



**Min calls for 'Team Agriculture' to make India global food basket**

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## SIR ROW: CONG CALLS FOR RESIGNATION OF PM, CEC

Citing removal of 13.3 crore voters and constitutional concerns, CWC passed a resolution calling for an independent probe to restore faith in democratic process.

NEW DELHI

Calling for the removal of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar over alleged SIR irregularities, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Tuesday put forth five demands before the Centre.

Kharge, at his opening address at the Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting in Delhi on Tuesday, demanded Prime Minister Narendra Modi's resignation on moral grounds for "pressuring" the poll panel chief.

His demands included making public the complete data regarding every major change made to the electoral rolls, providing political parties with the electoral rolls and relevant data in a simple format promptly, and an independent and time-bound inquiry wherever evidence of serious discrepancies emerges.

He also demanded the immediate resignation of CEC Gyanesh Kumar and suspension of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls and restoration of 13 crore 30 lakh names that the party claims have been removed from the rolls.

"Most importantly, the voters of India must have confidence that their vote is secure," Kharge said. "We do not view this issue merely as a battle to win or lose an election. Elections come and go, and governments change, but democracy and the Constitu-



**Prime Minister Narendra Modi's resignation on moral grounds for "pressuring" the poll panel chief.**

- Mallikarjun Kharge, Cong prez

tion are enduring. This is the foundation of Indian democracy. We must convey to every citizen that in a democracy, the most powerful person is the ordinary voter -- not the prime minister, the chief minister, or a leader in power," he said.

The CWC also passed a resolution which referred to reports that Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi had raised objections at least 14 times over 10 months regarding decisions and procedures linked to SIR.

The resolution said that the report validated Rahul Gandhi's claims of vote chori, adding that the credibility of the poll panel is under question due to the reported concentration of control over electoral rolls during the nationwide SIR.

The CWC also expressed concern over what it described as the constitutional validity of SIR, claiming that the exercise had "already wiped out 13 crore 30 lakh Indians from the electoral rolls".

The resolution said the process shifted the burden onto citizens to prove their eligibility, and the current process resulted in "arbitrary mass-disenfranchisement" that could not be reconciled with the guarantees under Article 14 and universal adult suffrage under Article 326.

"An exercise of doubtful constitutional validity cannot be allowed to decide who may vote in the world's largest democracy," the resolution said.

The CWC meeting, chaired by Kharge, is being attended by former party chiefs Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi, party general secretaries Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, Jairam Ramesh, KC Venugopal, Sachin Pilot, Mukul Wasnik, and senior leaders P Chidam-

### CONGRESS LISTS 5 DEMANDS

Kharge laid out five demands that he said the Congress would pursue:

- ➡ Full data on major changes to voter lists should be made public.
- ➡ Voters whose names have been removed should receive complete information and a full opportunity to appeal.
- ➡ Political parties should receive voter lists and essential related data in a simple format and in a timely manner.
- ➡ Serious discrepancies should be independently investigated within a fixed timeframe.
- ➡ Election-related data and decisions should be transparent so that no political party can claim information is being withheld.

baram, among others, attended the meeting.

Chief ministers of Congress-ruled states -- DK Shivakumar (Karnataka), VD Satheesan (Kerala), A Revanth Reddy (Telangana) and Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu (Himachal Pradesh) -- also attended in the meeting.

## Home, Law ministries brief JPC on FCRA Bill 2026

A 31-member panel, headed by BJP MP Sanjay Jaiswal, was formed to examine the provisions of the legislation in detail before coming out with a report.

NEW DELHI

The ministries of Home Affairs and Law and Justice on Tuesday gave a clause-by-clause briefing to the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) examining the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026, as the proposed law continues to face objections from Opposition parties and Christian groups.

The 31-member parliamentary panel, headed by BJP MP Sanjay Jaiswal, was constituted to scrutinise the Bill before submitting its report. Officials from the two ministries gave detailed presentations explaining the reasons for amending the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010, and the proposed way forward, according to sources.

### Foreign funding rules under scanner

Organisations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) receiving foreign contributions are required to register under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA). The Ministry of Home Affairs is the nodal authority overseeing their activities.

The panel is also expected to hear the views of domain experts, including State Bank of India chairman Challa Sreenivasulu Setty, senior government law officers and lawyers. Their inputs assume significance as the panel examines the financial, legal and compliance implications of the proposed changes.

### JPC briefing in a nutshell

**Committee:** The 31-member panel (21 from Lok Sabha, 10 from Rajya Sabha) is chaired by BJP MP Sanjay Jaiswal.

**Briefing and consultations:** MHA and Law Ministry officials gave a clause-by-clause presentation at Parliament Annex. The panel also lined up consultations with experts like SBI Chairman Challa Sreenivasulu Setty and ASG Chetan Sharma.

**FCRA data shared:** Officials reported active NGOs fell from 29,022 (2015) to 14,466, while foreign contributions rose from ₹17,832 cr to ₹22,974 cr in 2024-25, led by TN, Maharashtra, and Karnataka.



### Context and controversies

The FCRA Amendment Bill faces push-back from opposition and civil groups over fears of tightening restrictions, though India maintains it is an internal matter. The JPC must report back by the first week of the Winter Session 2026.

### Fewer NGOs, but more foreign funds

At the JPC's first meeting on September 18, a Ministry of Home Affairs team led by Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan told the panel that the number of active NGOs registered under the FCRA had nearly halved over the past decade even as foreign contributions increased. According to the data presented to the committee, 14,466 FCRA-registered NGOs are active across 15 states. Tamil Nadu has the highest number with 2,102 organisations, followed by Maharashtra with 1,578, Karnataka with 1,355, Delhi with 1,218, Andhra Pradesh with 1,022 and Kerala with 1,013. There were 29,022 active FCRA-registered NGOs in 2015. At the same time, foreign funds received by FCRA-registered NGOs increased from Rs 17,832 crore in 2015-16 to Rs 22,974 crore in 2024-25, even as the number of active organisations declined from 29,022 to 14,466.

The Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha on March 25 and referred to the parliamentary committee on August 12 following demands from Opposition parties for greater scrutiny. Opposition parties have alleged that some provisions could restrict legitimate foreign funding received by Christian NGOs and minority-run social welfare and educational institutions.

### Govt rejects minority charges

The Centre has rejected allegations that the proposed law discriminates against minorities and has maintained that the legislation is not religion-specific. It says the changes are intended to regulate foreign contributions and improve transparency in their use.

While introducing the Bill in

the Lok Sabha, Union Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai said the legislation was intended to improve transparency and ensure the proper utilisation of money received from abroad. Responding to Opposition claims that the Bill was "dangerous", Rai said it was "indeed dangerous" for those using foreign contributions for "forced religious conversion" and for people who "abuse foreign funding" for personal gain.

The disagreement goes to the heart of the debate surrounding the legislation: while the government has presented tighter regulation as necessary for accountability, its critics fear that stronger controls could make it harder for NGOs and minority institutions dependent on overseas contributions to operate.

## CISF jawan opens fire, kills 4 personnel in J&K's Kathua

As per reports, an argument broke out among the personnel before the firing.

SRINAGAR

Four Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) personnel, including an Assistant Commandant, were killed after a colleague opened fire at a security camp guarding a hydel power project in Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua district on Tuesday evening, in what officials described as a fratricide incident.

The firing took place at around 7 pm during a change of duty at the CISF deployment at the Sewa hydel power project in Mashka village in the Basohli area, close to the Himachal Pradesh border, officials said.

According to preliminary inputs, an argument broke out among the personnel before the firing. The exact cause of the argument and the circumstances that led to the shooting are being investigated.

The deceased were identified as Assistant Commandant Ankit Kumar Pandey, Sub-Inspector Lakshman Singh, and constables Sanjeev Kumar and Mohd Rafiq, officials said.

Pandey was the company commander of the CISF unit deployed at the project.

The four personnel were initially critically injured in the firing and were taken for medical treatment to an NHPC hospital in neighbouring Himachal Pradesh, where they later succumbed to their injuries, reports said.

The shooter, a CISF head constable, was apprehended



and handed over to the police.

A team from the Kathua district police reached the area and has been entrusted with the investigation. The CISF headquarters has also ordered a Court of Inquiry to establish the sequence of events and determine the circumstances leading to the firing.

The incident occurred at a particularly remote security deployment. The Sewa project is located in the mountainous Basohli area at the far end of Kathua district, close to Himachal Pradesh's Chamba district.

The CISF company was deployed on the Jammu and Kashmir side of the Chamera Dam over the Ravi river, and the site is reportedly more accessible through Himachal Pradesh than from the rest of Kathua.

For the CISF, whose mandate includes protecting critical infrastructure, such deployments involve guarding installations vital to power generation and transmission.

The Sewa project is located on the Sewa river, a tributary of the river Ravi, in a sparsely connected mountainous area.

The shooting was an instance of fratricide, referring to violence by personnel against members of their own force.

Officials have not yet established what triggered the confrontation or whether there were any other factors behind the shooting.

## HDK raises BMIC project irregularities

BENGALURU

Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy on Tuesday alleged changes were made to the Bengaluru-Mysuru Infrastructure Corridor Project without Cabinet approval, raising questions over land allocation.

He challenged Chief Minister DK Shivakumar to an open debate on the alleged irregularities. Releasing documents, he said the original Framework Agreement had been approved by the Cabinet and questioned how subsequent changes could be made without returning to it.

He pointed to differences between the original Framework Agreement and the revised Outline Development Plan (ODP), particularly in land allocation for the project.

According to Kumaraswamy, the total project area was 20,193 acres, while land earmarked for the toll road increased from 6,999 acres under the original framework to 9,468.86 acres in the revised plan. He also alleged that land allocations for townships were altered, with acreage increased in some locations and reduced in others.



### BMIC land row

- Original project area: **20,193 acres**
- Original toll-road allocation: **6,999 acres**
- Revised toll-road allocation: **9,468.86 acres**
- **Key demand:** Open debate on BMIC changes

### BMIC expansion questioned

Kumaraswamy questioned the State Government's decision to continue and expand the BMIC project despite the operational Bengaluru-Mysuru National Highway through Mandya. He alleged that further expansion could lead to additional land acquisition and financial liabilities for Karnataka. He also questioned whether the changes to land allocation and the revised project plan were placed before the Cabinet for approval, and alleged links between the government and private interests.

### Kumaraswamy seeks Rs 3,705 cr central aid for Karnataka drought

Kumaraswamy questioned the State Government's decision to continue and expand the BMIC project despite the operational Bengaluru-Mysuru National Highway through Mandya. He alleged that further expansion could lead to additional land acquisition and financial liabilities for Karnataka. He also questioned whether the changes to land allocation and the revised project plan were placed before the Cabinet for approval, and alleged links between the government and private interests.

## Russian military aircraft crashes in Amur, 6 killed

**Moscow:** A Russian military aircraft crashed shortly after takeoff in the far eastern Amur region on Tuesday, killing six people, Russian news agency Interfax reported, citing the defence ministry.

Preliminary reports identified the aircraft as a Tupolev Tu-154, a Soviet-era three-engine jet that was originally designed as a medium-range passenger aircraft but has also been used by Russia's military and government for special missions. It crashed shortly after takeoff, with seven people reportedly on board.

### 'CARNAGE, PLAIN AND SIMPLE'

## SC on 10x markup on cancer drugs, bats for 16% margin

**SC flags Rs 27,000 MRP on Rs 3,000 cancer drug; unchecked MRPs on 82% of non-scheduled drugs; hospital pharmacy practices and taxpayer burden.**

NEW DELHI

Calling the vast gap between marked retail prices and actual procurement costs "carnage, plain and simple," the Supreme Court on Tuesday said opaque and soaring medicine prices were inflicting suffering on ordinary patients while private hospitals and others pocketed the difference.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta, hearing petitions seeking stricter price controls, highlighted stark anomalies and

### Supreme Court observations

**Massive price discrepancy**  
Highlighted a cancer drug priced at an MRP of ₹27,000 despite being procured/supplied to retailers for just ₹2,700.

**Forced in-house purchases**  
Criticized corporate hospitals for compelling patients to buy medicines exclusively from in-house pharmacies under threat of denying treatment.

**Burden on taxpayers**  
Noted that inflated prices directly drain public funds when treatments are reimbursed via government welfare schemes.

**Beneficiaries**  
Remarked that pharmaceutical manufacturing companies are often not the primary gainers, pointing instead toward hospital profiteering.

questioned why a 16% margin could not be fixed on MRP.

An injection listed at an MRP of Rs 22,437 reaches the retailer for only about Rs 3,520. A cancer drug marked at

### Legal & policy questions raised

**Uniform margins:** Questioned why a standard 16% margin norm under the Drugs (Prices Control) Order (DPCO) isn't strictly enforced across all drugs instead of allowing massive, uncapped markups.

**Essential vs. Non-essential distinction:** Challenged the rationale behind differentiating pricing caps based on whether a medicine is classified as essential or non-essential.

**Next steps:** Directed Solicitor General Tushar Mehta to consult with govt officials and submit a response, deferring the hearing to October 12, 2026.

Rs 27,000 has a price-to-retailer of around Rs 3,000.

"Where does this chunk of money go, 10 times (the MRP)," Justice Mehta asked, adding, "This is carnage."



### Hospitals mandating in-house medicine purchases

Patients are routinely forced to buy medicines from hospital in-house chemists, the bench noted. Those who try to procure the same medicine at a lower price from outside risk doubts over its genuineness or may even face resistance from the hospital, the court observed.

"A corporate hospital... says that you have to buy from our chemist. If you bring it from outside, we are not assuring you of the treatment; what does the patient do," Justice Mehta observed, adding that hospitals "do not even allow a dead body to be taken out."

### Unethical practices and taxpayer burden

The court questioned the distinction between essential and non-essential medicines and the exclusion of many drugs from the Drugs (Prices Control) Order. "Why not keep 16% margin on MRP which is prescribed in the DPCO on everything? Why not? Ultimately, the result is the taxpayer (is paying)," Justice Mehta said.

It stated that medical devices and medicines fall under the Essential Commodities Act and asked why they should be left outside price control.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, who joined the hearing, said the government would examine a balanced solution and described the court's suggestion of a uniform 16% ceiling as appearing "logical." The bench said the real loser was the taxpayer, whether under government schemes or otherwise.



Quick Read



**Voters await BLO visits amid implementation gaps**

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**

Voters in parts of Bengaluru say Election Commission directions on home visits by BLOs have yet to reach the ground. The ECI has directed Booth Level Officers to collect documents from voters who received notices over unmapped names or discrepancies, instead of requiring them to attend hearings. However, residents said hearings continued at several centres, with relatives submitting documents and video calls used for voters outside the city or abroad. A Kasavanahalli resident said BLOs may face difficulties making home visits amid existing workloads. Another resident said field-level instructions remained unclear. The ECI has also asked officials to set up help desks and special camps for vulnerable voters.



**Despite ban, artificial colours continue to spice up K'taka food**

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**

Despite a statewide ban, artificial colours continue to be used in popular food items across Karnataka, raising health concerns. Brightly coloured gobi, kebabs, egg rice, fish fry, jalebi, falooda and ice candy are commonly sold at eateries and roadside stalls. Officials have restricted colours such as Rhodamine-B, Sunset Yellow FCF and Carmoisine in certain foods, while testing has flagged others above permitted limits. Sources said the price gap drives use, with artificial colours costing Rs 200-300 per kg compared to around Rs 20,000 for natural colours. Health Minister U.T. Khader warned of strict action against sellers compromising public health.



**Hampi's Stone Chariot**

ON SALE OCT 10-11 Rs 600

**Postal collectibles**

|           |                                               |
|-----------|-----------------------------------------------|
| DISTRICTS | Bengaluru, Mysuru, Mangaluru, Belagavi        |
| DATES     | October 10-11                                 |
| COPIES    | 1,000+ in Bengaluru; about 500 each elsewhere |
| PRICE     | Rs 600                                        |
| STAMPS    | 100 pictorial cancellations                   |
| THEME     | Karnataka heritage                            |

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**

The Karnataka Postal Circle will release more Philately Passports in Bengaluru, Mysuru, Mangaluru and Belagavi during National Postal Week. The passports will be available on October 10 and 11, with at least 1,000 copies expected at Bengaluru's General Post Office and around 500 each in Mysuru, Mangaluru and Belagavi on both days.

# Kharge questions BJP leaders over children's RSS participation

The minister also sought clarity on the organisation's funding, donor disclosures, audited accounts and registration status.

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Karnataka Home Minister Priyank Kharge has questioned BJP leaders over their children's participation in RSS activities and sought financial disclosures.

In a post on X, Kharge referred to Karnataka's 224 Assembly constituencies and challenged the BJP to produce photographs showing children of its candidates wearing RSS uniforms, attending shakhas, serving in gaushalas or following the lifestyle advocated by the organisation.

He claimed that such participation would be found among fewer than 10% of the children of BJP candidates. Kharge also named several senior BJP leaders, including Union ministers Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh, Nitin Gadkari, Anurag Thakur, S Jaishankar, Ashwini Vaishnaw and Piyush Goyal, and asked how many of their children active RSS swayamsevaks were or regularly attended shakhas.

"If the RSS is supposedly



| Kharge BJP challenge           |                   |                |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCIES        | ISSUE RAISED      | KHARGE'S CLAIM |
| 224                            | RSS participation | Less than 10%  |
| FINANCIAL ISSUES               | FUNDS MENTIONED   | RESPONSE       |
| Registration, accounts, donors | 'Guru Dakshina'   | Karnataka BJP  |

the great school of nationalism, discipline and character-building, why does it so often seem that the syllabus is meant for other people's children?" Kharge said.

Kharge also sought information on the RSS's registration, audited accounts, donor

disclosures and financial transparency. He questioned the collection of funds described as 'Guru Dakshina' and sought greater clarity on the organisation's finances.

His remarks came in response to a post by the Karnataka BJP unit, which said peo-

**“Why should there be any hesitation about registration, audited accounts, donor disclosures and complete financial transparency?”**

— Priyank Kharge, Karnataka Home Minister

ple who viewed activities through “party percentages and High-Command approvals” would not understand voluntary service.

“Those who measure everything through party percentages and High Command approvals will never understand voluntary, selfless service to the nation,” the BJP Karnataka unit said on X.

The exchange is part of a wider political dispute between Kharge and BJP-RSS leaders over the organisation's legal status, finances and activities.

Kharge has previously sought greater transparency from the RSS, while the organisation has maintained that it does not require formal registration to function.

# Rs 5.48 crore MDMA seized, six held



CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Girinagar, Hebbal and Vidyaranya police have busted separate drug operations, arresting six people and seizing 5.48 kg of MDMA.

The accused include a foreign national and three persons from other states. Police said the drugs were allegedly procured at cheaper rates from foreign countries, other states and various parts of Karnataka before being sold at higher prices to customers, including college students.

Girinagar police seized 4.320 kg of MDMA, while Hebbal police recovered 1.054 kg and Vidyaranya police seized 106 grams. The combined value of the seized contraband was estimated at Rs 5.48 crore based on the quantity and prevailing market rates.

The raids followed information received by police about the sale of banned narcotic substances within the limits of the three police stations. Separate cases were registered under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act before police teams conducted raids at locations identified through their sources.

Bengaluru Police Commissioner Seemant Kumar Singh said the city police had seized 79.5 kg of MDMA and 1,000 ecstasy pills, collectively valued at Rs 161 crore, during operations over the past four months.

“Thirty-six teams involving around 140 officers and personnel worked on the crack-

**Police operations across three areas uncovered alleged drug trafficking networks targeting customers, including college students, with six arrests.**

| Drug network busted |                      |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| 5.48 kg             | MDMA SEIZED          |
| 5.48 cr             | ESTIMATED VALUE (RS) |
| 6                   | ACCUSED ARRESTED     |
| 3                   | POLICE STATIONS      |
| 18.6 lakh           | CASH SEIZED (RS)     |
| 43                  | MOBILE PHONES        |
| 4                   | VEHICLES             |

down,” Singh said.

Police also seized Rs 18.6 lakh in cash, 43 mobile phones, two cars and two two-wheelers during the operations. Investigators used technical analysis, undercover operations and financial-trail analysis to trace the alleged drug network.

According to police, the network had altered its transportation methods to evade detection. While flights and trains were used earlier, the accused had recently shifted to buses for transporting drugs.

The crackdown is part of the State government's ‘No Drugs’ policy and anti-drug campaign.

# Rs 161 cr

**Four-month crackdown: Bengaluru police seized 79.5 kg of MDMA and 1,000 ecstasy pills between April and September. The operation involved 36 teams and around 140 personnel.**

# IIT-B study backs Hebbal tunnel, flyover amid IISc objections



CH NEWS, BENGALURU

An IIT Bombay assessment projects faster peak-hour traffic movement, while an IISc review questions assumptions behind the findings.

An IIT Bombay study on the Hebbal short tunnel and elevated corridor has recommended implementing both projects, projecting improved traffic speeds and reduced delays if a substantial share of traffic shifts to the proposed infrastructure.

