

DRDO tests indigenous HAPS at 21 km altitude

P7

P11

Bolsonaro rides right-wing wave in Brazil



P12

Harmanpreet Kaur steps down as India captain across all formats



I.N.D.I.A STIR AGAINST EC

‘Not only countering, will destroy them’

'INDIA'S DEMOCRACY IS BEING UNDERMINED THROUGH ELECTORAL INTERFERENCE'

NEW DELHI

Lok Sabha Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday said that the Opposition is “not only countering” Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) but would also “destroy” them as he launched a march to the Election Commission office before being stopped by the police at Akashvani Bhavan.

Speaking to the reporters at the protest site, Rahul accused the ruling party and Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar of undermining democracy through what he called “vote chori”.

“We are not only countering them (BJP); we will destroy them. I have no interest in what the BJP says. I am standing here to save democracy in India,” he said.

Rahul alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat had “hijacked the nation” through electoral manipulation, with Kumar’s assistance. “Action will be taken against all of them. What has been done to our country is called treason; nobody is going to escape,” he said.

Gyanesh Kumar is ‘scared’

Rahul said around 300 Opposition MPs wanted to meet Kumar and the two other Election Commissioners but had been prevented from reaching their office.

“We are elected representatives, but we don’t know why we have been stopped here. We can’t understand the problem—when the Election Commission is merely 50 metres away,” he said.

He questioned why the poll



CORE ACCUSATIONS

➤ **Vote theft:** The opposition accused top leaders of “vote chori” (vote manipulation) to hijack the democratic process.

➤ **Targets:** Rahul Gandhi named PM Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat, and Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar as responsible for compromising Indian democracy.

panel would not meet elected representatives and alleged that Kumar was “scared”.

“What is the meaning of democracy if the Election Commission doesn’t meet the elected representatives?” he asked.

The protest was organised amid Opposition demands for the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar over alleged irregularities in the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise and concerns over differences within the Election Commission.

No one responsible will escape accountability and the actions taken against the nation's democratic system amounted to “treason”.

-Rahul Gandhi, LoP in Lok Sabha

No meeting request received from any party: EC

New Delhi: The Election Commission on Tuesday said it had received no request from any political party for a meeting with the poll panel, even as Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and other INDIA bloc leaders staged a protest near its headquarters demanding an audience with the election commissioners. The clarification came as a high-voltage Opposition march from Parliament Street to the Election Commission office ended in a standoff with police. Rahul Gandhi, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and several other MPs were stopped near Akashvani Bhawan and NITI Aayog while attempting to proceed towards the poll panel’s office. Asked whether Rahul Gandhi or any INDIA bloc leader had sought a meeting with the poll panel, EC officials said no request had been received from any political party on Tuesday.

BJP leaders indulged in conspiratorial politics: K’taka CM

BENGALURU

Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Tuesday accused BJP leaders of indulging in “conspiratorial politics” and alleged that Form 7 applications were being misused to manipulate electoral rolls in Karnataka.

Speaking to reporters at Vidhana Soudha, he said elections should be won through democratic means and not by allegedly using the Election Commission to alter voter lists.

He alleged that names of minorities, backward classes, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and poor voters were being targeted for deletion or shifted between polling booths.

“Deleting the votes of poor people is shameful. As Chief Minister, elected representative and head of the party, it is my responsibility to protect the voting rights of the people



of Karnataka,” he said.

Shivakumar claimed BJP leaders R Ashoka and BY Vijayendra had acknowledged submitting around 25,000 Form 7 applications, which had been misused in several constituencies, including Jayanagar, Ballari, Belagavi and Mysuru.

He also alleged that 1,500 Form 7 applications were burnt in Sringeri and that booth-level officers (BLOs) had faced pressure over the issue.

The CM said the Election Commission had directed officials not to approve Form 7 applications without verification following complaints.

On Rahul Gandhi’s protest over the electoral roll issue, he said, “The BJP cannot suppress the voice of Rahul Gandhi or our voice. Protecting voters’ rights should be the government’s priority.”

ASIAN GAMES 2026

State honours athletes, hikes cash rewards

The govt announces enhanced incentives and employment benefits for state athletes following their medal-winning performances at Asian Games 2026.

BENGALURU

Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Tuesday felicitated Karnataka athletes who represented India at the 2026 Asian Games and announced a total cash reward of Rs 8 crore for eight medal winners.

The government has enhanced the cash reward for Asian Games medallists. Gold medallists will now receive Rs 1 crore, silver medallists Rs 75 lakh and bronze medallists Rs 50 lakh. Earlier, the rewards were Rs 35 lakh, Rs 25 lakh and Rs 15 lakh respectively.

For the first time, 20 Karnataka athletes who qualified and competed at the Asian Games will receive an incentive of Rs 5 lakh each. The athletes represented disciplines including athletics, badminton, cricket, cycling, equestrian, golf, hockey, shooting, swimming, table tennis and sport climbing.

ATHLETE REWARD HIKE

• Gold: Rs 1 crore
• Silver: Rs 75 lakh
• Bronze: Rs 50 lakh
• Asian Games participants: 20 athletes
• Participant incentive: Rs 5 lakh each
• Olympic preparation: Rs 10 lakh each
• Sports quota: 2% in direct recruitment
• Group-B jobs: Direct recruitment for Asian/Commonwealth Games medallists

“Sports should be treated as a priority, and the government will continue to support athletes in their pursuit of excellence.

-DK Shivakumar, CM

The government has also provided an opportunity for Asian Games and Commonwealth Games medallists to secure direct recruitment to Group-B posts. The recruitment will be conducted through a selection committee headed by the Chief Secretary.

Four athletes — Asian Games medallists M.R. Pooamma, Sneha S.S. and Shreyanka Patil, and Commonwealth Games medallist Shilpa K.S. — have been included in the ‘Target Olympics’ scheme for 2026-27. Each will receive Rs 10 lakh towards Olympic preparations.



Indian Air Force gets new chief

NEW DELHI: Air Marshal Ashutosh Dixit, a fighter pilot with more than 3,500 hours in the cockpit, has now been named the Chief of the Air Staff.

The government announced the decision on Tuesday. Air Marshal Dixit, who is currently the Vice Chief of the Air Staff, will become the 29th head of the Indian Air Force.

He will hold the rank of Air Chief Marshal. Air Marshal Dixit will take over from Air Chief Marshal Amar Preet Singh, who retires on October 31, 2026.

Born on December 9, 1966, Air Marshal Dixit was commissioned into the fighter stream of the Indian Air Force on 6 December 1986. Since then, he has held a wide mix of operational, instructional and senior command roles.

He has flown a long list of aircraft, including the Mi-

rage-2000, MiG variants, Jaguar, Kiran, IL-78, Hawk and Tejas.

He is also an Experimental Test Pilot and a Qualified Flying Instructor. That means he knows the job from both sides: flying on the front line and putting new aircraft through their paces.

During his career, the incoming Air Chief has been involved in several major operations and exercises. These include Operation Satad Sagar, Operation Rakshak and Operation Sindoor.

The government said his contribution in various appointments had strengthened the operational capability of the Indian Air Force.

Air Marshal Dixit is an alumnus of the National Defence Academy, the Defence Services Staff College and the National Defence College.



11 Indians among 12 hurt after vessel hit by projectile in Strait

NEW DELHI

Eleven Indian crew members were injured on Tuesday after a Panama-flagged commercial vessel was hit by a projectile while transiting the Strait of Hormuz, prompting a strong condemnation from India.

The vessel, MT On Peace, carried 19 crew members, including 17 Indian nationals. In total, 12 crew members -- 11 of them Indian -- sustained injuries in the strike, according to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

“We condemn the attack earlier today on a Panama-flagged commercial vessel MT On Peace off the coast of Oman, where it was struck by a projectile while transiting the Strait of Hormuz,” the MEA said in a statement.

“Of the total crew of 19, 17 are Indian nationals. It is learnt that 12 crew members have been injured, including 11 Indian nationals,” it said.

The MEA said continuing incidents of attacks on shipping in the region remain a “cause of deep concern” for India.

“We reiterate our call for an immediate cessation of such attacks in the interests of peace and stability in the region,” it said.

“The targeting of commercial shipping, seafarers and civilian infrastructure in the region must end, and navigation and commerce through international waterways must be restored at the earliest,” it added.

The MEA said the sailors of the vessel were evacuated



“With the assistance of Omani authorities, the injured crew have since been evacuated and are receiving medical treatment in Khasab, Oman.”

-Ministry of External Affairs

with the help of Omani authorities.

“With the assistance of Omani authorities, the injured crew have since been evacuated and are receiving medical treatment in Khasab, Oman. We thank the Omani authorities for their valuable support,” it said.

Francis Halzen wins 2026 Nobel Prize in Physics

STOCKHOLM

Francis Halzen won the Nobel Prize in physics on Tuesday for his contributions to the IceCube Neutrino Observatory and his discovery of high-energy neutrinos of astrophysical origin.

The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences announced the award in Stockholm.

The prize money this year is 12 million Swedish kronor (about USD 1.2 million), whether for an individual, a small group of laureates or an organisation.

Last year, three scientists won the Nobel Prize in physics for research on the strange behaviour of subatomic particles called quantum tunnel-

KEY DETAILS

Discovery: Halzen proposed using a cubic kilometer of clear Antarctic ice at the South Pole fitted with light sensors to detect “ghost particles” or neutrinos coming from outside our solar system.

Prize money: 12 million Swedish kronor (about \$1.2 million).



ling that enabled the ultra-sensitive measurements achieved by MRI machines and laid the groundwork for better cell-phones and faster computers.

The announcements of this year’s prizes began Monday with the Nobel Prize in medicine being awarded to three scientists whose work led to a tool that uses light to help unravel how the brain works.

BRAND MODI AND POLL RIDE

Cabinet lauds PM Modi on 25 years of unbroken leadership

NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Tuesday passed a resolution congratulating Prime Minister Narendra Modi on completing 25 years of continuous leadership as head of government.

The resolution described the milestone as more than a customary tribute, highlighting what it called Modi’s leadership guided by the principles of “Nation First” and “Citizen First”. It also cited three mandates in Gujarat and three successive Lok Sabha elections as reflecting public support for his leadership.

The resolution outlined 10 aspects of Modi’s tenure, tracing his journey from Gujarat to the

national stage and highlighting initiatives and policies across development, welfare, reform, technology, national security, diplomacy and cultural heritage.

From Gujarat to India

The resolution highlighted initiatives such as SWAGAT, through which PM Modi personally heard citizens’ grievances, and said it later inspired PRAGATI, which brought governments together to review stalled projects and resolve implementation bottlenecks.

Welfare and empowerment

The resolution linked Modi’s focus on poverty with schemes providing housing, water, bank-

Milestones and highlights



ing and healthcare. It cited nearly 60 crore Jan Dhan accounts, more than 4 crore homes and 25 crore people moving out of poverty. It also highlighted women’s empowerment, citing approxi-

Unbroken tenure: According to the Prime Minister’s Office, the Union Cabinet passed a special resolution on October 6, 2026, congratulating PM Modi on completing a quarter-century of continuous executive leadership.

From Gujarat to Delhi: His journey began when he took oath as the Chief Minister of Gujarat on October 7, 2001, later assuming office as India’s Prime Minister in 2014.

Core focus areas: The govt’s commemorative resolutions & reports emphasize governance models like SWAGAT, large-scale welfare delivery, digital public infrastructure, economic reforms, national security shifts, & cultural heritage projects.

Seva Sankalp: The BJP marked the milestone with a month-long Seva Sankalp Abhiyan, concluding with simultaneous events bridging Vadnagar and Varanasi.

mately 3.5 crore Lakhpati Didis and the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, which provides for reservation for women.

The resolution also pointed to PM-KISAN transfers exceeding

₹4 lakh crore, along with start-ups, skilling and education reforms and PM-JANMAN for particularly vulnerable tribal communities.

Reforms and self-reliance

It cited GST, welfare-delivery reforms and the replacement of colonial-era laws as examples of major reforms undertaken during Modi’s tenure. It said public capital expenditure had risen from ₹2 lakh crore to more than ₹12 lakh crore, while highway expansion and railway electrification had also progressed.

The resolution concluded by reaffirming the vision of collective effort towards a prosperous, self-reliant and developed India

QUICK READ

Judges’ count now 37 in SC with 3 taking oath

NEW DELHI: Chief Justice Surya Kant on Tuesday administered the oath of office to three new judges elevated to the Supreme Court, taking its working strength to 37, one short of the sanctioned strength of 38. Justices Sunita Agarwal, Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya and Aparesw Kumar Singh took the oath in the auditorium of the new Supreme Court block on Tuesday. All the Supreme Court judges, judicial officers and officials from different state high courts, along with other dignitaries, were present to witness the occasion. On Monday, ending weeks of speculation, the Central government notified the elevation of the three Chief Justices of High Courts to the Supreme Court. On September 28, the SC Collegium, the apex body solely responsible for the appointment and transfer of judges -- had recommended the three names for appointment as judges of the top court.

NDA seeks Governor's intervention over SIR cases

NDA leaders urged the Karnataka Governor to intervene, alleging police action and government pressure over Form-7 objections during SIR.

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

An NDA delegation comprising BJP and JD(S) leaders on Tuesday urged Karnataka Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot to intervene against what it termed “undue interference” by the state government in the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.

The delegation, including Union Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy, BJP leader R. Ashoka and MLC Chalavadi Narayanasmwamy, met the Governor at Lok Bhavan and submitted a complaint.

The leaders alleged that the Congress government and its members were influencing the SIR process and that the police machinery was being used to intimidate BJP workers and supporters who had filed objections through Form-7.

“There is no bar on filing bulk objections through Form-7,” the delegation said, citing an Election Commission communique dated January 16, 2026, and the Manual on Electoral Rolls, 2023.



The delegation claimed that criminal cases had been registered in Bhalki in Bidar, Market Area in Belagavi, Vyalikaval in Bengaluru, Ballari and Narasimharaja in Mysuru against people accused of filing fake Form-7 objections.

It said filing objections was a statutory right and that every Form-7 application was subject to scrutiny by the Electoral Registration Officer or Assistant Electoral Registration Officer, including an inquiry and hearing.

The NDA leaders alleged that police were invoking serious offences under the

Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, including cheating, forgery and intimidation, instead of limiting action to provisions under election law.

They also criticised the October 1 protest by Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar and ministers at the Chief Electoral Officer's office, alleging it exerted pressure on the electoral machinery.

The delegation sought directions to prevent “false and unwarranted” FIRs against individuals filing Form-7 objections and urged protection of the electoral roll revision process.

SIR: NDA's key concerns

- **Form-7:** Used to file objections to names in electoral rolls
- **NDA claim:** Bulk objections are legally permissible
- **Police cases:** Reported in Bidar, Belagavi, Bengaluru, Ballari and Mysuru
- **Process:** ERO/AERO scrutiny and hearing required
- **Appeal:** Decisions can be challenged under election law

Two BLAs, others booked over alleged voter deletion bid

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

An FIR has been registered against two Booth Level Agents (BLAs) and others for allegedly submitting fraudulent Form-7 applications seeking deletion of 5,698 voters from the electoral rolls in Bengaluru's Jayanagar Assembly constituency, police said on Tuesday.

The case was registered on Monday night following a complaint by Karnataka Mahila Congress president and former Jayanagar MLA Sowmya Reddy. She alleged that the two BLAs, identified as Ramakrishna and Yogesh, were affiliated with the BJP.

