

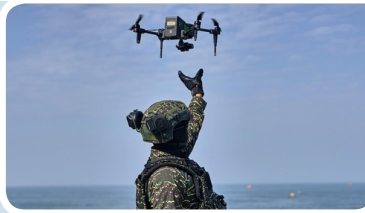


Tata Sons leadership dispute raises listing questions

P7

P13

Taiwan officials affirm US support amid delayed 'Arms Package'



P14

India could advance if rain washes out quarterfinal



10 YEARS OF SURGICAL STRIKES

TERRORISM WILL FACE DECISIVE RESPONSE: PM

Modi says Uri surgical strike set bold example of India's counter-terror policy.

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday described the 2016 surgical strikes as a decisive response to terrorism that set a "bold new example" of India's counter-terrorism policy before the world.

In his monthly radio broadcast, Mann Ki Baat, marking the approaching 10th anniversary of the operation, Modi said the Indian Army crossed the Line of Control on the night of September 28-29, 2016, to target terrorist hide-outs in Pakistan. The action followed the Uri Army camp attack, in which 18 soldiers were killed.

"The surgical strike boldly demonstrated to the entire world a new example of India's counter-terrorism policy," he said, adding that the country had made it clear that terrorism would be dealt with strongly and decisively.

PM Modi asserted that India follows a zero-tolerance approach towards terrorism. Over the past decade, from the Balakot air strike to Operation Sindoor, India has repeatedly sent the message that any attempt by terrorists to harm the nation will meet a befitting response.

Operation Sindoor, launched

Excerpt from PM's speech

2016 surgical strikes: PM Modi recalled the cross-border action carried out by the Indian Army on September 28-29, 2016, noting it demonstrated a bold new paradigm in India's counter-terrorism policy.

Decisive actions: He highlighted that over the past decade, operations ranging from the Balakot airstrike to Operation Sindoor have shown that hostile actions against India will face a befitting response.

National security: The PM reiterated that the nation's security apparatus remains firm, ensuring that those who sponsor or spread terror face severe deterrence.



Over the past decade, from the Balakot air strike to Operation Sindoor, India has repeatedly sent the message that any attempt by terrorists to harm the nation will meet a befitting response.

-Narendra Modi, PM

Tribute to Ashok Singhal He paid tribute to Vishwa Hindu Parishad leader Ashok Singhal on his birth centenary, highlighting Singhal's fight against social discrimination alongside the Ram Mandir movement.

Modi referred to the Somnath Swabhimana Parv, noting that a thousand years after Mahmud of Ghazni's 1026 attack on the temple, Somnath stands restored in grandeur while its destroyers have vanished.

Hails youth-led initiatives under Swachhata hi Sewa Ahead of Mahatma Gandhi's birth anniversary on October 2, he underlined the importance of cleanliness. He cited youth-led initiatives to clean rivers in Madhya Pradesh, restore stepwells in Andhra Pradesh, clean beaches in Mumbai, promote waste segregation in Delhi and carry out market clean-ups in West Bengal under the spirit of Swachhata hi Sewa.

Vote theft concerns raised by Rahul, Kharge turned out to be true: CM

BENGALURU

Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Sunday said the concerns raised by Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi over alleged 'vote theft' had turned out to be true. The party would discuss its next course of action at the Congress Working Committee meeting, he added.

Speaking to reporters here, Shivakumar said the issue had brought the functioning of the Election Commission under scrutiny and that an all-party meeting had also been called to discuss the way forward.

"Whatever Rahul Gandhi and Kharge sahib had said has now turned out to be true. I have come to discuss what our road-map should be on this issue. The entire country has become aware of it. So, it is becoming clear that the elections were conducted with a lot of irregularities."

He said the Congress leadership had called a CWC meeting on the issue and that opposition parties would subsequently meet to discuss the matter.

On the BJP's criticism that the Congress was raising the issue out of frustration over its electoral defeat, he said the EC itself had raised issues similar

to those flagged by the Congress. "What we said, the Election Commission itself has said, hasn't it? What is democracy? Majority. In a majority decision, two of them had already said, 'What you are doing is not right, what you are doing is not correct.' They have patched things up, brought them back, adjusted things and now seated them together," he said.

On the appointment of chairpersons to boards and corporations in the state, Shivakumar said the matter had already been decided in Delhi. "All that has already been decided in Delhi. We have decided that all the senior MLAs should be ac-

commodated. The workers will also be accommodated soon," he said.

Ministerial berths to women When asked about giving ministerial berths to women, he said the matter would be discussed during his next visit to Delhi.

On farmers blocking roads at Byramangala over land acquisition for the proposed Bidadi township near Ramanagera in Bengaluru South district, he said no one was being forced to part with their land. "I am asking people not to give land to anyone. We are not exerting pressure on anyone. I don't have any such requirement."



AEE missing case: 'We will bring him back'

On the disappearance of an Assistant Executive Engineer (AEE) in Gadag, Shivakumar said there were already complaints against the official and an investigation was underway. "There is a person called Naik in Gadag district. He has given a complaint twice or thrice. An investigation into that is going on. There are allegations that he was not properly carrying out his work as required under the law. He was not visiting the sites," he said. Shivakumar said the official had allegedly gone missing on an earlier occasion as well and had been traced to places including Ajmer and Hyderabad. "Earlier also, he escaped and went away in a similar manner. He had gone missing for around ten or twelve days and was eventually brought back. Even now, he has gone to Ajmer, Hyderabad and other places. Last time, he was brought back from Ajmer," he said. He said officials had been instructed to maintain video records of works before and after their execution to prevent fraudulent billing. "Whenever anyone undertakes work, we have instructed them to make a video. It should be recorded at the beginning and again after the work is completed, which he was not doing," Shivakumar said. "We are tracing him. His movement has been traced from Hyderabad and elsewhere. We will bring him back," he added.

Regret supporting Bihar govt: Chirag Paswan

PATNA: In a significant development that may have wide political ramifications, Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) president and Union Minister Chirag Paswan has castigated the Samrat Choudhary-headed NDA government in Bihar over the deteriorating law and order situation in the state, particularly the rise in crimes against women.

Chirag, who is part of the NDA in Bihar as well as at the Centre, expressed his dismay over the series of molestation cases being reported from across the state. "It appears that the state administration has completely failed to protect the people of Bihar," lamented Chirag here on Sunday. "I regret supporting a government where there is no control over crime or criminals. I will again make a fervent appeal to the Chief Minister to tighten the screws and firm up the administration so that strict action is taken against criminals. Otherwise, if such lawlessness in the state remains unabated, it will have far-reaching consequences in the days to come," said Chirag, the three-term Lok Sabha member from Bihar and son of former Union Minister late Ram Vilas Paswan, during his interaction with media persons.

Min: Guarantee schemes made finances harder to manage

HC Balakrishna, who holds the municipal administration portfolio, said the govt had to balance its welfare commitments with expenditure on salaries and development works amid financial constraints.

RAMANAGARA

Karnataka Minister HC Balakrishna said that the government would have found it easier to manage its finances had it not introduced the five guarantee schemes, as he sought the understanding of persons with disabilities protesting here over various demands.

Balakrishna, who holds the municipal administration portfolio, said the government had to balance its welfare commitments with expenditure on salaries and development works amid financial constraints.

"If we did not have these guarantees, perhaps all these things would not have appeared to us to be such major problems. It would have been easy for us to do all this. But we have to run the government. Everything must be managed within the system and within the budget," he told the protesters on Saturday night.

"We have given these guar-



If we did not have these guarantees, perhaps all these things would not have appeared to us to be such major problems. It would have been easy for us to do all this.

-HC Balakrishna, Municipal Administration Minister

antees for the welfare of the people. If there is a drought, we have to provide financial assistance to farmers, and they too stage protests," he said.

He said even those availing themselves of the guarantee schemes were also staging protests. "We are caught in the middle of all these problems and struggling."

He, however, clarified that the government or CM had no intention of stopping the implementation of the guarantees.

"But look at how the financial system is functioning today. We have to manage everything, pay salaries and undertake development works. All these are smaller issues."

He said he understood the

Minister's statement in a nutshell

HC Balakrishna made the statement while addressing persons with disabilities, who were staging a protest demanding various facilities in Ramanagara.

Admitted financial flexibility is constrained due to the high cost of welfare guarantees.

Explained that state government is forced to juggle massive welfare payouts alongside regular expenditures like employee salaries and infrastructure development works.

Clarified that his comments were not meant to dismiss the grievances of the protesters, but rather to highlight the practical difficulties of operating within a tight fiscal budget.

Assured the public that despite the fiscal strain, the government has no intention of scrapping or stopping the core welfare programmes.

challenges faced by the protesters but urged them to also consider the government's financial limitations.

"We have our limitations as well."

He appealed to the protesters to understand the government's position and not view its explanation of the financial constraints as an attempt to cause them hardship.

"Please do not misunderstand this as though we are causing you trouble and telling you all this before you. That would be a wrong way of looking at it," Balakrishna said.

MASSIVE AVALANCHE HITS NEPAL'S HIMLUNG HIMAL PEAK, 12 MISSING

KATHMANDU

At least 12 people, including climbers, went missing on Sunday after an avalanche struck the Himlung Himal peak in Nepal's Manang district, police said.

The avalanche at the base camp of the 7,126 metre Himlung Himal peak in the Nar Phu area buried a tent where nine climbers and 13 support staff, were taking shelter.

Around a dozen people are missing after the incident, said Deputy Superintendent of Police of the Armed Police Force Shailendra Thapa.



Some human casualties are also feared in the incident, Thapa said, highlighting that all those missing are Nepali nationals. A helicopter has been dispatched to the incident site for a rescue operation, and further information is awaited, he said.

The missing belong to Himalayan Holidays Nepal (HHN) and Imagine Nepal

QUICK READ

Rain fury continues in UP as death toll rises to 58

Lucknow: Widespread heavy rains continued to batter parts of Uttar Pradesh, disrupting normal life, even as the death toll in the current spell of rains rose to 58 in incidents of lightning, house and wall collapses. Light to heavy rains were predicted in several districts in the state on Sunday as well, the Met department here said. Several major towns, including Lucknow, Gorakhpur, Prayagraj and Varanasi, continued to face large-scale waterlogging, with reports of rainwater entering the homes of residents in many localities. CM Yogi Adityanath has directed officials to assess the damage to standing crops and the loss of livestock and provide succour to the affected people.

UK police arrest several under Explosives Act near US air base

FAIRFORD: British police arrested five men near a US air base on suspicion of explosive and terrorism offences on Sunday after a tip-off that three vans had been heading to the military airfield which has been used to strike Iran. Counter terrorism detectives leading the investigation said police had received a call about three suspicious vehicles which appeared to be travelling towards RAF Fairford in the west of England in the early hours of Sunday. The British government, which has given authorisation to the US to use bombers based at Fairford to strike Iranian missile sites that were attacking ships in Hormuz, said PM Andy Burnham was being updated on the incident.

WORLD TOURISM DAY

Use AI to make tourism more inclusive, sustainable, meaningful: KJ George

BENGALURU

Energy and Tourism Minister KJ George said on Sunday that Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital technology should go beyond simply making tourism "smart" and be used to make the sector more inclusive, sustainable and meaningful.

Speaking at the World Tourism Day 2026 celebrations, where he joined Chief Minister DK Shivakumar in presenting the Karnataka Tourism Awards,

the Minister said tourism must move beyond digital marketing towards a fully connected digital ecosystem that improves the entire visitor experience.

"We should use Artificial Intelligence not merely to make tourism smarter, but to make it more inclusive, sustainable and meaningful. The benefits of this transformation must reach not only large companies, but also homestay owners, tourist guides, artisans, small entrepreneurs and young

people," he said.

"AI-based tourism services could help visitors create personalised itineraries based on their interests, travel duration and requirements, provide multilingual information and connect them with recognised tourism service providers. The Tourism Department is working towards developing such technology-driven solutions," the Minister said.

AI and data analytics could also help the Department un-



derstand visitor movement, seasonal demand, destination popularity, accommodation patterns and infrastructure requirements, enabling evidence-based destination planning and management.

He said Bengaluru's strong technology, startup and research ecosystem could be leveraged to develop solutions for smart destinations, multilingual tourism services, virtual experiences, visitor-flow management and sustainable tourism.

He also stressed the need to digitally empower small hotels, homestays, guides, transport operators, artisans and local entrepreneurs through training and technology support.

First Karnataka tourism awards presented

For the first time, the Karnataka Tourism Awards were presented across 35 categories, recognising excellence and contribution across different segments of the tourism industry. Awardees represented areas including hospitality, tour operations, tourist guiding, startups, rural tourism, sustainable initiatives, heritage destinations and allied sectors. Congratulating the award winners, George said Karnataka's next phase of tourism growth would require close collaboration between government, industry, technology companies, academic institutions and local communities.

KAC, ASI's Bidar Sub-Circle bag awards

Department of Tourism Studies (UG/PG) of Karnataka Arts College (KAC) under Karnatak University, Dharwad, won the Best Educational Institute in Tourism Sector award while Archaeological Survey of India's (ASI) Bidar Sub-Circle, Hampi, bagged the Best Tourism-Friendly Heritage Monument award.

Quick Read

H1N1 cases rise in Bengaluru; doctors urge caution

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Bengaluru is witnessing a seasonal rise in flu-like illnesses, with H1N1 cases also increasing. Private hospitals and diagnostic centres report more positive cases compared to last year, though doctors say severe infections and hospitalisations remain low. ICMR has clarified that the circulating virus is the seasonal influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 strain and not a new or unusually dangerous variant. Dr K Krishnamurthy of KK Clinic said changing weather, humidity, rainfall, crowded indoor spaces and poor ventilation were favouring respiratory infections. Dr Sridhar Srinivasan G of Vasavi Hospitals advised mask use and hand hygiene. Doctors urged people to seek medical advice for persistent fever and avoid self-medication.

State targets lower maternal deaths

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Health and Family Welfare Department has launched discussions under the SUMAN Roadmap 2030 to prevent maternal deaths and lower Karnataka's Maternal Mortality Ratio from 73 to below 70 per one lakh live births. The plan covers care before and during pregnancy, childbirth and the post-delivery period, with focus on high-risk pregnancies, timely referrals, emergency care and blood availability. Under the Zero Maternal Death Gram Panchayat campaign, local bodies will identify pregnant women, link them to health services, arrange transport and support follow-up. Officials will focus on postpartum haemorrhage, hypertension and sepsis. Districts will prepare action plans, while maternal death reviews will guide corrective measures.

Hariprasad says Bihar strategy won't work in K'taka

Karnataka Congress president on Sunday questioned the EC's functioning and demanded transparency over concerns raised about the poll process.

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Karnataka Congress president B.K. Hariprasad on Sunday alleged that the BJP could not replicate in Karnataka what he described as its Bihar electoral strategy through the Election Commission, and called for transparent answers to questions raised over the poll panel's functioning. Hariprasad said the Congress had raised concerns about the Election Commission's functioning and that such questions could not be addressed through slogans or political counterattacks. He alleged that constitutional institutions were compromising their independence, while the BJP was attempting to divert attention by targeting Congress leader Rahul Gandhi. Referring to reported objections raised by Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi, Hariprasad demanded that Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar provide transparent answers to the issues surrounding the poll panel's decisions. The Election Commission has maintained that its decisions, including those



"If you have the courage of truth, present the facts, investigate the allegations, and if the records are clean, every question should receive a transparent answer."

-B.K. Hariprasad, KPCC Chief

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POLITICAL EXCHANGE

The dispute has intensified around the Election Commission's Special Intensive Revision exercise. Congress leaders have alleged irregularities and questioned the functioning of the three-member poll panel. The Election Commission, however, has said its decisions were taken collectively and that differences or observations during deliberations did not mean decisions were taken unilaterally. Congress has continued to demand explanations and an independent examination of its concerns.

related to the Special Intensive Revision (SIR), were taken collectively and that differing views formed part of its deliberative process. He also criticised Kerala BJP president Rajeev Chandrasekhar's demand for an apology from Rahul Gandhi over his criticism of the Election Commission, saying the issue could not be diverted by

EC CONTROVERSY

- **SIR:** Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls
- **Key issue:** Alleged differences within EC
- **Congress demand:** Transparent response from poll panel
- **CEC:** Gyanesh Kumar
- **Commissioners named:** Sukhbir Singh Sandhu, Vivek Joshi
- **EC position:** Decisions taken collectively

targeting the person who raised the questions. Hariprasad further alleged that inducements were offered to legislators during the 2006 and 2012 Rajya Sabha elections and sought an investigation into Chandrasekhar's tenure on the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence. These were allegations made by Hariprasad.

₹30 lakh deal alleged to secure veterinary officer post

CID investigation into KPSC veterinary officer recruitment irregularities has reportedly uncovered an alleged ₹30 lakh deal involving candidates.

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The CID, which is investigating alleged irregularities in the Karnataka Public Service Commission (KPSC) recruitment of veterinary officers, has reportedly uncovered details of an alleged ₹30 lakh deal to secure a government post for a candidate from Bidar district. According to the report, Pavan, who was allegedly associated with Basavaraj Kannale, had sought Kannale's help to secure a veterinary officer post for his friend. The candidate's family was reportedly financially weak and unable to arrange the amount allegedly demanded for the post. Pavan and the candidate were said to share a close friendship. Pavan allegedly approached Kannale seeking help to get his friend the post without payment. However, Kannale reportedly rejected the request, saying that he could not secure government employment for anyone free of cost.

Following this, Pavan allegedly entered into a ₹30 lakh deal with another candidate from Bidar district to arrange the post for his friend. The investigation reportedly found that ₹17 lakh from the alleged ₹30 lakh deal was paid to Kannale in the name of the candidate involved in the arrangement. The CID is now reportedly searching for Pavan to question him about the alleged



CID PROBE

The CID is investigating alleged irregularities in the recruitment of veterinary officers through the KPSC. The probe is examining alleged financial transactions and the possible involvement of candidates and intermediaries. Investigators are also seeking to establish how the alleged payments were made and whether they influenced the recruitment process. The allegations have not been established in court, and further investigation is under way.

₹30 LAKH ALLEGED DEAL

- Recruitment: **Veterinary officers**
- Agency: **KPSC**
- Location: **Bidar district**
- Alleged deal: **₹30 lakh**
- Amount allegedly paid: **₹17 lakh**
- Person being searched: **Pavan**
- Investigation: **CID**

transaction and his role in the recruitment irregularities. The investigation is expected to establish the identities of those involved, trace the alleged flow of money and determine how the recruitment process was allegedly manipulated. The allegations are part of an ongoing investigation, and the role of each person involved remains subject to further inquiry.

Pradosh to record statement as approver today in Renukaswamy murder case

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Pradosh S. Rao, one of the key accused in the Renukaswamy murder case, is scheduled to officially record his statement as an approver on Monday (September 28). Pradosh will appear before the 59th CCH court today and formally record before the judge his statement regarding the facts and circumstances surrounding the day of the murder. He has already provided the investigating officers in writing with all the information known to him and is now required to formally record his statement before the court. The Special Public Prosecutor (SPP) will question approver Pradosh at length today and place on record all the important information and evidence in his possession relating to the case. This will be followed by cross-examination by lawyers representing the other accused. Pradosh will have to answer

APPROVER STATEMENT

- Accused:** Pradosh S. Rao
- Court:** 59th CCH Court, Bengaluru
- Statement:** To be recorded as an approver
- Date:** September 28
- Next step:** Defence cross-examination
- Key parties:** Darshan Thoogudeepa, Pavithra Gowda and other accused



"The approver will have to answer questions from the lawyers representing all the accused during cross-examination."

-Special Public Prosecutor

WHAT IS AN APPROVER?

An approver is an accused person who agrees to provide evidence for the prosecution in a criminal case, subject to the conditions prescribed under law. Such a witness may disclose information about the alleged offence and the involvement of other accused. The evidence given by an approver is subject to scrutiny during cross-examination and is ultimately assessed by the court along with other evidence.

Court seeking a one-week postponement of the process of recording Pradosh's statement as an approver.

questions from the lawyers representing all the accused, including key accused actor Darshan Thoogudeepa and Pavithra Gowda. His statement as an approver is being closely watched by the defence of Darshan and Pavithra Gowda. Pradosh is likely to disclose before the court the alleged roles played by the other accused in the murder, which could be significant for the next stage of the trial. The matter has attracted further attention as Darshan's lawyers have already decided to approach the Supreme

MILK PRICE HIKE MAY PUSH UP HOTEL, BAKERY RATES

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Hotels and bakeries in Bengaluru are weighing possible price increases if the proposed hike in Nandini milk prices is steep, with coffee and tea likely to be among the first items affected. Sixteen milk unions in Karnataka have sought an increase in Nandini milk prices, citing a sharp rise in production and management

costs. The proposed hike has raised concerns among hotels and bakeries already facing higher prices of sugar, jaggery, rice, pulses and other essential inputs. Hotels in Bengaluru consume around 5-6 lakh litres of Nandini milk every day. The Bruhat Bengaluru Hotels Association has urged the Karnataka Milk Federation (KMF) and the government to avoid a steep one-

time increase and instead consider raising the price by ₹2-3 per litre in stages. PC Rao, honorary president of the Bruhat Bengaluru Hotels Association, said most hotels in Bengaluru use Nandini milk and ghee and that a large increase could put additional pressure on the industry. "Almost all hotels in Bengaluru use Nandini milk and ghee. It is being said that the

price of milk will increase by ₹8-10 per litre and we have already said that this should be done in stages," PC Rao said. He said a ₹2-3 increase would allow hotels to absorb the additional cost without immediately raising coffee and tea prices. However, a hike of ₹8-10 per litre could

force hotels to revise their prices. The impact could extend to curd, butter, ghee and paneer, besides sweets and bakery products. Bakery associations and small entrepreneurs are also discussing measures to limit the burden on consumers while managing rising input costs.



