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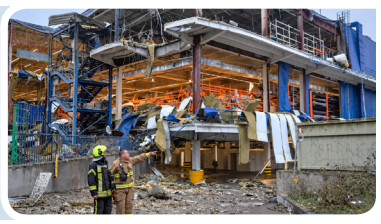
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P12 Sai Pallavi urges fans to experience Ramayana in 3D

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K'taka seeks SC-NBWL nod for Sharavathi, Mekedatu

The state wants faster environmental clearances for infrastructure projects while seeking a review of proposed restrictions affecting industry and livelihoods.

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Karnataka has urged the Union Government to expedite wildlife clearances for two major infrastructure proposals and defer a draft notification declaring parts of the Western Ghats ecologically sensitive.

Chief Minister DK Shivakumar met Union Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Bhupender Yadav in New Delhi on Thursday and sought early consideration of the Sharavathy Pumped Storage Project and the Mekedatu Balancing Reservoir and Drinking Water Project.

The proposals are awaiting clearance from the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife (SC-NBWL).

The 2,000-MW Sharavathy project has been considered and deferred at several committee meetings. At its February 28 meeting, the committee sought clarifications on technical issues and a report from the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), Bengaluru. The state government said it had submitted the required documents, including the NIAS report, and sought an early decision.

The Mekedatu proposal involves drilling 20 boreholes within the Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary for geotechnical investigations. Submitted to the Union Environment Ministry on July 1, the proposal covers 0.0000352 hectares. Karnataka has clarified that the work is limited to surveys and investigations and does not involve diversion of the protected area at this stage. The Centre has sought additional information on petitions pending before the Supreme Court.

Shivakumar also urged the Centre not to finalise the seventh draft notification on the Western Ghats as an Ecologically Sensitive Area until Karnataka completes a physical survey and its high-level committee submits a report. The State has sought consultation before further action.

Separately, Karnataka sought the removal of Eco Cane Sugar Energy Limited from the eco-sensitive zone, stating that the factory was established before 2016. The government said more than 500 workers and 5,000 families depend on the unit and urged the Centre to consider its recommendation to exclude the factory.



Chief Minister DK Shivakumar with Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Bhupender Yadav in New Delhi on Thursday.

State puts forth 3 issues before Centre

Karnataka's requests cover infrastructure, environmental regulation and industrial livelihoods. The Sharavathy project requires wildlife clearance, while Mekedatu's proposal concerns preliminary investigations inside the Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary. The state also wants the Western Ghats notification deferred pending a physical survey and committee report. Separately, it has sought exclusion of Eco Cane Sugar Energy Limited from the eco-sensitive zone, citing its establishment before 2016 and dependence on it for employment and livelihoods.

CM's requests to Centre

Sharavathy
Early wildlife clearance for the 2,000-MW pumped storage project.

Mekedatu
Clearance for 20 boreholes for geo-technical survey.

Western Ghats
Defer the finalization of 7th draft notification until the state completes its survey & submits a repor within a year.

Sugar factory
Remove Eco Cane Sugar Energy Limited from the eco-sensitive zone.

CM calls on Scindia

The CM also met with Union Minister for Communications and Development of North Eastern Region Jyotiraditya M Scindia and discussed key areas of cooperation in telecommunications and digital connectivity in his home state Karnataka.

DKS to meet sugarcane growers on Oct 26

Sugarcane farmers are demanding revisions to the Minimum Selling Price (MSP), Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) and State Advised Price (SAP). The October 26 meeting with Chief Minister DK Shivakumar is expected to address these demands. Farmers will hold a rally at Gurlapur in Belagavi district on October 25 before sending a delegation to Suvarna Vidhana Soudha. Farmer leader Chunappa Pujeri warned that protests could resume if their demands remain unresolved, including a padayatra, Karnataka bandh and roadblocks across districts. Farmers have also urged Union Minister Pralhad Joshi to depute a senior official.

Dasara: CM orders probe against cops for blocking ministers' entry

BENGALURU

Chief Minister DK Shivakumar has directed Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh to conduct an inquiry into the incident in which ministers were allegedly prevented by police officers from entering the Nandi Dhwaja (Nandi Flag) puja venue at the Mysuru Palace premises.

Ministers Balakrishna, Narendraswamy and Basavanthappa were allegedly denied entry to the puja venue during the ritual held at the beginning of the Mysuru Dasara procession on October 21, an official statement by CMO said on Thursday.

According to the statement, Shivakumar said he intervened personally to facilitate the ministers' entry, but expressed displeasure over the conduct of the officials concerned.

"Officials by preventing ministers from entering the venue, have acted in an unacceptable manner. I intervened personally and ensured that the ministers were allowed in. However, such indifference on the part of officials cannot be tolerated," he said.

The Chief Minister said he had directed the Chief Secretary to investigate the incident and submit a report identifying those responsible.

Action will be taken against the officials found guilty after the report is received, Shivakumar added.

> Officials by preventing ministers from entering the Nandi Dhwaja puja venue, have acted in an unacceptable manner and such indifference on the part of officials cannot be tolerated.
>
> - DK Shivakumar, Chief Minister

Bibi invites Modi, Capt Smit to light Israel I-Day flame

Israeli dials Modi; both leaders West Asia situation, stress need to restore peace and stability.

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday received a telephone call from his Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu, during which the two leaders exchanged views on recent developments in West Asia and underscored the urgent need to restore peace and stability in the region.

Modi and Netanyahu also welcomed the sustained momentum in India-Israel relations and reaffirmed their shared commitment to further strengthening the special strategic ties. "The leaders also exchanged views on recent developments in West Asia and underscored the urgent need to restore peace and stability in the region. Prime Minister Modi reiterated India's call for dialogue and diplomacy as the way forward," the Prime Minister's Office said in a statement.

In a post on X, Modi said he received a phone call from the Israeli Prime Minister. "We reviewed the sustained momentum in our bilateral ties and reaffirmed our commitment to further strengthening our partnership. We also exchanged views on recent developments in West Asia and underscored the urgent need to restore peace and stability in the region."

Spoke with my friend

"Spoke with my friend, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and invited him to light the torch alongside a brave Indian pilot on Israel's Independence Day. Modi thanked me for the invitation and said that on land and in the air, India and Israel are fighting terrorism together. He also commended the strong and decades-old ties between us," Netanyahu wrote.

Earlier this month, Netanyahu had called Indian pilot Smit Machchhar a "hero of the entire world" for foiling an alleged attempt by his co-pilot to crash an Israel-bound flight, as he spoke with him over the phone.



> We reviewed the sustained momentum in our bilateral ties and reaffirmed our commitment to further strengthening our partnership.
>
> - Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

> Spoke with my friend, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and invited him to light the torch alongside a brave Indian pilot on Israel's Independence Day.
>
> - Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel PM

Topics discussed

Strengthening bilateral relations in innovation, high-tech, economy, and security.

Ongoing defense and security cooperation.

Regional developments in West Asia and the need for peace and stability.

Invitation

Netanyahu extended an invitation for Prime Minister Modi and brave Indian pilot Smit Machchhar to join Israel's Independence Day celebrations.

India ramps up efforts to bring stranded Umrah pilgrims

NEW DELHI

India is stepping up efforts to facilitate the return of stranded Umrah pilgrims from Saudi Arabia, with Indian diplomatic missions coordinating with airlines and tour operators to arrange their early repatriation.

In a post on X, Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said the Indian Embassy in Riyadh and the Consulate General in Jeddah are actively engaging with concerned airlines and tour operators to ensure the return of affected pilgrims.

Over the past week, around 3,000 stranded Umrah pilgrims have returned to India on available flights, Jaiswal said. This is in addition to more than 10,000 regular Umrah pilgrims who had booked available flights and travelled back to India during the same period.

"Arrangements are being discussed to facilitate the return of other Umrah pilgrims at the earliest," Jaiswal said.

24x7 control rooms set up

The Indian Embassy in Riyadh and the Consulate General in Jeddah have established 24x7 control rooms to assist Indian nationals affected by the situation. The diplomatic missions are also providing all possible welfare assistance with support from community volunteers.

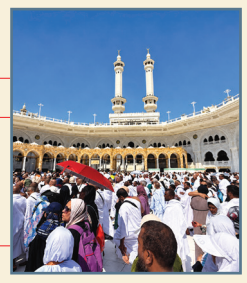
Regular advisories are being issued to keep Indian nationals informed about the situation and the assistance available to them.

The embassy and consulate are coordinating with relevant stakeholders to address the concerns of affected pilgrims and facilitate their return to India as soon as possible.

Helpline numbers for Indian nationals

Embassy of India, Riyadh
Telephone: +966-554412016, +966-542126784
Toll-free: 8002471234 (calls from Saudi only)
WhatsApp: +966-536216082 (messages only)

Consulate General of India, Jeddah
Telephone: +966-12-2614093, +966-556122301
WhatsApp: +966-536209704 (messages only)



Bring back 4k Indian pilgrims stranded in Saudi: Owaisi

Hyderabad: AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi on Thursday said around 4,000 Indian pilgrims were stranded in Makkah and Madina after airlines suspended flights to Saudi Arabian cities amid the security situation, urging the Centre to facilitate their return. Owaisi said the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) should allow airlines to deploy larger aircraft to bring the pilgrims home. Alternatively, he said, the government should arrange special flights to evacuate them. He sought the intervention of External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and other Union Ministers. "The Indian pilgrims have been abandoned by their travel agents. This needs your urgent intervention; in the meanwhile necessary support must be provided to the stranded pilgrims," he said, tagging EAM S Jaishankar.

Brent Crude nears $112 as Mideast tensions rekindle supply fears

LONDON

Global crude oil markets have come under pressure as the conflict in the Middle East intensifies, with increased Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia and fears of disruptions to oil supplies pushing Brent crude prices to their highest level since May.

At 6.41 pm on Thursday, Brent crude futures rose by $3.19, or 2.9%, to $112.01 a barrel. Prices had touched $112.68 earlier in the session, the highest level since May 18.

US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude also recorded an increase, rising 2.5% to $99.56 a barrel after touching $100.09 earlier in the session.

Tamas Varga, an analyst at PVM Oil, said attacks on vessels in the Strait of Hormuz, along with Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia and its oil infrastructure, had heightened concerns in the oil market.

Although reports indicate that Middle Eastern crude exports have exceeded pre-conflict levels, the attacks have raised concerns about the reliability of supplies, Varga said.

He also expressed the view that oil prices were unlikely to decline before the US midterm elections, leaving room for further increases.

'7 tankers attacked'

Tehran: Seven oil tankers caught fire or were damaged in the Strait of Hormuz overnight after being struck by Iran or hitting naval mines, Tehran said Thursday, in an unusually high number of reported incidents that underscores growing fears of a return to all-out war. With Israel's closely contested elections just days away, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu faces the prospect of losing power. Meanwhile, ahead of next month's US midterm elections, war-related price increases have fuelled voter anger. Against this backdrop, concerns are mounting that US and Israeli attacks on Iran could resume. Iranian state television reported the latest ship attacks, citing the navy of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). The force again threatened to target US military bases in the region if Washington continues helping commercial vessels navigate the strait.

INDIA bloc defers meet on 'vote chori' stir

New Delhi: INDIA bloc leaders' virtual meeting to discuss the roadmap for protests over 'vote chori' has been deferred.

The meeting was expected to take place on Thursday evening to decide the future course of action on protests against Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge was to chair the meeting, which was also expected to review the preparations for the bloc's upcoming rally in Delhi on November 1.

The members were to ideate a plan for protests, review their preparations and discuss ways to counter the government over the "vote chori" issue. No other date is announced for the virtual meeting yet. The meeting comes at a time when there is speculation over the government convening Parliament for passing a Constitution amendment bill.

CYBERCRIME & ONLINE FRAUD

Modi-govt makes SIM binding mandatory for messaging apps from Jan 1

Messaging apps like WhatsApp and Telegram must comply with the govt's SIM binding rules by Dec 31.

NEW DELHI

The Modi-led Cental Government has made SIM binding mandatory for instant messaging applications, setting a compliance deadline of December 31, with rules taking effect on January 1.

Under the new Department of Telecommunications (DoT) directive, platforms like WhatsApp, Telegram and Signal must remain continuously linked to the active physical SIM card installed on the device. Removing, deactivating, or swapping the registered SIM will instantly render these messaging accounts inaccessible, closing a key loophole exploited in online fraud. Here are all the details you need to know about SIM binding.

Historically, messaging applications relied on a single-instance One-Time Password (OTP) via text message to verify a phone number upon initial setup. Once authenticated, users could continue using the application indefinitely on a device, even if the SIM card was subsequently removed, replaced, or deactivated.

What is mandated under SIM-binding protocol?

Under the new SIM-binding protocol, the messaging application must maintain an active, real-time link with the physical SIM or registered eSIM present inside the smartphone. If the system detects that the registered SIM card has been detached or deactivated, the user session will automatically terminate, barring further access.

Why govt imposed SIM-binding protocol?

According to the DoT, the primary objective of this regulatory measure is to dismantle cybercrime networks and unauthorized messaging operations. Fraudsters frequently acquire local SIM cards to register accounts before removing or exporting the SIMs abroad, allowing scam operations to run remotely with active Indian numbers.

Core policy & objectives

Issuing authority: Department of Telecommunications (DoT) under the Telecom Cyber Security Rules, 2024 / Telecommunication Cybersecurity Amendment Rules, 2025.
Compliance deadline: Dec 31, 2026 (with operational rollouts expected into early next year).
Covered platforms: WhatsApp, Telegram, Signal, Snapchat, ShareChat, JioChat, Josh, and Arattai (classified as Telecom Identifier User Entities).
Primary goal: Curb cross-border cyber fraud, phishing, digital arrest scams, and impersonation by locking digital accounts to traceable, live telecom data.



Key user implications of SIM binding

Inactive or absent SIM: Removing or deactivating the registered SIM card will cause messaging apps to stop functioning.
Frequent web re-authentication: WhatsApp Web and linked browser sessions will require more frequent log-in cycles via QR code scans.
Tablet & Wi-Fi device restrictions: Devices operating without a physical, active SIM card may be blocked from hosting messaging sessions.
Disruptions for travelers: Frequent SIM swappers and travelers managing accounts across multiple handsets face service friction.

Quick Read



Sewage, potholes plague Okalipuram underpass

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Stagnant sewage water, large potholes and incomplete construction at Bengaluru's Okalipuram underpass are causing severe inconvenience to commuters and pedestrians. Sewage water continues to accumulate on the stretch, forcing buses, cars and two-wheelers to move slowly. Vehicles splashing dirty water and the risk of two-wheelers skidding have added to commuters' woes. Traffic jams have become frequent, with congestion reportedly extending up to Lulu Mall. The underpass work remains incomplete due to a lack of coordination with the Railways. Residents have urged authorities to clear the sewage, repair potholes and complete the pending work.

Odisha man held for Rs. 15 lakh phone theft

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Hoskote police have arrested a 30-year-old Odisha native for allegedly stealing mobile phones worth Rs. 15 lakh from Durga Mobile Shop on October 12. The accused, Shubham Senapati, allegedly covered the shop's entrance with a tarpaulin to avoid detection before breaking its rolling shutter and entering the premises. He had reportedly purchased a gas cutter online to carry out the theft. The incident was captured on CCTV cameras. Using the footage, police tracked down and arrested Senapati. The stolen mobile phones, valued at Rs. 15 lakh, have been recovered from him, police said.

Parameshwara: Focus on drought relief, not politics

The DCM urged opposition parties to unite in seeking Central assistance for drought-hit people, keeping State interests above political differences.

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Deputy Chief Minister G. Parameshwara on Thursday urged opposition parties to set aside political differences and join an all-party delegation to Delhi to seek drought relief from the Centre, stressing that the welfare of affected people must take precedence over politics.

Speaking to reporters near his Sadashivanagar residence, he said appointments with the Prime Minister and Union Ministers for Home and Agriculture must be secured before finalising the delegation's visit. The government cannot suddenly fix a date and travel to Delhi without obtaining appointments, he said, questioning whether the BJP, which had earlier governed the State, was unaware of such administrative procedures.

He said Karnataka had suffered estimated losses of around ₹62,000 crore due to drought. However, the compensation sought from the Centre would be calculated according to National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) guidelines, and the State could not demand the entire loss amount as compensation.



> **"Securing relief for people affected by drought must be our priority. Playing politics over such a serious issue is not right."**
>
> **— G. Parameshwara,** Deputy Chief Minister

The government would convene an all-party meeting after the Dasara festivities and hold another round of discussions with leaders before seeking appointments with Central leaders. The BJP and other opposition parties would again be invited to join the delegation. The government would approach the Centre to seek relief regardless of whether the opposition participated, he said.

Parameshwara also criticised attempts to give a caste angle to the incident in which police reportedly stopped some Ministers accompanying Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar during Mysuru Dasara. He said police were expected to follow security protocols and that unnecessary controversies should be avoided.

Drought relief above politics

Karnataka plans to take an all-party delegation to Delhi to seek assistance for drought-hit people. The government must first secure appointments with the Prime Minister and Union Ministers for Home and Agriculture. The estimated loss of ₹62,000 crore will not automatically determine the compensation sought, as the claim must follow NDRF guidelines. Opposition leaders will be invited to participate in the proposed delegation.

₹62,000

crore: estimated drought losses; the claim on the Centre will follow NDRF guidelines

'Congress candidate distributed gifts, cash to woo voters'

Chalavadi Narayanaswamy has accused Congress candidate Puttanna of using gifts and cash to influence voters in the teachers' constituency election.



CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Opposition leader in the Legislative Council Chalavadi Narayanaswamy has alleged that Congress candidate Puttanna is attempting to influence voters in the Legislative Council teachers' constituency election by distributing gift coupons, flasks, tiffin boxes and cash.

Addressing the media, Narayanaswamy claimed that gift coupon cards carrying the message "Dasara greetings from Puttanna" were being distributed. He alleged that recipients were being told to use the coupons to purchase items at Lulu Mall.

He further claimed that the distribution was being facilitated through Block Education Officers (BEOs) and that voters were also being offered money to secure their support.

Questioning the alleged practice, Narayanaswamy said the Congress must explain how such activities were acceptable during an election. He challenged the party to respond to the charges and questioned whether the alleged distribution of gifts and money amounted to "vote theft".

"Do you have any sense of dignity? Do you want to become an MLC through such means?" Narayanaswamy asked, targeting the Congress candidate over the allegations.

He also announced that photographs of BEOs allegedly working in collusion with Puttanna would be released. His allegations suggested that education department officials were being used to facilitate the distribution of gifts to voters.

The charges have brought the conduct of the teachers' constituency election into focus.

Man gets life term for murder over Rs. 100

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

A city sessions court has sentenced a man to life imprisonment for murdering a 34-year-old man following a dispute over Rs. 100 in Jayanagar in July 2018.

The 65th Additional City Civil and Sessions Court convicted Veeramanikantha, also known as Vijay, Viji and Pambu, of murdering Dinakaran and imposed a fine of Rs. 25,000. Judge S.N. Kalkani delivered the verdict.

According to the prosecution, the incident occurred around 5 pm on July 17, 2018, when Dinakaran was walking along Ambedkar Road in Shakambari Nagar towards the Rajarajeshwari slum area.

Veeramanikantha allegedly approached Dinakaran and demanded Rs. 100. When Dinakaran said he did not have the money, the accused attacked him with a knife, inflicting injuries to his face, hand and neck. Dinakaran was taken to a hospital, where he was declared dead.

The court held that the prosecution had established the murder charge under Section 302 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). It observed that the accused had a history of demanding money from people and assaulting those who refused, according to the prosecution's case.

The accused's mother, Gandhi, who faced a charge under Section 201 of the IPC for allegedly attempting to destroy evidence by washing bloodstains from the crime scene, was acquitted. The court ruled that the prosecution had failed to prove the charge against her.

The court directed that the fine of Rs. 25,000 be paid to Dinakaran's wife. It also asked the District Legal Services Authority to consider providing compensation to her for livelihood under Section 357 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

NGT stays tree felling for Hebbal tunnel project meant to ease traffic

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The proposed Hebbal tunnel project, planned to ease traffic congestion at one of Bengaluru's busiest junctions, is undergoing environmental and legal scrutiny, with the National Green Tribunal (NGT) staying tree felling in the project area until the application is finally disposed of. More than 1,600 objections have been received to the proposed felling of 1,128 trees.

The 2.3-km-long, three-lane, bidirectional tunnel proposed is intended to improve traffic movement around Hebbal Junction.

The proposed route will connect the junction to the staff quarters of the University of Agricultural Sciences, passing through the Karnataka Veterinary, Animal and Fisheries Sciences University.

The Bengaluru North City Corporation has agreed to provide around 3.5 acres of land in the Hebbal Lake area for the project.



The project

- 2.3-km, three-lane, bidirectional tunnel
- 1,128 trees proposed for removal
- More than 1,600 objections received
- 3.5 acres of land in the Hebbal Lake area

The Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) invited public suggestions and objections regarding the proposed tree removal. More than 1,600 responses were received, following which a tree experts' committee is expected to inspect the site and examine the concerns raised.

The committee's final report will help determine how many trees can be retained, how many can be transplanted and how many may need to be removed.

The NGT's southern bench in Chennai has directed that no trees be felled within the project area until the application is finally disposed of.



Hebbal Junction: the 2.3-km tunnel would pass the Hebbal Lake area

Petitioners have raised concerns about the possible impact on local biodiversity, groundwater levels, natural drainage and the aquatic ecosystem connecting Hebbal and Nagawara lakes. The matter is also being contested before the Karnataka High Court.

The project's implementation and tree-management measures will be subject to the outcome of the legal proceedings and the assessment by the tree experts' committee.

Ramya complains to police chief, Home Minister over late-night firecrackers, loud music

> *"We must respect the law. The Supreme Court has prohibited bursting firecrackers after 10 pm and playing loud music after midnight."*
>
> **RAMYA** Actress and former MP

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Actress and former MP Ramya has complained to Bengaluru Police Commissioner and Home Minister Priyank Kharge over firecrackers being burst and loud music being played late into the night during a festival procession, alleging that the noise disturbed residents.



In a social media post, Ramya said the celebrations continued until 6 am, affecting working professionals, children, senior citizens and hospital patients. She said she had called the emergency helpline 112 at 2.30 am and lodged complaints with the Police Commissioner and Minister Priyank Kharge.

"We must respect the law. The Supreme Court has prohibited bursting firecrackers after 10 pm and playing loud music after midnight. Today is a working day, and schools have also reopened. I hope this matter is taken seriously," she said, urging organisers to avoid loud music and fireworks at unreasonable hours.

In an earlier post on X, Ramya alleged that Fun World continued bursting firecrackers and playing loud music at around 3 am. She said hospitals were located nearby and senior citizens and children lived in the neighbourhood.

Ramya also raised concerns over the treatment of Somanna, an elephant that reportedly panicked amid a crowd during a procession in Shivamogga. The elephant, brought from a camp for the event, was led through narrow, crowded streets and ran uncontrollably after becoming frightened. No injuries were reported.

Ramya said the elephant appeared to be limping and in pain and questioned why a truck had not been arranged to take it for medical treatment.