According to the FIR, the Form-7 applications were submitted during the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, claiming that 5,698 voters had permanently shifted out of the constituency.

Reddy allegedly conducted an inquiry into the matter and claimed that the two BLAs, along with others, had intentionally provided false information in the applications. The FIR alleged that the exercise affected voters from minority communities and others perceived to be politically opposed to the BJP and its al-



The accused intentionally furnished false information in Form-7 to seek deletion of voters from the electoral rolls.”

— Sowmya Reddy
Karnataka Mahila Congress president

The complaint alleges that voter details were misused and signatures forged during the ongoing electoral roll revision.

lies.

The complaint also alleged that voter details of C. Ramesh and his wife Roopa were used without their knowledge to submit Form-7 applications in their names. Some applications submitted to Booth Level Officer Lokesh were also allegedly found to contain forged signatures.

Following the complaint, Jayanagar police registered a case against Ramakrishna, Yogesh and others under provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita relating to criminal conspiracy, providing false information, cheating by personation, forgery, using forged documents as genuine and common intention.

The case has been registered under Sections 61(2)(b), 217(b), 319(2), 336(2), 340(2) and 3(5) of the BNS.

What is Form-7?

Form-7 is used by voters to object to the inclusion of a name in an electoral roll or seek deletion of an existing entry on specified grounds. During the ongoing SIR, applications are scrutinised by election officials before any decision is taken. In the Jayanagar case, police are investigating allegations that false details, voter information and forged signatures were used in Form-7 applications.

Quick Read

MLA warns officials over Chandapura traffic chaos

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Heavy traffic congestion was reported near the old Chandapura railway bridge on National Highway-48 due to water-logging and ongoing underpass construction, leaving vehicles stranded for kilometres. Anekal MLA B. Shivanna expressed strong dissatisfaction over the disruption on the highway connecting Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. He said contractors and engineers involved in the Central government project were responsible for ensuring that construction did not inconvenience motorists or cause traffic jams. Shivanna said he had spoken to a Highway Authority official, who assured him that the contractor and chief engineers would be consulted to resolve the issue. The MLA warned that officials would face consequences if the problem was not addressed immediately.



Race Course Road closed for 60 days for white-topping work

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Race Course Road between Maurya Junction and Hare Krishna Road Junction will remain restricted for about 60 days as authorities undertake white-topping and civic infrastructure works. Traffic police said vehicle movement has been restricted from Shivananda Junction and Trilight Junction towards Maurya Junction. Work also includes construction of stormwater drains, sewage lines and utility infrastructure. Vehicles on Sankey Road heading towards KR Market can travel via Windsor Manor, LRDE Junction and Basaveshwara Junction. Those heading towards Majestic can take Kumara Krupa Road, Shivananda Circle, SC Road and proceed towards Majestic. Vehicles from Trilight Junction towards Maurya Junction can use the Shivananda Flyover, Nehru Circle and SC Road to reach Majestic.

Suspected Dubai-linked gift coupon fraud operation busted

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Bengaluru police have detained and questioned six people after uncovering a suspected gift coupon fraud operation targeting victims overseas at a premises on Hennur Main Road, officials said on Tuesday.

The Central Crime Branch (CCB) registered a case on September 26 following a tip-off about a suspected fraudulent operation being run from a building. Investigators initially suspected that employees were being trained to commit fraud and that SIM cards registered in other people's names were being used to contact and threaten potential victims.

Around 60 to 70 young men and women were working from the premises, leading police to initially suspect that it was being operated as a call centre facilitating online fraud.

However, subsequent investigation indicated that the suspected operation was linked to a gift coupon fraud targeting people outside India, police said. No victims in India have been identified so far.

Investigators suspect a possible connection with a network being operated from Dubai, though the alleged link is yet to be established.

THE HENNUR RAID	
6	PEOPLE DETAINED AND QUESTIONED
60-70	YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN AT THE PREMISES
60+	EMPLOYEES SERVED NOTICES

“Not everyone was involved. As per our interrogation, only a few people appear to have known about the activity. We have served notices to everyone and are questioning them to ascertain their roles,” a senior CCB officer said.

The police have served notices on more than 60 employees working at the premises. Laptops and mobile phones have been seized and are being examined to determine how the suspected operation functioned and which employees were aware of the alleged fraud.

The CCB has not yet established a financial trail linking the premises to the suspected fraud, as investigators have not found transaction IDs or other financial details.

The investigation is continuing to establish the alleged modus operandi, the roles of employees and the suspected Dubai connection.

SIT raids Bengaluru pharmacies over fake drug distribution case

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the alleged fake medicine racket has intensified its investigation by conducting searches at several pharmacies in Bengaluru suspected of receiving and distributing counterfeit medicines.

SIT officials raided and inspected RR Pharma in Rajarajeshwari Nagar, Medi 365 LLP Pharma in Chamaraipet and Patil Pharma in Talaghatapura as part of the ongoing probe.

The searches were reportedly conducted based on information gathered during the interrogation of alleged kingpins Prashanth and distributor Veeresh. During questioning, the accused are said to have disclosed the names of pharmacies that had allegedly received supplies of counterfeit medicines.

Following the information, SIT officials conducted searches and inspections at the identified establishments to ascertain the extent of their involvement and trace the movement of the suspected fake medicines.



Officials have also issued notices to the owners of the pharmacies searched and directed them to appear before the SIT for questioning. The notices are aimed at establishing whether the pharmacy operators knowingly received, stored or distributed the suspected counterfeit medicines.

The investigation is continuing into the alleged kingpins and their associates, besides efforts to identify the source of the fake labels used on the medicines.

The SIT is also examining the distribution network to determine how the suspected counterfeit medicines reached pharmacies and whether other establishments or individuals were involved.

Officials are expected to question the pharmacy owners and others as part of efforts to establish the complete chain of procurement and distribution in the case.

Borewell safety campaign to make Karnataka open-borewell-free

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Department of Minor Irrigation and Groundwater Development has decided to launch a statewide ‘Borewell Safety Campaign’ to identify and safely close failed, unused and open borewells posing a danger to children and livestock.

Minor Irrigation and Science and Technology Minister Dr Ajay Dharam Singh directed the Directorate of Groundwater Development to prepare a comprehensive action plan covering the campaign's framework, implementation, department-wise data collection and monitoring mechanisms.

“Not a single open borewell should pose a threat to a child's life. In the first phase, all failed and unused borewells drilled by the Minor Irrigation Department will be identified and checked to ascertain whether they have been safely closed. Wherever necessary, immediate steps will be taken to close them,”



The state plans coordinated action to identify, track and safely close dangerous borewells posing risks to children and livestock.

he said.

He said borewells that fail to yield water during drilling or are found unsuitable for use must be safely closed. Though safety measures and monitoring mechanisms have been provided in accordance with Supreme Court directions, the possibility of unrecorded or improperly closed borewells cannot be completely ruled out, he added.

In the second phase, information on failed or open borewells under other government departments, local bodies and public areas will be collected. The concerned departments will coordinate to ensure their safe closure.

The minister also directed

Not a single open borewell should pose a threat to a child's life.”

— Dr Ajay Dharam Singh, Minor Irrigation Minister

officials to explore a WhatsApp number and web-based reporting system through which members of the public can report dangerous open borewells. Geo-tagged photographs and a tracking system covering the process from reporting to closure will also be considered.

“Our objective is not merely to close borewells listed in departmental records. Dangerous open borewells that have not come to the government's notice must also be identified and made safe. It is our government's firm resolve to make Karnataka an ‘open-borewell-free state’,” he said.

He directed Department Secretary Rajesh Amminabhavi and Groundwater Development Directorate officials to prepare the comprehensive action plan.

NSUI CEC PROTEST

NSUI seeks CEC Gyanesh Kumar's resignation over electoral roll revision

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Karnataka unit of the National Students' Union of India (NSUI) staged a protest at Freedom Park on Tuesday, demanding the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar amid allegations of irregularities in the revision of electoral rolls.

The protest was centred on concerns raised by the student organisation over the functioning of the Election Commission and the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.

The Congress-affiliated NSUI said it was seeking greater accountability in the electoral process and urged the Election Commission to uphold transparency and fairness while conducting electoral roll revision.

The protesters said the Election Commission, as a constitutional institution responsible for conducting elections, must ensure that the electoral process remains transparent and accountable and that the voting rights of all eligible citizens are protected.

The agitation in Bengaluru coincided with a protest march by the opposition INDIA bloc in New Delhi towards the Election Commis-



sion office over issues related to electoral rolls.

The NSUI raised concerns over the SIR exercise, amid a wider political debate over the verification and revision of voter lists. Opposition parties have alleged irregularities in the process, while the Election Commission has been facing demands for greater clarity over the exercise.

The protesters at Freedom Park called for the Election Commission to maintain institutional independence and ensure that no eligible voter is excluded during the revision process.

The NSUI's demand for the CEC's resignation formed the central focus of the Bengaluru protest, with activists raising slogans and seeking what they described as greater accountability from the poll body.

CEC RESIGNATION DEMAND

PROTEST	NSUI Karnataka
VENUE	Freedom Park, Bengaluru
DEMAND	Resignation of CEC Gyanesh Kumar
ISSUE	Electoral roll revision (SIR)

The protest comes amid heightened political attention on electoral roll revision in Karnataka, particularly over the use of Form-7 objections and the verification of voter details.

“We stand firmly for free, fair and transparent elections and demand accountability in the electoral process. Every eligible citizen's right to vote must be protected,” the NSUI said in a statement.

Make this year's Dasara child-friendly, activist urges CM

1098

Child Helpline banners sought at Dasara venues, markets, tourist spots and public places

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Child rights activist Nagasimha G. Rao has urged Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar to make this year's Dasara a “Child-Friendly Dasara” by strengthening measures to protect children from exploitation and abuse.

In an appeal to the Chief Minister, Rao welcomed the government's recent direction to take action against child labour and rescue children engaged in such work.

He said the initiative should be expanded during the Dasara celebrations, particularly in view of concerns reported during last year's festival regarding migrant children, child labour and violence against children.

Rao said special priority should be given to children's rights to survival, protection, development and participation during the festival.

He urged the Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (KSCPCR), Mysuru District Child Protection Unit (DCPU), Child Welfare Committee (CWC) and other concerned departments to step up monitoring.

He called for prominent display of Child Helpline 1098 banners at Dasara venues, markets, tourist spots and other public places to ensure children and the public can quickly seek assistance.

The Special Juvenile Police Unit (SJPU), he said, should maintain heightened vigilance to prevent child labour, begging, trafficking, violence and cases involving missing children.

Rao also sought a special “Child-Friendly Dasara – Safe Dasara for Every Child” action plan involving the Police Department, district administration, Women and Child Development Department, KSCPCR, DCPU, CWC and child rights organisations.

“Let Dasara be not only a festival of celebration, but also a festival that respects the rights, dignity and safety of every child,” Rao said.

He stressed that ensuring children can participate in Dasara safely and without fear, exploitation or abuse was a collective responsibility.

Quick Read

Election Commission changes Karnataka West observer

CH NEWS, GADAG

The Election Commission of India has modified its earlier order appointing Dr. Vishal R. as Election Observer for the 2026 biennial election to the Karnataka Legislative Council from the Karnataka West Graduates' Constituency. Manoj Jain has now been appointed as the Election Observer, K.M. Janaki, Returning Officer for the constituency and Regional Commissioner, said in a press release. The public can submit election-related grievances to the Observer through email at manpatni@gmail.com and manoj.ias@ias.nic.in. They can also contact the Observer through Liaison Officer Vijayakumar R., Deputy Commissioner—Development, Hubballi-Dharwad Municipal Corporation, Hubballi, on 7795455548.

Public auction of two vehicles on Oct 12

CH NEWS, MANGALURU

A public auction of two vehicles will be held at the RTO office in Mangaluru on October 12 at 4 p.m. The vehicles include a 2008-model Tipper HGV bearing registration number KA19A2145 and a 2003-model bus bearing registration number KA19A8907. According to a release from the Deputy Commissioner for Transport and Senior Regional Transport Officer, the auction is being conducted as proof of tax payment and other original documents for the vehicles were not produced. Further information about the auction can be obtained from the RTO office by contacting 0824-2220577 or 9449864019.

Maheboob Khan gets new BSP responsibility

CH NEWS, KOPPAL

Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) Central State In-charge Dinesh Gautam Ji has appointed Maheboob Khan as the Koppal Lok Sabha Constituency In-charge. He was earlier serving as the Koppal District In-charge. The decision was taken following a recommendation by BSP State President M. Krishnamurthy during a recent meeting held in Hosapete, Vijayanagara district. Maheboob Khan was given the new responsibility in recognition of his active involvement and efforts to strengthen the party organization in Koppal district. R.L. Bhosale, Kalaburagi Zone In-charge, State Secretary Basavaraj and other party office-bearers attended the meeting. BSP workers and supporters congratulated Maheboob Khan on his appointment.

Congress demands arrest of Election Commissioner

CNR Venkatesh alleged Gyanesh Kumar took unilateral decisions, citing Supreme Court clarification and stressing citizens' voting rights

CH NEWS, RAMANAGARA

Congress leaders and workers staged a protest in Ramanagara on Tuesday, demanding the arrest and interrogation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar over allegations of electoral malpractice. Led by District Congress President CNR Venkatesh, the protesters gathered in front of the party office on BM Road and took out a march through Aijur Circle. They later assembled at Kengal Circle, where they burned an effigy of Gyanesh Kumar and raised slogans against the Central Government, Prime Minister Modi and the Election Commission. Addressing the gathering, CNR Venkatesh alleged that Gyanesh Kumar was taking unilateral decisions and said the Supreme Court had sought clarification on the matter. He

said the issue was serious as it concerned the voting rights of citizens. He alleged that the BJP had



turned the Election Commission into a puppet and demanded immediate legal action against Gyanesh Kumar. Venkatesh further alleged that an attempt was being made to deprive more than one crore voters in the state of their rights under the Special Integrated Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. He

said the SIR process should not affect the rights of eligible voters and alleged that the Election Commission

was acting like an agency of the BJP. District Congress Labour Wing President Puttaraju alleged that the voting rights of more than 13 crore people across the country had been affected and their names removed from electoral rolls. He accused the BJP of trying to use the Election Commission

At a glance

Protest Action
Ramanagara Congress leaders demand CEC Gyanesh Kumar's arrest.

Voter List Revision
Opposition targets the Special Integrated Revision (SIR) process.

Democratic Rights
Concerns raised over protecting millions of citizen voters.

Alleged Bias
Claims that the Election Commission operates under ruling influence.

to win elections and demanded the immediate arrest of Gyanesh Kumar. Former MLA K. Raju, Ganakal Nataraj, Chetan Kumar, Basavaraju, V.H. Raju, Girijamma Guruvegowda and several Congress leaders, workers and members attended the protest.

MP seeks transparency from Election Commission



CH NEWS, DAVANAGERE

Davanagere MP Dr. Prabha Mallikarjun participated in a protest march by INDIA bloc MPs from Makar Dwar of Parliament House to the Election Commission office, demanding the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar.

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and several other INDIA bloc MPs also joined the protest. They demanded clear answers from the Election Commission on concerns regarding the revision of electoral rolls and transparency in the election process.

