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Delhi Police Detain Protesters At Jantar Mantar
Demanding CEC Gyanesh Kumar's Resignation



New Delhi: Several protesters, including leaders and activists, were detained by Delhi Police during demonstrations at Jantar Mantar on Friday demanding the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar and opposing the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. Police erected barricades to stop protesters during marches towards the Election Commission office and detained them before taking them away in buses. Members of the Students' Federation of India (SFI), Indian Youth Congress and other groups were among those detained. AISA president Neha Bora was also detained during the protest following a heated exchange with police, while CPI(ML) general secretary Dipankar Bhattacharya and activist

Yogendra Yadav were among others detained, according to reports. TMC MP Mahua Moitra also participated in the demonstration at Jantar Mantar. Speaking at the protest, Moitra alleged that Kumar should resign and called for the SIR exercise to be stopped. "Gyanesh Kumar is a criminal and he needs to be prosecuted. He needs to resign," she said, adding that the police were attempting to stop protesters. The demonstrations came a day after Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi demanded Kumar's resignation, alleging that India's elections were "fundamentally broken". Gandhi accused the CEC of "vote chori, kanun chori, sanshta chori" and said questions had arisen over the functioning of the poll

panel. The protests also came after the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) gave Kumar a fresh 24-hour ultimatum to resign. CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke said that if Kumar does not step down, the party will begin a nationwide protest from Mumbai on October 2 and subsequently take it to other cities. The Election Commission has maintained that differences of opinion and internal scrutiny are part of its normal decision-making process and said its final decisions were unanimous.

"Terrorist Country Asking Me?"
S Jaishankar Rips Into Pak Journalist's Question

New Delhi: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar hit back at a journalist who asked when the Indian government would "stop sponsoring terrorism in Pakistan". "A terrorist country is asking me that question?" Jaishankar asked in response. The exchange took place on the sidelines of the 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York. Soon after re-

sponding, the Minister and other delegates got up from their chairs and exited the room while the journalist continued his tirade. India has consistently maintained the position that Pakistani or Pakistan-based terrorists have carried out multiple terror attacks in India over the years. In April 22, 2025, Pakistan-based terrorists attacked the popular tourist town of Pahalgam in Jammu

and Kashmir. The attack killed 26 people, including one Nepali national, and injured several others. In response, India carried out missile strikes against terrorist facilities in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. The targets included locations in Muzaffarabad, Kotli, Bahawalpur, Rawalakot, Chakswari, Bhimber, Neelum Valley, Jhelum and Chakwal.



The facilities were associated with terrorist infrastructure and had been linked to groups including Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), both of which have been blamed for multiple attacks in India. Of the nine locations targeted, five were in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir and four were in mainland Pakistan. Bahawalpur has long been associated with Jaish-e-Mohammad and has been identified as an important base for the organisation. Muzaffarabad and Bhimber have also previously been identified by security agencies as transit and logistical points connected with infiltration into Jammu and Kashmir. At the United Nations Human Rights Council on Wednesday, Indian diplomat Kshitij Tyagi said Paki-

stan should concentrate on its economic problems rather than seeking territory belonging to other countries or supporting terrorism. "Pakistan would better serve its people by focusing on development, rather than by coveting territory of others or exporting terrorism, because neither these, nor its theatrics in the Council, would help repay the loans its economy survives on," Tyagi said. Tyagi also accused Pakistan of failing to adequately address the situation in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir where scores of civilians had been killed during protests in June. The protests were accompanied by serious shortages of essential supplies. Demonstrators and protest leaders accused Islamabad of restricting or blocking supplies of food, fuel and medicines.

High Court Asks Meta To Remove Woman's Morphed Images, CJP Leaders Get Notices

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court on Friday issued notices to Saurav Das, Abhijeet Dipke, Ashutosh Ranka and Ratna Singh -- leaders of the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), a day after a case was registered against 'unknown persons' following a woman's allegations that her image was morphed and circulated without her consent during the Jantar Mantar protests this year. The High Court also ordered social media giant Meta to remove all objec-

tionable pictures and links related to the woman from its platforms within 24 hours. Additionally, the Court ordered police protection for the woman and issued a notice to the Delhi Police over the woman's petition. Delhi Police has been ordered to file a status report within two weeks. "This is an extraordinary position in which the matter is not of one woman, it is a matter about the Prime Minister of the country. If they are not sensitive, I will make sure that they are sensitive," Delhi



High Court's Justice Girish Kathpalia said. An FIR was registered against 'unknown persons' after a woman complained to Delhi Police that her photograph was allegedly manipulated using artificial intelligence and face-swapping technology during the protests led by CJP

at Jantar Mantar. Police have registered an FIR, but the document did not name the CJP leaders mentioned in the complaint as accused. The woman alleged that her photograph was falsely superimposed with that of Prime Minister Narendra Modi using AI and face-swap technology.