16.51 lakh applications for 11,249 State jobs

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Karnataka Examinations Authority (KEA) has received 16,51,210 applications for 11,249 government posts notified across 15 departments, reflecting intense competition among job aspirants in the State. Between June 5 and September 9, the KEA invited applications for vacancies in departments including Police, Revenue, Horticulture, Law and Municipal Administration. The figures indicate that an average of 146 candidates are competing for every post. Of the total applications, 3,46,511 were submitted for 2,544 posts reserved for the Kalyana Karnataka region, while 13,04,699 applications were received for 8,705 posts under the Residual Parent Cadre covering the rest of Karnataka. The Revenue Department received the highest number



of applications, with 4,92,534 candidates applying for 572 Village Administrative Officer posts. The 3,991 Civil Police Constable vacancies attracted 4,54,532 applications. In contrast, some posts under the Karnataka Residential Educational Institutions Society received relatively fewer applications. The 17 Graduate Drawing Teacher posts attracted 428 applications, while 581 candidates applied for 17 Diploma Drawing Teacher posts. The KEA has also received 1,27,975 appli-

cations for the Karnataka State Eligibility Test (KSET). The surge in applications comes after a prolonged gap in large-scale government recruitment. Apart from recruitment of around 15,000 Graduate Primary Teachers and 2,500 Assistant Professors, there had been limited major recruitment since 2018. Recruitment was further disrupted after the COVID-19 pandemic and delayed by court cases. KEA Executive Director H. Prasanna said four more de-

LONG WAIT FOR JOBS

A prolonged gap in major government recruitment has contributed to the surge in applications. Recruitment was disrupted after the COVID-19 pandemic and delayed by court-related issues, including internal reservation. The State government has announced plans to fill around 75,000 government posts over the next two years, while departments are increasingly using the KEA to conduct recruitment.

partments had submitted proposals to fill 9,340 posts and notifications would be issued soon.

BMTC faces salary payment uncertainty amid financial crunch

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Salary payments for around 27,000 BMTC employees, including drivers, conductors, mechanics, officers and security personnel, could face delays this month amid an alleged financial crunch in the corporation, transport employees' union leader Jagadish said on Sunday. Speaking to reporters, Jagadish said the Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation requires around ₹102 crore every month to meet its salary bill. However, he claimed that a sharp decline in bus revenue collections had left the corporation short of funds to make the payments. He said employees are normally paid on different dates. Security personnel receive their salaries on the first of every month, while drivers, conductors and mechanics are



paid on the sixth and officers on the seventh. "Due to the present financial crisis, the salary payment dates may be postponed this month or employees may receive only half their salaries," Jagadish said. He also attributed part of the corporation's financial difficulties to the implementation of the Shakti scheme, under which women are provided free travel on eligible state-run buses. Jagadish urged the state government to release ₹6,500 crore reportedly due to the four state transport corpora-

tions under the scheme. He said the release of the pending amount would help ease the financial pressure on the corporations. He also referred to Transport Minister Byrathi Suresh's recent statement that the four transport corporations had collectively incurred losses of around ₹8,000 crore. The minister had also said that fare revision was necessary and that the corporations were facing difficulties in paying salaries, Jagadish claimed. Meanwhile, Jagadish alleged that BMTC had accumulated dues of around ₹600 crore to diesel suppliers. He further claimed that the corporation had not purchased essential spare parts for buses for the past three months. The claims come amid continuing financial pressures on Karnataka's state-run transport corporations.

CH Observer

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Unchecked garbage dumps, broken footpaths opening into gutters, and severe potholes plague Seshadripuram's key corridors, including Seshadripuram 1st Main Road and North Park Road. Endangering students, pedestrians, and motorists near major educational and recreational landmarks, residents and commuters are urgently demanding immediate municipal intervention and permanent safety fixes.

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Mixed construction debris and garbage dumped right in front of Apoorva Bakery—at the busy Link Road and Seshadripuram 1st Main Road intersection—creates an unacceptable public eyesore and health hazard.



A broken footpath on Seshadripuram 1st Main Road, located behind Seshadripuram Law College, dangerously leads straight into an open gutter. Surrounded by schools, colleges, and residences, residents demand an immediate fix before a pedestrian is seriously injured in the dark.



Commuters and residents near Apoorva Bakery on Seshadripuram 1st Main Road decry the hazardous link road intersection. Poor lighting and severe potholes create major crash risks, endangering pedestrians and motorists alike, especially during rain.



An illegal garbage dump on North Park Road right next to the Seshadripuram Post Office creates a severe public health hazard. Plagued by an unbearable stench, the polluted spot sits right beside a BBMP washroom, two temples, a swimming pool, an indoor stadium, and Seshadripuram Composite College, prompting urgent student demands for a permanent fix.

BNCC Chief Sunil Kumar inspects civic works

BNCC Commissioner Pommala Sunil Kumar inspected civic amenities, ordering accelerated stormwater projects and improved sanitation micro-plans.

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Bengaluru North City Corporation Commissioner Pommala Sunil Kumar conducted an extensive inspection tour across several urban neighborhoods to evaluate local civic amenities and ongoing infrastructure projects. During his field visits, the commissioner engaged directly with neighborhood residents, senior citizens, and members of local welfare associations to understand their grievances and document essential community requirements.

Addressing sanitation concerns near Mosques Road Junction in Pulikeshi Nagar, Commissioner Kumar criticized the current street cleaning arrangements and ordered officials to formulate detailed micro-plans by September 29. He emphasized that proper follow-up mechanisms must be established to ensure thorough and regular cleanliness operations across all municipal wards.

In a subsequent meeting with the North East Bengaluru Resident Welfare Association, discussions centered on stalled infrastructure projects.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Street Sweeping Micro-Plan:** Inspecting the Mosques Road junction in Pulikeshi Nagar over inadequate cleanliness, the Commissioner ordered a dedicated micro-plan to be finalized and implemented by September 29.
- Road and Drain Acceleration:** Reviewing representations from the North East Bengaluru RWA, he directed engineers to fast-track crucial stormwater drain and road upgrading projects along Hutchins Road and Wheeler Extension.
- Elevated Rotary Flyover:** Authorities fast-tracked land acquisition procedures for the sanctioned Rotary Flyover project connecting Maruthi Seva Nagar, SMVT Baiyappanahalli Railway Station, Kammanahalli, and Banaswadi.
- Underpass Widening Initiative:** Addressing traffic bottlenecks at the Charles School underpass—which currently restricts four-wheeler movement—officials were instructed to coordinate with K-RIDE and consult Minister K.J. George for immediate expansion steps.

Officials must regularly review project progress and set appropriate timelines to ensure all civic works meet strict quality standards," Commissioner Pommala Sunil Kumar emphasized.

The commissioner directed engineering teams to accelerate pending stormwater drain construction along Hutchins Road and Wheeler Extension Road. He stressed that project supervisors must set strict implementation timelines, maintain high quality standards, and conduct regular progress reviews to prevent bureaucratic delays.

Furthermore, the commissioner reviewed major region-

al transit initiatives, including the approved Rotary Flyover Project connecting Maruthi Seva Nagar, Baiyappanahalli railway terminal, Kammanahalli, and Banaswadi. Local officials were instructed to expedite pending land acquisition procedures so that heavy construction can commence without further interruption.

Authorities also discussed plans to widen the congested underpass near Charles School to allow four-wheeler traffic, coordinating closely with railway infrastructure agencies and local ministerial representatives.



Local residents and community leaders expressed cautious optimism following the commissioner's field inspection and direct administrative assurances. Municipal officials reiterated their commitment to resolving urban bottlenecks and improving public infrastructure standards across the city. As administrative deadlines approach, citizens await timely execution of these announced civic upgrades.

Varthur-Gunjur corridor highlights urban planning, infrastructure deficit
CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The crippling traffic gridlock along Bengaluru's Varthur-Gunjur corridor has sparked urgent discussions among urban planners regarding the dangers of unchecked municipal expansion. Experts point out that the vital state highway, once designed for modest local transit, now struggles under the immense pressure of massive residential complexes, corporate tech parks, and numerous educational institutions. With thousands of vehicles entering narrow stretches simultaneously during peak morning hours, the region has become a glaring symbol of urban development outpacing basic infrastructure.

Urban planning specialists emphasize that the daily commuting nightmare experienced by residents is symptomatic of broader systemic planning failures across the metropolis. Rapid population influx and outward suburban growth occurred decades ahead of road network expansions, leaving narrow corridors completely overwhelmed. Commuters frequently report spending hours navigating short distances filled with deep potholes and severe bottlenecks, forcing frustrated local residents to occasionally take emergency road repairs into their own hands.

Government directs KRDCL to prioritize asphaltting

BENGALURU

Following severe public backlash over dismal transport infrastructure, state authorities have ordered the Karnataka Road Development Corporation Limited to prioritize immediate asphaltting on Varthur Road. The 9-kilometer stretch connecting Varthur Kodi and Sarjapur Road recently sparked widespread outrage after school buses and commuter vehicles remained trapped in crippling traffic gridlock for hours. Officials confirmed that the vital transit artery remains under corporate maintenance while falling within municipal jurisdiction limits.

The emergency repair directive comes on the heels of severe logistical bottlenecks that slowed down infrastructural improvements across the metropolis. Industry sources explained that recent interstate transport restrictions on raw aggregates from neighboring states, combined with

a local stone crusher strike, severely disrupted material supplies. However, with the strike now officially resolved, municipal authorities have instructed contractors to source necessary construction aggregates from alternative locations and commence road repairs immediately.

Originally, authorities planned to asphalt and widen the state highway only after constructing an approved elevated corridor. Due to the deplorable condition of the road surface, officials altered timelines to demand urgent resurfacing before flyover construction begins. Local resi-

dents welcomed the intervention but emphasized that repairing interior feeder roads in densely populated areas like Gunjur and Panathur remains equally critical for resolving daily commuting nightmares.

Municipal representatives announced comprehensive plans to upgrade major arterial connectors through advanced white-topping and resurfacing projects over the coming months. Additionally, city corporations plan to coordinate closely with traffic enforcement units to regulate heavy vehicle movement during peak hours once repairs conclude.



Greater Bengaluru Authority revises property taxes

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Greater Bengaluru Authority has aggressively ramped up fiscal enforcement, pushing total property tax revision cases to 37,216 across the metropolis. Municipal documents reveal that authorities added over 13,000 new revision cases during the current financial year up to August-end. Officials explained that tightening tax collections

has become a top priority as newly restructured city corporations' work urgently to expand internal revenue streams.

Administrative tightening follows widespread identification of properties declaring incorrect measurements, usage types, or structural details. Last financial year, authorities flagged nearly twenty-four thousand discrepant properties with targeted recovery dues

exceeding one hundred ninety crore rupees. However, actual revenue recovery remains relatively low, with authorities collecting just over twelve crore rupees from a fraction of those cases so far. Regional breakdowns show that western municipal zones recorded the highest financial recovery and total pending revision cases, followed closely by southern and central administrative divisions.

UNCLOGGING THE CORRIDOR

Authority proposes widening Gunjur road section

BENGALURU

Local authorities in Bengaluru have announced plans to acquire eight to ten properties along Gunjur Road to ease chronic traffic congestion. The decision follows widespread public anger after viral footage showed school buses and commuter vehicles trapped in massive gridlock for hours. Commuters traveling through the Whitefield corridor have frequently reported spending up to two hours covering short distances due to severe bottlenecks and deteriorated road conditions.

Municipal officials under the Greater Bengaluru Authority confirmed that widen-

ing the narrow corridor is essential for restoring smooth traffic movement. However, dense commercial and residential structures tightly flank the roadway, leaving very little open land for expansion. Consequently, the East City Corporation and higher administrative bodies are actively reviewing property acquisition strategies to clear critical pinch points along the route. Affected property owners will receive financial compensation once formal acquisition approvals and funding mechanisms are finalized by state authorities.

Senior civic officials inspected the troubled corridor to assess ground realities and



map out immediate repair works. While long-term widening plans move through administrative channels, road maintenance crews have been instructed to fill hazardous

potholes immediately. These temporary fixes aim to stabilize traffic flow at the most congested junctions where vehicles currently crawl at walking speeds.

Furthermore, infrastructural upgrades are being coordinated alongside ongoing construction projects by regional development agencies, including overpass developments nearby.

Transport planners emphasize that improving internal feeder roads is just as critical as upgrading major highways to support the surging population in eastern suburban neighborhoods.

As civic agencies finalize funding and jurisdictional responsibilities for land acquisition, local residents remain hopeful that these targeted interventions will finally resolve daily commuting delays.

Quick Read

Man held for stealing gadgets from Bengaluru PGs

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Avalahalli police have arrested B Shivaji, 24, from Andhra Pradesh for allegedly stealing electronic devices from paying guest (PG) accommodations in Mandur and Chikkagubbi areas. Police said the accused targeted rooms of employees and students, allegedly entering late at night or early morning when doors were left unlocked. He reportedly stole mobile phones and laptops kept on tables or charging points. Police recovered 12 mobile phones and seven laptops, including iPhones, worth more than Rs 10 lakh from him. The accused was traced after police examined CCTV footage following complaints from PG residents. A case has been registered and further investigation is under way. Police advised residents to keep doors securely locked.

Sewage flow threatens Shikaripalya Lake

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Inadequate underground drainage (UGD) infrastructure in the Shikaripalya Lake catchment in Anekal is a major cause of sewage pollution, according to the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB). In an affidavit to the National Green Tribunal, the Board said sewage was flowing through storm-water drains and could enter the lake due to the absence of a proper UGD network. An inspection found sewage flowing through a diversion channel near the lake. The KSPCB called for a UGD network linked to a terminal sewage treatment plant (STP). Rapid urbanisation around Hulimangala Gram Panchayat has increased sewage generation. The Board issued notices to six apartment complexes and an educational institution for allegedly discharging untreated sewage.



Give milk producers Rs 10 incentive as sixth guarantee: Kumaraswamy

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy has urged the State government to increase the incentive for milk-producing farmers from the existing Rs 5 to Rs 10 per litre, describing it as a possible sixth guarantee.

Reacting to the recent increase in milk prices, Kumaraswamy said the government should raise the incentive to Rs 10-Rs 15 without increasing the burden on consumers or farmers. He questioned the government's spending priorities and said more support should be extended to milk producers.

Kumaraswamy also criticised the State government's proposal to take an all-party delegation to the Centre over the drought issue.

"Why take an all-party delegation on the drought issue? There will be expenses for flights and five-star hotels. Can't someone simply go and hold discussions?" he asked.

He said drought relief

Central team to visit Karnataka drought-hit areas

A central team will visit Karnataka next week to assess drought conditions and examine the state government's relief request.

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

A central team is expected to visit Karnataka from October 3 to 6 to assess the prevailing drought situation and inspect selected affected areas.

The team will be headed by Ajit Kumar Sahu, Joint Secretary in the Union Agriculture Department. Before beginning its field visit, the team is expected to meet the Chief Minister and collect details and data on drought-affected taluks identified by the state government.

The state government has already prepared a list of drought-hit taluks and is expected to submit the details to the central team. The team will subsequently visit select districts and taluks to assess the situation on the ground. Karnataka has sought



The State Government has sought Rs 3,705 crore from the Centre as drought relief.

-D.K. Shivakumar, Chief Minister

financial assistance from the Centre to address the drought situation. Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking Rs 3,705 crore as drought relief.

DROUGHT ASSESSMENT

The central team will examine drought conditions in selected districts and taluks after reviewing data supplied by Karnataka. The state has declared 177 taluks drought-hit so far, while further ground-level verification could increase the number. The team's observations will be compiled into a report for the Centre. Karnataka has sought Rs 3,705 crore in relief to address the impact of drought.

At present, 177 taluks have been declared drought-hit in the State. The number is likely to increase following further ground-level assessments, with the state government indicating that it could cross 200.

The central team will study the impact of the drought, including the situation in the affected areas, based on the

- CENTRAL TEAM VISIT**
- **Visit:** October 3-6
 - **Team head:** Ajit Kumar Sahu
 - **Department:** Union Agriculture Department
 - **Drought-hit taluks:** 177
 - **Relief sought:** Rs 3,705 cr
 - **Possible count:** Over 200 taluks after ground assessment

information provided by the state government and its field observations.

Following the assessment, the team is expected to submit a report to the Centre. The report will form part of the process for examining Karnataka's request for drought relief.

8,786 BS-III buses raise pollution concerns in K'taka

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Karnataka's four transport corporations have 8,786 BS-III buses in their combined fleet of 25,996, raising concerns over air pollution from older vehicles operating across the State.

The four corporations — BMTC, KSRTC, NWKRTC and KKRTC — are gradually phasing out buses that have completed 15 years of service. BS-III buses emit higher levels of pollutants compared to BS-VI vehicles, highlighting the need to replace older buses with cleaner alternatives.

KSRTC has 4,135 BS-III buses, while the remaining vehicles are operated by BMTC, NWKRTC and KKRTC.

BMTC has a total fleet of 6,929 buses, including 1,779 electric buses. More than 700 of its buses are reportedly nearing the stage of being scrapped. Passengers have urged the authorities to speed up the process, citing concerns over pollution caused by ageing buses.

Across the four corporations, 5,451 buses have already been scrapped during the past five years after completing their service life. The corporations have also submitted a proposal to the State government to scrap another 9,518 buses that are expected to complete 15 years by 2031-32.

The transport corporations are gradually introducing buses with lower emission levels as part of efforts to modernise their fleets. However, thousands of BS-III buses continue to operate on roads, prompting calls for faster replacement.

Social activists had approached the National Green Tribunal (NGT) in 2024 over concerns related to pollution from old public transport buses.

Missing KRIDL engineer to face detailed probe: CM

Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar said the missing KRIDL engineer would be brought back and subjected to a detailed investigation.

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar on Sunday said a detailed investigation would be conducted into the disappearance of a Karnataka Rural Infrastructure Development Limited (KRIDL) Assistant Executive Engineer in Gadag district.

Shivakumar said a local BJP MLA had sought a thorough investigation into the disappearance of the engineer. He said allegations had been raised against the official over the manner in which he discharged his duties.

The engineer has allegedly been accused of not visiting project sites and failing to make video documentation of ongoing works. According to Shivakumar, a person named Nayak had lodged complaints regarding the official on two or three occasions.

The Chief Minister also said the officer had gone missing earlier and was traced after about 15 days.

His movements have now reportedly been traced to areas around Hyderabad and Ajmer, Shivakumar said. Efforts would be made to bring him back and conduct a detailed inquiry into the alle-

“He will be brought back and a complete investigation will be conducted.”

-D.K. Shivakumar, Chief Minister

gations, he added.

Shivakumar said maintaining transparency in government development works was the responsibility of officials. The investigation is expected to examine the allegations relating to the officer's duties as well as the circumstances surrounding his disappearance.

The incident has drawn attention in Gadag amid demands for clarity regarding the engineer's whereabouts and the complaints reportedly made against him.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST OFFICER

The engineer has faced allegations of failing to visit project sites and not maintaining video documentation of development works. Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar said complaints had reportedly been submitted against the officer on two or three occasions. He also said the engineer had earlier gone missing for about 15 days before being traced. The circumstances surrounding the latest disappearance will be examined as part of the investigation.

No dispute over CM post in BJP-JDS alliance: Vijayendra

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

BJP State president BY Vijayendra has said there is no confusion or disagreement between the BJP and JDS over the chief ministerial candidate for the next Assembly election, stressing that the decision will be taken by the leadership of both parties.

Speaking after a coordination meeting between the alliance partners, Vijayendra said there was no difference of opinion with Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy and no competition between the two leaders over the CM's post.

"The decision on who will become the next Chief Minister will be taken by the leadership of the BJP and JDS," Vijayendra said.

The issue of the alliance's CM candidate had recently returned to the political discourse. Vijayendra said the matter should not be viewed as a source of disagreement between the two parties and that the alliance leadership would take an appropriate decision at the relevant time.

He also said there was no confusion over seat-sharing between the BJP and JDS.

According to him, he had discussed the matter with Kumaraswamy and both parties would sit together to deliberate on the distribution of seats.

The meeting also discussed the elections to four Legislative Council constituencies representing teachers and graduates. The BJP and JDS have decided to contest the elections together, with constituency-wise responsibilities also discussed.

The leaders sought to underline coordination between the two alliance partners ahead of the upcoming elections. Kumaraswamy said the BJP and JDS should work together with the objective of bringing an NDA government to power in the State.

The alliance partners have also discussed conducting joint political programmes and strengthening coordination at the organisational level.

The latest meeting comes amid preparations for upcoming elections and renewed efforts by the BJP and JDS leaderships to coordinate their political activities.