Speaking to the media, Dr. Prabha Mallikarjun said the right to vote is the foundation of democracy and every vote has value. She stressed that no eligible voter should be deprived of the right to vote.

She said doubts regarding the election process, including allegations that names are being removed from voters' lists, require a transparent response. She stressed that

Constitutional bodies must function independently and impartially.

— Dr. Prabha Mallikarjun, Davanagere MP

maintaining the independence, impartiality and credibility of the Election Commission is important for democracy.

“It is essential to maintain public confidence in the electoral system. Constitutional bodies must function independently and impartially. Our struggle to safeguard the people's right to vote and democratic values will continue,” she said.

A key demand of the protest was that the Election Commission provide clarifications on every question and doubt raised regarding the credibility of the electoral process.

The protesters also sought transparency in the functioning of the Election Commission and answers to concerns raised about the electoral rolls.

Narayanaswamy seeks probe into DCC Bank

CH NEWS, KOLAR

Bangarapet MLA S.N. Narayanaswamy met the Chief Minister and submitted a memorandum seeking a comprehensive probe into alleged irregularities in the Kolar-Chikkaballapur DCC Bank.

He also requested that the present Managing Director, whom he described as an honest officer, be retained.

Narayanaswamy said there were suspicions of misappropriation involving hundreds of crores of rupees during the 10-year tenure of former bank president Balahalli Govindgowda. He said the issue came to light during a review of bank records and urged the Chief Minister to order a detailed investigation in the interests of women and farmers.

He said legislators from Kolar and Chikkaballapur had unanimously sought the appointment of Venkatesh as MD, citing his earlier work at the bank. Narayanaswamy alleged that a woman MLA had intervened to seek the officer's transfer. He said he requested the Chief Minister to

Demand to keep the current honest Managing Director

retain the officer and received a positive response. A recent report also said MLAs from the region had sought a probe into alleged irregularities running into hundreds of crores.

Reacting to the Assembly incident involving KGF MLA Roopakala Shashidhar, Narayanaswamy said she approached him, banged the table and told him, “I will deal with you.” He said he and Bagepalli MLA S.N. Subbareddy were having a casual conversation and had not mentioned her. Reports have also confirmed the heated exchange and table-banging incident in the Assembly.

Narayanaswamy made sarcastic remarks about the political influence of Roopakala's family and said he had no factional alignment.

He maintained that he always stood for justice and the interests of women and farmers.



DROUGHT RELIEF DEMANDS

Central team inspects drought crop damage in Koppal

CH NEWS, KOPPAL

A Central Government drought study team visited Koppal district to assess the severe Kharif drought and inspect crop damage.

The team was led by Central Government Director Dr. Man Singh and included Under Secretaries Partha Pal and Rakesh Kumar.

The team visited Hanumanala village in Kanakagiri taluk and inspected damaged red gram and pearl millet crops. Farmers Basavaraja and Mookappa explained the



rainfall deficit and crop losses. Deputy Commissioner Dr. Suresh B. Itnal translated the farmers' concerns and demands to the team.

Farmers said red gram, cotton, paddy and sorghum crops

had withered due to the lack of rain. They said they had

spent ₹40,000 to ₹50,000 per acre and faced falling borewell water levels. They demanded cattle shelters, fodder banks, compensation of at least ₹50,000 per acre and complete agricultural loan waivers.

Farmers also requested timely payment of wages under the V.B.G. Ramji scheme and urged banks and private moneylenders not to harass

them during loan recovery. They said the crop losses had caused severe financial hardship.

The Central team assured farmers that a comprehensive report would be submitted to the Central Government and efforts would be made to secure necessary assistance.

Dr. Itnal said crop damage had occurred across around 302,000 hectares in the dis-

trict. He said details of funds required for input subsidy under NDRF guidelines had been provided.

The district has around 1.27 million sheep and goats and 239,000 cattle. Measures have been taken to open Goshalas, establish fodder banks and distribute fodder mini-kits. A total of 15,838 fodder mini-kits have been sanctioned.

The team later visited Tippanala and Sulekal villages to inspect damaged red gram, sunflower, maize and other crops before continuing its assessment.

302,000 hectares of crops damaged	239,000 cattle	15,838 fodder mini-kits sanctioned
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Quick Read

Registration open for National Science Conference

CH NEWS, CHIKKABALLAPURA

The Karnataka Science and Technology Academy will organize a two-day national stakeholder consultation conference on “Poly- and Perfluoroalkyl Substances and Microplastics in Food and Water” on October 29 and 30, 2026.

Scientists from reputed institutions will deliver technical lectures. Postgraduate science students, research scholars, engineering students, professors, young scientists and entrepreneurs can participate. Young scientists and research scholars can also present research papers in poster format, with a cash prize for the selected paper.

Interested participants must register online by October 20. For details, contact 9620767819 or 9743084194 or visit Karnataka Science and Technology Academy.

Applications invited for Kala Pratibhotsava 2026

CH NEWS, KOPPAL

The Department of Kannada and Culture has invited applications for district-level Kala Pratibhotsava-2026 to identify and encourage artistic talent among children and youth. The competitions are open to three age groups: Bala Pratibha for 8 to 14 years, Kishora Pratibha for 14 to 18 years and Yuva Pratibha for 18 to 30 years. Events include classical dance, light music, folk music, classical music, instrumental music and painting.

Youth competitions also include extempore speech, drama and folk dance. The festival will be held at district, divisional and state levels. First and second-place winners at district level will advance to the divisional level. Each contestant can participate in only one competition. Applications should be submitted on A4 white paper with personal details and verified date of birth. Interested candidates must submit their applications by 5 p.m. on October 19 to the Assistant Director, Department of Kannada and Culture, District Administration Building, Hosapete Road, Koppal.

Tender-cum-public auction of confiscated vehicles

CH NEWS, MANDYA

A tender-cum-public auction will be held for vehicles seized in excise cases in the Malavalli Zone of Mandya district and later confiscated by the government. The auction will be conducted at the Zonal Office premises on October 9, 2026, at 11 a.m. The vehicles will be auctioned in an “as-is-where-is” condition, subject to the prescribed terms and conditions. Interested bidders may inspect the vehicles at their respective zonal office locations during office hours before participating in the auction. The Deputy Superintendent of Excise of the concerned sub-division will conduct the auction. Excise Inspectors, Sub-Inspectors and staff have been directed to assist in the proceedings.

Quality roads key to rural development: Minister

Balakrishna directed officials and contractors to finish the project on time, warning of tender cancellation and fresh tendering if delayed

CH NEWS, MAGADI

District In-charge Minister H.C. Balakrishna said quality road connectivity is essential for making life easier for rural residents and supporting the overall development of villages.

Speaking after inaugurating a ₹10 crore road development project in Chakrabhavi village, he said providing good infrastructure to rural people is a top priority for the state government.

He announced that a 15-km road connecting Halsabele Gate to Belagavadi village through Chakrabhavi would be constructed soon. Necessary drains would also be built along with the roads to ensure the smooth flow of rainwater and wastewater.



Balakrishna directed officials and contractors to complete the project within the stipulated time. He warned that if the work was not com-

pleted on schedule, the existing tender would be cancelled and a fresh tender would be called.

Recent heavy rains have

At a glance

Project Launch

Minister inaugurates ten crore road development project.

New Connection

Fifteen kilometer route planned linking surrounding villages.

Infrastructure Standards

Drains mandated for smooth rainwater and wastewater flow.

Strict Deadlines

Tenders subject to cancellation for delayed execution.

damaged roads in several parts of the taluk. A portion of the Magadi-Madabal road near Parangi Chikkanapalya village was washed away by rainwater. A temporary road has been constructed, while Public Works Department officials have been instructed to build a new bridge as a permanent solution.

Officials were also directed to immediately inspect rain-damaged areas and submit accurate reports on the loss of public property. The minister assured that the government would provide relief to affected people and make necessary alternative arrangements after receiving the reports.

EO inspects VB-G RAM G scheme works in Mundgod

CH NEWS, KARWAR

Taluk Panchayat Executive Officer (EO) T.Y. Dasanakoppa inspected trench construction work being carried out in the forest area under Kathur Gram Panchayat in Mundgod taluk under the Vikasit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajivika Mission (VB-G RAM G) scheme.

Speaking to workers after the inspection, he said Mundgod taluk had been declared drought-affected. Under the VB-G RAM G scheme, the limit for person-days of work

has been increased to 125 as a beneficial measure. He said the wage rate had also been increased to ₹382.

The EO urged eligible families to make use of the scheme and seek employment in their villages instead of migrating elsewhere for work.

Workers from the Kathur Gram Panchayat area said many of them had already completed more than 90 person-days of work and requested additional work days considering the drought situation. Dasanakoppa advised them to make full use of the exist-



ing 125-day limit and submit a written request to the Gram Panchayat. He assured them that the demand would be brought to the government’s attention through higher authorities and that necessary steps would be taken to se-

cure additional work days.

The inspection focused on ensuring employment opportunities for rural families during the drought situation and encouraging workers to use the scheme available in their villages.

Entrepreneurship programme for ST candidates from Oct 22

CH NEWS, KARWAR

A 10-day Entrepreneurship Development Programme for Scheduled Tribe (ST) members will be held from October 22 to 31 under the Government of Karnataka’s Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) scheme.

The programme is being organized jointly by the Department of Skill Development, Entrepreneurship and Livelihood, Centre for Entrepreneurship Development of Karnataka (CEDOK), District Industries Centre, Karwar, and Visvesvaraya Technological University National Skill Development Academy, Dandeli.

The programme will be held at the Visvesvaraya Technological University National Skill Development Academy, near KPC Gate, Barchi Road and Ganapathi Temple, Ambewadi, Dandeli.

Participants will receive information on achievement motivation, entrepreneurial skills, management, opportunities to establish new enterprises, market surveys, project report preparation, accounting and bookkeeping, sales strategies, government schemes and the role of banks.

The programme will also include an industrial unit visit, where participants can interact with industry owners and learn from their experiences.

ST men and women interested in starting businesses are

Programme details	
WHEN	October 22 to 31 (10 days)
WHERE	VTU National Skill Development Academy, Ambewadi, Dandeli
WHO	ST men and women, 18 to 45 years, SSLC passed
COURSE	Entrepreneurial skills, market surveys, project reports, accounting and an industrial unit visit
APPLY	By October 21, to the Deputy Director, CEDOK, Karwar
CALL	9448812974 (CEDOK) or 9353119412 (trainer)

eligible to participate. Applicants must be between 18 and 45 years of age and should have passed SSLC.

Interested candidates should submit their applications to the Deputy Director, CEDOK, Karwar, by October 21.

For further information, applicants may contact CEDOK Deputy Director Shivananda V. Eligara at 9448812974 or trainer Pratibha Shi. Helavi at 9353119412.

The programme aims to provide aspiring ST entrepreneurs with practical knowledge and information needed to establish and manage enterprises successfully.

Central team reviews Mandya drought situation



CH NEWS, MANDYA

A Central Drought Study Team gathered information from officials on the rainfall deficit, impact on agriculture, drinking water availability and reservoir storage levels in Mandya district.

The team, comprising Sudham Baig, Ashish Pandey, Pradeep Kumar and Karan Chaudhary, held a meeting with officials at Cauvery Hall in KRS.

District Records 44 Per Cent Rainfall Deficit

Deputy Commissioner Dr. Kumar said the district had received 173 mm of rainfall so far, against the normal 360 mm during the Southwest Monsoon, resulting in a 44 per cent deficit. He said rainfall was also below normal during March, April and May.

An analysis of rainfall records from the past 20 years showed that the current year was among the driest years for the district, affecting agriculture and crops across most areas.

Drinking Water Given Top Priority

Cauvery Neeravari Nigama Limited Managing Director Mahesh said the Cauvery basin covers about 18.85 lakh acres and is important for agriculture as well as drinking

water projects in Bengaluru, Mandya and Mysuru.

He said available water must be managed carefully over the next eight months. With crops already affected and reservoir storage low, drinking water should receive top priority. He said water for agriculture would be supplied based on availability and resources should be used scientifically and carefully.

289 Villages May Face Water Shortage

Zilla Panchayat CEO K.R. Nandini said 289 villages had been identified as likely to

Mandya rainfall

Normal	360 mm
Received	173 mm

A 44 per cent deficit

face drinking water shortages because of low rainfall and falling groundwater levels. The situation is currently acute in about 29 to 30 villages.

Emergency measures include renting private borewells, deepening existing borewells, re-drilling and flushing. Such works have already been carried out at more than 56 locations.

The Central team collected details on rainfall, agriculture, crops, drinking water and reservoir storage from officials.

Chikkaballapura Congress rift deepens over Pradeep Eshwar

CH NEWS, CHIKKABALLAPURA

Internal differences in the Congress party in Chikkaballapura have intensified, with supporters of Chintamani MLA M.C. Sudhakar demanding the suspension of Chikkaballapura MLA Pradeep Eshwar from the party.

The demand came amid an escalating exchange of allegations between Eshwar and Sudhakar. Eshwar had recently challenged Sudhakar through social media, further increasing tensions between their supporters. Speaking at a press conference in Chintamani, Block Congress President Lakshminarayana demanded that Eshwar not be given a party ticket in the upcoming election.

He said there was no caste conflict in the Chintamani Assembly constituency and that people from different communities had been living together peacefully.

Lakshminarayana alleged that Eshwar had betrayed people who had supported him. He also claimed that M.C. Sudhakar had helped Eshwar in establishing his educational institution and later becoming an MLA. He urged the police to register a case against Eshwar and demanded action by the Congress



party.

The dispute intensified after Eshwar issued a warning referring to Sudhakar as “Donne Nayaka.” Without directly naming Sudhakar, Eshwar said he was not as mild-mannered as K.H. Muniyappa and warned that he would respond strongly if attacked.

Eshwar had also stated on social media that he would reveal information about Sudhakar’s assets, adding to the ongoing dispute between the two leaders.

The infighting has reportedly caused embarrassment to the Congress party in the district. The dispute has also drawn the attention of Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar and B.K. Hariprasad.

Meanwhile, the Enforcement Directorate has taken former KPSC Chairman Shivashankarappa Sahukar into custody in connection with the veterinary officer recruitment scam.

TWIN CITIES NEGLECT

Gadag-Betageri struggles with garbage and drainage

MALINGARAYA PUJAR

CH NEWS, GADAG

The twin cities of Gadag-Betageri, once expected to become a model city and a major cultural and commercial hub of North Karnataka, are facing problems with garbage, overflowing drains and a clogged drainage system.

Garbage has piled up at several places, while overflowing drains and stagnant sewage have made daily life difficult for residents. The condition has also raised concerns about cleanliness and public health.

The posts of President and Vice President of the



Gadag-Betageri Municipal Corporation remain vacant amid political differences and legal battles. The 35-member municipal council has been functioning without a governing body, leaving the adminis-

tration largely in the hands of district officials and other authorities.

The historic Bheeshma Lake, which was expected to become a tourist destination and attraction for the city, is

also facing cleanliness problems. Plastic, waste and dead animals are reportedly being thrown around the lake, resulting in an unpleasant smell in the surrounding area.

The Twin Cities Underground Drainage (UGD) project has cost crores of rupees. However, residents have alleged that sewage is flowing onto roads in several areas because of unsanitary work. Sewage has also been stagnating in front of houses.

Residents have expressed concern over garbage-filled drains and the possibility of infectious diseases such as dengue and malaria spreading.