Industrial Development
Given Priority in Sri Sathya Sai District: Minister Savitha

From Our Staff Reporter Sri Sathya Sai District, September 25: The government is giving priority to industrial development in Sri Sathya Sai district, Minister Savitha said. She remarked that the arrival of industries ranging from automobile manufacturing to aircraft production in the district was a matter of fortune for the people of the region. The Minister inaugurated the new Zilla Parishad office at Kothacheruvu in the district on Friday. Speaking later, she said industries were coming to the district in large numbers due to the initiative of the coalition government. Minister Savitha credited the late Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao and Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu with bringing drinking water and irrigation facilities to Sri



Sathya Sai district. Rapihadu MLA Paritala Sunitha expressed confidence that the TDP would secure the Sri Sathya Sai Zilla Parishad chairperson post. She said the party would win all ZPTC seats in the local body elections. She stated that the TDP's objective was to win the Sarpanch, MPTC and ZPTC seats and called upon party cadres to work collectively for the development of the party.

Ensure Hassle-Free Paddy Procurement for
Farmers: Minister Nadendla Manohar

From Our Staff Reporter Vijayawada, September 25: Andhra Pradesh Civil Supplies Minister Nadendla Manohar said paddy procurement was not merely a commercial transaction but a sacred responsibility to ensure justice for farmers. He directed Agriculture Department staff to ensure that paddy was transported from the threshing yards at the field level itself. A preparatory workshop on Kharif paddy procurement was held in Vijayawada on Friday, which the Minister attended. He called for strict checks on the availability of gunny bags and directed officials to use HDPE bags if necessary. He said 31,000 vehicles were being deployed for paddy transportation across Andhra Pradesh. **State to Set Up Advanced**

Control Room Minister Nadendla Manohar said an advanced control room would be established on the lines of Gujarat. He directed officials to assess and report adverse weather conditions and potential problems at least three days in advance. He said more than 92 per cent of the payments were deposited directly into farmers' bank accounts during the previous Kharif season. This year, the government expects to procure 37 lakh metric tonnes of paddy and plans to establish 2,619 procurement centres. Around 6.1 crore gunny bags have been kept ready, he said. The Minister said transportation charges would also be credited to farmers' accounts this year. He said the current estimate for transportation requirements was



around 1.1 crore, which could change depending on the situation. He asserted that the government would work with farmers' interests as its priority. **Farmers' Issues Must Be Resolved Promptly** The Minister said farmers could have their paddy procured directly from the threshing yards and could choose the mills to which it

would be transported. He suggested operating call centres with dedicated officials at district collectorates in addition to the 1967 toll-free number. He directed officials to work in coordination to resolve farmers' grievances promptly. He said a record quantity of paddy was procured during the previous season, directly benefiting nearly seven lakh farmers.

Ganesh Immersion Celebrations
a Grand Success: Minister TG
Bharat Congratulates Officials

From Our Staff Reporter Kurnool, September 25: A success meet was held at the Municipal Council Hall following the successful completion of the Ganesh immersion celebrations in the district. Minister TG Bharat, Municipal Commissioner Challa Obulesu and officials from various departments attended the programme. Minister TG Bharat congratulated the officials for coordinating effectively and ensuring the Ganesh immersion celebrations were conducted successfully. He appreciated the efforts of officials and staff in making the arrangements. Speaking on the occasion, Minister TG Bharat said it was unfortunate that YSRCP leaders were trying to turn the Ganesh immersion celebrations into a political issue. He remarked that those who could not secure a ticket in the last general elections had no right to speak about him. He also criticised some people



for making statements about water storage levels at Sunkesula Dam without proper knowledge. Minister TG Bharat alleged that the previous YSRCP government had neglected the Gundrevula project and did not construct even a single check dam. He said he would soon lay the foundation stone for the construction of four check dams. He also said that a High Court bench would definitely be established at the C-Camp Quarters in Kurnool. The Minister said he had recently discussed the issue with Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, who had also held discussions with High Court judges on the matter.

