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SHARED TRADITION

Cultural ties, rooted in spirituality

Buddhist relics of Indian origin are set to be enshrined among the 108 'stupas of enlightenment' along Mau Chhu River in Bhutan's Gelephu town

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SC judge warns against societies that fear questions

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Lula da Silva, the Pele of Brazilian politics

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Britain open to apologising for slavery, says PM Burnham

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IN BRIEF



Oppn. has turned into destructive force, says Modi

EKTA NAGAR (GUJARAT)
Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday attacked the Opposition, saying it had turned into "*avrodh paksh* (obstructive side)" rather than "*virodh paksh* (opposing side)", and underscored the country needs to stay united. » Page 9

Mangolpuri fire: two held; factory owner booked

NEW DELHI
The Delhi police on Saturday arrested two persons, including the factory owner, and filed an FIR after a shoe factory fire in north-west Delhi's Mangolpuri claimed four lives and left two others injured on Friday. » Page 8

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INDIA bloc adopts motion to 'impeach' CEC over 6 charges

Opposition holds symbolic Parliament session; it accuses Gyanesh Kumar of conspiring with BJP to steal elections, disenfranchising 13.2 crore voters

Sandeep Phukan
NEW DELHI



Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge speaks during the symbolic 'impeachment' of CEC Gyanesh Kumar in New Delhi on Saturday. PTI

The Indian National Developmental, Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) on Saturday carried out a symbolic "public impeachment" of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar, unanimously adopting a "motion" by a show of hands.

The Opposition bloc levelled six charges against Mr. Kumar, including conspiring with the ruling BJP to steal elections, disenfranchising 13.2 crore voters through the special intensive revision (SIR) exercise, and acting at the behest of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi described Saturday's exercise as a "political weapon" aimed at all those who had "colluded" to destroy the votes of Indian people. He asserted that Mr. Kumar should not only be removed from office but also tried in a court of law for treason. The Opposition was compelled to hold a public impeachment because "every other institution and institutional direction" was closed to it, Mr. Gandhi said, warning that those involved in electoral irregularities "would not escape accountability and would have to face representatives of the people".

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'INSTITUTIONS RIDICULED'
» PAGE 10

U.P. deactivates ECINET logins for ERO computer assistants after Pilibhit voter roll misuse

Sreeparna Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI



U.P. CEO Navdeep Rinwa

The Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of Uttar Pradesh, Navdeep Rinwa, on Saturday directed the immediate deactivation of the login IDs of all computer assistants working on the ECINET Portal in the offices of Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) across the State.

The action comes in response to complaints and information from Pilibhit district regarding the misuse of login IDs provided to computer assistants, who work as voter registration centre operators, on the ECINET portal, the State CEO's office said in an official statement.

Opposition parties, including the Congress, had alleged that the details of 13,150 registered voters were altered on the rolls in the Pilibhit Sadar Assembly seat, even though their Elector Photo Identity Card (EPIC) numbers and serial numbers remained exactly the same. Subsequently, in the 347-Azamgarh constituency, 13 entries bearing the name Vikas Yadav appeared on the electoral rolls.

Re-verification order

On October 25, the Uttar Pradesh CEO had ordered the re-verification of all entries made by computer assistants since the publication of the final electoral rolls, after the special intensive revision (SIR) exercise, on April 10.

On Saturday, Mr. Rinwa asked EROs to submit a compliance report on the deactivation of login IDs at the earliest, and directed the immediate termination of services of the computer assistant involved in the Pilibhit case.

"The concerned firm has been directed to immediately terminate the service of the involved outsourced computer assistant in the case of Assembly Constituency 127-Pilibhit," the statement said. There are around 806 computer operators deployed in ERO offices across U.P.

Gorakhpur-registered KND Engineers and Consultants (India) Private Limited is currently the company to which the hiring of computer operators is outsourced, but sources told *The Hindu* that while the companies change every year after a tender process, the employees are drawn from the same list available on the government portal.

Sources allege the employees are drawn from the same list available on the government portal

IIT-B student's death: parents move HC, seek CBI probe

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Ravindra C. Wakode and Sonali Wakode, the parents of Sahil Wakode, an IIT-Bombay student who died on September 18, on Saturday approached the Bombay High Court seeking a transfer of the investigation into his death to the CBI or an SIT, along with supervision by a retired High Court judge.

In their petition, filed through advocate Hitendra Gandhi, the parents said the Powai police had registered a case of abetment to suicide but had not investigated role of the institute's authorities.

The parents have also sought a direction to the institution to secure all CCTV footage of that day and to ensure no one influences any student or faculty who witnessed the events of the day of the alleged incident.

(Those in distress can contact Tele MANAS at 14416 to seek help)

Two foreign nationals die in Bengaluru hotel

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU



The incident took place in the swimming pool on the third floor of Conrad Hotel in Bengaluru. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Two foreign nationals, a German and a Slovak, died following suspected electrocution in the swimming pool on the third floor of Conrad Hotel at Ulsoor in Bengaluru on Friday evening.

The deceased have been identified as Alexander Maximilian Theiss, 57, a Lufthansa Airlines crew member, and Juraj Horvat, 45, a Slovak national working as a project manager with an IT company.

According to the police, two other persons sustained injuries while attempting to rescue the victims. They have been identified as Mathew Desantis, 41, an American tourist staying in the hotel, and Rahul Tiwari, 28, a pool attendant and lifeguard employed by Conrad Hotel. Both injured persons were shifted to a private hospital where they are undergoing treatment. They are said to be out of danger.

Bengaluru City Police Commissioner Seemant Kumar Singh said one of the victims reportedly came into contact with an electric current and collapsed. The second person, who attempted to rescue him, also suffered electric shock and died. A pool attendant and another guest sustained injuries while attempting to rescue the victims, he said.

Preliminary assessment indicates that power leaked into the pool and there was a suspected short circuit. Autopsy reports of the bodies of the two deceased and an Electrical Inspectorate inquiry report are awaited.

Meanwhile, police have registered a case against the hotel management for causing death due to negligence.

A spokesperson of the Conrad Hotel expressed condolences to the families of the deceased and said they were offering full support to the investigators and teams at Conrad would be willing to provide all appropriate assistance to relevant authorities as their investigation continues.

Lighting up Deepavali



Potter Abdul Salam Kumar preparing earthen lamps at his workshop in Srinagar on Saturday, ahead of Deepavali, continuing a family tradition of making diyas for homes and institutions across Kashmir. IMRAN NISSAR

Three policemen injured during stir over panchayat polls in Alwar

Press Trust of India
JAIPUR

Three police personnel, including a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP), were injured on Saturday after a group of villagers allegedly pelted stones at them during a protest demanding repolling over purported irregularities in panchayat election in Rajasthan's Alwar district.

According to a police officer, the incident took place in Rajpur Bada village under Rajgarh panchayat samiti, where villagers were protesting against alleged irregularities in Friday's polling and demanding fresh polling.

A police team reached the protest site to persuade the villagers to end their agitation when some protesters allegedly began pelting stones at the personnel, an officer said

A team reached the protest site to persuade the villagers to end their agitation when some protesters allegedly began pelting stones at the personnel, the officer said, adding that police used mild force to disperse the crowd and bring the situation under control.

DSP Deshraj Kuldeep and other personnel sustained injuries in the incident.

'Vehicles damaged'

Additional Superintendent of Police Deepak Sharma said the protesters also damaged police vehicles during the clash.

"Additional police personnel have been deployed in the village to maintain law and order," Mr. Sharma said.

He added that cases were being registered in connection with the incident and the police were detaining those allegedly involved in the violence.

Construction curbs, vehicle ban kick in across Delhi

Nikhil M Babu
NEW DELHI



Most measures to tackle winter air pollution in Delhi will remain in force from November 1 to January 31. FILE PHOTO

A ban on dust-generating demolition and outdoor construction activities, restrictions on the entry of non-Delhi-registered vehicles below BS-VI emission standards, and double parking charges are among a slew of measures that will come into effect from today under the Delhi government's winter air pollution mitigation plan.

Under the restrictions, government and private offices in Delhi will also have to implement mandatory work-from-home arrangements for 50% of their staff. All the measures will remain in force from November 1 to January 31, except for the doubling of parking charges, which will continue until February 28. The Chief Minister's Office said on Saturday that the Environment Department had made all necessary preparations for their effective implementation.

'Deepavali ease'

Environment Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa told *The Hindu* that the government would initially focus on requesting people to comply with the directions rather than strictly enforcing them.

"We will try to not inconvenience people as much as possible till Deepavali. We will mostly request people to follow the directions till Deepavali," he said.

On the ban on vehicles below BS-VI emission standards, the Minister said the initial focus would be on checking the entry of such vehicles at the borders. "I have had a meeting with Transport Department Commissioners of nearby States to tell them to not send buses below BS-VI to Delhi," he added.

The restrictions are part of a gazette notification issued by the Delhi government on June 23.

Operational timings

According to the notification, to stagger office timings and reduce traffic congestion, Delhi government offices will operate from 10 a.m. to 6.30 p.m., while offices under the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) will function from 8.30 a.m. to 5 p.m. from November 1 to February 28.

The notification also states that vehicles without a valid Pollution Under Control Certificate will not be given fuel at petrol pumps throughout the year, and action will be taken against them.

"Special enforcement teams will be deployed, and continuous monitoring will be carried out through automatic number plate recognition cameras and the AI-enabled Integrated Command and Control Centre," an official said.

CPCB STEPS UP CRACKDOWN
» PAGE 5

INBRIEF



Filmmaker Sanjay Gupta dies after sustaining head injury

Sanjay Gupta, the filmmaker and producer behind popular crime and gangster dramas such as *Kaante*, *Musafir*, *Shootout at Lokhandwala* and *Kaabil*, died after sustaining a head injury in a fall at his Versova residence. He was 59. He is survived by wife Anuradha and their two children. In a statement on Saturday, Mumbai police said Gupta passed away at midnight after losing his balance, falling inside his house, and suffering a head injury that led to excessive bleeding. PTI

Fresh bailable warrants issued against Dhruv Rathee

A Delhi court on Saturday issued fresh bailable warrants against YouTuber Dhruv Rathee in a 2018 defamation case. Judicial Magistrate Rahul Jain issued the fresh warrants against Mr. Rathee in a case filed by Vikas Sanskrityayan alias Vikas Pandey, who accused the YouTuber of defamation over a video uploaded on his channel. On October 17, the court had issued bailable warrants against Mr. Rathee after a process server reported that his house was locked while attempting to serve notice. PTI

Efforts on to recover bodies from chopper crash site in remote Uttarakhand village

Multi-agency operation began early Saturday morning and alternative trekking routes from nearby high-altitude villages are being explored for the journey back; CM orders probe

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Teams deployed to recover the bodies of six persons, who died in a helicopter crash in Joshimath, reached the accident site on Saturday, and an intensive operation is under way to bring them back to the nearest road from the remote location, officials said.

A privately run helicopter carrying pilgrims from Badrinath crashed into a hillside in Joshimath in Uttarakhand amid overcast conditions on Friday afternoon, killing all six persons on board. The bodies of the pilot and the five pilgrims from Karnataka were found on Friday in the vicinity of the wreckage in Chai village. The operation was suspended on Friday due to darkness, the presence of wild animals, and difficult terrain.

The teams trekked along difficult mountain paths from the direction of Pandukeshwar to reach the wreckage and are now working to safely recover the mortal remains.



SDRF and other rescue personnel carrying the mortal remains of helicopter crash victims in Chamoli district on Saturday. PTI

The multi-agency operation began early Saturday morning but Chamoli district administration officials said the crash site is located in a highly inaccessible, high-altitude mountainous region and transporting them to the nearest road poses a significant challenge. A rescue official informed reporters that it could take several hours to reach the road.

Alternative trekking routes from nearby high-altitude villages are also being explored for the journey back.

A team from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and officials from the Uttarakhand administration also conducted an aerial survey of the site where the helicopter crashed. According to sources, the team has returned to Dehradun following the aerial survey and will prepare an investigation report on the incident.

Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami said that orders have been issued to investigate and determine the cause of the accident.

Co-pilot must

Meanwhile, Uttarakhand Civil Aviation Development Authority (UCADA) on Saturday made it mandatory for helicopters operating on pilgrimage routes to carry a co-pilot. UCADA has also made it compulsory for all pilots to submit a report to the authorities after every flight, detailing weather conditions and other operational information.

Prateek Jain, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of UCADA said that all charter services under Char Dham Yatra will now run with "two pilot crew configuration".

(With inputs from PTI)

CM suspends Dy. Jail Superintendent over prison break incident

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI



T.N. CM C. Joseph Vijay

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay has suspended Deputy Jail Superintendent N. Nageswaran, who had been holding additional charge as Superintendent of the Theni District Jail since August 6, 2024, in view of the jailbreak incident earlier this week.

A total of 17 inmates lodged at the Theni District Jail escaped from the prison on the night of October 26 after attacking the prison guard on duty. All of them were apprehended within a span of 40 hours.

Following the incident, Mr. Vijay on Saturday ordered stringent action over the security lapses in prison administration, negligence in surveillance, and lack of diligence in the discharge of duties.

The officer was placed under suspension with effect from October 30, as per the Tamil Nadu Civil Services (Discipline and Appeal) Rules, for failing to pay adequate attention to the supervision and control of inmates and prison staff. The Tamil Nadu government also transferred R. Krishnaraj, Superintendent of Madurai Central Prison, to Salem Central Prison to strengthen prison administration, accountability, and monitoring, a release stated.

Stress on vigilance

The Chief Minister has also stated that Prison Department officials must discharge their responsibilities with utmost care and vigilance to ensure that there are no lapses in security and surveillance in prisons. Mr. Vijay warned that stringent action would be taken against officials found to be negligent or careless while discharging their duties.

Rajasthan IPS officer taken off duty after ACB probe ordered against IAS husband

The Hindu Bureau
JAIPUR

The IAS officer is facing charges of purchasing 40 villas in luxury resorts by allegedly abusing his position and influence

The Rajasthan government on Saturday placed an Indian Police Service (IPS) officer, Prashakha Mathur, on awaiting posting order (APO) after an investigation by the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) was approved against her husband and senior Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer Shikhar Agrawal.

Mr. Agrawal, who was also sent on APO earlier this week, is facing charges along with his family members of purchasing 40 villas in luxury resorts in Udaipur and Alwar districts by allegedly abusing his position and influence and extending "undue benefits" to the firm.

While Mr. Agrawal was serving as the Additional Chief Secretary (Industries) and additionally held charge of four public sector corporations, his wife Ms. Mathur, a 1995-batch IPS officer, was posted as Additional Director General incharge of Planning, Modernisation and Welfare.

The ACB has alleged that Mr. Agrawal gave benefits such as relaxations in resort construction conditions, approvals without verification of certificates and special concessional packages to the firm. The alleged purchases of villas were made in the names of Mr. Agrawal and Ms. Mathur, their two sons, and Mr. Agrawal's parents-in-law.

The ACB has registered a preliminary inquiry and launched an investigation into the allegations of abuse of official position, conflict of interest, and extending undue benefits to the firm in question.

Mr. Agrawal was appointed Additional Chief Secretary in the CM's Office in February 2024, shortly after Bhajan Lal Sharma took oath as the CM, and served in that position till November 2025. Former CM Ashok Gehlot has demanded investigation by Central agencies into the matter, describing it as the "biggest scandal" under the BJP government.

Days after MLAs quit UDP, party chief Metbah Lyngdoh resigns as Meghalaya Minister

Press Trust of India
SHILLONG

United Democratic Party (UDP) president Metbah Lyngdoh resigned as a Minister in the Meghalaya government on Saturday, days after 11 of the party's 12 MLAs quit the regional outfit, leaving him as its only legislator in the State Assembly.

Mr. Lyngdoh said that he had submitted his resignation letter to Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma after assessing the prevailing political situation and recent developments within the party.



UDP chief Metbah Lyngdoh

Eight of the United Democratic Party's legislators joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in September, while three others defected to the NPP earlier this month.

Mr. Lyngdoh said the UDP's Central Executive Committee would deliberate on the developments and decide on the future course of action in consultation with party leaders and office-bearers.

Rejecting speculation that he was forced to resign, he maintained that the decision was voluntary.

CM approves 2,345 extra posts in Delhi Fire Services

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Aimed at strengthening Delhi's firefighting and emergency rescue services, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta has approved the creation of 2,345 additional posts across various categories in the Delhi Fire Services, the CM's Office (CMO) said on Saturday.

Under the restructuring, the number of posts will be increased across various ranks and categories, as per the CMO.

SPOTLIGHT

In Punjab, the highway to 2027

The drug menace in Punjab has stayed at the centre of political and social attention over the past decade or more. With the killing of anti-drug crusader Parvinder Singh Jhota, public emotions are running high. Political parties are hoping to capitalise on this, with election due in early 2027

Vikas Vasudeva

On October 13, anti-drug crusader Parvinder Singh Jhota, 40, was shot dead in broad daylight in Punjab's Mansa town. A fortnight later, his last rites had still not been held. A stretch of road in the town's Tikoni area has become a protest ground from where giant hoardings declare the slain activist a martyr, urging people not to mourn his death but to protect his ideals and carry forward the fight against drugs. Punjab has been battling drug addiction for more than two decades.

A steady crowd, including the elderly and young people, continue to arrive at the *pucca morcha* (permanent sit-in protest) site, making their way past barricades and signboards. Traffic police have set up diversions, but the people's resolve to stay for the long haul is clear.

Speakers from varied backgrounds, including social activists, farmer leaders, and folk singers, take turns addressing the gathering. They want the Punjab government to take immediate and effective steps to root out the drug problem. Their immediate demands include the resignation of Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, who also holds the Home portfolio, and the removal of Punjab's Director General of Police Gaurav Yadav.

On stage, a folk singer plays an *iktara* (a one-stringed musical instrument). In a raw, rustic voice he asks the State government to look at how many funeral biers have left Punjab's homes because of *chitta* (heroin).

Jhota was shot dead at a chemist shop in Mansa allegedly by Ashwani Kumar, the shop owner, with his licensed pistol. A video that went viral showed Jhota confronting the accused at the medical store over the alleged sale of illicit drugs. Parts of the shooting were recorded in a video where Kumar could be seen brandishing a weapon and firing. He was arrested in Salasar, Rajasthan.

The incident sparked immediate outrage in the State. Jhota's family and the 'Insaaf Committee' set up to secure justice for Jhota have since refused to cremate the body, blaming the Punjab government for its failure to curb substance abuse. Their key demand for a probe into the murder by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) was accepted, but the family members and the committee insist that their other demands be met too.

In October, PANJ Foundation, a Punjab-based think tank, released its report titled 'State of Punjab: Data Story of 15 Years'. Noting that the 2018 national survey is the only source that provides comparable estimates of substance use across Punjab and all other States using a uniform methodology, it noted that substance use in Punjab was higher than the national rate for every substance measured, with particularly large gaps for alcohol, cannabis, opioids, and cocaine.

It said that alcohol use was about twice the national rate. Cannabis use reached 12.55% of the population, 4.4 times the national rate and the highest among the 36 States and Union Territories. Opioid use was 4.7 times the national rate, while cocaine use was 6.6 times higher. It also found a gap in dependence and the need for treatment.



Residents staging a protest in Mansa following the death of anti-drug activist Parvinder Singh Jhota, who was shot dead on October 13. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Committees in action

Rubinder Pal Singh Ruby, Jhota's close friend, is still in a state of disbelief. He was with Jhotha on the day he was killed.

Ruby says Jhota, a former boxer, fell into drug addiction in his younger days, but fought his way out and eventually, after staying clean for over eight years, launched a campaign against drug abuse across the town and Mansa district in 2023. "His (Jhota's) sole aim was to make his town and Punjab drug-free and save the youth from its grip. He started the 'Nasha Roko, Rozgaar Do' (Stop Drugs, Give Employment) campaign in 2023," says Ruby, who was one of Jhota's supporters. Ruby says Jhota confronted chemists in their shops and people in homes suspected of selling illicit drugs. He then counselled people against selling or consuming them.

Inspired by his campaign, villagers, especially the youth, set up several such committees across Punjab's southern Malwa region, in villages from Faridkot and Bathinda to Mansa. They have no sanction from the police or the government. These committees search and confront those who are suspected of selling illicit drugs. They also corner addicts and counsel them to quit drugs.

A father's anger

As scores of people continue to throng the site to pay their respects and show support for the cause, Jhota's 72-year-old father, Bhim Singh, says their fight is not limited to his son's killing. It's against the nexus that provides patronage to people like his son's alleged killer, Kumar, allowing them to flourish in the illicit drug trade.

"Despite facing multiple criminal cases, including one under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act (1985), how did Kumar get an arms licence and how did he clear police verification? How was his pharmacy licence renewed after being suspended at least three times under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act (1940)?" he says. When his son began confronting chemists selling illicit drugs in 2023, he was pushed back by the administration. "The police registered about a dozen cases, including wrongful confinement, assault, and rioting against him," he says. "Even the 'Nasha Roko' committees that were being formed in villages by Jhota's initiative were indirectly discouraged by local administration," says Singh.

He has faith that the CBI will give him justice, as he waits for his son's body, now in a hospital mortuary, to be cremated.

A political prop

The drug menace in Punjab has stayed at the centre of political and social attention for over a decade. In the run-up to the Assembly election, due in early 2027, the issue has yet again become the key poll campaign focus of political rallies. Jhota's murder has given political parties a rallying point. His killing has put the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on the defensive over the State's poor law and order situation and its pre-election promise in 2022 to rid Punjab of drugs.

The AAP government has been asserting that it is committed to dismantling the entire drug network and as of October 29, the Punjab government's anti-drug campaign Yudh Nashian Virudh (Fight Against Drugs) has entered its 606th day. According to the police, 88,979 alleged drug smugglers have been arrested. Asserting that eradicating drugs is his "biggest priority", Chief Minister said earlier this month in Phagwara that drugs were being sold openly in Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, and Haryana, but it was only Punjab that was being singled out and defamed. He has accused the Opposition of playing politics on the issue.

Home Minister Amit Shah, who in September declared in Jalandhar that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) would fight the upcoming polls "solely on the issue of making Punjab drug-free", visited Jhota's house to meet his family on October 20. He also met family members of Gulzar Singh in Toor Banjara village of Sangrur district and Bikramjit Singh in Mari Panwan village of Gurdaspur district, who allegedly died in incidents linked to Punjab's drug issue.

Senior leaders from the Congress and Shiromani Akali Dal have also met Jhota's family and both parties have sharpened their attacks on the AAP government over the drug menace. The Opposition has even said that the government is patronising the drug trade.

Amandeep Singh, one of the members of the Jhota's Insaaf Committee, says, "The drug menace is a big issue and political parties make tall promises to eradicate the problem, but on ground the situation remains the same."

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CPCB steps up crackdown on polluting industries in NCR

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI


The direction to issue notices to non-compliant units comes ahead of restrictions scheduled to take effect in Delhi from today to tackle winter air pollution. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has directed pollution control authorities in Delhi-National Capital Region (NCR) to shut industrial units that have failed to place orders for installing or upgrading air pollution control devices (APCDs).

APCDs are filtration and emission-control systems fitted to industrial exhaust stacks to capture particulate matter before gases are released into the atmosphere.

In a letter dated October 30, the CPCB asked the Delhi Pollution Control Committee and the State Pollution Control Boards of Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan to immediately issue show-cause notices to non-compliant units covered under the Commission for Air Quality Management's (CAQM) revised emission norms. Units that fail to produce evidence of having placed orders for the equipment within five days are to face closure orders and remain shut until they demonstrate compliance with a credible installation timeline, the letter states.