Appealing to Minister Ramalinga Reddy, she urged authorities to provide immediate care to Somanna and prevent camp elephants from being used in future processions, stressing that animals deserved compassion.

Man kills wife over affair suspicion, dumps body in stormwater drain

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Police have cracked the murder case of a 25-year-old woman whose decomposed body was found in a stormwater drain under Magadi Road police station limits.

The victim, Ruksana, originally from Bihar, was allegedly murdered by her husband, Mohammed Irfaz, on October 10 over his suspicion that she was having an extramarital affair.

Her body was found in the drain on October 13. Police formed more than 10 teams to identify the woman, investigate the case and gather information about missing persons.

According to the investigation, the couple had married about a year ago and moved to Bengaluru around six months back. Irfaz worked at a garment factory, while Ruksana was also employed. He allegedly suspected her of having an affair because she frequently spoke on the phone, leading to regular arguments between them.

On October 10, a quarrel reportedly escalated, and Irfaz allegedly struck Ruksana on the head with a stone, killing her. He then stuffed a veil into her mouth, police said.

He allegedly broke the handle lock of a motorcycle belonging to an unidentified person and used it to transport the body, kept inside a sack, before dumping it in the drain.

During the investigation, police learnt from local residents that a woman was missing from a house in Gopalapura.

Irfaz reportedly told police that his wife had gone to Bihar and was not using a mobile phone.

Suspicious of his statement, police took him into custody for questioning. He allegedly confessed to the murder, according to the report. Magadi Road police are continuing their investigation.

PG LICENCE VIOLATIONS

Notices issued to 909 Bengaluru PGs over rule violations

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) has stepped up action against paying guest (PG) accommodations allegedly operating in violation of regulations, following a High Court order. The authority has issued notices to 909 PGs in the Bengaluru South division, but only 279 have provided clarifications regarding compliance.

Inspections revealed that more than 600 PG accommodations did not have the required official licences. The GBA has issued second notices to these establishments, seeking compliance with the prescribed rules.

The action follows directions issued by the High Court, under which the GBA undertook inspections of PG accommodations in the Bengaluru South division. Establishments found violating regulations were served notices and asked to clarify their compliance status.

However, officials found that more than 600 PGs continued to operate without the necessary licences despite the initial notices. The authority has now issued a second round of notices to these establishments.

The GBA has warned that legal action will follow if the PG operators fail to respond to the second notices. The authority is also monitoring PG accommodations across Bengaluru to check whether they are adhering to the regulations stipulated in the court's order.



909	279	600+
PGs served notices	clarified compliance	without licences

The inspections and notices are part of the authority's efforts to ensure that PG establishments comply with the applicable rules. Further action may be initiated against those found violating the regulations.

CH Observer

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From blocked footpaths on Link Road to overflowing waste right by the Kumarapark West children's park, civic neglect is taking a heavy toll on our neighborhood. Despite past cleanups, garbage and construction debris continue to choke walkways and public spaces, making daily commutes and family outings hazardous and deeply frustrating.

+91 80730 57594



Commuters face severe difficulty navigating the Link Road footpath in Seshadripuram—located right behind Apoorva Bakery next to Kavi's Kafe—due to ongoing reconstruction debris and a massive garbage pile blocking the walkway.



Unpicked garbage has accumulated again right in front of Chetty's Chats on Kumarapark West 6th Cross, next to the children's park. Despite previous cleanups, waste continues to pile up, severely dirtying this community area.

South City Corporation launches sports meet

Bengaluru South municipal staff step away from their desks to celebrate Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Jayanti through sports.

CH NEWS, BENGALURU



In a vibrant celebration honoring the visionary founder of the city, the Bengaluru South City Corporation officially kicked off an ambitious five-day sports festival for its municipal workforce. Held in commemoration of Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Jayanti, the grand inauguration took place at the iconic Kittur Rani Chennamma Stadium located in Jayanagar. The prestigious event was formally inaugurated by Dr. N. Madhu, Joint Commissioner of the Bengaluru South City Corporation, drawing an enthusiastic crowd of officers, field personnel, and administrative staff from both the local municipal body and the Greater Bengaluru Authority.

Addressing the energetic gathering during the opening ceremony, Dr. Madhu delivered an inspiring keynote emphasizing that competitive triumph takes a backseat to the pure joy of involvement. She noted that collective engagement forms the bedrock of true sportsmanship, commending the workforce for stepping away from their rigorous desks to partake with high morale. Highlighting the sedentary pitfalls of modern administrative careers, she urgently appealed to employees not to let taxing professional obligations compromise their personal well-being. Regular physical activity, she stressed, serves as an essential shield against chronic lifestyle stress, protecting both mental clarity and physical endurance. Furthermore, she expressed a strong desire to see even greater representation from female personnel in upcoming institutional tournaments.

Running from October 22 through October 28—excluding Sunday, October 25, and the Valmiki Jayanti holiday on October 26—the comprehensive five-day schedule operates daily from 8 am to 5 pm. The meticulously curated itinerary ensures inclusive competition across departments: the opening day featured track and field events exclusively for female staff, followed today by men's athletic trials. Subsequent days will spotlight specially-abled personnel and municipal drivers, culminating in high-energy team sports such as kabaddi, cricket, and volleyball. Prominent dignitaries, including Education Department Senior Assistant Director B.C. Bhuvaneshwari and Venkatakrishnappa, graced the opening ceremony to cheer on the participating municipal champions.

The programme

- Day 1: track and field for women staff
- Day 2: athletics for men
- Then: specially-abled staff and drivers
- Finale: kabaddi, cricket, volleyball

GBA sets October 31 deadline for LED streetlights

CH NEWS, BENGALURU



Expressing serious displeasure over persistent civic grievances regarding broken infrastructure, Bengaluru Development Minister Krishna Byre Gowda has set a hard deadline of October 31, 2026, for the complete installation and modernization of LED streetlights across the city. During a high-level virtual review meeting held with senior Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) officials, the Minister ordered sweeping administrative crackdowns, making physical on-ground inspections mandatory for civic personnel rather than blindly accepting paper reports. Furthermore, negligent contractors responsible for persistent maintenance failures have already been hit with cumulative penalties totaling Rs 93.67 lakh, calculated using real-time data from the Sahaaya 2.0 public grievance portal.

The strict directives follow months of intense scrutiny into the city's lighting network, which previously led to the suspension of Executive Engineer H.V. Ramesh for severe dereliction of duty. Minister Byre Gowda himself conducted surprise late-night inspections last month, catching numerous non-functional lights along major corridors. To permanently resolve these issues, authorities have been instructed to swap out aging sodium-vapour lamps for energy-efficient LEDs, particularly within the East City Corporation zone. Additionally, officials must expedite constituency-wise rollout schedules for a specialized Centralised Control and Monitoring System (CCMS) alongside dedicated control rooms across all four municipal corporations by the end of the month.

Daily complaints on Sahaaya 2.0

JUNE	OCTOBER
293 daily average	235 daily average

Recent administrative pushes appear to be showing positive trends, with daily average complaints logged on the Sahaaya 2.0 app dropping from 293 in June down to 235 by October. Out of 8,186 complaints registered between September 1 and October 15, municipal teams successfully resolved 6,765 cases. GBA Chief Commissioner Maheshwar Rao confirmed that executive engineers and additional commissioners are actively monitoring performance on the ground. By combining automated digital tracking with swift financial penalties for lagging contractors, the municipal body aims to ensure a well-lit, secure urban environment for all residents.

BNCC launches weekly phone-in programme

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Bengaluru North launches a weekly phone-in programme with Commissioner Pommala Sunil Kumar, giving residents a direct line to resolve civic grievances instantly.

In a major push to bridge the gap between municipal administration and urban residents, the Bengaluru North City Corporation has officially announced the launch of a dedicated weekly Phone-In Programme. Spearheaded by Corporation Commissioner Pommala Sunil Kumar, this direct communication channel aims to fast-track public grievance redressal across all municipal zones. The inaugural session is scheduled for today, Friday, October 23, running from 7 am to 9 am, providing an accessible early-morning window for citizens to voice their concerns before the workday begins.

During this two-hour interactive window, residents can connect directly with the Commissioner to report a wide spectrum of pressing civic challenges. Key focus areas include urgent road repairs and pothole elimination, proper streetlight maintenance, streamlined door-to-door solid waste collection, and the trimming of hazardous tree branches ahead of seasonal changes. Additionally, callers can address public health and safety concerns such as mosquito eradication drives, stray dog management, the upkeep of public parks, the removal of illegal banners, and footpath encroachments. Administrative hurdles, including long-pending e-Khata processing issues, will also be given priority attention during the session.

To ensure transparency and accountability, every grievance voiced during the live programme will be instantly logged onto the advanced "Sahaaya 2.0" digital portal and routed directly to responsible department heads. Citizens will receive automated SMS notifications detailing their complaint reference numbers and the assigned officers handling their cases. For those unable to join the live call, complaints can be registered anytime via the Sahaaya 2.0 mobile application or by reaching out to the central control room via WhatsApp at 9480685705, or through landlines at 080-22975936 and 080-23636671. This proactive initiative promises a swift, responsive, and citizen-friendly administrative ecosystem across North Bengaluru.

B'luru West lakes struggle with funding hurdles

CH NEWS, BENGALURU



Highlighting the severe ecological pressures facing urban waterbodies, the fourth installment of a special investigative series has brought to light the alarming deterioration of lakes across West Bengaluru. Concentrating on vital ecosystems such as the iconic Sankey Tank, Halagevaderahalli Lake, and Doddabidarakallu Lake, the report reveals a distressing pattern of shrinking water spreads, chronic sewage contamination, blocked rainwater inlets, and persistent funding bottlenecks. Local citizens' collectives and neighborhood lake groups are urgently demanding comprehensive financial audits, strict adherence to court orders, and immediate administrative intervention to protect these natural habitats.

At the historic Sankey Tank, members of the Voice of Sadashivanagar Association (VOS) report that the lake's water spread has shrunk by nearly half over the past fifteen years. Residents attribute this massive reduction to poorly planned periphery expansions and the construction of extra jogging tracks during previous phase developments. Furthermore, activists allege that blocked stormwater drains prevent vital rainwater inflows, while municipal garbage trucks continue illegal open-waste segregation near the park despite explicit judicial bans. Similar neglect plagues Halagevaderahalli Lake, where a newly built sewage treatment plant has remained idle for over two years, and Doddabidarakallu Lake, where heavy rains wash massive amounts of trash into local wetlands.

With the Bengaluru West City Corporation currently overseeing 38 lakes—many requiring urgent restoration—officials cite critical funding shortages as a major hurdle. While routine weed removal is underway, civic groups emphasize that sustainable preservation requires dedicated state grants, unblocked stormwater channels, and transparent spending audits. Protecting these urban wetlands remains vital for safeguarding local groundwater tables, supporting migratory bird populations, and preserving ecological balance for future generations of the metropolis.

Highlights of the lake report

- **Sankey Tank:** Residents allege that new jogging tracks and expanded peripheries have reduced the water spread, while garbage trucks park nearby.
- **Idle infrastructure:** At Halagevaderahalli Lake, a newly built Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) has remained non-functional for over two years.
- **Funding hurdles:** The Bengaluru West City Corporation manages 38 lakes, but budget limits have stalled major restoration proposals.
- **Doddabidarakallu:** Heavy rains continue to wash solid waste directly into local wetlands, requiring immediate government grants.

Official inspects B'luru South polling booths



CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Election preparations reached their final stages as Additional District Election Officer K. N. Ramesh personally inspected polling stations across Bengaluru South ahead of the Teachers' Constituency General Elections scheduled for tomorrow, October 23. The official visit aimed to ensure a smooth, secure, and transparent voting process for all electors.

During his ground review, Mr. Ramesh examined voter amenities and security measures across key voting centers. He paid special attention to accessibility features, ensuring ramps are fully functional for senior citizens and voters with disabilities. He also verified the setup and operational readiness of CCTV cameras installed to monitor polling centers. Instructing election staff to maintain absolute professionalism, he emphasized that voters must receive prompt assistance without any lapses or confusion.

The inspection covered six major polling locations across key jurisdictions. These included JSS School in Bommanahalli, NMKRV College in Jayanagar, Vemana Institute of Technology in BTM Layout, National College in Padmanabhanagar, PES College in Basavanagudi, and Sarvajna Public School in Govindrajnagar.

To support the duty personnel, Mr. Ramesh confirmed that proper meals and fresh drinking water arrangements are in place for all polling officers, staff, and political agents. He issued clear directives on the precise placement of ballot boxes in strict accordance with official guidelines to maintain complete transparency.

Concluding his tour, the election officer called on all deployed staff to follow Election Commission rules to the letter. He reiterated that zero disruption will be tolerated, ensuring a seamless voting experience for teachers casting their ballots across the city

Expert panel urges expanded workforce for sanitation

CH NEWS, BENGALURU



115 → 369	198 → 523
Junior Health Inspectors	pourakarmika supervisors

In a decisive move to overhaul urban cleanliness and municipal maintenance, a high-level expert committee headed by former Chief Secretary T.M. Vijay Bhaskar has released a comprehensive interim report. Following the recent restructuring of the civic administration and the establishment of the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA), the panel has strongly urged authorities to significantly expand the frontline sanitation workforce across all municipal corporations. Specifically, the report calls for a dramatic increase in Junior Health Inspectors from 115 to 369, alongside a major boost in pourakarmika supervisors from 198 up to 523, ensuring robust oversight of daily waste management operations.

A core issue highlighted in the findings is that many existing health inspectors and supervisors currently operate under outsourced arrangements, stripping them of the official authority needed to strictly monitor private contractors and permanent sanitation workers. To rectify these structural gaps, the interim blueprint proposes reallocating ward-level personnel—such as reducing tax inspector posts by 88—while standardizing civil and electrical engineering staffing based on actual road lengths within each jurisdiction. Furthermore, the committee recommends allocating dedicated ward grants of up to five lakh rupees to resolve citizen grievances logged via the Sahaaya platform, ensuring local officials have immediate financial resources for urgent infrastructure repairs and neighborhood sanitation fixes.

Beyond staffing adjustments, the comprehensive report emphasizes technological modernization and worker welfare. It strongly advocates for deploying advanced mechanical street sweepers, electric sweepers, and high-pressure suction machines to keep urban thoroughfares spotless. Concurrently, frontline sanitation personnel are slated to receive vital safety and operational gear, including long-handled brooms, durable rubber boots, and protective gloves. Administrative processes are also targeted for modernization through the adoption of E-Procurement 2.0 and a streamlined contract management model.

Quick Read

B'luru adds 5.5 lakh private vehicles in nine months

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Bengaluru's traffic congestion and air pollution concerns are growing as more than 5.5 lakh private vehicles, including nearly 1.24 lakh cars and 4.4 lakh two-wheelers, were added to the city's roads in the first nine months of 2026. State Transport Department data shows the city now has nearly 1.15 crore private cars and two-wheelers, putting further pressure on its road network. Sandeep Anirudhan, convenor of Citizens' Agenda for Bengaluru, attributed the problem to unplanned urbanisation, inadequate mass transit and poor last-mile connectivity. Air quality experts warn that vehicle emissions, tyre and brake wear, and road dust contribute to harmful particulate pollution. Vipul Lal Chandani of CSTEP said fine and ultrafine particles can penetrate deep into the respiratory system and increase the risk of respiratory and cardiovascular diseases.

Man poses as customer, steals gold worth ₹1.5 lakh

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

A man allegedly posing as a customer stole 10 grams of gold worth around ₹1.5 lakh from Rajarajeshwari Jewellers near Anjan Theatre in Binnipete, along Magadi Road. According to reports, the man entered the jewellery shop pretending to be a genuine customer and allegedly distracted the owner before making off with the gold. The theft came to light after the man fled from the shop. CCTV cameras captured the incident, including footage of the suspect escaping with the stolen gold. The incident highlights how the accused allegedly used the guise of a customer to carry out the theft.

Refreshed Golden Chariot begins luxury journeys on October 24

The fully booked inaugural trip will carry 75 guests on a six-day itinerary combining Karnataka's heritage, wildlife and coastal attractions.

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Karnataka's luxury tourist train, the Golden Chariot, will begin its 2026-27 season on October 24 with upgraded facilities and curated itineraries showcasing the state's heritage, wildlife, architecture, coffee plantations and coastal attractions, Tourism Minister K.J. George said.

The first five-night, six-day Pride of Karnataka journey is fully booked, with 75 guests scheduled to travel. Around 60 staff members will provide hospitality and other services aboard the train.

Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar has taken a special interest in strengthening the Golden Chariot as a flagship luxury tourism product, George said. "Our aim is to combine quality hospitality with carefully curated experiences showcasing Karnataka's diverse tourism offerings and establish the Golden Chariot as a strong offering in the domestic and international premium travel markets," the minister said.

The Pride of Karnataka itinerary includes wildlife experiences in Bandipur, Mysuru's royal heritage, the architectural treasures of Belur and Halebidu, coffee plantations in Chikkamagaluru, the UNESCO World Heritage site of Hampi, and Goa's coastline and Indo-Portuguese heritage.

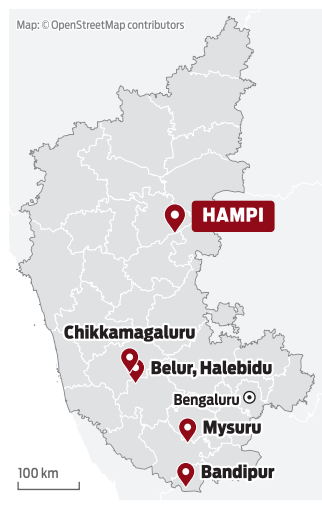
Before the new season, scheduled technical maintenance was carried out at the Mysuru workshop between May and August. The train's exterior has been refreshed, while guest services and kitchen facilities have been upgraded. New equipment includes a combi oven, a higher-capacity induction system and an improved reverse osmosis water purification unit.

A total of 13 journeys are scheduled for 2026-27: seven under Pride of Karnataka, three under Glimpses of Karnataka and three under Jewels of South.

Tourism Department Secretary Dr Ram Prasath Manohar said the full booking for the inaugural journey was an encouraging start. The focus would be on sustaining demand by improving hospitality, destination experiences, marketing and booking services.

KSTDC chairman M. Srinivas said the response to the first journey was encouraging and that efforts would be made to attract more domestic and international tourists in subsequent trips.





Pride of Karnataka: The itinerary's stops in the state, from Bandipur to Hampi

75 guests on the first journey

6 days the inaugural trip

13 journeys in 2026-27

60 staff on board

Namma Metro turns 15 with 96-km network, but mobility challenges persist

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Namma Metro has expanded steadily since its launch in 2011, but gaps in connectivity, delays in new corridors and weak integration with other transport modes continue to limit its impact on Bengaluru's traffic congestion.

The Metro marked 15 years of operations, growing from the MG Road–Baiyappanahalli section to a network carrying around 10 lakh passengers daily. However, this remains below the 30 lakh daily ridership projected in Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Ltd's (BMRCL) detailed project reports. The Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation carries around 47 lakh passengers daily.

Prof Ashish Verma of the IISc Sustainable Transportation Lab said the Metro had fallen short of its potential to transform Bengaluru's mobility.

"BMRCL is far behind the impact it should have made on Bengaluru's mobility. Every corridor has been commissioned after considerable delays, while ongoing projects are taking years to complete," he said.

Verma also highlighted inadequate first- and last-mile connectivity, poor pedestrian access to stations and limited integration with other public transport services. He questioned whether six-coach platforms planned for upcoming corridors would adequately meet future demand.

Passengers a day

Namma Metro, daily: 10 lakh
Projected in BMRCL reports: 30 lakh
BMTC buses, daily: 47 lakh
Figures as reported

> **"BMRCL is far behind the impact it should have made on Bengaluru's mobility."**
> — **Prof Ashish Verma,** IISc Sustainable Transportation Lab

100-KM MILESTONE

The 7.5-km elevated Pink Line section between Kalena Agrahara and Tavarekere is awaiting safety authorisation. Its remaining 13-km underground section, connecting Dairy Circle and Nagawara, is expected to open next year.The 58-km Blue Line linking Silk Board to Kempegowda International Airport is expected to open in phases over the next two years. Meanwhile, the proposed Orange Line and Sarjapur–Hebbal corridor await progress on tendering and approvals.

NIA officials probe suspected explosion at Bengaluru building

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Investigating agencies are probing a suspected explosion involving a battery-like object at an under-construction building in Pulakeshinagar, which left two men seriously injured.

The incident occurred on October 20 on the fifth floor of a building on Jeremiah Road. The injured were identified as Allauddin, a security guard, and Suraj Kumar, a painter.

National Investigation Agency (NIA) officials visited the spot and gathered preliminary information from East Division police. Investigators are examining whether the explosion was accidental or involved a planned act of sabotage.

Police seized wires, a timer and batteries from the site and sent them to the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) for analysis. The possibility that the object was an improvised explosive device (IED) has not been confirmed, and investigators are awaiting the forensic report.

According to preliminary information, Allauddin, a native of Assam who had been working as a security guard at the building for about two weeks, received a call from an unidentified person around 1.30 pm. The caller reportedly told him that a parcel had been sent.

Allauddin allegedly received a battery-like package and called Suraj, who was working on the seventh floor, to help open it on the fifth floor. The object reportedly exploded when the package was opened and a switch was operated.

Suraj sustained injuries to his mouth and hands, while Allauddin suffered burns to his hands and other parts of his body. Both were taken to Bowring Hospital with the help of local residents.

Suraj and his brother, Abhikumar, both from Uttar Pradesh, had reportedly been carrying out painting work at the building for two days. They live in Babusapalya. Police are examining the statements of the injured, which have reportedly contained inconsistencies.

The seven-storey building belongs to a businessman from Ramamurthy Nagar. While the first two floors are intended for commercial use, residential units are being constructed on the upper floors.

Local MLA A.C. Srinivas visited the site and said the seized materials had been sent for forensic examination. He said he would seek details from the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) regarding the building and pursue action if any unauthorised construction was established.

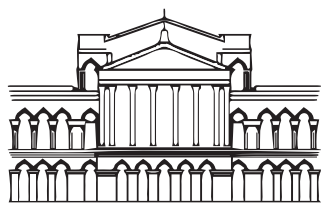


Explosion under probe

- **Location:** Fifth floor of an under-construction building on Jeremiah Road
- **Date:** October 20, around 1.30 pm
- **Injured:** Security guard Allauddin and painter Suraj Kumar
- **Evidence seized:** Wires, timer and batteries
- **Next step:** Forensic analysis to establish the nature of the object

HC quashes case against doctor over refusal to marry woman after 7-year relationship

CH NEWS, BENGALURU



A relationship ending does not automatically amount to cheating on the promise of marriage

The Karnataka High Court has quashed criminal proceedings against a doctor accused of refusing to marry a woman after a long-term physical relationship, observing that a relationship ending does not automatically amount to cheating on the promise of marriage.

A Bench headed by Justice M. Nagaprasanna passed the order on a petition filed by Dr Ramadas, also known as Ramadas Patil, a native of Bidar, seeking to quash a case registered in Mangaluru.

The court noted that both individuals were adults and had been in a consensual relationship for around seven years. The mere breakdown of the relationship, it said, could not establish that the doctor had intended to deceive the woman from the outset.

