CITY HILIGHTS

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The Truth Speaks

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No more anonymous calls!

INDIA MANDATES CALLER NAME DISPLAY FROM NOV 1

NEW DELHI

The Government of India will make caller name identification mandatory for mobile users from November 1, 2026, to help people identify incoming calls from unknown numbers.

The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has urged telecom service providers to enable Calling Name Presentation (CNAP), which will show the caller's name along with the phone number by default on 4G and new technologies such as 5G networks.

The new system is designed to enhance caller identification and assist users in identifying legitimate calls from potentially fraudulent calls. The DoT order has made it necessary for telecom operators to display names using subscriber information stored in their databases. However, the rollout for 2G and 3G networks, as well as landline connections, will be considered separately.

How will the new caller ID system work?

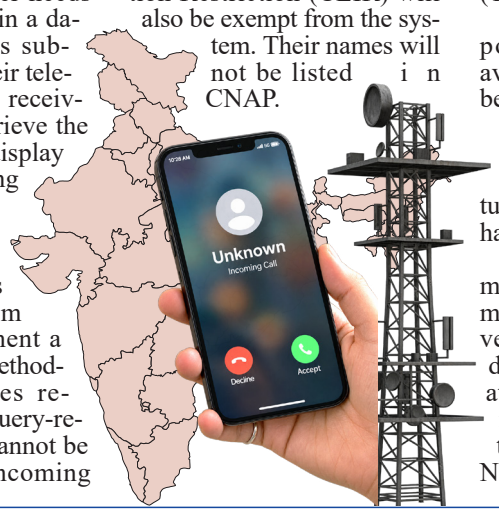
When a call arrives, the recipient's phone will show the caller's phone number and name. If the number is saved in the recipient's contacts, the saved name will be displayed, the DoT order said. If the number is not saved, the name the caller entered in the telecom operator's system will appear.

For international calls, the screen will show "International Call". For the system to operate, each telecommunications service provider needs to create and maintain a database that connects subscribers' names to their telephone numbers. The receiving operator will retrieve the necessary data and display it during the incoming call.

Will CNAP affect user privacy?

The DoT order has called for the telecom operators to implement a security-by-design methodology. Caller names retrieved through the query-response mechanism cannot be retained after the incoming call ends.

Subscribers who have enabled Calling Line Identification Restriction (CLIR) will also be exempt from the system. Their names will not be listed in CNAP.



Can businesses display a different caller name?

Businesses and bulk connections could be allowed to use a different name from the one found in the operator's subscriber database for display purposes. However, the name must be supported by a registered trademark or a trade name registered on the Goods and Services Tax (GST) portal.

It is the operator's responsibility to check the preferred name and supporting documents. Subscribers who want to update their business name displayed in the results will need to make a request.

Why is the govt introducing CNAP?

The mandate comes after the trials of 4G and 5G networks in recent months. It also incorporates recommendations by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) in February 2024.

TRAI agreed to DoT's proposal for making CNAP available by default in October 2025.

This was in contrast to its initial proposal, which suggested that the service be turned on only when the user has requested it.

The government plans to make caller identification more widely available by leveraging verified subscriber data stored by telecom operators, rather than relying on names saved in phone contacts, with the rollout on November 1, 2026.

CNAP mandate in a nutshell

How it works: Incoming calls will display the caller's registered name—pulled directly from official KYC records—alongside their phone number.

Automatic activation: The service will be enabled by default for all eligible users without requiring a separate request.

Network limitations: The initial rollout applies strictly to 4G and 5G networks. Implementation for 2G, 3G, and landline (PSTN) networks will be reviewed at a later date.

No app required: Unlike third-party caller ID tools, CNAP operates at the network level and does not require installing an app or uploading your contact list.

Business and international calls:

- International calls will carry an 'International' tag.
- Commercial and bulk callers can display a preferred trade or brand name, provided it is registered with the GST portal or the Trade Marks Registry.

Privacy protections: Names of users who have activated the Calling Line Identification Restriction (CLIR) facility will remain hidden.

What CNAP does not do?

It does not provide crowd-sourced spam warnings, block scam calls automatically, or work on internet-based/WhatsApp calls. Apps like Truecaller may still offer spam-flagging features that CNAP does not replace.

Kambala, Tulu Nadu tableau to feature in Mysuru Dasara: CM

The state govt has added coastal traditions to the annual festivities, while the CM also addressed concerns over electoral roll revision.

MANGALURU

Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Thursday said that coastal Karnataka's traditional sport Kambala and a tableau representing Tulu Nadu would be part of this year's Mysuru Dasara celebrations, highlighting the state government's efforts to showcase the region's rich cultural heritage.

Speaking to the media at the airport, Shivakumar said the state's cultural traditions and regional identities were being given prominence during the grand Dasara celebrations in Mysuru.

He said the government was organising the state festival in Mysuru, with the Vijayadashami programme scheduled for October 21. Representatives of Tulu Nadu would also participate in the celebrations.

Recalling the invitations he had received over the years to visit Kudroli Sri Gokarnanatheshwara Temple during Dasara, Shivakumar said former union minister Janardhana Poojary had been inviting him to the celebrations for several years. He added that he had visited the temple during the festival last year.



Kambala's cultural significance

Kambala is a traditional buffalo race associated with the coastal districts of Karnataka, particularly the Tulu-speaking region. The sport is deeply rooted in the agrarian and cultural traditions of Tulu Nadu. Its inclusion in Mysuru Dasara would bring a distinctive coastal Karnataka tradition into the State's flagship festival. The proposed Tulu Nadu tableau is also expected to showcase the region's cultural identity and heritage to a wider audience.

He said several new programmes had been introduced for this year's Dasara and contingents of the armed forces would participate in the procession. A new elephant would carry the golden howdah bearing Goddess Chamundeshwari.

The CM said he had earlier promised to take Kambala to Mysuru. Recalling the historical association of buffaloes with Dasara celebrations during the Vijayanagara period, he said the festival belonged to the entire state.

Petition filed in SC over SIR

On the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, he said a petition had been filed in the Supreme Court on Thursday concerning SIR data. "The right to vote is a right to life. We are fighting to protect it, and we will continue our struggle," he said.

DASARA CULTURAL SHOWCASE

- **October 21**: Vijayadashami programme
- **Cultural highlights**: Kambala & Tulu Nadu tableau
- **Procession**: Armed forces contingents to participate
- **Special attraction**: New elephant to carry the golden howdah
- **SIR**: Petition filed in Supreme Court over electoral roll data

On controversy over Rahul Gandhi asking him to travel in a vehicle during a protest march, Shivakumar alleged that some media outlets and BJP leaders had portrayed the incident as an insult.

INDIA bloc petition: SC puts ECI on notice

...asks petitioners to explain conduct.

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday issued notice to the Election Commission of India (ECI), Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar and Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi on a petition filed by Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi and other INDIA bloc leaders challenging alleged large-scale voter deletions and irregularities in the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.

A bench comprising Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi said the responses of the ECI and other respondents would be sought and the petitions tagged with similar matters already pending before the court.

"We would like to ask one of the petitioners about his conduct on the next date of hearing. Issuing notice does not mean that we are condemning anything. We are issuing notice. But about one of the petitioners, we will definitely entertain the issue," the bench said.



The court clarified that the notice did not amount to a condemnation of any party. It also said the notice concerning one petitioner would be entertained provisionally, subject to an explanation of his conduct. The bench did not specify the petitioner it was referring to in this observation.

ECI announces special summary revision in 17 states, UTs amid anti-CEC stir

New Delhi: The Election Commission on Thursday announced that Special Summary Revision of electoral rolls will be conducted in 17 states and Union territories, including those where assembly polls are due next year. In a letter to chief electoral officers of these states and Union territories, including Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Manipur and Goa, the poll authority said January 1, 2027, will be the qualifying date. The Special Summary Revision (SSR) aims to enroll eligible voters, particularly young and first-time electors, correct electoral roll entries and improve the purity of voter lists. While the term of the 403-member Uttar Pradesh Assembly ends on May 22 next year, the terms of 60-member Manipur, 40-member Goa, 117-member Punjab and 70-member Uttarakhand assemblies end on different dates in March 2027. The Representation of the People Act, 1950, allows the Election Commission to hold polls "earlier than six months before the term expires".

What Rahul Gandhi's petition seeks?

Rahul Gandhi, along with Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and other INDIA bloc leaders, moved the Supreme Court on October 12, challenging the ECI's decisions relating to the SIR of electoral rolls.

Interim stay: An immediate pause or suspension on the nationwide Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.

Full record disclosure: Complete transparency and disclosure of files, agendas, minutes, notings, objections, and ECINET/ERONET access logs regarding decisions made by the Election Commission, including the initial order to start the SIR.

Independent audit & **committee**: The creation of an independent committee chaired by a retired Supreme Court judge (along with technical experts and eminent citizens) to audit voter deletions, database access, and Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) protocols.

Constitutional & legal scrutiny: A judicial review to examine whether the ECI's actions violate Article 324 of the Constitution, the Chief Election Commissioner Act of 2023, and established Supreme Court precedents.

Safeguards and form corrections: Directives to prevent voter deletions without prior notice, action against officials for statutory violations, and ensuring online Form-6 aligns strictly with the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960.

'Nobody can browbeat judiciary': SC notice to Rahul

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Thursday issued notice to Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav and others over their October 12 march to the apex court to file a petition concerning the Election Commission of India and Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar. During the hearing, Chief Justice of India Surya Kant orally observed that "nobody can browbeat" the court. "We are not sitting in ivory towers. We know what statements they make outside and what they say in Court," CJI Kant said. "We would like to ask one of the petitioners about his conduct on the next hearing date," the CJI added.

ALL SET FOR A NEW ROLE



Karnataka Governor-designate Sudha Yadav being welcomed by Deputy Chief Minister G Parameshwara and Minister KH Muniyappa upon her arrival at the Kempegowda International Airport in Bengaluru on Thursday.

Prez accepts resignation of Union Minister Murugan

New Delhi: President Droupadi Murmu on Thursday accepted the resignation of Union minister L Murugan, her office said.

Murugan, who resigned as the Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs on Tuesday, said in a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi that he wanted to return to Tamil Nadu to strengthen the BJP in the state. "The President of India, as advised by the prime minister, has accepted the resignation of Dr L Murugan from the Union Council of Ministers, with immediate effect, under clause (2) of Article 75 of the Constitution of India," a communique issued by the Rashtrapati Bhavan on Wednesday said.

Israel bars Pak pilots, crew from entering its airspace

Jerusalem: Following the alleged hijacking attempt of a flydubai flight to Tel Aviv on September 30, reports said that Israel barred pilots and cabin crew from around 31 countries, including Pakistan, from serving on flights entering its airspace.

The directive follows the alleged hijacking attempt in which Indian Captain Smit Machchhar was injured while foiling the suspected plot.

The ministry had informed foreign airlines about the restrictions on October 1. On September 30 a flydubai flight was diverted to Saudi Arabia after its Omani co-pilot attacked Captain Machchhar and allegedly attempted to crash the plane.

QUICK READ

34 kids killed as school roof collapses in Peshawar

PESHAWAR

At least 34 children, most of them below the age of 13, and a teacher were killed and over 40 people injured when the roof of a private school collapsed in Peshawar, the capital of Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, on Thursday, police said. The owner of the three-storey school has been arrested. The roof was poorly constructed and the owner was operating the institution as an education trust. A total of 110 children were enrolled at the school and 30 students were present in classrooms on the upper floor when the roof collapsed, police added. According to Lady Reading Hospital (LRH) spokesperson Muhammad Asim, 30 students, including six girls, and a lady teacher were killed in the incident. Over 40 people, including 20 students, were also injured, he said. An emergency was declared at the hospital to treat the injured, Asim said, adding that all the children killed in the incident were aged 13 or mostly younger.

4 workers killed in dye factory blast in Gandhinagar

GANDHINAGAR

Four workers were killed in a blast at a factory in Chhatral GIDC Phase-4 in Gujarat's Gandhinagar district on Thursday afternoon, police said. The incident occurred at Kovika Dyes & Intermediates, a manufacturer and exporter of dyes located within Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation, said inspector J J Gadhavi of Kalol Taluka police station. The explosion took place during pipe-fitting work near a boiler vessel. Preliminary findings suggest the pipe may have burst due to pressure, triggering an explosion, Gadhavi said. The official identified the deceased workers as Vinodkumar Nandlal Singh (42), Teda Dehari (18) and Sikandar Lakhan Dehari (40), residents of Jharkhand, and Laxman Meena from Udaipur. The FSL will collect samples and conduct tests to determine whether inflammable substances were involved or if there was any negligence, SP Ravi Teja Vasamsetty said.

'ALL MAJOR POINTS SETTLED'

First tranche of India-US trade pact locked: Goyal

Legal drafting underway; insists on edge over rivals.

NEW DELHI

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Thursday said the first tranche of the India-US bilateral trade agreement had been finalised and was undergoing legal drafting, expressing hope that the process would be completed soon.

He said the agreement could be operationalised once India secured a comparable or competitive advantage over its peer countries.

"US bilateral trade agreement's first tranche has been finalised and it is going through final contours, the legal drafting, and we hope to be able to finalise that soon and operationalise that once we get the comparable advantage or competitive advantage over our peer countries," Goyal said at the SRCC Centenary Conclave in New Delhi.

He said his latest remarks on the agreement were consistent with his previous statements. "My comments on the US-India pact are consistent and exactly what I've said yesterday and what I said a week ago and what I said three months ago. So nothing new in that," he said.

Also on Thursday US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor said the "big items are done" in the negotiations and expressed confidence that both sides would finalise the pact. Speaking at the Bloomberg New Economy Forum, Gor described the negotiations as moving at an "incredible pace" and said the two sides were "very close to landing it".



> The "big items are done" in the negotiations and expressed confidence that both sides would finalise the pact.
>
> - Sergio Gor, US Ambassador to India

IN-SHORT

Current status
The text of the first tranche is locked and passing through legal vetting.

Core goals
India seeks preferential market access, reduced tariff friction, and tariff stability for exporters.

Next steps
The agreement will be formally signed & operationalised once legal drafting finishes and India confirms a clear competitive advantage over peer countries.

Diplomatic context
The update comes just ahead of an upcoming visit to India by US Secretary of State Marco Rubio to discuss broader commercial and energy ties.

Quick Read



EPFO extends September return filing deadline to October 31

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has extended the deadline for employers to file electronic challan-cum-returns (ECRs) for September 2026 from October 15 to October 31, allowing additional time following a revision in the wage ceiling. The wage ceiling was increased from Rs 15,000 to Rs 25,000, effective September 17. Consequently, employers must calculate contributions to the Employees' Provident Fund, Employees' Pension Scheme and Employees' Deposit Linked Insurance Scheme using the applicable wage ceilings for the respective periods. Meanwhile, eligible establishments seeking retrospective regularisation of exempt provident fund trusts under the EPFO's Amnesty Scheme, 2026, have until December 28 to submit applications.



SH-35 traffic improves, but school reopening will test gains

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Traffic movement on State Highway 35 around Varthur and Gunjur has improved following renewed efforts to address roadwork delays, but the relief may be temporary as schools remain closed for Dasara holidays. Inventure Academy CEO Nooraine Fazal said 58 of 62 buses reached school before 7.30 am on October 14, compared with 38 on October 9. Average journey time fell to 55 minutes from 74 minutes. However, congestion continued near Marathahalli Bridge, Panathur Road and Kadubisanahalli. Route R53 to Attibele took two-and-a-half hours. Traffic police and contractors have stepped up measures to ease congestion and resume road repairs.

Kumaraswamy dares Kharge, demands judicial probe

The sting operation controversy escalated on Thursday as Kumaraswamy protested party workers' arrests and demanded an independent judicial investigation.

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Union Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy on Thursday challenged Home Minister Priyank Kharge to order a judge-led inquiry into the sting operation controversy, alleging political interference and questioning the arrest of his party workers.

Kumaraswamy visited the Bengaluru Police Commissioner's office and protested the arrests of Janata Dal (Secular) workers in connection with the sting operation video. He demanded that the police question him directly instead of targeting his party workers.

"Our party workers have not indulged in such activities. Why are you arresting them? Question me directly. That is why I have come to the Commissioner's office," Kumaraswamy said.

> **"Our party workers have not indulged in such activities. Why are you arresting them? Question me directly. That is why I have come to the Commissioner's office."**
>
> **– H.D. Kumaraswamy**
> Union Minister



He challenged Kharge to initiate a judicial probe and dared the Home Minister to arrest him, accusing him of lacking the courage to act against him.

"I am not indulging in cowardly acts like him. I am speaking with courage. The fight has begun," Kumaraswamy said.

The Union Minister also released photographs purportedly showing Prashanth, who appeared in the sting operation video, with AICC general secretary Randeep Singh Surjewala and Rakesh Shetty. Kumaraswamy alleged that Prashanth was a rowdy-sheeter and demanded his immediate arrest. These allegations have not been independently established.

Taking aim at former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's government and Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, Kumaraswamy described Shivakumar as a "pioneer of sting operations". He also questioned how confidential discussions from Cabinet meetings were being leaked to the media.

Alleging that the controversy was diverting attention from the State's drought situation, Kumaraswamy called for a judicial investigation to establish the facts.

The controversy has intensified political exchanges between the ruling Congress and the JD(S), with the arrests and the circumstances surrounding the video emerging as key points of contention.

BMRCL begins soil tests for Metro Red Line

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) has begun geotechnical investigations on Sarjapur Road for the proposed 37.8-km Namma Metro Red Line connecting Sarjapur with Hebbal.

The soil testing will help engineers assess ground stability, soil characteristics and underlying rock formations before construction begins. The findings will guide decisions on foundation depth, structural design and construction requirements for elevated and underground sections.

"The study will provide essential information about soil stability, geological formations and other ground conditions along the route. These findings will guide decisions on foundation depth, structural design and the construction requirements for metro pillars, helping ensure the safety and stability of the infrastructure," a senior BMRCL official told The Hindu.

The proposed Bengaluru Metro Phase 3A corridor will cover major locations, including Hebbal, the Central Business District, Koramangala and Sarjapur. The 37.8-km alignment comprises 23 km of elevated track and 14 km underground, with the project's estimated cost revised to ₹25,999 crore.



However, the project is awaiting approval from the Union government. The Karnataka government has submitted the Detailed Project Report (DPR), but the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has said that the proposal remains under scrutiny, with no specific timeline for approval.

The Centre's decision will depend on the feasibility assessment and availability of financial resources under the Metro Rail Policy, 2017.

BMRCL has also undertaken a cost-reduction exercise in response to concerns over the project's expenditure, particularly the cost of underground construction. Changes to station designs, alignment and engineering specifications were examined to reduce costs without compromising operational requirements.

Once implemented, the Red Line is expected to strengthen connectivity between north and southeast Bengaluru, linking residential neighbourhoods, commercial centres and the city's information technology corridor.

Metro Red Line

Hebbal to Sarjapur
37.8 km
elevated
23 km
underground
14 km
estimated cost
₹25,999 cr

The geotechnical study will assess ground conditions and guide engineering plans for elevated and underground sections of the proposed corridor.

DGP Alok Kumar seeks correction in state's submission to SC

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Karnataka DGP (Prisons) Alok Kumar has urged the state government to correct its submission before the Supreme Court, disputing a claim that a CBI investigation is pending against him.

In a letter dated October 5 to Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh, Kumar sought urgent intervention, saying the submission opposing his appointment as head of a Special Investigation Team (SIT) was factually incorrect.

The Supreme Court on October 1 stayed the Karnataka High Court's September 21 order constituting the SIT to investigate alleged irregularities in Karnataka Public Service Commission (KPSC) recruitment. The state government had opposed Kumar's appointment, citing an alleged pending CBI investigation into telephone-tapping allegations from his tenure as Bengaluru Police Commissioner.

Kumar said the CBI had filed a closure report in the case, which was accepted by the CBI Special Court on February 13, 2024. He added that the complainant had not objected to the closure.



He also said the state government had decided in May 2023 that no departmental inquiry was necessary against him after examining his representation.

A show-cause notice and chargesheet issued on May 9, 2025, were subsequently quashed by the Central Administrative Tribunal chairman on October 14, 2025, following a split verdict at the tribunal's Bengaluru Bench. The state government challenged that order before the High Court, which declined to grant a stay, Kumar said.

"Therefore, as on today, no CBI investigation/enquiry or departmental enquiry or proceeding is pending against me in relation to the matter referred to before the Hon'ble Supreme Court," Kumar wrote.

He also clarified that he had neither sought appointment as SIT chief nor expressed a desire to lead the team. He asked the chief secretary to ensure that the government's affidavit placed accurate facts and relevant court records before the Supreme Court.

The record, as Kumar sets it out

- **MAY 2023** — State decides no departmental inquiry is needed
- **FEB 13, 2024** — CBI Special Court accepts the closure report
- **OCT 14, 2025** — CAT chairman quashes the show-cause notice and chargesheet
- **SEP 21, 2026** — High Court constitutes the SIT
- **OCT 1, 2026** — Supreme Court stays the SIT order
- **OCT 5, 2026** — Kumar writes to the Chief Secretary

Orange alert for six Karnataka districts as rain continues

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Karnataka is likely to receive thunderstorms and rain in several districts until October 19 under the influence of the northeast monsoon, with the Meteorological Department issuing an orange alert for six districts for Friday.

Shivamogga, Chikkamagaluru, Hassan, Kodagu, Mysuru and Chamarajanagar are under an orange alert for October 16, with heavy rain likely in parts of the Malnad and south interior regions. Udupi and Dakshina Kannada have been placed under a yellow alert.

According to weather expert C.S. Patil, a low-pressure area over the southwest Bay of Bengal is expected to influence weather conditions across Karnataka over the coming week.

On October 15, a yellow alert was issued for Bengaluru Urban, Bengaluru Rural, Tumakuru, Ramanagara and Chamarajanagar districts, where thunderstorms and lightning were likely in some areas.



For October 17, the yellow alert covers Belagavi, Dharwad, Gadag, Haveri, Uttara Kannada, Davanagere, Shivamogga, Udupi, Chikkamagaluru, Dakshina Kannada, Hassan, Kodagu and Mysuru.

On October 18, the alert will cover Belagavi, Bagalkote, Dharwad, Gadag, Haveri, Vijayanagara, Ballari, Uttara Kannada, Davanagere, Shivamogga, Udupi, Chikkamagaluru, Dakshina Kannada, Hassan and Kodagu.

Rainfall is expected to ease along the coast and in south interior Karnataka by October 19, although isolated parts of north interior Karnataka may receive moderate rain.

Bengaluru is also likely to receive rain during the coming week. Winds of 30–40 kmph are possible during thunderstorms.

The expected rainfall may bring down temperatures after recent highs of around 32 degrees Celsius in Bengaluru and 39 degrees Celsius in Karwar. Farmers have been advised to protect harvested and harvest-ready crops from rain-related damage.

Realtor shoots former driver near NICE Road bridge

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

An old personal rivalry allegedly led to a shooting near the NICE Road bridge close to Pillaganahalli on Wednesday evening, leaving a former car driver seriously injured after he was shot in the leg.

Real estate businessman Sampangi allegedly fired three rounds at Srinivas, alias Mental Seena, using his licensed firearm. The incident took place when Srinivas was travelling on a scooter. A case has been registered at Konanakunte police station.

According to preliminary police information, Srinivas had previously worked as a driver for Sampangi. However, following a personal dispute, he was dismissed from the job about a year ago. The two had reportedly been involved in frequent quarrels since then.

The rivalry had also led to a police complaint last month. Sampangi had approached Konanakunte police, alleging that Srinivas attacked him with a machete. An FIR was registered in connection with the complaint.



On Wednesday evening, Sampangi was travelling in a car with three other people when they allegedly intercepted Srinivas, who was riding a scooter near the NICE Road bridge. Sampangi is accused of taking out his licensed firearm and firing three rounds at Srinivas's leg.

The injured man was immediately shifted to a private hospital, where he is undergoing treatment. His condition was not specified in the initial report.

Konanakunte police visited the spot following the incident and initiated further investigation. Police are examining the circumstances surrounding the shooting, including the previous dispute and the complaint filed last month.

Further legal action is expected to follow the investigation. The allegations against Sampangi remain subject to police investigation and due legal process.

