Police warn of stern action against election violence

31 incidents reported across 13 districts

MV Syam Sundar
Amaravati

THE state police warned of stringent action against those disrupting the ongoing MPTC and ZPTC elections, asserting that political affiliation or influence will not shield offenders from the law.

According to director general of police Harish Kumar Gupta, 31 election-related incidents were reported across 13 districts during nomination filing on October 22. These included 22 incidents of violence and public disorder and nine separately reported cases of nomination paper snatching or tearing.

Anantapur recorded the highest number of incidents at eight, followed by Annamayya, YSR Kadapa, Prakasam and Tirupati with three each. Across the incidents, 16 instances of nomination papers being snatched, torn or destroyed were reported. Six incidents involved stone-pelting or attacks with stones and sticks. Four vehicles were set on fire, two houses were attacked or damaged, and one incident of firing in the air was reported.

A police constable sustained a grievous head injury, while two persons, including a contesting candidate, were reported critically injured. Police vehicles and personnel also came under attack while escorting candidates and guarding nomination centres.

Police registered 16 cases, including counter-cases, while registration of cases relating to 11 further incidents is underway. At least 54 persons have been named as accused. Preventive action has been taken against two persons, and four persons were apprehended. Police used lathicharge on three occasions and fired two tear-gas shells to disperse violent groups.

The DGP said CCTV footage, videos and photographs were being examined to identify offenders, including those who instigated violence. Superintendents and Commissioners of Police have been directed to strengthen security at sensitive locations and complete pending cases promptly. The police urged the public to report threats or violence by dialling 100 or 112, reiterating that peaceful participation would receive full protection and election-related lawlessness would not be tolerated.

Modi, Tusk set target to double India-Poland trade by 2030

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Polish counterpart Donald Tusk on Thursday set a target of doubling bilateral trade between the two countries by 2030, according to a joint statement issued after their meeting here.

The leaders called for the early signing and ratification of the EU-India Free Trade Agreement (FTA), as well as its timely implementation, to unlock new opportunities for trade and investment, diversify and strengthen critical value chains, and open new markets, the statement said.

PM Modi invited Polish companies to expand their investments and operations in India and benefit from India's large market, skilled workforce and growing manufacturing and innovation ecosystem.

Tusk appreciated Indian investment in Poland and highlighted Poland's strength as a gateway for Indian businesses seeking to expand their presence in Central and Eastern Europe and the wider European market.

The two leaders agreed to expand cooperation in agriculture by resuming the activities of the bilateral working group, aimed at intensifying bilateral trade and cooperation.

Google CEO saves Atlantic Ocean from being renamed as Trump Ocean!

Trump-Pichai exchange follows US Prez's earlier push to rename the Gulf of Mexico as the Gulf of America

Washington

US President Donald Trump says Google CEO Sundar Pichai rejected his idea to rename the Atlantic Ocean, after the company previously adopted his administration's Gulf of America name change for users in the United States.

Trump recounted the conversation at a rally in South Carolina on Wednesday, saying he had asked Pichai whether Google could handle a new name for the Atlantic.

"So we seriously looked at the Atlantic Ocean, and I called Google Maps, who were really great with the lake," Trump told supporters.

He said he spoke to Pichai, whom he described as a "brilliant guy", about the proposal.

"And I said, Sundar, I'm thinking of the Atlantic Ocean. Can you handle it?" Trump recalled asking.

According to the President, Pichai replied: "No, no, no. This time I'm not doing it. Oceans are different, sir. You know, they cover a lot of countries."

Trump said he would probably abandon the idea, asking the crowd whether the Atlantic Ocean should keep its existing name.

There was no immediate independent confirmation from Google or Pichai of Trump's account of the exchange.

Trump also floated another possible name change, suggesting the Pacific Ocean could become the "American Ocean".

"How do you think Europe would fit?" he asked, joking about how European leaders might react.

He mentioned European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, suggesting she would be delighted by the idea.

Trump said he had considered putting his own name or America's name on an ocean but indicated he would leave the Atlantic alone.

His remarks appeared to be a joke rather than a formal proposal.

The comments follow his administration's earlier geographic renaming efforts. Shortly after taking office in January 2025, Trump signed an executive order changing the Gulf of Mexico's name to the Gulf of America.

Google Maps subsequently adopted the new name for users in the United States, while people elsewhere continued to see the Gulf of Mexico or both names, depending on their location.

The earlier change had also led to a dispute with the Associated Press over its use of the Gulf of America name, highlighting how geographic naming decisions can become political issues.

Any motion against CEC will be examined under rules: Birla

NEW DELHI: Amid protests against Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Thursday said 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 second attempt are still pending in the Upper House.

"If any fresh notice comes, we will see and examine it accordingly under rules and procedures," Birla told a press conference here, responding to a question on a possible impeachment motion against the CEC. There have been protests in the last fortnight in different parts of India seeking the resignation of Kumar for alleged irregularities while carrying out the special intensive 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 says the CEC or an Election Commissioner may resign at any time by submitting in writing 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.