Referring to Supreme Court judgments, the Bench observed that a criminal offence arises only when a promise of marriage is made without any intention of fulfilling it from the beginning. If a relationship subsequently breaks down due to reasons such as caste differences, it cannot automatically be treated as cheating.

The court also noted that the complaint lacked adequate evidence of physical assault or caste-based abuse. It held that the provisions of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act could not be invoked in the circumstances of the case. The proceedings pending against the doctor before the Second Additional District and Sessions Court in Mangaluru were accordingly quashed.

Case background

The doctor and the complainant met through friends in Bidar in 2017 while studying at different medical colleges in Mangaluru. Their friendship developed into a romantic relationship, which allegedly continued until 2023. Differences reportedly arose over the woman's caste, and the doctor later decided to marry another woman. The woman filed a complaint in 2025, following which police investigated and filed a charge sheet. The doctor then approached the High Court.

LPU admissions for online, distance programmes closing soon

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Lovely Professional University (LPU) has announced that admissions for its August 2026 session of Online and Distance Learning programmes are nearing closure, giving students and working professionals a final opportunity to enrol in flexible higher education courses.

Through its Centre for Distance and Online Education (CDOE), the university offers more than 21 distance education and 15 online programmes across Management, Commerce, Computer Applications, Information Technology, Sciences, Arts and Library and Information Sciences.

The distance education portfolio includes undergraduate, postgraduate and diploma programmes such as MBA, M.Com., BBA, B.Com., MCA, BCA, B.Sc. IT and M.Sc. IT. Online offerings include MBA, MCA, M.Com., BBA, BCA and postgraduate programmes in Data Science, Mathematics, Economics, Arts and Social Sciences.

The MBA programme provides single and dual specialisations across 12 domains, including Finance, Marketing, Human Resource Management, Data Science, Business Analytics, Digital Marketing, International Business and Healthcare Management.

The MCA programme offers five specialisations: Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence, Data Science, Cyber Security, Full Stack Web Development, and AR/VR Game Development.

LPU CDOE also provides expert interactions, campus events, co-curricular activities and hybrid learning experiences to support academic and professional development.



The university has received NAAC A++ accreditation with a score of 3.68 and is recognised by the University Grants Commission under the First Category of Graded Autonomy. It secured 31st position in the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) 2025 and features in the Times Higher Education and QS global rankings for 2027. Its online and distance programmes are also recognised by World Education Services (WES).

Interested learners can visit LPU's official website for programme details and admission requirements.

B'luru receives sudden showers; yellow alert till October 26

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Bengaluru witnessed sudden rainfall on Thursday, with light to moderate showers in several parts of the city, bringing relief from the cloudy and humid conditions but causing inconvenience to commuters and pedestrians.

Areas including Corporation, KR Market, Shantinagar, Vidhana Soudha, Rajajinagar and Malleshwaram received rainfall. The sudden downpour forced two-wheeler riders and pedestrians to seek shelter at roadside eateries and under flyovers. Several people were also seen walking with umbrellas as rain continued in parts of the city.

BILLING TRANSPARENCY

Hospitals to disclose medicine purchase prices, MRP

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

From November 1, every hospital in Karnataka will have to display its treatment charges and show both the purchase price and the maximum retail price (MRP) of medicines on patient bills, under new Health Department guidelines meant to make medical billing more transparent.

Hospitals have been directed to display official price lists of available treatments prominently in public areas, preferably near registration counters. Patients must be able to access details of available procedures and their prescribed charges.

Medicine bills must separately mention the name, brand, batch number, manufacturing date and expiry date of each drug, along with its purchase price and MRP. The requirement is intended to help patients understand the difference between the procurement cost and the amount charged to them.

The guidelines also cover medical equipment, stents and disposable medical supplies. Hospitals must maintain transparency in billing for these items by providing clear information on their purchase costs and the prices charged to patients.

Hospitals will have to preserve medicine purchase invoices, procurement-price details and billing records for at least three years. Drug control officials will be authorised to inspect these documents when required.

Violations may attract action under the relevant laws. District health officers, chief medical officers and drug control authorities will supervise implementation. The guidelines apply to government, private and trust-run hospitals across Karnataka.

The move aims to make hospital expenses easier to verify and improve accountability in billing. However, some private hospitals have reportedly raised objections to the requirements. The department's monitoring and enforcement will be crucial to ensuring compliance.



BILLING RULES

EFFECTIVE DATE
November 1, 2026

TREATMENT CHARGES
Price lists must be displayed publicly

MEDICINE BILLS
Purchase price and MRP mandatory

PRODUCT DETAILS
Name, brand, batch number, manufacturing and expiry dates

RECORD RETENTION
At least three years

ENFORCEMENT
Health and drug control officials

Quick Read

Power supply to be suspended in Gauribidanur villages on Oct 24

CH NEWS, CHIKKABALLAPURA

Power supply will be interrupted on October 24, 2026, from 10 am to 5 pm in several villages of Gauribidanur taluk due to maintenance-related work under the PM-KUSUM C scheme.

P. G. Ramesh Kumar, Executive Engineer of BESCOM, Chikkaballapura, announced that work by Amulya Energy Private Limited will affect the F-09 Tokalahalli and F-10 Narasapura Nirantara Jyothi feeders connected to the Vatadahosahalli 66/11 kV substation.

The affected areas include Vatadahosahalli, Muddulodu, Jeelakunte, Kadirenahalli, Hulikunte, Krishnarajapura, Chimukalahalli, Suryanayakanahalli, Nakkalahalli, Katanakallu, Peddenahalli and Narasapura, along with Gotlakunte and nearby areas.

Officials told to ensure error-free graduates' constituency poll

Zilla Panchayat CEO Dr. Y. Naveen Bhat urged officials to resolve election issues in accordance with the law and escalate unresolved matters to ensure fair voting

CH NEWS, CHIKKABALLAPURA

Deputy Commissioner G. Prabhu announced that all preparations have been completed in Chikkaballapura district for the Karnataka South-East Graduates' Constituency election scheduled for October 23. Voting will take place from 8 am to 4 pm.

Speaking after inaugurating the mustering process at the District Administration Building auditorium on Thursday, Prabhu said the district has 26,262 registered voters and 36 polling stations. Each polling station has been assigned a team of six to eight officials and staff, with the necessary facilities and election materials provided.

He instructed Presiding Officers, Assistant Presiding Officers, police personnel and other election staff to work together and perform their duties transparently. He stressed that all procedures, from mustering to voting and de-mustering, must follow Election Commission guidelines without any lapses. Staff have already completed two rounds of training and were directed to follow the instructions carefully.



Officials at the mustering for the graduates' constituency poll in Chikkaballapura on Thursday

Zilla Panchayat Chief Executive Officer Dr. Y. Naveen Bhat said officials must take immediate action in accordance with the law if any problems arise during the election process. Issues that cannot be resolved at the local level must be reported to higher authorities to ensure fair and impartial voting.

District Superintendent of Police Padmini Sahoo said the Presiding Officer is in charge of each polling station, and police personnel must work under their direction. She instructed staff to report any issues to the Presiding Officer and take necessary steps to maintain peace. Mobile phones are prohibited inside polling stations, including for police personnel.

The poll in numbers

registered voters in Chikkaballapura district
26,262
polling stations
36

Additional Deputy Commissioner Dr. N. Bhaskar, Sub-Divisional Officer D. H. Ashwin, district Tahsildars, Taluk Panchayat Executive Officers and other election officials attended the programme.

After the mustering process, polling personnel collected their election materials and left for their assigned polling stations in designated vehicles to complete the final preparations for voting.

Shivamogga plans special puja after howdah falls during Dasara procession



The press conference in Shivamogga on Thursday

CH NEWS, SHIVAMOGGA

Shivamogga City MLA S. N. Channabasappa has proposed conducting a special religious ritual following the incident in which an elephant carrying the ambari (howdah) during the Dasara procession lost control and the howdah fell.

Speaking at a press conference on Thursday, Channabasappa said he was relieved that no lives were lost. However, the incident damaged the idol of Goddess Chamundeshwari, breaking its right arm, while the 430-kg silver mantapa was also severely damaged. He said the idol would be repaired and a new idol commissioned, while the City Corporation would take responsibility for the damaged silver structure.

Channabasappa said everyone involved must share responsibility for the incident. However, he cautioned against immediately blaming officials, noting that elephant behaviour could be unpredictable. He added that the government would guide the arrangements for future Dasara celebrations.

Deputy Commissioner Prabhulinga Kavalikatti said an internal inquiry was underway under Chief Conservator of Forests Hanumanthappa to investigate the incident involving elephants retreating from the procession.

At a glance

- **Incident:** Elephant Somanna bolted; the howdah fell, damaging the idol and silver canopy
- **No casualties:** minor damage to some vehicles and houses
- **Inquiry:** a fact-finding committee under the CCF
- **Remedy:** special rituals, idol repair, a new silver canopy

Former Deputy Chief Minister K. S. Eshwarappa and Channabasappa met the Deputy Commissioner to discuss possible measures. Religious representatives also suggested conducting rituals to address the incident. The Deputy Commissioner said the administration would consult the Religious Council and follow directions from the district minister and the Department of Religious Endowments after receiving a written request.

The City Corporation will take necessary steps regarding the damaged property and plans to ensure that the event can be held again for the public.

Meanwhile, animal lovers and the Simha Sene wing of the Karnataka Rakshana Vedike staged a protest outside the Divisional Forest Officer's office, condemning the incident during the Shivamogga Dasara procession.

Uttara Kannada ready for West Graduates' poll at 25 stations

CH NEWS, KARWAR

The Uttara Kannada district administration has completed preparations for the Karnataka Legislative Council West Graduates' Constituency election scheduled for October 23. Polling staff and election materials have reached their designated stations under police protection.

A total of 16,039 voters, including 8,028 men and 8,011 women, are eligible to cast their votes at 25 polling stations across the district. The administration has taken precautionary measures to ensure free, fair and peaceful polling.

To oversee the process, 34 Presiding Officers, 35 Assistant Presiding Officers, 62 Polling Officers, 25 micro-observers and 125 police personnel have been deployed. Security arrangements have been strengthened to prevent irregularities during voting.

The polling stations are spread across various locations, including the Tahsildar offices in Ankola, Bhatkal, Haliyal, Honnavar, Joida, Kumta, Mundgod, Siddapur and Yellapur. Other stations include educational institutions and government offices in Karwar, Sirsi, Dandeli, Gokarna and nearby areas.

A total of 14 candidates are contesting the election. The main candidates include Mohan Limbikai of the Indian National Congress and S. V. Sankanur of the Bharatiya Janata Party. Other candidates represent various political parties, while several are contesting as independents.

The administration has instructed election personnel to follow all prescribed guidelines and ensure that voters can exercise their franchise without difficulty.

Vote counting is scheduled for October 27 at 8 am at the University of Agricultural Sciences in Dharwad. The results will determine the winner of the West Graduates' Constituency seat in the Karnataka Legislative Council.

ON POLL DUTY

34	PRESIDING OFFICERS
35	ASSISTANT PRESIDING OFFICERS
25	MICRO-OBSERVERS
125	POLICE PERSONNEL

Farmers attend awareness programme under Save the Farms campaign

CH NEWS, KARWAR

An agricultural awareness programme was organised in Mudageri village on Thursday under the Khet Bachao Abhiyan (Save the Farms Campaign) – Rabi 2026, to educate farmers about sustainable farming practices and government support schemes.

As part of the programme, a team of agricultural scientists and staff visited the Mudageri Gram Panchayat and nearby paddy fields to interact with farmers and provide useful information.

Principal Scientist Dr. Kalidas C. explained the balanced use of chemical fertilisers and created awareness about the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) and the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) scheme.



Scientists with farmers in a paddy field at Mudageri under the Khet Bachao Abhiyan

Senior Scientist Dr. Mahesh V. discussed agricultural credit facilities and the benefits farmers could gain from trade agreements. Scientist Dr. Kurva Raghu Ramudu demonstrated a mobile application that helps farmers access information about various government schemes.

The programme aimed to encourage sustainable agricultural practices and improve farmers' awareness of government schemes and available support services.

The nationwide Khet Bachao Abhiyan will run from October 22 to November 30, with the target of reaching approximately one crore farmers across the country.

Manja string kills woman on her way to work on a scooter in Hubballi

CH NEWS, HUBBALLI

A 38-year-old woman died after a kite-flying string, known as manja, became entangled around her neck while she was riding her scooter near Shivashankar Colony on Karwar Road on Thursday.

The deceased, Vidya Manjunatha Gowdar, a resident of Bharat Nagar, worked as a laboratory technician and was travelling to work when the incident occurred. The string reportedly caught her neck, causing her to lose control of her scooter and fall onto the road. She suffered severe bleeding and died before reaching the hospital.

Call for a ban

Vidya's relative, Mohan Gowdar, said she regularly travelled along the same road and called for an immediate ban on dangerous manja strings.

Local resident Dr. Anand Kumar also demanded strict action against those selling and using strings coated with powdered glass. He urged authorities to investigate how such dangerous strings continued to be sold despite restrictions.

Case registered

Hubballi-Dharwad Police Commissioner Bhushan Borase visited KIMS Hospital and offered condolences to the family. He confirmed that a case had been registered at Old Hubballi Police Station and that efforts were underway to identify those responsible.

Criminal cases will be filed against those found selling or using manja strings, including students, the Commissioner warned

The Commissioner warned that criminal cases would be filed against those found selling or using manja strings, including students.

The incident has renewed calls for strict enforcement against dangerous kite strings to prevent further injuries and deaths.

Muneer Katipalla demands fully equipped taluk hospital in Moodubidire

CH NEWS, MOODUBIDIRE

CPI(M) district leader Muneer Katipalla has urged the government to establish a fully equipped taluk-level hospital in Moodubidire to provide better healthcare facilities, especially for poor families.

He was speaking at a protest organised by the CPI(M) Moodubidire Taluk Committee in front of the Taluk Administrative Office on Thursday. Protesters demanded that the government protect public hospitals and regulate private hospitals.

Katipalla said the people's demand for Moodubidire to become a taluk was not limited to administrative status but also included the establishment of a well-equipped government hospital. He stressed that health problems cause significant hardship for poor families and that access to affordable treatment was essential.

KITTUR UTSAVA

Chukki Nanjundaswamy to inaugurate three-day Kittur Utsava

CH NEWS, BELAGAVI

Farmer activist Chukki Nanjundaswamy will inaugurate the 202nd Kittur Utsava, scheduled from October 23 to 25 at Kittur in Belagavi district. MLA Babasaheb Patil announced that Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar will participate in the closing ceremony.

Speaking during an inspection of the festival preparations, Patil said the state-level event would be celebrated on a grand scale. For the first time, a livestock fair featuring indigenous breeds of cattle, sheep and goats will be organised to benefit farmers.

The festival will feature kabaddi, volleyball, wrestling, water sports, flower and fruit exhibitions, seminars, poetry gatherings and cultural programmes. A separate poetry gathering for women will focus on the history of the Kittur kingdom. K. Sharifa will inaugurate the event, while poet Dr. Gurudevi Hulleppanavarmath will preside over it.

Kittur Development Authority Commissioner Dr. Santosh Hangal said around 6,500 students and 700 teachers are expected to participate in the festival. A seminar for women has also been planned.

DySP Dr. Veerayya Hiremath said around one lakh people are expected to attend each day. Security arrangements include 450 police officers and personnel, along with 200 Home Guards.

Parking facilities have been arranged at 10 locations.

Three stages have been established at Kittur Fort, Veerabhadreshwara Kalyana Mantapa and Kittur Rani Channamma Auditorium. Sports events will be held at designated grounds, while water sports are planned at Thumbukere.



Film actor Sharan, music director Arjun Janya, singer Rajesh Krishnan, rapper Chandan Shetty and other artists are expected to entertain visitors.

Patil invited people from across Karnataka to participate in the three-day festival and commemorate the historic victory of Kittur Rani Chennamma.

Kittur Utsava 2026

WHEN	October 23 to 25
OPENS	Chukki Nanjundaswamy
CLOSES	CM D.K. Shivakumar
SECURITY	450 police, 200 Home Guards

CHANGE OF NAME

I, BHARGAVI J., D/o JEYAPRAKASH B.K., residing in Bengaluru, Karnataka, have changed my name to ADHYA SRI J. for personal reasons. Henceforth, I shall be known as ADHYA SRI J. for all purposes.
ADHYA SRI J.

NAME CHANGE

I, **SHAIIK MOHAMMED USMAN**, S/o. Shaik Ameer jan, resident of No. 4, B Street, Lal Masjid Road Cross, Shivajinagar, Bangalore-560051, Have Changed My Name to SHAIK **MOHAMMED USMAN**, Vide Affidavit Dated:21.10.2026 before Notary CHANDRASHEKAR. M. Bengaluru.

NAME CHANGE

I, **WAHEEDUNNISSA ZAHOOR**, W/o Samiulla Mohammed Zahoor, residing at No.24, 2nd Stage, Pillanna Garden, Bangalore-560 045, have changed my name to **WAHEEDA ZAHOOR**, Vide Affidavit Dated: 17.10.2026 before notary N. NAGAPPA, Bengaluru

IN THE COURT OF THE II ADDITIONAL CIVIL JUDGE, AT DODDABALLAPUR
C.Mis.No. 696/2025
Between: Sri. Shivakumar S/o Hanumanthaiah Aged about 50 years, R/at: Sasalu Village Sasalu Hobli, Doddaballapura Taluk, Bangalore Rural District. PETITIONER
And: The Tahsildar, Doddaballapura Taluk. RESPONDENT
PUBLIC NOTICE
Whereas the petitioner has filed the above petition under Section 13(3) and 14 of Registration of Births and Deaths act 1969, for seeking the death certificate of the grand father of petitioner by name Sri.Hanumanthaiah @ Kurlappa S/o Hanumanthaiah who died on 18.10.1989 at Sasalu Village, Sasalu Hobli, Doddaballapura Taluk.
In this regard it is hereby notice that whoever has interested in the said matter may appear in person or through an Advocate duly authorized before the above said court on 30.11.26 at 11 A.M./forenoon. In default this matter will be heard and disposed off an ex-parte.
Given under my hand and seal of the court on this the 22nd day of October 2026.
By order of the court
Chief Ministerial Officer, II ADDITIONAL Civil Judge & JMFC Doddaballapura
Sri. Ravi.M., Advocate, Court Road, 15th Cross Behind Healyn Hospital, Vinayakanagara, Doddaballapur-561 203.

IN THE COURT OF THE I ADDITIONAL CIVIL JUDGE & JMFC AT DODDABALLAPURA
CMis No. 547/ 2026
Petitioner: Ramaiah.N S/o Late.Nagappa, Aged about 66 years, R/at Bidikere Village, Tubagere Hobli, Doddaballapura Taluk Bangalore Rural District & others V/s Respondent: The Tahsildar, Registrar of Birth and Deaths, Doddaballapura Taluk
PUBLIC NOTICE
Whereas the petitioner have filed above petition for obtaining Death Certificate of Late RATHNAMMA W/O RAMAIAH.N is the Wife of petitioner Who died on 09-12-1988, at Bidikere village, Tubagere Hobli. Doddaballapura Taluk. Bangalore Rural District. if there are any persons having claim, they may appear before Hon 'ble court In person or through pleader on this 21-11-2026 at 11:00 A.M, failing which the petition will disposed of according to law.
Given under my hand and seal of the Court on 16-10-2026
By Order of the Court
Chief Ministeral Officer Prl Civil Judge & JMFC Court, Doddaballapura
Advocate for petitioner: **C.PRAKESH**, Advocate Court road Doddaballapura

CHANGE OF NAME

I, RANCY S/o K GAYATHRI and Late RICHARD OLIVER, R/o No. 295, Ground Floor, 1st B Cross, 6th Block, 2nd Phase, Vidyanagar Park/ Bus Stand, Banashankari 3rd Stage, Bangalore South, Hosakerehalli, Bengaluru, Karnataka-560085, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as SUHAS RANCY.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, RAMACHANDRAIAH S/o HANUMAIAH, R/o 133, Chamundipura, Bilagumba, Ramanagaram, Ramanagar, Karnataka-562159, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as RAMACHANDRAPPA.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, JYOTHI E A W/o ANAND E P, R/o 9, 5th Cross, A T Extension, Ramakrishnapuram, K. G. Road, Bangalore North, Bangalore, Karnataka-560009, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as SARIKA INDU ELLOR.

Quick Read

Young man killed in Annigeri hit-and-run accident

CH NEWS, ANNIGERI

A 23-year-old man was killed in a hit-and-run accident on the Hubballi-Gadag National Highway near Annigeri. The deceased was identified as Salim Ismail Doddamani, a resident of Koliwada village. According to reports, he was crossing the road on a bike when an unidentified vehicle hit him. He died on the spot due to the impact. Following the incident, a case was registered at the Annigeri police station. Police have launched an investigation to identify the vehicle and trace its driver. Further details are awaited.

TCS job fair in Bhatkal targets 500 candidates

CH NEWS, BHATKAL

Anjuman Arts, Science and Commerce College in Bhatkal will host a job fair in collaboration with Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) on October 24, aiming to recruit 500 candidates.College Principal Prof. Yusuf Kola announced the details during a press conference held at his office on Thursday.Candidates who completed or are completing degrees in 2024, 2025 or 2026 in B.Com, B.A., BBA, BBM, B.Sc., BCA, BAF and BBI are eligible to participate. Preference will be given to applicants with good communication skills and knowledge of Hindi, Urdu, English and Kannada. Selected candidates will receive an initial monthly salary of ₹19,000. Registration will begin at 8:30 am, followed by an aptitude test and interview. Organisers have arranged for eligible candidates to be selected on the spot.Candidates from Bhatkal, Murudeshwar, Kumta, Ankola, Karwar, Byndoor, Kundapura, Shiruru and Mangaluru are encouraged to attend the recruitment drive.

Election staff reach polling stations ahead of voting

Additional Deputy Commissioner B.T. Kumaraswamy said all preparations were complete, with five staff members at each polling station and emergency teams ready

CH NEWS, CHITRADURGA

Election officials and staff have been assigned to 55 polling stations for the Karnataka South-East Graduates' Constituency Legislative Council election scheduled for October 23, from 8 am to 4 pm.

Deputy Commissioner S. Ramya inspected the arrangements during the mustering process at Government Arts College in Chitradurga on Thursday. She instructed staff to follow election rules, review their training materials and work together to ensure smooth voting.

Micro-observers must reach their assigned polling stations between 6:30 am and 6:45 am. Mobile phones are prohibited inside polling stations, except for the Presiding Officer. Staff must contact their designated Nodal Officer if they face any confusion or problems.

Additional Deputy Commissioner B.T. Kumaraswamy said all preparations had been completed. Each polling station will have five staff members, including a Presiding Officer, an Assistant Presiding Officer and three Polling Officers. Fifteen additional teams have been kept ready for emergencies.



Officials at the mustering of election staff at Government Arts College in Chitradurga on Thursday

Webcasting facilities have been arranged at all polling stations for live monitoring from the Returning Officer's centre in Bengaluru. Drinking water, electricity, ramps and shade have also been provided. Help centres staffed by Booth Level Officers will assist voters.