CULTURAL CELEBRATIONS

Durga Puja, Dandiya celebrations begin across Bengaluru

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Bengaluru's Bengali and Gujarati communities have kicked off a week of festivities, bringing together traditional rituals, cultural performances, regional cuisine and vibrant dance as Durga Puja and Dandiya celebrations began on Thursday.

> **"Durga Puja is the collective effort of hundreds of people — a coming together of several generations."**
>
> **— Kalyan Pathak,** media convener, NBCS

Festivities at venues across the city will continue until October 21, offering residents an opportunity to experience the traditions of Bengal and Gujarat during the Dasara season.

The North Bengaluru Cultural Samithi (NBCS) is celebrating its 49th Durga Puja at Mahalakshmipuram with the theme 'Shatadal', symbolising purity, spiritual awakening and harmony. The programme features special pujas, music, dance performances and Anandamela, a food fair offering Bengali delicacies.



"Durga Puja is the collective effort of hundreds of people — a coming together of several generations," said Kalyan Pathak, media convener, NBCS.

The Jayamahal Cultural Association is marking its 72nd Durgotsav with 'Sabekiyana – Tradition Relived'. On Maha Ashtami, October 19, Dhunuchi Naach, a devotional dance performed with incense-filled earthen censers, will be followed by Dollu Kunitha, Karnataka's traditional drum dance.

"Bringing these distinct traditions onto the same stage reflects Jayamahal's celebration of its Bengali heritage within the cultural life of Karnataka," said Anuradha Roy, president of the association.

At the ITI Grounds in K.R. Puram, the Jagriti Bangiyo Cultural Association is featuring women dhol players, known as Mahila Dhaki, from West Bengal.

"Our association decided to invite Mahila Dhaki so that we can empower and support them financially during peak seasons like this," said Pompi Ghosh, an association member.

Meanwhile, the Gujarati Samaj of Bengaluru is hosting Dandiya celebrations at Palace Grounds, featuring singer Bhoomi Trivedi and orchestras from across India. The programmes run from 8 pm to midnight.

"We have been celebrating Dasara through Dandiya for many decades," said Ashok Dani, chairman of the samaj.

The samaj will also host Dandiya Raas 2026 from October 16 to 18 at Vistar Resort in Electronic City, featuring traditional singers, orchestras and Garba.

Where to go

- **Mahalakshmipuram:** 49th Durga Puja by NBCS
- **Jayamahal:** 72nd Durgotsav
- **K.R. Puram:** Mahila Dhaki drummers at ITI Grounds
- **Palace Grounds:** Gujarati Samaj Dandiya, 8 pm to midnight
- **Electronic City:** Dandiya Raas, October 16-18

CH Observer

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Rampant civic neglect is plaguing Bengaluru's neighborhoods, turning vital walkways and hospital corridors into hazardous eyesores. From overflowing garbage piling up outside Milann Hospital in Kumara Park East and chronic trash accumulation near the BJP Head Office in Malleshwaram, to unchecked construction debris choking Sripuram's 3rd Main Road, residents face daily risks. This mounting infrastructure crisis demands urgent municipal intervention to restore basic safety and hygiene across the city.

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Unattended garbage piling up directly outside Milann Hospital along E Park Road in Kumara Park East, Seshadripuram, has raised severe health concerns for patients, visitors, and local residents navigating the busy medical corridor.



Unattended garbage has accumulated for weeks along the ground's compound wall next to the BJP Head Office on 12th Cross Road in Malleshwaram, creating an unsightly and unhygienic hazard for pedestrians and local residents.



Unchecked construction debris and household waste dumped directly in front of the SIP Abacus center on 3rd Main Road, Sripuram, Kumara Park West, Seshadripuram, has created an unhygienic eyesore, drawing intense frustration from local residents, students, and passersby navigating the neighborhood.

'100 KM OF WALKWAYS FREE OF OBSTRUCTION'

Bengaluru North City Corporation audits Kodigehalli Main Road, driving a massive campaign to clear pedestrian walkways by November 1.

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Stepping up efforts to reclaim public spaces and prioritize pedestrian safety, the Bengaluru North City Corporation (BNCC) has executed a rigorous footpath walkability audit along Kodigehalli Main Road. Led by senior municipal engineers alongside civic initiative coordinators, the inspection forms part of an aggressive campaign spearheaded by Corporation Commissioner Pommala Sunil Kumar to deliver 100 kilometers of obstruction-free, pedestrian-friendly walkways across the northern zone by November 1.

The high-level inspection team—comprising Zone 1 Chief and Executive Engineers alongside Walkaluru representative Arun Pai—covered a critical four-kilometer stretch spanning both sides of the thoroughfare from Kodigehalli Gate to Kodigehalli Village. The walkability audit was designed to evaluate the condition of physical infrastructure, identify transit bottlenecks, and catalogue hazards forcing pedestrians off sidewalks and onto dangerous vehicular lanes.

The audit team flagged multiple structural and utility-related obstructions hindering smooth movement. Key issues documented during the inspection included defunct or abandoned streetlight poles obstructing walkways, improperly aligned underground utility inspection chambers, and Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) manhole covers projecting significantly above the finished footpath surface level.

Additionally, the survey recorded hazardous elements requiring immediate utility coordination, such as redundant BESCOM electricity poles, misaligned optical fiber cable (OFC) junction boxes, exposed and dangling telecommunication wires, localized accumulations of solid waste, and broken, sunken concrete slabs creating uneven walking surfaces. Commercial encroachments by local shopkeepers and roadside vendors further compounded pedestrian difficulties along key commercial segments.

Following the audit, zonal engineering divisions were issued strict directives to execute immediate corrective work, rectify surface-level discrepancies, and coordinate with utility providers to relocate obstructive poles and cables.

The initiative aligns with the Corporation's broader administrative blueprint to overhaul pedestrian infrastructure and ensure universal accessibility across urban nodes. With the November 1 deadline fast approaching, BNCC authorities remain focused on completing remediation works on target, transforming vital neighborhood corridors into safe, clean, and truly walkable public spaces for Bengaluru residents.



Walkability audit findings

Ambition for November 1

The corporation is aggressively fast-tracking its infrastructure upgrade to ensure 100 km of sidewalks are fully accessible and cleared of hurdles ahead of next month's deadline.

Critical obstructions identified

The inspection team flagged multiple hazards, including unused streetlight and BESCOM poles, improperly aligned or raised utility and OFC chamber covers, and exposed optical fiber cables.

Encroachment crackdown

Officials noted widespread commercial encroachments by local shopkeepers and street vendors, alongside localized solid waste dumping and broken, sunken slabs creating uneven walking conditions.

Collaborative oversight

Conducted alongside NGO representatives, the walkability audit forms part of a larger civic framework designed to institutionalize public-private cooperation in urban planning across northern zones.

Prioritizing pedestrian safety

With field officials instructed to take immediate remedial action on the deficiencies uncovered along Kodigehalli Main Road, the civic administration aims to set a benchmark for walkable urban infrastructure. The ongoing drive underscores BNCC's commitment to transforming arterial and sub-arterial corridors into safe, accessible public spaces for all residents.

AI cameras deployed to clear garbage black spots in South B'luru

Bengaluru South City Corporation launched an AI-powered municipal initiative, deploying automated camera systems and a strict 10-day deadline to clear garbage black spots.

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

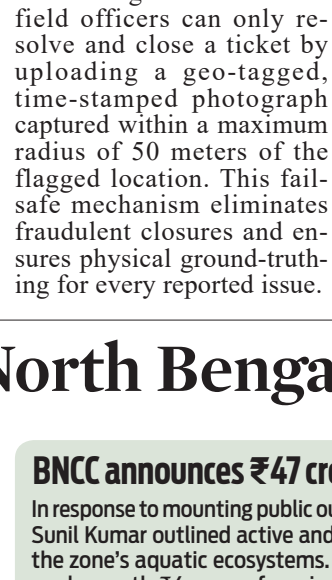
In a major technological leap toward automated urban governance, Bengaluru South City Corporation has officially integrated artificial intelligence into its municipal operations to detect, track, and resolve civic grievances. Spearheaded by Corporation Commissioner K.N. Ramesh, the civic body has launched a targeted initiative deploying AI-enabled camera systems to tackle persistent urban challenges, beginning with a strict 10-day deadline for field personnel to clear all garbage black spots and waste-related tickets identified during an extensive pilot survey.

The transformative municipal initiative has been rolled out in strategic collaboration with Chitragupt Urban Technologies Private Limited. Over the past month, the pilot project executed a comprehensive infrastructural survey covering 150 kilometers out of a total of 311 kilometers of arterial and sub-arterial roads within the South Zone jurisdiction.

The survey utilized specialized vehicles equipped with advanced AI cameras that autonomously mapped and recorded urban decay indices as they traversed the city streets. Without human intervention, the system successfully identified and cataloged a wide array of civic infractions, including dangerous roadway potholes, illegal footpath encroachments, scattered construction debris, unauthorized optical fiber cables, and unsightly garbage black spots. Each detected irregularity was automatically logged and assigned a unique problem ticket number, creating a centralized, data-driven inventory of localized civic bottlenecks.

To streamline the operational workflow and ensure accountability on the ground, the civic body has introduced the custom-built "Anveshak" mobile application. Designed specifically to manage the resolution of waste-related tickets, the app serves as a real-time digital dashboard for Junior Health Inspectors and municipal Marshals.

During a special orientation workshop held at the Corporation office for Marshals and health personnel, technical representatives from Chitragupt Urban Technologies demonstrated the app's rigorous compliance mechanisms. Under the new protocol, municipal personnel must log on to the app's dashboard, review assigned grievances, and visit the exact coordinates to execute remedial action. Crucially, closing a ticket requires strict adherence to digital verification: field officers can only resolve and close a ticket by uploading a geo-tagged, time-stamped photograph captured within a maximum radius of 50 meters of the flagged location. This failsafe mechanism eliminates fraudulent closures and ensures physical ground-truthing for every reported issue.



How a ticket is closed

1. **Log on** to the Anveshak app's dashboard
2. **Review** the assigned grievances
3. **Visit** the exact coordinates and take remedial action
4. **Upload** a geo-tagged, time-stamped photo taken within 50 meters of the flagged spot

2,000	1,000	10 days
tickets raised by the AI survey	about half: garbage and waste	to clear all 1,000

Quick-fix fails as Church Street sinkhole reappears

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Barely 48 hours after the Bengaluru Central City Corporation (BCCC) hastily patched up a road collapse on the city's iconic Church Street, the surface has caved in once again. The recurring structural failure has exposed the limitations of superficial municipal repairs, turning a localized road hazard into a broader debate on civic accountability and infrastructure maintenance in the city's premier commercial zones.

The initial crisis began when a heavy garbage compactor strayed onto Church Street—a high-footfall pedestrian corridor where heavy vehicles are strictly prohibited because the paving is engineered exclusively for light vehicles under 10 tonnes. The immense weight of the vehicle cracked the decorative cobblestone surface and triggered a sudden sinkhole. In the immediate aftermath, annual maintenance contractors rushed to execute a quick-fix remedy, merely swapping out the broken stone slabs without digging deeper to investigate underlying structural integrity or sub-surface damage.

This cosmetic approach inevitably failed. With foundational support compromised and heavy foot traffic resuming, the patched area collapsed a second time, prompting viral videos across social media platforms and forcing authorities to hurriedly barricade the hazardous stretch to safeguard pedestrians.

Municipal engineers investigating the repeat failure have now discovered a more critical underlying issue: the impact of the heavy compactor also ruptured a Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) pipeline running beneath the cobblestone grid. Civic officials noted that comprehensive, permanent engineering repairs cannot proceed until BWSSB excavates and replaces the damaged underground water supply line over the weekend. The incident has reignited public criticism over lax enforcement of vehicle bans on pedestrianized TenderSURE corridors and the reliance on temporary patches by civic contractors.



Ecological crisis grips North Bengaluru's rejuvenated lakes

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

As rapid urbanization pushes Bengaluru's infrastructure to its limits, the ecological health of water bodies across North Bengaluru has emerged as a major cause for alarm. Environmental activists, resident welfare groups, and conservation experts are warning that shrinking water surfaces, blocked stormwater inlets, and unscientific "soup bowl" lake designs are severely escalating flood risks while destroying critical habitats for resident and migratory wildlife.

The crisis is starkly visible at Venkateshapura Kere in Sampigehalli, a water body under the jurisdiction of the Bengaluru North City Corporation (BNCC). According to local activists and historical records from the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA), the lake's recorded extent has shrunk from 10 acres and 35 guntas in 2016 to just 6.35 acres today following controversial denotification processes. Residents report that blocked drainage inlets have severely compromised the lake's storage capacity, leading to severe localized flooding during heavy downpours, including compound wall collapses and submerged vehicles in adjacent apartment complexes.

Similar distress plagues Avalahalli Lake, where citizens have flagged rampant encroachments along connecting stormwater drains. The lake spans roughly 15 acres, and its conservation efforts are further hampered by fragmented multi-agency jurisdiction involving the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA), Singanayakanahalli Gram Panchayat, and the BDA, leaving local caretakers caught in bureaucratic red tape.

At the historic Hebbal Lake—a premier birding sanctuary—desilting and rejuvenation works have left the lake bed dry year-round, triggering deep anxiety among ornithologists and local naturalists over the displacement of native and winter migratory birds. Citizens have formally appealed to the Karnataka Environment Minister to mandate seasonal biodiversity and habitat assessments, cautioning against invasive construction projects and the proposed short tunnel road that threatens over 1,000 trees in the surrounding buffer zones.

Meanwhile, at the Yelahanka Puttenahalli Lake and Bird Conservation Reserve, completed sewage-diversion pipeline works by the BWSSB have failed to prevent degradation, as dense weed infestations choke the water surface in the absence of systematic clearance by civic authorities.

BNCC announces ₹47 crore remediation roadmap

In response to mounting public outcry, BNCC Commissioner Pommala Sunil Kumar outlined active and proposed interventions to salvage the zone's aquatic ecosystems. Pointing to ongoing improvement works worth ₹4 crore—focusing on inlets, outlets, and walkways across Agrahara, Thirumenahalli, and Singapura lakes—the corporation has unveiled a comprehensive ₹47 crore rejuvenation blueprint for 2026–27. The upcoming initiatives will prioritize sewage diversion drains, wetland desilting at Harohalli and Allalasandra, boundary fencing, and pathway upgrades. Furthermore, the corporation plans to install real-time water quality and water level monitoring systems, trash barriers, floating wetlands, and aerators across critical North Bengaluru lakes to restore ecological balance.

Quick Read



VTU, Vishwabharat Skill Institute sign MoU for student jobs

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Visvesvaraya Technological University (VTU) has signed an MoU with Vishwabharat Skill Institute (VBSI) to provide industry-oriented practical training and improve employment opportunities for engineering students. The agreement was signed on Thursday at the VTU Regional Office by Vice-Chancellor Prof. S. Vidyashankar and a delegation led by VBSI Director F.R. Singhvi. The initiative will train 3,000 students over three years in fields including artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, cloud computing, data analytics, industrial automation, electric vehicles and renewable energy. "More than 100 industry experts will voluntarily guide students, and the company has assured employment opportunities," Vidyashankar said. Registrar Prof. Prasad B. Rampure and other officials attended the event.

ED chargesheets five in ₹15-crore Ambedkar Corporation fraud case

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has filed a supplementary chargesheet against five people, including Ayub Syed, in an alleged ₹14.95-crore fraud involving the Dr B.R. Ambedkar Development Corporation (ADCL). Filed on October 5 before a special Prevention of Money Laundering Act court in Bengaluru, the chargesheet follows an FIR registered by the CBI's Anti-Corruption Branch. The ED alleged that a fake bank account was opened in the corporation's name at the State Bank of Mysore branch in HAL Second Stage using forged documents and another person's identity. Four fixed deposits worth ₹5 crore each were allegedly closed prematurely, enabling the diversion of ₹14.95 crore. The funds were reportedly routed through multiple bank accounts and withdrawn in cash to conceal their origin.

INDIA bloc to discuss SIR, voting rights at Karnataka meeting

Opposition leaders plan joint political, legal and public awareness initiatives amid concerns over electoral transparency and voter registration.

CH NEWS, BENGALURU



Opposition parties in Karnataka will meet on Friday to discuss concerns over electoral roll revisions, alleged voter deletions and coordinated efforts to safeguard voting rights.

The INDIA alliance will hold a state-level meeting in Bengaluru on October 16 to discuss its campaign against the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls and strengthen coordination among its constituent parties, the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) said on Thursday.

The meeting will be held under the leadership of state Congress president B.K. Hariprasad. Leaders of the CPI(M), CPI, CPI(ML) Liberation, All India Forward Bloc and Samajwadi Party, among others, are expected to participate, according to a KPCC press release.

Allegations that eligible voters' names could be deleted from electoral rolls and concerns about the functioning of the Election Commission are expected to feature prominently in the discussions.

The alliance will also consider joint political and legal action, along with public awareness programmes to inform citizens about electoral processes and voting rights.

Coordination between constituent parties at the state, district and grassroots levels will be another key agenda item. The meeting is intended to bring opposition parties together on a common approach to the revision exercise and related concerns over electoral transparency.

The KPCC said the discussions would focus on strengthening coordination among alliance partners and developing collective initiatives to safeguard voting rights.

The meeting comes amid political debate over electoral roll revision and demands for transparency in the process. The alliance's discussions are expected to shape its proposed campaign and coordination efforts across Karnataka.

INDIA bloc SIR meet

WHEN	Friday, October 16
WHERE	Bengaluru
LED BY	B.K. Hariprasad
ISSUES	SIR, voter deletions and voting rights
PLANS	Legal action, political coordination and public awareness

What is SIR?

Special Intensive Revision (SIR) is an exercise undertaken by election authorities to review and update electoral rolls. Such revisions can involve verifying voter details and determining eligibility for inclusion in the rolls. The INDIA bloc's Karnataka meeting will focus on concerns over alleged deletion of eligible voters, electoral transparency and the functioning of the Election Commission. Opposition parties are also expected to discuss legal and public outreach measures related to voting rights.

Drought losses could reach ₹60,000–70,000 crore: Parameshwara

The government is assessing more regions and preparing a comprehensive relief memorandum, with a delegation visit planned to New Delhi.



CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Karnataka has expanded its drought-hit list as the government prepares a final assessment of crop and other losses before seeking additional financial assistance from the Centre.

Deputy Chief Minister and Revenue Minister G. Parameshwara said nine more taluks had been declared drought-hit, taking the total to 226. The final memorandum detailing drought-related losses is expected to be ready within one or two days.

Taluks qualifying under Trigger-1 criteria will undergo ground-truthing, and more areas could be added if they meet the eligibility requirements. Otherwise, the current list will remain final.

Karnataka drought relief

Drought-hit taluks	226
Newly added	9
Initial loss estimate, ₹ crore	46,000
Possible final losses, ₹ crore	60,000–70,000
Potential central relief demand, ₹ crore	18,000–20,000

All-party delegation to Centre

Parameshwara said Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar had directed the government to take an all-party delegation to New Delhi to submit the memorandum. The government would approach opposition parties again despite their reluctance to participate. If they declined, the Chief Minister, Parameshwara and some ministers would seek meetings with the Prime Minister and concerned Union ministers to explain the situation and seek relief.

> **"The final relief demand will be determined after completing the assessment."**
> — **G. Parameshwara,** Deputy Chief Minister

Loss estimate may reach ₹70,000 crore

The state had initially estimated drought-related losses at around ₹46,000 crore, but the final figure could reach ₹60,000 crore to ₹70,000 crore.

"The final relief demand will be determined after completing the assessment," Parameshwara said.

He explained that compensation could not be sought for the entire loss because assistance must be calculated under National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) guidelines. Karnataka may seek ₹18,000 crore to ₹20,000 crore if losses reach ₹60,000 crore. Last year, the state sought around ₹18,000 crore against estimated losses of ₹49,000 crore.

Reservation verdict challenged

The government will file a special leave petition in the Supreme Court challenging the High Court verdict striking down enhanced reservation for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Further options, including placing the measure under the Constitution's Ninth Schedule, will be discussed by the Political Affairs Committee.

Parameshwara also said the Cabinet had neither discussed nor taken a decision on an investigation into the sting video case.

How relief is calculated

Karnataka's estimated drought losses and its demand for central assistance are separate figures. Under National Disaster Response Fund guidelines, only eligible losses can be included in the relief claim. The government must complete its assessment before finalising the memorandum. Last year, the state estimated losses at around ₹49,000 crore and sought approximately ₹18,000 crore from the Centre. This year's demand will depend on verified losses and applicable relief norms.

Namma Metro Pink Line inspection flags 36 safety, technical deficiencies

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The opening of the elevated Pink Line depends on rectification work and clearance from the metro safety regulator before passenger services can begin.



Pink Line safety check

DEFICIENCIES	36
RESPONSE	1–2 days
INSPECTED	Oct 6–8
REPORT	Oct 9
STRETCH	Kalena Agrahara–Tavarekere
OPENS AFTER	CMRS safety clearance

As many as 36 safety and technical deficiencies were identified on Namma Metro's Kalena Agrahara–Tavarekere stretch during an inspection by the Commissioner of Metro Rail Safety (CMRS).

In a letter, the CMRS, Southern Circle, directed Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Ltd (BMRCL) to submit an action-taken report and additional technical documents before the stretch is cleared for passenger operations.

The five-page report lists observations concerning civil works, electrical and traction systems, signalling and telecommunications, rolling stock and operational arrangements.

Fire safety, electrical faults flagged

The inspection found gaps in fire safety systems, malfunctioning lifts and damaged electrical earthing connections. Emergency evacuation arrangements and essential signboards at stations were also yet to be fully completed.

The report flagged defective earthing connections along the viaduct, damaged earth conductors, wear marks on rail surfaces and corrosion. Certain train-testing issues require a joint, detailed report from BMRCL and the original equipment manufacturers. Some documents certifying the trains' fitness for commercial operations were also found inadequate.

A senior BMRCL official said the corporation expected to respond to the observations within one or two days, Deccan Herald reported. Rectification work is under way.

BMRCL has asked the state government to decide on an inauguration date for the elevated line. Reports indicate that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been invited to attend the ceremony.

However, passenger services cannot begin until the CMRS grants the required safety clearance.

Bulk Form 7 applications escape scrutiny

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Bulk applications seeking deletion of voters' names in Belagavi, Bidar and Vijayapura have not triggered inquiries that could have led to penal action against applicants for allegedly filing false declarations, officials said.

The issue has triggered a political controversy, with the Congress government alleging attempts to remove genuine voters from electoral rolls through bulk objections. The government has sought scrutiny of the applications and action against those found violating election rules.

Under Section 31 of the Representation of the People Act, making a false declaration in connection with electoral rolls is punishable with imprisonment of up to one year, a fine, or both. However, in the three districts, the applications were either returned, withdrawn or rejected at the preliminary stage, leaving officials without grounds to proceed against the applicants.

Belagavi was the first district to report bulk applications seeking deletion of voters' names. Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Roshan said the submissions did not comply with Election Commission protocols.

"The rules require them to be submitted to the booth-level officer (BLO) through the booth-level agent (BLA). Hence, the forms were not accepted," Roshan said, explaining that the forms were returned and officials lacked material evidence to file a complaint.

In Vijayapura, Deputy Commissioner Anandh said no notices were issued because the bulk applications had been withdrawn. He added that the Election Commission's recent clarification on the number of Form 7 applications an individual could submit had provided clarity on bulk objections. Bidar Deputy Commissioner Shilpa Sharma said the electoral registration officer had rejected the bulk applications at the preliminary stage.

KARNATAKA RAINFALL DEFICIT

Karnataka records 32% rainfall deficit, highest since 1918

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Karnataka recorded a 32% rainfall deficit during the 2026 southwest monsoon, marking its steepest shortfall since 1918, according to India Meteorological Department (IMD) data. The deficit exceeded the 31% recorded in 2002, while the state had reported an 18% shortfall in 2023.

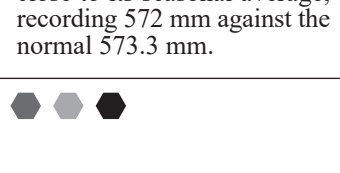
Between June 1 and September 30, Karnataka received 563.7 mm of rainfall against the normal 831.8 mm. The southwest monsoon season generally extends from June to September, and the deficit is calculated using rainfall recorded during these four months.