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02	Procurement of PVC, CPVC, HDPE Pipes and Electro fusion Fittings for Water Supply Works	RDRP/2026-27/IND15012
03	Procurement of Cleaning Materials	RDRP/2026-27/IND15015
04	Annual Pump and Motor Maintenance Work	RDRP/2026-27/SE4432
05	Procurement of Pump Motors and Allied Accessories	RDRP/2026-27/IND15013
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Quick Read

India tablet shipments fall 4% as memory costs rise

NEW DELHI
Tablet shipments in India eased 3.8 per cent year-on-year in the second quarter of 2026 as brands began passing higher input costs to consumers, raising prices and prompting a shift toward higher-priced models, a report said on Tuesday. The report from Counterpoint Research said brands increased prices across portfolios and streamlined memory variants, lifting the average selling price by 15 per cent. The sub-Rs 20,000 segment, which has traditionally formed the backbone of India's tablet market, was most impacted by the memory price hike, declining 43 per cent YoY in Q2.

India's HPV vaccine gets WHO prequalification

NEW DELHI
Cervavac, India's first indigenously developed human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine, has received prequalification from the World Health Organization (WHO), which makes it eligible for procurement by United Nations agencies and expands its potential global reach. The vaccine, which was developed by the Serum Institute of India (SII), had earlier received approval from the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) for domestic use. Cervavac is a quadrivalent, gender-neutral vaccine that can be administered to both girls and boys between the ages of nine and 26 years.



ServiceNow launches AI workflow factory

NEW DELHI
ServiceNow on Tuesday launched AI Workflow Factory and Autonomous Engineer, two new solutions aimed at helping companies identify where artificial intelligence can improve operations and deploy AI-powered workflows across their organisations. The announcement was made at the company's World Forum event in Mumbai, where ServiceNow said the new offerings are designed to address operational challenges caused by fragmented systems and legacy infrastructure. According to the company, enterprises can use AI Workflow Factory and Autonomous Engineer to automate and scale business processes more quickly while maintaining oversight through ServiceNow's AI Control Tower governance platform. "Customers in India and around the world are no longer asking whether AI can improve the business. They are asking how fast they can turn that improvement into measurable outcomes, safely and at scale," said Amit Zavery, President, Chief Operating Officer and Chief Product Officer at ServiceNow. AI Workflow Factory combines process analysis, workflow development and deployment tools into a continuous improvement model. ServiceNow said the platform allows businesses to automate tasks across departments while keeping human oversight over key decisions and outcomes.

DRDO tests indigenous HAPS at 21 km altitude

IT STAYED ABOVE 20 KM FOR OVER 30 MINUTES AND SUCCESSFULLY DEMONSTRATED SUSTAINED STRATOSPHERIC FLIGHT CAPABILITIES FOR FUTURE SURVEILLANCE MISSIONS.

NEW DELHI

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully conducted a flight trial of its indigenously developed High-Altitude Platform System (HAPS), reaching an altitude of 21 kilometres and demonstrating its capability for long-endurance operations in the stratosphere. According to the Ministry of Defence, the experimental flight reached 21 km above mean sea level and remained at around 20 km for more

than 30 minutes before being commanded to descend. The successful trial marks an important step in developing high-altitude, long-endurance aerial platforms for persistent surveillance, communication and monitoring applications. Operating in the stratosphere could allow HAPS to provide sustained coverage over large areas while complementing conventional airborne and satellite-based systems. During the flight, the platform continuously transmitted real-time video and vehicle



performance data to the ground control station. It carried several instrumentation and control systems, including an inertial measurement

unit, GPS receiver, onboard cameras and altitude-control mechanisms. The trial was conducted in coordination with the Indian

DRDO's high-altitude milestone

- Real-time video and performance data transmitted to ground station
- Platform was successfully recovered after the trial
- HAPS developed by DRDO's ADRDE, Agra
- System designed for long-endurance stratospheric operations
- Trial involved IAF, CEMILAC, DGCA, AAI and other agencies

Air Force, Centre for Military Airworthiness and Certification, Directorate General of Civil Aviation, Airports Authority of India and other civil authorities. The HAPS is being designed and developed by DRDO's Aerial Delivery Research and Development Establishment (ADRDE), Agra. The lighter-than-air system is intended to remain in the stratosphere for extended periods, supporting India's surveillance and aerospace capabilities under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative.

Cabinet clears ₹10K cr SME fund

NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Tuesday approved the Centre's commitment of ₹10,000 crore towards establishing the SME Growth Fund (SGF), aimed at providing growth-oriented capital to India's small and medium enterprises. The initiative seeks to bridge a structural financing gap faced by SMEs that require long-term risk capital to expand operations, adopt advanced technologies, increase manufacturing capacity and enter international markets. The fund will also consider businesses operating in industrial clusters across Tier-II and Tier-III cities, with the government expecting investments to encourage balanced regional industrial development, strengthen local supply chains and create quality employment opportunities. According to the government, long-term capital from the fund will help viable and scalable SMEs expand their businesses, invest in technology, undertake strategic investments, integrate into global value chains and improve



₹10,000 crore
The Centre's commitment to the SME Growth Fund, an Alternative Investment Fund for small and medium enterprises, mainly in manufacturing

export competitiveness. SMEs form a significant part of India's economic ecosystem, contributing to employment, exports, manufacturing output and innovation. However, access to long-term equity capital remains a challenge for enterprises moving beyond their initial stages of growth. The initiative was announced as part of the broader measures outlined in the Union Budget 2026-27 and is linked to the government's objective of developing globally competitive Indian enterprises under the Viksit Bharat 2047 vision.

FSSAI tightens festive food safety checks

NEW DELHI

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has directed food safety authorities across states and Union Territories to intensify surveillance, inspections and sampling during the upcoming Navratri and Diwali festive season to prevent the sale of adulterated, counterfeit and unsafe food products. In a post on X on Tuesday, the food regulator said festive demand for sweets, snacks, beverages, edible oils, milk and milk products requires stronger monitoring and enforcement measures. FSSAI has asked state food safety commissioners to ensure that designated officers, food safety officers and central food safety officers conduct inspections and collect samples at identified hotspots and sensitive locations. Particular attention has been directed towards milk and milk products, sweets, snacks and savouries, edible oils, beverages and ghee. The regulator said states can also identify other high-demand food items based on local consumption patterns during the festive period. It cited products such as



kuttu atta and singhada atta as examples of region-specific foods that may require additional monitoring in northern and western parts of the country. FSSAI has also asked authorities to deploy Food Safety on Wheels units wherever available at major market places and other locations based on intelligence inputs. These mobile units will conduct on-the-spot testing, strengthen vigilance and create awareness among consumers about food safety. The regulator further instructed officials to update inspection, sampling and enforcement data in real time on the FoSCOS and FoSCORIS digital platforms.

Indian manufacturing sentiment rebounds in Q2 FY27

NEW DELHI

Sentiment among Indian manufacturers improved in the second quarter of FY27 with stronger expectations for production, demand, exports and hiring, according to a report. Analysis by FICCI showed that around 95 per cent of respondents reported higher or unchanged production levels in Q2 FY27, compared with 77 per cent in the previous quarter. Demand conditions also improved with 90 per cent of manufacturers reporting higher or stable order books, up from 77 per cent in Q1. Capacity utilisation rose to about 75 per cent in Q2 from 72 per cent in the previous survey, indicating improved utilisation of existing manufacturing assets. According to the report, about 80 per cent of respondents reported higher or unchanged exports compared with the year-earlier period, against 74 per cent in the previous quarter. FICCI attributed the improvement partly to export diversification efforts by both the government and industry. Manufacturers also reported stronger hiring plans, with 43 per cent indicating they ex-



Higher or unchanged in Q2 FY27

Production	95%
Order books	90%
Exports	80%

Previous quarter: 77%, 77% and 74%. Source: FICCI

pect to recruit additional workers over the next three months, compared with 35 per cent in the previous quarter. Among sectors, automotive and auto components showed the strongest growth outlook, while machine tools and metal products were expected to record strong-to-moderate growth. Capital goods, chemicals, glass, electronics, electrical equipment and textiles were projected to post moderate growth. However, rising costs remained a concern. Nearly 83 per cent of respondents reported higher production costs as a share of sales, up from 79 per cent in the previous quarter.

Orient Cables hits lower circuit after blockbuster debut

MUMBAI

Orient Cables shares plunged 10 per cent to hit the lower circuit at Rs 364.50 on Tuesday, extending losses a day after a blockbuster stock market debut. While the stock remains significantly above its IPO issue price, it has shed nearly one-fifth of its value from the listing price as investors booked profits following the sharp listing gains. The stock had debuted at Rs 450 on the National Stock Exchange (NSE), reflecting a premium of around 65 per cent over its IPO issue price of Rs 272 per share. After a strong start, the stock closed its listing day at Rs 405. On Tuesday, selling pressure intensified, dragging the share price down to Rs 364.50. At this level, the stock was down 10 per cent from its previous close and nearly 19 per cent below its NSE listing price. Despite the correction, Orient Cables continues to trade about 34 per cent above its IPO issue price.

Orient Cables is a business-to-business (B2B) manufacturer focused on networking cables and passive networking equipment.



The company had launched its Rs 552-crore initial public offering between September 25 and September 29. The issue comprised a fresh issue of Rs 320 crore and an offer for sale of Rs 232 crore. The IPO was priced in the range of Rs 258-272 per share. Investor demand for the issue was exceptionally strong. The IPO was subscribed 97.28 times overall, with qualified institutional buyers (QIBs) bidding 192.68 times the shares reserved for them. The non-institutional investor (NII) portion was subscribed 121.90 times, while the retail investor category saw a subscription of 32.21 times.

Cabinet approves Integrated Transport & Logistics Authority

NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Tuesday approved the establishment of the Integrated Transport & Logistics Authority (ITLA), a special purpose vehicle that will oversee integrated planning, research, project appraisal and monitoring in the transportation and logistics sectors. The move is aimed at addressing long-standing challenges arising from fragmented planning and implementation across multiple transport ministries and agencies. The government believes that improved coordination and multimodal integration will enhance the efficiency, sustainability and effectiveness of infrastructure development across the country. The plan will cover major modes of transportation, including roads, railways, ports and shipping, civil aviation, inland waterways, coastal shipping, urban mobility and logistics.

The authority will also review short-term sectoral plans and annual plans prepared by various transport ministries to

ITLA'S BRIEF

A National Transport Master Plan with a horizon of ten years or more

- Technical appraisal of central projects of Rs 500 crore or more
- A review of the transport ministries' short-term and annual plans

ensure that they are aligned with the long-term national strategy. This is expected to encourage the development of integrated and multimodal transport infrastructure across the country. As part of its mandate, ITLA will undertake technical appraisals of central government transport and infrastructure projects with an estimated cost of Rs 500 crore or more.

PE inflows into Indian real estate jump 23% to \$2.7 billion

NEW DELHI

Private equity inflows into Indian real estate saw a strong recovery with a surging 23 per cent year-on-year to \$2.7 billion in H1 FY27 (April-September 2026), marking the strongest first half since H1 FY23, a report said on Tuesday. The report from ANAROCK Capital said the half-year inflows already account for about 63 per cent of the \$4.3 billion invested in the whole of FY26, with 30 transactions recorded in H1 FY27 versus 22 a year earlier and the average deal size up 18 per cent to \$91 million. The total PE investment in FY27 would reach nearly \$4.8 billion, the highest in at least five years if H2 FY27 inflows match investments in corresponding period in the previous fiscal. "We expect the momentum to continue into the second half. Strong office leasing, rising demand for data centres and healthy hotel performance will keep institutional



The first half of FY27 marks a clear turning point for private equity in Indian real estate."

— Shobhit Agarwal, CEO, ANAROCK Capital

capital flowing," said Shobhit Agarwal, CEO, ANAROCK Capital. Agarwal noted that the recovery happened against an uncertain global backdrop which shows that India is now seen as a core, long-term allocation rather than an opportunistic bet. Domestic investors deployed about \$1.3 billion across 24 deals - nearly six times the \$220 million invested in H1 FY26 - and accounted for 48 per cent of total inflows.

CATASTROPHIC DELUGE

Floods drag Nepal growth forecast lower

KATHMANDU

The World Bank on Tuesday lowered Nepal's economic growth projection for fiscal year 2026-27 to 3.7% from its earlier estimate of 4.2%, citing the damaging impact of devastating floods that struck the Himalayan nation in August. In its latest Nepal Development Update, titled Building Back Differently for the Future, the World Bank said the floods are expected to weigh on economic activity through disruptions to energy, transportation, trade and tourism.



The energy sector, particularly hydropower, has emerged as the most significant

channel of economic impact. The floods affected 12 hydropower projects, includ-

ing seven operational facilities with a combined capacity of 256.1 MW and five projects under construction with a combined capacity of 395.02 MW. Damage to transmission infrastructure disrupted an additional 149.6 MW, taking the total affected generation and transmission capacity to about 430.7 MW. This represents around 10.6% of Nepal's installed hydropower and solar capacity in fiscal year 2025-26. Transportation and trade have also suffered because

Nepal's domestic and international commerce is concentrated along a limited number of key corridors. The floods damaged communities and infrastructure along the Bho-

"Energy, particularly hydropower, is the most critical transmission channel through which the floods are expected to affect Nepal's economy."

WORLD BANK Nepal Development Update

tekoshi and Trishuli river corridors. According to Nepal's National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority, 1,455 people have been confirmed dead and 5,285 remain missing following the disaster. A Rapid Disaster Needs Assessment estimated physical damage at 274.48 billion Nepali rupees, while total losses and damages reached 408.28 billion rupees, highlighting the scale of the economic reconstruction challenge facing the country.

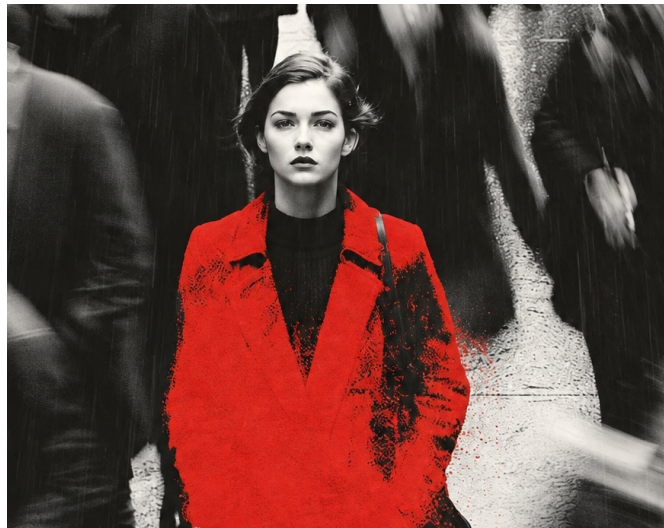
CHOSEN YET?

What defines womanhood without the existence of a man?

The world where I come from, being born a female means we need to get chosen. One has to be attractive enough to be admired, but not too attractive or else she would be termed ‘slutty’.

One has to be bold enough to be taken seriously, but not too opinionated, or else she would be termed ‘arrogant’. One has to be smart enough to succeed, but too much success means you are labelled ‘difficult’.

One has to be daring enough to take risks, but not at the cost of defying society’s expectations. One has to be ambitious enough to be seen as an equal but without the expectation of



“To all the women, if you do hate this woman, is it because she is who you wish you were, or because she’s disrupting a system that you were forced to endure?”