Voters can carry one of the approved identity documents, including Aadhaar, driving licence, PAN card, passport or eligible government-issued identity cards. Mobile phones, electronic devices and personal pens are prohibited inside polling stations. Votes must be marked using the special purple pen provided by the Election Commission.

Transport arrangements cover 10 routes, with KSRTC buses operating on eight routes and Trax vehicles on two. After voting, ballot boxes and documents will be transported under police security to the designated strong room in Bengaluru.

Sub-Divisional Officer Dr. K.J. Kantaraj, election officials, taluk Tahsildars and other officers attended the mustering process. Officials urged staff to follow instructions carefully and ensure a smooth and orderly election.

At a glance

- **Date & Timing:** October 23, 8 am to 4 pm
- **Polling Personnel:** Each station is staffed by 5 officials, monitored by central micro-observers.
- **Strict Regulations:** Total prohibition of mobile phones, electronic devices, and personal pens inside booths.
- **Voter Identification:** Voters can use standard photo ID or any of 10 alternative documents.

55	15	10
polling stations	reserve teams	transport routes



Three SpiceJet flights delayed, 473 passengers stranded at KIA

CH NEWS, Bengaluru

Around 473 passengers were left waiting for hours at Kempegowda International Airport after three SpiceJet flights to Kolkata and Mumbai were delayed due to technical issues.

Passengers expressed anger over the delays and the reported failure to issue boarding passes or provide proper information.

The affected passengers, including three infants, had been waiting at the airport since Wednesday night. The delays caused significant inconvenience, with passengers questioning the airline staff over the lack of updates.

SpiceJet flight SG-158, scheduled to depart for Kolkata at 6:30 pm on October 21, was carrying 134 passengers. Its departure was rescheduled to approximately 9:45 pm.

Another Kolkata-bound flight, SG-647, carrying 161 passengers, including one infant, was scheduled to leave at 7:45 pm. Its departure was postponed to around 10:20 pm, resulting in a delay of more than two and a half hours.

Meanwhile, flight SG-633, scheduled to depart for Mumbai at 11:45 pm on October 21, was delayed until approximately 2:15 am on October 22 due to a technical issue. Passengers had to wait at the airport late into the night.

The combined delays affected hundreds of travellers, including families travelling with young children.

Passengers expressed frustration over the absence of timely communication and the uncertainty surrounding their journeys.

According to the information available, SpiceJet had not issued an official explanation detailing the specific cause of the disruptions.

The incident has raised concerns among passengers about airline communication and arrangements for travellers during unexpected delays. Passengers sought clear updates about departure schedules and assistance while waiting at the airport.

The three delayed flights disrupted travel plans for hundreds of people, leaving passengers awaiting further information from the airline.

Sufism committee seeks tickets for Muslims in Hunsur local body polls

CH NEWS, HUNSUR

The Hunsur Taluk Sufism Committee has submitted a memorandum to State Minister U.T. Khader and former MLA H.P. Manjunath, demanding ticket allocation to the Muslim community for the upcoming Zilla Panchayat (ZP) and Taluk Panchayat (TP) elections.

In a press statement, the committee said the minority community had been denied opportunities to contest ZP and TP elections since the tenure of former Chief Minister S.M. Krishna. It urged the Congress leadership to address the issue and provide representation in the upcoming local body elections.

According to the committee, more than 30,000 voters from the Muslim community live in Hunsur Taluk. Despite this significant voter population, the committee alleged that the Congress party had not allocated tickets to community members in previous elections, leaving them without adequate political representation.

'Equal share, equal living'

The committee also pointed out that other political parties in different taluks of Mysuru district had offered election tickets to Muslim candidates. It questioned the Congress party's approach, stating that the party speaks about the principle of "equal share, equal living" but has failed to provide the community with opportunities to contest ZP and TP elections.

The committee said that the community's participation in the electoral process should be recognised through fair opportunities to contest local body elections. It called upon party leaders to consider the community's request while finalising candidates for the upcoming polls.

The memorandum also urged the concerned ministers, legislators and senior Congress leaders to recommend candidates from the Muslim community and ensure their inclusion in the candidate selection process.

The Hunsur Taluk Sufism Committee reiterated its demand for political representation and expressed hope that the party leadership would consider its request before announcing candidates for the Zilla Panchayat and Taluk Panchayat elections.

30,000+ Muslim voters in Hunsur Taluk, according to the committee

Hampi region preserves ancient Dussehra worship traditions

CH NEWS, Hospet

Thousands of devotees gathered at Dharmada Gudda in Hospet taluk of Vijayanagara district to observe traditional rituals associated with Ayudha Puja and Dussehra.

The celebrations featured deity processions, devotees carrying palanquins over long distances and rituals around the sacred Banni tree.

Dharmada Gudda, located between Nagenahalli and Kalaghatta villages, is associated with Channabasaveshwara and Nijalingamma Devi. The annual celebration attracts devotees from several surrounding villages, continuing a tradition believed to date back to the Vijayanagara Empire.

For nine days before the festival, Shakti deities installed in temples across villages, including Ezukeri in Hospet, Ezukeri in Kamalapur, Nagenahalli and Basavandurga, are worshipped. Devotees organise daily prayers and bhajans during this period.

Holiday declared for polling booth institutions in Dharwad

CH NEWS, DHARWAD

Dharwad Deputy Commissioner R. Snehal has declared a two-day holiday on Thursday and Friday for schools, colleges and government offices designated as polling booths for the upcoming elections.

The decision has been taken to facilitate election preparations and ensure that voting arrangements are completed without disruption.

According to the district administration, polling booths have been established at 56 locations across Dharwad district. The holiday will apply only to educational institutions and government offices identified as polling stations. The measure is intended to provide officials with the necessary time and facilities to prepare the premises for polling.

Only schools, colleges and government offices selected as polling booths will remain closed

The administration has clarified that schools and colleges not designated as polling booths will remain open and continue their regular activities. Students, parents and staff members have been advised to check whether their respective institutions are included in the list of polling stations before making plans.

Meanwhile, a special leave facility has also been announced for graduate voters employed in government departments, educational institutions and private organisations. Eligible employees belonging to the graduate constituency can avail themselves of leave to exercise their voting rights, subject to the prescribed procedure.

Graduate voters have been instructed to obtain prior permission from their respective departments or employers before taking leave.

The arrangement is intended to help eligible voters participate in the election without facing difficulties arising from their work commitments.

The district administration is making arrangements to ensure that polling takes place smoothly at all designated locations. The preparations include making polling premises ready and coordinating the necessary arrangements for election personnel and voters.

Officials have urged institutions concerned to cooperate with the administration and follow the instructions issued for the election. Voters have also been encouraged to verify their eligibility and polling details in advance.

The two-day holiday does not apply to every educational institution in Dharwad district.

Only schools, colleges and government offices selected as polling booths will remain closed on the specified days. Other institutions will function normally.

The administration has appealed to eligible graduate voters to make use of the leave facility, obtain the required approval and participate in the democratic process.

Illegal card and matka gambling raise concerns in Haveri

CH NEWS, HAVERI

Alleged illegal card gambling and matka activities in Haveri district have raised questions about the effectiveness of enforcement measures against gambling rackets in Karnataka.

Despite the state government's strict stance against illegal gambling, reports suggest that such activities continue in several locations across the district.

Card gambling is allegedly taking place in villages around Guttal and Ranebennur in Haveri district. Temporary tents are reportedly being set up in villages and forest areas on the outskirts, where gambling activities are said to be conducted.

The report further alleges that a person from Goa is operating the racket by arranging gambling spots in these areas. These claims have drawn attention to the need for effective monitoring of remote locations, where illegal activities may be difficult to detect.

The alleged continuation of card gambling and matka operations has also raised questions about whether sufficient action is being taken to prevent such activities. The situation has prompted concerns over the implementation of the government's measures against illegal gambling and the need for authorities to investigate the reported operations.Illegal gambling can expose participants to financial losses and create wider concerns for families and local communities.

FORM NO. INC-26

[Pursuant to Rule 30 of the Companies (Incorporation) Rules, 2014]

Advertisement to be published in the Newspaper for Shifting of Registered Office from one state to another state

Before the Central Government South-Western Region Directorate, Bangalore

In the matter of sub-section (4) of Section 13 of Companies Act, 2013 and clause (a) of sub-rule (5) of Rule 30 of the Companies (Incorporation) Rules, 2014

AND

In the matter of **SORTING HAT SOLUTIONS PRIVATE LIMITED** (CIN: U22219KA2022PTC161167) having its registered office at No 11/1,12/1 2nd Floor, Block B Maruti Info-Tech Centre, Amarjyothi Layout, Intermediate Ring Road, Domlur, Bangalore, Bangalore North, Karnataka, India, 560071. .....Petitioner

Notice is hereby given to the General Public that the company proposes to make application to the Central Government under section 13 of the Companies Act, 2013 seeking confirmation of alteration of the Memorandum of Association of the Company in terms of the Special Resolution passed at the Extra-Ordinary General Meeting held on 19th October, 2026 to enable the company to shift its Registered Office from the State of Karnataka (within the jurisdiction of ROC Bangalore) to the State of Maharashtra (within the jurisdiction of ROC-Mumbai).

Any person whose interest is likely to be affected by the proposed change of the registered office of the company may deliver **either on the MCA-21 portal (www.mca.gov.in) by filing investor complaint form** or cause to be delivered or send by registered post of his/her objections supported by an affidavit stating the nature of his/her interest and grounds of opposition to Regional Director, South-Western Region, Bangalore at the address E' Wing, 2nd Floor, Kendriya Sadana, Koramangala, Bengaluru – 560034, Karnataka, India within twenty one days of the date of publication of this notice with a copy to the applicant company at its registered office at the address mentioned below:

No 11/1,12/1 2nd Floor, Block B Maruti Info-Tech Centre, Amarjyothi Layout, Intermediate Ring Road, Domlur, Bangalore, Bangalore North, Karnataka, India, 560071

For and on behalf of
SORTING HAT SOLUTIONS PRIVATE LIMITED
Sd/-
Gaurav Munjal
Director (DIN: 06575810)

Date: 23/10/2026
Place: Bangalore

BANGALORE DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
T. Chowdaiah Road, Kumara Park West, Bengaluru-560 020

No. BDA/EE(North)/Corrigendum/2026-2027/818 Date: 22.10.2026

CORRIGENDUM

Sub: Modification to Invitation for Tender for the tendered work.

Ref.: This office Tender Notification No.: BDA/EE/North/TEN/T-765/2026-2027, dated: 01.10.2026.

In continuation to the tender notification dated 01.10.2026 cited at reference, the contents shall read as follows.

Para (1) shall be read as follows:

1. The Executive Engineer, North Division, Bangalore Development Authority, Bengaluru, on behalf of the Commissioner, Bangalore Development Authority, Bengaluru, invites tender from eligible tenderers for the construction of works detailed in the Table. Two Tender Document System as per Rule 28 of the KTPP Act shall be followed. The Tenderers are required simultaneously submit two separate electronic document, first containing the Earnest Money Deposit and the details of their capability to undertake the tender (as detailed in ITT Clause 2 and 3), which will be opened first and the second containing the price tender (as detailed in Section 4 and 9) which will be opened only if the Tenderer is found to be qualified to execute the tendered works. The Tenderers are advised to note the minimum qualification criteria specified in Clause 3 of the Instructions to Tenderers to qualify for award of the contract.

The Table of content for the work shall be read as follows:

Sl. No.	Name of work	Approx. value of work excluding GST (Rs. in Lakhs)	Earnest Money Deposit (Rs. in Lakhs)	Tender processing fee (Rs.)	Period of completion
1	Construction of RCC drain and Road at Sy. No. 81/4, 81/5 and 81/6 of Hennur Village, Kasaba Hobli, Bengaluru North Taluk	359.43	Refer Karnataka Public Procurement portal	Refer Karnataka Public Procurement portal	06 months including monsoon period

Para (1) shall be read as follows:

9. Following shall be the calendar of events for tendering:

Last date and time for receipt of Queries: **23.10.2026 up to 16.30 Hrs.** Last date and time for receipt of tender: **26.10.2026 up to 16.00 Hrs.** Time and date of opening of First Electronic Document (Technical Bid): **27.10.2026 at 16.30 Hrs.** Place of opening of First Electronic Document (Technical Bid): Office of the Executive Engineer, North Division, Bangalore Development Authority, T. Chowdaiah Road, Kumara Park West, Bengaluru-560 020. Time, date & Place of opening of Second Electronic Document (Financial Bid): **Will be intimated to the qualified tenderers.** The other conditions of the tender remain unaltered. Any clarifications may please be obtained from the Office of the Executive Engineer, North Division, Bangalore Development Authority, HBR BDA Complex, Bengaluru-560 043, on all working days during working hours.

Helpline / Whatsapp: 9483166622 (24x7) @BDAOfficialGok

Sd/- Executive Engineer, North Division, BDA, Bengaluru

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

Quick Read

India's aerospace industry set to grow twice as fast as global market

NEW DELHI

India's aerospace industry is set to expand at twice the pace of the global market, powered by state-backed reforms, growing private investment and closer ties with the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), according to a new report. Citing Arkam Ventures, the Forbes report put the sector's current value at $13 billion and said it could more than triple to $40 billion by 2030, while some estimates see a $44 billion space economy by 2033. "To win the celestial race, India's space startups need to strongly leverage the nation's unique attributes in software development to cater to the downstream market of data mining from satellites," the report said.

Swiggy's Q2 net loss widens sequentially to Rs 922 crore

MUMBAI

Swiggy, the food delivery and quick-commerce platform, on Thursday posted a consolidated net loss of Rs 922 crore for the September 2026 quarter (Q2 FY27), up from a loss of Rs 791 crore in the April-June quarter (Q1 FY27). The loss was, however, narrower than the Rs 1,092 crore it reported for the same quarter a year earlier (Q2 FY26), its stock exchange filing showed.



PM-DAKSH trained 1.87 lakh, 96,162 got job offers

NEW DELHI

The Pradhan Mantri Dakshata Aur Kushalta Sampann Hitgrahi (PM-DAKSH) scheme trained more than 1.87 lakh candidates from SC, OBC, EWS and de-notified tribe communities and safai karamcharis, including waste pickers, between 2020-21 and 2023-24, and 96,162 of them received job placement offers, says a factsheet the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment issued on Thursday.
Against Rs 276.47 crore allotted to PM-DAKSH from 2020-21 to 2023-24, actual spending so far has come to Rs 309.5 crore.



Sinduri pomegranate exports hit Dubai market

NEW DELHI

An export consignment of Sinduri pomegranates from Kullu in Himachal Pradesh has reached Dubai, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said on Thursday, a sign of the new inroads Indian farm produce is making in foreign markets.
He praised Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel for drawing more local businesses and exporters into the Centre's FTA outreach, which will help widen the use of FTAs and raise Gujarat's share of India's exports.

India-Poland target doubling bilateral trade by 2030

Both countries urge early signing of the EU-India FTA, agree to boost cooperation in defence, green tech, space and semiconductors.

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Polish counterpart Donald Tusk agreed on Thursday to double trade between India and Poland by 2030, an ambitious economic goal as the two countries look to deepen their strategic partnership.

The target was set out in a joint statement issued after their talks, which centred on widening trade, investment, industrial cooperation and collaboration in technology.

The two leaders called for the India-European Union Free Trade Agreement to be signed and ratified early and implemented on time. The pact, they said, could open fresh opportunities for trade and investment, strengthen critical supply chains, diversify economic partnerships and give businesses new markets.

Modi urged Polish companies to invest more and widen their operations in India, pointing to its large consumer market, skilled workforce and expanding manufacturing and innovation base. Tusk welcomed Indian investment in Poland, calling his country a gateway for Indian firms looking to grow in Central and Eastern Europe and the wider European market.

The leaders also agreed to revive the work of their bilateral working group on agriculture, with the aim of stepping up trade and collaboration in the sector.

They welcomed the India-Poland Business Forum held during the visit, which drew top chief executives and industry representatives from both sides. Companies were urged to look for partnerships in industrial machinery, defence, infrastructure, pharmaceuticals, mining, critical minerals, energy and information and communications technology.

Both sides also stressed resilient supply chains, support for small and medium-sized enterprises, innovation-led growth and digital transformation.



India-Poland trade push

- India and Poland aim to double bilateral trade by 2030
- Modi and Tusk called for early signing and ratification of the India-EU Free Trade Agreement
- Both seek more investment in manufacturing, defence, pharmaceuticals and infrastructure
- Cooperation to expand in artificial intelligence, semiconductors, quantum technologies and space
- Agricultural collaboration and startup partnerships are also priorities

Hotels may need 125 mn sq ft more by 2035: CBRE

MUMBAI

India's organised hospitality sector will require some 120-125 million square feet of additional real estate by 2035, or roughly 1,90,000-2,10,000 new hotel rooms, says a report released on Thursday.

According to the CBRE Research report, the sector drew about $905 million of real estate investment between 2024 and the first half of 2026. The expected growth opens opportunities in the economy, mid-scale, upscale, upper-upscale and luxury hotel segments.

Growth will hinge on picking the right markets and operating models, securing land and keeping pace with shifting demand for business travel, leisure holidays and experience-led tourism.

Gateway cities hold about 35 per cent of India's branded hotel rooms but earn around 50 per cent of the sector's revenue. Corporate travel, meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions, and transit demand keep their share of revenue high.

Beyond the big cities, leisure, cultural and spiritual destinations are emerging as promising markets for resorts and experience-focused hotel formats.

"India's hospitality opportunity is becoming increasingly diverse, with growth extending beyond traditional hotel markets and formats. As business, leisure and experience-led travel evolve, developers and operators are taking a more market-led approach to identifying opportunities. This involves understanding the demand drivers of each destination and building strong operating partnerships," said Anshuman Magazine, Chairman and CEO for India, South-East Asia, the Middle East and Africa at CBRE.



Room to grow by 2035

sq ft of additional real estate
120-125 mn
additional hotel keys
1.9-2.1 lakh

'MP plans to make Bina a petrochemical hub'

MUMBAI

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Thursday spoke of the growth of India's chemical and petrochemical industry and set out his state's industrial development plans at the inaugural session of India Chem 2026 at the Bombay Exhibition Centre.

India's chemical, petroleum and petrochemical market, worth $120 billion in 2014, is now more than twice that size, Yadav said, a measure of the sector's growth over the past decade. The industry drew foreign direct investment of Rs 1 lakh crore between 2014 and 2026, he added.

On Madhya Pradesh's investment prospects, the chief minister said proposals worth about Rs 12 lakh crore that came in after the state's Global Investors Summit were now moving towards implementation.

The main announcement was a plan to develop Bina as a new petrochemical hub. Yadav said Prime Minister Narendra Modi had laid the foundation stone for a downstream petrochemical unit there.

> **"The chemical and petrochemical sector is creating equal opportunities for progress across agriculture, healthcare, energy and manufacturing."**
> — **Mohan Yadav,** Madhya Pradesh CM

The planned plant is expected to turn out more than 2.2 million tonnes of petrochemical products a year. These will serve as raw material for industries including plastics, packaging, pharmaceuticals, textiles and automobiles. The project is also expected to create jobs for young people in the state.

The chemical and petrochemical industry, Yadav said, offered openings in agriculture, healthcare, energy and manufacturing. He also pointed to Madhya Pradesh's work on supporting industrial infrastructure, including modern plastic parks over 121 acres at Tamod in Raisen and 93 acres at Bilowa in Gwalior.

The chief minister commended Union Minister J.P. Nadda and FICCI for backing India Chem 2026, calling it an important platform for international experts, industrialists and policymakers.



Bina petrochemical project

WHERE	Bina, Madhya Pradesh
OUTPUT	Over 2.2 million tonnes a year
FOR	Plastics, packaging, pharma, textiles, automobiles
GAIN	Industrial growth and jobs

Singapore Airlines told to pay Rs 50K over no food for infant on 15-hr flight

CHANDIGARH

The Punjab State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission has ordered Singapore Airlines to pay Rs 50,000 as compensation and litigation costs to a passenger whose family was not given proper food, including milk for his 11-month-old daughter, on a 15-hour flight from Delhi to Melbourne.

An Additional Bench of Judicial Member H.P.S. Mahal and Member Kiran Sibal partly allowed the airline's appeal against a January 2023 order of the District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, Ropar. That order had directed the airline and a travel agency, Bipasha Aviation, to refund Rs 1.25 lakh paid for the air tickets, with interest, and to pay Rs 25,000 as compensation and Rs 11,000 towards litigation expenses.

Jaspreet Singh, who filed the complaint, had bought three tickets through the travel agency for his wife, minor daughter and mother-in-law to fly from Delhi to Melbourne on March 4, 2020. The complaint said the passengers were not given proper food during the journey of about 15-16 hours.

Singh alleged that when his family asked the airline staff about meals, they were told their food had not been confirmed and that passengers with confirmed meal bookings would be served first.

He also alleged that his wife and mother-in-law finally had to share one meal, and his 11-month-old daughter was not given even milk.Singh complained to the airline by email on March 9, 2020. The airline first promised to look into the matter but later said no vegetarian or special meals had been requested when the tickets were booked.

In its appeal against the District Commission's order, the airline argued that the complainant had not asked for any specific meals in advance and that food had been served as per the menu. It also contended that there was no deficiency in service that would justify refunding the fare.



THE RULING

Singapore Airlines to pay Rs 50,000

- Appeal partly allowed by the Punjab State Commission
- The Ropar district order: a Rs 1.25 lakh refund, Rs 25,000 compensation, Rs 11,000 costs

S. Korea raises cybersecurity alert over critical PHP flaw

SEOUL

South Korea's science ministry on Thursday raised the country's cyber crisis alert by one level, joining a worldwide effort to deal with two critical security flaws in PHP, a programming language that runs most of the internet.

From noon, the alert stood at "caution", the second lowest of its four tiers, and companies and government agencies were asked to install updates to patch their systems safely, the ministry said.

"The flaw found in PHP could affect a number of websites and requires an urgent response as exploit codes have already been made publicly available," Science Minister Bae Kyung-hoon said in a release.

The move came a day after government agencies and companies around the world took websites offline because of the vulnerabilities, which were found with the help of artificial intelligence (AI). Cybersecurity firm Wiz, one of the companies whose researchers found the flaws, called them the "most severe" vulnerabilities ever detected by AI.

PHP, short for Hypertext Preprocessor, runs a huge number of platforms, among them online shopping malls, Wikipedia and WordPress, the open-source content management service behind many websites, including blogs.

The flaw disclosed on Wednesday could let attackers take control of affected web servers without authentication and mount major cyberattacks such as data leaks, system shutdowns and website defacement, the science ministry said.

The National Security Office (NSO) at the presidential office then held an emergency meeting to coordinate the government's response to PHP-related cyber threats, the presidential office said.

The meeting looked at how the public, private and defence sectors use PHP and how each is responding, and the officials present pledged to share information and coordinate their responses.



India showcases food excellence at SIAL Paris 2026

NEW DELHI

India presented its small-farmer-led agricultural revolution, built on diversity, resilience, sustainability and greater self-sufficiency, at the SIAL Paris 2026 exhibition. Those themes shaped the India pavilion, which was simply titled "Feeding Our Tomorrow", according to an article.