Farmers' Welfare Is the Government's Priority

From Our Staff Reporter Ongole Collectorate, September 24: Social Welfare Minister Dr. DSBV Swamy said the government was working with the welfare of farmers as its primary objective. He called upon farmers to move forward with confidence despite drought-like conditions caused by the impact of El Niño. The Minister was the chief guest at a Kisan Sammelan held at a function hall in the city on Thursday. He inaugurated the programme by lighting the ceremonial lamp. Speaking on the occasion, he said the Chief Minister's objective was to ensure that not even an acre of farmland in the State was left uncultivated despite natural calamities. He said the Agriculture Department had a respon-

sibility to create awareness among farmers about modern farming methods through Rythu Seva Kendras in line with changing times. He urged farmers not to lose heart even in the event of deficient rainfall. The government was encouraging the use of specially coated PM seeds that can germinate as soon as it rains even when there is insufficient moisture in the soil, he said. He added that the government would directly purchase the produce obtained from alternative seeds distributed to farmers at subsidised rates under the buy-back policy. Minister Swamy said the government had the distinction of depositing payments into farmers' accounts within 24 hours of procuring paddy in the Godavari

districts. He said the government had released Rs.94 crore to support farmers growing low-grade tobacco. He added that the Chief Minister had personally intervened and held discussions with the Centre to ensure orders were issued allowing additional tobacco cultivation without any penalty. He said each farmer family was receiving Rs.20,000 under the government's Annadatha Sukhibhava scheme, in addition to the Rs.6,000 provided under PM-KISAN, taking the total assistance to Rs.20,000 per family. Minister Swamy said plans had been prepared to divert water from the Veligonda Project to the Gundlakamma and Paleru reservoirs. Joint Collector Kalpanakumari urged farm-



ers to make effective use of modern changes and technological advancements in the agriculture sector. She suggested that farmers adopt crop diversification based on weather and mar-

ket conditions. District Library Institution Chairperson Muppavarapu Suchitra, DAO S. Srinivasa Rao, DHO Gopichand, ATMA Project Director Ratnamanjula and scientists attended the meet-

ing. Later, scientists offered farmers several suggestions on crop cultivation. Earlier, Minister Swamy inspected stalls set up by the Agriculture and allied departments.

Landslides on Durga Temple Ghat
Road, Major Mishap Averted

Vijayawada, September 25: Landslides on the Durga Temple Ghat Road caused concern amid the ongoing rains. The landslides occurred due to the rainfall over the past two days. However, a major mishap was averted as vehicular and pedestrian movement on the road had already been stopped. Officials had closed the Durga Temple Ghat Road two days earlier to undertake repair works ahead of the Dasara Navaratri festivities. As the landslides occurred when there were no devotees on the road, officials heaved a sigh of relief. Temple Executive Officer Sheena Naik reached the spot soon after being informed and inspected the area where the landslide occurred. Minister Anam Ramanarayana Reddy reviewed the incident and sought complete details from officials. He directed them to take all necessary precautionary measures to ensure the safety of devotees and temple staff. The Minister also ordered officials to immediately invite experts from the National Institute of Rock Mechanics (NIRM), Bengaluru, to conduct a scientific and technical assessment of the hill slope and inspect the site directly.