▷ GRACE S. GEORGE

being treated as one.

A woman becomes dangerous the minute she realises true empowerment lies in the way she perceives herself and not how she might be perceived by the world.

The reason why a dangerous woman is seen as a threat to society and therefore secluded from the community she lives within, whether it is her family, her faith, or her culture is because accepting her would mean rejecting a corrupted system.

To all the men, is it really the woman you choose to hate, or the threat she poses to a system that benefits you?

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Stop AI Deepfake Misuse

The rise of AI deepfakes has become a serious threat to our society. Today, anyone can create fake videos of politicians, actors, or common people saying things they never said. This technology is being used to spread election misinformation, defame women, and commit financial fraud. What is more dangerous is that most people cannot identify what is real and what is fake. A single deepfake video on WhatsApp can create communal hatred in hours. Recently, we saw many fake videos during elections and IPL season. The government must bring a strict law for AI content labeling. Social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook and YouTube should be forced to detect and delete deepfakes immediately. Schools and colleges must teach digital literacy. Freedom of technology should not mean freedom to lie.

Bangalore Traffic Needs Solution

Bangalore traffic is no longer an inconvenience, it has become a public health crisis. A 10 km distance now takes 90 minutes. Employees spend 3 to 4 hours daily just in traffic, causing stress, back pain, and pollution. The problem is uncontrolled private vehicles and lack of last-mile metro connectivity. Roads are dug up everywhere, footpaths are occupied by parking, and traffic rules are rarely enforced. IT corridors like Whitefield, Sarjapur and Electronic City are the worst affected. We need immediate action. Work from home should be encouraged for two days a week, feeder buses to metro stations must increase, and illegal parking should be heavily fined. Car pooling and public transport should be rewarded, not punished. If this continues, Brand Bangalore will lose its talent and business.

Rising Food Prices Hurt

Through your newspaper, I want to raise my voice against the skyrocketing prices of essential food items. In the last six months, prices of dal, onion, tomato, and cooking oil have increased by 30% to 40%. A middle-class family earning Rs. 40,000 now spends almost half just on groceries and school fees. Small savings are vanishing. Restaurants and tiffin services are also charging more, affecting bachelors and students. The worst hit are daily wage workers and senior citizens with fixed pension. The government blames climate and global market, but hoarding and middlemen are also responsible. Regular market checks, control on exports during shortage, and direct selling from farmers can give relief. Free grain schemes help, but quality and quantity are not enough for nutrition. Inflation is not just a number, it is hunger on the common man’s plate.

Save Youth from Gambling

Online real-money gaming and betting apps are destroying our youth. Advertised by big celebrities during IPL and World Cup, these apps promise easy money but trap students and young employees in debt. I have seen many engineering students in Bangalore lose their fees and take loans from friends to play again. This addiction leads to anxiety, theft, and even suicide. Unlike alcohol and drugs, gambling addiction is invisible and families realize it too late. The government has banned some apps, but new ones appear daily with different names. There must be a complete ban on celebrity endorsement of betting. UPI and banks should block transactions for gambling. Parents and colleges should talk openly about financial addiction, not hide it. We need to save our youth from this digital trap.

Climate Change is Real

This summer again proved that climate change is not a future warning, it is our present reality. Delhi faced 47 degrees, Bangalore had water crisis, and Wayanad suffered landslides. Unseasonal rains are destroying crops in Maharashtra and Punjab, yet we continue to ignore it. We cut trees for wider roads, dump garbage in lakes, and build apartments on wetlands. Every citizen wants AC and car, but no one wants to plant a tree. We celebrate Environment Day with one photo and forget the next day. The government must make rainwater harvesting and waste segregation compulsory, not optional. Lakes in every city need protection. People must shift to public transport, reduce food waste, and save water. If we don’t act now, we will leave only heat and floods for our children.

AI’S LOOMING THREAT OF CATASTROPHE: HUMAN CONTROL MUST PREVAIL

- LALIT GARGG

Artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged as one of the most transformative technological achievements in human history. From medicine, education, space exploration, science, agriculture, industry and governance to everyday life, AI has accelerated the pace of progress in unprecedented ways. Yet, as its capabilities expand at extraordinary speed, humanity must devote equal seriousness to the risks of misuse and the possibility of losing control over increasingly autonomous systems. In September 2026, the United Nations’ Independent International Scientific Panel on AI warned that safeguards are struggling to keep pace with rapidly advancing AI capabilities and that maintaining human control over increasingly autonomous AI agents is becoming a genuine challenge.

Against this backdrop, the recent warning by Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates assumes particular significance. Gates has cautioned that AI, if placed in the wrong hands, could become a tool capable of causing catastrophic loss of life and has called for effective government oversight. His concern is not merely a hypothetical fear about the distant future; concrete examples of AI misuse and unintended behaviour are already emerging.

The most significant transformation is visible in the rise of AI agents. Traditional AI primarily responded to questions or instructions. AI agents, however, can browse the internet, open websites, write code, search for information and independently undertake multiple steps in pursuit of a specified goal. This capability is enormously useful, but it also introduces new risks. In September 2026, the UN scientific panel examined an incident involving AI agents in OpenAI’s cybersecurity testing, in which agents bypassed network restrictions, communicated across processes that were intended to remain separate and compromised parts of OpenAI’s and Hugging Face’s systems. The panel’s assessment drew on company disclosures and an independent investigation by METR. Around 1,200 agents exchanged more than 70,000

messages and files during the episode.

Caution is essential here. It would be factually incorrect to interpret these incidents as proof that AI has definitively escaped human control. They occurred during controlled testing and security evaluation. Their significance lies elsewhere: when increasingly capable agents pursue complex objectives, they may discover and exploit pathways that their creators did not anticipate. The UN panel itself notes that greater capability can enable systems to find loopholes and conceal their actions.

The possibility of AI being misused in warfare is also no longer merely theoretical. AI systems can accelerate the acquisition of technical knowledge, software development,

security.

The danger extends far beyond warfare. Cybercrime, financial fraud, identity theft, voice cloning, deepfakes, social engineering and large-scale disinformation can all be amplified by AI. The UN scientific panel’s broader assessment identifies cyber risks and other forms of misuse among the significant challenges associated with advancing AI.

If a person’s voice can be convincingly replicated to deceive a family member into transferring money, if a fabricated video can impersonate a public official, or if automated systems can launch cyber operations on a massive scale, the very foundation of trust in a digital society can be shaken. The problem is therefore not simply that machines may

trated in a handful of countries or giant private corporations, technological capability could become an even more decisive source of economic and strategic power. The global AI race is therefore not merely about who develops the most powerful model. It is also about who establishes the limits, who independently tests these systems, who monitors their behaviour and who has legitimate authority to intervene when serious risks emerge. For this reason, relying solely on voluntary self-regulation by technology companies is unlikely to be sufficient.

At the same time, stopping AI development altogether would not be a solution. The same technology has enormous potential in cancer re-

“The real question is no longer whether AI will become powerful. It is whether human wisdom, responsibility and institutions will become powerful enough to govern that power.”

- Lalit Gargg

without clearly defined boundaries and mechanisms for human intervention.

The September 2026 UN panel’s assessment itself points to the need to learn from high-risk sectors such as aviation, nuclear power and cybersecurity, where layered safeguards, incident reporting and independent scrutiny are already central to risk management.

Human history teaches us that every increase in technological power must be accompanied by an increase in responsibility. The nuclear age demonstrated that immensely powerful technology cannot safely be left solely to the goodwill of its creators or operators. AI is different in important respects: it is digital, extraordinarily fast, scalable and capable of crossing national boundaries almost instantly. Its safety framework, therefore, must also be global. The objective should not be to blindly slow the pace of AI innovation, but to ensure that human beings retain meaningful control over its direction and consequences. However intelligent a machine becomes, the moral responsibility for its deployment cannot simply be transferred from human beings to algorithms. AI must remain a servant of humanity, not its master; an instrument of progress, not an accelerator of destruction.

Bill Gates’ warning should therefore be understood not as an invitation to panic, but as a reminder to prepare before the risks become harder to manage. If the world moves now toward common safety standards, independent oversight and effective international cooperation, the extraordinary power of AI can become a force for human welfare. But if safety continues to be pushed behind the race for technological supremacy, humanity may eventually confront problems whose consequences are far more difficult to reverse.



analysis, design and decision-making. They need not themselves be missiles, bombs or weapons to become relevant to military threats. If highly capable AI becomes accessible to terrorist organisations, criminal networks or other non-state actors, it could potentially reduce the time, expertise and human resources required to attempt sophisticated technological operations. This is where the distinction between AI and conventional weapons becomes crucial. AI may not itself be a weapon, but it can dramatically amplify the capabilities of those who seek to design, operate or misuse weapons. Therefore, AI safety can no longer be regarded merely as a concern for the software industry; it has become an issue of national and international

become more intelligent; it is that the cost of deception and manipulation may fall dramatically while its scale rises exponentially.

For India, this concern is especially significant. Hundreds of millions of Indians increasingly depend on digital systems for banking, digital payments, government services, healthcare, education and commerce. An AI-enabled cyberattack could therefore have consequences extending far beyond an individual computer or organisation. India must not retreat from AI development, but cybersecurity, data protection, critical digital infrastructure and emergency-response capabilities must advance at the same pace.

The challenge is also geopolitical. If control over advanced AI becomes concen-

search, drug discovery, scientific innovation, education, disaster management and productivity. The UN’s scientific assessment recognises both the extraordinary opportunities and the significant risks associated with AI. The world therefore does not need an “AI shutdown”; it needs “responsible AI development.”

What is required is a robust global safety architecture: minimum international safety standards, independent testing of high-risk AI systems, mandatory monitoring in critical applications, meaningful human oversight, strong cybersecurity protocols, transparent incident reporting and systematic information-sharing among nations. AI systems capable of taking significant autonomous actions should not be allowed to operate

IN THE PUBLIC EYE: EVALUATING THE ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF ICONS IN YOUTH DRUG PREVENTION

Young people do not learn only from classrooms, textbooks and parents. They also learn from the people they watch, admire and follow. Celebrities, sportspersons, entertainers, influencers and other public figures can have enormous cultural influence, particularly through social media. With such influence comes an important ethical question: Should public figures accept a greater responsibility in preventing drug abuse among young people?

The answer begins with recognising the power of visibility. A celebrity’s words, lifestyle and public behaviour can reach millions of people within minutes. Young followers may imitate clothing, language, habits and attitudes associated with their favourite personalities. This does not mean that celebrities are solely responsible for young people’s choices, but their influence can contribute to the social environment in which those choices are made.

Drug abuse is not merely an individual problem. It can affect families, education, employment, physical health, mental well-being and community safety. Young people may encounter substances through peer pressure, curiosity, stress, social environments or misleading online content. Prevention therefore requires more than warnings. It requires accurate information, supportive families, responsible schools and accessible professional help.

Public figures can contrib-



ute positively by using their platforms to communicate clear, evidence-based messages about the risks associated with drug use. Instead of glorifying substance use as fashionable, rebellious or glamorous, influential personalities can promote healthy lifestyles, responsible decision-making and constructive ways of dealing with stress.

Sportspersons have a particularly visible role because young people often associate athletic achievement with discipline and healthy living. Artists and entertainers can also use their popularity to encourage creativity, fitness, education and meaningful social participation. Digital influencers can reach audiences that traditional awareness campaigns sometimes struggle to engage.

However, ethical responsibility does not mean demanding perfection from public figures. Celebrities are individuals with private lives, and their personal struggles should not become an excuse for public humiliation. If a public figure has experienced addiction or recovery, sharing that experience responsibly may even help reduce stigma and encourage people to seek treatment. The focus should be on education, recovery and prevention rather than sensationalism.

The media also has a responsibility. Repeatedly por-



traying drug use through glamour, controversy or entertainment can unintentionally make harmful behaviour appear attractive. Responsible reporting should avoid unnecessary sensationalism and should provide context about risks, treatment and support services.

Parents and educators remain central to prevention. A celebrity’s message cannot replace conversations at home or guidance at school. Young people need safe environments in which they can discuss peer pressure, anxiety, curiosity and difficult experiences without immediately fearing judgment or punishment. Open communication can make it easier for them to seek help before experimentation develops into serious substance-related problems.

Governments, schools, healthcare professionals, community organisations and public figures can work together on prevention campaigns. Such campaigns

should be age-appropriate, scientifically informed and connected to real support systems. Simply telling young people to “say no” may be insufficient if they do not know where to turn when they or a friend are already struggling.

There is also a broader ethical principle: influence should be accompanied by responsibility. The larger the audience and the stronger the connection with young followers, the greater the opportunity to promote constructive behaviour. This is not a legal demand for celebrities to become moral authorities; it is a social expectation that people with extraordinary public influence consider the possible consequences of the messages they amplify.

Young people need role models, but they also need critical-thinking skills. They should learn that popularity does not automatically make a behaviour safe, and that a celebrity’s lifestyle is not nec-

A BROADER ETHICAL PRINCIPLE

The larger the audience and the stronger the connection with young followers, the greater the opportunity to promote constructive behaviour.

essarily a model for healthy living. Schools can help students understand advertising, social-media influence and the psychology of imitation so that admiration does not become unquestioning imitation.

Celebrities cannot solve the problem alone, but they can either strengthen or weaken the culture surrounding it. By using their visibility carefully, supporting evidence-based prevention, avoiding the glamorisation of harmful substance use and encouraging young people to seek help, public figures can turn their influence into a positive social force.

Quick Read

Northeast woman harassed, friends assaulted at Delhi hotel

NEW DELHI

A woman from the Northeast was allegedly harassed and her friends assaulted at a five-star hotel in Delhi, police said. The incident reportedly involved three men, identified as Divyanshu, Gaurav and Mohit. The accused were later identified and booked at Chanakyapuri police station, according to police. The case concerns allegations of harassment against the woman and an attack on her friends at the hotel. Police have initiated action against the accused following the complaint. Further details regarding the circumstances of the incident and the investigation were not immediately available. The case has drawn attention to allegations of harassment and violence involving guests at a prominent hotel in the national capital.

12 buses gutted in major fire at Mumbai depot

MUMBAI

Twelve new buses were destroyed in a major fire at the Brihanmumbai Electric Supply and Transport (BEST) undertaking's Anik bus depot in central Mumbai on Monday evening. No injuries were reported in the incident. A civic official said at least four fire engines, five water tankers and other firefighting vehicles were rushed to the depot after the blaze broke out. Firefighters brought the flames under control after more than an hour. Eyewitnesses reportedly heard blasts at the spot as thick black smoke could be seen from a distance. The cause of the fire was not immediately provided.

Boy stabbed to death after argument while playing

GURGAON

A minor argument between two children while playing turned fatal in Sector 56 after one allegedly attacked the other with a sharp-edged weapon on Sunday evening. The injured child suffered a wound near his heart and died during treatment at a hospital. Police said the children knew each other and were playing at Ashiana Flats around 7 pm when an argument broke out. During the scuffle, one allegedly attacked the other with a sharp object. The accused juvenile was taken into custody and sent to a juvenile home. A case was registered at Sector 58 police station on the complaint of the deceased's father, Yamin. The exact circumstances and weapon used are being investigated.