"The 32% deficit is a cause for concern, as it is among the most significant shortfalls recorded in recent years," said N. Puviarasan, director of the IMD in Bengaluru.

South interior worst affected

South interior Karnataka, comprising 17 districts, recorded the highest regional deficit at 36%. The region received 432.9 mm against the normal 678.4 mm.

North Karnataka, which includes 11 districts, recorded a 32% deficit, receiving 329.1 mm against the normal 480.8 mm. Coastal Karnataka, comprising three districts, reported a 28% shortfall, with 2,226.7 mm against the normal 3,093.9 mm.



Karnataka's monsoon deficits

Ramanagara records 87% deficit

Ramanagara recorded the state's highest district-level deficit at 87%, receiving just 59.2 mm against the normal 459.6 mm. Belagavi was the only district to receive rainfall close to its seasonal average, recording 572 mm against the normal 573.3 mm.

> *"The 32% deficit is a cause for concern, as it is among the most significant shortfalls recorded in recent years."*
> **N. PUVIARASAN** Director, IMD Bengaluru

The IMD attributed the below-normal southwest monsoon rainfall across India to El Niño and local weather conditions. These factors could also influence the northeast monsoon, raising concerns that Karnataka's rainfall deficit may persist through the year, according to reports.

The 1918 benchmark

Karnataka's rainfall deficit this year is among its most severe in more than a century. The state recorded a 47% shortfall in 1918, the highest cited in the report. The 32% deficit in 2026 has surpassed the 31% recorded in 2002. With El Niño and local weather conditions affecting monsoon patterns, the performance of the northeast monsoon will be important in determining whether the state's annual rainfall shortfall widens further.

Kristu Jayanti hosts meet on graphic narratives

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Kristu Jayanti University has launched a two-day national conference exploring how comics, graphic novels and visual storytelling reflect cultural transitions, bringing together more than 600 scholars, academicians and participants from India and abroad.

Organised by the Department of English, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, the conference began on October 15 and will conclude on October 16. Pro Vice-Chancellor Fr. Dr. Lijo P. Thomas presided over the inaugural session, while Janaki Vishwanath, founder and director of Antharbhaava Foundation, Bengaluru, delivered the inaugural address.

Vishwanath highlighted how visual storytelling can give voice to lived experiences and help society understand and respond to cultural change.

The first day featured keynote addresses by Dr. Priyanka Tripathi, associate professor at the Indian Institute of Technology, Patna, and Dr. Shriya Raina, assistant professor at Birla Institute of Technology and Science, Pilani.

Tripathi examined documentary comics through Ita Mehrotra's Uprooted (2025), while Raina discussed the presence and absence of representations in Hindi comics. A panel discussion featuring both speakers and graphic novelist and journalist Jai Undurti was moderated by Dr. Sreedevi Santhosh, head of the Department of English.

Paper presentations were conducted in online and offline modes, enabling participants from different countries to discuss graphic narratives in local and global cultural contexts.

The conference continues on October 16 with a keynote address by Dr. Sathyaraj Venkatesan of the National Institute of Technology, Tiruchirappalli, on graphic medicine and visual culture of care, followed by Undurti's session on comics and the city.

The event aims to promote interdisciplinary dialogue and open new avenues for research into visual storytelling and changing societies.

Quick Read

MLA Venkatesh urges students to pursue excellence through hard work

CH NEWS, PAVAGADA

MLA H.V. Venkatesh said that recognising and encouraging talented students would inspire them to achieve greater success in the future. He was speaking after inaugurating the 'Talent Award–2026' ceremony organised by the Kanyakaparameshwari Arya Vysya Sangha and G.S. Charitable Trust at Anjaneya Shetty Kalyana Mantapa in Pavagada. Congratulating students for their academic achievements, Venkatesh said education was the foundation of success. He encouraged students to set ambitious goals, work hard and remain focused on their studies to achieve their aspirations. During the programme, students who secured high marks in their examinations were felicitated and honoured for their performance. Former Municipal President Sudesh Babu, SSK Sangha President Anil Kumar, Ashok, Pramod Kumar, Prabhakar Gupta, Raghunandan, Atluru Naresh and others attended the event.

BESCOM to hold consumer grievance meeting on Oct 17

CH NEWS, CHIKKABALLAPURA

BESCOM will organise a consumer interaction meeting on October 17 at 3 pm at the sub-divisional offices within the Chikkaballapura division. The meeting will be presided over by the Executive Engineer (Electrical) and Assistant Executive Engineer (Electrical). Consumers under the respective sub-divisions have been invited to participate and raise grievances related to electricity supply. The meeting aims to provide consumers with an opportunity to present their concerns and seek solutions in accordance with the law. P.G. Ramesh Kumar, Executive Engineer of BESCOM, Chikkaballapura, announced the meeting through a press release and urged consumers to attend.

Hubballi dargah to host 14th annual Urs celebrations

CH NEWS, HUBBALLI

The 14th annual 'Urus-e-Qadri' celebrations will be held from October 19 to 21 at the Dargah Sharif of Hazrat Syed Shah Mohammad Mehmood Badsha Qadri Al-Hasaniwal-Hussaini, popularly known as Kesaramaddi Badsha Peera, in Pala village on P.B. Road. The event commemorates the revered Sufi saint, a descendant of Prophet Muhammad. The programme includes Quran recitation and Khatm-e-Zikr on October 19, Sandal Mubarak on October 20, and Urs Mubarak with a community feast on October 21. A Qawwali programme will follow Isha prayers on the final day. The celebrations will take place under the guidance of Al-Haj Hazrat Sayyid Shah Mohammad Tajuddin Qadri, the shrine's custodian. Organisers have invited people of all faiths to participate and partake in the community meal.

Contact: 8792273202 / 9686715504.

DC Ramya directs election officials to follow rules strictly

Ramya stressed that proper training and awareness, with PowerPoint presentations and election manuals, are essential for conducting elections effectively

CH NEWS, CHITRADURGA

Deputy Commissioner S. Ramya has instructed election officials and staff to perform their duties carefully and responsibly to ensure the smooth conduct of the Karnataka Legislative Council biennial election from the Karnataka South-East Graduates' Constituency.

She stressed that no lapses should occur during the electoral process.

She was speaking at a training programme organised at Tarasu Rangamandira in Chitradurga on Thursday for Presiding Officers (PROs), Assistant Presiding Officers (APROs), polling personnel and micro-observers ahead of the October 23 election. She said every stage, from polling to counting, was important and must be completed in accordance with election rules. Officials were asked to remain alert and prevent confusion at polling stations.

Ramya said proper training and awareness were essential for conducting elections effectively. Master trainers would use simple PowerPoint presentations to explain procedures, while participants were advised to listen carefully and study the election manuals available on the official website.



S. Ramya
Deputy Commissioner, Chitradurga

Chitradurga prepares for meaningful Kannada Rajyotsava celebrations

Deputy Commissioner S. Ramya has directed officials to celebrate Kannada Rajyotsava on November 1 in an organised and meaningful manner, showcasing Karnataka's history, art and cultural heritage. At a preparatory meeting held at her office on Thursday, she said the district-level celebrations would take place at the Police Parade Grounds. A grand procession will begin at Neelakanteshwara Temple at 7.30 am, followed by flag hoisting at 9 am. Committees have been formed to oversee cultural programmes, procession arrangements and reception. School and college students will participate in cultural events. Officials and representatives of pro-Kannada organisations attended the meeting.

Additional Deputy Commissioner B.T. Kumaraswamy explained the preferential voting system followed in the graduates' constituency election. Voters can rank candidates according to their preferences by marking 1, 2, 3 and so on. However, a vote is valid only when the first preference is marked correctly. Marking the number 1 against more than one candidate will make the vote invalid.

Kumaraswamy also stressed the importance of maintaining ballot secrecy and closely monitoring ballot boxes. He referred to previous instances of ballot papers appearing on social media after elections and instructed polling officials to prevent such incidents. Only the pen supplied by the Election Commission must be used for voting, and every voter's identity must be verified.

S. Nagabhushana, DIET Principal, ex-officio Deputy Director and master trainer, conducted the training session. Sub-Divisional Officer Dr. K.J. Kantaraj, Election Tahsildar Bibi Fathima, Chitradurga Tahsildar B.M. Govindaraj, polling officials and micro-observers attended the programme.

Chikkaballapura holds public hearing on industrial environmental concerns

CH NEWS, CHIKKABALLAPURA

A public hearing on environmental issues related to proposed industrial development in Chintamani taluk was held at Kanishettihalli village on Thursday.

The hearing was jointly organised by the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board, Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Board (KIADB) and the Chikkaballapura District Administration. Deputy Commissioner G. Prabhu presided over the session and heard the concerns, suggestions and grievances of farmers and residents.

People from Badagavarahalli, Maikalasonnenahalli, Kongathimmanahalli, Kagathi and Kanishettihalli participated in the meeting. These villages have been identified for industrial development, prompting residents to share their views on the proposed plans and related environmental concerns.

KIADB Joint Director Shivalingaiah, District Environmental Officer Meenakshamma and Tahsildar Sudarshan Yadav attended the hearing, along with hundreds of farmers and local residents.

Chikkaballapura invites applications for Kannada Rajyotsava honours

Applications are invited from district achievers for Kannada Rajyotsava honours on November 1. Applicants from fields including literature, arts, education, journalism, sports, medicine and social service can apply by October 26 at the Sub-Divisional Officer's office.

Preference will be given to Chikkaballapura residents with notable district- or state-level achievements. Except in sports and music/dance, priority goes to applicants aged 60 and above. Selection will consider social justice and regional representation. Applicants must have no criminal cases or complaints, SDO D.H. Ashwin said.

Koppal gears up for two-day Dasara Dandiya Utsav

CH NEWS, KOPPAL

Koppal MP K. Rajashekar Basavaraj Hitnal announced that the Koppal Dasara Dandiya Utsav-2026 will be held on October 17 and 18 at the Taluk Stadium as part of the Dasara celebrations. The two-day event is being organised by the Koppal District Athletics Association.

Speaking at a press conference on Thursday, Hitnal said Koppal and several other parts of Karnataka were facing severe drought conditions. He said the festival aimed to bring people together to worship Goddess Durga and pray for good rainfall, a prosperous harvest, the well-being of people and the prosperity of the land.

Traditional worship and cultural programmes

The Taluk Stadium will feature floral decorations and special lighting. Priests will perform Devi Puja and Maha Mangalarati according to traditional rituals. The cultural programme will include traditional and devotional songs performed by a music troupe. Events are scheduled to begin at 6 pm.

Special arrangements for Dandiya

Separate spaces have been arranged for women and couples to participate in Dandiya dances in a safe and organised environment. Dandiya sticks will be distributed to women free of charge.

Security and public facilities

Organisers have made arrangements to ensure public safety, particularly for women. CCTV cameras, barricades and police personnel will be deployed at the venue. Ambulances and fire services will also be available to handle emergencies. Refreshments will be provided to attendees.

Hitnal said the festival would offer an opportunity for people from different communities and backgrounds to come together and strengthen unity and brotherhood. He appealed to the public to participate in large numbers and make the celebrations successful.

Former Koppal Urban Development Authority president Srinivas Gupta was present at the press conference.

Hunsur residents renew demand for park and lake restoration

CH NEWS, HUNSUR

The Hunsur City Municipal Council has initiated a clean-up drive at a site proposed for a public park in Chikkahunasuru following requests from local residents.

DEED Director Srikanth said Commissioner Manasa had responded to the residents' appeal, while a request had also been submitted to Tahsildar Manjunath to officially designate the land for a park.

Speaking to reporters, Srikanth said the ongoing work involved clearing overgrown vegetation and filling a pit with construction debris to level the proposed park site. Commissioner Manasa also stated that cleaning work had begun along the pedestrian walkway surrounding the lake.

Members of the Chikkahunasuru Lake and Park Development Struggle Committee, including former City Municipal Council member Manju, have been working to address several civic issues affecting the locality. They have appealed to elected representatives, the City Municipal Council, Govindanahalli Grama Panchayat and the taluk administration to take immediate action.

The committee has sought repairs to the lake's pedestrian walkway, which was damaged at four locations during last year's rains and has become unusable. It has also demanded proper drainage arrangements to prevent sewage from entering the lake and nearby paddy fields. Clearing accumulated waste from drains in Old Chikkahunasuru is another major demand.



The residents have further requested that vacant land beside the high school, located in Survey No. 61 of Chikkahunasuru, be allocated for developing a public park.

Manasa said residents had previously approached elected representatives and municipal authorities regarding sewage discharge and blocked drains. However, despite inspections by Panchayat officials, concrete action had not followed, she noted.

The committee has now written to the Panchayat Development Officer of Govindanahalli Panchayat, seeking conversion of the school-adjacent land into a park and cleaning of the lake surroundings. Residents have urged the concerned authorities to address these long-pending demands promptly and improve public spaces and sanitation in the area.

UNSEASONABLE HEAT WAVE

Gadag residents face unusual Oct heat as temperatures rise

MALINGARAYA PUJAR
CH NEWS, GADAG

Residents of Gadag district are experiencing unusually high temperatures even before the summer season, with the prevailing weather conditions causing discomfort to people, farmers and animals. Although October usually brings cooler weather, temperatures have risen considerably, leaving residents struggling to cope with the heat.

Temperatures rise above normal

The district is currently recording temperatures between 31°C and 32°C, around 3.5°C to 4°C above normal levels. Residents say the weather has become unpredictable, making it difficult to distinguish between the rainy season, winter and summer. As the sun intensifies from around 11 am, major roads remain deserted, with people venturing outdoors mainly for essential work and seeking shelter under trees to escape the heat.

Farmers worried over lack of rain

The hot weather has added to farmers' difficulties as rainfall remains inadequate. Several monsoon crops are yet to reach the harvesting stage, while farmers are worried about preparing their fields for winter crops without sufficient rain. Dry soil and uncertain weather have raised concerns about agricultural prospects. Residents are also apprehensive that prolonged heat could affect drinking water availability, while livestock struggle to find adequate water and shade.



Demand for cooling drinks increases

As temperatures climb, shops selling fresh juice, lemonade, watermelon and other cooling drinks are witnessing increased demand. Tender coconut water has also become a popular choice among people seeking temporary relief from the heat.

Health department issues precautions

Gadag District Health Officer Dr. S.S. Neelgund has advised residents to take precautions against heat-related illnesses. People should schedule outdoor activities before 11 am or after 4 pm and use umbrellas when stepping outside. Staying in direct sunlight for extended periods should be avoided.

The DHO has also urged people to drink plenty of water to prevent dehydration and reduce their intake of spicy foods and meat. Anyone experiencing fatigue, dizziness or other symptoms after sun exposure should seek medical attention immediately. Residents have been advised to follow these precautions carefully as the unusually warm weather continues.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, SUKANYA MANJUNATH KUSUGAL D/o MANJUNATH KUSUGAL, W/o SACHIN GURUSHIDDAPPA HUGAR, R/o Sanna Road, Sanna Oni,Ugginakeri, Kalghatgi,Dharwad,Karnataka -581204, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as SUKANYA SACHIN HUGAR.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, S CHAIN RAJ S/o SAMPATH RAJ R/o 8-6 3rd Cross, Near Marappa Garden Benson Town, Bangalore North, Bangalore, Karnataka-560046, have changed the name of my minor son DHRUV CHAINRAJ alias TANUJ aged 14 years and he shall hereafter be known as DHRUV CHAIN RAJ.

IN THE COURT OF THE 1st ADD CIVIL JUDGE AND JMFC AT DODDABALLAPUR
C.MIS. No. 353/2025

SRI. S. Mahendra, son of late N.N. Shivakumar, aged about 31 years, Nagasanadra Village, Kasaba Hobli, Doddaballapura Taluk, Bengaluru Rural District. ...PETITIONER

AND **TAHASILDAR,** The Registrar of Births and Deaths, Doddaballapura Town, Doddaballapura. ...RESPONDENT

PUBLIC NOTICE

Whereas, the Petitioner has filed the above petition under Sections 13(3) and 14 of the Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969, seeking issuance of a Death Certificate in respect of her Grandfather, Late venkata shamappa S/o. Late parathaiyya, who died on 07-07-2022 at Aralumallige Village, Doddaballapura Taluk.

In this regard, notice is hereby given to the general public that any person having any interest or objection in respect of the said matter may appear before the above said Court, either in person or through an Advocate duly authorised, on 13-11-2026 at 11:00 A.M.

In default of appearance, the matter will be heard and disposed of ex-parte. Given under my hand and the seal of the Court on this 8th day of October, 2026.

By Order of the Court
Chief Ministerial Officer, 1st ADD Civil Judge & JMFC, Doddaballapura.
Advocate for Petitioner :
Sri. R BYRE GOWDA LAW ASSOCIATES
NO: 3249 Taluk Office Road, Doddaballapura – 561203. Mob: 9611981556

PUBLIC NOTICE

This notice is given to the General public that my client, Canara Bank, Tavarekere Branch, Sira Taluk is going to sanction loan in favour of **Sri.Manjunatha.P S/o Pandurangapa,** R/o Panjiganahalli Village, Kasaba Hobli, Sira Taluk, against security of below mentioned schedule property. As per the information from Sri.Manjunatha.P, has misplaced the original Regd Sale Deed Dt:30.08.2006, Regd as No.1748/2006-07. In this regard he has lodged online complaint to police department, vide lost **Report No.2479175/2026.** Hence anybody having title interest, and right in any manner over the schedule property, may intimate the same in writing with documentary evidence to the undersigned within 07 days from the date of this publication, failing which my client will proceed with the loan transactions as not claimed. Further it is requested that if anybody finds above said regd Sale Deeds, the same may be handed over either to me or to my client.

SCHEDULE

Land bearing Sy.No.47/6 measuring 2 acres situated at Panjiganahalli Village, Kasaba Hobli, Sira Taluk, Tumakuru District.

H. WAJID AHMED, Advocate and Notary R.T.Road Sira Town. Mob: 9448101786

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **I NIRESH,** S/o. Raju, residing at door No.9-101/2, Gorigudda Guruprasad Lane, Adimar D.K.-575002 Karnataka, India have changed my son's name from **HARSHITH** to **HARSHITH N PERNE** for all his future correspondence and purposes vide Affidavit dated 10th June 2026 before Advocate Rekha k. Mangalore in her Notarial Registration No. 1523/2026.

NAME CHANGE

I, **DADAPEER,** S/o Nasir (Aadhaar No.3587 5694 7855) Residing at, Beside DC Bunglow, Kalidasanagar Siragate, Oorukere, Tumakuru-572106 Karnataka, have changed my name to **DADA PEER,** vide affidavit dated: 15.10.2026, before Notary T.N. BHARATHI, TUMAKURU.

IN THE COURT OF HON'BLE 1st ADDL. CIVIL JUDGE AND JMFC AT DODDABALLAPUR
C.MIS .No.537/2026

Petitioner: 1. Sri. Venkatesh M S/o Late. Muniraju @ Munirajappa Aged about 35 years, **2.** Sri. Nagaraju M S/o late. Muniraju @ Munirajappa, Aged about 32 years. Both are R/at Varadanahalli Village, Kasaba Hobli, Doddaballapur Taluk, Bangalore Rural District. V/s

Respondents: The Register, Birth and Death Town panchayth, Bashettihalli Doddaballapura Taluk

PUBLIC NOTICE

Whereas the Petitioner has filed the above petition under section 13(3) And 14 of Registration of birth and death Act, 1969 for seeking the death certificate of his father by name MUNIRAJU @ MUNIRAJAPPA S/o LATE . KEMPAIAH who died on 22/02/1997 at Varadanahalli village, Kasaba Hobli, Doddaballapur taluk , Bangalore rural District.

In this regard it is hereby that whoever has interested in the said matter may appear in person or through an advocate duly authorized before the above said court on 23-11-26. In default this matter will be heard and disposed off an ex-party order.

Given under my hand and seal of the court on the 15th day of October 2026.

By order of the court.
Chief Ministerial Officer, Prl. Civil Judge and JMFC Court, Doddaballapura
Advocate: **Shashikumar K,M,** Opp.Civil court complex, Rojipura ,Doddaballapur

CHANGE OF NAME

I, AJJAYYA SHANKRAPPA JUJAGAR S/o SHANKRAPPA JUJAGAR R/o 1/4/99,Near New Bus Stand, Kinhal, Koppal, Karnataka-583230, have changed the name of my minor son ADVAITH JUJAGAR aged 7 years and he shall hereafter be known as PRITHAM AJJAYYA JUJAGAR.

NAME CHANGE

I, **MAMA JUNI CHADKHAN HASSANBAPA,** W/o Musaddiq Manna, resident of 8/B, Hassan Villa, Eagle Street Langford Town, Bengaluru – 560027, have changed my name to **MAMA JUNI,** Vide Affidavit Dated: 15.10.2026 before notary MEER HASSAN, Bengaluru

CH CLASSIFIEDS

To place a classified ad contact: **080-41209042**

Quick Read

Hunsur residents demand Aadhaar correction centres at Hobli level

CH NEWS, HUNSUR

Long queues at the Aadhaar correction centre inside the Taluk Office have caused hardship to residents, prompting demands for centres at Hobli headquarters. Students, elderly people, children and other applicants wait for hours, sometimes skipping meals to retain their places. The relocation of the Bilikere centre to Mysuru two to three months ago has increased pressure on the sole remaining centre. Frequent server problems further delay services.

SOLE CENTRE: TALUK OFFICE

Karwar organises job interviews and consumer meetings

CH NEWS, KARWAR

The Project Employment Exchange, Karwar, will conduct walk-in interviews for vacancies at Bharat Auto Cars Private Limited on October 17, from 10 am to 5 pm, at Maruti Suzuki Arena, Sadashivgad. Candidates who have completed SSLC, PUC, ITI, diploma or degree courses can apply. Both men and women are eligible for jobs in Karwar and Bhatkal. Applicants must carry their resumes. For details, contact 9620902330, 8277005959 or 08382-226386. Consumer interaction meetings will also be held on October 17, from 3.30 pm to 5.30 pm, at the Karwar and Dandeli sub-divisional offices. Consumers can present electricity supply grievances and seek assistance from officials.

INTERVIEWS ON OCTOBER 17 10 AM TO 5 PM

Udupi extends ration card e-KYC deadline to Oct 20

CH NEWS, UDUPI

The government has extended the deadline for completing e-KYC for eligible ration cardholders until October 20. The requirement applies to Priority (BPL) and Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) beneficiaries receiving rations through Fair Price Shops, as well as those whose last e-KYC was completed five years ago. September 30 was the earlier deadline. The Department of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs has urged beneficiaries who have not completed the process to do so immediately. Failure to complete e-KYC within the deadline may disrupt ration distribution. Lists of beneficiaries with pending e-KYC have been provided to Fair Price Shops across all taluks. ardholders, including those who have migrated or left their villages, should check their status and complete the process without delay. eneficiaries can visit a nearby Fair Price Shop with their ration card and Aadhaar card linked to their mobile number.

E-KYC DEADLINE OCTOBER 20

NAME CHANGE

I , **MOHSIN ALI VAKIL**, , aged 66 years , S/o of Wahid Ali ,residing at 1 Flat No. 701, Pride Picassa Apartment, No. 214, 1st Main Road, 2nd Stage, Domlur, Bengaluru – 560071, Karnataka, India I have Changed my name from VAKIL **MOHASIN ALI WAHIDALI** to **MOHSIN ALI VAKIL**, Affidavit dated 15th October 2026, before Notary Hemalatha P

Bidar MLA seeks compensation after sugarcane fire

Fires destroyed 20 acres of sugarcane in Udabanahalli, Khashempura and Anadoor, deepening the hardship of farmers already hit by drought.

CH NEWS, BIDAR

Farmers facing drought-related hardships have suffered another setback after an electrical mishap destroyed around six acres of sugarcane belonging to Vithal Reddy in Anadoor village of the Bidar South Assembly constituency.

Following the incident, Bidar South MLA Dr. Shailendra Beldale visited the affected farmland along with officials to assess the damage. He gathered details about the incident and instructed the concerned authorities to conduct a thorough inspection and take appropriate action.

The incident has added to farmers' financial difficulties, as they struggle with drought conditions and the rising risks associated with agricultural activities. According to the information provided, sugarcane crops covering approximately 20 acres in Udabanahalli, Khashempura and Anadoor villages have already been destroyed by fires.