DRUG PRICE GAP	
Companies flagged: 254	
Regulatory authority: NPPA	
Pricing order: DPCO, 2013	
Medicine: Rs 86 ➡ MRP Rs 4,528	
Cancer drug: Rs 342 ➡ MRP Rs 3,836	
Bivatas injection: ₹ 5,850 ➡ MRP ₹ 62,690	
Cosate injection: Rs 340 ➡ MRP Rs 3,699	

purchased for Rs 86 reportedly carried an MRP of Rs 4,528, while another medicine costing Rs 160 had an MRP of Rs 7,110.

Among the other examples cited by the FDA, Cytax 100 mg, a cancer medicine, had a landing cost of Rs 342 against an MRP of Rs 3,836. Nucain 300 mcg had a landing cost of Rs 112 and an MRP of Rs 1,239. Similarly, Bivatas 400 mg injection had a landing

WHAT THE FDA SEEKS

The Karnataka FDA has asked the NPPA to examine alleged excessive trade margins charged on medicines, medical devices and consumables. It has sought appropriate price controls based on manufacturing or landing costs and a ceiling on hospital trade margins. The move follows an FDA compilation of 254 companies whose products allegedly showed substantial differences between procurement costs and MRPs charged to patients.

cost of Rs 5,850 against an MRP of Rs 62,690, while Cosate 3 MIU injection had a landing cost of Rs 340 against an MRP of Rs 3,699.

The FDA has sought appropriate pricing mechanisms based on manufacturing or landing costs for medicines, medical devices and consumables to prevent what it termed the exploitation of poor patients.

FKCCI elects new office-bearers

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Federation of Karnataka Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FKCCI) has elected its new office-bearers for 2026-27. T. Sairam Prasad has been elected president, B.P. Shashidhar senior vice-president and N. Satish vice-president.

Sairam Prasad has over three decades of business experience and has served as FKCCI vice-president and senior vice-president.

He also heads his family business, C.V. Thimmaiah and Company, active in the market since 1962.



Shashidhar, a BE graduate and owner of Kartik Industries, has been associated with FKCCI for 10 years and has chaired several committees.

Satish's election completes the new governing body.

The new office-bearers bring extensive business and industry experience to the organisation.

SIR ROW INTENSIFIES

R Ashoka hits out at Rahul Gandhi over SIR

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Leader of Opposition R Ashoka on Sunday criticised Congress leader Rahul Gandhi over his allegations concerning the Election Commission and the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.

Speaking at a joint press conference with Legislative Council Opposition Leader Chalavadi Narayanaswamy at the BJP office, Ashoka said Congress should explain why it was questioning the Election Commission and challenge the SIR process through appropriate legal channels.

Ashoka said that if the Congress believed SIR was flawed, it should seek the dissolution of the Kerala government and also state that elections in Karnataka and Telan-

gana had not been conducted properly.

He alleged that Congress was targeting the Election Commission because of its electoral setbacks. Ashoka also referred to Rahul Gandhi's criticism of the ED, Income Tax Department and CBI, saying the Election Commission was now being targeted.

The Election Commission has maintained that decisions relating to SIR were taken unanimously by the full commission.

Ashoka said he was not defending the Election Commission and maintained that those who had objections should approach the courts with evidence. He also criticised Congress over its demand for changes in the poll panel's rules.



“If SIR is not correct, dissolve the Kerala government and say that elections in Karnataka and Telangana were not conducted properly.”

- R Ashoka, Leader of Opposition

Responding to the proposed meeting in Delhi against SIR, Ashoka said the BJP would face Congress protests and claimed the party had the organisational strength to counter them. On the drought-relief

delegation, Ashoka said the BJP would not join the State government's all-party delegation seeking drought assistance. However, he said the party would participate in an all-party delegation on the Kasturirangan report.

He also criticised the Congress government over its guarantee schemes and alleged that the State's finances were under pressure.

- SIR ROW**
- **Issue:** Special Intensive Revision
 - **BJP leader:** R Ashoka
 - **Demand:** Congress to challenge SIR
 - **Poll panel:** ECI
 - **Other issue:** Drought-relief delegation
 - **Kasturirangan:** BJP willing to join delegation

Narayanaswamy separately accused Congress of opposing SIR because of concerns over changes in electoral rolls and said the Election Commission was not subordinate to any political party.

Quick Read

Koppal Gavimath Seer Visits Hindu Maha Ganapathi

Kalaburagi
The seer of Koppal Gavimath visited the Kedar-nath-style temple installed by the Hindu Maha Ganapathi Committee near the city fort and offered prayers to Maha Ganapathi. The seer performed Aarti and joined devotees in seeking the deity's blessings. He appreciated the temple's design and the special decorations arranged for the Ganeshotsava celebrations. Several dignitaries also participated in the event, including Sri Abhinava Channamalla Swamiji, seers from Gola, Tolanur and Narona. RSS Vibhag Pracharak Vijaya Mahantesha, MLA Basavaraja Mattimadav and social worker Jayashree Mattimadu.

Tiger that killed man captured in Chamarajanagar

Chamarajanagar
A tiger suspected of killing a man in Chamarajanagar taluk was captured near Tavarekattehole. The tiger had attacked farmer Basavanna of Badagalapura village on September 14 while he was working in a field at Sanegala village, killing him and consuming parts of his body. Forest officials had been searching for the animal using trained elephants and had also placed a cage trap. During the operation near Tavarekattehole, the tiger was spotted and tranquillised before being captured. It was rescued and shifted to a rehabilitation centre.

Raghavendra, Vijayendra visit Kollur Mookambika Temple

Kundapur
Shivamogga MP B.Y. Raghavendra and Karnataka BJP president B.Y. Vijayendra visited the Sri Mookambika Temple at Kollur on Sunday and offered special prayers. Baidur MLA Gururaj Ganti-hole, party leaders and others were present. Temple Executive Officer Prashanth Kumar Shetty welcomed the leaders and felicitated them on behalf of the temple administration.

Pradeep Eshwar expresses Chief Ministerial ambition

DAVANAGERE
Congress MLA Pradeep Eshwar has said that he aspires to become the Chief Minister of Karnataka in the future, stating that he hopes to reach the position after 25 years. Speaking to the media in Davanagere, Eshwar expressed confidence that the Congress would secure more than 150 seats in the 2028 Assembly elections. He also said he would work to address the growing commercialisation of the education sector in 2028. Eshwar said he had submitted several suggestions to the education reform sub-committee and

Balakrishna raises concerns over guarantee schemes

Balakrishna noted that the state government must now balance the financial burden of its guarantee schemes with competing demands.

RAMANAGARA

Minister H.C. Balakrishna has said that the implementation of Karnataka's guarantee schemes has added to the government's financial challenges, while stressing the need to balance welfare commitments with other spending requirements. Speaking while receiving grievances from people with disabilities near the Ramanagara Deputy Commissioner's office, Balakrishna said the state government had implemented the guarantee schemes and was now required to manage their financial implications along with other demands. He referred to the difficulties faced by the state amid drought conditions, particularly the demands from farmers for compensation. According to Balakrishna, the government is facing pressure

from multiple sections, including farmers seeking financial assistance and beneficiaries expecting the continuation of guarantee schemes. "If the guarantee schemes are stopped, there will be an outcry over that as well," he said, describing the situation as a challenge for the government. Balakrishna emphasized that the government must function within its available financial resources and maintain a balance between different priorities. He said expenditure would have to be managed according to the state budget while meeting its commitments to the people. His comments have drawn attention because they come amid an ongoing discussion within the Karnataka government about the financial implications of the guarantee programmes. The five major schemes were introduced by



the Congress government as key electoral commitments. The minister also addressed concerns raised by people with disabilities. He said their demands would be discussed in the Cabinet and indicated that the government would consider the issues raised by the community. The remarks highlight the competing demands facing the state government, including funding welfare programmes, providing drought relief to farmers and continuing development expenditure. The government's position on

Balancing welfare and drought relief

Karnataka Minister Balakrishna highlighted the government's financial challenge in balancing expensive guarantee schemes with farmer compensation amid drought conditions. While stopping welfare programs would cause public outcry, the state must manage its budget commitments carefully, including addressing demands from the disability community.

the continuation and implementation of the guarantee schemes remains an important part of the broader discussion over Karnataka's finances.

Ramanagara folk students win multiple cultural prizes

MYSURU

Students of the Karnataka Janapada Parishat's Ramanagara Folk Diploma course secured top honours at the Kala Maitri Cultural Festival, organised to mark the 17th Foundation Day of the University of Music and Performing Arts. The students showcasing their talent in various traditional folk art forms. The Ramanagara Folk Diploma students secured first place in Folk Dance, Folk Percussion and Folk Song, besides winning first place in the women's mono-acting category. They also secured second place in the men's mono-acting category and second place in Dollu Kunitha. University of Music and Performing Arts Vice-Chancellor Prof. K. Ramakrishnayya, Registrar Prof. M.G. Manjunath and Karnataka Nataka Akademi president Dr. K.V. Nagaraj Murthy felicitated the winners and congratulated them on their performances.

Century-Old Gadag School Struggles Without Roof

Malingaraya Pujar, CH NEWS

A century-old government school in the heart of Gadag city is reportedly facing severe infrastructure problems, leaving hundreds of children to study in cramped conditions. Government Higher Primary Kannada Boys' School No. 3, established in 1925, has reportedly been without a proper roof on its first floor for several months. The school building had a traditional tiled roof until 2022, when the Education Department replaced it with tin sheets as part of renovation work. According to local residents, strong winds in May 2025 tore away the roof sheets. Since then, the first floor has reportedly remained exposed to rain and sunlight. During rainfall, water enters the rooms, further affecting the condition of the building. The absence of usable classrooms has created another serious problem. The upper-floor rooms have reportedly been locked because of concerns about the building's



safety. Although students from Classes 1 to 7 study at the school, only three classrooms on the ground floor are currently available. As a result, students from two or three classes are reportedly being accommodated in the same room. While lessons are conducted for one class, students from another class sit in the same space, making it difficult for teachers and children to concentrate. An Anganwadi centre is also functioning in the building. According to the report, the school principal wrote to the Gadag City Area Education Officer (BEO) on May 19, 2026, seeking urgent repairs and measures to ensure the safety of students. However, residents allege that no effective repair work has been undertaken despite the passage of several months. Parents have expressed concern over the safety of children, particularly during the rainy season. They have urged the district administration and Education Department to immediately inspect the building, repair the damaged roof and provide sufficient classrooms. Residents have also appealed to senior officials and the district administration to intervene urgently. They say a school with nearly a century of history deserves a safe and adequate learning environment for the children who depend on it.

Guarantee schemes won't stop, says Yatindra

RAMANAGARA

Minister Yatindra Siddaramaiah has said that Karnataka's guarantee schemes will continue despite the financial burden associated with their implementation. His remarks came in Channapatna amid a discussion over comments made by Minister H.C. Balakrishna about the government's financial constraints. Balakrishna recently said that managing the state's finances would have been easier without the five guarantee schemes. He also pointed out that the government has to balance welfare commitments with salaries, development expenditure and assistance during difficult periods. At the same time, Balakrishna clarified that neither the government nor Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar intends to discontinue the guarantees. Responding to the issue, Yatindra said the guarantee schemes were commitments made to the people and that the government was responsible for implementing them. He maintained that new programmes were also being taken up alongside the guarantees. Yatindra also rejected claims that the state government had stopped development activities because of financial difficulties. He pointed to government spending on development projects as evidence that such activities were continuing. The issue comes amid an ongoing discussion about Karnataka's finances. On September 23, Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar said the Finance Department had advised

Highlights
• Guarantee schemes remain fully funded.
• Development works continue despite pressures.
• Fiscal prudence advised by department.
• Ahinda movement transcends party boundaries.
• Backward classes empowerment remains central.
• Schemes will not be discontinued.

vised the government to spend judiciously in view of fiscal pressures and the state's borrowing position. He also said that the five guarantees had been introduced in response to economic pressures faced by people. On the question of the Ahinda movement, Yatindra said it transcends party boundaries and described the empowerment of backward classes, minorities and Dalits as central to the Congress party's stated ideology. He said efforts would be made to bring backward communities together and organize a large Ahinda convention as elections approach. The government has separately reiterated that the five guarantee schemes will not be discontinued. Chief Minister Shivakumar has previously said that beneficiary verification or changes in implementation should not be interpreted as a decision to end the schemes.

Hubballi Tahsildar, staff work on Sunday to clear pending files

HUBBALLI

The Hubballi City Tahsildar's office witnessed an unusual scene on Sunday, as Tahsildar Mahesh Gaste and more than 30 staff members reported for duty to clear pending government files. Gaste arrived at the office at 10 a.m. and worked through the day along with revenue assistants, village accountants, the Deputy Tahsildar and other employees. The team spent nearly eight hours processing files and completing

ing routine administrative work. Why did they work on Sunday? The staff had been occupied with the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process for several days. As a result, routine office work had accumulated and several files remained pending. To reduce the backlog, Gaste asked his staff to attend the office on Sunday. More than 30 employees joined him and worked throughout the day.

Festive Spirit at Mysuru Dasara Elephant Camp

CH NEWS, MYSURU

A festive atmosphere prevailed at the Dasara elephant camp in the Mysuru Palace premises, where mahouts, kavadis and their families came together for a day of celebrations and community bonding. A special programme was organised to honour the elephant handlers and their families. T-shirts and essential daily-use items were distributed to the mahouts and kavadis, while sarees were presented to women and toys were given to children. Jungle Lodges chairman and MLA Anil Chikkamadu

and K.V. Prabhakar, former media adviser to former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, were instrumental in organising the event. They interacted with the families and shared moments of joy with them. The celebrations also included a special lunch arranged for the families of the mahouts and kavadis at Lalitha Mahal Palace. Anil Chikkamadu, Prabhakar, their family members and friends spent the day interacting with the families associated with the elephant camp, adding to the warm and festive atmosphere. Members of the 9 Dreams



organisation, including Manjunath, Anand, Raghu, By-pass Manju and Gadi Express Nagaraj, were among those who participated in the

programme. The event highlighted the close bond between the Dasara elephant handlers and the wider community.

292 cannabis plants found inside Tiger Reserve forest

CHAMARAJANAGAR

Illegal cannabis cultivation has been detected inside the forest area of the Biligirirangana Betta Tiger Reserve in Chamarajanagar district. Excise and Forest Department officials discovered around 292 cannabis plants during a joint operation in the reserve. The plants were found in the Bellaje beat of the Bailur range, which falls within the Biligirirangana Betta Tiger Reserve. According to officials, the cannabis plants had an estimated total weight of approximately 213 kilograms. The discovery has raised concerns about illegal cultivation and other unauthorised activities taking place within the protected forest area. Forest regions can sometimes provide secluded locations for unlawful cultivation, making regular surveillance and coordinated enforcement important for protecting such areas. The joint operation by the Excise and Forest departments resulted in the detection of the cannabis plantation. Officials are now taking steps to determine how the cultivation was carried out and identify the individuals involved. The identity of those who allegedly cultivated the cannabis remains unknown.

ALLEGATIONS REMAIN UNVERIFIED

Prakash Raj alleges voter deletions through form-7

HASSAN

Actor and social activist Prakash Raj has alleged that a network he described as "Operation Kamala Form-7" is being used during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls to remove eligible voters from the lists. Addressing a press conference in Hassan on Sunday, Prakash Raj claimed that the voter-list revision process was being misused to target specific communities and economically vulnerable people. These are allegations made by Prakash Raj and have not been independently established in the report. He cited an incident from Booth No. 142 in Belagavi North Assembly constituency, where, according to his account, two individuals allegedly attempted to submit pre-printed Form-7 applications seeking deletion of around 200 Muslim voters. He claimed that a police inquiry indicated that the forms had originated from the office of a defeated BJP candidate and that the person who signed them was a local BJP



Morcha leader. Prakash Raj further claimed that the number of suspicious applications had increased from around 27,000 initially to more than 67,000. He alleged that Dalits, backward communities, minorities and people perceived to be opposed to the ruling party were being targeted. He also raised concerns about migrant workers, tribal communities, tenants who had changed residences and voters who were temporarily away from home being marked as "absent" or "shifted." He alleged that elderly citizens who are still alive were also being incor-

rectly recorded as deceased. He questioned the functioning of the ECI-NET system and called for greater scrutiny of the voter-list revision process. Prakash Raj said social audits had been conducted at more than 100 booths with the participation of various organisations. He announced plans to release what he described as supporting documents before state and national media in Bengaluru on September 30. He also said a national press conference would be held in Delhi on October 1, followed by a proposed protest at Jantar Mantar on October 15 involving more than 10,000 people.

At a glance
• Suspicious voter deletion forms surfaced.
• Targeted communities face removal attempts.
• Flawed voter-list revisions questioned.
• Social audits reveal irregularities.
• Planned protests demand electoral transparency.
• Legislators urged to audit constituencies.

Quick Read

4 lion cubs die at Tavarekoppa Zoo in Shivamogga

Shivamogga

Four Asiatic lion cubs born at Tavarekoppa Zoo in Shivamogga have died, just four days after birth. The cubs were born to five-year-old lioness Sara, who was experiencing her first pregnancy. Zoo officials suspect inadequate maternal care and nursing may have caused their deaths. Sara and male lion Shiva were brought from Indore, Madhya Pradesh, last year as part of efforts to breed Asiatic lions, an endangered species. Zoo CEO Dr. Amarakshara said first-time mothers sometimes fail to properly care for their offspring. He added that if Sara faces similar difficulties during a future pregnancy, zoo staff may intervene and hand-raise the cubs.

Lizard found in Kesari Bath at hospital canteen

Haveri

A lizard was reportedly found in a serving of Kesari Bath purchased from a canteen on the premises of Haveri District Hospital. The food had been ordered along with Up-pittu for a new mother admitted to the hospital when the lizard was discovered. The incident occurred at the Raghavendra Canteen, sparking outrage among patients and their relatives. Canteen owner Chandru said he had opened the establishment in the morning and later returned home. He claimed customers informed him about the incident and said he was unaware of how the lizard entered the dish. He assured that greater attention would be given to cleanliness and prevention measures.

3 arrested with MDMA in Mangaluru CCB raid

Mangaluru

CCB police arrested three people and seized 240 grams of MDMA worth ₹24 lakh during a raid near Kayargoli Cross in Mudipu, Ullal taluk. The operation was conducted on September 26 based on information that the accused had allegedly procured the drug from Bengaluru and were supplying it to people and students in Mangaluru. Police also seized four mobile phones and a tempo, taking the total value of the confiscated items to ₹29.80 lakh. The arrested accused were identified as Nawaz, Mohammad Arif N and Lloyd D'Souza. A case has been registered at Kona-je police station, and further investigation is underway.

STUDENTS URGED TO BECOME TOURISM AMBASSADORS

GADAG

Students should play an active role in promoting tourism by maintaining cleanliness, ensuring good conduct and supporting the safety of visitors at tourist destinations, Zilla Panchayat CEO Mukul Jain said on World Tourism Day 2026.

He was speaking at a programme titled “Reimagining Tourism using Digital Agendas and Artificial Intelligence”, organised at the Bhishma Kere recreational area near Sri Basaveshwara Statue Park in Gadag. The event was jointly organised by the District Administration,

Fake post on Dasara inauguration sparks police case

Koppal City Police registered a case and initiated an investigation over the post.

KOPPAL

A false social media post claiming that Abhinava Gavisiddeshwara Mahaswamiji of Koppal's Sri Gavi Matha had declined the invitation to inaugurate this year's Mysuru Dasara festival has caused confusion among devotees.

Police have registered a case at Koppal City Police Station and begun an investigation into the post.

The controversy emerged after Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar announced in the Legislative Assembly that Gavisiddeshwara Mahaswamiji would inaugurate the Dasara festivities. The announcement was welcomed by devotees in Koppal and other parts of Karnataka.

Subsequently, an unverified post circulated on social media claiming that the seer had refused the invitation and had im-

posed certain conditions for attending the inauguration. Representatives of Gavimatha clarified that the information was false and baseless. Devotees were urged not to believe anonymous social media posts and to depend on official communications for information concerning the seer and the Matha.

Koppal District Superintendent of Police Sahil Bagla said baseless posts had been circulating on social media since the previous day, claiming that the Gavimatha seer had refused to inaugurate the Dasara celebrations. He said a case had been registered at Koppal City Police Station based on information received regarding an Instagram account.

The SP advised members of the public to verify the au-



thenticity of information before forwarding or sharing such posts on social media. Police are investigating the source and circumstances surrounding the circulation of the allegedly false information.

Meanwhile, Karnataka Minister for Kannada and Culture Shivaraj Tangadagi said the claim that Gavisiddeshwara Sri had refused to inaugurate Dasara was untrue. He stated that he would visit Gavimatha on September 28 to formally invite the seer to inaugurate the festival.

The incident has prompted renewed appeals for responsible social media use, particularly when posts concern religious leaders, public events,

Fake news on Koppal seer

A controversy erupted after Karnataka's Deputy CM announced Gavisiddeshwara Mahaswamiji would inaugurate Dasara. Although social media claimed the seer refused, Gavimatha representatives and Koppal Superintendent of Police Sahil Bagla confirmed the posts were baseless, prompting a police case.

and government programmes. Devotees have been advised to rely on verified statements from Gavimatha and government authorities rather than unverified social media claims.