The study, conducted by Professor Archak Mittal for Rithwik Projects Private Limited, the BDA contractor for the short tunnel, estimated that average peak-hour speed in 2027 could increase from 13.74 kmph on the existing road network to 20.64 kmph if 50% of traffic shifts to the tunnel and elevated corridor. At an 80% shift, the projected speed is 22 kmph.

The study tested 50%, 60%, 70% and 80% traffic-shift scenarios based on assumptions in the project DPRs. It examined the existing road network, elevated corridor, tunnel and combined project, and recommended the two facilities together.

However, the Sustainable Transportation Lab at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) reviewed the assessment and described it as “biased in favour of building the two projects”, citing insufficient evidence for its recommendations.

IISc IST Lab convener Ashish Verma questioned the traffic-diversion assumptions,

**The proposed Hebbal infrastructure has drawn contrasting assessments over projected traffic gains, modelling assumptions and wider network impacts.**

**“The report does not provide enough details on how the model was built and tested.”**

— Ashish Verma IISc IST Lab convener

calling the 50% and 80% levels “arbitrary”. He said the study did not establish the figures through a robust route-assignment methodology.

The review also noted that the tunnel has 3+3 lanes while the elevated corridor has 2+2 lanes, making identical diversion assumptions questionable. It said the detailed analysis primarily covered the existing network and combined project, rather than independently evaluating each facility.

The IIT-B study itself flagged a possible bottleneck where traffic from both facilities could converge downstream. It recommended traffic channelisation and at least a 250-metre gap between the structures.

Prof Verma also said the assessment did not compare public transport alternatives or environmental, ecological and road-safety costs.

| Peak-hour speed, kmph |       |
|-----------------------|-------|
| Existing              | 13.74 |
| At 50% shift          | 20.64 |
| At 80% shift          | 22    |

IIT-B study projections for 2027

# High Court quashes case against ‘Drone Prathap’ over sodium experiment



CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Karnataka High Court has quashed the criminal case registered against YouTuber N.M. Prathap, popularly known as ‘Drone Prathap’, over a science experiment involving sodium in an agricultural pond.

Justice Suraj Govindaraj, hearing Prathap's petition seeking quashing of the case, observed that the experiment was related to science prescribed in the Class 10 NCERT curriculum. The Bench said the experiment appeared to have been conducted for educational purposes and there was no apparent malicious intent.

Prathap is known for conducting educational experiments on YouTube and has reportedly built around 600 drones using electronic waste. The video in question was allegedly made to explain a chemical reaction to viewers.

However, the court made it clear that it neither endorsed nor appreciated the manner in which the experiment was conducted.

The Bench said the material before it did not establish the malicious intent required to justify continuing the investigation and criminal proceedings against Prathap. It consequently quashed the FIR and related criminal case.

At the same time, the court cautioned that any repetition of similar incidents in the fu-

## THE CASE SO FAR

- THE EXPERIMENT**  
100 grams of sodium in a pond on a friend's farm; the video went viral
- DECEMBER 2024**  
Prathap arrested
- THE CHARGES**  
Explosive Substances Act Sec 3; BNS Sec 288
- HIGH COURT**  
Petition allowed, proceedings closed

## THE VERDICT

### FIR and criminal case quashed

- Experiment linked to Class 10 NCERT science
- No apparent malicious intent
- A repeat will be viewed more seriously

ture would be viewed more seriously.

## Case background

Prathap had conducted the experiment using 100 grams of sodium in an agricultural pond on his friend's private property. The experiment was recorded and uploaded on YouTube, after which the video went viral on social media.

Prathap was arrested in December 2024 in connection with the incident. Police had registered a case under Section 3 of the Explosive Substances Act, alleging an explosion in a manner that could endanger life or property. He was also booked under Section 288 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita for negligent handling of explosive substances.

Challenging the proceedings, Prathap approached the High Court seeking quashing of the FIR and criminal case. The court subsequently allowed his petition and closed the proceedings.

# Man steals jewellery from relative's house, replaces it with fake ornaments

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

A man allegedly stole gold jewellery from his relative's house while the family was away and replaced the ornaments with fake ones.

Kengeri police have arrested Ashwath K.H., a native of Hosanagara in Shivamogga district, and recovered 84.3 grams of gold jewellery and cash, collectively valued at Rs 8.40 lakh, police said.

The theft occurred at the house of Ashwath S., who lives at Kailash BDA Apartments in Kengeri. The accused, a distant relative of the complainant's wife, frequently visited the house and was familiar with the family.

Police said the accused had recently visited the house after being invited for Lakshmi Puja. He allegedly noticed the jewellery placed before the deity and planned the theft.

A few days later, the family left the city to attend a family function. Taking advantage of their absence, Ashwath allegedly brought a person who made a duplicate key and convinced him that the house belonged to him and that he had lost his key. He then allegedly en-



Rs 8.40 lakh

GOLD, CASH RECOVERED

tered the house, replaced the original ornaments with fake ones that he had brought along and fled with the jewellery.

After returning, the family noticed that Rs 8,000 kept in the puja plate was missing. A subsequent check revealed that several ornaments in the cupboard had been replaced with fake jewellery.

The stolen ornaments included a 17.3-gram gold rope chain, a 45-gram diamond-studded gold necklace and two gold bangles weighing 22 grams.

The homeowner lodged a complaint with Kengeri police. After registering a case, police examined CCTV footage and launched an investigation, which led to the accused's arrest. The stolen jewellery and cash were recovered, police said.

## HERITAGE ON STAMPS

# More Philately Passports to be rolled out in four districts

**“At least 1,000 passports will be available at Bengaluru's GPO on October 10 and 11. The number might increase as well.”**

**SENIOR OFFICIAL** Karnataka Postal Circle

Each passport will cost Rs 600.

A senior Karnataka Postal Circle official said the initiative had received an over-

whelming response, particularly from families, travel enthusiasts, bikers and philately enthusiasts. Hundreds of enquiries have reportedly reached post offices through social media messages and phone calls, while some people have visited the GPO directly to check availability.

“We don't want people to go through the hassle of queuing up on working days. Passports will be sold on October 10 and 11, including the Sunday, to

make them more accessible,” the official said.

The department is procuring additional passports and may increase the number available in Bengaluru depending on demand. Staff will work on the two days despite them being government holidays.

The Philately Passport features 100 pictorial cancellations showcasing Karnataka's natural, historical and cultural heritage. Landmarks in-

clude Vidhana Soudha, Banerghatta National Park, Nandi Hills, Hampi's Stone Chariot, Gol Gumbaz, Galaganatha Temple at Pattadakal, Nagarhole National Park and Kapu Lighthouse.

Visitors can obtain a postage stamp matching the theme of a listed landmark at a designated post office. The stamp is then fixed in the passport and accompanied by a unique permanent pictorial cancellation for that location.

For the first time, the Postal Circle has also collaborated with artisans producing handcrafted Channapatna toys.

Merchandise such as letter boxes, keychains and postman pen stands will be available, along with postcards featuring GI-tagged Channapatna toys.

Travel enthusiast Natarajan Venkatesan said he completed all 100 cancellations after buying a passport in April.

## HERITAGE THROUGH STAMPS

The Philately Passport features 100 pictorial cancellations based on Karnataka's natural, historical and cultural landmarks. Collectors can visit listed destinations, obtain a themed postage stamp from a designated post office and get a unique permanent pictorial cancellation.



CH Observer

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Unchecked garbage dumps, broken foot-paths opening into gutters, and severe pot-holes 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.

+91 80730 57594



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.

# KBG reveals massive expansion plan for Bengaluru outskirts

The Minister said urbanisation was expanding beyond GBA limits, with Bengaluru's urbanised area potentially growing from 750 to 1,800 sq km.

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The government has notified a new road grid for areas of Bengaluru Urban district outside the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA), aiming to ensure that future urban growth is supported by roads, drinking water, drainage and other basic infrastructure. Bengaluru Development Minister Krishna Byre Gowda said the plan was needed because the city had expanded rapidly over the past 25 years without enough advance planning. This has contributed to traffic congestion and continuing problems with roads, drinking water and drainage.

The Minister said urbanisation was now spreading quickly beyond the GBA limits. He said Bengaluru's urbanised area, currently around 750 sq km, could expand to 1,400–1,800 sq km in the coming years.

The new road grid has been planned to connect taluk and hobli headquarters with major district roads, State highways, the Peripheral Ring Road and the Satellite Town Ring Road. The identified roads have been notified as CDP roads to support planned expansion.



**750 sq km**  
Bengaluru's urbanised area today, approximately

**1,400–1,800 sq km**  
what Bengaluru's urbanised area could expand to in the coming years

**5–10 years**  
to build the full road network, the Minister said

Citizens have been advised to check the notification before constructing houses or developing layouts. Land required for notified road corridors will have to remain vacant as per applicable laws. Details of the notification will be

## Highlights

- Government notifies new road grid outside GBA.
- Infrastructure planned ahead to prevent urban congestion.
- Citizens urged not to build on corridors.
- Road widths expanded up to 90 metres.
- Notifications and alignment videos uploaded online.
- Officials display details on notice boards.

uploaded on the BMRDA website. Officials have also been directed to provide videos showing existing and proposed road alignments and display road details at Gram Panchayat and Revenue Department offices.

The roads will be developed in phases based on priority, as the network covers thousands of kilometres. Officials said the plan aims to prevent future infrastructure problems in Bengaluru's growing outskirts.

## Bengaluru Corporation clears ₹100 crore land encroachment

### The reclaimed land

Government land cleared

**3 acres 13 guntas**

Estimated worth

**₹100 crore**

Survey No. in Sarakki Village

**73**

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Bengaluru South City Corporation has cleared encroachments from 3 acres and 13 guntas of government land in Sarakki Village and taken the property into its custody, Commissioner K.N. Ramesh said.

The land, located at Survey Number 73 near Banashankari Temple, is estimated to be worth around ₹100 crore. It has been sanctioned for construction of the Bengaluru City Corporation's central office.

The government had earlier allotted the land to the Karnataka Agricultural Marketing Department's Fruit and Vegetable Division under APMC.



However, the land was not used for the purpose for which it was allotted. The government later cancelled the earlier allocation and sanctioned the property to the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) on September 3, 2026, for construction of the Corporation's central office.

Following the new allotment, a team led by Mahantesh, Executive Engineer of the Planning Division, inspected the site on Tuesday under the direction of the Corporation Commissioner.

Using JCB machinery, officials removed unauthorised sheds and cleared encroachments from the Corporation's

land. Officials also issued strict instructions to people who had constructed illegal buildings on another part of the same survey number. They were directed to vacate the Corporation-owned land immediately.

Commissioner K.N. Ramesh said the operation had helped the Corporation reclaim the 3 acres and 13 guntas of GBA-owned land. He said the property would be protected for the planned construction of the Corporation's central office.

The Commissioner also warned that legal action would be taken against anyone found encroaching on the site in the future.

## BDA recovers land worth ₹13.50 crore

**BENGALURU:** The Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) continued its drive against unauthorised constructions by recovering property worth around ₹13.50 crore in J.P. Nagar 9th Phase, 5th 'B' Block.

During the operation, the BDA demolished unauthorised structures built on about 12,100 square feet of land in Survey No. 91 of Alahalli Village, Uttarahalli Hobli, Bengaluru South Taluk. The land was subsequently recovered by the authority.

The demolition was carried out by the BDA Task

Force under the leadership of the Deputy Superintendent of Police, Zonal Commissioner of the South Zone and Engineering Officer-3. Executive Engineers and an Assistant Executive Engineer from the South Division also took part in the operation.

The operation was conducted with the active support of the local police department. The BDA said the action was part of its continued efforts to clear unauthorised constructions and recover its property.

## BWSSB expands groundwater monitoring with new technology

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) will install Internet of Things (IoT) monitoring devices in 6,000 more borewells by March 2027 to improve the monitoring and management of groundwater resources.

The devices will help the Board monitor water levels, extraction quantities and pump-set operations remotely. BWSSB currently owns around 16,000 borewells, of which 1,800 have already been equipped with IoT devices under the first phase. The second phase will cover another 6,000 borewells, with plans to eventually bring all Board-owned borewells under the monitoring system.

BWSSB Chairperson N. Manjula said the technology would make borewell management more scientific, efficient and data-driven. She noted that operating pumps when water levels are inadequate, running motors longer than necessary and detecting equipment faults only after failures can result in technical problems and unnecessary expenditure.

According to the BWSSB, the IoT devices will continuously transmit information that can help officials identify borewells where groundwater availability is declining and prevent unnecessary pump operation. The system is also expected to reduce motor damage caused by prolonged or dry running.

The devices will be central-



### DETAILS

- **Expansion:** 6,000 more borewells to receive IoT devices by March 2027.
- **Monitoring:** Tracks groundwater levels, extraction and pump operations remotely.
- **Management:** Two dashboards will monitor borewell performance citywide.
- **Benefits:** Helps prevent dry running, reduce motor damage and improve maintenance.
- **Groundwater:** Data will support efficient and sustainable groundwater utilisation.

ly monitored through two dashboards, enabling officials to track borewell performance and water availability across different parts of the city. The data generated will provide information on groundwater levels and usage patterns.

The Board said this information would help officials identify emerging problems at an early stage, improve maintenance planning and reduce operational costs. It would also provide a broader understanding of groundwater conditions in different areas of Bengaluru. BWSSB officials expect the technology-driven monitoring system to improve the efficiency of borewell operations while supporting more sustainable utilisation of groundwater resources.

## Officials face FIRs for wrong SIR information

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Strict action, including registration of FIRs, will be taken against Booth Level Officers (BLOs) and other staff if they provide incorrect information, mislead the public or give wrong guidance during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, Bengaluru Central City Corporation Commissioner and Additional District Election Officer (Central) Jagadeesh G. said. Speaking at a meeting with election officials and representatives of recognised political parties, he directed officials to provide only official and verified information about the SIR process. Eligible citizens must be given proper guidance regarding voter registration and related applications.

Officials were also instructed to identify areas where the need for SIR is high and con-



duct special awareness drives. Additional staff will be deployed in areas with a heavy workload to prevent delays.

The Commissioner urged citizens to check whether their names are included in the electoral roll and submit Form 6 where required. He said the objective is to ensure an accurate electoral roll and that no eligible voter is left out.

**Teachers' constituency poll schedule announced**  
Jagadeesh G. also held a meeting with recognised political parties regarding preparations for the Bengaluru Teachers' Constituency elec-

## TEACHERS' CONSTITUENCY POLL

**Sept 29** Notification issued  
**Oct 6** Last day for nominations  
**Oct 7** Scrutiny  
**Oct 9** Last day to withdraw  
**Oct 23** Polling, 8 am to 4 pm  
**Oct 27** Counting  
**Oct 31** Process complete

### AT A GLANCE

**Election Schedule:** Bengaluru Teachers' Constituency (BTC) poll notification issued; polling set for October 23, 2026.

**Strict Warning:** Officials threatening FIRs and disciplinary action against BLOs providing incorrect SIR information.

**Special Counter Setup:** Dedicated Form-19 acceptance counters established across all seven Central zone ERO offices.

**Resource Optimization:** Directives issued to deploy additional human resources to high-workload SIR constituencies.

tion. Representatives were briefed about notification, nomination filing, scrutiny, withdrawal, polling and counting.

The election notification was issued on September 29. Nominations can be filed until October 6, followed by scrutiny

on October 7 and withdrawal until October 9. Polling will be held on October 23 from 8 am to 4 pm, while counting will take place on October 27.

The election process will be completed by October 31.

### SPECIAL COUNTERS

### FOR TEACHERS' APPLICATIONS

Dedicated counters will be opened at ERO offices in all seven Assembly constituencies under the Central jurisdiction to receive Form-19 applications from eligible teachers.

Officials and staff will be assigned to the counters, with their names and designations displayed.

Applications and documents will be processed according to Election Commission guidelines.

Election officials, representatives of political parties and other officials attended the meeting.



Quick Read



Auto driver detained after roadside scuffle with women goes viral

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

An argument over repeated ride cancellations and fare escalated into a physical altercation between an app-based auto driver and two women. Bengaluru police detained the driver, identified as Chetan, after a video of the incident at HSR Layout's 3rd Sector went viral on social media. According to HSR Layout police, the two women work at a salon in Koramangala, while Chetan is associated with an app-based ride-hailing platform. Police said the women allegedly booked and cancelled the auto several times before booking it again. A dispute over the fare followed, eventually turning physical. Another woman intervened and attempted to calm the situation.

How it unfolded

- 1Cancelled: the women allegedly booked and cancelled the auto several times
- 2Rebooked: they booked it again and a dispute over the fare followed
- 3Scuffle: it turned physical; another woman tried to calm things
- 4Detained: the video went viral and police detained the driver

Silkworm producers offered subsidy

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Department of Sericulture has invited applications from registered private bivoltine silkworm egg producers for subsidy assistance under the Central Sector Silk Samagra-2 scheme. The assistance is intended for construction of seed rearing houses and procurement of required equipment. Eligible producers must submit the prescribed application form along with necessary documents through the concerned Sericulture Extension Officers by October 23, 2026. Details of eligibility, terms, conditions and the application form are available on the department's official website. Applicants can also contact the Joint Director or Deputy Director of Sericulture in their respective districts for further information. The department has urged eligible producers to make use of the scheme.

| SILK SAMAGRA-2 SUBSIDY |                                                     |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| FOR                    | Seed rearing houses and equipment                   |
| WHO                    | Registered private bivoltine silkworm egg producers |
| APPLY                  | Through Sericulture Extension Officers              |
| BY                     | October 23, 2026                                    |

# CM directs banks not to deduct Gruha Lakshmi funds

CM D.K. Shivakumar has ordered officials to prevent financial institutions from adjusting welfare payments against beneficiaries' outstanding loans.

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar has directed the Chief Secretary to issue clear instructions to banks and financial institutions against deducting Gruha Lakshmi scheme payments towards loan instalments or interest.

The direction followed a request by Dinesh Gooligowda, State Vice-Chairman of the Guarantee Implementation Authority and MLC, who sought urgent action over complaints from beneficiaries.

Under the Gruha Lakshmi scheme, ₹2,000 is credited every month directly to the bank accounts of eligible women.

The assistance is intended to support household expenses, children's education and women's financial empower-

Gruha Lakshmi money is meant to support women and their families and should not be used as an instrument for loan recovery." — Dinesh Gooligowda, MLC

ment.

In a letter to the Chief Minister, Gooligowda said some commercial banks, private finance companies, microfinance institutions and other organisations were allegedly deducting the amount soon after it was credited, citing outstanding loan dues or interest.

He said beneficiaries were, in some cases, not informed before the money was adjusted towards loan instalments. Such deductions were causing difficulties for economically



vulnerable women and affecting the intended purpose of the scheme, he said.

Gooligowda also referred to discussions at recent District Level Review Committee meetings involving bankers. District administrations had reportedly cautioned financial institutions against withhold-

ing or adjusting Gruha Lakshmi funds towards loan instalments or interest.

Following the representation, Shivakumar directed the Chief Secretary to take necessary steps and ensure clear instructions are issued to banks and financial institu-

## Leopard sighting in Anchepalya triggers concern

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

A leopard was spotted in Bengaluru's Anchepalya early Tuesday, causing concern among residents and raising fresh questions over wildlife movement into urban areas.

The leopard was reportedly seen moving through an isolated stretch of Anchepalya at around 3 am. A security guard captured footage of the animal as it passed through the area.

The leopard was spotted close to the location where a wild elephant had recently entered the city. The latest sighting has added to residents' concerns following the elephant incident, in which a



person was reportedly killed.

Residents have expressed anxiety over the repeated movement of wild animals into Bengaluru's expanding urban areas. The incidents have also prompted questions about measures being taken by the Forest Department to prevent wildlife from entering populated neighbourhoods.

RESIDENTS ADVISED

Avoid isolated places early in the morning and at night

Do not approach the animal or try to chase it away

Do not gather near places where it is spotted

The sighting has particularly worried residents living close to vacant plots and isolated stretches, where the animal could potentially find cover. People in the area have been advised to exercise caution and avoid venturing into isolated places during early morning and night hours.

Forest officials are expected

to monitor the area and take steps to track the leopard's movement. Residents have also been urged not to approach the animal, attempt to chase it away or gather near places where it is spotted.

The latest incident highlights the challenges posed by the increasing interface between Bengaluru's urban expansion and surrounding wildlife habitats.

Authorities are likely to assess the situation and take appropriate measures to ensure the safety of residents while preventing any harm to the animal.

Further details on the leopard's movement and efforts to locate it are awaited.

## Bengaluru woman quits IT job to drive Rapido auto

### WHY SHE SWITCHED

BEFORE  
IT job with night shifts; her mother alone at home

NOW  
Rapido auto driver: close to her mother, earning more

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

A Bengaluru woman's decision to leave her corporate IT job and become a Rapido auto driver has gone viral on social media.

The woman had earlier worked with a private IT company. However, after her father's death, she faced the responsibility of taking care of her mother.

