



THE Hans India



Don't need permission to hoist national flag: Bora
All India Students' Association (AISA) president Neha Bora on Thursday moved the Delhi High Court challenging a police notice directing her to execute a bond for maintaining peace before a special executive magistrate. **P10**

Equal before law? Ask the convict and the undertrial
In the same week that an Indian prison system holds thousands of undertrials who have never been convicted of anything, the Allahabad High Court opened its doors wide for a man convicted of murder, so that he may contest an election, possibly on a ruling-party ticket. **P6**

Govt proposes mandatory emergency braking systems for new cars by 2030
The Road Ministry has proposed mandating Advanced Emergency Braking Systems (AEBS) for all new car models starting October 2030 to curb road accidents. The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH), in a draft notification dated October 19, 2026 **P11**

Shruti Haasan charms in pearl-embroidered attire
Actress and singer Shruti Haasan stunned in a two-piece pearl-embroidered outfit in a desert background. The star flaunted a strappy top with scalloped edges and mirror embroidery. Shruti Haasan's long skirt had a slit at the side **P12**

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WINDOWS

Sonia Gandhi makes Insta debut

NEW DELHI: Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson Sonia Gandhi made her Instagram debut on Thursday with a post on her upcoming book, which she said is a "story of love, duty, loss and finding a place to belong". This is Gandhi's first foray into social media as over the years she has maintained her distance from it with the Congress' X handle being the forum on which she released her video statements or other messages and letters that she wished to make public. Gandhi immediately followed the Instagram accounts of her son Rahul and daughter Priyanka, along with that of the party. All top Congress leaders, including Rahul Gandhi, who are on Instagram started following the former Congress president's account.

13 women face death in Iran

TEHRAN: At least 13 young women are in prison, subjected to torture and facing execution for protesting against the Iranian regime. The Washington-based Abdorrahman Boroumand Center for Human Rights in Iran provided this information, as reported by The Times, UK. Eight of the women were sentenced for participating in protests against the Iranian regime in January, and one for allegedly sharing images of the war with foreign-based media, according to the Times. One of the girls facing execution is Taraneh Rahimi, a 21-year-old horse rider. Her twin Romina was given a 25 year prison sentence. The Rahimi girls have been convicted for waging war against God.

UP cop suspended for posting obscene video

BIJNOR: A police station house officer (SHO) in Uttar Pradesh's Bijnor was suspended for allegedly posting an obscene video in the official WhatsApp group, officials said. SHO Neeraj Kumar of Barhapur police station posted the video in the group, Circle Officer (Nagina) Rajesh Solanki said. The video was reportedly deleted shortly after it was posted. However, some police personnel had downloaded it and taken screenshots by then. After the matter came to light, Superintendent of Police K K Bishnoi ordered an inquiry. A team visited the police station on Monday and recorded statements of police personnel.

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I admire Lawrence Bishnoi saab, the only accountable person always ready to take responsibility

Speaker to examine Oppn's CEC impeachment motion

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

AMID protests against Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla said on Thursday that if the Opposition brings any fresh impeachment motion against the country's top poll officer, it will be examined according to rules and procedures.

The Opposition has twice attempted to remove Kumar.

In the first move, the notices were rejected by both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha while the notices submitted in the

● **According to the Constitution and the law on the appointment of the CEC and Election Commissioners, a CEC can only be removed by Parliament in the same way a sitting Supreme Court judge can be impeached**

● **CEC and ECs (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023, also states that the CEC or an Election Commissioner may resign at any time by submitting a written resignation to the President**

second attempt are still pending in the Upper House.

"If any fresh notice comes, we will examine it according

to the rules and procedures," Birla said, responding to a question on a possible impeachment motion against



Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar

the CEC. There have been protests in the last fortnight in different parts of India seek-

ing the resignation of Kumar for alleged irregularities while carrying out the special inten-

sive revision of voters list.

According to the Constitution and law on the appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and Election Commissioners, a CEC can only be removed by Parliament the way a sitting Supreme Court judge can be impeached.

The Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023, also states that the CEC or an Election Commissioner may resign at any time by submitting a written resignation to

the President.

According to Article 124, which deals with the Supreme Court, a judge of the Supreme Court shall not be removed from his office except by an order of the President passed after an address by each House of Parliament supported by a majority of the total membership of that House and by a majority of not less than two-thirds of the members of that House present and voting has been presented to the President in the same session for such removal on the ground of proved misbehaviour or incapacity.

Shah targets AAP, Cong; vows to end Pb's drug trade by 2029

Home Minister responded to questions raised by AAP chief and former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal about efforts to curb drug abuse in Bihar, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Goa

PURNA SINGH
NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah launched a strong attack on the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and Congress during his visit to Delhi on Thursday, his birthday, asserting that the BJP would remain in power for the next 30 years and promising to eliminate the drug trade in Punjab by 2029. Addressing an event in Shyam Vihar linked to Yamuna rejuvenation projects worth ₹8,941 crore, Shah also responded to questions raised by AAP chief and former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal about efforts to curb drug abuse in Bihar, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Goa.

Referring to Kejriwal's reported remark Shah had ended drug abuse in Bihar and was now being asked



to do the same in Punjab, the Home Minister said the AAP and Congress had earlier relied on excuses over the issue. "Kejriwal ji, we have answers to your questions. But we will respond when we uproot your government in Punjab," Shah said, signalling a direct political challenge to the ruling AAP ahead of the next Assembly election in the state.

Shah also dismissed allegations surrounding the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Delhi, claiming that the opposition was using the issue to create a narrative of vote theft. He alleged that the opposition wanted to protect the votes of infiltrators and said Rahul Gandhi and his associates had already understood the

political implications. The Home Minister maintained that allegations of electoral irregularities were being used as an excuse to challenge political outcomes.

Taking aim at the Congress and other opposition parties, Shah expressed confidence that the BJP would continue to hold power for at least three decades. Citing the party's electoral history across several states, he referred to periods of 41 years in Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh, 56 years in West Bengal, 64 years in Tamil Nadu, 12 years in Arunachal Pradesh, 13 years in Mizoram, 14 years in Manipur and 12 years in Assam, arguing that the BJP had not been in power in these states during those respective periods.

RS 500 CR ROW ERUPTS IN MAHA: JARANGE TARGETS SHINDE

JALNA/MUMBAI: Maratha quota activist Manoj Jarange on Thursday released an audio clip, which purportedly claims that Rs 500 crore had been delivered to him through Shiv Sena MP Shrikant Shinde, and alleged that a conspiracy had been hatched to silence him and weaken his agitation.

He made the audio clip public, a day after Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde dared him to prove the allegation that the latter had secured Rs 500 crore from the BJP and funnelled it via his son and



MP Shrikant Shinde. Reacting to the audio clip row, state minister and BJP leader Chandrashekhar Bawankule said if Jarange has concrete evidence regarding the Rs 500 crore claim, he should lodge a complaint with the police or the district collector, while his party colleague and minister Ashish Shelar questioned the veracity of the audio.

Indian killed in Saudi airport attack, 2 others injured

DUBAI: An Indian national was killed and two others were injured in an attack on Dammam airport in Saudi Arabia, officials said on Thursday, a day after another compatriot was injured in a drone attack targeting the kingdom's Shaybah oilfield, amid a spate of strikes by Yemen's Houthis rebels on key infrastructure in the country. The Indian Embassy in Riyadh said Saudi authorities have informed it about the casualties in the attack on King Fahd International Airport in Dammam on Wednesday night.

Netanyahu invites Modi to light torch with Smit on I-Day

JERUSALEM

ISRAELI Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Thursday said he spoke with his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi and invited him to light a torch together with Indian pilot Smit Machchhar on the Jewish state's Independence Day.

In a post on X, the Israeli Prime Minister also said that PM Modi appreciated the "strong, long-standing ties" between the two countries.

"I spoke with my friend, the Prime Minister of India,



Narendra Modi, and invited him to light a torch - together with a brave Indian pilot - on Israel's Independence Day," Netanyahu said. "Modi thanked me for the invitation and said that, on

the ground and in the air, India and Israel are fighting together against terrorism," he added.

Indian pilot Machchhar was stabbed and seriously injured by his co-pilot in

the cockpit of flydubai flight FZ1073, travelling from Dubai to Tel Aviv, on Sept 30. The flight was carrying 174 passengers, including 27 children. Machchhar managed to open the cockpit door, allowing passengers and crew members to intervene and restrain the attacker.

The plane later made an emergency landing in Saudi Arabia. Machchhar, who has been hailed as a "hero" by Modi and Netanyahu for his courage, is undergoing treatment at a hospital in the United Arab Emirates.

RAIHAN VADRA'S PHOTOS REMOVED FROM EXHIBITION

HANS NEWS SERVICE
JAIPUR

THE Bikaner House Management Society on Thursday said it had asked for certain photographs to be removed from Raihan Vadra's exhibition after finding them inconsistent with its policy. It added that the remaining photographs were still on display. In a statement, the society said Bikaner House is a public cultural institution dedicated to promoting art and culture, and that all exhibitions and related activities must adhere to the policies laid down by its management.

The clarification came a day after artist and photographer Raihan Vadra, son of Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and businessman Robert Vadra, alleged that several photographs depicting recent protests in Delhi had been taken down ahead of his solo exhibition, triggering a controversy. Raihan said he was informed at 3.30 pm that the exhibition would be cancelled unless the photographs were removed by 5 pm. He also said he had shared the detailed proposal and layout of the show with the Bikaner House management well in advance. Priyanka Gandhi criticised the decision, calling it "ridiculous" and accusing the authorities of trying to "muzzle" the voices of young people across the country. "Today it's him, tomorrow it'll be another artist," she told PTI.



Police denies permission for Diljit Dosanjh's Oct 30 concert

NEW DELHI: Delhi Police has denied permission for Punjabi singer Diljit Dosanjh's scheduled concert at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium on October 30, citing specific threat-related inputs, security concerns and law and order commitments amid the ongoing festive season, an official said on Thursday. In a letter dated October 21, Deputy Commissioner of Police (South) Anant Mittal informed BookMyShow Live Private Limited Director Anil Makhija that the request to organise the "Diljit Dosanjh's Aura India Tour Delhi" concert had been examined but could not be approved.

Modi extends support to bring peace to Ukraine

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

INDIA and Poland on Thursday agreed to deepen ties in defence, space, and nuclear energy domains, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Polish counterpart Donald Tusk pledging to boost bilateral strategic partnership amid growing global instability. Following the talks, Modi said both sides believe in democratic values and the rule of law and that India will continue to support every meaningful effort in bringing peace to Ukraine and West Asia. Tusk is on a three-day visit to India amid renewed global push to end the conflict in Ukraine.

"Today we have agreed to deepen ties in defence, space, and nuclear energy. We invite Polish companies to engage in co-development and co-production with India in all these strategic areas," Modi said. "In critical minerals and coal gasification too, we will develop new partnerships with Polish expertise," he added.

Modi said the friendship between India and Poland is based not only on diplomatic relations but also on a shared heritage of humanity and compassion. "During World War II, the royal families of Jamnagar and Kolhapur sheltered thousands of Polish children and families in India."

Sewage, drains, water supply: Rs 8,941 cr Yamuna cleanup push unveiled

PURNA SINGH
NEW DELHI

DELHI has launched a major infrastructure drive to tackle Yamuna pollution, strengthen water supply and overhaul its ageing sewerage network, with Union Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurating and laying the foundation stones for 43 projects worth ₹8,941.22 crore on Thursday. The projects, announced at a Delhi government event in Shyam Vihar, comprise 10 completed projects worth ₹2,827.11 crore and 33 projects worth ₹6,114.11 crore that will

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said the initiatives will improve sewage management across the capital and reduce the flow of untreated wastewater into the Yamuna

now move into the implementation phase.

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said the initiatives would improve sewage management across the capital and reduce the flow of untreated wastewater into the Yamuna. The programme covers new water

treatment facilities, upgrades to existing sewage treatment plants (STPs), decentralised wastewater treatment units, household sewer connections, pumping stations, rehabilitation of old pipelines and improvements to drainage infrastructure. The broader



objective is to ensure that more wastewater is collected and treated before it reaches the river.

The projects inaugurated include a 477-million-litre-per-day (MLD) water treatment plant at Chandrawal,

a two-million-gallon-per-day (MGD) water recycling plant at Bawana and a new 124-MGD sewage treatment

plant at Okhla. Existing STPs at Rithala and Kondli have also been upgraded.

The projects receiving foundation stones include the modernisation of eight existing STPs, construction of 29 new smaller treatment plants, expansion of sewer networks, new sewage pumping stations and a 4.5-kilometre trunk drain connecting Mundka Halt Station to the Najafgarh Supplementary Drain.

A new water treatment plant with a capacity of 477 MLD has been completed at Chandrawal at a cost of ₹598.60 crore.



Chidambaram allocates Rs 2 cr for Sivaganga GH Cath lab

SIVAGANGA: Senior Congress leader and RS member P Chidambaram announced on Thursday an allocation of Rs 2 crore from his MPLAD funds to equip a new Cath lab at the Sivaganga Government Hospital. Addressing a press briefing to detail the utilisation of his constituency funds, the former union minister also dispelled media claims that he had conducted an official audit of the local healthcare facility. "A newspaper reported that I inspected the general hospital. I did no such inspection. I went there to ask what their requirements were and only sat in the Dean's room," Chidambaram clarified.

Following discussions with the hospital's Dean and the District Collector, he said three urgent requirements were identified: a Cath lab for angiograms, a dedicated ambulance, and a waiting shelter for patients and their attendees. Acting on the request, Chidambaram said he immediately approved the medical equipment.

"They said it would cost Rs 4 crore -- Rs 2 crore for the building and Rs 2 crore for the equipment. I am giving Rs 2 crore from the MP funds for the equipment. I told them to construct the building from government funds," he stated.

He added that the ambulance would be funded once formal quotations are received, while the waiting shelter is being deferred to next year's budget. Detailing broader constituency development, the Rajya Sabha member noted that six infrastructure projects are currently nearing completion in the district, 14 are underway and expected to open early next year, and 12 new requests are currently being processed for tenders.

Chennai Corpn crosses 1.5 lakh mark in anti-rabies vaccination drive

CHENNAI: To realise Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay's vision of a rabies-free Tamil Nadu, the Greater Chennai Corporation has successfully vaccinated 1,50,303 stray dogs against rabies across the city between August 11 and October 21.

An official release on Thursday from Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) said launched to safeguard the public and eradicate rabies from Chennai, the mega initiative involves administering anti-rabies vaccinations alongside endo and ectoparasiticide (internal and external parasite control) treatments to stray dogs.

According to Corporation Commissioner G S Sameeran, the vaccination and parasite-control drive has reached 12,313 dogs in the Thiruvottiyur Zone, 7,200 dogs in the Manali Zone, 15,038 dogs in the Madhavaram Zone, 12,477 dogs in the Tondiarpet Zone, 8,598 dogs in the Royapuram Zone, and 13,849 dogs in the Thiru Vi Ka Nagar Zone. In addition, the GCC has vaccinated 21,844 dogs in the Ambattur Zone, 11,895 dogs in the Anna Nagar Zone, 7,782 dogs in the Teynampet Zone, 10,131 dogs in the Kodambakkam Zone, 4,343 dogs in the Alandur Zone, and 12,752 dogs in the Perungudi Zone. The release further said that the vaccination and parasite-control drive is currently active in the Valasaravakkam, Adyar, and Sholinganallur zones, where the GCC has already covered 3,943, 3,985, and 4,153 stray dogs respectively.

GCC has also appealed to the general public, pet owners, and animal welfare activists to extend their full cooperation to successfully achieve the ultimate goal of a "Rabies-Free Chennai."



UDHAGAMANDALAM

FOREST Department officials trapped a male tiger in a cage set up at Gudalur in Nilgiris district on Thursday morning, weeks after another tiger responsible for human attacks in the region was captured. The operation follows

a series of terrifying incidents that began on August 9 and 21, when a tiger attacked and claimed the lives of two people in the O'Valley-Lauriston region near Gudalur, forest officials said.

Enraged by the fatal attacks, locals staged massive protests demanding the immediate

capture of the man-eater. Yielding to public pressure, the Forest Department deployed traps, successfully capturing the tiger on September 18 and subsequently transferring it to the Vandalur Zoo.

However, recent sightings sounded alarm bells and the forest personnel spotted another

tiger roaming the Silver Cloud and O'Valley areas bearing visible injuries, prompting renewed surveillance.

Authorities immediately intensified monitoring operations across the Mudumalai, Gudalur, and O'Valley belts, deploying cages at strategic locations. Their efforts paid

off when the injured animal walked into the trap set near the Halalla area close to Silver Cloud in the early hours. Forest officials stated that further course of action regarding the captured tiger will be decided on strictly following directives from senior forest department officials.

TN conducting India's first dengue vaccine pilot study, says Minister

CHENNAI

TAMIL Nadu is conducting India's first dengue vaccine study in Tenkasi district, overseen by the ICMR, Health Minister K G Arunraj said on Thursday. Speaking to reporters at the sidelines of a workshop on child development here, he said the vaccine is currently part of Brazil's immunisation schedule.

"It is being evaluated for its effectiveness in Indian conditions and currently offers 80 to 90 per cent protection against severe consequences and hospitalisation," he added. The health minister also said while the current dengue situation is under control, the real challenge will emerge during the rainy season over the next two to three months.

He appealed for public cooperation to prevent water stagnation in households and cautioned against self-medication. "If at all there is a fever case, they should immediately come to the hospital and then they should not venture trying home medicines, home recipes in this re-



gard," he said.

The minister also addressed the recent detection of a single avian flu case at the Vandalur Zoo, confirming the facility has been closed to the public as a precautionary measure while animal handlers are tested. Defending the state's monsoon preparedness, Arunraj noted that despite an unexpected downpour of over 36 cm in three hours a few days ago, roads were cleared for traffic within hours following multiple review meetings chaired by the chief minister.

On the political front, the minister dismissed accusations by the BJP in Delhi that protesters questioning government policies are

"anti-national," stating his party, TVK, stands firmly for democratic ideals and the Constitution.

He also stated the party's opposition to hasty revisions of electoral rolls ahead of elections, calling instead for a transparent process to ensure free and fair polling. Earlier, addressing the gathering at the workshop on child development and Artificial Intelligence, the minister urged the media to reframe narratives around children with developmental delays.

He requested journalists to highlight early intervention successes, noting that dignity, rather than pity or inspiration, is the narrative that leaves the child intact. He further challenged the press to hold the government accountable for outcomes -- such as therapy accessibility and travel distances -- rather than merely counting screening camps.

Identifying fundamental pillars of early development, Arunraj stressed that exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months is an essential requirement for a child's brain development. Equally vital is psychological nourishment.

cal nourishment.

"Unconditional positive regard is the most important vitamin and mineral a parent can give to the child," he said, urging parents to embrace their children without judgment.

Speaking on the intersection of AI and journalism, the minister noted its utility in quickly translating datasets like the National Family Health Survey into Tamil charts or captioning media for inclusivity.

However, he issued strict ethical guidelines, cautioning reporters against letting machines generate the face of a child to illustrate stories on disability. He warned that AI medical suggestions are merely hypotheses for paediatricians, not confirmed facts for print, and reminded reporters to verify data against official sources because a "machine's confidence is not evidence".

Stressing that public trust cannot be restored by a correction, he urged journalists to disclose AI usage and reminded them that no machine can replace the human empathy required to notice a distressed child at an Anganwadi centre.

Vandalur Zoo closes due to bird flu spread threat

CHENNAI

THE Arignar Anna Zoological Park, familiarly known as the Vandalur Zoo, here, has appealed to the public to abstain from visiting the zoological park for two days from Thursday as a precaution following the confirmation of H5N1 Avian Influenza infection in water birds by the National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases (NIHSAD), Bhopal.

The Vandalur Zoo will not allow visitors on October 22 and 23 as a precautionary measure following confirmation of H5N1 Avian Influenza infection in water birds by NIHSAD on October 21, 2026, the zoo authorities said.

