mortality. Preliminary assessments suggest that the disaster was triggered by a catastrophic drop in dissolved oxygen levels, a recurrent symptom of chronic urban water pollution.

According to technical experts, the continuous influx of inadequately treated sewage and domestic wastewater introduces heavy organic loads and algal nutrients into the lake ecosystem. As aerobic microorganisms rapidly decompose this organic accumu-

Thousands of dead fish surfaced at East Bengaluru's Doddagubbi Lake, sparking environmental alarm over severe chemical pollution, untreated sewage influx, and plummeting dissolved oxygen levels.

lation, they consume massive quantities of dissolved oxygen. When oxygen concentrations plummet below critical survival thresholds, aquatic life suffocates, resulting in sudden and widespread die-offs. Furthermore, authorities noted that unauthorized industrial effluent discharges frequently exacerbate these vulnerabilities, introducing toxic compounds that overwhelm the aquatic ecosystem's natural self-purification capacity.

The incident has reignited intense debates regarding the efficacy of sewage diversion networks and wastewater management infrastructure surrounding Bengaluru's vital water bodies. Local civic associations have criticized municipal authorities for failing to plug untreated sewage entry points into Doddagubbi Lake, pointing out that despite numerous green initiatives, foundational lake protection remains inadequate.

Environmentalists are urging the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) and the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) to release comprehensive laboratory test results confirming whether specific chemical toxins contributed to the disaster. As cleanup crews begin clearing thousands of dead fish to prevent secondary public health hazards, local communities demand permanent remedial actions—including strict effluent monitoring, installation of functional tertiary sewage treatment plants, and rigorous judicial enforcement against polluters—to safeguard Bengaluru's remaining aquatic heritage.

NIMHANS issues rabies warning over dog saliva

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Medical experts at the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS) have issued an urgent public health warning regarding the rabies virus, stressing that casual contact with infected dogs can prove fatal if ignored. The alert follows a tragic incident in Karnataka where a 46-year-old

NIMHANS issued an urgent rabies alert after a Karnataka man tragically died from a minor dog scratch.



man died of rabies after minimal contact with a stray animal.

Dr. Reeta Mani, Professor and Head of the Department of Neurovirology at NIMHANS, cautioned animal lovers that even young puppies can carry the virus. According to medical guidelines, saliva coming into contact with broken skin, mucous membranes, or the eyes—such as a dog licking an open wound—con-

stitutes a high-risk Category III exposure. While the virus cannot penetrate healthy, intact skin, it enters the body rapidly through abrasions.

The warning underscores a recent fatality involving a resident of Challakere in Chitradurga district. While sleeping outdoors, the man was approached by a drooling stray dog. When he woke up, he pushed the animal away and sustained a minor finger scratch while attempting to chase it. Symptoms manifested months later, and despite being transferred to Bengaluru's Epidemic Diseases Hospital in Indiranagar, he succumbed to the infection.

Doctors reiterate that once clinical symptoms appear, rabies is virtually 100 percent fatal, as modern medicine offers no cure. Health officials urge citizens never to neglect dog scratches, licks on broken skin, or saliva contact, advising immediate washing of wounds and prompt administration of anti-rabies vaccinations to prevent irreversible tragedy.

Rabies exposure classification & recommended post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP)

EXPOSURE CATEGORY	NATURE OF CONTACT WITH SUSPECTED ANIMAL	RECOMMENDED IMMEDIATE ACTION & PEP PROTOCOL
CATEGORY I	Touching or feeding animals, licks on intact (healthy) skin	No risk: Wash exposed skin with soap and water. No vaccination required.
CATEGORY II	Minor scratches or abrasions without bleeding, licks on broken skin/mucous membranes	Immediate action: Wash wound thoroughly with soap and running water for 15 minutes; administer immediate anti-rabies vaccination course.
CATEGORY III	Single or multiple transdermal bites or scratches, contamination of mucous membranes with saliva, licks on broken skin, or contact with bats	Critical risk: Immediate and thorough wound washing + Rabies Immunoglobulin (RIG) infiltration around the wound + full post-exposure vaccination schedule without delay.

Congress govt pressuring police over Form-7 cases: Vijayendra

B.Y. Vijayendra accused the state government of pressuring police amid the ongoing electoral roll revision

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

BJP state president B.Y. Vijayendra on Sunday accused the Congress government of pressuring police to register cases against party workers over Form-7 applications.

Vijayendra alleged that the Congress government was exerting pressure on the police department to register FIRs against BJP workers in connection with Form-7 applications submitted during the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. His remarks came after Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar staged a sit-in at the Chief Electoral Officer's office on Thursday.

The BJP leader said the party had raised the issue

Form-7 row

Issue

Applications during SIR

BJP claim

Police pressure to file FIRs

DGP approached

M.A. Saleem

BJP leaders who met DGP

B.S. Yediyurappa, R. Ashoka and others

BJP warning

Street protests if action continues

with Director General of Police M.A. Saleem after former Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa, Leader of Opposition R. Ashoka and other senior leaders met the DGP on Friday.

Vijayendra warned that the

BJP would take to the streets if police action against its workers continued.

Vijayendra said Form-7 is part of the electoral-roll revision process and can be used to object to the inclusion of duplicate or deceased voters. He maintained that police should not register criminal cases merely because such forms were submitted, unless there was evidence of wrongdoing.

Vijayendra also accused the state government of misusing power and money and criticised its handling of drought relief.

He claimed the government had announced Rs 2,500 assistance for farmers but had not released the amount, while the BJP had demanded compensation of



at least Rs 50,000 per hectare for drought-hit farmers.

He further alleged delays in funds for irrigation and road repairs and salary payments in some departments, and reiterated the BJP's demand for a White

Paper on the state's finances.

Vijayendra also favoured a BJP-JD(S) alliance for future elections and said he had requested JD(S) leader H.D. Kumaraswamy to work towards such an arrangement.

Quick Read

Bengaluru generates over 5,200 tonnes of waste daily

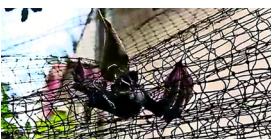


CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Bengaluru generates more than 5,200 tonnes of solid waste daily, with peripheral constituencies bearing a heavier burden than central areas.

Official data shows daily wet waste generation at around 3,190 tonnes and dry waste at 2,030 tonnes. RR Nagar tops the list with 235 tonnes of wet and 122 tonnes of dry waste daily. Bengaluru South follows with 185 tonnes and 135 tonnes, while Bommanahalli generates 180.32 tonnes of wet waste. In contrast, Chickpet records 101 tonnes of wet and 85 tonnes of dry waste, while Malleswaram generates 76.9 tonnes and 50 tonnes, respectively. The city relies on eight major processing units, seven government facilities and one private plant. A 600-tonne-per-day waste-to-energy plant, along with biomethanation plants and dry waste collection centres, supports waste management.

Bengaluru wildlife caught in deadly nets



CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Wildlife rescuers are reporting a rise in animals and birds getting trapped in nets installed across Bengaluru homes, farms and public spaces.

Pigeon-exclusion meshes, balcony nets, sports netting and agricultural barriers are becoming unintended hazards for urban wildlife. Monkeys, bats, snakes and birds often become entangled, suffering injuries, dehydration and sometimes death. Rescue groups receive around 8-10 calls involving birds and snakes caught in such nets every month. The Avian and Reptile Rehabilitation Centre has rescued more than 110 animals trapped in different nets this year, including about 40 from a pomegranate farm.

Experts have urged regular monitoring and safer net designs, warning that mesh size, material and visibility can determine the risk to wildlife.

Bengaluru air quality moderate; Mysuru, Mangaluru fare better



CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Air quality across major cities in Karnataka showed variations on October 4, with Bengaluru recording an average Air Quality Index (AQI) of around 78 to 83, placing it in the 'moderate' category.

Traffic hotspots record higher pollution

Silk Board, Peenya and Whitefield, which experience heavy traffic and industrial activity, have recorded higher concentrations of PM2.5 and PM10 particles. The AQI in some pockets has crossed 100.

People with respiratory ailments and asthma, along with senior citizens, have been advised to exercise caution, particularly in areas witnessing heavy traffic and dust.

The higher pollution levels in Bengaluru are linked large-

ly to traffic movement, construction activity and dust in busy parts of the city.

Mysuru, Mangaluru record better air quality

Compared with Bengaluru, coastal and Malnad regions have recorded relatively better air quality. Mysuru and Mangaluru have reported AQI levels between 45 and 55, helped by rainfall. Their air quality falls within the 'good' to 'moderate' range.

In north Karnataka, Belagavi, Hubballi-Dharwad and Kalaburagi have recorded AQI levels between 80 and 95. Construction activity and dust are among the factors contributing to the higher readings.

Health experts advise vulnerable groups to limit prolonged exposure to polluted areas and take precautions during peak traffic hours.

78-83	45-55	80-95
Bengaluru average AQI	Mysuru, Mangaluru	Belagavi, Kalaburagi, Hubballi-Dharwad

Bangalore Hospital upgrades advanced healthcare services

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Bangalore Hospital at South End Circle has strengthened its medical infrastructure with advanced technology, modern equipment and specialist doctors to provide comprehensive healthcare services under one roof.

The hospital has undergone modernisation, with a special focus on cardiac care, emergency treatment and spine-related conditions. It has installed a 640-slice cardiac CT scanning system to facilitate early detection of heart attack risks, coronary artery conditions and blood circulation problems.

The hospital's cardiac services are also supported by the advice and guidance of renowned cardiologist and MP Dr C.N. Manjunath. Emergency cardiac care and other specialised treatments are being provided at the facility.

Hospital spine surgeon Dr Abhishek Mannem is offering advanced treatment for back pain, spinal disorders and complex spine conditions using modern surgical techniques. He has undergone specialised training in spine surgery in India, Hong Kong and France.

Bangalore Hospital has also made arrangements for 24x7 emergency services, an ICU,

cath lab, cardiac CT scan, MRI and surgical departments. Comprehensive healthcare services are available at its Jayanagar and Kengeri branches as well.

Kammavaru Sangha presi-



dent R. Raj Gopal Naidu said the organisation had come forward to collaborate with the hospital with the objective of restoring its reputation as a leading healthcare institution. He said efforts were being made to ensure quality medical treatment was accessible to poor and economically disadvantaged people.

Hospital management and staff recently welcomed members of the Kammavaru Sangha and briefed them about the institution's services and facilities.

Bangalore Hospital Group chairman Dr Krishnaprasad Surapaneni, CEO Dr Lahari, medical superintendent Dr Abhishek Mannem, R. Raj Gopal Naidu, office-bearers of the Kammavaru Sangha and Kammavari Credit Cooperative Bank, specialist doctors and hospital staff were present.

₹22 lakh fraud in name of PU Board official

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

A family in Bengaluru was allegedly cheated of Rs 22 lakh by cyber fraudsters who posed as senior officials of the Karnataka Pre-University Education Board and promised to increase their daughter's marks in the II PUC examination.

The fraudsters allegedly contacted the family and claimed that the girl was likely to score low marks in important subjects. They reportedly assured the family that her marks could be increased during the answer-sheet evaluation process.

The accused allegedly told the family that higher PU marks would improve their daughter's chances of securing a medical seat through the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET).

Believing the claims, the family allegedly transferred a total of Rs 22 lakh in instalments to different bank accounts provided by the fraudsters.

The family realised it had been cheated after the examination results were announced and there was no change in the girl's marks as



promised.

The family subsequently approached the Cyber Crime police and filed a complaint. Police have registered a case and launched an investigation.

Investigators are examining the bank accounts to which the money was transferred and the phone numbers used by the accused to contact the family.

Police have warned parents and students against falling for fraudulent calls promising changes to examination marks or admissions.

Officials have clarified that examination authorities do not alter marks in exchange for money. Parents and students have been advised to verify such claims directly with the concerned education authorities and avoid transferring money to unknown individuals.

The investigation is underway to identify those behind the fraud and trace the money transferred by the victims.

Experts question logic of 5 police commissionerates

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Former police commissioners and senior officers have questioned whether five commissionerates would improve policing, coordination and accountability across Bengaluru.

The Karnataka government's decision to divide the Bengaluru City Police Commissionerate into five separate commissionerates has drawn mixed reactions from former police commissioners and policing experts. The proposed restructuring is being viewed in the context of the Greater Bengaluru Authority's (GBA) five-corporation model.

The broader objective of the policing overhaul is to improve coordination between the civic administration and police while aligning policing arrangements with the new governance structure. However, experts and citizens have questioned whether a structure designed for civic administration would necessarily work effectively for policing.

Former police commissioners and senior officers have suggested that a maximum of two commissionerates could help ensure effective administration and coordination across the city. They have cautioned that dividing Bengaluru into five separate police jurisdictions could create unforeseen complications.

The restructuring comes nearly a year after the GBA and five city corporations were formed. However, cadre and recruitment rules have not yet been revised, raising con-

cerns over whether the new administrative structure can improve service delivery on the ground.

The proposed arrangement could also raise questions over coordination between the different commissionerates, particularly in cases involving



crimes that cross jurisdictional boundaries. Maintaining effective communication and ensuring clear responsibility between the units could become crucial for successful implementation.

While the five-way structure may provide administrative advantages in certain areas, its effectiveness will largely depend on government support, adequate staffing and clear jurisdictional responsibilities.

Police officials are also examining how the existing policing structure can be adapted to the proposed changes. Experts say recruitment and cadre reforms will be important to ensure that the restructuring does not merely alter administrative boundaries but also strengthens policing capacity.

The government's final approach will determine whether the five-commissionerate model improves policing efficiency or creates additional layers of coordination in Bengaluru.

Organised begging rings hinder rehabilitation of Bengaluru's destitute

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Bengaluru's rehabilitation network is helping hundreds of destitute people rebuild their lives, but organised begging rings continue to keep



many vulnerable people outside the support system.

At the Nirashritara Parihara Kendra on Magadi Road, 875 inmates are receiving shelter, care and vocational training in tailoring, garment work and other skills aimed at helping them become self-reliant.

Among them is a woman from Bhiwandi in Maharashtra who came to Bengaluru with her three children after a failed marriage and her husband's second wedding. The family survived by seeking alms before being rescued by government agencies and brought to the rehabilitation centre.

After spending several months at the facility, the woman and her children have stabilised and are hoping to return home.

The Bengaluru centre is also accommodating 38 in-

Organised begging networks are keeping vulnerable people outside rehabilitation centres, limiting government efforts to restore stable livelihoods.

mates from the dysfunctional Bengaluru East rehabilitation facility. Across Karnataka, the Central Relief Committee, under the Social Welfare Department, shelters more than 3,800 people through 14 functional centres.

In Bengaluru, police-assisted rescue operations bring people found begging into the rehabilitation system. However, organised networks that exploit vulnerable people continue to pose a major challenge, making it difficult for authorities to bring more people into shelters, provide vocational support and facilitate family reunification.

B'luru protest planned against Bedti-Aghanashini diversion

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Environmentalists, activists and Uttara Kannada residents will stage a major protest in Bengaluru on October 10 against the proposed diversion of the Bedti and Aghanashini rivers.



The protest, organised by the Bedti-Aghanashini Valley Conservation Committee, will be held at Freedom Park. The committee is opposing the proposed river-linking project aimed at diverting water to drought-prone areas of Karnataka, arguing that the rivers are vital to Uttara Kannada's ecology and livelihoods.

The committee said the rivers receive substantial flow mainly during the monsoon between July and September, while their flow remains low for the rest of the year. It has questioned the government's assessment that the rivers have surplus water, describ-

ing the calculation as unscientific.

Organisers have warned that the project could lead to forest loss and damage to grazing and agricultural land, besides increasing the risk of landslides in the Western Ghats. They have also raised concerns over reduced downstream flow and possible seawater intrusion into coastal areas, which could affect fishing and agriculture.

Citizens from Uttara Kannada living in Bengaluru, environmental groups and representatives of various organisations are expected to participate.

Retired Justice Santosh Hegde, environmentalist A.N. Yellappa Reddy, poet Jayanth Kaikini, environmental scientist T.V. Ramachandra, geologist T.V. Srinivasa Reddy, Adamy Chetana president Tejaswini Ananth Kumar and others have extended support to the protest.

The organisers said the demonstration aims to draw attention to the ecological and livelihood concerns surrounding the proposed diversion and demand that the project be stopped.

SSLC FEE HIKE

SSLC exam fees hiked by 5% for 2026-27

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Students appearing for the 2026-27 SSLC examinations in Karnataka will have to pay higher examination and registration fees following a five



per cent revision announced by the School Education and Assessment Board.

The revised fee structure covers fresh candidates, private candidates and repeat candidates. For students appearing for the SSLC examination for the first time, the examination fee has been increased from Rs 710 to Rs 746, an increase of Rs 36.

The board has also directed students who have already registered for the examination to pay the additional amount. Such candidates will have to pay an additional Rs 76, according to the order.