Her night-shift duties made it difficult for her to leave her mother alone at home, prompting her to resign from the corporate job.

Her story came to light after social media content creator Tanvi Shetty travelled in her auto in Bengaluru and recorded a video about her. Tanvi was reportedly surprised to find the auto driver speaking fluent English and asked about her background.

The woman said she chose auto driving to remain close to her mother while earning a livelihood independently.

Her decision initially faced opposition from family members, who questioned why an educated woman would leave an IT job to drive an auto.

This is better than a corporate job. I can spend time with my mother and I am earning more than I did in my IT job."

The Rapido auto driver

Despite the criticism, she remained firm in her decision. "This is better than a corporate job.

I can spend time with my mother and I am earning more than I did in my IT job," she said.

The video shared by Tanvi Shetty on Instagram has reportedly received lakhs of views and sparked discussions online.

Several social media users have expressed appreciation for the woman's decision to prioritise her mother's care while choosing a profession that provides her with financial independence.

Her story has also drawn attention to the different livelihood choices available in Bengaluru and the challenges faced by families when work schedules conflict with caregiving responsibilities.

## MDMA allegedly sold from Bengaluru mutton shop

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Police have busted an alleged drug-peddling operation at a mutton shop in Vidyaranyapura and arrested two people.

The arrested have been identified as Junaid Pasha and Rizwan Baig. According to police, the duo allegedly procured MDMA from a Nigerian national and used the mutton shop as a base to distribute the drug.

Acting on specific information, Vidyaranyapura police raided the shop and seized 106 grams of MDMA, valued at around ₹10.60 lakh. Two mobile phones, ₹2,590 in cash and a two-wheeler were also seized during the operation.

Police are investigating the source of the drugs and the possible involvement of others in the alleged supply network. The accused are suspected of obtaining the con-

| Seized |                               |
|--------|-------------------------------|
| 106 g  | MDMA, WORTH ABOUT ₹10.60 LAKH |
| 2      | MOBILE PHONES                 |
| ₹2,590 | IN CASH                       |
| 1      | TWO-WHEELER                   |



triband from the Nigerian national and selling it to customers in and around the area.

The use of a small commercial establishment as an alleged drug-selling point has raised concerns about the spread of narcotics networks into neighbourhood businesses. Police are also examining the communications and transactions of the arrested persons to determine the extent of the operation.

A case has been registered and further investigation is underway.

The seizure comes amid continuing police efforts to crack down on the supply and sale of synthetic drugs in Bengaluru. Investigators are expected to question the accused to identify their alleged supplier and establish whether the seized MDMA was intended for local distribution.

Police have urged citizens to provide information about suspected drug-peddling activities to help curb the circulation of narcotics in residential and commercial areas.

## Bengaluru, Mysuru selected for Centre's PRAGATI 50 initiative



CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Urban Development Minister Dr Yatindra Siddaramaiah on Tuesday welcomed the selection of Bengaluru and Mysuru under the Centre's PRAGATI 50 initiative, aimed at developing 50 selected cities across the country as model clean cities.

The minister participated in a video conference chaired by Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Manohar Lal Khattar to discuss measures to strengthen new programmes under the Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0.

Welcoming the launch of PRAGATI 50, Siddaramaiah congratulated the two Karnataka cities for being chosen for the initiative.

He also discussed various urban development projects in the state and key demands with the Union minister.

Siddaramaiah said financial assistance from the Centre

The initiative is expected to strengthen urban cleanliness while supporting Karnataka's efforts to improve civic infrastructure.

was essential for the successful implementation of major urban development projects, including those aimed at developing model cities. He urged Khattar to ensure the early release of pending central funds.

"Central funds are essential for the successful implementation of major urban development projects. I have requested the Centre to release the pending funds at the earliest," Dr Yatindra Siddaramaiah said.

The minister also sought an appointment with Khattar to discuss additional funding for Karnataka's urban development projects and other development-related issues.

Khattar assured him that a meeting would be scheduled soon to discuss the state's demands and development priorities.

The high-level video conference was attended by urban development ministers from various states and senior officials of the Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry.

## Contractors demand release of ₹38,000 crore pending dues



CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Karnataka State Contractors' Association has demanded the immediate release of around ₹38,000 crore in pending dues owed to contractors by various development departments.

In a letter to Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, the association expressed dissatisfaction over the delay in clearing bills despite assurances given to contractors. It recalled that Shivakumar, while serving as Deputy Chief Minister, had assured contractors that the government would stand by them and release pending payments in a single instalment.

The association said Shivakumar met its office-bearers on June 30, 2026, after becoming Chief Minister and assured them that their dues would be cleared within two months. He had also reportedly said the Finance Department had been asked to make the necessary arrangements.

The association claimed that approximately ₹38,000 crore remained pending with various development departments, with dues accumulating since 2021-22.

It alleged that, except the Public Works Department and Greater Bengaluru Authority, other departments were not

The Karnataka State Contractors' Association has urged the government to clear pending bills and address long-standing concerns.

### PENDING BILLS

|                                          |                                      |
|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ₹38,000 crore in pending contractor dues | 2021-22 dues pending since           |
| 8% VAT-GST difference sought             | June 30 association met the CM, 2026 |

maintaining transparency in tendering and payment processes.

It urged the government to maintain seniority while releasing payments and sought a halt to the issuance of Special Letters of Credit. It also demanded the release of the eight per cent VAT-GST difference pertaining to 2017-18 and 2018-19.

The association sought withdrawal of the order requiring work details to be uploaded on the Contract Management Module of the e-procurement platform before treasury payments are released.

It also sought priority for local contractors in district and taluk-level tenders and opposed preference to contractors from other districts and States.

The association said small and medium contractors had faced difficulties in securing works since the Covid-19 period and sought measures to facilitate licence renewals and continuation of ongoing works.

# Pushcarts banned on Avenue Road to ease congestion

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Avenue Road in KR Market, one of Bengaluru's busiest commercial areas, has become a major congestion hotspot due to heavy pedestrian and vehicular movement.

To ease the situation, the city traffic police have prohibited pushcarts from entering Avenue Road. The move follows an earlier restriction on autorickshaw entry into the



busy stretch.

Traffic officials are also considering restricting the movement of goods vehicles

during peak hours. The proposal was discussed during a meeting involving traffic police, Greater Bengaluru Au-

thority (GBA) officials and the local MLA.

Officials are reportedly examining whether goods vehicles can be permitted on Avenue Road during night hours while restricting their entry during peak periods. A final decision on the proposal is expected soon.

The restrictions are aimed at improving traffic flow and reducing conflicts between pedestrians, commercial vehicles

and other road users in the densely crowded market area.

With business activity remaining high throughout the day, Avenue Road witnesses considerable movement of shoppers, traders, delivery vehicles and pedestrians. Officials said the existing traffic restrictions were being considered in response to persistent congestion.

The decision on goods vehicles will determine whether

### WHAT NEXT

- A final decision on goods vehicles is expected soon
- Talks on regulating commercial traffic without affecting business

additional traffic-management measures are introduced on the stretch. Until then, authorities are continuing discussions on regulating commercial traffic without affecting business operations.

### PEAK HOUR RESTRICTIONS

- ✓ Autorickshaws: entry banned
- ✓ Pushcarts: entry prohibited
- Goods vehicles: peak-hour ban, night-time access under consideration



Quick Read

Debt-ridden farmer dies by suicide

CH NEWS, GADAG

A 50-year-old farmer died by suicide in Gadag district on Tuesday after suffering massive crop losses and mounting unpaid debt. The deceased has been identified as Jaganappa Lamani, a resident of Varavi Thanda in Shirahatti taluk. According to local sources, Jaganappa ended his life by hanging himself from a tree in an agricultural field located in Kundralli village, Lakshmeshwara taluk. Officials reported that severe drought conditions and a lack of rainfall had entirely destroyed the crops planted across his two-acre plot. Struggling to survive, Jaganappa had earlier borrowed approximately Rs 2 lakh to fund his farming needs and daily household expenses. Facing total harvest failure, he sank into deep depression over his inability to repay lenders. The Lakshmeshwar police have registered an official case regarding the incident, visited the spot for inspection, and initiated a detailed investigation into the tragedy.

Chitradurga Fort hosts cleanliness drive on Tourism Day

CH NEWS, CHITRADURGA

The City Municipal Council organised a voluntary cleanliness drive and awareness programme at the historic Chitradurga Fort as part of World Tourism Day and the 'Swachhata Hi Seva' campaign. Led by Jyothiraj, popularly known as 'Kothiraj', municipal staff and prominent citizens took part in the shramadan. They cleared accumulated waste from the area in front of the fort and its surroundings. Later, participants formed a human chain inside the fort premises and took a pledge to keep the country and environment clean. They also resolved to dedicate at least two hours every week to cleanliness activities. The campaign conveyed the message that protecting the cleanliness of historical monuments and tourist places is the responsibility of every citizen.

Chitradurga to mark Senior Citizens Day

CH NEWS, CHITRADURGA

A programme to mark World Senior Citizens' Day will be held on October 1 at 10 am at the Zilla Panchayat Hall in Chitradurga. The programme is being jointly organised by the District Legal Services Authority, Advocates' Association, district administration, Zilla Panchayat and departments working for women, children, persons with disabilities and senior citizens, along with voluntary organisations. Principal District and Sessions Judge B.T. Mahavarkar will inaugurate the programme, while Deputy Commissioner Ramya S. will preside. Senior Advocate D.K. Sheela will deliver a special lecture on the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007. Based on the 2026 theme, "The Era of Longevity: Rethinking Lifestyles for a Long Life," the event will include senior citizen felicitation, prize distribution, cultural programmes and awareness activities. District Welfare Officer Vaishali J. appealed to senior citizens and the public to participate in large numbers.

# BJP workers stage protest over Gadag water crisis

Protesters accused Minister H.K. Patil of inadequate drinking water supply, demanding a permanent solution instead of temporary measures

CH NEWS, GADAG

BJP workers and hundreds of women staged a protest in Gadag city over the drinking water shortage, demanding an immediate and regular supply even before the summer season.

The protesters gathered at Tong Koota with empty buckets and pots. They performed a ritual there as part of their protest against the state government. They later took out a march from Tong Koota to Mahatma Gandhi Circle, with women carrying empty pots. At Gandhi Circle, protesters raised slogans against the government and demanded action to address the water shortage. The protest was led by former minister and MLA C.C. Patil and BJP leader Anil Menasinakai. The protesters expressed anger against local MLA and Minister H.K. Patil, alleging



that the city had not received adequate drinking water for several years. They demanded a permanent solution instead of temporary measures. Addressing the gathering, Anil Menasinakai challenged the government to provide regular water to Gadag city. He also demanded that H.K. Patil resign as MLA if adequate drinking water could not be provided. The protesters raised slo-

gans including, "Give me water, or else give me an answer," and warned that the agitation would be intensified if their demands were not met. Later, some protesters attempted to lay siege to the city hall. They pushed against police barricades and tried to climb the city hall gate. Police intervened and worked to disperse the protesters. The protesters demanded immediate and adequate

At a glance

- **Protest action:** BJP workers and women staged a demonstration in Gadag over severe drinking water shortages.
- **Public demands:** Citizens and leaders called for an immediate, regular and permanent water supply solution.
- **Political pressure:** Protesters marched with empty pots, shouted slogans and demanded the local minister's resignation.
- **Escalation:** Demonstrators attempted to breach city hall barricades, prompting police intervention to disperse the crowd.

drinking water, along with a permanent solution to the city's water shortage.

“Give me water, or else give me an answer”

— Protesters' slogan, Gadag

## Chitradurga prepares for Maha Ganapathi procession

CH NEWS, CHITRADURGA

District Superintendent of Police Kushal Choukse directed officials to ensure strict security arrangements for the Hindu Maha Ganapathi immersion procession and Shobhayatra scheduled for October 3 in Chitradurga city.

Speaking at a meeting at the Deputy Commissioner's office, he stressed coordination among all departments to ensure the event is conducted peacefully. Officials expect around four lakh people to participate in the procession and immersion.

The police will soon conduct a route march along the main procession routes. CCTV cameras and watchtowers will be installed, while measures will be taken to regulate banners and flex boards. Officials were instructed to review preparations daily and complete assigned work within the deadline.

Additional Superintendent of Police Shivakumar said the idol has been installed at the Government Science College grounds and will be taken to Chandravalli for immersion. He said around 3 to 3.20 lakh people had participated in the 2025 procession, which ended peacefully by 10 pm.

Organisers and volunteers will be given T-shirts of a spe-



Procession crowd

|      |              |
|------|--------------|
| 2025 | 3-3.20 lakh  |
| 2026 | about 4 lakh |

2026: the turnout officials expect

cific colour, and volunteer lists must be submitted to the police in advance. Volunteers will also receive instructions before the procession.

The use of buntings, paper blasters and firecrackers has been prohibited. Private drone use will require police permission, while the police will use five to six drones for surveillance.

Prasada distribution on the main road will not be allowed. Counters must be arranged on side roads after prior permission and food quality checks.

Officials were also asked to arrange drinking water and mobile toilets for devotees, including women, children and elderly people. Departments and organisers were urged to work together for a safe and peaceful event.

## ‘Safe abortion awareness needed to protect women’

CH NEWS, CHITRADURGA

District Health and Family Welfare Officer Dr. M.C. Sunil Kumar said awareness about safe abortion services is important as lack of correct information can lead women to unsafe methods and health complications.

He was speaking after inaugurating an awareness programme for field staff and ASHA workers at Holalkere Public Hospital. The programme was organised by the District Health and Family Welfare Department, District Reproductive and Child Health Office, District IEC Division and Holalkere Taluk Health Office.

Dr. Sunil Kumar said social fear and stigma often prevent women from approaching hospitals. He said safe abortion is not a crime and urged field staff to spread correct information in communities.

District RCH Officer Dr. Abhinava M.D. said women should receive equitable, respectful and confidential care. He highlighted confidentiality, proper information, informed consent, non-discriminatory services and post-procedure care with family planning counselling as important principles.



Officials warned people against using home remedies or self-medication advice shared on WhatsApp and YouTube, saying such practices can be life-threatening. ASHA workers were asked to inform women that safe services are available at government health facilities, including Primary Health Centres, Community Health Centres, Taluk Hospitals and District Hospitals. People were advised to contact health workers or the 104 helpline for guidance.

Administrative Medical Officer Rekha T.D. said the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act was enacted in 1971. She noted that following the 2021 amendment, termination may be permitted up to 24 weeks in special circumstances, subject to applicable provisions and medical advice.

An exhibition on temporary family planning methods was also held during the programme. Health officials, doctors, ASHA workers and other department staff participated in the event.

## Koppal groups protest against SIR process



CH NEWS, KOPPAL

Progressive, pro-people and labour organisations staged a massive protest at Ashok Circle in Koppal on Tuesday, demanding the arrest of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar and the dismissal of the Central Government.

The protesters alleged that the Central Government had come to power through "vote theft". After the protest, they submitted a memorandum addressed to the President of India through Mahavir Kumar, Shirastedar at the Tahsildar's office, on behalf of the Deputy Commissioner.

The memorandum called for protecting the constitutional position of the Election Commission of India and safeguarding democratic values. The protesters alleged that the Election Commission is a three-member body and that major administrative decisions should be taken by majority. They claimed that Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar had taken unilateral decisions on technical changes and the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process.

The protesters further claimed that Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi had submitted written objections

Highlights

- Progressive organisations protest against ECI decisions.
- Protesters demand arrest of Gyanesh Kumar.
- Memorandum calls for Central Government dismissal.
- SIR process circulars demanded for suspension.
- Unilateral administrative actions face strong opposition.
- Inquiry into voter rights violations requested.

against such decisions on more than 14 occasions.

They demanded that all SIR circulars issued without the consensus of the full commission be withdrawn and that the SIR process be suspended immediately. They also demanded the arrest of the Chief Election Commissioner and a detailed inquiry into alleged violations of voters' rights under the supervision of a retired High Court or Supreme Court judge.

The groups also demanded the dismissal of the Central Government and appropriate constitutional action by the President.

The protesters raised slogans against the SIR process and the Central Government during the demonstration.

## Group appeals against renaming Dakshina Kannada district



CH NEWS, MANGALURU

A group of citizens, intellectuals, historians, writers and cultural activists has appealed to the Karnataka government to retain the historic name 'Dakshina Kannada' for the district instead of renaming it 'Mangaluru District'.

The group defended Dakshina Kannada's name, citing its 1977 adoption, century-old regional identity, and broader geography beyond headquarters Mangaluru

At a press meet held on Tuesday, the group said the appeal was not against Mangaluru, which they described as the historic, cultural and economic centre of the region. They said retaining Dakshina Kannada would help preserve the historical identity of a region that extends beyond a single city.

The group said the government changed the district's name to Dakshina Kannada in January 1977, and the name has been in use for nearly five decades. They also pointed to the administrative identity as-

sociated with the region for more than a century.

According to the group, a district does not necessarily have to carry the name of its headquarters. Mangaluru is the district headquarters, while Dakshina Kannada represents a wider geographical and cultural region that includes Puttur, Belthangady, Sullia, Bantwal, Moodbidri and Mulki.

The group said the name Dakshina Kannada continued even after major administrative changes, including the creation of Udupi district in 1997. They also expressed concern that changing the name could require changes to historical, administrative, educational, legal and cultural records.

The members welcomed the government's decision to seek public opinion on the proposed name change. They urged that the consultation be broad-based and transparent, covering all taluks, towns and villages, as well as historians, academics, writers, cultural organisations and other stakeholders.

They requested the government to retain Dakshina Kannada as the official district name while allowing Mangaluru to continue developing its identity as the headquarters.

## Former MLA Somalingappa dismisses land dispute accusations

CH NEWS, BALLARI: Former Member of Legislative Assembly M.S. Somalingappa has strongly refuted the latest police complaint filed against him and his family members, calling the land dispute allegations completely baseless and malicious.



Addressing reporters at a press conference held at his residential office in Tekkalakote on Tuesday, the veteran leader clarified the legal facts surrounding the controversy.

He explained that his son, Venkatappanayaka, lawfully bought 75 cents of land out of a total three-acre plot in Survey Number 8/3. The transaction was conducted directly with the complainant, Manjula, who executed the sale deed using a legally valid General Power of Attorney.

The former legislator pointed out that the complainant had repeatedly filed similar false cases against him and his sons in the past. According to him, judicial proceedings conducted before both the Siruguppa court and the Ballari district court had already dismissed her previous claims as fabricated.

Regarding the fresh First Information Report registered at Siruguppa police station on September 27, Somalingappa asserted that neither he nor his family members were anywhere near the site during the alleged incident. He urged investigators to examine relevant mobile tower locations and public CCTV recordings to confirm their absence.

Somalingappa further detailed that Manjula personally completed all documentation formalities at the Siruguppa sub-registrar office. Following the formal handover, a protective wire fence was erected solely around the 75-cent boundary, and his family holds no claim or interest in the remaining area.

Expressing deep displeasure over the continuous smear campaign, he stated that the motivated accusations were aimed at tarnishing his hard-earned public image. He warned that his legal team would contest the complaint firmly in court while actively preparing a civil defamation suit against the complainant.

### RAINS BRING RELIEF

## Heavy rains fill Chamarajanagar reservoirs

CH NEWS, CHAMARAJANAGAR

Heavy rains brought relief to residents of Chamarajanagar district, particularly in Hanur and Kollegala taluks, after the region had faced a rainfall shortage.

The rain came as Karnataka Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar arrived to inaugurate development projects and distribute benefits in the area.

Heavy rain overnight filled the Hubbe-Hunase reservoir to capacity, causing it to overflow. The Udurote, Tattehalla and Swamihalla reservoirs also filled, with water flowing over bridges and entering several parts of Hanur town.

Devangapete and nearby areas were badly affected as water submerged houses and roads. Traffic and pedestrian movement on the main road to Male Mahadeshwara Betta was temporarily disrupted af-



ter more than five feet of water flowed over a bridge.

Heavy rain also caused problems in Martalli Gram Panchayat limits. Water entered houses and shops, leaving several residents in distress. The houses of Rangamma and Jyothi were flooded, damaging food grains, clothes and other daily essentials. The floodwaters also washed away two sheep and 20 chickens, which were important to

their livelihood. Officials reportedly responded to the situation.

Meanwhile, boulders, rocks and soil rolled onto the road leading to Male Mahadeshwara Betta following the heavy rainfall. The road turned muddy, creating difficulties for movement.

Hanur had faced drought conditions for several months, with shortages of drinking water for people and live-

stock. However, continuous rain over the past week has brought hope to residents.

The filling of reservoirs has also brought relief to farmers in surrounding areas. The reservoirs envisioned by the late Rajugowda are now full, bringing smiles to farmers who had been waiting for better water conditions.

The recent rainfall has provided much-needed relief to the drought-hit region, although waterlogging and road disruptions have affected several areas.