Iran says 7 tankers attacked in Hormuz

Tehran

SEVEN oil tankers caught fire or were damaged in the Strait of Hormuz overnight after being hit by Iran or striking naval mines, Tehran said Thursday, a markedly high number as tensions rise over concerns about a return to all-out war.

With days before a close election in Israel in which Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu could lose power, and before next month's U.S. midterm election in which war-linked high prices have sparked voter anger, there are concerns that U.S.-Israeli attacks on Iran could resume.

"Netanyahu wants to attack Iran, that's not even a question," Danny Citrinowicz, a researcher at Israel's Institute for National Security Studies and a former Iran specialist in Israel's military and intelligence services, said. He accused Israel of rushing into another round with Iran without revamping its strategy. A clear Netanyahu victory in the Oct. 27 election means an attack is almost guaranteed, he said.

Main Opposition candidates are likely to focus on domestic issues first, but Citrinowicz said he believed the region is on the way toward "another kinetic escalation."

Iranian state television reported the claims about the latest attacks on ships, which the AP couldn't independently confirm. The report cited the Revolutionary Guard Corps navy, which again threatened to strike US military bases in the region if the US keeps helping to guide commercial ships through the strait.

The report didn't mention casualties. Iran still asserts control over the waterway, a central point of leverage in any talks with the US over the war.

October has had the most reported attacks on commercial shipping since March in the war's opening weeks, according to a British military monitor, the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations. UKMTO didn't report the latest attacks, but it has noted new reluctance by some shippers to report incidents. Oil producers have found ways to keep crude flowing, experts say, but at a mounting cost.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi on Wednesday said that a wary Tehran remains open to diplomacy but is ready to defend itself. Iran has warned that it has learned important military lessons from the war that began with US and Israeli attacks on Feb. 28. In recent days, Tehran has indicated that it could expand targets to include infrastructure such as undersea cables and data centres.

'Completely unacceptable'

NEW DELHI: India on Thursday condemned attacks on civilian and energy infrastructure in Saudi Arabia after an attack on King Fahd International Airport in Dammam killed an Indian national and injured two others Wednesday, while another Indian was injured in a separate attack on the Shaybah oil field a day before.

Earlier in the day, the Indian Embassy in Riyadh said an Indian national was among two people killed and two other Indians were among eight injured in an attack on the Dammam airport Wednesday evening.

According to Saudi Arabia's General Authority of Civil Aviation, among the eight injured were two Indian nationals, two Yemenis, two Bangladeshis, one Nepalese national and one Saudi citizen. It said some of those injured are in serious condition. "We convey our heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family and wish speedy recovery to those injured. The Indian Embassy in Riyadh is in contact with the Saudi authorities and will provide all possible assistance," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a statement.

"We also reiterate that the attacks on civilian and critical infrastructure are completely unacceptable and must cease immediately. We stand in solidarity with the people and the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in safeguarding its sovereignty, and hope that peace and normalcy would return to the region at the earliest," it added.

ULB polls rescheduled to Nov 1

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The SEC had issued election notifications on October 14 for the second ordinary elections to 13 municipal corporations and 87 municipalities and nagar panchayats. The original nomination process was conducted from October 16 to 18, scrutiny took place on October 19, and the deadline for withdrawal of candidatures was October 21 at 3 p.m.

Following the Supreme Court's directions, the Commission issued an order on October 21 halting the further election process in all 100 ULBs. It subsequently examined reports submitted by collectors and district election authorities, commissioners of police and superintendents of police, besides representations from the petitioner party and candidates and other evidentiary material, including electronic evidence.

The Commission observed that candidates willing to contest had, in certain places, been intimidated or attacked, had their nomination papers torn, or had been prevented from filing nominations by other adverse circumstances. It identified four ULBs where such incidents had occurred and decided to provide affected candidates another opportunity to contest.

The Supreme Court had directed the SEC to take its decision by October 22 and, wherever it extended the nomination deadline, allow candidates at least 48 hours from the announcement of the decision. It had also directed the Commission to defer publication of the final list of contesting candidates until October 25. According to the SEC's notification, the extended nomination process covers the following areas:

Kadapa Municipal Corporation: Fresh nominations will be accepted in Ward Nos. 6, 11, 13, 15, 16, 17, 24, 31, 34, 52 and 55.

Rajampet Municipality: The process will reopen in Ward Nos. 6, 12, 13, 14, 17, 19, 23, 24, 25, 26 and 27.

Mydukur Municipality: Fresh nominations will be accepted in all 32 wards.

Tirupati Municipal Corporation: The extended nomination process covers Ward Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 19, 55, 56, 57, 59, 65 and 66.

The SEC has directed that nominations be received on October 23 and 24, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., at the centres already specified by the Returning Officers and Election Officers. In addition to these centres, nomination papers will also be received at designated premises in the respective Collectorates, as specified by the collectors and district election authorities.