Immediate preventive measures, including disinfection, sanitisation, and strict implementation of biosecurity protocols, have been undertaken in accordance with the Government of India's guidelines.

"No further bird mortality or sickness has been reported since October 9, 2026. This temporary measure is intended to facilitate intensive sanitisation, strengthen biosecurity measures, and ensure



close monitoring of the situation. The public is requested to cooperate with the precautionary measures," a statement from the Director of AAZP said on Wednesday.

According to sources, seven water birds died in the zoo's largest enclosure - the Vedanthangal birds enclosure - between October 3 and October 9. The fatalities included four painted storks, one grey pelican, one grey heron, and one oriental darter.

The National Institute of High Security Animal Dis-

eases had confirmed the H5N1 infection from sample testing.

Since the situation has remained stable so far, the officials believe the immediate outbreak may already be over. Nevertheless, the temporary two-day closure is being used to carry out intensive sanitisation and disinfection. The area was cordoned off immediately after the first death, and the zoo has intensified biosecurity protocols to ensure the safety of its remaining animals and staff.

Govt extends tenure of local bodies Special Officers by six months

CHENNAI

THE Tamil Nadu government has extended the tenure of Special Officers administering the local bodies by six months, pushing the timeline until April 19, 2027.

The government issued orders stating that the rural local body elections cannot be held immediately due to ongoing administrative restructuring, including the merger of 46 rural local bodies with urban local bodies and pending ward delimitation.

In its order, the government said the extension applied to all 37 districts.

It extended the tenure of Special Officers in 28 districts (where elected

terms ended previously) and appointed new Special Officers in the remaining 9 districts where the elected terms officially expired on October 19, 2026.

As a result, instead of elected politicians, these government-appointed officials - such as block development officers and project directors - will continue to oversee civic services like drinking water, street lighting, and infrastructure maintenance.

A senior official on Thursday indicated that owing to pending reorganisation, upcoming winter monsoon duties, and the census, local body elections will likely not take place until after March 2027.

HEAVY RAINS BATTER PONDY; SCHOOLS SHUT, LOW-LYING AREAS INUNDATED

PUDUCHERRY: Puducherry and its suburbs were pounded by heavy rains overnight, inundating roads in several areas. The heavy downpour disrupted traffic and affected daily wage earners.

In view of the rains, Minister A Namassivayam announced a holiday on Thursday for all government-run and privately-managed schools in Puducherry and Karaikal regions.

Puducherry recorded 7 cm rainfall during the last 24 hours ending 8.30 a.m. on Thursday, official sources said. A control room has been set up to handle emergency calls for help. Official sources told PTI that revenue and other departments are fully geared up to handle any exigencies. On Wednesday, Pro Tem Speaker A Anbalagan presented a petition to Chief Minister N Rangasamy seeking steps to drain out water from low-lying areas.

Pralhad Joshi launches Kashi Tamil Sangamam 5.0 portal

NEW DELHI

UNION Minister for Education Pralhad Joshi on Thursday launched the registration portal for the fifth edition of Kashi Tamil Sangamam (KTS 5.0) scheduled to be held from November 28 to December 12.

The Ministry has invited eligible applicants from Tamil Nadu, especially youth and students, to register for Kashi Tamil Sangamam 5.0 and participate in this celebration of India's cultural oneness, linguistic diversity and shared civilisational inheritance, said an official statement.

Interested applicants may register through the official portal at <https://kashitamil.iitm.ac.in/>, hosted by IIT Madras with effect from October 22, it said. The Portal will accept applications till November 13 under seven categories: Students, teachers, writers and



media professionals, agriculture and allied sectors, professionals and artisans, women and spiritual leaders. The programme will celebrate, reaffirm and strengthen the age-old civilizational bonds between Tamil Nadu and Kashi, the two ancient seats of learning, strengthening the spirit of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat, said an official statement. Joshi said that since ancient times, the country has had a strong cultural unity. He noted that many people visited Kashi and Rameswaram as part of their

Tamil Sangamam played an important role in strengthening national unity and celebrating India's shared civilisational heritage. The first Kashi Tamil Sangamam was held in 2022, and over the last four editions, it facilitated meaningful exchanges of knowledge, language, traditions and lived experiences between the two regions. The event is organised by the Department of Higher Education, Union Ministry of Education, in collaboration with IIT Madras; Banaras Hindu University (BHU); Central Institute of Classical Tamil (CICT), Chennai; Uttar Pradesh Government and Central Govt Departments/Ministries of Culture, Railways, School Education, Tourism, Textiles, Food Processing Industries, Information & Broadcasting and Skill Development and Entrepreneurship.

YouTuber arrested for financial influencer Harish's suicide



CHENNAI

YOUTUBER Jason Samuel Vijayakumar was arrested on Thursday for allegedly abetting the suicide of 27-year-old financial content creator V Harish, police said on Thursday. After the death by suicide of 27-year-old Harish, following alleged

cyberbullying over his investment advisory credentials by Vijayakumar, a case was registered by police.

During the course of the investigation, based on witness statements and documentary evidence, it was established that 30-year-old Vijayakumar was allegedly responsible

for Harish's suicide, police said. Consequently, Vijayakumar, son of George Lambert, was arrested and produced before a Judicial Magistrate Court, and he was remanded to judicial custody. Harish was running a YouTube channel under the name "Finance with Harish" through which he provided

Insta reels fuel real violence among youth: AIADMK

MADURAI

A dangerous trend of posting videos with weapons has emerged among the youth, glorifying rowdiness and declaring themselves as 'dons' on Instagram, former AIADMK Minister R B Udhayakumar said on Thursday. In a video statement, the AIADMK leader said the intense competition for online popularity has also led to cyberbullying.

"In an environment of intense competition, driven by severe, unrestrained, and uncivilised criticisms, how many 'Insta celebrities' have ended up taking their own lives today," Udhayakumar asked. Referring to recent revenge killings driven by online provocations, the AIADMK leader cited the murder of 26-year-old 'Sullan' Madhan in Sivaganga district, an incident fueled by Instagram reels. He also pointed to the

financial advice and had approximately 13 lakh (1.3 million) followers. Against this background, Vijayakumar allegedly attempted to "extort" Harish and is said to have posted defamatory videos

about him on social media platforms, the police said. Harish's social media account was blocked as a result of these defamatory allegations. Due to mental distress, Harish died by suicide by hanging at his

residence on October 20, 2026. Based on a complaint lodged by Harish's father, Vinayagam, a case was registered at the suburban Kanathur Police Station. Vijayakumar had denied the cyberbullying

killing of 24-year-old Surya in Madurai following an online dispute over the title of local 'Don' and the murders of Ashok Kumar and Sriram in Coimbatore, which stemmed from rival factions brandishing weapons and issuing threats on social media.

Udhayakumar said instead of bringing order to the chaos, the ruling TVK government is encouraging this "reel culture". "They are unable to

maintain law and order. Through Instagram, they are diverting the people's attention. Insta reels are not just for the youth. It is an obsession for the ruling TVK government too," he added. Udhayakumar charged that the administration has offered this dangerous digital obsession as a "fatal gift" to the youth, allowing what begins as online entertainment to devolve into real-world bloodshed.

allegations in a social media statement, asserting that he was acting in the consumer interest by highlighting that Harish lacked a SEBI-registered Investment Advisor (RIA) license.

WINDOWS
Minister lauds CESC
for Guinness World
Record drone show

MYSURU: Energy and Tourism Minister K J George on Thursday lauded the CESC for setting a Guinness World Record with a drone show at the Mysuru Dussehra celebrations and praised the city's spectacular electrical illumination during the 11-day-long festivities.

He said the Energy Department and Chamundeshwari Electricity Supply Corporation (CESC) played a key role in showcasing the festival's splendour to the world.

"The Energy Department and CESC have played a key role in showcasing the grandeur of Dussehra to the world in an even more impactful manner. This year, the creation of a spectacular peacock formation using 3,473 drones has earned a Guinness World Record, further enhancing the global visibility of the festival," George said.

The electrical illuminations added a distinctive splendour to the celebrations, with colourful lighting installations spread across 146 km of roads, 123 circles and prominent locations, besides 80 illuminated artistic installations, he said, according to a release by CESC.

"The effective management of the city's illuminations, coupled with an impressive technology-driven drone show, reflects the operational efficiency of the Energy Department and the technical capabilities of CESC," he said.

Commending the four-day drone show held at the Torchlight Parade Grounds in Bannimantap, George said 12 visual formations created using different colours and designs mesmerised audiences, with the peacock formation emerging as the highlight.

He said managing the city's electrical illuminations during the festival, which attracts lakhs of tourists and the public, required meticulous planning, technical preparedness and coordination.

"Given the scale of the festival, priority was accorded to the reliable management of the power infrastructure, technical preparedness and coordination at various levels. The initiatives undertaken by CESC under the Energy Department have played a significant role in enhancing the grandeur of the Dussehra festivities," he said.

George also praised CESC for balancing its responsibility of ensuring uninterrupted power supply with the execution of the illuminations and the technology-driven drone spectacle.

"After creating a tiger formation using drones and setting a record last year, CESC has continued its remarkable journey by creating a peacock formation this year and setting a new record. The electrical illuminations and drone show have also significantly contributed to positioning Dussehra as a major global tourism attraction," he said.

Meanwhile, Archana, Managing Director of CESC said the Dussehra electrical illuminations would remain in place for 10 more days, until October 31, and urged tourists and the public to follow safety guidelines while enjoying the displays.

"Tourists and members of the public are encouraged to follow the necessary safety guidelines and enjoy the spectacular beauty of the illuminated city," she added.

Police crack
woman's murder
case, husband
arrested

BENGALURU: A man was arrested for allegedly murdering his 25-year-old wife over suspicion of an illicit relationship and dumping her body in a stormwater drain, police said on Thursday. The decomposed body of Rukhsana, a native of Bihar, was found in a stormwater drain within the Magadi Road police station limits on October 13. Police said she was allegedly killed by her husband, Mohammed Irfaz, on October 10.

Mysuru Dasara showcases state's cultural richness and innovation

The event was also notable as Chief Minister D K Shivakumar celebrated his first Dasara as head of the state government

HANS NEWS SERVICE
MYSURU

MYSURU Dasara 2026 stood out for its blend of traditional grandeur and contemporary attractions, reinforcing its reputation as one of Karnataka's most celebrated cultural festivals. The event was also notable as Chief Minister DK Shivakumar celebrated his first Dasara as head of the state government.

The festivities began with special prayers to Goddess Chamundeshwari at Chamundi Hills and culminated in a series of events across the city, including the spectacular Jamboosavari, cultural performances, flower exhibitions, wrestling bouts and the traditional torchlight parade.

This year's celebrations introduced several attractions intended to broaden the festival's appeal. Bands from the Indian Army, Air Force and Navy participated in the procession, bringing military music and patriotic fervour to the celebrations. Kannada film personalities and cultural troupes from different states also attracted considerable public attention.



One of the major innovations was the inclusion of coastal Karnataka's Kambala, the traditional buffalo race associated with the region's farming communities. The event brought an important element of coastal culture to Mysuru and highlighted the diversity of Karnataka's traditions. The flower show at Kuppanna Park featured elaborate floral displays, including a model of Vidhana Soudha. The Dasara exhibition and wrestling competitions offered additional entertainment to residents and tourists.

Young audiences gathered for Yuva Dasara, where popular singer Sid Sriram entertained music lovers. Performances at Mysuru Palace celebrated classical music, dance and literature. Professor Nagamani Srinath was honoured with the State Sangeetha Vidwan award, while an Urdu poetry programme conveyed a message of cultural harmony.

The participation of Kerala Chief Minister V.D. Satheesan and Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy in the Jamboosavari strengthened the festival's inter-state significance. Cultural tableaux and performers from outside Karnataka further highlighted India's diversity. A spectacular drone display during the Bannimantap torchlight parade became another talking point, combining technology with entertainment. The festival attracted tourists from across the country, benefiting local businesses and tourism-related activities. Mysuru Dasara 2026 demonstrated that preserving heritage while embracing new ideas can make a traditional celebration more inclusive, vibrant and relevant to younger generations.

Shivakumar orders probe into ministers
being stopped at Nandi flag puja

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU

CHIEF Minister DK Shivakumar has directed Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh to investigate the incident in which three ministers were prevented from entering the venue of the Nandi flag puja at Mysuru Palace during Dasara celebrations and submit a report.

Ministers Balakrishna, P.M. Narendra Swamy and K.S. Basavanthappa were stopped by Mysuru Superintendent of Police Rishyanth when they were proceeding to attend the ritual ahead of the Jamboosavari procession. The police officer reportedly cited security reasons for restricting their entry, triggering confusion between the ministers and police personnel.

Shivakumar said the conduct of officials in stopping ministers was unacceptable. He stated that he had personally intervened and instructed the police to allow the ministers to enter the venue. "The casual attitude of officials cannot be tolerated," the Chief Minister said in a statement.



He added that the Chief Secretary had been asked to establish who was responsible for the incident and submit a report. Action would be taken against officials found guilty after the report was received, he said.

The incident has triggered a political controversy, with allegations that the ministers were disrespected despite being part of the government delegation attending the state's major cultural festival.

The controversy has also taken a social dimension, with some Congress leaders describing the incident as an insult to Dalit ministers and demanding action against the police officer concerned. They have urged the Chief Minister and Home Minister to take the matter seriously.

The episode has raised questions about coordination between the police and elected representatives during high-profile public events.

The proposed inquiry is expected to examine the circumstances that led to the ministers being stopped and determine whether the security restrictions were justified. The government

‘MINOR HUMAN ERROR’

HANS NEWS SERVICE
MYSURU

DEPUTY Chief Minister DrG Parameshwara and Health Minister U T Khader stated that the action by SP Rishyanth in preventing certain ministers from proceeding during the Nandi Dhvaja Puja of Mysuru Dasara should not be inflated into a major controversy.

Dr. Parameshwara noted that officers simply carry out the directions given to them and that, when crowds of 15-20 lakh people arrive over ten days of the festival, occasional small lapses occur. After viewing the video, he observed that no physical manhandling took place; the ministers were merely asked to stop.

He suggested the possibility that an existing protocol required only the

Chief Minister to advance at that point.

On remarks that Dalit ministers had been insulted, Dr. Parameshwara asked why the caste label needed to be attached at all. "Ministers are ministers, and other ministers are not identified by caste," he said.

Health Minister U T Khader added that the police action was not deliberate and that human error is a natural occurrence. He pointed out that officers had been on continuous duty without proper meals for a month and that minor slips in a security setting should not be sought out and enlarged.

The episode had already drawn a formal response from Chief Minister D K Shivakumar, who instructed Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh to conduct an inquiry and submit a report.

is awaiting the Chief Secretary's report before deciding on further action.

Sugarcane farmers' meeting scheduled
for October 26 in Belagavi: CM

Karnataka to hold separate talks on drought,
water sharing and forest land issues

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU

A meeting with sugarcane farmers and sugar factory owners has been scheduled for October 26 in Belagavi to discuss their concerns, Chief Minister DK Shivakumar said on Thursday.

Speaking to the media outside his Sadashivanagar residence before leaving for Delhi, Shivakumar said Union Minister Pralhad Joshi would not be able to attend the meeting due to other commitments. "Joshi has said that you should hold the meeting first, after which we can meet. The issue of sugarcane farmers is not limited to Karnataka but concerns the entire country. We will hold a separate meeting with officials at the Centre to discuss the matter and find a solution," he said.

The Chief Minister said he would also discuss forest land disputes with the concerned Union Minister. Taking a decision on the Mahadayi issue could be difficult due to the upcoming elections in Goa, he added.



On the Tungabhadra reservoir, Shivakumar said a request had been made to meet the Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister for discussions on the water situation. The meeting could take place either in Andhra Pradesh or Delhi. "The water level in the Tungabhadra reservoir is critically low, while the demand for water from farmers is very high. With no adequate rainfall, we need to formulate a strategy for the coming days," he said. Shivakumar added that he would meet the Prime Minister and Union Home Minister to present Karnataka's demands regarding drought-related assistance.

Bengaluru trio wins World's Best
Extreme Cake Sculptors' title

Team India SugarSutra Defeats
Finalists from Australia, Japan and
Taiwan in live 12-hour contest

BENGALURU: Three pioneering cake and sugar artists from Team India came together to represent the country on the international stage and returned as world champions, winning the 2-Day International Cake-Off Challenge at the International Cake Show Australia (ICSA) 2026.

Representing the country, Team India/ SugarSutra's Anna Austin, Arati Mirji and Samie Ramachandran won the title of "World's Best Extreme Cake Sculptors 2026" at the ACADA Australasian Cake Oscar Awards, competing against finalist teams from Australia, Japan and Taiwan.

The team's winning sculpture interpreted the theme "Adventure" through Tamil Nadu's Jallikattu tradition, bringing the ferocity, colour and energy of the



sport to life in cake, sugar and chocolate. Every inch of the piece, from the bull's structure to the fine details on the garlands and the sculpted facial features of the Jallikattu player, was built live in just 12 hours. The cake captured the 'adventure' spirit through movement, rhythm, and visual drama, embodying India's diversity, vibrancy, and artistic heritage.

Anna Austin, Arati Mirji and Samie Ramachandran, representing Team India, were chosen for the competition because of their established work and expertise within the Indian and international cake-art community.

Anna was among the pioneers in introducing edible people modelling artistry in India and has also received international recognition. Arati is an internationally recognised sugar florist and award winner, with her work receiving accolades on the global stage. Samie is particularly known for his larger-than-life edible sculptures and is recognised for this specialised form of cake art.

Cake in India is a big business, layered by culinary experts, artisans, and home bakers alike. India's cake market is projected to more than double by 2031, from USD 2.38 billion to USD 4.42 billion, growing at 13.22% a year. Despite that growth, cake as an art form has no formal governing body in India, and no dedicated industry structure recognising the artists behind it.

The trio believes a field with this much potential is overdue proper recognition, given their experience in the industry.

‘Stop harassing Kannada film producers in the name of awards and subsidies’

When application fees, Blu-ray preparation costs and the expense of producing multiple sets of documents are taken into account, a producer applying for both an award and a subsidy could end up spending approximately Rs 50,000 to Rs 60,000 for a single film

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU

FILM director Mansore has urged the government to simplify the application process for state film awards and subsidies, alleging that the existing procedures impose an unnecessary financial burden on Kannada film producers.

Applications have been invited for the 2022 and 2023 State Film Awards, with October 31 set as the deadline. However, delays in the award and subsidy process over the past seven to eight years have made it difficult for producers to submit applications, he said in a press release.

Mansore pointed out that only a handful of production houses in the Kannada

film industry operate on a full-fledged basis, while most are independent or part-time ventures that close their offices after producing one or two films. Many producers do not systematically preserve the necessary permissions and documents related to film production. After a film's release, directors, production managers and other team members often move on to different assignments, leaving producers struggling to collect the required paperwork.

He alleged that the government had made the application process excessively complicated, apparently to avoid disputes after announcing awards and subsidies. Applicants are required to submit 10 copies of certain documents



separately for awards and subsidies, even though such a requirement does not apply when submitting films for the National Film Awards, he said.

The biggest hurdle, according to Mansore, is the mandatory submission of Blu-ray

discs. He said Blu-ray was a preferred format for viewing films in full 2K resolution a decade ago, but DVDs and Blu-ray discs have since largely disappeared from the market. Five good-quality blank Blu-ray discs cost between Rs 1,000 and Rs 4,000 online, he said. The state application process requires separate Blu-ray discs for awards and subsidies, with two discs required for each category. In Bengaluru, only four or five people are available to write films onto Blu-ray discs, and preparing each disc costs between Rs 2,000 and Rs 4,000. The total expense for four discs can therefore range from Rs 8,000 to Rs 16,000.

In contrast, a pocket hard disk could be used to submit

a film for around Rs 5,000, he said, adding that formats such as DCP and MOV can preserve viewing quality at 2K resolution. He questioned why the state government continued to insist on Blu-ray when the National Film Awards, Indian Panorama, international film festivals and the Film Archives in Pune had shifted to pocket hard drives.