Jawed Ashraf, Chairman of the India Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO), led India's participation as Partner Country at the exhibition, held at Paris Nord Villepinte from October 17 to 21, 2026.

Ashraf spoke of a move to more sustainable, climate-resilient farming that uses fewer chemicals and offers better traceability. Drones, sensors, artificial intelligence (AI) and the Internet of Things (IoT) help farmers use water, fertilisers and crop protection more efficiently, an increasingly valuable edge as extreme weather strains food production.

India already produces grains, fruit, vegetables, dairy, meat and seafood for about a sixth of humanity, and Ashraf sees that capacity, combined with more sustainable methods, as part of the answer.

With the UN marking 2026 as the International Year of the Woman Farmer, Ashraf used the occasion to underline the part women play in India's agricultural transformation.

One such woman made the trip to Paris. Priyanka Rhushikesh Mohite, from Nashik in Maharashtra, is a certified agricultural drone pilot whose drone sprays nano fertilisers and sows seeds. Watering an acre used to take a whole day and about 200 litres of water. With the drone, she says, it takes seven to eight minutes and 10 litres, according to the report.



Watering an acre

BEFORE	WITH A DRONE
200 litres of water and a full day	10 litres and seven to eight minutes

INDIA POST GROWTH

India Post revenue tops ₹4,000 cr for second straight quarter



NEW DELHI

For the first time, the Department of Posts has earned more than Rs 4,000 crore in revenue in two quarters running, with parcels, insurance and international business powering its September-quarter earnings, Communications Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said on Thursday.

India Post's revenue for the quarter ended September 30, 2026 was Rs 4,202 crore, 25 per cent more than the Rs 3,355 crore it earned in the same quarter a year ago. It was also up nearly 5 per cent on the previous quarter, building on the momentum of April-June.

Parcels grew fastest, rising 71 per cent year-on-year. Postal Life Insurance and Rural Postal Life Insurance together grew 44 per cent, and international business was up 38 per cent on the same period last year.

The quarter took India Post's revenue for the first half of the financial year to about Rs 8,213 crore, up nearly 24 per cent from Rs 6,636 crore in April-September of the previous financial year.

Scindia said the department had also become more efficient.

Its expenditure coverage ratio, excluding pension liabilities, rose to 62 per cent in the September quarter from 54 per cent a year earlier, meaning revenue now covers a bigger share of its spending.

"We have improved our expenditure coverage ratio by almost 8 per cent this year," Scindia said.

After reviewing all 23 postal circles, the minister said the Bihar, West Bengal and North East circles had done well and beaten expectations on key business measures.

Growth, September quarter

- **71%** parcel business
- **44%** Postal Life and Rural Postal Life Insurance
- **38%** international business

TWO ANTHEMS, ONE PASSION: A LIFETIME OF FOOTBALL MEMORIES



DR. VIJAY GARG

Football is much more than a game of ninety minutes. It is an emotion, a shared language and a collection of memories that can remain alive for an entire lifetime. A football stadium may witness thousands of matches, but some evenings become unforgettable because they bring together history, rivalry, national pride and the simple human love of sport.

There is something deeply moving about standing in a stadium as two national teams prepare to face each other. The players line up, the crowd becomes silent, and the first national



anthem begins. Thousands of voices rise together. Then comes the second anthem. For a few moments, the stadium seems to hold two different identities, two histories and two journeys under one roof.

Yet when the match begins, the differences become part of a larger celebration. The players may wear different colours and represent different countries, but they share the same field, the same rules and the same passion for football.

A football stadium is therefore not merely a sporting venue. It is a living museum of memories. The seats remember generations of supporters. The grass has witnessed dramatic goals, unexpected victories, heartbreaking defeats and moments of extraordinary courage. A child attending a match with a parent may remember that evening decades later, long after the score has been forgotten.

For supporters, football is often connected with family traditions. Fathers take their children to matches; grandparents tell stories about legendary players; friends gather to watch important games together. Jerseys are preserved, tickets become souvenirs and old photographs become treasured possessions. A particular goal, a dramatic penalty or a last-minute victory can become a family story repeated for years.

The beauty of football also lies in its unpredictability. No matter how strong a team appears on paper, the final result is decided on the field. A goalkeeper can become a hero in a few seconds. A young substitute can change the entire match. A single pass can create a goal, while a single mistake can alter history.

But football memories are not always about winning. Sometimes the most meaningful memories come from defeat. A supporter may remember the tears after a lost final, the silence after a missed penalty or the courage of players who continued fighting until the final whistle. Such moments teach an important lesson: sport is not only about victory; it is also about dignity, resilience and accepting disappointment.

The two national anthems before a match symbolize another important truth. Football can create healthy rivalry without destroying mutual respect. Opposing supporters may passionately support their own teams, but they can still appreciate a brilliant goal, a spectacular save or an act of sportsmanship by the opposition.

In an increasingly divided world, sport can provide moments of connection. For ninety minutes, people who speak different languages and come from different backgrounds can share the same excitement. They celebrate together, worry together and experience the unpredictable drama of the game together.

Technology has changed the way football is experienced. Matches can now be watched on mobile phones, computers and giant screens. Replays can be seen instantly, statistics are available within seconds and social media allows supporters from different continents to discuss every moment. Yet watching a match inside a stadium remains unique.

> **"One stadium may host many matches, two anthems may represent different nations, but the memories created by football can belong to everyone. That is the timeless magic of the beautiful game."**
>
> **— Dr. Vijay Garg**

The sound of thousands of supporters cannot be completely reproduced on a screen. The collective gasp before a penalty, the explosion of joy after a goal and the silence following a defeat create an atmosphere that becomes part of personal memory.

Perhaps that is why a great football match can stay with us for a lifetime. We may forget the exact date or even the final score, but we remember where we were, who stood beside us, what we felt and how the stadium sounded.

Two anthems represent two nations. One football connects them. Between those two moments of music and the final whistle lies a story of competition, courage, emotion and human connection.

Ultimately, football reminds us that rivalry does not have to mean hatred and difference does not have to prevent unity. Two teams can compete fiercely while sharing one beautiful game. Two anthems can echo across the same stadium while thousands of people celebrate a common passion.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Regulating AI in classrooms

The rapid integration of generative artificial intelligence in schools raises urgent concerns regarding basic critical thinking. While AI tools offer unprecedented access to information, overreliance threatens student problem-solving skills and original thought. Educational boards must establish clear guidelines prioritizing conceptual understanding over automated answers. Technology should assist learning, not replace human effort. We must safeguard real intellect before passive consumption permanently replaces active learning in our schools.

– Sudhakar

Prioritize sustainable public transit

The escalating urban traffic congestion and rising air pollution demand an immediate shift toward robust public transit. Expanding electric bus fleets and improving last-mile metro connectivity are no longer luxury projects but basic necessities. Municipal authorities must prioritize dedicated bus corridors and safe pedestrian walkways over endless road widening. Sustainable urban mobility will reduce carbon emissions, save commuting time, and significantly improve the daily quality of life for millions.

– Ranjith

DEPENDENCY ON FOREIGN TECHNOLOGY AND NEW THREATS TO NATIONAL SECURITY



COLUMN

Mahendra Tiwari

The fierce war between Russia and Ukraine is no longer limited to the use of conventional weapons. In this era of modern warfare, information and communication technology has emerged as the most powerful weapon. Satellite-based communications have become crucial for the success of any military operation. In this context, a new and serious controversy has recently arisen, sparking diplomatic and strategic tensions internationally. Ukraine's most important satellite communications system was suddenly disrupted in the midst of its military operations. This incident occurred while Ukraine was facing Russian missile attacks. The sudden disruption of communications resulted in heavy losses for the Ukrainian army and forced the suspension of several crucial defence operations. This unexpected disruption deeply concerned the Ukrainian leadership and exposed the dangers of technological dependence on the battlefield to the entire world.

> *Unless a country is self-reliant in its defence communication technology, its sovereignty and military independence will always be dependent on the political decisions of another country.*

The primary cause of this entire crisis was an unannounced technical blockade of military communications equipment. Ukrainian military officials and defence experts discovered that a speed limit had suddenly been imposed on the high-end communications equipment they used. If any unmanned reconnaissance aircraft or military equipment exceeded 160 kilometres per hour, satellite contact was automatically lost. According to



some military reports, this serious problem was observed even at speeds of 110 kilometres per hour. Advanced unmanned aircraft used in modern warfare fly at very high speeds and rely on constant satellite contact to gather accurate information or engage targets.

These unmanned aircraft have become crucial in the current war. These aircraft not only perform reconnaissance of enemy positions but are also capable of pinpointing and dropping munitions. Such aircraft must constantly receive instructions from remote operators, which are possible only through extremely high-speed satellite communications networks. When these aircraft are flying at very high speeds, maintaining satellite contact with constantly changing geographical coordinates is a complex technical process. Losing contact after crossing the speed limit means these aircraft suddenly become blind, unable to transmit visuals or receive instructions from their operators. Disoriented, these expensive and advanced aircraft either crash or are destroyed by enemy radar. This technical blockade, implemented without any prior warning, rendered many advanced Ukrainian military aircraft useless before reaching their targets.

Following this serious incident, the Ukrainian President publicly alleged that their communications services were being deliberately disrupted in the war zone. He believed that such technical disruptions amid Russian attacks could be a conspiracy to weaken Ukrainian security. Following these serious allegations, Elon Musk, head of the company that built this satellite communication system, was forced to come forward and offer clarification. He clarified the situation, explaining the difference between a civilian-use system and a military-use system. He stated unequivocally that the US government has full ownership and control of the specific military communications system being used by the Ukrainian military. According to him, the sole authority to control, slow down, or impose any restrictions on the network rests with the US Department of Defence and the country's Supreme Commander, President Donald Trump.

Following this revelation, this technical issue has become a full-blown geopolitical controversy. International affairs analysts and diplomatic experts have begun linking this incident to the recent political tensions between the US and Ukraine. It is believed that this move was not merely a technical glitch but a tool to exert diplomatic pressure. Ukraine has been carrying out frequent attacks on Russian energy installations for some time, which has the potential to impact the global energy market. Political experts believe that the US administration was pressuring Ukraine to stop or limit these attacks. When diplomatic negotiations failed, attempts were made to convey messages by controlling communications technology that directly impacted the battlefield. This is a clear example of how superpowers can influence the course and outcome of war through technological control, even without directly engaging in combat.

This incident has deeply concerned not only Ukraine but also other European countries and allies. Several member states of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization have reacted strongly. They argue that if the technological communication infrastructure, vital to the battlefield, is used to exert political pressure, it poses an unprecedented threat to the security of all allies. Defence experts in countries like Poland have publicly expressed concern that the situation that has befallen Ukraine today could happen to any other country tomorrow. Complete dependence on the technology of a foreign superpower in defence matters poses a significant risk to national security.

This entire incident has sparked a new debate about national sovereignty in diplomatic circles. When a country relies on another country's technology for its defence equipment, can it truly make independent decisions? The situation in Ukraine provides an answer to this question. Even as their soldiers fight valiantly on the ground, control of their weapons and communications is in the hands of an American president sitting miles away. Diplomatic experts believe that using technology as a weapon in this way marks the beginning of a dangerous trend. If defence aid or technical support is withdrawn or limited in the middle of a war due to political differences, it could directly lead to that country's defeat.

Ultimately, this entire episode of the communication disruption in Ukraine establishes that future wars will not be fought solely through geographical boundaries and artillery. In today's world, invisible technological networks and satellite communications have become the most decisive fronts of war. Whoever possesses technological dominance can determine the true outcome of a war. With the US government and president in control of this military communication system, it becomes clear that countries providing technology can at any time suspend or alter its use to suit their own convenience and political advantage. Ukraine's experience is a bitter lesson for all countries around the world. This incident proves that technological dependence also implies political dependence.

PUNJAB'S DRUG MENACE: WHEN THE UNIFORM BECOMES A SYMBOL OF TRAGEDY



LALIT GARGG

Punjab's soil was once synonymous with valour, courage, hard work, enterprise and indomitable spirit. Its young men laid down their lives defending the nation's borders, while its farmers toiled tirelessly to fill the country's granaries. Yet, today, the very identity of Punjab is increasingly being associated with the flourishing drug trade, the ruin of its youth and the growing influence of drug mafias. This is not merely a social tragedy confined to one state; it is a grave test of national security, administrative integrity and political will. In a state where the hands of young people once wielded swords, held ploughs and proudly carried the national flag, drugs have rendered countless hands helpless and plunged innumerable families into despair.

The irony is deeply disturbing: when those entrusted with curbing the drug trade – the police themselves – come under suspicion following reports of heroin worth crores of rupees being recovered from a police officer's residence, it sets alarm bells ringing across the entire system. The reported recovery of heroin worth ₹40 crore from the house of a police constable in Punjab points towards a disturbing rot within the system. This is not merely a criminal case; it raises serious questions about an establishment in which those appointed to prevent crime may themselves come under the shadow of suspicion. When the fence begins to devour the field it is meant to protect, who will safeguard the crop?

If elements within the very police force responsible for apprehending drug traffickers become entangled in such allegations, the erosion of public trust is inevitable. An impartial investigation, identification of those responsible and stringent legal action are therefore indispensable. No individual can be declared guilty merely on the basis of an allegation; equally, no one who exploits the police uniform to commit a crime should be allowed to escape the reach of the law.

The drug trade in Punjab has now spread its tentacles into neighbourhoods, villages and small towns. Once regarded as a problem largely confined to border areas or urban youth, drug abuse has become a far more pervasive crisis, aggravated by the availability of synthetic drugs and various other narcotic substances. A section of the younger generation is losing its health, education, employment prospects and future to addiction. In some homes, mothers are left mourning the loss of their children; in others, elderly fathers lose the support they had hoped to rely upon in their twilight years. Elsewhere, a family's sole breadwinner, trapped in addiction, becomes dependent upon the very relatives who once depended on him. What could be more heartbreaking than the lamp meant to illuminate a home becoming the source of its darkness? Drug addiction does not destroy an individual alone; it corrodes the entire family and hollows out the social fabric from within.

The gravity of this crisis is also reflected in government figures and police operations. According to the available details, over a ten-month period, Punjab Police arrested 10,524 alleged drug traffickers, including 153 major operators. During this period, 790 kilograms of heroin, 860 kilograms of opium and other narcotic substances were seized, along with drug money worth more than ₹13 crore. Assets valued at over ₹208 crore, reportedly linked to the drug trade, were also subjected to enforcement action. These figures certainly indicate the scale of enforcement, but they simultaneously raise a fundamental question: how are such enormous quantities of narcotics continuing to enter the state? If the availability of drugs and the grip of addiction remain undiminished despite so many arrests and seizures, the roots of the



problem are clearly deep and entrenched. To avoid a situation in which the disease worsens even as the medicine is administered, the focus must extend beyond arrest statistics to a thorough investigation of supply chains, financial networks and possible political patronage.

Punjab's approximately 553-kilometre-long border with Pakistan connects this challenge directly with national security. The threat of narcotics and weapons being smuggled across the border through drones has made border management increasingly complex. Reports indicating that 183 drones had been seized along Punjab's border so far in 2026 underscore the seriousness of this threat. It is imperative to dismantle trafficking networks operating from across the border, but it would be a grave mistake to place the entire responsibility on external forces while turning a blind eye to vulnerabilities within the state. If local traffickers, organised criminal syndicates and corrupt elements within the system are working in collusion, stringent border surveillance must be accompanied by equally uncompromising action within Punjab. Only an impartial investigation capable of separating fact from fiction can establish who is merely a pawn, who is a key player and who is orchestrating the entire operation from behind the scenes.

The Aam Aadmi Party government in Punjab has made several claims regarding its campaign against drugs and its action against traffickers. The crucial question, however, is whether these claims have translated into the substantive change the people of Punjab expected. Promising a decisive war against drugs before assuming power is one thing; carrying that battle through to tangible results requires political will, administrative integrity and sustained accountability. If drugs remain readily available, young people continue to fall prey to addiction and trafficking networks repeatedly resurface, it is only natural to question the government's strategy and its implementation. Raids, arrests and announcements alone cannot fulfil the dream of a drug-free Punjab. The true measure of the government's success must be the extent to which the supply of narcotics has declined, the number of young people who have recovered through treatment and returned to normal life, and the effectiveness of action taken against major traffickers and those who may be shielding them.

The fight against drugs must combine police reforms, modern technology, border security and financial investigations with an equally strong commitment to de-addiction centres, psychological counselling, employment opportunities and rehabilitation. Young people suffering from addiction cannot simply be dismissed as criminals; they must be offered treatment, support and a dignified opportunity to rebuild their lives. Public participation in villages, awareness campaigns in schools and colleges, and the active involvement of families can transform this campaign into a mass movement. At the same time, allegations of complicity or protection within the police and political establishment must be investigated impartially at every level.

Freeing Punjab from the grip of drugs is not merely the responsibility of the government; it is a collective obligation of society. Nevertheless, the foremost responsibility for leadership and accountability rests with the government. When law enforcers themselves begin to fall under a cloud of suspicion, and the recovery of heroin worth crores raises troubling questions about the credibility of the system, postponing introspection becomes an act of self-destruction. The time has come to move beyond merely going through the motions and deliver decisive results. Punjab needs neither hollow slogans nor publicity-driven campaigns; it needs uncompromising action, transparent investigations and accountable governance. To uproot the drug mafia, the walls of political patronage must be broken down, and the full force of the law must reach every offender, irrespective of position or influence.

> **"The devastating drug menace will continue to destroy not only Punjab's youthful strength but also the social fabric and national security of the entire country."**
>
> **– Lalit Gargg**

ROOTED IN TOMORROW: WHY TREE PLANTING REMAINS ESSENTIAL

In an era dominated by rapid technological breakthroughs, artificial intelligence, and unprecedented urban expansion, humanity frequently looks toward high-tech solutions to address its most daunting crises. Yet, as heat waves shatter temperature records, extreme weather events destabilize economies, and biodiversity loss threatens delicate global ecosystems, the single most powerful tool for ecological restoration remains remarkably straightforward and low-tech: planting trees. The act of placing a seedling into the soil is far more than a sentimental gesture or a pleasant civic exercise. It is an urgent, non-negotiable imperative for long-term ecological survival, urban resilience, and human health.

To understand the pressing need for aggressive afforestation and reforestation, one must first confront the scale of global forest loss. Over the past century, vast tracts of ancient timber, tropical rainforests, and temperate woodlands have been cleared to make way for agriculture, industrial development, and sprawling infrastructure. When these forest canopies disappear, the planet loses its natural lungs. Forests act as massive carbon sinks, absorbing billions of tons of carbon dioxide annually. As these ecosystems are destroyed or degraded, stored carbon is released back into the atmosphere, accelerating the greenhouse effect and amplifying the intensity of global climate change.

While cutting emissions at the source remains critical, mitigation efforts alone are no longer sufficient. We must actively sequester existing atmospheric carbon, and native woodland ecosystems perform this function at a scale and efficiency that human engineering cannot match. A mature tree continuously absorbs carbon dioxide while generating oxygen, filtering air pollutants, and cooling the immediate atmosphere through evapotranspiration. Scaled across millions of acres, widespread tree planting offers a natural, highly effective buffer against warming global temperatures.

Beyond global climate regulation, tree planting is an indispensable tool for local environmental health. Soil degradation, desertification, and erosion are growing global crises that directly threaten food security and freshwater access. Deep root networks hold topsoil in place, preventing nutrient runoff and protecting agricultural land from erosion caused by heavy rains and high winds. Furthermore, forest ecosystems play a foundational role in the hydrological cycle. Trees act as giant natural sponges, intercepting rainfall, slowing surface runoff, and encouraging water to percolate into underground aquifers. In regions prone to devastating floods or severe droughts, restored forests stabilize water tables and buffer communities against severe environmental disruptions.

In modern cities, where asphalt and concrete absorb and radiate heat, tree planting is a matter of public health and urban survival. Urban areas frequently experience the "heat island effect," where localized temperatures spike significantly higher than surrounding rural landscapes. This elevation in temperature worsens air quality, increases energy consumption for air conditioning, and exacerbates respiratory and cardiovascular illnesses among vulnerable populations. Strategic urban forestry — planting trees along streets, in public parks, and across residential neighborhoods — dramatically lowers ambient urban temperatures. Urban tree canopies filter fine particulate matter, trap harmful pollutants like nitrogen dioxide and ozone, and diminish noise pollution, creating livable, healthy municipal environments.

The human benefits of tree canopy expansion extend far beyond physical health. Numerous psychological and medical studies demonstrate that regular access to green spaces reduces stress, lowers blood pressure, enhances



mental clarity, and fosters stronger community bonds. Urban tree planting projects offer civic spaces where diverse populations gather, encouraging active lifestyles and social cohesion. When communities come together to plant and nurture trees in local neighborhoods, they cultivate shared responsibility and civic pride.

However, the modern call to plant trees must be accompanied by ecological mindfulness. Mass tree-planting initiatives cannot simply be treated as a numerical quota or an easy corporate offset. History shows that planting monocultures of non-native species can impair ecosystems, dry up water supplies, and heighten susceptibility to pests and wildfire. Effective afforestation requires a commitment to planting the right trees in the right places for the right reasons. Priority must be given to diverse, native tree species that support local fauna, restore natural habitats, and enhance regional biodiversity. Furthermore, long-term care and stewardship are essential; a newly planted sapling requires protection and watering until its roots take firm hold.

Ultimately, planting trees is a profound commitment to future generations. The classic proverb reminds us that a society grows great when old men plant trees in whose shade they shall never sit. In our fast-paced, present-focused world, afforestation forces us to think beyond immediate quarterly metrics and short-term political cycles. It is a long-term investment in clean air, stable water systems, fertile soil, and a temperate climate for generations yet unborn.

The ecological crises of our time require bold, collective action from governments, businesses, and individuals alike. Policy makers must protect existing old-growth forests while funding large-scale urban and rural planting programs. Private sector organizations must incorporate genuine ecological restoration into their practices rather than relying on superficial greenwashing. And citizens must engage actively in local planting drives, converting idle spaces into thriving green habitats.

The path toward a sustainable future is not exclusively paved with futuristic technologies or complex policy frameworks. Part of the solution lies right beneath our feet.

By committing to comprehensive, ecologically responsible tree planting today, we can restore balance to our ecosystems, safeguard human health, and ensure that our planet remains a vibrant, livable home for centuries to come.

— VIDHYASHREE J.

TINY CREATURES, MIGHTY FARMERS: THE IMPORTANCE OF WORMS AND INSECTS IN AGRICULTURE



Agriculture is often associated with farmers, fertile soil, seeds, irrigation and machinery. However, beneath the soil and among the leaves, countless tiny creatures perform essential tasks that sustain agricultural productivity. Earthworms, bees, butterflies, beetles and other insects play a significant role in maintaining soil fertility, pollinating crops, controlling pests and preserving ecological balance. Though often overlooked, these organisms are among the most valuable allies of farmers.