Scrutiny of fresh nominations will take place on October 25 from 8 a.m. onwards. The deadline for withdrawal of candidature, applicable only to candidates who file fresh nominations under the extended process, is 3 p.m. on the same day.

Under the revised programme, the final list of contesting candidates for all 100 ULBs will be published after 3 p.m. on October 25.

Polling is scheduled for November 1, from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. If a repoll is required, it will be conducted on November 2 during the same hours. Counting of votes will begin at 8 a.m. on November 3. The SEC has stated that the revised schedule for indirect elections will be announced separately.

CJP leaders seek more time, skip Delhi Police questioning

NEW DELHI: Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) leaders Saurav Das and Ashutosh Ranka will not appear before the Delhi Police Crime Branch for questioning on Thursday after seeking more time, sources said. Police are expected to issue a fresh notice to the two leaders, the sources said. The Crime Branch had summoned Das and Ranka to its Rajouri Garden office on Thursday, a day after they were released from judicial custody. The two were released after a Special Executive Magistrate (SEM) court accepted their personal and surety bonds and recorded their written undertakings to maintain peace and abide by the law.

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

Impromptu meet by Naidu, Pawan

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Pawan Kalyan arrived at Naidu's residence in Undavalli around 11 am without a convoy or security detail, accompanied only by his driver. The meeting, which was not scheduled in advance, lasted around 40 minutes.

The discussions are believed to have centred on the turmoil surrounding the local body elections, including violence and alleged irregularities during the nomination process, the challenge posed by rebel candidates and the implications of the Supreme Court's recent directives. The postponement of the urban local body elections and reported differences between the TDP and Jana Sena in some regions are also understood to have figured in the talks.

There is also speculation that the two leaders discussed a possible joint visit to Delhi.

However, no official confirmation was available on whether such a visit had been finalised or on the specific decisions taken during the meeting.

The meeting comes at a critical juncture for the ruling NDA alliance, with the State Election Commission (SEC) halting the municipal election process amid the legal proceedings and the Supreme Court's directions on complaints of candidates being prevented from filing nominations.

CM for faster execution of 714 investment MoUs

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The meeting reviewed investment proposals across industries, energy, tourism, information technology, electronics, food processing and infrastructure. Ministers Nara Lokesh, TG Bharat, Anagani Satya Prasad, Gottipati Ravi Kumar, P Narayana and Kandula Durgesh participated virtually, along with officials from the departments concerned.

Naidu stressed the need to monitor the progress of existing agreements and ensure that projects move towards implementation and commercial production. The emphasis on execution comes as the government seeks to convert investment commitments into industrial activity and employment.

The Chief Minister directed officials to facilitate the establishment of a world-class convention centre in Visakhapatnam to enable the city to host investment summits. He also called for coordinated development of ports, airports, roads and railways, with particular emphasis on strengthening east-west connectivity as part of a broader logistics hub. Highlighting the potential of horticulture in Rayalaseema, Naidu said investment, infrastructure development and food processing would be critical to developing the region into a Global Horticulture Hub. The focus, according to the meeting agenda, is on linking agricultural production with processing facilities and supporting infrastructure.

The Chief Minister also called for creating a comprehensive semiconductor ecosystem in Andhra Pradesh, including manufacturing units. The objective is to develop the supporting industrial environment needed to attract semiconductor-related investments. The SIPB reviewed proposals from multiple sectors, with the government seeking to strengthen infrastructure and connectivity while accelerating the implementation of projects already covered by investment agreements.

Indian among 3 killed in Houthi attacks on Saudi airport, oilfield

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The Indian Embassy in Riyadh said Saudi authorities had informed it about the casualties in the attack on King Fahd International Airport in Dammam, eastern Saudi Arabia, on Wednesday night. "One Indian national was among two people who unfortunately lost their lives in the attack on Dammam airport on Wednesday night and two Indian nationals were injured," the embassy said in a social media post on Thursday.

"We are ascertaining further details and contacting the affected families. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family and loved ones of the deceased and we wish speedy recovery of the injured," it added.

Saudi Arabia's General Authority of Civil Aviation said a Saudi citizen and an Indian resident were killed in the attack. The airport had also been targeted on October 11. The authority said eight people, including two Indians, were injured. Bangladeshi and Nepalese nationals were also among those hurt. "Their injuries range from minor to critical, and they are receiving the necessary medical care at several hospitals," it said.

Strong quake hits Tibet

NEW DELHI: A strong earthquake of magnitude 7.0 struck Tibet on Thursday. The earthquake occurred at a depth of 173km. The most recent earthquake to strike Nepal was on September 8. The earthquake came amid ongoing rescue and recovery operations following floods triggered by an ice-rock avalanche near the Nepal-Tibet border on August 26. Chinese researchers have warned that climate change is accelerating glacier loss across the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, potentially increasing the risks of future disasters.