Mansore also questioned whether the Blu-ray discs submitted to the Department of Information and Public Relations were stored securely. Citing his own experience with his film Act-1978, he said he had personally submitted the application and Blu-ray disc, but on the day the State Film Awards selection committee screened the film, a problem

reportedly arose with the disc. The film was subsequently obtained on a pen drive for viewing. "If the work can be completed using a pen drive or pocket hard disk, why insist on Blu-ray? Even from the perspective of content security, would an open DCP format not be sufficient?" he asked.

He further said the government had fixed application fees of Rs 16,193 for Kannada films released in 2022 and Rs 18,621 for films released in 2023, separately for awards and subsidies, citing a bylaw that allows fees to be revised once every two years. When application fees, Blu-ray preparation costs and the expense of producing multiple sets of documents are taken into account, a producer applying for both an award

and a subsidy could end up spending approximately Rs 50,000 to Rs 60,000 for a single film, he said. Mansore noted that many producers who invested in films after the COVID-19 pandemic had suffered losses and were hoping that awards and subsidies would help them recover at least part of their investments. Instead of placing additional financial and procedural burdens on them, the government and the Department of Information and Public Relations should immediately simplify the application process, he urged. He also appealed to the Karnataka Film Chamber of Commerce to intervene with the government and help secure a solution in the interest of Kannada film producers.

Ahoy Hyderabad...!

Holidays end; return journey sparks traffic snarls on highways

MM FAROOQUI
HYDERABAD

WITH the conclusion of the Dasara festival, massive traffic congestion was witnessed on the major highways as a large number of people who travelled to their native places especially in Andhra Pradesh for the Dasara festival began their return journey.

Long queues of vehicles were witnessed, causing severe inconvenience to commuters. Heavy rush was also reported at key toll plazas where vehicles were made to wait for hours.

The National Highway 65, the Hyderabad – Vijayawada stretch triggered long bumper-to-bumper traffic across multiple stretches.

Traffic movement slowed significantly since Wednesday due to the surge in vehicles heading towards Hyderabad. Congestion was also reported at other places due to the heavy inflow of vehicles towards Hyderabad.

- Commuters face hours of waiting
- Ongoing flyover construction slows traffic at Choutuppal
- Over 7,000 special buses deployed to ease rush

Traffic police and highway officials were seen making efforts to regulate vehicle movement and clear congestion at the affected stretch. However, due to the continuous inflow of vehicles returning after the Dasara holidays, traffic remained heavy for most of the day.

Although educational institutions are scheduled to reopen on October 23 after the Dasara holidays, many people had started their journey a day in advance to avoid congestion.

Traffic moved slowly near Choutuppal due to ongoing



flyover bridge construction work, causing delays for vehicles heading towards Hyderabad.

Heavy traffic was also reported on the Nagpur, Mumbai and Warangal highways as commuters returned from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana districts, including Medak, Siddipet and Sangareddy.

Meanwhile, TGSRTC has finalised arrangements to handle the return journey rush starting October 22, with peak crowds expected

over the weekend of October 25 and 26. To accommodate festival travellers across Telangana, the corporation is deploying over 7,000 special buses.

According to TGSRTC officials, the Karimnagar zone alone will operate 3,533 special services.

The regional breakdown includes 431 buses from Adilabad, 719 from Nizamabad, 1,175 from Karimnagar, 530 from Warangal, and 678 from Khamman.

The Hyderabad zone will

operate 2,155 special buses, including 645 from Mahabubnagar, 255 from Medak, 815 from Nalgonda and 440 from Rangareddy. In addition, the Greater Hyderabad Zone will operate 1,312 special services.

Authorities have advised commuters to plan travel during off-peak hours and follow traffic advisories to avoid inconvenience. The traffic situation is expected to remain tense over the next two days as the festive exodus continues.



Adluri Laxman Kumar reviews Dharmapuri bus station modernisation preparations

Foundation stone ceremony scheduled for October 25; officials directed to complete arrangements in time

HANS NEWS SERVICE
KARIMNAGAR

STATE Welfare Minister Adluri Laxman Kumar on Thursday inspected arrangements for the foundation stone-laying ceremony for the modernisation of Dharmapuri bus station, scheduled for October 25.

Accompanied by Road Transport Corporation officials, local public representa-

tives and party leaders, the minister reviewed preparations ahead of the visit of State Transport Minister Ponnampallabharathi, who is expected to lay the foundation stone for the proposed works.

During the inspection, Laxman Kumar discussed the modernisation plans and arrangements for the programme with officials.

He stressed the need for

coordination among all concerned departments to ensure the smooth conduct of the ceremony.

The minister directed officials to complete all necessary arrangements well in advance and ensure that the programme is organised efficiently.

The proposed modernisation is aimed at improving facilities at the Dharmapuri bus station.

Dasara festivities boost excise revenue in Warangal

SADANANDAM SIRIMALLE
HANUMAKONDA

LIQUOR sales across the combined Warangal district witnessed a significant surge during the Dussehra festival, generating revenue of Rs 239.37 crore between October 1 and 21. The total represents an increase of Rs 75.81 crore compared with the Rs 163.56 crore recorded during the corresponding period last year.

The rise in sales has been attributed to festive demand, celebrations and consecutive holidays. The district has 139 bars and 295 liquor shops, which recorded substantial business during the 21-day period.

Hanumakonda Urban district topped the sales chart, with liquor worth Rs 88 crore sold during the festival period.

- The combined Warangal district records liquor sales worth Rs 239.37 crore between October 1 and 21
- Hanumakonda Urban leads district-wise sales with Rs 88 crore, followed by Hanumakonda Rural at Rs 44 crore, while Mahabubabad recorded Rs 37 crore and Jangaon and Bhupalpally registered Rs 36 crore each
- The surge in sales was attributed to festive celebrations, consecutive holidays, population growth, expanding urban areas and increased commercial activity

Hanumakonda Rural recorded sales of Rs 44 crore, reflecting strong demand across the district.

Other districts also reported considerable sales. Mahabubabad recorded liquor sales worth Rs 37 crore, while Jangaon and Bhupalpally each registered sales of Rs 36 crore.

The figures highlight the substantial increase in liquor consumption during the festive season across the

combined Warangal district. The overall sales rose by nearly 46 per cent compared with last year, underlining the impact of festive activity on the excise department's revenue.

Hanumakonda Urban's leading position was attributed to its growing population, expanding urban areas and commercial activity, which contribute to higher demand for liquor, particularly during major festivals.

Agarwal completes one year as Rajanna Sircilla collector

HANS NEWS SERVICE
RAJANNA-SIRCILLA

DISTRICT Collector Garima Agarwal has completed one year in office, with a focus on welfare delivery and development across Rajanna Sircilla district.

During the year, more than 3,000 houses were completed under the Indiramma housing scheme, while 48 anganwadi buildings were completed at a cost of Rs 3 crore. Educational infrastructure was strengthened through improvements to government schools and residential institutions.

In agriculture, awareness programmes encouraged farmers to adopt alternative crops, including pulses, vegetables and oil palm, which was cultivated on more than 700 acres.

Healthcare initiatives in-

Housing, education, healthcare and infrastructure top development agenda



cluded distributing nutritional kits to 421 tuberculosis patients and monitoring services at government hospitals and primary health centres.

The administration also promoted women's self-help groups, improved facilities at the Mandepalli old-age home

and monitored development works at Vemulawada's Sri Rajarajeshwara Swamy temple. Road improvements, warehouse construction, tourism development and public infrastructure remained key priorities during her first year.

Jhansi Rajender Reddy meets Telugu NRIs in North Carolina

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HANUMAKONDA

HANUMANDLA Jhansi Rajender Reddy, vice-president of the Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC), Congress in-charge for Palakurti constituency and founder of the Women Empowerment Telugu Association (WETA), attended a meet-and-greet programme with Telugu non-resident Indians (NRIs) at Apex, North Carolina, USA. The event was hosted by Karunakar Vanguru.

During the informal gathering, NRIs interacted with Jhansi Rajender Reddy and shared their views on Telangana's political and social developments.

Through WETA, she has been working to empower Telugu women by promoting their development, encouraging their potential and creating opportunities for greater recognition in society. She also



seeks to strengthen unity and mutual cooperation among Telugu communities.

In her political role, Jhansi Rajender Reddy has been actively involved in Congress activities in Palakurti constituency, focusing on public issues, constituency development and coordination with party leaders and workers.

The programme provided an opportunity for Telugu NRIs to engage with Telangana leadership and maintain closer ties with their home state. It also highlighted her continued efforts towards women's empowerment and political engagement.



Panduga Sayanna remains an inspiration for generations: SP

HANS NEWS SERVICE
JAYASHANKAR BHUPALPALLY

THE life of Panduga Sayanna, celebrated as a people's hero for standing up for the poor and fighting oppression and exploitation, continues to inspire future generations, Jayashankar Bhupalpally District Superintendent of Police Siriseti Sankeerth, IPS, said. The district police office organised celebrations marking Sayanna's birth anniversary on Thursday. On the occasion, Sankeerth gar-

landed Sayanna's portrait and paid floral tributes. The SP said that defending the poor and fighting for the self-respect of weaker sections were the defining values of Sayanna's life. He urged people to uphold equality, humanity and a spirit of service, while extending support to marginalised communities. He emphasised the need to pass on Sayanna's fighting spirit and ideals to future generations, describing his life as a source of inspiration for building a more just and inclusive society.

Warangal police warn against QVSE investment fraud

Fraudsters promise huge returns on Rs 54,000 investment; 56 cases registered across TG

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HANUMAKONDA

WARANGAL Police Commissioner N. Shweta, IPS, has urged the public to remain vigilant against the QVSE (Quantum West Stock Exchange) app, which is allegedly being used to cheat people through fraudulent online investment schemes.

According to the Commissioner, fraudsters persuade victims to download the app through APK files and convert Indian rupees into cryptocurrency using Binance. They promise a huge profit on an investment of 500 USDT, approximately Rs 54,000, along with referral bonuses of 50 USDT and 25 USDT for first- and second-level referrals.



As many as 56 cases linked to this fraud have been registered across Telangana.

Shweta advised people to avoid suspicious apps, unverified trading platforms and schemes promising guaranteed returns. Victims should immediately call 1930 or file a complaint at www.cyber-crime.gov.in.

NHM employees continue indefinite strike in Karimnagar

HANS NEWS SERVICE
KARIMNAGAR

NATIONAL Health Mission (NHM) employees continued their indefinite strike in Karimnagar on Thursday, staging a novel protest by standing on one leg outside the Collectorate to press for the resolution of their long-pending demands.

Organised by the NHM Joint Action Committee (JAC), the protest highlighted demands for job security, regularisation, cadre fixation and equal pay for equal work.

The employees also sought 100 per cent gross salary, direct salary payments under the SPARSH system, a 5 per cent annual increment, an 8 per cent loyalty bonus and

Protesters stand on one leg outside Collectorate, demand regularisation, pay hike and pending arrears



release of arrears pending since 2022.

Other demands include medical coverage under EHS, 180 days of paid maternity leave, restoration of reduced

salaries and implementation of revised pay scales.

The JAC also demanded Rs. 20 lakh ex-gratia for families of employees who die in service, a job for one

eligible family member and Rs. 30,000 towards funeral expenses. Leaders said the peaceful agitation would continue until the government addressed their grievances.

Satish accuses Cong of misusing power

HANS NEWS SERVICE
KARIMNAGAR

FORMER Husnabad MLA Vodithala Satish Kumar has accused the Congress government of targeting Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) leaders and workers through politically motivated cases, alleging that such actions undermine democratic values. On Thursday, he visited BRS leaders and workers facing cases in Dharmasagarapalli village of Koheda mandal and assured them of the party's support. Satish Kumar alleged



that Congress leaders were intimidating opposition workers instead of addressing public issues and fulfilling electoral promises. He said BRS workers would not succumb to political pressure, stressing that power was temporary and public service should remain the priority. He assured the affected workers

and their families that the party would provide support and pursue legal remedies, including approaching the High Court if necessary, to seek the quashing of cases. He also criticised the alleged interference of elected representatives' relatives in BRS administration and urged BRS workers to remain confident.

Warangal road expansion aimed at future growth: MLA

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HANUMAKONDA

WARANGAL West MLA Naini Rajender Reddy on Thursday laid the foundation stone for road expansion works worth Rs 2 crore from Hanumakonda bus stand via JNS Stadium to DCC Bhavan.

Speaking on the occasion, Naini said the project aimed to ease traffic congestion, improve road safety and meet the city's growing



transportation needs. He urged residents and traders not to obstruct development

in the name of vote-bank politics and called for collective support.

He said narrow roads and increasing vehicle numbers had created difficulties for

commuters and local businesses. Stressing planned infrastructure development, he called for constructive suggestions from opposition parties. Naini also announced plans to develop areas around JNS Stadium, improve commercial opportunities and provide better facilities for hostel students. He said coordinated efforts were essential to ensure Warangal's sustainable growth and better infrastructure for future generations.

Violence, counter-allegations mar local body nominations

K VARAPRASADA RAO
AMARAVATI

THE second day of nominations for the MPTC and ZPTC elections in the state on Thursday witnessed widespread clashes, stone-pelting, allegations of nomination papers being torn up and police action in several districts, intensifying the political confrontation between the ruling NDA and the YSRCP.

While the YSRCP accused the police of siding with the TDP and preventing its candidates from filing nominations, ruling alliance leaders alleged that the opposition was instigating disturbances and subsequently portraying itself as a victim.

Incidents were reported from YSR Kadapa, Annamayya, Anantapur, Kurnool, Palnadu, Chittoor, Nellore, Prakasam and other areas. Reports included attacks on party workers, vehicles being set on fire, nomination documents being destroyed and police resorting to lathi-charges to disperse rival groups. Although nominations proceeded without major incidents in several other districts, the developments in Rayalaseema and Palnadu raised concerns about candidates' ability to participate freely.

In Annamayya district's Thamballapalle constituency, clashes between TDP and YSRCP workers in Peddamandyam and Peddad-



Police take away YSRCP MP Y S Avinash Reddy from his home in Pulivendula on Thursday

ippasamudram left several people injured. TDP leaders Narayana Reddy and Anand were among those injured in Peddamandyam, where police resorted to a lathi-charge. In Peddadippasamudram, stone-pelting and the burning of two-wheelers aggravated the situation.

YSR Kadapa district witnessed clashes, stone-pelting and allegations of nomination papers being torn up at multiple locations.

In Gundlakunta in Jammalamadugu constituency, a motorcycle belonging to YSRCP members was reportedly set on fire. Tension also prevailed near the residence of TDP MLC Ramasubba Reddy, while YSRCP MLA Dr Sudha and other leaders were arrested in Badvel.

In Nandaluru, a factional clash within the TDP between supporters of Jagamohan Raju and Meda Vijaya Sekhar Reddy resulted in two cars and some motorcycles being set on fire.

TDP state spokesperson Balasubrahmanyam reportedly fired shots into the air.

In Palnadu, clashes were reported at Nakarikallu, Dache palli and Edlapadu. At Nakarikallu, rival groups accused each other of destroying MPTC nomination papers, prompting police to resort to a lathi-charge. A case was registered against former Macherla MLA Pinnelli Ramakrishna Reddy and other YSRCP leaders following a protest in Macherala over alleged obstruction of nominations.

Anantapur district also witnessed confrontations. Police stopped former YSRCP MLA Thopudurthi Prakash Reddy at Vaddepalli while he was travelling towards Atmakur with a candidate, citing restrictions on people from outside the local area. In Guntakal, TDP and YSRCP leaders clashed amid allegations that nomination papers belonging to YSRCP candidates were torn up. Stone-pelting was

- **Stone-pelting, attacks, torn nomination papers and house arrests reported across Rayalaseema and Palnadu**
- **YSRCP alleges systematic obstruction; TDP and NDA leaders accuse opposition of instigating violence**

reported near the Anantapur rural MPDO office, leaving a person named Ramanjaneyulu with a head injury.

In Nellore district's Gudur, clashes followed allegations that TDP supporters obstructed YSRCP candidates.

At the Eluru zilla parishad office, two persons allegedly snatched and tore the nomination papers of YSRCP candidate Madhula Ratnam before being apprehended by police. In Bestavaripeta in Markapuram district, TDP leaders were accused of tearing the nomination papers of a BJP MPTC candidate, triggering a confrontation.

The YSRCP alleged that its candidates were being prevented from reaching nomination centres while several senior leaders were placed under house arrest. Those reportedly confined

to their residences included MPs Gurumoorthy and Avinash Reddy, former MLAs Kethireddy Pedda Reddy, Thopudurthi Prakash Reddy and Kethireddy Venkatarami Reddy, former minister Sake Sailajanath, former Chittoor MLA Chevireddy Bhaskar Reddy and his sons, and former Pattikonda MLA Sridevi. Restrictions were also reported against YSRCP leaders in Tirupati and Nellore.

Former minister Adimulapu Suresh staged a road protest in Ponnaluru in Prakasam district, alleging that YSRCP candidates were not being allowed to enter the nomination premises.

Minister Y Satya Kumar Yadav alleged that disturbances were concentrated in Pulivendula and Punganur, constituencies represented by YSRCP MLAs, while the nomination process had proceeded peacefully elsewhere. He accused YSRCP leaders of instigating conflicts and lodging complaints to mislead the Election Commission.

TDP MLA Gouthu Sirisha alleged that the YSRCP was resorting to violence out of fear of electoral defeat. She questioned why disturbances were occurring in areas associated with leaders such as Peddireddi Ramachandra Reddy, Chevireddy Bhaskar Reddy, Avinash Reddy and Bhumana Karunakar Reddy, alleging that the strategy was being directed from Tadepalli.

Gather evidence of poll violence, Jagan tell party leaders

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

YSRCP chief Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy directed party leaders to systematically collect evidence of alleged irregularities and violence during local body elections and pursue legal action, saying the fight to protect democracy must continue in the courts.

At a meeting with key party leaders at party central office on Thursday, Jagan discussed the Supreme Court's intervention over alleged irregularities during the local body elections. He said the court had expressed concern over the subversion of democracy in State and taken cognisance of complaints, prompting directions to the State Election Commission (SEC).

Jagan alleged that Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu was orchestrating violence in a systematic and deliberate manner and claimed that the situation had not improved despite the Supreme Court's directives.

He said incidents of violence were continuing during the ongoing MPTC and ZPTC elections as well. "It is unprecedented to see those in government themselves engaging in such violence," Jagan said, accusing the government of misusing the police force to facilitate the alleged atrocities.

Emphasising the need to build a strong legal case, Jagan asked party leaders to guide workers on the ground in documenting incidents and gathering evidence.

He said the party would place substantiated material before the courts and continue its legal fight.

YSRCP stages protest at SEC office



YSRCP MLC Lella Appi Reddy along with other party leaders speaks to the media at SEC office in Vijayawada on Thursday

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

YSRCP leaders staged a protest at the State Election Commission (SEC) office here on Thursday after State Election Commissioner Anil Chandra Punetha initially failed to grant them an appointment to submit their complaints over alleged obstruction of nominations for ZPTC and MPTC elections.

The leaders accused the SEC of delaying action on their complaint and demanded implementation of the Supreme Court's directions to ensure that candidates could file nominations without intimidation. It was the second consecutive day that the YSRCP delegation had approached the SEC to explain the alleged irregularities in the nomination process.

Following the protest, the leaders were eventually granted an appointment.

Speaking to the media, YSRCP MLC Lella Appi

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

Reddy alleged that TDP activists, with the alleged complicity of the police, were preventing opposition candidates from filing nominations.

He claimed that illegal arrests and house arrests were being used to obstruct candidates and that those attempting to submit their papers were facing attacks.

"We approached the Supreme Court because candidates were being prevented from filing nominations. The Supreme Court directed that security be provided to those filing nominations. Despite its orders, our candidates are still facing attacks and are unable to file their papers," he alleged.