Repeat candidates

The examination fee for repeat candidates has also been

revised. Candidates appearing for one subject will now have to pay Rs 470, compared to Rs 448 earlier.

The fee for two subjects has increased from Rs 559 to Rs

Revised SSLC fees (Rs)		
	OLD	NEW
Fresh candidate	710	746
Already registered	-	+76
Repeat, one subject	448	470
Repeat, two subjects	559	587
Repeat, 3+ subjects	752	790
Fresh private registration	248	260
Existing private registration	72	76

587, while candidates appearing for three or more subjects will have to pay Rs 790 instead of Rs 752.

The registration fee for private candidates has also been increased. Fresh private candidates will now pay Rs 260, up from Rs 248. Candidates already registered as private candidates and who have paid the examination fee will have to pay Rs 76 instead of Rs 72.

The revised charges will apply to candidates appearing for the 2026-27 SSLC examinations.

Quick Read

Tipper crashes into toll plaza, traffic disrupted

CH NEWS, VIJAYAPURA

A toll plaza was badly damaged after a tipper truck crashed into the structure near Kannolli in Sindagi taluk of Vijayapura district in the early hours of Sunday. The accident occurred at a toll plaza on National Highway 52, which is under the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI). The impact completely mangled the toll plaza structure. Fortunately, no injuries were reported in the incident. The crash disrupted traffic movement between Vijayapura and Kalaburagi for some time. Police reached the spot, removed the damaged tipper and restored the movement of vehicles. A case has been registered at the Sindagi police station, and further investigation is underway.

Car plunges into lake after tyre burst

CH NEWS, CHIKKAMAGALURU

A car plunged into Kote Kere, also known as Fort Lake, in Chikkamagaluru city after its tyre burst while it was moving, causing the driver to lose control. The car first collided with an electric pole before crashing through the iron fencing around the lake and falling into the water. The impact snapped the electric pole, which fell onto the road. The three occupants of the car escaped with no life-threatening injuries. Police retrieved the vehicle from the lake using a crane. Former minister C.T. Ravi, who was passing through the area, stopped and inquired about the condition of the injured. The incident occurred under the jurisdiction of Chikkamagaluru City Police Station.

Kodagu man dies of heart attack at airport

CH NEWS, MADIKERI

A man from Sunkikoppa in Kodagu district died of a heart attack at Kempegowda International Airport in Bengaluru after arriving from Kuwait to spend his leave with his family. The deceased was identified as Bashir, a resident of Master Layout near KEB in Sunkikoppa. He had been working in Kuwait for several years and supporting his wife and two daughters through his earnings. Bashir arrived at Bengaluru airport from Kuwait around 3 am on Saturday. He reportedly developed sudden chest pain after arriving and died at the airport following a heart attack. His family travelled to Bengaluru after receiving the news. His mortal remains will be brought to Sunkikoppa, where relatives and family members will pay their final respects. The funeral is scheduled to be held at the 7th Hosakote Muslim burial ground after 3 pm on Sunday.

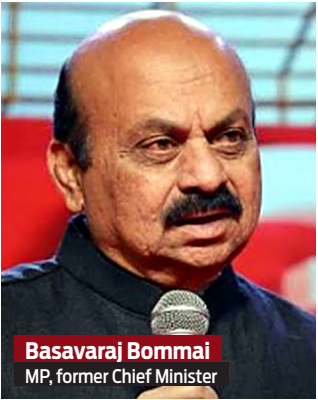
Bommai alleges Congress relied on bogus votes

Bommai claimed that certain voters were registered across multiple locations and votes were cast using deceased individuals' names.

CH NEWS, HAVERI

Former Karnataka Chief Minister and MP Basavaraj Bommai alleged that the Congress had benefited from bogus voting for years and was now facing difficulties because of the Special Summary Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. Speaking to reporters in Haveri, Bommai accused Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar of staging a protest outside the Election Officer's office to protect bogus votes. He alleged that some voters had been registered at multiple locations and that votes had also been cast in the names of deceased persons. Bommai said the SIR process in Karnataka had been progressing smoothly from the beginning. He alleged that the Congress had initially attempted to facilitate the filling of applications at places such as mosques, which the BJP had opposed. He said the draft electoral roll was scheduled to

be published on October 8 and accused the Congress of



creating confusion by holding protests before its release. He said BJP leaders had already met the Election Officer and submitted a representation regarding the issue. According to Bommai, the revision process was now proceeding in accordance with the law. He clarified that the State Government did not have direct authority to initiate cases concerning the SIR process, as

such matters fell under the jurisdiction of election officials.

On the demand to make Savanur taluk a separate Assembly constituency, Bommai said delimitation would have to be carried out according to Election Commission rules. Committees at the central and state levels would assess population requirements and other factors before considering

Our stand is clear. The votes of eligible citizens must be protected, while votes belonging to ineligible persons must be removed.

Basavaraj Bommai MP

such demands, he said.

Reacting to AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge's demand to annul elections held after the beginning of the SIR process, Bommai said the Congress was making excuses

Bommai defends Karnataka's electoral revision

Basavaraj Bommai stated that Karnataka's electoral revision is proceeding lawfully. He accused Congress of political interference, creating unrest over draft rolls, and making excuses following electoral setbacks, while noting delimitation requires official Commission rules.

after suffering defeats in several places. Instead, the party should introspect and identify the reasons for its electoral setbacks, he said.

On demands for the suspension of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, Bommai accused the Congress and its allies of attempting to create unrest and said people would not support such efforts.

Fire destroys plastic warehouse near Bellur

CH NEWS, BIDAR

A massive fire broke out at the Keerthi Wire Mesh warehouse, which stores plastic raw materials, near Bellur village in Bidar taluk on Sunday. The blaze quickly spread across the warehouse, engulfing the premises and destroying a large quantity of plastic materials. The intense fire caused extensive damage to the warehouse and its stored materials. Thick smoke from the burning plastic rose high into the sky, creating concern among residents of Bellur and neighbouring villages. The dense smoke spread across the surrounding area and caused

anxiety among people living nearby. Towering flames were visible from a distance, prompting residents to remain alert as the fire continued to burn.

After receiving information about the incident, fire and emergency personnel rushed to the warehouse and began efforts to bring the blaze under control. Firefighters faced a challenging situation because of the large quantity of plastic raw materials stored inside the premises. They worked continuously for several hours to prevent the flames from spreading to nearby areas.

After sustained efforts, the fire department personnel



managed to completely extinguish the flames. No casualties were reported in the incident, providing relief to residents and authorities. However, the warehouse suffered major damage, while a substantial quantity of plastic raw

materials was destroyed in the fire.

The exact cause of the blaze has not yet been established. Officials are expected to conduct an inquiry to determine how the fire started and assess the extent of the property and material losses.

The incident has also highlighted the need for strict fire safety precautions at warehouses storing plastic and other highly combustible materials. Residents have expressed concern over the heavy smoke generated by the fire and its possible impact on the surrounding environment. Authorities will examine safety arrangements at the warehouse.

'Elders' path can guide us towards peace'

CH NEWS, VIJAYAPURA

Senior journalist Rafi Bhandari called upon people to follow the values and principles shown by their elders and strive for peace, truth and non-violence. He was speaking after inaugurating a 'Mushaira', a poetic symposium for world peace, organised by Suvidha Social Service Organization in Vijayapura to mark the birth anniversaries of Mahatma Gandhi and former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri.

Bhandari recalled Mahatma Gandhi's belief that "our life is our message" and said people should make their lives an example for others. He also highlighted Shastri's decision to observe a fast at a time when the country was facing poverty and hunger. By personally experiencing hunger, Shastri demonstrated the importance of sacrifice and responsibility, he said.

Bhandari urged people to resolve to lead healthy and meaningful lives and said the world could be conquered through peace, non-violence

and truth. However, peace has become increasingly difficult to find in today's fast-paced society, he observed. The rush

ard incidents to create divisions.

Siraj Jamkhandi, principal of Sikab School, Tikota, also



to achieve everything quickly often creates problems and accidents. Therefore, people should carefully consider their decisions and choose peaceful ways to resolve differences, he said.

Alimulla Hussain, lecturer at Anjuman College, said Gandhi's message of rejecting discrimination based on colour and other differences continues to remain relevant. Peace, he said, is the foundation of a beautiful and harmonious society. He appealed to people to remain united and work for the welfare of society without allowing untow-

spoke on the occasion. Organization president Fayaz Kaladgi welcomed the gathering and delivered the introductory address.

Mohammad Naseem Rozindar, Shabbir Pital, Dadapir Mujawar, M.S. Patil (Ganiyara), Pidahusein Kaladgi, Ravi Murugod, Mirasab Mulla and Ijaz Mukbil were present on the dais.

Poets including Momin Bijapuri, Mujeeb Ahmed Mujeeb, Abdulkhadir Sahil, Rizwan Ahmed Rizwan, Iqbal Khadim and Aqib Raza recited their poems during the programme.

Labourer stabbed to death after ₹500 demand

CH NEWS, SHIVAMOGGA

A daily-wage labourer was allegedly stabbed to death after four youths demanded ₹500 from him near the Tunga Channel in Ashok Nagar, Shivamogga. Police have registered a murder case at Doddapete Police Station.

According to the available information, the incident occurred around 8 pm when four youths arrived on two motorcycles near the Tunga Channel. They allegedly noticed Mohammad Ali, a daily-wage worker, carrying a ₹500 note and approached him demanding the money. Ali reportedly refused to hand over the cash. The youths allegedly attacked him with a knife, snatched the ₹500 and fled the spot. Ali sustained serious injuries and died by the roadside before help could reach him.

After learning about the incident, local residents and the victim's family rushed to the spot. The incident has caused concern among resi-

Living voters question death certificates shown

CH NEWS, VIJAYAPURA

A controversy has emerged in Vijayapura over the ongoing revision of electoral rolls after



Basanagouda Patil Yatnal

eight people, whose names were reportedly cited as deceased voters, appeared before the district administration and said they were alive. The issue has sparked questions over the use of death certificates in objections seeking deletion of names from the voters' list.

The controversy arose after MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatnal displayed death certificates of eight voters while alleging irregularities in the electoral rolls. The documents were cited in connection with objections filed during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process. The matter has now come under scrutiny after the individuals concerned appeared before officials and denied being deceased.

Key points

- Living voters marked as dead.
- Valid certificates show data mismatches.
- Targeted deletions spark political row.
- Yatnal defends roll verification actions.
- Administration orders detailed document probe.
- Fears grow over wrongful deletions.

The eight voters questioned how death certificates bearing their names came to be used in the electoral process. They also sought action against

The documents were cited during objections in the Special Intensive Revision, drawing scrutiny after alleged deceased individuals appeared and denied it.

those responsible if the documents were found to have been improperly used. Their appearance before the authorities has raised concerns about whether genuine voters could be wrongly removed from electoral rolls based on incorrect records.

According to a verification reported by The New Indian Express, the eight certificates were issued by a competent authority. However, while the names of the individuals matched, some other details, including names of parents or spouses, did not correspond with the details of the living voters. The discrepancies have added another dimension to the controversy.

The development has intensified the political dispute surrounding the electoral roll revision in Karnataka, with BJP and Congress leaders trading allegations over the submission and verification of objections. Yatnal has maintained that objections were filed against suspected ineligible entries, including names of deceased persons, duplicate voters and non-residents.

The district administration is expected to examine the records and establish how the certificates came to be associated with the eight voters. The verification process will also determine whether the discrepancies resulted from clerical errors, mismatched records or any deliberate attempt to influence the electoral rolls.

Suspect arrested over alleged terror links in Bidar

CH NEWS, BIDAR

Bhalki Rural police have arrested a man from Enakuru village after allegedly finding a WhatsApp link connecting him to a banned Pakistan-based organisation. The accused, identified as Vishalakumar Metre, was arrested after police examined his mobile phone and allegedly found details raising suspicion about his links with the organisation. Police registered a suo motu case and took him into custody.

The arrest comes days after two suspected terrorists were reportedly arrested in Chikkaballapur.

However, the accused's aunt denied the allegations, claiming that the case was fabricated amid a property dispute involving his parents. She said police searched their house two days ago and took Vishalakumar away. Police are investigating the alleged links and circumstances surrounding the case.

GLOBAL TEMPERATURE EFFECTS

Minister warns of tough months, urges water conservation

CH NEWS, MADIKERI

Agriculture Minister Narendra Swamy has warned that Karnataka could face difficult conditions over the next seven to eight months due to changing weather patterns, rising temperatures and the possible impact of El Nino. He urged people to use water carefully and conserve the resource from now itself.

Speaking to reporters in Madikeri, Swamy said climate change and increasing global temperatures were affecting weather patterns. The El Nino phenomenon could also influence cloud movement and rainfall distribution,

potentially causing significant variations from normal rainfall, he said.

The Minister warned that rain could fail to reach areas where it is urgently needed, while heavy rainfall could occur in places where it is less beneficial. Such uneven rainfall could have a direct impact on groundwater resources. With groundwater levels expected to decline further, people should reduce unnecessary water consumption and adopt conservation measures, he said.

"Save water, save the future," Swamy said, stressing that conserving water should be treated as a collective re-

sponsibility. He appealed to people to continue water-saving practices during the coming months, particularly through the summer period.

The Minister also expressed concern over the possible impact of water shortages on agriculture. Reduced availability of water could affect the cultivation and supply of vegetables and leafy greens, potentially leading to higher food prices. He warned that the situation could become more difficult if traders or others attempted to hoard essential commodities and create an artificial shortage.

Swamy called for public cooperation with the govern-

ment in dealing with any emerging water or food-relat-



Narendra Swamy

ed challenges. He also said rising temperatures could cre-

ate health concerns and that preventive measures would be

IN SHORT

Minister warns of summer challenges

- Minister Swamy warned that water shortages could impact agriculture, spike vegetable prices, and cause artificial hoarding.
- Urging public cooperation, he assured that the government is monitoring climate conditions, preparing summer advisories, and tracking health concerns.

necessary to protect people during the summer.

The Minister said the prevailing climatic conditions in Karnataka, India and other parts of the world were being closely monitored. Discussions on preparations for the summer and possible cli-

mate-related challenges had also taken place at the nation-

al level.

He said the government was prepared to issue advance warnings if necessary and assured that important information and advisories would be communicated to the public through Former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah.

Quick Read

Nayara Energy hikes petrol, diesel prices

NEW DELHI
Nayara Energy has increased petrol prices by ₹5 per litre and diesel prices by ₹3, effective from the early hours of Saturday, October 3, as the private fuel retailer seeks to narrow the gap between retail prices and rising international oil and refined-product costs. The latest hike comes amid renewed pressure on fuel retailers from higher global energy prices. Nayara Energy, which operates 7,108 petrol pumps across the country, has made several price adjustments this year as refiners deal with geopolitical disruptions affecting crude and refined-product markets. The company is India's largest private fuel retailer. The latest revision is aimed at responding to higher international energy costs and changing conditions in global oil markets.

RBI may hike repo rate by 0.25%

MUMBAI
The Reserve Bank of India may raise the repo rate by 0.25 per cent in its October monetary policy review amid rising inflationary pressures, a poll of 16 economists and bankers found. The repo rate currently stands at 5.25 per cent. A hike would reverse the rate-cut cycle that began in 2025 after the RBI last raised rates by 0.25 per cent to 6.50 per cent in February 2023. Experts cited renewed tensions in West Asia, higher energy and commodity prices, global central bank rate hikes and strong domestic growth as key risks. Most participants expect a hike with a hawkish stance, while some favour status quo. Several economists expect two to three hikes in FY27. "Coordination with global central bank hikes, rising inflation risks and strong growth momentum provide policy space to hike," — Kanika Pasricha, Chief Economic Advisor, Union Bank of India.

Review bank statements to curb wasteful spending

NEW DELHI
Reviewing bank statements can help identify wasteful spending, control expenses and protect savings. UPI and credit cards offer convenience, but rewards, cashback offers and easy payments can encourage spending beyond limits. A weekly review can identify unusual transactions, missed payments and unnecessary expenses early. A month-end check provides a clearer view of cash flow, recurring expenses and savings patterns. Setting a review day, such as Sunday evening, can make the habit easier. Unused subscriptions are a common source of waste. OTT platforms, music services and cloud storage may continue charging through automatic debits even when rarely used. Regular checks can help identify and cancel such services. Frequent food orders can increase expenses, with ₹300-500 orders several times a week adding up to thousands of rupees monthly. Impulse purchases during sales can encourage unnecessary spending. Banking alerts and expense-tracking apps can help monitor transactions and prevent small leaks from becoming larger financial problems over time.