Repair dangerous lines

During the visit, Dr. Beldale raised concerns over low-hanging electricity lines across agricultural lands in several villages. He warned that such lines could endanger farmers and damage crops. He directed officials to inspect power lines in the constituency and immediately repair those posing risks.

The MLA stressed that negligence in maintaining electrical infrastructure would not be acceptable. He called for necessary safety measures and the identification and repair of hazardous electrical connections to prevent similar incidents.

Demand for compensation

Dr. Beldale instructed officials to assess the crop losses and take steps to provide compensation to affected farmers according to government rules. He assured that he would bring the losses suffered by Vithal Reddy to the attention of the relevant departments and make efforts to secure appropriate relief.



Bidar South MLA Dr. Shailendra Beldale and officials at the fire-damaged farmland in Anadoor village.

Several local representatives and residents, including Sanju Reddy, Santhosh Soralli, Srinivasa Reddy, Basavaraja Sindabandagi and others, were present during the visit.

The visit highlighted the need for prompt compensation and improved electrical safety measures to protect farmers and their crops during the ongoing drought crisis.



BJP's Shettar calls CM Shivakumar 'grandfather' of sting operations

CH NEWS, KOPPAL

Senior BJP leader and former Karnataka Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar has accused Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar of using the sting operation controversy to divert public attention, demanding a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe into the matter.

Speaking at a press conference at the Koppal District BJP office on Thursday, Shettar alleged that Shivakumar's recent statements reflected arrogance and described him as the "grandfather" of sting operations. He claimed Shivakumar had initially maintained a moderate public image but had now begun making controversial remarks, including comments about religious leaders.

Shettar questioned Shivakumar's claim that he knew about an alleged sting operation and possessed photographic evidence. He asked why an FIR had not been registered if such evidence existed, alleging that the issue could otherwise be fabricated or intended to mislead the public. He demanded that the matter be handed over to the CBI for an impartial investigation.

The BJP leader also alleged that the controversy reflected political competition between Shivakumar and former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah over leadership and power. He criticised what he described as attempts to make Siddaramaiah a scapegoat and said conducting sting operations concerning anyone's personal life was unethical. Shettar further criticised the state government over its financial position and guarantee schemes, claiming that public dissatisfaction was growing and that the government could face instability. These remarks were made as part of his criticism of the Congress government.

He also questioned the identities of those allegedly involved in the sting operation and challenged Shivakumar to initiate legal action if he had evidence. Shettar maintained that political power should not be used for character assassination or intimidation. During the press conference, Shettar also announced a tour of Koppal district in connection with the upcoming North-East Teachers' Constituency election.

Kushtagi MLA and Opposition Chief Whip Doddanagouda Patil, MLC Hemalatha Naik, former minister Halappa Achar, former MLA Paranna Munavalli, BJP district president Naveen Kumar Gulugannavar, JD(S) leaders C.V. Chandrasekhara and Suresh Bhumreddy, among others, attended the event.

Koppal to publish final electoral roll on Oct 27

CH NEWS, KOPPAL

Deputy Commissioner and District Election Officer Dr. Suresh B. Itnal chaired a meeting with representatives of recognised and registered political parties to discuss the draft electoral roll published under the Special Summary Revision (SSR)-2026.

The meeting, held at the Deputy Commissioner's office, reviewed the revision schedule, voter statistics and issues identified in the draft electoral roll.

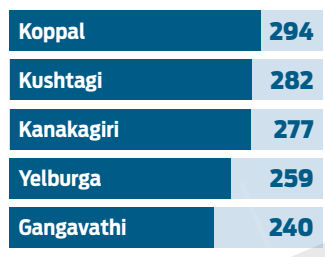
Dr. Itnal announced that the final electoral roll would be published on October 27, 2026.

According to the draft roll, Koppal district has 10,41,388 voters, including 5,19,142 men, 5,22,189 women and 57 voters categorised as others. The district has 1,352 polling stations across five Assembly constituencies.

Kushtagi has 282 polling stations, Kanakagiri 277, Gangavathi 240, Yelburga 259 and Koppal 294.

The draft electoral roll was published on August 24, 2026, while claims and objections were accepted from August 24 to September 23. The meeting also discussed errors identified in the electoral roll and notices issued concerning 14,401 voters whose data had not been mapped.

Polling stations



Koppal district: 1,352 in five Assembly constituencies

Political party representatives were briefed on the steps taken to address these issues and resolve related concerns. The meeting provided an opportunity to review the revision process and discuss matters concerning the accuracy of voter records.

The district administration is proceeding with the scheduled revision process ahead of the final publication. The updated electoral roll will reflect the outcome of the claims, objections and corrections considered during the exercise.

CHITRADURGA CEO INSPECTS RURAL EMPLOYMENT SCHEME WORKS



CH NEWS, CHITRADURGA

Zilla Panchayat Chief Executive Officer Dr. S. Akash conducted a surprise inspection of lake and stream rejuvenation works under the VB-G RAM G scheme in Challakere taluk on Thursday.

He directed officials to ensure timely wage payments and provide basic facilities for workers at work sites.

Dr. Akash inspected the lake development project at Upparahatti village under Dodderi Gram Panchayat and the Garani Halla stream development work at Reddyhalli village under Gopanahalli Gram Panchayat.

He checked workers' online attendance through the National Mobile Monitoring System (NMMS) application and examined their job cards and bank passbooks to verify wage payments.

During his interaction with workers, the CEO explained that employment previously provided under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act scheme was being offered under the renamed VB-G RAM G initiative from July 1. He said the scheme guarantees 125 days of employment per family annually and provides equal wages to men and women.

Considering the drought conditions in the district, he encouraged rural residents to use the scheme to find employment within their villages instead of migrating to cities in search of work. Workers requested that wages be credited within 15 days of completing their work. Responding to their concerns, Dr. Akash instructed officials to take steps to ensure timely payments.

He also directed them to provide first-aid kits, shaded resting areas and drinking water at work sites.

The CEO later visited the Social Forestry Department and collected information about nursery saplings from Range Forest Officer Eshwarappa. At Neralagunte and N. Mahadevapura Gram Panchayats, he reviewed Jal Jeevan Mission works and reverse osmosis water plants.

Dr. Akash also interacted with residents about drinking water availability. As no immediate problems were reported, he advised them to inform the taluk executive officer or Zilla Panchayat promptly if shortages arose.

Human skills remain essential in the age of artificial intelligence

CH NEWS, CHITRADURGA

Government Arts College Principal Prof. R. Tarini Shubhadayini has stressed the importance of developing human skills and sensitivity as artificial intelligence (AI) increasingly influences different sectors.

She expressed concern that growing dependence on technology could weaken human values and emotional understanding.

She was speaking while presiding over the inauguration of the Cultural Committee and various other committees at Government Arts College in Chitradurga on Thursday. She encouraged students to develop their cultural interests, participate actively in extracurricular activities and cultivate positive thinking to build a successful future.

Retired Tumakuru history professor Siddalingaiah inaugurated the programme. He said reading books such as Wings of Fire by former President Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam and the works of English playwright William Shakespeare could encourage self-reflection and personal growth. He observed that society increasingly needed understanding and compassion instead of behaviour that harms others.

Siddalingaiah advised students to be mindful of their words and avoid hurting people through their speech. He also encouraged them to participate in college cultural activities, saying such involvement could help calm restless minds and support mental well-being.

Professional trainer Challakere Gajendra said modern lifestyles and excessive social media use were affecting the mental peace of young people.

He urged students to develop diverse skills during their undergraduate years to prepare themselves for future challenges and competition.

Prof. B.E. Jagannath, Cultural Committee convener, and Prof. K. Leelavathi, Internal Quality Assurance Cell convener, also addressed the gathering.

A Bharatanatyam performance by student Sangeetha attracted the audience, followed by various cultural programmes presented by students.

College Teachers' Association president Prof. Hanumantappa, Red Cross convener Prof. Pradeep Kumar, Controller of Examinations Prof. S.B. Shivaprasad, NSS officers Prof. Basavaraja and Prof. Prasad, Rovers-Rangers convener Prof. B. Jayamma, Sports Officer Prof. Prasanna Kumar, NCC Officer Prof. Manjunath, Muralidhara and faculty members Prof. Meghana and Prof. Soumya attended the event.



NOTICE

Written offers are invited by the Trustees of **"CRY- Child Rights and You"** having PTR No F – 5208 (M) at correspondence address being Anand Estate, 189/A, Sane Guruji Marg, Mumbai – 400011 in sealed envelope for sale of the Trust's property on "as is where is basis" being "Premises Bearing No.3, Stephens Road Cross, Fraser Town, Bangalore-560005. Property comprises land admeasuring 2969 Sq. Ft.."

The offers should be delivered at CRY-Child Rights and You, Anand Estate, 189/A, Sane Guruji Marg, Mumbai - 400011. Time is the essence of the contract and offers received after 1 month shall not be entertained.

The reserve price of the above referred Trust property is kept as Rs. 4,00,00,000/- (Rupees Four Crores only). The last date for receiving offers is one month from the date of advertisement.

Person/s interested in making a bid shall along with their offer letter, enclose a Demand Draft or a Pay Order only, in favor of "CRY- Child Rights and You", equivalent to 10% of the offer/bid amount. The said amount will be refunded without interest in case the offer is not accepted.

The sale of the said property shall be subject to the approval and sanction of the Charity Commissioner, Maharashtra State, Mumbai. The registration of the property shall be executed solely in favor of the First Party.

Offers will be opened at 4.00 pm on 19th November, 2026 at the above-mentioned address. The offerors may remain present. Conditional offers or incomplete offers shall not be considered and the Trust reserves the right to accept or reject the offers without assigning any reason(s).

Sd/-
(Trustees)

Date: 16.10.2026

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರಕಾರ ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ಇಲಾಖೆ
ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ಮತ್ತು ಕುಟುಂಬ ಕಲ್ಯಾಣಾಧಿಕಾರಿ ಕಛೇರಿ,
ಉಡುಪಿ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ, ಅಜ್ಜರಕಾಡು, ಉಡುಪಿ–576101.
e-mail: dhoudupi-hfws@karnataka.gov.in Ph No: 0820-2985429
NHM/DPMU/Drugs/213/2026-2027 Dated: 14-10-2026

ಇ–ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ

(ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಪಬ್ಲಿಕ್ ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಮುಖಾಂತರ ಮಾತ್ರ)

2026–2027ನೇ ಸಾಲಿಗೆ ರಾಷ್ಟ್ರೀಯ ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ಅಭಿಯಾನ/15ನೇ ಹಣಕಾಸು/ಪಿ.ಎಮ್–ಅಭೀಮ್ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮಗಳಡಿ ಉಡುಪಿ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಯ ವಿವಿಧ ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗಳಿಗೆ ಅಗತ್ಯವಿರುವ ಔಷಧಗಳನ್ನು ಖರೀದಿಸಲು ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಪಬ್ಲಿಕ್ ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಮೂಲಕ ಎರಡು ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಡಾಕ್ಯೂಮೆಂಟ್ ಪಿಸ್ಟಂನಲ್ಲಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಟೆಂಡರ್ ನಮೂನೆಗಳಿಗಾಗಿ, ಇ.ಎಂ.ಡಿ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಮತ್ತು ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ಮಾಹಿತಿಗಳಿಗಾಗಿ ವೆಬ್‌ಸೈಟ್ https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in ನಲ್ಲಿ ನೋಡಬಹುದಾಗಿದೆ.

(1) ಟೆಂಡರ್ ದಾಖಲೆಗಳು ಚಾಲ್ತಿಗೆ ಬರುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 16–10–2026 ರಿಂದ (2) ಆಕ್ಷೇಪಣೆಗಳಿಗೆ ಅಂತಿಮ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 19–10–2026 ರ ಸಂಜೆ 4.30 ಘಂಟೆಯವರೆಗೆ (3) ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಅರ್ಜಿ ಹಾಕಲು ಅಂತಿಮ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 31–10–2026ರ ಸಂಜೆ 4.30 ಘಂಟೆಯವರೆಗೆ (4) ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಬಿಡ್ ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 02–11–2026ರ ಸಂಜೆ 4–30 ಘಂಟೆಯ ನಂತರ (5) ಅಂದಾಜು ಮೊತ್ತ: ರೂ. 60,00,000/–

ಸಹಿ/– (ಡಾ. ಬಸವರಾಜ ಜಿ. ಹುಬ್ಬಳ್ಳಿ)
ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ಮತ್ತು ಕು.ಕ.ಅಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳು,
ಉಡುಪಿ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ.

ವಾಸಾಇ/ಸನಿಉ/ಕೆಎಸ್ಎಂಸಿಎ/430/26–27 ದಿ: 15.10.2026

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ನೀರಾವರಿ ನಿಗಮ ನಿಯಮಿತ
(ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರದ ಉದ್ಯಮ)
ಕಾರ್ಯಪಾಲಕ ಇಂಜಿನಿಯರ್‌ರವರ ಕಛೇರಿ, ಕನೀನಿನಿ, ನಂ.5, ಭದ್ರಾ ನಾಲಾ ವಿಭಾಗ, ದಾವಣಗೆರೆ. ಫೋ: 08192–264669
ಇ–ಮೇಲ್: eebcddvg@yahoo.co.in

ಸಂ: ಕಾ.ಇಂ/ಕ.ನೀ.ನಿ.ನಿ/ಭ.ನಾ.ವಿ.5/ದಾ/ಪಿ.ಬಿ–3/ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ/2026–27/1544 ದಿನಾಂಕ:14.10.2026

ಅಲ್ಪಾವಧಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ

ಉಲ್ಲೇಖ:– 1) EE/KNNL/ BCD-5/DVG/PB6/2701RLIS/2026-27/1535 Dated: 14.10.2026
2) EE/KNNL/ BCD-5/DVG/PB-/4701 works/2026-27/ 1536 Dated: 14.10.2026

ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥಾಪಕ ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕರು, ಕ.ನೀ.ನಿ.ನಿ, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ಇವರ ಪರವಾಗಿ ಕಾರ್ಯಪಾಲಕ ಇಂಜಿನಿಯರ್, ಕ.ನೀ.ನಿ.ನಿ, ನಂ.5 ಭದ್ರಾ ನಾಲಾ ವಿಭಾಗ, ದಾವಣಗೆರೆ ರವರು, ಉಲ್ಲೇಖಿತ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಲೆಕ್ಕ ಶೀರ್ಷಿಕೆ 2700 **RLIS** ಅಡಿಯಲ್ಲಿನ **ಮಾನವ ಸಂಪನ್ಮೂಲ ಸರಬರಾಜು ಹಾಗೂ ಕೆರೆ ತುಂಬಿಸುವ ಯೋಜನೆಯ ನಿರ್ವಹಣೆ ಮಾಡುವ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗೆ ದ್ವೀ ಲಕೋಟೆ** ಪದ್ಧತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ **ಹಾಗೂ** ಲೆಕ್ಕ ಶೀರ್ಷಿಕೆ **4701** ರಡಿಯಲ್ಲಿನ **ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳಿಗೆ ಏಕ ಲಕೋಟೆ** ಪದ್ಧತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಕೆಪಿಪಿಪಿ–ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಮುಖಾಂತರ ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ನ್ನು ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಿದ್ದು, **ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ಗಿಟ್ಟ ಮೊತ್ತ ರೂ.8.40 ಲಕ್ಷಗಳಿಂದ ರೂ.136.81** ಲಕ್ಷಗಳವರೆಗೆ ಇರುತ್ತದೆ. ಅರ್ಹ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರಿಂದ ವರ್ಕ್ಸ್ **ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ಗಳನ್ನು ಹಾಗೂ ಶೇಕಡವಾರು ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ಗಳನ್ನು** ಕೆಪಿಪಿಪಿ–ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ವೆಬ್‌ಸೈಟ್ (https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in) ಮುಖಾಂತ ಈ ಕೆಳಕಂಡಂತೆ ದಿನಾಂಕದ ಒಳಗಾಗಿ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಬಹುದಾಗಿರುತ್ತದೆ.

1) KNNL/2026-27/OW/WORK_INDENT4807 (ದ್ವೀ ಲಕೋಟೆ ಪದ್ಧತಿ) **ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ:14.10.2026 ರಿಂದ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 27–10–2026 ರ ಸಂಜೆ 5.00** ಘಂಟೆವರೆಗೆ. ಪ್ರೀ ಬಿಡ್ ಸಭೆ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 23.10.2026 ರ ಸಂಜೆ 4.00 ಗಂಟೆಗೆ ಈ ಕೆಳಗೆ ಸಹಿ ಮಾಡಿದ ಕಛೇರಿಯಲ್ಲಿ. ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಬಿಡ್‌ನ್ನು ತೆರೆಯುವ **ದಿನಾಂಕ: 28–10–2026 ರಂದು ಸಂಜೆ 5.10** ಘಂಟೆಗೆ ತೆರೆಯಲಾಗುವುದು.

2) KNNL/2026-27/CN/WORK_INDENT4803 KNNL/2026-27/CN/WORK_INDENT4805 KNNL/2026-27/IW/WORK_INDENT4806 (ಏಕ ಲಕೋಟೆ ಪದ್ಧತಿ) **ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ:14.10.2026 ರಿಂದ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 27–10–2026 ರ ಸಂಜೆ 5.00** ಘಂಟೆವರೆಗೆ. ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಬಿಡ್‌ನ್ನು ತೆರೆಯುವ **ದಿನಾಂಕ: 28–10–2026 ರಂದು ಸಂಜೆ 5.10** ಘಂಟೆಗೆ ತೆರೆಯಲಾಗುವುದು

ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಕುರಿತು ಸ್ಪಷ್ಟೀಕರಣಕ್ಕೆ ದಿನಾಂಕ: **23–10–2026 ರಂದು 4.00** ಘಂಟೆವರೆಗೆ, **ಒಟ್ಟು ಕಾಮಗಾರಿ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ :– 4 ಸಂಖ್ಯೆಗಳು** :– ಯಾವುದೇ ಕಾರಣ ನೀಡದೆ ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ಗಳನ್ನು ಮುಂದೂಡುವ, ಅಂಗಿಕರೀಸುವ ಅಥವಾ ತಿರಸ್ಕರಿಸುವ ಹಕ್ಕನ್ನು ಕೆಳಗೆ ಸಹಿ ಮಾಡಿರುವ ಅಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳು ಕಾಯ್ದಿರಿಸಿಕೊಂಡಿರುತ್ತಾರೆ. ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ಮಾಹಿತಿಗಾಗಿ ಕೆಪಿಪಿಪಿ–ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಅಥವಾ ಕಛೇರಿ ವೇಳೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಕೆಳಗೆ ಸಹಿ ಮಾಡಿದವರ ಕಛೇರಿಯನ್ನು ಸಂಪರ್ಕಿಸಬಹುದಾಗಿರುತ್ತದೆ.

ವಾಸಾಇ/ಡಿವಿಜಿ/378/ಕೆಎಸ್ಎಂಸಿಎ/2026–27

ಸಹಿ/– ಕಾರ್ಯಪಾಲಕ ಇಂಜಿನಿಯರ್,
ಕನೀನಿನಿ ನಂ.5 ಭದ್ರಾ ನಾಲಾ ವಿಭಾಗ, ದಾವಣಗೆರೆ.

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Quick Read

Pakistan's cyber fraud losses hit 2.5% of GDP, highest in Asia

ISLAMABAD

Scams enabled by cyber fraud are estimated to cost Pakistan the equivalent of 2.5 per cent of its gross domestic product (GDP), among the highest such losses in Asia, according to a Business Recorder report citing the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank Group (WBG). The estimate is well above the global average loss of 0.45 per cent of GDP. The report said the figure pointed to growing risks for digital financial services, as fraudsters increasingly target online platforms, telecommunications networks and electronic payment systems.



Rupee to remain in appreciating mode despite global volatility

NEW DELHI

The Indian rupee is likely to keep appreciating even as turbulence grips global markets, but the government and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) may need to consider further policy steps to build resilience, an SBI Research report said on Thursday. It forecast that inflation would peak at around 6.8 per cent in November 2026, and that India's 10-year yield would likely touch 7.6 per cent, which would also help price discovery in future.

"The USD/INR forward implied yield opened at 4.60 per cent, around 42 bps higher than yesterday's close," the report noted. Costlier hedging makes dollar funding more expensive and could nudge companies towards rupee-denominated borrowing, supporting demand for the rupee, it added.

In the interim, the RBI could tighten in a calibrated way through an asymmetric corridor adjustment, raising the marginal standing facility (MSF) rate by 50 bps from 5.75 per cent to 6.25 per cent. A 25 bps repo rate hike could follow in December, taking the repo rate to 5.75 per cent and the MSF rate to 6.50 per cent, the report forecast. It expects global financial markets to stay volatile amid persistent geopolitical uncertainty, elevated US yields and shifting inflation dynamics.

Factory closures and layoffs hit China's textile sector

BEIJING

Shrinking demand, a wave of factory closures and layoffs, and a growing shift of production overseas are straining China's once-dominant textile industry, according to a new report. Factories in Zhejiang, Guangzhou and other manufacturing hubs have seen order sizes fall sharply, the report from Mekong said, and contracts that once ran for months now last only days. "Beijing sought to transition the Chinese economy from export dependence towards consumer-led growth. However, weak consumer confidence, a prolonged property sector crisis, economic uncertainty and slowing income growth have undermined household spending," the report noted.

GOYAL CALLS ON YOUTH TO DRIVE INDIA'S AI JOURNEY

The minister urges students to embrace emerging technologies, develop future-ready skills and pursue ambitious goals, saying youth participation would be crucial to achieving Viksit Bharat 2047 and strengthening India's economy.

NEW DELHI

Students must take charge of their own learning, keep pace with emerging technologies and contribute to the country's development, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Thursday. Sustained effort and ambitious goals, he stressed, would help young Indians realise the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.

Addressing the inauguration of Shri Ram College of Commerce's (SRCC) Centenary Conclave in New Delhi, Goyal said the country's future would depend significantly on the ability of its youth to develop new skills, embrace innovation and take on emerging challenges.

Investment in manufacturing, in adopting technology and in skill development would create jobs and lift India's standing in the global economy, he said. He asked students to prepare for a changing job market by building expertise in artificial intelligence, cybersecurity and the practical use of emerging technologies.



Large language models and other artificial intelligence systems, Goyal said, must be turned into practical tools for businesses and ordinary citizens. Recalling how India's information technology sector grew in the 1990s and 2000s, he urged young people not just to adopt technology but to take the lead in developing it.

The minister also stressed that learning and personal development should continue throughout life. He encouraged students to spot new opportunities that could help businesses grow, make it easier to do business and improve the ease of living.

Praising the enterprise of young Indians, especially startup founders, Goyal said innovation and a readiness to take risks could help solve problems across sectors.

He also underscored the importance of India's culture, traditions and heritage, calling for collective responsibility and ambitious individual aspirations to help establish India as a leading global power.

What did the minister say?

- → Goyal addressed SRCC's Centenary Conclave in New Delhi.
- → Students urged to develop AI and cybersecurity skills.
- → Minister called for greater innovation in emerging technologies.
- → Manufacturing and skill development highlighted as employment drivers.
- → Youth entrepreneurship identified as important for India's future.

Defence Ministry signs ₹4,106 crore deals

NEW DELHI

On Thursday, the Ministry of Defence signed contracts worth Rs 4,106 crore to give the Indian Air Force a dedicated communication satellite capability and to buy Varunastra heavyweight torpedoes for the Indian Navy, a step forward for domestic defence manufacturing and technological self-reliance.

₹2,563 cr	₹1,543 cr	₹661.50 cr
GSAT-7C satellite for the Air Force, with NSIL	Varunastra torpedoes for the Navy	BrahMos fire control systems, earlier this month

The Rs 2,563 crore contract for the GSAT-7C satellite went to Bengaluru-based NewSpace India Limited (NSIL). Designed, developed and built in India, the satellite will give Indian Air Force assets secure, resilient and seamless communication, strengthening operational effectiveness.

Hyderabad-based Bharat Dynamics Limited signed the second contract, worth Rs 1,543 crore, for Varunastra, a ship-launched anti-submarine torpedo developed in India by the Naval Science and Technological Laboratory (NSTL).