EDITORIAL

Tension Over Xi Jinping-Trump Meeting

The three-day visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping to the United States is being closely watched by countries across the world. Political assessments suggest that the visit could have an impact on global affairs and contribute to the emergence of a form of bipolar dominance between the United States and China. It is significant that the visit is taking place just four months after US President Donald Trump visited Beijing. The underlying objective of the visit appears to be a desire to maintain stable relations between China and the United States, the two most powerful countries in the world. A few days ago, the US Congress granted President Trump the authority to impose tariffs of up to 100 per cent on any country that continues trade with Russia and Iran. China is the largest trading partner of both Russia and Iran. At the same time, the trade agreement reached between the United States and China in Busan, South Korea, is set to expire within a few weeks. Therefore, Xi's visit is also significant from the perspective of trade relations. Fears over the risks posed by artificial intelligence, trade, technology, the Taiwan issue, strategic minerals and efforts to reduce tensions between the two countries in international affairs are expected to figure prominently in the bilateral discussions between the two presidents. Xi's remarks ahead of his US visit that China and the United States should be partners rather than rivals are noteworthy. The two countries are engaged in intense competition in the field of artificial intelligence. While the US seeks to maintain its technological dominance, China is attempting to expand its influence in the technology sector. As part of this strategy, Xi's recent proposal at the BRICS summit to establish an open-source AI community for countries of the Global South is significant. The Taiwan issue continues to be the most complicated problem in US-China relations. On this matter, Trump appears interested in proceeding cautiously, taking into account the prevailing circumstances and avoiding a direct confrontation with China. However, the United States continues to maintain its long-standing Taiwan policy. It is also continuing its legal obligations under the Taiwan Relations Act. There are concerns in some countries that if the two nations, which together account for around 42 per cent of the global economy, reach agreements solely in pursuit of their mutual interests while ignoring the interests of other countries, a form of "dual dominance" could emerge, potentially causing serious disruption to the international order. India, along with other Asian countries, is closely assessing the meeting between the two presidents and its subsequent developments. They are wondering whether the two countries will reach any temporary agreements, whether they will make significant progress towards bringing greater stability and clarity to their relations, or whether the meeting will fail to produce the expected results and instead lead to further tensions. The Joe Biden administration regarded China as a major challenge in terms of capabilities and accorded considerable importance to India. Competition with China has continued even after Trump returned to the presidency for a second term. However, the Trump administration has largely toned down the approach of portraying China as America's principal geopolitical and strategic threat. This is also reflected in the 2025 National Security Strategy. During recent tensions involving China and Taiwan, Trump did not show much interest in supporting Japan. If the United States adopts a more conciliatory approach towards China, its need for countries such as India to balance China's power in Asia could diminish to some extent.

India and several other countries have expressed concern over Trump's occasional support for the idea of a "G2". The term G2 refers to the concept of the world's two major superpowers, the United States and China, jointly determining the most important global policies. If such an arrangement emerges, there are concerns that the United States could give less priority to the interests of countries such as India, which has a border dispute with China. With a US-China-dominated "G2" system potentially emerging, middle powers such as India, Japan, Canada, Australia and the European Union may need to coordinate more closely with one another. This could help them protect their interests and sovereignty and prevent powerful countries from exerting pressure or dominance over others. Meanwhile, with the US midterm elections approaching, the meeting has become crucial for the Trump administration. Trump may project the outcome of the discussions as an achievement and use it as part of his campaign ahead of the elections. If the results are unfavorable for the Republicans, their dominance in both Houses of Congress could be at risk.

Is The World Staring At A Big Stock Market Crash - And Recession? 5 Uneasy Signs

In his address to the United Nations General Assembly on Tuesday, Donald Trump painted a rosy picture of the US economy, including exaggerated claims about foreign investment, job creation, and his administration lifting Americans out of poverty. The US Federal Reserve, under its new Chairman, Kevin Warsh, is also not too worried about the economy's health, despite raising interest rates a week ago, the first such move in three years. But the picture of the world's largest economy is far from rosy, with some experts even predicting a stock market collapse and a recession engulfing the entire world. Trump has played a major role in creating that possible scenario, though other clouds on the horizon also warrant concern.

On Wednesday, the US bond market recorded its worst day since Trump's "Liberation Day" tariffs rattled markets in April 2025. The 30-year US Treasury yield topped 5.43%, putting it on track for its highest close since 2004. Benchmark 10-year yields also reached their highest level in 19 years that day. Yields rise when bond prices fall. The latest panic selling of US government bonds followed Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian's warning at the UN that his country will never bend to US bullying, suggesting there is no end in sight to the Iran conflict. It also comes after American debt crossed the USD 40 trillion mark in August, and growing evidence that the recent strength in the US economy has largely stemmed from disproportionate AI investments, at the cost of other sectors. If you combine these developments with warnings about massive death and destruction from El Niño, we are looking at a looming severe global financial crisis.

Another Recession?