Earthworms are essential for maintaining healthy soil. As they burrow through the earth, they create channels that improve aeration, help rainwater penetrate the soil and allow plant roots to grow more effectively. They feed on decaying leaves and organic matter, breaking them down and releasing nutrients that support plant growth. Earthworm castings contribute to soil fertility, while their movement improves soil structure and encourages beneficial microbial activity. Farmers can encourage earthworm populations by using compost, farmyard manure and suitable crop residues. Reducing excessive tillage and avoiding indiscriminate chemical use can also help protect these valuable organisms.

Many insects, particularly bees, butterflies, moths and hoverflies, contribute to pollination. By transferring pollen between flowers, they help plants produce fruits and seeds. Crops such as cucumbers, pumpkins, gourds, melons and several fruit varieties benefit significantly from insect pollination. In India, where agriculture supports millions of livelihoods, protecting pollinators is important for crop production and biodiversity. Farmers can attract these insects by maintaining flowering plants along field boundaries, preserving natural vegetation and avoiding unnecessary pesticide spraying during flowering.

Not all insects damage crops. Ladybird beetles feed on aphids, while lacewing larvae and certain parasitic wasps help control harmful pests. These beneficial organisms reduce pest populations naturally and can lower farmers' dependence on chemical pesticides.

Excessive pesticide use, however, can destroy beneficial insects alongside harmful ones. This may disrupt the natural balance and sometimes allow pests to multiply rapidly. Integrated pest management, which combines field monitoring, biological control, crop rotation and carefully targeted pesticide applications, offers a more balanced approach to protecting crops.

Earthworms, termites, beetles and other decomposers help break down dead vegetation and organic residues. Working alongside microorganisms, they return nutrients to the soil and support the natural cycle of plant growth. Instead of burning crop residues, farmers can consider composting and mulching where appropriate. These practices can improve soil organic matter, conserve moisture and provide suitable conditions for soil organisms.

Despite their importance, earthworms and beneficial insects face threats from excessive pesticide use, habitat destruction, intensive tillage, pollution and climate change. Their decline can weaken soil health, reduce pollination and make pest management more difficult.

Farmers also face economic pressures and cannot be expected to adopt sustainable practices without adequate support. Agricultural institutions and governments should provide training, accessible advice and affordable alternatives to harmful farming practices.

Simple measures can make a difference. Applying organic manure, reducing unnecessary soil disturbance, maintaining flowering plants and monitoring pests before spraying can help protect beneficial organisms. Schools and agricultural colleges should also educate communities about the importance of distinguishing harmful pests from useful insects.

> *"The future of farming depends not only on the hands that cultivate the land but also on the tiny creatures that keep it alive."*
>
> **AJITH KIRAN**

The contribution of worms and insects reminds us that agriculture depends on more than machinery and chemical inputs. A productive farm is a living ecosystem in which every organism has a role. Earthworms may remain hidden beneath our feet, while pollinators move quietly among flowers, but their collective contribution is immense. Protecting these natural allies is essential for healthier soil, resilient crops and sustainable food production. By recognising their importance and adopting responsible farming practices, we can safeguard agricultural productivity for future generations.

— AJITH KIRAN

BIRYANI: A FLAVOURFUL JOURNEY THROUGH INDIA'S CULINARY HERITAGE

Biryani is one of India's most beloved dishes, celebrated for its rich aroma, distinctive taste and remarkable cultural significance. From the bustling streets of Hyderabad to the traditional kitchens of Lucknow and the coastal regions of Kerala, biryani has captured the hearts of millions. More than a combination of rice, spices, meat or vegetables, it represents India's culinary diversity, hospitality and shared love for good food. Its popularity transcends age, religion, language and social background, making it a dish that brings people together.

The history of biryani reflects centuries of cultural exchange and culinary evolution. Although its origins are often associated with Persian influences and the royal kitchens of the Indian subcontinent, the dish gradually developed distinct regional identities. Over generations, cooks adapted recipes according to local ingredients, traditions and preferences. Consequently, biryani became not a single standard preparation but a collection of regional specialities, each with its own character and flavour.

Hyderabadi biryani is renowned for its bold spices and distinctive dum-cooking technique, which allows ingredients to cook together in a sealed vessel. Lucknowi biryani is appreciated for its delicate fragrance and subtle seasoning, while Kolkata biryani is famous for its characteristic inclusion of potatoes. Kerala's Malabar biryani reflects the culinary traditions of the region's coastal communities. These variations demonstrate how food preserves cultural identity while adapting to changing tastes.

The secret of a delicious biryani lies in the careful



balance of its ingredients. Fragrant rice, aromatic spices, fried onions, mint, coriander and other seasonings contribute to its distinctive flavour. The preparation requires patience, precision and experience. Rice must retain its texture, spices should complement rather than overpower one another, and the ingredients must be cooked to perfection. The traditional dum method is particularly valued because it allows flavours and aromas to develop gradually. In an age dominated by convenience and fast food, biryani reminds us that some culinary experiences require time and craftsmanship.

Beyond its taste, biryani holds an important place in Indian social life. Weddings, festivals, family gatherings and celebrations frequently feature this popular dish. Preparing and sharing a large pot of biryani symbolises generosity and hospitality. For many families, its aroma evokes childhood memories, festive occasions and meals enjoyed with loved ones. Such associations demonstrate that food is not merely a source of nourishment but also a powerful connection to our memories and traditions.

However, biryani's popularity also brings certain concerns. Commercial establishments sometimes prioritise quantity over quality, while inadequate hygiene and improper food storage can compromise safety. Consumers should choose restaurants that maintain cleanliness and use fresh ingredients. Nutritional awareness is equally important. Depending on the preparation, biryani may contain considerable amounts of oil, salt and calories. Enjoying it in moderate portions as part of a balanced diet allows people to appreciate its flavour responsibly.

Modern food delivery services and social media have expanded biryani's reach, introducing regional varieties to new audiences. Nevertheless, there is a risk that traditional recipes may lose their individuality as commercial establishments increasingly favour standardised preparations. Supporting local restaurants and traditional cooks can help preserve regional culinary knowledge. Younger generations should also be encouraged to learn the stories, ingredients and techniques behind different varieties of biryani.

> **"In a diverse country like India, biryani remains a delicious reminder that food can build connections where differences might otherwise divide us."**
>
> **— J. JANANI**

Ultimately, biryani represents far more than a popular meal. It reflects India's history, regional diversity, culinary creativity and spirit of togetherness. Its enduring appeal lies in its ability to unite tradition with innovation and individual pleasure with shared celebration. Every fragrant serving carries a story of cultural exchange, craftsmanship and hospitality. By appreciating its regional differences and preserving its culinary heritage, we can ensure that biryani continues to delight future generations.

— J. JANANI

EMBRACING THE HEALING POWER OF SUNLIGHT

For the better part of a century, modern society has waged a quiet, relentless war against the sun. We have slathered ourselves in high-SPF armor before stepping out to fetch the mail, cocooned ourselves in climate-controlled, windowless offices, and traded the gold of the afternoon for the blue glow of screens. Driven by legitimate health warnings regarding skin cancer and premature aging, public health messaging swung hard from prudent caution to outright sun phobia. We learned to fear the very star that birthed us, treating daylight like an environmental hazard rather than an essential nutrient.

It is time for a cultural and scientific reckoning. While protecting our skin from the destructive burns of ultraviolet overexposure remains sensible, our wholesale retreat indoors has triggered a parallel public health crisis. Sunlight is not merely a source of warmth or a backdrop for vacation photographs; it is a foundational biological requirement. Evolution did not design human beings to live under artificial flickering fluorescents and behind UV-filtered window glass. By hiding from the sun, we are starving our bodies and minds of a primal stimulus required for optimal health, vitality, and longevity.

To understand why sunlight matters, we must first look backward through the lens of human evolution. For millions of years, human biology was calibrated entirely to the rhythms of the natural solar cycle. The rising sun was the master switch that turned on our physiology, flooding the brain with cortisol and serotonin to awaken alertness, sharpen focus, and set the internal biological clock. As the sun traversed the sky, shifting light frequencies cued our metabolic and digestive processes. When dusk fell, the fading light triggered melatonin production, preparing the body for deep, restorative rest.

Today, this ancient synchronization has broken down. The master conductor of our biological clock — a cluster of neurons in the hypothalamus called the suprachiasmatic nucleus — is starved of the high-intensity full-spectrum light it expects during the morning hours. Instead, we wake up in dark bedrooms, flip on artificial white lights, stare into smartphones, and spend our days under dim indoor bulbs. This circadian dissonance has wreaked havoc on modern sleep architecture. Chronic insomnia, daytime fatigue, and metabolic dysfunction are skyrocketing, partly because our internal clocks are chronically confused, untethered from the natural anchor of the solar day.

Beyond the regulation of sleep, sunlight serves as an unmatched chemical pharmacy within the human body. Take, for instance, the synthesis of Vitamin D — often called the sunshine vitamin, though it acts more like a potent steroid hormone. When UVB photons strike bare skin, cholesterol in the epidermis is converted into cholecalciferol. This hormone influences over a thousand genes, governing everything from bone density and muscular strength to immune defense and cellular repair.

While Vitamin D supplements are widely available on pharmacy shelves, the human body processes the synthesized product of natural sunlight exposure far more holistically. Furthermore, reducing sunlight exposure merely to its ability to produce Vitamin D misses a vast array of other physiological marvels. Recent dermatological and cardiovascular research has revealed that UVA radiation triggers the release of nitric oxide from stores in the skin into the bloodstream. Nitric oxide acts as a natural vasodilator, relaxing blood vessel walls and lowering blood pressure. In epidemiological studies, individuals who receive regular, moderate sun exposure actually exhibit lower rates of cardiovascular disease and all-cause mortality, independent of their Vitamin D levels. The sun, it turns out, protects our hearts in ways we are only beginning to comprehend.



The psychological benefits of sunlight are equally profound. Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is widely recognized as a form of depression linked to shortened winter days and a lack of bright light. But even outside the depths of winter, sunlight is a premier mood regulator. Sunlight exposure stimulates the brain to produce higher levels of serotonin, the neurotransmitter responsible for feelings of calm, happiness, and emotional stability. Conversely, a lack of sunlight leaves us chemically vulnerable to anxiety, lethargy, and clinical depression. There is a deep, visceral truth to the phrase "sunshine in one's soul": our mental health is tethered to the luminance of our environment.

Despite these overwhelming biological benefits, our built environment continues to move in the opposite direction. Modern architecture favors hermetically sealed glass skyscrapers that block beneficial wavelengths while trapping heat and artificial glare. Children spend record-low amounts of time playing outdoors, a trend closely correlated with the exploding prevalence of myopia (nearsightedness) and immune disorders. We are raising a generation of indoor creatures who view the natural world through a digital window, alienated from the elements that shaped our species.

Reclaiming our relationship with the sun does not require reckless abandon or a return to the blistering sunburns of youth. What we need is a return to evolutionary common sense: sun wisdom, not sun worship. Sensible, moderate, and gradual exposure to natural sunlight — especially in the morning and late afternoon — is one of the most powerful, cost-free health interventions available to humanity. Stepping outside for twenty minutes without sunglasses while the morning sun is low in the sky can recalibrate circadian rhythms, elevate mood, and boost daytime energy more effectively than any cup of coffee.

We are children of the sun. To treat it solely as an enemy to be avoided at all costs is to deny a fundamental part of our biological heritage.

By stepping back into the light with mindfulness and respect, we can heal our sleep, protect our hearts, brighten our minds, and reconnect with the vibrant natural world to which we rightfully belong.

— ANNA B.

Quick Read

2 killed as Dussehra procession hits high-voltage wires

JABALPUR

Two people died and five to seven others were injured when a Dussehra procession touched 11 kV power lines in Majholi in Madhya Pradesh's Jabalpur district on Wednesday night.Police said organisers were taking idols, one of them from Civil Lines, to Narela Pond for immersion when the procession went under the power lines and people were electrocuted.Majholi Police Station House Officer Purva Chaurasia said legal procedures and an investigation were underway following demands for an FIR.Police also said a junior engineer had assured organisers at a Peace Committee meeting that the power lines would be raised. Senior officials have been informed, and further details are awaited.

Delivery executive dies by suicide after alleged assault

NEW DELHI

A 24-year-old delivery executive died on October 20 after allegedly consuming poison following an assault over a torn currency note in east Delhi, police said on Thursday.The victim was allegedly attacked by two East Vinod Nagar residents on October 4 after refusing to accept a torn note. He later recorded a video recounting the incident.Police received a PCR call from the victim at 11.03 pm on October 4. An FIR was registered at Kalyanpuri police station the following day.The two accused, identified as Rakesh alias Bunti, 30, and Rampal Singh, 65, have been arrested.The victim was admitted to Lal Bahadur Shastri Hospital on October 5 after allegedly consuming a poisonous substance. Following his death, police added Section 108 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, relating to abetment of suicide, to the FIR.

6 killed, 39 injured in bus crash

RAIPUR

Six people were killed and 39 injured after a minibus travelling from Manendragarh to Kelhari crashed near Pahad Hanswahi in Chhattisgarh's Manendragarh-Chirmiri-Bharatpur (MCB) district on Thursday.
Superintendent of Police Ratna Singh confirmed the death toll had risen from the initial five to six. Police suspect brake failure caused the crash. The SP also said the minibus had more passengers on board than it was permitted to carry.
The injured were shifted to Manendragarh Hospital, where they are receiving treatment. The accident occurred within the jurisdiction of Kelhari police station.
Police are investigating the circumstances surrounding the crash, including the suspected mechanical failure and overloading.

Delhi unveils Rs 9,000 crore water projects to rejuvenate Yamuna

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta outlined major water infrastructure initiatives, expressing confidence that ongoing efforts would restore the Yamuna and improve the capital's water systems.

NEW DELHI



Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Thursday highlighted infrastructure projects worth approximately ₹9,000 crore aimed at rejuvenating the Yamuna and strengthening the capital's water systems. She described the inauguration of the projects as a significant step towards improving water infrastructure and fulfilling the government's commitment to restoring the river. Gupta said her administration had made consistent progress on Yamuna rejuvenation during its first one-and-a-half years in office.

"We can say that the way the government has started work for the rejuvenation of the River Yamuna, in one and a half years of tenure, we have continuously moved forward strongly in that direction," Gupta said. She expressed confidence that the river would become cleaner and flow uninterrupted in the coming years, adding that the government was working continuously to achieve the goal.

The Chief Minister pointed to completed projects such as the Chandrawal water project, which had been stuck for years. She said the latest investment followed infrastructure projects worth another ₹9,000 crore to ₹10,000 crore initiated last year. The funding is intended to improve Delhi's overall infrastructure, with a major focus on wastewater treatment, sewer connectivity and drinking water supply.

Gupta said the government was following a scientific roadmap to ensure sewer lines covered the entire city, connections were linked to sewage treatment plants (STPs), and treatment facilities were installed at drains. Several Delhi projects, including the Metro and Water Department initiatives, have had support from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), which she thanked. She congratulated the water minister and officials for their work.

Earlier, Union Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurated and laid foundation stones for 43 Delhi Jal Board projects worth ₹8,941 crore. The initiatives focus on cleaning the Yamuna, treating wastewater and improving drinking water infrastructure. Shah said the projects formed the backbone of the river's rejuvenation and noted that more than 40 per cent of the journey towards the goal had been covered.

Three priorities

- Sewer connectivity
- Wastewater treatment
- Drinking water supply

In focus

project funding
₹8,941 crore
Delhi Jal Board projects launched
43
of the way to a clean Yamuna, says Amit Shah
40%+

Gujarat air ambulance flies 98 missions since 2022



GANDHINAGAR

Gujarat's government-operated 24-hour air ambulance service has completed 98 missions since its launch in 2022, including 50 operations transporting human organs for transplantation, according to an official statement released on Thursday.

The service, introduced under Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel's leadership, aims to improve access to emergency healthcare by transporting critically ill patients to specialised medical facilities. Of the 98 missions completed so far, 48 involved patient transfers, while the remaining 50 were dedicated to moving vital organs for transplantation.

Deputy Chief Minister Harsh Sanghavi, who also oversees the Civil Aviation portfolio, said the service operates through the state's Civil Aviation Department and Gujarat State Aviation Infrastructure Company Limited (GUJSAIL). It provides subsidised air medical transportation and is available to citizens across India.

The service uses a dedicated Beechcraft King Air B200 aircraft, registered as VT-GUJ, which remains available around the clock. Depending on the patient's condition, urgency, distance and destination, the aircraft can carry appropriate doctors, medical personnel and equipment.

The operational process involves coordination between 108 Emergency Services, GUJSAIL's Flight Operations Department, pilots, hospitals, airport authorities and ground transportation teams. Hospitals can also directly request transfers when patients require urgent treatment elsewhere.

The service works alongside road ambulance networks and offers another option when distance, urgency or terrain make air transport the better choice. Its organ-transfer missions are particularly important because transplantation requires organs to reach recipient hospitals within limited timeframes.

The government has fixed subsidised charges at Rs 50,000 for patients from Gujarat, Rs 65,000 for patients from other states and Rs 55,000 when a hospital books the service, the statement said.

The initiative is approaching the milestone of 100 missions, highlighting the role of coordinated aviation and healthcare services in emergency response. Officials say the system is designed to connect patients with appropriate medical facilities while supporting time-sensitive transfers across the country.

98 missions

50	ORGAN TRANSFERS
48	PATIENT TRANSFERS
24 hr	ON CALL ROUND THE CLOCK

Subsidised charges

GUJARAT PATIENTS	Rs 50,000
OTHER STATES	Rs 65,000
HOSPITAL BOOKING	Rs 55,000
AIRCRAFT	Beechcraft King Air B200, VT-GUJ

Tamil Nadu gives 45 kg sandalwood free to Nagore Dargah

CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay on Thursday handed over a government order sanctioning the free supply of 45 kg of sandalwood to Nagore Dargah for its annual Kandoori festival scheduled for November 10.

The sandalwood, classified as Jajpokal II Class, will be used for the celebration of the Periya Andavar Kandoori festival, according to the government order. The initiative facilitates the religious observance at the prominent dargah in Nagore.

The order was handed over to Nagore Dargah managing trustee H. Haja Najeemudeen Sahib and other trustees at the Secretariat in Chennai on October 22.

Several ministers and public representatives attended the event, including Minister for Minorities Welfare A.M. Shahjahan, Minister for Labour Welfare and Skill Development J. Mohamed Farvas, and Minister for Forests R.V. Ranjith Kumar.

Tamil Nadu Waqf Board Chairman and Ramanathapuram Member of Parliament K. Navas Kani was also present during the handover.

The Kandoori festival is an important annual religious event associated with Nagore Dargah, which attracts devotees from different communities.

In a separate development at the Secretariat on Thursday, officers of the Tamil Nadu State Civil Service who were recently appointed to the Indian Administrative Service called on Chief Minister Vijay.



The government order for the sandalwood supply marks an administrative step ahead of the November 10 festival, with dargah trustees receiving formal confirmation of the allocation. The event was attended by representatives from the state's minority welfare, labour, forest and Waqf administration sectors.

Uttarakhand to begin fresh voter registration drive on Nov 12

DEHRADUN

Uttarakhand will begin its Special Summary Revision (SSR) of electoral rolls on November 12, with January 1, 2027, set as the qualifying date, Chief Electoral Officer B.V.R.C. Purushottam announced on Thursday.

The revision aims to facilitate voter registration for first-time electors and people seeking inclusion after their names were deleted during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR). The announcement followed a meeting between Purushottam and representatives of recognised national political parties, where officials explained the schedule and procedures for the exercise.

The draft electoral roll will be published on November 12. Voters can submit claims and objections between November 12 and December 11, while hearings will continue until December 28. The final electoral roll is scheduled for publication on January 4, 2027. Citizens who turn 18 on or before January 1 will be eligible to register.



Purushottam said his office received 100,744 applications through Form 6, used for fresh voter registration, during a special drive conducted between October 12 and 20. Officials also informed political representatives about restrictions on objections to prevent bulk misuse.

The revision

- **NOVEMBER 12** — Draft roll out; claims and objections open
- **DECEMBER 11** — Claims and objections close
- **DECEMBER 28** — Hearings end
- **JANUARY 4, 2027** — Final electoral roll

Uttarakhand's final electoral roll following the SIR was published on October 3, recording approximately 7.16 million electors. This represented a net decline of 10.1% from the 7.96 million electors recorded before the revision.

The final list contained 25,164 more names than the draft roll published on July 14. Officials recorded 129,872 additions and 104,708 deletions during the claims and objections phase.

Pilibhit voter list irregularities: EC removes two officials

LUCKNOW

The Election Commission (EC) on Thursday removed two officials from their existing assignments and ordered a detailed investigation into alleged voter list irregularities in the Sadar Assembly constituency of Uttar Pradesh's Pilibhit district. A computer operator was also dismissed, and an FIR was registered against him and others.

The action followed a preliminary inquiry into complaints by local Congress leaders alleging that more than 13,000 voters' names were replaced with those of other people after the final draft electoral roll was released in April.

According to sources, Election Registration Officer Mayank Goswami and Amaria Sub-Divisional Magistrate Hemant Chaudhary were attached to the district headquarters. A departmental inquiry was initiated against both officials, while computer operator Anil Kumar was dismissed from service.

The preliminary investigation reportedly found cases in which voters' Electoral Photo Identity Card (EPIC) numbers and serial numbers remained unchanged, but their names were different. The affected voters were allegedly unaware of the discrepancies in their electoral records.

A local Congress leader further claimed that 884 voters had been removed from the list despite continuing to reside in the constituency, while 2,600 people who allegedly did not live there had been added.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Electoral Officer Navdeep Rinwa has sought a report from District Electoral Officer and District Magistrate Alok Kumar. The commission has ordered a thorough probe into the allegations.

Separately, irregularities were reportedly detected in the electoral roll for the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Council elections scheduled for Friday. The list for the Allahabad-Jhansi Graduates' constituency allegedly contained unusual entries, including a voter's name recorded as "Ram ne Yadav ko Mara" and his father's name as "Murkh Chandra Yadav". In another entry, a voter's father was reportedly listed as "B. Com".

The developments have raised concerns about the accuracy of electoral records and the verification process used to prepare voter lists. Further details are expected after the district administration submits its report and the investigations proceed.

E-RICKSHAW POLICY DRAFT

Delhi proposes cap of 2.5 lakh e-rickshaws

NEW DELHI

The Delhi government has released a draft E-Rickshaw Policy for public consultation, proposing a cap of 2.5 lakh e-rickshaws to improve road safety, reduce traffic congestion and strengthen last-mile connectivity across the national capital.

The draft policy will remain open for suggestions and feedback for one month before the government finalises the regulatory framework. Under the proposed rules, an e-rickshaw will need a compliance certificate, a fitness check, a valid licence and vehicle identification, so that only eligible vehicles run on city roads.

Transport Minister Pankaj Kumar Singh said the policy seeks to balance commuters' needs with disciplined traffic management. He described e-rickshaws as an affordable and important transport option, particularly in narrow lanes and areas with limited access to other public transport services.

"Once the public consultation is complete, we will examine the suggestions received and make changes wherever necessary," Singh said. He added that vehicles failing to meet prescribed safety standards, including those built using unsafe "jugaad" techniques, would not be permitted to operate.