₹800 crore plan proposed to tackle Kushalanagar floods

MADIKERI

A comprehensive ₹800-crore project has been proposed to address the recurring flood problem in Kushalanagar, Kodagu district, where residents have faced repeated flooding from the Cauvery River.

The proposal aims to provide long-term flood protection while developing the riverbank as a public recreation and commercial space.

The proposed project covers a 7.5-kilometre stretch of the Cauvery riverbank, from the vicinity of Cauvery Nisargadhama to Gummankolli, Kudlur and Kudlumangaluru. The plan combines flood-control infrastructure with roads, walking paths, parks and green spaces.

A three-phase drone survey was conducted in 2022 by Mangaluru-based Brahmar Technologies under the supervision of the Cauvery Irrigation Corporation. Data relating to flood-affected areas, water flow, water levels and



the extent of flooding were collected and incorporated into a comprehensive report.

The maximum flood level of the Cauvery has also been assessed using historical monsoon records and flood conditions observed over three consecutive years.

Based on these findings, the project proposes modern engineering measures to reduce the impact of flooding on residential areas.

One of the major components is a proposed 20-metre-high retaining barrier along vulnerable stretches of the riverbank. The objective is to prevent floodwaters from entering nearby residential neighbourhoods during periods of heavy rainfall.

The project also proposes gabion walls to help channel stormwater from residential areas into the river and reduce water stagnation. In addition, plans include a 'Kaveri Aarathi' centre, an amphitheatre and recreational facilities near the Ayyappa Swamy Temple. Commercial facilities have also been proposed with the aim of supporting local economic activity.

Earlier, silt removal work costing around ₹2 crore was undertaken in the Cauvery during the tenure of former MLA M.P. Appachu Ranjan. The work provided temporary relief in some areas, but residents have continued to seek a permanent solution and have raised concerns over incomplete retaining-wall works.

A detailed report of around 400 pages has now been submitted to the government through Cauvery Neeravari Nigam. The proposal is currently awaiting government examination and approval.

Students honored for Dasara sports meet achievements

GADAG

Students of Sri K.H. Patil Government First Grade College brought pride to the institution by securing top positions at the 2026-27 Gadag district-level Dasara sports meet in athletics.

Under the joint auspices of the Government of Karnataka, District Administration, Zilla Panchayat, and Department of Youth Empowerment and Sports.

College students Venkanna Shalake and Iranna Kalaggagari secured first place in the 4x100-meter relay, while Al-labhakshi Binkadakatti won first place in the 800-meter race. To recognize their achievements, the college organized a special felicitation ceremony, where the successful

athletes were congratulated for their dedication and performance.

Presiding over the programme, Principal Dr. Appanna N. Hanje said that participation in sports, along with academic activities, contributes significantly to the overall development of students. He noted that district-level sports meets provide a valuable platform for rural students to identify and showcase their sporting abilities. He expressed confidence that the winners would continue their efforts and bring recognition to the college at state and national levels.

Sports Coordinator and Assistant Professor of Economics, Mr. Mahantesh, said that sports are not limited to winning or losing, but also teach discipline,

teamwork, perseverance, and hard work. He appreciated the students for their dedication and competitive spirit and encouraged them to continue practicing to achieve greater success.

Dr. Shobha P. Adaki, Physical Education Lecturer, delivered the introductory address. Mr. Bhimesha, Assistant Professor of Kannada, welcomed the gathering, while Mr. Basavaraja Balaganuru Math proposed the vote of thanks.

Dr. Jitendra Jahagirdar, IQAC Coordinator; Mr. Ramesh Hulakund, Head of the Kannada Department; Dr. Sarika Patil, Associate Professor of Mathematics; and Ms. Mahananda Hiremath, Head of the Arts Department, were present and congratulated the victorious students on their achievements.

Foul stench plagues Kittur Chennamma Park

BETAGERI

Kittur Chennamma Park on P.B. Road in Betageri is reportedly facing serious sanitation problems, with stagnant wastewater and garbage causing a foul smell and raising concerns among residents about public health.

According to Ganesh Angadi, president of the Betageri Horata Samiti, wastewater has accumulated in the area surrounding the park, resulting in a persistent stench. A public library is also located nearby, and the unpleasant conditions are reportedly causing inconvenience to citizens who visit the library.

The park attracts hundreds of residents every morning and evening for walking and other recreational activities. However, the lack of proper sanitation and maintenance has made the surroundings unpleasant for visitors.

Local residents have reportedly brought the issue to the attention of officials of the Gadag-Betageri City Municipal Council, the Health Department and other concerned authorities several times. However, they allege that no permanent solution has been found so far.

Angadi urged the authorities to immediately clean the park and surrounding areas and ensure that wastewater does not accumulate.

Belagavi Ganeshotsava sets new 42-hour record

BELAGAVI

The annual Ganeshotsava in Belagavi concluded on a grand note after the Ganesha immersion procession continued for 42 consecutive hours, setting a new record in the city. The procession, which began at 5 p.m. on Friday, September 25, continued until noon on Sunday.

A total of 1,056 public Ganesha committees had installed idols across the city and observed the festival for 12 days. This year's procession surpassed last year's record of 36 hours. More than five lakh people reportedly witnessed the grand procession.

As the idols arrived at Dharmaveera Sambhaji Circle on open vehicles, thousands of devotees gathered along the roads. Youngsters danced to devotional music, while traditional performances such as Dhol-Tasha, Dhvaja Pathak, Dollu and Kolata added colour to the celebrations.

Idols from Chavhata Galli, Khadak Galli, Bandhoor Galli, Ganachari Galli and Rajahamsa Galli in Anagol joined the procession during its later stages. Large crowds participated in the immersion of the famous 'Belagaviya Raja' idol from Chavhata Galli. The procession echoed with chants of "Ganesha Bappa Morya" and other devotional slogans before the City Corporation's Ganesha idol was finally im-

mersed in Kapileshwara tank.

Police Commissioner Prakash Nikkam said more than 4,000 police personnel worked continuously to manage the massive procession. He said the celebrations concluded without any untoward incidents and thanked residents, Corporation officials and other departments for their cooperation.

Nikkam noted that the height of some idols contributed to delays and said steps would be considered to reduce the duration of the procession next year. Several committees also reduced DJ sound levels and avoided plasma and laser lights.

City Corporation Commissioner Karthik M. said civic authorities had made extensive arrangements and praised staff who worked continuously throughout the 42-hour operation. He said additional immersion ponds and other improvements would be considered next year.

As the procession reached its conclusion, Mayor Preeti Kamakar, Deputy Mayor Hanumantha Kongali, Commissioner Karthik M. and corporators joined the celebrations and danced to bid a grand farewell to Lord Ganesha.

Davanagere nears 24x7 water supply under Jalasiri

DAVANAGERE

The long-standing drinking water problems of Davanagere, popularly known as 'Benne Nagari', are expected to ease soon as the ambitious Jalasiri project has reached its final stage. The scheme aims to provide round-the-clock drinking water to households and establishments within the City Corporation limits.

The ₹662.03-crore project was entrusted to the Karnataka Urban Infrastructure Development and Finance Corporation (KUIDFC), with funding from the Central and State governments. German company Suez Projects Private Limited was awarded the execution contract and is also responsible for maintenance for eight years. The project was originally scheduled for completion by 2022.

According to the City Corporation, 98% of the work has now been completed, with only three

wards—Bhasha Nagar, KTJ Nagar and Azad Nagar—having some pending work. Officials expect the remaining work to be completed by November or December.

The Jalasiri project was conceived to address the city's severe and irregular water supply. Previously, several localities received water only once every three to five days, while some areas received it just once a week. Problems with pipelines, storage tanks and uneven distribution further worsened the situation.

The city currently requires around 770 lakh litres, or 70 MLD, of water daily. Under the project, connections have been provided to 85,133 households and 2,044 commercial establishments. A total of 70 km of pipelines have been laid between treatment plants and storage tanks, while another 1,341 km of pipelines connect the network to households.

Dashalakshana Mahaparva celebrated with Palaki Utsava

HAVERI

Special puja programmes were held on Saturday morning at the Bhagavan Nemina-tha Digambara Jain Temple in Haveri city to mark the concluding day of the Ananta Nampi observance during the Dashalakshana Mahaparva festival. The religious programmes were conducted under the guidance of temple priest and trustee Shrenika Upadhyaya. Devotees participated in the celebrations with

devotion, marking the conclusion of the Mahaparva in a traditional manner.

Following the puja, the Sri Anantanatha Swami Jinabimba Palaki Utsava was held in the evening. The procession passed through prominent streets of the city amid devotional chants and festive celebrations. A large number of Jain devotees participated in the procession. Men and women dressed in saffron and white traditional attire walked along with the palaki, raising devotional slogans and

adding to the spiritual atmosphere.

Merit Awards Presented

A merit award ceremony was also organised at the Sri Nemina-tha Digambara Jain Temple for the Haveri Smt. Veena Chandranath Kalasur Charitable Trust for the 2025-26 academic year.

Students from the Jain community in the district who secured more than 90 per cent marks in their SSLC and PUC examinations were felicitated and presented with cash awards.

RESIDENTS ALLEGE VIOLATIONS

Illegal sand mining ravages Kali River in Karwar

KARWAR

The Kali River in Uttara Karnataka district has become the centre of allegations of large-scale illegal sand mining, with residents of Kinnara village in Karwar taluk claiming that sand is being extracted from the riverbed around the clock and transported to other parts of Karnataka and neighbouring Goa.

According to local residents, large boats are being used to extract sand from the middle of the river. The material is reportedly stockpiled along the riverbank before being transported by tippers



and lorries, particularly during the night. Villagers have alleged that the activity is continuing despite the absence of official authorization for sand mining in the district.

Residents are also concerned about the impact of



heavy vehicles transporting the sand. The movement of loaded trucks has reportedly damaged village roads and created difficulties for local communities.

The issue has taken a more serious turn after villagers al-

leged that people who questioned the activity were assaulted. Kinnara resident Vijay reportedly submitted a complaint to Deputy Commissioner Lakshmi Priya through the Praja Seva Abhiyana, urging authorities to take action against those involved in the alleged illegal mining. The Deputy Commissioner said the administration had taken note of complaints regarding damage to village roads caused by heavy vehicles carrying illegally mined sand. She said separate teams from the Mines and Police departments would be deployed and check-posts established to

prevent illegal mining and transportation.

Authorities have also planned joint surveillance by the Mines and Police departments. However, residents claim that operators temporarily stop their activities when officials intensify inspections and resume once monitoring is reduced.

The allegations have raised concerns over the protection of the Kali River and the possible damage caused by unregulated extraction of its natural resources. Locals are now seeking sustained enforcement rather than periodic inspections.

Quick Read

Govt orders captive coal plants to maximise generation

NEW DELHI
The Power Ministry has directed captive coal-based plants with a capacity of 50 MW or more to generate electricity up to their available capacity from October 1 to December 31, 2026. Invoking Section 11 of the Electricity Act, the ministry said the move would help meet expected growth in power demand. Plants must offer surplus electricity on power exchanges after meeting their own needs. Operators have also been told to maintain adequate coal stocks and submit weekly reports to the Central Electricity Authority covering generation, captive use, electricity sales, available capacity and fuel stocks.

Maritime insurance pool shields ships from war

NEW DELHI
The Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool is providing domestic war-risk cover for ships and cargo amid disruptions in the Red Sea and near the Strait of Hormuz. Launched in May, the pool had issued 3,000 cargo war-risk policies, 92 hull war-risk policies and three Protection and Indemnity policies by September 7, according to a government factsheet. War-risk premiums have fallen about 35–40 per cent from their peak during the West Asia conflict. Backed by a government guarantee, the pool aims to keep Indian trade insured when foreign cover becomes costly or unavailable. GIC Re manages its operations.

Boeing develops fix for flight guidance issue

NEW DELHI
Boeing is developing a software update after identifying a flight guidance issue affecting certain 737 MAX aircraft. The problem may arise during a specific landing scenario after pilots abandon an approach and change the planned flight path. Automated guidance could then become unavailable. Boeing said it informed 737 operators about the issue last month and reminded them of existing procedures for handling it safely. The company's engineers are working on a permanent fix. The US Federal Aviation Administration is reviewing the issue with Boeing and airlines. The agency said it would act if its assessment identifies a safety concern.

Cloud giants’ revenue could exceed \$1 trillion by 2030

NEW DELHI
Annual revenue from large cloud providers could cross \$1 trillion by 2030 as demand for artificial intelligence increases, according to analyst estimates cited in a BlackRock report. Companies developing AI need computing power to

Tata Sons leadership dispute raises listing questions

Noel Tata opposed Chandrasekaran’s reappointment and IPO plans, whereas trusts-nominated director Venu Srinivasan held a contrasting view.

MUMBAI
A dispute over leadership and control at Tata Sons has placed the future structure of India’s Tata Group under scrutiny. The disagreement involves Tata Trusts chairman Noel Tata, Tata Sons executive chairman N Chandrasekaran and differing views among directors representing the trusts.

At issue is Chandrasekaran’s reappointment, a possible stock market listing of Tata Sons and how the Shapoorji Pallonji Group, its second-largest shareholder, could obtain liquidity from its holding. The questions reach beyond one boardroom decision because Tata Sons is the holding company at the centre of the group. Tata Trusts is the controlling shareholder. Noel



Tata objected to Chandrasekaran’s proposed reappointment and to listing the company, while another trusts-nominated director, Venu Srinivasan, took a different position. The Tata Sons board voted to proceed with the proposals, setting up disagreement over how much authority its largest shareholder should have in such decisions.

Listing has become a central concern after the Reserve Bank of India rejected Tata Sons’ request to deregister as a non-bank finance company. Tata Sons has said it would take steps to com-

Tata sons listing dispute and governance

RBI rejected Tata Sons’ deregistration request, sparking debate over listing. While Noel Tata warns listing risks its philanthropic ethos, governance advisers demand transparency. The Shapoorji Pallonji Group seeks value unlocking, making control and privacy key legal battlegrounds.

pany with regulatory requirements. Noel Tata has argued that a listing could change the character of a group whose trusts support extensive philanthropy. Govern-

ance advisers, however, have called for greater transparency at a company of this size. The Shapoorji Pallonji Group has long sought a way to unlock the value of its Tata Sons stake. A listing could provide one route, while an alternative proposal has also been discussed. Any solution would need to address the interests of shareholders alongside regulatory obligations. The disagreement has renewed attention on the balance between the trusts’ ownership, the holding company’s board and management’s freedom to make decisions. It could yet become a legal dispute. The outcome may decide who controls leadership choices and whether Tata Sons remains private.

DRDO backs indigenous quantum cooling system

NEW DELHI
The Defence Research and Development Organisation has signed an agreement with Rajasthan-based startup Zero mK India to develop a specialised cooling system for quantum technology. The project aims to build a 20 millikelvin dilution refrigerator in India, reducing reliance on imported equipment. Signed in New Delhi under DRDO’s Technology Development Fund, the agreement is the first high-value deep technology project supported by a ₹500-crore funding pool approved by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. The Director of the fund and representatives of the Alwar-based

POINTS

- Advances domestic quantum research infrastructure development.
- Aligns with National Quantum Mission goals.
- Expands local access to essential equipment.
- Partners defence agency with private startup.
- Supported by Rajnath and Rajesh Singh.
- Requires successful target-temperature system testing.

company signed the pact.

A dilution refrigerator can cool equipment to temperatures extremely close to absolute zero. Twenty millikelvin is 0.02 kelvin, far colder than conventional industrial refrigeration. Such conditions are needed to operate and test several types of quantum computing hardware, whose delicate quantum states can be disrupted by heat. The project is intended to strengthen India’s ability to design and build the infrastructure required for quantum research. Officials said it aligns with the National Quantum Mission and could support work in advanced cryogenics and other strategic technologies. Producing the system domestically would

also give researchers and developers greater access to an important piece of equipment. The agreement connects a defence research agency with a private startup in an area that has potential applications beyond a single laboratory. It reflects an effort to involve Indian industry in developing complex technologies that have often depended on overseas suppliers. Rajnath Singh congratulated DRDO and its industry partners, expressing hope that the collaboration would provide a model for future work in emerging fields. DRDO chairman and Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh also conveyed his support to the teams involved.

UPI growth drives India’s digital payments

NEW DELHI
India’s Unified Payments Interface has become the world’s largest retail fast-payment system by transaction volume, according to research published by the International Monetary Fund. A decade after its launch, UPI is central to everyday purchases, from small shops to online services.

Government figures show that the system processed 241.62 billion transactions worth about ₹314 lakh crore in the financial year ending March 2026. In 2016-17, it handled about 20 million transactions worth ₹7,000 crore. The rapid growth reflects the ease of sending money directly between bank accounts through different payment apps. The scale has also raised a question: who pays to maintain and improve the network? A new merchant discount rate of 0.4% is due to apply from October 15 to eligible UPI merchant payments above ₹2,000. Small merchants receiving up to ₹1 lakh a month through UPI QR payments are exempt, as are QR payments to merchants in rural and semi-ur-

Highlights

- Processed 241.62 billion transactions in FY26.
- Handled ₹314 lakh crore total value.
- Reflects rapid direct account payment growth.
- Introduces 0.4% merchant discount rate fee.
- Applies above ₹2,000 from October 15.
- Exempts small and rural UPI merchants.



Small merchants earning under ₹1 lakh monthly and all QR payments in rural or semi-urban areas are exempt.

ban locations. Officials say the charges cannot be passed on to customers. Revenue from the fee is intended to support banks and payment providers as they invest in system reliability, cybersecurity, fraud prevention and customer service. The charge has nevertheless prompted concerns about its effect on businesses that depend heavily on digital payments. UPI’s growth has attracted international attention because its interoperable design lets customers use different banks and apps on the same network. Cross-border acceptance is expanding, allowing some Indian travellers to pay merchants abroad from their domestic accounts where the service is available. The IMF has linked UPI’s adoption to interoperability, which can help people move away from cash. Its success now presents a balancing task for policymakers: maintaining low-cost access for users and smaller businesses while funding a payment system that handles transactions at enormous scale. Its next test is sustaining growth without compromising affordable access.

Nestlé responds to Maggi contamination allegation

MUMBAI
Nestlé India has responded to a Mumbai-area customer’s allegation that insects and worms were found in a packet of Maggi noodles while it was being prepared. The company said it learned of the claim through media reports and could not assess its authenticity without direct contact or an examination of the product. The customer, reportedly from Kalyan, said the packet carried an expiry date of February 2027. That date has prompted questions about the condition of the product, but it does not establish when or how any alleged contamination occurred. No laboratory finding confirming the claim was cited in the initial reports.

A Nestlé India spokesperson said the company learned of the matter through media reports, had not been contacted by the customer or authorities, and could not yet judge whether the claim was genuine. The company said it follows strict food safety procedures and checks ingredients, manufacturing and packaging before products reach the market. It maintained that quality management systems operate across its factories and reiterated its commitment to selling safe food. There have been calls for the Maharashtra Food and Drug Administration to examine the complaint and collect samples for testing. A laboratory analysis of the

packet, along with its batch details and storage history, would help establish whether there is a product quality issue. As of the company’s response, it said neither the customer nor authorities had contacted it about this case. The allegation has attracted attention because Maggi is widely consumed in India. Consumers want clarity when a complaint involves a packaged food item that appears to be within its stated shelf life. At the same time, the reported discovery remains an allegation until the product can be inspected and the facts verified. The complaint remains subject to verification through appropriate independent testing and official investigation.

Bessent says Iran pressure producing results

WASHINGTON
US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent says Washington’s campaign to isolate Iran economically is producing results, pointing to restrictions on Iranian airlines and banking links in several countries. His remarks came as an economist argued that Iran’s financial position is deteriorating rapidly. Bessent said Treasury officials had travelled to press governments to limit dealings with Tehran under Operation Economic Outlook, launched in August. He cited Türkiye and Oman ending flights by Iran’s Mahan Air, the United Arab Emirates halting flights by Iranian airlines, and major banks in the UAE and Türkiye stopping transactions with Iran.

“These efforts are delivering results,” Bessent wrote on X. He said the United States would continue working with other countries to restrict financial channels it believes support the Iranian government. The claims about the effectiveness of the pressure campaign are the Treasury secretary’s assessment, not an independently established measure of Iran’s overall economy. The Treasury has described the operation as a coordinated effort against networks it accuses of helping Iran sell oil, evade sanctions and move money abroad. In September, it announced measures targeting companies and individuals connected to Iranian aviation. Washington says the restrictions are intended to

cut off resources available to the Iranian authorities. Bessent also shared an essay by economist Robin Brooks, who argued that Iran’s economy was weakening and that the United States had additional ways to increase its isolation. His analysis adds to the debate over sanctions, but it does not by itself show how much of Iran’s economic strain is caused by the latest US measures rather than war and other pressures. The campaign comes amid continuing conflict and uncertainty over shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, a vital route for oil. Restrictions on banking and air travel may increase Tehran’s difficulties, while broader economic disruption also affects ordinary Iranians.