The ministry said the torpedo's advanced manoeuvring capabilities allow it to engage enemy submarines at long ranges, adding to the Indian Navy's anti-submarine warfare capabilities.

The agreements are in line with the government's Aatmanirbhar Bharat and Make in India initiatives, which seek to expand indigenous production and reduce reliance on foreign defence technologies.

Earlier this month, the ministry had also signed a Rs 661.50 crore contract under the Buy (Indian-IDDM) category with BrahMos Aerospace Private Limited, for BrahMos fire control systems and launchers for Indian Navy ships.

At least 68 per cent of the BrahMos project's content must be indigenous, and it encourages Indian industry, including micro, small and medium enterprises, to take part. The project is also expected to create jobs over three years.

India responded well to energy shock, has strong fundamentals: IMF

UNITED NATIONS

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) raised India's growth projection despite the energy shocks because the country responded well to the challenges, helped by its "strong fundamentals", "fiscal prudence" and ample reserves, the fund's official for the Asia region said on Thursday.

> *"The exchange rate should not be viewed as a barometer of economic success or failure, given the multiplicity of shocks we have seen."*
>
> **KRISHNA SRINIVASAN**
> Director, IMF Asia and Pacific Department

It lifted the projection from 6.5 per cent in April to 7 per cent in its latest report, despite the energy shock from the Iran war. Explaining the upgrade, Krishna Srinivasan, director of the IMF's Asia and Pacific Department, said: "We've revised up growth because Q1 (first quarter) of this fiscal year came out much stronger than we had anticipated."



"India entered this (phase of energy shock) with very strong fundamentals; growth was strong, fiscal prudence was pretty much enshrined," he said. "They had lots of reserves and so on."

"In that context, you know, they have responded well to the shock," he told a news conference in Bangkok, the venue of the IMF's annual meeting.

Srinivasan was asked about the "disconnect between growth and performance": a rupee under pressure, weaker investment inflows and the risk of higher oil prices, even as India posts the highest growth rate among major economies.

"The so-called disconnect is not really (a) disconnect because what happens to the exchange rate is a function of global interest rates, investor risk appetite, and oil prices," Srinivasan said.

But "the exchange rate should not be viewed as a barometer of economic success or failure, given the multiplicity of shocks we have seen," he said.

Srinivasan also backed this year's revision of the GDP methodology by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), calling it a "welcome development".

Women drive growth across India's workforce

NEW DELHI

Women's participation in India's workforce and entrepreneurial ecosystem has increased significantly, with around 3.69 crore registered micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) owned by women, accounting for approximately 38 per cent of all registrations, according to an official factsheet released on Thursday.

Women's labour force participation rate (LFPR), for those aged 15 and above, climbed to 40 per cent in 2025 from 23.3 per cent in 2017-18. Over the same period, the Worker Population Ratio (WPR) for women went up from 22 per cent to 38.8 per cent.

That meant an estimated 20 crore employed women aged 15 and above in India in 2025, a sign of their growing contribution to the economy.

Women are also gaining ground in entrepreneurship. More than 1.07 lakh recognised startups, about 48 per cent of the total, had at least one woman director or partner.

Manufacturing has become another key source of jobs for women. They made up nearly 70 per cent of the direct workforce in mobile phone manufacturing as of July 2026, and nearly 30 per cent of the workforce added across the wider electronics manufacturing sector over the previous decade.

Government initiatives aim to improve women's access to finance, formalisation, markets and support for entrepreneurs. The Swavalambini programme gives selected participants business training, financial and market guidance, legal assistance and 21 weeks of mentorship.

Core figures

- **Women-owned MSMEs:** 3.69 crore, around 38 per cent of registrations
- **Women's LFPR:** Increased from 23.3 per cent in 2017-18 to 40 per cent in 2025
- **Women-led startups:** Over 1.07 lakh recognised startups had at least one woman director or partner
- **Yashasvini campaign:** More than 22 lakh women-owned MSME registrations by July 2026
- **Public procurement:** Women-owned MSEs accounted for 3.8 per cent in FY26

Net direct tax collections rise 13.2% to ₹13.38 lakh crore in FY27

MUMBAI

Higher receipts from corporate tax, non-corporate tax and the securities transaction tax (STT) lifted India's net direct tax collections by 13.21 per cent year-on-year to Rs 13.38 lakh crore in the current financial year (FY27) up to October 14, Income Tax Department data released on Thursday showed.

Gross collections, before refunds, were up 14.89 per cent at Rs 16.03 lakh crore, against Rs 13.95 lakh crore in the same period a year earlier.

Corporate tax brought in a net Rs 5.99 lakh crore, against Rs 4.97 lakh crore in the same period last year. Net non-corporate tax collections, which cover taxes paid by individuals and other non-corporate entities, climbed to Rs 6.92 lakh crore from Rs 6.54 lakh crore.



STT receipts grew strongly, with net collections rising to Rs 46,840.43 crore from Rs 30,901.81 crore a year earlier.

Net collections under other taxes, however, turned negative, at minus Rs 1.64 crore, against Rs 282.39 crore a year ago.

Gross corporate tax collections increased to Rs 7.53 lakh crore from Rs 6.44 lakh crore in the year-ago period, while gross non-corporate tax collections went up to Rs 8.03 lakh crore from Rs 7.20 lakh crore.

Gross STT collections also rose sharply, to Rs 46,840.43 crore from Rs 30,901.81 crore.

FY27 so far (Rs lakh crore)

Gross collections	16.03
Net collections	13.38
Refunds	2.65

Income Tax Department data, as of October 14

SC upholds Bombay HC order quashing Yes Bank AT1 bond write-down

NEW DELHI

In a major relief for investors hit by Yes Bank's 2020 rescue, the Supreme Court on Thursday upheld a Bombay High Court ruling that had set aside the write-down of the lender's Additional Tier-1 (AT1) bonds.

A Bench of Justices Dipankar Datta and Augustine George Masih dismissed the appeals of Yes Bank, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the government, in effect upholding the High Court's January 2023 decision striking down the extinguishment of AT1 bonds worth Rs 8,415 crore.

The ruling ends a long legal battle over how AT1 bondholders were treated when the crisis-hit bank was reconstructed. It comes nearly five months after the apex court reserved its judgment, having heard detailed submissions from the regulators, the government, the lender and investor groups.

The dispute goes back to March 2020, when worsening asset quality and a steep loss of depositor confidence put Yes Bank under mounting stress.

Under the rescue package, the bank's administrator ordered a full write-down of AT1 bonds worth Rs 8,415 crore.

A key question before the Supreme Court was whether the power to extinguish the bonds came from the reconstruction scheme itself, or from the RBI's regulatory framework and the contractual terms of the securities.

WHAT ARE AT1 BONDS?

Additional Tier-1 (AT1) bonds are meant to absorb losses when a bank is in financial distress, and can be written down once specified contractual and regulatory triggers are met.

MUTUAL COOPERATION ON AGENDA

India-UK push deeper economic ties

BANGKOK

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman met the United Kingdom's Chancellor of the Exchequer, John Healey, on Thursday for talks on strengthening bilateral economic ties, focusing on financial services, critical minerals, green technology and industrial cooperation.

The two met in Bangkok on the sidelines of the annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank Group. Sitharaman told Healey that India was looking forward to the 14th Economic and Financial Dialogue (EFD), with proposed collaboration in critical minerals, green technology and city-region partnerships. The two sides agreed to hold the next dialogue in December, the Finance Ministry said in a statement.



She also reiterated India's commitment to working closely with the UK on shared priorities and to backing a constructive and inclusive G20 process.

The two leaders took stock of the successful fourth India-UK Financial Markets Dialogue, along with the fintech meetings and related India-UK Financial Partnership meetings that built on the outcomes of the previous EFD.

Both countries have identified financial services as a major opportunity to widen their economic partnership. They have welcomed the growth in bilateral trade in financial services and agreed to deepen cooperation in banking, insurance, pensions, capital markets and sustainable finance. The Financial Markets Dialogue held at the GIFT City International Financial Services Centre in December 2024 had helped strengthen collaboration across these sectors.

Sitharaman is in Bangkok from October 14 to 18 for the IMF-World Bank annual meetings and for engagements with G20 and G7 finance ministers and central bank governors.

THE BANGKOK TALKS

December: the 14th India-UK Economic and Financial Dialogue

Focus: critical minerals, green technology and city-region partnerships

G20: India backs a constructive and inclusive process

HIMALAYAN PILGRIMAGES MUST ALSO AIM TO FREE THE MOUNTAINS FROM POLLUTION



LALIT GARGG

> **"If a pilgrim can carry a bottle of water up a mountain, there is no reason why the empty bottle cannot be carried back down."**
>
> — Lalit Gargg

The Himalayas are not merely a range of mountains; they are the foundation of India's cultural consciousness, spiritual faith and natural life. Their lofty peaks bear the memories of ancient penance and meditation, their rivers sustain the lives of millions, and their valleys have been home to countless sacred shrines that have drawn devotees for centuries. Himachal Pradesh, along with the wider Himalayan region, is blessed with numerous important Hindu pilgrimage sites. Visiting these sacred places is an expression of faith for millions. Unfortunately, in recent years, the distinction between pilgrimage and tourism has increasingly blurred. Entertainment, recreation and consumer-driven lifestyles are gradually overshadowing spiritual contemplation, placing an ever-growing burden on the fragile Himalayan environment.

The Himalayas possess a unique natural beauty, but their ecological sensitivity is also their greatest vulnerability. The soil in high-altitude regions is thin, vegetation regenerates slowly, and waste decomposes far more slowly than it does in the plains. Yet, thousands and even millions of people converge on these environmentally delicate areas. Long queues of vehicles, mounting pressure on parking facilities, unplanned expansion of hotels and roadside eateries, plastic bottles, food wrappers, polythene bags and disposable products are steadily damaging the natural beauty and ecological balance of the mountains.

Reports indicating that more than 800 tonnes of waste had been collected during the Char Dham Yatra by mid-September this year bring the gravity of the crisis into sharp focus. The accumulation of 50.30 tonnes of waste in the highly sensitive Kedarnath region between April and August is particularly alarming. These figures deserve serious attention because a plastic bottle discarded at a high altitude is not simply a piece of litter. It can remain in the environment for years, threatening the soil, water sources and wildlife. The irony is profound: people visit these sacred places seeking inner purification, restraint and renunciation, yet leave behind a trail of waste. Can such a journey truly be called a pilgrimage? A pilgrimage is not merely about reaching a temple; it is also an inward journey that transforms the human being. If we bow our heads before a deity and then throw plastic into the very mountains whose sanctity brought us there, our faith remains incomplete.

In this context, the 'Carry Me Back' campaign offers an encouraging ray of hope. Nearly 5,000 pilgrims reportedly carried back more than 12 tonnes of compressed plastic waste from an approximately 18-kilometre stretch. This demonstrates that when pilgrims are made active participants in environmental protection, they can make a substantial difference. The initiative is not merely about collecting rubbish; it seeks to transform the very mindset with which people undertake pilgrimages. Such campaigns should be expanded and implemented across Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and other Himalayan pilgrimage destinations.

The experience of the Amarnath Yatra also offers valuable lessons. The expansion of reusable utensils and water-refilling facilities reportedly helped reduce waste per pilgrim by 15 per cent, even as the number of pilgrims increased by 17 per cent. This demonstrates that environmental pressure can be reduced when convenient, practical and scientifically designed alternatives are made available. Appeals to pilgrims alone are not enough. Administrations must establish systems in which environmentally responsible behaviour becomes the easiest and most natural choice.

The uncontrolled increase in crowds at religious and tourist destinations in Himachal Pradesh is part of this larger crisis. During peak seasons, Shimla, Manali, Dharamshala, Chamunda, Jwalamukhi, Chintpurni, Naina Devi and other destinations face mounting pressure on transportation, water supply, sewage systems, solid-waste management and local resources. Mountain regions cannot withstand the same level of human pressure as cities in the plains. Therefore, the popularity of a pilgrimage or tourist destination should not be measured merely by how many people it attracts.

The time has come to replace the assumption that 'more tourists mean more development' with a more responsible principle: the more ecologically sensitive a destination is, the more carefully tourism must be managed. Every pilgrimage and tourist destination should undergo a scientific assessment of its carrying capacity, and the number of daily visitors should be regulated accordingly, taking seasonal conditions into account. Single-use plastics must be effectively restricted, water-refilling stations expanded, and deposit-and-return systems introduced for bottles and packaging. Waste should be segregated at source, while shopkeepers, hotel operators and vendors must be held accountable for the waste they generate.

Most importantly, the mindset of pilgrims must change. The mountains are not playgrounds for our amusement; they are a priceless natural heritage that belongs to future generations. The river beside which we offer our prayers sustains millions of people living downstream. The forests we capture in our photographs maintain the ecological balance of the mountains. And when we revere a mountain as Devbhoomi, the land of the gods, throwing plastic on its slopes is an insult to the very faith we profess.

Episodes of extreme rainfall, floods, landslides and avalanches in Nepal and across the Himalayan region have repeatedly warned us that interference with fragile mountain ecosystems can have grave consequences. It would



not be scientifically sound to attribute every natural disaster directly to tourism or pollution. Nevertheless, unplanned construction, excessive human pressure, forest degradation and inadequate waste management can intensify the vulnerability of mountainous regions and aggravate the consequences of extreme weather events.

Today, the Himalayas are increasingly becoming a landscape of mounting environmental concerns. Over the past few decades, particularly in Himalayan states, natural resources have been exploited indiscriminately in the name of development, while religious tourism has contributed to pollution on a substantial scale. Construction activities that disregard environmental regulations and ecological realities have further compounded the risks of floods and landslides. This raises a fundamental question: what should be the true measure of development in mountain states? Where construction is genuinely necessary, it must be undertaken through scientific planning, strict environmental safeguards and designs capable of withstanding the region's natural hazards. Unfortunately, large structures have often been erected in the name of promoting tourism and pilgrimage without adequately considering their vulnerability to floods and landslides or their impact on the environment. In many instances, the caution and accountability expected from government authorities have been lacking. Development that endangers human lives and destroys the natural foundations of a region cannot be called sustainable progress.

The Himalayas give us an extraordinary range of gifts: water, forests, biodiversity, climate regulation, cultural heritage and spiritual inspiration. In return, our responsibility extends far beyond offering prayers at their sacred shrines. We must also protect the natural world that makes these places sacred. If a pilgrim can carry a bottle of water up a mountain, there is no reason why the empty bottle cannot be carried back down. This simple act of responsibility can become the foundation of a much larger transformation. Faith and environmental protection are not opposing forces; they are complementary expressions of the same sense of reverence.

The true spirit of a pilgrimage is fulfilled only when a devotee returns from a temple carrying not just sacred offerings, but also a renewed commitment to protecting nature. Governments must create effective systems, local communities must participate actively, and pilgrims must pledge to bring their waste back with them. Only through such collective responsibility can the sanctity of the Himalayas be preserved.

Calling the Himalayas Devbhoomi is not enough to protect them. Their sanctity can be preserved only when we treat them with the reverence, restraint and responsibility that a divine land deserves. A pilgrimage must purify not only the pilgrim's heart but also the pilgrim's conduct towards nature.

MUSIC THROUGH THE AGES: HOW TODAY'S SOUND IS STILL SHAPED BY THE PAST



> *"A symphony is not merely an orchestral work; it is also a statement of its time."*
>
> ASHOK G.P.



— ASHOK G.P.

The study of the history of Western music is not only a study of the past, it is a study of the development of music through the years, of the ways in which cultures have evolved to express themselves, and of the reasons for the music we hear today, which has been shaped by centuries of musical thought.

Music is one of the most persistent forms of human expression. It is the soundtrack to our celebrations, the voice of our grief, the call to action, and it often says what words cannot. While we listen to music every day, we rarely think about the amazing journey that goes into it. The melodies, harmonies, instruments and musical traditions of today are all part of a much larger story that has been written by generations of composers, performers, thinkers and societies. The history of Western music offers a remarkable window into this journey. Each period offers a unique perspective on sound, creativity, and the human experience – from the origins of early musical traditions to the complex compositions of the Baroque era, the emotional depth of the Classical and Romantic periods, and the innovative experimentation that defines later musical periods.

Music history is more than a list of dates, composers and works. It is an exploration of ideas, including the evolution of musical language, the evolution of creative standards, and the reactions of composers to the intellectual, cultural, and social milieux in which they live.

Consider the different ways that music has been conceived over the ages. In one period composers may want to explore great emotion, dramatic contrast and individual expression; in another they may want balance, proportion and formal clarity. Later developments would increase the possibilities of rhythm, harmony, timbre and musical structure, while challenging long-held norms. These changes weren't a one-off. They represent the hopes, faiths, technology and sensibilities of the makers and experiencers of music.

Grasping these relationships can change the way we listen. A symphony is not merely an orchestral work; it is also a statement of its time. A musical form is more evidence of how composers arranged and communicated their ideas than of its technical organization. Even contemporary music, with its wide variety of influences and seemingly completely new creations, makes more sense when placed within the framework of the traditions it draws from, changes or consciously rejects.

In music education, this matter is very crucial. While learning to sing or play an instrument is an accomplishment, musical understanding goes beyond technical mastery. Understanding why music sounds the way it does, how music structures work and how artistic methods have changed are all helpful to students. Knowing the past improves thinking, promotes attentive listening and enables artists to approach repertoire with more awareness and sensitivity.

For educators, music history also offers an opportunity to connect theory with practice. The study of a composer's context can deepen interpretation; understanding of stylistic conventions can inform performance decisions; and examining changing musical ideas can encourage students to think critically and creatively. History, in this sense, is not separate from music practice. History enriches music practice.

There is also a cultural significance to studying music history. Musical traditions are preserved, transformed and transmitted across generations. To study them is to recognise the accumulated knowledge and imagination of those who came before us. It is also to understand that music is never entirely static. Every generation inherits a language and in its own way contributes to its continuing evolution.

I believe that musical knowledge should be approached with both thinking and a real love for the art. These ideas show up in *Music Through the Ages*. My aim is to encourage readers to see music history as a living story. That story still shapes how music is written, produced, taught and listened to. I do not want it to remain just an academic subject.

Ultimately, the past is never entirely absent from the music of the present. It survives in the structures we recognise, the harmonies that move us, the traditions we preserve, and the boundaries artists continue to push. To understand music's history is to listen with greater awareness and to discover that behind every sound lies a story worth exploring.

HUMAN ORGANS COULD SOON BE GROWN IN LABORATORIES



DR. VIJAY GARG

> *What once seemed like science fiction may gradually become a reality.*

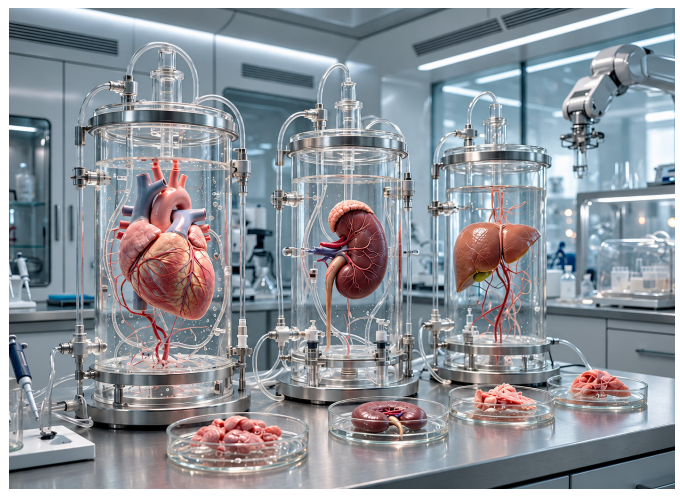
Imagine a future in which patients waiting for a kidney, liver, heart, or other vital organ do not have to depend entirely on human donors. Scientists are working towards a remarkable possibility: growing human tissues and organs in laboratories.

Using advanced techniques such as stem cells, tissue engineering, and 3D bioprinting, researchers are learning how to create living tissues that may one day replace damaged organs. Stem cells can develop into different types of body cells, while specially designed materials can provide a structure on which these cells grow and form tissues.

Scientists have already made progress in developing simple tissues and miniature versions of organs for research. These laboratory-grown tissues can also help doctors study diseases and test new medicines.

Although fully functional, transplantable organs are still a major scientific challenge, the progress is encouraging. In the future, laboratory-grown organs could reduce the shortage of organ donors and make transplantation safer and more accessible.

What once seemed like science fiction may gradually become a reality. The laboratory could one day become a place where science helps grow not just knowledge but new organs and new hope for human life.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Safety Net for Rail Passengers

The Supreme Court's directive mandating compulsory insurance for offline train ticket purchases is a welcome, long-overdue measure toward universal passenger safety. For years, online buyers possessed the option to opt into micro-insurance, leaving millions of daily counter-ticket passengers vulnerable in cases of derailments or unforeseen mishaps. Railways serve as the lifeline of our nation's transport system, catering heavily to low- and middle-income travellers who rely on physical booking windows. Integrating automatic coverage into counter tickets ensures equal financial protection across all socioeconomic groups. However, successful implementation requires absolute transparency. The Railway Board must institute simple, hassle-free claim settlement processes, clear communication at station counters, and robust digital record-keeping to prevent bureaucratic delays during emergencies. Passenger safety must extend beyond safe transit to comprehensive accountability.

– Fransis Jacob

Urgent Action on Seasonal Smog

As autumn sets in, Northern India once again faces the familiar menace of deteriorating air quality. Year after year, urban centers transform into choked smog zones as crop residue burning, industrial emissions, and vehicle exhaust converge. Despite annual discussions and emergency policy measures like traffic restrictions or smog towers, the fundamental causes remain unaddressed. Temporary palliatives cannot replace long-term structural reform. Municipalities and state authorities must act in unison rather than passing responsibility across jurisdictions. Farmers require accessible, subsidised machinery for straw management alongside viable crop diversification models. Simultaneously, cities must enforce strict industrial emission standards and expand reliable public transit to curb vehicular pollution. Clean air is a basic human right, not a seasonal luxury. Our public health strategy demands sustained, year-round preventive action rather than reactive crisis management every winter.

– Rickey

Taming Digital Misinformation Hazards

The rapid proliferation of hyper-realistic generative AI tools and deepfakes poses an unprecedented threat to democratic discourse and personal privacy. Recent incidents involving synthetic media demonstrate how effortlessly public figures can be misrepresented and ordinary citizens targeted without consent. While technological innovation should be encouraged, unregulated proliferation risks eroding trust in digital media and democratic processes. Voluntary self-regulation by technology conglomerates has proved inadequate against malicious actors. Governments must collaborate with industry leaders and cybersecurity experts to establish enforceable legislative frameworks. Mandating visible digital watermarks on AI-generated content, enforcing swift takedown protocols, and penalizing malicious creators are critical steps. Public awareness campaigns on media literacy are equally essential so citizens can navigate digital platforms critically. We must act decisively before synthetic content permanently undermines truth in our shared public sphere.

– Maria Riya

THE SILENT STRUGGLE BEHIND GLOWING MOTHERHOOD MYTH

Motherhood is painted as a glow. In advertisements, in festive wear campaigns at luxury hotels, in family albums, pregnancy looks serene. The reality for millions of Indian women is far more complex, painful, and dangerously silenced.

As a society, we celebrate the baby but ignore the woman carrying it. Pregnancy problems remain a hushed topic, discussed in whispers in hospital corridors rather than in open public health discourse. This silence has consequences.

There is the physical toll that we normalize. Morning sickness is dismissed as "part of it," when for some it is hyperemesis gravidarum requiring hospitalization. Back pain, swollen feet, gestational diabetes, and hypertension are treated as routine discomforts. Preeclampsia, a condition that can turn fatal, often goes undetected because antenatal check-ups are irregular, especially for working women and



"Pregnancy is not just about growing a baby. It is about protecting a woman."

— HEPSI

those in rural areas. Anemia affects over 50% of pregnant women in India, yet it is rarely framed as a systemic failure of nutrition and care, but as individual weakness.

The mental health crisis is almost invisible. Postpartum depression makes headlines, but antenatal anxiety and depression are equally common. The fear of miscarriage, the pressure to produce a male child, job insecurity, body shaming, and lack of partner support create immense stress. We tell women to "stay happy for the baby" without asking what support they need to actually be okay. In our journalism project on fashion and fetish, we saw how women's bodies are constantly displayed, yet when that same body is pregnant, it is either idealized or hidden, never honestly supported.