The direction comes ahead of restrictions scheduled to take effect in Delhi from today under the government's winter pollution management framework, which includes curbs on vehicles, construction activities and other sources of pollution. After peaking in the "poor" category around 222-232 midweek, continuous rainfall brought Delhi's average AQI down to 60 on Friday and around 95 on Saturday morning, according to the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology-maintained network.

The CAQM prescribed a particulate matter (PM) emission limit of 50 mg/Nm^3 for 17 categories of highly polluting industries, as well as specified 'medium' and large 'red category' industries, food processing units, textile industries operating boilers and metal industries with furnaces. The revised standard became applicable from October 1.

The CPCB's direction follows reports that several units have not placed orders for new APCDs or for retrofitting existing equipment, and have also failed to obtain adequacy assessment reports or exemption certificates. They include bag filters, which trap dust using fabric membranes; electrostatic precipitators, which use high-voltage electricity to collect charged particles; cyclone separators, which use centrifugal force to remove coarse particles; and scrubbers, which use liquids to capture dust and certain gases. The CPCB's previous attempts to impose deadlines have had only limited effect. Only around 200 of 2,321 identified industrial units had complied with the installation or retrofitting requirement by July 31, according to reports.

Nishant to attend JD(U) conclave in Varanasi today ahead of U.P. poll

Press Trust of India
PATNA

Bihar Health Minister Nishant Kumar will visit Varanasi on Sunday to attend a party workers' conclave of the Janata Dal (United) [JD(U)], headed by his father Nitish Kumar, months ahead of the Uttar Pradesh Assembly poll, a senior leader said here on Saturday.

JD(U) MLC Sanjay Gandhi, a confidant of the party chief, spoke to journalists shortly after a visit by the former Chief Minister, who attended a function organised on the occasion of Sardar Patel's 151st birth anniversary. "Our party has a presence in Uttar Pradesh and the workers there have expressed a strong wish that Nishant*ji*, who is our future leader, visit the State ahead of the Assembly poll," he said.

"In the days to come, Nishant*ji* will undertake more tours," Mr. Gandhi said.

Varanasi, which is also the parliamentary constituency of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has a sizeable population of Kurmis, a powerful OBC group which considers Sardar Patel and Nitish Kumar as their greatest icons. Mr. Gandhi, however, ducked queries on whether the JD(U) hoped to contest the upcoming poll in alliance with the BJP, its Bihar ally, which in Uttar Pradesh has a partnership with some other regional parties.

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12th accused remanded in police custody till Nov. 6 in Tiger Shroff case

Press Trust of India
MUMBAI

A special Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) court here on Saturday remanded the 12th accused in the actor Tiger Shroff firing case in police custody till November 6.

Amar Mundiya, who was held from Sonipat in Haryana, had transferred money from his bank account to other co-accused, police told the court.

The prosecution argued that his custody was essential to trace the source of the money and examine the digital applications used by him to facilitate transactions.

Advocate Ajinkya Mirgal, representing Mr. Mundiya, opposed the remand, arguing that several co-accused had already been arrested in the case.

After reviewing the case diary and considering the severity of the charges under MCOCA, Special Judge Pradhan ruled that Mr. Mundiya's police custody was necessary for further investigation and remanded him until November 6.

Two shooters fired five rounds at the actor's car as he was leaving a football ground in Mumbai's Juhu area on October 18.





Probe finds TDB staff role in Sabarimala ghee scam

The Hindu Bureau
PATHANAMTHITTA

The Vigilance team probing the Sabarimala ghee scam has found the involvement of more Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) employees in the fraud, with the investigation revealing that a portion of the proceeds from the sale of stolen ghee was distributed among them.

The prime accused, S.S. Binu, a transport contractor who allegedly masterminded the scam and facilitated the diversion of the ghee, distributed ₹20 lakh among Devaswom employees, the probe has revealed.

Mr. Binu had apparently received ₹50 lakh from the sale of 11,000 kg of Milma ghee stolen from Sabarimala to two companies in Tamil Nadu.

Youth escapes police custody while being taken to prison

Four T.N. police personnel escorting the escapee have been placed under suspension; this is the second time Raghavan, who has been convicted in a theft case, has given the police the slip

The Hindu Bureau
COIMBATORE

A 25-year-old who was convicted of theft in Bengaluru a few months ago escaped from police custody for the second time in Coimbatore in the early hours of Saturday.

Raghavan had first escaped from custody on June 19 while being transported from Coimbatore to Bengaluru. Following the incident, the Annur police registered a case against him. He was arrested in Bhavani on Friday in connection with the case. Raghavan was produced before a magistrate at the Fast Track Court in Coimbatore around 11 p.m. on Friday and remanded in judicial custody.



An intensive search operation has been launched in coordination with the Coimbatore City and District police.

He managed to escape from police custody around 12.40 a.m. on Saturday by pushing the police personnel escorting him, just before he could be taken through the entrance gate of the Coimbatore Central Prison for admission.

An intensive search operation has been launched in coordination with the Coimbatore City and District police.

Special teams have been formed under the supervision of senior police officers.

The search involves drone surveillance, CCTV camera footage analysis, and intensified vehicle checks. Police units in neighbouring areas have also been alerted.

Four police personnel responsible for escorting him have been placed under suspension for lapses in duty.

Reacting to the incident, AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K. Palaniswami likened it to an episode in a television serial. Mr. Palaniswami, on his social media handle, said the escape of prisoners could be added as a chapter to a souvenir on the "achievements" of the TVK-led government.

Four-year-old killed in stray dog attack in Kalaburagi

The Hindu Bureau
KALABURAGI

A four-year-old boy died after being attacked by a stray dog in the Dariyapur locality of Housing Board Colony in Kalaburagi, Karnataka on Friday evening. Thirteen other people were reportedly bitten by the same dog during their morning walk on Saturday.

The deceased has been identified as Manoj, son of Sharanappa, a native of Jambaga village. Sharanappa works as a watchman in the city.

The incident occurred when Manoj was playing outside his house. He sustained serious injuries in the attack and was rushed to the District Hospital, where he succumbed to his injuries.

The same stray dog, suspected to be rabid, reportedly attacked 13 people who were out on their morning walk on Saturday. All the injured are undergoing treatment at the District Hospital.

Case against civic body

A case has been registered against the Kalaburagi City Corporation at the Station Bazar Police Station in connection with the incident.

The incidents have triggered anger among residents, who have urged the civic authorities to take immediate preventive measures to control the stray dog menace and relocate aggressive dogs from residential areas. They have also demanded compensation for the bereaved family.

Mangolpuri fire: two arrested; factory owner booked for culpable homicide

Lavpreet Kaur
NEW DELHI

Delhi Police on Saturday arrested two persons, including the factory owner, and filed a First Information Report (FIR) after a shoe factory fire in northwest Delhi's Mangolpuri Industrial Area claimed four lives and left two others injured on Friday night.

According to the police, factory owner Suresh Chand and contractor Ashok, 47, have been arrested while multiple teams are working to trace other accused. An FIR was registered under Sections 287 (negligent conduct with respect to fire), 125(a) (endangering life), 105 (culpable homicide not amounting to murder) and 3(5) (joint liability) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, police said.

According to fire officials, and the fire originated in the basement of the building. A preliminary probe suggests a short circuit in the basement triggered the fire, police said.

The deceased were identified as Ashok, 25, Harihar Chaurasiya, 40, Lal Babu, 38, and Prem Chand, 50. Two rescued workers remain hospitalised, with one reported to be in a serious condition.

Norms 'flouted'

Division Officer (North and Outer North) Ashok Kumar Jaiswal said the storage of raw material along the staircase and the total lack of ventilation severely hampered rescue efforts in the basement. "No one died because of the fire, but because of asphyxiation," he said.


Police personnel outside the shoe factory in Delhi's Mangolpuri on Saturday. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Grieving relatives demanded financial compensation from the company. Several alleged that the workers were pressured to work extra hours during the festive season.

Umesh Prasad waited for his nephew Ashok's body. "His last words to his wife, who lives in Bihar's Nalanda, on the phone were, 'There is a fire, I am going.' After that, the call never connected again," Mr. Umesh said

'Skipped double-shift'

Vijay, who escaped because he skipped his double shift to sleep, said, "Sometimes we were asked to do double duty when there was demand. I came back home to have dinner, but then I did not feel like going back."

A.P. girl attacked with chainsaw in school

Hareesh P.
ANANTAPUR

A Class 10 girl is battling for life in a hospital after she was attacked with an electric chainsaw at her school at Raptadu in Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh on Saturday. Another girl suffered minor injuries.

According to police and eyewitnesses, Hemanth, a close relative of the girl, barged into her classroom and started attacking her indiscriminately, leaving the students and the teacher in shock. The police later arrested him at Dharmavaram railway station.

The Raptadu Police registered cases under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act and on charges of attempted murder. The motive behind the attack is being probed.

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has directed the police to ensure thorough investigation.

SIT files FIR against Kerala PSC chairperson in exam fraud case

G. Anand
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) of the Crime Branch probing the suspected fraud in recruitment tests conducted by the Kerala State Public Service Commission (KPSC) for has registered an FIR against the independent constitutional body's chairperson M.R. Baiju and fellow members.

The FIR registered on October 28 listed only the official titles of Mr Baiju and did not identify him or the other PSC members by name. It indicts the chairperson and other members for criminal breach of trust and wrongful employment of their constitutionally sanctioned authority. It alleges that they tilted the playing field in favour of candidates owing allegiance to the Communist Party of India (Marxist) [CPI(M)] by tweaking the rank list for the post of Fisheries Extension Officer under the State Fisheries Department.

The Crime Branch has also accused the KPSC chairperson and members of undermining public confidence in the commission, created to ensure an independent, fair, transparent, and merit-based selection process for public employment, insulated from political influence and favouritism.

'Protest against vote theft to be integrated with workers' issues'

The Hindu Bureau
KOZHIKODE

Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation [CPI(ML) Liberation] general secretary Dipankar Bhattacharya has said that the ongoing protests by the INDIA bloc against alleged vote theft will be integrated with the concerns of the farmers and the working class.

He was addressing the media in Keralam on Saturday. Answering a question, Mr. Bhattacharya said there would be greater coordination between the ongoing struggles on the ground and INDIA bloc, which was initially launched as an electoral alliance.

"We, the Left parties, always pay very close attention to the farmers' issues. The biggest challenge before the Indian farmers now is the proposed India-U.S. trade deal, which, if finalised, will sound a death knell for Indian agriculture. The farmers will suffer enormously because they cannot compete with the American farmers who are backed by the U.S. state and its economy," he said.

Likewise, the workers had been fighting against the Labour Codes. "Earlier, whatever basic labour rights were promised, many of them were never really kept. Now with the Labour Codes, there is absolutely no concern for the labour welfare or any security of Indian workers. So we are with the working class," he added.

He also said that all INDIA bloc constituents would be participating in the protest rally planned on the Ram Lila grounds in New Delhi on Sunday.

After voters found at Delhi addresses, DEO orders field verification of deletion claims

Suruchi Kumari
NEW DELHI

Of the 961 deletion objections filed in Mustafabad by October 30, 684 (71%) were submitted by BJP BLAs

After 28 voters in Delhi's Mustafabad constituency against whom deletions had been sought were found living at their registered addresses, the office of north-east Delhi District Election Officer (DEO) Ajay Kumar said on Saturday that election officers would visit every elector against whom a Form 7 application had been filed "to ascertain the genuineness" of the claim before deleting any name from the electoral roll.

The DEO's office also said it would initiate "action under the rules" against those who had filed Form 7 applications if their claims were found to be false or "mischievous".

The DEO's response came in reply to a post on X sharing *The Hindu*'s October 30 report that all 28 electors at polling booth 129 against whom Chandra Shekhar Nainwal, a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) booth-level agent (BLA-2), had filed objections were living at their registered addresses.

Moreover, nine fresh applications naming Mr. Nainwal as the objector appeared on the Delhi CEO's October 30 list of deletion applications received. When contacted earlier, Mr. Nainwal had denied filing the forms and said he was neither a BLA nor associated with any political party.

The DEO's office said no bulk applications beyond the prescribed limits had been received, either online or physically, in Mustafabad. It also cited figures that differed from those available in public records, saying: "A total of 832 Forms 7 and 8 (102 Forms 8) have been filed/received in AC-69 up to October 30."

Till October 28, 19 BJP BLAs had filed 572 of the 843 Form 7 applications submitted against Muslim electors across 24 parts of the Mustafabad constituency. Officials said the applications lacked a BLA undertaking and were not submitted in the prescribed format.

According to the Delhi Chief Electoral Officer's (CEO) list of Form 7 applications, 118 more objections were filed on October 29 and 30, taking the total to 961. Of these, 684, or 71%, were filed by the BJP BLAs, including 112 by the same 19 BLAs.

Meanwhile, Ali Mehdi, the Congress candidate from Mustafabad in the 2025 Assembly election, said in a post on X that he had submitted a formal complaint to the north-east Delhi DCP seeking an FIR against BJP BLAs over alleged attempts at illegal deletion.

Naidu urges vigilance amid fresh cyclone prediction in A.P.

The Hindu Bureau
VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has directed officials to expedite restoration works in the areas affected by Cyclone Arnab and called for a high alert in view of the threat of another cyclone.

With a depression over the southeast Bay of Bengal predicted to intensify into a cyclone by Sunday, moderate to heavy rainfall is likely in the south coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema regions on November 2, 3 and 4.

Reviewing relief and restoration measures in the cyclone-hit districts at the Real Time Governance Society (RTGS) Centre in the Secretariat on Saturday, he directed officials to monitor the movement of the depression every six hours and take appropriate measures based on its trajectory.

Mr. Naidu directed officials to urgently restore the protection wall at Kakinada, clear silt from canals in the Narsapuram and Katrenikona areas, and strengthen drainage systems in Konaseema and West Godavari districts to ensure the smooth flow of water.

He ordered compensation of ₹54,000 per hectare for damage to 1,293 hectares of coconut plantations and ₹1,500 for each uprooted coconut tree.

Keralam likely to receive rainfall from today

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

After a brief hiatus, the rainfall activity is set to resume in Keralam for a few days from Sunday under the influence of a weather system developing over the Bay of Bengal.

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), a low-pressure area formed over the South Andaman Sea and adjoining areas of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands is likely to intensify into a depression over the southeast Bay of Bengal and adjoining areas of the Andaman Sea and Andaman and Nicobar Islands on Saturday.

CJI presents N.R. Madhava Menon award to Attorney General Venkataramani

The Hindu Bureau
KOCHI

In his 'return speech', Venkataramani urged everyone to work towards social transformation

Crediting N.R. Madhava Menon, considered the father of modern legal education, with reimagining legal education in the country, Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant presented the N.R. Madhava Menon Memorial Tribute of Honour-II Award to Attorney General for India R. Venkataramani in Keralam on Saturday.

He recalled that Menon lived as per the timeless principle that the welfare of the people is the supreme law. He gave it life through education, curricula and legal-aid clinics that placed the marginalised at the centre of legal training, Mr. Kant said.

The award function was organised jointly by the Bar Council of Kerala and the Bar Council of Kerala Advocates' Academy for Continuing Legal Education Trust.

Referring to the *'gurushishya'* bond between Menon and Mr. Venkataramani, Mr. Kant said it extended beyond college, with the latter carrying his teacher's conscience to the Supreme Court.

Thanking Menon for being with him throughout his life, Mr. Venkataramani, in his 'return speech', exhorted everyone to be responsible citizens and work towards social transformation.

In his keynote address, Soumen Sen, Chief Justice of the Kerala High Court, narrated how Menon left a lasting institutional legacy. He also emphasised the need to upgrade the quality of legal training, especially in trial courts.

2,500 acres identified for land swap for Mekedatu project: Karnataka CM

Press Trust of India
MANDYA

Karnataka Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar on Saturday said 2,500 acres of land had been identified as alternative land, including forest land, to facilitate the Mekedatu balancing reservoir project across the Cauvery river.

The project, once implemented, would enable Karnataka to store 66 tmc of water and regulate its release during difficult periods, benefiting farmers in Mandya and other Cauvery basin areas, the Chief Minister said.

He said the Deputy Commissioner of Mandya district had been appointed chairman of the committee overseeing the process, and officials had already held meetings on providing alternative land to the Forest Department.


Cauvery river flows through a gorge at Mekedatu, near Kanakapura in Ramanagara district of Karnataka. K. MURALI KUMAR

"We have collectively decided to provide alternative land, including forest land, in lieu of the land required for the project. We have identified 2,500 acres so far and are in the process of identifying the remaining land," he said.

Multi-purpose project

Mekedatu is a multi-purpose project proposed by Karnataka, which involves building a balancing reservoir near Kanakapura in Bengaluru South district.

The project is aimed at ensuring drinking water to Bengaluru and neighbouring areas; it can also generate 400 MW power, according to officials.

Mr. Shivakumar said the State government would upload the details of the alternative land on the forest clearance portal and expected the necessary permissions to be granted thereafter. The government hopes to make progress by the next Budget, he added.

Tamil Nadu has raised apprehensions that the flow of Cauvery water into the State will be affected if the project takes shape.

From Page One

Opposition bloc adopts motion to 'impeach' CEC

The "motion" was moved by Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, whose official residence served as the venue for the public impeachment. The proceedings, which went on for three-and-a-half hours, were modelled on those of Parliament, replicating the setting of the Lok Sabha, with former Speaker Meira Kumar presiding over the session.

Mr. Gandhi said the unprecedented gathering in the garden of Mr. Kharge's residence may seem "absurd" and reflected the closure of institutional avenues available to the Opposition.

"This may look like a meeting of MPs and ordinary citizens, but it is, in fact, a political weapon aimed directly at every single person who colluded to destroy the votes of the Indian people," Mr. Gandhi said.

In a pointed warning to officials working under the CEC, Mr. Gandhi said they could not expect legal protection to shield them indefinitely. "Mr. Modi and Mr. Shah might be on top. We will deal with them, but you are their instruments, and so you are our first target," he said. He also cautioned officials not to underestimate the public response in a time of political change.

Mr. Gandhi alleged that 13.3 crore votes had been deleted from electoral rolls, accounting for nearly 15% of India's electorate, while the difference between the Opposition and the winning side in the 2024 Lok Sabha election was only three percentage points.

'CEC acting at behest of PM, HM'

Earlier, moving the motion, Mr. Kharge accused the CEC of overseeing a conspiracy to manipulate elections, deleting voters' names, changing Form 6 without parliamentary oversight, centralising electoral rolls through ERONET/ECINET, excluding the other two Election Commissioners from decision-making, and acting at the behest of the Prime Minister and the Home Minister.

"The right to vote is under threat because CEC Gyanesh Kumar is running the Election Commission on the directions of Modi and Shah," Mr. Kharge alleged. He said 193 Opposition MPs had submitted notices in both Houses of Parliament seeking Mr. Kumar's removal seven months ago, but their proposals had been rejected. The present exercise, he said, was intended to restore public confidence in the Election Commission.

"We are fighting to keep genuine voters on electoral rolls. It is the BJP which is protecting *ghuspaithiyas*," the Congress chief said.

Mamata Trinamool Congress leader Sagarika Ghose alleged that the 2026 West Bengal Assembly election was "stolen" by deleting eligible voters from the electoral rolls, while her colleague, Mahua Moitra claimed that 71% of those deleted from the Bengal electoral rolls were Muslims and 51% were women.

Communist Party of India (Marxist) MP John Brittas said the SIR exercise was hollowing out universal adult franchise by forcing even elected representatives to establish their eligibility to vote. Noting that he had personally attended two hearings to establish that he was an eligible voter, he asked: "If this is the situation of an MP, a public representative, what would be the condition of the common man?"

Other senior leaders, including former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Arvind Sawant, CPI(ML) MP Sudama Prasad, and the Samajwadi Party's Harendra Malik, also spoke on the motion.

Society must cultivate habit of inquiry: Justice Bhuyan

Supreme Court judge stresses scientific temper, says societies that fear questions become vulnerable to misinformation and authoritarianism; warns against 'us versus them' narratives

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

Supreme Court judge Justice Ujjal Bhuyan said a society that accepts claims without evidence, fears questions and treats tradition as beyond question becomes vulnerable to misinformation, defenceless in the face of authoritarianism and fails to reform unjust practices.

Justice Bhuyan said building a scientific temper enshrined in Article 51A of the Constitution should not be confined to laboratories but extend to the capacity of youths and students to think rationally as members of a civil and political society.



> All you need is the capacity to think rationally; what you say or think must be based on reason. It is an attitude of inquiry and openness to examination. It cannot happen overnight. The germination has to take place in the university
>
> **JUSTICE UJJAL BHUYAN**
> Supreme Court judge

Attitude of inquiry

"All that you need is the capacity to think rationally; what you say or think must be based on reason. It [scientific temper] is an attitude of inquiry and openness to examination. It cannot happen overnight. The germination has to take place in the university," Justice Bhuyan said in his address at the University of Science and Technology, Meghalaya on Saturday.

The speech resonates after the nation saw widespread dissatisfaction among Gen Z over NEET 2026 paper leaks, student unrest in universities and a wave of agitations across premier institutions from IIT Bombay to multiple National Law Schools followed by a demand to restore student union elections at Jamia Millia Islamia. The judge said society should demand empirical evidence when public discourse relies on emotional resonance and unverified assertions. Students must acquire the habit of inquiry to see through misinformation.

"To inquire is to avoid accepting the very first explanation that comes our way; it tells us to look for reasons; and it trains the mind to search a little deeper than what appears at the surface. This is nothing else but the development of a scientific temper. This will protect the mind from prejudice and empower it to make independent thinking and choice possible," Justice Bhuyan said.

'Destructive tendency'

The judge pointed out how society is willingly or unwillingly getting drawn into a "false narrative; the binary of 'us' and 'they'". He termed this a destructive tendency.

Justice Bhuyan said the narrative must shift from 'us' and 'they' to the 'we' of the Preamble to the Constitution of India, which starts with the expression 'We, the People of India'.

"This Constitutional concept of 'we' enables diversity to coexist with unity. Its genius lies in the fact that it does not seek to efface the differences; rather, it seeks to restore unity without demanding uniformity. It does not require that our individual identities should get subsumed in the larger whole," Justice Bhuyan said.



Toshimitsu Motegi, S. Jaishankar, Marco Rubio and Penny Wong during the meeting of Foreign Ministers in Atlanta. ANI

Quad plans $85 mn in technical aid for access to trusted AI

Press Trust of India
WASHINGTON

Foreign Ministers of Quad grouping on Saturday expressed their intent to provide $85 million in technical assistance to expand access to trusted Artificial Intelligence across the Indo-Pacific even as the U.S. committed to provide $10 million for recycling critical minerals in India and ASEAN countries.

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio hosted a meeting with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, Japan's Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi and Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong on the sidelines of G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Atlanta.

Participating in the Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting, Mr. Jaishankar said he spoke about countering non-market practices and increased economic stresses in the Indo-Pacific. Mr. Jaishankar said he highlighted the importance of maintaining stability, driving prosperity and ensuring freedom of choice.

'Narco-hawala' probe: 4 more accused held

Devesh K. Pandey
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate has arrested four more accused, including a Myanmar citizen, in connection with an international cross-border "narco-hawala" network, following a recent multi-agency crackdown on the network.