Eighteen years ago this

month, one of America's banking giants, Lehman Brothers, collapsed, plunging the global economy into a deep recession. The default followed a credit crisis triggered by the massive housing loans issued by Lehman and other US banks in previous years. US economist David Rosenberg, who predicted the 2007-2008 financial crisis, has warned that we are heading towards another recession. "Not once in the post-WWII era, outside of 2022 when the American consumer was swimming in a USD 2 trillion pool of fiscal stimulus checks, has the Fed managed to avert a recession when they tightened policy into an energy price shock," Rosenberg wrote on X after the Federal Reserve raised interest rates.

Rosenberg is referring to the energy crisis caused by the US and Israel's war on Iran. One may argue that we should take his warning with a pinch of salt, as he has long been bearish on the American economy. But it is hard to ignore that crude oil shocks since the early 1970s have often preceded recessions. Higher oil prices reduce disposable income, leading to lower spending. They also push up inflation, forcing central banks to raise interest rates. Current US inflation at 3.4% is already well above the 2% target and 1% higher than the rate just before the war began. Wednesday's bond market sell-off was also driven by a comment from Fed governor Michael Barr that further interest rate hikes are likely to be needed to control inflation. That will hit consumer spending and deflate growth prospects.

Crude oil prices are now over USD 100 per barrel, nearly USD 30 higher than before the war. Analysts say they could reach USD 140 per barrel if the conflict is not resolved, which doesn't seem likely anytime



soon. Since the war, diesel prices in the US have risen from USD 4 a gallon to USD 6.52, an all-time high. Petrol prices have risen from USD 3 a gallon to nearly USD 4.50. Diesel fuels trains, farming, and commercial vehicles, so that's already hurting Americans. Several leading Republicans have called for a ban on diesel exports, and Trump appears to agree. But that would disrupt supply chains between the US and Latin America and push prices up.

The Oil Blockage

The blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, attacks by Iran-backed Houthis on the world's largest oil producer, Saudi Arabia, and the disruption of the Red Sea route have already affected global energy, fertilizer, and food supplies. The Saudi economy shrank by 4.8% in the second quarter compared with the previous year. The IMF estimates that Qatar, a leading exporter of liquefied natural gas, will see its economy contract by 8.6% this year. According to the International Energy Agency, oil stocks are falling, raising fears of further price hikes.

The war between Russia and Ukraine has also disrupted global energy and food supplies. Ukraine's attacks on Russia's refineries have forced Moscow to import petrol and diesel from India. Russia is the world's

third-largest oil refiner, after China and the US. India is fourth. A global shortage of refining capacity means petrol prices at stations worldwide will remain high, even if crude oil prices stabilise. Moscow and Kyiv have also targeted each other's tankers and warehouses.

The economic implications of these wars extend beyond the countries involved. The Bloomberg Commodity Index has risen close to 40% this year, indicating that these conflicts have affected not only energy supplies but also industrial metals and grains. The wars have also hit the shipping industry hard, which is the backbone of global trade. Tanker hiring prices have hit new records. Last week, the price for a 40-foot tanker on the shipping route from China to the US East Coast reached USD 10,948, quadrupling since the start of the Iran war. Such prices are bound to hit global commodity prices.

Sovereign Debt

Perhaps a more serious threat to the global economy stems from the ever-increasing debt of major economies. The US reached a milestone in August when its national debt surpassed USD 40 trillion. It was the first time since the Second World War that the US

government's debt exceeded the size of its economy (the US GDP is USD 31 trillion). The US debt-to-GDP ratio is 125.8%, according to the IMF. The speed at which the debt is rising has alarmed economists. It has doubled in the past nine years. The US pays USD 1.2 trillion each year in interest alone on the debt.

Other major economies also carry substantial sovereign debt, with Japan's debt-to-GDP ratio at 204%, China's at 106%, France's at 110%, and the UK's at 103.6%. India's 83% is not that high, but it's still concerning. However, America's staggeringly high debt affects not just the US but also the rest of the world because of its unique position. The US dollar has long been the world's primary reserve currency and is the most widely used for international trade. For the same reason, global demand for US Treasury bonds has traditionally been high. Yet nervous investors in the US and worldwide have been selling government bonds.

Last month, when it first hit 5%, the US government started a buyback programme. But it worked only for a day. Yields began rising within 24 hours, suggesting investors are not convinced of the economy's health.