Reddy claimed that nomination papers already submitted to election officials were being torn up and cited an alleged incident in Chittoor in which B-forms, the party authorisation documents for municipal corporation elections, were torn.

One dead, 100 injured in Deveragattu Bunni festival clashes

NARENDRA
KUMAR VARIKUNTLA
KURNOOL

THE traditional Bunni festival at Deveragattu in Holagunda mandal of Kurnool district turned violent on Wednesday night, leaving one person dead and over 100 devotees injured. Held annually on the night following Vijayadashami, the ritual once again witnessed bloody clashes as groups of devotees fought wielding heavy sticks and flaming torches. The tragic outcome has reignited sharp concerns over the persistence of this violent tradition, despite recurring attempts by authorities to prevent casualties.

The violent confrontation erupted following the celestial wedding of Lord Mala

- **Stick fight turns bloody during midnight ritual**
- **Devotees from 11 villages clash over processional idols**
- **Despite tight security, deadly tradition claims another life**



Devotees engage in violent stick fight during the annual Bunni festival at Deveragattu in Holagunda mandal late on Wednesday night

Malleswara Swamy as the processional idols were being brought down the hill.

Devotees from 11 surrounding villages, divided into opposing factions, engaged in a fierce battle to secure possession of the idols of Goddess Malamma and Lord Malleswara Swamy.

Armed with sticks and torches, participants attacked one another, causing severe head trauma and heavy bleeding. Despite suffering painful injuries, devotees continued the fight, transforming the sacred procession into a scene

of chaotic bloodshed. The deceased has been identified as Pothuraju, a resident of Alur. More than 100 injured devotees were rushed to government hospitals in Alur and Adoni for emergency medical treatment. Popularly known

as the "stick fight" festival, the centuries-old ritual takes place at midnight following Vijayadashami, drawing thousands of devotees across Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Telangana, and Maharashtra.

Despite extensive awareness drives and heavy security deployments organised by police and the district administration, the violent clashes continue unabated. Participants typically smuggle sticks onto the temple grounds disguised as regular pilgrims before launching into attacks around midnight. The recurring loss of life and heavy injuries present a formidable challenge to law enforcement, highlighting an urgent need for more effective preventive strategies to curb the dangerous practice.

2027 Inter exams to commence on February 24

DASARI SRINIVASA RAO
VIJAYAWADA

THE Board of Intermediate Education, Andhra Pradesh (BIEAP), has released the tentative timetable for the Intermediate Public Examinations (IPE) for first and second-year students for February-March 2027. The theory examinations will commence on February 24 and continue until March 16.

Board of Intermediate Education (BIE) secretary P Ranjith Basha released theory and practical examination schedule here on Thursday.

The examinations will be conducted in the forenoon session from 9 am to 12 noon. First-year students will begin their examinations with language papers and elective subjects on February 24, while second-year students will take their corresponding Paper-II examinations on February 25.

Practical examinations for general courses will be held from February 1 to 10, while those for vocational courses will take place from February 1 to 15 in two sessions — 9 am to noon and 2 pm to 5 pm. The examinations will be conducted on all days, including Sundays. The Ethics and Human Values examina-

- **First-year exams to conclude on March 15; practicals from Feb 1**
- **BIE releases tentative timetable for first- and second-year students**

tion will be held on January 27 from 10 am to 1 pm, while the Environmental Education examination is scheduled for January 29 during the same hours. The Samagra Shiksha Vocational Trade Examination (NSQF Level-4) theory paper will be conducted on February 17 from 10 am to noon. The board clarified that the timetable is tentative and some dates may be changed depending on public holidays notified by the State government. The vocational examination timetable will be issued separately, though the dates will remain unchanged.

The board also stated that separate question papers will be provided for elective subjects such as Mathematics, Biology, Physics, Chemistry, History, Economics, Civics and Commerce under Part-II, while common question papers will be provided for core and additional subjects, as specified in the schedule.

Ex Srikakulam TDP MLA Lakshmi Devi joins YSRCP

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

FORMER Srikakulam MLA Gunda Lakshmi Devi, along with her key followers, joined the YSR Congress Party in the presence of former Chief Minister and YSRCP President Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy at the party's central office in Tadepalli.

Jagan welcomed Lakshmi Devi and the leaders accompanying her into the party by presenting them with YSRCP scarves. Lakshmi Devi's family had an association of nearly four decades with the Telugu Desam Party. Her husband, late former Minister Gunda Appala Suryanarayana, was elected MLA four times and served as a Minister twice. Lakshmi Devi was elected as Srikakulam MLA on a TDP ticket in the 2014 elections.

Along with Lakshmi Devi, TDP leaders Muddada Praveen, Jallu Rajeev, Simma Narsing Rao, Palli Srinivasa Rao, Kunuku Govind, Gadu Sai Kumar, Gedela Ram Kumar, Yagati Prasad, Chinjala Muttayi Naidu, Chettu Govind, Guruvu Srinivas and Routhu Nageswara Rao joined the YSRCP. Former deputy chief minister Dharmana Krishna Das, former minister Dharmana Prasada Rao and several other YSRCP leaders participated in the programme.

Centre extends CS Sai Prasad's tenure



HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

THE Central government has extended the tenure of Andhra Pradesh chief secretary G Sai Prasad by another six months, until May 31, 2027. The department of personnel and training (DoPT), under the Union ministry of personnel, public grievances and pensions, issued orders approving the extension following a proposal from the state government.

In a letter to the principal secretary of the state general administration (political) department, Rajesh Kumar Yadav, under secretary in the Union ministry of personnel, conveyed the Centre's approval to extend Sai Prasad's tenure by six months. A 1991-batch IAS officer, Sai Prasad had earlier received a six-month extension from June 1 to November 30, 2026. He was otherwise due to retire on November 30. The latest extension follows a formal request made by the state government to the Centre through a demi-official (DO) letter dated September 29.

Four Bhavani devotees killed in road accident at Kathipudi

DEEKSHITULA
SUBRAHMANYAM
KAKINADA

FOUR Bhavani devotees from Denkada in Vizianagaram district died in a tragic road accident near Kathipudi in Prathipadu constituency of Kakinada district on Thursday morning. The accident occurred when a Scorpio vehicle hit devotees who had got down from a private bus to have tea while travelling to Vijayawada for darshan of God-

dess Kanaka Durga. According to preliminary information, around 40 Bhavani devotees were travelling in the private bus from Denkada to Vijayawada when the vehicle developed a technical snag near Kathipudi. The driver pulled over to the roadside to carry out repairs. Some of the devotees got down and were walking towards a nearby shop to have tea when a Scorpio coming from the Etcherla area of Srikakulam district hit them. The impact was severe,

leaving three devotees dead at the spot. Another devotee sustained serious injuries and died while being shifted to a local hospital. The deceased were identified as Chirigidi Yarraiah (38), Lingala Seetharam (45), Bonela Ramana Sattibabu (40), and Tatipudi Sivaprasad (40). They all residents of Denkada. Reports also indicated that some occupants of the Scorpio sustained minor injuries. Peddapuram DSP A B G Tilak and other police personnel reached the

accident spot and inspected the scene. Police initiated an inquiry into the circumstances leading to the accident.

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan expressed shock over the incident. Pawan spoke to officials and assured the families that the government would stand by them. Minister Nara Lokesh also expressed deep condolences over the deaths and sympathised with the bereaved families.

27.5 lakh kids screened, 27,000 health issues detected

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

AS many as 27.54 lakh children have undergone health check-ups in the last three months under the Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK) in Andhra Pradesh, with 27,039 children found with health issues now receiving follow-up treatment and 541 children undergoing surgeries.

Under RBSK, free health screening is being provided to children below 18 years in Anganwadi centres and government and aided schools across the state. The gov-

ernment has set a target to screen 53,66,466 children. The programme was rolled out in July through field health teams.

Of the 27.54 lakh children screened so far - about 51.32 per cent of the target - 9,32,352 were re-examined by medical officers for confirmation. Finally, 27,039 children were identified with treatable defects and are being treated in major hospitals.

Reviewing the implementation on Thursday, health secretary G Veerapandian, along with health and family welfare commissioner K V N

- **27.54 lakh children screened under RBSK in three months.**
- **27,039 children identified with health issues and under treatment**
- **541 children underwent surgeries; screening to be completed by Dec**

Chakradhar Babu and other senior officials, directed that



the screening be completed by December.

Under the programme, 38 types of conditions are being screened - 10 birth defects, 5 diseases, 11 nutritional defi-

ciencies and 12 developmental delays and disabilities.

Among birth defects, officials recorded 455 cases of neural tube defects, 243 of Down syndrome, 153 cleft

lip and palate, 142 clubfoot, 102 hip joint disorders, 126 congenital heart diseases, 83 cataract, 62 hearing impairment, 33 retinopathy of prematurity, and 8 congenital kidney and urinary tract anomalies.

On the nutritional and disease front, 3,673 cases of Vitamin-A deficiency, 1,847 Vitamin-D deficiency, 715 severe malnutrition, 650 anaemia and 338 goitre were detected. Other cases include 5,122 skin problems, 5,320 rheumatic heart disease, 1,494 respiratory issues, 1,141 dental problems, 1,037 epilepsy, 568 diabetes,

311 hypertension, 31 kidney diseases, 69 ear infections, 12 tuberculosis and 9 leprosy.

Developmental issues recorded include 236 vision defects, 413 hearing defects, 246 neuromotor impairments, 181 motor delays, 61 cognitive delays, 45 language delays, 27 behavioural problems, 19 anxiety disorders, 8 ADHD cases, 4 sleep disorders and 35 neurodevelopmental disorders. Besides, 15 autism, 20 learning disorders, 2 severe developmental delays, 24 congenital hypothyroidism and 157 adolescent health issues were also identified.

Cyber risks on the rise owing to rapid AI adoption, scamsters

SEVERAL incidents concerning cyber security have been reported in last 24 hours. From PHP to eMudhra, such cyber security issues have again raised the threats posed in the digital world, which have real life implications. Back home, eMudhra issue has highlighted India's vulnerabilities.

eMudhra is an Indian digital certification authority, which provides digital certificates that help browser confirm that the website is genuine. Several government websites like Income Tax, Aadhaar issuer- UID- AI and many others use a range of eMudhra's keys to sign their security certificates. Without this authentication, browser will not allow the individual or entity to complete their task on these government websites.

In the recent security incident,

security researcher named Wayne said the security encryption issued by eMudhra's certificates were extremely weak and could be cracked in seconds. He alerted major technology firms on such vulnerabilities. As compromised keys could allow cyber criminals to issue fraudulent certificates and impersonate legitimate websites, Apple, Google and Mozilla had blocked the certificates in their browsers- Safari, Chrome and Firefox.

Cloudflare- the cybersecurity firm- also deployed emergency fixes across its network to protect users. Though eMudhra said that no negative impact due to such incident has happened and taken remedial measures, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has constituted a special team to investigate the security incident over

the vulnerabilities over private keys.

Another global incident involving PHP has led to many government websites going offline across the world. PHP is an open-source scripting language, which is more than 3 decades old, and is used widely across the internet. Globally, more than 70 per cent of websites use PHP.

In a recent incident, two critical vulnerabilities were found. These vulnerabilities could allow cyber attackers to take control of web servers of users without the requirement of any authentication. This incident, which came to light through OpenAI's latest model, prompted the National Security Agency (NSA) of US to give an advisory for installing latest security updates. "If an immediate update is not feasible, it is recommended that organisations

take the system offline until it can be fully mitigated," the advisory said.

Several governments including Finland, & Netherland took several government websites offline. These incidents again raise the security threats that are emerging in the digital world owing to artificial intelligence (AI) and other emerging technologies. While cyber security threats have always been there, rapid adoption of AI has increased these risks.

Interestingly, AI is finding out old risks in the current digital world, and at the same time, it is also creating new vulnerabilities. Against this backdrop, India as a nation has to create effective defence against such digital risks. Increasingly, several Indians are falling into the trap of cyber criminals.

According to National Human

Rights Commission (NHRC), Indians have lost around Rs 52,976 crore to cyber frauds over the past six years, with nearly 8 per cent of the losses relating to cyber arrest scams. Similarly, trading related cyber scams are on a rise with majority of the losses arising from such events. Apart from individual losses, government agencies are also facing high proportion of risk from digital war waged against the country by enemy nations.

Critical infrastructure projects like airports, dams, power plants and others are regularly facing cyber threats from neighbouring countries. As digital warfare becomes the new normal, India as a country has to devise ways to defend itself from such emerging threats. In this regard, AI can be a great enabler in accomplishing this objective.

LETTERS

Will RSS goad NDA to do better?

A family that bickers in private rarely broadcasts its quarrels to the neighbourhood ('Bhagwat's Dasara message highlights Hindu undivided family', October 22, 2026). The RSS chief's recent speech shows that differences within an alliance do not always mean a divorce. In politics, public silence often hides intense private negotiations. We must look beyond the dramatic headlines.

For the common citizen, the real question is whether these internal debates bring any benefit to their daily lives. A ruling party and its ideological mentor can disagree on election strategies or social issues, but they share a deep, unbreakable bond. They will eventually find a middle ground because their survival depends on each other. Instead of predicting a split, we should watch if this quiet tension forces the government to focus more on jobs, prices, and everyday governance.

K Chidanand Kumar, Bengaluru

India needs to be on guard against 'enemies'

THIS is further to your editorial 'Bhagwat's Dasara message highlights Hindu undivided family'. The annual Dasara Speech by RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat was more in line with an orderly democratic process to be followed in the country by the opposition, in order to draw attention to their demands. Agitations, Mohan Bhagwat said are healthy democratic procedures to remind the government in power for needed course correction. But, the process and procedure must not be with an intention to damage or hurt the orderly and well-oiled administration of the country at the behest of radical elements or inimical forces conspiring against the government. However, the nation has to guard against the vicious designs of destabilising forces out to wreck the country; and the people must be aware of such designs by such agencies. The virtual critic of Mohan Bhagwat was the Karnataka Home minister, Priyank Kharge who needlessly lampooned Bhagwat being the spokesperson for BJP was a very sad demonstration against RSS for no reason by the Congress government in Karnataka.

S Lakshmi, Hyderabad

RSS firmly behind BJP as ever

THIS refers to "Bhagawat's Dasara message highlights Hindu undivided family," (Oct 22). RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat's Vijayadashami speech warning against "regime change" and foreign-backed plots is not entirely unexpected. The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) share the same ideological roots, making the BJP the political arm of the Sangh Parivar. When the RSS chief warns against political unrest or protests targeting the government, it serves a clear purpose: protecting their shared political power. Any threat to the Modi-led BJP government is seen by the RSS as a threat to its own long-term vision for India. While the RSS and BJP may occasionally disagree on minor internal issues, the RSS will never support opposition parties trying to remove the BJP. Defending the current government against criticism or political change is essential for the RSS to safeguard its own ideological goals.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, Bengaluru

Sangh's 'ostrich in the sand' approach

A propos 'Bhagwat's Dasara message highlights Hindu undivided family' (Hans India: October 22, 2026). RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat's annual Dasara speech was a damp squid, vis-à-vis the burning issue of the CEC-orchestrated SIR. RSS, the ruling BJP's Godfather obviously doesn't find an exercise that disenfranchised over 13 crore eligible Indians worth addressing.

RSS' silence on a grave issue that has dented Indian democracy badly represents the Sangh's design to cling to power by hook or by crook. This has been disturbing to the commoner, whose hope of a nation of uncompromisingly strong democratic credentials has been dashed. When hope fades, desperation and frustration take shape. It is indeed disappointing to note that Bhagwat chose to adopt an 'ostrich in the sand' approach, so that the hornet's nest isn't stirred. Bulldozing a nation's democratic tradition must be met with eyeball-to-eyeball.

Dr. George Jacob, Kochi

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BENGALURU ONLINE

'Stop harassing film producers in the name of awards and subsidies'

BENGALURU: Film director Mansore has urged the government to simplify the application process for state film awards and subsidies, alleging that the existing procedures impose an unnecessary financial burden on Kannada film producers. Applications have been invited for the 2022 and 2023 State Film Awards, with October 31 set as the deadline. However, delays in the award and subsidy process over the past seven to eight years have made it difficult for producers to submit applications, he said in a press release. Mansore pointed out that only a handful of production houses in the Kannada film industry operate on a full-fledged basis, while most are independent or part-time ventures that close their offices after producing one or two films. Many producers do not systematically preserve the necessary permissions and documents related to film production. After a film's release, directors, production managers and other team members often move on to different assignments, leaving producers struggling to collect the required paperwork. He alleged that the government had made the application process excessively complicated, apparently to avoid disputes after announcing awards and subsidies. Applicants are required to submit 10 copies of certain documents separately for awards and subsidies, even though such a requirement does not apply when submitting films for the National Film Awards, he said.

The biggest hurdle, according to Mansore, is the mandatory submission of Blu-ray discs. He said Blu-ray was a preferred format for viewing films in full 2K resolution a decade ago, but DVDs and Blu-ray discs have since largely disappeared from the market.

Read more at <https://epaper.thehansindia.com>

Equal before law? Ask the convict and the undertrial

CHOLLETI

IN the same week that an Indian prison system holds thousands of undertrials who have never been convicted of anything, the Allahabad High Court opened its doors wide for a man convicted of murder, so that he may contest an election, possibly on a ruling-party ticket.

The order is almost impossible to read without a double-take. Nandlal Rai, also known as Babloo Rai, was sentenced to life imprisonment by a Varanasi trial court in April 2025 for the murder of Pramod Kumar Nigam, an activist of the Ram Janmabhoomi movement. A division bench of the High Court, comprising justices Siddharth and Vinai Kumar Dwivedi, has now not only granted him bail but stayed his conviction and sentence while his appeal is pending. The stated purpose, in his own lawyer's words, is his wish to fight the 2027 Uttar Pradesh Assembly election as an independent, or "if possible, on a BJP ticket."

The court's reasoning, as reported, was striking: the right to contest elections is "akin to the right to livelihood," and, in the words attributed to the bench, "the common man's right to livelihood... is no less important than a politician's right to contest elections." In one clean sweep, a murder convict's political ambition was elevated into a constitutionally protected livelihood interest.

Now hold that up against another, far more numerous reality. Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam have spent

more than six years in custody in the Delhi riots "larger conspiracy" case — arrested, accused, never convicted. The trial has not begun. A charge sheet running to 17,000 pages and a prosecution witness list reportedly approaching 900 sit before a court that has not yet framed charges.

On January 5, 2026, the Supreme Court refused them bail. The Delhi High Court has rejected Khalid's plea repeatedly. Across the country, journalists, activists and ordinary citizens are detained under stringent laws, some for years, with no date fixed for charges to be framed, let alone a verdict.

Set the two images side by side and a question forms that no fair observer can avoid: is the higher judiciary now applying one standard to those aligned with power, and another to those who challenge it?

The honest objection — and why it is not enough

Every fair analysis must state the strongest counter-argument, because it is a real one and not a pretext. The two situations are legally different. Rai's case is a suspension of a conviction pending appeal — a recognised power the High Courts exercise under the criminal procedure code, and one the Supreme Court has itself used for public representatives who stand to lose their office and their constituents' representation while an appeal drags on.

A stay of conviction preserves the status quo until the appeal is heard. It does not declare anyone innocent. Bail for someone accused of terrorism offences, on the



The law gives every judge discretion. The question is not whether the power to suspend a conviction exists. It is whether, in a republic where thousands rot as undertrials and where even the accused in a murder case queue for years for appeals, the most urgent use of that discretion is to rescue the electoral prospect of a convict who, his own counsel concedes, emerged as a suspect only days after the FIR and stands convicted on circumstantial evidence

other hand, is governed by a far stricter statutory regime — the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act inverts the usual presumption and requires a court to be satisfied that the accusation is prima facie not true. The judges denying bail to Khalid and Imam are, on this reading, simply applying a law Parliament wrote.

This is true, and it must be said plainly to keep this article honest. But it answers only the narrow question of jurisdiction and statutory text. It does not answer the larger question of equity, priority and perception — and it is precisely there that the unease settles.