As part of Operation Trident, simultaneous raids were earlier carried out at 38 locations across Assam, Mizoram, and Manipur, leading to the arrest of 18 accused persons and detection of ₹100 crore in "hawala" transactions on October 23.

The Central agency has uncovered financial records purportedly showing that drug suppliers in Myanmar were also paid in kind.

Meitei, Naga groups hold rallies in Manipur; demand end to SoO pact

Press Trust of India
IMPHAL

An umbrella body of Meitei groups held a massive rally in Manipur's capital Imphal on Saturday seeking protection for indigenous people and the scrapping of the Suspension of Operations (SoO) agreement with militant groups.

Naga civil bodies also held marches in Chandel and Senapati districts, supporting the rally by the Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity (COCOMI) in Imphal. The Naga organisations demanded termination of the agreement, accusing Kuki-Zo militant groups of being involved in violence.

The rallies came days after militants ambushed 14 Meitei men and killed three of them, sparking protests in the State.



Coming together: A rally organised by the Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity in Imphal on Saturday. AFP

Police put up barricades at Keisampat junction, just a few hundred metres from the Lok Bhavan, Chief Minister's Office and the BJP State office, and prevented the rally from moving ahead.

"We seek the resignation of the present government for its failure to protect the lives and properties of the indigenous people of the State," said COCOMI convenor Y. Dhiren.

A protester said, "After three-and-a-half years of crisis in Manipur, Naga tribes, Meiteis and the native people are coming together to raise their voice against the government for their policies"

For the first time since ethnic violence erupted in 2023, security forces have taken control of a camp meant to house Kuki-Zo militants under the nearly two-decade-old truce and plan to audit all 14 such camps across the State.

This rare takeover followed the discovery that only one of the 159 registered cadres was present at the camp, raising questions about compliance with the SoO agreement, which expired on September 4 without renewal. Under its rules, militants covered by it must remain in designated camps and keep their weapons under security arrangements.

ED detains SP leader two days after bail

Mayank Kumar
LUCKNOW

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Saturday detained Samajwadi Party leader Azam Khan from outside the Rampur jail in Uttar Pradesh immediately after he was released on bail in an alleged PAN fraud case, officials said.

Mr. Khan, 78, may soon be arrested under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

SP chief Akhilesh Yadav criticised the BJP for the action against Mr. Khan. "It is a very cowardly act to trap an elderly person in such frivolous cases and put him in jail again and again," he wrote on X.

Sudhir Panwar, a senior SP leader, said, that Mr. Khan's arrest smacked of political vendetta.

Modi says Opposition has become destructive force; calls for unity

Press Trust of India
EKTA NAGAR

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday attacked the Opposition, saying it had turned into "*avrodh paksh* (obstructive side)" rather than "*virodh paksh* (opposing side)", and highlighted the need for the country to stay united.

He was addressing a gathering at the Parade Ground in Gujarat's Ekta Nagar on the occasion of Rashtriya Ekta Diwas, marking the 151st birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

"It is our misfortune that the Opposition has turned into *avrodh paksh*," Mr. Modi said.

In a veiled reference to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's foreign trips, the Prime Minister asked, "Who is secretly meeting whom in foreign countries? Forces opposed to India are extending their support to whom? Who is speaking the language of India's enemies?"

He said the nation needs to stand united against such forces and alleged that the Opposition wants to divide the people of the country.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi pays tribute to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on his birth anniversary at the Statue of Unity, in Ekta Nagar, Gujarat. PTI

'Dimagi Naxals'

"Social media is being used as a weapon, rumours are being spread, and India's image is being tarnished," he alleged.

"I said last year that we would not rest until the country was free from Naxalism and Maoism; that promise has been fulfilled. Though we have finished Naxals, the threat of '*dimagi* (intellectual) Naxals' remains very high," hesaid.

Mr. Modi told the gathering that India's next big steps include completely securing the country's borders, stopping infiltration and demographic changes, and moving towards a secular civil code.

New projects launched

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister inaugurated 23 development projects worth ₹307.83 crore to boost tourism and civic infrastructure at Ekta Nagar. He also laid the foundation stones for eight development projects worth ₹118.88 crore, taking the total outlay for the 31 projects to ₹426.71 crore.

Newly launched projects aim to upgrade visitor facilities and civic infrastructure around the world's tallest statue, which has developed into a major tourism hub.

Earlier in the day, Mr. Modi paid floral tributes to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel at the Statue of Unity.

'Distorians' cannot erase the respect Indira had for Patel: Jairam Ramesh

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh on Saturday shared a rare photograph from 1947 featuring a young Indira Gandhi greeting Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, who was then Deputy Prime Minister, and said "distorians" cannot erase the profound respect and admiration that Indira Gandhi had for the Congress stalwart.

"Two Indians, both indomitable and resolute. Both shaped subcontinental geography and history," he said on X.

'Architect of freedom'

"Today, we celebrate the 151st birth anniversary of a key architect of India's freedom and who made India's unity a living reality. He was also to inspire the White Revolution that came decades later," Mr. Ramesh said of Patel.

"Today, we also mark the 42nd death anniversary of a most courageous and consequential personality who made a free India strong as a nuclear and space power and catalysed the Green Revolution during her lifetime," he said of Indira Gandhi.



Mallikarjun Kharge, Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi pay tribute to Indira Gandhi at Shakti Sthal in New Delhi on Saturday. ANI

Sharing the picture, Mr. Ramesh said it was taken in early November 1947 in New Delhi, during a function hosted by the Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru for delegates to the Asian Regional Conference of the International Labour Organisation. The picture shows a 30-year-old Indira Gandhi greeting the 72-year-old Deputy Prime Minister, he said.

"Distorians cannot erase the profound respect and admiration that Indira Gandhi had for Sardar Patel, and she spoke from her heart on the occasion of his birth centenary. And Sardar Patel's was the only statue of a living person that Nehru himself unveiled in Godhra on February 13, 1949," he said.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and former party chiefs Rahul Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi paid homage to her at the 'Indira Gandhi Memorial' at 1 Safdarjung Road, the residence of the former Prime Minister.

Rahul Gandhi shared a Sanskrit *shloka* she had taught him. "Sitting on your lap. Holding both your hands. Listening to your voice say these words. Repeating them after you. *Asato maa sadgamaya, tamaso maa jyotirgamaya, mrityor maa amritam gamaya* (Lead me from untruth to truth, from darkness to light, from death to immortality). *OM Shanti, Shanti, Shanti*. What a beautiful gift you gave me Dadi. What a gift. I never imagined."

'Unwavering resolve'

Mr. Kharge hailed Indira Gandhi as a symbol of indomitable courage, unwavering resolve and visionary leadership. "Her supreme sacrifice for the unity and integrity of our nation will forever be etched in our collective memory," Mr. Kharge said in a post on X in Hindi.

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra also hailed her grandmother and former Prime Minister. "What a beautiful woman she was! Free as the sky, deep as the ocean, resilient as the earth and brighter than fire," she said.

Indira Gandhi was assassinated by her bodyguards in New Delhi on October 31, 1984.

At 'public impeachment', voters question deletion of names from electoral rolls

Sandeep Phukan
NEW DELHI



Missing names: Participants at the INDIA bloc's symbolic 'public impeachment' of the CEC in New Delhi on Saturday. PTI

The Indian National Developmental, Inclusive Alliance's (INDIA) symbolic "public impeachment" of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar on Saturday featured accounts from voters who alleged that their names had been deleted from electoral rolls during the special intensive revision (SIR) exercise.

Among them was Anita Jaiswal, who moved from Kolkata to Delhi. She said she had voted in every election between 2012 and 2025 but was now being asked to establish her citizenship.

"I am a single mother. They told me to get an Aadhaar card, saying it would prove that I am a citizen. Who gave you the right to remove my voter ID? My daughter gets a scholarship, has a bank account and an Aadhaar card, and now you are deleting our names. Who gave you the right?" she said.

Iftikar Ahmed, another voter from Kolkata, said he had voted in the same Chowrangee constituency for 20 years but received a notice during the SIR hearing seeking documents because of a mapping discrepancy. His father, too, had been voting from the same address for two decades, he said. "Our names have been removed in a planned manner," he alleged.

Nikhil Dey, founder of Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan, who has been working with affected voters, introduced Kanta Prasad, who had been declared dead in the exercise. "He spoke very convincingly for a corpse! The deprivation of the right to vote is a crime against the Constitution and a blot on our democracy. There must be accountability," Congress MP Shashi Tharoor said in a post on X.

RTI activist Anjali Bharadwaj said that in response to an application seeking copies of files recording the decision-making process behind the SIR, the Election Commission of India (ECI) had replied that no such file existed. "T. C. Kom, who is a Principal Secretary, said the ECI had not taken any decision to conduct an SIR," Ms. Bharadwaj claimed.

All India Students' Association (AISA) national president Neha Bora alleged that the SIR was a attempt to disenfranchise young voters and undermine democracy. Neha said their statutory authority was being overridden through the use of software to exclude eligible voters.

Democratic institutions being ridiculed by INDIA bloc: BJP

BJP MP Sambit Patra slams Opposition alliance over mock Parliament session; he says the parties have repeatedly disrupted the House during sessions; he also rejects allegations of 'vote theft'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Saturday accused the Congress and its allies of ridiculing democratic institutions by staging a mock Parliament session, and said that Opposition parties had repeatedly disrupted proceedings in the real Parliament.

At a press conference, BJP MP Sambit Patra referred to the structure resembling the old Parliament building erected for the mock Parliament session and said: "They want to retain everything from the old British-era structure... They should seat Rahul Gandhi *ji* as the mock Prime Minister in that very old structure. We have absolutely no objection."

He was referring to the Indian National Developmental, Inclusive Alliance's (INDIA bloc) mock Parliament session held at Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge's New Delhi residence on Saturday for a symbolic "public impeachment" of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar over allegations of irregularities in the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls and the conduct of elections.



> They want to retain everything from the old British-era structure... They should seat Rahul Gandhi *ji* as the mock Prime Minister in that very old structure. We have absolutely no objection
>
> **SAMBIT PATRA**
> BJP national spokesperson

SIR exercise

Responding to the Opposition's "vote *chori*" charge, Mr. Patra said: "If your 38 lakh BLAs (booth-level agents) had been doing their work properly, you would not have needed to hold this mock Parliament today."

On the allegation that voting rights of 13 crore people were "stolen", he said if that had been the case, the affected people would have taken to the streets. "The reality is that not a single person's vote has been stolen," he said. He pointed out that SIR had been conducted 10 times during Congress rule and accused the party of double standards. Explaining the figure, Mr. Patra claimed that about 12 crore voters had permanently shifted, and of them, about 6 crore had already filled in Form 6 to be included in the voter list. Notices had been sent to the remaining individuals and the process was underway, he said, adding that those marked absent were also being included. About 2.8 crore names were deleted on account of their death and nearly 1 crore duplicate entries were also removed, he said.

Rejecting the charge that Form 6 had been amended, he said only a declaration was added and that the Supreme Court judgment dated May 27, 2026, addressed the matter clearly. He also said the Election Commission of India (ECI) had clarified that decisions on SIR were taken unanimously.

Constitutional norms

The BJP leader refuted the accusation that the BJP brought in a 2023 law to grant immunity to Election Commissioners (EC), arguing that constitutional protection already existed and the law only laid down the procedure. He cited a Telangana lower court order in July 2023 for the registration of a case against the Chief Election Commissioner and others. The directive was set aside by the High Court.

"However, at that time, it was felt that due to political pressure, even constitutional authorities who enjoy protection under the Constitution could be subjected to cases without any consideration," he said.

Earlier, BJP MP Sudhanshu Trivedi said the World Bank's 2025 report acknowledged India's success in reducing poverty under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. According to the report, between 2011 and 2023, extreme poverty declined from 27.6% to just 2.6%.

Congress calls BJP campaign on democracy 'hypocrisy'

The Hindu Bureau
CHANDIGARH

The Haryana Congress on Saturday described the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) decision to launch a campaign "*Loktantra Bachao, Arajakta Hatao*" (Save Democracy, Eliminate Anarchy) as the height of political hypocrisy and a desperate attempt to divert the country's attention from uncomfortable questions concerning electoral transparency.

Haryana Congress incharge Sanjay Dutt said the BJP has systematically weakened democratic institutions and now preaching the virtues of democracy.

"The party that wants an Election Commission subservient to its interests is now lecturing the Opposition on democratic values. The party that has no answers to the serious allegations of vote theft is branding those demanding answers as anarchists," he said in a statement.

BJP national president Nitin Nabin will lead a *padyatra* in Rohtak on November 1 as part of the party's nationwide campaign, against what the BJP describes as the Opposition's misinformation propaganda.

AAP releases first list of 40 candidates for 2027 Punjab polls

The Hindu Bureau
CHANDIGARH



Bhagwant Mann

Taking the lead in announcing candidates for the Punjab Assembly election, due in early 2027, the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Saturday released its list of 40 candidates, all of them sitting legislators.

Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann will re-contest from the Dhuri Assembly constituency in Sangrur district.

There are 117 Assembly seats in Punjab and the five-year term of the Assembly ends on March 16, 2027. The AAP registered a landslide victory in the 2022 Assembly election by winning 92 seats.

Among prominent candidates, the Punjab Assembly Speaker Kultar Singh Sandhwan will contest from Kotkapura, while Minister Sanjeev Arora, currently in jail in an alleged money laundering case, is the party's candidate from Ludhiana West. Others include Kuldeep Singh Dhaliwal from Ajnala, Inderbir Singh Nijjar from Amritsar South, Kulwant Singh from SAS Nagar, and Bram Shanker Sharma Jimpa from Hoshiarpur constituency.

"Our party's principle is that, three or four months before Assembly elections are held, we release the list of candidates. Candidates will get the opportunity to go to the people and take the government's work to them," Mr. Mann said.

Why appeal against voter inclusion, asks Bengal's Opposition

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

Opposition parties in West Bengal have stepped up the heat on the issue of 16.10 lakh appeals filed against the inclusion of voters following the special intensive revision (SIR) in the State.

Leaders of the Mamata All India Trinamool Congress and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) have questioned the lack of clarity over who authorised the filing of the appeals after the SIR concluded in the State.

Communist Party of India (Marxist) West Bengal State secretary Mohammad Salim described the development as a "ghostly affair", with officials shifting responsibility.

"Everyone is busy dodging responsibility. Is it some ghostly affair? The responsibility of disenfranchising lakhs upon lakhs of citizens must surely fall on #CEC and #CEO for washing their hands clean," Mr. Salim said.

The CPI(M) leader was referring to a recent statement by Subrata Gupta, former special observer for the West Bengal SIR exercise, who reportedly said that he had "no information" about the CEO office filing lakhs of appeals seeking to remove voters whose names had been cleared by judicial officers.

The Mamata AITC leadership also questioned the role of the ECI in filing lakhs of appeals seeking to remove voters whose names had been cleared. "Subrata Gupta (now advisor to CM Suvendu Adhikari) - during West Bengal's SIR has told *The Wire* that he had no information about the Chief Electoral Officer's office filing lakhs of appeals seeking to remove voters whose names had been cleared by judicial officers," the party said on social media.

NC denies rift as 17 MLAs hold meeting

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

Disgruntled National Conference (NC) legislators on Saturday forwarded a list of demands to party president Farooq Abdullah, even as the party provincial president, Showkat Ahmad Mir, downplayed the Friday meeting organised by 17 legislators.

"A meeting of NC MLAs was an internal exercise in democracy. It discussed concerns and future challenges. No one had spoken against the party organisation or the government. There was no confrontation with the leadership. There is no rebellion. Even in families, there are occasions when family members get upset," said Mr. Mir.

His statement came a day after a meeting of disgruntled 17 NC legislators was held at a legislator's residence in Srinagar over the recent Cabinet expansion "without consultation". Distribution of portfolios "despite certain objections" and the role of Chief Minister's adviser Nasir Aslam Wani and MP Shami Oberoi were also discussed.

Meanwhile, the list of demands by the disgruntled legislators was forwarded to the party president Dr. Farooq Abdullah. It demanded "intensifying" the struggle for restoration of Statehood, implementation of the promises made in the 2024 manifesto within six months, removing Mr. Wani, and reconsidering portfolios assigned to Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary. Several senior NC legislators had been upset after they did not get any ministerial berths.

Hardeep Puri files papers for M.P. Rajya Sabha bypoll

Press Trust of India
BHOPAL

Union Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri, the BJP's nominee for the November 12 Rajya Sabha byelection in Madhya Pradesh, filed his nomination papers on Saturday in the presence of Chief Minister Mohan Yadav and BJP state president Hemant Khandelwal.

Indian Overseas Bank
CENTRAL OFFICE, 763, ANNA SALAI, CHENNAI – 600 002

PUBLIC NOTICE

Important information regarding TDS/TCS correction timeline as per Income Tax Act 2025

- Any TDS/TCS correction viz. correction of PAN, correction of amount paid and TDS/TCS amount etc. for the period from Q4 2023-24 to Q3 2024-25 can be processed only upto 31.03.2027.
- Customers seeking corrections for FY 2023-24 (Q4 only) and FY 2024-25 must submit their requests well before 31.03.2027.
- The Correction request for the above period is time barred by limitation on 31.03.2027 and would not be accepted from 01.04.2027 onwards.

For assistance, customers may contact the nearest Indian Overseas Bank branch.

APPOINTMENTS

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR EMPOWERMENT OF PERSONS WITH MULTIPLE DISABILITIES (DIVYANGJAN))
(Dept. of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Govt. of India)
Muttukadu, East Coast Road, Kovalam (P.O), Chennai - 603 112
Tamil Nadu – India. Phone: 044 – 27472046, 27472113, 27472423
Email: niepmd@gov.in, niepmd@gmail.com, director@niepmd.tn.nic.in
website: www.niepmd.nic.in
– (Re-Accredited by NAAC B+2nd Cycle)

NIEPMD (D) invites online applications from the Indian Nationals, who fulfil the prescribed qualification, experience, age and other conditions for filling up the following sanctioned regular and contractual posts at NIEPMD(D), Chennai:-

EMPLOYMENT NOTICE NO:02(R)/2026

Sl. No.	Name of the Post	No. of Post / Reserved for
1.	Deputy Registrar (Admin)	01 (One)
2.	Lecturer in Special Education (Locomotor and Cerebral Palsy)	01 (One) UR-PwD
3.	Lecturer in Community Rehab & Project Management	01(One) EWS
4.	Rehabilitation Officer (Independent Living)	01(One) SC

Manpower Engagement Notification (Temporary) No:7/2026

Sl. No.	Name of the Post	No. of Vacancies
1.	Lecturer (Clinical Psychology) (Consultant)	1
2.	Tutor - Clinical Assistant (Occupational Therapy) (Consultant)	1
3.	Rehabilitation Officer –Therapeutics (Consultant)	1

For detailed advertisement, essential/desirable qualifications, age limit, application link (https://niepmd.nic.in/notice-category/recruitments/), and the application fee details etc., please visit our website: **www.niepmd.nic.in**

Sd/-
DIRECTOR

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR EMPOWERMENT OF PERSONS WITH MULTIPLE DISABILITIES (DIVYANGJAN))
(Dept. of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), (Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Govt. of India)
Muttukadu, East Coast Road, Kovalam (P.O), Chennai - 603 112
Tamil Nadu – India. Phone: 044 – 27472046, 27472104, 27472113, 27472423.
Website: www.niepmd.nic.in. Email: niepmd@gov.in, niepmd@gmail.com
– (Re-Accredited by NAAC B+2nd Cycle)

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST - 01, 02 / 2026

The National Institute for Empowerment of Persons with Multiple Disabilities (NIEPMD) (DIVYANGJAN), Chennai invites Expression of Interest from qualified and experienced professionals for engagement of Allied Faculty on Part-Time/Consultancy basis for teaching various subjects in the BASLP, BPT & BOT Programme at NIEPMD (D), Chennai.

Sl. No.	Discipline	No. of Post	Remuneration
	NIEPMD(D), Chennai		
	For B.ASLP		
1.	Assistant Professor (Electronics)	1	Remuneration will be paid on hourly basis as per the Institute norms
2.	Assistant Professor (Otolaryngology)	1	
3.	Assistant Professor (Linguistics)	1	
4.	Assistant Professor (Statistics)	1	
5.	Assistant Professor (Neurology)	1	
6.	Ear Mould Technician	1	
7.	Bio- Medical Technician	1	
	For BPT & BOT		
1.	Bio-Chemistry	1	Remuneration will be paid on hourly basis as per the Institute norms
2.	Pathology and Micro Biology	1	
3.	Pharmacology	1	
4.	Emergency care and life support skills	1	
5.	Yoga and systems of Medicines	1	

For all other details, please log on to the website **www.niepmd.nic.in**

Sd/-
DIRECTOR

Protests must be guided by national interest: RSS leader

Ishita Mishra
NEW DELHI

Everyone has the right to raise issues concerning the country through demonstrations, but such protests must be conducted with the national interest in mind, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) national publicity in-charge Sunil Ambekar said on Saturday.

He also urged people to remain vigilant against attempts by anti-national forces to exploit public demonstrations.

Mr. Ambekar was speaking to the media in Indore ahead of the RSS' three-day national meeting, scheduled to begin on Monday. The meeting is expected to bring together 408 senior functionaries, including RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat and general secretary Dattatreya Hosabale.

Discussions are likely to cover organisational changes within the Sangh ahead of its election year, centenary-year programmes, and drugs and other burning issues in the country.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
HIGHER EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Lokseva Bhawan, Sachivalaya Marg, Bhubaneswar-751001
PT1-HE-SCH-POLICY-0003-2026/ 58043/HE., Bhubaneswar, Dated : 30.10.2026

CANCELLATION NOTICE OF RFPs

The RFP notices issued for "Procurement, Supply, Installation and Commissioning of Laboratory equipment and its accessories" for the Universities under PM-USHA, as mentioned below, are hereby **cancelled**, with immediate effect.

Sl. No.	Tender/RFP No.	Issue No. & date of RFP	RFP description
1.	PM-USHA:02/2026	35467/01.07.2026	RFP for Procurement, Supply, Installation & Commissioning of Laboratory Equipment & its Accessories for **Berhampur University**, Ganjam under Regional Directorate of Education, Berhampur approved Under PM-USHA.
2.	PM-USHA:03/2026	46980/31.08.2026	RFP for Procurement, Supply, Installation & Commissioning of Laboratory Equipment & its Accessories for **Ravenshaw University**, Kataka Under Regional Directorate of Education, Bhubaneswar approved Under PM-USHA.
3.	PM-USHA:04/2026	46980/31.08.2026	RFP for Procurement, Supply, Installation & Commissioning of Laboratory Equipment & its Accessories for **Maharaja Sriram Chandra Bhanja Deo University**, Mayurbhanj under Regional Directorate of Education, Baleshwar approved Under PM-USHA.
4.	PM-USHA:06/2026	50236/18.09.2026	RFP for Procurement, Supply, Installation & Commissioning of Laboratory equipment & its Accessories for **5 State Public Universities** under Regional Directorate of Education, Sambalpur Approved Under PM-USHA.