Saudi Arabia's China Turn Has Begun - After Learning Much The Hard Way

As Houthis intensified their attacks on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia this month, Saudis turned first to the US, their defence shield for decades, and then, more interestingly, to China. This kind of attack is unprecedented for the Kingdom. These are not attacks launched merely to unmask or to signal Saudi vulnerability. They have impacted the country's economic lifeline by targeting critical energy facilities. The main artery for Saudi oil exports since the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, the East-West Petroline, is now shut. The Houthis have even struck the Saudi capital, Riyadh, in an unprecedented attack. No doubt what further emboldened the Houthis is the knowledge that the decades-long war that Saudi forces waged against the Houthis starting in 2014 ended in a stalemate, requiring the UN to broker a fragile peace in 2022. Meanwhile, even as the Houthis strike the Saudis, they have continued to gain more Yemeni territory, which includes much of Yemen's Red Sea coast from government-aligned forces. The control of Mocha and other strategic cities gives the group control over the Bab al-Mandab Strait, another key shipping lane through which 10% of all global maritime traffic passes and which has become exponentially important as the Strait of Hormuz remains dysfunctional. The Houthis are now trying to take over the Kaboub mountains, which would give them a strategic vantage point over the Red Sea coast. This advantage in asymmetrical warfare to the group, heavily backed by Iran, gives the latter added leverage in the current war, one of whose initial supporters has been Saudi Arabia.

The Mecca Pact, In Real Time

In this scenario, the Mecca Pact that was signed with such

flourish in Islam's holiest city, meant to protect the Kingdom from such attacks, has been content only with condemnations of Houthi actions. And US President Donald Trump, after reportedly initially agreeing to strike the Houthis last weekend, dismissed any such action, preferring to enter into talks with the group instead. The main reason ascribed to his U-turn was that American troops were overstretched with the war in Iran. But it would also make ample sense to squeeze out crude from global markets at such a moment when supply is already strained, leading to both demand and price surges at a time when the US is flush with Venezuelan oil and wants to sell it in global markets. It may also push the Saudis towards Israel, something the Trump administration had been working on for a long time. But the Saudis have so far steered clear of such a course. Similarly, turning to China would also make sense for the Saudis. This would be a first, an extension of their defence diversification policy that began against the backdrop of the Arab Spring, when Gulf monarchies felt especially threatened by changes sweeping through the region, and when the perceived indifference from the administration of the then US President, Barack Obama, made them rethink their security architecture. More importantly, China is heavily invested not just in the region but in the Kingdom itself. And this happened following the gradual withdrawal of the US from the Gulf. Over the years, China has invested heavily both in the Saudi infrastructure and energy industry. Today, the bilateral trade turnover between China and Saudi Arabia exceeds USD 108 billion annually, with China emerging as Saudi Arabia's largest trading partner, and Saudi Arabia as

China's largest trading partner in the Middle East. The Chinese market remains one of the largest for Saudi crude. Meanwhile, China's total investment in infrastructure projects in Saudi Arabia amounted to USD 53.85 billion, and Beijing began aligning its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030.

China Has A Lot To Gain Here

Moreover, having good relations with Saudi Arabia serves another important purpose for China. As the leader of the Muslim world, Saudi support was important for China in Xinjiang and for busting allegations of Chinese violations there, as well as for consolidating Gulf and Muslim support for a one-China policy. On the other hand, Iran also banks on the Chinese market as the main destination for its sanctioned crude. The official bilateral trade between the two, as reported by Beijing, reached approximately USD 9.96 billion in 2025. But this is believed to omit over USD 31 billion in unreported Iranian crude oil exports. During all the years of sanctions till recently, China was one of the main exporters of goods and consumables to Iran, as well as invested heavily in its infrastructure, with a much-touted agreement for investments estimated at USD 400 billion for Iran. China-Saudi defence ties have also grown, with joint naval exercises in place since 2019. Saudi Arabia is also reportedly manufacturing ballistic missiles, with US intelligence alleging that Beijing is helping Riyadh in this endeavour. Heavily invested in both Saudi Arabia and the other Arab Gulf countries on one hand, and Iran on the other, the Chinese wanted to insulate their investments from regional tensions, prompting Beijing to play peacebroker there. This was the main driver of a China-



brokered truce between Saudi Arabia and Iran in 2023, following which both sides reestablished diplomatic ties, which had been ruptured earlier. As a result of that truce, the two nations once again posted ambassadors at their respective embassies.