India-Canada to begin fifth round of CEPA talks

NEW DELHI

India and Canada will begin the fifth round of negotiations for the proposed Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) in Ottawa on October 5, with both sides seeking to conclude the talks by the end of this calendar year, an official said. The five-day round of discussions is scheduled to begin on October 5 and may continue until October 9. The nego-

tiations will be led by the chief negotiators of the two countries as they work to advance the proposed economic partnership agreement. The latest round follows the fourth round of negotiations, which concluded in New Delhi on September 18. The proposed CEPA is the focus of the ongoing trade negotiations between the two countries. The fifth round will take place in Ottawa, where the chief negotiators are ex-



pected to continue discussions on the agreement. The faster pace of talks comes as India and Canada

seek to complete negotiations by the end of this year. The

India-Canada CEPA talks

- **SEPT 18**
Fourth round ends in New Delhi
- **OCT 5-9**
Fifth round in Ottawa, led by the chief negotiators
- **END-2026**
Target to conclude the agreement

October 5-9 discussions will therefore be an important stage in the process following the September round. The proposed pact remains under negotiation, with both countries continuing their efforts to reach an agreement within the stated timeframe. The next round is expected to build on progress made during discussions, as both sides seek to maintain momentum and meet their target for concluding negotiations.

‘India needs more open trade, investment policies to withstand global shocks’



NEW DELHI

India needs to strengthen its resilience to growing geopolitical and economic shocks by adopting more open trade and investment policies, deepening international partnerships and securing its position in global value chains, experts said at the 5th Kautilya Economic Conclave.

Liqing Zhang, Professor of International Economics and Director of the Center for International Finance Studies at the Central University of Finance and Economics, said India could strengthen its ability to respond to external shocks by opening its markets further. He also said stronger economic engagement between India and China could benefit both countries.

Key takeaways

Open trade policies

Key to withstand global shocks.

More foreign investment

Experts seek stronger investment flows.

Economic resilience

Vital amid geopolitical uncertainties.

Global value chains

India must secure its position.

Asian cooperation

Stronger regional partnerships can reduce risks.

tries, including through increased imports from India and greater Chinese investment in the country.

Hans Peter Lankes, Managing Director and Deputy Chief

India needs greater trade openness, stronger global partnerships and deeper value-chain integration to withstand geopolitical and economic shocks.

Executive of ODI Global, said building economic resilience should remain central to policymaking. He highlighted the importance of fiscal, monetary and industrial policies in helping economies withstand recurring external shocks.

Lankes also described India as an active leader of the Global South and said the country had managed several global economic challenges effectively. He noted that India-UK relations remained close and said the UK would be receptive to India's priorities ahead of its upcoming G20 presidency.

She said countries should focus on identifying critical pressure points and work with Asian economies, including India, rather than withdrawing from international economic relationships.

NISM to hold investor education drive for WIW

NEW DELHI

The National Institute of Securities Markets (NISM) will conduct a week-long investor education programme from October 5 to 10 as part of World Investor Week 2026, focusing on financial awareness, responsible investing and cyber safety for young investors and the investing community.

The programme, marking the 10th World Investor Week, will include on-campus activities, expert-led sessions and online webinars. NISM will organise Investor Education Visit Programmes for six days at its Patalganga campus for nearly 2,400 stu-

dents from colleges across the region. The sessions will introduce students to securities markets, investing princi-

NISM
National Institute of Securities Markets
A Capacity Building Institute of SEBI

plines and informed financial decision-making.

On October 8, NISM, in collaboration with the National Council of Applied Economic Research and the Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority, will hold an Investor Education and Protection Seminar. The theme will be "The Future is Now: Gen Z Driving Universal Digital Financial Education for Viksit Bharat".

Jio IPO likely by October end at \$143-146 bn valuation

Jio IPO in numbers

\$143-146 bn enterprise valuation	\$3.8 bn issue size, India's largest
27 crore fresh shares, about 2.9%	₹30,053 cr FY26 profit, up 15%

NEW DELHI

Jio Platforms is likely to list by the end of October at an enterprise valuation of \$143-146 billion, or above ₹12 trillion, with the \$3.8 billion IPO expected to become India's largest public offer, according to sources.

The company has completed overseas roadshows in the US, UK, Dubai, Hong Kong and Singapore and is expected to file IPO papers with SEBI in the week beginning October 12. Sources said an India roadshow is expected after the filing.

SEBI issued its final observations on August 28, while Jio Platforms had filed its draft IPO papers in June. The company plans to issue up to 27 crore fresh equity shares, representing about 2.9 per cent of its post-issue equity base.

Jio Platforms houses Reliance's digital businesses, including telecommunications operations. Reliance Jio Info-comm has a 32.89 per cent share of fixed-line connections and 39.29 per cent of mobile connections, serving

157.9 million and 506 million customers respectively. Jio Platforms had a 15 per cent rise in FY26 profit after tax to



₹30,053 crore and revenue increased 14.5 per cent to ₹1,46,885 crore.

The IPO would be the first public offering from the Reliance group since 2008 and the first IPO of a consumer-focused business within the conglomerate. Reliance Industries owns about 66.4 per cent of Jio Platforms, while Meta and Google together hold about 17.7 per cent, according to the draft prospectus.

"Based on interest received from overseas roadshows, Jio Platforms is likely to list at a base enterprise valuation of \$143-146 billion or at least ₹12 trillion by end of this month," a banking source said.

India real estate shows split demand trends

NEW DELHI

India's real estate market is showing a two-speed trend, with office, flexible workspace and logistics segments recording strong demand while residential markets face rising unsold inventory, according to Equirius' Real Estate Tracker - Sept 2026 report.

Net office absorption across the top seven cities reached 27.4 million square feet in the first half of 2026, up 2 per cent year-on-year. Office completions fell 10 per cent to 22.2 million square feet, while vacancy declined to a multi-year low of 15 per cent. Global capability centres re-

mained a major driver, with leasing rising 22 per cent to 19.2 million square feet, accounting for 45 per cent of gross office leasing.



Flexible workspace operators leased 191,306 seats in H1 2026, an annual increase of 68.4 per cent, representing around 20 per cent of total office leasing. Logistics and industrial leasing across the top eight cities rose 18 per cent to a record 36.2 million square feet. Warehousing accounted for 24.3 million square feet, while third-party logistics players leased 12.2 million square feet.

Residential markets, however, recorded inventory growth. Unsold housing inventory across eight major markets rose 4 per cent year-on-year to 525,695 units at H1 2026, while quarters-to-sell increased to 6.0 from 5.8 at the end of 2025. Ahmedabad had the highest inventory overhang at 8.1 quarters, followed by the National Capital Region at 7.6 quarters.

Two-speed market, H1 2026

Office absorption, up 2%

27.4 mn sq ft

Flexi-space seats, up 68.4%

191,306

Logistics leasing, up 18%

36.2 mn sq ft

Unsold homes, up 4%

525,695

FSSAI BAKERY ACTION

FSSAI suspends bakery licence over hygiene lapses

NEW DELHI

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has suspended the licence of West Bengal-based Creative Bakers and Confectioners Pvt Ltd with immediate effect after inspectors found severe hygiene and food-safety violations at its premises.

The regulator said the inspection revealed dirt, grease, dust, cobwebs and flies in

food production and handling areas. Perishable raw materials were reportedly stored in the open, while rusted and inadequately cleaned containers were used for raw and semi-finished products.

FSSAI also flagged significant pest infestation, including ineffective fly control and inadequate measures against rodents. Windows and other openings lacked insect-proof mesh, raising further concerns over contamination.



The inspection found waste, old stock, rejected lots and scrap in food-handling areas. Rusting equipment, flaking paint, dampness and broken floor tiles were also observed. The company was also found

to have inadequate food-safety records covering water and finished-product testing, temperature monitoring, equipment calibration, preventive maintenance, mock recalls,

The food business operator has been directed to cease all food business activities during the suspension period.

FSSAI

consumer complaints, employee training and audits.

FSSAI directed the food business operator to stop all food-related activities during the suspension period.

In a separate action, the regulator ordered Everest Food Products Pvt Ltd to recall a batch of its pre-packed cumin powder after laboratory tests found pesticide residues above permitted limits.

The sample, collected from Riverside Resorts & Holiday

Homes in Goa, was initially declared unsafe by a food analyst. Following an appeal, the sample was examined by a Referral Food Laboratory, which confirmed excessive levels of Azoxystrobin and Thiamethoxam.

FSSAI directed Everest to immediately recall the entire affected batch, E080668761, maintain recall records, submit status reports and implement corrective measures to prevent recurrence.

IMF urges India to let rupee absorb Fed hike impact

WASHINGTON

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has said the US



Federal Reserve's interest rate hike will tighten global financial conditions and advised India to allow its exchange rate to act as a shock absorber.

An IMF spokesperson said US rate hikes have historically placed pressure on emerging markets through capital flows, financing conditions and exchange rate movements. The impact on India, the spokesperson said, would depend on the magnitude, pace and persistence of the US tightening cycle, along with domestic economic conditions.

The Federal Reserve raised interest rates on September 17 for the first time since July 2023 and indicated that another hike could follow as it seeks to contain inflation.

The IMF said India is enter-

ing the period from a position of strength, supported by strong economic growth, a credible inflation-targeting framework and ample external buffers. Healthy corporate and financial-sector balance sheets have also strengthened the country's resilience to external shocks.

The Fund recommended allowing the exchange rate to absorb external pressures while keeping monetary policy focused on maintaining domestic price stability.

"Allowing the exchange rate to act as a shock absorber, while keeping monetary policy focused on domestic price stability, remains an effective approach," the IMF spokesperson said.

The comments come as emerging markets face potential volatility from tighter US monetary conditions. Higher US interest rates can influence capital movements, financing costs and currencies across developing economies.

The IMF's assessment suggests that India's relatively strong domestic fundamentals could help cushion the impact of global financial tightening, while flexible exchange-rate management could provide an additional buffer against external shocks.

SAIL, NMDC asked to explore overseas assets

NEW DELHI

The Steel Ministry has asked state-owned Steel Authority



of India Ltd (SAIL) and NMDC to explore mineral assets overseas to secure long-term raw material supplies and help reduce input costs, a senior ministry official said.

SAIL is India's largest public sector steelmaker, while NMDC is the country's leading iron ore producer. The ministry's direction is aimed at strengthening access to key resources needed by the steel industry and reducing exposure to external supply pressures.

Iron ore and coking coal are among the basic raw materials required for steel production, along with limestone and pulverised coal injection (PCI) coal. While India has abundant iron ore resources, steelmakers including SAIL remain heavily dependent on imported coking coal.

Indian steel producers source about 85-90 per cent of their coking coal requirements from countries such as Australia and Mozambique.

Limestone is also imported from the West Asia region. The ministry's move therefore seeks to help public sector steel companies secure future raw material requirements while managing costs.

Private steelmaker JSW Steel has acquired coking coal assets overseas as part of its

"By 2030, my goal is to earn at least 20 per cent of revenues from the sale of minerals other than iron ore"

AMITAVA MUKHERJEE
NMDC Chairman

plan to meet 50 per cent of its raw material needs through captive sources. NMDC, which primarily operates in iron ore production, is also seeking to diversify into exploration of other minerals to meet growing demand from various industries, including steel.

NMDC Chairman Amitava Mukherjee recently said his goal was for the company to earn at least 20 per cent of its revenue from minerals other than iron ore by 2030. The overseas asset search by SAIL and NMDC comes as the government looks to strengthen raw material security and support the steel sector's longer-term requirements and improve competitiveness and resilience.

17 MONTHS TO GO: GOVERNANCE MUST REMAIN THE PRIORITY

COLUMN SHYAM SUNDAR VATTAM

With around 17 months remaining before the 2028 Karnataka Assembly elections, political parties have already begun preparing their organisational machinery. The ruling Congress, too, has launched an extensive statewide political outreach programme. The KPCC’s Bharat Jodo 2.0 began from Shikaripura on September 30 and is planned as an 84-day programme covering the 84 Assembly constituencies that Congress lost in the 2023 elections. The party has said the programme is intended to strengthen its organisation, interact with people and highlight issues including the Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls.

The timing of such political activity inevitably raises a larger question: how much attention can the government continue to devote to political mobilisation when several pressing administrative and economic challenges demand sustained attention?



For the government, the coming months are particularly important. Karnataka has to deal with the consequences of inadequate rainfall in several regions, including concerns over drinking water, agriculture, horticulture, livestock and fodder. The administration’s response will require close coordination among the Revenue, Agriculture, Horticulture, Water Resources and Rural Development departments, besides district administrations and local bodies.

This is not merely a political issue. It is a governance challenge.

The Chief Minister and his Cabinet have to ensure that departmental responsibilities do not get overshadowed by political programmes and constituency-level engagements. Ministers are expected to remain accessible to their departments and districts, particularly when farmers, rural communities and livestock owners face seasonal difficulties.

The calendar itself makes the next few months significant. The Mysuru Dasara celebrations will occupy considerable administrative attention, followed by Deepavali and the winter session of the Legislature. These are important public events and constitutional responsibilities, but they should not result in a slowdown in routine governance.

The real test of any government is not the number of political programmes it organises but how effectively its machinery responds when citizens face difficulties.

There is also a broader political reality. The Congress is now looking ahead to the 2028 Assembly election, just as the BJP and JD(S) are expected to strengthen their organisational activities. The Congress’s decision to take its new padayatra through constituencies it lost in 2023 clearly demonstrates the importance it attaches to rebuilding its political base.

There is nothing unusual about a ruling party preparing for the next election. However, political mobilisation and governance need not be competing exercises. The challenge for the government is to ensure that election preparations do not become a substitute for administration.

The next five to six months could be crucial from the perspective of water availability, agricultural conditions and rural distress. Government departments must therefore maintain continuous monitoring at the taluk and district levels. Drinking water arrangements, fodder availability, crop-loss assessment, relief measures and groundwater conditions require timely intervention rather than last-minute responses.

Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar has a long political runway before the 2028 election. The Karnataka government itself records him as Chief Minister since June 3, 2026. That gives the administration substantial time to demonstrate what can be achieved through effective governance before the electoral contest becomes the dominant political focus.

The Opposition will naturally scrutinise every failure of the government and use public grievances as political issues. That is part of democratic politics. The government’s strongest response to such criticism, however, lies in functioning institutions, responsive administration and visible delivery of public services.

Seventeen months is still a considerable period in politics, but a short period when drought, water security, agriculture and rural livelihoods are involved. The immediate challenge before the government is to ensure that political preparation does not come at the cost of administrative attention. Governance will ultimately be judged on how effectively the government responds to people’s everyday problems.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Care For Expecting Mothers

Pregnancy is celebrated in our society, but a woman’s mental health during this period is completely ignored. We focus only on physical check-ups, diet, and scans. What about her anxiety, mood swings, fear of delivery, and career stress? Many pregnant women cry alone because if they speak, they are told, “Don’t think negative.” This silence can lead to depression and affect both mother and baby. Families, especially husbands, must listen to her without judging. Doctors should also screen for mental stress like they check BP and sugar. Taking rest and seeking counselling should not be called weakness. A happy mother is the foundation of a healthy child. It is time our society understands that mental care is also maternal care.

— Priya Sharma

Pregnancy Stress Needs Attention

Through your esteemed newspaper, I wish to highlight the hidden suffering of pregnant women. In Indian families, a pregnant woman is expected to be always happy and strong. In reality, hormonal changes, body pain, sleepless nights, and fear about the future make her mentally vulnerable. Working women face double pressure from office and home. Others face constant advice and comparison from relatives. Yet mental health is treated as a taboo topic. We need awareness. Light exercise, yoga, proper sleep, and family support can help her cope. If anxiety continues, professional help must be taken without shame. Motherhood should not mean silent sacrifice. Let us support her mind, not just her body.

— Anita Verma

Listen To Pregnant Women

Why do we ask a pregnant woman what she ate, but never ask how she feels? Mental health during pregnancy is as important as physical health, but it is the least discussed. Many women fear losing their identity after childbirth. They worry about pain, finances, and being a good mother. Instead of support, they get pressure to stay positive. It is the duty of family members to share household work, give her rest, and accompany her for check-ups. Society must stop glorifying women who work without rest till delivery. If we protect a mother’s mental peace today, we protect the next generation tomorrow.

— Dr. Sneha Kulkarni

WHO IS A JOURNALIST AND WHO IS A PROPAGANDIST?

DR. PRIYANKA SAURABH

In today’s times, it’s becoming more difficult than ever to distinguish between a journalist and a propagandist. The number of news outlets has increased, sources of information have expanded, and social media has given everyone a platform to express their views. But amidst this expansion, a serious question has arisen about the fundamental role of journalism—is journalism still a medium for questioning power, or is it becoming part of political and ideological factions? This question is not limited to any one person, organization, channel, or ideology. The question of journalism’s credibility in a democracy is much broader than this.

Today, the media is often accused of dividing journalism into two distinct camps. One camp appears to defend

“In a democracy, a journalist should neither be a friend nor an enemy of power.”

DR. PRIYANKA SAURABH

almost every policy, decision, and statement of the ruling party, while the other finds fault or flaw in almost every move by the ruling party. Both have their own audiences, readers, and supporters. Both have their own arguments, and both have their own ideological following. The problem isn’t whether a journalist criticizes or supports a particular policy. The problem arises when a journalist’s role is limited to supporting or opposing a political party.