There is the gap between private luxury and public neglect. In Bengaluru, a private hospital will offer designer maternity shoots and birthing suites costing lakhs. A few kilometres away, a government hospital has one gynaecologist for hundreds of women. The same city holds both realities. The posh display of celebration, like the tiered cakes and lavish buffets we photographed, stands in stark contrast to women who cannot afford basic folic acid supplements or an ultrasound. What do we need to change?

We need to stop treating pregnancy as a nine-month private family matter and start treating it as a public health priority. This means mandatory, paid, comprehensive antenatal leave, not just maternity leave after birth. It means sensitizing workplaces so that a pregnant employee is not seen as a liability. It means including male partners in counselling, because pregnancy is not a solo project.

It also means better education. Most young women I speak to know more about skincare trends than about high-risk pregnancy signs. Schools, colleges, and media must provide evidence-based information about reproductive health, complications, and when to seek immediate care. Early signs like severe headache, blurred vision, reduced fetal movement, or bleeding should be known to every family, not just doctors.

Finally, we must listen. Opinion columns like this are not medical advice. If you or someone you know is experiencing a difficult pregnancy, please speak to a qualified obstetrician-gynaecologist and your primary care provider without delay. Do not rely on social media or family lore alone.

The glamour of motherhood fades quickly. What remains is the health of the mother and the child. If we truly revere tradition, as our fashion shoots claim to, let us revere the women who carry that tradition forward — not with filtered photos, but with real care, real listening, and real investment in their well-being.

— HEPSI

BEYOND SAVINGS: WHY MARKET KNOWLEDGE MATTERS

In India, we are taught to save. From childhood piggy banks to fixed deposits, our financial education ends with "save money." It rarely teaches us what to do next. In an era where inflation eats into our savings and a luxury hotel buffet costs what our parents saved in a month, simply saving is not enough. Understanding the stock market is no longer an elite skill for suited men on Dalal Street. It is basic financial literacy for every student.



The first reason stock market knowledge is important is that it protects us. Today, every second Instagram reel promises to double your money, every Telegram group claims to have a "sure-shot" stock tip. Without basic knowledge, young people — especially students in cities like Bengaluru — fall prey to scams, crypto frauds, and F&O gambling masked as investment. When you know what a P/E ratio is, what a balance sheet means, and why diversification matters, you are less likely to be fooled by a flashy promise. Knowledge is your first layer of security.

It builds real wealth. India is a young country, but our wealth is old. We keep money in savings accounts giving 3% interest while inflation runs at 6%. That means we are losing purchasing power every year. The stock market, through instruments like mutual funds and index funds, allows ordinary Indians to become part-owners of the growth story we see around us. That cafe at JW Marriott, that fashion brand we shot for our photo essay, that telecom company whose recharge we complain about — they are all listed companies. When you understand the market, you move from being just a consumer to being a participant in growth.

Stock market knowledge creates independence. For generations, financial decisions in families were taken by one person, usually the father. Women were told that finance is "not their subject." This needs to change. A young woman who understands SIPs, compounding, and risk management is financially independent in a way that no degree alone can guarantee. In our journalism project, we documented luxury and glamour. True luxury is not a designer outfit; it is the freedom to make your own financial choices without dependence.

Critics argue that the stock market is risky, that it is gambling. This is exactly why knowledge is important. Driving is risky if you don't know how to drive. The market is risky if you invest without learning. The answer is not avoidance, but education. Start with the basics: the difference between saving, investing, and trading. Understand that the market rewards patience, not panic. Learn the power of compounding: Rs. 500 invested monthly from age 20 can become more than Rs. 50 lakh by age 60, thanks to compounding. No savings account can do that.

"Invest in knowledge before you invest in stocks. The returns are always higher."

AVINASH S.

So how do we bring this into the mainstream? Schools and colleges must include stock market literacy in their curriculum, not as an optional commerce chapter, but as a life skill. Parents must talk about money at the dinner table. And we as media must stop showing the market only when the Sensex crashes 1,000 points. We must show its role in everyday life.

You do not need to become a full-time trader. You just need to understand enough to not be left behind. In a country aiming to become a $5 trillion economy, financial illiteracy is a liability we cannot afford.

— AVINASH S.

TURN DOWN VOLUME BEFORE HEARING FADES

We live in a city that never lowers its voice. In Bengaluru, the honk of traffic on Vittal Mallya Road, the thump of bass from a pub inside a luxury mall, the roar of a fashion show's speakers, and the endless buzz of earphones on the metro — noise is our constant companion. We have come to accept it as normal. We should not.

Exposure to loud noise is no longer just an annoyance. It is a full-blown public health crisis, and we are willingly turning up the volume on our own damage.

The most obvious victim is our hearing. The World Health Organization warns that over 1 billion young people worldwide are at risk of hearing loss due to unsafe listening practices. The culprit is not just industrial machinery. It is the 100-decibel playlist in your noise-cancelling headphones. It is standing for three hours next to a concert speaker at a college fest. When we photographed the silent, empty corridors of the JW Marriott, the silence felt luxurious. That is telling. Silence has become a luxury because we have made noise the default.

Loud sound damages the delicate hair cells in the inner ear. Once damaged, they do not regenerate. The loss is gradual, invisible. You do not notice it until you start saying "what?" more often, until you need subtitles, until



the ringing in your ears after a night out never really stops. That ringing is called tinnitus, and for many, it is permanent.

But the damage goes far beyond the ears.

Constant loud noise raises stress hormones. It increases blood pressure, disrupts sleep, and impairs concentration. Ask any student trying to study for an assignment with construction drilling outside, or a child trying to sleep near a main road. Noise fragments attention and fuels anxiety. Studies link chronic noise exposure to heart disease and poor cognitive performance in children. In a city that prides itself on being India's tech and knowledge capital, we are literally making it harder to think.

The irony is, much of this exposure is voluntary and celebrated. We equate loudness with power, with celebration, with being alive. A wedding is not grand unless the DJ shakes the windows. A festival is not festive unless loudspeakers violate every decibel limit after 10 PM. We blast music in our ears to drown out the city noise, creating a double assault on our hearing.

What can be done? The solution is not to live in a silent monastery.

Personal responsibility: follow the 60-60 rule — listen at no more than 60% volume for no more than 60 minutes at a time. Choose headphones that block outside noise so you don't need to turn up the volume. If you leave a concert and your ears are ringing, that was too loud.

Civic enforcement: Bengaluru has noise pollution rules — 75 decibels for industrial areas, 65 for commercial, 55 for residential during the day. They are rarely enforced. Resident welfare associations, mall managements, and event organizers must be held accountable. Sound level meters should be as common as CCTV cameras.

Urban design: our photo essay theme was Fashion Fetish — how we package luxury. True luxury today would be a quiet zone. We need more green buffers, better soundproofing in buildings, and libraries and study spaces that actually offer silence.

We protect our eyes with sunglasses, our skin with sunscreen. It is time we protect our ears with awareness. Because once the music fades, it should be by choice, not because we can no longer hear it.

"Turn it down, while you still can."

— VELU RAM

RECHARGE RISING: HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH?

Remember when a mobile recharge was a simple Rs. 100 top-up that lasted a month? Today, the same recharge barely lasts 28 days, costs three times more, and still leaves you checking your data balance anxiously. For millions of Indian students, workers, and families, the frequent increase in mobile recharge amounts is not just an inconvenience — it is a quiet economic squeeze.

Let us be clear: connectivity is no longer a luxury. In Bengaluru, where our college projects, internships, and even attendance depend on Google Classroom and WhatsApp groups, a phone without data is as good as no phone at all. For a delivery executive navigating, for a student uploading an assignment at 11:58 PM, for a mother video-calling her child, mobile data is survival. When telecom companies raise tariffs every six to eight months, they are not pricing a luxury product. They are taxing a necessity.

The telecom story in India was once a success story. The Jio revolution brought data prices crashing down, making India the cheapest data market in the world. It fueled our start-up dreams and digital education. Now the wheel has turned full circle. The same companies that lured us in with Rs. 149 unlimited



plans are now pushing the entry-level plan beyond Rs. 300. The latest round of hikes in 2024 and 2025 saw a 20–25% jump across Airtel, Jio, and Vi. The justification is always the same: need for 5G investment, Average Revenue Per User must increase, industry sustainability.

No one denies that companies need to be profitable to build towers and lay fiber. But the question is one of timing and fairness. In a market that is effectively a duopoly, where does the consumer go? Porting from one operator to another offers no relief because all three raise prices within weeks of each other. The consumer has no real choice, only the illusion of one.

The impact is unequal. For a family in a luxury hotel lobby browsing on unlimited Wi-Fi, a Rs. 50 hike is invisible. For a student in a PG in Koramangala, who is already managing rent, mess fees, and assignment printouts, it means choosing between a recharge and a book. For low-income users who use prepaid, the validity trap is cruel. If you cannot recharge for 7 days, your number goes into incoming-only mode. For migrant workers and elderly users, losing a number means losing contact with work and family. The digital divide we worked so hard to bridge is being rebuilt by pricing.

What makes it more frustrating is the shrinking value. Plans are getting costlier but not proportionally better. The 28-day month, not 30 days, is a clever trick: you end up paying for 13 recharges a year, not 12. Unlimited calling is bundled even when many only need data. And the truly cheap, voice-only plans for those who just need to stay reachable have almost disappeared.

What should be done?

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) must step in more actively. We need a mandated, low-cost lifeline plan: a Rs. 100–150 plan with basic validity for 30 days, focused on keeping people connected, not on data binges. We need true transparency: if prices rise by 20%, companies should publish what service quality improvements that 20% will bring to my area. And we need to enforce the 30-day validity standard, ending the 28-day loophole.

For consumers, it is time to audit our own usage. Do we need that Rs. 666 plan or will a Rs. 299 one suffice? Use Wi-Fi where available, track data, and raise a collective voice.

"The mobile phone was supposed to be India's great equalizer. Let us not let frequent recharge hikes make it a divider again."

— PAVAN

DEADLINE DILEMMA: DISCIPLINE OR DISTRESS FOR STUDENTS

Every student in Bengaluru knows the drill. The reminder on the class WhatsApp group, the late-night Google Doc, the final rush to upload before the portal closes at 11:59 PM. The timely submission of assignments has become one of the most defining pressures of student life, and it is time we looked at it honestly for both its value and its violence.

Let us first acknowledge the positive side, because deadlines are not the enemy.

On the positive side, deadlines teach life. In a world of newsrooms, hotel management, fashion shows, and corporate offices like the JW Marriott — where our photo essay was staged — nothing works without time discipline. An assignment deadline is a low-stakes rehearsal for high-stakes reality. It instills accountability, planning, and prioritization. A student who learns to break a 2,000-word project into research, draft, and edit phases is learning project management.

It also brings fairness. When a journalism professor says "submit by Friday," it creates an equal playing field. If some submit late without penalty, the sincerity of those who sacrificed sleep is devalued. Timely submission protects academic integrity and keeps the academic calendar moving.

Most importantly, it builds a sense of achievement. That small dopamine hit of clicking "Submit" on time, of seeing "Turned in" on Google Classroom, matters. It is a micro-win in an otherwise anxious student journey.

But here is where the other side begins. What was once discipline has now become distress.

The pressure for timely submission has mutated because the volume has exploded. Students today are not doing one assignment at a time. They are juggling five subjects, each with an assignment, a presentation, and an internal test, plus internships, plus the pressure to maintain



an Instagram-worthy college life. The deadline does not exist in isolation. It exists in a traffic jam of deadlines. The result is not learning, but survival.

We have normalized all-nighters, caffeine overdoses, and copied work. I have seen classmates submit a brilliantly formatted assignment on "Fashion meeting Indian Tradition" at 11:58 PM, but if you ask them what they wrote, they remember nothing. When the goal shifts from understanding to uploading, education loses.

The negative impact on mental health is real and documented. The constant anxiety of the countdown timer leads to burnout, procrastination out of fear, and a guilt cycle. Students who miss a deadline due to illness, family issues, or simply poor internet — a common reality in India — are often branded as lazy rather than heard. The system rarely asks why it was late.

There is also a class divide. A student with a personal laptop, stable Wi-Fi, and a quiet room at home can submit on time more easily than a student sharing one phone with siblings and traveling two hours to college. The same deadline punishes two very different realities equally, which is not equity.

So what is the middle path?

Teachers need to move from rigid deadlines to humane deadlines. This means spacing assignments, giving clear rubrics in advance, allowing a 48-hour grace window without penalty once a semester, and grading for quality of thought, not just punctuality. Students, on the other hand, must reclaim time management not as a last-minute hustle, but as a daily habit.

Deadlines should be tools to structure learning, not weapons to induce fear. A timely submission is a good habit, but a thoughtful submission is a better one.

"If our education system can teach both together, we will produce not just punctual students, but prepared professionals. And that is a deadline worth meeting."

— NAVEEN KUMAR

Quick Read

3 arrested for killing activist who opposed gutka sales

THANE

Police have arrested three people within 12 hours of the killing of social activist Harish Gajwani, who campaigned against illegal gutka sales and gambling activities in Maharashtra's Thane district. Gajwani was shot dead near the Ulhasnagar railway station complex around 8.30 pm on Wednesday. Deputy Commissioner of Police Sachin Gore said a preliminary investigation suggested that an old personal enmity was behind the murder. One of the accused, Avinash Naidu, allegedly held a grudge against Gajwani following a previous dispute. On September 27, Gajwani had posted on X claiming his life was under threat and alleging that senior police officials were shielding illegal activities. Vitthalwadi police have registered a case under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and relevant provisions of the Arms Act.

Class 12 student stabbed to death; five held

NEW DELHI

A 17-year-old Class 12 student was stabbed to death and his classmate assaulted by a group of five in Mohan Garden, west Delhi, on Wednesday, police said. Delhi Police apprehended three minors and arrested two adults in connection with the incident. Three of the accused reportedly study at the same school as the victims. Police said the attack followed a dispute earlier that morning over the victim's friend allegedly not wearing school shoes. After school hours, the accused allegedly gathered others and attacked the boys near the school gate. The victim was stabbed twice, including in the neck, and later died at a hospital.
The knife allegedly used in the attack was recovered near the school gate.

Gujarat scientifically manages 906 tonnes of pilgrimage waste

GANDHINAGAR

The Gujarat Pollution Control Board has scientifically managed around 906 metric tonnes of pilgrimage waste since 2024 under its Swachh Paryavaran Yatra initiative, according to the Chief Minister's Office. During the recent Ambaji Padyatra, authorities managed 38.8 tonnes of waste, deploying 90 sanitation workers and 13 vehicles. The initiative distributed cloth and compostable bags, steel bottles and awareness materials to reduce plastic use. Officials estimated the Ambaji campaign helped mitigate 27.58 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions and save 3.25 lakh kilowatt-hours of energy.

Keralam Assembly seeks Western Ghats ESA exemptions

Keralam legislators seek safeguards for residents, farmers and essential services while urging the Centre to reconsider ecological restrictions across vulnerable Western Ghats regions.

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Keralam Legislative Assembly on Thursday unanimously passed a resolution urging the Centre to accept the State government's revised proposal seeking the exclusion of 8,590.69 square kilometres across 98 revenue villages from the Western Ghats Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA).

The resolution, moved by Electricity, Environment and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Sunny Joseph, called on the Centre to issue the final notification on the Western Ghats ESA only after considering the State's revised proposal.


V.D. Satheesan
Keralam Chief Minister

Chief Minister V.D. Satheesan told the House that the United Democratic Front (UDF) government had maintained the same position on the issue as the previous Left Democratic Front (LDF) administration. The discussion followed Leader of Opposition Pinarayi Vijayan's suggestion that the resolution acknowledge the work undertaken by successive governments over the past decade.

Mr. Joseph agreed to incorporate the suggestion, acknowledging that the final proposal resulted from the efforts of successive administrations.

The resolution further urged the Centre to ensure that ESA restrictions are not applied beyond the designated boundaries. It sought a review of provisions affecting certain industries, including dairy processing units, slaughterhouses, Common Effluent Treatment Plants and healthcare institutions using diesel generator systems exceeding five megavolt-amperes.

It also called for consideration of exemptions for new healthcare facilities, pumped-storage hydropower projects and townships exceeding 50 hectares established to rehabilitate people affected by disasters or other distress, subject to environmental regulations and statutory clearances.

The State additionally sought the exclusion of the Cardamom Hill Reserve, citing its established cardamom cultivation, human settlements and existing infrastructure.

It called for the complete exclusion of human settlements, agricultural lands and plantations from the ESA notification.

At a glance

- **8,590.69 sq km:** proposed for exclusion
- **98:** revenue villages covered by the proposal
- **Unanimous:** resolution passed by the Assembly
- **Cardamom Hill Reserve:** sought for exclusion
- **Key demand:** protect livelihoods while conserving the Western Ghats

JNU students enter 12th day of hunger strike

JNU students continue their hunger strike as talks with university authorities fail, pressing for revoked disciplinary actions and restoration of key student safeguards.

NEW DELHI



Students at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) entered the 12th day of their indefinite hunger strike on Thursday, demanding the revocation of rustication orders against student union office-bearers and the restoration of the Gender Sensitisation Committee Against Sexual Harassment (GSCASH) and the JNU Entrance Examination (JNUEE).

The Jawaharlal Nehru University Students' Union (JNUSU) launched the protest on October 3 with a charter of 13 demands covering academic, infrastructural, welfare, social justice and democratic concerns. Among its key demands are the withdrawal of the Chief Proctor Office (CPO) Manual and the reinstatement of rusticated student representatives.

JNUSU president Aditi Mishra, vice-president K. Gopika Babu and general secretary Sunil Yadav are among those participating in the hunger strike, along with several other students.

The protest continued after a second round of negotiations with the university administration on October 12 failed to produce concrete commitments on the union's major demands.

According to the union, the administration agreed to examine concerns regarding the CPO Manual and alleged violations of reservation rules in hostel allotments. However, it did not provide a comprehensive response on the rustication orders or the restoration of GSCASH. On JNUEE, the administration reportedly cited a lack of funding as a major obstacle.

"The outcome of the second round of negotiations makes it clear that the administration is still unwilling to offer concrete commitments on our legitimate demands. Mere assurances, promises to seek legal opinions and prepare feasibility reports cannot substitute for action," the union said in a statement. Meanwhile, the university has asked Ms. Mishra to appear before a proctorial committee on October 22 over allegations of manhandling security personnel and damaging campus property during a September 8 protest. JNUSU has also claimed that 10–12 other students received similar notices.

The ongoing agitation follows disciplinary action against five students in February 2026 over the alleged vandalism of facial recognition technology access gates at the university's central library.

Actor Imran Khan asked to leave India after Mumbai protest

MUMBAI



Actor Imran Khan, an American citizen and Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cardholder, has reportedly been directed to leave India by October 28 following his participation in a protest demanding the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar in Mumbai.

The Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO) issued the notice after receiving a complaint from Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Kirit Somaiya, who questioned the actor's participation in the demonstration despite his foreign citizenship.

Khan was among hundreds of protesters detained at August Kranti Maidan on October 10.

Introduced in 2005, the OCI scheme provides eligible people of Indian origin holding foreign citizenship with certain privileges, including a lifelong, multiple-entry visa to India. However, OCI status does not amount to dual citizenship, and cardholders remain foreign nationals rather than Indian citizens.

OCI cardholders cannot vote in Indian elections, contest parliamentary or State Assembly elections, or hold certain constitutional positions. They also do not enjoy the same constitutional protections under Article 19 as Indian citizens, including the specific rights to freedom of speech and peaceful assembly guaranteed to citizens.

However, the absence of these citizen-specific protections does not automatically make every instance of a foreign national attending a protest illegal.

The Citizenship Act, 1955, permits the government to cancel OCI registration on specified grounds, including fraud, certain forms of conduct against the Constitution and considerations involving national security or public interest. Cancellation of OCI status and an order to leave India are distinct legal actions.

What an OCI card allows

- ✓ A lifelong, multiple-entry visa to India
- ✗ Dual citizenship: cardholders remain foreign nationals
- ✗ Voting in Indian elections
- ✗ Contesting parliamentary or Assembly elections

Delhi's new water plants face raw water shortage

NEW DELHI



Delhi has completed two water treatment plants worth a combined ₹850 crore, but a shortage of additional raw water has prevented the infrastructure from delivering its intended benefits to the capital's residents.

The plants at Dwarka Phase-2 and Chandrawal have a combined treatment capacity of 155 million gallons per day (MGD), equivalent to nearly 60% of Delhi's estimated 250 MGD gap between water demand and supply. However, officials said the new capacity has not translated into a corresponding increase in the city's overall water supply.

The Dwarka Phase-2 plant, built at a cost of ₹280 crore with a capacity of 50 MGD, has reportedly been ready for more than eight months but remains non-operational due to the lack of raw water.

In north Delhi, the 105 MGD Chandrawal plant was constructed at a cost of ₹599 crore to supplement the existing 90 MGD facility, which dates back to the 1930s. However, officials said water from the older plant is currently being diverted to operate the new facility, leaving insufficient supplies to run both at full capacity.

The new Chandrawal plant is presently producing around 50–55 MGD, according to officials.

To address the shortage, the DJB is exploring several options, including installing tubewells that could add around 30 MGD to raw water supplies.

Additionally, the utility has proposed supplying treated wastewater from the Rithala sewage treatment plant to Haryana for irrigation in exchange for raw water suitable for drinking.

₹280 cr	₹599 cr	155 MGD
Dwarka Phase-2 plant (50 MGD)	Chandrawal plant (105 MGD)	combined treatment capacity

Odisha Dy CM links Kanya Pujan to empowerment

BHUBANESWAR

Odisha Deputy Chief Minister and Women and Child Development Minister Pravati Parida on Thursday emphasised the importance of girls' safety, education and empowerment while participating in Kanya Pujan celebrations during Navratri in Bhubaneswar.

Parida performed the traditional ritual alongside officials at an event organised by the Odisha State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (OSCPCR).

According to a statement from the Deputy Chief Minister's Office, Parida said the ceremony should extend beyond religious worship and serve as a reminder of society's responsibility to protect every girl's dignity and rights.

She called for collective efforts to create a child-friendly society where girls are respected, safeguarded and empowered to pursue their aspirations. Her remarks highlighted the need to ensure their holistic development through access to education, safety and opportunities.

Navratri is a nine-day Hindu festival dedicated to Goddess Durga and her various forms, observed through religious rituals, devotional singing and traditional dances.

Earlier, Parida met Union Women and Child Development Minister Annapurna Devi in New Delhi during a two-day departmental summit held on October 8 and 9. The summit brought together ministers and senior officials from States and Union Territories to strengthen coordination between the Centre and States on women and child development.

Discussions focused on improving nutrition and early childhood education through Anganwadi Centres, strengthening child protection systems, ensuring women's safety and advancing women's empowerment initiatives.

TVK joins INDIA bloc's anti-CEC protest

CHENNAI

Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), led by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay, on Thursday joined a Congress-led protest in Chennai demanding the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar over alleged irregularities in electoral rolls and the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process.

The participation marked TVK's first involvement in an anti-CEC protest since the party joined the INDIA bloc on October 3.

Representatives of all seven constituent parties participated in the agitation, which focused on alleged voter deletions and concerns over the revision of electoral rolls. Protesters claimed that more than 97 lakh voters had been removed from Tamil Nadu's electoral rolls and alleged that marginalised communities, including Muslims and tribal groups, were disproportionately affected.

The allegations have not been independently established. The protest comes amid wider opposition demonstrations against the SIR process and demands for greater transparency in electoral roll revisions.

> **"The Election Commission is working on behalf of the BJP, which is undemocratic."**
> — **Vijay Vasanth,** Congress MP

Congress MP Vijay Vasanth called for Kumar's resignation, accusing the Election Commission of favouring the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

"We are insisting on the resignation of Gyanesh Kumar... The Election Commission is working on behalf of the BJP, which is undemocratic," he told media.The TVK's participation follows a meeting between Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and Vijay at the latter's residence in Chennai on October 10. The two leaders reportedly discussed political issues, with Gandhi also congratulating Vijay on TVK's victories in the Dharapuram and Madurantakam by-elections.

