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PM to attend IAF's air show at Varanasi

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to visit his parliamentary constituency, Varanasi, on October 25. During his visit, Modi will inaugurate a factory in Sevapuri and attend the Indian Air Force's (IAF) aerial display at Namo Ghat. Modi will attend the air show alongside Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath and other officials. The event, titled 'Indian Air Force Aerial Display 2026', will showcase the force's combat capabilities, advanced technology and flying skills under the theme 'Wings Over Ganges'.

Putin agrees to resume trilateral talks on Ukraine war

MOSCOW: President Vladimir Putin agreed Wednesday to resume trilateral negotiations with Washington and Kyiv on ending the war in Ukraine, a Kremlin official said. The Russian leader has agreed "in principle" to resume the talks after November 10, Putin's foreign affairs adviser Yuri Ushakov told reporters following a meeting in St. Petersburg between Putin and US President Donald Trump's envoy Steve Witkoff. The trilateral talks will focus on "building a security system for Russia and Ukraine after the conflict ends," Ushakov said.

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eMudhra's security code compromised



NEW DELHI: Indian digital certification authority eMudhra has revealed that private keys associated with its certificates have been compromised, which verify trusted digital assets and ensure secure online data transmission, according to an advisory from the cybersecurity watchdog Cert-In. Noting that eMudhra operates its Indian services, including eSign, and a global certificate business, government sources said that the problem arose in the global business, and that the impact on India is expected to be "limited".

IRREGULAR by MANJUL

Believe me, the India-US trade deal is just weeks away. I've been telling you this for years. Don't you remember?

SEC HALTS POLL PROCESS IN ALL ULBs AFTER SC ORDER

- Commission to decide on extending nomination deadline
- Final list of candidates deferred to October 25
- Any extension must provide at least 48 hours for fresh nominations

K VARAPRASADA RAO
AMARAVATI

IN a significant late-night development, the Andhra Pradesh State Election Commission (AP SEC) on Wednesday ordered an immediate halt to the further election process in all 100 urban local bodies (ULBs) in Andhra Pradesh, reversing its earlier decision to suspend proceedings only in 19 municipalities. The decision has effectively put the municipal election process on hold across the State, pending a fresh assessment of allegations that candidates were prevented from filing nominations because of violence and law-and-order problems. The SEC issued the directive in compliance with the Supreme Court's interim order on Wednesday, which requires the Commission to examine complaints from the YSR Congress Party (YS-



RCP) and individual candidates and decide by Thursday (October 22), whether the nomination deadline should be extended in cases where obstruction is established. The Commission had issued notifications for elections to 13 municipal corporations and 87 municipalities and nagar panchayats. Nominations were received from October 16 to 18, and scrutiny was conducted on October 19. The next stage of the process has now been stopped across all 100 urban local

bodies until the SEC takes a decision in accordance with the court's directions. The Supreme Court on Wednesday directed the SEC to examine representations and supporting material, including video footage and other electronic evidence, to determine whether candidates were denied a genuine opportunity to contest. Where the Commission finds that candidates were unable to file nominations because of a breakdown in law and order, it must consider extend-

ing the deadline. The court also directed the SEC to postpone publication of the final list of candidates, originally scheduled for October 21, until October 25. Any extension of the nomination deadline must provide candidates at least 48 hours from the announcement of the decision to submit their nominations, with the election notification amended wherever necessary. The order does not provide for a blanket extension of nominations across the state. Instead, the SEC must assess the evidence and identify cases in which candidates were genuinely prevented from filing their papers. In its Wednesday-night order, the SEC said it would issue a further decision on October 22 after obtaining reports from collectors and district election authorities, as well as commissioners of police and superintendents of police. The Commission had initially halted further pro-

ceedings in 19 municipalities following the court's intervention while allowing elections elsewhere to continue. The latest directive extends the suspension to all 100 urban local bodies while the SEC completes its assessment. A special Supreme Court bench comprising Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana emphasised that the obligation to conduct elections within a prescribed timetable could not override the need to provide candidates a fair opportunity to contest. The matter is scheduled for a further hearing on October 27, when the SEC and the director general of police must submit compliance reports. The Commission's decision on Thursday will determine whether the nomination process is reopened in specific urban local bodies or wards and how the remaining election schedule will proceed.