The job of journalism isn’t to stand in favor of power. But its job isn’t just to oppose power either. Its true respon-

sibility is to stand up to power and question it. In a democracy, power isn’t the private right of any one party, leader, or government. Power is a responsibility bestowed by the people, and journalism is an important means of public oversight of that responsibility. Therefore, a journalist’s primary responsibility should not be to any party, leader, or ideology, but to facts, the Constitution, democratic institutions, and the public interest.

This is why asking questions is the most important task in journalism. When the government makes a decision, the questions should be: why it was made, what is its purpose, who will benefit from it, who will suffer its losses, how much public money will be spent on it, and how will its consequences be measured. Similarly, when the opposition makes a claim, the questions should be: what are the facts behind that claim, what is its basis, whether it has any alternative proposals, and how practical are its promises. The yardstick for questioning should be facts and public interest, not individuals or parties.

The biggest challenge facing journalism today isn’t just political pressure. Another challenge is equally serious—viewer and reader preferences. People often want to hear only what confirms their preconceived notions. This puts pressure on media organizations to produce content that resonates with their target audience. This is where the line between journalism and propaganda begins to blur.

The purpose of propaganda is to create public opinion in favor of an idea, person, or system. The purpose of journalism is to inform the public based on available facts and raise relevant questions. The

difference between the two is not always evident in words, but in the methodology of work. In journalism, it is important to verify sources, verify claims, examine context, and provide relevant parties



with an opportunity to present their views. Conversely, when conclusions are predetermined and facts are selected solely to support them, the credibility of journalism is bound to be questioned.

A journalist can make mistakes. A fact may be misreported, or a story may be missing context. But the hallmark of credible journalism is correcting mistakes when they arise, rechecking sources, and constantly introspecting on one’s reporting. Fairness also doesn’t mean presenting both sides of an issue as equally valid. If one claim has strong facts to support it, while another lacks, a journalist’s responsibility is to present the facts in the same proportion. Balance cannot mean giving equal weight to truth and falsehood.

Similarly, questioning the government does not imply opposition. In a democracy, questioning is not opposition, but a process of democratic accountability. It is natural for the public to question a government that makes decisions in their name. Unfortunately, today, journalists are often identified less by their questions and more by their

perceived political leanings. If a journalist asks a question to the government, they are labeled as belonging to the opposition camp. If they present facts in support of a government decision, they are

labeled as a supporter. Thus, the journalist’s question becomes less discussed and more discussed about their perceived loyalty.

This situation is a challenge not only for journalism but also for democracy. A healthy media system should include both criticism of the government and factual reporting of its good work. The opposition’s shortcomings should also be questioned, and their legitimate questions should also be given space. A journalist’s job is not to appease any party, but to empower citizens to reach their own conclusions by providing them with more information. The value of journalism should not be determined by who is pleased or displeased by its news, but by how reliable and verified information it presents to the public.

Therefore, the path of unbiased journalism is not easy. The government may be displeased. The opposition may also be displeased. Advertisers may be uncomfortable. Social media crowds may criticize, and their own readers or viewers may express disagreement. Yet, the true test of journalism occurs when a journal-

ist has to publish facts that contradict their own comfortable perspectives. If a journalist only asks questions whose answers please their own supporters, they are bound to face the question of introspection.

Journalism means neither subservience to power nor loyalty to the opposition. Neither propaganda nor vengeance. Neither blind devotion to an ideology nor opposition for the sake of opposition. The fundamental foundation of journalism is facts, questions, context, and public interest. Democracy needs journalists who can question the government, question the opposition, verify their sources, and have the courage to question their own assumptions.

Because a journalist’s job isn’t to change power. Elections are a public right, and the decision to change or maintain power rests with the voter. A journalist’s job is different. Their job is to ask the ruling party what they did, why they did it, for whom, and who will bear responsibility for the consequences. Similarly, their responsibility is to ask the opposition the basis of its allegations and promises.

In a democracy, a journalist should neither be a friend nor an enemy of power. They should be a medium for public questioning. Only when journalists ask questions, examine documents, verify claims, and demand answers from both the ruling party and the opposition does journalism fulfill its democratic role. And when journalists stop asking questions, the sources of information remain abundant, but journalism gradually diminishes. After all, the true identity of journalism lies not in siding with any camp, but in the courage to question every camp.

THE ‘PUSS’ REACHED THE COURT FROM CHANDA

DR. SATYAVAN SAURABH

“Chand mama door ke, pue pakain boor ke”—there’s hardly a lullaby in childhood that has such a deep connection with generations of



offensive meaning in another region, attributing that meaning to the entire song would not be fair to the linguistic context.

The world of folk songs and lullabies is far older than written dictionaries. They are

tion, the meanings associated with ‘awra’ have been related to things or body parts that were considered to be covered or hidden. However, as it entered Indian languages, the general meaning of ‘Aurat’ became established as woman or lady. Today, it is used in everything from common Hindi colloquial speech to literature and journalism. Can every usage today be read in that old meaning based solely on its historical etymology? Clearly not. This is the reality of linguistic evolution.

The word “madam” is also

The world of folk songs and lullabies is far older than written dictionaries.

an example of semantic change and social evolution. Evolving from the French “ma dame,” this term originally referred to a woman with respect. Different phases of history have had different social usages, but today, in English and Indian languages, “madam” is commonly used to address a teacher, an officer, or a respectable woman. Therefore, to define a word’s current meaning by focusing on a single phase of its history would be to reduce the complexity of linguistics to a simple conclusion.

The real question isn’t whether a word has a different meaning in one place. The question is whether every word will be read based on all its possible meanings in every context? If this were to happen, a large portion of vernacular, literature, folk songs, and old proverbs would be rendered questionable in today’s semantic system. A word’s meaning derives from context, and ignoring context can distort meaning.

Therefore, in such linguistic matters that arise before courts and public institutions,

it is not enough to simply look at the meaning of a word. It is essential to consider all aspects—the language or dialect from which the word originated, the time when it was used, its meaning in which region, the purpose of its creation, and its context within the sentence. Linguistic sensitivity does not mean applying every potentially offensive meaning everywhere. True sensitivity requires respecting the semantic worlds of different linguistic communities.

This controversy also offers a significant social lesson. In today’s age of digital media and instant feedback, it’s easy to find a single meaning of a word, but difficult to understand its history and context. The internet can instantly tell us the meaning of a word, but it doesn’t necessarily explain its entire cultural journey. Therefore, “Google’s meaning” cannot be the definitive proof of any linguistic conclusion. Language can only be understood by considering etymology, historical usage, regional dictionaries, and context.

Instead of clashing with modern sensibilities, folk language should be used as an opportunity for dialogue. If a different meaning of “bur” makes people uncomfortable in a particular region, that regional sensibility should be understood; but it would also be inappropriate to question the cultural memory of centuries-old lullabies on the same grounds. The beauty of lan-

guage lies in its versatility: the same sound can open up a world of different meanings in different places.

Before judging words, we should examine their context.

“Boor” is obscene or sweet? The real question is context.”

— Dr. Satyavan Saurabh

guage lies in its versatility: the same sound can open up a world of different meanings in different places.

Before judging words, we should examine their context.

tory, culture, and emotions hidden behind them, then language will not only remain a medium of communication but also a bridge connecting diverse India.

ETHNICITY GIVES US ROOTS TO RISE



What is ethnicity? It is not just the color of your skin or the language you speak. It is the food your grandmother cooks, the stories your father tells, the festivals you celebrate, the pain your community carried, and the pride you inherited without asking. In today's fast world where everyone wants to become global, we are slowly forgetting that without ethnicity, we have no identity.

Some people say ethnicity divides us. I disagree. What divides us is ignorance. Ethnicity itself is beautiful. When a Tamil boy wears a veshti for Pongal, when a Punjabi girl ties a parandi for Lohri, when a Naga youth dances the horn-bill dance, they are not being backward. They are remembering who they are. A tree that cuts its own roots will fall in the first wind. A human who forgets his ethnicity will also fall — he will become a copy, speaking English, eating burgers, wearing jeans, but feeling empty inside.

Importance of ethnicity is importance of belonging. We all need to belong. In Bangalore today, thousands of youngsters from Bihar, Assam, Bengal, Karnataka villages work in IT parks and delivery apps. During lunch, they speak broken English. During phone calls home, they speak their mother tongue and

smile. That language, that accent, that slang — that is ethnicity giving them emotional safety. Without it, big cities would be lonely hotels, not homes.

Ethnicity also preserves wisdom. Modern science is now rediscovering what ethnic communities knew for 500 years. Ayurveda from Kerala, ethnic traditions, millet food from Karnataka, ethnic farmers, bamboo craft from Northeast, herbal medicine from tribal groups in Chhattisgarh — these are not old superstitions, they are sustainable knowledge. When we lose ethnicity, we lose this knowledge and then we pay lakhs to learn it again from Western universities.

Does ethnicity mean we should reject others? No. My Kannada ethnicity does not make me hate Tamil ethnicity. In fact, when I understand my own culture deeply, I respect other cultures more. The problem starts when ethnicity becomes superiority — “my caste is higher, my language is purer.” That is not ethnicity, that is ego. Real ethnicity is humility: “This is who I am, and I am proud without needing to put you down.”

Globalization wants one culture for all — same coffee, same movies, same dress, same accent. It is convenient for business but dangerous

for humanity. If everyone becomes same, world becomes boring and fragile. Imagine if there was only one type of music, one type of food. Ethnicity gives diversity. Diversity gives strength, like a forest with many trees survives better than a farm with one crop.

We also need ethnicity for future generations. A child who grows up without knowing his ethnic stories will search for identity on the internet. He will copy Korean pop culture or American influencers because he has no story of his own. But a child who hears stories of Kempegowda, Rani Abbakka, Lachit

“A tree that cuts its own roots will fall in the first wind.”
— ADITHYA

Borphukan, Birsa Munda — he gets confidence. He knows heroes look like him.

So we should not be ashamed of our ethnicity. Wear your language with pride. Cook your traditional food. Celebrate your festivals openly. Teach your children your mother tongue, even if school teaches English.

Because modernity does not mean forgetting who you are. Modernity means carrying your roots into the future.

— ADITHYA

HAPPY MOTHER MAKES HEALTHY BABY

Everyone talks about what a pregnant woman should eat, which doctor to visit, which hospital is best. No one talks about what is going on in her mind. In my opinion, coping up with mental health during pregnancy is the most neglected part of motherhood in our society, and it is high time we take it seriously.

From the outside, pregnancy looks beautiful. Family members are excited, relatives give blessings, neighbours give tips. But inside, the woman is going through a storm. Her body is changing every week. Hormones make her mood swing — happy in the morning, irritated by afternoon, tearful at night. She cannot sleep properly, she feels tired all the time, she worries about delivery pain, baby's health, finances, job security, and whether she will be able to manage everything after birth.

If she expresses fear, our typical Asian response is, “Don't worry, all women go through this.” Or worse, “Thinking negative will harm the baby.” This shuts her up. She smiles in front of everyone and cries alone. This silence is dangerous.

Mental stress during pregnancy is very common. Working women in cities like Bangalore face office pressure, long commutes, and then expectations at home. Women in joint families face constant comparison and unsolicited advice — eat this, don't go out, don't work too much, pray more. First-time mothers are scared, second-time mothers are exhausted. Yet we expect them to stay positive all the time,

as if they are not human.

I strongly feel a mother's mental health directly affects the child. A stressed, sleepless, depressed mother cannot eat well, cannot bond well, and is at high risk of postpartum depression. We check haemoglobin, thyroid, and sugar in every test, but we never check her happiness. Why?

Coping is not difficult if family and society support her. First, communication

Third, rest should not be treated as laziness. Our culture praises women who do all work till delivery day. This is wrong. Taking breaks, taking maternity leave without guilt, and sharing housework is essential for mental peace.

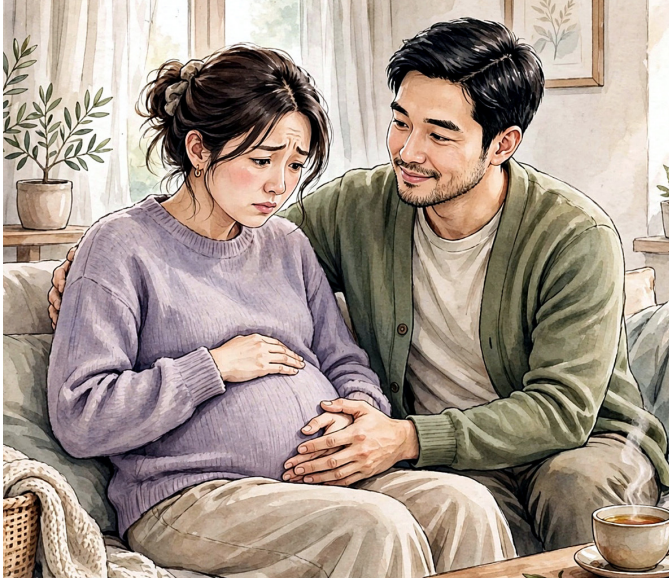
Fourth, professional help should be normalized. If anxiety continues for weeks, if she loses interest in everything, if she cries daily, she must see a doctor or counselor. There is no shame in it.

We go to a doctor for fever, we should go for mental stress too.

Lastly, the woman herself should not feel guilty for prioritizing herself. Self-care is not selfish. Reading a book, meeting friends, sitting quietly — these small things recharge her mind.

Pregnancy is not only about delivering a baby, it is about delivering a mother too. If we take care of her mind today, we are protecting two lives.

— MANI



WESTERN WINDS CHANGE ASIAN LIVES

Walk into any mall in Bangalore, Bangkok, or Jakarta today, and you will feel confused. Are we in Asia or America? Girls in ripped jeans, boys with Korean-American hairstyles, everyone drinking Starbucks, eating burgers, speaking English with an accent. At home, grandmother is watching a serial, grandfather is waiting for someone to eat with him. This is the reality of Western influence on our Asian customs, traditions, and mainly lifestyle — and my opinion is, it is a mix of freedom and loss.

Asia has always had a strong identity. We respect elders, we live in joint families,

Western lifestyle has entered our homes through mobile phones, movies, MNC jobs, and social media, and it is changing everything fast.

First, look at lifestyle. Food is the biggest change. Rice, dal, roti, sambar, and home-cooked meals are being replaced by pizza, pasta, noodles, cold drinks, and ready-to-eat packets. We now celebrate birthdays with cake cutting at midnight instead of blessings in the morning. We wear jeans to temples, shorts to family functions. English is considered intelligent, mother tongue is considered backward. A boy who speaks pure Kannada or Hindi is laughed at in college, but a boy who speaks broken English is

separate flats, not because they hate parents, but because they want “space” and “privacy.” Live-in relationships, late marriages, no marriages, single-child or no-child decisions — all were Western ideas, now common in our metros. Old parents are left in apartments or old-age homes while children settle in the US or in another city. We are copying Western independence, but we forget Western people also suffer from loneliness and depression because of it.

Third, festivals and traditions are becoming shows. Diwali is now about online shopping sales and Instagram photos, not about family puja. Eid, Christmas, Pongal,

“Ethnic Day” in office, like a costume. Rest of the year, Western dress is normal.

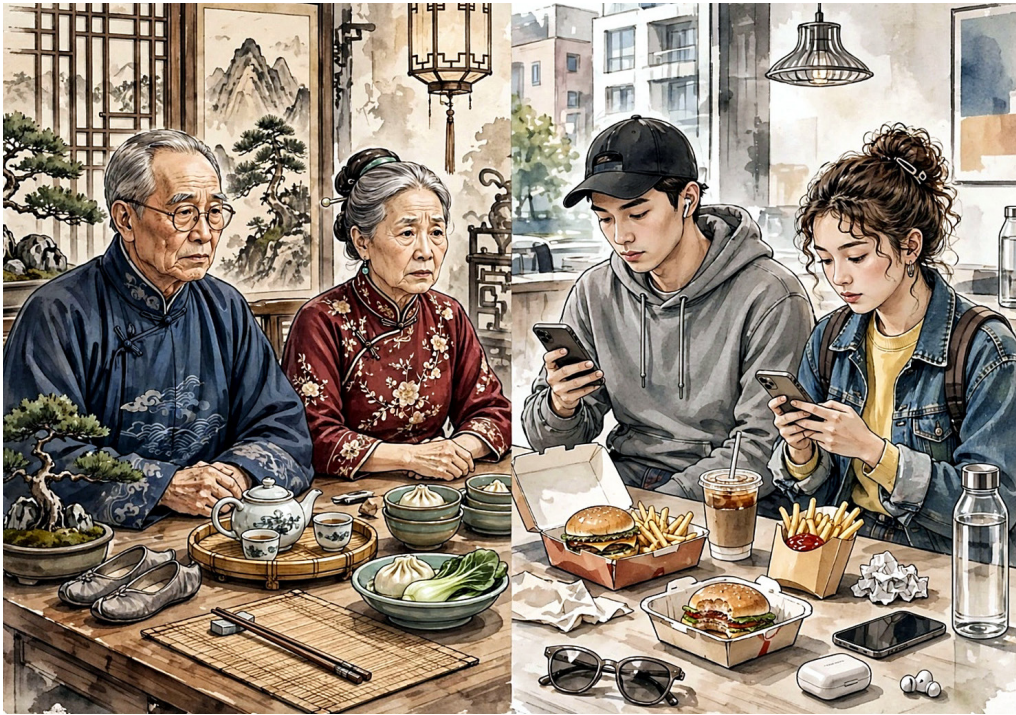
But I will not say Western influence is fully bad. It gave us good things also. It gave girls freedom to study, work, wear what they want, and say no to forced marriage. It taught us punctuality, professionalism, cleanliness, and questioning wrong traditions like dowry and caste discrimination. It opened our minds. A society that never changes will die.