The law gives every judge discretion. The question is not whether the power to suspend a conviction exists. It is

whether, in a republic where thousands rot undertrial and where even the accused in a murder case queue for years for appeals, the most urgent use of that discretion is to rescue the electoral prospect of a convict who, his own counsel concedes, emerged as a suspect only days after the FIR and stands convicted on circumstantial evidence — one whom media reports have also linked to the late gangster-turned-politician Mukhtar Ansari.

Nothing in the reported order suggests the bench doubted his eventual acquittal. It suspended conviction to protect a candidacy. Meanwhile, for the accused who has spent six years awaiting trial — for whom the Supreme Court's own judgment in *Union of India*

v. K.A. Najeed recognises that prolonged incarceration can itself justify bail — the discretion repeatedly bends the other way.

Speedy trial, the Court has said for decades, is part of the guarantee of life and personal liberty under Article 21. Six years without charges framed is, on any reading, the failure of that guarantee. Yet the higher courts' remedy has been to let the detention continue.

What is really being tested

It would be wrong to reduce this to a single political party or a single judge. The cases are decided by different benches, under different statutes, on different facts. The deeper trend is institutional.

The contrast reveals what is increasingly the operative hierarchy in Indian criminal justice: political value trumps individual liberty. A conviction can be stayed the moment it threatens a career in representative politics. But a presumption of innocence, the very foundation of a free society, is treated as dispensable the moment an accused is branded a "dissident," an "activist," a "urban Naxal," or a "rioter." The label, not the evidence, becomes the operative fact.

That is how you get the strangest arithmetic in the world's largest democracy: a man proven guilty enough to be sentenced to life for murder is free to seek office, while men never proven guilty of anything sit into a seventh year waiting for a court to even tell them the precise charges they must answer.

The danger to the judiciary is reputational and profound.

Courts command obedience not because they hold the sword or the purse, but because the people believe they are even-handed. Every time a stay of conviction drops for a political aspirant while an undertrial's bail fails for the ninth time, a little of that belief drains away. Law, wrote one jurist, is not an ass; but it can be made to look like one when it is ridden by opposing riders on the same afternoon.

Where this is heading

The honest answer to "where is the higher judiciary heading" is that it is heading in two directions at once, and that is the problem.

In one direction lies a judiciary internalising the priorities of state power: alert to the political convenience of a suspect aligned with the ruling dispensation, hardening itself against the accused who stands outside it. In the other direction — visible in the occasional bail grant, in Najeed, in the rare acquittal — lies the older, better judiciary: the one that saw courts as the last refuge of the friendless and the unpopular. The outcome has not been decided. It will be decided case by case, and it will be decided by whether the higher judiciary remembers a simple, ancient truth: the test of a court's courage is not how it treats the powerful man who wants a favour, but how it treats the powerless man who has nothing left but the law. On the present evidence, the balance of that test is hanging, and not comfortably.

(The writer is with the Cholleti BlackRobe Chambers, Hyderabad, and writes on the economy, politics and law)

SBI data leak: What happened, what data was exposed and what customers should do

DR. MUCHUKOTA SURESH BABU

SBI has identified 3,897 customer records containing personal information in a dataset found on the dark web. The bank is investigating the suspected exposure, which raises concerns about targeted financial fraud and identity theft.

The State Bank of India (SBI) is investigating a suspected data leak after identifying 3,897 customer records containing personally identifiable information (PII) in a dataset available on the dark web.

In a stock exchange filing on October 21, the country's largest public-sector lender said a preliminary analysis of approximately 3.75 lakh records had revealed the customer information. SBI received alerts about the suspected exposure on October 16 from its threat intelligence service provider, the Defence Cyber Agency and the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In).

The bank has activated its cyber incident response and containment protocols and appointed an independent cybersecurity agency empanelled with CERT-In to investigate the incident. The investigation aims to establish the authenticity, source and extent of the suspected exposure. SBI said the incident had no material impact on its business operations, financial performance or

business continuity. Its core banking functions continue to operate normally.

What data was exposed?

According to SBI's filing, the records reportedly contained customers' names, gender, registered mobile numbers, dates of birth, email addresses and residential addresses. The dataset also included branch and Customer Information File (CIF) identifiers, lead IDs, loan-related metadata and information from other associated files.

The bank is still verifying the authenticity and completeness of the data and investigating its origin. The findings do not establish that all the customers concerned have suffered financial losses or that their bank accounts have been accessed.

Does the leak mean SBI accounts have been hacked?

Not necessarily. Exposure of personal information does not automatically mean that bank accounts have been compromised. SBI's preliminary findings concern personal information and loan-related metadata. The bank has not established that account passwords, PINs, one-time passwords (OTPs) or transaction credentials were exposed.

However, the information could help fraudsters make scams more convincing. Criminals who know

a customer's name, phone number, address or loan-related details could impersonate bank officials and claim there is a problem with an account, loan application or KYC verification.

Because the caller may already know personal details, the communication could appear genuine. Customers should not treat familiarity with their information as proof of identity.

How could the data be misused?

According to Sarthak Dubey, co-founder and COO of Mitigata, customer information can be exposed through systems beyond a bank's core banking infrastructure. Loan applications, KYC documents and account-opening forms may be stored across loan origination systems, employee email accounts, shared drives and third-party platforms used by vendors. Potential entry points include compromised employee or vendor credentials, phishing, infostealer malware and misconfigured storage systems or application programming interfaces (APIs).

Dubey cautioned that investigators must establish whether the information originated from SBI's systems, a third-party service provider or another source before drawing conclusions.

The key concern is that exposed personal information could be used

to make fraudulent calls, messages and emails appear legitimate, increasing the risk of phishing, identity theft and financial fraud.

What should SBI customers do?

SBI customers do not need to panic or automatically close their accounts. They should, however, remain alert to unexpected calls, messages and emails involving banking, loans or identity verification.

Never share an OTP, PIN or password with anyone, even if the person claims to represent SBI. Avoid clicking on unfamiliar links or installing applications at the request of an unsolicited caller. Verify suspicious communications independently through SBI's official website, mobile application or verified customer-service channels.

Customers should also keep transaction alerts enabled, review account activity regularly and report unauthorised transactions immediately. Checking credit reports for unfamiliar loans, credit cards or credit enquiries can help identify potential misuse of personal information. Those who do not require Aadhaar biometric authentication may also consider locking their biometrics through official UIDAI channels.

Anyone who suspects financial fraud should contact their bank immediately or call India's cybercrime helpline at 1930.

What happens next?

SBI's investigation must establish the source and authenticity of the data, identify any affected systems or third-party providers and determine the number of customers potentially affected. The bank will also need to secure any vulnerabilities, review access controls and strengthen monitoring for attempts to misuse the information.

Identifying potentially affected customers and communicating verified findings will be important in limiting the risk of follow-on fraud.

SBI has stated that the suspected exposure has not materially affected its operations, financial performance or business continuity. The bank said it would take appropriate remedial and preventive measures in line with applicable regulatory requirements.

The investigation is ongoing, and the full source and extent of the suspected exposure remain unclear.

The bottom line

The identification of 3,897 customer records containing personal information does not, by itself, mean that bank accounts have been hacked or money stolen. Until SBI establishes the full facts, customers should protect their banking credentials, independently verify suspicious communications and report suspected fraud promptly.

DROUGHT DEFIED

Nellore farmer beats dry spell with natural farming

- Sows 25 crop varieties using Pre-Monsoon Dry Sowing, surviving a 4-month drought with only 12 mm of rain
- Earns over Rs 20,000 in net returns from just 0.30 acres of field crops and fruit-bearing bund plantations
- Keeps soil temperatures at a cool 31.88°C, over 20°C lower than neighboring conventional and barren fields

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

EVEN after four months without significant rainfall and with no irrigation facility, a farmer in Nellore district has demonstrated how natural farming practices can help sustain crops and generate income under challenging cli-



E Srinivasulu from Mahimaluru village in Atmakur mandal succeeds to overcome to the impact of El Nino by adopting natural farming method

matic conditions. Forty four-year-old farmer E Srinivasulu from Mahimaluru village in Atmakur mandal has relied on Pre-Monsoon Dry Sowing (PMDS), crop diversification, soil-cover management and bund plantations to build resilience against prolonged dry spells associated with El Niño conditions.

Srinivasulu's journey into natural farming began in

2017 after years of struggling with rising input costs and uncertain returns from chemical farming. Introduced to the approach by community resource person Venkatarami Reddy, he initially experimented on 50 cents of land, harvesting 540 kg of paddy. Encouraged by the results, he expanded the practices and later became an internal community resource person to

guide other farmers. For the past eight years, he has adopted PMDS to make effective use of available soil moisture. On April 18 and 19, 2026, he sowed 25 crop varieties on 0.30 acres using pelleted seeds and applied 150 kg of Ghanajeevamrutham. The major crops included indigo, vempali, dhaincha, sunhemp and red gram.

The field received just 12 mm of rainfall on May 31, with no subsequent rainfall or irrigation during the reported dry spell.

Despite the conditions, the diversified farm continued to provide produce and fodder, while additional returns from standing crops were expected. His six-foot-wide bunds, planted with mango, banana, amla, jamun, sapota, guava and drumstick, provide additional produce and income. The plantations also contribute to biodiversity and act as barriers

against hot winds. Srinivasulu reported crop returns of approximately Rs 15,210 from the 0.30-acre plot. After deducting Rs 2,000 towards seeds and Ghanajeevamrutham, the estimated net income from field crops stood at Rs 13,210.

Bund plantations generated an additional reported income of Rs 7,750, taking the combined reported and expected returns to around Rs 20,960.

Soil temperature readings were recorded at 31.88°C on his Natural Farming plot, compared with 55.80°C on barren land and 51.78°C on conventional farmland.

His experience highlights how crop diversity, soil cover, bio-inputs and bund plantations can help rainfed farmers manage climatic uncertainty, support livestock and household needs, and create multiple income streams despite limited water availability.

103 ZPTC nominations filed on Day-2

DASARI SRINIVASA RAO
VIJAYAWADA

THE nomination process for Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency (ZPTC) and Mandal Parishad Territorial Constituency (MPTC) elections gathered momentum in NTR and Krishna districts on Thursday, with 103 nominations filed for ZPTC seats on the second day. The cumulative number of nominations in the two districts reached 122, with 57 in NTR and 65 in Krishna, including those filed on the first day.

In NTR district, 53 nominations were filed on Thursday for the 16 ZPTC segments, taking the total to 57. Kanchikacherla received the highest number of nominations on the day at seven, followed by Gampalagudem with six. Veerullapadu and Ibrahimpatnam received five nominations each, while Jaggayyapeta and Vatsavai received four each.

Mylavaram, Vijayawada Rural, Tiruvuru and A Konduru received three nominations each on



TDP senior leader Murakonda Edukondala Rao of Gani Atkuru village files his nomination as the party's candidate for the Kanchikacherla ZPTC seat before Returning Officer Suseela at the NTR Zilla Parishad office in Vijayawada on Thursday

Thursday. Penuganchiprolu, Chandralapadu, Reddigudem and Vissannapeta recorded two nominations each, while Nandigama received one. No nominations had been filed for the G Konduru ZPTC segment till Thursday. In Krishna district, 50 nominations were filed on Thursday for the 26 ZPTC segments, taking the cumulative tally to 65.

Candidates from the

ruling NDA constituents — the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), Jana Sena and BJP — as well as the YSRCP, Left parties and Congress filed nominations accompanied by party leaders and supporters.

With Friday, October 23, being the last day for filing nominations, officials expect a rush at the centres and are taking steps to maintain law and order and facilitate the process.

SEC, police changed stance with SC intervention: Ambati

VL SYAMSUNDAR
GUNTUR

FORMER minister and YSRCP Guntur district president Ambati Rambabu said that incidents of irregularities had taken place at 19 locations during the municipal election nomination process. Following the Supreme Court's directions, the election process had been temporarily stayed at the affected locations, but not across all constituencies. He alleged that the Election Commission and the police had changed their stance only after the Supreme Court intervened.

Addressing the media here on Thursday, he claimed that public opposition to the ruling alliance

was growing while support for the YSRCP was increasing. He alleged that Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu was encouraging lawlessness.

He urged IAS and IPS officers to correct their mistakes, warning that a future YSRCP government would not spare officials responsible for wrongdoing and would bring them before the court. He alleged that alliance leaders were using the police to threaten opposition candidates and prevent them from filing nominations at several places.

He said the YSRCP would contest 76 seats in Guntur and claimed that the elections were being conducted under the supervision of the Supreme Court.

SARAS MELA

Every Lakhpati Didi has a success story: Collector

DASARI SRINIVASA RAO
VIJAYAWADA

EVERY Lakhpati Didi participating in the National SARAS Ajeevika Mela in Vijayawada has a success story to share, NTR District Collector Dr G Lakshmisha said on Thursday, describing the fair as a successful platform for rural women entrepreneurs.

The national-level exhibition, being held at Punnami Ghat, has been receiving an encouraging response from visitors over the past 10 days. Addressing a media conference at the venue, the Collector said the fair had recorded business transactions worth more than Rs 6 crore during this period.

He said it was a matter of



Collector Dr G Lakshmisha addressing the media at the National SARAS Mela venue at Punnami Ghat on Thursday

pride that a national-level SARAS Mela was being organised outside Delhi and the National Capital Region for the first time, with the support of the Union and State governments. Since its inauguration by President Droupadi Murmu, the fair has attracted visitors in large numbers, he added.

The exhibition features

products showcased by self-help group women entrepreneurs from various States and Union Territories. Around 600 stalls have been set up, offering a wide range of handloom products, handicrafts and other items. The India Food Court has emerged as a major attraction, serving traditional cuisines from different parts of the country.



TDP state leader Madigani Gurunadham addressing a press conference at Vijayawada Press Club on Thursday

YSRCP using ABV to divide communities: Madigani

DASARI SRINIVASA RAO
VIJAYAWADA

TELUGU Desam Party (TDP) state leader Madigani Gurunadham accused the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) of allegedly using retired IPS officer AB Venkateswara Rao, an independent candidate for Vijayawada Mayor's post, to create divisions between the Kamma and Kapu communities.

Addressing a press conference at Vijayawada Press Club on Thursday, Gurunadham objected to Venkateswara Rao's recent remarks against Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and TDP general secretary Nara Lokesh. He alleged that the retired officer was echoing the YSRCP's language and attempting to damage the TDP politically.

Defending Naidu's handling of the aftermath of the Hudhud cyclone, Gurunadham said the Chief Minister had worked from Visakhapatnam for several days to restore essential services and rehabilitate the city.

He described Venkateswara Rao's criticism of Naidu's response to flooding as politically motivated.

Collector holds meet with political parties

VL SYAMSUNDAR
GUNTUR

DISTRICT collector and District Election Officer CM Sai Kanth Varma said that the election process in the district was continuing peacefully.

He addressed a meeting with the representatives of various political parties at the Collectorate here on Thursday. General observer Veerabrahmaiah and expenditure observer Nandini Salaria also took part. Speaking on this occasion, he explained

the election process and said that appropriate action would be taken based on the information and feedback provided by political party representatives regarding the conduct of the local body elections. He said voter slips would be distributed soon.

District Revenue Officer NSK Khajavali, GMC additional commissioner I Kishore, Congress representative Botla Brahmaiah, TDP representatives Kancherla Sivaramayya, N Omkar, and representatives of various political parties were present.

Digital training for visually impaired students begins

MV SYAM SUNDAR
VIJAYAWADA

THE HEPSN wing of Andhra Loyola College, in collaboration with Benetech – Bookshare, USA, inaugurated a three-day Advanced Digital Training Workshop for visually impaired students. Running from Thursday, the programme aims to empower students with modern digital skills and assistive technology.

Inaugurating the event, chief resource person G Kumaresan highlighted how specialised digital training enables visually impaired learners to independently navigate higher education and access academic resources.



Customised Laptops being distributed to students

es. College leaders Rector Fr Royappa and Correspondent Fr Dr Francis Xavier reaffirmed their commitment to an inclusive campus.

A key highlight was the distribution of specialised laptops, sponsored by the Torchit Foundation, to 12

‘Fear of defeat haunting YSRCP’

VL SYAMSUNDAR
NARASARAOPET

MP Lavu Sri Krishnadevarayalu urged YSRCP leaders to come forward and file their nominations to contest in the ensuing local body elections. He assured them of full support in filing their nominations. He said that every eligible person has the right to contest in the elections.

Several TDP candidates for ZPTC and MPTC seats in Narasaraopet, Palnadu district, filed their nominations along with their supporters on Thursday. MP Lavu Sri Krishnadevarayalu participated in the

programme and extended his support to the TDP candidates.

Speaking on the occasion, he expressed concern that no one from the YSRCP was coming forward to file nominations. He said every eligible person had the right to contest elections and emphasised that elections should be conducted freely and fairly.

He alleged that YSRCP leaders were resorting to provocative acts near nomination centres instead of coming forward to contest the elections.

He further said that YSRCP candidates were withdrawing their nominations due to fear of defeat.

a distinct dimension to the contest, bringing a former senior police officer into the race for the city's top civic post.

The three candidates have distinct political and professional backgrounds, making the mayoral contest a closely watched event. Their respective support bases, public profiles and political networks are expected to shape the campaign as Vijayawada prepares for the municipal polls.

With the three prominent candidates in the race, the VMC mayoral election has become a focal point of political discussion, with the outcome drawing keen interest among residents and political observers.

Three prominent faces in race for mayor post

DASARI SRINIVASA RAO
VIJAYAWADA

THE Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC) mayoral election has attracted considerable political attention, with three prominent personalities entering the fray for the prestigious post. The candidates, representing different political and professional backgrounds, are set to make the contest keenly watched in the city.

The NDA has backed Jana Sena Party candidate and former MLA Vangaveeti Radhakrishna, popularly known as Vangaveeti Radha, for the Vijayawada Mayor's post. He is the son of former MLA Vangaveeti Mohana Ranga Rao and

- The candidates, representing different political and professional backgrounds, are set to make the contest keenly watched in the city

former legislator Chennupati Ratna Kumari. Radha was elected to the Andhra Pradesh Assembly from Vijayawada East as a Congress candidate in 2004.

He later contested from Vijayawada Central on a Praja Rajyam Party ticket in 2009 and from Vijayawada East on a YSRCP ticket in 2014, losing on both occasions. Before the 2019 Assembly elections, he left



CPI, CPM and Congress support independent candidate and retired IPS officer AB Venkateswara Rao

the YSRCP and joined the TDP. As part of the seat-sharing arrangement within the NDA, the Vijayawada Mayor's post was allotted to the Jana Sena Party. Although Radha had been aspiring for the Mayor's post from the beginning, he



YSRCP candidate and former Mayor Rayana Bhagya Lakshmi

initially remained with the TDP. He subsequently quit the TDP and joined the Jana Sena Party. Later, Deputy Chief Minister and Jana Sena chief K Pawan Kalyan announced Radha's candidature for the Vijayawada Mayor's post. After a gap



TDP, BJP support Jana Sena Party candidate and former MLA Vangaveeti Radhakrishna

of 12 years, Radha has returned to the electoral arena, this time seeking the Mayor's post. He is campaigning alongside NDA leaders, seeking an opportu-

nity to serve the public and invoking the public service legacy of his parents.

The YSRCP has fielded former Mayor Rayana Bhagya Lakshmi, who held the office from 2021 to 2026. Drawing on her experience in municipal administration, she is highlighting the work undertaken during her five-year tenure while criticising what she describes as shortcomings in the NDA government's two years in power.

The third candidate, retired IPS officer and former Intelligence chief AB Venkateswara Rao, is contesting as an independent with the support of the CPI, CPM and Congress. His candidature has added



Zeenath Khan takes Hyderabad's history to Mumbai LitFest shortlist

ASRA GHOUSE

For Hyderabad author Zeenath Khan, who published her debut novel at the age of 52, the path to publication was an exacting journey that began in 2017. Now shortlisted for the 'Mumbai LitFest' in the 'Best First Book: Fiction' category for her novel, 'The Sirens of September', Khan recalls discarding four or five drafts including trashing a manuscript of about 1,20,000 words while bringing the book to life.