Sd/- Joint Secretary to Govt. & SPD, RUSA/PM-USHA
11001/394/2627 OPR-11001/11001/1/26-27/0081

INBRIEF



ACM Ashutosh Dixit takes charge as 29th IAF chief

Air Chief Marshal Ashutosh Dixit, a seasoned fighter pilot with over 3,500 hours of flying experience on more than 20 types of aircraft, on Saturday assumed charge as the 29th Chief of the Air Staff, succeeding Air Chief Marshal A.P. Singh, who retired after a distinguished career spanning 43 years. The Indian Air Force (IAF) accorded a ceremonial guard of honour to Air Chief Marshal Singh at the Race Course Air Force Station here before he handed over the baton to his successor. Air Chief Marshal Dixit, who was serving as the Vice Chief of the Air Staff, played a key role in strategic planning during Operation Sindoor.

Omar Abdullah marries journalist Nidhi Razdan

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, 56, on Saturday announced his marriage with journalist Nidhi Razdan, a day after a lowkey ceremony held in New Delhi. Posting the wedding pictures on X, Mr. Abdullah said, "A new journey began yesterday." Ms. Razdan also posted pictures with a joyful message, "It's done bro". The announcement evoked a barrage of congratulatory messages from netizens, friends and party workers. The second marriage of Mr. Abdullah came three months after a legal battle over his divorce which ended in "a mutual consent settlement" in the Supreme Court of India on July 31.

490 policemen awarded Grihmantri Dakshata Padak

Four hundred and ninety personnel from various States, Union Territories, Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) and Central Police Organisations (CPOs) were awarded the Kendriya Grihmantri Dakshata Padak on Saturday, the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, a government statement said. The list also includes 14 officers from the CBI. The award was instituted through a Ministry of Home Affairs notification dated February 1, 2024. It is conferred on members of police forces, security organisations, intelligence wings, special branches of States and Union Territories, CAPFs, CPOs, the National Security Guard and Assam Rifles, it said. PTI

IIT-ISM Dhanbad student dies after falling from 8th floor

A final-year student at the Indian Institute of Technology (Indian School of Mines), Dhanbad, died after falling from the eighth floor of a campus hostel on Saturday. According to the police, the incident occurred around 8 a.m. The student has been identified as 21-year-old Mane Rajkumar Pratik from Ahmedpur city in Latur district, Maharashtra. "As soon as we got the information, we rushed to the spot and took him to the nearest Asarfi Hospital. However, the doctors' attempts to revive him failed," IIT-ISM chief security officer Ram Manohar told *The Hindu*.

(Those in distress can contact Tele MANAS at 14416 to seek help)

SUDOKU

		8				6	5	7
2					1	4		
	7					8		
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		3	9	4	8	1		
4			5					
		7					6	
		9	4					1
8	1	5				3		

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★☆☆

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Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

7	2	3	9	8	6	1	5	4
5	4	6	1	3	7	9	8	2
9	1	8	5	4	2	6	7	3
6	9	5	8	1	3	2	4	7
8	7	1	4	2	9	3	6	5
4	3	2	6	7	5	8	9	1
2	8	4	7	9	1	5	3	6
3	6	9	2	5	4	7	1	8
1	5	7	3	6	8	4	2	9

108 stupas in Bhutan will have India-linked Buddha relics

Rahul Karmakar
GELEPHU

Buddhist relics of Indian origin will be enshrined in most of the 108 *jangchub chortens* (stupas of enlightenment) that monks and volunteers are scheduled to build simultaneously along a 12 km stretch of the Mau Chhu River in the Bhutanese town of Gelephu on Sunday.

The event will mark the spiritual foundation of the Gelephu Mindfulness City (GMC), which Bhutan's King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuk envisions as a spirituality-driven global economic hub. About 240 km south-southeast of Bhutan's capital, Thimphu, the city borders Assam's Chirang district.

The Central Monastic Body of Bhutan, the country's principal institutional carrier of the Drukpa Kagyu lineage of Tibetan Buddhism, said that Buddhists in Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, and Bhutan had donated hundreds of relics, mostly bones and hair.

"Malaysia sent three sets of 108 relics of the Buddha, enlightened saints and revered lamas. We received many from Thailand. Most of the relics were established as having been sourced from India," Choten Dorji, the Principal Secretary to one of the masters of the monastic body, said on Saturday.

The relics form part of the '*zung*', the living embodiment of the Buddha's enlightened body, speech and mind. The sacred components of the *zung* include *thangkhas* (traditional Tibetan Buddhist paintings on cotton or silk fabric), statues, precious stones, rolled mantra scrolls, or *dharanis*, and relics of enlightened beings.

The *jangchub chorten* commemorates the Buddha's attainment of enlightenment and symbolises the triumph of wisdom over ignorance. Once consecrated, a *chorten* is rendered equivalent to the living Buddha.



All set: The podium set up for the Bhutan King's address during the ceremony. RAHUL KARMAKAR

On February 26, King Wangchuk announced Project 108 at the GMC as a "test of national character", not merely an initiative to set a world record.

"It is an ambitious undertaking that demands courage, unity, and deep commitment. We must do it to prove to ourselves that, as we face the challenges ahead, there is no limit to what we can achieve when we stand together," he said.

Officials said that Project 108, involving 40,000 trained volunteers, was Bhutan's sacred gesture of peace in a world troubled by conflict.

Each *chorten* is estimated to cost $200,000, and individuals, families, communities, and institutions worldwide have contributed to the project.

According to the blueprint, each *chorten* will stand 15 metres tall, positioned 108 metres apart in a line along the Mau Chhu River, which runs through Gelephu.

Significance of '108'

Bhutan's spiritual leaders explained the rationale behind the number 108.

"In astronomy, the distance between the earth and the sun is approximately 108 times the sun's diameter and the distance between the earth and the moon is about 108 times the moon's diameter," a monk said.

"In some Tibetan Buddhist traditions, the Kangyur (principal collection of sacred Buddhist scriptures) is arranged in 108 volumes. Practitioners count 108 beads on a prayer mala, circumambulate sacred sites 108 times, and ring temple bells 108 times. In the Vajrayana Buddhist tradition, 108 symbolises spiritual completeness, cosmic balance, and the purification of karma," he said.

Project 108 also links to Hinduism. "Hindu tradition often speaks of 108 Upanishads (sacred philosophical texts). Many Hindu deities have 108 names. In yoga, the sun salutation is traditionally performed in cycles of 108," the monk said.

The date for executing Project 108 is significant, too. Bhutan observes November 1 as Lord Buddha's Descending Day and Mother's Day. Sunday also marks the 18th coronation anniversary of King Wangchuk, who reached Gelephu with his royal entourage on Saturday.

Hundreds march in Kolkata against attacks on bookstalls

Citizens, activists, professors, politicians join the march, 'Walk for Books', which was held without any political banner; it was organised in protest against attacks on bookstalls during Durga Puja

Shrabana Chatterjee
KOLKATA

Hundreds of people walked holding books in their hands at a rally in Kolkata on Saturday protesting against recent attacks on books and bookstalls, blamed on right-wing groups and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The march, "Walk for Books", was conducted without any political banners, with common citizens, activists, professors, and politicians taking part in it.

The march was organised on College Street, popularly known as *Boipara* (books neighbourhood) of Kolkata, as hundreds walked holding books, banners, and posters. "*Boi amader bondhu, boi-er jonno hathun*" (Books are our friends, walk for books), read one of the banners.

Senior Communist Party of India (Marxist) leaders, including State secretary Mohammad Salim, Sujan Chakraborty, Biman Bose, and others, showed up at the protest.

CPI(M) leader Shatarup Ghosh, who took part in the march, said that such a protest was unheard of in Kolkata, because such an attack on books was also unheard of. "The type of attack will determine the type of protest. Many who are walking in this march have no relation to the Left ideologies, but they have shown up for the love of books," Mr. Ghosh said.

Many sang, recited poems, played musical instruments, raised slogans, and held their copy of books high above their heads or close to their chests as they marched on.

"It was heartfelt to see such an organic march for books; I have never seen such a thing before. People from ages 8-80 were all walking together. As a book lover and publisher, it is my responsibility to walk in this march," Subrata Das, a publisher and owner of Setu Publication, told *The Hindu*.

"Education is one of the most important things in the contemporary world, but this attack on books by the current government is pathetic. They want to crack down on education and books so that people do not learn and do not ask questions," a research scholar from Jadavpur University, who took part in the march, said on the condition of anonymity.



Pages of history: People during the 'Walk for Books' (*Boiyer Jonno Hatun*) rally in Kolkata on Saturday. PTI

A call for the march was written and signed by several prominent personalities in the State such as academician Pabitra Sarkar, former MP Jawhar Sircar, journalist Paranjoy Guha Thakurta, actor Sabyasachi Chakraborty, playwright Chandan Sen, and many others.

Vandalism reported

During the Durga Puja festivities last month, repeated attacks were reported on Left parties' book stalls in West Bengal. According to senior CPI(M) leader Sujan Chakraborty, at least 292 stalls were vandalised. However, the attacks worked in their favour, as common people and politicians alike showed up at their stalls in solidarity in large numbers and drove up sales beyond ₹1.5 crore.

Several right-wing groups and BJP workers are blamed for these attacks. However, the BJP has denied these allegations and condemned the attacks even as Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari continued his verbal attack on the book stalls.

ISRO flew NVS-03 satellite with pyro valves open: chief

Press Trust of India
SRIHARIKOTA

ISRO chief V. Narayanan on Saturday said that in order to ensure mission reliability and bypass previous technical hurdles, the NVS-03 satellite was operated with "three pyro valves open".

Addressing the media at a post-launch press conference, Mr. Narayanan revealed that this bold technical decision was validated after rigorous vibration and shock testing by a national-level committee chaired by former ISRO chief Kiran Kumar.

Pyro valves are crucial in spacecraft propulsion, and it may be recalled that the NVS-02 (launched in 2025), the second spacecraft in the NVS series, was a failure.

A high-level panel, after thorough analysis, concluded that "the drive signal did not reach the pyro valve of the oxidiser line of the engine meant for orbit raising."

In February 2026, ISRO announced that the most likely cause was the disengagement of at least one contact (in each of the main and redundant paths) of the connector.

Against this background, Mr. Narayanan said that with four satellites, including NVS-01 now active in India's navigation satellite system, ISRO plans to launch NVS-04 in five months, and NVS-05 in 10 months to further bolster the constellation.

'Exceptional accuracy'

Mr. Narayanan highlighted the exceptional accuracy of the flight. "Against [the planned] perigee [the point in an orbit closest to Earth] of 170.36 km, we have got 170.31 kilometres," he said.

"Against [the planned] apogee [the point in an orbit farthest from Earth] of 37,247 kilometres, we achieved 38,080 kilometres," he noted. "This is one of the best accuracy of any of the launch vehicles in the world we can think of," he added.

The successful deployment has restored India's NavIC (Navigation with Indian Constellation) to its minimum operating configuration of four satellites, bolstering both strategic and civilian location services across the subcontinent.

The ISRO successfully placed NVS-03 into a highly precise orbit using the GSLV-F18 launch vehicle on Saturday.

Two men held for online fraud targeting Punjab residents

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Two 22-year-old men have been arrested by the Delhi police for facilitating an online fraud in which Punjab residents were duped of over ₹83,000 on the pretext of purchasing health supplements and medicines through a fake website. The police have traced fraudulent transactions worth ₹2.66 lakh to two bank accounts allegedly used to receive the money and recovered a phone containing the website link and WhatsApp conversations between the accused.

The accused were identified as Hiten Kumar, of Greater Kailash in Delhi, and Ayush Arya, of Indirapuram, Uttar Pradesh.

The case came to light after a resident of Amritsar, Dharamvir Singh, alleged that he was cheated of ₹83,257 after placing orders for health supplements and medicines through www.openlifevedixa.com. He made the payments between September 27 and 30, but the promised products were never delivered, according to the police.

According to the police, an investigation into the financial transactions and bank account details led them to an SBI account held by Mr. Arya.

Further scrutiny revealed another account associated with a woman known to him. Over ₹2,66 lakh had been credited to the two accounts.

During interrogation, Mr. Arya disclosed that he had shared his bank account details, along with those of the woman, with his cousin Hiten in exchange for a 10% commission.

India's first fusion power company sets road map for a nuclear reactor

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

If all goes to plan, India may see designs for the first privately-built tokamak, a nuclear reactor that uses fusion to produce energy, firmed up in 2027.

Bengaluru-based startup Pranos Fusion has built PRAGYA, a small doughnut-shaped tokamak, to test plasma control and superconducting magnets. This is a gateway to building PRANIK, a larger tokomak that will have plasma heated up to millions of degrees – more than the interior of the Sun – necessary to fuse hydrogen atoms and create energy.

"By 2027, we expect to finalise the blueprint for PRANIK and be on our way to building a practical reactor that can produce energy. To be able to actually produce electricity from fusion is a further step away," Shaurya Kaushal, co-founder and CEO of Pranos Fusion, said.



Fusion frontier: The Bengaluru-based startup has built a compact tokamak as a test bed for plasma control. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Nuclear plants everywhere employ fission – a chain reaction involving uranium nuclei to produce heat that is used to generate electricity. Fusion, on the other hand, releases energy when light atomic nuclei merge, and usually involves joining two forms of hydrogen – deuterium and tritium – into helium and a fast neutron. However, this requires the fuel to be heated to around 100 million degrees Celsius, far hotter than any solid wall could withstand. In tokamaks, powerful magnets hold this superheated plasma away from the walls, keeping it hot enough for fusion to continue.

"Electricity from a fusion reactor is still far away and would be expensive now, however the need for any source of energy is only going to grow," co-founder Roshan George said.

"Fusion's advantage is that while [it's] nuclear power, it doesn't need radioactive material like uranium. India already produces plenty of deuterium. Fusion reactions are also not chain reactions, and therefore the risk of a runaway reaction [like in a fission reactor] is almost absent," Mr. George added.

The cost of a private tokamak depends on scale, Mr. Kaushal said. A compact research machine like PRAGYA is "a comparatively modest investment".

Pranos Fusion says compact machines, HTS (high-temperature superconducting) magnets, and India's manufacturing base can bring costs down substantially. It is backed by Ankur Capital, pi Ventures and Industrial47, and has raised $7.2 million.

INBRIEF



Petrol export duty cut to nil, diesel levy raised by ₹3 a litre

The government slashed export duty on petrol to nil while hiking that on export of diesel and aviation turbine fuel (ATF) by ₹3/litre and 50 paise/litre each for the next 15 days. There was no change in existing excise duty rates for petrol and diesel for local use. Diesel exports would now draw a levy of ₹11.5/litre against ₹8.5/ litre it in the previous fortnight. ATF would be subject to an export levy of ₹11/litre against ₹10.5/litre as mandated for the previous fortnight.

Government extends import duty exemption for cotton

The Finance Ministry extended the import duty on cotton until December 31 providing relief to the largest cotton consumer–the textile industry. In a notification issued on October 30, the Ministry said the exemption, which was granted in May this year, would now extend to the end of December. With poor Southwest monsoon impacting cotton crop, daily arrivals of cotton remain low though the new cotton marketing season began on October 1.

NTPC Q2 net rises 14% on more generation, efficiencies

State-owned power producer NTPC Ltd.'s standalone net profit rose 14.3% year-on-year (YoY) to ₹5,320 crore in the September quarter, aided by higher electricity generation and improved operational efficiencies amid increased power demand following deficient monsoon rainfall. The company's commercial generation increased 11.1% to 92.413 billion units (BU) during the quarter. Its plant load factor (PLF) improved to 73.53% from 66.01% a year-earlier.

Merging SpaceX, Tesla makes more sense for Elon Musk than its investors

Merger will up vertical integration across technologies like communications, computing infra, which many governments rely on, raising risk of preferential access, discrimination; Starlink, Starshield services may also depend on decisions made within a corporate system that includes X.com

NEWS ANALYSIS

Vasudevan Mukunth
CHENNAI

American billionaire Elon Musk's plan to merge his spaceflight and satellite-Internet company SpaceX with his electric vehicle maker Tesla will concentrate a huge amount of technological financial power in his hands with a combined market capitalisation of $3.5 trillion. Importantly, it will create a new integrated AI-industrial conglomerate.

Both firms have committees of independent directors to figure it out and no particular terms are in play. SpaceX also disclosed Mr. Musk, the controlling shareholder, will have to okay the merger though he has recused himself from committees' negotiations.

SpaceX has already absorbed xAI, that operates Grok AI model, in February while Tesla is developing specialised AI chips. The firms also jointly announced an ambitious semiconductor manufacturing project called Terafab. So, a merger will bring multiple verticals under the same corporate roof.

Remove capital checks

But while the merger will ease these operations' ability to move money and personnel between them, it could also eliminate crucial checks on how the combined behemoth allocates capital – a non-trivial prospect considering Mr. Musk's latent fondness for testing the rules.

For example, *CNBC* reported in 2024 Mr. Musk diverted 12,000 Nvidia H100 processors meant for Tesla towards X.com and xAI, reportedly delaying Tesla's receipt of over $500 million computing equipment by months. He later said Tesla lacked the infrastructure to use the processors when Nvidia delivered them. In January 2026, Tesla committed $2 billion to xAI and when SpaceX acquired xAI, Tesla turned its right to buy xAI shares into a right to buy SpaceX shares. Neither of the transactions was illegal per se but they hint simultaneously at the movement of resources and (reduced) exposure to scrutiny that could ensue post-merger.

A more important possibility is if Tesla is being moved to within a larger enterprise to finance ambitions its shareholders have not supported thus far. For example, at the November 2025 Tesla investors' meeting, a proposal to authorise it to invest in xAI failed under the firm's voting rules. Tesla, however, entered into the $2-billion investment pact in January as the vote was non-binding.

To wit, the firms' financial circumstances differ hugely. "SpaceX's year-on-year revenue growth in Q3 2026 was 161% while Tesla's was roughly 0%. Tesla's current value far exceeds what its current earnings would justify as the variance is rooted in speculation about autonomous vehicles and AI integration. Analysts have also said SpaceX shareholders could find themselves surrendering a significant share of what has become a highly profitable business to Tesla's more speculative future earning.



Power and more: Founder, CEO, chairman, and chief engineer of SpaceX, Elon Musk at SpaceX's IPO on the Nasdaq. REUTERS (FILE)

No majority but control

Further, Mr. Musk now owns about 20% of Tesla but has voting control at SpaceX with 85%. But per Barclays, depending on the post-merger structure, he could own 37% of the combined firm's equity but 56% of voting power. That is, Mr. Musk could consolidate control over an enterprise worth many trillions of dollars without holding a majority of economic value. One crucial result of that may be a newfound ability to finance firms whose economic or institutional rationale is questionable, whose political importance for Mr. Musk is significant and for which he can skip the support of other shareholders.

A similar issue came up in 2016 when Tesla bought solar power firm SolarCity, setting off years of investor litigation. Mr. Musk was at the time Tesla's chairman and CEO and SolarCity's chairman and largest investor. SolarCity was facing significant liquidity problems and Tesla had agreed to buy it in an all-stock transaction worth $2.6 billion but without appointing an independent committee to negotiate. For added measure, SolarCity was being run by Mr. Musk's cousins Lyndon Rive and Peter Rive.

A court ultimately ruled in Mr. Musk's favour after investors alleged he used Tesla to 'salvage' his investments in SolarCity but not before identifying several lacunae in the acquisition process, including conflicts of interest. (Per the court, Mr. Musk was nonetheless served well by having a majority of disinterested Tesla shareholders approve the deal.)

Tech integration

A closely related issue is the merger could raise vertical integration across technologies like communications and computing infrastructure – that many other businesses as well as governments rely on – raising the risk of preferential access and discrimination. (*Reuters* also reported the merger could prompt demands for extensive safeguards around information and technology sharing between SpaceX's and Tesla's U.S. and China operations.) Seen another way, many services of strategic importance, including Starlink and Starshield, could depend on decisions made within one corporate system that also includes X.com.

Dangerous prospect

A recent example of the stakes concerns Starshield. *The Wall Street Journal* reported on October 20 Mr. Musk personally asked operators at SpaceX to limit connectivity of Ukrainian drones to its network after his as well as U.S. President Donald Trump's frustration over Kyiv attacking Russian oil refineries. While there appears to be some confusion over who first gave the order – Mr. Musk or someone in the White House – the merger could boost the corporation at its centre by bringing together aerospace, telecommunications, AI, robotics, computing hardware, power generation, and the requisite funds.

The final prospect is as dangerous as it is dazzling: a firm that governments bank on for strategic capabilities yet which they cannot castigate without threatening their own interests – the ultimate expression of Mr. Musk's parastate actions in Ukraine.

Considering SpaceX and Tesla already collaborate as well as can expand cooperation via contracts, and if their technological benefits are available to reap without merging, those benefits alone will not suffice to explain why the companies prefer or need a merger. The answer, instead, might be what Mr. Musk needs.

Crude oil prices very volatile in Q2: IOCL

Saptaparno Ghosh
NEW DELHI

Crude oil prices stayed highly volatile in Q2 with procurement carried out varyingly at discounts and premiums, Anuj Jain, director (finance) at Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. (IOCL) told investors in a call.

Mr. Jain explained broadly crude procured during Q2 held both discounts and premiums at varying periods. This entailed a discount of $5/barrel to the then benchmark prices to a premium of $12/ barrel. This ranged from no discount/premium to a premium of $18/barrel in Q1. He also informed under-recoveries on liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) stood at ₹184/cylinder in September and rose to ₹229 in October. Also, he projected the under-recoveries could rise to ₹309/cylinder in November and ₹370 per cylinder in December.

Further, Russian crude accounted for around 55% of IOCL's crude basket during H1, Middle East 24%, Africa – including Angola and Nigeria – about 10%, Brazil about 7% with U.S. and Venezuela making up the remainder 2-5% and 3-4%, respectively.

'Keeping eye on Tata Group developments'

Press Trust of India
KOLKATA

SEBI Chairman Tuhin Kanta Pandey said the market regulator was monitoring developments relating to governance at the holding company level in the Tata Group and pointed out the group's listed companies and their promoters were subject to SEBI's disclosure and compliance norms.

The comments came amid differences over governance matters at Tata Sons, the group's holding company, including the reappointment of N. Chandrasekaran as chairman and the proposed listing.



Tuhin Kanta Pandey

"At the holding company level, there are some issues as that's not really a listed firm. The rest of the firms, those which are listed, follow all LODR (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) norms."

ECV maker EKA Mobility plans ₹1,000-crore R&D investment

Jagriti Chandra
PUNE

Electric commercial vehicle (ECV) maker EKA Mobility plans to invest ₹1,000 crore in research and development (R&D) over the next four to five years as it steps up manufacturing capacity and seeks to expand domestic and overseas footprint, founder chairman Sudhir Mehta said.

The Pune-based firm inaugurated six new manufacturing plants across Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, taking annual production capacity to 40,000 vehicles. The expanded capacity comprises 24,000 small commercial vehicles, 10,000 buses and 6,000 trucks.

Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari, Heavy Industries Minister H. D. Kumaraswamy and Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis were present.



EKA has an order book of more than 11,000 buses valued at $1.7 billion

"EKA aims to scale up sales to match this capacity by 2030," Mr. Mehta told journalists. A subsidiary of automotive components maker Pinnacle Industries, EKA invested ₹3,500 crore in the business so far.

Japan's Mitsui & Co and the Netherlands-based VDL Groep are strategic partners. The firm, which has presence in Zanzibar and Nepal, aims at raising exports to 20-30% of total sales over next few years. It is exploring more opportunities in Africa "We are looking at Ghana, Ethiopia, Uganda and many African markets, basically, much of West and South Africa," Mr. Mehta said.

EKA has an order book of more than 11,000 buses valued at $1.7 billion, with deployments across 14 States. It has also sold more than 1,500 electric small commercial vehicles for passenger mobility, last-mile delivery and goods transportation across the country.