### Hanur, then and now

BEFORE

Drought for several months; drinking water short for people and livestock

➡

NOW

Reservoirs full after a week of continuous rain; hope for residents, relief for farmers







Quick Read



The open drainage pit, Manjunatha Layout

**Open drainage pit raises safety concerns in Hunsur**

CH NEWS, HUNSUR

An open drainage pit near the 5th Cross of Manjunatha Layout is posing a serious danger to residents, while stagnant wastewater and foul smell have added to public dissatisfaction with the City Municipal Council's functioning.

The open drainage pit is located near Hunsur Road, opposite the Indane Gas Agency. Due to the absence of a proper drainage system, wastewater is not flowing freely and has been stagnating, creating a foul smell and affecting the surrounding atmosphere.

Residents said Manjunatha Layout, despite being located in the heart of the city, has been left with a hazardous and open drainage system. They reportedly informed the Municipal Council about the problem, but no action has been taken so far.

Residents have urged Municipal Council officials to immediately repair the damaged drainage system and close the open drainage pit. They warned that they would stage a protest in front of the Municipal Council office if the issue is not addressed.

The public also expressed dissatisfaction over the condition of roads in the city, particularly the failure to repair potholes. They alleged that officials and the Commissioner have failed to address basic development issues.

Sakrebyle Elephant Camp to remain closed on Wednesdays

CH NEWS, SHIVAMOGGA

The Sakrebyle Elephant Camp in Shivamogga taluk will remain closed every Wednesday following new Forest Department guidelines aimed at wildlife conservation and tourist safety. The department has introduced a weekly holiday for captive elephant camps across Karnataka. The Sakrebyle camp reopened to tourists on September 26 after being temporarily closed following an incident at Dubare Elephant Camp on May 18. Following its reopening, stricter safety measures have been introduced at Sakrebyle. Safety signboards have been installed at several locations inside the camp to guide visitors and improve safety. Forest officials have appealed to tourists to plan their visits accordingly and avoid visiting the camp on Wednesdays. The weekly closure is part of measures introduced to improve safety for visitors while supporting wildlife conservation at captive elephant camps.

Abhishek Kamble named president of Dasara committee

CH NEWS, KALABURAGI

The Suryavamshi Khatik Samaj has announced that Abhishek Shekharbabu Kamble, proprietor of Balaji Automobiles, has been unanimously selected as the president of the community's 2026 Dasara Festival Committee. On the occasion, Congress leader Shivananda Honagunti felicitated Abhishek Shekharbabu Kamble and conveyed his best wishes.

# BJP leaders question MLA Hitnal over Kavatar claims

Leaders questioned the MLA over alleged ₹3 crore and ₹1 crore fines linked to illegal quarrying and government land encroachment

**CH NEWS, KOPPAL**

BJP SC Morcha leader Ganesh Horattnala and leaders from various communities expressed strong opposition to allegations made by Koppal MLA K. Raghavendra Hitnal and other Congress leaders against BJP leader Dr. Basavaraj Kavatar's private hospital and personal affairs.

Speaking at a press conference on Tuesday, Horattnala condemned the allegations and said targeting Dr. Kavatar's private hospital because of his political involvement was inappropriate. The leaders alleged that the accusations were politically motivated.

They said K.S. Hospital had supported poor patients from Koppal and other states, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic and

other critical situations. They said bringing the hospital into political rivalry was inappropriate.

The leaders questioned the MLA on several issues, including alleged fines of ₹3 crore and ₹1 crore imposed on the MLA and MP during the Congress government's tenure for illegal stone quarrying and encroachment on government land.

They also questioned the ₹10,000 crore development grants allegedly brought to the constituency and asked what Smart City infrastructure had been developed in Koppal. They alleged that foundation-laying ceremonies for projects, including the Koppal-Mundaragi road, had been held more than once.

Questions were also raised about alleged irregularities in



BJP leaders at the press conference in Koppal on Tuesday

KUDA site allotments, alleged ₹16 crore corruption in the City Municipal Council and the ₹72 crore KRIDL fake bill scam. The leaders also criticised cases filed against people protesting for road repairs in Kavalur and alleged attempts to claim credit for the Alavandi substation project.

They further alleged attempts to sideline leaders

from Muslim, Valmiki, Barquera, Lingayat, Kuruba and Madiga communities, describing it as "divide-and-rule" politics.

Accepting the MLA's challenge to inspect development works in every village, they asked him to fix a date and time. They said voters and BJP workers would present their views on development over the last 13 years.

## BJP leader Krishnappa Kalladka criticises Sangh Parivar

**CH NEWS, MANGALURU**

BJP leader Krishnappa Kalladka has criticised what he described as an attempt to silence those who speak openly, alleging that complaints are filed with the Central Crime Branch (CCB) and police are sent to their homes when they express views that are considered inconvenient.

Speaking on the issue, Kalladka questioned the attitude of people who, according to him, believe that everything happens only because of their organisation. He referred to what he described as an "arrogance" among sections of the Sangh Parivar and said such an ap-

**Arrogance among sections of the Sangh Parivar should be questioned**

proach should be questioned.

Kalladka reportedly made the remarks while expressing his views on internal differences and the treatment of people who raise questions. He alleged that individuals who speak the truth or voice criticism face pressure through police complaints and investigations.

The BJP leader also questioned whether raising concerns or expressing a different opinion should lead to



police action. He said democratic organisations should have space for discussion, disagreement and criticism rather than attempting to suppress opposing views.

His comments have drawn attention because of his association with the BJP and his remarks about the Sangh Parivar. The statements come amid continuing political dis-

cussions in Karnataka over police complaints, investigations and differences within political and social organisations.

Kalladka's allegations concern the conduct of specific individuals and organisations, and the claims would require verification from the concerned authorities. No independent confirmation of the allegations was included in the available report.

The remarks have since been circulated on social media, prompting discussion among political workers and members of the public about freedom to express dissent within political and organisational circles.

## Officers told to prepare for water shortage



The KDP meeting at Kundapur

**CH NEWS, UDUPI**

MLA Gururaj Gantihole said, since the rains have not come as expected this time, there is a water shortage in Kundapur and Byndoor taluks, and we must prepare to deal with the water problem immediately.

He was speaking while presiding over the Kundapur taluk-level quarterly KDP meeting held at the taluk panchayat hall at Kundapur.

According to the report, there is a 27 percent rainfall deficit in Byndoor and 16 percent in Kundapur. If the rainfall measurement had been properly maintained, there would have been an even greater deficit. Areas with salt water problems may experience a deficit from December itself. For this reason, priority should be given to drinking water this time and farmers should also be helped, he said.

Horticulture department officials said that 16 gardens

and an area of 4.5 acres have been damaged due to this rain. Varahi engineer informed that the total storage capacity of the Mani reservoir on the Varahi river is 31.5 TMC, and there is a 30 percent storage shortage due to low rainfall. KDP member Hariprasad Shetty said that after giving some time to agriculture, water has been stopped again. Some of the Kindi dams in Kundapur and Byndoor have been boarded up.

More people are coming to the taluk hospital. But they

At a glance

- **Rainfall Deficit:** Kundapur and Byndoor face notable rainfall shortfalls, triggering severe early water shortage concerns.
- **Reservoir Storage:** Mani reservoir reports a 30% storage deficit due to inadequate seasonal downpours.
- **Healthcare Issues:** Taluk hospital faces long receipt queues, doctor coordination gaps, and 20 vacant staff posts.
- **Infrastructure Concerns:** Members demand school building repairs, bridge traffic solutions, and dam board management.

Priority to drinking water this time, and help for farmers too

have to wait for hours for the receipt. Member Ramesh Shetty alleged that there is a lack of coordination among the doctors. Hold a meeting of the doctors at the hospital as soon as possible and resolve this. If not possible, the MLA instructed the Kodgi Hospital Administrator to convene a health protection committee meeting.

Member Jyoti V Putran demanded the appointment of a skin disease specialist. We have 56 posts sanctioned, 36 have been filled, and 20 posts are vacant. Field staff posts are vacant, said Taluk Health Officer Dr K Premanand.

Member Sarath Kumar Shetty demanded that the buildings of closed government schools be repaired before they collapse and the assets there be protected.

Expressing concern about the construction of the new bridge, MLA Kiran Kumar Kodgi said that the construction of the bridge may take 2-3 years. It is difficult to stop traffic for that long.

## Davanagere seeks specialist wildlife vets



A leopard rescue by the highway

**CH NEWS, DAVANAGERE**

Davanagere district is facing a shortage of trained wildlife anesthesiologists, raising concerns over delays in rescuing wild animals that enter human settlements. The issue has become more significant as sightings of leopards, bears and elephants have increased in several parts of the district.

The Forest Department has reportedly submitted proposals to the state government seeking specialist wildlife veterinarians for Davanagere. At present, experts often have to be brought from Shivamogga or Hosapete when an animal needs to be tranquilised during a rescue operation.

Human-wildlife conflict

in to tranquilise the animal and facilitate its rescue.

According to the report, Karnataka has only 12 suitably trained wildlife anesthesiologists. Two are at Mysuru Zoo, while three are posted between Pilikula Biological Park in Mangaluru and Bannerghatta Biological Park. One each is available at the Shivamogga Lion Safari, Sakrebailu Elephant Camp, Bandipur Elephant Camp, Kodagu Wildlife PG Centre, Dubare Elephant Camp and Hosapete Zoo.

Davanagere ACF Anand said specialist wildlife veterinarians are required to administer anesthesia to wild animals and that general doctors cannot perform the task. He said experts currently have to be called from Shivamogga or Hosapete during emergencies.

Anand said the injured leopard rescued recently near Anagod is now healthy. He added that a proposal had been sent to the state government seeking specialist personnel for the district.

Residents have urged the government to address the shortage to ensure quicker and safer wildlife rescue operations.

## QUALITY RURAL HEALTHCARE

# Free health camps planned across Magadi Gram Panchayats

**CH NEWS, MAGADI**

Block Congress President Pujaripalya K. Krishnamurthy announced that free health check-up and surgery camps will be organised across every Gram Panchayat in Magadi taluk.

Speaking at a press conference at the Chakrabhavi VSSN Society hall, he said a large free health check-up camp would be held on Sunday, August 4, at the Chakrabhavi VSSN Society premises. The programme is being organised under the leadership of Minister H.C.



Leaders with the health camp posters at the Chakrabhavi press meet

Balakrishna, in association with Mahanadu Kattemane, D.K.S. Charitable Trust, M.S. Ramaiah Hospital and the Chakrabhavi VSSN Society.

Krishnamurthy said the programme aims to provide quality healthcare to people in

rural areas and encourage residents to seek medical attention instead of buying medicines from shops and ignoring health problems.

High-tech mobile buses from M.S. Ramaiah Hospital, equipped for the first time in

Highlights

- Free health check-up camps planned across Magadi.
- Large camp scheduled at Chakrabhavi VSSN Society.
- High-tech mobile buses offer cancer and dental care.
- Specialist doctors examine diverse health conditions.
- Free medicines, spectacles, transport, and meals provided.
- Major surgeries and expenses covered completely.

the state, will participate in the camp. The buses will pro-

## Mangaluru old harbour struggles with severe congestion



Boats and fish crates at Mangaluru's Old Harbour, or Dhakke

**CH NEWS, MANGALURU**

Fishermen at Mangaluru's Old Harbour, or Dhakke, are seeking urgent government action to address a severe shortage of boat berthing space and long-pending dredging work at the harbour mouth.

The fishing community says the problems are affecting operations and creating safety risks.

More than 1,400 boats, including around 900 licensed steel boats along with traditional and wooden craft, operate from the harbour. However, the existing berthing facilities can accommodate only about 250 to 300 boats, leaving hundreds of fishermen struggling to dock their vessels and unload their catch.

Work on three jetties under Phase-3 of the harbour development project has also been delayed. About 60 per cent of the work on the third jetty has reportedly been completed, while the remaining work is pending. The first jetty has been demolished, and work on the second jetty has stopped midway. Fishermen have urged the government to release pending funds and speed up construction.

The fishing community has also demanded a fourth jetty, either near Kotepura or in the form of a floating jetty, to increase berthing capacity. Fishermen's leaders said the shortage has become particu-

larly difficult with several months of the fishing season already over.

Another major concern is silt accumulation at the estuary where the Netravati and Phalguni (Gurupura) rivers meet the Arabian Sea. Sand and sediment carried by the rivers have reduced the water depth, increasing the risk of boats hitting sandbars while entering or leaving the harbour.

Fisherman leader Rajesh Puthran said inadequate dredging over the years has resulted in dangerous conditions. He pointed to an incident shortly before Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar's visit when three boats reportedly met with accidents at the estuary on the same day.

Faisal Kudroli, general secretary of the Mangaluru Trawl Boat Union, said the government must complete the three jetties and allocate funds for a fourth. Fishermen's leaders also want the government to procure a modern cutter dredger, saying conventional machinery is inadequate for removing the accumulated sediment.

Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, during his recent visit to the harbour, inspected the facilities and interacted with fishermen. The community has urged the government to implement the assurances given during the visit and provide permanent solutions to their infrastructure and safety concerns.



## COURTING CONTROVERSY: A COSTLY HABIT FOR KARNATAKA CONGRESS



SHYAM SUNDAR VATTAM

*“For a government in power, silence on a needless controversy can sometimes be more productive than winning an argument that it never needed to enter.”*



Inviting controversy appears to have become a recurring feature of political discourse within the ruling Congress in Karnataka. While several ministers and senior leaders prefer to concentrate on governance, a few appear willing to enter contentious debates through statements that can quickly overshadow the government’s work.

The latest controversy involving KPCC president B.K. Hariprasad is a case in point. Amid the dispute over a proposed screening of a documentary on Umar Khalid at the National Law School of India University (NLSIU), Hariprasad described Khalid as a “nationalist” while attacking the ABVP and the RSS. Khalid has been in custody since 2020 in connection with the Delhi riots case under the UAPA, but he has not been convicted. Hariprasad has subsequently defended his remark, arguing that an accused person cannot be treated as guilty without a court conviction.

The legal argument is one issue; political messaging is another. In a politically polarised environment, a statement on a highly contentious national-security issue can easily become the headline, pushing the government’s development and administrative agenda into the background. The BJP and its affiliated organisations have already used the remark to question the Con-

### The recent controversies

#### NLSIU documentary row

KPCC president B.K. Hariprasad described Umar Khalid as a “nationalist” while attacking the ABVP and the RSS. Khalid, in custody since 2020 in the Delhi riots case under the UAPA, has not been convicted.

#### T. Narasipura procession

A dispute over the route of a Ganesh immersion procession escalated into protests and demands for action against the police inspector concerned. Police have been asked to remain on high alert.

gress’s position on nationalism and minority politics.

This controversy has come at a particularly sensitive moment in Karnataka, with tensions surrounding Ganesh processions also generating political confrontation. The dispute in T. Narasipura over the route of a Ganesh immersion procession has escalated into protests and demands for action against the police inspector concerned. The government has had to ask police to remain on high alert amid the political confrontation.

Religious processions inevitably require a balance between the right to celebrate, public safety and the maintenance of communal peace. Police restrictions may sometimes be necessary for law and order, but the manner in which such restrictions are communicated can have consequences. When a local administrative or police statement is perceived as disrespectful to religious sentiments, a law-and-order issue can rapidly become a political issue.

The T. Narasipura episode demonstrates how quickly such disputes can acquire a life of their own. What began as a question concerning a procession route has resulted in political protests, competing claims and continuing public debate.

For the Congress government, the larger challenge is therefore not merely to counter the BJP politically but to ensure that its own leaders and functionaries do not unnecessarily create additional fronts of confrontation.

Statements on sensitive subjects such as nationalism, religion and communal relations demand particular restraint from those holding senior positions. Political leaders are entitled to defend their ideological positions, but they must also recognise that every provocative formulation carries consequences beyond the immediate political exchange.

The Congress government has a full plate of governance issues—from urban infrastructure and employment to welfare delivery, drought management and development. These are matters on which its performance will ultimately be judged.

The lesson from the recent controversies is straightforward: political leaders need not respond to every provocation, and not every argument requires a headline. Governance requires communication, but it also requires discretion.

For a government in power, silence on a needless controversy can sometimes be more productive than winning an argument that it never needed to enter.

## FROM POWER TO PERIL: THE POLITICAL REALITY AND BATTLE OF MAMATA BANERJEE

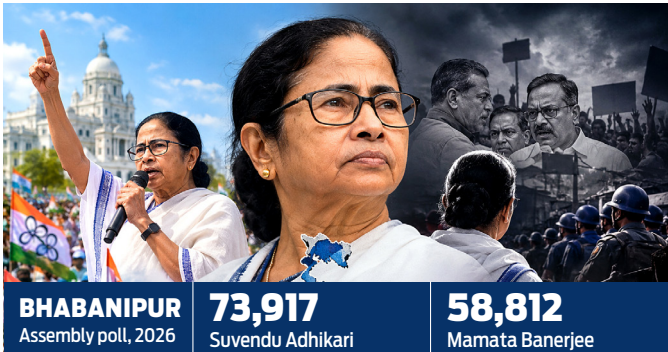
**“It is a story of a leader confronting the hardest question in politics: when the familiar symbols, structures and certainties disappear, can the political movement itself be rebuilt?”**



Lalit Gargg

bols are not merely electoral identifiers; for regional parties, they often embody years of organizational work, public recognition and political identity. The Election Commission has temporarily assigned Banerjee’s faction the name “Mamata All India Trinamool Congress” and the “Football Player” symbol, while the rival faction has been given the name “Democratic Trinamool Congress” and the “Envelope” symbol for the forthcoming by-elections. Banerjee has challenged the Election Commission’s decision in the Supreme Court and described the development as a “black day” for democracy. The third dimension of her predicament is legal. Following the change of government, several complaints and FIRs have been registered against Banerjee over statements made during the election campaign and other political programmes. In June 2026, an FIR was registered in Kolkata following allegations that remarks made during an election-related programme could promote enmity between communities. Another FIR was registered in Siliguri over allegations concerning remarks about religion and religious sentiments. These remain allegations and legal proceedings; an FIR itself does not establish guilt.

There was also a legal confrontation surrounding a Trinamool Congress Chhatra Parishad rally in Kolkata in



**BHABANIPUR**  
Assembly poll, 2026

**73,917**  
Suvendu Adhikari

**58,812**  
Mamata Banerjee

August. Police registered an FIR against Banerjee and organisers over alleged violation of a Calcutta High Court order governing the programme and the movement of supporters. At the same time, controversies surrounding the previous administration including allegations relating to recruitment irregularities and other financial or administrative decisions continue to remain part of the wider political debate. Such allegations need to be distinguished from proven wrongdoing and judged through the appropriate legal processes. Perhaps the most significant political challenge, however, is the erosion of the image that once constituted Banerjee’s greatest political capital. She built her identity as a leader who came from a modest background, fought powerful political establishments and presented herself as the voice of ordinary people, particularly the underprivileged and women. Her political persona was built around struggle, accessibility and resistance.

Over the years, however, controversies surrounding governance, allegations of corruption and disputes over issues concerning women’s safety and recruitment have generated political criticism. The teacher-recruitment controversy, in particular, became a major issue in Bengal politics. The cumulative effect of these controversies, combined with 15 years of

incumbency, contributed to an environment in which questions about governance and public trust became central to the political contest. Yet Mamata Banerjee’s political character has never been defined by an easy acceptance of defeat. Her early life and political career were shaped by struggle. From her formative years in politics to her long campaign against the Left Front, she repeatedly demonstrated a willingness to remain on the streets and fight prolonged political battles. Even now, she has rejected the idea of political retirement and has indicated that she intends to continue the struggle.

Her response to the changing political circumstances is also reflected in her evolving electoral strategy. Ahead of the forthcoming by-elections, Banerjee’s faction withdrew its candidate in Nandigram and extended support to the Congress candidate, indicating a willingness to work with another opposition party in the changed political circumstances. This represents a notable shift from the political positioning that characterized much of her earlier relationship with the Congress. Mamata Banerjee’s place in Indian political history has been shaped by her ability to build a powerful regional movement almost from scratch. She broke away from the Congress in 1998, established the Trinamool Congress and eventual-

ly succeeded in ending more than three decades of Left Front rule in West Bengal. For 15 years, she remained the dominant political force in the state. The same political journey that once symbolized an extraordinary rise is now confronting an equally extraordinary test.

The present crisis, therefore, is larger than an electoral defeat. It encompasses loss of power, organizational fragmentation, the battle over the party’s name and symbol, legal proceedings, questions about political credibility and the challenge of rebuilding a political base. The Election Commission’s interim decision has added a new dimension to the struggle, while the Supreme Court proceedings may determine an important part of the immediate institutional battle. The defining question for Banerjee now is not simply whether she can return to power. It is whether she can rebuild the political organization and public confidence that sustained her for so many years. Her greatest strength has historically been her capacity to convert adversity into political mobilization. But the present challenge is different: the struggle is no longer merely against an external political opponent. It is also about holding together a fractured organization and preserving a political legacy that she herself built over decades.