Problem is not Western culture. Problem is blind copying. We are taking their bad habits — fast food, alcohol parties, broken families, disrespect to elders, show-off lifestyle — and leaving our good habits. In the West itself, people are now turning to yoga, meditation, Ayurveda, and family values because they are tired of stress. And we Asians, who already had yoga and family support, are throwing it away to look modern.

Modern does not mean Western. Japan is modern but still bows to elders. South Korea is rich but still respects traditions. We can also do both. Wear jeans, but also wear saree with pride. Eat pizza sometimes, but eat home food daily. Speak English for job, but speak mother tongue at home. Live separately if needed, but call parents daily and take care of them.

In conclusion, Western influence is like rain. Needed, but too much will flood the house. Our Asian customs are our roots. If roots are cut, the tree will look tall for some time, then fall. Let us take science, technology, and freedom from the West, but keep our family, respect, food, language, and festivals alive. That is real Asian pride.

— MAHOMMED KAIF



we celebrate festivals together, we eat with hands, we remove slippers outside, we believe in community more than individual. These are not old habits, these are our values. But in the last 20 years,

respected. Is this progress or inferiority?

Second, family customs are breaking. In Western culture, 18 means leave the house, live alone, be independent. Now Asian youth also want

Baisakhi — all become party days. We celebrate Halloween and Valentine's Day with more excitement than our own local festivals. Our traditional clothes — saree, dhoti, kurta, salwar — are worn only on

COLD FOOD, HOT PROBLEMS FOR HEALTH



Open your fridge today and count. Cooked rice from yesterday, sambar from two days ago, cut watermelon wrapped in plastic, half onion, cold curd, leftover chicken, pizza slice from Sunday. We all live like this. Refrigerator has become our second kitchen, our safety box. But my opinion is clear: overdependence on refrigerated food is silently damaging our health, and we are refusing to see it.

In old times, food was cooked fresh, eaten fresh. Grandmother would cook in the morning, and by night it was over. No fridge, no reheating. Today in Bangalore apartments, we cook once on Sunday and eat till Wednesday. Why? Because we are “busy.” We work 10 hours, travel 2 hours. So fridge feels like a friend. But a friend who keeps food cold does not keep it healthy.

First damage is nutritional loss. Vegetables lose vitamins when stored for days. Vitamin C and B go first. When you reheat spinach after 3 days, you are eating colour, not nutrition. Studies show cooked food stored more than 24 hours loses up to 50% nutrients and becomes a home for bacteria that cold cannot kill, only slows. Listeria, Salmonella grow slowly even at 4 degrees. When we reheat half-heartedly in microwave, middle stays cold, bacteria stay alive. Result is food poisoning, loose motion, gas, acidity — which we blame on “outside food.”

Second damage is chemical. We store hot food in plastic boxes, we store cut fruits in plastic wrap, we keep water in old plastic bottles in fridge door for months. Cold

makes plastic release more chemicals into food over time. We also store everything together — raw meat next to cooked food, onion next to cake. Cross contamination is common, but we cannot see it.

Third damage is to our body system. Ayurveda and modern gut science now agree: cold, old food is light to digest. Fresh food is heavy, warm food activates enzymes. When you eat 3-day-old cold rice reheated, your stomach works double. That is why so many youngsters today have bloating, IBS, constipation, skin dullness, even after eating “home food.” It is home food, but it is dead food.

I am not saying throw away your fridge. Fridge is needed for milk, curd, vegetables. I am saying don't make it your dustbin. Refrigerated food is for emergency, not for daily habit. In hostels and PGs, I see boys eating the same chicken curry for 4 days. In offices, girls reheat same pasta for lunch 3 days. This is not saving time, this is spending health.

Also, fridge kills taste and our relationship with food. When food is always available, we eat without hunger. Midnight cold cake, morning cold juice. Our body clock gets confused.

Solution is simple and old: cook less, cook fresh. Cook only what you need. If you must store, store for max one day, in steel or glass, not plastic. Never reheat more than once. Throw cut fruits after few hours. Label dates.

Fridge should preserve food, not punish your body. Fresh food gives energy. Old cold food just fills stomach.

— CHERYL GONSALVES

SUCCESS PRESSURE IS CRUSHING TODAY'S YOUTH

At 22, you are supposed to have a startup. At 25, a car and a flat. At 27, you should be earning in lakhs and travelling abroad. If not, you are a failure. This is the new definition of success we have created for today's youth, and it is crushing them from inside.

My neighbour's son in Bangalore finished engineering last year. He got a job for Rs 35,000. Good starting salary for a middle-class family. But at a family function, his uncle asked, “Only 35k? My son got 18 LPA in Hyderabad.” The boy didn't eat that night. He started preparing for coding interviews till 2 am, not because he loves coding, but because he is ashamed. This is not ambition. This is pressure.

Where does this pressure come from? First, parents.

Indian parents sacrificed a lot, so they want returns in the form of social respect. “My son is in Google” is a trophy for them. They compare, even if they don't mean to hurt. Second, social media. A 23-year-old influencer shows his new BMW, a 24-year-old girl shows her Dubai trip, a LinkedIn boy posts “Thrilled to announce I joined Microsoft at 45 LPA.” You see success all day, failure never. So you feel you are the only one left behind.

Third, our education system only celebrates toppers. The boy who is good at music, the girl who wants to become a teacher, the student who wants a peaceful government job — they are called “settling for less.” We have made success mean only money and fame. Not happiness, not

Parents need to reduce pressure, not increase it. Ask your child “Are you happy?” before “How much do you earn?”

— AJJU

health, not character.

Result? Anxiety, depression, burnout at 24. Hospitals in Bangalore, Pune, Delhi are full of young patients who sleep 4 hours, drink 5 coffees, and cry in office washrooms. They have money but no time to call their mother. They have followers but no friends. Some take extreme steps because they feel they cannot meet expectations. We lose brilliant minds not because they were weak, but because the race was unfair.

Success is also badly timed today. Earlier, people became successful at 40. Experience mattered. Today, if you are not successful by 30, society treats you as expired. This hurry is dangerous. A mango forced to ripen with chemicals looks yellow but tastes sour. A youth forced to succeed early looks rich but feels empty.

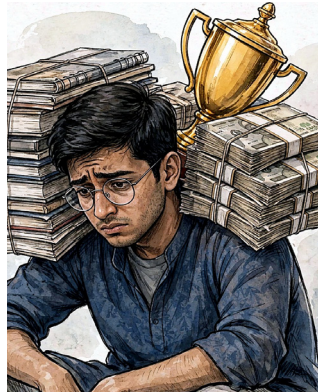
I am not saying youth should not dream big. Dream, work hard, earn well. But success should be personal. For one boy, success is cracking UPSC. For another, it is opening a small hotel in his village and staying with parents. For a girl, it is becoming a dancer, even if salary is less. Who are we to rank these?

Parents need to reduce pressure, not increase it. Ask your child “Are you happy?” before “How much do you earn?” Colleges need to teach life skills, not only placement numbers. And youth themselves need to stop comparing their chapter 1 with someone else's chapter 10 on Instagram.

Life is not a 100-metre race. It is a long journey. Some walk fast, some walk slow, some take a different road. All can reach a beautiful place.

If we don't remove this pressure now, we will produce a generation that is successful on paper and broken in real life.

— AJJU



Quick Read

Gujarat police recover ₹4 crore gold, arrest 4

GANDHINAGAR
Ahmedabad Rural Police and Railway Police arrested four accused and recovered 2.90 kg of stolen gold worth around Rs 4 crore after a robbery at Kheda Railway Station. The robbery occurred around 5 pm. The victim chased the accused and photographed their vehicle, helping police trace them through CCTV footage and vehicle details. Police set up roadblocks near Viramgam and arrested one accused. Officers later tracked the remaining suspects carrying the stolen gold. During the operation, PI S A Gadhvi was dragged nearly 500 metres while trying to stop the fleeing vehicle. He eventually took control of the car and stopped it. Police recovered the gold hidden inside the vehicle's seat cover and seized two cars. Further investigation is underway.

Massive fire breaks out at tyre factory in Firozabad

FIROZABAD
A massive fire broke out at a tyre factory in the Naushehra area of Firozabad, Uttar Pradesh, on Sunday. Fire tenders from across the district were rushed to the spot and firefighting operations are underway. Fire Officer Satendra Pandey said the factory is involved in retreading old tyres. Firefighters faced a slight water shortage after the factory's water pump was damaged in the blaze, forcing tenders to return periodically for refilling. Pandey said authorities received the fire call around 2.30 pm and immediately mobilised teams from all stations. He added that the facility had witnessed another fire earlier this year. The cause of Sunday's blaze will be investigated after the fire is brought under control. Further details are awaited.

Delhi cops arrest fraudster in ₹21 cr forgery racket

NEW DELHI
The Delhi Police Economic Offences Wing (EOW) arrested wanted fraudster Kushal Samir Mehta at Mumbai's Borivali Railway Station on October 1 in connection with multiple forgery cases involving fake government documents and transactions worth more than ₹21 crore. Police said Mehta is linked to two Delhi cases. In one, forged treasury papers and sanction letters were allegedly used to attempt fraudulent government payments of ₹18.62 crore. The payments, however, were stopped after verification exposed the documents as fake. In another case, an Ahmedabad businessman allegedly lost ₹3.12 crore after Mehta promised to use government connections to resolve official matters. Police said he used forged documents bearing fake seals and letterheads of Union ministries, the PMO, courts and banks to gain trust. After Mehta repeatedly ignored summonses and warrants, investigators tracked his movements through phone and location data. The EOW coordinated with railway authorities and intercepted him at Borivali. He was brought to Delhi under transit remand, and a court granted police four days' custody. Further investigation is underway.

Udhayanidhi booked over minor in poll campaign

HE ALLEGEDLY MADE A MINOR BOY GET ONTO A CAMPAIGN VAN AND WHILE SPEAKING, THE MINOR MADE REMARKS AGAINST CM VIJAY SAYING “OM KALI. BHADRA KALI...”

TIRUPPUR

Tiruppur District Police on Sunday registered a case against Tamil Nadu Leader of the Opposition Udhayanidhi Stalin for allegedly involving a minor in an election campaign for the Dharapuram by-election. The case relates to a campaign meeting held near the Periyar statue in Dharapuram town on Saturday. According to police, Udhayanidhi made a minor



boy get onto a campaign van and speak during the meeting. While speaking, the boy made remarks against Chief

Dharapuram bypoll: in the fray

TVK	DMK	AIADMK
P Sathyabama	S Suganya	K Bhanumathi
CPI	NTK	POLL / COUNT
P Lakshmanan	M Karthika	Oct 6 / Oct 9

Minister C Joseph Vijay, including the words “Om Kali. Bhadra Kali...”. Police said the incident violated Election Commission guidelines that prohibit children from participating in election-related activities. They

also alleged that the child was made to speak in a manner insulting the Chief Minister. Udhayanidhi was campaigning for DMK candidate Advocate S Suganya in Nochipalayam, seeking support for her in the October 6

by-election. He said the DMK had represented the Dharapuram constituency in the Legislative Assembly from 2021 to 2026, although voters had not given the party victory in the latest election.

The bypoll was necessitated after AIADMK MLA P Sathyabama resigned in May 2026, days after winning the seat in the Assembly elections. She later joined the ruling Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam and is contesting the bypoll as its candidate. The constituency is

reserved for Scheduled Castes and is located in Tiruppur district.

The contest includes candidates from TVK, DMK, AIADMK, CPI and NTK. P Sathyabama, S Suganya, K Bhanumathi, P Lakshmanan and M Karthika are in the fray respectively. Voting is scheduled for October 6, with counting on October 9. The bypoll is being closely watched as an important electoral test for the TVK government.

‘World is witnessing India taking giant leap forward in sports’

LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak on Sunday praised India's performance at the Asian Games 2026, saying the country's growing sporting success reflects its wider progress.

India finished fourth in the overall standings at the Aichi-Nagoya Games with 85 medals, including 21 gold, 27 silver and 37 bronzes.

“The way Indian athletes have demonstrated their prowess at the Asian Games is remarkable.”

— Brajesh Pathak, UP DyCM

Pathak credited Prime Minister Narendra Modi's focus on sports, citing increased funding, improved infrastructure and international-standard facilities for athletes. He also noted that sportspersons were being directly recruited to high-ranking positions. Pathak said the performances had lifted the morale of Indian athletes and high-

85	21	27	37
medals	gold	silver	bronze

lighted the country's growing presence on the global sporting stage. He congratulated the athletes and said their achievements would inspire young Indians to pursue sport with greater confidence and ambition.

India's campaign included a historic men's cricket gold after a 19-run victory over Pakistan in the final. The women's team had earlier beaten Sri Lanka by 147 runs to complete a golden double. India also swept all six gold medals in cricket, kabaddi and hockey. The women's kabaddi team defeated Iran 37-34, while the men's side overcame Iran 40-34.

Hockey produced another landmark double. India's women defeated China 1-0, with Lalremisiami scoring in the 10th minute, ending a 44-year wait for an Asian Games medal and securing the country's first women's hockey gold since 1982. The

men defeated Malaysia 5-1 to retain their title. Both teams qualified for the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics.



China topped the medal table with 341 medals, including 169 gold, followed by Japan with 269 and South Korea with 150. India's 85-medal haul was below its record 106 at Hangzhou in 2023, but the campaign featured several historic achievements and first-time podium finishes.

AISA hits streets for CEC's resignation

NEW DELHI

Members of the All-India Students' Association (AISA) and several other organisations held a protest march near Ashok Road on Sunday, demanding the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar. The demonstration came amid continuing protests over the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.

The latest protest followed a demonstration near Jantar Mantar on Saturday, when Delhi Police detained several

AISA members. AISA president Neha Bora, senior advocates Prashant Bhushan and Kapil Sibal, and others had attempted to cross police barricades. Police have also registered at least three FIRs over the October 2 protest, with two filed at Parliament Street police station and one at Connaught Place.

The controversy centres on allegations of irregularities in the SIR exercise. Protesters have demanded Kumar's removal, while the Election Commission has rejected suggestions of institutional



dissent. The poll panel said operational queries, inputs and suggestions raised during the draft stage were part of its normal administrative process and maintained that decisions on the SIR schedule were unanimous.

The protests have drawn participation from multiple political and student groups. Youth Congress workers, members of the Students' Federation of India and Democratic Youth Federation of India, opposition leaders and Aam Aadmi Party leaders have also demonstrated in

Delhi. AAP Delhi president Saurabh Bharadwaj was detained after joining the Jantar Mantar protest.

Praising participants, Bora wrote on X, “Our Heroes! I hope that when we are your age, we are as strong and steadfast as you all!” The demonstrations have continued amid heightened security in central Delhi, with police previously denying permission for the Jantar Mantar protest and imposing prohibitory orders under Section 163 of the BNSS, 2023, during the ongoing electoral controversy.

AP HOUSING PUSH

Naidu launches 3L PMAY-G houses statewide

TENALI

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and Union Minister for Rural Development Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Sunday laid the foundation for three lakh houses under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G) 2.0 across the state. The programme was launched at Burripalem in the Tenali constituency.

Naidu said the state aims to achieve 100 per cent housing by 2029. He said the Centre had initially sanctioned 75,000 houses under the regular quota, but approved three lakh houses following a special request. Chouhan agreed



to sanction another three lakh houses after the current batch is completed, with an additional three lakh planned next

year, taking the total allocation to nine lakh houses.

Naidu said the coalition government was committed to

providing quality housing and ensuring welfare reached every section. He criticised the previous government, alleging that six lakh houses meant for the poor were cancelled between 2019 and 2024 and that irregularities affected the housing programme. He also said nearly four lakh beneficiaries returned house sites because some locations were unsuitable.

The state will introduce 3D concrete printing technology on a pilot basis at Burripalem. Houses built using the technology are expected to maintain indoor temperatures at least eight degrees Celsius lower than outside temperatures. After successful

Initiative at a glance
■ 3 lakh houses: Foundation laid under PMAY-G 2.0
■ 9 lakh allocation: Total houses planned for Andhra Pradesh
■ 2029 target: Naidu aims for 100% housing coverage
■ 3D technology: Pilot project launched at Burripalem
■ 5,000 houses: Planned using 3D concrete printing
■ Farmer aid: PM-KISAN and Annadata Sukhibhava provide ₹20,000 annually

completion, 5,000 houses will be constructed using the same technology, Naidu said.