On policy support for the ECV industry, Mr. Mehta flagged the limited availability of financing as a key constraint to faster adoption and expansion.

(The reporter was in Pune at the invitation of Eka Mobility)

Taxes: Centre releases ₹1.09 lakh cr. more to States

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Centre released an additional instalment of tax devolution to State governments totalling more than ₹1.09 lakh crore.

This is in addition to the regular monthly devolution and the second additional instalment this financial year.

"This release is in view of the upcoming festive season and to enable States to accelerate capital spending, and also to finance their development/welfare related expenditure," the Finance Ministry said in a statement on Saturday.

Currently, 41% of the taxes collected by the Union government is devolved in 14 instalments among the States during a fiscal year.

GOVERNMENT OF PUDUCHERRY
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT KARAIKAL

e-TENDERING NOTICE INVITING BID BY EPC MODE

e-TENDER NOTICE No.23/I&PH/TN/2026-27 Dt. 30.10.2026

On behalf of the President of India, Bids are invited for the work of "Design, supply, construction, installation, testing & commissioning of 0.5 MLD Faecal Sludge Treatment Plant (FSTP) at Paraivaipet, Karaikal including operation & maintenance for 3 (three) years beyond defect liability period of 02 (two) year in EPC mode of contract" costing Rs.8,08,14,365/- (including GST). **Last time & date of submission of tender: on 30.11.2026** For further details please refer the website **www.pudutenders.gov.in** from 04.00 P.M on 02.11.2026,

-Sd/-
No. 571/DIP/KKL/ADVT/2026 **EXECUTIVE ENGINEER-I&PH, P.W.D., KARAIKAL**

BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD
Office of the Chief Engineer (IP-R&D)
3rd Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G. Road, Bengaluru - 560009
No:BWSSB/CE/(IP-R&D)/ACE/(IP-R&D)-II/1479/2026-27 Dated:29.10.2026

INVITATION FOR TENDER (Through KPP Portal)

BWSSB invites Tenders in Two Stage Tender System from eligible contractors for the work of Consultancy services for Preparation of Detailed Project Report for Storing 5-6 TMC of water from River Cauvery in the existing Lakes in and around Bengaluru City.
Amount Put to Tender: Rs.210.20 Lakhs, EMD Amount: Rs.4.21 Lakhs
Last date and time for Receipt of tenders is on **11.11.2026** upto **16:00** hours. The bids will be opened on **12.11.2026** at **17:00** hours. The details regarding the tender and participation in the e-procurement portal process can be obtained by logging on to **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in.** For further details contact the undersigned office during working hours.

Sd/-
DIPR/CP/3443/CCL/2026-27 **Chief Engineer (IP-R&D)**

कार्यालय मुख्य अभियन्ता, जल संसाधन संभाग, कोटा

क्रमांक F.143/CEWRZ/BRN/e-NIB-17/2026-27/13522-30 Dated 22.10.2026

निविदा संशोधन सूचना (ई-निविदा सूचना सं. 17/2026-27)

इस कार्यालय के पत्रांक 12731 दिनांक 29.09.2026 के द्वारा जारी ई-निविदा सूचना संख्या 17/2026-27 के कार्य "Repairing of Sorkhand Talab and Construction of Drainage Channel at downstream of sorkhand Talab, Tehsil Anta, Distt. Baran" की पूर्व प्रकाशित तिथियाँ निम्नानुसार संशोधित की जाती है। निविदा की अन्य शर्तें समय-समय पर जारी संशोधन अनुसार रहेंगी एवं मान्य रहेंगी।

Bidding Schedule	Existing Provision	Revised Provision
Date of Downloading & of Uploading Tender Document	From 01.10.2026 (9.30Hr.) to 22.10 2026 Time 18.00 Hr.	From 01.10.2026 (9.30Hr.) to 02.11.2026 Time 18.00 Hr.
Date of Opening of Technical Bid	23.10.2026 at 15.00 Hr.	03.11.2026 at 15.00 Hr.
e-NIT Part A, Condition No. 9	ठेकेदार निविदा प्रस्तुत करने से पूर्व कार्य स्थल, भौगोलिक परिस्थिति एवं निर्माण से संबंधित समस्त परिस्थितियों का संज्ञान निश्चित रूप से कर लेवे । कार्य करने हेतु कार्य स्थल उपलब्ध है। साईट विजिट का प्रपत्र तकनीकी बिड के साथ अपलोड किया जाना है।	ठेकेदार निविदा प्रस्तुत करने से पूर्व कार्य स्थल, भौगोलिक परिस्थिति एवं निर्माण से संबंधित समस्त परिस्थितियों का संज्ञान निश्चित रूप से कर लेवें। कार्य करने हेतु कार्य स्थल उपलब्ध है।

UBN No. WRD2627WSOB00720 (D.R. Meena)
Chief Engineer
Water Resources
Zone, Kota
DIPR/C/2026/18105

TIRUMALA TIRUPATI DEVASTHANAMS - TIRUPATI
Office of the Chief Engineer **TENDER NOTICE**

ADV No.44/D3/CE/TTD/2026-27, NIT No.507 /SE-II/TTD/ 2026-27 dt:30-10- 2026
Name of work:(1) Laying of additional MS Pipe Line from Gogarbham Dam to Filter plants at main Filter House, Tirumala.Amount 600.00 Lakhs, Time for completion 12 months.
NOTE: For full details, log on to the Website https://www.tirumala.org.
TTD-40021(31)/1/2026-PRO SEO(Adv.No.231) Date:31-10-2026 **EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

RajCOMP Info Services Limited (RISL)
C-Block, 1st Floor, Yojana Bhawan, Tilak Marg, C-Scheme, Jaipur
RISL invites e-bids from the eligible bidders for the following:

NIB No./ Date/ Unique bid no.	Particulars	Estimated Cost	Start of sale / Last date
F4.3(702)/RISL/Tech/ 2026/3913 Dated 30.10.2026 RJS2627SLOB00065	RFP for Hiring of OEM Oracle Resources under Jan Aadhaar and e-Mitra Project.	Rs. 4.00 Crores / Rs. 8,00,000.00	30.10.2026 / 01.12.2026

Details can be seen on the websites **http://risl.rajasthan.gov.in, http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in, http://doitc.rajasthan.gov.in and http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in.**
Raj.Samwad/C/26/12702 **ACP (Dy. Director)**

SELECTION RALLY FOR ARMY BOYS SPORTS COMPANY, THE MADRAS REGIMENTAL CENTRE, WELLINGTON 2027

1. Army Boys Sports Company (ABSC), The Madras Regimental Centre (MRC), Wellington (Nilgiris), Tamilnadu is a Joint Venture between Sports Authority of India (SAI) and Indian Army with a vision to select, Groom and Prepare Potential Talent in Athletics discipline, to improve our medals prospects in future International / National sports event (All India States & Union Territories).
2. The Selection rally for enrollment into ABSC, MRC will be conducted at Thangaraj Stadium, Wellington from **06 Jan to 09 Jan 2027** for the age group of 8 to 16 years as on 06 Jan 2027 (Born between 01 January 2011 and 01 January 2019). Outstanding sportsmen having attained the age of 15 or 16 years, will be considered as exceptional cases based on their level of competence and participation in the Athletics discipline. The entry for selection will be opened on **06 Jan 2027 at 7 AM to 5 PM** only. School Children having Participated at School Games Federation of India (SGFI) level or Equivalent Sports Event must bring their Certificates of Participation / Certificates of medals received.
3. The Physical Fitness Standards required for Young Talent will be: For 8 to 11 years physical standard not applicable, 12 years 153 cm height and 14 years 160 cm height. Taller candidates will be given preference for selection. Educational qualification is min 3rd std pass. Selected candidates will be provided with free accommodation and education till 12th Class and sports training under the NIS diploma coaches.
4. On attaining the 17 1/2 years of age, the young talent will have an option of enrollment in The Madras Regimental Centre sports quota based on their performance and subject to meeting the laid down physical / educational standards.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF AYURVEDA
Deemed To Be University
(Ministry of AYUSH, Govt. of India)
Jorawar Singh Gate, Amer Road, Jaipur-302002 (Rajasthan)
Website: www.nia.nic.in
VACANCY NOTIFICATION NO. 2/2026 (ESIC)
For Medical Officer (Ayurveda) & Medical Officer (Homoeopathy) in Employees' State Insurance Corporation, Govt. of India
Online Applications are invited for 19 Posts of Medical Officer (Ayurveda) and 5 Posts of Medical Officer (Homoeopathy) for Employees' State Insurance Corporation, Ministry of Labour, Govt. of India to be filled by Direct Recruitment. All Details like Qualifications, Maximum Age, Reservations etc. are available in the Website of the Institute: **www.nia.nic.in**. Applications are to be filled Online only in the Website of the Institute **www.nia.nic.in** The Date of Starting of Online Filling of Applications is **16-11-2026** and the Closing Date is **15-12-2026.**
Dated: 30-10-2026 (JP SHARMA) JOINT DIRECTOR (ADMN.)

Indian scientists find new gateway in plants' alarm system

Jacob Koshy

Researchers at the National Institute of Plant Genome Research (NIPGR), New Delhi, have identified a previously uncharacterised protein that helps a plant warn undamaged leaves when an insect attacks one.

The finding may have implications for designing chemicals to help plants fend off pest attacks.

Plants too don't like to be preyed upon by other insects or herbivores. They also can't flee and have no nervous system, yet a bite on one leaf can set off an alarm that reaches other leaves within minutes.

The prevailing view credits a family of cellular gateways, glutamate receptor-like channels (GLRs), that respond to the amino acid glutamate and relay the alarm.

The study, published in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, points to another protein: CNGC13, which sits mainly in the xylem and phloem and lets calcium into cells as the damage signal passes along the plant.

"Our study identifies an important role for a calcium channel, CNGC13, in coordinating systemic calcium signalling during insect herbivory," Jyothilakshmi Vadassery, one of the study co-authors, said in a statement. "The findings provide new insights into how plants communicate danger signals across tissues."

Spreading the warning

At the site of attack, calcium, reactive oxygen species and hormones such as jasmonic acid switch on defence genes and reinforce cell walls, sealing the wound and blocking pathogens. If the damage is serious, hydraulic, electrical, calcium, and reactive oxygen signals carry the alert to distant tissue. Warned leaves can raise their glucosinolate levels and grow more leaf hairs, making them more resistant to herbivores.

Some plants also release airborne chemicals that warn nearby tissue and attract the insects' natural enemies, per a review in the journal *Frontiers in Plant Science*.

According to the new paper, insect pests cause roughly 20% of global annual crop losses, a figure projected to rise with warming, and crop protection still leans heavily on chemical insecticides. Learning how plants sense attack could point to crops that defend themselves better.

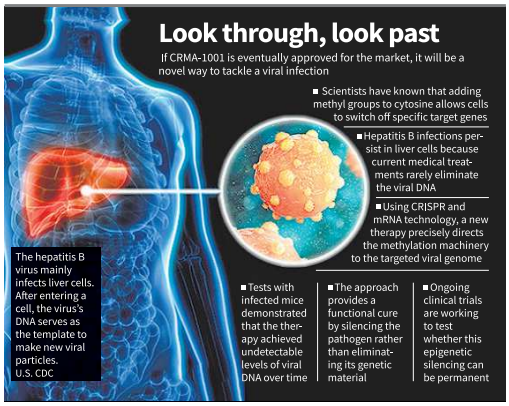
CNGC13 test

The authors say the speed and robustness of systemic responses to different kinds of damage suggested that other channels were involved. To establish the CNGC13 channel's role, researchers compared normal *Arabidopsis*, a small weed from the mustard family, with three mutant lines lacking CNGC13. Larvae of *Spodoptera litura*, which played the plant's attacker, gained significantly more weight on all three mutant lines. Restoring the gene in one line returned weight gain to normal, indicating the channel is needed for resistance.

Gene therapy aims for a cure by silencing hepatitis B DNA

An experimental therapy called CRMA-1001 is a remarkable development because, instead of targeting the virus directly, it silences the viral DNA; this is promising because treatments rarely eliminate the DNA, which allows the virus to rebound

Arun Panchapakesan



According to new work reported in *Nature Biomedical Engineering*, scientists have used epigenetic control to treat a hepatitis B infection. The development is remarkable because, instead of targeting the virus directly, the work silenced the viral DNA. This is promising because current treatments rarely eliminate the DNA, which allows the virus to rebound. By silencing this residue, the treatment could offer a path to a lasting functional cure for hepatitis B.

Virus in hiding

The hepatitis B virus mainly infects liver cells. After entering a cell, the virus's DNA serves as the template to make new viral particles. In many people, the immune system clears the infection, but if it does not, the viral DNA can persist for years or even decades in the host's liver.

In this time, the virus can remain silent, meaning the viral DNA is still present in the cell but its genes are not active to produce new viruses. This allows the virus to 'hide' from the immune system. Then, at a later point, the virus can activate again and produce new virus particles.

Studies have shown that one of the mechanisms by which the virus stays silent is by methylating cytosines.

DNA is segmented into genes, and each gene contains the information necessary to make a particular protein. These proteins essay their roles in the cells. Since every cell in the body has two copies – one from each parent – of all human DNA, all cells technically have the blueprint to make a whole organism. However, cells also have specialised functions: a brain cell does not need the genes for the proteins used to digest food.

One of DNA's four building blocks is cytosine. Cells can attach a chemical tag, like the methyl group ($-CH_3$), to cytosine to silence the corresponding gene. This prevents the cell's protein factory from reading the gene and the cell from making that protein. Problems in this epigenetic system can lead to diseases like cancers.

The new study has reported a new experimental therapy called CRMA-1001 that can reportedly silence the DNA of the hepatitis B virus by selectively methylating the virus's genome.

The study's authors combined two molecular components to achieve this, called a 'locator' and an 'effector'. The locator used the CRISPR-Cas9 gene-editing tool to find and bind to a specific DNA sequence: in this case, a sequence within the viral DNA. This allowed the CRISPR system to take the 'effector', the methylation machinery, to the correct location. The effector had proteins that could add methyl groups to nearby cytosines in the viral DNA and proteins that help switch off genes. Finally, the researchers packed the entire system and delivered it on an mRNA platform. Once a cell had read the instructions to make the required proteins, it degraded them, stopping the production of those proteins too.

The researchers gave mice infected with hepatitis B virus either a single dose of CRMA-1001 or three doses, one month apart, and regularly tested them for six months for the signs of infection. They reported that after one dose, the levels of several hepatitis B virus markers, including the viral DNA and two viral proteins called HBsAg and HBeAg, dropped significantly. When they tested the viral DNA, they found new methyl groups, suggesting the treatment was working as intended. The effect was even stronger after three doses: six months after the first dose, as many as 90% of the animals had less viral DNA than could be detected.

CRMA-1001 is not a cure in the traditional sense of the word. The hepatitis B virus DNA is still present in the liver cells. Instead, the study demonstrated a functional cure: when the virus is not necessarily eliminated but is kept so thoroughly suppressed that, for all intents and purposes, the patient has no active signs of disease. In this study, the team followed up with the mice for six months after treatment, and the researchers found sustained suppression of the virus in that period. However, the study did not establish whether the virus could eventually become active again after those six months, since the viral DNA was still present.

Further studies are needed to examine the long-term effects of CRMA-1001, including whether the silencing effect can persist over many years and whether the virus can ever become active again after treatment. An ongoing phase I/II clinical trial includes these among other questions. Nonetheless, CRMA-1001 represents a novel way to tackle a viral infection: instead of fighting the threat, the cell simply ignores it.

(Arun Panchapakesan is an assistant professor at the Y.R. Gaitonde Centre for AIDS Research and Education, Chennai)

Greener cities and bluer spaces for a healthier India



SPEAKING OF SCIENCE

D. Balasubramanian

Green trees and plants are vital for human health. In villages and farmlands, the uppermost parts of the tree provide a canopy, with roof-like branches, offering people a cooler and healthier environment. And the rivers, canals, ponds and pools offer people there a bluer environment.

Such rural areas thus offer their residents healthier environs. But when private enterprises and commercial agencies take away many acres of land in towns, suburban, and rural areas to build large multi-storied buildings and housing complexes, it results in further canopy loss. The State of Telangana has about 48% of the people living in urban areas, with more trees sacrificed, while farmlands and villages are left with fewer trees and less water for agriculture. This is also true of several other southern States.

The urban population across India is now 36%. UNICEF has pointed out that children's health is affected when green and blue spaces are disturbed. According to the National Family Health Survey, the infant mortality rate can be correlated to the greenness of the area; the lower the greenness, the higher the rate. In the green States of Kerala, Goa and Puducherry, the infant mortality rate is quite low, around eight per 1,000 births, while Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan have higher rates, closer to thirty per 1,000 births.

In 2023, an international team of researchers pointed out in the journal *The Lancet* (vol. 8, issue 9, September 2023) that since a significant fraction of the human population now lives in urban areas, these people should also enjoy greater access to urban green and blue spaces, which could lead to improvements in public health. It will also promote environmental biodiversity and civic sense through parks, sports fields, higher physical activity, and camaraderie among the residents.



Shrinking spaces: UNICEF has pointed out that children's health is affected when green and blue spaces are disturbed. V. RAJU

A more recent paper by three Indian researchers in the *Indian Journal of Science and Research* (Pande et al; *Ind. J. Sci. Res.*, 5 (2), 2025) expanded on this theme and suggested a framework to achieve green infrastructure and urban sustainability. This involves greener urban areas, including more trees, parks, walkways, sports arenas, and swimming pools. These have now become part of the Indian government's Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT).

In this connection, recently, an international group of epidemiologists analysed data from 57 countries. Their findings, published in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, under the title 'Urban tree canopy fragmentation and child mortality in low- and middle-income countries' (*PNAS*, 123 (34) e2606669123, August 21, 2026), show how the loss of green and blue spaces through the loss of canopy can affect children's health by increasing climate stress, air pollution, anxiety, loss of playground space and infection by pests and microbes. These factors can also lead to low birthweight, psychological stress, congenital anomalies, and child mortality, notably under the age of five. The researchers collected data from 42 lakh children hailing from 57 low- and middle-income countries or regions where green and blue spaces are more prevalent, such as in West Sudan, the Punjab region in Pakistan, and the Ganga-Brahmaputra Delta in Bangladesh, and found that these regions have lower levels of under-five mortality than in the other countries studied.

According to the World Bank, India ranks as the fifth wealthiest nation in the world. Even as we aim to make India rank higher, let us ensure the country becomes greener and bluer.

dbala@lvpei.org

SNAPSHOTS



Even in desert, early humans sought more than water

More than water alone guided humans in the ancient Arabian Peninsula. Scientists earlier believed human populations expanded across 'Green Arabia' wherever lakes formed. But after surveying a 1,500-km stretch in the Rub' al Khali desert, researchers found evidence of 55 extinct lakes but no stone tools or signs of life. Since early humans relied on stone tools for survival, the team concluded human migration was guided by the availability of both water and toolmaking stones.



Faux references getting more common in science papers

An analysis of 5 lakh peer-reviewed papers in physics, chemistry, materials science, engineering, and computer science published in 2023-26 has revealed 1,135 fake references in 619 papers. The rate of papers containing such citations increased from roughly 6 of every 10,000 papers in 2023 to 23 out of 10,000 in 2026. Physics had the highest rate of fake references and chemistry had the lowest. These fictional citations often stem from the unchecked use of AI tools or misconduct.



Manx shearwaters risk jet-lag on long-distance flights

Seabirds called Manx shearwaters can become 'jet-lagged' during long, fast flights, momentarily veering off course. They fly across oceans using an internal body clock that synchronises with daylight. But when they fly east or west across longitudes, the clocks fall out of sync with the local time. Using GPS data from over a thousand birds, scientists found the internal clocks of shearwaters flying east lagged, causing the birds to drift clockwise from their intended path.

Question Corner

Only change is constant

Have humans stopped evolving? If not, what traits are changing?
– Anand Songara, Indore

Humans are still evolving – through new mutations, natural selection, migration, and random chance.

Put one way, evolution can be discerned from changes in the frequencies of the genetic variants passed down through the generations. But this process is too slow to detect within a single human lifetime.

But one good example of something we know has changed is the ability of human adults to digest milk. Most mammals lose their ability to digest lactose after weaning, but in the last several millennia, genetic variants have allowed this ability to last longer in some human populations.

In an another example, humans have evolved through the way they resisted infectious diseases. In regions where malaria is endemic, people with one copy of the sickle-cell variant have some protection against severe malaria.

Overall, evolution has no predetermined direction, so it is hard to predict how humans will change in the coming millennia.

Readers may send their questions / answers to science@thehindu.co.in

What do the new E100 vehicle rules mean?

What has changed? Should existing vehicles switch to E85 or E100? What are the concerns over ethanol blending?

Jagriti Chandra

The story so far:

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has amended the Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989, to permit the use of ethanol-based fuels containing up to 100% ethanol (E100) in vehicles. The move paves the way for flex-fuel (flexible fuel) vehicles, which can run on petrol, ethanol blends of varying proportions, or pure ethanol.

While petrol is refined from crude oil extracted from the earth, ethanol is a type of alcohol that can be produced by fermenting plant biomass (such as sugarcane, maize, or broken rice). The two fuels can be mixed.

What has the government changed?

One of the key changes is the inclusion of E100, or fuel comprising 100% ethanol, alongside E85 in several tables under Rule 115, which deals with emission standards and related requirements for motor vehicles. E85 is a fuel containing up to 85% ethanol, while E100 consists entirely of ethanol, subject to applicable fuel specifications. The amendments include an explanatory note stating that E85 or E100 may be used only in flex-fuel vehicles designed by original equipment manufacturers.

Should existing vehicles switch to E85 or E100?

No. In a press statement, the Ministry clarified that a vehicle's compatibility with E10 or E20 does not establish its suitability for E85. The notification does not require owners of existing vehicles to switch to E85 or modify their vehicles, either now or later. Motorists should check the fuel-compatibility sticker on their vehicle and follow the manufacturer's guidance in the owner's manual when choosing fuel at a filling station, the Ministry's statement added.

The notification does not require owners of existing vehicles to switch to E85 or modify their vehicles, either now or later

How will the amendments support the roll-out of E100 vehicles?

The amendments are expected to facilitate homologation, the official certification process through which authorised agencies, such as the Automotive Research Association of India, verify that vehicles and components comply with technical, safety, and environmental standards before they can be approved for sale or use on public roads. This will help secure type approvals for E100-powered vehicles, supporting their roll-out and wider consumer adoption. Corrections have also been incorporated into fuel classifications, including a reference to gasoline blended with 20% ethanol, or E20, in place of an earlier notation referring to E10.

What is the status of the Ethanol Blended Petrol Programme now?

India achieved its 20% ethanol-blending (E20) target in 2025, five years ahead of the original 2030 deadline set under the National Policy on Biofuels, 2018. From April 2026, all Bharat Stage-VI (BS-VI) vehicles are required to fully meet E20 emission standards, and all petrol sold across India is mandated to contain 20% ethanol (E20). The policy focus is now widening beyond E20: the government has enabled the regulatory pathway for E85 and E100 vehicles, though these will require compatible flex-fuel vehicles and dedicated dispensing infrastructure.

What are consumers' concerns?

The main concern is vehicle compatibility. Owners of older or non-E20-compliant vehicles question whether E20 could damage components, raise maintenance costs, or leave them without access to lower-ethanol petrol.