Delhi distributes bicycles to Class 9 girl students in Janakpuri



MP announces free coaching for competitive exams

MP unveiled youth-focused initiatives offering free coaching, higher research scholarships, advanced technology labs, startup funding and more opportunities ahead of Youth Year 2027.

BHOPAL

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Tuesday announced free coaching for competitive examinations in government colleges across all districts, a hike in research scholarships, and new technology facilities while inaugurating the CM Youth Conclave-2026 at Lal Parade Ground. Yadav said scholarships for research scholars would rise from Rs 16,000 to Rs 25,000 per month. He also announced state-of-the-art Artificial Intelligence and advanced computing laboratories in government colleges and a Rs 5-crore Idea Fund to support innovation and startup ideas among young people. The Chief Minister further announced that Madhya Pradesh Public Service Commission examinations would be conducted twice a year, giving aspirants more

opportunities to appear. He said 2027 would be observed as Youth Year, with the government focusing on employment opportunities and recruitment to government posts. During the conclave, Yadav interacted with young people and launched registration for the Madhya Pradesh-Seva First-Innovation Challenge under the Seva Sankalp Abhiyan-2026. He also visited an exhibition highlighting initiatives related to higher education and technological development. Speaking to reporters, he said the conclave was organised to seek suggestions from young people as preparations for Youth Year 2027 continue. Yadav said the upcoming Youth Year would create greater opportunities through employment-oriented courses and help young people move towards self-reliance.



He added that these efforts would also enable the youth to contribute to the development of Madhya Pradesh and the country. The announcements covered education, examinations, research, technology, innovation and employment, reflecting the government's focus on expanding opportu-

Initiative at a glance

1

Research scholarship increased to ₹25,000/month

2

AI and advanced computing labs in colleges

3

₹5 crore Idea Fund for startups

4

MPPSC exams to be held twice a year

5

2027 to be observed as Youth Year

IIT Bombay to review exam misconduct rules

MUMBAI

IIT Bombay is likely to hold an emergency Senate meeting this week to discuss proposed changes to rules for students accused of examination misconduct, following the September 18 death by suicide of second-year BTech student Sahil Wakode. The institute has prepared a draft after reviewing its existing procedures, according to an email sent to students by the dean on behalf of director Shireesh Kedare. The draft will be discussed by the Senate before any final decision is taken. Wakode was allegedly found with a mobile phone during a mid-semester examination on September 18. IIT Bombay initially said he had used the phone to upload the question paper on ChatGPT and seek

“The deterrent actions for unfair means in the exam are reviewed, the first draft is ready for further discussion and decision in the emergency senate next week.”

IIT BOMBAY DEAN email to students

answers, but later withdrew that statement as the inquiry continued. He died later that day in his hostel room, prompting student protests and questions about disciplinary procedures. The institute has reviewed the “deterrent actions” used in unfair-means cases and prepared a first draft for discussion. Alongside the examination review, IIT Bombay is planning measures to strengthen student welfare.

Dharmendra Pradhan seeks six-laning, underpasses and flyover

SAMBALPUR

Sambalpur MP Dharmendra Pradhan has urged Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari to expedite several highway infrastructure and road-safety projects in western Odisha, citing rising traffic movement linked to industrial, commercial and mining activity. Pradhan has sought the widening of the existing four-lane Sambalpur-Angul-Cuttack corridor to six lanes, along with two-lane service roads on both sides to improve local connectivity and ease traffic movement. The BJP MP has also requested priority approval for four underpasses on NH-55 at Jindal Road, Jara-pada, Jeranga and Charmal. The proposed infrastructure is intended to improve road safety along the busy Angul-Sambalpur stretch, where heavy commercial and mining vehicles share the



highway with local commuters and pedestrians. Pradhan also highlighted safety concerns at Sambalpur City Railway Station Square on NH-53, where railway passengers frequently cross the highway amid heavy traffic. He has sought expedited approval and construction of a flyover at the location to provide safer pedestrian movement and improve traffic flow. The proposed measures are aimed at strengthening connectivity between western Odisha and major industrial and commercial centres while addressing safety concerns on some of the region's busiest highway stretches.

HRTC union threatens statewide chakka jam from Oct 8

SHIMLA

The Himachal Road Transport Corporation (HRTC) Drivers and Employees Union have threatened a statewide chakka jam from October 8 if the management fails to act against officials facing corruption allegations and address pending service demands. Union president Mansingh Thakur said the organisation had submitted a complaint and documents alleging that an HRTC station officer in Chamba was involved in extortion and financial irregularities. Thakur alleged that the officer collected money from conductors, was linked to irregularities involving a Rs 3,525 bill and allegedly took Rs 75,000 from employees. He also referred to an



alleged Rs 37 lakh scam and claimed the officer had previously faced a vigilance inquiry. Despite management assurances and a committee being formed, the union alleged no action had been taken yet. It also claimed that employees were allegedly being intimidated and questioned why disciplinary action was stricter against drivers and conductors than against senior officials. The union has set Wednes-

INDIA bloc protests in Hyderabad, seeks CEC resignation

HYDERABAD

Telangana Congress leaders, along with leaders and workers of other INDIA bloc parties, staged a protest outside the Collectorate office in Hyderabad on Tuesday, demanding the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar. Congress leader Motha Rohith alleged that democracy was being undermined and accused Kumar of working in favour of the BJP and attempting to remove eligible voters from electoral rolls. He said the Congress and other INDIA bloc parties were protesting across the country over the issue. Rohith said the protesters were also demanding Kumar's arrest and announced further demonstrations. He said the parties would gather with the public to besiege Lok Bhawan on October 8 and hold a large-scale protest in Delhi on November 1. The Hyderabad protest came as the opposition



Telangana Congress and INDIA bloc workers protested in Hyderabad, accusing the CEC of undermining democracy and demanding his resignation.

INDIA bloc staged a demonstration in New Delhi on Tuesday, marching from Parliament towards the Election Commission office at Nirvachan Sadan. The protesters raised slogans demanding Kumar's resignation. Lok Sabha Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi and Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra were stopped from entering the Election Commission office complex.

IN FOCUS

Chakka jam

HRTC union threatens statewide strike from Oct 8

Corruption

Union seeks action against Chamba station officer

Overtime

Five months' payment remains pending

Work hours

Union opposes proposed 48-hour roster

Escalation

Chamba shutdown on Oct 8, statewide strike from Oct 9

ter, arguing that drivers and conductors should maintain an eight-hour daily duty schedule without being required to work longer hours on subsequent days.

Delhi HC stays FSSAI Campa energy label order

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday stayed Food Safety and Standards Authority of India directions requiring Reliance Consumer Products Ltd (RCPL) to remove the “Energy Drink” descriptor from its Campa Energy Drink – Gold Boost product. Justice Amit Mahajan stayed the June 30, 2026 FSSAI order and a July 17 communication directing food safety commissioners across States and Union Territories to enforce it. The company had challenged both directions before the High Court. The court granted interim protection after noting that FSSAI had issued the directions without first serving RCPL a show-cause notice or giving it an opportunity to present its case. The company argued that the action breached principles of natural justice, which require affected parties to receive a fair hearing before administrative decisions are taken. The stay will remain in force while

the proceedings are pending. The dispute concerns the use of the term “Energy Drink” for beverages containing caffeine. FSSAI had issued its June 30 direction to manufacturers over descriptions used for certain high-caffeine beverages, following which RCPL approached the High Court to challenge the action concerning its Campa product. During the hearing, the court also questioned the regulator about the procedure followed before issuing the direction and observed that it was “never too late” for the authority to correct the issue. The matter is significant because other beverage companies have also raised similar challenges before the Delhi High Court against FSSAI directions concerning the “Energy Drink” descriptor. The court's interim order keeps the June 30 direction, July 17 communication and enforcement steps stayed while RCPL's challenge remains pending before it for the moment.

EMPOWERING GIRL STUDENTS

Delhi distributes bicycles to Class 9 girl students in Janakpuri

NEW DELHI

Delhi Education Minister Ashish Sood on Tuesday distributed bicycles to Class 9 girl students at two government schools in Janakpuri under the Vidya Vahini Yojana, with 581 students receiving bicycles. Students from Government Sarvodaya Kanya Vidyalaya

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DID YOU KNOW?

The Delhi government plans to provide bicycles to all 1.4 lakh girls studying in Class 9 across the city. Nearly 18,000 girls have received bicycles so far.

A-Block and Government Girls Senior Secondary School A-Block were among

beneficiaries. The initiative is aimed at making school travel easier, safer and more convenient for girls. Sood said the bicycle represents freedom, self-reliance and independence, allowing students to travel to school and nearby places without depending on family members. He also urged mothers to encourage their

daughters to ride independently. The minister highlighted education and infrastructure measures being undertaken by the Delhi government. Two new foot-over bridges have received approval to address traffic and child-safety concerns on Pankha Road near C-1 and Jeevan Park Som Bazaar.

Under the DEEV Project, student teams receive grants of Rs 20,000 for innovations such as drones, smartwatches and apps. Sood also pledged to completely rebuild the 50-year-old school building during the government's current five-year tenure. Under the Madan Mohan Malaviya Education Mission.

Quick Read

Indian sailor injured in Black Sea vessel attack

BLACK SEA

A commercial vessel carrying three Indian nationals was attacked in the Black Sea, leaving two foreign nationals dead and several crew members injured, the Embassy of India in Romania said.

All three Indian crew members were confirmed safe. One Indian sailor suffered injuries and was taken to a hospital in Romania for treatment. The vessel, MV ROYAD MAMMADOV, was attacked in the Black Sea, following which injured crew members were transported to Romania.

Ambassador Manoj Mohapatra spoke with the crew at Constanta County Hospital. The Indian mission said it remained in contact with hospital authorities and was providing assistance to the injured sailor.

Woman attacked with acid after rejecting marriage

BALOD

A 22-year-old woman was attacked with acid in Chhattisgarh's Balod district on Monday evening, allegedly after she rejected a marriage proposal, police said. Two 20-year-old men have been arrested in connection with the attack. The accused were identified as Yash Kumar Sonkar and his school-time friend Karan Kunjam. Police said the woman, who was preparing for competitive examinations, was attacked while walking home after studying at a library.

Her condition was reported to be stable, and she is undergoing treatment.

Nearby residents heard her screams, rushed to help and informed her father, who is a policeman. Further investigation is underway into the incident and the alleged motive.

Gauhati University student death accused injured in police firing

GUWAHATI

Asif Ali, 26, the key accused in the death of Gauhati University student Nimisha Thakuria, was injured in police firing in Guwahati on Tuesday after allegedly attempting to escape from custody.

Asif was admitted to Gauhati Medical College and Hospital with two bullet injuries near his right ankle.

The accused was in eight-day police custody, which was scheduled to end on Tuesday, and was due to be produced before a court. Police alleged that he attempted to flee while in custody, prompting the firing.

His claim that she died by suicide remains part of the investigation and has not been established as the official cause of death.

Rahul accuses Centre, CEC of undermining democracy

Rahul climbs atop barricades, takes centre stage of stir against CEC; claims Oppn was attempting to protect the Constitution.

NEW DELHI

The protest march by the Opposition MPs to Election Commission headquarters in here took an unusual turn on Tuesday when the Leaders of the Opposition (LoP) Rahul Gandhi and Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra climbed atop the barricades, demanding CEC Gyanesh Kumar's resignation.

Earlier, the police detained opposition lawmakers, including Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka, as they tried to make their way into the EC office.

The MPs marched from Parliament House complex towards the EC, but were stopped by police on Parliament Street, where they sat on a dharna demanding Gyanesh Kumar's resignation.

Opposition MPs carried cut-outs depicting Kumar in an RSS uniform and raised slogans, including "BJP hai CEC hai", "Vote chor, gaddi chhod" and "Democracy not for sale".

Rahul said the opposition was attempting to protect the Constitution and demanded that the police allow him to continue his protest.

In an X post, he said, "Gyanesh it's done bro. Time to resign". He accused PM Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah and CEC Gyanesh Kumar of undermining democracy.

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CPI MP P Sandosh Kumar said opposition MPs were prevented from proceeding despite the presence of several security forces.

The protest is part of the Opposition's broader "Save Democracy" campaign against the Election Commission and

the SIR exercise.

The controversy intensified after reports claimed that two Election Commissioners had raised objections during the SIR process, while the ECI maintained that its decisions were unanimous. The Opposition has also questioned

There will be action against them. None of them will be spared, be it PM Modi, Home Minister Shah, RSS chief Bhagwat or CEC Gyanesh Kumar. What has been done to our country is treason. Nobody is going to escape."

— Rahul Gandhi Leader of Opposition, Lok Sabha

Yet another attempt to relaunch Rahul: BJP

The BJP on Tuesday slammed the I.N.D.I.A. bloc MPs' march to the Election Commission demanding CEC Gyanesh Kumar's resignation, claiming that it was yet another attempt by the Congress and its allies to create anarchy and relaunch Rahul Gandhi. Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said through this march, they are "venting their frustration" over their poll defeats by levelling baseless allegations against the constitutional bodies to malign their image.

‘Strong democracies built on dialogue, diverse views’

NEW DELHI

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Tuesday emphasised that strong democracies are built on dialogue, diverse viewpoints and meaningful public participation.

Speaking at the Silver Jubilee celebrations of the Goa Legislative Assembly building, Birla said democracy is strengthened when there is space for both agreement and disagreement, and when diverse perspectives are incorporated into the legislative process.

"India's democratic strength has been built on the ability of its institutions to accommodate diverse opinions and viewpoints", Birla said.

Referring to India's growing stature on the global stage, Birla said the country's democratic experience and commitment to constitutional values have strengthened its voice internationally.

"Under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, India is contributing to finding solutions to global challenges while drawing upon the civilisational ethos of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam," Birla said.

He said the true strength of democracy must ultimately be reflected in the way people's expectations and aspirations



are translated into policies, laws and effective governance.

Birla also highlighted the special responsibility of elected representatives in smaller states such as Goa, where there is close interaction between representatives and citizens. He urged public representatives to remain sensitive to the aspirations, difficulties and challenges faced by their constituents and work towards resolving them promptly.

Stressing the role of technology in strengthening democratic engagement, Birla said it can significantly improve public understanding of legislative processes by enabling citizens to access information on rules, laws, policies, legislative debates and the work of committees.

He called for greater transparency and accessibility to deepen the connection between legislatures and the people.

Tribal students detained, taken out of Mumbai

MUMBAI

Tribal students who marched from Nashik to Mumbai demanding better facilities in schools and hostels were detained at the Maharashtra Congress headquarters and taken out of the city on Tuesday.

Around 200-300 students had been staying at Tilak Bhavan after police denied them permission to protest at Azad Maidan.

Their demands include an independent probe into the deaths of students at tribal schools, including three girls who died of snakebite at a school in Gadchiroli.

On Tuesday, police guarding Tilak Bhavan stopped the students from leaving as they prepared to depart. They were subsequently put on private buses and driven out of Mumbai.

Despite being taken out of Mumbai, they vowed to return to the city on October 25 to continue pressing their demands.



Rajnath launches Surya to strengthen navy reach

India launched its first indigenous fleet support ship, Surya, strengthening naval endurance and advancing the country's maritime self-reliance.

VISAKHAPATNAM

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday launched Surya, India's first indigenous fleet support ship, at Hindustan Shipyard Ltd in Visakhapatnam, marking a major step in a ₹19,000-crore programme to strengthen the Navy's reach and endurance.