Chouhan praised Naidu's leadership and assured Central support. He said Andhra Pradesh would receive the additional housing allocations and highlighted financial support for farmers. Under

PM-KISAN, eligible farmers receive Rs 6,000 annually, while the state adds Rs 14,000 under Annadata Sukhibhava, taking total annual assistance to Rs 20,000. He said the Centre and state governments were working together towards Andhra Pradesh's development.

Samajwadi Party plans district marches against EC



LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party MP Awadhesh Prasad on Sunday said the party will organise marches in every district against the Election Commission, saying the protests would focus on protecting voting rights, democracy and the Constitution.

His announcement came as protests against the Election Commission and the Special Intensive Revision exercise were reported in Mumbai and Delhi.

In Mumbai, activists of the Cockroach Janata Party and

other civil society organisations demonstrated at Shivaji Park, alleging irregularities in the SIR exercise. Heavy police deployment was seen at the venue. In Delhi, members of the Students' Federation of India and Democratic Youth Federation of India, along with opposition leaders, protested near Jantar Mantar.

Delhi Police had denied permission for the proposed demonstration and imposed prohibitory restrictions under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023. Despite the restrictions, the SFI and DYFI protest

The demonstrations aim to safeguard democracy, defend the Constitution, and protect the right to vote.

went ahead, with CPI(M) leaders demanding the removal of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar.

“To protect the right to vote given by Babasaheb Ambedkar, safeguard democracy and defend the Constitution, the SP will hold marches in all districts.”

— Awadhesh Prasad, Samajwadi Party MP

CPI(M) General Secretary MA Baby, who joined the Delhi protest, alleged that Kumar had violated rules governing the Election Commission and called for his removal. The party did not provide a schedule or dates for the proposed marches in the statement.

Will bring laws against love, land jihad in 6 months: Adhikari

KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari on Sunday promised to implement the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) in



the state within six months, followed by stringent laws against what he described as “love jihad”, “land jihad” and religious conversion.

Addressing an event organised by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad to mark the birth centenary of late leader Ashok Singhal, Adhikari said West Bengal would follow Uttarakhand and Gujarat in implementing the UCC. He also paid tribute to Singhal and recalled his role in the Ram Janmabhoomi move-

ment, saying the Ram temple in Ayodhya was built after a long struggle.

Adhikari said his government would protect Sanatan traditions, temples and India's cultural heritage while functioning within the Constitution. On Durga Puja, he said no inauguration would take place during Pitru Paksha and announced that alcohol consumption would be prohibited in the state on Ashtami.

The Chief Minister also called for vigilance and unity while referring to the killings in Pahalgam and his interaction with victims' families. He alleged that previous administrations had attempted to divide communities and social groups in West Bengal, mentioning Rajbanshi, Matua, Kurmi and tribal communities, besides Bengali and non-Bengali identities.

Adhikari further announced plans to develop the Gan-gasagar Mela to international standards and invited the Vishwa Hindu Parishad to participate.

Quick Read

3, including 10-year-old, killed in Assam boat capsizes

LAKHIMPUR

Three people, including a 10-year-old boy, died after a country boat capsized in Assam's Lakhimpur district on Sunday, police said. The incident occurred around 9.30 am in the Merbil area as the victims were crossing the Merbil River with goats they planned to sell at a market. The deceased were identified as Ajit Dutta, 25, Podma Dutta, 50, and Midhusmi Dutta, 10, residents of Deolia Gaon.

Mayawati reviews Uttarakhand BSP preparations

LUCKNOW

Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) national president Mayawati on Sunday held a review meeting with senior Uttarakhand party leaders, focusing on the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls and preparations for upcoming Assembly elections. She also called for shortcomings to be addressed within a fixed timeframe. The BSP alleged that around nine lakh names had been removed from voter lists following the SIR and stressed the need to ensure that poor people, youth, women and weaker sections are not deprived of their constitutional right to vote. She also reviewed preparations for selecting candidates for upcoming elections in Uttar Pradesh and Punjab. The party said it was assessing candidates and strengthening its organisational structure ahead of the polls.

Bihar floods spark political battle over relief

PATNA

Congress leader and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Sunday criticised the Bihar government over the recurring flood crisis, saying the people of the State need a permanent solution rather than annual relief measures. In a post on X, Gandhi said floods had once again caused widespread devastation across Bihar, with millions of people affected and hundreds of villages submerged. He also referred to reports of deaths and people missing in the floods and expressed condolences to affected families. Gandhi questioned the BJP-led government over its response to the recurring crisis and asked what had been done during the past 17 years to address the problem permanently. He said repeated floods had forced families to migrate every year and called

India goes ‘beyond advocacy’ on Ukraine peace: MEA

India’s approach is guided by the need for dialogue and diplomacy to end the conflict, and that recent months have seen increased involvement in practical solutions

NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Sunday said India has moved “beyond advocacy” in its efforts to help address the Russia-Ukraine conflict, including discussions on Black Sea safety and grain export agreements. Speaking at the Munich Leaders Meeting in Delhi, Jaishankar said India’s position on the conflict remained clear: it wants an end to the fighting through dialogue, diplomacy and negotiations. He said India had advocated

this approach for several years but had become more involved in recent months. He added that negotiations “Our position on that conflict has been very clear, which is that we would like to see an end to this conflict, and we believe that this will require dialogue and diplomacy.” S JAISHANKAR External Affairs Minister were necessary and that India had recently become more



engaged beyond simply advocating for peace. Jaishankar was speaking on “From New Delhi to New Momentum: Opportunities for

BEYOND ADVOCACY

Discussions on Black Sea safety and grain export agreements

– Said at the 62nd Munich Security Conference in Delhi

engagement with the Russia-Ukraine conflict and its wider efforts relating to regional security and food supply issues. Commenting on India-Russia ties, Jaishankar also underlined the historical

significance of Moscow’s relationship with New Delhi. He said Russia and the Soviet Union had stood by India when its security and territorial integrity were under threat, including at a time when much of the world preferred supporting a military regime next to India. Jaishankar’s comments come as India continues to emphasise dialogue and diplomacy as the preferred route to ending the Russia-Ukraine conflict, while becoming more directly involved in discussions concerning Black Sea safety and grain exports.

Delhi CM opens 45 kW solar plant at Harewli Gaushala



NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Sunday inaugurated a newly constructed building and a 45-kW solar energy plant at Harewli Gaushala, while performing traditional rituals during her visit to the facility. Gupta visited the gaushala with her family and participated in a sacred fire ritual, Gau Puja, cow donation and fodder service. She also spent time at the facility and reviewed arrangements for the care of cattle. Highlighting the importance of renewable energy, the Chief Minister said the

newly inaugurated solar plant was a significant step towards connecting the gaushala with clean energy. The 45 kW facility is expected to support the gaushala’s energy requirements while promoting sustainable practices. Gupta also emphasised the cultural importance of cow protection and service, describing it as part of the country’s traditional values. The visit comes a day after Gupta inspected the Okhla landfill site and reviewed the progress of waste disposal work in the national capital. During the inspection, she said the Delhi government had cleared 100 acres of land

The CM highlighted the significance of bovine care and sustainable energy during her visit.

across the city’s three landfill sites over the past 1.5 years. A significant portion of the cleared land, she said, had also been converted into green areas. Gupta said most of the waste accumulated before January 2025 at the Okhla landfill had been processed. The remaining waste, she said, largely consisted of fresh garbage generated after January 2025, which was being processed around the clock. The Chief Minister said Delhi receives between 3,000 and 4,000 metric tonnes of fresh waste every day. She said the government was working on two fronts — clearing existing waste and ensuring that newly generated garbage was processed promptly to prevent the formation of new landfill mountains.

Vijay takes out roadshow in bypoll-bound Dharapuram

DHARAPURAM

TVK president and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay held a roadshow in Dharapuram on Sunday, campaigning for party candidate P Sathyabama ahead of the October 6 bypoll. He criticised the DMK over remarks targeting women and warned opposition parties against what he described as crude political rhetoric.

Speak whatever you want about me. I will take it. But if you dare speak against our sister, or against the mothers, sisters, and daughters of our households, I will not stay quiet.” – C Joseph Vijay TN CM

Vijay arrived in Coimbatore by special flight before travelling by helicopter to Dharapuram. He began the roadshow around 1 pm in a customised caravan and was expected to cover nearly 40 km, passing

more than 20 public-contact points before campaigning ended at 6 pm. He interacted with voters, took a brief bull-ock-cart ride and received flowers, garlands and party towels.



During the campaign, Vijay offered prayers at the Moolanur Vanjiamman shrine and received traditional temple honours. He later walked through parts of the route, waving to supporters and greeting people who gathered along the roads. The procession covered key areas including Periyar statue junction, Five Roads junction, Meenakshipuram, Kulathupalayam and Karaiyur. Vijay referred to recent remarks allegedly made by

DMK president M K Stalin about Sathyabama, which TVK leaders described as body-shaming. “Speak whatever you want about me. I will take it. But if you dare speak against our sister, or

The Dharapuram constituency is witnessing a multi-cornered contest, with TVK fielding P Sathyabama.

against the mothers, sisters, and daughters of our households, I will not stay quiet,” Vijay said, warning that attacks on women had crossed a line. The roadshow marked Vijay’s second campaign visit to Dharapuram after his September 30 rally. Polling in Dharapuram and Maduranthakam will be held on October 6, with counting scheduled for October 9. Sathyabama is contesting Dharapuram for TVK after resigning as an AIADMK MLA and joining Vijay’s party.

TMC protests loss of 2 parliamentary panel chairmanships

KOLKATA

Trinamool Congress MLA Kunal Ghosh on Sunday criticised the reconstitution of



parliamentary standing committees after two party MPs, Dola Sen and Kirti Azad, lost their chairperson posts. Ghosh called the decision anti-democratic and objected to the changes made during the annual reconstitution of Department-Related Parliamentary Standing Committees for 2026-27. The reshuffle was announced by Rajya

Sabha Chairman C P Radhakrishnan and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla. The TMC lost control of two key panels. In the Committee on Commerce, BJP MP Sudhanshu Trivedi replaced Dola Sen as chairperson. In the Committee on Chemicals and Fertilisers, MP Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar replaced Kirti Azad. Ghosh said, “What happened in the Parliamentary Standing Committee should not happen in a democracy... They removed Dola and Kirti Azad and instead brought those wrong people into the committee.” Other appointments included Congress MP Shashi Tharoor retaining the External Affairs panel, while BJP MPs were named to head committees on Home Affairs, Defence, Finance, Communications and Information Technology, and Coal, Mines and Steel.

EC teams to visit 5 poll-bound states

NEW DELHI

Senior Election Commission officials led by Deputy Election Commissioners will begin visiting five poll-bound States this week to assess election

WHERE THE TEAMS GO

- Goa this week
- Uttarakhand next week
- Punjab in the coming weeks
- Manipur in the coming weeks

preparedness at the field level, as the poll panel steps up preparations for the high-stakes elections. Officials will first visit Goa this week, followed by Uttarakhand next week. The teams are also scheduled to travel to Punjab and Manipur in the coming weeks. The visits are intended to oversee preparedness directly at the

field level, according to officials familiar with the schedule. The field visits come as the Election Commission intensifies its preparations ahead of elections in the five States. The visits will allow senior officials to assess the situation on the ground and coordinate with local authorities and election machinery. The move comes amid heightened political attention on the Election Commission, with protests continuing over its functioning and the Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls. The poll panel is simultaneously preparing for elections across the five States, making field-level assessment an important part of the process. The exercise will focus on field-level readiness and help the poll authority identify gaps, coordinate preparations and ensure that election-related arrangements are reviewed before the electoral process begins.

BHADOHI CARPET EXPO

Yogi launches 112 projects worth ₹1,340 crore

BHADOHI

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday inaugurated the 50th Golden Jubilee Edition of the India Carpet Expo in Bhadohi and laid the foundation stone for 112 development projects worth more than ₹1,340 crore in the district. Addressing the gathering, Adityanath highlighted what he described as major changes in Uttar Pradesh’s law and order, infrastructure and business environment since 2017. He said the state had earlier faced challenges related to law and order, infrastructure, technology and government support, particularly affecting artisans and workers. The Chief Minister said

In focus

- 50th Golden Jubilee Edition of India Carpet Expo inaugurated in Bhadohi
- CM Yogi Adityanath launched 112 development projects worth ₹1,340 crore
- UP has received investment proposals worth ₹50 lakh crore
- Projects worth ₹15 lakh crore have already undergone ground-breaking ceremonies
- Government has provided jobs to 9.5 lakh youths
- Another 1 lakh government jobs expected in the next six months
- CM announced plans for “One District, One Cuisine” initiative
- Focus highlighted on infrastructure, healthcare, education, local products and heritage

Uttar Pradesh had received investment proposals worth ₹50 lakh crore, while projects worth ₹15 lakh crore had already undergone ground-breaking ceremonies. He added that projects worth

another ₹7.5 lakh crore were expected to be taken up soon. Adityanath also highlighted employment generation in the state. He said the government had provided jobs to 9.5 lakh young people and announced

that another one lakh youths were expected to receive government jobs within the next six months. He warned that those who undermine employment opportunities or threaten the safety of women and traders would face strict action. The Chief Minister also criticised the previous political administration while highlighting his government’s development agenda. Speaking about infrastructure and public services, Adityanath referred to initiatives such as “One District, One Medical College” and “One District, One Product”. He said the government was now planning to introduce a “One District, One Cuisine” initiative, under which every



district would have its own signature dish. The Chief Minister also highlighted the establishment of Kashi Naresh University in

Bhadohi, also known as Sant Ravidas Nagar, and said the process of setting up a medical college in the district was progressing.

He said development efforts were being undertaken alongside measures to preserve the region’s heritage and promote local products. The India Carpet Expo, being held in Bhadohi, also puts the spotlight on the district’s carpet industry and its artisans. Adityanath said the government’s focus was on creating a stronger business environment while improving infrastructure and providing greater opportunities for workers and young people. The event combined the inauguration of the major carpet exhibition with the launch of development projects, reflecting the state’s emphasis on industrial growth, infrastructure and employment.

How India Is Playing Safe on Oil Amid a Global Crisis?

AN ECONOMY EXPOSED TO EVERY TURN IN THE MARKET

India is especially sensitive to such shocks because it produces only a small share of the crude it processes. A Ministry of Finance review put its crude import dependence at 88.6 per cent in April–January of the 2025–26 financial year. The same review said the Middle East supplied 46.9 per cent of imported crude during that period, Eurasia 34.6 per cent and North America 7.2 per cent. The government noted that India had expanded its source-

ing from 27 countries to more than 40 over the preceding decade. More suppliers provide flexibility, but they do not change the basic fact that close to nine out of every ten barrels of crude India uses must come from abroad. Oil reaches almost every part of the economy. Diesel moves agricultural produce and manufactured goods, powers farm equipment and supports construction. Petrol shapes the daily cost of commuting. Jet fuel affects air-

lines and tourism. Liquefied petroleum gas, or LPG, is central to household cooking and many small businesses. Petroleum-derived feedstocks also enter plastics, chemicals, fibres and packaging. When oil becomes more expensive, the effect does not stop at the filling station. For policymakers, the first objective is therefore continuity. A refinery cannot simply wait for a diplomatic settlement before planning its next cargo.

At an Indian refinery, an arriving tanker is more than a shipment of crude. It is the beginning of a chain that reaches a truck carrying vegetables to a city market, a diesel pump beside a highway, a factory running a generator and a family cooking dinner. A disruption thousands of kilometres away can travel through that chain long before most households hear the name of the port where it began. That is the problem India faces in the current global oil crisis. The war involving the United States and Iran has disrupted Gulf production and shipping, while attacks and security risks have complicated movements through the Strait of Hormuz and the Red Sea. Russian oil has helped Indian refiners compensate for the shortfall, but it brings another set of risks: possible trade penalties, sanctions exposure, higher freight bills and uncertainty over future availability. A barrel can be physically obtainable and still be commercially or politically costly. India's response has been to keep several doors open at once. Refiners have bought Russian crude, maintained ties with Gulf producers, sought cargoes through alternative routes and watched the spot market for replacement supply. The government has relied on inventories and commercial arrangements to create breathing space, while pursuing longer-term ways to reduce the country's need for imported petroleum. None of these steps removes the danger. Together, they describe what "playing safe" means for a nation that cannot afford to bet its fuel supply on a single country, shipping lane or diplomatic outcome. The numbers explain the urgency. In its September oil market report, the International Energy Agency estimated that global production fell to 100.1 million barrels a day in August, with more than 10 million barrels a day of Gulf output still shut in. It recorded a 95-million-barrel fall in observed global inventories during that month alone. The agency also described a particularly severe squeeze in diesel and other refined products. This is a crisis of production, shipping, refining and price at the same time, rather than a simple shortage of oil in the ground.