"It was definitely a welcome surprise for me," says Khan, smiling at the recognition. She's also the second Hyderabad woman to be shortlisted for the category in the past six years.

For someone who faced criticism for her commitment to writing about a subject, such as Hyderabad's history, Khan endured more than her share of judgement.

"Women are always told, 'You can't do this, you can't do that.' You know how much I was discouraged from writing the book? They were like, 'Oh, who will be interested? This Hyderabad topic is so boring.' But I

At 52, Hyderabad author Zeenath Khan turned years of persistence into her debut novel, 'The Sirens of September'. Now shortlisted for the Mumbai LitFest, her journey is a testament to perseverance

think it's very important for women to pursue their passions, whatever they are," she reflects.

"My daughter, she cheered me on a lot," recalls Khan. "She encouraged me to not give up and keep at it." And the rest is history.

Set against the 1948 annexation of Hyderabad State (Operation Polo), the historical fiction novel brings to life a chapter of Hyderabad's history with lush, vivid prose and impeccable dialogue; it almost feels like tasting something exquisite.

"As a Hyderabad, I believed I could lend authenticity," notes the author. "There's a certain understanding of the customs and the place that someone being from outside could

not do."

Through research across the United Kingdom and India, Khan honed her craft and narrative voice.

"You have to persevere and believe in your story. And you have to be a bit humble also, because everybody thinks that their story is the best. But you have to be open to feedback, to criticism," she says. "I wrote to maybe ten or twelve agents in the UK; didn't hear back. Then Kanishka Gupta took it on in 2023. From there, after two or three revisions, it was handed over to the publisher and came out in 2025. My editor at Penguin Random House (India) was brilliant. She made suggestions without forcing me to do anything that went against my book,"



Zeenath Khan

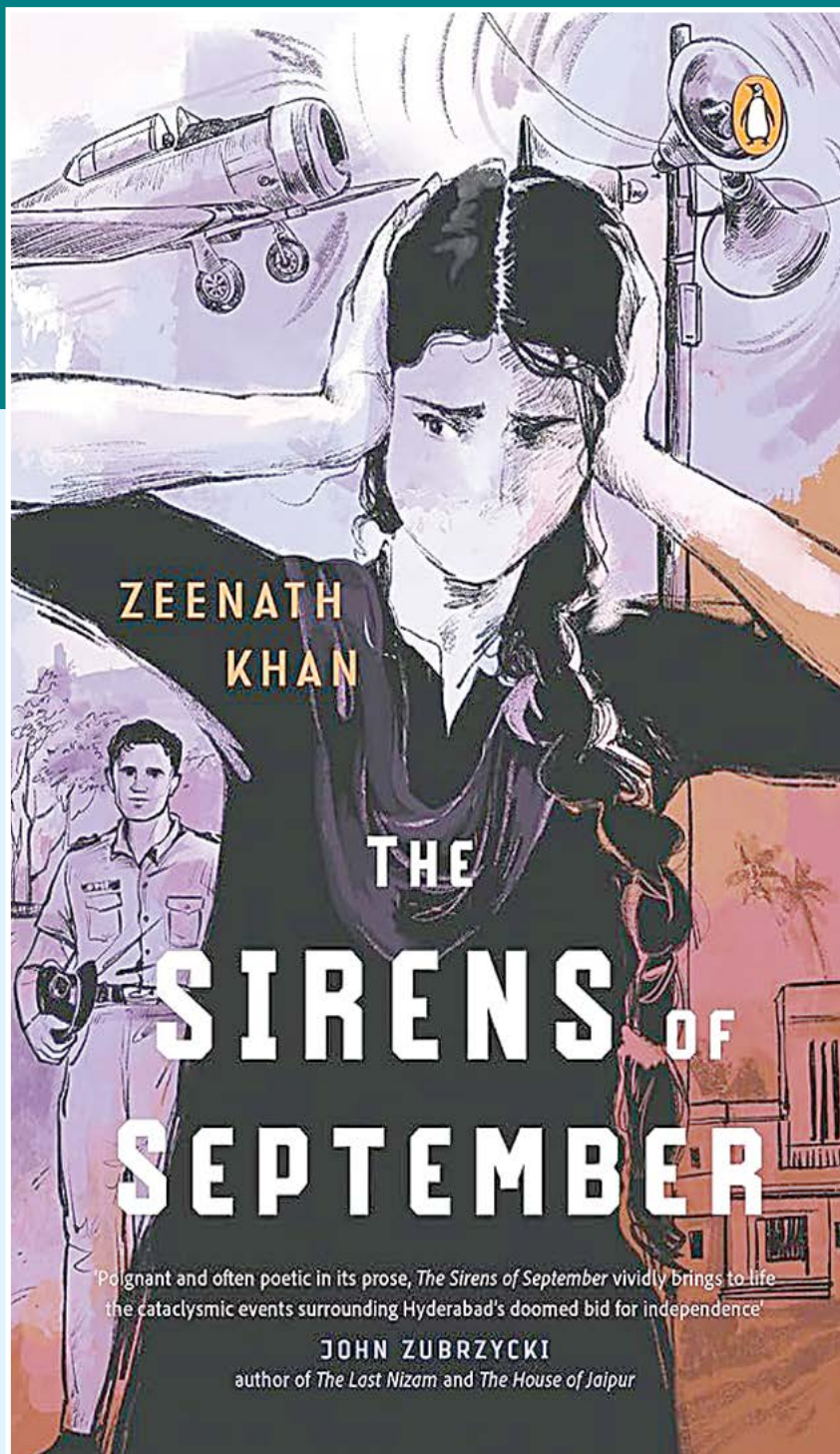
shares Khan, on the slow burn process of traditional publishing.

Reflecting on the shortlist, she's humble. "It's a very subjective thing who wins because the genres of all three shortlisted titles are different. I'm just very excited and nervous."

But why this subject? "I wanted to create nostalgia for a time and place we

cannot visit. I feel that if you write it as fiction and people get involved with the characters and their emotions, it leaves an impact," she shares.

"I think more people should write about the events of the South," says the author, who is hopeful that this shortlist will shift publishers' appetite for stories from the region.



Mommy-to-be Kiara Advani flaunts her new look in a baggy shirt to keep baby bump out of sight



Mommy-to-be Kiara Advani seems to be living her best phase. The actor was seen embracing a fresh look.

The actress, who is expecting her second child with husband Sidharth Malhotra, recently flaunted her new hairstyle in a mirror selfie, sporting a baggy and loose brown shirt paired with grey trousers.

Kiara took to her social media account to share a glimpse of her new look, and wrote, "Something about a haircut just makes you feel lighter."

The actress looked effortlessly stylish in the brown button-down shirt, which she paired with comfortable grey trousers and was seen posing for the mirror selfie.

The actress seemed to have deliberately chosen a loose and baggy outfit to avoid her baby bump being seen.

For the uninitiated, the actress and husband Sidharth Malhotra

announced that they are set to embrace parenthood once again.

On October 7, Kiara and Sidharth announced their second pregnancy through an adorable social media post.

The couple shared a picture of their daughter, Saraayah Malhotra, holding a pair of ivory knitted baby booties, hinting at the newest addition to their family.

"Blessed once again with the greatest gift of all... Our hearts are so full of love and gratitude," read the caption.

Talking about Kiara and Sidharth's love story, they fell in love while working together on their film Shershaah, which was released in 2021.

After dating for some time, the couple tied the knot in February 2023 in a traditional wedding ceremony in Rajasthan.

The actors welcomed their first child, daughter Saraayah, in June 2025. (IANS)

Breast cancer doesn't always start with a lump

A small change in the breast, an unusual discharge or a slight change in skin texture may seem harmless, but sometimes these are early warning signs of breast cancer. During Breast Cancer Awareness Month, healthcare experts are urging women to pay closer attention to their breast health, recognise unusual changes and seek medical advice without delay.

Breast cancer remains one of the most common cancers affecting women in India. While medical advancements have significantly improved treatment outcomes, delayed diagnosis continues to be a major concern. Many women ignore early symptoms because there is no pain, while others hesitate to consult a doctor due to fear, social stigma or lack of awareness.

According to the International Agency for Research on Cancer's GLOBOCAN 2022 estimates, India recorded approximately 1.92 lakh new breast cancer cases and 98,337 deaths, with breast cancer accounting for 26.6% of all newly diagnosed cancers among women.

The concern is equally relevant in Telangana. According to the Telangana government's Cancer Portal, approximately 30.35 lakh women's cancer screenings were conducted between March 2023 and March 2026. The state reports an overall cancer incidence rate of 125 per lakh population, highlighting the importance of strengthening cancer awareness and early detection efforts.

Dr. Santosh Kumar Chellapuram, Consultant Medical Oncology and Hematology-Oncology at STAR Hospitals, Hyderabad, said, "One of the biggest misconceptions about breast cancer is that it always begins with a painful lump. In reality,

Breast cancer may not always begin with a noticeable lump, making awareness of subtle changes crucial for early detection. Recognising warning signs, undergoing timely screening and seeking medical advice can play a vital role in improving treatment outcomes

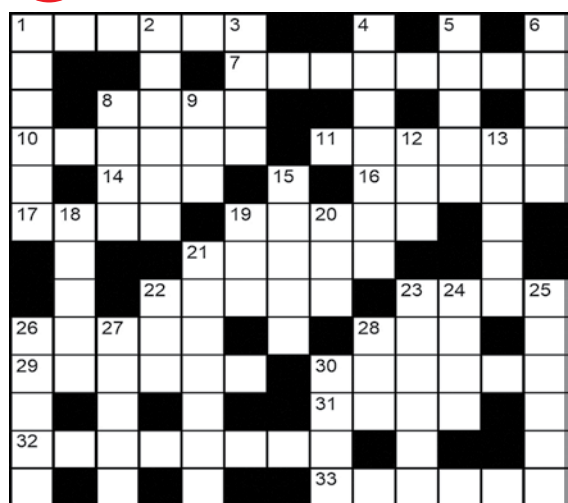


Regular physical activity, maintaining a healthy weight, limiting alcohol and avoiding tobacco can contribute to better overall health and may help reduce cancer risk. Women should become familiar with the normal appearance and feel of their breasts and discuss appropriate clinical examinations and mammography screening with their doctors based on age and individual risk.

Dr. Chellapuram further emphasised, "Fear should never become a reason for delaying diagnosis. A breast lump does not automatically mean cancer, but ignoring it can be dangerous. Our message to women is simple: Know your body, recognise unusual changes and seek medical advice early. Breast cancer awareness should not be limited to October; it must become a year-round priority."

With increasing awareness, improved diagnostic facilities and advances in cancer treatment, breast cancer is no longer a diagnosis without hope. This Breast Cancer Awareness Month, the message is clear: early detection can save lives, and a timely consultation could make all the difference.

CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- Phrase of distress (2,4)
- Close by (8)
- Unwilling to work (4)
- Brings about (6)
- Capital of Nagaland (6)
- Sheltered side (3)
- Titled ladies (5)
- Auctioneer's cry (4)
- They are used to photograph bones ? (1-4)
- Be of use (5)
- Leaves out part of seed (4)
- Visit briefly (3,2)
- Comforter or quilt (3)
- Oral (6)
- Withdraw (6)
- Prayer ending (4)
- Pre-dinner drink (8)
- Flowed out (6)

DOWN

- 960 grains make two ____ (6)
- Rubbed out (6)
- Beams of sunlight (4)
- Foul-smelling, poisonous oil (7)
- Obscure (5)
- Cartographer's book (5)
- Respite (4)
- Last letter of the alphabet (US) (3)
- Owens (3)
- Repasts (5)
- Make a speech (5)
- Dominant (2,3)
- Sixteen for Caesar (3)
- Three-toed sloths (3)
- Loss of memory (7)
- Oaf, lout (3)
- Safe harbours (6)
- Once ____ a time : at some vague time in the past ? (4)
- Caused a boat to turn over or fall down (6)
- "Fiddliesticks" (5)
- Strength (5)
- The finished edge of fabric (3)
- Bollywood's greatest Mohd. ____ (4)



Solution to October 22

SUDOKU



Solution to October 22



Scholarships

Scholarship Name 1:	Sakal India Foundation Career Development Scholarship 2026
Description:	The Sakal India Foundation Career Development Scholarship 2026 is being offered by the Sakal India Foundation to support ambitious Indian students in their academic and career advancement. This scholarship provides financial aid and mentorship to candidates exhibiting academic excellence and commitment to professional growth. Applications are open to residents of India who have completed at least Class 10 level of education. Applicants must have a valid admission letter and have secured a minimum of 85% aggregate marks in the previous class. An award of up to ₹10,000.
Eligibility:	31-10-2026 Online applications only www.b4s.in/hans/SIC55 https://dle9eg0t055l3.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/sakal-india-foundation-career-development-scholarship-20261792464627.png
Prizes & Rewards:	
Last Date to Apply:	
Application mode:	
Short Url:	
QR Code:	
Scholarship Name 2:	Mahindra Saarthi Abhiyaan 2026-27
Description:	The Mahindra Saarthi Abhiyaan 2026-27, an initiative by Mahindra & Mahindra Limited, supports the educational aspirations of daughters of truck drivers across India. The scholarship provides financial assistance to eligible girls studying in Class 11, Class 12, Graduation, and Post-Graduation, helping them continue their education despite financial challenges.
Eligibility:	• Open to girls studying in Class 11, Class 12, Graduation, or Post-Graduation. • Applicants must be daughters/wards of truck drivers. • Students from across India are eligible to apply. • Children of Buddy4Study or Mahindra & Mahindra employees are not eligible.
Note:	If the latest semester results are unavailable, the previous odd-semester results may be considered for selection.
Prizes & Rewards:	INR 10,000 as a fixed scholarship award for each selected scholar.
Last Date to Apply:	30-11-2026
Application mode:	Online Application Only
Short Url:	www.b4s.in/hans/MHSA4
QR Code:	https://dle9eg0t055l3.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/mahindra-saarthi-abhiyaan-2026-271792464607.png
Scholarship Name 3:	SDEF India Scholarship Program 2026-27
Description:	The SDEF India Scholarship Program 2026-27, an initiative of the Swami Dayanand Education Foundation (SDEF), supports academically meritorious students from financially constrained families who are beginning professional undergraduate courses in India. Selected students can receive up to INR 50,000 per academic year, renewable for up to four years, subject to annual review and continued eligibility.
Eligibility:	• Open to students admitted to the first year of a full-time eligible professional undergraduate programme in 2026-27. • The applicant's annual family income must not exceed INR 12 lakh from all sources. • Applicants should not have taken a drop or gap year after Class 12. • Students must meet the applicable academic, entrance examination and category-wise eligibility criteria for their course. • Eligible programmes include B.Tech./B.E., MBBS, BDS, and B.Arch. • Applicants must be willing to participate in further assessment and selection stages, if shortlisted.
Prizes & Rewards:	Up to INR 50,000 per academic year, renewable for up to four years, subject to annual review and continued eligibility. The scholarship amount is disbursed directly to the student's college or university towards approved educational expenses.
Last Date to Apply:	30-11-2026
Application mode:	Online Application Only
Short Url:	www.b4s.in/hans/SDEF1
QR Code:	https://dle9eg0t055l3.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/sdef-2026-271792574235.png
Scholarship Name 4:	Vahani Scholarship 2026
Description:	The Vahani Scholarship 2026 is being offered by the Vahani Scholarship Trust to students in Class 12. This scholarship aims to financially support the undergraduate education of meritorious students from economically weaker sections.
Eligibility:	Applications are open to students currently pursuing studies in Class 12, have secured 85% or above in Class 10th, and have an annual family income of less than ₹3 lakh.
Prizes & Rewards:	Selected candidates receive full tuition fees, a stipend for a laptop, travel allowance, and numerous other benefits.
Last Date to Apply:	01-11-2026
Application mode:	Online application only
Short Url:	www.b4s.in/hans/VAHA1
QR Code:	https://dle9eg0t055l3.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/vahani-scholarship-20261792464540.png
Scholarship Name 5:	WINGS — Women INspiring Growth in STEM Scholarship Program
Description:	IIT Bombay's Alumnus Bharat Desai and his wife, Neerja Sethi, have launched an initiative at IIT Bombay to encourage women in STEM, named WINGS — Women INspiring Growth in STEM Scholarship Program. This initiative aims to break financial barriers and champion women's education in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.
Eligibility:	• For female students planning to pursue an undergraduate STEM course at IIT Bombay (2027-28 Session). • Students not availing any other government tuition grant or scholarship. • The scholarship will continue for students maintaining a 6.0 CPI or higher.
Prizes & Rewards:	The scholarship covers tuition fees (Rs 2 lakhs per annum) for women students meeting the above eligibility criteria.
Last Date to Apply:	31-10-2026
Application mode:	Online Application Only
Short Url:	www.b4s.in/hans/WINGS2
QR Code:	https://dle9eg0t055l3.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/wings-women-inspiring-growth-in-stem-scholarship-program1791265653.png
Scholarship Name 6:	Infocepts Innovate for Impact Scholarship 2026-27
Description:	The Infocepts Innovate for Impact Scholarship 2026-27, a CSR initiative of Infocepts Foundation, is now open for applications. The scholarship supports meritorious engineering students from financially disadvantaged backgrounds with support of up to INR 50,000 per year for four years.
Eligibility:	Open to undergraduate Computer Engineering, IT, AI, ML, or Data Science students (Any year) with 60% in Class 10 and 12, family income up to INR 6 lakh, studying/domiciled in Nagpur, Pune, Chennai, or Bengaluru.
Prizes & Rewards:	Selected students will receive scholarship support of up to INR 50,000 per academic year for a maximum period of four years, subject to annual renewal and continued eligibility.
Last Date to Apply:	30-10-2026 & Online Application Only.

Software engineers in the AI age: Skills beyond coding

As AI takes on routine programming tasks, software engineers will need to focus on solving complex problems, designing reliable systems and ensuring that AI-generated code meets real-world requirements

DR CHARU JAIN

For decades, learning to code has been considered a pathway to a career in the technology industry. Today, artificial intelligence (AI) tools can generate code, identify errors and explain programming concepts in seconds. This has prompted a question among students, parents and educators: as AI takes on more coding tasks, what skills will future software engineers need?

Educators argue that software engineering is evolving rather than disappearing. While AI can automate parts of development, building reliable software still requires problem-solving, technical understanding, system design and the ability to evaluate the quality of a solution.

Beyond writing code

AI-assisted coding is changing how developers approach routine tasks. Instead of writing every line manually, engineers can use AI tools to generate initial code, suggest fixes and explore different approaches. This can reduce time spent on repetitive work and allow greater attention to complex problems.

However, generated code must be reviewed before it is used. Developers need to assess whether it is secure, efficient, maintainable and suitable for the intended application. They must also identify errors that may not be immediately visible.

The shift is comparable to the introduction of calculators in mathematics. Calculators reduced the need for repetitive arithmetic but did not eliminate the need to understand mathematical concepts. Similarly, AI can assist with coding without replacing the engineering knowledge required to build



dependable systems.

Viraj Sagar Das, Pro Chancellor at BBD University, emphasises that software engineering involves more than typing instructions into a computer. Developers must understand what needs to be built, how different components interact and how systems should respond when something goes wrong.

Why fundamentals still matter

Prompting allows users to communicate instructions to AI systems, but effective prompts alone cannot replace a foundation in computer science. Algorithms, data structures, databases, cybersecurity, computer networks and system design help developers understand the problems they are trying to solve.

Educators stress that students need to learn how to use AI as an assistant while retaining the ability to reason independently. Without technical fundamentals, a developer may struggle to recognise incorrect suggestions or understand the consequences of a design decision.

AI literacy is therefore

becoming an additional skill rather than a substitute for programming knowledge. Future professionals will need to know which tasks can be delegated to AI, how to verify its responses and when human judgement is essential.