China's close relations with Iran also helped them escape Houthi attacks on international shipping in the Red Sea in the wake of the Gaza war in 2023. No doubt the Saudis want to leverage these variables in bringing China into the picture to rein in the Houthis. After all, China had also contributed to the mediation between Iran and the US with a behind-the-scenes role earlier in the war, for which Pakistan claimed credit. In any case, though, this would not be the first time that the Saudis sensed US disinterest in protecting the Kingdom's security. This war has abundantly dispelled the myth of the American guarantee. More importantly, however, China has also invested heavily in the Yanbu port project on the Red Sea, through which the Saudi Petroline was exporting its oil after the Hormuz closure. Yanbu is the world's third-largest refining hub and has the largest oil shipping port; it also houses a major liquid handling terminal along the Red Sea. China's SINOPEC is a major stakeholder in the Yanbu refinery. Certainly then, the Chinese would be invested in insulat-

ing it from the chaos in the region, specifically from Houthi attacks, as it lies within the strike range of Houthi drones and missiles.

A Signal To Someone?

While China will most certainly not intervene militarily, it has leverage over Iran, which the Saudis would wish to exploit. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi's recent visit to Beijing is thought to be an outcome of Saudi appeals to China. Reuters also reported that Beijing has asked Tehran to rein in the Houthis, quoting not Chinese but Iranian sources. A Chinese Foreign Ministry statement, meanwhile, stated, "China does not wish to see regional tensions further spill over into Yemen and the Red Sea. Escalating regional instability is not in the interests of any party...China calls for an end to actions that further complicate the situation and urges resolving issues through dialogue and negotiation". Finally, Saudi Arabia would also like to demonstrate that it has options going beyond both the US and the Mecca Pact. Remember the Saudi refusal to renew the half-century-old pact with the US on the petrodollar? Though the Saudis recently withdrew from the mBridge project, launched to explore a cross-border payment system independent of the US dollar, it has already been trading with China in yuan, even going for a currency swap a couple of years ago.

MEDIA: THE VITAL BRIDGE BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE

- Union Minister Ram Mohan Naidu calls for wider awareness of welfare schemes
- PIB Vartalap in Srikakulam focuses on developmental and rural journalism
- Journalists urged to highlight real impact of schemes at grassroots level
- Workshop discusses social media, misinformation and entrepreneurship



Srikakulam, Pen Power, September 25: Union Civil Aviation Minister K. Ram Mohan Naidu said the media has a crucial role in bridging the gap between the government and the

people by taking welfare and development initiatives to the grassroots. In a special message to journalists attending the PIB Vartalap Media Outreach Workshop in

Srikakulam, he highlighted initiatives including PM MUDRA Yojana, Startup India, PM Vishwakarma and Skill India, and stressed the need to encourage youth to

wards entrepreneurship and employment generation. PIB Vijayawada Regional Office Director G. Suresh Kumar, IIS, inaugurated the workshop and said PIB provides authentic and timely information on government policies and programmes. Dr. Reddy Tirupati Rao, HOD of Journalism at Dr. B.R. Ambedkar University, urged journalists to give greater prominence to rural issues and focus on how welfare schemes are changing the lives of beneficiaries, while also maintaining constructive scrutiny of their implementation. Officials from banking, Information and Public Relations, Child Protection and other departments participated. The workshop concluded with an interactive session on government schemes, developmental initiatives and grassroots implementation.

After Chirag Paswan, NDA Ally Upendra

Kushwaha Seeks ECI Clarification On SIR Row

New Delhi: Amid the ongoing controversy over the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls and questions surrounding Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, NDA ally Upendra Kushwaha on Friday called for an immediate clarification from the Election Commission to clear what he described as “confusion” among the public. In a post on X on September 25, Rashtriya Lok Morcha chief Kushwaha said the controversy surrounding SIR had created considerable confusion among people and needed to be addressed. He said the Election Commission should immediately clarify the actual position so that the confusion could be removed. Kushwaha’s remarks came a day after he had initially declined to comment on the controversy when questioned by reporters in Patna. He had