Why the Strait of Hormuz matters ?

The Strait of Hormuz is a narrow maritime exit from the Persian Gulf, but its economic reach is enormous. Crude, fuels and gas from several major producers depend on routes through or around it. When passage becomes hazardous, the consequences spread beyond ships actually crossing the strait. Tankers may be delayed or rerouted; insurers may demand higher premiums; ships tied up for longer journeys become unavailable elsewhere. Even a buyer whose crude originates outside the Gulf may pay more for transport because the global tanker market has tightened. This year's crisis has shown why a route on a map cannot be treated as a guaranteed route in practice. According to the IEA, Gulf oil exports in August were around 13 million barrels a day, nearly half their level before the war.

Bypass arrangements and protected voyages helped crude continue moving, but exports of refined products and LPG remained sharply below their earlier level. The agency said the region's diesel and gas-oil exports had fallen especially steeply. For a country concerned with both crude supply and the price of finished fuels, those distinctions matter. India can switch a portion of its crude buying away from the Gulf, but it cannot switch away from the global price of oil. A disruption in one region sends other buyers searching for the same replacement cargoes. What appears to be a local shipping problem becomes a worldwide auction. The longer a tanker takes to arrive, the larger the inventory a refinery needs to hold. A crisis therefore consumes working capital as well as oil.

Returning to the Gulf without relying on one passage

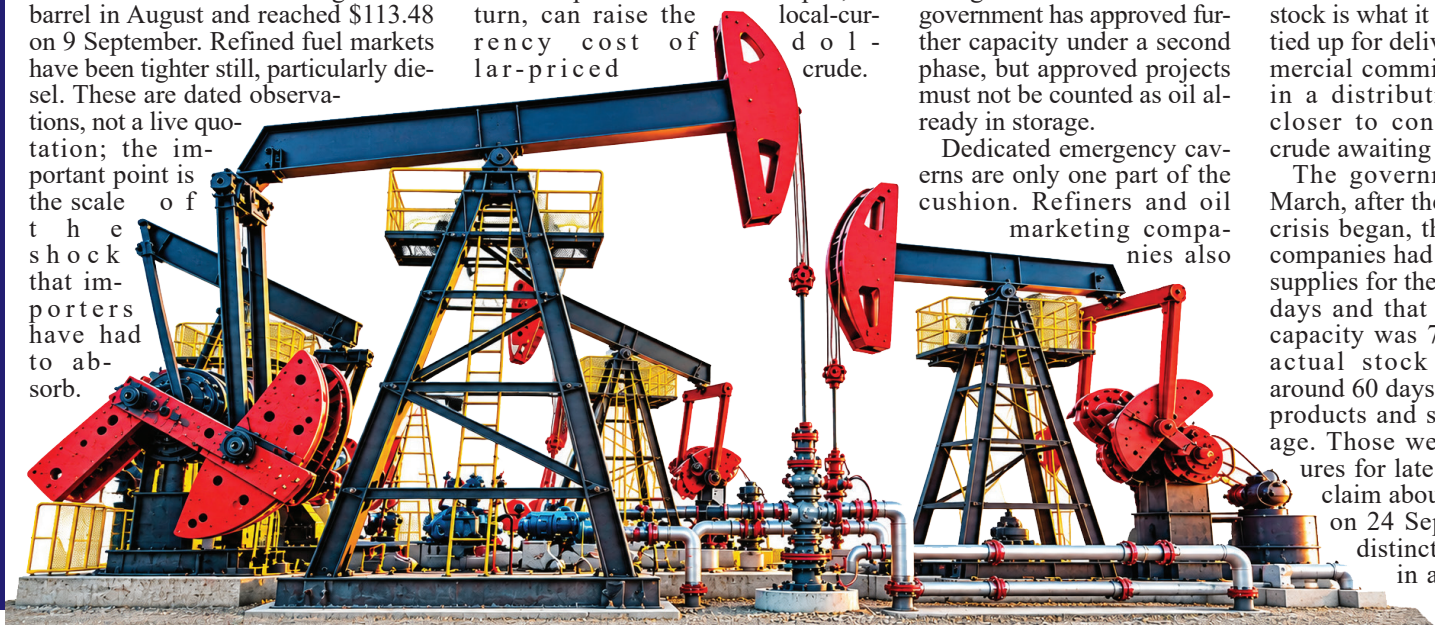
Keeping Gulf relationships alive remains essential. The region is close, has major production capacity and has long supplied crude suited to Indian refineries. The question is how to obtain that oil when traditional routes are impaired. One answer has been to move cargoes through alternative logistics networks. Abu Dhabi National Oil Company has sold oil from storage and export points outside Hormuz, including Fujairah and Sohar, using shipping arrangements that allow volumes from inside the Gulf to reach those locations. Trade-source data also show purchases from the UAE and Saudi Arabia continuing alongside Russian imports. These are commercial adaptations to a maritime constraint; they do not make the crisis disappear, and they can add handling and freight costs.

Diplomacy is part of the same strategy. On 22 September, India and OPEC held a high-level energy dialogue in New Delhi. The official account said discussions centred on market stability, energy security and timely investment in oil supplies. Meetings of this kind do not guarantee a tanker tomorrow morning. They do help preserve channels with the producers on which India will rely after the current emergency ends. India has also explored closer storage cooperation with the UAE. A May government announcement described potential ADNOC participation in Indian strategic reserves and possible Indian reserve storage at Fujairah.

The price India cannot route around

Diversification can reduce the chance that fuel stops flowing. It cannot fully protect consumers from a global surge in prices. The IEA said benchmark North Sea Dated crude averaged \$91 a barrel in August and reached \$113.48 on 9 September. Refined fuel markets have been tighter still, particularly diesel. These are dated observations, not a live quotation; the important point is the scale of the shock that importers have had to absorb.

For India, a higher import bill means more foreign currency spent for the same physical quantity of oil. It can widen the trade deficit and put pressure on the rupee. A weaker rupee, in turn, can raise the local-currency cost of dollar-priced crude.



Russia: a lifeline with its own risks

Russian crude became an important component of India's oil mix after the invasion of Ukraine reshaped global trade. In the present Gulf crisis, it has also offered a route to barrels that do not need to pass through Hormuz. That geographical advantage is real. It has helped Indian refiners maintain access to supply when nearby sources have been disrupted. Yet Russia cannot be treated as a risk-free substitute. Its export infrastructure and refineries face disruptions associated with the war in Ukraine. Shipping costs and competition from other buyers can change the economics of a cargo. Western sanctions and the possibility of further trade action complicate transactions. India must consider the value of its broader commercial relationships alongside the immediate price of oil. The recent figures show how fluid the balance has become. Trade-source data reported on 22 September put India's Russian imports at roughly 2.1 million barrels a day in August, down 16.5 per cent from July, although Russia remained the largest supplier. Preliminary tracking suggested about 1.9 million barrels a

day in September. Those estimates are subject to revision; they are a snapshot of deliveries and tracking, not proof of a permanent policy reversal. A sensible reading is that Russian oil has given India optionality, while excessive reliance on it would create a different vulnerability. Buying when the delivered economics work is one decision. Allowing the national supply chain to depend on that source in every circumstance is another. The distinction matters because a sanctions change, a freight spike or a disruption at an export terminal can alter the calculation quickly. It is tempting to describe India's choice in moral or geopolitical absolutes: align with one side or the other, buy from one camp or reject it. Refineries cannot run on absolutes. The government has said it will secure energy for the population and source from diverse sellers according to market conditions. That position is an attempt to keep the purchase of fuel from becoming a single-test referendum on every international relationship. It is also a position that grows harder to sustain as the crisis deepens and other governments attach political conditions to trade.



The quiet value of inventory

When supply is uncertain, stored oil buys time. India's dedicated strategic petroleum reserve facilities have a stated capacity of 5.33 million metric tonnes at Visakhapatnam, Mangaluru and Padur. The government has approved further capacity under a second phase, but approved projects must not be counted as oil already in storage. Dedicated emergency caverns are only one part of the cushion. Refiners and oil marketing companies also

carry working inventories of crude and petroleum products. Oil may be in tanks, in transit or already contracted for future delivery. These categories should not be conflated. Tank capacity is the size of a container; actual stock is what it holds; a cargo tied up for delivery is a commercial commitment; petrol in a distribution depot is closer to consumers than crude awaiting processing. The government said in March, after the Middle East crisis began, that Indian oil companies had tied up crude supplies for the following 60 days and that total reserve capacity was 74 days, with actual stock cover then around 60 days across crude, products and strategic storage. Those were dated figures for late March, not a claim about stock levels on 24 September. The distinction is crucial in a fast-moving crisis.

Stored barrels provide a bridge, not a permanent replacement for imports. If a refinery draws stocks today, it will eventually need to replenish them, perhaps at an even higher price. Reserves work best when they give buyers time to avoid panic purchases, manage temporary interruptions and coordinate deliveries. Their value lies as much in preventing a rushed decision as in the oil itself. This is why the state cannot answer every disruption simply by opening the reserve caverns. Officials must judge whether a lost cargo is temporary, whether commercial inventories can absorb the delay and whether releasing strategic crude now would leave the country more vulnerable to a larger interruption later. It is a judgment made under uncertainty, with the cost of both action and inaction rising as the crisis persists.

Quick Read

Landmines cleared in Cambodian village

PHNOM PENH

Nearly 200,000 square metres of land cleared of landmines and unexploded ordnance has been formally returned to residents of Kaoh Pao Village in Cambodia's Koh Kong Province. The demining effort was funded through the Indian government's Quick Impact Project under the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation framework. Indian Embassy officials joined Cambodian provincial leaders and mine action authorities to hand over the safe land, which will directly benefit about 134 families. Officials highlighted that the reclaimed property will provide secure access for local farming, housing, and sustainable socio-economic development.

Philippines condemns Chinese interference near Thitu

MANILA

The Philippine Coast Guard has accused Chinese maritime forces of obstructing a law enforcement operation targeting suspected dynamite fishing near Thitu Island. Authorities stated that two China Coast Guard ships and a military helicopter shadowed and blocked Philippine vessels responding to illegal fishing activity near Sandy Cays. The target vessel ultimately escaped toward Subi Reef while Philippine teams halted pursuit for safety reasons. In a separate incident, military officials reported that a Chinese J-16 fighter jet dangerously intercepted a patrol aircraft over Scarborough Shoal, condemning Beijing's actions as part of a coercive pattern.

Taipei police raid gay bar ahead of pride parade

TAIPEI

Roughly 100 LGBTQ+ community members staged an angry protest in Taipei following a rare police raid on a prominent local gay bar. Officers targeted the Commander D venue in the Wanhua district, detaining 51 patrons and arresting the owner. Police officials stated the operation relied on a search warrant concerning public decency laws, specifically targeting individuals exposing their bodies in public. Protesters marched to the local precinct on Sunday, condemning the crackdown as an aggressive violation.

Diplomacy is the only path forward: Iran

TEHRAN

Iranian Foreign Minister Seyyed Abbas Araghchi firmly asserted that military force and economic sanctions offer no viable resolution to the ongoing conflict with the United States, emphasizing that diplomacy remains the sole path to ending regional hostilities. Recapping diplomatic engagements during the recent 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), Araghchi highlighted a comprehensive framework presented by the Iranian delegation to resolve lingering disputes and secure the re-opening of the strategic Strait of Hormuz. According to the proposal, critical commercial shipping lanes through the vital waterway could be fully reopened within a seven-day window if Washington and its allies agree to core conditions, including a binding UN reso-

Brazil votes: Presidential election facing October runoff

MILLIONS OF BRAZILIANS VOTED IN A FIERCELY POLARIZED GENERAL ELECTION AS LULA FACES FLÁVIO BOLSONARO.

BRASÍLIA

Millions of Brazilians cast their ballots in the opening round of a fiercely contested, deeply polarized general election. The high-stakes national vote unfolds against a turbulent backdrop defined by compounding economic anxieties, a sprawling financial corruption scandal, and intense geopolitical friction involving Washington and regional diplomatic alignments.

Veteran leftist President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, 80, is mounting a historic cam-

paign for a fourth term in office. He faces a formidable challenge from 45-year-old Senator Flávio Bolsonaro, who is seeking to reclaim presidential power for the right-wing movement of his imprisoned father, former President Jair Bolsonaro. Because election rules require an outright majority of more than 50% of valid votes to secure victory in the first round, a runoff vote is widely expected and has been officially scheduled for October 25. Latest opinion surveys indicate that President Lula and



Senator Bolsonaro are running neck-and-neck in hypothetical head-to-head matchup polling.

United States President Donald Trump openly criticized the judicial proceedings as a politically motivated "witch hunt" and subsequently leveraged economic pressure against Brasília, imposing sweeping 50% tariffs on Brazilian exports in 2025 explicitly linked to the elder Bolsonaro's legal case. Additional tariffs targeting alleged unfair trade practices followed earlier this year. President Lula has forcefully weaponized these punitive measures on the campaign trail,

accusing Washington of blatant electoral interference and depicting the Bolsonaro family as overly subservient to foreign interests at the direct expense of Brazilian sovereignty.

Conversely, Senator Flávio Bolsonaro has campaigned on a platform of repairing bilateral relations with the United States and Israel.

Alongside the presidency, voters are casting ballots to fill all 513 seats in the Lower House and two-thirds of the Senate, determining the legislative balance of power as Congress plays an increasingly influential role in national governance.

Brazilian election highlights

High-Stakes Presidential Contest

President Lula da Silva, 80, is seeking a fourth term, facing off against 45-year-old Senator Flávio Bolsonaro, who is carrying the right-wing mantle of his imprisoned father, former President Jair Bolsonaro.

Runoff Outlook

With neither candidate securing an outright majority in early projections, a second-round runoff on October 25 appears imminent, with recent polls indicating a dead heat.

Major Campaign Flashpoints

The electoral cycle has been heavily shaped by economic anxieties, high public debt, cost-of-living pressures, a sprawling banking scandal, and intense debates over international relations and U.S. tariffs.

Bosnia heads to polls amid EU integration, geopolitical influence

SARAJEVO

Millions of Bosnians headed to the polls in a high-stakes general election that could decisively shape the nation's stalled European Union accession path and tilt the balance of geopolitical influence between the West and Russia.

Registered voters—numbering roughly 3.4 million—cast ballots to elect the country's central tripartite presidency and national House of Representatives, alongside regional legislatures across its two primary political enti-

ties: the Serb-dominated Republika Srpska and the Bosniak-Croat Federation. For the first time nationwide, authorities implemented advanced electoral technology, including biometric voter verification and electronic ballot scanners, designed to curb fraud and accelerate preliminary results.



implementing robust anti-corruption legislation.

Tracking data indicates that in Republika Srpska, the Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD), led by pro-Russian secessionist figure Milorad Dodik, has maintained a strong lead, while nationalist and reformist factions battle tightly across the Federation. If ethnic hardliners retain power and continue their obstructionist politics within the central government, analysts warn that prospects for EU integration will remain stalled indefinitely.

The election has also served as a proxy theater for major global powers seeking strategic leverage in the Western Balkans. While the European Union pushes to anchor the region within its economic block, Russia continues to exert influence by actively supporting pro-Moscow leadership within Republika Srpska.

“More than 30 years after the war, the situation is still the same; we are talking about nationalism... The same faces, the same story, constantly.”

— Ismar Garasljevic, High school teacher, Sarajevo

ties: the Serb-dominated Republika Srpska and the Bosniak-Croat Federation. For the first time nationwide, authorities implemented advanced electoral technology, including biometric voter verification and electronic ballot scanners, designed to curb fraud and accelerate preliminary results.

While Bosnia secured official EU candidate status in December 2022 and a green light to open formal accession negotiations in 2024, actual

Displaced Gazans wait overseas amid devastation

CAIRO

The ongoing plight of Gaza's overseas diaspora reflects a profound humanitarian crisis defined by prolonged displacement, institutional stagnation, and deep psychological trauma. Three years after the eruption of the devastating conflict triggered by the October 7, 2023 attacks, more than 100,000 Palestinians remain stranded across neighboring countries and international destinations, unable or unwilling to return under current conditions.

Despite formal international diplomatic efforts, the reality on the ground inside the Gaza Strip remains fractured.

cess requiring vetting by multiple security agencies—life in exile is marked by profound grief and perpetual limbo. Families remain fractured



across borders, with members scattered between Egypt, Turkey, and various temporary shelters within Gaza.

Countless displaced individuals, such as Omar al-Hassayna—who lost dozens of fami-

Three years on	
100,000+	PALESTINIANS STRANDED ABROAD
60 %	OF GAZA HELD BY ISRAELI FORCES
7,000	DISPLACED WHO HAVE RETURNED

Israeli military forces continue to maintain a stronghold over approximately 60% of Gaza's territory, while Hamas retains administrative and security control over most populated civilian pockets, primarily in temporary or damaged shelters.