The meeting was the first between the leaders since the formation of the Secular Social Justice Victory Alliance in Tamil Nadu.

GUWAHATI VISA APPLICATION CENTRE

Guwahati opens Northeast's first multi-country visa centre

GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Thursday inaugurated Northeast India's first multi-country Visa Application Centre (VAC) in Guwahati, aiming to reduce the travel costs, time and logistical difficulties faced by residents applying for overseas visas.

The facility, operated by VFS Global, will initially process applications for 14 countries, including Austria, France, Italy, Switzerland, Ireland, Japan, Egypt and Morocco.



Previously, many applicants from the northeastern states had to travel to Kolkata, Delhi or other designated centres to submit visa applications and provide biometric information. Such journeys often involved additional expenses for transport, accommodation and food, besides time away from work or studies.

The new facility is expected to make visa procedures more accessible for students pursuing overseas education, professionals seeking employment, tourists and people travelling abroad for medical treatment.

"The VFS Global's visa centre facility will make international travel more accessible and convenient to our people," Sarma said after inaugurating the centre. He added that the facility would bring the world closer to the people of Assam and the Northeast.

> *"The VFS Global's visa centre facility will make international travel more accessible and convenient to our people."*
> **HIMANTA BISWA SARMA**
> Assam Chief Minister

Visa Application Centres generally collect application forms, supporting documents, fingerprints and photographs before forwarding them to the relevant diplomatic missions.

Assam minister Bimal Borah said applicants would be able to access visa services for seven Schengen countries under one roof. However, applicants must verify the destination-specific requirements, appointment procedures and jurisdiction before applying.

The centre is also expected to strengthen the region's international connectivity by easing access to overseas education, business and tourism opportunities.

The initial rollout marks a step towards addressing a longstanding gap in regional access to visa services. Its broader impact will depend on the expansion of participating countries, appointment availability and its ability to serve applicants from all eight northeastern states.

Quick Read

Retired customs officer shot dead in Bihar

BHOJPUR

A retired customs officer was shot dead by armed assailants in Ara town of Bihar's Bhojpur district on Thursday morning. Police have detained one person and launched an investigation. The victim, Ram Kumar Singh, was attacked near Jain College while preparing to leave for his morning walk. He sustained multiple bullet injuries and was rushed to Ara Sadar Hospital, where doctors declared him dead. A land dispute is suspected, according to preliminary reports, but the motive has not been officially established. The incident triggered anger among local residents, with some blocking the Ara-Patna Road to protest the killing and demand action.

UP police arrest four in online betting fraud

ETAWAH

Uttar Pradesh Police have arrested four alleged members of an interstate gang accused of cheating over 500 people of crores of rupees through online gaming and betting. Senior Superintendent of Police Brijesh Kumar Srivastava said the accused allegedly collected villagers' identity documents to obtain SIM cards and open bank accounts in their names. Police seized 16 mobile phones, 42 ATM and debit cards, six fake SIM cards, a laptop, financial documents, a transaction register and two vehicles allegedly bought using the proceeds. The gang had reportedly been active for eight to 10 months.

Taxi plunges into Uttarakhand gorge, killing two

DEHRADUN

Two people were killed and three others rescued after a taxi plunged into a gorge in Uttarakhand, according to sources reports on Thursday. Rescue teams rushed to the accident site and carried out an operation to recover the victims and assist the survivors. The three rescued individuals were provided assistance following the incident. Authorities are investigating the circumstances surrounding the accident.

Railways deploy drones to strengthen passenger safety

NEW DELHI

Indian Railways is strengthening security through drone surveillance to curb stone pelting, theft, trespassing and other offences while improving passenger safety and crowd management across railway premises. The Railway Protection Force (RPF) is deploying unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) to monitor railway tracks, station premises and rail yards. Equipped with cameras, the drones provide live video feeds and aerial views, enabling security personnel to identify suspicious activities and respond to potential threats. According to reports, East Coast Railway has deployed 11 drones across 284 stations and plans to increase its fleet to 22 by March 2027. The initiative is aimed at expanding surveillance coverage and strengthening security at vulnerable locations.

Rajendra Arlekar takes charge as Tamil Nadu Governor

Rajendra Arlekar formally assumed office on Thursday, ending months of additional charge following the transfer of former Governor R.N. Ravi to West Bengal.

CHENNAI

Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar on Thursday took charge as the full-time Governor of Tamil Nadu at Lok Bhavan in Chennai, following his appointment to the constitutional office by President Droupadi Murmu.

Mr. Arlekar, who previously served as Governor of Keralam, had been discharging the additional responsibilities of Tamil Nadu Governor since March 12, 2026. The arrangement was made after his predecessor, R.N. Ravi, was appointed Governor of West Bengal.

His appointment as the full-time Governor formalises the arrangement that had been in place for more than seven months. During this period, Mr. Arlekar continued serving as Governor of Keralam while also overseeing the constitutional responsibilities associated with the Tamil Nadu gubernatorial office.



Following that development, Mr. Arlekar was entrusted with the additional charge of Tamil Nadu, allowing the office to function while a permanent appointment was awaited.

The President's appointment of Mr. Arlekar now establishes him as the full-time constitutional head of Tamil Nadu. His assumption of office took place at Lok Bhavan, the official premises of the Governor in Chennai, on Thursday. The Governor's office plays an important constitutional role in the functioning of a state government.

Mr. Arlekar's appointment comes after his experience in Keralam, where he had been serving as Governor before taking on the additional charge of Tamil Nadu. His transition to the full-time role marks the conclusion of the temporary arrangement that began in March.

The new Governor

WHO	Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar
WHERE	Lok Bhavan, Chennai
BEFORE	Governor of Keralam; Tamil Nadu additional charge since March 12
SUCCEEDS	R.N. Ravi, now in West Bengal

Rajnath warns Pakistan against further terror attacks

Rajnath Singh emphasised India's commitment to peaceful dialogue while warning that cross-border terrorism would trigger decisive military action to protect national security and sovereignty.



NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday warned that any further terrorist activity originating from Pakistan would invite a stronger Indian response, asserting that the country's commitment to peace should not be mistaken for weakness.

Addressing the Times Network Defence Conclave in New Delhi, Singh said India favoured dialogue, coexistence and peaceful resolution of disputes but remained prepared to defend its sovereignty and national interests.

"Operation Sindoor, Balakot Airstrikes and Surgical Strikes weren't just military operations; they symbolised a decisive shift in the nation's approach, moving from diplomatic condemnation to proactive action aimed at rooting out terrorism by reaching its very source," Singh said.

He added that since 2014, the operational lifespan of most terrorists had fallen to less than a year, with security forces neutralising many within a year of their taking up arms against India.

The minister highlighted emerging security challenges, including what he described as the "5D Security Threat": disinformation, destabilisation, disruption, deception and destruction. He warned that terrorism was evolving beyond organised groups, with lone-wolf attacks and alleged white-collar terrorism making threats increasingly difficult to detect.

Referring to an incident involving a co-pilot who allegedly attempted to crash a passenger aircraft, Singh praised Captain Smit Machchhar for his courage in helping avert a potential disaster.

"The fight against terrorism requires not only the capabilities of security agencies but also the active participation of aware and responsible citizens," he said.

Singh also called for a shift towards "smart power", combining advanced military technology, artificial intelligence and intelligence capabilities with cost-effective weapons and adaptable systems.

Highlighting growth in domestic defence manufacturing, he said production had reached over ₹1.78 lakh crore, compared with ₹40,000 crore in 2014. Defence exports had risen to ₹39,000 crore from ₹686 crore in 2013-14.

Singh expressed confidence that India would achieve its defence production target of ₹2 lakh crore in 2026 and ₹3 lakh crore by 2029, while aiming for ₹50,000 crore in defence exports by 2029.

In focus

defence production
₹1.78 lakh cr
defence exports
₹39,000 cr
production target for 2026
₹2 lakh cr
production target by 2029
₹3 lakh cr
export target by 2029
₹50,000 cr

Ankita Bhandari's parents threaten to go on hunger strike

NEW DELHI

The parents of Ankita Bhandari, a 19-year-old woman murdered in Uttarakhand in 2022, were briefly detained by Delhi Police on Thursday after staging a sit-in protest near India Gate against the appointment of former BJP Uttarakhand chief Dushyant Kumar Gautam as Sikkim Governor.

> **"If we are not allowed to sit here, we will go on a hunger strike from our home till the decision to appoint him governor is not revoked."**
>
> **– Soni Devi**

Virendra Bhandari and Soni Devi had been demanding that Gautam's appointment be put on hold until the ongoing Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe into their daughter's murder case is completed.

The protest continued for nearly 10 hours before police detained the family and several political leaders at around 4.30 am. Those detained included Congress leader Supriya Shrinate, National Students' Union of India member Varun Choudhary and Indian Youth Congress president Uday Bhanu Chib. They were taken to Tilak Marg police station and released after approximately 30 minutes.

The protest was also attended by Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, who joined the family in expressing solidarity with their demand for accountability.



Ankita, who worked as a receptionist at a resort in Uttarakhand's Pauri Garhwal district, was murdered in September 2022.

Their latest protest focuses on Gautam's gubernatorial appointment and the need for the investigation to be completed before the appointment proceeds.

The parents have indicated they will continue their protest, including through a hunger strike at home, if their demand for reconsideration of the appointment is not addressed.

The allegations concerning Gautam remain subject to the ongoing investigation, and the protest reflects the family's demand for transparency and accountability in the case.

Modi discusses trade, energy ties with Canadian minister

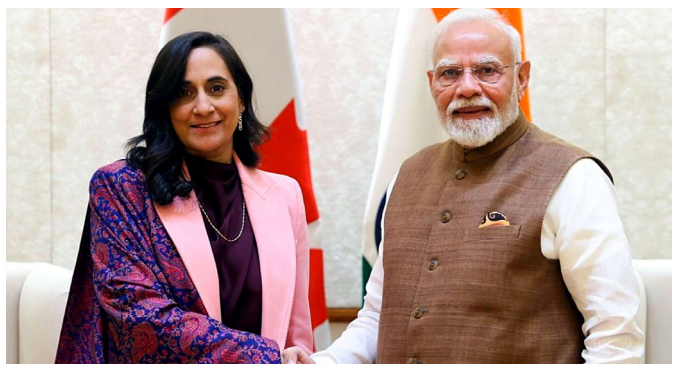
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday met visiting Canadian Foreign Minister Anita Anand to discuss strengthening bilateral cooperation in trade, technology, security, energy, education and people-to-people exchanges, as both countries seek to rebuild and expand their strategic partnership.

Following the meeting, Modi said India was committed to developing a constructive and forward-looking relationship with Canada that would deliver tangible benefits to the people of both countries.

In a post on X, Modi said, "Pleased to meet Canadian Foreign Minister Anita Anand. We had a productive discussion on further strengthening India-Canada ties in trade, technology, security, energy, education and people-to-people exchanges."

The meeting comes ahead of Modi's expected visit to Canada in December 2026. Both countries are working towards concluding the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), which is expected to strengthen trade and investment ties.



India-Canada ties

- **TUESDAY** – Modi speaks to Canadian PM Mark Carney
- **WEDNESDAY** – Modi meets Anand: trade, technology, security, energy
- **DECEMBER** – Modi expected to visit Canada; CEPA talks on

Earlier on Wednesday, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar also met Anand to review progress in bilateral relations. Their discussions covered trade and investment, education, energy, defence and people-to-people exchanges.

The diplomatic engagements follow a conversation between Modi and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney on Tuesday, signalling continued efforts by both governments to maintain momentum in bilateral cooperation.

India and Canada have been seeking to strengthen engagement across economic and strategic sectors.

Technology, energy and education are also emerging as key areas for cooperation, alongside security and defence engagement.

Modi's meeting with Anand highlights the importance both governments are placing on sustained diplomatic dialogue.

New working group to preserve and promote tribal languages

NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs has constituted a Working Group on Tribal Languages to strengthen the documentation, preservation, research and promotion of tribal languages across India.

The group held its first meeting on Thursday in a hybrid format, chaired by Ranjana Chopra, Secretary of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. Linguists, academics, researchers and community language practitioners participated in discussions on developing a coordinated national framework for safeguarding linguistic diversity.

The meeting reviewed the progress of Adi Vaani, a digital platform developed by IIT Delhi in collaboration with the Ministry. The platform provides text-to-text translation in nine tribal languages and supports speech processing, optical character recognition and video subtitling.

According to the Ministry, State Tribal Research Institutes have contributed approximately 13.9 lakh text sentences in ten languages and around 300 hours of speech data. Adi Vaani has recorded over 48,000 Android downloads and approximately 6,500 monthly users.



> **"Language resources developed with communities should continue to be owned by the communities."**
>
> **— Ranjana Chopra,** Secretary, Ministry of Tribal Affairs

The Working Group will focus on establishing a national baseline of tribal languages, expanding digital documentation, developing language-learning materials and supporting community-led preservation of oral traditions and cultural resources.

Participants proposed creating searchable databases of language resources, district-level community research teams, digital archives and an atlas of tribal languages across States.

Representatives of the National Education Society for Tribal Students noted that more than 525 Eklavya Model Residential Schools, serving over 1.7 lakh students, could use the platform for classroom learning and contribute stories, poems and other materials.

Chopra emphasised that language resources developed with communities should remain owned by those communities. The Ministry will circulate the meeting's agenda items and prepare a roadmap for future action.

CHENNAI WATER PIPELINE PROJECT

Vijay launches ₹3,108-crore Chennai drinking water project

CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay on Wednesday laid the foundation stone for a ₹3,108.55-crore ring main pipeline project aimed at ensuring equitable and uninterrupted drinking water supply across the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) area.

The project seeks to interlink Chennai's water sources and treatment facilities through an interconnected pipeline network, improving the distribution of drinking water to residents across the city. The initiative is expected to strengthen the existing water supply infrastructure and address disparities in access to drinking water.



As part of the project, approximately 91.2 km of interconnected pipelines will be laid to establish a closed circular loop system. The network will connect all nine water treatment facilities, enabling water to be distributed more efficiently across different parts of Chennai.

The project also includes the installation of instruments to monitor water pressure, flow and quality at treatment plants and distribution stations. These monitoring systems are intended to help authorities track the performance of the network, identify potential problems and improve the management of water distribution.

91.2 km
of interconnected pipelines will form a closed loop linking all nine of Chennai's water treatment facilities

By connecting the treatment facilities through a common network, the system is designed to provide greater flexibility in supplying water to different areas. It is also expected to help maintain continuity of supply when individual sections of the network require maintenance or experience operational difficulties.

The foundation stone was laid at the Chennai Metrowater pumping station in Sholinganallur on Wednesday.

PREMADA OORALI takes K'taka box office by storm

The Kannada film industry is witnessing one of the most astonishing box-office phenomena in recent memory as the small-budget emotional family drama Premada Oorali continues its historic run across Karnataka. Directed by Manoj Kumar and starring a largely unheralded cast alongside veteran actor Rangayana Raghu, the film has emerged as a massive cultural and commercial milestone.

Opening quietly on September 25, 2026, across a mere 60 shows with virtually zero initial buzz or commercial marketing budget, the film faced an uphill battle. In an industry increasingly dominated by high-octane actioners, dark themes, and multi-crore spectacles, the rural family drama relied entirely on old-school grassroots promotion—with team members distributing wedding-style invitation cards and partnering with local auto-rickshaw drivers to spread awareness. By the end of its opening weekend, powerful word-of-mouth caught fire, triggering an unprecedented surge in theater allocations that quickly expanded to over 1,200 shows statewide. Driven by profound emotional resonance, strong family dynamics, and stellar performances by Shree Raam, Thapaswini Poonacha, and Ramika Shivu, Premada Oorali quickly surpassed the Rs 50 crore milestone. Made on an ultra-lean budget of roughly Rs 2 crore to Rs 2.5 crore, the film's extraordinary financial return has officially made it the highest-grossing Sandalwood title in Karnataka for 2026, eclipsing even high-budget tentpole projects such as Yash's much-anticipated action epic Toxic. Industry analysts note that the film's unexpected triumph has successfully revitalized single-screen theaters across B and C centers throughout the state, proving that authentic storytelling and relatable human emotions remain an unbeatable force at the ticket windows.



Rowdyism Dies, 'Grantha' Survives





The muhurtha ceremony for the film "Grantha" produced by Smt. Haripriya Ravikopp from Gokak, under the banner of Shark Cinemas—was held in a grand manner at Kanteerava Studio. Sri Sri Muruga Rajendra Swamiji of the Shoonya Sampadana Mata, Gokak, graced the occasion to offer his blessings to the team, while actor Aniruddh Jatkar clapped for the first shot. Sanjeev Gavandi has written the story and is directing the film, which carries the catchy tagline: "Boolokada Adipati" in Kannada. Yuva is Hero. Cast that includes Sr.actor Abhijith, 'Cockroach' Sudhi, Ravi Kale, and Sayaji Shinde. The film features music by Anjan Poojari, cinematography by Veeresh N.T.A., and editing by Satish Chandrayya. Stunts are choreographed by Dr. Thriller Manju, while the choreography is handled by V. Nagesh, Bhushan, and V. Murali.

Speaking on the occasion, the director shared that this film is the culmination of a three-year-long dream. After undergoing several revisions, the concept was finally refined and shaped into its current, definitive form.

The story is set against the backdrop of the 1990s. It explores the nature of 'rowdyism' in states other than Karnataka. The protagonist decides to author a book—a creative work of his own—intended to show future generations what the underworld is truly like.

The title of the film is derived from this book. While the story is fictional, it incorporates several real-life elements. A well-known actress will play the female lead; her identity will be revealed at a later date. Sanjeev Gavandi stated that plans are in place to film in various locations, including Bengaluru, Mangaluru, Mumbai, and North Karnataka.

Rajinikanth's 'Jailer 2' roars to massive openings

Superstar Rajinikanth's highly anticipated action sequel Jailer 2 hit theatres worldwide, drawing massive crowds of enthusiastic fans and generating stellar early box office projections. Directed by Nelson Dilipkumar, the high-octane commercial entertainer is expected to post a staggering global Day 1 gross of around Rs 125 crore, fueled by phenomenal advance bookings and widespread celebratory screenings across domestic and international markets.

Prior to its release, the film crossed significant milestones at the box office ticket windows, selling over 14.58 lakh tickets across nearly 14,000 shows. Domestic advance sales alone crossed Rs 31 crore, with Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Kerala driving the highest demand. Industry analysts predict that worldwide advance sales will touch up to Rs 80 crore, positioning Jailer 2 among the biggest openings in Tamil cinema history, trailing only Rajinikanth's previous blockbuster Coolie and Thalapathy Vijay's Leo.

Early audience reactions and reviews have been overwhelmingly enthusiastic, particularly praising Rajinikanth's peerless screen presence, his effortless swag as Tiger Muthuvel Pandian, and Nelson's signature dark humor. Comedian Yogi Babu's performance received special mentions, while Anirudh Ravichander's electrifying background score and high-energy music tracks earned widespread applause for elevating the film's whistle-worthy action and mass elevation blocks.



The star-studded sequel also features prominent appearances by Mohanlal, S. J. Suryah, Vidya Balan, Vijay Sethupathi, and a much-discussed surprise cameo by Bollywood star Hrithik Roshan. While a few early reviewers noted that the second-half pacing slowed down compared to the explosive first act, the overall theatrical atmosphere has been described by critics and peers alike as a festive celebration. Leading figures from the film fraternity, including actors Dhanush, Nani, and Sivakarthikeyan, took to social media to hail the movie as a must-watch cinematic feast. As spot bookings and holiday footfall continue to pour in, Jailer 2 is well on its way to cementing another historic box office milestone for Tamil cinema's enduring superstar.

Respect for author: Sethupathi cuts remuneration

In an industry where soaring star salaries often dictate production economics, acclaimed actor Vijay Sethupathi has made headlines by willingly slashing his remuneration in half. Known affectionately by fans as Makkal Selvan, the versatile performer reportedly reduced his standard fee from Rs 15 crore to approximately Rs 7.5 crore for his upcoming collaboration with legendary auteur Mani Ratnam, titled Inji Vellam.

Industry insiders note that the significant financial concession was offered purely as a personal mark of respect and admiration for the iconic filmmaker.

The romantic drama, which recently wrapped up production following an exceptionally swift shooting schedule, pairs Sethupathi with leading actress Sai Pallavi. Set against the atmospheric backdrop of Kolkata, Inji Vellam has already generated substantial trade excitement, with distributors locking in a grand theatrical release during the festive Pongal/Sankranthi season in January 2027. Mani Ratnam's distinct storytelling sensibilities, paired with the fresh on-screen pairing of Sethupathi and Pallavi, have positioned the project as one of the most anticipated releases of the upcoming year.

This gesture highlights a rare instance of an A-list star prioritizing creative alignment over commercial billing. Sethupathi, who is currently riding high on the critical and commercial success of his recent outing Baththa, has built a reputation for seamlessly transitioning between protagonist roles, complex anti-hero shades, and supporting powerhouses across Tamil, Telugu, and Hindi cinema.

Beyond Inji Vellam, Sethupathi's busy professional slate includes a diverse array of projects. Principal photography has already concluded for Slum Dog, a high-octane emotional action drama directed by Puri Jagannaadh, further demonstrating the actor's preference for eclectic scripts and varied cinematic styles.

As trade analysts track the box-office trajectory of his recent releases—including his prominent ensemble presence in Rajinikanth's newly opened blockbuster Jailer 2—Sethupathi's calculated artistic choices continue to reinforce his status as one of contemporary Indian cinema's most unpredictable and respected talents.



Salman Khan dismisses biopic ideas on Koffee with Karan

Bollywood superstar Salman Khan delivered signature candor, wit, and unfiltered reflections during his appearance on the premiere episode of Koffee With Karan Season 9, hosted by Karan Johar. Steering the conversation away from conventional promotional talk, the actor addressed decades of public speculation surrounding his personal life, career choices, and the persistent rumors of a cinematic biopic.

During a playful Rapid Fire segment conducted alongside special guest Karisma Kapoor, Khan was asked to choose which prominent filmmaker he would trust to direct a biographical film about his life, given options including Sooraj Barjatya, Kabir Khan, Sanjay Leela Bhansali, and David Dhawan. Offering a characteristic breakdown, the actor joked that David Dhawan would helm a comedy, Sanjay Leela Bhansali a traditional tragic love story, Sooraj Barjatya a sequence of heartwarming romances, and Kabir Khan an action-packed romance.

However, the superstar firmly shut down any actual plans for a cinematic adaptation, declaring, "A biopic of my life will never be made. My life will go to my grave."

Expanding on his fiercely guarded personal life and long-standing single status, Khan reflected on why he avoids discussing relationships publicly. He explained that media speculations often place unfair pressure on personal bonds, noting that individuals mentioned in dating reports eventually move on and marry others.

Aneet Padda seeks solo stardom in Shakti Shalini



Following her meteoric rise to nationwide stardom in Mohit Suri's romantic musical Saiyaara—which shattered box office records by grossing approximately ₹580 crore worldwide—actor Aneet Padda has made a deliberate and calculated shift in her cinematic trajectory. In a recent interview, Padda revealed that despite the overwhelming success of her romantic debut alongside Ahaan Panday, she consciously sought out a starkly different challenge for her follow-up project: a solo-led venture where the narrative weight rests entirely on her shoulders.

That project materialized as Shakti Shalini, the sixth installment in the expanding Maddock Horror Comedy Universe. Directed by Aditya Sarpotdar, the film pairs Padda with co-star Vishal Jethwa and blends high-octane action, romance, and supernatural elements. For Padda, securing a women-led genre film at this nascent stage of her career represents both an incredible stroke of luck and an empowering professional milestone. Acknowledging that carrying a film entirely as a solo lead is an intimidating prospect, she has embraced the complete ownership of the project's outcome, eager to showcase a multifaceted version of her acting capabilities far removed from conventional romance.

Novel scripts over regional borders: Allu Arjun's choices



The evolving dynamics of pan-Indian cinema have brought significant attention to Telugu superstar Allu Arjun's recent professional alignments with prominent Tamil (Kollywood) filmmakers, most notably through his much-discussed collaboration AA23 with director Lokesh Kanagaraj and the big-budget sci-fi action project Raaka directed by Atlee. While these developments have sparked widespread media speculation regarding a deliberate gravitation toward Tamil directors, industry experts and filmmakers like Hemanth Madhukar argue that these choices are driven primarily by narrative novelty, conceptual scale, and the universal appeal of high-octane storytelling rather than regional affiliations.