Embraer names Mahindra, Adani as partners

NEW DELHI
Brazilian aircraft manufacturer Embraer has identified Mahindra as its Indian partner for the Indian Air Force’s proposed purchase of 60 medium transport aircraft. For its commercial aviation plans in India, the company will work with Adani Defence and Aerospace. The two partnerships involve different aircraft and separate opportunities. Embraer and Mahindra intend to offer the C-390 Millennium for the military transport programme. Embraer and Adani are exploring a domestic final assembly line for the E175 regional passenger jet. The Air Force tender could give India a new fleet to move personnel and cargo. Embraer’s bid would face competition, and the partnership with Mahindra does not mean that the air-

craft has been selected. The procurement process will determine which proposal meets the service’s requirements. Embraer and Mahindra have also outlined plans to develop maintenance, repair and overhaul capability for the C-390 in India. Such facilities could support aircraft through their operating lives if the bid succeeds. They could also provide work for Indian suppliers, subject to the eventual scope of the programme. On the civilian side, Embraer and Adani signed an enhanced memorandum of understanding earlier this year concerning a possible E175 assembly line. The proposal is aimed at India’s regional aviation market, where smaller jets could serve routes that do not require larger aircraft. An agreement to propose a facility is not a final decision to build one.

UP-EXPORTS TRADE BOOST

Uttar Pradesh targets Rs 5 lakh crore exports by 2030

UTTAR PRADESH
Uttar Pradesh aims to increase its annual exports from about Rs 2 lakh crore to Rs 5 lakh crore by 2030, Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Sunday. He linked the target to the state’s broader ambition of becoming a \$1 trillion economy. Addressing the UP International Trade Show, Goyal said Indian free trade agreements could give businesses

The skills of young people and the state’s craftsmanship could support industrial expansion. For smaller businesses, reaching export markets would require both opportunities to meet buyers and the ability to produce goods that meet their needs.

—Piyush Goyal, Minister in the state greater access to overseas buyers. He urged entrepreneurs to use these opportunities to take Uttar Pradesh’s products and ser-

vices into new markets. The minister said international investment, stronger tourism and greater recognition for local brands would also be important to the state’s growth. He described Uttar Pradesh as an attractive investment destination, citing its industrial policies and efforts to draw large companies. The trade show brought together participants from six partner countries, along with delegates, exhibitors and po-

tential buyers. Goyal said such events help local firms establish contacts with international businesses and present their products to customers abroad. He pointed to expressways, airports and industrial parks as infrastructure supporting manufacturing and trade. He also highlighted activity in defence, electronics, semiconductors and other technology sectors. A robotics manufacturing facility in Greater Noida was among

the examples he cited. The minister called for coordination between the Centre and the state government, with participation from industry, workers and young people. The Rs 5 lakh crore figure remains a target rather than an achieved level. Reaching it by 2030 would require Uttar Pradesh to more than double its current exports while expanding production and strengthening its presence in global markets.



- DR. VIJAY GARG

LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY IS OUR STRENGTH, UNITY IS OUR IDENTITY



India is a land of remarkable linguistic diversity. From Hindi, Punjabi, Bengali, Tamil and Telugu to Marathi, Gujarati, Malayalam, Kannada, Assamese and many other languages, every language carries its own history, literature, traditions and cultural identity. This diversity is not a weakness; it is one of India's greatest strengths.

Language is much more than a means of communication. It connects people with their families, communities, history and cultural roots. Every Indian language has produced great poets, writers, thinkers and scholars whose works have enriched our collective heritage. Different languages give India a unique cultural richness that few countries can match.

However, linguistic diversity should never become a reason for division. We may speak different languages, but our national aspirations, constitutional values and sense of belonging to India can remain common. Unity does not mean that everyone must speak the same language. True unity means respecting different languages while sharing a common national identity. India's linguistic diversity teaches us an important lesson: difference and unity can exist together. We can take pride in our mother tongue while respecting the language spoken by someone else. Learning another Indian language can also help us understand another community and culture more closely.

Schools and educational institutions have an important role in promoting this spirit. Students should be encouraged to respect all Indian languages and understand the cultural traditions associated with them. Technology can also help by making literature and educational resources available across languages. The strength of India lies not in linguistic uniformity but in harmonious diversity. Our languages may have different sounds and scripts, but they can all contribute to the same national song of unity.

Languages may be many, voices may be different, but the feeling of India should remain one. Linguistic diversity is our strength; national unity is our identity.

BRICS: INDIA'S NEW ROAR



- DR. SATYAWAN SAURABH

A new platform of opportunities and challenges for India, Voice of the Global South, Strategic Autonomy and India's Role in a Multipolar World Order.

Today, BRICS is not just an economic grouping of emerging economies, but has also become an important platform for amplifying the voice of the global South in the changing world order. Originally composed of Brazil, Russia, India, and China, BRICS was renamed BRICS after South Africa joined in 2011. Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates became full members in 2024, and Indonesia also joined as a full member in January 2025. With this expansion, BRICS now comprises 11 major emerging economies.

The year 2026 holds special significance for India, as it assumes the BRICS Chairmanship from January 1, 2026, and New Delhi is scheduled to host the 18th BRICS Summit. The central vision of India's Chairmanship is focused on resilience, innovation, cooperation, and sustainable development. This Chairmanship not only gives India the role of a convener, but also provides an opportunity to influence the group's priorities and future direction.

The greatest significance of BRICS lies in strengthening India's strategic autonomy. India has long advocated a foreign policy that builds relationships with diverse countries and forums in accordance with its national interests, rather than relying solely on a single power bloc. While India's partnerships with countries like China and Russia are part of BRICS, India also cooperates with the United States, Europe, Japan, and other powers in parallel. BRICS thus provides a practical basis for India's multi-alignment

"If India succeeds in combining its presidency with practical cooperation, solidarity with the global South, and balanced diplomacy, it could play a decisive role in shaping BRICS's new direction".

foreign policy.

Another important aspect of BRICS is strengthening the voice of the Global South. Even today, many decisions in international institutions are made within structures where the representation of developing countries is not commensurate with their economic and demographic roles. India has consistently raised the need for reform of institutions such as the United Nations Security Council, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank. Through BRICS, developing countries can collectively strengthen their demand for a more representative and equitable global governance system.

BRICS is also important for India from an economic perspective. Expanded membership means new opportunities for cooperation in larger markets, investment, energy, trade, technology, and supply chains. This opportunity is particularly significant for India as the global economy is facing increasing trends of protectionism, trade tensions, and supply chain restructuring. Cooperation within BRICS to reduce trade barriers and facilitate payment systems can benefit India's economic interests. The possibilities of cooperation on trade in local currencies and cross-border payment systems are also important in this direction.

The New Development Bank is a significant achievement of BRICS in the field of development finance. Its objective is to provide financing for infrastructure and sustainable development projects. Such institutions are important for developing countries because they can serve as both an alternative and a complement to traditional global financial institutions. For India, this offers vast potential for cooperation in projects related to transport, energy, urban de-



velopment, climate, and green infrastructure.

But BRICS faces challenges. The most significant challenge is the diverse and sometimes conflicting strategic interests of its member states. Border disputes and broader strategic competition between India and China could impact any deeper political or security cooperation. Global developments such as the Russia-West conflict, the situation in West Asia, and the US-China rivalry could also create divisions within BRICS.

The second challenge is the complexity of coordination after expansion. When the group was smaller, building a common approach was relatively easy. Now, with 11 full members and partner countries of varying levels, decision-making has become more complex. Each country has a different economic structure, political priorities, and foreign policy. Therefore, simply increasing its numbers is not enough; a common agenda and effective institutional mechanisms are also essential.

Another serious challenge is the growing tendency to view BRICS as an anti-Western alliance. If the grouping is presented solely as an alternative or rival to the US and the West, its developmental and economic objectives could be harmed. It would be in India's interest to develop BRICS as a multipolar and inclusive cooperation platform rather than a bloc pitted against anyone.

India's 2026 presidency is a significant opportunity in this regard. India should move beyond mere announcements and focus on practical results. Concrete projects can be launched in areas such as trade and investment, digital public infrastructure, artificial intelligence, health, agriculture, energy, climate change, disaster management, and sustainable development. Strengthening the New Development Bank's functionality and project finance capacity should also be a priority.

Ultimately, the success of BRICS will be determined by how influential its statements are in global politics; more importantly, by how much practical cooperation it generates. For India, BRICS is an important platform for strategic autonomy, economic opportunities, the collective power of the global South, and a more representative world order. Its diversity is certainly a challenge, but it can also be its strength. During its presidency, India should center consensus, dialogue, and development, making BRICS a platform that stands not against any power, but in favor of equality, cooperation, and a balanced multipolar world order.

BRICS is not just a diplomatic platform for India, but an opportunity to shape its independent and influential role in the changing world order.

EOS-05: INDIA'S EYE IN THE SKY

Earth observation satellites have now become essential tools in governance, disaster relief, agriculture, environmental protection, and national security. These satellites provide remote sensing data about the Earth's surface, atmosphere, and oceans, helping governments monitor changes that cannot be easily detected by ground systems. India's Earth observation mission has been well established for years, and the launch of EOS-05 on GSLV-F17 is a significant step towards enhancing its capabilities. This is particularly significant because its ability to image from geosynchronous orbit enables repeated observations of the Indian region.

The launch of EOS-05 is part of a shift in the nature of satellite remote sensing. Earth observation has traditionally been a major application of satellites operating in low Earth orbit (LEO). These satellites will provide extremely detailed images, but due to their orbit, they will only pass over a specific area at regular intervals. This is very useful for periodic coverage, but it could be even more useful in rapidly changing conditions. These systems could be complemented by a geosynchronous imaging satellite that can observe a large area over a long period of time.

This is especially important when events occur over a period of hours rather than days. Cyclones can suddenly intensify or change direction, floods can spread across a wide area, forest fires can ignite or become uncontrollable, and maritime activity can be in a state of constant flux. Continuous satellite observations can provide authorities with more dynamic information about such events. Therefore, EOS-05 should be

viewed as a complementary element to LEO satellites in the Earth observation system. LEO satellites can be used to obtain detailed images, while geosynchronous satellites can provide greater stability and continuity.

This capability is crucial for a diverse and disaster-prone country like India. Natural disasters like cyclones, floods, landslides, and forest fires frequently impact the country. Early warning, rapid assessment, and continuous monitoring are essential for effective disaster management. Frequent satellite observations can help authorities assess the evolution of a disaster situation and quickly locate affected areas. Satellite images can also be helpful in mapping inundated areas during floods. In the event of a forest fire, regular monitoring can be useful in observing changes in burned areas. This monitoring can also help understand changing weather patterns during cyclones.

But imagery is only valuable if time and skill are invested in converting it into a useful product. The real challenge for India is to make satellite observations an integral part of disaster management platforms, providing administrators, disaster management agencies, and local authorities with real-time, easily accessible information. The aim is to bridge the gap between data collection and decision-making.

Another sector that will benefit from EOS-05 and India's overall space Earth observation capabilities is agriculture. Regular monitoring of the agricultural landscape at the ground level in India is challenging and resource-intensive. Satellite observations can be helpful in assessing agricultural indicators such as



vegetation, crop conditions, and land use changes. Satellite images can be used in conjunction with weather data, soil data, and ground observations to detect the development of stress in crops and changing environmental conditions.

As the use of AI increases, this process can become even more efficient. Due to the sheer volume of data sent by modern satellites, manual interpretation alone is becoming increasingly difficult. AI-based systems can quickly process images, detect anomalies, and flag areas requiring immediate attention. These technologies can help accelerate crop assessment, disaster mapping, and environmental monitoring, reducing the time spent on manual analysis.

The benefits of continuous observation are also significant from an environmental perspective. India is undergoing rapid urbanization, land-use changes, increasing pressure on forests and ecosystems, and increasing stress on water resources. Satellite monitoring can be used to regularly monitor long-term vegetation

changes, wetlands, water bodies, and other ecosystems. Permanent datasets can help policymakers and researchers detect trends and make more effective environmental decisions.

Satellite-based observation is also of immense strategic importance to India's maritime interests. The country's long coastline and location in the heart of the Indian Ocean region mean increased awareness of the marine environment is essential. Satellite monitoring can be used in conjunction with other monitoring methods to enhance knowledge about activities and changing conditions in the maritime domain.

The importance of EO is also growing from a strategic perspective. In the modern security environment, timely and reliable information has become a strategic asset. Continuous imaging can enhance situational awareness and can be used in conjunction with airborne, ground-based, and other space-based surveillance systems. Furthermore, the country needs the capability to re-



DR. PRIYANKA SAURABH

"The launch of EOS-05 is the first step taken by India in the field of continuous Earth observation".

spond to such situations. India should not rely heavily on any single satellite and should build a diverse satellite constellation that can ensure continuity of essential services even if a specific satellite is unavailable.

Therefore, building an integrated and intelligent Earth Observation (EO) ecosystem should be the key to moving forward. Data from EOS-05 should be integrated with other platforms, such as satellites, meteorology, agriculture, and disaster management. Image processing should be accelerated by implementing artificial intelligence (AI) tools and information should be made available for decision-making. The next step is for India to invest more in indigenous sensors, satellite platforms, communication systems, and data processing infrastructure.

Most importantly, India should build a complementary multi-orbit constellation of geosynchronous and long-term electric field (LEO) satellites that can provide detailed images and continuous visibility, respectively. This will provide a complete picture of the country and its neighbouring regions.

EOS-05 is not just another step forward in India's space capabilities. It marks a paradigm shift in the approach to Earth observation, moving from periodic observations to continuous observation. However, its ultimate significance will depend on how effectively the information it generates is used in national security, environmental management, agriculture, disaster management, and governance. India's aspiration should be to move beyond simply collecting satellite images and develop an intelligent and sustainable information system that can guide action.

LETTERS TO EDITOR

Uniting the Global South

India's assumption of the 2026 BRICS chairmanship marks a pivotal moment in global diplomacy. Representing an expanded 11-member bloc, India is uniquely positioned to bridge divides and champion the interests of the Global South. Rather than creating an anti-Western faction, New Delhi's focus on multipolarity, sustainable development, and digital public infrastructure provides a balanced framework for international cooperation. By advocating for reforms in traditional institutions like the UN Security Council and the IMF, India ensures that developing nations gain a voice commensurate with their economic and demographic weight.

- Akash Leckinton

Unity in Linguistic Diversity

India's vast array of languages and cultural traditions is not a point of division, but the very foundation of its national strength. In an increasingly globalized world, preserved linguistic identity provides a deep sense of heritage while building resilience. The true identity of our nation lies in our ability to celebrate these differences while remaining steadfastly united. When citizens of diverse backgrounds collaborate whether in community initiatives, local governance, or regional development they bring a rich variety of perspectives that drive innovation and social harmony.

- Sanap Krishna

Sentinel of National Progress

The deployment of advanced earth observation satellites like EOS-05 represents a monumental step forward in India's technological and strategic self-reliance. Serving as an "eye in the sky," these space assets provide critical real-time data that extends far beyond orbital monitoring. From enhancing disaster management response times to optimizing agricultural planning and monitoring coastal ecosystems, satellite intelligence directly impacts daily governance and economic planning. Furthermore, continuous observational capabilities bolster national security by safeguarding borders and maritime zones.

- Willy

Bridging Digital Divides in Modern Education



The rapid acceleration of digital learning across urban classrooms has transformed how students access knowledge, but it also casts a long shadow over rural communities where infrastructure remains severely underdeveloped. While metropolitan schools seamlessly integrate artificial intelligence, interactive smartboards, and cloud-based platforms into daily curriculums, millions of children in small towns still struggle with basic connectivity and inadequate hardware. This growing disparity is no longer just a matter of convenience; it represents a fundamental divide in opportunity that threatens to permanently disadvantage an entire generation of young learners.

During recent years, public

and private initiatives have attempted to bridge this gap through tablet distribution and subsidized internet plans. However, hardware distribution alone fails to solve the root problem. Without reliable electricity grids, continuous maintenance, and high-speed broadband in remote districts, sophisticated devices often become unusable expensive paperweights. Furthermore, digital literacy among teachers in rural schools remains uneven. Instructors are frequently tasked with adopting complex digital tools overnight without receiving the practical, long-term training required to incorporate technology effectively into pedagogical methods.

To build an equitable educational ecosystem, policy

responses must shift focus from grand hardware roll-outs toward sustainable digital infrastructure and comprehensive human development. Investment should prioritize establishing robust community internet hubs, supporting local language educational software, and providing continuous training modules for rural educators. When technology is thoughtfully integrated, it democratizes learning by giving every child, regardless of geographic location, access to world-class educational resources. Ensuring equal access to digital tools is not merely an educational goal; it is a vital prerequisite for national social mobility, economic stability, and shared future growth.

Deeksha N.

Addressing Aging Populations and Elder Care

Demographic shifts across developing and developed nations reveal a profound social transition: communities are aging faster than ever before. Advances in healthcare and declining birth rates mean that older adults constitute a rapidly growing proportion of the global population. While longer lifespans represent a triumph of modern medicine and improved public health, they also present complex economic, social, and logistical challenges. Existing social safety nets, healthcare systems, and urban infrastructures were designed for much younger demographics and are struggling to adapt to the specialized needs of aging citizens.

In many societies, tradition-

al family caregiving structures are fracturing under modern economic pressures. Geographic mobility, nuclear family units, and dual-income households mean adult children often lack the time or financial resources required to provide full-time care for aging parents. Consequently, demand for professional elder care, specialized medical facilities, and assisted living arrangements has skyrocketed. However, these services remain prohibitively expensive for middle and low-income families, leaving millions of senior citizens at risk of social isolation, financial insecurity, and inadequate long-term medical support.

Addressing the elder care crisis demands comprehen-

sive public policy reform that combines state infrastructure investments with community-driven support systems. Governments must strengthen public pension schemes, subsidize long-term healthcare services, and incentivize retrofitting public transport and urban housing to improve accessibility. Additionally, communities should establish intergenerational programs and neighborhood support networks that combat social isolation among the elderly. Respecting and supporting senior citizens is a benchmark of a compassionate society; ensuring their dignity, health, and economic security must become an urgent national priority.

Oman



Preserving Mental Health in Competitive Workplaces

Modern corporate environments increasingly celebrate intense productivity, constant connectivity, and unyielding availability, creating a pervasive workplace culture that drives widespread psychological burnout. The normalization of extended working hours and digital accessibility through smartphones has blurred the boundaries between professional duties and personal life. Employees face overwhelming pressure to respond to communications around the clock, leading to chronic stress, sleep deprivation, and severe anxiety. Despite growing corporate rhetoric surrounding employee wellness, the underlying structural expectations within many industries continue to prioritize short-term outputs over long-term human

well-being.

The economic and human consequences of systemic workplace stress are profound. Burnout severely reduces long-term employee engagement, stifles creative problem-solving, and leads to high turnover rates that quietly cost organizations millions in lost productivity and recruitment fees.

Moreover, chronic mental strain manifests physically, contributing to long-term health complications that place additional burdens on public healthcare systems. Treating mental health as an individual responsibility—expecting workers to manage workplace stress solely through personal resilience or apps—ignores the organizational practices that create toxic work conditions in the first place.

Fostering a truly healthy workforce requires structural changes within corporate management structures and institutional culture. Organizations must establish clear boundaries regarding after-hours digital communication, enforce reasonable workload caps, and create psychological safety where employees can seek support without fear of professional repercussions. Flexible work arrangements, transparent management, and regular performance evaluations based on actual impact rather than physical or digital seat-time are vital steps forward. Prioritizing employee mental health is not an act of corporate charity; it is a fundamental strategy for building sustainable, resilient, and highly creative organizations.

Ivan

Managing Urban Heat Islands and Resilience

As global temperatures continue to break historical records, major cities across the globe face an escalating environmental crisis known as the urban heat island effect. Concrete jungles, dominated by asphalt roads, high-rise glass structures, and dense construction, absorb solar radiation during daylight hours and release it slowly throughout the night. This process prevents urban microclimates from cooling naturally, creating dangerously high localized temperatures that severely impact public health, strain municipal power grids, and drastically reduce the overall quality of life for millions of city residents.

The human cost of unmanaged urban heat falls disproportionately on vulnerable populations, particularly outdoor laborers, informal settle-



ment residents, and elderly citizens who lack access to air conditioning or green spaces. Elevated urban temperatures compound air pollution, worsen cardiovascular and respiratory conditions, and increase heat-related hospitalizations during summer months. Municipalities often treat heatwaves as temporary weather anomalies rather than structural urban planning failures, resulting in short-term emergency advisories rather than

permanent infrastructure overhauls that address the physical root causes of extreme urban warming.

Mitigating urban heat requires a complete paradigm shift toward climate-resilient architecture and nature-based infrastructure solutions. City authorities must prioritize expanding urban forest canopies, constructing green rooftops, incorporating permeable paving materials, and restoring natural water bodies with-

in metropolitan limits. Urban planning regulations should enforce cool roof mandates using reflective paints and mandate passive cooling designs in new building codes. By reimagining concrete landscapes as sustainable, green ecosystems, cities can significantly reduce ambient temperatures, safeguard public health, and build long-term climate resilience against an warming world.

Tyla

Ethical Imperatives in Artificial Intelligence Governance

The rapid integration of artificial intelligence into critical sectors like healthcare, criminal justice, hiring, and financial services has outpaced existing regulatory frameworks, raising serious ethical dilemmas. Automated algorithms process immense amounts of data to make life-altering decisions, yet the internal mechanisms behind these systems remain largely opaque. When proprietary software determines creditworthiness, job suitability, or medical treatment priorities, questions regarding algorithmic bias, historical discrimination, and accountability become urgent matters of public interest that demand immediate regulatory oversight.