Consumers also question E20's effect on fuel economy. Ethanol has a lower energy density than petrol; while the government estimates a 5% decline in mileage, some consumers say the loss is greater. Dealers, meanwhile, warn that ethanol's affinity for water could raise contamination risks during the monsoon, strengthening the case for separate storage and dispensing systems for higher blends.

Users have also questioned why blending of ethanol has not reduced retail fuel prices. The government has responded by saying that procurement of raw materials such as maize at ₹71.86 per litre is higher than $70 per barrel of crude oil (or ₹37 to ₹40 per litre).

Experts argue that the focus on ethanol blending risks distracting from electrification, which they say offers a clearer long-term path to deep emissions cuts. "The future is electric. Other technologies are interim solutions. Electrification is cleaner, avoids the lifecycle emissions associated with ethanol production, and offers public health and climate benefits," said Amit Bhatt, managing director, International Council on Clean Transportation.

There are also concerns about the land and water required for large-scale ethanol production, the choice of crops used as feedstock, and the potential competition between fuel and food production.

Why are social media takedowns in focus?

What triggered the latest wave of takedowns? How do the amended IT rules make takedowns faster? Are takedowns being driven by government orders? What can users do when their accounts get blocked?

Lavpreet Kaur

The story so far:

In recent weeks, social media users have reported a spate of posts, reels, and accounts being blocked or taken down across platforms, including Instagram, Facebook, and X. Screenshots shared online show notices stating, 'Your post is unavailable in India', while others say access to content has been restricted through an automated system implemented under India's Information Technology or IT (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021.

The restrictions have come amid protests against the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls and demands for Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar's resignation across the country. They have brought the government's content-blocking powers, shorter compliance deadlines for intermediaries, and role of platforms' own automated moderation systems into focus.

What triggered the latest wave of takedowns? What did the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) advisory to Meta say?

The latest wave follows two advisories issued by MeitY on October 8 and 10, amid anti-CEC protests. The October 8 advisory was addressed to social media platforms to exercise "enhanced diligence" over content relating to ongoing public events, contextualise misleading material, and prioritise complaints from authorised government agencies. It urged platforms to curb "manipulated or out-of-context content" on top of AI-generated deepfakes that are already liable for takedown notices under the amendments to the IT (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules.

Users can challenge restrictions imposed under Sections 69A and 79(3)(b) by questioning their legality, including through the courts where appropriate.

The October 10 advisory, issued by MeitY's Cyber Laws Division and addressed specifically to Meta, focused on how content was being distributed through feeds and recommendation systems. It said videos, images, statements, and graphics relating to public order and law-and-order situations were being prominently displayed and recommended to users. It advised Meta to identify and address content that could cause public disorder or incite violence or other unlawful activity; review its ranking and recommendation mechanisms; provide context for visuals whose authenticity, date, location, or circumstances were unclear; and ensure users were not disproportionately exposed to a single or limited set of narratives. It also asked Meta to cooperate with law-enforcement agencies within the timelines prescribed under the IT Rules.

The advisory called for immediate action and asked Meta to inform the Ministry of the measures taken. It also stated that lawful civic and public discourse should not be unnecessarily restricted.



The logo of Meta seen at the entrance of the company's temporary stand ahead of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland in 2025. REUTERS

How do the amended IT Rules make takedowns faster?

The IT (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Amendment Rules, 2026 tightened intermediary obligations, particularly in relation to synthetically generated information, including realistic AI-generated or altered audio-visual material.

Under amended Rule 3(1)(d), an intermediary that receives actual knowledge through a court order or a reasoned intimation from an authorised government officer or agency must remove or disable access to the specified unlawful information within three hours, down from 36 hours under the earlier framework. The amendments also shortened grievance-redressal timelines and introduced additional requirements for identifying and labelling permitted synthetic content. The changes leave platforms with considerably less time to assess a notice, determine its scope, and act on it.

Which laws allow the authorities to seek takedowns, and what safeguards apply?

Three provisions are central to understanding the restrictions: Section 69A of the IT Act, 2000; Rule 3(1)(d) of the IT Rules, 2021; and Section 79(3)(b) of the Act. Although all three can be relevant to the removal of online material, they serve different legal purposes.

Section 69A empowers the Central government or an officer specifically authorised by it to direct the blocking of public access to online information on specified grounds, including the sovereignty and integrity of India, defence, security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States, public order, and preventing incitement to certain offences.

Rule 3(1)(d), meanwhile, sets out the obligations of intermediaries after they receive a court order or a qualifying intimation from a relevant authorised authority concerning specified unlawful information.

Section 79 provides intermediaries with conditional protection from liability for third-party content. Under Section 79(3)(b), such protection may be affected if an intermediary fails to act after receiving the legally required notification concerning unlawful information.

Are the takedowns being driven by government orders?

The number of takedown notices issued by the unit declined during October as automated takedowns rose, according to an official from the Delhi Police's Intelligence Fusion and Strategic Operations unit. The Delhi Police have issued around 300 takedown requests in the past three months, with most acted upon by the platforms, according to sources. Law-enforcement agencies identify posts through routine monitoring, assess their content, and provide reasons when seeking their removal.

"The recent takedowns are a direct consequence of the advisory issued to Meta. The advisory seems to have been incorporated into Meta's community standards, contributing to restrictions imposed under the company's own policies," advocate Rishav Ranjan said.

What recourse do users have when their posts or accounts are blocked?

Users can challenge restrictions imposed under Sections 69A and 79(3)(b) by questioning their legality, including through the courts where appropriate. However, where content is restricted under a platform's own community standards, users are expected to approach the platform's grievance officer first and, if dissatisfied with the decision, appeal to the government's Grievance Appellate Committee.

Legal experts said this shift towards platform-level enforcement had made it more difficult for users to obtain timely relief.

"Now, users do not have the remedy in constitutional courts as Meta has taken up the exercise," Mr. Ranjan said. "Writing to a grievance officer often results in an automated acknowledgement, which can then be taken to the committee. The user is then required to wait for 30 days for a result. This adds 60-90 days before the appeal results in a solution. Meanwhile, the user's account remains blocked, in some cases impacting their livelihood and credibility."

Why is the NVS-03 satellite launch significant?

What is NavIC? What is its operational status? What does the NVS-03 satellite, which was launched on board the GSLV on October 30, carry? What corrective measures is ISRO attempting? Did recent launch failures affect the NVS-03 mission?

Jacob Koshy

The story so far:

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully launched the NVS-03 satellite from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota on board the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) on October 30. The launch will restore base-level functionality to India's indigenous 'GPS' system, called NavIC.

What is NavIC?

India launched the first-generation Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) satellites between 2013 and 2018. They were designed to provide positioning, navigation and timing (PNT) services over India, to an area extending approximately 1,500 km beyond its boundaries. IRNSS was subsequently renamed NavIC, for 'Navigation with Indian Constellation'. Unlike the U.S. GPS, which has global coverage, NavIC was conceived as a regional system.

Satellite navigation systems generally provide two categories of signals: an open signal for civilian applications like navigation, transportation, disaster management, and telecommunications, and a restricted signal for authorised users, including the armed forces. The latter offers greater accuracy. For the armed forces, NavIC would offer a degree of operational independence.

However even with NVS-03, it will be a while before these loftier goals are realised.

NVS-03, followed by NVS-04 and NVS-05 — purportedly to be launched by December — are expected to help restore NavIC



The GSLV-F18 rocket carrying the NVS-03 satellite stands on the launch pad at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre ahead of liftoff, in Sriharikota. ANI

What is the operational status of NavIC?

Of the satellites launched under the original IRNSS programme, several have either been decommissioned, failed to reach their intended orbits, or have suffered failures of their onboard clocks. In July 2025, ISRO disclosed that five satellites were completely defunct, with all three clocks aboard each no longer functioning.

The situation deteriorated further in March, when the last functioning atomic clock aboard IRNSS-1F stopped working. The satellite, launched in 2016, had completed its designed mission life of 10 years three days prior. This left only three satellites able to provide PNT services. At least four are required for NavIC to function as intended.

There was also a setback in January 2025, when ISRO successfully placed the NVS-02 satellite in a geosynchronous transfer orbit, but the satellite's thrusters failed to move it into its intended final orbit.

What does NVS-03 carry?

NVS-03 is part of the second generation of satellites ISRO is developing to modernise NavIC. Each NVS satellite carries at least one indigenous rubidium atomic clock. Developed by the ISRO Space Applications Centre, these clocks are intended to replace the imported clocks made by Swiss company SpectraTime, used in the first generation IRNSS satellites.

The payload in Friday's launch consisted of imported and indigenous clocks, but ISRO has not shared more details.

Atomic clocks provide precise timing signals that allow receivers on the ground to calculate their position by measuring the time taken by signals to travel from satellites. Even a small timing error can translate into a significant positioning error.

What corrective measures is ISRO attempting?

NVS-01, launched in May 2023, was successfully placed in orbit and carries an indigenous rubidium atomic clock. NVS-02 was the second satellite in this series, but this mission's failure delayed subsequent launches. NVS-03, followed by NVS-04 and NVS-05 – purportedly to be launched by December – are expected to help restore NavIC.

ISRO's move towards indigenous clocks is also a corrective measure. It has also proposed increasing the number of clocks onboard each satellite to five, providing additional redundancy.

However, the indigenous clocks face procurement challenges. A March editorial in *The Hindu* argued that the transition to domestic manufacturing has not ensured a dependable supply of flight-ready equipment. ISRO also continues to function as both designer and operator of NavIC and, unlike the U.S. GPS Directorate or the European Union Agency for the Space Programme, lacks a dedicated counterpart to manage its navigation constellation.

Did recent launch failures affect the NVS-03 mission?

The NVS-03 launch comes against the backdrop of an unusually difficult period for ISRO. Two successive failures of the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) forced the space agency to pause launches while a failure analysis committee investigated the causes.

The PSLV and GSLV are different rocket families but share aspects of their first-stage solid motor lineage, avionics, guidance systems, and manufacturing infrastructure. The government has said it has identified and resolved the causes of the failures but has declined to publish the committee's findings. ISRO has had only two successful launches this year, the other being the GSLV-F17 mission that launched the EOS-05 satellite.

The NVS-03 launch also departed from the usual spacecraft configuration, with ISRO having cleared a plan to fly it with its pyrotechnic valves already open, in a bid to avoid a recurrence of a problem that prevented NVS-02 from manoeuvring into its intended orbit.

PROFILES

The Pele of Brazil's politics

Lula da Silva

The left-wing leader's victory in Brazil, after finishing second in the first round, reflects the deep roots of the Workers' Party, which built its support base through resistance to the military dictatorship in the early 1980s, as well as the declining appeal of Bolsonarismo

Shobhan Saxena

ILLUSTRATION: R. RAJESH



With a smirk, Flávio Bolsonaro squinted at the camera and called President Lula da Silva "nine fingers" in the televised debate just two days before Brazil went to the polls for the presidential runoff. It was a cynical attempt to weaponise an old scar – and a gossip – against the Workers Party's leader. Lula reacted sharply, reminding the audience how he had lost a finger on his left hand while working in a factory. "If there is anyone who lost a finger at the age of 17, it was me, working at night because I had to work," Lula said, staring into the cameras. A red-faced Flavio didn't know where to look. On October 25, Lula made history by becoming the first Brazilian president to finish second in the first round of an election, held on October 4, and go on to win the presidency in the run-off.

Ever since Lula entered politics more than three decades ago, his opponents have peddled the rumour that he deliberately chopped off his own finger to gain sympathy and claim compensation. But those familiar with his life know the struggles that shaped him. Born on October 27, 1945, in a dusty corner of Brazil, Lula grew up amid hunger and deprivation in the state of Pernambuco.

His family migrated to São Paulo in search of a better life, joining thousands who fled the region trapped in poverty and hopelessness. Raised by his mother, Dona Lindu, whose resilience left a lasting impression on him, Lula received only primary education before joining the workforce as a teenager. His mother passed away at 64 in 1980, while Lula was in prison during a workers' strike. "I believe in a more just country because one day my mother taught me that, even in a simple home, no one can give up," Lula said on Mother's Day this year, fighting back tears as he remembered Dona Lindu.

Lula's journey – from a parched corner of Brazil to the industrial belt of Sao Paulo – was brought to life in *Lula, the Son of Brazil*, a 2010 film directed by Fábio Barreto. Tracking his life, the film showed how Lula's political training began on the factory floors of Sao Paulo's industrial region known for its massive factories.

Amid the clutter of machines and the daily struggle with poverty, Lula rose from an apprentice to a metalworker and trade union leader and became the voice of workers who were not willing to accept low wages and political exclusion. "During the late 1970s, as Brazil's military dictatorship sought to contain dissent, Lula emerged as one of the most prominent figures in the labour movement. His leadership brought him into direct confrontation with the regime and in 1980 he was arrested for his role in the strikes," said Mr. Barreto.

The foundation

The struggle of workers led to an event that would change Brazil's destiny forever. On February 10, 1980, more than 600 people, including trade unionists, intellectuals, church leaders and human rights activists, met on the campus of a Catholic school in Sao Paulo to declare the founding of the Workers' Party (PT).

As the charter of the new party was being discussed, Lula, one of the principal movers behind the idea of PT, sat among the audience rather than at the main table, reinforcing the idea that the party should grow from collective participation. With its manifesto calling for a mass movement for workers' emancipation and democracy with people's participation, the PT became the platform from which Lula launched his political career and eventually reached the presidency.

Since that day in 1980, Lula's political trajectory has been inseparable from that of the Workers Party. His successive presidential campaigns in the late 1980s and 1990s, as military dictatorship came to an end, transformed him from a trade union leader into a national political figure and turned the PT into a major political force across Brazil. In his 2020 book *Lula and His Politics of Cunning: From Metalworker to President of Brazil*, U.S. academic John D. French examined how industrialisation and workers' aspirations to get ahead in life shaped Lula's political instincts. Mr. French, who spent years studying Brazil's labour movement, argues that repression taught labour leaders negotiation, adaptability and guile. Mr. French compares Lula to Pelé, Brazil's legendary footballer, calling him the "Pelé of politics" – a master of his craft, able to read situations, anticipate others' moves and navigate difficult circumstances.

Armed with these qualities and backed by Brazil's working class and the poor, Lula assumed the presidency in 2003, ushering in a defining era for Brazil and the PT. His two terms (2003-2010) and Dilma Rousseff's presidency (2011-16) consolidated the PT's place at the centre of national politics. But Jair Bolsonaro's victory in 2018, on an anti-PT platform, posed the biggest threat yet to the party's political dominance, marking a sharp rightward shift in Brazil. Lula's return to presidency in 2023, after his imprisonment on unsubstantiated charges and acquittal, demonstrated that the PT remained a formidable force even in a deeply-polarised country.

A new mandate

Rejuvenated by Lula's election victory in 2022, the PT has now received a massive mandate in last week's election, opening a new chapter in its trajectory. The victory has given the party, whose base is now much bigger and diverse than it was 20 years ago, an opportunity to prepare for the period after Lula's fourth term. With younger voters and more digital engagement, the PT may be now on the cusp of a transformation. "In this election I have learned a lot from the young. In my fourth mandate, my government will focus more on people and their needs, and we will see more young leaders," Lula said after beating Flavio.

While his rival has fled to Miami, Lula's journey from the factory gates of São Paulo to presidential palace continues. The significance of his victory extends beyond the country's borders. For millions around the world, Lula's victory represents a triumph of democracy against the far-right, achieved despite pressure from U.S. President Donald Trump and interference by Big Tech. Former Brazilian minister José Dirceu describes Lula as a truly global leader. "Lula's political journey and electoral victories represent a milestone in the struggle for democracy and against hunger and inequality, serving as a reference point in the fight against the rise of the far-right in several countries," he says.

The Brazilian election verdict is clear: the factory worker from Sao Paulo and Workers Party remain at the centre of Brazil's politics, while Bolsonarismo faces an uncertain future.

THE GIST

- On February 10, 1980, more than 600 people, including trade unionists, intellectuals, church leaders and rights activists, met on the campus of a Catholic school in Sao Paulo to declare the founding of the Workers' Party
- With its manifesto calling for a mass movement for workers' emancipation and democracy, the PT became the platform from which Lula launched his political career and eventually reached the presidency
- Successive presidential campaigns in the 1980s and 1990s, as military dictatorship came to an end, transformed him from a trade union leader into a national figure, and turned the PT into a major political force across Brazil

The surge of the other

Ra'am and Joint List

Israel's Arab parties made historic gains in elections but uncertainty remains whether the opposition bloc would join hands with them to form a government

Sambavi Parthasarathy

AFP



On October 27, the day Israel went to the polls, the first election since the October 7, 2023 Hamas attack, the country recorded its highest voter turnout since 1999, at 77.7% But this was not the only story about the turnout.

Israel's often overlooked Arab citizens, who make up some 20% of the population, made an overwhelming case for representation and change that day by turning out in massive numbers to vote. Exit polls recorded by Channel 12 estimated their turnout at nearly 80%, the highest in at least a decade.

For the far-right coalition led by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the election was a "war for our home", but for Arab parties, the political mobilisation meant meaningful representation in the Knesset, the Israeli parliament.

This mobilisation seems to have paid off. Arab parties have emerged as the third bloc after the elections. The Joint List and the United Arab List (Ra'am) have secured a combined 19 seats in the 120-member Parliament, their highest-ever tally.

Part of the credit goes to the Arab parties, which have actively mobilised their communities to vote. But much of it also goes to Mr. Netanyahu's far-right government, whose policies and rhetoric, including the war on Gaza and escalating violence in the occupied West Bank, have heightened fears among Arab citizens.

While Arab citizens are affected like any other Israelis when it comes to national security, they've also borne the brunt of racism and violence. According to polls by the Israeli Democracy Institute, a party's position related to crime in Arab society was one of the most important factors determining their vote.

Prime motivation

Fear, as many experts have pointed out, has been their prime motivation, which Arab parties have been able to mobilise given the divisive campaigns launched by Mr. Netanyahu's bloc. During the campaign, the Netanyahu camp put up billboards, saying it was 'either the right or Palestine'. Even on the day of polling, the Prime Minister urged his supporters to go and vote, pointing to an Arab voter surge and calling it a matter of "life and death".

While leaders of Arab parties have called Mr. Netanyahu's attempts racist, they, too, have borne the brunt of discrimination. Like in the cases of previous elections, an attempt was made for disqualification of the Ra'am party and the Joint List (an alliance of Balad, Hadash and Ta'al) before the polls. The surge in voter turnout has helped them gain a significant number of seats, which would have made them kingmakers in a hung Parliament where no bloc has a clear majority. But neither side has expressed any willingness to form a government with Arab parties.

Mr. Netanyahu has accused the Arab parties of "stealing" the elections and has vowed to keep them out of power, while Gadi Eisenkot, leader of the opposition coalition, has been reluctant to join hands with them.

This reluctance is not new. The Ra'am party, led by Mansour Abbas, became the first Arab party in nearly 44 years to be part of a government in 2021 when they backed the Bennett-Yair Lapid government. Ra'am broke off from the Joint List. However, this experiment was short-lived as the coalition collapsed within a year. Ra'am returned to the opposition fold after Mr. Netanyahu's coalition won the elections in 2022.

Arab parties had previously supported governments from outside, especially under Labour Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

For Arab parties, the question of coalition is not an easy take either. Any alliance with Jewish parties is challenging given how much they differ in their views on Palestine. Most Jewish parties, including Mr. Netanyahu's Likud and Mr. Eisenkot's Yashar, are opposed to the establishment of a Palestinian State and support the occupation of the West Bank.

This is in contrast to what the Arab parties envision. The Joint List has stated that it is committed to ending the occupation and establishing a Palestinian state along the 1967 borders and lifting the siege on Gaza. Ra'am supports an end of the occupation and the establishment of a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital. However, they differ on priorities. While Mansour Abbas's Ra'am party prioritises tackling immediate, practical resources for Arab towns, the Joint List maintains that Arab citizens cannot achieve true equality inside Israel without also ending the military occupation of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza.

The young Serb unrest

Student List

Serbia's student protesters, who built a blockade movement against corruption and political establishment, brought down the government of Aleksandar Vučić

Joan Sony Cherian

AFP



On November 1, 2024, the concrete canopy of the Novi Sad Railway station in Serbia came crashing down, killing 16 people. Two of the youngest victims were just six years old. What began as grief and mourning over a tragedy has since brought an end to 14 years of rule by the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS), led by Aleksandar Vučić.

Before the collapse, the Novi Sad railway station had recently been reconstructed as part of a major state-funded project, backed by China's Belt and Road Initiative, to upgrade the railway line between Belgrade and Budapest for high-speed rail services. Outrage over the shoddy reconstruction led to allegations of corruption and government negligence, which resulted in widespread protests.

By December 2024, students started blockading university spaces and halting classes, demanding transparency over the renovation project and the prosecution of all those responsible for the collapse. There were also symbolic protests. For example, every day at 11.52 a.m. (the time of the collapse), protesters would observe 16 minutes of silence for the 16 victims.

Mr. Vučić, who became Deputy Prime Minister in 2012, later became Prime Minister and then, in 2017, was elected President of Serbia. His rule has been characterised as authoritarian due to democratic backsliding, restriction on media freedoms and curtailing of civic liberties.

By January 2025, the protests had snowballed into a larger grassroots movement against corruption. Even as Prime Minister Milos Vucevic resigned in January 2025, the movement did not stall. It continued to appeal to the masses and conducted plenums in order to flesh out its demands more concretely. Through such plenums, the 'leaderless' and 'faceless' movement brought everyone into the ambit of decision-making, giving students a sense of ownership about the protests.

They organised rallies and marathons in order to spread the message. They were even able to call on people in large towns and small villages to set up their own local citizen groups. In May 2025, the student movement formally demanded the resignation of the government and called for snap elections.

Even though these protests, some of which were massive in scale, with more than 1 lakh people showing up in Belgrade, were met with police action leading to several students and journalists getting injured, the fervour of the movement didn't abate. The momentum kept brewing throughout these two years. An October 30, 2025 analysis by ACLED stated that between November 1, 2024 and October 24, 2025, more than 2,400 demonstrations took place against the government across Serbia.

Electoral victory

When snap elections were finally announced, on September 9, 2026, the students made their own list of candidates for the 250 seats in the Serbian Parliament: the 'Student List – Students Are Winning'. Since the students themselves had no experience in public life, they made a list of renowned academics, civic personalities and even actors who would stand for their needs and demands. Their programme involves a 11-point plan divided into three sections, which demands full transparency in public procurement and audit of state projects, freeing the media, permanent employment contracts after 12 months, and affordable housing among others.

The lead candidate selected by the students on the list is cardiologist Ilija Srdanović, a prominent face during the protests. Other candidates on the list include Radomir Saicic, a chemistry professor, Dejan Bodiroga, a former basketball player, and Dejan Šoškić, a former governor of the National Bank of Serbia. One clear requirement for the candidates was that they should have no political affiliation. This is emblematic of the suspicion with which the Serbian political class as a whole is seen in the country.

The elections, conducted on October 25, saw the victory of the student movement with the Student List winning 141 seats while the SNS won 103. Other opposition parties barely scraped by with just one or two seats. The student movement was jubilant with Mr. Saicic reflecting the mood: "Students won and with them also hope that Serbia can be a country of justice, freedom and dignity".

Mr. Vučić, however, while conceding the election, told party supporters that the movement had destroyed two years of life in Serbia and that they would be defeated "faster than they think".