Mamata Banerjee has survived many political storms. Her present circumstances constitute perhaps the most demanding test of her political career. Whether she can once again transform adversity into an opportunity for political renewal will depend on how she responds to the organizational rupture, legal battles, changing alliances and questions of public trust. Her political story, therefore, is not simply a story of power gained and power lost.

## THE FLAME OF THE LAMP AND OUR CULTURAL SENSIBILITY

Whether you light a lamp or not is a personal decision. To adhere to a religious tradition, to distance yourself from it, or to practice it in your own way in a democratic society, this is a matter of individual freedom. But when personal preference or the expression of political disagreement escalates to the public mockery of a religious symbol or cultural tradition, the question is no longer just about a lamp. The question is how much we respect the beliefs and cultural sensibilities of others while expressing our disagreement.

The lamp holds a profound significance in Indian culture. The entire spirit of Diwali is associated with light, hope, and the triumph of light over darkness. The tradition of lighting lamps in homes, temples, and on various auspicious occasions has been passed down through generations. The tradition of lighting lamps in the evening is also evident in many Indian families to this day. Therefore, for some, the lamp is not just an object made of oil, wick, and clay; it also symbolizes faith, auspiciousness, knowledge, and positive energy.

This sentiment is expressed in the famous Sanskrit prayer, “Deepo Jyotih Param Brahma, Deepo Jyotirjanardanah. Deepo Haratu Me Pampa, Sandhyadeep Namos-



tute.” Meaning, the light of the lamp is saluted as the ultimate light and it is prayed to dispel ignorance and negativity. This is why lighting a lamp in a Sanatani family is not just a simple household activity, but a ritual deeply rooted in religious and cultural beliefs.

Therefore, lighting a lamp should not be forced upon anyone, but it should also not be considered appropriate to mock the faith of the person lighting the lamp. Personal liberty means not only the freedom to choose oneself, but also the responsibility to respect the choices and beliefs of others. It is also important to note that when a religious symbol is associated with a political event, it is natural to question that event. One might ask what role a political event should play in public institutions, whether participation in it is voluntary, and to what extent the use of government resources is appropriate.

This is where it becomes important to distinguish between criticism of a political event and insulting a cultural

symbol. If there is an objection to lighting lamps at an event, the question should be about the political nature of the event, its administrative role, expenditure, or mode of participation. Targeting the lamps themselves, the puja, or the Sanatan tradition takes the debate in a different direction. Similarly, if someone opposes a political event, it would not be appropriate to label them anti-Indian culture or anti-religion solely on this basis.

Today, social media has given everyone a platform to express their views. This has also brought a problem: the line between satire and criticism can often become blurred. While certain words or images may seem like simple political satire to some, the same content may be perceived as an insult to someone else’s beliefs. Therefore, social sensitivity is essential alongside social media freedom.

The tradition of blowing out candles on birthdays also comes to mind in this context. Today, cutting a cake and blowing out candles is widely practiced on birthdays. On the other hand, those who consider the lamp a symbol of auspiciousness and light in the Indian religious tradition view it differently. The cultural contexts of both traditions differ. Therefore, adopting one or

avoiding the other should not be taken as an indication of a person’s patriotism or devotion to their culture.

Still, a question worth pondering is: are we as sensitive to the symbols associated with our own culture as we expect to be sensitive to other cultural symbols? If someone chooses not to light a lamp on Diwali, they are free to do so. But if someone else lights a lamp with complete devotion, why should their faith be ridiculed? Similarly, if someone participates in a political event by lighting a lamp, they should be criticized for the political aspect of the event, not their religious beliefs.

Political debates often cite birthday celebrations of former Prime Ministers or other leaders, and alleged government expenditures. To substantiate such allegations, the relevant year, expenditure, and official documents are essential. Accusing an individual or former government of misusing public funds without proof is unfair. Today’s political debate requires facts, not mere old allegations, to strengthen it.

The real question isn’t about a few rupees worth of oil and wick. The real question is what our priorities should be in public life and what our language should be. Should political differences become so sharp that even

**“Before mocking faith and hurting the sensibilities of others while protesting, consider this: Disagreement is the strength of democracy, but respect is its dignity.”**



Dr. Satyavan Saurabh

cultural symbols become targets? Is it right to equate religious belief with political support? Is a person who lights a lamp necessarily a supporter of a political ideology? And is a person who doesn’t light a lamp automatically anti-cultural? The answer to these questions is that a person’s faith and political preferences must be understood separately.

For some, the lamp represents worship, for others tradition, for others culture, and for others simply light. Interpretations may vary, but it’s possible to disagree without offending. The strength of our culture lies not just in the fact that we light lamps; its strength also lies in the fact that we foster dialogue between diverse opinions. Just as the flame of a lamp dispels darkness in the same way, wisdom, restraint, and facts can dispel the darkness of public debate.

So, whether you light a lamp or not is your decision. Supporting or opposing a political event is also your right.

## LETTERS TO EDITOR

### Action Needed on Fast Fashion

The rise of low-cost, disposable clothing is driving an environmental crisis we can no longer ignore. Massive amounts of synthetic textile waste end up in landfills daily, polluting local ecosystems and microplastics into our waterways. Meanwhile, overseas garment factory workers continue to endure dangerous conditions and unfair wages. As conscious consumers, we must shift toward sustainable choices and demand transparency from major brands. However, individual effort alone is insufficient. Governments must implement strict regulations on textile production, mandate recycling programs, and incentivize eco-friendly manufacturing to protect both our planet and human dignity before this crisis worsens. —Anna B.

### Reclaim Our Digital Privacy

In our hyper-connected world, personal privacy is rapidly becoming a relic of the past. Corporations continuously harvest personal data, tracking online activities, location history, and behavioral patterns to monetize sensitive information. This surveillance culture undermines individual autonomy and exposes citizens to severe cybersecurity risks. While technology brings convenience, it should never cost us our fundamental right to privacy. We urgently need comprehensive data protection laws that hold tech conglomerates accountable. Stronger digital security regulations and transparent algorithmic policies are critical to restoring consumer control, protecting vulnerable users, and maintaining public trust in the modern digital age. —Diva Hustla

### Invest in Youth Mental Health

Youth mental health challenges have escalated into a public health emergency requiring immediate intervention. Young people face rising rates of anxiety and depression driven by social media pressures, academic demands, and broader economic instability. Despite growing awareness, accessible support systems remain severely underfunded and out of reach for many families. Schools need dedicated funding for licensed counselors, mental health literacy programs, and early intervention services. Furthermore, community centers should offer safe, supportive spaces for youth engagement. Prioritizing youth mental well-being today is essential for building a healthier, more resilient society for future generations. —Ajith Kumar

### Potholes Demand Urgent Repairs

Our city’s deteriorating road infrastructure has reached an unacceptable level, creating severe safety risks for commuters daily. Deep potholes and uneven pavement not only damage vehicles, resulting in costly repairs, but also cause frequent traffic delays and serious accidents, particularly for cyclists and motorcyclists. Patchwork fixes after heavy rains are no longer sufficient; they quickly erode and waste public funds. City authorities must prioritize comprehensive, high-quality road resurfacing projects with proper drainage systems. Safe and functional roads are basic public necessities. Investing in durable infrastructure will protect public safety and ensure efficient transportation across our entire community. —Daja

### Protect Our Food Security

Rising food costs and supply disruptions are placing immense pressure on low-income families in our community. Food insecurity impairs child development, worsens chronic health conditions, and deepens social inequality. While emergency food banks provide vital relief, they cannot solve the underlying systemic causes. We need long-term policy solutions, including support for local agricultural networks, subsidies for nutritious whole foods, and sustainable urban farming initiatives. Guaranteeing reliable access to affordable, healthy food is a fundamental social responsibility. Strengthening local food systems will build community resilience and ensure no resident goes hungry during economic hardships. —Umni Jaan



# THE GUARDIANS OF OUR FRAGILE MODERN ECOSYSTEMS



Every morning, before the human world fully awakens, the air fills with a subtle, intricate symphony. Birds herald the break of day, filling urban streets, dense forests, and coastal shorelines with song. Because they are so ubiquitous, it is easy to take these avian creatures for granted – to view them simply as pleasant background elements of our natural environment. Yet, birds are far more than ornamental inhabitants of the sky; they are critical indicators of planetary health, vital contributors to global biodiversity, and indispensable ecological allies.

For tens of millions of years, birds have occupied complex ecological niches across every continent, from the frozen landscapes of Antarctica to the lush canopies of tropical rainforests. Through their daily activities, they perform functions that sustain terrestrial ecosystems. Birds act as nature’s seed dispersers, carrying botanical species across miles of fragmented habitats and allowing forests to regenerate naturally. Nectar-feeding species pollinate thousands of plant varieties, while predatory birds control rodent populations and keep agricultural pests in

check without the need for toxic chemical interventions. Scavengers like vultures clear carcasses, actively preventing the spread of deadly pathogens throughout ecosystems and human settlements.

Beyond their practical ecological contributions, birds serve as living barometers of environmental change. Because of their high mobility, sensitivity to temperature, and reliance on specific habitats, avian populations react rapidly to ecological disruptions. When a habitat becomes polluted, when climate patterns shift unpredictably, or when local insect populations crash, bird species are often the first to show visible signs of decline. In this sense, watching bird populations offers science an early warning system for the overall health of our shared biosphere.

Tragically, birds today face an unprecedented convergence of human-driven threats. Rapid urbanization, agricultural expansion, and widespread deforestation continue to destroy critical nesting grounds and migratory stopover sites. Industrial pollution, pesticide overreliance, invasive species, and climate-induced weather extremes have accelerated population drops across hundreds

of avian species worldwide. Millions of migratory birds perish annually along historic flight paths, disoriented by artificial city lights or striking glass structures that cut through their traditional routes.

Protecting avian life is not merely a sentimental endeavor for birdwatchers and naturalists; it is a fundamental requirement for ecological stability. Safeguarding birds demands intentional, systemic action: preserving wetland sanctuaries, restoring native forests, establishing light-pollution regulations, and curbing chemical runoff in agriculture. Urban areas can contribute by integrating bird-friendly glass and planting native flora in public parks and residential gardens.

As we confront widespread environmental challenges, listening to the natural world has never been more urgent. Birds connect continents through their extraordinary journeys and stitch together the delicate webs of life that sustain us all. By committing to protect these magnificent skyward guardians, we safeguard the ecological foundation that supports all life on Earth.

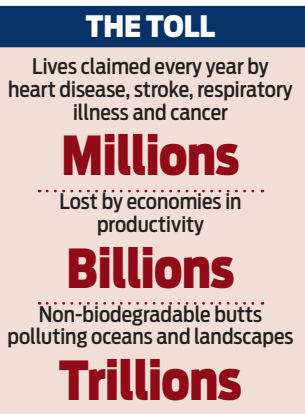
— YASH RAJ

# THE PERSISTENT SHADOW OF THE MODERN CIGARETTE

For decades, public health campaigns, aggressive taxation, and strict regulatory frameworks have waged a relentless war against tobacco. Smoking rates in many parts of the world have dropped dramatically from their mid-twentieth-century peaks, leading many to believe that the battle against cigarettes is largely won. Yet, despite widespread knowledge of its lethal consequences, the cigarette remains one of the most resilient, destructive, and profitable consumer products in human history.

The modern cigarette is not merely a roll of dried tobacco leaf; it is an engineered delivery device designed to maximize nicotine addiction. Chemical additives, specialized filters, and optimized combustion temperatures ensure that nicotine reaches the brain within seconds, creating a powerful physiological grip that defies rational choice. Millions of smokers genuinely wish to quit, but they find themselves trapped by a product specifically tailored to make stopping as difficult as humanly possible.

The human toll of this engineered habit continues to be staggering. Cigarette smoking remains the leading cause of preventable death globally, claiming millions of lives each year through heart disease, stroke, chronic respiratory conditions, and various forms of cancer. Beyond the individual suffering, the societal costs are immense. Healthcare systems bear an extraordinary financial bur-



den treating smoking-related illnesses, while economies lose billions in lost productivity. Furthermore, the environmental impact – from deforestation driven by tobacco farming to the trillions of non-biodegradable cigarette butts polluting oceans and landscapes – adds another layer to this ongoing crisis.

In recent years, the landscape has grown even more complex with the rise of alternative nicotine products, such as electronic cigarettes and heated tobacco devices. While often marketed as safer alternatives or cessation tools, they have created a new paradigm of nicotine dependence, particularly among younger generations. The tobacco industry continues to adapt, employing sophisticated marketing strategies to protect its bottom line and ensure that new generations remain tethered to chemical addiction.

Eradicating the shadow of the cigarette requires more than passive awareness; it demands sustained, courageously bold policy decisions. Governments must continue to raise tobacco taxes, implement plain packaging laws, restrict marketing, and support robust cessation programs. At the same time, society must view smoking not as a personal moral failure, but as a public health challenge perpetuated by a predatory industry. Only through unwavering commitment and systemic action can we finally extinguish the far-reaching harm of the cigarette.

— SHARON FAUSTINA J.

# THE ETERNAL LURE OF EARTH’S ULTIMATE SAFE HAVEN

For thousands of years, civilizations have risen and fallen, currencies have inflated and collapsed into obscurity, yet gold has stood remarkably immune to the passage of time. From ancient royal treasuries to high-tech digital vaults, this gleaming metal has consistently retained its position as humanity’s ultimate store of value. In an era dominated by volatile financial markets, shifting geopolitical balances, and intangible digital assets, gold continues to exercise an extraordinary hold on the global economy and human imagination.



What endures as gold’s primary strength is its fundamental tangibility and independence. Unlike paper fiat currencies, which central banks can print in unrestricted quantities, gold cannot be created by decree or diluted by monetary policy. Its physical scarcity is dictated by nature itself, rendering it a finite resource that carries no counterparty risk. When economic turmoil strikes, inflation erodes purchasing power, or political instability threatens national currencies, investors and ordinary citizens alike instinctively flee toward the permanent safety of the precious metal.

Beyond its historical role as a hedge against inflation and financial instability, gold plays a critical, systemic function in global economics. Sovereign nations maintain massive central bank gold reserves to bolster national creditworthiness and provide stability during systemic crises. In recent years, central banks across the globe have

actively increased their gold holdings, seeking to diversify away from reliance on foreign paper reserves and safeguard national wealth against trade frictions and currency fluctuations. This persistent institutional demand underscores a fundamental truth: even in a modernized monetary system, gold remains the ultimate collateral.

At the same time, gold occupies a unique dual role that sets it apart from other commodities. It is simultaneously a monetary asset and a tangible industrial material. Beyond its widespread cultural and artistic presence in global jewelry traditions, gold’s exceptional conductivity, durability, and resistance to corrosion make it indispensable in cutting-edge industries. Modern microelectronics, advanced aerospace technology, clean energy systems, and specialized medical applications all depend heavily on its physical properties, ensuring a steady, multi-layered foundation of global demand.

However, gold is not entirely without debate. Skeptics point out that physical gold produces no yield or dividend income, requiring market price appreciation alone to deliver returns while incurring storage and security costs. Yet, comparing gold purely to yield-bearing financial assets misses its core function. Gold is not meant to act as a speculative engine for rapid wealth creation; it is designed to serve as an anchor of financial security – an insurance policy against economic uncertainty.

As global economies navigate unprecedented levels of public debt, technological disruption, and shifting geopolitical power, the relevance of gold remains as vital as ever. In a world defined by rapid, often destabilizing change, gold provides a rare constant. It remains a timeless symbol of stability, a reliable sanctuary in times of crisis, and a powerful testament to humanity’s enduring pursuit of lasting value.

— CHIRU

# THE QUIET ARCHITECTS OF EARTH’S SURVIVAL

Every breath we take is a silent, unacknowledged gift from the green world around us. In our fast-paced, concrete-dominated modern existence, it is easy to view plants as mere scenery – a backdrop to human ambition, a decorative element in our offices, or a pleasant view along a highway. Yet, far from being passive ornamentation, plants are the absolute foundation of terrestrial life and the quiet architects of planetary balance.

For millions of years, plants have engineered Earth’s biosphere through the quiet miracle of photosynthesis. By converting sunlight, carbon dioxide, and water into oxygen and essential nutrients, they created the atmospheric conditions that allowed complex life – including humanity – to evolve. Today, tropical rainforests, ancient woodlands, and marine phytoplankton act as the primary lungs of our planet, absorbing billions of tons of carbon emissions annually while continually replenishing the air we breathe. Without this baseline biological function, Earth would be a barren, toxic stone.

Beyond atmospheric regulation, plants dictate global food security and economic health. Every calorie consumed by land animals originates, directly or indirectly, from plant life. Modern agriculture feeds over eight billion people, while botanical species provide the raw material for medicine, shelter, textiles, and energy. Historically, Aspirin was derived from willow bark, and even today, a vast percentage of modern pharmaceuticals owe their existence to active botanical compounds.

Yet, despite their indispens-

able role, human expansion threatens plant diversity at an unprecedented rate. Deforestation, urban sprawl, industrial agriculture, and rising global temperatures have fragmented habitats worldwide. Millions of plant species now face the threat of extinction before science can fully document or understand them. When we lose a single plant species, we do not simply lose a flower or tree; we collapse micro-ecosystems, displace pollinators, and lose



potential breakthroughs in medicine and agriculture.

Realigning our relationship with the botanical world is not an act of sentimental conservation – it is a matter of self-preservation. Urban planning must shift toward integrating green infrastructure, while global policy must prioritize reforestation and wild ecosystem protection. Protecting plant life ensures the stability of our climate, our soil, and our food systems. As we face the mounting realities of ecological change, honoring and safeguarding Earth’s green architects is the single most vital step toward securing our shared future.

— ANNA B.

# MINIATURE CANVASES SHAPING MODERN CULTURE AND IDENTITY

Once relegated to the margins of beauty culture as a mere grooming routine, nail art has evolved into one of the most vibrant forms of contemporary artistic expression. Where a simple coat of translucent pink or classic crimson once sufficed, today’s manicures feature intricate 3D chrome swirls, velvet textures, delicate hand-painted line work, and bedazzled motifs. This transformation reflects a significant cultural shift: the modern manicure is no longer just a finishing touch to an outfit, but a primary medium through which individuals communicate identity, mood, and creative autonomy.

The rise of nail art highlights a fascinating intersection between fashion, technology, and personal agency. Ten tiny keratin plates have become micro-canvases capable of housing miniature masterpieces. Advances in gel chemistry, magnetic pigments, and precision tools allow manicurists – now rightfully recognized as specialized artists – to build multidimensional designs that rival high-fashion garments in detail. From subtle, milky French tips that signal polished minimalism to bold, mismatched sets that subvert

traditional aesthetic rules, nail art offers an accessible entry point into creative experimentation. Unlike expensive wardrobe overhauls, custom nails allow anyone to carry personalized, wearable art everywhere they go.

Beyond aesthetics, the phenomenon speaks to a deeper psychological desire for self-expression in an increasingly standardized world. In every hand gesture – typing on a keyboard, holding a coffee cup, or gesturing during a conversation – nail art serves as a silent narrative. It provides a sense of bodily ownership and personal joy, often described by enthusiasts as an essential form of tactile self-care. Furthermore, the salon chair has reclaimed its place as a communal hub where artistic collaboration flourishes between client and technician, fostering connection through craftsmanship.

Ultimately, the booming popularity of nail art proves that art need not be confined to museum walls or runway shows to carry meaning. By turning fingertips into canvases, society has democratized haute couture, transforming everyday gestures into celebrations of individuality, innovation, and design.

— SUBU



# THE HIDDEN PRICE OF MODERN FAST FASHION



Every morning millions of people stand before their wardrobes deciding what to wear, participating in a daily ritual that connects individuals to a global industry worth trillions of dollars. Clothing brands do not merely sell garments; they shape culture, project personal identity, and dictate global consumption patterns. Yet beneath the sleek advertising campaigns and vibrant runway shows lies an industry grappling with profound environmental and ethical crises.

In recent decades, the rise of “fast fashion” has fundamentally redefined our relationship with attire. Driven by ultra-efficient supply chains and aggressive digital marketing, popular clothing brands have conditioned consumers to treat garments as disposable commodities rather than durable goods. Micro-trends cycle through social media algorithms at unprecedented speed, encouraging continuous purchasing cycles. Clothing that once took months to design, manufacture, and distribute now arrives on store shelves or online storefronts

in a matter of days, encouraging a throwaway culture where items are worn only a handful of times before being discarded.

This relentless pace of production carries a devastating environmental footprint. The apparel industry accounts for roughly ten percent of global carbon emissions – more than all international flights and maritime shipping combined. Massive quantities of synthetic fibers, particularly polyester, derived from fossil fuels, release microplastics into marine ecosystems with every wash. Furthermore, the immense water usage required for cotton cultivation and the toxic runoff from chemical textile dyes continue to pollute freshwater sources in manufacturing hubs around the world.