Algorithmic bias is rarely intentional; rather, it reflects historical inequities embedded within the vast datasets used to train machine learning models. If past hiring records



favor specific demographics, an automated screening system will inevitably replicate and accentuate those preferences under the guise of objective data evaluation. This dynamic threatens to institutionalize systemic bias at a scale previously unimaginable. Furthermore, the absence of clear liability standards creates a legal vacuum where neither software developers nor organizational users take full responsibility when

automated systems generate discriminatory or harmful real-world outcomes.

Establishing comprehensive, ethical AI governance requires a multi-stakeholder strategy that balances technological innovation with mandatory human rights protections. Governments must establish independent regulatory bodies to conduct routine algorithmic audits, mandate algorithmic transparency, and enforce strict data privacy

protections. Tech companies must prioritize explainable AI models, ensuring automated decisions can be audited, challenged, and explained in plain language. Technology should serve human well-being, and preserving transparency, fairness, and accountability within digital systems is essential to maintaining public trust in an increasingly automated world.

Sujan Kumar

Combating Misinformation in Digital Information Ecosystems

The viral spread of unchecked misinformation across social media networks poses an existential threat to democratic discourse, public health, and social stability. Algorithmic architecture on major digital platforms is designed to maximize user engagement, frequently amplifying sensationalist, emotionally charged, and unverified content over factual reporting. During public emergencies, elections, and crises, viral falsehoods manipulate public opinion, sow deep societal divisions, and undermine public trust in established scientific, educational, and journalistic institutions.

The speed at which false narratives travel online makes traditional fact-checking methods insufficient on their own. While professional newsrooms and independent fact-checkers work diligently to debunk harmful claims, false information often reaches millions of users before corrections can be issued. Furthermore, the rapid advancement of generative artificial intelligence tools allows bad actors to produce convincing fake images, audio clips, and articles at minimal cost, overwhelming the average citizen's ability to distinguish authentic news from coordinated disinformation campaigns.

Countering digital misinformation requires a comprehensive effort involving media literacy education, regulatory reform, and technological accountability. Educational systems must integrate critical digital literacy into school standards, teaching individuals how to evaluate sources, cross-reference facts, and recognize emotional manipulation online. Simultaneously, social media platforms must be held accountable for algorithmic transparency and forced to adjust recommendation engines that profit from sensational falsehoods. Protecting free expression while safeguarding truth requires an informed citizenry, responsible technology platforms, and an unwavering commitment to factual integrity.

Parulatha



The Auto Driver Who Runs A Library



Every morning at 5 AM, when most of Bangalore is still asleep, Ramesh Anna's auto is already clean and ready.

But unlike other autos in Shivajinagar, his has no blaring music or movie posters. It has books.

For the last 8 years, 48-year-old Ramesh has been running a moving library from his auto-rickshaw. There are 30-odd books in Kannada, English, and Hindi — kept in a small wooden shelf behind the passenger seat. Any passenger can borrow one for free, and return it on their next ride, or pass it on. Ramesh studied only till Class 10.

He had to drop out when his father died and drive an auto to support his family. "I could not go to college, but books took me everywhere," he says.

He started with two books his daughter brought from her school library. A passenger who was waiting in traffic picked one up and started reading. He returned it next

week with two more books as a gift. That's how it began. Today, his auto has travelled over 2 lakh kilometres and his books have travelled even further. IT workers read Sudha Murty on their way to office, college students read APJ Abdul Kalam, and school kids read comics.

He has no register, no fine, and no due date. He trusts people. "If someone keeps a book, it means they needed it more than me," he smiles. In a city obsessed with 10-minute deliveries and surge pricing, Ramesh Anna is a reminder of a slower, kinder Bangalore.

He does not earn more because of the books. In fact, he sometimes loses rides because he spends time talking about a book. But he says his auto is never empty. We talk about innovation in education and making libraries accessible. Sometimes innovation is not an app, but an auto driver who believes that a free book can change a boring ride into a journey.

Tazak

Quick Read

Satish Salian demands protection amid threats

CH NEWS, THANE

The grieving father of late talent manager Disha Salian has officially requested heavy police security. Satish Salian, alongside his legal counsel, claims they face severe threats from rival political figures. Their legal team sent urgent letters to top national leaders, including the Prime Minister and the Home Minister, demanding immediate protection. They argue that high-profile individuals implicated in the ongoing high-stakes investigation currently enjoy heavy state-backed security, while key witnesses and family members remain dangerously exposed.

'World must not ignore past pandemic lessons'

CH NEWS, New Delhi

India has strongly urged nations to work together and share medical resources fairly to fight future health crises. Top health official Punya Salila Srivastava emphasized that strong digital tools and fair access to vaccines are crucial. She highlighted India's past efforts in shipping millions of doses worldwide during COVID-19.

'Democratic accountability demands full RTI transparency'

Tamil Nadu revoked a controversial notification exempting the Law and Order Department from RTI scrutiny following backlash.

CH NEWS, CHENNAI

In a dramatic policy reversal, the Tamil Nadu government officially revoked a controversial gazette notification that had exempted the Public (Law and Order) Department from the purview of the Right to Information (RTI) Act, bowing to intense public backlash and sharp political criticism just hours after the order was initially issued.

The initial administrative move had sought to classify the sensitive department under the category of an "Intelligence and Security Organisation," which would have effectively shielded critical governance records from public scrutiny. Had the exemption stood, citizens, journalists, and transparency advocates would have been barred from filing RTI applications regarding highly scrutinized matters, including police custody deaths, custodial torture inquiries, communal and caste clash investigation reports, political agitations, and decisions concerning the withdrawal of sensitive legal cases.

The initial notification triggered immediate, widespread condemnation across the political spectrum, uniting both op-



Don't let bureaucrats set the tone, tenor, and direction of the administration.
- Karti P. Chidambaram, Congress leader

position figures and allied leaders in rare alignment against the bureaucratic maneuver. Congress leader Karti P. Chidambaram—whose party belongs to the ruling Secular Social Justice Victory alliance led by the TVK—publicly denounced the decision as a dangerous precedent that directly undermined the foundational tenets of democratic accountability established by the UPA government in 2005.

"The Law and Order Department handles crucial matters such as examining inquiry re-

Key highlights

- Swift U-Turn: The state administration rescinded the exemption hours after its issuance, responding to heavy criticism from opposition parties and civil society advocates.
- Political Condemnation: Leaders across political lines, including BJP's Tamilisai Soundararajan and Congress figures, lambasted the original move as an undemocratic attempt to evade transparency and accountability.
- Critical Records Protected: Had it stood, the order would have blocked public access to vital investigative documents, security-related detentions, and files concerning the withdrawal of sensitive legal cases.
- Upholding Transparency: Critics emphasized that the RTI Act, enacted in 2005, remains a cornerstone of democratic accountability that should be expanded rather than restricted.

ports on police firing, custodial deaths, torture, and security-related detention cases," Chidambaram posted on social media. Warning that such actions

Rapid administrative rollback

Facing compounding political fallout and mounting public outrage, the state government acted swiftly to rescind the notification, restoring the Public (Law and Order) Department to full compliance with the transparency law. Following the rapid rollback, political analysts and civic leaders welcomed the government's responsiveness while emphasizing that the episode highlights the constant vigilance required to protect institutional transparency and the citizen's right to information across Indian governance.

erode public trust, he advised the Chief Minister's Office to guard against bureaucratic overreach.

Prominent opposition figures similarly piled pressure on the administration. Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Tamilisai Soundararajan slammed the move as flagrantly undemocratic. Challenging the government's transparency, she questioned why an administration confident in its governance would seek refuge from public records laws and legal oversight.

Personal sacrifice made for Simhastha project: MP CM

UJJAIN

In a striking display of personal sacrifice for public infrastructure, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav personally struck the first blow with a pickaxe to demolish his own ancestral home in Ujjain as part of a massive road-widening project ahead of the upcoming Simhastha 2028 fair.

The Chief Minister's childhood residence is among 272 structures marked for clearance to widen arterial roadways in the holy city. Standing before the property where he grew up, Yadav acknowledged the deep emotional weight of the moment while emphasizing that civic duty must supersede personal attachment when preparing for a global spiritual gathering of this magnitude.

"This is the place where I grew up, playing and running around, and now I am stepping forward to dismantle it with my own hands," Yadav told gathered citizens and reporters. "It certainly has an emotional impact. However, if it is necessary for the administration and essential for Simhastha, then this sacrifice must be made. I am satisfied that we are all doing this together."

Yadav expressed hope that his voluntary action would set a unifying example for local residents whose properties are similarly affected by the ambitious urban overhaul. He noted that citizens across the city are willingly stepping forward to surrender portions of their land so that millions of future pilgrims can move safely through the historic pilgrimage center.

Ujjain Municipal Corporation Chairperson Kalawati Yadav outlined the massive scale of preparations currently underway for the Simhastha Mela, which convenes once every twelve years on the sacred banks of the Shipra River.

With tens of millions of devotees expected to descend upon the city in 2028, municipal authorities have fast-tracked widespread structural upgrades.

The comprehensive development blueprint encompasses constructing approximately 29 kilometers of new bathing ghats, building comprehensive river diversion projects, erecting protective dams, and aggressively expanding narrow urban corridors.

Officials stressed that widening key thoroughfares is vital to prevent catastrophic pedestrian bottlenecks and ensure seamless emergency access during the massive religious festival.

Mahindra for IAF, Adani for commercial planes: Embraer

NEW DELHI

Brazilian aerospace giant Embraer has finalized its strategic industrial partnerships in India, joining forces with the Mahindra Group for a major military transport tender and partnering with the Adani Group to expand regional civil aviation.

The high-profile announcements were detailed by Embraer Defense and Security President and CEO Bosco Da Costa Junior during an interaction highlighting the company's long-term commitments to India's aerospace sector. For the Indian Air Force's highly anticipated Multi-Role Transport Aircraft program, which seeks to procure sixty medium transport planes to replace ageing fleets, Embraer has officially selected Mahindra as its exclusive defense partner to offer the advanced C-390 Millennium jet.

Addressing market inqui-

Key highlights

- Military Partnership with Mahindra: Embraer has teamed up with Mahindra to offer the KC-390 jet as a high-performance replacement for ageing fleets, complete with plans for localized manufacturing and a Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO) hub.
- Commercial Tie-Up with Adani: For civilian and commercial aircraft sectors, the company maintains a separate collaboration with the Adani Group to cater to expanding domestic regional aviation demands.
- Intense Tender Competition: Five major entities—including Mahindra, Tata, HAL, Reliance, and Adani—have received the Request for Proposal from the Defence Ministry for the multi-billion-dollar MTA program.
- Performance Edge: Embraer highlights that the KC-390 carries heavier payloads, flies faster and higher than traditional turboprop competitors, and boasts exceptional mission completion reliability.

ries regarding the defense Ministry's Requests for Proposal issued to several major industrial groups, Da Costa confirmed that the division between its military and commercial partners is firmly established and will not change. While Mahindra handles military applications, Embraer has tied up with the Adani

and a heavy payload capacity. Embraer emphasized the jet's elite global reliability, noting high fleet availability and proven performance in harsh, unpaved desert environments. Beyond simply fulfilling the initial sixty-aircraft military order, Embraer aims to utilize India as a vital global hub for manufacturing, maintenance, and supply chain expansion.

On the civilian front, the collaboration with Adani focuses on meeting surging passenger demands across tier-two and tier-three cities, leveraging Adani's extensive airport infrastructure. By establishing robust domestic supply chains and maintenance networks under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative, Embraer hopes to deeply root its advanced aviation technology within India, fostering long-term technological growth, skilled local employment, and enhanced connectivity for millions of passengers nationwide.

SIR Electoral Row: Khera challenges BJP over 13 cr voter deletions

NEW DELHI



If 2.8 crore dead people were still on the rolls, were the annual Summary Revisions since 2014 really that shoddy? Where did the other 10.2 crore names go?

- Pawan Khera, Congress Leader

unprecedented internal friction within the Election Commission of India (ECI). Investigative reports revealed that Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi had formally registered objections at least 14 times over a 10-month period concerning procedural transparency, data custody, and unilateral decisions tied to the nationwide rollout of the SIR.

While opposition parties, led by the INDIA bloc, have staged statewide protests demanding the resignation and accountability of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, the ECI has maintained that its final decisions were approved unanimously and that internal notes represent normal administrative feedback. Amid mounting pressure, the Commission recently issued fresh guidelines and announced review mechanisms for its internal IT framework, even as political battle lines over the sanctity of India's voter registries harden.

The political firestorm surrounding the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls intensified sharply following a scathing critique by Congress leader Pawan Khera, who directly challenged the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) over the mass exclusion of over 13 crore names from draft voter rolls across various states.

Khera's remarks came as a direct rebuttal to a social media post by the BJP, which defended the massive deletion drive by claiming that 2.8 crore names of deceased voters had successfully been purged from the electoral registries to prevent potential electoral fraud and bogus voting.

Seizing upon the BJP's defense, Khera questioned the integrity and precision of the annual Summary Revisions conducted by the Election Commission since 2014.

Pointing out that the total number of names struck off under the ongoing SIR exercise has crossed 13 crore, Khera demanded an explanation for the remaining 10.2 crore voters excluded alongside the 2.8 crore deceased individuals.

Khera asked whether the BJP was admitting that its administration and the electoral machinery had failed for over a decade to maintain accurate rolls, or if the annual summary clean-ups were profoundly shoddy.

The Congress leader reiterated allegations that the sweeping exercise has systematically disenfranchised millions of legitimate citizens, transforming a routine administrative clean-up into an opaque mechanism of voter suppression.

The verbal duel between the ruling party and the opposition unfolds against the backdrop of

Congress leader Pawan Khera challenged the BJP over the mass deletion of 13 crore voters during electoral roll revisions, questioning transparency and institutional accountability.

Chemicals department launches Special Campaign 6.0

NEW DELHI

Stepping up its administrative readiness, the Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals is preparing to launch Special Campaign 6.0, an intensive nationwide initiative dedicated to cleanliness, efficient space management, and the proper disposal of electronic waste across all government offices.

Scheduled to run throughout October, the upcoming campaign builds directly upon the groundwork laid during a rigorous preparatory phase held across ministry divisions. With the overarching focus placed on the effective collection, segregation, and disposal of e-waste, officials are implementing systematic measures to streamline workflows and modernize workplaces.

The sixth iteration of the campaign follows the notable successes achieved during Special Campaign 5.0. In the previous year, targeted cleanliness and record-management drives yielded tangible results. Systematic scrap disposal generated more than nine lakh rupees in revenue, while comprehensive space audits freed over seven thousand square feet of valuable office area. Furthermore, thousands of physical and electronic files were meticulously reviewed and weeded out, significantly improving overall administrative efficiency.

The upcoming campaign extends far beyond central ministry headquarters, actively involving public sector undertakings and autonomous institutions such as the Central Institute of Petrochemicals Engineering and Technology and Hindustan Organic Chemicals Limited. Collectively, these bodies executed numerous cleanliness and optimization activities during the preparatory weeks.

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Sarma slams Rahul over election row

NEW DELHI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has strongly criticized Congress leader Rahul Gandhi. Sarma demanded an apology, accusing him of spreading confusion regarding the Election Commission. He stated that the opposition alliance consists entirely of frustrated and defeated politicians trying to weaken Indian democracy. Sarma pointed out that Congress keeps losing elections under various poll panels, yet routinely blames electronic voting machines instead of doing proper self-evaluation.

Seva Sankalp: CM Rekha launches ₹214.12 cr infrastructure drive across unauthorised colonies

NEW DELHI

In a major infrastructure push targeting marginalized urban pockets, Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta officially laid the foundation stones for 53 transformative development projects valued at Rs. 214.12 crore across several key unauthorised colonies.

Launched under the ongoing Seva Sankalp campaign, the comprehensive infrastructure package spans the Kirari, Bawana, Mundka, Narela, and Nangloi Jat Assembly constituencies. According to government estimates, the extensive works are designed to upgrade



living standards and strengthen basic municipal amenities for approximately 1.75 lakh residents who have long grappled with systemic infrastructural neglect.

The ambitious multi-crore package aims to overhaul fun-

Constituency-Wise Allocation and Focus on Kirari

- Kirari Assembly Constituency: Receiving the largest share of the package, Kirari has been allocated Rs. 105.51 crore across 14 unauthorised colonies for 27 distinct development works. This includes the construction of 640 roads and lanes, 50.71 kilometers of paved roadways, and an extensive 101.42-kilometer drainage network to mitigate chronic waterlogging.
- Bawana & Nangloi Jat: Bawana secured nine development works worth Rs. 38.83 crore, while Nangloi Jat received eight projects valued at Rs. 33.25 crore.
- Mundka & Narela: Mundka will see five major projects totaling Rs. 22.05 crore, and Narela is set to benefit from four projects worth Rs. 14.48 crore.

damental urban services by constructing and modernizing over a thousand internal path-

ways, expanding durable road networks, and engineering robust subterranean stormwater

Roads, drains, sewerage, and drainage are the basic rights of every citizen. Our objective is not merely to make announcements, but to find permanent solutions to problems that have remained pending for years.

- Rekha Gupta, Delhi Chief Minister

drainage systems. Specifically, the works encompass the development of 1,062 roads and lanes across 27 distinct unauthorised colonies, alongside the laying of roughly 89.82 kilometers of paved road network and 147.69 kilometers of advanced drainage infrastructure.

Addressing a large gathering of local citizens and public dignitaries—including North West Delhi MP Yogendra Chandolia and senior Cabinet Ministers Parvesh Sahib Singh, Ashish Sood, and Ravindra Indraj Singh—Chief Minister Gupta emphasized that basic civil amenities are non-negotiable rights for every urban dweller.

"Our objective is not merely to make political announcements, but to find permanent, ground-level solutions to problems that have remained pending for decades," Gupta stated. "The Delhi Government is working tirelessly to fulfill the basic infrastructure needs of

every single lane and area, moving steadily toward Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of a Viksit Delhi."

Cabinet Ministers highlighted that these interventions will drastically reduce airborne dust pollution caused by unpaved surfaces, improve local transit connectivity, and permanently resolve the severe waterlogging and sewage overflow issues that plague outer Delhi during monsoon seasons. The administration has vowed to complete all initiated works within strict, time-bound parameters to ensure tangible benefits reach citizens without bureaucratic delays.

Quick Read

AP Govt announces Rs. 11,000 crore initiative

CH NEWS, AMARAVATI Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan will launch massive rural development projects worth over eleven thousand crore rupees. The special initiative focuses heavily on upgrading village infrastructure, building new concrete and blacktop roads, and constructing thousands of modern cattle sheds to support local dairy farmers. State officials stated that both central and state funds will finance the se extensive welfare projects. This upcoming launch marks another major step by the coalition government aimed at transforming rural economies, improving basic amenities, and boosting agricultural growth across different districts.

Authorities issue severe rainfall warning in Uttarkashi

CH NEWS, UTTARKASHI Local authorities in Uttarkashi have placed rescue teams on high alert following a severe rainfall warning issued by the meteorological department. Officials have urged pilgrims visiting the sacred Char Dham shrines and tourists to avoid unnecessary travel due to high risks of sudden landslides and overflowing rivers. Emergency equipment, including heavy clearing machinery and medical units, has been strategically deployed along major routes. District leaders emphasized that safety is the top priority, advising all visitors and residents to stay away from dangerous water bodies and promptly report any weather-related emergencies to local disaster control lines.

Saurabh Bharadwaj slams Delhi Minister Parvesh

NEW DELHI

A massive political row broke out in the national capital after Aam Aadmi Party leaders shared a viral video allegedly showing Delhi Minister Parvesh Sahib Singh slapping a young man. The confrontation reportedly occurred during an official inspection of road infrastructure in Tilak Nagar. AAP Delhi chief Saurabh Bharadwaj launched a scathing attack on the minister, labeling him a coward and challenging his conduct during the heated public altercation.

According to reports, local party workers and the area legislator had gathered to question officials about alleged poor construction quality and corruption in local road projects. The situation quickly escalated when tensions flared between political factions. The victim,

HM Shah inaugurates Sabarmati railway projects

Union Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurated modernized railway upgrades at Sabarmati, highlighting seamless connectivity and freight expansion.

CH NEWS, AHMEDABAD

Union Home Minister Amit Shah celebrated the remarkable evolution of Gujarat's Sabarmati railway station. Speaking at a major public event, Shah reflected on how far the transit hub has advanced from its humble past. He contrasted today's seamless connectivity with the difficult conditions he faced traveling from Delhi decades ago.

Looking back at the 1980s, Shah noted that passengers arriving at Sabarmati once had to walk two exhausting kilometers just to find a basic auto-rickshaw. Today, the station stands completely transformed into a world-class junction. It now boasts direct integration with modern metro networks, state bus services, and upgraded rail links. This modernization forms part of a massive Rs 1,542-crore investment package dedicated entirely to upgrading railway infrastructure across the Ahmedabad division.

A major highlight of the inauguration was the unveiling of



Today, no one can believe that this is the same station where, in the 1980s, one had to walk two kilometres to get a rickshaw... these projects cover passenger convenience, railway safety, and environmental concerns.