The framework will also tackle overloading and require vehicles to meet passenger-capacity and fitness norms. Routes and fares are among the other operational aspects the government plans to examine after reviewing stakeholder feedback. The government proposes to start implementing the policy within 90 days of the consultation ending and the policy being finalised.

The government is also expanding Delhi's bus network, including through smaller buses intended to improve connectivity in residential, peripheral and underserved areas. Singh said coordinated regulation of e-rickshaws and expansion of public transport could improve commuter convenience and traffic management.

Separately, Singh replied to Aam Aadmi Party leaders Saurabh Bharadwaj and Manish Sisodia, who had raised allegations about the state of an Ayushman Arogya Mandir in Khanpur. He said a small part of the ceiling had a defect that was being repaired, and argued that one incident should not be taken as a reflection of the whole healthcare system.



HE SAID *"Once the public consultation is complete, we will examine the suggestions received and make changes wherever necessary."* — Pankaj Kumar Singh, Delhi Transport Minister

Quick Read

Four devotees killed as SUV hits them on NH-16

KAKINADA

Four devotees were killed and another seriously injured after a speeding SUV hit them on the Chennai-Kolkata National Highway (NH-16) in Andhra Pradesh's Kakinada district on Thursday morning.

The accident occurred around 6 am at Kathipudi village when a bus carrying 40 devotees travelling from Denkada to Vijayawada broke down. Five passengers who got off to buy tea were walking along the roadside when a speeding Mahindra Scorpio struck them.

Three devotees died at the scene, while another died while being shifted to hospital. The fifth victim is undergoing treatment and is reportedly stable.

Student dies by suicide after alleged caste harassment

COIMBATORE

A Class 11 student from a Scheduled Caste community died by suicide on Wednesday, October 21, following alleged harassment over his caste and eating habits at a government-aided school in Coimbatore.

The student's mother alleged that teacher Vijayakumar had singled out five students, including her son, for consuming beef and made them stand in class around two months ago.

Peelamedu police booked the teacher, school principal Arunkumar and two classmates on charges of abetment of suicide. Vijayakumar was arrested on Thursday.

Wife among four arrested after man's body found in box

UNNAO

Police in Uttar Pradesh's Unnao district have arrested four people, including the deceased man's wife, her neighbour and a minor, after his body was found stuffed inside a box dumped beside the Unnao-Rae Bareli highway.

The victim, identified as Sonu, was a resident of Achalganj and lived with his wife, Neha, in a rented house in Kanchan Nagar.

Police said they solved the case within 12 hours using CCTV footage and the registration number of a loader vehicle allegedly used to transport the box.

During questioning, Neha reportedly told investigators that her husband frequently returned home drunk and assaulted her.

Gujarat courts Tamil Nadu industries for summit

CHENNAI

Gujarat organised an investment roadshow in Chennai to strengthen industrial cooperation with Tamil Nadu and attract businesses to the 11th Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit, scheduled in Gandhinagar from January 10 to 12, 2027.

The delegation included Gujarat Minister of State for Women and Child Development Manisha Vakil, Urban Development and Urban Housing Principal Secretary M Thennarasan, and Gujarat State Electronics Mission Director Neha Kumari.

According to the release, Gujarat accounts for 17 per cent of India's manufacturing output and 25 per cent of merchandise exports.

INDIA bloc defers virtual meeting on 'vote chori' protests

OPPOSITION LEADERS DELAYED DISCUSSIONS ON COORDINATING THEIR CAMPAIGN, REVIEWING RALLY PREPARATIONS AND DECIDING FUTURE STEPS AMID CONCERNS SURROUNDING ELECTORAL PROCESSES.

NEW DELHI

The INDIA bloc has deferred its proposed virtual meeting to discuss the next phase of protests over alleged "vote chori" and demands for the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, sources said on Thursday.

The meeting was scheduled for Thursday evening, October 22, but was postponed, according to the sources. Opposition leaders were expected to discuss a coordinated strategy for taking forward their campaign against alleged electoral irregularities and mounting pressure on the government over the issue.

The leaders were also expected to review preparations for the bloc's November 1 rally and discuss ways to intensify their political campaign. The proposed discussions were aimed at establishing a roadmap for protests and deciding the opposition's next steps against the Chief Election Commissioner.

The "vote chori" issue has emerged as a key point of confrontation between opposition parties and the ruling establishment. Opposition leaders have raised concerns over electoral processes and have called for accountability from election authorities.

What the meeting was to take up

- → The next phase of protests over alleged "vote chori"
- → The demand that CEC Gyanesh Kumar resign
- → Preparations for the bloc's November 1 rally

The allegations have also become a focus of political mobilisation by the INDIA bloc.

However, no revised date for the virtual meeting was given. The reasons for postponing the meeting were also not immediately specified.

The development comes as opposition parties seek to maintain a united front on electoral concerns and organise collective action. The bloc's next decisions are likely to shape the timing and direction of its planned protests.

The INDIA bloc comprises opposition parties that have joined forces to challenge the ruling National Democratic Alliance. Its leaders have periodically held consultations on political strategy, parliamentary coordination and issues they intend to raise against the government.



Delhi High Court reserves order on Neha Bora's plea against peace bond notice

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Thursday reserved its order on All India Students' Association (AISA) leader Neha Bora's petition challenging a notice issued under Sections 126 and 130 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) in proceedings related to furnishing a bond for maintaining peace. Justice Subramonium Prasad heard arguments from senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan, representing Bora, and Additional Solicitor General Chetan Sharma and Central Government Standing Counsel Ashish Dixit, appearing for the State.

Bora's counsel argued that the notice contained incorrect allegations and failed to record the legally required satisfaction that a breach of peace was likely. He said Bora had called for a gathering at Mandi House following a change in the designated protest site,



> "The only safeguard available to a citizen is the procedure, the requirement."
>
> — Delhi High Court, during the hearing

and maintained that her social media post did not incite violence or unlawful activity. He also alleged that she was detained shortly after reaching the area on October 16.

The court examined whether the magistrate could require a bond before completing the inquiry and whether the notice demonstrated an independent assessment of the evidence. It also questioned whether documents supporting the magistrate's opinion would be supplied to Bora before the hearing.

"The only safeguard available to a citizen is the procedure, the requirement," the court observed, highlighting the importance of procedural protections when personal liberty is involved.

Opposing the petition, Sharma submitted that Sections 126 and 130 must be read together and that preventive action was justified by circumstances indicating a possible breach of peace. He referred to six FIRs against Bora, a general diary entry, police records and restrictions reportedly in force around Mandi House. The State argued that the notice had not imposed a bond or penal consequence and that Bora could respond through a lawyer.

Murmu releases a Rs 200 coin honouring Sindhi spiritual figure Mata Hasi Devi

The commemorative release recognises Mata Hasi Devi's spiritual legacy, celebrating her influence and the enduring religious traditions associated with Shadani Darbar.

RAIPUR

President Droupadi Murmu on Thursday released a commemorative Rs 200 coin honouring Mata Sahib Hasi Devi, the fifth Peethadheesh of Shadani Darbar in Raipur, marking her 200th birth anniversary.

The coin was unveiled at Chhattisgarh Mandapam in Lok Bhawan in the presence of Chhattisgarh Governor Ramen Deka and Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai. The Ministry of Finance issued the commemorative coin to recognise Mata Hasi Devi's spiritual contributions and legacy.

According to an official release, the coin features an image of Mata Hasi Devi on one side. The other side displays the Lion Capital of the Ashoka Pillar along with the denomination of Rs 200. The design aims to preserve her life, philosophy and spiritual teachings for future generations.

The release was described as a significant occasion for the Sindhi community in India and abroad, recognising the legacy of a prominent spiritual figure. Devotees and coin collectors will be able to book the commemorative coin through various units of Shadani Darbar, the release stated.

Sant Yudhishthir Lal, the Peethadheesh of Shadani Darbar in Raipur, delivered the welcome address at the event.

Several public representatives and senior officials attended the ceremony, including First Lady Rani Deka Kakoti, Member of Parliament Brijmohan Agrawal, and legislators Purandar Mishra, Sunil Soni and Motilal Sahu.

Chief Secretary Vikas Sheel, Director General of Police Arun Deo Gautam and Secretary to the Governor C. R. Prasanna were also present, along with members of Shadani Darbar and representatives of the Sindhi community from across the country.



The coin

- **Value:** Rs 200
- **One side:** Mata Hasi Devi
- **Other side:** the Lion Capital of the Ashoka Pillar
- **Marks:** her 200th birth anniversary

Second Vande Bharat special train added on Delhi-Patna route for festival rush

NEW DELHI

Indian Railways has introduced a second Vande Bharat Special train between New Delhi and Patna to manage increased passenger demand during the ongoing festival season.

The additional service follows the launch earlier this month of the 02252/02251 New Delhi–Patna–New Delhi Vande Bharat Festival Special Express. East Central Railway has announced another service, numbered 02253/02254, to accommodate the expected rush of passengers travelling between the national capital and Bihar.

According to Saraswati Chandra, Chief Public Relations Officer of East Central Railway, the decision was taken to provide additional travel capacity during the busy festive period. The move is intended to offer passengers another rail option on the popular route.

Train number 02254, the New Delhi–Patna Vande Bharat Special Express, will cover approximately 995 kilometres in 12 hours and 55 minutes. The service is scheduled to operate from New Delhi between October 22 and November 26, 2026.

The train will depart on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays each week during the announced operating period.



The additional service is expected to help passengers planning journeys between Delhi and Patna amid increased demand for festival travel.

Vande Bharat trains are designed to provide faster intercity connectivity and modern passenger facilities. Special services are frequently introduced by Indian Railways during periods of heightened demand to improve capacity and ease pressure on regular trains.

The introduction of the second special train expands the available Vande Bharat services on the Delhi–Patna corridor.

BJP defends Delhi police action on CJP protesters, hits back at Annamalai



NEW DELHI

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has defended the police crackdown on Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) protesters near Jantar Mantar in New Delhi, accusing former Tamil Nadu BJP president K Annamalai of blurring the distinction between peaceful demonstrations and deliberate violations of the law.

Tamil Nadu BJP spokesperson Narayanan Thirupathy responded on Wednesday to Annamalai's criticism of the detentions of protesters who approached Jantar Mantar last week, with some allegedly breaching barricades. Thirupathy argued that the authorities acted against unauthorised demonstrations rather than suppressing peaceful dissent.

"Mr Annamalai's questions deliberately blur the line between peaceful protest and deliberate law-breaking," Thirupathy said.

He maintained that CJP leaders had been denied permission to protest at Jantar Mantar but allegedly entered the area by climbing locked gates and barricades. He also accused them of entering a site that had been denotified for protests and violating peace bonds they had previously signed.

According to Thirupathy, orders issued by the Special Executive Magistrate and subsequent judicial custody proceedings referred to repeated unauthorised protests and alleged breaches of the bonds. He argued that these circumstances justified the authorities' actions and rejected claims that the detentions lacked legal procedure.

Thirupathy further pointed out that the High Court subsequently reviewed the matter and ordered the protesters' release, describing the proceedings as an example of due process.

Annamalai, a former Indian Police Service officer, had criticised the crackdown and questioned the government's response to the protesters. In a post on X, he recalled a 2011 statement by Narendra Modi, then Gujarat Chief Minister, condemning a midnight police crackdown on anti-corruption protesters at Delhi's Ramlila Maidan.

GUJARAT INVESTMENT ROADSHOW

Gujarat woos investors in Jaipur ahead of Global Summit 2027

JAIPUR

Gujarat held an investment roadshow in Jaipur on Thursday to attract investors and industry representatives ahead of the 11th edition of the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit, scheduled in Gandhinagar from January 10 to 12, 2027.

Gujarat Labour, Skill Development and Employment Minister Kunvarji Bavaliya, Gujarat Urja Vikas Nigam Limited Managing Director Shalini Agrawal and Jaipur Mayor Sunil Kothari attended the event. The roadshow aimed to showcase investment opportunities, industrial policies and infrastructure facilities available across the state.

11th	Jan 10-12	61,000+	140+
edition of the summit	2027, in Gandhinagar	delegates in 2024	countries in 2024

Bavaliya said the programme formed part of Gujarat's efforts to engage with industrialists across the country before the summit. Narendra Modi, then Chief Minister of Gujarat, initiated the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit in 2003, and the event has since developed into an international platform for investment promotion.

Agrawal highlighted Gujarat's industrial development roadmap for 2047 and its infrastructure network, including ports, expressways, the Dedicated Freight Corridor and the upcoming bullet train project. She said industrialists from different sectors participated in the Jaipur programme.

Gujarat has set a target of contributing USD 3.5 trillion towards India's ambition of becoming a developed economy worth USD 30 trillion by 2047. The state plans to conduct investment outreach programmes in several Indian cities during October and November, ahead of the summit.

The 2027 edition carries the theme "Viksit Gujarat – Shaping Global Future". Planned activities include sector-specific meetings and roundtable discussions with investors, multinational companies and industry bodies. These engagements will highlight investment opportunities and potential benefits arising from India's expanding free trade agreements.



The previous edition, held in 2024, attracted more than 61,000 delegates from over 140 countries. Organisers aim to build on that participation in 2027 as Gujarat seeks to strengthen its position as a major investment destination.

Prabha's birthday brings new FAUZI teaser



Excitement is reaching fever pitch among millions of movie enthusiasts and dedicated fans of pan-India superstar Prabhas as his highly anticipated birthday approaches, bringing with it the much-awaited official promotional rollout for his upcoming massive cinematic venture tentatively titled "Fauzi," which has been keeping audiences on the edge of their seats for a considerable period.

According to updates from the production camp, the makers have planned a double treat to celebrate the star's special day, starting with an exclusive character poster scheduled to drop tonight, followed immediately by a high-octane official teaser tomorrow.

This upcoming promotional material is expected to finally shatter the wall of secrecy surrounding the project and offer a much-needed comprehensive glimpse into its scale, tone, and visual aesthetic.

Directed by critically acclaimed filmmaker Hanu Raghavapudi, known for his unique storytelling flair and grand period dramas, "Fauzi" features Prabhas taking on the central protagonist role. Newcomer Imanvi will be seen starring opposite him as the female lead, making her prominent entry into the big-budget commercial space. Despite the monumental hype that has surrounded the film ever since its inception, the makers have maintained extreme confidentiality, leaving fans largely in the dark regarding the core storyline, historical or fictional setting, and overall production magnitude.

Industry trade analysts point out that everything now hinges on the reception of tomorrow's teaser launch and the clarity it provides regarding an official theatrical release date. If the visual assets and narrative framing manage to captivate the audience's imagination, the film is poised to recapture massive momentum, building an unstoppable wave of organic buzz and sky-high expectations across national box-office markets.

Rashmika Mandanna announces debut IIFA performance

Popular pan-Indian star Rashmika Mandanna is preparing to step onto one of the most prestigious global stages of Indian cinema, expressing profound excitement and heartfelt gratitude as she gets ready for her very first live performance at the upcoming International Indian Film Academy (IIFA) Awards.

The 27th edition of the grand cinematic celebration is scheduled to take place on January 22 and 23, 2027, lighting up the spectacular Etihad Arena located on Yas Island in Abu Dhabi. Organizers officially revealed her participation, confirming that the talented actress will deliver a high-energy live performance during the star-studded weekend.

Sharing her thoughts on this milestone, Rashmika noted that marking her debut on the iconic platform feels deeply personal and extraordinary. As an artist who has consistently expressed a deep passion for dance, the opportunity to perform live before thousands of passionate film lovers holds immense significance for her career.

"Performing on the IIFA stage for the first time feels incredibly special, and I am honestly so excited," the actress shared in an official statement released on Wednesday. She added that the global event serves as a magnificent tribute to Indian cinema, bridging artists and audiences across international borders. Taking to social media to share her joy directly with her millions of followers, Rashmika posted an enthusiastic message online, writing that she is thrilled to travel to Abu Dhabi to create lasting moments with her fans on January 23.



The upcoming gala promises a star-studded lineup of entertainment. Alongside Rashmika's anticipated debut performance, the ceremony will be hosted by prominent Bollywood actors Varun Dhawan and Ananya Panday, with additional hosting duties shared by Karan Johar and Manish Paul.

The night will also feature grand musical and dance acts from celebrated industry names, including Salman Khan, Kareena Kapoor Khan, and Janhvi Kapoor.

Marking its fourth grand showcase in Abu Dhabi, the prestigious event is being organized in official partnership with the Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi and Miral. The return of the festival to the region was initially unveiled during the Arabian Travel Market, highlighting a strong collaborative vision to promote cultural exchange and cinematic excellence worldwide.

Actor Mouli wins hearts with honest reaction



Rising star Mouli has captured the attention and admiration of fans across the internet following his remarkably grounded response to recent online criticism. The young actor found himself at the center of a social media storm after a well-known television anchor publicly questioned his current level of stardom and public recognition. Instead of ignoring the comments or lashing out, Mouli addressed the controversy directly during the high-profile teaser launch event for his upcoming film, Donga Naa Koduku. His unfiltered and deeply honest reaction quickly spread across various digital platforms, winning widespread praise from audiences and industry insiders alike.

During the media interaction, Mouli spoke candidly about the intense behind-the-scenes pressure actors face to maintain visibility in a competitive industry. He openly admitted that, coming from a background without powerful industry Godfathers or familial connections, he feels a constant necessity to leverage every possible promotional avenue. By doing whatever it takes to keep his movie in the spotlight, he hopes to give his project the best fighting chance at the box office. Viewers were particularly impressed by his ability to handle sensitive and potentially confrontational questions with grace, maintaining a polite composure entirely free of arrogance or defensive posturing. Rather than choosing anger, the actor opted for vulnerability, sharing genuine insights into the daily hustle, personal struggles, and ambitious dreams that drive his career forward.

Industry observers note that his refreshing transparency stands out in an environment often dominated by scripted PR responses. His primary focus remains resolutely fixed on seizing every creative opportunity presented by the Telugu film industry, letting his dedication and talent speak louder than any controversy. As anticipation builds for the theatrical release of Donga Naa Koduku, fans eagerly await how his promising journey will unfold on the big screen.

Shahid Kapoor wraps up Farzi 2 shoot

Versatile Bollywood star Shahid Kapoor has officially completed filming for the highly anticipated second season of his blockbuster crime thriller series "Farzi," bringing immense joy to fans who have been waiting eagerly to witness the next chapter of the gripping storyline ever since the first season captivated audiences worldwide on streaming platforms.

To celebrate the momentous completion of production, acclaimed filmmaker duo Raj & DK took to social media to share an entertaining and candid behind-the-scenes video from the final day on set. In the lighthearted clip, the actor can be seen stepping out of his intense character persona to break into hilarious facial expressions and spontaneous, quirky dance moves, showcasing his playful off-screen personality.

Playfully acknowledging the wrap, the directors captioned their post by noting that the artist had immediately shaken off his heavy role to celebrate. Praising his incredible dedication, they added that the creative team had pulled off some extraordinary work for the upcoming episodes, expressing profound excitement for the audience to witness the final product.



When the directors playfully questioned him about his sudden antics on camera, Shahid flashed a goofy smile and exclaimed that his portion was officially finished before diving right back into his energetic celebration. The joyful moment captured the warm camaraderie shared between the actor and the creative minds behind the camera throughout the demanding shooting schedule.

A few days prior to the wrap, Shahid took a moment to reflect on his deep connection with his character, Sunny, an artist drawn into the dangerous underworld of counterfeiting. Sharing a glimpse of his looks from the sets, he expressed how deeply the role had blended with his own identity over the course of production. He wrote that the character felt like a part of his soul, echoing the journey of a young street kid from Mumbai with big dreams.

The hit series features an impressive ensemble cast alongside Shahid, including acclaimed actors Vijay Sethupathi, Kay Kay Menon, Raashii Khanna, and Bhuvan Arora. Following the massive success of its debut season, which premiered on Amazon Prime Video in February 2023, viewers are now looking forward to the release date announcement of this thrilling continuation.

Sai Pallavi urges fans to experience Ramayana in 3D

Talented actress Sai Pallavi has a special request for everyone waiting to see the upcoming giant movie Ramayana. During a recent lively event in Tamil Nadu, she encouraged fans, families, and movie lovers to experience this grand cinematic tale in 3D on the big screen rather than watching small clips on mobile phones.

The much-anticipated mythological epic is scheduled to hit theaters across the globe on November 5, 2026. Bringing a timeless story to life, the movie features a stellar cast with Ranbir Kapoor playing a major role, Sai Pallavi stepping into the revered character of Sita, and Yash adding powerful energy to the screen.

Speaking directly to the gathered crowd, Sai Pallavi explained that catching glimpses of the trailer on a tiny smartphone display simply cannot compare to the magic of sitting inside a dark theater with giant 3D glasses on. She pointed out that producer Namit Malhotra shared a massive vision right from the start. Instead of settling for a regular or average version, the entire team worked hard to create something truly extraordinary for viewers of all ages.

The actress enthusiastically urged parents to bring their children along to the cinema halls. She believes that experiencing this legendary tale together in immersive 3D will create unforgettable memories for young minds. Sharing her thoughts on the monumental project, she expressed deep pride, stating that the crew poured their hearts into delivering the biggest story in the entire world.

This vibrant gathering marked the final domestic promotional stop for the film crew within the country. Following this successful interaction, the main cast and crew will travel overseas to promote the project globally.

Beyond the lead actors, the movie boasts an impressive ensemble cast including Ravi Dubey, Vivek Oberoi, Kajal Aggarwal, Sunny Deol, Rakul Preet Singh, Indira Krishnan, and Kunal Kapoor.

Adding musical brilliance to the cinematic experience, legendary composer A. R. Rahman has created the songs, while renowned international composer Hans Zimmer has crafted the background score.

Fans are counting down the days until they can witness this grand vision unfold on the silver screen.

Nabha Natesh returns to Kannada cinema



Talented actress Nabha Natesh is making a highly anticipated return to Kannada cinema after a nearly decade-long absence, starring alongside popular action star Dhruva Sarja in the upcoming romantic drama titled "Chemistry," marking her emotional homecoming to Sandalwood since her last appearance in the 2017 film "Saheba."

Reflecting on her journey during a recent media interaction, the actress expressed immense joy about returning to her cultural roots and performing in her mother tongue once again. She recalled growing up watching classic cinematic masterpieces featuring legendary Kannada icons such as Dr. Rajkumar, Shankar Nag, Anant Nag, Ambareesh, and Vishnuvardhan, which deeply inspired her artistic ambitions from a very young age.

The talented performer candidly opened up about the unexpected hurdles that interrupted her rising career trajectory, sharing that she suffered a severe accident in 2021 after accidentally slipping on a hard concrete surface, resulting in a painful shoulder fracture. This unfortunate incident forced her to step away from the limelight and take a necessary three-year sabbatical to heal completely, though she noted that overcoming the physical and mental toll ultimately helped her emerge much stronger and more resilient.

Discussing her new project, Nabha shared that her career took various turns after her Kannada debut in "Vajrakaya," but she always yearned to find the right script to return to her native film industry. "Chemistry" presented that ideal opportunity, allowing her to dive back into the romance genre for the first time since her notable Telugu debut "Nannu Dochukunduvate" in 2018, while portraying a modern, multi-dimensional female character relevant to women today.