Beyond the environmental strain, the human cost of cheap, rapid garment production remains severe. To keep prices artificially low, many major brands continue to rely on factories in developing nations where labor protections are weak, wages fail to meet living standards, and working

**10%**  
Roughly this share of global carbon emissions comes from the apparel industry – more than all international flights and maritime shipping combined

conditions remain hazardous. Despite frequent public commitments to corporate social responsibility, the pressure for lower production costs often leads brands to prioritize profit margins over worker safety and fair pay.

However, a cultural shift is beginning to take root. A growing movement of conscious consumers is demanding transparency, fair labor practices, and sustainable materials from their favorite labels. Emerging independent brands are building business models around circular fashion, repair programs, and ethical sourcing, proving that style does not have to come at the expense of human dignity or ecological stability.

Reclaiming the integrity of what we wear requires accountability on both sides of the mirror. Clothing brands must abandon the race to the bottom and embrace genuine sustainability over greenwashing. At the same time, consumers must reconsider the true cost of convenience and choose quality over quantity. By supporting ethical labels and treating clothing as a long-term investment, we can reshape fashion from an engine of exploitation into a force for sustainable art and authentic self-expression.

— VARSHA



Quick Read

Woman, family assaulted over 'black magic' allegations in Telangana

**HYDERABAD**

A 65-year-old woman and her family were allegedly assaulted by neighbours in Nomula village, Ranga Reddy district, after being accused of practising black magic. Police said the incident occurred on September 23, but came to light after videos of the assault went viral.

The woman, P Venkatamma, was allegedly tied to a neem tree near a worship place. Police registered a case against 14 villagers under relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

Hookah bars cannot serve customers in smoking zones

**LUCKNOW**

The Allahabad High Court has ruled that restaurants, cafes and other public places cannot serve hookah to customers, even in designated smoking areas. The Lucknow bench of Justices Shekhar B Saraf and A K Chaudhary dismissed petitions seeking permission to operate hookah bars. The court said preparing a hookah, filling it with tobacco, placing coal or replacing it amounts to providing a service prohibited under COTPA and the 2008 smoking rules.

Gujarat Congress protests against CEC, alleges voter-roll manipulation

**AHMEDABAD**

Gujarat Congress leaders and workers staged a protest in Ahmedabad on Tuesday, demanding the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar over allegations of electoral manipulation and deletion of names from voter rolls. Gujarat Congress president Amit Chavda alleged that citizens' voting rights were being undermined and accused the government of influencing the Election Commission. Congress workers and members of the public also held protests at various locations across Gujarat, with several participants wearing black clothes to mark their opposition.

Kanimozhi invokes Dhanush to target Vijay over poll promise

**NEW DELHI**

DMK MP Kanimozhi on Tuesday invoked actor Dhanush's 2014 film Velaiilla Pattadhari while criticising Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) and its leader Vijay over an alleged delay in fulfilling an election promise to unemployed graduates. Addressing a gathering in Dharapuram ahead of the October 6 bypoll, Kanimozhi alleged that the four-month-old TVK government had failed to deliver on several promises made during the election campaign. She specifically referred to the party's promise of providing Rs 4,000 to unemployed graduates. In an apparent reference to Dhanush's film, which portrays the struggles of an unemployed engineering graduate, Kanimozhi remarked that Dhanush had now "come to politics", triggering speculation and buzz around the actor. Dhanush, however, has not announced any political plans.

Centre picks 50 cities for cleanliness drive

The Centre has launched PRAGATI-50, selecting 50 cities across 24 states to showcase improved cleanliness, sanitation and waste management standards.

NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has identified 50 cities across 24 states under the PRAGATI-50 initiative to demonstrate higher standards of urban cleanliness. Launched by Union Minister Manohar Lal, the programme will operate within the Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0 framework, nationwide, using targeted action, key performance indicators and technology-enabled monitoring and sustained oversight.

The initiative aims to deliver visible improvements in urban cleanliness, solid waste management, used water management, sanitation and citizen participation. The selected cities include major



“These 50 cities across 24 states will emerge as clean role-model cities for the rest of the country, by going beyond their routine sanitation work to demonstrate sustained, high-performance parameters of visible cleanliness.”

**Manohar Lal**  
Union Minister

Venugopal attacks Modi over Election Commission row

NEW DELHI

Congress general secretary KC Venugopal on Tuesday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi should intervene in the controversy over differences within the Election Commission of India and alleged manipulation of voter lists. Speaking after the Congress Working Committee meeting, Venugopal said two Election Commissioners had written to the Cabinet Secretary about the poll panel's functioning and decisions.

Venugopal said the matter was within the Prime Minister's knowledge and argued



that Modi had a responsibility to intervene. He praised Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi for raising concerns through the "Vote Chori" campaign. Venugopal alleged that the Chief Election Commissioner was compromised and that EVMs and voter lists had been rigged, claims that remain allegations by Congress.

The Congress leader said the CWC discussed the functioning of the Chief Election Commissioner and what the

party described as fraud in the election system. He said 68 members participated in the meeting, which lasted two-and-a-half hours.

He said the government was not listening to people's demands and that democratic parties would resist through

“The CWC's opinion is that PM Modi has no moral right to continue as the Prime Minister.”

**KC Venugopal** Congress general secretary

peaceful movements.

The Election Commission has separately said differing views are a normal part of institutional deliberation and that final decisions on matters, including the Special Intensive Revision, were unanimous.

Odisha CM urges collective action on child nutrition



**BHUBANESWAR**

Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi stressed collective responsibility for child nutrition while participating in the state-level celebrations of "Angan Ka Utsav" and the ninth Rashtriya POSHAN Maah-2026 in Bhubaneswar on Monday.

Majhi distributed school

bags containing essential learning kits to pre-school children. He also felicitated Anganwadi Workers, Anganwadi Helpers and ASHA workers for their contribution to maternal and child health and welfare services.

Addressing the gathering, Majhi said healthy mothers and children form the foundation of a strong society and

**Odisha CM Mohan Charan Majhi highlighted collective responsibility for child nutrition during Angan Ka Utsav and Rashtriya POSHAN Maah celebrations.**

credited Anganwadi Workers and ANMs for contributing to improvements in Odisha's maternal and child health indicators.

The Chief Minister also appealed to parents to encourage children to take part in games, physical activities, singing, dancing and reading rather than spending excessive time on mobile phones.

He said children were Odisha's soul and bright future, adding that keeping them safe and well-nourished was a collective resolve.

Maharashtra FDA seizes 50 tonnes food stock

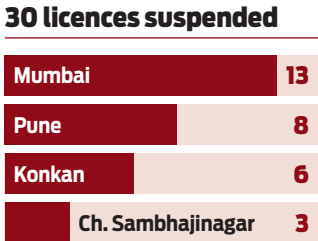
MUMBAI

The Maharashtra Food and Drug Administration seized more than 50 tonnes of food products worth nearly Rs 1.20 crore during a statewide crackdown conducted from September 23 to 27 ahead of the festive season.

The seized products included sweets, milk and milk products, edible oil, rice, dry fruits, namkeen, farsan, tea, spices, sauces, noodles, wafers and other food items.

In Mumbai, inspections found serious hygiene violations at several establishments, including pest infestation, improper storage and inadequate separation of raw and ready-to-eat food. One establishment had cats, rat droppings, flies and cockroaches in preparation areas, while another had live cockroaches, lizards, flies and larvae.

The FDA seized 7,340 kg of edible oil worth Rs 11.81 lakh in Jogeshwari. Konkan accounted for 23,806.90 kg



worth Rs 39.99 lakh, while Pune reported 6,366.88 kg worth Rs 28.54 lakh.

Separately, the FDA inspected 26 establishments over banned food products, seized stock worth Rs 30.63 lakh, registered 22 FIRs and arrested 30 people. Commissioner Tukaram Mundhe said strict enforcement would continue against unsafe food practices.

BJP names 10 candidates for Bihar-UP MLC polls

| BJP'S 10 CANDIDATES                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| <b>BIHAR</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  |
| Naval Kishore Yadav Patna Teachers · N.K. Yadav Kosi Graduates · Sarvesh Kumar Darbhanga Graduates · Narendra Prasad Singh Tirhut Teachers                                                                                             |  |
| <b>UTTAR PRADESH</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |  |
| Kedar Nath Singh Varanasi Graduates · Dinesh Goel Meerut Graduates · Ashok Kumar Rathore Allahabad-Jhansi Graduates · Pramod Mishra Varanasi Teachers · Hari Kishore Tiwari Agra Teachers · Dhruv Tripathi Gorakhpur-Faizabad Teachers |  |

NEW DELHI

The Bharatiya Janata Party on Tuesday announced 10 candidates for the 2026 Legislative Council graduate and teacher constituency elections in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. The announcement covers four seats in Bihar and six in Uttar Pradesh, with the nomination process beginning in Lucknow amid tightened security around the venue and nearby areas.

The candidate list was issued by BJP Rajya Sabha MP and National Headquarters In-charge Tarun Chugh. The nomination process began at the Lucknow Divisional



Commissioner's office on Tuesday, where candidates submitted their papers for the elections.

Security arrangements were strengthened around the nomination venue. DCP (West) Jitendra Kumar Srivastava said personnel were deployed at the main gate, returning officer's chamber, perimeter areas and for traffic management.

Gujarat records 2.43 crore Poshan Maah activities

GANDHINAGAR

Gujarat has recorded more than 2.43 crore nutrition-related activities during Poshan Maah-2026, placing the state among the leading performers nationwide overall. The campaign, being conducted under the theme "Aapni Anganwadi, Aapni Javabdari", is aimed at making nutrition a people's movement through participation by active government departments, local bodies, Anganwadi workers, health workers, self-help groups, parents and communities.

As of September 27, the Women and Child Development Department had carried out 56.13 lakh activities, while other associated departments accounted for around 1.87 crore. Mahisagar, Valsad, Patan, Anand and Mehsana emerged as the leading districts.

The campaign is focusing on dietary diversity and protein-rich foods, with emphasis on locally available nutritious items such as millets, pulses,



**2.43 cr** nutrition activities in Gujarat: 56.13 lakh by the WCD Department, about 1.87 crore by other departments

green vegetables, fruits, milk, nuts and seeds.

Anganwadi centres are being strengthened as hubs for nutrition and early childhood development, with fresh, hygienic meals and greater community participation.

ED searches 14 premises in ₹645-crore fund case

NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate on Tuesday searched 14 premises across Chandigarh, Mohali and Panchkula as part of its money laundering investigation into the alleged embezzlement of Rs 645 crore in public funds belonging to the Haryana government, Chandigarh Municipal Corporation and other government accounts.

The investigation follows an FIR registered by Haryana Police in February 2026 over discrepancies in balances of Development and Panchayat Department accounts maintained with IDFC First Bank and AU Small Finance Bank.

The premises searched included Malik Jewellers, KLG Jewels and associated enti-



| Case in focus                           |                                                   |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| 14 premises searched                    | Rs 645 cr alleged public funds involved           |
| 3 cities: Chandigarh, Mohali, Panchkula | Rs 211 cr assets attached, seized or frozen by ED |
| 14 accused in ED prosecution complaint  | 6 Haryana-cadre IAS officers in CBI chargesheet   |

ties, MB Gold Traders, Sham Jewellers and Sunder Jewellers. Gourav Kansal, who allegedly acted as a middleman in routing and layering proceeds of crime, was also covered.

According to officials, the allegedly embezzled funds were routed through bank accounts of various jewellers and presented as business transactions.

The CBI has filed a third chargesheet before the Special Court in Panchkula, naming six Haryana-cadre IAS officers and other government servants in the bank fraud case. Earlier, the ED arrested four accused persons and attached, seized or froze movable and immovable assets worth approximately Rs 211 crore.

Woman's dismembered body found in NTR canal

GUNTUR

The dismembered body of a woman, identified as Kalyani, was recovered from a canal in Andhra Pradesh's NTR district, with police suspecting that she was allegedly murdered following a dispute over money.

Kalyani, who was estranged from her husband and family, had reportedly been living alone. Police suspect that Shafi, a mutton shop owner who was allegedly in a relationship with her, was involved in the murder.

According to police, the two allegedly had a quarrel over money before Kalyani was killed. Investigators suspect that her body was subsequently cut into pieces and dumped in the Vijayawada



Thermal Power Station (VTPS) cooling canal in an apparent attempt to destroy evidence.

The body was recovered from the canal on September 18.

The case remains under investigation, and the allegations against the suspect are yet to be established in court.



Quick Read

9% of students report suicidal thoughts: Survey

NEW DELHI

About 15% of students in higher educational institutions experienced periods of feeling overwhelmed or distressed in the past six months, while 9% reported suicidal thoughts, according to a nationwide survey by a Supreme Court-appointed panel.

The survey was conducted by the National Task Force (NTF), which is examining student mental health and measures to prevent suicides in higher education institutions. The findings are expected to be included in its final report, due by October 31, 2026.

The survey gains significance amid renewed concerns over student mental health following the deaths of students at IIT Delhi and IIT Bombay.

CBI deports UAE fugitive in PNB fraud case

NEW DELHI

The CBI has secured the deportation of Sandeep Mistry from the UAE to India in connection with the Nirav Modi Punjab National Bank fraud case. Mistry was allegedly involved in fictitious international trade transactions and helped prepare forged import-export documents. The agency said he also facilitated fund transfers from dummy companies and used covert communication platforms to conceal evidence. A Red Notice was issued through INTERPOL in July 2026, following which UAE authorities traced and arrested him. Mistry was brought to India, taken into CBI custody and produced before a competent court, which sent him to jail custody.

MCD carries out 29 demolitions across Delhi, seals 10 properties

NEW DELHI

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) on Tuesday carried out 29 demolition actions across all 12 zones as part of its city-wide enforcement drive against dangerous buildings, unauthorised constructions and violations of building norms. The civic body also sealed 10 properties and issued seven demolition orders. Major actions were reported in areas including Hari Nagar, Vikas Puri, Dabri More, Shakarpur, Gandhi Nagar, Madhu Vihar and Old Seemapuri. The MCD said the drive aims to ensure compliance with the Master Plan of Delhi and Building Bye-Laws while safeguarding public safety. The enforcement campaign will continue across Delhi.

Kejriwal seeks safety measures for Delhi women students

NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday called for stronger safety measures for women students in Delhi, questioning restrictions imposed on women following the alleged gangrape of a 17-year-old girl at Aastha Kunj Park.

In a video message, Kejriw-

- What Kejriwal wants
- 1CCTV cameras across Delhi, a central command to monitor footage in real time
- 2Functional streetlights and action on dark spots
- 3Women police personnel deployed inside colleges

Revanth's 'rich God, poor God' remark triggers BJP backlash

Revanth Reddy's remarks on Lord Ram and Lord Shiva triggered a political row, with BJP leaders accusing him of dividing Hindus.

|                                                                                 |                                                                 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Lord Ram</b><br>"God of the rich", with a larger following in the north      | <b>Lord Shiva</b><br>"God of the poor", worshipped in the south |
| <b>HYDERABAD</b>                                                                |                                                                 |
| Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's remarks describing Lord Ram as the God |                                                                 |
| <b>WHO SAID WHAT</b>                                                            |                                                                 |
| <b>N Ramchander Rao, BJP:</b> "highly condemnable", "absurd"                    |                                                                 |
| <b>Prakash Reddy, BJP:</b> could affect unity and diversity                     |                                                                 |
| <b>Shahnawaz Hussain, BJP:</b> political consequences for the Congress          |                                                                 |
| <b>Mahesh Kumar Goud, Congress:</b> about the deities' traditional look         |                                                                 |

of the rich and Lord Shiva as the God of the poor triggered a political controversy on Tuesday, with the BJP accusing him of attempting to divide Hindus and create differences between northern and southern India.

Speaking at a media event in Delhi on Monday, Reddy said the Congress had struggled in northern states because the BJP had "stolen Lord Ram", who has a larger following there. He said the party performed better in the south, where Lord Shiva is worshipped, and alleged that the BJP represented the rich.

Telangana BJP chief N



Ramchander Rao called the remarks "highly condemnable" and "absurd". He alleged that Reddy was trying to create divisions among Hindus and between the north and south. Rao also called on BJP workers to protest and burn effigies of the Chief Minister at the mandal level across Telangana.

BJP spokesperson Prakash Reddy criticised the remarks, questioning Reddy's references to Ram and Shiva and say-

ing they could affect the country's unity and diversity. The Congress defended Reddy's comments. State president Mahesh Kumar Goud said the comparison referred to the traditional visual appearance of the two deities, while stressing that both were respected and worshipped by the party. Goud accused the BJP of using Lord Ram for political purposes and said both deities were regarded equally.

Odisha mining funds spent on stadium, roads, instead of affected areas: CAG



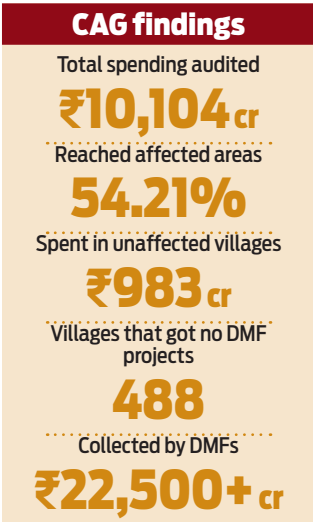
BHUBANESWAR

A Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) audit has found that a significant share of funds collected by Odisha's District Mineral Foundations (DMFs) was spent outside mining-affected areas, including on stadiums, roads, government facilities and other projects.

The performance audit, covering 2015-16 to 2023-24, examined spending in six districts — Keonjhar, Sundargarh, Jajpur, Mayurbhanj, Dhenkanal and Nabarangpur. Of the ₹10,104.28 crore spent, only ₹5,477.75 crore, or 54.21%, went to directly affected areas. Odisha's rules require at least 60% of DMF funds to be spent in such areas.

The audit found that ₹983.32 crore was spent in 976 villages classified as unaffected by mining in Keonjhar and Sundargarh. Projects included mini-stadiums, road widening, office quarters and hospital digitisation. Meanwhile, 488 directly affected villages in the two districts received no DMF-funded project during the nine-year period.

Sundargarh DMF spent ₹136.77 crore on the Rourkela International Hockey Stadium, while Jajpur DMF spent ₹113.65 crore on a regional science academy. Other spending included ₹6.06 crore by Keonjhar to sponsor five students for mining engineering courses in Australia and ₹4.30 crore by Jajpur on medical en-



trance coaching. The audit also flagged spending on school furniture, rural parks, protective equipment and government vehicles.

Despite the six audited DMFs collecting more than ₹22,500 crore, none had established an Endowment Fund, intended to provide sustainable financial support to mining-affected communities after mines

**CAG audit finds Odisha's mining funds were diverted to stadiums, roads and government projects, while several mining-affected villages received no funding.**

close. The CAG also found that officials in three districts used a "common affected areas" classification that was not recognised under applicable laws and guidelines. Gram Sabha proposals for basic needs were not acted upon in several mining villages. The findings highlight gaps between the intended purpose of DMF funds and their actual utilisation across Odisha.

Rahul urges youth to raise voices, protest over women's safety



NEW DELHI

Congress leader and Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday called for stronger action against crimes targeting women and urged young people to protest against harassment and sexual violence.

In a video message posted on X, Mr. Gandhi said women should not be subjected to restrictions because of crimes committed against them.

"Stop punishing women for the crimes committed against them," he said, adding that women across the country

**"Stop punishing women for the crimes committed against them"**  
— Rahul Gandhi, Leader of the Opposition, Lok Sabha

were afraid to walk the streets because of the risk of harassment and rape.

Mr. Gandhi said the solution was not to "lock women inside", but to make streets safer and ensure that those responsible for attacks were punished.

He also urged the youth to raise their voices and protest, arguing that the government responds when people put pressure on it. His remarks came amid protests and heightened concerns over women's safety, particularly among students in Delhi.

Thousands of Delhi University students have recently participated in demonstrations demanding safer campuses and public spaces.

UP Deputy CM tells jobless youth to drive autos, sparks backlash

LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak's remarks advising unemployed youth to consider driving au-



Brajesh Pathak

UP Deputy Chief Minister

**"Naukari-wokri ke chakkar mein mat pado... auto-rickshaw ya taxi chalao aur khoob paisa banao... char ghante chalao aur bachhon ke sath samay bitao."**

**BRAJESH PATHAK** UP Deputy Chief Minister

to-rickshaws or taxis instead of pursuing jobs have triggered criticism from opposition leaders and social media users.

Speaking at an event in Lucknow on Monday, Pathak suggested that young people should not get caught up in the pursuit of conventional employment.

A Samajwadi Party leader criticised Pathak's remarks, saying the government had failed to provide sufficient employment opportunities and that ministers should not offer such advice to unemployed youth.

LDF gains ground in Keralam civic by-polls



38 wards: the result

|                                     |                                      |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>19</b><br>UDF: 15 kept, 4 gained | <b>18</b><br>LDF: 11 kept, 7 wrested |
| <b>1</b><br>Twenty20                | <b>0</b><br>BJP                      |

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Congress-led United Democratic Front government in Keralam faced a setback in local body by-polls on Tuesday, with the CPI(M)-led Left Democratic Front gaining seven wards from the ruling front. The elections covered 38 wards.