- Amit Shah, Union Home Minister the Rs 700-crore WAG-12 locomotive maintenance facility. Designed to house and service massive electric freight engines, the advanced depot can maintain up to 300 heavy locomotives. Shah pointed out the incredible economic power of these 12,000-horsepower engines, explaining that a single WAG-12 can haul cargo equal to roughly

Key highlights

■ WAG-12 Maintenance Facility: A state-of-the-art ₹700-crore maintenance shed has been established to house and service up to 300 high-capacity, 12,000 HP electric freight locomotives capable of hauling loads equivalent to 600 trucks.

■ Capacity Expansion: Key initiatives include the doubling of the Sabarmati-Sarkhej railway line to boost direct connectivity toward Mumbai and the introduction of trials for long-haul double-stack container trains.

■ Comprehensive Investment: The projects form part of a broader ₹1,542 crore railway infrastructure overhaul across Ahmedabad aimed at elevating passenger convenience, safety via the Kavach system, and green transit alternatives.

600 heavy trucks, dramatically boosting freight efficiency.

Environmental sustainability also took center stage with the launch of India's pioneering Liquefied Natural Gas-powered train. Utilizing an innovative dual-fuel system, the converted power cars successfully completed extensive trials exceeding two thousand kilometers. This green initiative cuts down traditional diesel consumption significantly while maintaining full

operational reliability.

Furthermore, Shah inaugurated the Sabarmati-Sarkhej line doubling project, which unlocks smoother connections toward Mumbai. Combined with advanced safety tech like the Kavach protection system, these comprehensive upgrades prove that India's transportation network is rapidly accelerating toward a cleaner, safer, and much more connected future for all commuters.

Priyanka Gandhi accuses BJP of shielding CEC

NEW DELHI

Opposition leader Rahul Gandhi shared a reflective message online, emphasizing his ability to remain serene while navigating turbulent political waters. Publishing a thoughtful reflection on social media, the senior politician compared his political journey to swimming through rough ocean waves. He noted that facing fierce challenges teaches individuals that rough conditions are simply another form of inner calm, signaling resilience against ongoing controversies. Aunque the post avoided explicit references, the timing strongly tied into the brewing political firestorm surrounding the Election Commission of India. Opposition parties have raised sharp questions regarding



Rahul Gandhi shared a reflective social media post comparing his political journey to swimming through rough waves amid intensifying opposition protests over voter roll revisions.

transparency and the ongoing nationwide voter list revision. Gandhi recently stepped up his

Fadnavis Mocks Rahul Over Vote Theft Claims

NAGPUR

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis launched a blistering attack on opposition leaders on Sunday, dismissing allegations regarding the nationwide voter list revision as entirely baseless. Speaking to journalists, Fadnavis accused rival politicians of deliberately undermining the credibility of independent democratic institutions. He argued that the continuous rhetoric surrounding manipulated electoral data is part of a calculated strategy designed to manufacture public distrust and foster widespread institutional anarchy.

The Chief Minister took direct aim at senior opposition figures, claiming their primary objective is to erode faith in constitutional bodies and steer governance toward ideological extremes. He humorously remarked that while critics frequently wave copies of the national charter during public rallies, their actual words reflect a fundamental disrespect for established legal frameworks. Responding to claims of systematic vote deletion, Fadnavis presented empirical electoral counter-examples. He highlighted specific re-

gional elections where ruling parties secured decisive victories despite significant drops in registered voter counts following administrative roll updates, questioning how such outcomes could align with claims of targeted voter suppression.

Furthermore, Fadnavis criticized opposition leaders for ignoring formal bureaucratic channels during the ongoing verification window. He explained that official protocols provide ample opportunity for political parties and citizens to raise objections, correct administrative errors, or reinstate omitted names through proper legal forums.

Instead of participating constructively in these transparent administrative procedures, critics choose to stage disruptions for political survival, he asserted. Concluding his remarks with a sharp satirical jab, the Chief Minister suggested that national leaders should launch an official inquiry to locate what he described as lost political sanity, urging them to refocus public discourse on genuine developmental priorities and national unity instead of manufactured controversies.

For three years, I have been exposing vote theft. Now, the Election Commissioners themselves are acknowledging it and bringing the truth to light... CEC Gyanesh Kumar should resign immediately."

- Rahul Gandhi, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha

critique, claiming that systematic vote manipulation has been occurring for years while alleging severe institutional misconduct at the highest levels of the election body. Meanwhile, fellow opposition leaders amplified these calls for accountability, demanding immediate high-level resignations and full investigations into alleged electoral irregularities. Prominent party figures accused ruling administration officials of shielding top election

administrators from scrutiny. The intensifying dispute has united various opposition factions, who are scheduled to convene shortly to formulate a joint strategy addressing these democratic concerns.

As political tensions mount nationwide, public debate continues to intensify over the independence and operational transparency of constitutional regulators. While government defenders dismiss the opposition claims as politically motivated attacks designed to create confusion, opposition figures remain steadfast in their pursuit of institutional reform. This ongoing clash highlights deep divisions over electoral oversight, setting the stage for major parliamentary and public confrontations in the coming days.

Dhami defends EC over electoral revision

DEHRADUN

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami has accused opposition leaders of spreading false narratives and confusion regarding the recent electoral roll revision.

Defending the Election Commission, Dhami stated that internal procedural discussions should not be misconstrued as deep divisions within the poll body.

He emphasized that the special revision aims to clean up voter lists rather than remove eligible citizens, noting that officials will personally visit homes to assist unmapped voters. This comes as political tensions rise over election procedures, with leaders clashing sharply across the country regarding the transparency of the electoral system.

Minister Giriraj slams Rahul over EVM & EC row

NAGPUR

Union Textiles Minister Giriraj Singh launched a fiery attack on senior opposition figures, accusing them of double standards regarding the democratic process. Speaking to journalists during his visit to Nagpur, Singh claimed that opposition leaders routinely praise election systems whenever their party secures a victory, yet immediately blame electronic voting machines and independent election administrators whenever they face defeat at the ballot box.

The Union Minister reserved his sharpest criticisms for top opposition leaders, alleging that their ongoing public campaigns are designed to undermine national institutions. Expanding his critique, Singh leveled serious retrospective claims regarding political lineage and past administrative compliance, arguing that critics of the current government frequently disregard constitutional norms.

He asserted that the persistent opposition rhetoric stems primarily from an inability to accept a democratically elected leader from a humble background holding the country's highest executive office.

Furthermore, Singh dismissed recent opposition comparisons linking ongoing administrative voter list updates to controversial citizenship verification frameworks.



He criticized regional leaders for allegedly prioritizing divisive political rhetoric over basic legal literacy and constitutional respect. The senior minister emphasized that institutional updating processes are routine administrative measures necessary to maintain clean and accurate electoral rolls for every eligible citizen across the nation.

During his ongoing tour, Singh also participated in key industrial events, including a prominent national cotton summit alongside fellow cabinet colleagues.

At the conference, he highlighted the vital economic role played by agricultural producers and outlined government strategies to boost sustainable farming and textile manufacturing.

Concluding his remarks, the minister urged political rivals to focus on constructive national development rather than manufacturing continuous controversies that weaken public faith in vital democratic pillars.

SECURING RURAL LIVELIHOODS

Centre to launch digital livestock insurance portal

NEW DELHI

The Union Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying is set to launch a dedicated Livestock Insurance Portal on Monday, marking a major leap in digitizing agricultural risk management across the nation. Union Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh will formally unveil the integrated digital platform, designed to streamline policy issuance, claims processing, and real-time monitoring under the central government's flagship Livestock Insurance Scheme.

Agricultural economists note that livestock farming serves as a vital economic lifeline for millions of rural households, particularly smallholders and landless farmers. However, unexpected animal mortality due to disease or natural calamities often plunges vulnerable families into severe financial distress. To combat



these risks, the newly developed portal will offer a centralized web-based workflow, ensuring greater transparency, accountability, and efficiency in service delivery from local veterinary units to state headquarters.

A standout feature of the portal is its multilingual support, making services accessible in Hindi, English, and eleven regional languages. This inclusivity ensures that livestock keepers from diverse linguistic backgrounds can easily navigate policy details,

track coverage status, and file claims without relying on intermediaries. Furthermore, the platform integrates advanced identification technologies, such as radio-frequency identification tagging, to accurately track insured animals and expedite legitimate claim settlements.

Under the current administrative framework of the National Livestock Mission, financial support remains heavily subsidized to encourage widespread adoption among marginal communities. Bene-

Key highlights

■ Multilingual Accessibility: To ensure maximum grassroots outreach, the digital interface will support English and Hindi alongside 11 regional Indian languages.

■ Subsidized Framework: Under the National Livestock Mission framework, small and marginal farmers contribute 15% of the policy premium, while central and state governments jointly fund the remaining 85%.

■ Enhanced Traceability: The government is evaluating radio-frequency identification (RFID) tagging integrations to refine animal tracking, verify beneficiary livestock, and accelerate claim processing windows.

ficiaries contribute just fifteen percent of the insurance premium, with the central and state governments jointly cov-

Strengthening rural livelihoods through technology

By shifting manual processes to a transparent, data-driven digital framework, the new portal aims to bridge administrative gaps, improve institutional efficiency, and deliver robust financial safety nets directly to livestock rearers nationwide.

ering the remaining eighty-five percent. Coverage extends up to ten cattle units per eligible household, providing comprehensive financial safety nets for dairy farmers and rural entrepreneurs.



Pollution of Rivers in India

Rivers are among India's greatest natural assets, yet many of them have become carriers of sewage, industrial waste, plastics and agricultural chemicals. This contradiction is especially serious because rivers are not merely channels of water. They support drinking-water systems, farming, fisheries, transport, industry, biodiversity, religious practice and the everyday life of towns and villages. When a river is polluted, the damage therefore spreads far beyond the riverbank. It enters food chains, groundwater, public-health systems, household budgets and local economies. River pollution in India is not caused by one careless industry or one poorly managed city. It is the cumulative result of rapid urbanisation, incomplete sewerage networks, weak treatment capacity, industrial non-compliance, changing land use, agricultural runoff, solid-waste dumping and the reduction of natural river flows. India has introduced important laws, institutions and river-rejuvenation programmes, and measurable improvements have occurred in some locations. However, the overall challenge remains large because infrastructure alone cannot restore a river unless it is connected, operated, monitored and supported by adequate ecological flow. The central argument of this article is that India must stop treating rivers as drains to be cleaned after pollution occurs. Rivers must instead be governed as living ecosystems. That requires controlling waste at source, financing reliable wastewater services, restoring floodplains and wetlands, publishing trustworthy water-quality data, enforcing the polluter-pays principle and giving citizens a meaningful role in protecting their local water bodies.

Why Rivers Matter to India?

India's civilisation developed around rivers. The Ganga, Yamuna, Brahmaputra, Godavari, Krishna, Narmada, Cauvery and many smaller rivers have shaped settlement patterns, agriculture, trade and culture for centuries. Even today, rivers supply water to major cities, irrigate vast agricultural areas and sustain millions of people whose livelihoods depend on fishing, farming, sand, transport, tourism and religious activity. Their importance is also ecological. A healthy river transports sediment, recharges aquifers, supports wetlands, moderates local temperatures and provides habitat for fish, turtles, birds, aquatic plants and microorganisms. Floodplains absorb excess water during high-flow periods and release it gradually, reducing flood risk and supporting groundwater recharge. The river is therefore not only the visible stream between two banks. It is connected to tributaries, drains, wetlands, floodplains, groundwater and the surrounding landscape. This wider understanding matters because a river can look full and still be ecologically unhealthy. A channel may contain water because it receives sewage, reservoir releases or stormwater, while dissolved oxygen remains too low for aquatic life and disease-causing organisms remain dangerously high. Conversely, a river may appear clean during the monsoon because pollutants are diluted, although the pollution load has not actually fallen. Proper assessment must therefore consider water quality, quantity, seasonal flow, biodiversity and the condition of the entire basin.

The Scale and Nature of the Problem

India's river-pollution problem is widespread, although its intensity varies by river, season and location. The Central Pollution Control Board's 2022 assessment identified 311 polluted stretches on 279 rivers, based on monitoring of 603 rivers. A "polluted stretch" is not necessarily an entire river; it is a monitored section where water quality fails to meet the required standard, commonly because biochemical oxygen demand is too high. Even so, the number reveals that pollution is not confined to a few famous rivers or large metropolitan areas. It affects watercourses across many states and union territories. Water quality is measured through several indicators. Biochemical oxygen demand, or BOD, estimates the oxygen required by microorganisms to

break down organic matter. A high BOD usually indicates a heavy organic-pollution load. Dissolved oxygen, or DO, shows how much oxygen is available in the water for fish and other organisms. Fecal coliform counts indicate contamination by human or animal waste and signal a higher risk of waterborne disease. Other tests measure pH, nutrients, suspended solids, toxic metals, pesticides and chemical oxygen demand. The sewage gap explains a large part of the crisis. According to the CPCB's national inventory for 2020-21, urban India was estimated to generate about 72,368 million litres per day of sewage, while installed treatment capacity was about 31,841 MLD. Operational capacity was lower still, at approximately 26,869 MLD. These figures are a national snap-

shot rather than a complete measure of what reaches rivers, but they illustrate the structural mismatch between wastewater generation and the ability to treat it. Capacity figures can also overstate performance. A treatment plant may exist on paper but operate below capacity because households are not connected to sewers, pumping stations fail, drains bypass the system, electricity costs are unpaid, or maintenance is poor. Some towns have treatment plants but lack complete sewer networks; others collect sewage but release it when plants are overloaded. Effective treatment must therefore be measured by the volume consistently captured, treated to standard and safely reused or discharged, not simply by the rated capacity of constructed plants.

Major Sources of River Pollution

Untreated and Partly Treated Sewage

Domestic sewage is the largest and most persistent source of organic pollution in many Indian rivers. It contains human waste, detergents, food residues, oils, nutrients, pathogens, household chemicals and, increasingly, pharmaceutical residues. In older and rapidly expanding cities, sewer networks often cover only part of the population. Informal settlements and peripheral colonies may depend on septic tanks, open drains or direct discharge. Many septic tanks are poorly designed, and fecal sludge may be emptied into drains or vacant land rather than taken to an authorised treatment facility.



Industrial Effluents

Industrial pollution is often smaller in volume than municipal sewage but can be more toxic. Tanneries, textile-dyeing units, pulp and paper mills, distilleries, sugar mills, pharmaceutical factories, electroplating units, chemical plants, mines and metal-processing industries can release acids, alkalis, dyes, solvents, oils, salts, heavy metals and other hazardous substances. If effluent-treatment plants are absent, poorly operated or deliberately bypassed, even a relatively small discharge can contaminate water, sediment and aquatic organisms.

Religious Tourism and Everyday Practices

Ritual bathing, cremation, idol immersion, flower offerings and festivals are culturally significant, but poorly managed practices can add organic matter, paint, plaster, plastics and other materials to rivers. The problem should not be framed as a conflict between faith and environmental protection. Many Indian traditions regard rivers as sacred, which can become a powerful basis for conservation. Designated immersion tanks, natural materials, collection points for offerings, cleaner cremation facilities, adequate toilets and well-managed pilgrimage infrastructure allow religious practice to continue with less ecological damage.

Solid Waste and Plastics

Open dumping of municipal waste along riverbanks and drains is another visible source of pollution. Plastic packaging, multilayered material, cloth, construction debris and organic waste enter rivers directly or are carried by rain. Large objects obstruct channels and damage aquatic habitats, while plastic fragments gradually break into microplastics. Organic waste produces leachate and consumes oxygen as it decomposes. Waste accumulated in drains also worsens urban flooding, after which contaminated floodwater spreads through homes and streets.

Agricultural Runoff

Agriculture contributes nutrients, pesticides, sediment and animal waste to rivers. Fertilisers not absorbed by crops can be washed from fields into streams, encouraging eutrophication and algal blooms. Pesticides may harm non-target species and persist in the environment. Irrigation return flows can carry salts and chemicals back into rivers, while erosion adds sediment that blocks light, alters habitats and transports attached pollutants.



The Ganga

The Ganga basin illustrates both the scale of the challenge and the value of sustained public investment. It contains dense cities, industrial centres, farming regions and major pilgrimage sites. Pollution sources include municipal sewage, industrial discharges, solid waste and runoff from the wider basin. Earlier programmes created assets but often struggled with fragmented implementation and weak operation and maintenance. The Namami Gange Programme adopted a broader approach that includes sewerage infrastructure, industrial monitoring, river-surface cleaning, biodiversity conservation, afforestation, rural sanitation, public participation and improved institutional coordination. The use of hybrid annuity contracts, under which private operators have long-term responsibility for treatment-plant performance, attempts to correct the older bias toward construction without maintenance.



The Yamuna

The Yamuna demonstrates how a relatively short urban stretch can dominate public perception of an entire river. In Delhi, numerous drains carry sewage and other waste into a channel whose natural flow is heavily regulated. During dry periods, limited freshwater is available to dilute pollution. Repeated investments in interceptor sewers and treatment plants have improved capacity, yet incomplete household connections, drain bypasses, poor maintenance and pollution from the wider basin continue to undermine results. The lesson is clear: no city can clean a river by treating only the water already inside the channel. Every drain and sub-drain must be mapped, wastewater must be intercepted before discharge, and sufficient environmental flow must remain in the river. Upstream and downstream states must also coordinate because a river ignores administrative boundaries.

What Major Rivers Reveal



URBAN RIVERS SUCH AS THE MUSI AND HINDON

The Musi in Hyderabad and the Hindon in western Uttar Pradesh show that the pollution problem extends well beyond nationally prominent rivers. Rapid urban and industrial growth has placed severe pressure on both. These rivers receive a mixture of sewage, industrial effluent and solid waste, while settlements and economic activity have expanded across their floodplains. Their condition also affects downstream communities that may use contaminated water for irrigation or come into contact with polluted groundwater. Such examples expose a recurring governance failure: cities often regard rivers at their edges as disposal corridors rather than public ecological infrastructure. Restoring urban rivers requires metropolitan land-use planning, protection of drains and floodplains, strict industrial enforcement and wastewater systems designed for future population growth rather than yesterday's demand.

Quick Read

Afghan forces kill 28 in border clash

KABUL

Afghanistan's defense ministry announced that security forces killed 28 fighters and wounded 32 others in eastern Nuristan province following an armed incursion from Pakistan. The clash occurred in the border district of Kamdesh after a group—allegedly comprising Islamic State militants and former Afghan security personnel—crossed the border. Kabul accused Pakistani intelligence of training and orchestrating the infiltration, drawing a sharp escalation in cross-border tensions. This confrontation follows recent Pakistani airstrikes in Afghanistan, which Islamabad defended as counter-terrorism operations but which local officials reported caused civilian casualties.

Narayani River Crosses Danger Mark, Triggers Flood Alerts

KATHMANDU

Nepali authorities issued urgent flood warnings after the Narayani River surged past its danger threshold in southern Chitwan and Nawalparasi districts, driven by continuous heavy rainfall since September 24. The water level at the Devghat monitoring station climbed to 11 meters—surpassing the 9-meter danger mark—and is forecast to peak near 13 meters. The flooding has already swept away 25 houses in Parbat district's Jajjala Rural Municipality, while a landslide in Palpa left three people missing. Officials have urged residents along the Transboundary River, known as the Gandak in India, to evacuate to higher ground.

Republicans test Michigan doorstep messaging strategy

LIVONIA

Republican ground campaigns in Michigan are testing whether framing Democratic rival Abdul El-Sayed as a left-wing extremist can overcome a widening enthusiasm gap for U.S. Senate candidate Mike Rogers. Backed by conservative super PACs aiming to knock on up to 8 million doors, canvassers in suburbs like Livonia are pushing a common-sense conservative message. However, door-to-door interactions revealed mixed reactions, with some voters expressing skepticism or frustration over living costs and President Donald Trump's policies. Meanwhile, energized Democrats plan over a million door-knocks, focusing tightly on kitchen-table economic issues.

POPE LEO URGES CHURCH TO CONFRONT PAST FAILINGS

LOURDES

Pope Leo has called upon the Catholic Church to courageously confront its internal failings and heal the deep wounds inflicted within its ranks, delivering the message just hours before a scheduled closed-door meeting with French survivors of clerical child abuse.

Addressing an estimated 150,000 people gathered in a

INDIA'S UNGA ADDRESS

Jaishankar discusses bilateral cooperation at UNGA

NEW YORK

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar has concluded a flurry of high-level diplomatic engagements on the sidelines of the 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly, meeting with his counterparts from Venezuela, Belarus, Mexico, and Canada to deepen bilateral cooperation and address pressing global concerns.

During his bilateral meeting with Venezuelan Foreign Minister Felix Plascencia Gonzalez at UN headquarters, Jaishankar highlighted the expanding scope of bilateral

Taiwan officials affirm US support amid delayed 'Arms Package'

TAIWAN EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT THE U.S. UNDERSTANDS ITS DEFENSE NEEDS DESPITE DELAYS ON A MAJOR ARMS PACKAGE.

TAIPEI

Taiwan's diplomatic leadership has expressed confidence that the United States remains fully cognizant of the escalating military pressures facing the self-governing island, despite months of administrative delays surrounding a crucial multi-billion-dollar defense procurement package.