DHAKA

Opposition leader in Bangladesh warns against India corridor: report



REUTERS

Nahid Islam, an Opposition leader in Bangladesh and convener of National Citizen Party, has warned against any move to facilitate an Indian transit corridor through the country and called for a fair water-sharing agreement with New Delhi ahead of the expiry of the Ganges treaty in December, according to *Prothom Alo*. PTI

BRASILIA

Flavio says he left Brazil because he is a victim of 'persecution'



AFP

Former conservative presidential candidate Flavio Bolsonaro said on Friday that he fled Brazil to the United States because he was a victim of "persecution" in his country. Mr. Bolsonaro, who lost the election runoff to President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, secretly left Brazil on Tuesday and arrived in Florida aboard a private jet. AFP

WASHINGTON

U.S. to deport at least 150 Afghan immigrants back to Afghanistan



AP

U.S. administration plans to deport more than 150 Afghan immigrants back to Afghanistan via Pakistan, *The New York Times* reported on Friday, a move advocacy groups say could endanger their lives. Among those expected to be deported are relatives of Afghans who assisted the U.S. military prior to the fall of Kabul. AFP

FRANKFURT

German police fire water cannon during tense 'Gen Z' protests



REUTERS

German police fired water cannon to disperse firework-hurling protesters on Saturday and were also pelted with other projectiles. In dozens of cities, demonstrators turned out for the protests organised by the group "GenZ regelt!" (GenZ has got this), the latest by disillusioned youth in Europe. AFP

Iran's Supreme Leader warns U.S., Israel against launching new attacks

Trump says he is considering new military action against Iran after the U.S. midterm elections while Netanyahu speaks of a 'historic opportunity' to topple Tehran's govt.; Islamic republic's Army spokesperson warns of 'expanding scope of war'

Agence France-Presse
TEHRAN

Iran's Supreme Leader on Saturday warned the United States and Israel against launching new attacks following their threats to resume strikes after crucial elections.

President Donald Trump has warned of new military action after the U.S. holds midterm elections, saying last weekend he was weighing up whether to "finish them off".

In Israel, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has spoken of a "historic, one-time opportunity" to topple the Iranian government.



An anti-Israel board, with '5064 days until the destruction of Israel' written on it, on a street in Tehran, Iran. REUTERS

Both countries are holding legislative polls that could determine the direction of the conflict, with Israel having voted on Tuesday and the U.S. midterms set for next week.

"If the enemies once again launch military or terrorist attacks, it is the armed forces of the Islamic republic and the Iranian nation that will determine the time and conditions for ending them," Iran's Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei said on Saturday in a statement.

'Impactful response'

"Any level or type of threat must be met with an immediate, impactful and geographically unrestricted response," he is said to have told top military commanders in a meeting.

The encounter was the first reported between Mr. Khamenei and military top brass and included armed forces chief of staff Ali Abdollahi, Army chief Amir Hatami and Revolutionary Guards commander Ahmad Vahidi.

The Supreme Leader has not been seen publicly since he took the helm in March after the killing of his father Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in U.S.-Israeli strikes at the outset of the war.

Mr. Khamenei also ordered commanders to update Iran's target list to include "all types of tangible and intangible assets belonging to the American-Zionist enemy".

Earlier on Saturday, Iranian Army spokesperson Mohammad Akaraminia warned that any resumption of hostilities would only expand the scope of the war.

Poland's President accuses PM of taking over top court

Reuters
WARSAW

Polish President Karol Nawrocki on Saturday accused Prime Minister Donald Tusk of staging a forced takeover of the country's top court after the head of the court, an ally of the previous far-right government, was suspended.

Late on Friday, the Constitutional Tribunal said its longest-serving judge Anna Korwin-Piotrowska had suspended Bogdan Swieczkowski, the tribunal's president and an appointee of Mr. Tusk's hard-right predecessor, and was now in charge of the court.

The move escalated a battle between Mr. Nawrocki, an ally of the previous nationalist government, and Prime Minister Donald Tusk's pro-European government over control of the judiciary.

"Tonight, there was a breach of public order in the Republic of Poland and a forcible takeover of a constitutional body," Mr. Nawrocki said in a statement read by an aide outside the court early on Saturday, after the President had turned back mid-flight from a trip to Africa to address the situation.



Bogdan Swieczkowski attempts to enter the headquarters of the Polish Constitutional Court in Warsaw on Saturday. AFP

He headed straight to the court where riot police were out in force as several hundred protesters demanded Mr. Swieczkowski's reinstatement. Mr. Nawrocki called for urgent political consultations.

Mr. Tusk, writing on X, said his government was seeking to restore the rule of law, which the European Union had accused his predecessors – the Law and Justice Party – of subverting.

"This process is difficult, at times even painful, and requires decisive action. There is no other way," he said.

A long-running political dispute over the Constitutional Tribunal has effectively paralysed the institution, with the pro-European government and the nationalist President refusing to recognise appointees put forward by the other side.

The dispute dates back to 2015, when the Law and Justice sought to appoint judges to seats already filled by the previous government.

Earlier this year, Mr. Nawrocki refused to swear in three of six judges nominated by Parliament, while Mr. Swieczkowski declined to seat judges elected by the current parliamentary majority.

Britain open to apologising for slavery, says PM

Sriram Lakshman
LONDON

U.K. Prime Minister Andy Burnham has said his government is open to the idea of formally apologising for Britain's historical role in the slave trade, although he ruled out financial reparations.

Mr. Burnham set out his position in an opinion piece in *The Guardian* on Friday, ahead of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Antigua and Barbuda, next week. There have, for long, been calls for Britain to apologise and offer reparations for slavery and its colonial past, including in India.

Some 3 million Africans were transported as slaves to work on plantations in Britian's colonies in the Americas. Britain began abolishing the slave trade in its empire in 1807. Slavery was abolished in 1833 though not all slaves were freed until 1838. Britain "compensated" slave owners to a total sum of £20 million or 40% of the government's annual budget in 1833.

"Manchester's cotton industry was built on the labour of enslaved people," wrote Mr. Burnham, the former Mayor of Manchester. He acknowledged the calls from affected countries for a dialogue on slavery. "By sticking our heads in the sand, we have damaged the ability of the Commonwealth to function," he said.

Mr. Burnham said the U.K. was "offering structured dialogue with those affected by the transatlantic slave trade".

"Listening to calls for a formal apology on behalf of the British state will form an important part of this process, and I am open to them," he added.

Calls for Britain to make amends for its past have grown louder in recent days as King Charles III tours the Caribbean on his way to the CHOGM. The King is the titular head of the Commonwealth. In the Bahamas this week, King Charles acknowledged the "great suffering and injustices of the past", stopping short of an apology. Buckingham Palace has said it was up to the U.K. government to decide whether or not to apologise.

Barbadian Prime Minister Mia Amor Mottley welcomed Mr. Burnham's statement, even as she acknowledged that "views differ" on reparations. The British Monarch was the titular Head of State of Barbados until 2021, when the country became a republic. Once slavery was abolished, a system of indentured labour grew in the colonies between 1838 and 1917. Some 2 million men, women and children from India were shipped across the British Empire, from the Caribbean to South Africa, to work on plantations.



British Prime Minister Andy Burnham pushed back against the notion of financial reparations for victims of slavery. REUTERS

Historical wrongs

Mr. Burnham pushed back against the notion of financial reparations for victims of slavery, saying the British people could not be held responsible for historical wrongs "however heinous", that happened in a different age and under different legal circumstances, in which they did not play any part.

Instead, Mr. Burnham announced that former Prime Minister Gordon Brown would head a debt restructuring initiative for some of the poorest countries in the Commonwealth.

Cities like Manchester continued to grow after the abolition of slavery as the British empire consolidated its grip on the markets of its colonies, notably India, which became a supplier of raw cotton to the mills of Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow and other areas.

Author and Lok Sabha MP, Shashi Tharoor, who has written on British colonialism in India, has been one of those calling for an "atonement" by the U.K. for its past. Mr. Tharoor has previously suggested that a symbolic annual sum of £1 per year be paid to India, for 200 years, as part of this.

"I have long argued that whatever reparations are offered by Britain, no credible figure is payable and no payable figure is credible. But moral atonement for the ravages of colonialism is indispensable," Mr. Tharoor told *The Hindu* on Saturday, when asked for a reaction to the Burnham piece and debate around reparations.

Mr. Tharoor welcomed Mr. Burnham's willingness to formally apologise for slavery but criticised the Prime Minister's omission of a larger apology for colonialism.

"But the omission of colonialism from his apology is inexplicable and inexcusable. It remains deeply shameful that Britain has never said a simple 'sorry' for the loot, pillage, death and destruction perpetrated during the colonial era on millions of innocent victims of British imperialism," Mr. Tharoor said.

U.S. approves Patriot missiles to Ukraine

Agence France-Presse
WASHINGTON

The Donald Trump administration on Friday greenlit the sale of 500 Patriot missiles to Ukraine, the State Department said, but Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy warned deliveries could take years.

The approval, which goes to Congress for review, comes after weeks of complaints by Kyiv that its supplies of the interceptor missiles were dwindling.

"The proposed sale will improve Ukraine's capability to meet current and future threats by improving its integrated air and missile defense capabilities," a statement said.

Rajasthan University of Veterinary and Animal Science (Jobner), Jaipur
Estate Office

क्रमांक :- EO/RUVAS/2026-27/236 दिनांक :- 28/10/2026

ई-निविदा सूचना संख्या 14/2026-27

राजस्थान पशु चिकित्सा एवं पशु विज्ञान विश्वविद्यालय, (जोबनेर), जयपुर की ओर से राज्य / केन्द्र सरकार के अधिकृत संगठनों / विभागों में पंजीकृत संवेदकों से ई–प्रोक्यूरमेंट प्रक्रिया के माध्यम से आनलाइन निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है।
निविदा से संबंधित अन्य आवश्यक विवरण वेबसाईट **http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in, http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in** व **https://ruvasjaipur.rajasthan.gov.in** पर देखी जा सकती है।

Sr. No.	Name of Work	NIT Amount Including GST (In Lacs)	Contract Period	Tender Fee	EMD (2%)	Processing Fee
1	Construction of Academic Block Ist (G+2Floors) (Veterinary Anatomy, Veterinary Phisiology and Biochemistry, Animal Genetics and Breeding) for New College of Veterinary & Animal Sciences At Bharatpur.	790.00 Lacs	18 Months	5000/-	1580000.00	2500/-
2	Construction of Boundary Wall, Guard Room with Gate at Proposed College of Veterinary and Animal Sciences at Kota.	346.00 Lacs	1 Year	3000/-	692000.00	2000/-

1. धरोहर राशि, निविदा शुल्क एवं प्रोसेसिंग शुल्क, संपदा अधिकारी राज. पशु चिकित्सा एवं पशु विज्ञान विश्वविद्यालय, (जोबनेर), जयपुर के खाते में जमा करवानी है।

Bank Name	ICICI BANK
BRANCH NAME	RHB MANSAROVER, JAPUR.
ACCOUNT NO.	677601702188
ACCOUNT HOLDER NAME	Estate Officer Rajasthan University of V and A Sciences Jobner Jaipur
IFSC CODE	ICIC0006776

2. निविदा प्रपत्रों / दस्तावेज दिनांक 28/10/202 से दिनांक 23/11/2026 तक सांयः 6:00 बजे तक वेबसाईट **http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in** पर देखी जा सकेगी तथा निविदा प्रपत्र दिनांक 25/11/2026 को प्रातः 11:30 बजे खोली जायेगी।
3. प्रशासित निविदा के सम्बन्ध में किसी भी प्रकार की जानकारी Estate Office RUVAS, (Jobner) Mansarover, Jaipur कार्यालय से कार्य दिवस एवं कार्यालय समय में प्राप्त की जा सकती है।
UBN No. : RVJ2627WLOB00038,
UBN No. : RVJ2627WSOB00039
राज.संवाद/सी/26/12654

संपदा अधिकारी
राज.पशु चिकित्सा एवं पशु विज्ञान विश्वविद्यालय
म्यायात (जोबनेर) जयपुर

PRAGATI POWER CORPORATION LTD.
(A Govt. of NCT of Delhi Undertaking)
DGM (T) C&M-III, C&M department
220KV Sub- Station Building, Pragati Power Station-I,
I.P. Estate, Ring Road, New Delhi-110002.
TEL: 011-20841722/09599022986

NIT No. 07/2026-27 Floating Solar PV (FSPV) plant of capacity 2.904 MWp **Date: 27.08.2026**

Tender for Installation & Commissioning of grid connected floating solar PV (FSPV) plant of capacity 2.904 MWp on raw water reservoir of PPS-III. Bawana have been uploaded on E-tender web Portal of ITI Limited (A Government of India Undertaking) **(https://ipgcl.euniwizarde.com/)** for the below items with tender closing time at 11:00 hrs on bid submission date:

Collective No / Tender No	Total Capacity	Estimated Cost	EMD
1000014422/ PPCL/FSPV/ CAPEX/2026-27	2.904 MWp	Rs. 16.83 Cr. (including 05 years O&M and insurance charges), excluding taxes	Rs. 16,83,000/- in favour of PPCL

Detailed notification which includes Critical dates, qualifying Criteria, Technical Specifications, Special Terms and conditions, formats etc. are available on IPGCL website **www.ipgcl-ppcl.gov.in**

Interested bidder(s) has to submit their bids after logging into the ITI limited website by using the login Id and password provided by ITI limited during registration, details of persons to be contacted in case of any assistance required Mr. Abhishek Kumar - 9355030617 (e-Wizard System).

DIP/Shabdarth/Classified/0269/26-27 **DGM(T) C&M-III**

Dr. B.R. AMBEDKAR UNIVERSITY DELHI
(Established by the Act of Legislative Assembly of National Capital Territory of Delhi)

ADMISSION NOTICE FOR LLM PROGRAMMES IN THE ACADEMIC SESSION 2026-27

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar University Delhi, a State University established by the Act of Legislative Assembly of National Capital Territory of Delhi invites a second round of applications from the eligible candidates seeking admission to its LLM programmes at Karampura Campus as detailed below for the Academic Session 2026-27.

Sl. No.	School	Programme	No. of seats for Indian Students
1.	School of Legal and Socio-Political Studies	Master of Laws (01 Year)	35

How to apply: Only online applications are accepted through University website **https://aud.delhi.gov.in** For details about eligibility conditions for admission, fee structure etc., please refer to the University website. The above numbers of seats are tentative, the seats may increase or decrease, the final numbers of seats will be notified on University website. Reservation Norms as applicable will be applied as per the University provisions and will be notified in due course on the University Website.
Candidates who have applied in the first round do not need to apply again.

Last date of Online Application
08.11.2026

The eligible candidates who have already applied or intend to apply for the post of Medical Officer are advised to visit the University website **https://aud.delhi.gov.in/** for the detailed corrigendum.

Date: 28.10.2026 **Registrar**

DIP/Shabdarth/Classified/0272/26-27
Directorate of Higher Education, Govt. of NCT of Delhi

PACE ACE

Rabada becomes the fastest to 350 Test wickets in terms of deliveries



AFP

South Africa's Kagiso Rabada on Saturday became the fastest to reach 350 Test wickets in the third Test against Australia. Rabada took 13,808 deliveries, fewer than Dale Steyn (14,719) and Waqar Younis (14,905) to achieve the milestone. He also became the fifth from his country to claim 600 wickets in international cricket.

FIRST BLOOD

Chase and King script West Indies' emphatic victory over Bangladesh



AFP

Brandon King piloted West Indies to an eight-wicket win against Bangladesh in the first Test in Mirpur on Saturday to take a 1-0 lead. Roston Chase took five for 36. **The scores:** Bangladesh 272 & 142 in 48.4 overs (Nayeem 52, Chase 5/36, Warrican 4/63) lost to WI 245 & 170/2 in 35.1 overs (King 81 n.o., Campbell 49). **PoM**: Warrican.

TRIUMPHANT

Fakhar's hundred steers Pakistan past Lanka in the tri-series final



REUTERS

Opener Fakhar Zaman hit a century while Saad Baig and Arafat Minhas smashed half-centuries to take Pakistan past Sri Lanka by three wickets in the ODI tri-series final in Lahore on Saturday. **The scores:** Sri Lanka 325/8 in 50 overs (Kamindu Mendis 131, Pavan 77) lost to Pakistan 331/7 in 48.3 overs (Zaman 127, Baig 74, Minhas 61).

TEAM UPDATE

Nabi to be part of the Indian ODI squad for entire series against NZ



FILE PHOTO: RITU RAJ KONWAR

Auqib Nabi will be part of the Indian ODI squad from the start of the series against New Zealand. The right-arm pacer, who was initially in the squad for the fourth and fifth ODIs, has been brought in after Prasidh Krishna failed to regain fitness. The first match will be played at the Eden Park in Auckland on Wednesday.



Overjoyed: The Australian batters found Harmer too hot to handle on the final day. AP

Harmer the hero as SA clinches series

The spinner's six-wicket haul helps the host bundle out the Aussies for 111; the result sees Bavuma & Co. climb to the top of the ICC Test rankings

AUSTRALIA IN SA

Agencies
CAPE TOWN

Simon Harmer picked up a career-best six for 16 as South Africa bowled out Australia for 111 to win the third Test by 176 runs and clinch the three-match series 2-1 in Newlands on Saturday.

The 37-year-old off-spinner finished with match figures of 10 for 120, his first 10-wicket haul in Tests. Harmer's second innings figures read: 21.1-14-16-6.

Kagiso Rabada took three for 39 to reach 350 Test wickets.

Set a 288-run target, Australia collapsed to 60 for seven at lunch before Nathan Lyon (33 not out) and captain Pat Cummins (11) offered some resistance.

The visitors had a tough morning session as Kagiso Rabada and Harmer took three wickets each.

The day began with Australia getting off to a poor start as Rabada dismissed the in-form Matt Renshaw for a golden duck, caught behind down the leg-side.

Australia's previous lowest fourth innings total against South Africa was 107 – also at Cape Town – back in 2018, when it lost by 322 runs. With the win, South Africa replaced Australia at the top of the ICC Test rankings.

The scores:
South Africa 329 & 387 bt Australia 429 & 111 in 57.1 overs (Harmer 6/16).
Player-of-the-Match: Harmer.
Player-of-the-Series: Jansen.

WTC Points Table

		P	W	L	D	DED*	PTS	PCT
1	New Zealand	6	4	1	1	0	**52**	72.22
2	South Africa	7	5	2	0	0	**60**	71.43
3	Australia	13	9	4	0	0	**108**	69.23
4	India	11	5	4	2	0	**68**	51.52
5	Bangladesh	7	3	3	1	0	**40**	47.62
6	England	16	7	8	1	14	**74**	38.54
7	Sri Lanka	6	1	2	3	0	**24**	33.33
8	West Indies	13	3	8	2	2	**42**	26.92
9	Pakistan	9	2	7	0	19	**5**	4.63

Points system: 12 for a win, 6 for a tie, 4 for a draw

The teams are ranked according to the percentage of points (PCT) won and the top two progress to the final in 2027

***Deductions:** Points are deducted for slow over rates

Will Sooryavanshi, Kuldeep feature in the final T20I?

INDIA IN NZ

Press Trust of India
HAMILTON

Even though the Indian team management is steadfast in its backing of the established line, the Auckland shellacking might have triggered thoughts of making some tactical rejigging to the playing XI in the fifth and final T20I against New Zealand here on Sunday.

India has an unassailable 3-1 lead, but the World champion would certainly not want to sign off with a defeat after dominating the early part of the five-match series.

In that context, the think-tank will ponder whether to bring back Vaibhav Sooryavanshi and the obvious casualty will be Sanju Samson.

The bowling department, too, has its own issues to deal with despite keeping the Kiwis to below 200 in the second and third T20Is.

India has been heavily reliant on Arshdeep Singh and to a lesser extent Axar Patel for wickets and control after the much-celebrated return of Bhuvneshwar Kumar failed to yield results.The only way to bring in either Kuldeep Yadav or Varun Chakaravarthy is to bench Naman Dhir.

India's spin-bowling coach Sairaj Bahutule had said that both Kuldeep and Varun were ready to step in any time, even though that chance might not come their way in this series. The home side will take a lot of heart from the efforts of century-maker Glenn Phillips and Michael Bracewell, who made a power-packed fifty, going into this match.

It will however, require another huge effort to narrow the margin of defeat.

Match starts at 12.30 p.m. IST.



Mixed bag: Sooryavanshi fell cheaply in one match and sparkled in the other. CREIMAS/BCCI

It's all in the mind, says Manisha

WRESTLING

Y.B. Sarangi

An ardent Cristiano Ronaldo fan, Manisha Bhanwala values time like her superstar idol. After a frustrating Asian Games outing, she made the best use of the short period to bounce back as the first-ever Indian woman wrestler to land a World championship gold in Astana.

Manisha had planned to compete in 59kg, instead of Olympic category 57kg, in order to avoid another round of weight cut. "It was not my day at the Asian Games. Our coach (Virender Dahiya) told me that something big was awaiting me. Since I had less time, I chose 59kg," said Manisha at a virtual press conference organised by the Wrestling Federation of India on Saturday.

Manisha, hailing from Siwaha village in Jind district of Haryana, joined one of her role models, 2010 World champion Sushil Kumar, in an exclusive club after staging a remarkable come-from-behind 8-6 win over USA's Abigail Elizabeth Nette in the final. For Manisha, who paid an emotional tribute to her late father Suresh for his support by posing with a T-shirt featuring his photograph alongside her Worlds belt, it was a dream-come-true. "I started wrestling late. So, I couldn't take the belt as a junior or sub-junior. Now I have the belt," said Manisha, who led the Indian women to the fifth spot in the team rankings.

Having won international medals in four different weight categories - 57kg, 59kg, 62kg and 65kg - the 29-year-old does not feel insecure of the talented Indians in 57kg. "There's nothing called old or young. It's all in the mind. You must take care of your diet and sleep."

Eager to make a mark in 57kg at 2028 Los Angeles Olympics, Manisha looked on the bright side of winning the World title in a non-Olympic weight. "Some wrestlers who would switch to 57kg were here. Competing with them was an advantage," she said.



Manisha with a T-shirt carrying her father's photo.

> I started wrestling late. So, I couldn't take the belt as a junior or sub-junior

Qualifier Swara sizzles

WTT FEEDER

K. Keerthivasan
CHENNAI

With her loose-fitting jersey, Swara Karmarkar could easily be mistaken for a sub-junior paddler. But the diminutive 16-year-old from Nashik, ranked 947th in the world, is far more accomplished than what her ranking suggests.

Swara, coached by Jay Modak, has started making significant strides at the international level. On Saturday, she produced a fine show to storm into her maiden women's singles semifinals in the WTT Feeder Chennai at the TN Physical Education and Sports University here.

Armed with a hook serve that often earns her easy points, Swara possesses an attacking forehand and uses a defensive long-pimpled rubber on her backhand. She displayed her repertoire in the win over Suhana Saini in the quarterfinals.

The teenager, a qualifier here, will face second seed Yoo Yerin of South Korea while Sutirtha Mukherjee will meet top seed Yang Ha Eun of South Korea.

Among men, G. Sathiyan will meet Manav and SFR Snehit will take on England's Samuel Walker.

There were some stunning results in the pre-quarterfinals. P.B. Abhinandh, who had shocked the No. 4 seed, went down to qualifier Nikunj Attri while Suhana got the better of fourth seed Nithya Shree Mani in the women's section. The biggest shock was the exit of Ankur Bhattacharjee, the second seed, who lost to Walker.