The film industry has experienced a paradigm shift where traditional geographical boundaries matter less than the capability to craft larger-than-life, star-driven spectacles for a global audience. Directors such as Lokesh Kanagaraj and Atlee have proven track records of successfully handling massive cinematic universes and marquee superstars—having collaborated with icons like Rajinikanth, Thalapathy Vijay, and Shah Rukh Khan. For an actor like Allu Arjun, whose commercial stature scaled historic global heights following massive multi-language blockbusters, partnering with filmmakers who excel in mounting high-concept, pan-Indian cinematic events is a natural strategic alignment.

Recent speculation surrounding AA23—tentatively titled LK7 and backed by Mythri Movie Makers with music by Anirudh Ravichander—was recently put to rest when Lokesh Kanagaraj shared an update confirming that pre-production and discussions are actively moving forward. Similarly, his ongoing work on Raaka alongside Deepika Padukone highlights an ambition to explore diverse narrative spaces, ranging from gritty urban action to cutting-edge science fiction.

Quick Read

Sweden's parliament rejects Andersson as PM

STOCKHOLM

Sweden's parliament on Thursday rejected Social Democrats leader Magdalena Andersson's bid to form a minority government, as widely expected, extending a period of uncertainty over who will become prime minister after last month's general election. Four centre-left opposition parties, which have all said they favour Andersson as prime minister, on September 13 won a majority of seats in Sweden's parliament, the Riksdag, but do not agree on who should be part of a new government. The opposition in September won 176 seats to 173 for Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson's right-wing bloc. Thursday's ballot was the first of up to four votes before a new election must be called.

Maduro due in US court over new torture charge

NEW YORK

Ousted Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro and his wife Cilia Flores are due in US court on Thursday to respond to a new indictment accusing them of conspiring to torture political opponents. The additional charges, brought last Thursday, significantly expanded the US criminal case against Maduro, 63, and Flores, 70. They previously pleaded not guilty to charges that they abused their power to help drug traffickers ship cocaine. Their lawyers have said they deny the torture charges as well. Maduro and Flores were captured by the US military in a January raid ordered by President Donald Trump and flown to New York.

8 missing after fire on vessel in Black Sea

BUCHAREST

Romania said eight people were missing after a fire broke out on a vessel flying the San Marino flag on Thursday morning, the latest incident in the Black Sea, which has seen a series of drone attacks. Suspected Russian drones have hit several ships off Romania and neighbouring Bulgaria since last week in a spillover from the Ukraine war. The vessel, named the Wine Trader, reported a fire at around 7:00 am (0400 GMT), approximately 13 nautical miles southeast of the Romanian city of Sulina, the Romanian Naval Authority said in a press release. "There were 12 people on board the vessel. Four of them are safe, whilst eight are currently missing," it added.

A search and rescue operation was underway, involving a vessel and a helicopter, it said. The incident comes after Romania said on Wednesday it was probing a possible fresh drone attack on a tanker off its Black Sea coast. Rescuers rushed to help the Comoros Islands-flagged Yara J after a fire broke out, but the ship's crew managed to douse the fire themselves. "Whether it was struck by a drone or not, an investigation is currently underway," Defence Minister Radu Miruta told the Digi24 television channel. "This is a matter of significant gravity, given that such incidents are occurring in Romanian territorial waters," he said. At least 163 civilian and commercial vessels were hit on the Black Sea in the first eight months of this year, according to Turkey's IMEAK chamber of shipping.

Russia nears completion of new drone base

Russia's rapidly expanding drone infrastructure near Ukraine raises concerns over faster aerial attacks and the challenge of defending against them.

LONDON

Russia has nearly completed construction of a major new base for launching jet-powered attack drones in its southwestern Rostov region, with satellite imagery showing the facility taking shape in just six weeks, according to defence experts and an analysis of commercial images.

The site, which appeared to be an empty field on August 31, had expanded into a complex covering an area equivalent to around 126 football pitches by Wednesday. Images provided by Planet Labs and Airbus showed extensive construction, highlighting Russia's efforts to expand its strike capabilities near Ukraine.

The development comes as Moscow increases its use of jet-powered attack drones against Ukraine. These weapons can travel at speeds of up to 600 kilometres per hour, making them more difficult for Ukrainian forces to intercept. Kyiv expects Russia to intensify drone and missile attacks during the coming winter as the full-scale war enters its fifth year.

Mike Monnik, founder and chief executive of private intelligence company DroneSec, said the facility appeared capable of launching Russia's latest Geran-4 and Geran-5 jet-powered drone models. He identified eight launch platforms along the western edge of the site, designed to accommodate launch rails.

Monnik said the new installation would add to an existing Russian network of at least 11 fixed launch sites used in attacks against Ukraine.



6	126	600	8
weeks for the base to take shape	football pitches: the area it covers	km/h: top speed of the jet drones	launch platforms identified

Pope Leo recovers after lung cancer surgery

VATICAN CITY

Pope Leo had a good night in hospital and ate breakfast on Thursday as he continued recovering from surgery for lung cancer, the Vatican said. The 71-year-old pontiff underwent an operation on Tuesday to remove the lower lobe of his right lung after being diagnosed with lung adenocarcinoma, the most common form of lung cancer.

The Vatican said the surgery was completed successfully without complications. Blood tests and a chest X-ray conducted on Wednesday also showed normal post-operative results.

However, the Vatican has not disclosed the size of the tumour or whether the cancer had spread to nearby lymph nodes. A pathology report may take several days to become available, while further updates on the pope's condition were due on Thursday.

Messages of support have arrived from political and religious leaders. US President Donald Trump, who has clashed with Leo on several issues, expressed his wishes for the pontiff's recovery on Wednesday. "I want to see Pope Leo get well," Trump told reporters. "I just want to wish him well, get better fast."



Pope Leo is recovering after lung cancer surgery, while uncertainty over his prognosis raises questions about his upcoming engagements.

WHAT NEXT

- Public engagements cancelled until October 20
- Overseas tour of Uruguay, Argentina and Peru, November 6–17; dates may change depending on his recovery

Albania's leader defies calls to resign as student protesters rampage

TIRANA

Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama on Thursday rejected calls to resign as thousands of student-led protesters smashed windows and fought running battles with riot police firing water cannon and tear gas in the capital. Protesters voiced anger about perceived corruption, the cost and quality of education and a deal to sell off parts of the country's pristine southern coastline to a luxury resort development backed by US President Donald Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner.

They demanded Rama's resignation, saying no one had listened to their concerns during a summer of largely peaceful protests over the development. In a written statement to Reuters, Rama rejected calls to quit. "My responsibility is to listen, address legitimate concerns and keep Albania moving forward. The alternative would be a betrayal of the Albanians who gave me a strong mandate to complete negotiations on European Union membership," he said.

A student who gave her name as Kiara said the cost of living, poor job prospects, and alleged corruption were the main issues.



"Our prime minister is the meaning of the word corruption. You can only find work in your field if you know a guy who knows a guy," she said, her face covered by a mask, like many on the streets on Thursday.

The protests, now in their third day, mark the biggest challenge yet to Rama, who won a fourth term last year, with EU membership at the centre of his campaign. Parliament cancelled its session as the violence erupted again nearby.

Rama, whose government denies corruption, said he would be ready to discuss the rising cost of education, but added: "Attacking institutions, destroying public property and threatening public safety have nothing to do with the legitimate demands of students."

> *"Attacking institutions, destroying public property and threatening public safety have nothing to do with the legitimate demands of students."*
>
> **EDI RAMA** Albanian Prime Minister

Tirana's streets were littered with burned-out garbage bins, shattered bus stops and broken traffic lights. Wafts of tear gas drifted across the centre.

Brazil's Flavio Bolsonaro racks up fresh endorsements ahead of runoff

SAO PAULO

Brazilian presidential candidate Flavio Bolsonaro has secured the new backing of multiple parties ahead of an election runoff later this month, suggesting his campaign is building momentum and offering an early glimpse of what a governing coalition could look like if he wins.

The right-wing lawmaker, the eldest son of former President Jair Bolsonaro, will face leftist President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva in the presidential runoff on October 25, after he exceeded expectations in the first round of voting with a slight lead over the incumbent.

Endorsements have since rolled in from a number of centre-right and right-wing parties, putting Bolsonaro's coalition on track to hold comfortable majorities in both chambers of Congress should he win the presidency. Brazil's Congress is highly fragmented and whoever wins the presidency needs to assemble a congressional coalition in order to advance their legislative agenda.

Support in Congress would increase the chances that Bolsonaro will be able to push through the free-market economic reforms investors are clamouring for. It could also help a potential Bolsonaro government reshape Brazilian institutions like the Supreme Court by confirming new justices and even impeaching sitting ones.



"I am very pleased with this formal support. This is how we are going to rebuild Brazil," Bolsonaro said last week during a press conference with lawmakers and members from allied parties.

The new backers include PP, Uniao Brasil, Republicanos and Podemos, parties that had remained neutral in the first-round campaign. Lawmakers from some of those parties used to hold influential positions in Lula's administration, including cabinet posts.

Bolsonaro also secured the support of three presidential contenders defeated in the first round: former Minas Gerais Governor Romeu Zema, former Goias Governor Ronaldo Caiado and Augusto Cury, an author and psychiatrist.

The endorsements mark a significant turnaround for the senator, who entered the final stretch of the first-round campaign without formal support from major parties as opinion polls consistently showed him trailing Lula.

EU, Gulf states delay Saudi summit amid sustained Houthi attacks

RIYADH

The European Union and Gulf states on Thursday postponed a joint summit due to be held in Saudi Arabia next week, as sustained attacks by the Iran-aligned Houthis fuel concerns about air travel to and from the kingdom.



Continued Houthi threats against Saudi Arabia and an extended suspension of operations at King Khalid International Airport were the reasons for postponing the summit scheduled for October 24 in Riyadh, the Gulf Cooperation Council said.

13

people were killed and hundreds wounded in strikes on Riyadh's international airport last weekend

The EU did not specify a reason for the delay, saying only that a new date would be announced "in due course". The postponement is the latest blow to Saudi Arabia's effort to host global events despite the escalating war with the Houthis.

The summit had been intended in part to demonstrate European solidarity with Gulf states and Saudi Arabia amid the war, making its postponement a sign of how seriously the security situation has deteriorated.

Last weekend, 13 people were killed and hundreds wounded in strikes on Riyadh's international airport, in an attack claimed by the Houthis. The airport, where dignitaries had been supposed to land, remains closed after the attacks.

The EU said it still attached "great strategic importance" to ties with the Gulf region and remained committed to deepening the partnership.

Prince Harry, Meghan make a first joint appearance since UK return

NOTTINGHAM

Prince Harry and his wife Meghan appeared together in public on Thursday for the first time since they made a surprise return to Britain, returning to the city where they made their maiden joint official engagement nine years ago. Harry, the younger son of King Charles, and Meghan shocked the monarch and other members of the royal family when they relocated from California to England two months ago with their children Prince Archie, 7, and Princess Lilibet, 5.

In their first joint public outing since then, the couple returned to Nottingham in central England, which they visited in 2017, shortly after it was announced they were getting married. They began by visiting a recording studio run by a youth and community charity which has received support from a £1.1 million ($1.46 million) donation announced by Harry last year.



Prince Harry and Meghan
Duke and Duchess of Sussex

The engagements conclude with a visit to another charity the couple have backed which supports young people and is linked to their previous visit in 2017.

Harry and Meghan, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, have become deeply polarising figures since they stepped down from royal duties to move to California in 2020, going on to deliver scathing criticism of both the prince's family and the royal institution itself.

Opinion polls show a majority of Britons hold a negative opinion of them, although young people are far more sympathetic. On their visit to Nottingham nine years ago they were greeted by large flag-waving cheering crowds.

TRADE GAP WITH CHINA

EU summit: Leaders seek solutions to spiralling prices

BRUSSELS

The European Union began a packed summit on Thursday which quickly underscored wrangles over how to tame soaring energy prices, design a budget to keep the bloc competitive and curb surging exports from China that are blamed for job losses.

The leaders from the EU's 27 members met in Brussels on the back of securing an agreement with Beijing to limit imports of hybrid cars from China, a first step towards cutting a goods trade deficit that hit €360 billion ($400 billion) in 2025.



The summit takes place at a time of heightened economic anxiety, with fuel price spikes since the Iran war putting cash-strapped governments on the back foot, companies struggling and Europe wanting to shore up its defences and support Ukraine.

The clock is also ticking on a series of elections in Europe over the coming months including in France in April, which could propel French far-right leader Marine Le Pen to the presidency vowing to slash her country's contribution to the EU budget.

Slumping in the polls at home, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz told reporters that positions were still far apart on the budget, which has pitted net contributors such as Germany against net beneficiaries. The latest proposal would safeguard subsidies for farmers and regions, which critics say sucks money away from more urgent areas to keep up with the US and China.

Quick note

- → Leaders deadlocked on budget
- → Budget pits contributors against beneficiaries
- → Competitiveness and high energy prices also in focus
- → High energy prices hurting companies and fuelling voter anger
- → Latvia PM compares support for Ukraine to cost of a beer

Infantino faces backlash at FIFA meeting in Zurich

INFANTINO MEETS FIFA LEADERS AFTER ABANDONING A JULY PLAN TO SELL A COMMERCIAL SUBSIDIARY'S MINORITY STAKE.

ZURICH

FIFA President Gianni Infantino is set to face growing opposition from senior football officials at a FIFA Council meeting in Zurich on Thursday, following the collapse of his proposal to sell a stake in FIFA tournaments, including the World Cup.

The meeting marks Infantino's first gathering with FIFA's top leadership since the proposed FIFA Forward Enterprise (FFE) scheme was abandoned in July, just days after its announcement. The plan involved selling a minority stake in a FIFA commercial subsidiary to private investors.

A company launched by Joshua Kushner, brother of Jared Kushner, US President Donald Trump's son-in-law, was identified as the proposed lead investor.

Infantino has faced calls to resign from the presidents of three regional football confederations: Aleksander Ceferin of UEFA, Salman Al Khalifa of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) and Victor Montagliani of CONCACAF. Their representatives are expected to attend the meeting alongside officials from Africa, South America and Oceania.

The 37-member council is also expected to discuss FIFA's governance structure, financial reserves, funding for member associations and disciplinary procedures. Some officials reportedly want to limit Infantino's powers if they cannot remove him from office.

Infantino is seeking re-election in March 2027, with November 18 set as the deadline for potential candidates to submit nominations. Former Switzerland and Tottenham Hotspur defender Ramon Vega has announced his intention to contest the election but has yet to confirm whether he has the backing of the five national associations required to enter the race. The failed investment proposal exposed divisions within world football. UEFA and CONCACAF have also called for FIFA to release $10 million to each of its 211 member associations. The abandoned FFE scheme had proposed $20 million in development funding, with the possibility of accessing an additional $20 million.



Despite criticism, Infantino retains support from several football associations, particularly in Africa and parts of Asia. Sport governance experts have called for a transparent and independent review of FIFA's operations. However, former FIFA governance committee chairman Miguel Maduro expressed doubts that the meeting would produce meaningful reforms.

Council agenda items spark intense debates

Investments	Reviewing the failed private investment scheme.
Reserves	Managing multi-billion-dollar global financial reserves.
Funding	Debating increased payouts for member associations.
Governance	Reforming central power structures and transparency.
Discipline	Addressing controversial rules and disciplinary procedures.
Ethics	Investigating external complaints and special awards.

Santner calls for balanced pitches in limited-overs cricket

WELLINGTON

New Zealand captain Mitchell Santner has called for balanced pitches in limited-overs cricket, stressing the importance of providing a fair contest between bat and ball ahead of India's upcoming full-fledged tour of New Zealand, beginning on October 22. With shorter boundaries and flat pitches often seen in New Zealand, the limited-overs matches could turn into high-scoring contests dominated by batters. Santner's comments have brought attention to the need for playing surfaces that offer opportunities to both batters and bowlers.

Modern limited-overs cricket has increasingly favoured aggressive batting, with players regularly targeting boundaries and pushing scoring rates higher. Flat pitches and smaller grounds can make it difficult for bowlers to contain runs, particularly during the middle and final stages of an innings.

Santner's call for balanced surfaces reflects the need to maintain a competitive contest in which bowlers can also make an impact. Pitches offering some assistance to seamers and spinners could make matches more challenging and encourage teams to adopt different strategies.

India's upcoming tour is expected to provide an important test for both sides across the limited-overs formats. The Indian team will look to adapt to New Zealand's conditions, while the hosts will aim to make the most of their familiarity with local grounds and playing surfaces.

The nature of the pitches could play a significant role in determining team combinations, bowling plans and batting approaches. While batters generally benefit from predictable bounce and good pace, bowlers require conditions that allow them to challenge opponents and create wicket-taking opportunities.



As teams continue to focus on aggressive scoring in limited-overs cricket, the debate over balanced pitches remains relevant. Surfaces that provide opportunities for both disciplines can help produce competitive matches and test the skills of players in different situations.

With the India-New Zealand series approaching, pitch conditions are likely to remain an important talking point as both teams prepare for the contests beginning October 22.

Mbappe breaks Messi's record with 100 appearances



ROME

Kylian Mbappe became the youngest player to make 100 appearances in the UEFA Champions League, achieving the milestone at the age of 27 during Real Madrid's match against Roma on Wednesday.

He celebrated the landmark by scoring an equaliser in the first half as Madrid secured a thrilling 4-3 victory.

Lionel Messi previously held the record, having reached 100 Champions League appearances at the age of 28 against Roma in September 2015. Mbappe has now surpassed the Argentine great to claim the distinction.

The French forward also continued his rise on the competition's all-time scoring list. His 72nd Champions League goal moved him past former Real Madrid striker Raul Gonzalez into fifth place in the tournament's career scoring rankings.

Mbappe started as centre-forward in coach Jose Mourinho's lineup for the encounter at the Stadio Olimpico. He had also scored Madrid's opening goal in their 2-1 victory over Inter Milan last month.

The 27-year-old made his Champions League debut for Monaco in September 2016, when he was just 17. Since then, he has established himself as one of the competition's most prolific forwards.

Mbappe finished as the Champions League's leading scorer last season with 15 goals. His campaign included a remarkable hat-trick against Olympiacos, when he scored three times in six minutes and 42 seconds, recording the second-fastest hat-trick in the competition's history.

Meanwhile, Manchester City striker Erling Haaland achieved another milestone despite his team's 4-2 defeat to Paris Saint-Germain. The Norwegian scored twice to take his Champions League tally to 61 goals in 60 appearances.

UEFA said Haaland, aged 26 years and 85 days, became the youngest player to reach 60 goals in the competition, breaking Messi's previous record by one day.

The achievements underline how Mbappe and Haaland are rewriting Champions League records, challenging milestones previously held by some of football's greatest players.



PATHAK TARGETS STRONG international hockey comeback

NEW DELHI

Indian goalkeeper Krishan Bahadur Pathak said he had worked on every aspect of his game that needed improvement during his time away from the senior national team, as he prepares to make his international comeback at the Asian Champions Trophy 2026. The 29-year-old has been included in India's 18-member squad for the tournament, scheduled to take place in Jalandhar and Mohali from Oct 27 to November 5. He replaces Mohith HS and returns to international action after more than nine months. Pathak last represented India during the team's tour of South Africa in December 2025. With 156 international caps to his name, Pathak spent his time away from the senior team training with India's development squad in Bengaluru. He also travelled with the national team to the FIH World Cup in the Netherlands and Belgium as a non-playing member before the Asian Games.

Pathak said he had followed the coach's advice and focused on improving the identified areas of his game. Along with regular team training and matches against Karnataka's senior national team, he attended additional goalkeeping sessions to sharpen his skills. He said the training period had helped him address the areas requiring attention and that he was now determined to make the most of the opportunity at the continental tournament.

The comeback will hold special significance for Pathak as India will play their league-stage matches in his home state of Punjab. Jalandhar's Olympian Surjit Singh Hockey Stadium is particularly important to him, as he spent seven years learning the sport and developing his goalkeeping skills at the Surjit Hockey Academy based there.

Pathak said playing at the same ground where he began his hockey journey would make the occasion memorable. He also thanked the Punjab government and Hockey India for providing the opportunity. Previously, Pathak served as the understudy to former India captain and legendary goalkeeper PR Sreejesh, who retired after the Paris 2024 Olympics.

India will begin their campaign against Bangladesh on October 27, followed by matches against China, Japan, Malaysia and South Korea.

DDCA names 16-member squad for women's T20 trophy

NEW DELHI

The Delhi and District Cricket Association (DDCA) has announced a 16-member squad for the first two matches of the Senior Women's T20 Trophy in the 2026–27 domestic season. Soni Yadav will lead the team, while Shweta Sehrawat has been appointed vice-captain and wicketkeeper.

The squad was finalised by the Senior Women's Selection Committee during a meeting held at the DDCA on October 14. All selected players have been asked to report to the team manager at Guru Gobind Singh College Ground on Thursday.

Organised by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), the Senior Women's T20 Trophy will be held from October 26 to November 20. The tournament will feature 37 teams divided into five groups under the Elite and Plate structure, with league-stage matches followed by knockout rounds.

Maharashtra will enter the competition as defending champions after winning their maiden title in the previous edition. Railways remain the tournament's most successful team, having claimed the trophy 11 times.

Meanwhile, the DDCA has invited applications for open trials to select Delhi's Women's Under-15 team for the 2026–27 domestic season.

***Delhi squad**: Soni Yadav (captain), Shweta Sehrawat (vice-captain and wicketkeeper), Priya Punia, Tanisha Singh, Pragya Rawat (wicketkeeper), Nazma, Bharti Rawal, Vanshika Lila, Priya Mishra, Nidhi Mahto, Disha Nagar, Shivi Sharma, Sumiti Soni, Medhavi Bidhuri, Goyinka Sharma and Akshita Jain.*

SHNAIDER DEFEATS MUCHOVA TO REACH WUHAN QUARTER-FINALS

WUHAN

Russia's Diana Shnaider advanced to the Wuhan Open quarter-finals on Thursday with a 7-5, 6-3 victory over Karolina Muchova of the Czech Republic, recording her fourth career win against a top-10 opponent.

The 11th seed reached the last eight in Wuhan for the first time, delivering a composed performance to maintain her impressive form during the 2026 season. The defeat also dealt a blow to Muchova's hopes of qualifying for the season-ending WTA Finals.

The opening set remained closely contested, with both players looking to gain control. Shnaider found the decisive breakthrough in the 11th game, capitalising after Muchova wasted two consecutive game points. The Russian then held her serve to take the set 7-5.

Shnaider carried that momentum into the second set, breaking Muchova twice to establish control and complete the victory in straight sets. The result secured her place in her fourth career WTA 1000 quarter-final.

The world number 13 has enjoyed a productive season, with three of her four career victories against top-10 players coming in 2026. She entered the Wuhan match with a 32-20 win-loss record for the year and has reached the semi-finals at Roland Garros, Adelaide and Washington.

For Muchova, the loss could have wider implications in the race for the WTA Finals. She currently holds 4,735 points in the live standings, ahead of Poland's Iga Swiatek, who has 3,919. However, Swiatek could overtake her by winning the Wuhan title.



Sangai Cup to select Manipur judo team

IMPHAL

The Sangai Cup Inter Club Judo Tournament 2026 will serve as selection trials to identify Manipur's team for the upcoming National Judo Championships. The three-day competition will be held at the Sports Authority of India's New Multipurpose Hall in Takyelpat from Friday to Sunday. The tournament will feature competitions across four categories: Sub-Junior, Cadet, Junior and Senior. Organised jointly by the Inspire Institute of Sport (IIS) and the Manipur Judo Association (MJA), the event aims to provide athletes with a platform to demonstrate their skills and secure places in the state team.

According to the schedule released by the MJA, weigh-ins for Junior boys and girls and Sub-Junior girls will take place on Thursday at Khuman Lampak. Their bouts are scheduled for Friday, alongside weigh-ins for Sub-Junior boys and Cadet boys and girls. Saturday will feature bouts in the Sub-Junior boys and Cadet categories, while weigh-ins will be conducted for Senior men and women.

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