Periodic military actions, restricted access to basic humanitarian aid, and a chronic shortage of medical supplies continue to plague the local population, leaving infrastructure devastated. For those who managed to secure passage abroad—a rigorous pro-

cess requiring vetting by multiple security agencies—life in exile is marked by profound grief and perpetual limbo. Families remain fractured across borders, with members scattered between Egypt, Turkey, and various temporary shelters within Gaza. Countless displaced individuals, such as Omar al-Hassayna—who lost dozens of fami-

Latvian PM Kulbergs wins majority, secures pro-Ukraine mandate

RIGA

In a watershed moment for Baltic politics, Latvian Prime Minister Andris Kulbergs is



legislative term, and Kulbergs will need to tightly manage his party's loose alliance of independents and smaller factions. On foreign policy and

Latvian Prime Minister Andris Kulbergs secured a landslide general election victory, positioning his centrist coalition to form a government focused on robust defense and reform.

national security, Kulbergs has vowed to maintain an uncompromising stance toward Moscow and steadfast support for Kyiv.

“Any economic ties with Russia makes us weak. Yes, it can bring some extra money, but it's a weakness Russia might exploit,” Kulbergs told cheering supporters at his party headquarters on election night. Throughout the campaign, Kulbergs promised to bolster Latvia's anti-drone defenses and preserve defense spending at an elite 5.0% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP)—one of the highest investment levels across the entire NATO alliance. Latvia's 1.9 million citizens remain deeply vigilant regarding regional security as their nation shares strategic borders with both Russia and Belarus.

Share of the vote

United List	35.3%
Latvia First	13.1%
Sovereign Power	11.7%
National Alliance	8.9%

With 97% of ballots counted. Turnout 51.8% (59.4% in 2022)

USS George H.W. Bush arrives in Thailand

PHUKET

The nuclear-powered Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77),



serving as the flagship of Carrier Strike Group 10, arrived off the coast of Phuket, Thailand, on October 4, 2026, alongside the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Delbert D. Black (DDG 119). Carrying approximately 4,800 military personnel, the strike group's arrival marks a scheduled five-day rest-and-recreation (R&R) port visit following an intense six-month deployment in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility.

During its prolonged tour in the Middle East, the carrier strike group played a critical role supporting Operation

Epic Fury and maintaining vital U.S. naval blockades and maritime stability across the Arabian Sea and surrounding volatile waters. Having departed its home bases in Norfolk, Virginia, and Mayport, Florida, back in March, this stop in Phuket represents the strike group's very first official port call of the deployment.

While the massive carrier remains anchored offshore, thousands of sailors and personnel are utilizing the Phuket Deep Sea Port to come ashore between October 4 and 9. The crew is engaging in various community relations projects, cultural excursions, and recreational activities across the popular southern resort island, which includes a friendly U.S.–Thailand soccer match.

The continuous high-level port engagements underscore enduring bilateral defense cooperation and strategic military ties with Thailand, which remains the United States' sole treaty ally on the mainland of Southeast Asia.

TIGRAY CONFLICT REIGNITES

TPLF rebels retreat, Ethiopian forces retake capital Mekelle

ADDIS ABABA

In a dramatic escalation that threatens to reignite Africa's deadliest modern conflict, Ethiopian federal military forces and allied militias have successfully seized control of Mekelle, the capital of the northern Tigray region. The rapid capture marks a devastating strategic blow to the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and its governing opposition alliance, plunging the volatile Horn of Africa nation back into severe political and military uncertainty.

The seizure of the regional capital unfolded following



heavy fighting triggered by a major TPLF-led offensive launched on September 23 against federal positions. However, federal counteroffensives moved swiftly. According to a source close to the pro-government Tigray Peace Forces, allied militia-

men and federal troops breached the city center, securing key administrative installations.

A local humanitarian worker and multiple Mekelle residents verified that federal security forces firmly control the urban center. Facing over-

whelming military pressure, the TPLF released an official statement via social media confirming its tactical withdrawal from the city. The regional leadership announced that the Tigray regional government would be “temporarily moved out of Mekelle and operate from somewhere else,” signaling that rebel forces plan to wage an asymmetric insurgency from rural strongholds. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's administration has not yet issued a formal administrative statement regarding the offensive.

This sudden flare-up represents the most dangerous military confrontation since

the conclusion of the devastating 2020–2022 civil war, which claimed hundreds of thousands of lives and triggered severe humanitarian catastrophes across northern Ethiopia.

In the days preceding the fall of Mekelle, the federal government in Addis Ababa abruptly severed diplomatic ties with neighboring Eritrea, accusing Asmara of covertly arming and supporting the Tigrayan rebel alliance. Furthermore, Ethiopian authorities have leveled similar allegations against Sudan and Egypt—contentions that all three accused nations have vehemently denied.

ETHIOPIAN CONFLICT HIGHLIGHTS

Fall of Mekelle: Following a fierce counteroffensive launched against a TPLF advance that began on September 23, pro-government militia and federal troops entered and secured the city center by Saturday afternoon.

TPLF Retreat: In an official statement posted on Facebook, the TPLF confirmed its withdrawal from the capital, announcing that the regional government would temporarily relocate operations outside Mekelle.

Regional Escalation Fears: Analysts warn that the renewed hostilities—marking the worst escalation since the devastating 2020–2022 civil war—risk widening into a broader regional conflict amid severed diplomatic ties between Addis Ababa and neighboring Eritrea.

Vibrant closing ceremony wraps up Asian Games 2026

Ace shooter Neeru Dhanda led India home as Aichi-Nagoya lowered the curtain on historic Asian Games.

NAGOYA

The 20th Asian Games Aichi-Nagoya 2026 concluded with a vibrant, culture-filled closing ceremony at Nagoya City Mizuho Park Athletic Stadium on Sunday. Ace Indian trap shooter Neeru Dhanda proudly carried the Indian tricolour during the Parade of Nations, leading a proud contingent after delivering a historic multi-medal campaign. Dhanda earned the prestigious flag-bearer honor following a stellar performance where she captured two gold medals and one silver. Notably, she etched her name in the history books by becoming the first Indian woman to win an individual Asian Games gold in trap shooting, alongside a mixed team gold with Kynan Chenai and a women's team silver. Her phenomenal outing placed her among four elite Indian athletes to secure three medals at the Games. India officially signed off from the Aichi-Nagoya Games with an outstanding

total of 85 medals, comprising 21 gold, 27 silver, and 37 bronze. This stellar haul secured India a strong fourth place in the overall continental standings, trailing powerhouse nations China, hosts Japan, and South Korea. While the medal count did not match the record 106 secured at Hangzhou in 2023, the 2026 campaign witnessed unprecedented historic milestones. The standout feature of India's campaign was a complete, golden sweep

across all three major team disciplines: cricket, kabaddi, and hockey. Both the men's and women's squads in each of these sports captured gold medals, showcasing the nation's exceptional depth and dominance in team events. In cricket, both men's and women's teams triumphed, with the men defeating arch-rivals Pakistan in a thrilling final. Kabaddi saw both squads overcome fierce challenges from Iran to secure dual gold medals.

Meanwhile, the Indian women's hockey team ended a 44-year gold drought by edging past China 1-0, while the men's team successfully defended their title with a commanding 5-1 victory over Malaysia, simultaneously booking direct qualification for the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics.

The colourful closing ceremony, themed 'One Asia', featured dynamic parkour displays, laser shows, and traditional Japanese performances. The emotional highlight of the evening was the symbolic handover ceremony, featuring the historic torch and flag from the inaugural 1951 Asian Games in New Delhi. The Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) flag was officially handed over to the Qatari delegation, with legendary high jumper Mutaz Barshim accepting the honors as Doha prepares to host the 21st Asian Games in 2030, marking the end of an unforgettable chapter of sportsmanship in Japan.



Lovlina targets early LA28 qualification

Buoyed by Asian Games gold, star boxer Lovlina Borgohain eyes early Los Angeles 2028 qualification at the upcoming World Championships.

NEW DELHI

Fresh from a triumphant gold-medal campaign at the Asian Games, star Indian boxer Lovlina Borgohain has already set her sights firmly on the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics, aiming to secure her qualification at the earliest possible opportunity during the 2027 World Boxing Championships.

With the Boxing Federation of India (BFI) confirming that Asian Games medalists will serve as primary entries for the upcoming World Championships in Kazakhstan—designated as the first official qualifier for LA28—Lovlina is eager to bypass a prolonged qualification battle. "We always try our best to qualify in the first qualification only. It is a very good thing for an athlete. The way hockey has done it, they will get a long time to prepare. Our target is to qualify in the first qualification, get a good time and get good results," Lovlina told IANS on Sunday. Reflecting on her recent



success, Lovlina views her Asian Games triumph not merely as redemption for missing the podium at the Paris Olympics, but as a moment to cherish purely for its own sake. "I have not thought of anything like that. I just said that I have won the moment. This is my medal. I just have to enjoy it. I don't have to answer anyone. I don't have to prove anything. I just have to enjoy my medal," she expressed. Analyzing the broader landscape of Indian boxing, Lovlina credited the impressive medal hauls across various weight classes to an evolving mental toughness within the national squad. She emphasized that intensive training camps and unwavering government support have fostered a true "champion mindset,"

enabling athletes to compete with greater confidence on the international stage. For the experienced pugilist, enduring grueling training regimens ultimately boils down to the unmatched pride of representing the nation. "It is a very good feeling. We are not allowed to go around the world with our national flag. But when the national anthem is played, our flag comes up. That is a very special moment. That feeling is the dream of every athlete," she said. With her sights now locked on the 2027 World Championships, Lovlina aims to translate her continental momentum into an early Olympic berth, granting her the ideal runway to prepare for glory in Los Angeles.

Khalid Jamil defends Gurpreet after defeat to Brazil

KOLKATA

Indian national football team head coach Khalid Jamil firmly refused to place blame on captain and goalkeeper Gurpreet Singh Sandhu following India's 4-0 defeat to Brazil in an international friendly at Kolkata. Gurpreet was substituted at half-time after the South American powerhouse established a commanding lead during the opening 45 minutes. However, Jamil immediately dismissed any notion that the veteran goalkeeper should shoulder individual responsibility for the heavy scoreline, pointing instead to systemic defensive lapses across the squad. "You cannot blame Gurpreet. He is one of the best goalkeepers in India. But you

cannot judge him on two matches. So, it's not just because of Gurpreet. The defenders also didn't close down. So, overall, everybody's mistake," Jamil told reporters via the AIFF. The fixture provided a formidable test for the Blue Tigers against a star-studded Brazilian side managed by veteran Italian tactician Carlo Ancelotti and featuring global superstars like Vinicius Júnior. Jamil emphasized that playing against opposition of this caliber leaves zero margin for error. "If you play with a good team, you make one mistake, and they finish," Jamil noted. "For that, concentration

should be good, and you have to be alert." Following the match, Jamil revealed that Ancelotti offered words of encouragement, praising the Indian side's effort. Describing the legendary Italian manager as a "gentleman," Jamil noted that there were immense technical lessons to draw from interacting with a coach of Ancelotti's stature. Despite refusing to sugarcoat the team's performance—candidly rating the outing with "zero points" when asked for a score out of ten—Jamil stressed the vital importance of continued exposure to world-class opponents.



Irani Cup defeat serves as valuable lesson: Paras Dogra

SRINAGAR

Jammu and Kashmir captain Paras Dogra reflected candidly on his team's 167-run defeat to Rest of India in the prestigious Irani Cup fixture at the Sher-i-Kashmir Stadium, emphasizing that the hard-fought encounter serves as an essential developmental milestone. Despite capturing a crucial 41-run first-innings advantage—anchored by resilient knocks from Dogra himself, Abdul Samad, and Lone Nasir Muzaffar—the reigning Ranji Trophy champions stumbled dramatically on the fourth afternoon. Chasing a target of 279, the J&K batting lineup collapsed under a hostile spell of seam and swing bowling, folding for just 111 as international pacers Mukesh Kumar (6-33) and



Akash Deep (3-25) tore through the order. "It has been a really good game - they played really well. It is a learning for us and boys have taken positives. Credit goes to Rest of India," Dogra stated during the post-match presentation ceremony. The momentum of the match shifted decisively during Rest of India's second innings, largely driven by young batter Smaran Ravichandran, whose magnificent 135 was comple-

mented by a record 113-run ninth-wicket partnership alongside Mukesh Choudhary. Asked how J&K could have altered their tactical approach against the lower-order resistance, Dogra paid tribute to the opposition's execution. "I thought a lot about it. All credit goes to Smaran—he batted really well. I don't think there is any word [to describe it], and then Akash and Mukesh bowled really well," the veteran skipper noted. Beyond the immediate match analysis, Dogra highlighted the massive structural transformation taking place within the region's domestic cricket ecosystem. He credited the administrative leadership of former player and current Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) President Mithun

Manhas, alongside consistent backing from the Jammu and Kashmir Cricket Association (JKCA) management and selectors, for catalyzing the team's historic rise to national prominence. "It all started when Mithun bhai came in and took over. Really thankful they gave me this opportunity to lead this side. The management, selectors, everyone has been backing us up. Looking forward to the upcoming season," Dogra added. Having absorbed the lessons from their high-profile Irani Cup debut, Jammu and Kashmir will quickly turn their focus to defending their domestic crown, kicking off their 2026-27 Ranji Trophy campaign against Madhya Pradesh in Srinagar on October 11.

China Open: Noskova, Andreeva reach last 16

BEIJING

As high-profile upsets continue to reshape the tournament draw at the China Open, rising stars Linda Noskova and Mirra Andreeva delivered commanding performances to secure their places in the fourth round. Their victories come in the wake of stunning early exits by top seed Elena Rybakina and second seed Aryna Sabalenka. Fifth seed Noskova made swift work of Viktorija Golubic, needing just 55 minutes to cruise to a 6-2, 6-1 victory. Relying on aggressive first-strike tennis, the Wimbledon champion landed 77% of her first serves and conceded only five points on her delivery. Demonstrating tactical variety with sharp drop shots and aggressive net play, Noskova fared off early pressure in the second set before tearing through five straight games to seal the match. She will next face 19th seed Ekaterina Alexandrova, who battled back from a set and a break down to eliminate 11th seed Diana Shnaider 3-6, 6-4, 6-3. Fourth seed Andreeva took a tougher route against Polina Kudermetova, overcoming an early deficit to triumph 6-4, 6-1 in 68 minutes. Though Kudermetova struck 25 groundstroke winners, Andreeva tightened her defense and capitalized on her opponent's 48 unforced errors, winning 10 of the final 11

games. The French Open champion will next meet Ukraine's Daria Snigur, who swept past Taylah Preston 6-1, 6-0 in just 47 minutes to reach her maiden WTA 1000 fourth round. With the top of the draw wide open following the departures of the tournament's top seeds, Noskova and Andreeva look to harness their momentum as they advance into the business end of the Beijing event



SHEDGE REPLACES HARDIK PANDYA FOR INDIA A SQUAD

PUDUCHERRY

Dynamic seam-bowling all-rounder Suryansh Shedge has officially been drafted into the India A squad as a direct replacement for the injured star Hardik Pandya ahead of the highly anticipated three-match one-day series against Australia A. The opening fixture of the series is scheduled to get underway in Puducherry on Tuesday, October 6, 2026. Hardik Pandya, who had been named in the initial squad selected last month subject to a final fitness clearance, was forced to withdraw from the series after experiencing physical discomfort in his right calf on September 19. Subsequent magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) examinations confirmed that the pace-bowling all-rounder is suffering from a very mild intramedullary edema, a medical condition clinically equivalent to right medial tibial stress syndrome (commonly known as shin splints). Medical staff at the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) Centre of Excellence advised a period of rest and rehabilitation to prevent aggravation ahead of upcoming international assignments. Shedge, a promising 23-year-old talent, joins the In-

dia A setup after completing a rigorous rehabilitation program for a quadriceps injury at the BCCI Centre of Excellence located in Bengaluru. "Yes, Shedge has joined the India A squad as a replacement for injured Hardik. Shedge had a quadriceps injury and was recovering from it at the BCCI Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru," confirmed a senior cricket operations source closely tracking developments on Sunday. Shedge's inclusion highlights his rapid rise within the national talent pipeline. He made his senior international debut during India's T20I tour of Ireland in June 2026 and subsequently featured in T20I series against England and Zimbabwe. While he is still hunting for his maiden international wicket, his domestic and developmental form has been compelling. He delivered impressive performances during the India A 50-over tri-series in Sri Lanka earlier this June, accumulating 147 runs across five matches while contributing two vital bowling scalps in 23 overs of medium-pace work. However, his call-up to the India A side carries immediate domestic ramifications: Shedge will now be forced to miss Mumbai's prestigious opening Ranji Trophy encounter against Chandigarh, which is set to commence at the historic Wankhede Stadium on October 11.