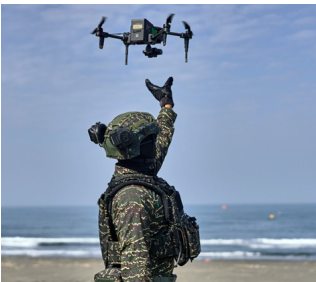
Speaking at a press briefing in Taipei, Taiwan Deputy Foreign Minister Chen Ming-chi addressed ongoing international speculation regarding bilateral security ties following a high-level summit between U.S. President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping. Chen emphasized that Washington maintains a clear, unshakeable grasp of the cross-strait security balance and the persistent threats posed by Beijing's aggressive military modernization.

Democratic Taiwan has experienced a prolonged waiting period for the formal approval of a vital U.S. arms sales package valued at approximately 14 billion dollars. This prospective procurement follows closely on the heels of a historic eleven-billion-dollar

defense package finalized late last year.

However, political momentum shifted earlier this year when President Trump indicated during a diplomatic visit to Beijing that the latest tranche of weapons sales would be held in abeyance. While recent statements from Washington have avoided explicit timelines for the transaction, U.S. officials have maintained that foundational American policy toward Taiwan remains unchanged.

Deputy Minister Chen pointed to recent remarks by U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, which highlighted the rigorous review processes governing international arms transfers, as evidence of normal administrative diligence rather than a policy shift. "Taiwan faces a severe situation in the Taiwan Strait," Chen told reporters. "Even though China's domestic economy faces downward pressures, Beijing continues to pour massive financial and structural resources into expanding its offensive military capacity. Under this context, the United States very much understands our defense



Taiwan faces a severe situation in the Taiwan Strait... even with China's economy declining, it continues investing more resources into building military capacity. Under this context, the US very much understands our defence needs.

-Chen Ming-chi, Taiwan Deputy Foreign Minister

needs."

To counter anxiety regarding potential shifts in American security commitments, Taipei has maintained continuous, high-level diplomatic dialogue with Washington counterparts. U.S. Ambassador to China David Perdue reinforced these assurances in a recent media appearance, stating definitively that official Washington policy re-

INS Sudarshini departs Alexandria after successful port call

ALEXANDRIA

The Indian Naval Sail Training Ship INS Sudarshini has officially set sail from Egypt's historic port city of Alexandria, bringing to a close a high-profile diplomatic and operational port call that further solidified maritime cooperation between India and Egypt.

During its stay in Alexandria, which began on September 23 as part of the vessel's extensive global deployment, the three-masted barque engaged in a robust series of professional interactions, cross-training exercises with the Egyptian Navy, and cultural exchanges. The ship was warmly received upon arrival by Alexandria Naval Base Commander Rear Admiral Mohamed Abdel Aziz alongside representatives of the Indian Embassy. A notable highlight of the deployment was an official onboard reception hosted for India's Ambassador to Egypt, Suresh Reddy,



and other distinguished local dignitaries, reinforcing the deep strategic and cultural bonds shared by the two nations.

The ongoing voyage forms a central pillar of the ambitious ten-month Lokayan 26 transoceanic expedition, which commenced from Kochi on January 20. Designed to cultivate traditional seamanship and foster international goodwill, INS Sudarshini is slated to traverse approximately 22,000 nautical miles across 18 ports in 13 countries. Since embarking, the vessel has successfully navigated the Arabian, Red, and Mediterranean seas, completed a strategic transit of the Suez Canal, and represented

India at France's prestigious Escale a Sete maritime festival.

Furthermore, the expedition marked a historic milestone when the ship completed its first-ever Atlantic crossing, arriving in Antigua on May 27 after a rigorous 19-day passage from Cape Verde, during which it crossed the 10,000-nautical-mile mark. Trainees aboard have gained invaluable, hands-on experience in celestial navigation, open-sea maneuvering, and traditional sail handling.

Defense ministry officials emphasize that Lokayan 26 underscores the Indian Navy's unwavering dedication to professional excellence and maritime diplomacy. Serving as a floating ambassador of India's rich maritime heritage, INS Sudarshini continues to champion the timeless ethos of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (the world is one family) and the strategic vision of MAHASAGAR across international waters.

POPE LEO URGES CHURCH TO CONFRONT PAST FAILINGS

LOURDES

Pope Leo has called upon the Catholic Church to courageously confront its internal failings and heal the deep wounds inflicted within its ranks, delivering the message just hours before a scheduled closed-door meeting with French survivors of clerical child abuse.

Addressing an estimated 150,000 people gathered in a

sunlit field near the renowned Catholic shrine in Lourdes, the pontiff emphasized that the institution must humbly submit to accountability. Speaking during his apostolic journey through France, the first U.S. pope stressed that repairing institutional credibility requires facing past institutional errors head-on, though survivors remain skeptical regarding the speed of meaningful

reform.

During an earlier, closed-door address to members of the French Episcopal Conference, Pope Leo directly referenced the devastating impact of abuse committed against minors by clergy members.

He commended local bishops for implementing protective safeguards while urging them to maintain strict vigilance and pursue continuous reforms.

10 Missing: Avalanche strikes Himlung Himal base camp

KATHMANDU

An unexpected and violent avalanche struck the base camp of Himlung Himal, a towering 7,126-meter peak located in the remote Nar Phu region of Nepal's Manang district near the Tibet border, leaving at least ten expedition staff members and climbing support personnel unaccounted for. The disaster unfolded on Sunday morning as a powerful weather system fueled by the Bay of Bengal dumped heavy snow across high-altitude Himalayan ranges and lashed the hills and plains with relentless, torrential rainfall.

According to the Expedition Operators Association of Nepal, the missing individuals include staff from multiple trekking and outfitting agencies, with specific reports indicating personnel attached to Himalayan Holidays Nepal and Imagine Nepal Pvt Ltd. Expedition organizers noted that while many climbing teams and rope-fixing crews had successfully retreated or evacuated the mountain slopes following safety advisories issued earlier in the week, several support staff and kitchen crews had unfortunately remained behind at the base camp when the snow mass broke loose.

The Department of Tourism, alongside district authorities in Manang led by Chief District Officer Mukti Prasad Khanal, scrambled emergency response protocols immediately following the disaster. However, rescue and reconnaissance efforts faced severe logistical hurdles.

Swiss voters reject strict neutrality initiative

ZURICH

Swiss voters have decisively rejected a high-profile constitutional initiative aimed at drastically tightening the nation's traditional neutrality rules, according to comprehensive early projections released by government statisticians.

The proposal, which sought to enshrine an uncompromising definition of permanent neutrality into the Swiss constitution, was soundly defeated at the ballot box, with more than two-thirds of participating citizens voting against the measure. The decisive outcome preserves Switzerland's current diplomatic flexibility, allowing the Confederation to continue participating in targeted economic sanctions and collaborative security frameworks with international partners like NATO.

The rejected initiative was spearheaded by right-wing and isolationist political factions who argued that Switzerland's longstanding diplomatic stance had been compromised in recent years. Proponents sought to legally bar the Swiss government from implementing non-military economic sanctions—such as those aligned with European Union punitive measures against foreign aggressors—and to prohibit any form of operational military cooperation or intelligence-sharing exercises with Western defense alliances, including NATO.

Sponsors of the initiative argued that creeping alignment with Western geopolitical blocs risked dragging neutral Switzerland into foreign conflicts and eroding the country's historic role as an impartial global mediator. They contended that strict isolation from economic sanctions and military pacts was the only reliable mechanism to guarantee absolute immunity in times of international crisis.

The Swiss Federal Council, parliament, and major political parties campaigned fiercely against the initiative, warning that such a rigid reinterpretation of neutrality would severely damage Switzerland's standing in the international community and isolate its export-driven economy.

Government leaders emphasized that Switzerland's neutrality has never meant complete political or moral indifference to violations of international law. By aligning with EU sanctions following geopolitical crises in Europe, Bern successfully demonstrated that humanitarian principles and economic measures could be enforced without abandoning core defensive security.

Furthermore, defense ministers pointed out that limited, practical cooperation with NATO and European partners is essential for modern defense readiness, particularly in airspace monitoring, cybersecurity, and joint training exercises conducted by the Swiss Army.

Implications for Swiss Foreign Policy

Sunday's referendum result ensures continuity in Swiss foreign policy, reaffirming public support for "cooperative neutrality." While Switzerland remains fiercely proud of its independent status and stays out of formal military alliances like NATO membership, the electorate's rejection of the initiative signals a pragmatic understanding of global interconnectedness.

Political analysts noted that the strong turnout against the measure reflects the public's desire to maintain economic stability, preserve diplomatic channels, and retain the flexibility to respond collectively to international security threats without compromising the nation's cherished tradition of peace and neutrality.

Security incident at RAF Fairford, several arrested

FAIRFORD

British law enforcement agencies have detained several men on suspicion of explosives offenses, triggering a major security lockdown and immediate home evacuations near RAF Fairford in southwest England—a strategic military installation utilized by United States Air Force personnel.

The emergency response unfolded on Sunday after local authorities declared a major incident in the vicinity of the air base. An eyewitness report confirmed that heavily armed police officers sealed off the main access gates, positioning tactical equipment around entry points, while residents from the nearby Whelford area were evacuated to a local leisure center for safety. Approximately thirty emergency response vehicles, comprising police units, ambulances, and fire apparatus, massed in the village as bomb disposal specialists went to work.

Gloucestershire police released a formal statement confirming the operation: "A number of properties are currently being evacuated in the Whelford area following the declaration of a major incident. It follows the arrest of several men on suspicion of offenses under the Explosives Act."

Authorities added that the Army's specialist explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) unit was deployed to thoroughly examine a number of suspicious vehicles. Police later confirmed that they believe the situation is contained, though rigorous investigative measures remain active. Downing

Street announced that Prime Minister Andy Burnham is receiving continuous updates regarding the security operation, while government officials declined further comment while active investigations proceed.

The security scare arrives amid an elevated threat environment surrounding the installation. Recently, the British government authorized the U.S. military to utilize RAF Fairford for strategic airstrikes targeting Iranian missile sites involved in attacks against commercial shipping vessels in the Strait of Hormuz. In response, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps issued warnings in July declaring that any foreign military facility hosting strikes against Iranian assets would be treated as a legitimate target.

While British authorities previously stated that national armed forces are fully prepared to defend the country against external retaliation, intelligence and security services across Europe have also grown increasingly vigilant regarding potential sabotage operations and hybrid threats linked to hostile state actors.

U.S. Air Force representatives declined to comment on specific force protection protocols.

However, a spokesperson for the 501st Combat Support Wing emphasized that personnel remain on high alert: "Our fellow UK-based Wings remain vigilant and will take appropriate actions to ensure the safety and security of our U.S. service members, civilians, contractors, and their families."

Japan builds cricket ambitions through Asian Games



BENGALURU

Japan is using the 2026 Asian Games to introduce cricket to a wider audience and test its national team against some of the sport's strongest sides. In a country where baseball and football draw far more attention, the tournament offers cricket a rare public stage.

That effort gained momentum on September 22, when Japan hosted India for their first men's T20 international meeting at the Sano International Cricket Ground. The match, held as part of the Suzuki Cup, marked 75 years of diplomatic ties between the two countries. India won by just two runs, but Japan's close challenge gave the hosts a performance to build on.

The Asian Games now bring international cricket to Nisshin City in Aichi Prefecture. For Japan's players, the competition provides another chance to gain experience against established teams. For the Japan Cricket Association,

it is an opportunity to make the game more visible at home.

Progress has also come through youth cricket. Japan qualified for the 2026 Under-19 Men's World Cup after winning its East Asia-Pacific qualifying tournament. Sano has become an important base for that development, hosting matches and supporting players coming through the sport.

The challenge is to turn attention during the Games into lasting participation. More young players need places to train, regular matches and a clear route from local cricket to the national side. High-profile fixtures can spark interest, but the work of building clubs and coaching programmes must continue after the crowds leave.

Japan's narrow loss to India showed that its cricketers are willing to compete. The bigger measure of success will be whether this month's exposure helps cricket find a lasting place in Japan's sporting life.

Harita Bhadra wins Asian Games bronze



NAGOYA

Indian sprinter Harita Bhadra won bronze in the women's 200 metres at the Asian Games on Sunday, clocking 23.20 seconds in a close finish.

The Maharashtra athlete edged Japan's Abigeirufuka Ido by just one hundredth of a second to take third place. Singapore's Veronica Shanti Pereira won gold in 22.78 seconds, while China's Chen Yujie claimed silver in 22.93 seconds.

Bhadra was among six athletes added late to India's squad for the Aichi-Nagoya Games. Her bronze gave India a place on the podium in one of track and field's shortest races, where the smallest margin can decide a medal.

She had reached the final after finishing second in her heat in 23.31 seconds. In the medal race, she improved on that time by 0.11 seconds. Her finish proved decisive as she held off

the Japanese runner at the line.

The race was Pereira's from the front. The Singapore sprinter broke 23 seconds to secure gold, with Chen following for silver. Behind them, Bhadra's battle for bronze remained tight until the finish, making her narrow advantage over Ido the defining moment of India's race.

For Bhadra, the medal capped a rapid turn from late squad inclusion to Asian Games medallist. It also rewarded an improved performance when it mattered most: her final was faster than her qualifying run, and every fraction of a second counted.

Her result adds to India's athletics campaign in Nagoya, where the track and field events run from September 23 to 29. The bronze gives the team a result to celebrate as more Indian athletes continue their events at the Games.

Singapore's sprinter won gold under 23 seconds, Chen took silver, and Bhadra narrowly edged out Ido to claim bronze.

Harita takes bronze, Narender reaches semifinals



NAGOYA

India enjoyed success in athletics and boxing at the Asian Games on Sunday as Harita Bhadra won bronze in the women's 200 metres and Narender Berwal advanced to the men's heavyweight semifinals.

Bhadra clocked 23.20 seconds in Nagoya, edging Japan's Abigeirufuka Ido by one hundredth of a second for third place. Singapore's Veronica Shanti Pereira took gold in 22.78 seconds, while China's Chen Yujie won silver in 22.93 seconds. The narrow finish gave the Maharashtra sprinter a podium place in her Asian Games campaign.

Bhadra had qualified for the final after finishing second in her heat in 23.31 seconds. She improved on that mark when the medals were at stake, finding the margin needed to hold off the Japanese runner. Her bronze added to India's track and field tally at the Aichi-Nagoya Games.

chi-Nagoya Games.

In boxing, Narender moved into the semifinals of the men's over-90kg category by beating Thailand's Adthapong Saengtep in their quarterfinal. The victory assures him at least a bronze medal, with the semifinal offering a chance to compete for a place in the gold medal bout.

Narender entered the competition at the quarterfinal stage after receiving a first-round bye. He was India's only male boxing medallist at the previous Asian Games, where he also claimed bronze. He arrives at this edition with experience after winning silver in the over-90kg division at the 2026 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow.

The two results came in different arenas but shared the same reward for India: an athletics medal secured and a boxing medal guaranteed. Bhadra's race was decided by the smallest of margins, while Narender's win keeps his campaign alive.

Anahat and Abhay secure squash silvers

NAGOYA

Anahat Singh and Abhay Singh won silver medals in squash at the 2026 Asian Games on Sunday, after losing their singles finals to Malaysian opponents. Their defeats ended India's hopes of a golden double and direct qualification places for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

Anahat, 18, lost the women's final 4-11, 4-11, 7-11 to Sivasangari Subramaniam. In the men's final, Abhay went down 9-11, 5-11, 5-11 to defending champion Ng Eain Yow. The winners secured the Olympic places attached to the Asian Games singles titles. A day earlier, the two Indians had raised hopes of gold with contrasting semifinal victories. Anahat produced a comeback against Japan's Satomi Watanabe, recovering from two games down to win in five. Her result assured India a women's singles medal and placed her one victory away from an Olympic berth.

Abhay took a more direct route to the final. He beat Pakistan's Muhammad Irfan 11-3, 12-10, 11-6, using patient rallies to move his opponent around the glass court and force errors. His win gave India two squash singles finalists at the same Games. Sunday's finals proved harder. Sivasangari established control early against Anahat, while Ng held off Abhay in a close opening game before pulling clear. Neither Indian could turn the match around, but both left Nagoya with a medal. Squash will make its Olympic debut at Los Angeles in 2028. Although Anahat and Abhay missed the direct places on offer here, their runs to the finals showed that both can compete deep into a major international tournament. For India, two silver medals are a strong return from the singles events. For the players, the next task is to build on these performances and pursue another route to the Olympics.

Sindhu criticises badminton schedule after quarterfinal defeat

NAGOYA

PV Sindhu criticised the Asian Games badminton schedule on Sunday after playing three singles matches in less than 24 hours. The Indian star said the short gap between matches left too little time for recovery.

Sindhu played her second-round match on Saturday afternoon. Her third-round match finished around 1 am local time on Sunday, and she returned for her quarterfinal against China's Chen Yufei at about 1.30 pm. Chen won 11-21, 21-18, 21-10, ending Sindhu's singles campaign.

Sindhu said the schedule could have been organised better. She explained that preparing mentally was only part of the challenge: players also needed enough rest to recover physically, particularly before matches with long rallies. She did not say the schedule alone caused her defeat and described the quarterfinal as a good match overall.

The two-time Olympic medallist began strongly against Chen and took the opening game. Chen



fought back in the second, then pulled clear in the deciding game to reach the semifinals. Sindhu had played twice the previous day, with her later match running beyond midnight.

Sindhu also questioned the absence of a player challenge system on Court 4, where she faced Chen. She said she believed some close line calls had gone against her. Review cameras were available on only two show courts at the venue.

Fellow Indian Unnati Hooda, who also lost her quarterfinal, said the scheduling could have been handled better, although she did not blame it for her defeat. Several players had been required to play twice within a few hours on Saturday. Sindhu's comments have drawn attention to the demands placed on athletes as the badminton competition reaches its decisive rounds.



NEW DELHI

More than 1,000 people joined the 92nd Fit India Sundays on Cycle event at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium in New Delhi on Sunday. Organised with Sulabh International during Hindi Pakhwada 2026, the programme linked physical activity with cleanliness and public health.

Under the theme "Pedal for Fitness, Ride for a Cleaner India," participants took part in a cycling rally and a five-kilometre run and ride around the stadium. Activities began at 5.30 am and included yoga, zumba and rope skipping. Organisers also set up a games area with carrom, chess, badminton, tug of war and an obstacle race. The programme opened with the felicitation of guests. Participants then took a Nasha Mukti pledge,

committing themselves to a healthy life free from substance abuse, before the cycling rally was flagged off.

The Hindi Pakhwada celebrations brought a cultural element to the fitness event. Among those present were endurance athlete, cyclist and mountaineer Sabita Mahato; fitness model and Indian Flag Runner Kiran Chillar; and Fit India Ambassador Dr Prem Prakash Meena.

Meena said the Sundays on Cycle campaign had reached its 92nd edition and that the turnout reflected growing interest among young people in fitness. He credited the Prime Minister's appeal to develop a sporting culture with encouraging wider participation in such activities. Mahato urged people to make exercise part of their daily routine. She said spending

half an hour on fitness every day, instead of only on Sundays, could help create a lasting habit. Repeating an activity for 21 days, she added, was one way to build that routine.

The partnership with Sulabh International connected the

cycling initiative with the message of a cleaner environment. Through the rally, group exercise and games, organisers encouraged local residents to see fitness as a regular practice and to support cleanliness in their communities.

Hindi Pakhwada marks Fit India Cycling

BASKETBALL MEDAL CEREMONY



FIBA Asia President and KAO President Dr K. Govindaraj presents medals to the winning teams in the women's basketball event at the 20th Asian Games in Nagoya, Japan.

India could advance if rain washes out quarterfinal



India and Pakistan would both advance if their respective quarterfinals are washed out or abandoned.

NISSHIN

Defending champions India could advance to the Asian Games cricket semifinals without playing if rain washes out

Monday's quarterfinal against Afghanistan in Nisshin, Japan. Under the tournament's provision for an abandoned knockout match, the higher-ranked T20 international side would progress.

India are ranked above Afghanistan, so a washout would send them through. The same rule would favour Pakistan over Hong Kong, China, if their quarterfinal is abandoned. Both matches are scheduled for September 28 at Korogi Sports Park. Pakistan and Hong Kong are due to

play first, followed by India and Afghanistan. Forecasts cited on Sunday indicated a high chance of rain, raising concern that conditions could disrupt both fixtures. A forecast, however, is no guarantee that either match will be cancelled; officials will assess conditions on matchday.

The possibility of a rain decision is familiar to India. The men's cricket final against Afghanistan at the previous Asian Games in Hangzhou was abandoned be-

cause of wet weather. India received the gold medal on the basis of their higher ranking. Monday's match offers Afghanistan a chance to challenge the defending champions on the field, provided the weather allows play.

Afghanistan reached the quarterfinals from the preliminary stage. The ICC confirmed its place in the last eight after rain affected the final Group A fixture between Nepal and hosts Japan. Hong Kong also advanced from Group B, where a match involving Malaysia and Oman was washed out.

India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh entered the knockout stage directly. Their opponents earned places through the group phase, making the quarterfinals the first appearance of the seeded teams in the men's competition.