Swara... on a roll.

The results: Men (quarterfinals): Manav Thakkar bt Harmeet Desai 5-11, 11-4, 12-10, 13-11; G. Sathiyan bt Yashansh Malik 11-3, 11-9, 11-3; SFR Snehit bt Nikunj Attri 11-9, 11-9, 4-11, 11-6 Samuel Walker (Eng) bt Payas Jain 14-16, 5-11, 11-5, 11-7, 11-9; **Doubles (semifinals):** Sathiyan & Harmeet bt Sanil Shetty & Snehit 5-11, 9-11, 11-7, 11-1, 11-4; Payas & Priyanuj Bhattacharyya bt Ankur Bhattacharjee & Akash Pal 4-11, 11-9, 6-11, 11-8, 11-8.

Women (quarterfinals): Sutirtha Mukherjee bt Divyanshi Bhowmick 11-9, 11-13, 11-8, 11-7; Yang Ha Eun (Kor) bt Lee Haelin (Kor) 11-9, 11-9, 11-6; Swara Karmarkar bt Suhana Saini 11-9, 6-11, 11-8, 8-11, 11-4; Yoo Yerin (Kor) bt Avisha Karmakar 11-5, 11-5, 11-2.

Mixed doubles (semifinals): Mehan Senthil & Ananya Muralidharan bt Kwon Hyuk & Kim Seoyun (Kor) 11-7, 11-9, 6-11, 7-11, 11-7; Manav Thakkar & Taneesha Kotecha bt Payas & Sayali Wani 11-6, 12-10, 10-12, 11-7.

Jurel and Padikkal lift India-A on the opening day

Press Trust of India
CHRISTCHURCH

Skipper Dhruv Jurel made a solid unbeaten 99 after Devdutt Padikkal's breezy 80 as India-A recovered well to score a strong 291 for seven against New Zealand-A on the opening day of the four-day match here on Saturday.

Jurel (99 batting, 155b) and Akash Deep (25 batting) were at the crease at close. The eighth-wicket pair has so far added 69 in 18.4 overs.

At lunch, India-A was comfortably placed at 87 for one despite the early dismissal of Yashasvi Jaiswal, who trapped leg-before by pacer Fraser Sheat in the first over.

India lost Sai Sudharsan (41) in the first over after lunch.

But Padikkal continued unfazed, bringing up a sturdy fifty in 101 balls with a boundary through point off Jarrod McKay.

India-A was 131 for two at this stage, but the Kiwis snared three wickets in quick time.

However, Jurel found a willing ally in Manav Suthar (22) as the seventh wicket duo added 62.

The scores: India-A 291/7 in 88 overs (Padikkal 80, Jurel 99 batting, Sheat 4/80) vs. New Zealand-A. **Toss:** NZ-A.

Brighton hands City second loss; Chelsea adds to United's woes

EURO LEAGUES

Reuters
LONDON

Brighton inflicted a second straight Premier League defeat on Manchester City with a 1-0 win to close within two points of the leader on Saturday, while Manchester United slumped to another damaging defeat for Michael Carrick at Chelsea.

Third-placed Brighton ended its wait for a first-ever away win against City at the 18th attempt to bolster dreams of challenging for the title.

Earlier, United looked lively in the first half but squandered a series of chances. It was punished four minutes into the second half when Morgan Rogers picked up the ball just inside the United half and cantered past a hesitant defence before delicately lifting it past goalkeeper Senne Lammens.

Lisandro Martinez gave away a penalty and was shown a second yellow card in the 63rd minute. Cole Palmer scored from the spot to make it 2-0.



Despair: Nothing seems to be going right for Carrick & Co. REUTERS

The results: Premier League: Chelsea 2 (Rogers 50, Palmer 64-pen) bt Manchester United 0; Bournemouth 2 (Evanilson 31, Adli 90+5) bt Leeds 0; Brentford 2 (Milenkovic 30-og, Thiago 76) bt Nottingham Forest 0; Coventry 3 (Sakamoto 17, Awoniyi 37, Rudoni 52) bt Sunderland 1 (Le Fee 67-pen); Hull 2 (Iroegbunam 58, McBurnie 68) drew with Ipswich 2 (Fiorentino 22, Enciso 74); Manchester City 0 lost to Brighton 1 (Ayari 11).

LaLiga: Levante 0 lost to Atletico Madrid 2 (Grimaldo 36, Simeone 62); Rayo Vallecano 3 (De Frutos 36, 55, Lopez 73) bt Celta Vigo 0.

Seria A: Bologna 2 (Pobega 33, Bernardeschi 59-pen) bt Monza 1 (Varela 6-pen).

On Friday: LaLiga: Villarreal 0 lost to Espanyol 1 (Cabrera 60).

Bundesliga: Elversberg 4 (Keidel 7, Onyeka 26, Krattenmacher 45+1, Campbell 90+1) bt Mainz 1 (Hollerbach 90+2).

Sindhu, Lakshya book spots in title clash

BADMINTON

Press Trust of India
SAARBRUCKEN

P.V. Sindhu and Lakshya Sen set up a double title bid at the $500,000 Hylo Open Super 500 badminton tournament after cruising into the women's and men's singles finals with straight-game victories on Saturday.

Double Olympic medallist Sindhu, who finished runner-up at the French Open last week, continued her impressive run with a 21-13, 21-16 win over World No. 53 Anmol Kharb in a lopsided all-Indian semifinal to reach her second final in as many weeks.

The former world champion will face Denmark's eighth seed Line Hojmark Kjaersfeldt in the final.

Later, Lakshya, who has been going through a rough patch since reaching the All England final this year, notched up a stunning 21-17, 21-13 win over World No. 13 Toma Junior Popov in the semifinal.

The 25-year-old from Almora, a 2021 World championships bronze medallist, will take on the winner of the other semifinal between fourth seed Jonatan Christie of Indonesia and top seed Anders Antonsen of Denmark.



Lakshya. FILE PHOTO: SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Navy ends Railways' title hopes, enters the final

The three-time defending champion bows out after a penalty shootout as Rajbeer and Darshan miss their attempts; BPCL gets the better of Army via a tie-breaker to reach the summit clash

MURUGAPPA GOLD CUP

S. Prasanna Venkatesan
CHENNAI



Stellar show: Goalkeeper Ankit and Selvaraj were the architects of Navy's win over Railways. R. RAGU

Indian Railways' quest for a fourth consecutive title was derailed as Indian Navy knocked out the defending champion 4-2 in a penalty shootout in the first semifinal of the 97th all-India MCC-Murugappa Gold Cup hockey tournament at the SDAT Mayor Radhakrishnan Stadium here on Saturday.

The teams were locked 2-2 in regulation time.

BPCL also advanced to the final, pipping Indian Army in a penalty shootout.

Navy, the runner-up last year, held its nerve in the shootout, with goalkeeper Ankit Malik playing a key role. Railways, meanwhile, will rue its poor conversion rate, having converted just one of the eight penalty corners it earned. Navy made the most of its only penalty corner.

After a goalless first quarter, Navy took the lead in the 27th minute through Yogesh Singh, who converted Abhishek Topno's penalty-corner delivery with a drag-flick.

Railways drew level in the third quarter through Pratap Lakra's drag-flick off a penalty corner. Atul Deep put Railways ahead in the 55th minute, scoring off a rebound after goalkeeper Sanjay Bhaskar had blocked Lovepreet Singh's close-range attempt.

Navy forced a shootout with three minutes left when K. Selvaraj converted Sanjit Toppo's long diagonal pass in the 57th minute.

Navy scored through Ashis Topno, Sanjit Toppo, Yogesh, and Kuldeep in the shootout, while Rajbeer Singh and Darshan Gawkar missed for Railways.

The results (semifinals): Indian Navy 2 (Yogesh Singh 27-pc, K. Selvaraj 57) drew with Indian Railways 2 (Pratap Lakra 39-pc, Atul Deep 55). Navy won the shootout 4-2.

Indian Army 1 (Akshay Dubey 27-pc) drew with Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd. 1 (Anmol Ekka 55-pc). BPCL won the shootout 4-1.

Gritty Mohun Bagan rallies to get past Punjab FC

ISL

Amitabha Das Sharma
KOLKATA

Mohun Bagan Super Giant rallied to beat Punjab FC 2-1 in an ISL-13 fixture at the Salt Lake Stadium here on Saturday. The second successive home win took the former champion to the top of the standings with nine points from four matches. Punjab suffered its first defeat and remained on seven points.

Punjab started brightly and took the lead in the third minute when Alfred Planas' right-footed shot from outside the box beat Bagan goalkeeper Vishal Kaith to find the bottom-right corner. Bagan struggled to contain the visitor's swift transitions, with defenders Alberto Rodriguez and Rahul Bheke sustaining bleeding injuries in carrying out their duties.

The host recovered with two opportunistic strikes later in the opening half. Scottish forward Lee Erwin equalised in the 18th minute with a left-footed finish following an assist from Anirudh Thapa.

Dejan Drazic then put Bagan ahead in the 42nd minute with a right-footed effort from outside the box that took a deflection off a defender before entering the net.

Bagan continued to miss Jamie Maclaren, Miguel Figueira and Apuia through injuries.

The second half saw an intense contest, but Bagan gradually took control and created several openings. Erwin, Manvir Singh and substitute Liston Colaco were repeatedly denied by Punjab goalkeeper Arshdeep Singh, whose timely saves prevented a heavier defeat.

Kaith also made crucial interventions as Punjab threatened initially, but Bagan finished the stronger side.

The results: Mohun Bagan SG 2 (Lee Erwin 18, Dejan Drazic 42) bt Punjab FC 1 (Alfred Planas 3).
At Chennai: Chennaiyin FC 0 drew with Kerala Blasters FC 0.



Intense duel: Bagan's Drazic and Punjab's Shabong battle for possession. PTI

Indian wrestlers disappoint

Sports Bureau

Indian freestyle wrestlers ended their World championships campaign in Astana without a medal on Saturday.

Jaspooran Singh (125kg) beat Jamaican Aaron Johnson 10-0 in repechage, but lost 0-10 to USA's Wyatt Hendrickson in the bronze match. Nikhil (61kg) and Pushpender Dalal (86kg) lost their respective repechage bouts.

Rahul (57kg), Sagar Jaglan (74kg), Saurabh Yadav (79kg) and Sachin (92kg) lost before reaching the medal rounds.

LIVE TELECAST

New Zealand vs. India: Fifth T20I, Sony Sports Ten 1 & LIV, 12.30 p.m.
ISL: Sony Sports Ten 2 & LIV, 5 & 7.30 p.m.
Hockey: Asian Champions Trophy, India vs. Malaysia, SS Select 2 & JioHotstar, 7 p.m.
Afghanistan vs Zimbabwe: Third T20I, FanCode, 8 p.m.
Premier League: SS Select 1 & JioHotstar, 10 p.m.
Formula One: Mexico GP, F1 TV, F1 TV Pro App & FanCode, 1.30 a.m. (Monday).
New Zealand-A vs. India-A: Second 'Test' Day 3, Sony Sports Ten 1 & LIV, 3.30 a.m. (Monday)

AWCL: East Bengal faces Ho Chi Minh City

Amitabha Das Sharma
KOLKATA

The City of Joy will host the AFC Women's Champions League (AWCL) at the Kishore Bharati Stadium, beginning on Sunday. East Bengal opens its Group B campaign against Vietnamese champion Ho Chi Minh City WFC.

The group also features Korea's Hwacheon KSPO WFC and DPR Korea's April 25 Sports Club (also known as 4.25 SC). Two knockout-stage spots will be up for grabs.

Reigning Indian Women's League champion East Bengal had an impressive qualifying campaign, scoring 18 goals without conceding even one. The home side has bolstered its squad with six foreign recruits, including Ugandan forwards Fazila Ikwaput and Resty Nanziri, and Japanese defender Hitomi Tanaka.

Ho Chi Minh will pose a big challenge as it will be spearheaded by striker Huynh Nhu, Vietnam's all-time leading scorer. Her return, after a successful European stint, will add quality. The group stage (round-robin format) will be held on Nov. 1, 4 and 7.

Asian Champions Trophy hockey badly in need of a total overhaul

Uthra Ganesan
JALANDHAR



A cut above the rest: The gulf between India and the other Asian teams has widened. X@THEHOCKEYINDIA

Halfway through the men's Asian Champions Trophy and the difference between India and the rest of the participating teams has been more evident than ever.

While it was always expected that the host would dominate the proceedings, the huge gap on the turf merits question on the relevance of the competition, specially for India, and the way forward for both the ACT and Asian hockey.

When the event was conceptualised and inaugurated way back in 2011, it was meant to be an avenue for Asian teams to compete against and grow with each other. Since then, however, continental hockey has only slipped further on the world stage, reflected in the world rankings.

Consider this: At the end of 2011, when the ACT was first played, there were three Asian teams in the top-10 – Korea (6), Pakistan (8) and India (10). Malaysia (13), Japan (15) and China (17) weren't too far behind. A year later, Pakistan broke into the top-five followed by Korea and India as the highest-ranked Asian sides.

In contrast, the latest rankings (as of Saturday) have India (8) as the lone Asian team in the top 10 – as has been the case for the last few years – with Pakistan (12), Malaysia (13) and Japan (16) following. Korea is languishing at 20.

India has been the only Asian team to qualify for all the four Olympics since then. Pakistan played the 2012 edition by virtue of winning the 2010 Asian Games and Japan was at the 2020 edition as host. Korea's last appearance at the quadrennial showpiece was in 2012.

"Well, I see this tournament as possibly a building phase for certain teams. It's really difficult to place it somewhere where it has meaning when you've just played Asian Games against the same people, so it is difficult," coach Craig Fulton admitted.

One way of raising the tournament's profile and make it more competitive could be expanding it beyond Asia. Making it an Afro-Asian or Asia-Oceania competition with eight to 10 teams instead of the present six would not only bring in better teams but also provide much needed impetus to Hockey India's plans of diversifying the hosting of international hockey across the country.

There is no denying, however, that the tournament in its entirety, its place in the calendar and Asian hockey as a whole needs a revamp. Hockey India secretary general Bholanath Singh, also the AHF vice-president, did not respond to queries despite repeated attempts.

A chance for Vaishnavi, Maaya and Sahaja to show their mettle

TENNIS

Nihit Sachdeva
CHENNAI



All in readiness: The third edition of the WTA 250 Chennai Open is upon us. NIHIT SACHDEVA

For Indian tennis players, appearances in the main draws of Tour-level events come at a premium. Therefore, cashing in when a rare window of opportunity opens up is important.

When the main draw of the third edition of the WTA 250 Chennai Open begins at the SDAT Stadium on Monday, Vaishnavi Adkar, Maaya Rajeshwaran and Sahaja Yamalapalli will look to make the most of the wild cards awarded to them. The 21-year-old Vaishnavi, the country's No. 1 player and ranked 334 in the WTA rankings, will be up against Jodie Burrage, the 27-year-old Brit who has entered the main draw via a Protected Ranking of 149.

"Playing as India No. 1 is not really what I'm focusing on right now. I just want to improve my game," said Vaishnavi during Saturday's draw ceremony.

The 17-year-old Maaya faces Polish World No. 106 Katarzyna Kawa while 26-year-old Sahaja takes on Swiss World No. 128 Simona Waltert.

Indonesian World No. 47 Janice Tjen, the reigning champion, meets former Junior US Open champion and American wild card Katherine Hui.

The tournament has been hit by a spate of withdrawals in the last few days. As many as seven players pulled out either due to injury, illness or the change in their schedule.

"The tournament draw is very heavy in the middle. It is wide open and anyone can win it," said Vijay Amritraj, president of the Tamil Nadu Tennis Association.

India's Jensi Kanabar, Zeel Desai, Shrivalli Bhamidipaty, and Diya Ramesh bowed out in Qualifying.

Sheetal Iyer (WTA Supervisor), Hiten Joshi (CEO, Tamil Nadu Tennis Association), Panna Udvardy (Hungarian player), Amritraj, Vaishnavi, B. Venkatasubramanyam (secretary, TNTA) were present for the ceremony.

India eyes an improved show against Malaysia

Uthra Ganesan
JALANDHAR



Shining bright: Abhishek was the standout player while Vishnukant too found the target against Japan. HOCKEY INDIA

Already assured of a spot in the semifinals with three wins in as many games, unbeaten India and Malaysia will face-off in a potential battle for the top spot on the Asian Champions Trophy points table here on Sunday but with very different targets in mind.

India had a wake-up call against a resilient Japan and Saturday's break would help Craig Fulton's boys to refresh, regroup and relook at their performance. Even though India has had the upper hand against Malaysia over the past decade – its last defeat came in the 2018 Asian Games semifinals in the shootout - the Speedy Tigers have always been tricky opponents.

A stroke of luck and the lone penalty corner in the final quarter helped the home team break the shackles against Japan. "Sometimes when you play a lot of easy games, it just kind of changes perspective and you think you're just going to walk in and beat everyone by six-seven goals. And it (the challenge) is good. You don't always get what you want and you have to find a way," Fulton admitted.

India will also hope to cut down on the mistakes that marred its previous outing. Sanjay and Jarmanpreet need to get more disciplined in the defence. The midfield struggled to find openings against the Japanese. Abhishek, who struck twice, agreed it was much-needed. "Yes, it was a wake-up call. Japan played well, but if we play to our plan, I am sure we can do better against Malaysia," he said.

The last time the two teams met was in the final of the recent Asian Games which India won 5-1 to qualify for the LA Olympics.

"We don't just look to finish in top two but we want to close the gap with the big teams," Malaysia head coach Brendon Carolan said.

Petronas TVS' Chiranth reigns in Super Sport 301-400cc Open class

MOTORSPORTS

Sports Bureau
CHENNAI



Chiranth.

Bengaluru's Chiranth Vishwanath breezed to victory in the premier Super Sport 301-400cc Open class, upstaging pole-sitter and Petronas TVS Racing teammate Sarthak Chavan in the third round of the MRF Indian National Racing Challenge 2W 2026 at the Madras International Circuit, here on Saturday.

The results: Provisional (six laps unless mentioned): Super Sport 301-400cc Open: Race 1: 1. Chiranth Vishwanath (Petronas TVS Racing, 10m, 55.474s); 2. Sarthak Chavan (Petronas TVS Racing, 10:55.989); 3. Rakshith Dave (Petronas TVS Racing, 10:57.703).
Pro-Stock 200cc Open: Race 1 (3 laps): 1. Savion Sabu (MadRabbit Racing, 06:08.259); 2. Senthil Kumar (Team Rockers Racing, 06:08.611); 3. K. Amarnath Menon (MadRabbit Racing, 06:09.103).
Super Stock 301-400cc Open: Race 1: 1. Senthil Kumar (Team Rockers Racing, 11:26.600); 2. S. Mathana Kumar (Team Rockers Racing, 11:26.761); 3. Kabilesh Rajini Krishnan (RACR Castrol Power 1, 11:29.135).
Super Stock 165cc Intermediate: Race 1: 1. K.K. Anandhu (Veedol C2 Racing, 12:48.674; 2. D. Annish Samson (Motul Sparks Racing, 12:53.960); 3. Faruk Ali Sohtun (Motul Sparks Racing, 12:58.202.
Stock 301-400cc Novice: Race 1: 1. K.K. Anandhu (12:15.654); 2. S. Venugopalan (Motul Sparks Racing, 12:15.713); 3. Divy Parmer (Ipone Yakuza Racing India, 12:16.338). **Stock 165cc Novice: Race 1 (4 laps):** 1. Surya Reddy (RACR Castrol Power 1, 08:49.529); 2. Yashwant Varma (Motul Sparks Racing, 08:49.923); 3. K.M. Saranjith (Veedol C2 Racing, 08:50.023.
Petronas TVS one-make Championship: Expert (Apache RR 310): Race 1: 1. R. Hari Haran (11:33.103); 2. Rajender Beedani (11:33.771); 3. Kamal Navas (11:43.181).
Rookie (Apache RTR 200) Race 1: 1. Jangam Akarsh (13:12.423); 2. Dev Agastya (13:12.650); 3. C. Godwin Clarance (13:12.862).
Women (Apache RTR 200): Race 1 (5 laps): 1. Poojitha Anil Kumar (11:15.136); 2. Drishya Nair (11:27.312); 3. Hannah Akkineni Joshitha (11:31.698).



Pretty blossoms: Farmers harvest cockscomb flowers on the outskirts of Srinagar.



A blooming affair: A butterfly feeds on nectar from a cockscomb flower.



Nature's pigment: Cockscomb flowers are harvested at full bloom for their red pigment.



Preparations under way: Bashir Ahmad, a farmer, arranges freshly harvested cockscomb flowers inside his house in Srinagar for drying.

Velvety crimson is Kashmir's treasure

Deeply rooted in Kashmir's culinary heritage, the cockscomb flower lends a rich red hue to traditional cuisine; the petals, which are sun-dried and preserved for year-round use, serve as an indispensable ingredient in *wazwan*



Imran Nissar
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The cockscomb flower (*Celosia cristata*) is recognisable by its distinctive, velvety, fan-shaped crest that resembles a rooster's comb. Rich crimson pigment is concentrated in the dense and highly textured folds of the blossom and these petals are harvested and dried to give traditional Kashmiri dishes their signature ruby-red colour.

Cultivated in the fertile valleys of Kashmir, these blossoms are carefully handpicked at peak bloom, sun-dried to preserve their intense natural pigments, and stored for year-round culinary use. The dried flowers are locally known as *mawal*.

Mawal holds a sacred status in the *wazwan* – the famous multi-course royal feast prepared by master chefs known as *wazas*. It imparts a subtle, earthy undertone that seamlessly complements heavy spices without overpowering them. *Mawal* is usually sold in the traditional markets of Srinagar. To release the signature crimson colour, the dried flower petals or *mawal* powder is steeped in hot water. The resulting rich, ruby extract is then strained directly into simmering gravies.

Mawal is indispensable in classics like rogan josh (meat curry), adding colour and flavour to the famed gravy alongside mild Kashmiri red chillies. It is also added to dishes like *rista* (spiced meatball curry), *mirchi korma* (chillies curry), and vegetarian specialities like *dum aloo* (potato curry).

Mawal reflects Kashmir's deep-rooted heritage of using local flora for natural, organic cooking. In traditional medicine, it is valued for its soothing and cooling properties, making rich, meat-heavy *wazwan* courses easier to digest.

As an irreplaceable element of Kashmir's gastronomic identity, *mawal* helps elevate every feast into a visually stunning and authentic experience.



Slick cut: Flowers being harvested for their petals. Once dehydrated, the red blooms are stored and later ground into a powder or used to extract the natural colouring for Kashmiri dishes.



Bed of petals: The dried petals are used in traditional cuisine.



Floral stock: Workers sift through the petals to get them ready for the market



Intense colour: Sun-drying cockscomb flowers helps preserve their natural pigment.



Finishing touch: A farmer shows the dry petals, which become a prized ingredient for rich gravies and sumptuous dishes.



Before the feast: A chef presses the essence of powdered cockscomb flower into a dish for *wazwan*, Kashmir's traditional multi-course banquet.



Colouring tradition: Powdered *mawal* is ready to offer a rich colour to traditional cuisine.



Vibrant hues: A *waza*, a traditional Kashmiri master chef, adds the essence of *mawal* to a dish during the preparation of *wazwan*. The flower lends its distinctive crimson hue to dishes such as *rogan josh* and *rista*.