Rethinking software education

The growing use of AI is also raising questions about how programming students should be assessed. If a tool can produce a complete assignment, the final submission alone may not reveal how well a student understands the underlying concepts.

Educators are considering assessment methods that focus on evaluating AI-generated code, finding vulnerabilities, debugging unfamiliar programs and explaining technical decisions. Designing complete systems and defending the reasoning behind a solution can provide a clearer picture of a student's understanding.

At BBD University, AI components have been incorporated into curricula, alongside exercises in which students explain code and



debug programmes they did not write themselves. Such approaches aim to assess understanding and problem-solving rather than code production alone.

What lies ahead for India's technology workforce?

For India, which has a large software and IT services sector, these changes have implications for engineering education and recruitment. Employers may increasingly look for graduates who can combine programming knowledge with AI-assisted development, critical thinking and responsibility for the systems they build.

The pace and impact of change will vary across roles and organisations. AI may reduce the time needed for some tasks while creating

new requirements in areas such as verification, integration, security and system oversight.

The software engineer of the future may write fewer lines of code manually but will still need to understand how that code works and whether it solves the right problem.

The central challenge for universities is not simply to teach students how to prompt AI tools. It is to prepare them to use those tools thoughtfully, question their outputs and take responsibility for the final result. In an AI-assisted industry, engineering knowledge remains essential to turning generated code into reliable software.

(The author is Executive Director at COER University)

UoH hosts rally contingent, students take anti-drug pledge

HANS NEWS SERVICE

A riding contingent participating in the Rashtriya Ekta Rally visited the University of Hyderabad (UoH) while travelling to Ekta Nagar, where university officials, students and members of the campus community took part in an interaction focused on national unity, social harmony and drug awareness.

The contingent, comprising participants from across South India, was welcomed by the university administration. The interaction provided an opportunity to share the rally's message of unity, discipline and collective responsibility among young people.

As part of the programme, an anti-drug pledge was administered to raise awareness about the harmful effects of substance abuse and encourage students to adopt healthy, responsible and drug-free lifestyles. The initiative also highlighted the role of young people in

supporting efforts to prevent drug abuse and promote safer communities.

The programme was attended by Prof. Anuradha, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Hyderabad; Ch. Srinivas, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Serilingampalli; Prof. Padmaja, Dean of Student Welfare; Prof. Naresh Annem, programme coordinator; and officers of the EAGLE Force, along with university representatives.

During the visit, members of the riding contingent interacted with students and university community members, discussing the importance of social responsibility and the role of youth in promoting harmony and awareness.

The rally's stop at the university formed part of its journey to Ekta Nagar. The programme brought together participants from the rally, university officials and students around the themes of national integration and drug prevention.



Free data engineering course for unemployed graduates

HANS NEWS SERVICE

The Sri Sathya Sai Dakshata Program has announced a free 90-day Data Engineering course for unemployed graduates in Telangana, aimed at helping them develop industry-relevant skills and improve their employment prospects.

The programme is open to graduates who passed out between 2022 and 2026 with degrees in MSc, B.Tech, M.Tech or MCA. Classes will be conducted

offline near Khairatabad Metro Station in Hyderabad, with training led by faculty members with three decades of teaching experience.

The course covers basic and advanced Python, SQL, artificial intelligence tools, soft skills and career counselling. The programme is designed to provide practical training in data engineering and help participants prepare for employment opportunities in the technology sector.

Successful candidates will also receive placement assistance after completing the course. According to the organisers, more than 100 students from a previous batch of over 350 underprivileged graduates secured placements in companies.

The initiative seeks to address skill gaps among unemployed graduates and expand access to technical training, particularly for those facing financial barriers to professional education.



When you get a new role, I take it as a challenge. When this news came (appointed vice-captain), I felt good that I could help the other players as much as possible for the team. So, when I got this role, I was very happy. My mindset is to win as many matches as possible for the team, whether as a player or as vice-captain. In this role, I can help Smriti as much as possible.

-Deepti Sharma, Indian women cricketer

Sports Nation

1st T20I-226 chased, records smashed

Samson, Dhir power India to thrilling win over NZ

CHRISTCHURCH

INDIA carried their rich run-scoring vein from the West Indies series into New Zealand, as Sanju Samson's 33-ball 67 and Naman Dhir's late assault of an unbeaten 42 off just 15 balls powered them to hunt down 226, their highest-ever chase in T20Is, and beat New Zealand by four wickets in front of a sell-out crowd at the Hagley Oval on Thursday.

Earlier, on a fresh pitch, Glenn Phillips smashed a 40-ball 82 not out and lifted New Zealand to an imposing 225/4. But the superlative efforts of Samson and Dhir, along with dew coming into the picture, ensured India completed the chase with two balls to spare in a run-fest that produced 455 runs in front of a sell-out crowd.

While India rejoiced over a record chase, New Zealand, despite their moments in the field, will rue their inability to stitch tight overs and being erratic in fielding. Being wayward in the powerplay, and conceding 17 extras left them playing catch-up for the rest of the innings. The second game of the series will be played at the same venue on Saturday.

India's chase began explosively, with Abhishek Sharma smashing a six off



the final ball of the first over. Ferguson conceded 22 runs in his opening over, while Milne leaked 26 as India raced to 94/1 in the powerplay. Abhishek struck 29 off 12 balls before falling to Michael Bracewell. Samson reached his fifty in 23 balls, hitting eight fours and four sixes, before Mitchell Santner dismissed him for 67.

India then slipped to 122/4 as Tilak Varma and Ishan Kishan departed cheaply. Axar Patel scored 24 off 14 balls, while captain Shreyas Iyer contributed 42 off 28. With 48 needed from 24

balls, Dhir turned the contest around, attacking Santner and Ferguson. Needing eight in the final over, India sealed victory through Dhir's four and six off Matt Henry.

Earlier, Finn Allen smashed 45 off 24 balls, while Daryl Mitchell made 28 and Bevon Jacobs scored 31. Phillips dominated with an unbeaten 82, reaching his 13th T20I fifty. India's bowlers struggled, with Axar conceding 51 runs, Bhuvneshwar Kumar 49 and Arshdeep Singh 45. Arshdeep, playing his 100th T20I, also ran out Jacobs. India's sloppy fielding and dropped catches

compounded their problems, while New Zealand's 17 extras proved costly.

The teams meet again at Hagley Oval on Saturday, with India carrying momentum after a record-breaking triumph.

BRIEF SCORES:

New Zealand 225/4 in 20 overs (Glenn Phillips 82 not out, Finn Allen 45; Mayank Yadav 1-40, Arshdeep Singh 1-45) lost to India 230/6 in 19.4 overs (Sanju Samson 67, Naman Dhir 42 not out; Michael Bracewell 2-37, Mitchell Santner 2-39) by four wickets.

51st National Sub Jr Chess C'ship 2026

Telangana's 10-year-old Divith Reddy clinches title

HYDERABAD: Ten-year-old Telangana chess prodigy Candidate Master (CM) Divith Reddy Adulla clinched the open title at the 51st National Sub-Junior Under-15 Chess Championship 2026, held at Subham Convention Centre, Hyderabad, on October 20. The 35th-seeded player, rated 2,086 Elo, emerged champion with 10 points after 11 rounds, edging out S Madhesh Kumar of Puducherry on tie-breaks.

Divith's fearless, gritty atti-

tude and nerves of steel helped him overcome the challenge in a competitive field. His victory highlighted Telangana's growing presence in junior chess. He received the prestigious title from All India Chess Federation president Nitin Narang, in the presence of P



Madhya Pradesh, also on nine.

Malla Reddy, general secretary of the Telangana Olympic Association, and Reddyreddy Laxmi Reddy, president of the Telangana State Chess Association. Niladri Banerjee of West Bengal finished third with nine points, ahead of Madhvendra Pratap Sharma of

In the girls' section, Delhi's Prishita Gupta won the title with 10 points, conceding only two draws. WFM Nivedita V C of Tamil Nadu finished runner-up with nine points, while WFM Maitreyi Mondal took third with 8.5 points. Both champions received ₹90,000 each. AICF head of operations Ajeet Kumar Verma and TSCA secretary A Jayachandra were among those present at the prize distribution. K S Prasad served as tournament director.

Raihan Vadra art show row

'Suppressing voice of artists is direct 'attack' on democracy'

JAIPUR

FORMER Rajasthan chief minister Ashok Gehlot on Thursday attacked the BJP government over the Raihan Vadra art show row, calling it a direct "attack" on democracy and clear example of "censorship". Artist and photographer Raihan Vadra, the son of Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and Robert Vadra, on Wednesday said the Bikaner House administration in the national capital pulled down many of his pictures of the recent Delhi protests ahead of a solo exhibition.

Targeting the BJP government, Gehlot demanded an explanation for the removal of the photographs. "Bikaner House is a property of the Rajasthan government. This means a young artist's creativity was stifled under the BJP government's watch, which is highly condemnable," Gehlot



said in a statement. The Congress leader alleged that the BJP government was attempting to suppress images that reflected public dissent. He also praised Vadra for refusing to remove two photographs featuring the national flag, saying his stand demonstrated that there could be no compromise on respect for the tricolour. "Suppressing the voice of artists is a direct attack on democracy. This is a clear example of censorship," Gehlot said, demanding that the BJP government explain why the photographs were removed.

On Wednesday, Raihan said he was told at 3:30 pm that if the images are not taken down

by 5 pm, the show will be cancelled. He said he had shared the detailed proposal and layout of the show well in advance with the Bikaner House management. Bikaner House went ahead and took down some of the pictures.

"They told us at 3:30 pm today if the images are not taken down by 5 pm, the show will be cancelled. They said it is not the right time for such photos to be shown," Raihan had told PTI. He said none of the images "gave out any political message and only documented the protests over the last six months". A Bikaner House official said "they were not authorised to comment". (PTI)

Asian Para Games

Sheetal's double gold headlines India's 88-medal surge



NAGOYA: Armless archer Sheetal Devi picked up two gold medals in less than two hours to reaffirm her peerless credentials, while the track-and-field contingent remained the biggest contributor to India's tally, which swelled to 88 at the Asian Para Games on Thursday.

The 19-year-old world champion and world number one first teamed up with Toman Kumar to defend the mixed team gold, beating Indonesia's Teodora Audi Ayudia Ferelly and Ken Swagumilang 151-148.

She then overcame a four-point deficit to defeat Singapore's Alim Nur Syahidah 142-139, repeating their individual final result from Hangzhou 2023.

India's medal count stood at 21 gold, 26 silver and 41 bronze. Para-athletics led the haul with 52 medals, including 18 gold. Suvarna Raj opened the day's gold rush by winning the women's F54 discus with a best throw of 15.66m.

Shailesh Kumar led an Indian sweep in the men's T63 high jump, setting a Games record of 1.89m. Varun Bhati won silver with 1.84m, while Rahul took bronze with 1.81m. Anjanaben Bumbadiya won the women's T47 400m in 59.97 seconds, ahead of Jayanti Behera (1:00.65). Dilip Mahadu Gavit claimed the men's T47 400m gold in 48.27 seconds,

while Dharmaraj Solairaj defended his long jump crown with an Asian record of 7.15m. Tejalben Damor added a silver in the women's T12 400m.

Archery also witnessed history as Swati Chaudhary won India's first Asian Para Games medal in the W1 category, taking silver after losing 4-6 to China's Cen Mengkan.

In swimming, teenage Andhra Pradesh swimmer Ravi Budigina claimed bronze in the men's S13 50m freestyle in 25.89 seconds, completing a hat-trick of medals. Kapil Kumar won silver in the S10 400m freestyle, while Swatik Patil and Tejas Nandakumar secured bronze medals in the SB9 100m breaststroke and S7 100m backstroke, respectively.

India also secured a men's SL3 badminton final between Pramod Bhagat and Nitesh Kumar. Bhagat defeated Korea's Lee Seungjun after a 2-hour-9-minute battle, while Nitesh reached the singles and mixed doubles SL3-SU5 finals with Thulasi-mathi Murugesan. Naveen Sivakumar entered the SL4 final.

In table tennis, Bhavina Patel and Subham Wadhwa won bronze in mixed doubles XD7 after losing their semifinal to South Korea.

Kanpur horror

Man run-over after being pinned to car roof; 2 held



KANPUR (UP): A 37-year-old man was allegedly pinned to the roof of a car with his hands trapped in its rear window panes and driven for around 1.5 km before being thrown onto the road and run over by the same vehicle in Kanpur, police said on Thursday.

Commissioner of Police Raghuraj Lal told PTI that two of the three accused, named in the murder case have been arrested. The victim, Biru Singh Badauria, a salesperson with a food products company, was returning home after visiting a Dussehra fair when the incident took place in the Hanuman Vihar area on Tuesday night.

According to a complaint filed by his father, Ram Shankar Singh, the accused intercepted Badauria and assaulted him. When he tried to flee, they allegedly hit him with their car, pinned him to its roof with his hands trapped in the rear window panes and drove at high speed for around 1.5 km. They then allegedly threw

him onto the road and ran over him with the vehicle. Badauria was initially taken to a private hospital and later shifted to Lala Lajpat Rai (LLR) Hospital, where he died during treatment on Wednesday.

The family alleged that the attack stemmed from an earlier dispute between Badauria and two of the accused, Rajveer and Mewa Yadav, residents of Khadepur's Nai Basti.

The victim's brother initially lodged a complaint describing the incident as a road accident, following which a case was registered. The victim's father later filed a separate complaint alleging murder and naming Rajveer, Mewa Yadav and Pintu, according to Lal.

The police are examining CCTV footage and have recovered the vehicle involved in the incident, he said. Rajveer and Pintu have been arrested, while efforts are underway to trace the third accused, Lal said, adding that further action would be taken based on the evidence.

Eviction notice to mosque near PM's residence: Mehbooba slams Centre



SRINAGAR

PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti on Thursday criticised the Centre over an eviction notice to a century-old mosque near the prime minister's residence, and accused the government of having a "blatant disregard" for the religious sentiments of the country's

Muslim community. Authorities have served an eviction notice to the Race Course Mosque, which is located in close proximity to the prime minister's residence in the national capital, and disconnected its water and electricity supply.

"Visiting mosques in Muslim countries, praising their

grandeur and projecting respect for Islamic sentiments and heritage. Yet at home, a 120 year old heritage mosque near the Prime Minister's residence faces an eviction notice threatening its very existence. This glaring contradiction between admiration for mosques abroad and blatant disregard for the re-

ligious sentiments of India's own Muslim community is mind boggling, to say the least," Mehbooba said in a post on X.

According to officials, the mosque management received an eviction notice around October 19 and was given six days to vacate the premises.



"Indian companies will need to adopt a more strategic approach to the European market. This includes identifying products where tariff advantages are significant, building relationships with European buyers, upgrading product quality, and integrating into European supply chains,"

-Anant Swarup, Secretary General, FICCI

BIZ BRIEFS

V-Rich logs rise in subscriptions

V-Rich expanded its buffalo milk subscription service across West and East Hyderabad, offering farm-controlled, pasteurised, un-homogenised milk with 6% and 3% fat variants. Deliveries are available through its mobile app, with no preservatives or artificial stabilisers. YogithaJahnavi, Founder & CEO, V-Rich, said: "We are closely involved with how our milk is produced. From what our animals are fed to how our farms are managed, we believe quality begins at the source."

100 years of Pioneer

Pioneer, a flagship seed brand of CortevaAgriscience, marked 100 years of agricultural innovation, highlighting over 54 years in India and operations across 70 countries. Robert Kaan, Head-APAC, Vylor by Pioneer, said: "A hundred years ago, one farmer, one seed, and one bold idea changed what was possible for farmers and agriculture. That spirit continues to guide us today. As we look to the next century, our focus remains sharp on advancing seed innovation to meet the evolving challenges faced by our farmers."

Krystal Integrated acquires Citelum

Krystal Integrated Services has acquired 100 per cent of Citelum India from France's EDF Group, entering city lighting and urban infrastructure. It plans to invest Rs100 crore, target Rs300-350 crore annual revenue within 3-4 years and expand across 30-40 cities. Sanjay Dighe, CEO, Krystal Integrated, said: "Urban infrastructure in India is witnessing growing investment driven by urbanization, increasing focus on energy efficiency and public infrastructure development."

50 Mercedes cars delivered

Mahavir Motors, part of Mahavir Group, delivered 50 Mercedes-Benz cars to customers during its Dussehra Dream Days event at its Kondapur showroom in Hyderabad. Coinciding with Dussehra, the event celebrated festive aspirations, new beginnings and luxury car ownership. The initiative highlighted Mercedes-Benz's appeal through its design, technology and comfort, while reflecting customer trust in the brand and Mahavir Motors' focus on delivering memorable ownership experiences during the festive season.

Indriya unveils 'Festival of Love'

Indriya, Aditya Birla Jewellery, launched its Diwali campaign, 'Festival of Love', featuring Aditi Rao Hydari and Siddharth. It also unveiled Padmika, a festive collection of 22-karat gold jewellery featuring traditional motifs, Goddess Lakshmi designs and revived GulabiMeenakari pink enamel craftsmanship. Sandeep Kohli, CEO, Indriya, said: "The festive season remains one of the most important periods for the jewellery industry, shaped by the enduring traditions of celebration, gifting and auspicious purchases."

BULLS BUCKLE UNDER CRUDE SURGE

Dalal Street reels under oil, inflation fears

Brent crosses \$112 amid escalating West Asia tensions and weak global cues

MUMBAI

BENCHMARK stock indices Sensex and Nifty extended their slide to a third straight session on Thursday, as surging crude oil prices amid escalating tensions in West Asia dampened investor sentiment.

A broad-based selloff, especially across FMCG, power and IT stocks, and weak global cues also kept domestic equities under pressure.

The 30-share BSE Sensex declined 460.30 points, or 0.62 per cent, to close at 73,249.39. During the day, the benchmark tumbled 704.58 points, or 0.95 per cent, to hit an intraday low of 73,005.11.

The 50-share NSE Nifty dropped 123.70 points, or 0.54 per cent, to settle at 22,687.65. In the intraday session, the index plunged 256.5 points, or 1.12 per cent, to a low of 22,554.85. Among the Sensex constituents, Reliance Industries, Eternal, HDFC Bank, PowerGrid, Trent, Asian Paints, Infosys,



ITC, Bharat Electronics Ltd, Mahindra & Mahindra, Tata Consultancy Services and Larsen & Toubro were the major laggards.

Bajaj Finance, UltraTech Cement, ICICI Bank, Sun Pharmaceuticals, State Bank of India, Bharti Airtel, Adani Ports, Tata Steel, Kotak Mahindra Bank, HCL Technologies and Bajaj Finserv were among the gainers. "Inflation concerns took centre stage today as renewed escalation in West Asia sent crude prices sharply higher. The rupee reversed its recent trend, weakening steadily through the session, which weighed on investor sentiment. Al-

though the benchmark indices attempted a recovery led by banking stocks, the move failed to sustain at higher levels," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Ltd. With domestic bond yields climbing back to recent highs, equity valuation premiums came under renewed scrutiny and selling broadened across almost all sectors, he added.

"Consequently, tracking negative global cues ahead of Japan's inflation data, Indian equities ended lower after a volatile session, with mid- and small-cap segments underperforming large caps," Nair said.

OIL SHOCK KNOCKS RUPEE DOWN 44 PAISE

MUMBAI: The rupee slumped 44 paise to close at 94.82 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday, weighed down by a negative trend in the domestic equity markets and surging crude oil prices. According to forex analysts, the rupee began trading on a flat-to-lower trajectory due to sluggish domestic equities and surging crude oil prices. Escalation of attacks by Yemeni Houthis on Saudi Arabia's energy infrastructure deteriorated global market sentiment, they said, adding that softening of the dollar index and a decline in US Treasury yields cushioned the downside. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 94.47 against the dollar, then lost ground to touch an intra-day low of 94.94 and finally settled for the day at 94.82 (provisional), registering a decline of 44 paise over its previous close.