The LDF won 18 seats, including 11 wards it retained

and seven it wrested from the UDF. The UDF won 19 seats, retaining 15 sitting wards and gaining four.

The result offered relief to the LDF after its defeat in the 140-member Kerala Assembly election, where the UDF won 102 seats. One of the LDF gains came from Bavode East in Peralassery panchayat, part of former chief minister and Opposition leader Pinarayi Vijayan's constituency.

CPI(M) state secretary M V Govindan said voters had accepted the LDF's resolve to return by correcting its mistakes and called the results a strong message to the Satheesan government.

Home Minister and senior Congress leader Ramesh Chennithala said fluctuations were natural in local elections and stressed that the UDF remained ahead overall with 19 of the 38 wards.

Veeramani case: DMK seeks SIT questioning of Vijay, ministers

CHENNAI

The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) has approached the Madras High Court seeking a direction to the Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the R. Veeramani POCSO case to summon Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay and Ministers Aadhav Arjuna and



- Who's who
- T.R. Baalu: DMK treasurer; filed the petition
- C. Joseph Vijay: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister
- Aadhav Arjuna, C.T.R. Nirmal Kumar: Ministers
- R. Veeramani: Gem Granites founder; POCSO case

C.T.R. Nirmal Kumar for questioning.

The petition, filed by DMK treasurer and Lok Sabha floor leader T.R. Baalu, seeks action on a representation submitted to the SIT on September 27.

Baalu said the allegations made by the Chief Minister and Ministers were directly connected to the ongoing investigation and should therefore be examined by the SIT.

DELHI WOMEN SAFETY

Aangan Ka Milan launched to strengthen Anganwadi services



PATNA

Bihar Chief Minister Samrat Chaudhary inaugurated the 'Aangan Ka Milan' programme at an Anganwadi Centre on the premises of Phulwarisharif High School, focusing on improving nutri-

- At the launch
- Cheques under Mukhyamantri Kanya Utthan Yojana and PM Matru Vandana Yojana
- God-bharai for mothers, Annaprashan for children
- Anganwadi and ASHA workers felicitated
- Booklet 'Suposhit Bachpan Ki Rasoi' released

tion, healthcare and early childhood education.

He said the government would take steps to construct buildings for Anganwadi centres that do not have their own premises.



Quick Read

AI boom needs \$6 trillion annual revenue by 2031

NEW DELHI

The rapid buildout of artificial intelligence (AI) infrastructure will require the creation of an estimated \$6 trillion in annual revenue by 2031 to justify the capital being deployed with productivity gains alone unlikely to support the economics of the investment cycle, a report said on Tuesday. According to Bain & Company's analysis, existing AI applications across consumer and enterprise segments could generate between \$1.2 trillion and \$1.8 trillion in revenues, leaving a gap of about \$4.2 trillion that will need to come from new categories of innovation.

Seoul stocks fall for 2nd day on inflation woes

SEOUL

South Korean shares retreated on Tuesday as rising oil prices fuelled inflation concerns and pushed U.S. Treasury yields higher amid Middle East tensions. The Korean won strengthened against the U.S. dollar. The benchmark Korea Composite Stock Price Index (KOSPI) lost 18.93 points, or 0.27 percent, to end at 6,870.81, marking its second consecutive session of losses. The index opened 0.19 percent lower and extended its losses in afternoon trading as foreign and institutional investors sold local shares. Overnight, U.S. stocks retreated as renewed tensions between Washington and Tehran drove crude oil prices higher.

Workers listed under VB-G RAM G job scheme touch 10.88 cr

NEW DELHI

The Centre's new VB-G RAM G rural employment guarantee scheme has recorded significant progress since its implementation on July 1 this year, with the number of active workers under the scheme going up to 10.88 crore and more than 31.69 crore person-days of employment being generated (as of September 24), according to a government factsheet issued on Tuesday. Women's participation in the scheme stands at 61.65 per cent while employment is being provided to workers on demand. The number of works under execution have touched the 97.17 lakh mark and approved works are readily available to meet future employment demand of 73.24 lakh people, according to the factsheet. Close to 2.31 lakh Gram Panchayats in the country are presently executing works across the country. An average wage rate of Rs 283.24 per day per person is being paid under the scheme and as many as 3.76 crore direct benefit transfers (DBT) into the workers' accounts have already taken place in the first three months of the scheme. A total of Rs 93,841 crore has been allocated to states and UTs as interim allocation for FY 2026-27. Out of this, a Mother Sanction of Rs 25,880 crore has been issued as the first instalment to the states and UTs, the factsheet further states. The transition from Mahatma Gandhi NREGA to VB-G RAM G has been seamless and disruption-free. Digital systems supporting implementation were operational from the commencement of the new framework, the statement said.



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# Min calls for 'Team Agriculture' to make India global food basket

More than ₹1,200 crore PM-RKVY support sanctioned to 10 states; Centre and states must rise above politics to put farmers first, says Chouhan.

**NEW DELHI**

Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Tuesday handed over financial sanction letters worth more than Rs 1,200 crore to agriculture ministers of 10 states under the Prime Minister Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (PM-RKVY), stressing implementation of agriculture programmes across states.

The disbursement included Rs 290 crore for West Bengal, Rs 198 crore for Haryana, Rs 181 crore for Chhattisgarh, Rs 154 crore for Arunachal Pradesh, Rs 114 crore for Bihar, Rs 104 crore for Karnataka, Rs 75 crore for Mizoram, Rs 64 crore for Himachal Pradesh, Rs 58 crore for Jharkhand and Rs 43 crore for Punjab.

Chairing a meeting with



state Agriculture Ministers and senior officials, Chouhan said the Union Government was going beyond policy formulation by ensuring timely availability of resources so schemes could begin implementation without delay.

He said agricultural growth had risen from 3 per cent in 2015 to 4.5 per cent, while the average annual increase in foodgrain production had

more than doubled from around 40 lakh tonnes to 84 lakh tonnes. Rabi foodgrain production rose by 205 lakh tonnes between 2023-24 and 2025-26, he added.

Chouhan also announced monthly virtual reviews with states and proposed State Agriculture Teams involving ministers, officials, agricultural universities, ICAR insti-

CENTRE SANCTIONS RS 1,200 CR TO 10 STATES

₹1,200 crore sanctioned to 10 states

Monthly Centre-state agriculture reviews announced

Khet Bachao Abhiyan from October 22

Action against fake farm inputs

tutions, KVKs, ATMA and FPOs. District-level meetings will also be held monthly.

He called for a nationwide Khet Bachao Abhiyan from October 22 to November 30 to promote balanced fertiliser use based on Soil Health Cards. States were also asked to act against fake fertilisers, spurious seeds and sub-standard pesticides.

## India-NZ trade set to surge as FTA kicks in on Oct 20

**NEW DELHI**

The India-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (FTA) is set to come into force on October 20, aimed at doubling bilateral trade by 2030. Indian exporters are set to receive duty-free access to New Zealand across all tariff lines.

This is expected to improve the competitiveness of Indian products in sectors including textiles and garments, leather and footwear, gems and jewellery, engineering goods and processed foods, according to an article in Khalsa Vox news website.

Removing customs duties makes Indian products cheaper relative to competing imports in the New Zealand market, potentially creating opportunities for exporters seeking to expand their presence there.

Another important aspect of the agreement is that New Zealand has committed to investments worth \$20 billion in India over the next 15 years. The two countries have also set themselves the goal of doubling bilateral trade by 2030.

Once the FTA kicks in on October 20, the changes will

unfold in stages. Some tariffs will disappear immediately, while others will decline over several years and certain agricultural concessions will remain subject to quotas and safeguards, the article observes.

For Indian consumers, the most visible impact could eventually be felt in imported products such as kiwi fruit, apples and Manuka honey. However, the agreement does not throw open the Indian market across the board. Sensitive sectors, including dairy and several agricultural products, remain protected.



India has agreed to reduce or eliminate tariffs on around 70 per cent of its tariff lines covering imports from New Zealand. Some products will receive immediate duty-free access. These include wood, wool, sheep meat and raw hides.

## RBI now has less room to keep interest rates unchanged

**NEW DELHI**

Rising crude oil prices, inflation and higher bond yields globally has narrowed Reserve Bank of India's room to hold rates unchanged, a report said on Tuesday. The report from BNP Paribas India said India's macro-outlook has weakened in recent weeks as Brent crude rose above \$100 per barrel and US 10-year Treasury yields climbed toward 5 per cent.

Inflation continues to rise globally, and central banks are resorting to rate hikes. Though India's macro buffers have increased with foreign currency non-resident (FCNR) flows, capital-flight risks have also risen with rate hikes in developed markets.

"In our view, rising oil prices and commodity inflation remain a material challenge



for India in the near term. The INR has already depreciated by nearly 1 per cent and the RBI now has less room to keep interest rates unchanged," the report said.

The latest escalation in the Middle East has pushed Brent above \$100 per barrel, while the ECB and BoJ have raised rates by 25 basis points, tightening global financial conditions and increasing capital-flight risks for India.

"India's macro-outlook is sensitive to oil prices, and the latest escalation in the Middle East is a negative," said Kunal Vora, Head of India Equity Research.

The report noted that over the past two weeks the rupee has depreciated by around 1 per cent, India's 10-year bond yields have breached

7 per cent and foreign institutional investor selling has resumed, even as foreign currency non-resident (FCNR) deposits have bolstered reserves to about \$800 billion, supported by roughly \$127 billion of FCNR flows.

This offers near-term relief, but these flows are likely to reverse in 3-5 years, the report said, adding that high inflation could slow high-frequency indicators in the coming months.

"India's macro indicators have remained resilient, but the outlook is weakening due to rising oil prices and inflation. Key positives are strong credit growth, strong auto sales, improving jobs data and large food-grain holdings, which provide a shield against El Niño," the report noted.

Consumption indicators showed some moderation last month, with urban wages falling, rising inflation, and deteriorating business confidence. Rural dynamics are also weakening because of a monsoon deficit, higher food inflation, and reduced crop sowing.

\$100+ Brent a barrel

~5% US 10-year yield

7%+ India 10-year yield

\$800bn forex reserves

### GOYAL-GREER MEET

## India seeks tariff edge in US trade deal

**NEW DELHI**

India and the United States are working to advance negotiations on a balanced and mutually beneficial Bilateral Trade Agreement, with Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal's upcoming engagement with US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer expected to focus on resolving key tariff issues.

Goyal will attend the G20 Trade Ministers' Meeting in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on September 30 and October 1, at the invitation of Greer. The two sides are expected to work towards finalising an interim trade deal in line with the joint statement issued by India and the US on February 7, 2026.

India is seeking an arrangement that gives domestic exporters a tariff advantage over competing economies rather than simply securing a lower headline tariff. The proposed



framework is expected to establish preferential market access for businesses from both countries.

Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal earlier said the trade agreement was more or less finalised, with discussions now focused on creating an architecture for preferential access before the deal is formally signed.

He explained that India largely operates under most-favoured-nation tariffs, while the US is using executive tariffs, making a mechanism for tariff differentials necessary.

During his US visit, Goyal

is also expected to advocate for a rules-based, open, inclusive, transparent, equitable and non-discriminatory global trading system with the WTO at its core.

His bilateral engagements will also focus on strengthening trade and investment opportunities for farmers, fishermen, women entrepreneurs, startups, MSMEs and other businesses.

Goyal is scheduled to meet senior executives of American companies across manufacturing, consumer goods, agribusiness, retail and technology sectors in Milwaukee and Chicago.

## Private firms enter missile production

**NEW DELHI**

India is expanding missile production beyond state-run defence companies by bringing private firms into the manufacturing process, in a move aimed at strengthening the country's ability to produce sophisticated weapons at scale.

A report by India Narrative said the shift is intended to address the gap between developing advanced missile systems and manufacturing them in sufficient quantities. The new approach is also expected to create greater wartime redundancy, with the Defence



Ministry planning to have at least two production partners for each missile system.

The report said greater competition could improve price discovery, delivery timelines and production efficiency. It could also encourage new partnerships between public and private companies, allowing different firms to specialise in specific components of increasingly complex weapons systems.

The Defence Ministry in August approved the transfer of DRDO technologies for conventional missile systems to qualified Indian defence companies. Private firms can bid for technology transfer, obtain designation as Development-cum-Production Partners, or DePPs, and take on prime systems-integration responsibilities.

The move represents a departure from the earlier model

**India is opening missile manufacturing to private companies, seeking greater production capacity, competition and wartime resilience across its defence industry.**

under which DRDO-developed missiles were largely transferred to nominated public-sector production agencies, particularly Bharat Dynamics Limited.

The report stressed that sustained military capability depends not only on designing weapons but also on the ability to manufacture, replenish and maintain them during prolonged conflicts.

At the same time, it said the entry of private companies should not be viewed as a retreat by the public sector. BDL remains an experienced missile manufacturer with established infrastructure, technical expertise and supplier networks.

The new model means public-sector companies will no longer have an automatic entitlement to produce DRDO-developed missile systems, introducing greater contestability into defence manufacturing.

Missile manufacturing shift

1 Private firms can bid for DRDO technology transfers

2 Companies can become Development-cum-Production Partners

3 At least two production partners planned for each missile system

4 BDL remains a key public-sector missile manufacturer

5 Competition expected to improve efficiency and delivery timelines

## India's aviation demand outpacing airline capacity growth: Naidu

**NEW DELHI**

India's aviation market is expanding faster than the pace at which airlines are adding capacity, Union Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu said on Tuesday.

Speaking at an event here, Naidu said revenue passenger kilometres (RPKs) in India have grown at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 7.3 per cent over the past decade, compared to a 7 per cent CAGR in available seat kilometres (ASKs) offered by airlines.

"This means the market is growing faster than the seats," the minister said, underlining the need for continued expansion in aviation capacity and connectivity.

India has emerged as the world's third-largest domestic

10-YEAR CAGR

7.3% DEMAND (RPK)

7% SEATS (ASK)

aviation market, driven by rising incomes, increasing regional connectivity and growing demand for air travel. The government now aspires to make the country the third-largest aviation market globally in the coming years.

To support this growth, Naidu said the government is pursuing an ambitious airport expansion programme. The number of operational airports in the country has in-

creased from 74 in 2014 to more than 166 currently. The government has set a target of expanding the network to 400 airports by 2047.

According to the minister, 66 airports are presently under development, while another 100 airports are planned over the next decade as part of efforts to strengthen air connectivity across the country.

Naidu also announced that Routes Asia 2027, one of the aviation industry's key global networking and route development events, will be held in India from March 16 to 18, 2027.

He said hosting the event would help boost both regional and international air connectivity and further enhance India's standing in the global aviation sector.





Quick Read



US bases became source of insecurity: IRGC

**Tehran**  
Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) spokesperson Hossein Mohebbi has claimed that US military bases in the region failed to provide security and instead became a source of insecurity during the recent conflict.

According to the IRGC spokesperson, Iranian missile and drone attacks targeted several US bases during the conflict. He argued that the attacks demonstrated what he described as the failure of the US military presence to deliver the security objectives Washington had cited for maintaining its regional bases.

At the same time, Mohebbi has said that Iran's military preparedness does not rule out negotiations. He stated that decisions regarding war and diplomacy are made within Iran's political system and that negotiations could be pursued alongside military preparedness when considered in the country's interests.

US expands missile production with allies

**Washington**  
The US Department of War has awarded Raytheon a contract worth up to \$20.7 billion to produce AMRAAM missiles for American and allied forces. The five-year agreement, with options for two additional years, aims to expand missile manufacturing capacity. The deal involves the US Air Force, Navy and foreign partners purchasing through the Foreign Military Sales programme. Raytheon said it is expanding its workforce, supply chain and production facilities to meet rising demand. AMRAAM production nearly doubled in 2025 compared with 2024. The missile is used by 44 countries across 14 platforms, including air combat and ground-based air defence systems.

AMRAAM deal

Contract value, up to

\$20.7bn

Countries use the missile

44

Platforms

14

Trump says Iran war will end very soon

**Washington**  
US President Donald Trump said the United States would win its war with Iran "very soon," while US officials held discussions with mediators seeking to end the conflict. Trump said the war would conclude quickly, one way or another. He also said US gasoline prices would fall after the conflict ends. The remarks came as diplomatic efforts continued between Washington and Tehran. Iranian officials have said negotiations could help end the fighting, while demanding conditions for reopening the Strait of Hormuz. Trump, however, said he had offered Iran nothing to end the war. The conflict has disrupted regional energy supplies and pushed oil prices higher. Brent crude recently rose above \$105 per barrel amid continued concerns over Middle East supply disruptions.

Indian envoy Srivastava bids farewell to PM Shah

Shah stressed strengthening historic Nepal-India ties and expanding mutually beneficial cooperation.

KATHMANDU

Indian Ambassador to Nepal Naveen Srivastava made a farewell call on Nepal Prime Minister Balendra Shah as he prepares to conclude his diplomatic tenure in the country.

The meeting provided an opportunity to review the longstanding and multifaceted relationship between India and Nepal and discuss areas of continued cooperation.

Srivastava's tenure has included engagements aimed at strengthening bilateral relations between the two neighbouring countries. India and Nepal share close historical, cultural, economic and people-to-people ties, with cooperation extending



across several sectors, including energy, infrastructure, connectivity, trade, education and development.

During his earlier meeting with Prime Minister Shah in August, Srivastava and the Nepalese leader discussed

SRIVASTAVA'S FAREWELL ROUND



ways to further strengthen bilateral relations, promote cooperation and enhance the development partnership for mutual benefit. Shah had stressed the importance of deepening the historic relationship between Nepal and India and expanding cooperation in areas of common interest.

Srivastava had also conveyed greetings from Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Shah and described their discussions as an opportuni-

ty to further deepen the multifaceted India-Nepal partnership.

Earlier this month, Srivastava also paid a farewell call on Nepal's Foreign Affairs Minister Shisir Khanal. During that meeting, Khanal congratulated him on completing his tenure and appreciated his contribution to strengthening Nepal-India relations. Discussions covered energy cooperation, trade, infrastructure, road connectivity and peo-

ple-to-people ties. Khanal also expressed gratitude for India's support following the Bhotekoshi floods and its assistance in search, rescue and relief operations.

The latest farewell meeting with Prime Minister Shah comes as Srivastava concludes his assignment in Nepal. Both countries are expected to continue their engagement through established diplomatic channels and build on cooperation in areas of mutual interest. In-

Meeting highlights

- Ambassador Srivastava concluded his Nepal tenure.
- Met Prime Minister Shah and Khanal.
- Strengthened India-Nepal bilateral and development relations.
- Discussed energy, trade, and infrastructure.
- India aided post-Bhotekoshi flood operations.
- Diplomatic engagement will continue moving forward.

dia and Nepal have maintained diplomatic relations for decades, with development cooperation forming an important part of their bilateral partnership.

Human rights abuses in PoK, PoGB by Pak raised at UNHRC



GENEVA

Human rights concerns in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) and Pakistan-occupied Gilgit-Baltistan (PoGB) were raised during the ongoing 63rd session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in Geneva.

Sardar Shaukat Ali Kashmiri, Chairman of the United Kashmir People's National Party (UKPNP) and Representative of the African Development Association, highlighted what he described as increasing repression by Pakistani authorities in PoK since June 5, 2026.

Addressing the UNHRC, Kashmiri cited reports of

deaths, injuries, arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, restrictions on peaceful gatherings and communication blackouts. He also expressed concern over what he

Calls for UN inquiry

Activists urge the UN to investigate alleged human rights abuses, excessive force, and communications blackouts in Pakistan-administered Kashmir, demanding accountability, the release of detainees, and protection for peaceful protesters.

**Sardar Shaukat Ali also raised concerns about what he called the growing militarisation of civilian life in the area.**

described as the increasing militarisation of civilian life in the region.

He also urged authorities to restore unrestricted internet and mobile communication services in PoK. Regarding PoGB, Kashmiri raised concerns over political representation, land ownership and the rights of local communities over natural resources. He called for independent monitoring mechanisms to examine allegations of abuses and protect civic space.

Similar concerns were raised at the UNHRC last week by social activist Harleen Kour. She said people in PoK had been protesting for months over food, electricity, employment, infrastructure and political representation.

INS Ranvijay strengthens India-Oman maritime ties



SALALAH

Indian Naval Ship (INS) Ranvijay has made a port call at Salalah in Oman, highlighting the close maritime cooperation and longstanding defence ties between India and Oman. The visit is aimed at strengthening bilateral naval relations and enhancing cooperation between the two maritime forces. The port call provides an opportunity

for personnel from both countries to engage in professional interactions, exchange operational experiences and build greater understanding.

During the visit, Indian naval personnel are expected to participate in a range of engagements with their Omani counterparts. Such interactions form an important part of India's efforts to deepen maritime partnerships with

Port call at a glance

**SHIP**  
**INS Ranvijay**  
**PORT**  
**Salalah, Oman**  
**NAVIES**  
**Indian Navy and Royal Oman Navy**  
**AIM**  
**Stronger bilateral naval relations**

countries in the Indian Ocean and the wider Gulf region.