YSRCP distorting SC verdict: Naidu

K VARAPRASADA RAO

- Warns rebels of suspension
- Directs TDP cadre to coordinate with Jana Sena, BJP
- Orders intensified grassroots-level campaigning

AMARAVATI: Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu on Wednesday accused the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) of distorting the Supreme Court's verdict on

urban local body elections to mislead the public and gain political mileage. He alleged that YSRCP chief Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy was using litigation to obstruct elections, development, and welfare initiatives. **Continued on Page 7**



Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu participating in the Police Commemoration Day event in Mangalagiri on Wednesday

LAW & ORDER

Naidu calls upon AP Police to set nat'l benchmark

Political patronage must not shield criminals

K VARAPRASADA RAO
AMARAVATI

CHIEF Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Wednesday called upon the Andhra Pradesh Police to set a national benchmark in maintaining law and order by combining technological advancement with professional efficiency, courage and compassion. He said security, development, employment and public well-being were closely interconnected, as investor confidence in law and order encouraged industrial growth and job

creation. Participating in Police Commemoration Day at the 6th Andhra Pradesh Special Police Battalion in Mangalagiri, Naidu paid tributes to police personnel who sacrificed their lives in the line of duty. He said maintaining law and order would remain his top priority whenever he was in office. The Chief Minister made it clear that crimes committed under political cover would not be tolerated and that political connections must never protect offenders. **Continued on Page 7**

PM reviews state of economy with FM, EAC-PM members

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday held a meeting with permanent members of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM), Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Finance ministry officials to discuss the state of the economy, sources said. "The meeting was on the current state of the Indian economy. How to navigate the economy amid external uncertainties, enhance ease of doing business and revisit existing policies to attract more investment were some of the key topics of discussion," they said.

India, US trade deal to be much different: Trump

WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump said that India and the US are "pretty close" to reaching a trade deal, which will be much different than the earlier pacts. Speaking to reporters at the Oval Office on Tuesday, Trump said India and the US were pretty close to making a trade deal. "They want to make a deal. We're going to make a deal. Pretty close, yeah," Trump said in response to a question. "It's going to be a much different kind of deal



than we've done," the President said. Trump's remarks came at a time Secretary of State Marco Rubio was visiting India and discussed further strengthening bilateral relations focusing on sectors such as trade, energy, technology, defence and people-to-people ties. Earlier, Rubio also said

Washington was "trying to finalise a trade deal with India" and was "very close to doing that." Earlier this month, Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal met US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer in Milwaukee and Washington to discuss the finer aspects of the trade deal. He recently said the first tranche of the India-US bilateral trade agreement had been finalised and was undergoing legal drafting, with the government hoping to complete the process soon.



Ashutosh Ranka (L) and Saurav Das,

Court orders CJP leaders' release

NEW DELHI: A Special Executive Magistrate (SEM) on Wednesday ordered the release of CJP leaders Saurav Das and Ashutosh Ranka following the expiry of their judicial custody in connection with the October 14 protest at Jantar Mantar. The two leaders were produced before the magistrate, where their surety documents were also submitted during the proceedings. **Continued on P7**

Punjab CM detained at Delhi airport, fined ₹50K

NEW DELHI: The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Tuesday alleged that Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann was detained for nearly three hours at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport after returning from Paris, before officials issued him a challan of Rs 50,000, claiming they were under "tremendous pressure from above". The party has accused the Centre of deliberately



humiliating Mann and creating hurdles in Punjab's progress, linking the alleged incident to repeated denials of political clearance for the chief minister's foreign visits. **Continued on Page 7**

SBI probes suspected dark web exposure of 3,897 customer records

NEW DELHI

THE country's largest bank, SBI, on Wednesday said it is investigating the suspected exposure of 3,897 customer records containing personally identifiable information on the dark web, following alerts it received on October 16 from its threat intelligence service provider, the Defence Cyber Agency, and CERT-In. A preliminary analysis of around 3.75 lakh records available on the dark web identified 3,897 customer records containing sensi-

tive information, including registered mobile numbers, dates of birth, names, gender, email addresses and residential addresses, State Bank of India (SBI) said in the regulatory filing on Wednesday. The exposed information reportedly also included branch and Customer Information File (CIF) identifiers, lead IDs, and metadata associated with loan and lead records and other related files. It said a detailed investigation was required to establish the authenticity and completeness of the exposed



data, determine the potential source and extent of the exposure, and assess the associated risks to customers and the bank. SBI said it had promptly

activated its cyber incident response and containment protocols. It had also engaged an independent cybersecurity agency empanelled by CERT-In to conduct

a comprehensive assessment and investigate the alleged compromise. The incident has had no material impact on the bank's core business operations, financial performance or business continuity, the filing said, adding that its core business functions continued to operate normally without disruption. A detailed assessment is underway, and the bank is implementing appropriate remedial and preventive measures, it said.

HDFC probe finds senior execs leaked confidential info

NEW DELHI: HDFC Bank's internal investigation has found evidence that two senior executives disclosed confidential business strategies and potentially market-sensitive information to outsiders. The investigation is still underway, with the bank examining whether the information was misused, according to the report. The

executives, who oversee key businesses and functions at the lender, have been formally informed of the findings. It was not immediately clear what disciplinary action would follow. An HDFC Bank spokesperson acknowledged the internal review but declined to comment on its findings or identify the executives involved. **Continued on Page 7**