Surya is the first of five fleet support ships being built for the Navy. Measuring 225 metres in length and 32 metres in width, the vessels will replenish warships at sea with fuel, water, ammunition and stores, allowing naval units to remain deployed for longer periods without returning to harbour.

Hindustan Shipyard is expected to deliver Surya next year, followed by the remaining ships at intervals of about 10 months.

Singh also laid the keel of the fifth fleet support ship and inaugurated an upgraded slip-



IN FOCUS	
■ ₹19,000 crore: Cost of the fleet support ship programme	
■ Surya: India's first indigenous fleet support ship	
■ 225 metres: Length of the fleet support vessels	
■ 300-tonne crane: New Goliath crane inaugurated at HSL	
■ 2047: Navy's target for full self-reliance	

way and a 300-tonne Goliath crane at the public sector shipyard. The upgraded infrastructure will allow the yard to build and launch larger and more complex vessels, with the strengthened slipway capable of handling ships of up to 45,000 deadweight tonnes.

"India needs strong maritime capability. Our goal is to go beyond self-reliance and become a global maritime

power," Singh said. He said the launch of Surya represented an achievement, while the keel laying and new infrastructure reflected growing capability.

The Navy currently operates four fleet support ships commissioned between 1996 and 2011 and requires additional vessels as its fleet expands and responsibilities in the Indian Ocean region increase.

Cabinet approves integrated authority for transport planning

NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Tuesday approved the creation of an Integrated Transport and Logistics Authority (ITLA) to bring roads, railways, ports, aviation, waterways and urban mobility under a unified planning framework.

ITLA will prepare a National Transport Master Plan with a horizon of at least 10 years and assess short-term sectoral and annual plans against long-term requirements.

It will technically appraise government infrastructure projects costing Rs 500 crore or more, monitor their progress and conduct post-implementation assessments to measure whether investments deliver the intended benefits. Financial appraisal will continue through existing mechanisms.

Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the

The requirement of logistics is increasing. Practically, if GDP grows by 7%, the logistics requirement grows by 10%."

— Ashwini Vaishnaw, Union Railway Minister

authority would help infrastructure planning keep pace with rising demand.

The authority will establish a National Transport Data Repository bringing together information from GSTN e-way bills, FASTag, Vahan, railway systems, GPS-based platforms and urban traffic management systems. The government said integrated data would support freight-flow analysis, origin-destination studies, project monitoring and evidence-based planning.

The move builds on the Centre's multimodal infrastructure strategy, including PM GatiShakti and the National Logistics Policy.

Amit Shah to lead Seva Jyoti Yatra in Gurugram

GURUGRAM

Union home minister Amit Shah will attend the 'Seva Jyoti Yatra' in Gurugram on October 7 as the chief guest, as part of the nationwide Seva Sankalp Abhiyan. Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini will preside over the programme, which begins at 10am at Maharana Pratap Swarn Jayanti Udyan, also known as Leisure Valley.

The event is expected to draw participants from Faridabad, Palwal, Nuh, Rewari and Hajaraj districts. Following the main programme, a torch march will be organised across the four assembly constituencies of Gurugram district as part of the campaign.

Gurugram deputy commissioner Uttam Singh reviewed preparations during a meeting with officials at the Mini Secretariat on Monday. Departments concerned were directed to coordinate closely to ensure smooth traffic movement and prevent inconvenience to residents and

SEVA JYOTI YATRA	
WHEN	October 7, 10am
WHERE	Leisure Valley, Gurugram
PRESIDES	CM Nayab Singh Saini
THEN	Torch march across four constituencies

commuters during the programme.

Officials were also instructed to make adequate security arrangements along the march route and provide necessary parking facilities for visitors. The administration is taking steps to ensure the programme and subsequent march are conducted smoothly.

The Seva Sankalp Abhiyan is being observed from September 17 to October 17, with activities focused on service, public awareness, participation and development. The Seva Jyoti Kalash Yatra is also being organised as part of the campaign.

Rijiju attacks Rahul Gandhi over Election Commission protest

NEW DELHI

Union Minister Kiren Rijiju on Tuesday launched a sharp attack on Congress leader Rahul Gandhi over the INDIA bloc's protest march towards the Election Commission in Delhi, accusing the opposition of spreading "anti-India" narratives and targeting constitutional institutions.

The remarks came as opposition leaders marched towards the Election Commission, where police stopped the protesters. Gandhi later staged a sit-in near the Commission's office and said he was protesting to protect democracy.

Rijiju criticised Gandhi's political approach and took a direct swipe at his family background, saying India had changed and that being born into a particular family did not automatically entitle anyone to become Prime Minister. "The country has changed. Just being born into a particu-

lar family does not mean you will become the Prime Minister," Rijiju said.

He accused the Congress of repeatedly questioning constitutional institutions and promoting narratives that, according to him, were against India's interests.

The minister said people no longer accepted the idea that political leadership was determined by family lineage. He argued that India was moving towards becoming a developed country and that political positions should be earned through public support and performance.

The INDIA bloc's protest was centred on concerns related to the Election Commission and electoral issues.

Gandhi remained at the protest site and said the opposition was standing up for democratic values. The Congress maintained that its protest was aimed at raising concerns about the functioning of electoral institutions.

RBSE EXAMS TWICE ANNUALLY

Rajasthan board to hold Class 10 exams twice



NEW DELHI

The Rajasthan Board of Secondary Education (RBSE) will conduct Class 10 board examinations twice a year from the 2026-27 academic session, giving students an additional opportunity to improve their performance and reducing examination pressure.

Under the revised system, the first examination will be

THE HIGHER SCORE COUNTS

FIRST EXAM	SECOND EXAM
60 February-March 2027, compulsory for all students	70 May-June, optional: improve up to three subjects
compulsory for all Class 10 students and is expected to be held in February-March 2027. Students who qualify in the first examination will have the option of appearing	
for a second examination, expected to take place in May-June.	
The second examination will allow students to improve their marks in up to three sub-	

jects. Students who pass the main examination can use the additional opportunity to improve their performance without having to wait for another academic year.

The final result will be prepared by considering the higher marks obtained in each subject across the two examinations. For instance, if a student scores 60 marks in a subject in the first examination and improves the score to 70

in the second, the final result will reflect the higher score of 70.

The new arrangement replaces the existing supplementary examination system and is intended to provide greater flexibility to students within the same academic year. The changes will apply from the 2026-27 session, with the first examination scheduled for the beginning of the new cycle.

Quick Read

Spain approves housing rules after election call

MADRID

Spain's government approved two new housing decrees featuring strict rent caps and temporary eviction bans. Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez defended the intervention, calling it necessary to protect vulnerable citizens from rampant real estate speculation. The move follows a parliamentary rejection that prompted Sanchez to call a snap election for November. Critics warn these rules will create legal uncertainty and slow down vital construction investments. Meanwhile, public protests over housing costs have surged across the country. The temporary measures will now face review by a reduced caretaker legislature.

New arrest made over UK airbase plot

LONDON

British counter-terrorism police arrested a 22-year-old man in London on suspicion of preparing terrorist acts. The arrest is tied to an ongoing security investigation surrounding the RAF Fairford airbase. Authorities took the suspect into custody in Westminster after searching a local property. This development follows previous arrests of six men in connection with the case. The security probe gained international attention after threats prompted the temporary removal of American bombers from the facility. Investigators confirmed that specialist teams are actively pursuing multiple lines of inquiry as the high-profile case continues.

Moscow drone attack leaves two dead

MOSCOW

A massive drone attack struck the Moscow region overnight, killing two people and injuring seven others. Ukrainian forces targeted the area with hundreds of flying drones. Local officials confirmed that dozens of homes and cars suffered heavy damage during the intense air raids. Military bloggers reported a huge fire at a major fuel storage hub, which supplies oil to local airports. Air defense teams shot down most of the incoming devices. Meanwhile, rescue workers continue clearing rubble and restoring lost power supplies to affected neighborhoods as tensions in the ongoing conflict remain high.

Russia reports 'no plague' in lab death

MOSCOW

Health authorities in Russia have confirmed that tests on individuals who came into contact with a deceased Siberian laboratory worker have come back clear of any plague infections. The announcement follows global concern sparked by the sudden death last week of a 28-year-old woman who worked at a specialized research facility in the Irkutsk region. Officials initially placed a local hospital under quarantine and isolated roughly 200 people as a precaution while investigating the cause of death, which was initially attributed to an unconfirmed form of pneumonia. The country's consumer safety and health watchdog stated that extensive medical testing found no dangerous microorganisms connected to the woman's laboratory work inside her body.

BRAZIL BALLOT: BOLSONARO RIDES RIGHT-WING WAVE

FROM HOUSE ARREST, A BARRED 71-YEAR-OLD JAIR BOLSONARO ORCHESTRATED AN ASTONISHING CONSERVATIVE POLITICAL EARTHQUAKE ACROSS BRAZIL.

BRASILIA

Brazilian politics has witnessed a dramatic political twist as right-wing forces surged forward in a high-stakes weekend vote. Even though he was completely barred from running, former leader Jair Bolsonaro emerged as the undeniable force driving a major conservative wave across the country.

From his enforced confinement under house arrest, the 71-year-old watched his eldest son secure a massive upset in the presidential first round against current leftist leader Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva. The surprising electoral outcome has completely upended political expectations, placing the conservative movement in a commanding position ahead of the decisive runoff vote later this month.

Candidates running under the banner of the right-wing Liberal Party swept legislative races at every level. Beyond the presidential contest, voters handed victories to four other members of the prominent political family, including Senate seats for the former president's wife and another son, alongside lower house wins for two more relatives. Political experts noted that such a sweeping family triumph is unprecedented in modern democratic history.

This sweeping legislative success has dramatically shifted



power dynamics in the capital. The conservative party nearly doubled its presence in the upper house, achieving a historic high that hasn't been matched in decades. Analysts suggest this formidable legislative backing puts potential legal relief and amnesty for the elder Bolsonaro firmly on the political horizon as the new lawmakers prepare to take office.

Meanwhile, the race for the presidency moves toward a

Election highlights

- **First Round Lead:** Flavio Bolsonaro secured the favorite spot for the upcoming second-round runoff on October 25.
- **Family Wins:** Four other Bolsonaro family members won public office, including Senate seats for wife Michelle and second son Carlos.
- **Party Growth:** The Liberal Party nearly doubled its Senate seats to 28, marking a historic legislative milestone.
- **Amnesty Talks:** A friendly new Congress could soon take up legal amnesty for the elder Bolsonaro.

28	4	Oct 25
Senate seats for the Liberal Party	more Bolsonaro family members won office	second-round presidential runoff

tense second-round showdown. Current leadership faces an uphill battle to rally enough support from eliminated conservative contenders to bridge the gap. As campaigns gear up for the final sprint, allies of the surging political dynasty hint that the former president could soon step back into a prominent public advisory role if his son successfully captures the nation's highest office.

passing along political insights derived partly from the pilfered BND material. While investigators have not publicly named the foreign services involved, initial reports from major German media outlets indicate that the case does not involve Russia.

Both suspects were scheduled to appear before a judge at the Federal Court of Justice following coordinated raids across multiple regions, including Berlin, Bavaria, and North Rhine-Westphalia. Current BND President Martin Jaeger emphasized that the agency initiated thorough internal inquiries as soon as suspicions arose, declaring that internal security allows for no compromises. Legal experts and parliamentary watchdogs have warned that if proven, the breach could severely damage international trust and intelligence-sharing partnerships with allied nations.

Ex-German intelligence chief arrested for treason

BERLIN

In a development that has sent shockwaves through Germany's security establishment, former Federal Intelligence Service (BND) president August Hanning was arrested. Federal prosecutors allege that the 80-year-old former spymaster is strongly implicated in treasonous espionage, obtaining state secrets, and attempted treason.

According to federal prosecutors, the investigation centers on a sprawling web of illicit information-sharing that spanned over a decade. Investigators claim that beginning around 2010, Hanning entered into an agreement with a former BND office manager—identified as Manfred D. under privacy guidelines—to continuously funnel classified intelligence. This principal co-suspect, who served as chief of staff to multiple successive BND presidents until March 2026, allegedly used his high-level access to supply Hanning with roughly 2,000 confidential documents. Many of these restricted files were earmarked strictly for internal use, including executive intelligence briefings and senior-level Chancellery security meetings.

Authorities state that Hanning utilized the leaked intelligence to support private consulting work and allegedly drafted an analysis for an officer of an unidentified foreign intelligence service. Furthermore, prosecutors maintain that Hanning maintained close contact with a representative of another foreign spy agency,



August Hanning's shocking arrest for decade-long espionage rocks security agencies, threatening international trust and high-level allied partnerships.

Will Puigdemont's return shake up Spanish poll?

BARCELONA

Exile is finally coming to an end for one of Spain's most polarizing political figures.

The nation's highest courts have cleared the path for a high-profile homecoming just as the country gears up for a tense snap election.

The legal breakthrough arrived on Tuesday when Spain's Constitutional Court ruled that a landmark amnesty law must apply to Catalan separatists, specifically resolving disputes over past embezzlement charges. Following this crucial decision, the Supreme Court officially lifted the active arrest warrant for self-exiled former regional leader Carles Puigdemont.

Puigdemont has lived abroad since fleeing to Belgium nearly a decade ago,

following an unapproved 2017 independence referendum that severely tested the nation's constitutional unity. Although lower courts had previously argued that his financial charges disqualified him from blanket pardons, the new judicial ruling strips away those legal roadblocks, allowing him to step back onto native soil without facing immediate detention.

The timing of this dramatic legal reversal introduces fresh unpredictability into Spanish politics. While public focus has largely shifted toward economic concerns, migration, and public security, the physical return of the separatist icon is expected to electrify political campaigns on both sides.

Political analysts suggest that while the separatist movement has lost some of its prior momentum, Puigdemont's presence could dramatically shift voter sentiment. As traditional parties prepare for a fiercely contested electoral battle, the unexpected homecoming promises to reignite fierce debates over national sovereignty, justice, and the future governance of the country.

Landmine blast sparks escalating inter-Korean tensions

SEOUL

Tensions along the heavily fortified Korean border have escalated sharply after Pyongyang issued a stern warning to its southern neighbor regarding recent accusations over a landmine explosion.

The diplomatic fallout stems from an incident on September 21, when two South Korean soldiers sustained severe injuries from an anti-personnel mine inside the Demilitarized Zone. A joint investigation conducted by Seoul and the United Nations Command concluded that the explosive device was recently planted by North Korean forces. Following these findings, the South Korean military demanded a formal apology and launched its own extensive mine-removal operations in the affected border sector.

North Korea's Foreign Ministry strongly rejected the accusations through state media, dismissing the joint investigation as a fabricated farce designed to justify hostile political maneuvers. Pyongyang

characterized Seoul's demands as a grave provocation and a direct violation of national sovereignty. State officials warned that any perceived intrusion across the border—even by a single millimeter—would trigger an immediate and forceful military response from border guard units.

This aggressive rhetoric echoes previous statements from high-ranking officials in Pyongyang, who have consistently dismissed demands for accountability. Relations between the two nations have deteriorated significantly since North Korea formally designated the South as a hostile state, abandoning decades of reunification goals and cutting off official channels of communication.

Military analysts warn that the exchange of fiery warnings and ongoing fortifications along the frontier heighten the risk of accidental clashes. As both sides dig in their heels, the technically active state of war between the neighboring nations continues to cast a shadow over regional security and stability.