India has been working with countries in the Gulf and Indian Ocean region to enhance maritime security cooperation and maintain open and secure sea lanes. Cooperation with Oman is particularly significant given the country's strategic location near important international shipping routes. The port call at Salalah is expected to further reinforce the existing relationship between the Indian Navy and the Royal Oman Navy.

World Uyghur Congress announces October 1 protests

ISTANBUL

The World Uyghur Congress (WUC) has announced protest demonstrations in Istanbul and Berlin on October 1, highlighting what it describes as continuing human rights concerns affecting Uyghurs in China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.

The organisation said the demonstrations are being planned to draw international attention to issues including restrictions on religious and cultural practices, alleged arbitrary detention, family sep-



aration and other rights-related concerns. The protests are scheduled to coincide with October 1, which marks the anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China.

The October 1 protests are expected to bring together Uyghur community members, supporters and rights activists in both European cities.

The events in Istanbul and Berlin come amid continued international debate over China's policies in Xinjiang and the treatment of the Uyghur population. Rights organisations and Uyghur advocacy groups have called for greater transparency and accountability, while Beijing has maintained that its policies protect social stability and promote economic development in the region.

UAE confirms Netanyahu visit, discussion over bilateral ties



ABU DHABI

UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan met Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Abu Dhabi and discussed bilateral relations between the two countries, according to the

The road to Abu Dhabi

- **2020**  
Diplomatic ties under the US-brokered Abraham Accords
- **MARCH 26**  
The two leaders met in Al Ain, a source said
- **MAY**  
UAE denied Netanyahu's office on a secret visit
- **AFTER UNGA**  
Abu Dhabi talks; UAE confirms the visit

Emirati state news agency WAM. The UAE's confirmation marked the first public acknowledgment by Abu Dhabi of Netanyahu's visit.

The Israeli Prime Minister's Office said Netanyahu travelled to the UAE at the invitation of Sheikh Mohamed. It said the visit focused on strengthening relations between Israel and the UAE and addressing regional challenges. Israeli officials separately said the discussions also focused on Iran.

Netanyahu's visit followed his participation in the United Nations General Assembly in New York. His delegation reportedly included his wife Sara Netanyahu and senior Israeli security officials.

India-Bangladesh officials discuss bilateral ties

DHAKA

Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Dinesh Trivedi met Bangladesh State Minister for Foreign Affairs Humaiun Kobir at the

Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Dhaka on Tuesday and discussed bilateral, regional and international issues, including the recently concluded 81st United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York.

NAME CHANGE

**I, ANSAR AHMED RAZZAQUE**, Resident of No. 18, 5th Cross, Kausar Nagar, R T Nagar Post, Bengaluru -560032, Karnataka, have changed my name to **ANSAR AHMED**, vide affidavit dated: 29.09.2026 before notary G. DAYANANDA, Bengaluru.

IN THE COURT OF THE PRINCIPAL CIVIL JUDGE & JMFC AT DODDABALLAPUR

**PETITIONER:** Narayana S/o Late Sibanna, Aged about 50 years, R/lat Nagavalli Village, Hebburu Hobli, Tumakuru Taluk, Tumakuru District. **Vs** **RESPONDENT:** Registrar of Birth and Death / The Tahsildar, Doddaballapur Taluk, Doddaballapur.

**PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT**  
It is hereby notified to the public that the above petitioners, in the Hon'ble Court, Petitioner's Father Late Sibanna S/o Late Ramaiah died on 15.06.1992 at Rampura village, Doddaballavangala Hobli, Doddaballapur Taluk and since there are no official records of his death, petitioners has filed an application to register the date of death in the Register of Births and Deaths, 1969. Therefore, if the public has any objection, we hereby inform you to appear before the above court on 27/10/2026 at 11:00 AM. Failing that, the case will be disposed of unilaterally in his absence.

The publication is dated: 26.09.2026 with the signature and seal of the court.  
By order of the court  
Chief Ministerial Officer, Pr. Civil Judge & JMFC, Doddaballapur  
Advocate for petitioner: Srinivas G, Advocate, Doddaballapur - 561 203.

IN THE COURT OF THE PRINCIPAL CIVIL JUDGE & JMFC AT DODDABALLAPUR

**PETITIONER:** Narayana S/o Late Sibanna, Aged about 50 years, R/lat Nagavalli Village, Hebburu Hobli, Tumakuru Taluk, Tumakuru District. **Vs** **RESPONDENT:** Registrar of Birth and Death / The Tahsildar, Doddaballapur Taluk, Doddaballapur.

**PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT**  
It is hereby notified to the public that the above petitioners, in the Hon'ble Court, Petitioner's Uncle Late Ramachandralal S/o Late Ramaiah died on 01.05.2005 at Rampura village, Doddaballavangala Hobli, Doddaballapur Taluk and since there are no official records of his death, petitioners has filed an application to register the date of death in the Register of Births and Deaths, 1969. Therefore, if the public has any objection, we hereby inform you to appear before the above court on 27/10/2026 at 11:00 AM. Failing that, the case will be disposed of unilaterally in his absence.

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**PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT**  
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The publication is dated: 26.09.2026 with the signature and seal of the court.  
By order of the court  
Chief Ministerial Officer, Pr. Civil Judge & JMFC, Doddaballapur  
Advocate for petitioner: Srinivas G, Advocate, Doddaballapur - 561 203.

IN THE COURT OF HON'BLE PRL. CIVIL JUDGE & JMFC AT K.G.F.

**C.M.C. No: 368 / 2026**  
**PETITIONERS:** 1. SRI. S. KUPPUSWAMY, S/o. Late. Sampath. Aged about 49 years, Aadhaar No. 669904900286. 2. SRI. RAGHU. S, S/o. Late. Sampath, Aged about 47 years, Aadhaar No. 566203956421. 3. SRI. NAGARAJ. S, S/o. Late. Sampath, Aged about 39 years, Aadhaar No. 810579664632. 4. SRI. PALANI. S, S/o. Late. Sampath, Aged about 42 years, Aadhaar No. 879703104491. 5. SRI. MANJUNATH. S, S/o. Late. Sampath, Aged about 38 years, Aadhaar No. 535555556914 All are R/at: # 45, Pandar Line, Marikuppam Post, K.G.F. 563119

**-VS-**  
**RESPONDENT:** THE COMMISSIONER, KGF City Municipal Council, Robertsonpet, KGF

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
WHEREAS, the petitioner are filed a Petition under section 13(3) of Registration of Birth & Death Act 1969, for obtaining the Death Certificate of Petitioner No.1 to 5's deceased FATHER SRI. SAMPATH, S/o. LATE THANGAVEL and SMT. LATE. ELAPACHI AND W/O. LATE. SUGUNA was died on 17-01-1994 due to ill-health at # 45, Pandar Line, Marikuppam Post, K.G.F. 563119, KGF Taluk, Kolar District.

The hearing date of the case is posted on 03/11/2026. If any person having any claim or objection has to appear before this Hon'ble court, a person or by pleader in the above said hearing date at about 11:00 AM to answer the same, failing which the petition will be disposed off as ex-parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court on this 29-09-2026.

By Order of the court  
CHIEF MINISTERIAL OFFICER, PRL CIVIL JUDGE AND JMFC COURT, KOLAR GOLD FIELDS  
Advocate for Petitioners: SRI. SUHAS RAI, R. B.A, U.L.B., Advocate, K.G.F.  
PLACE: K.G.F., DATE: 29-09-2026

US adds methanol to Venezuela trade licences

WASHINGTON

The United States has revised three Venezuela-related sanctions licences to explicitly include methanol among the petrochemical products covered by certain authorised oil trade, supply and investment activities.

The US Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) issued amended General Licences 46E, 48D and 49B, replacing earlier versions of the licences. The changes specifically add methanol to the chemical



annexes while leaving the main permissions and restrictions largely unchanged. General Licence 46E authorises certain transactions involving Venezuelan-origin oil and petrochemical products for im-

port into the United States. The licence covers activities including transportation, sale, storage and refining, subject to specified conditions.

General Licence 48D permits US persons and US entities to supply certain goods, technology, software and services for Venezuela's oil, gas and petrochemical sectors.

General Licence 49B allows negotiations and the signing of contingent contracts related to certain new oil, gas, petrochemical and electricity projects in Venezuela. Actual implementation of such contracts

requires separate authorisation under the terms of the licence.

OFAC's revised documents list methanol under five tariff classifications. Methanol has been added alongside products such as ammonia, urea, phosphates, sulphur and other fertiliser-related chemicals.

The revisions do not represent a broad lifting of US sanctions on Venezuela. They do not announce any specific methanol shipment or investment, nor do they establish the volume or value of potential trade under the amended licences.



# India Face South Korea in Semifinal

India face a tougher South Korean challenge in the Asian Games semifinal, aiming to move closer to their first women's hockey gold since 1982.



## KAKAMIGAHARA

Unbeaten India will face South Korea in the women's hockey semifinal of the Asian Games 2026 on Wednesday, with the defending silver medallists standing two victories away from ending a 44-year wait for a second continental gold.

India have been dominant in Pool B, winning all five matches and scoring 66 goals. However, their semifinal against South Korea at the Kawasaki Juko Stadium is expected to provide their toughest examination of the tournament so far.

India opened their campaign with a 19-0 win over Uzbekistan before recording victories against Indonesia and Thailand by 17-1 and 20-1 respectively. They then overcame hosts Japan 3-1 before completing the pool stage with a 7-0 victory over Singapore.

South Korea finished second in Pool A with four wins from five matches. Their only defeat came against group winners China, who secured a 3-0 victory. South Korea's biggest win was an 8-0 result against Bangladesh.

India's attacking strength has been central to their impressive campaign. Drag-flick

## Unbeaten India face South Korea in women's hockey semifinal

- India won all five Pool B matches.
- India scored 66 goals during the pool stage.
- Deepika leads the tournament with 21 goals.
- South Korea finished second in Pool A.
- Seungae Park has scored eight goals.
- India last won Asian Games gold in 1982.

specialist Deepika leads the tournament scoring charts with 21 goals, while Navneet Kaur has scored 10. Rutuja Dadaso Pisal has seven, while Lalremsiami and Ishika have contributed six and five respectively.

India also possess considerable experience in goal through captain Savita and Bichu Devi. South Korea, meanwhile, will look to midfielder Seungae Park, who has scored eight goals.

India's last women's hockey gold at the Asian Games came in 1982, leaving the team chasing a historic return to the top.

# Ankush marches into 80kg final, Narender settles for bronze in +90kg

## NISHIO

Indian boxers continued their strong run at the ongoing Asian Games 2026 as Ankush Panghal registered a thumping win over 75kg reigning world champion Fazliddin Erkinboev in the men's 80kg semifinal at the continental showpiece to march into the final. Ankush a n d

Parveen Hooda made it to the finals of their respective category, while Narender Berwal settled for a bronze after losing his +90kg semifinal bout to current world champion Aibek Oralbay of Kazakhstan.

Ankush registered a brilliant come-from-behind win over Erkinboev in the semifinal by 4-1. Ankush was trailing 1-4 at the end of the first round but bagged a closely fought second round 3-2 with his punches landing well.

The Indian pugilist was superior of the two boxers in the third round as well, as he clinched the third one 5-0. Four of the five judges voted in favour of Ankush as he won 4-1. All four gave him a 29-28 ruling, while he received a 2 8 - 2 9 against him from one judge.

Later, Nar-

ender lost his semifinal to Oralbay by a 0-5 unanimous decision. Oralbay dominated the bout with his strong punches, while Narender fought his way well but could not bring the world champion down.

Oralbay won the first round 5-0 with his punches landing well. He continued his dominance in the second round as well as his fierce attacks put Narender in trouble. The Kazakh took a defensive approach in the third round as he kept the Indian pugilist at bay for a 5-0 win.

Meanwhile, Ankush has become the first Indian male boxer to move into the Asiad final since Amit Panghal (49kg) won a gold in the 2018 Jakarta Games. Narender won the bronze in the men's +92kg event in the last Games.

This was India's second confirmed silver medal in boxing at the ongoing Games. A little earlier, Parveen Hooda marched into the final of the women's 65kg event after a 5-0 win over China's Li Shu.



## DREAM MEDAL FOR AASHIMA

# Aashima Turns Dream into Asian Games Silver

## NAGOYA

Aashima Ahlawat described her Asian Games team silver medal as a dream fulfilled after India finished second in the women's trap team event at the Aichi-Nagoya Games on Tuesday.

Aashima, Neeru Dhandha and Manisha Keer combined for a score of 328 at the Aichi Prefecture General Shooting Gallery to secure the silver medal. China won gold with 346, while Kuwait finished third with 325.

For Aashima, the medal marked a significant milestone in a rapid shooting career that began only in 2021. She joined the junior Indian shooting team in 2023 before

moving into the senior setup in 2025.

The Indian trio produced their performance in challenging rainy conditions. Aashima said the weather ultimately helped India because the shooters were accustomed to competing and training in similar conditions at home.

The Indian shooters remained composed as several competitors struggled with the rain, allowing the team to move from bronze position to silver.

Aashima said the medal means a lot to her. When I started shooting, I always wanted to join an Asian Games team and win a medal. - Aashima Ahlawat (Indian trap shooter)



This medal means a lot to me. When I started shooting, I always wanted to join an Asian Games team and win a medal. - Aashima Ahlawat (Indian trap shooter)

achievement was particularly meaningful because winning an Asian Games medal had been one of her ambitions since she began shooting.

The silver follows her success at the Asian Championships, where she won an individual bronze and team gold.

Barely a year into her senior career, Aashima has now added an Asian Games medal to her growing collection.

Despite the achievement, her immediate priority is returning home to Delhi and celebrating with her family and friends.

Asked who she would dedicate the medal to, Aashima gave a simple answer — her mother.

Parveen Hooda stormed into the women's 65kg final at the ongoing Asian Games after registering a thumping 5-0 win over China's Li Shu at the Nishio Gymnasium here on Tuesday.

Parveen dominated the bout, especially in the last two rounds. She bagged the first round by a close 3-2 margin as she landed counter punches while being measured in her approach.

Parveen dominated the second round with her hits, while the Chinese boxer also landed some punches. Despite this, Parveen won the round 5-0. The Indian pugilist was superior once again in the third round as she landed accurate punches to win the third round 5-0. All five judges voted in her favour, with three giving her 29-28 ruling and two giving 30-27.

Parveen now moves into the final of the 65kg, where she will be facing what is expected

to be a pretty tough bout against Chinese Taipei's Chen Nien-chin for the gold medal.

Nien-chin is the reigning Olympic and world bronze medallist. She has also won a bronze in the 2023 Asian Games.

India's Ankush Panghal and Narender also have their respective semifinals on Tuesday as the Indian boxers look to make it to the final.

India have confirmed six boxing medals in the ongoing Aichi-Nagoya Games. All three boxers in action on Monday won their respective bouts. Kapil Pokhariya, Priya Ghanghas and Lovlina Borgohain won their respective bouts. Priya assured herself of a medal in the women's 60kg category after a unanimous 5-0 win over Tajikistan's Mijgona Samadova in the quarterfinals. Earlier in the day, Lovlina confirmed herself of a medal as well with a strong 5-0 win in the women's 75kg quarterfinal against Korea's Seong Suyeon.

# Dhandha Overcomes Odds for Gold

## NAGOYA

Neeru Dhandha made history at the Asian Games by becoming the first Indian woman to win an individual trap gold medal at the Games this year.

Her triumph came despite a major physical setback shortly before the competition. Dhandha was hospitalised 10 days before the start of the Asian Games and said she did not train during the camp.

For five days, she said, she could not eat and survived only on water. Despite her condition, Dhandha remained determined to compete and stayed in regular contact with her coach Mansher Singh, who continued motivating her.

That encouragement helped the shooter return to competition and produce a record-breaking performance. During the final at the Aichi Prefecture General Shooting Gallery, continuous rain created difficult conditions, but Dhandha remained composed.

She hit 28 of the 30 possible targets, setting a new Asian record and improving the previous mark of 24 by four hits. Earlier in the day, she had also won a team silver medal.

Dhandha said her motivation came from her family, the Indian Army, MP State Shooting Academy, her federation and the Sports Authority of India. She credited the academy with supporting her family, saying her father is a farmer and her mother is a homemaker.

The shooter was introduced to shooting after encouragement from the parents of her

## NEERU DHANDA'S HISTORIC FEAT

- First Indian woman to win individual trap gold at the Asian Games,
- Set a new Asian record with 28/30 hits,
- Previous Asian record: 24 hits,
- Won team silver earlier on the same day,
- Won World Cup gold at Lonato del Garda in 2026,
- Now preparing for the Olympics.

cousin Lakshay Sheoran, a 2018 Asian Games trap silver medallist.

After winning World Cup gold in Lonato del Garda earlier in 2026, Dhandha now has her sights set on the Olympics.

# Sree Charani Sets T20I Bowling Record

India spinner Sree Charani has created history by recording the highest-ever rating in the ICC Women's T20I Bowling Rankings.

## DUBAI

India's left-arm spinner Sree Charani has created history by achieving the highest-ever rating in the ICC Women's T20I Bowling Rankings, reaching 817 points after her impressive performances in Japan.

Already ranked No. 1 among T20I bowlers, Charani surpassed the previous record of 806 points held by Australia's Megan Schutt, which was set in November 2018.

Charani played a key role in India's successful campaigns in the Asia Cup and Asian Games. During the Asia Cup, she claimed 12 wickets, including outstanding figures of 4/20 against Sri Lanka in the final. Her spell helped India secure a 72-run victory and win the tournament for the eighth time.

Her form continued at the Asian Games. Charani produced career-best figures of 4/10 against Japan as India progressed to the semifinals. She later took two wickets in the gold-medal match against Sri

Lanka, which India won by 147 runs, lifting her rating to a record 817 points.

India's Deepti Sharma also moved up the T20I Bowling Rankings after taking three wickets in the Asian Games final. She now occupies second place with 754 points, while England's Sophie Ecclestone is third with 723.

Smriti Mandhana returned to the top five of the T20I Batting Rankings after scoring 79 in the Asian Games final.

In the ODI rankings, West Indies all-rounder Hayley Matthews rose three places to fourth after her record 182 against Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe's Nyasha Gwanzura, Modester Mupachikwa and Francisca Chipare also made significant gains, while West Indies bowlers Ashmini Munis- ar and Aaliyah Alleyne climbed in the rankings.

| Sree Charani's Record: |                                               |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| 817 POINTS             | Highest-ever T20I bowling rating              |
| 21 POINTS              | Above Megan Schutt's previous record          |
| 12 WICKETS             | Charani's Asia Cup tally                      |
| 4/10                   | Career-best Asian Games figures against Japan |
| No. 1                  | Current T20I bowling ranking position         |

# Parveen Hooda marches into boxing final after 5-0 SF win over Li Shu

## NISHIO

India's boxer Parveen Hooda stormed into the women's 65kg final at the ongoing Asian Games after registering a thumping 5-0 win over China's Li Shu at the Nishio Gymnasium here on Tuesday.

Parveen dominated the bout, especially in the last two rounds. She bagged the first round by a close 3-2 margin as

she landed counter punches while being measured in her approach.

Parveen dominated the second round with her hits, while the Chinese boxer also landed some punches. Despite this, Parveen won the round 5-0. The Indian pugilist was superior once again in the third round as she landed accurate punches to win the third round 5-0. All five judges voted in her favour, with three giving her 29-28 ruling and two giving 30-27.

Parveen now moves into the final of the 65kg, where she will be facing what is expected

to be a pretty tough bout against Chinese Taipei's Chen Nien-chin for the gold medal.

Nien-chin is the reigning Olympic and world bronze medallist. She has also won a bronze in the 2023 Asian Games.

India's Ankush Panghal and Narender also have their respective semifinals on Tuesday as the Indian boxers look to make it to the final.

# 'Beating multi-gold medallist boosted archery team's morale': AAI General Secy

## OKAZAKI CITY

Archery Association of India (AAI) secretary general Virendra Sachdeva called recurve archer Neeraj Chauhan's stunning win over multiple-time Olympic gold medallist Kim Je-deok a "morale-boosting" one and heaped praise on the archers for putting up a good show at the ongoing Asian Games 2026. Sachdeva hailed Neeraj's 6-4 win over Je-deok, who won team and mixed team events in the Tokyo 2020 Olympics and defended the team title in the Paris 2024 Games. "Neeraj delivered a fantastic performance. Our entire team is doing well, but beating Korea's multiple Olympic gold medallist to reach the quarterfinals has boosted the morale of the whole team," Sachdeva told in an exclusive interaction. "Undoubtedly, the Indian shooters are having a great campaign; both the men's, women's, and mixed teams in compound and recurve have reached the semifinals. In the individual events of compound and recurve, our archers have made it to the quarterfinals," he said.