Commenting on the evolving landscape of Indian cinema, the actress praised the positive shift in how female characters are scripted across different language industries. She noted that contemporary storytelling has moved away from traditional, one-dimensional portrayals toward richer, more nuanced narratives that capture the true complexity of women's experiences.

Looking ahead at her future career aspirations, the trained theater artist revealed her strong desire to step out of her comfort zone by experimenting with unconventional genres. She expressed a deep-seated wish to explore dark psychological thrillers, horror films, or vulnerable characters dealing with deep emotional fractures.

Quick Read

Police probe killing of foreign national by crowd in Durban

JOHANNESBURG

South African police said on Thursday they were investigating the killing of a foreign national by a crowd of about 50 people in the coastal city of Durban, amid growing concern over anti-migrant protests and violence against foreign nationals in the country.

In a post on X, the South African Police Service said the victim, thought to be in his late 30s or early 40s, was beaten by the crowd and declared dead at the scene. Police did not disclose the victim's nationality or provide further details about his identity.

Police said a group had been marching through central Durban when two men appeared to break away and approach the victim. The situation then escalated, with around 50 people assaulting him.

Authorities have not established the motive behind the killing and did not indicate whether any arrests had been made in connection with the incident.

Cuba's public transport hits all-time low under US fuel blockade

HAVANA

Cuba's Transportation Minister Eduardo Rodriguez Davila faces what looks like an impossible task every day: moving millions of people by plane, train and automobile across an island nation that stretches 780 miles (1,250 km), with almost no fuel. Public transportation on the Caribbean's largest island has collapsed on an unprecedented scale since the United States imposed a de facto ban on fuel imports on Cuba's communist-run government in late January.

"Traditional public transportation is at one of its lowest points of all time," Rodriguez Davila, a mechanical engineer turned minister, said in an exclusive interview in Havana this week.

Suu Kyi's son speaks to her for first time in five years

BANGKOK

Kim Aris, the son of Myanmar's detained former leader Aung San Suu Kyi, said on Thursday that he had spoken to his mother for the first time in more than five years, while she remains under house arrest. For years Aris had received only occasional, second-hand news of his 81-year-old mother; this time he spoke to Suu Kyi directly.

On social media, a spokesperson for Myanmar's military-backed president said Aris had spoken to Suu Kyi by telephone through Myanmar's embassy in London, and shared separate photographs of the two.

Russia, Ukraine intensify strikes amid peace push

Russia pounds Kyiv with missiles as Moscow says 808 drones downed in Russian cities.

KYIV

Russia and Ukraine exchanged heavy attacks overnight, with Moscow and Kyiv reporting missile and drone strikes as diplomatic efforts led by Washington continued.

Ukrainian officials said Russia fired at least 21 ballistic missiles at Kyiv in three waves, while Moscow said Ukraine had launched 630 drones towards the Russian capital. The strikes came even as the United States renewed its efforts to bring the two sides back to the negotiating table.

Moscow said it was ready to resume talks with Kyiv under US mediation next month. The announcement came after Russian President Vladimir Putin met US envoy Steve Witkoff in St Petersburg.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky expressed hope that negotiations could take place in early November. Such talks would be the first since February, potentially reopening a diplomatic channel after months of continued fighting.



However, signs of progress remained uncertain. After meeting Zelensky and European and NATO officials in Oslo earlier in the week, Witkoff had spoken of "some degree of momentum". But the Kremlin indicated that the proposals discussed did not fully address Russia's expectations.

Kremlin aide Yuri Ushakov said Washington had conveyed new nuances emerging from the Oslo discussions but stressed that these did not entirely satisfy Moscow. A Russian official briefed on the Putin-Witkoff meeting described the discussions as relatively short and lacking substantive progress.

Meanwhile, the two countries exchanged the bodies of fallen soldiers.

Russia handed over 252 bodies and Ukraine returned 25, according to reports from neighbouring Belarus. Such exchanges have accompanied diplomatic contacts in previous phases of the conflict.

Strikes and talks

- **Missiles:** Ukraine reported three waves of Russian ballistic missile attacks.
- **Drones:** Russia claimed Ukraine launched 630 drones towards Moscow.
- **Talks:** Moscow expressed readiness to resume US-mediated talks next month. Zelensky hoped negotiations would begin in early November.
- **Fallen soldiers:** Both countries exchanged the bodies of fallen personnel.

Macron moves to ban 'illegitimate' protests after riots

PARIS

France is tightening protest restrictions after recent riots, as unions, students and political movements prepare demonstrations across several cities this weekend.

French President Emmanuel Macron has vowed to ban unauthorised demonstrations in coming days, blaming ultra-left groups and vandals for recent unrest.

Macron said after talks with senior ministers and intelligence chiefs on Thursday that protests deemed illegitimate would be prohibited, as the authorities braced for another potentially volatile weekend.

He said demonstrations organised by trade unions and other recognised groups would still be allowed, although the authorities could change their routes to protect businesses and public safety.

"Last Saturday we had political and seditious acts by ultra-left groups whose aim is to bring down the Republic," Macron said.

His remarks came after France experienced some of its worst urban unrest in years on October 17, when demonstrations linked to public anger over the cost of living and rising fuel prices were accompanied by riots and looting.

Restrictions are already being imposed across the country ahead of planned rallies. Local authorities in Lyon, France's second-largest city, have banned all demonstrations planned for Saturday.

Protest organisers, however, are still rallying supporters. UNEF, France's main student union, has called for rallies on Saturday, and the Yellow Vest movement has filed plans for a march through central Paris.

In Paris, a student protest planned for Thursday was banned, but metro stations in central areas were still closed in anticipation of unauthorised gatherings.

Aramco evacuates HQ amid Houthi attacks

DHAHRAN

Saudi Arabia's state oil giant Aramco has ordered the evacuation of its headquarters in Dhahran as fighting with Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthi movement intensifies, according to six people familiar with the matter.

The instruction directs staff to leave the building and work remotely, marking a significant security development as attacks targeting Saudi territory and energy infrastructure escalate. The company did not immediately respond to a request for comment, and the reason for the evacuation remained unclear.

The order follows a string of Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia, among them a strike on Aramco's headquarters earlier this month that reportedly caused extensive damage. After that attack, fire spread across several floors of the building, showing how exposed critical energy infrastructure is as the conflict resumes.



Fighting between Saudi Arabia and the Houthis has escalated in recent weeks, ending a 2022 truce brokered by the United Nations that had largely halted cross-border attacks. The renewed hostilities have opened another front in the wider regional conflict involving the United States, Israel and Iran.

The Saudi-led coalition said on Thursday that it had intercepted drones over Riyadh and Medina, one of Islam's holiest cities. Saudi Arabia has also carried out strikes against Houthi missile-launching sites and said it has intercepted numerous ballistic missiles fired by the group.

The developments unsettled financial markets. Saudi Arabia's benchmark stock index fell 2.5% on Thursday following reports of the evacuation, according to market data.

Latest developments

Headquarters evacuation
Aramco staff were instructed to leave the Dhahran building and work remotely.

Regional escalation
Saudi-led coalition forces reported intercepting drones over Riyadh and Medina.

Market reaction
Saudi Arabia's benchmark index fell 2.5% on Thursday.

Indian nationals
Houthi spokesperson Yahya Saree said a rescue operation was under way for a boat carrying 14 Indians near Jabal Zuqar island.

International Criminal Court wins EU's Sakharov human rights prize

BRUSSELS

The International Criminal Court (ICC) and its officials have won the EU's 2026 Sakharov human rights prize, European Parliament President Roberta Metsola announced on Thursday, less than two weeks after former ICC judge Navi Pillay was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

"The EU is built on respect for multilateralism and international institutions," Metsola said as she announced the award in the EU Parliament in Strasbourg, where it drew a standing ovation. "And this prize recognises the important work of the court in upholding international law and justice."

It is the war crimes tribunal's second international honour this month, and it comes less than two weeks after US President Donald Trump announced sanctions against the court.



Pillay's Nobel award was widely seen as a gesture of support for the embattled court. The ICC, based in The Hague, has long been a target of Trump, whose campaign against it has escalated since the court announced arrest warrants in 2024 against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his former defence minister.

ICC President Tomoko Akane said the "unprecedented challenges" facing the court made the prize all the more significant.

> *"There is no peace without justice and no security without law."*
> **TOMOKO AKANE** ICC President

"It underscores the importance of continued international cooperation and support to enable the court to carry out its mandate independently and impartially, in the service of justice and the victims of the gravest crimes," the Japanese judge said.

"There is no peace without justice and no security without law," she added. Named after the late Soviet dissident Andrei Sakharov, the EU prize has been given every year since 1988 to individuals and organisations that defend human rights and freedoms.

Late detection of Ebola case in Nigeria raises alarm across Africa

ABUJA

Nigeria's first Ebola patient in more than a decade was not tested for the disease until 13 days after she fell ill, officials said, a delay that casts doubt on the authorities' ability to contain an outbreak that already spans four African nations.

First detected in May in Democratic Republic of Congo, 3,000 km away, the epidemic is the second-largest on record. It had already reached Uganda and Kenya before the Nigerian case was confirmed on Tuesday, the widest known spread on the continent.

The patient, the Ugandan-born wife of a Swiss diplomat, arrived in Abuja, Nigeria's capital and a major travel hub, on October 3 after a two-week holiday in Uganda, said Dr Jean Kaseya, the head of Africa's top public health body.

Citing the account given by the Nigerian authorities, Kaseya said she fell ill three days later. Suspecting malaria at first, she sought treatment at several facilities before she was tested for Ebola on October 19.

"When we identified at-risk countries, Nigeria was not part of this list. It is now," said Kaseya, director-general of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention.

He added that the list would have to be redrawn, and that North and Southern Africa could also be at risk. "We need to consider that no-one is safe today."

He said the late detection would make it harder to trace the people the woman may have infected. Ebola spreads through direct contact with the bodily fluids of a person showing symptoms.



"We need to identify all the contacts... this one is a little bit tough for someone who took almost two weeks without being tested, coming into contact with health workers, family members, friends," Kaseya said.

So far Nigeria has identified 44 contacts, a number that Kaseya and other Ebola experts said was bound to rise.

13	44	4
days before she was tested	contacts identified so far	African nations hit

Trump heads to Iowa as Republicans fight to hold their seats

42%

of likely voters said their finances had worsened over the past year (Marist poll)

SIOUX CITY

President Donald Trump travels to Iowa on Thursday to shore up Republicans in a state he won by 13 percentage points two years ago, but where his weakened standing and voters' anxiety over his policies have clouded the party's prospects in the November 3 midterm elections.

Trump will hold a rally in Sioux City, where Republicans are defending a Senate seat, three House districts and the governor's office, giving Democrats an opening after years of Republican gains.

Some of the Republicans Trump is trying to help have split with him over the Iran war, as higher fuel and grocery prices add to voters' economic worries.

Republican Representative Ashley Hinson, in a close Senate race against Democratic state Representative Josh Turek, has called for an "immediate end" to the war, saying Iowans should not have to bear higher fuel or grocery prices because of it.

Last month Republican Representatives Mariannette Miller-Meeks and Zach Nunn, both facing difficult reelection races, joined Democrats in voting to limit Trump's war powers in Iran.

In the race for governor, recent polls show Democrat Rob Sand ahead of Republican Zach Lahn, and Democrats are also targeting an open House seat in Iowa's second congressional district.

Losses for the Republicans would be a setback for Trump in a state where his popularity helped the party build a commanding advantage.

The Senate and House races could help decide control of Congress, and with it his ability to advance his agenda in his final two years.

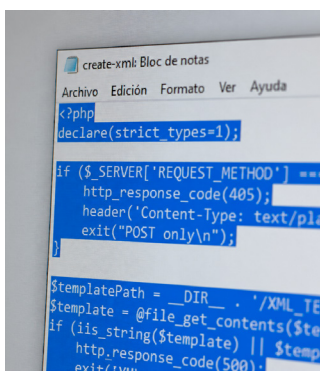
Republicans are also worried about the rural voters behind Trump's Iowa victories, with farmers facing higher costs and trade uncertainty.

A Marist poll this month found that 42% of likely voters said their finances had worsened over the past year, including more than half of independents.

Thirty-five percent saw their vote as a vote against Trump, against 21% who saw it as a vote for him.

CYBER SECURITY SCRAMBLE

PHP security flaws trigger millions of hacking attempts worldwide



TOKYO

Governments and companies around the world rushed on Thursday to secure their digital systems after critical flaws in the widely used PHP programming language set off millions of reported hacking attempts.

The flaws, which had remained undiscovered for years, were identified using artificial intelligence, prompting developers to release emergency software updates.

> **"It was a long day and a long night, I know for all the IT and security folks... I've not seen anything like this in a long, long time."**
> — **Satya Nadella,** Microsoft CEO

Users were urged to install the fixes immediately as attackers began attempting to exploit the vulnerabilities.

The disclosure led to precautionary shutdowns of websites and online services in Europe and Asia. Banking, airline, railway, tax and government services were among those hit, showing how heavily public infrastructure and corporate operations rely on systems built on PHP.

Microsoft Chief Executive Satya Nadella described the response as an exceptionally demanding period for technology and security teams.

At a company event in Cologne, Germany, he said the episode showed why digital systems had to be designed so that they could be maintained securely.

"It was a long day and a long night, I know for all the IT and security folks… I've not seen anything like this in a long, long time," Nadella said.

Experts in cybersecurity warned that the timing of the disclosure had intensified the risks because technical details became public before fixes were available. This created a window in which attackers could study the vulnerabilities and develop methods to exploit them.

Organisations were racing to update their systems while confronting attackers capable of using AI to exploit weaknesses, said Madeline Lawrence, co-founder of Belgian cybersecurity firm Aikido Security.



SAMSON'S EXPLOSIVE FIFTY GUIDES INDIA TO VICTORY

CHRISTCHURCH

Samson's 33-ball knock of 67 proved crucial in maintaining the required run rate

India defeated New Zealand by four wickets in the first T20 International at Hagley Oval on Thursday, taking a 1-0 lead in the five-match series.

Sanju Samson starred with the bat, scoring a brilliant 67 off just 33 balls to guide India through a challenging chase.

Batting first, New Zealand posted an imposing 225 for four in their allotted 20 overs. Glenn Phillips led the home side's charge with a powerful 82 off 40 deliveries, putting the Indian bowlers under considerable pressure. His aggressive innings helped New Zealand maintain a high scoring rate and set a challenging target for the visitors.

India captain Shreyas Iyer won the toss and elected to bowl first, hoping to take advantage of the conditions at the Christchurch venue. However, New Zealand's batters made the most of their opportunities, putting the Indian bowling attack to the test.

Arshdeep Singh, Axar Patel and Mayank Yadav picked up one wicket each for India during the first innings. Despite their efforts, the hosts managed to cross the 220-run mark, leaving India with a demanding target of 226 runs to win.

In reply, Samson produced an outstanding performance, combining attacking stroke play with effective timing to keep India in the hunt. His 33-ball knock of 67 proved crucial in maintaining the required run rate and putting pressure on New Zealand's bowling attack.

India's batters continued to fight throughout the chase, eventually reaching the target with four wickets to spare. The victory gave the visitors an early advantage in the series and strengthened their recent record against New Zealand. India had defeated New Zealand in the bilateral series played earlier this year and also beaten them in the World Cup final. The opening T20I victory further boosted the visitors' confidence as both teams prepare for the remaining four matches.

New Zealand will now look to bounce back in the second T20I, while India will aim to extend their lead in the series.

226 **runs chased down by India: their highest successful T20I chase**

Vivaan Dave wins double gold at Gujarat championships

AHMEDABAD

Vivaan Dave, a 14-year-old table tennis player, claimed the Under-17 and Under-19 titles at the Gujarat State Table Tennis Championships 2026, held in Gandhidham from October 16 to 20.

Supported by Adani Sportsline's "Garv Hai" initiative, Vivaan delivered an impressive performance against older and more experienced opponents to secure both titles and add another achievement to his growing career.

Vivaan was previously ranked No. 2 in India in the Under-15 category. He has continued to demonstrate his potential through strong performances in domestic and international competitions.

His Under-17 gold at the UTT National Ranking Table Tennis Championship in Kanpur came earlier this year. On the international youth circuit, he took Under-15 silver at the WTT Youth Contender in Ulaanbaatar and followed it with an Under-15 bronze in Tashkent.

In 2025, Vivaan achieved another double-gold performance at the UTT 87th Inter-State Sub-Junior and Cadet National Table Tennis Championships, winning both the Under-15 individual and team titles.

> *"Winning both state titles was a proud moment. Competing against older players gave me valuable experience, and I am grateful for the support that allows me to focus on training and performance."*
> **VIVAAN DAVE** table tennis player

Having started playing table tennis at the age of five, Vivaan dreams of representing India at the Olympics and winning a gold medal for the country.

Through its "Garv Hai" initiative, Adani Sportsline has supported his development by providing table tennis kits and equipment and facilitating travel for competitions. He has been associated with the programme since August 1, 2026.

Next up for Vivaan is the WTT Youth Contender in Chennai from October 23 to 26, after which he will prepare for the National Ranking Table Tennis Championship in Punjab later this year.

Iva Jovic stuns Paolini to reach Ningbo QUARTERFINALS

42	20	7th	2-2
tour-level wins this year	wins over top-50 players	quarterfinal of the season	head-to-head with Paolini

NINGBO

American teenager Iva Jovic defeated two-time Grand Slam finalist Jasmine Paolini 6-4, 6-3 to reach the quarterfinals of the Ningbo Open on Thursday, making an impressive start to her tournament debut.

WHAT NEXT
- Alexandra Eala or French Open semifinalist Diana Shnaider in the quarterfinals
- Jovic leads Eala 3-0 and Shnaider 1-0 head to head

The fourth-seeded Jovic recovered from an early setback in the opening set to secure a straight-sets victory over the Italian player in their round-of-16 encounter at Centre Court.

The 18-year-old initially struggled and fell behind 1-3 in the first set after losing her serve. However, she quickly regained control, breaking Paolini in the fifth and ninth games to take the set 6-4.

Paolini continued to face difficulties with her serve in the second set, allowing Jovic to break her four times. Although the American also lost her serve twice, she maintained her advantage and closed out the set 6-3 to seal the match.

The victory brings Jovic level with Paolini at 2-2 in their career head-to-head record. It also marks her second consecutive win over the Italian, following her victory at the Australian Open earlier this year.

Jovic has now reached her seventh quarterfinal of the season. She previously advanced to the semifinals in five of her six earlier quarterfinal appearances this year, underlining her consistency on the tour.

The American also recorded her 20th victory against a top-50 opponent, with Paolini ranked 35th in the world. The win was Jovic's 42nd tour-level victory of the year, making this her most successful season so far.

Jovic will next face either Alexandra Eala or French Open semifinalist Diana Shnaider. She holds winning head-to-head records against both potential opponents, leading Eala 3-0 and Shnaider 1-0.

The teenager has enjoyed an impressive season, successfully defending her Guadalajara Open title last month after winning it in 2025. She also reached the fourth round of the US Open for the first time, marking another significant milestone in her rapidly developing career.





1ST T20I · HAGLEY OVAL, CHRISTCHURCH
NEW ZEALAND 20 ov 225/4
INDIA 19.4 ov 230/6
INDIA WON BY 4 WICKETS
INDIA LEAD THE FIVE-MATCH SERIES 1-0

TOP OF THE CARD | SANJU SAMSON 67 33 balls, 4 sixes, 8 fours | GLENN PHILLIPS 82 not out, 40 balls | GUJARAT STATE TT CHAMPIONSHIPS U-17 + U-19 GOLD | NINGBO OPEN, LAST 16 Jovic bt Paolini 6-4, 6-3

Sheetal Devi stages stunning comeback to win gold

CH NEWS, NAGOYA

Indian para-archer Sheetal Devi produced a remarkable comeback to defeat Singapore's Nur Syahidah Alim 142-139 in the women's compound individual final at the Asian Para Games 2026 on Thursday, securing India's 17th gold medal at the continental event.

Sheetal in Nagoya
- **Gold, mixed team:** with Toman Kumar, 151-148 over Indonesia; a world record 1,402 in qualifying
- **Silver, women's doubles:** with Payal Nag; Asian and Games records, 1,379, in qualifying
- **Gold, individual:** 142-139 over Nur Syahidah Alim; the world record, 704 of 720, equalled in qualifying

The 19-year-old successfully defended the title she won at the 2023 Asian Para Games in Hangzhou, demonstrating exceptional composure under pressure.

Sheetal faced an early setback in the final, trailing 55-59 after the second end, in which she scored 26 points. However, she responded strongly, recording two consecutive perfect scores of 30 to regain the lead and seal the victory.



Her individual triumph capped an outstanding campaign in Aichi-Nagoya. During the qualification round, Sheetal equalled the world record with a score of 704 out of 720, surpassing her own Asian record of 698, set in Bangkok in March. She had earlier won gold in the mixed team compound event alongside Toman Kumar. The Indian pair defeated Indonesia 151-148 in the final after setting a world record of 1,402 points in the mixed team qualification round, surpassing the previous mark of 1,400. Sheetal also secured silver in the women's compound doubles event with Payal Nag. The Indian duo topped the qualification standings with a combined score of 1,379, establishing new Asian and Asian Para Games records.

With two gold medals and one silver in Nagoya, Sheetal has matched her three-medal achievement at the 2023 edition in Hangzhou.

CM Vijay announces Rs 30 lakh reward for Manisha

CH NEWS, CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay has announced a cash reward of Rs 30 lakh for para badminton player Manisha Ramadass after she won a bronze medal at the 2026 Asian Para Games in Japan.

Manisha won the bronze in the mixed doubles SL3-SU5 category with Paralympic champion Pramod Bhagat. The Indian pair met Indonesia's Leani Ratri Oktila and Hikmat Ramdani in a hard-fought semifinal.

Congratulating the athlete through a message on his official X account, Vijay praised Manisha for her perseverance, dedication and hard work. He also extended his greetings to the Indian contingent participating in the continental sporting event.



The Chief Minister said her achievement had brought pride to Tamil Nadu and the country. He added that the medal-winning performance demonstrated the importance of determination and consistent effort in achieving sporting success.

Announcing the financial incentive, Vijay said the state government would provide Rs 30 lakh to recognise Manisha's contribution and encourage her continued progress in para badminton.

He expressed hope that her success would inspire young para athletes to pursue their sporting ambitions with confidence and determination. The Chief Minister also wished her success in future competitions, expressing confidence that she would continue bringing recognition to Tamil Nadu and India.

Manisha's achievement highlights the contribution of Indian para athletes at the international level and the growing recognition of their performances. The state government's reward also acknowledges her efforts in representing India at the Asian Para Games.

Vijay reiterated his best wishes to Manisha and the Indian team, hoping that their performances would motivate more young people to take up competitive sports and work towards representing the country at major international events.

DID YOU KNOW?
Manisha's partner in the mixed doubles, Pramod Bhagat, is a Paralympic champion.

₹30 lakh The Tamil Nadu government's reward for her bronze at the Asian Para Games, announced by Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay
MIXED DOUBLES SL3-SU5 BRONZE, WITH PRAMOD BHAGAT

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