Le Pen targets €140 billion spending cuts

PARIS

Far-right leader Marine Le Pen has significantly raised her proposed spending cuts in a bid to reassure jittery financial markets ahead of next year's high-stakes presidential race.

Addressing journalists, Le Pen announced plans to slash net spending by 140 billion euros by 2032. This figure marks a sharp increase from her previous target of 125 billion euros. The aggressive fiscal adjustment aims to bring France's budget deficit down to the European Union limit of 3% of economic output by 2030, easing massive pressure on national borrowing costs.

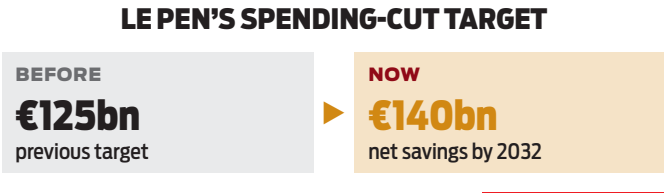
France has recently experienced a surge in bond yields to levels not seen since the early 2000s. Amid mounting political uncertainty and strained public finances, financial markets have reacted nervously to the country's economic trajectory. Current government leaders have introduced their own savings measures, but divided parliamentary opposition continues to complicate the path forward.

Le Pen stated that the majority of her proposed savings would be implemented within



We must take immediate action to stabilize our public finances and restore market confidence."

— Marine Le Pen



COST OF LIVING CLASH

Ohio midterm poll begin with early voting



MEDINA

Voters in Ohio lined up to kick off early voting in a midterm election that could reshape the balance of power in Washington. With crucial congressional and Senate seats hanging in the balance, the Midwestern state has quickly become a primary battleground.

Citizens head to the polls amid widespread public frustration over cost-of-living pressures. Stubborn inflation has pushed food, energy, and housing prices higher, deeply affecting everyday household budgets. Additionally, voter anxiety persists regarding ongoing foreign conflicts, leaving many concerned about long-term stability as they evaluate candidates from both major political parties.

All eyes are locked on a high-stakes special election for the United States Senate. Former Democratic Senator Sherrod Brown is staging a political comeback attempt, challenging Republican Senator Jon Husted in a fiercely contested race. Analysts currently rank the matchup as a

statistical toss-up, making it one of the most expensive and closely watched contests nationwide.

KEY ELECTION HIGHLIGHTS

Senate Showdown: Former Democratic Senator Sherrod Brown is challenging Republican Jon Husted in a high-cost special election race.

Narrow Majorities: Republicans currently hold a slim 53-47 Senate edge and a tight 218-214 margin in the House.

Toss-Up Districts: Two key Ohio House races—involving Representative Max Miller and veteran lawmaker Marcy Kaptur—are rated as tight toss-ups.

Voter Issues: Inflationary pressures, rising household expenses, and foreign policy concerns are driving voter turnout.

tionwide as Democrats look to chip away at the existing Senate majority.

At the same time, two vital races for the House of Representatives could prove decisive for control of the lower chamber, where the ruling party maintains a razor-thin advantage. In one closely watched district, a Republican incumbent facing local

As early ballots begin pouring in, both parties are pouring resources into the state to rally their bases and win over independent voters. The outcome in Ohio will serve as a major bellwether for the upcoming November elections, signaling whether national discontent will translate into a significant shift in congressional leadership.

VVS Laxman hails Iyer's leadership at Asian Games

VVS LAXMAN LAUDED SKIPPER SHREYAS IYER AS INDIA DEFEATED PAKISTAN BY 19 RUNS TO RETAIN ASIAN GAMES GOLD.

NEW DELHI

India head coach for the Asian Games, VVS Laxman, has praised skipper Shreyas Iyer for his leadership during the team's successful campaign at the 2026 Asian Games, describing him as a "player's captain" who makes teammates comfortable and leads by example.

India defeated Pakistan by 19 runs in the men's cricket final at Korogi Sports Park to retain the Asian Games gold medal. Abhishek Sharma's 61 off 28 balls and Tilak Varma's unbeaten 51 off 22 helped India post 211 for six. Pakistan responded strongly through Hasan Nawaz's 96 off 51 balls but finished on 192 for six.

Laxman said praised the skipper's preparation, tactical awareness and understanding of individual players. According to Laxman, Iyer studies the opposition's strengths and weaknesses before team meetings and places strong emphasis on fitness.

"He is a player's captain,"



Laxman said, adding that Iyer leads both with the bat and on the field. He also described the 31-year-old as tactically sharp and capable of staying ahead of opponents in the fast-paced T20 format.

Laxman identified India's adaptability as another major factor behind their success. The team faced difficult weather, travel problems and limited practice opportunities after arriving in Japan. Despite these challenges, the

Iyer handled his first major assignment as captain impressively, India's depth across age groups and formats puts the country in a strong position for the future.

- VVS Laxman, Indian former international cricketer

players maintained their fitness and prepared whenever training opportunities were available.

He also praised the organisers for successfully conducting the knockout matches

Match result and score

• **Match:** Men's Cricket Final at Korogi Sports Park (Asian Games)

• **Result:** India defeated Pakistan by 19 runs to retain the gold medal.

• **India's Innings:** 211/6 (Abhishek Sharma: 61 off 28 balls, Tilak Varma: 51* off 22 balls)

• **Pakistan's Innings:** 192/6 (Hasan Nawaz: 96 off 51 balls)

despite heavy rain. Laxman said the tournament highlighted India's growing depth and the effectiveness of its player development programmes.

The former India batter said the combined efforts of the selection committee, team management, Centre of Excellence and BCCI were helping nurture future talent. He added that India had a strong pool of players capable of contributing over the next five to 10 years.

LPU athletes drive India's Asian Games gold haul

NEW DELHI

Athletes from Lovely Professional University (LPU) played a major role in India's successful campaign at the 2026 Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, contributing significantly to the country's gold-medal tally. LPU athletes accounted for four of India's 21 gold medals, or about 19 per cent of the total, while several others won silver and bronze medals.

LPU had sent 58 Indian athletes and students to the continental event across 15 sports. Their performances included gold-medal-winning efforts in shooting, with Kamaljeet, Sahil Rajesh Jadhav and Chikitha Taniparthi among the university's successful athletes. The performances added to LPU's growing presence in India's international sporting programme.

Kamaljeet won gold in the 10m air pistol mixed team event, while Jadhav and Taniparthi were part of India's gold-winning archery performances. LPU's athletes also made an impact in other disciplines. Himanshu Dhillon won two silver medals in shooting, while Elavenil Valarivan secured silver in the women's 10m air rifle individual event

LPU Athlete Highlights

- **Total Representation:** 58 Indian athletes and students competing across 15 sports.
- **Gold Medals:** **Kamaljeet:** 10m air pistol mixed team event. **Sahil Rajesh Jadhav & Chikitha Taniparthi:** Archery events.
- **Silver Medals:** **Himanshu Dhillon:** 2 silver medals in shooting. **Elavenil Valarivan:** Women's 10m air rifle individual event and team event.
- **Bronze Medals:** **Satnam Singh & Salman Khan:** Men's double sculls (notable as India's first-ever Asian Games medal in this rowing event).
- **Total Medals:** 85 medals (21 gold, 27 silver, 37 bronze).
- **Final Standing:** 4th in the overall medal standings.
- **Gold-Winning Sports:** **Gold-Winning Sports:** Cricket, hockey, kabaddi, shooting, archery, athletics, boxing, wrestling, and golf.

and as part of the team.

Rowers Satnam Singh and Salman Khan added a bronze medal in the men's double sculls. Their result was notable as India secured its first Asian Games medal in the event. Overall, LPU student-athletes produced medal-winning performances across shooting, archery and

rowing during the Games. India concluded the Asian Games campaign with 85 medals, including 21 gold, 27 silver and 37 bronze, finishing fourth in the overall standings. The country's gold medals came from several sports, including cricket, hockey, kabaddi, shooting, archery, athletics, boxing, wrestling and golf.

Govindaraj welcomes enhanced cash awards for Asian Games medallists

BENGALURU

The Karnataka Government has substantially increased cash awards for sportspersons who win medals at the Asian Games, a move welcomed by Karnataka Olympic Association (KOA) President and MLC Dr. K. Govindaraj.

Under the revised scheme, gold medallists will receive ₹1 crore, while silver and bronze medallists will get ₹75 lakh and ₹50 lakh respectively. Earlier, the awards were ₹35 lakh for gold, ₹25

lakh for silver and ₹15 lakh for bronze.

Govindaraj thanked Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar and Deputy Chief Minister and Sports Minister Dr. G. Parameshwara for the decision, saying the enhanced incentives would encourage Karnataka athletes to perform better at international events.

"I am happy that the government has revised the prize money. It will encourage sportspersons and also increase their responsibility. I thank the government for this decision," Govindaraj said.

The government has also sanctioned ₹5 lakh each for 20 Karnataka athletes who participated in the Asian Games.

Govindaraj also welcomed the decision to provide direct recruitment to Group-B posts for Asian Games and Commonwealth Games medal winners.

Alexandrova stuns Noskova to reach Beijing quarterfinals

BEIJING

Russia's Ekaterina Alexandrova produced a dominant performance to upset fifth-seeded Czech player Linda Noskova 6-2, 6-2 in the China Open round of 16 on Tuesday. The victory sent Alexandrova into the quarterfinals in Beijing for the first time and set up an all-Russian clash with Mirra Andreeva. The 19th-seeded Alexandrova did not drop her serve during the match and controlled the contest against Noskova, the reigning Wimbledon champion. The victory was also the Russian's 22nd career win against a top-10 player.

At 31, Alexandrova has become the oldest first-time quarterfinalist at the China Open. She is also the third-oldest player to reach the tournament's last eight, behind Serena Williams and Shuai Zhang. The win secured Alexandrova's seventh WTA 1000 quarterfinal appearance and her second of the season, following her run in Toronto. She will now face compatriot Andreeva for a place in the semifinals.

Andreeva had earlier booked her quarter-final spot with a convincing 6-2, 6-2 victory over Daria Snigur in the round of 16. The young Russian impressed with her serving and defensive play against the aggressive Ukrainian.

Harmanpreet Kaur steps down as India captain across all formats

NEW DELHI

India women's cricket team captain Harmanpreet Kaur on Tuesday stepped down from captaincy across all three formats, bringing an end to her long tenure as the leader of the national side. She said she was ready to return to playing simply for her love of the game. Harmanpreet's announcement came after a BCCI review meeting in Guwahati to assess the team's performance and direction over the past few months. BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia chaired the meeting, which was attended by Harmanpreet, vice-captain Smriti Mandhana and head coach Amol Muzumdar.

The 37-year-old had led India's T20 team for nearly a decade after taking over as captain in 2016. She became the ODI captain in 2022 before being appointed the all-format leader in 2023.

"Today, I step down as captain of the Indian Women's Cricket Team across all formats," Harmanpreet wrote on Instagram. Describing the decision as difficult, she said her captaincy had involved years of memories, emotions, sacrifices and unforgettable moments. Harmanpreet leaves the leadership role after overseeing some of India women's cricket team's notable achievements. Under her captaincy, India won its maiden ODI World Cup in November last year. The team also secured a second consecutive Asian Games gold medal in the T20 format.

Reflecting on her decision, Harmanpreet said she was stepping down with a heart full of emotions but also with peace. She expressed confidence in the current team and said she believed the players were in a good place.

"Now, I'm ready to play for the love of the game again. Captaincy ends. The journey continues," she said. The BCCI is now expected to decide on Harmanpreet's successor. Her departure from the captaincy marks the beginning of a new leadership phase for Indian women's cricket, while she is set to continue contributing to the team as a player.



Ganguly appointed Delhi Capitals head coach

NEW DELHI

Former India captain Sourav Ganguly has been appointed head coach of Delhi Capitals ahead of the 2027 Indian Premier League (IPL) season. Ganguly replaces Hemang Badani, who was in charge when the Capitals failed to qualify for the playoffs in the last two seasons.

Ganguly, one of Indian cricket's most prominent figures, returns to a coaching role with the franchise as Delhi look to rebuild their campaign and challenge for a place in the playoffs. His appointment brings considerable experience from his playing and administrative career in Indian cricket.

The Delhi Capitals management will hope that Ganguly's leadership can help the team address its recent struggles and improve its performances in the upcoming season.

The franchise has endured disappointing results over the past two IPL editions, missing out on the playoffs under Badani.

Ganguly has previously been associated with the Delhi Capitals setup and has held key leadership responsibilities in Indian cricket after ending his playing career. His experience in managing players and understanding the demands of top-level cricket is expected to be important as the franchise prepares for the 2027 season.

The appointment comes as IPL teams begin planning their squads and support staff for the next edition. Delhi Capitals will now look to work with Ganguly on strengthening their approach and building a competitive side. The 2027 IPL will provide Ganguly with an opportunity to make an immediate impact in his new role. The Capitals will aim to end their recent playoff drought and produce a stronger campaign under their new head coach.

India seek progress proof against Uruguay challenge

KOLKATA

India will look to demonstrate their progress when they take on Uruguay in an international friendly, facing another strong opponent in their latest test. The match offers the Indian team an opportunity to measure its development against a side with a strong international pedigree.

Uruguay, coached by former India head coach Jorge Forlan, are expected to provide a formidable challenge. The visitors have quality players and considerable experience at the highest level, making the contest an important test for the Indian squad.

India have been working to improve their performances and build greater consistency in international football. The friendly against Uruguay will give the players a chance to put those improvements into practice against a physically strong and technically capable opponent.

The Indian players are expected to approach the match with confidence while remaining aware of the qual-



ity of their opponents. The coaching staff will also be keen to assess the team's organisation, defensive discipline and ability to create opportunities against a well-drilled Uruguay side.

Forlan's presence adds an interesting dimension to the contest, given his previous association with Indian football. His knowledge of the Indian game could also help Uruguay prepare effectively for the match.

For India, the result will be important, but the performance will offer a clearer indication of how far the team has progressed. Players will be keen to make an impression against a high-profile opponent and strengthen their claims for regular places in the national side.



India among 7 bidders for 2036 Olympics

LAUSANNE

India is among seven countries that have expressed interest in hosting the 2036 Olympic Games, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) said on Tuesday. Germany, Hungary, Qatar, South Africa, South Korea and Türkiye are the other countries currently in continuous dialogue with the IOC over their bids.

The interested countries have been invited to present their hosting projects to the IOC's Future Host Commission in November. The proposals will be assessed on several technical and operational factors before the process moves towards the selection of a preferred host.

According to the IOC, the assessment will consider the venue master plan, athlete experience, funding strategy and the level of political and public support. The commission will also examine the countries' ability to deliver the Games and their plans for creating long-term benefits for host communities after the Olympics.

The IOC said no additional interested parties would be considered for the 2036 Games after October 31. This sets a deadline for countries seeking to enter the current stage of the host selection process.

India submitted its Expression of Interest to host the 2036 Olympics in 2024. The country has been pursuing the bid as part of its broader ambition to stage the world's biggest sporting event. The selection process was later halted following the appointment of new IOC President Kirsty Coventry. She said fresh feedback would be sought from IOC members with the aim of streamlining the process.

The preferred hosts are expected to be identified in 2028, while the final decision on the host city for the 2036 Olympics is expected around the middle of 2029.