BULLION RALLY FALTERS AS GOLD, SILVER RETREAT

NEW DELHI: Gold prices fell by Rs 1,000 to Rs 1.48 lakh per 10 grams in the national capital on Thursday, while silver tumbled Rs 5,900 to a 10-month low of Rs 2.07 lakh per kilogram amid weak trends in the international markets. The yellow metal of 99.9 per cent purity closed at Rs 1.49 lakh per 10 grams on Wednesday. Silver also plunged Rs 5,900 to Rs 2,07,500 per kg, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The white metal previously traded around these levels at Rs 2,07,600 per kg on December 18, 2025.

Govt, LIC to stay invested in IDBI Bank but surrender board seats

TO EXIT PROMOTER ROLES AND REMAIN PUBLIC SHAREHOLDERS

NEW DELHI

THE government and Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) intend to remain public shareholders in IDBI Bank after the proposed strategic sale to Canada's Fairfax Financial Holdings, with their individual stakes capped at 15 per cent and no representation on the bank's board, DIPAM Secretary Arunish Chawla said.

"Both the Government of India and LIC want to become public shareholders. To become public shareholders, you cannot hold more than 15 per cent equity. You also cannot sit on the board," he said.

The Securities and Exchange Board of India has directed LIC to reduce its post-dilution stake from 19 per cent to 15 per cent, increasing the bank's public float by four percentage points.

Last week, the government approved the sale of a combined 60.72 per cent stake in IDBI Bank to Fairfax for about Rs 53,000 crore (\$5.5 billion), marking a major step in India's long-delayed banking privatisation drive.

Fairfax will acquire the government's 30.48 per cent stake, valued at about Rs 26,620 crore, and LIC's 30.24 per cent holding, valued at around Rs 26,440 crore.

The Canadian billionaire Prem Watsa-led company



will pay Rs 81 per share, above the benchmark fair value of Rs 75.99 determined by two independent valuation agencies.

Following the strategic restructuring, responsibility for running the bank and infusing capital when required will rest with Fairfax, Chawla said.

The transaction is expected to be completed by the end of the current financial year, subject to regulatory clearances from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). Fairfax will submit the required technical papers and credentials to the RBI. Once approval is secured, the share purchase agreement will be signed.

The strategic buyer will also be required to make an open offer to minority shareholders, giving them an opportunity to tender their shares under applicable regulations.

The sale process began in 2022 and suffered a setback earlier this year when initial bids fell below the government's reserve price. The transaction is expected to be one of India's largest foreign investments in the banking sector.

Govt mulls emergency braking systems for new cars

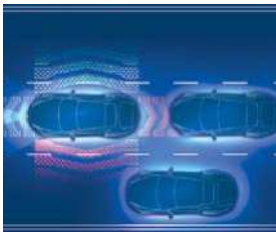
NEW DELHI

THE Road Ministry has proposed mandating Advanced Emergency Braking Systems (AEBS) for all new car models starting October 2030 to curb road accidents.

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH), in a draft notification dated October 19, 2026, said that for pre-2030 still-in-production models, AEBS would be mandatory from October 2032.

AEBS provides automatic braking in the event of failure of the driver to respond to emergency situations to either avoid a crash or reduce the impact of a collision.

"Provided that, M1 cat-



egory of vehicles manufactured on and after 1st October 2030 in the case of new models and 1st October 2032 in the case of all models shall be fitted with Advanced Emergency Braking System, conforming to AIS-185, as amended from time to time," the draft notification said.

The government has mandated multiple measures, especially focused on braking systems, to enhance the

safety of medium and heavy-duty vehicles.

To enhance brake performance, a revised braking standard has been mandated for trucks effective October 1, 2027.

Braking systems have been advanced with the mandatory implementation of electronic stability control systems (AIS 162) for trucks from October 1, 2027, which provide stability, especially in the event of braking at curves. The draft rules will be taken into consideration after the expiry of thirty days from the date on which the copies of this notification, as published in the Gazette of India, are made available to the public.

AI unlikely to cause mass job losses, reskilling will create opportunities: AI pioneer

NEW DELHI

AI pioneer Andrew Ng said that artificial intelligence is unlikely to trigger a mass loss of jobs but will instead create new opportunities if workers reskill.

He urged students and professionals to focus on acquiring new skills rather than fearing being replaced by machines, Andrew Ng said.

Andrew called for education and training programmes to anticipate the manner in which work would evolve, rather than



focus exclusively on the skills currently in demand.

The expert said that current AI systems are not yet capable of eliminating the vast majority of jobs and that the technology often makes workers more productive, al-

lowing businesses to expand and hire more people. "There will be hope and it's not nearly as bad as the hype says it will," he said.

Many businesses have hyped up the AI job apocalypse to make themselves look larger than their true potential or to gain PR attention, adding that recent data suggested AI was creating more jobs than it was destroying.

Andrew cited software engineering as an example of how AI can reshape, and not cut employment. "Certainly,



Day 2: Jio IPO draws blockbuster response

₹30,213-crore issue subscribed 5.6 times as institutional demand surges

MUMBAI

JIO Platforms' IPO maintained its momentum in attracting investors across all categories on Day 2 of its IPO. The oversubscription raised to 5.6 times the shares on offer, as each and every sub-category got overflooded with applications.

The public offer had witnessed an extraordinary demand in anchor book, with applications received in excess of Rs 2.5 lakh crore for shares worth Rs 8,110 crore.

The demand for the remaining 19.75 crore shares reached 110 crore as day 2 of bidding drew to a close. This meant the total demand

stood at Rs 1.23 lakh crore.

The QIB section reached oversubscription level of 13.3 times, with bids of Rs 72,898 crore. The NII section was 5.97x oversubscribed with bids of Rs 24,330 crore.

The Retail investors' quota was 1.54 times oversubscribed with aggregate bids of Rs 14,652 crore. Reserved portion for the employees also witness demand double that of available shares.

The section witnessed bids of Rs 1,103 crore, against an availability of Rs 500 crore. Existing RIL shareholders bidding in the IPO too applied for 4x the available shares with total bids crossing Rs 10,107 crore.

Rubio concludes India visit, says advanced economic and energy security cooperation

NEW DELHI: US Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Thursday said that continuing to build economic partnership and energy security cooperation makes both India and the US stronger as he wrapped up his three-day visit, which took him to the country's financial capital Mumbai and a key refinery site in Gujarat's Jamnagar. In Mumbai, Rubio also held bilateral talks with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Tuesday. "Just departed India having advanced our economic and strategic priorities in the region. Continuing to build our economic partnership and energy security cooperation makes both our nations stronger," Rubio

posted on X. He also shared a photo of him and US envoy Sergio Gor, with the iconic Gateway of India in Mumbai in the background. The Secretary of State had landed in Mumbai on October 20 to advance bilateral ties in energy, trade and investment, defence, and critical technologies, and exchange views on the West Asia crisis. The US Mission in India, in a statement on Thursday, said that Secretary Rubio visited Mumbai and Jamnagar from October 20-22 to "advance the US-India strategic partnership, strengthen commercial and investment ties, and reaffirm the United States' commitment to a prosperous and secure Indo-Pacific".

ICICI Life launches new retirement plan

HANS BUSINESS HYDERABAD

ICICI Prudential Life Insurance Limited has expanded its retirement solutions portfolio with the launch of ICICI Life Guaranteed Indexed Pension, an annuity product designed to combine guaranteed income with inflation-protected market returns.

The new retirement plan blends a Guaranteed Annuity with a Variable Annuity component, allowing policyholders to balance financial stability with growth.

The plans feature Flexible Market Linkage where Customers can allocate between 60% and 100% of their investment to a guaranteed annuity. The remaining portion is linked to the NIFTY 50 Total Return Index (TRI), offering upside potential to help protect retirement funds against inflation.

Vikas Gupta, Chief Product Officer, ICICI Life Insurance, said: "With ICICI Life Guaranteed Indexed Pension, customers can choose the level of guaranteed income they are comfortable with along with the opportunity to benefit from market performance. This flexibility enables them to make informed choices and plan their retirement years with greater confidence and financial security. The product offers single-life and joint-life options with return of purchase price. Upon unfortunate demise of the annuitant or the last surviving annuitant, death benefit equal to total premiums paid would be returned to the nominee."

inverted duty structure claims, 90 per cent of the refund amount will be provisionally sanctioned automatically, subject to system-based risk assessment.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION

A minimum threshold of Rs 10,000 will be prescribed for issuing show-cause notices to reduce compliance burdens and litigation.

Effective date: November 1, 2026, for administrative changes. Law amendments: Reforms requiring legislative changes from April 1, 2027. Beneficiaries: Around 9.5 lakh small e-commerce sellers. Refunds: 90% provisional refunds for eligible zero-rated and inverted-duty claims.

STREAMLINED REGISTRATION

A comprehensive circular will specify documents and information required for GST registration. The GST REG-01 form will include prescribed document options, while the portal will offer clearer navigation, drop-down lists and tooltips to reduce errors, queries and rejections.

FASTER REFUNDS

Excess balances in electronic cash ledgers will be refunded automatically without officer intervention. The deadline for issuing acknowledgements or deficiency memos will be reduced from 15 days to 10 days. For zero-rated supplies and



ing monthly input tax credit passed on of up to Rs 2.5 lakh.

Sellers must have a genuine presence in one state, where physical verification and Aadhaar authentication will be completed. Registrations in other states can be

obtained with the e-commerce platform's consent, without further tax officer involvement.

The move could benefit around 9.5 lakh small sellers by enabling access to national markets without establishing physical offices in every state.

GST rolls out faster reforms from November 1

NEW DELHI

SIMPLIFIED GST registration for small sellers on e-commerce platforms, faster refunds, unified registration documentation and a minimum threshold for issuing tax notices are among the Goods and Services Tax process reforms likely to take effect from November 1.

The 57th GST Council meeting held on October 8 approved several reforms covering registration, returns, refunds and adjudication. Changes that can be implemented administratively will be rolled out in phases from November 1, 2026, while those requiring

amendments to the GST law will take effect from April 1, 2027.

Notifications and circulars relating to the process reforms have been approved by the legal department and are likely to be issued on Friday, an official said.

SIMPLIFIED E-COMMERCE REGISTRATION

Small sellers supplying goods through e-commerce platforms across multiple states and Union Territories, where they have no physical presence, can declare the platform's warehouse in that state as their Principal Place of Business, subject to prescribed conditions, includ-



'RAMAYANA' TO ADOPT PAY-PER-VIEW MODEL

Will the viewers prefer paid streaming over piracy?



SUHAS SISTU

The digital rights of the film Ramayana will reportedly explore the possibility of a pay-per-view model on JioHotstar after its theatrical run. The venture is expected to provide an additional revenue stream for the ambitious production, despite challenges with digital piracy.

Unlike traditional over-the-top (OTT) streaming services, which allow viewers to watch films with existing subscriptions, a pay-per-view model would require users to make an extra payment to view a chosen film. In the case of Ramayana, the main uncertainty concerns whether its massive star power and mythology-

driven appeal will be enough to encourage viewers to spend more money on watching the film at home.

The film's scale and star power could pay off, drawing viewers to a legal source to watch the epic on their TVs or mobile phones. However, figuring out the price is likely to be crucial, as too steep a charge and some viewers who cannot afford it will turn to piracy or simply wait for the film to enter regular OTT subscriptions.

The challenge of unauthorised copies is likely to be even more acute for big-budget Indian films. Illegal uploads often appear online shortly after a film's premiere, threatening to damage its earnings. Thus, preventing copyright violations and

quickly removing such content would be extremely important if the reported plan comes to fruition.

The proposed pay-per-view model could be good for business if the price is right. Aside from being attractive to the target audience, it will help to maximise revenues, ensuring that the budget-heavy production generates sufficient returns. Despite apparent risks, Ramayana's makers have an opportunity to benefit massively from the bold approach, striking a balance between keeping the price reasonable and profitable. The suggested format is a reported possibility rather than an official announcement, meaning that it is likely to be a closely-watched trial for Indian cinema's future.



Happy Birthday
Prabhas: The darling who conquered Indian cinema

The fans have come a long way in celebrating the birthday of Rebel star Prabhas. The actor has carved a niche for himself in the hearts of millions and has fetched massive success with his versatile performances in the yatra of his career. The Rebel star is popularly called Darling, and he has indeed become one of the biggest Pan India stars after ruling Tollywood. The actor's upcoming projects keep us glued to the screen and have generated unparalleled hype in the industry.

The star made his mark with Eeshwar and has since come a long way, ruling the Tollywood film industry for more than two decades. However, the Baahubali franchise catapulted the actor to new heights and made him a national hero, as the franchise ruled the multiplexes across the country. The actor's Baahubali 2 and Kalki 2898 AD have grossed more than ₹1,000 crore worldwide, securing his position among the top Indian stars who rule the box office. The actor has amassed enormous

popularity across several languages and is a big draw in Hindi, Tamil, Malayalam, and Kannada film industries. He also enjoys incredible goodwill in the US, UK, and Japan. His recent Salaar has been an incredible hit with people from all corners of the country, who have praised his performances on the screen.

Moreover, the actor is not just a super star but also a true gentleman. He has been supportive of the fans during natural calamities and has offered help in whatever capacity possible. He has also been commended for his charitable activities by his contemporaries in the industry.

The actor's upcoming projects also seem to be promising. With films like Spirit, directed by Sandeep Reddy Vanga, Fauzi, directed by Hanu Raghavapudi, Kalki 2, directed by Nag Ashwin, and Salaar 2, directed by Prashanth Neel, the Rebel star seems to be unstoppable.

Happy birthday Prabhas, here's hoping that the actor continues to amaze us with his performances on-screen and achieve greater heights in his career while giving us more Pan India hits to cherish for years!

- S Suhas

'KilleR' trailer launched; Harish Shankar praises sci-fi thriller

Director Poorvaaj promises an unpredictable movie with KilleR, a science-fiction action thriller starring Jyoti Poorvaaj and Poorvaaj himself. The film is set to release globally on October 30th.

While launching the trailer in Hyderabad, director Harish Shankar appreciated the technical aspects of the film, saying that the trailer itself gives away the kind of visual splendour the film has. He also wished the team luck, saying that they have done



well to put together such a great film without crossing the budget.

Produced by Poorvaaj and A. Padmanabha Reddy under Think Cinema and AU &

I Studios, the film also stars Manish Gilada, Chandrakanth Kollu, Archana Ananth, et al., in pivotal roles.

As per reports, Jyoti Poorvaaj essays six different roles

in the film, which follows a three-timeline narrative. Speaking about the film's second-half twist, Poorvaaj said that it would be challenging to guess and announced a reward of Rs. 1 crore for anyone who could correctly predict the twist under the mentioned conditions.

The makers also have tie-ups for the film's satellite and digital rights, which have created considerable buzz around the film's release.

-P Raviteja

'Summer Holidays' locks Nov 6 release

Producer Dheeraj Mogilineni is optimistic that the upcoming kids' film, Summer Holidays, which hits the screens this November 6, will be a hit with adults too. The film, directed by Srikar, will see Master Rohan Roy, Master Arun, and Baby Khushi take on pivotal roles. The makers unveiled the release date at a press conference in Hyderabad.

Dheeraj Mogilineni, who is producing the film under Dheeraj Mogilineni Entertainment banner, says the film will take the older view-



ers down memory lane.

"The film will be a feel-good family entertainer that will take adults back to their

summer vacations and childhood days spent in their grandparents' village," the producer said. While speak-

ing about the response to the teaser and the songs, director Srikar said he was pleasantly surprised by the love for the film. "I think it will have a great response as a feel-good family entertainer," he added. Music director Sinjith Yerramilli also urged moviegoers to watch the film in theaters. "The team has strategically planned the release date to avoid the competition with other big films, and we want people to come watch the film on the big screen because we believe in an affordable price for small films," added Dheeraj.

-P Raviteja

'321' ready to hit theatres today



Telugu movie 321 (with tagline Love Marriage Vs Arranged) is all set to hit the theatre on October 23. The film directed and produced by Shanthi Kumar Chilumula will see Mohit and Lavanya in the lead roles. The brainchild of Ramanuja Reddy Vangapati banner under Brahma Art Creations, the film is the debut production for Ramanuja Reddy.

In a special screening held on Wednesday ahead of the film's release, followed by a press meet, the cast and crew spoke about how they are confident that the film will connect with the family audience.

"We have done a good film. The perfor-

mances, music and the entire team's efforts are praiseworthy," said Shanthi Kumar. "This will be a celebration for the entire team," added Ramanuja Reddy, who also made his debut as a producer. "I believe the audience is going to enjoy the film," he added.

"There are wonderful songs composed by Shanthi Kumar and Mouna Sri along with an interesting background score," said music director Calvin Joy. "The film's clean presentation and entertaining aspect has been appreciated by me, as well as Shanthi Kumar and the cast," added Mouna Sri. "321 is an entertaining film that will connect with family audience, especially the younger population," said actress Lavanya. "I request the audience to support the film," added actors Vivan Surya and Srinivas Bhogireddy.

321 touches upon a relevant topic relating to relationships and decisions revolving around love and marriage.

-P Raviteja

Lion Sai Venkat's 'Jayaho Ramanuja' set for worldwide theatrical debut tomorrow

A historical film on the life and times of ancient philosopher Sri Ramanujacharya, Jayaho Ramanuja, is all set to witness a global theatrical release on 24th this month. The pre-release function was held in Hyderabad today, where many industrialists appreciated the film's message of social equality.

Directed by and featuring the leading man Lion Dr. Sai Venkat, the movie is produced by Sai Prasanna and Pravalika of Sudarsanam Productions. The American actress Jo Sharma plays the leading lady while Suman and Pravalika play crucial roles.

Speaking during the function, Sai Venkat said that the film has been his dream come true and that he wants this

film to take his young people into the life and teachings of the great Ramanujacharya.

They appreciated the teachings of the great seer and urged people to support the film.

Pravalika said that they have done extensive promotions for the film, including a campaign around the Statue of Liberty. The director V. N. Aditya and others present at the function praised the film's socially relevant narrative.

The film's makers hope that the masses will appreciate the film for depicting the life and preachings of Ramanujacharya and spread awareness about him.

-P Raviteja



Shruti Haasan charms in pearl-embroidered attire

Actress and singer Shruti Haasan stunned in a two-piece pearl-embroidered outfit in a desert background. The star flaunted a strappy top with scalloped edges and mirror embroidery. Shruti Haasan's long skirt had a slit at the side, and gold drop earrings, along with open, wavy hair, completed the look. Her relaxed posture in the pictures was undoubtedly a huge hit.

In addition to being a famous actress and singer, Shruti Haasan has been dubbed a complete performer in Indian cinema. After spending her formative years as a singer, she began acting, singing, and composing. Shruti Haasan has gained popularity throughout Indian cinema by starring in Telugu, Tamil, and Hindi films.

Shruti Haasan will appear in the Tamil film Train and the Telugu film Aakasam-lo Oka Tara. In the meantime, her eagerly awaited Salaar Part 2 will also be released.

-S Suhas



DRR Productions debut film gets a grand launch

DRR productions first ever project, code-named Production No. 1 was launched with traditional pooja ceremonies on the auspicious occasion of Dasara. Produced by Dr.DamodarNerella, this marks the directorial debut of Shashank Duvvuru and is slated to release in theatres next year.

Ravi Shivateja, Bhaskar Paramatmani and Subrahmanyam Ala are in the lead roles while Neha Pathan is the female lead. Blending in friendships, romance and family drama with science-fiction elements and unexpected twists, the film promises to be a compelling watch.

Dr.DamodarNerella, founder and CEO of Indian American Medical Association, spoke about how he has had this dream of producing a film since he was a child and shared that he was confident about Shashank's vision and the strength of the concept.

Shashank, who has worked as assistant director for



The Girlfriend, starring RashmikaMandanna, and directed the short film Ulta, described the project as an entertainer with an underlying concept and followed the journey of three young men through humour, emotions and intriguing developments. The shoot is set to commence soon, while the title poster and other details are due to be released later.

-P Raviteja