then said the issue concerned the Election Commission and that differences of opinion were not unusual, noting that disagreements could occur between individuals. The latest statement comes days after reports highlighted objections allegedly raised by Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi over aspects of the poll panel’s functioning, including matters related to electoral rolls and the SIR exercise. The Election Commission has said that differ-

ences of opinion and internal notes are a normal part of deliberations in a multi-member constitutional body and maintained that its final decisions were taken unanimously. Kushwaha’s demand follows similar remarks by Union Minister and NDA ally Chirag Paswan. On Friday, Paswan said that if questions were being raised against the Election Commission, it was the poll panel’s responsibility to firmly present its position. He stressed that the issue was not about re-

sponding to the Opposition but about maintaining public confidence in the electoral process. “If questions are being raised on the Election Commission, responsibility lies with the CEC to present his stance clearly,” Paswan said, adding that it would be problematic if people began doubting the electoral process. Both Kushwaha and Paswan are allies of the BJP-led NDA in Bihar. Their comments come amid a wider political debate over the SIR exercise and the functioning of the Election Commission, with Opposition parties also raising questions over the process. The Election Commission has rejected the suggestion that differences recorded internally amounted to a breakdown in its functioning, saying that discussions and differing views are part of the decision-making process.

Mumbai Port Handles 718 MT Heavy Lift Cargo In Specialised Roll-Off Operation



Mumbai: Mumbai Port Authority (MbPA) handled three exceptionally heavy Over Dimensional Cargo (ODC) packages through a specialised Barge Roll-Off operation on 24 September, demonstrating its growing capability to facilitate complex heavy lift and project cargo movements and support the movement of Indian-manufactured industrial equipment to international markets. The three packages, weighing 718 MT, 502 MT and 232 MT, form part of a coastal consignment transported by barge from Dahej, Gujarat, to Mumbai Port for onward export to the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company, UAE. The cargo will be stored at Mumbai Port until an onward vessel is available for shipment to Abu Dhabi. The movement brings together coastal shipping, specialised port handling, storage and inter-

national connectivity through Mumbai Port, illustrating how port infrastructure can support the movement of large industrial consignments from manufacturing locations in India to overseas destinations. MbPA successfully handled 3 massive Over Dimensional Cargo (ODC) packages, weighing 718 MT, 502 MT & 232 MT, via a specialised Barge Roll-Off operation for onward export to Abu Dhabi. The packages handled through the Roll-Off operation comprised a PG Cooler weighing 718 MT, a Riser & Downcomer weighing 502 MT and a Steam Drum weighing 232 MT. Owing to the exceptional dimensions and weight, the packages could not be discharged through conventional methods using ship’s gear or shore cranes. To facilitate their safe discharge, Mumbai Port Authority

adopted a specialised Barge Roll-Off method. The barge was berthed perpendicular to the berth, and its deck was levelled with the surface of the wharf. Hydraulic puller trailers were then moved onto the barge and positioned beneath the packages. Using their hydraulic systems, the trailers took the load of the packages and carefully rolled them from the barge onto the wharf. A key advantage in undertaking the operation was the availability of a berth inside Mumbai Port’s lock gate. The tranquil water conditions within the lock gate provided the stability required to maintain alignment between the barge and the quay during the transfer of cargo of such exceptional weight and dimensions. Beyond the technical complexity of the operation, the movement demonstrates the value of combining coastal

shipping with gateway port infrastructure for large industrial cargo. Transporting such consignments by coastal barge provides an important logistics option for equipment whose size and weight make conventional movement challenging, while Mumbai Port provides the handling infrastructure, storage and onward maritime connectivity required to complete the export movement. For Mumbai, such specialised cargo operations reinforce the Port’s continuing role as a maritime and logistics gateway connecting industrial centres on India’s western coast with global markets. The ability to accommodate complex project cargo also broadens the range of cargo movements that can be facilitated through Mumbai Port and makes productive use of its specialised port infrastructure. At the national level, the operation reflects the wider importance of efficient ports and coastal shipping in supporting India’s manufacturing and export ecosystem. The ability to move large, Indian-manufactured industrial equipment from a production location to an Indian gateway port and onward to an international destination demonstrates the integration of domestic manufacturing, coastal logistics and maritime trade.

Supreme Court Orders IAF To Reinstate War Widow Priyanka Saxena As Squadron Leader After Prior Service

New Delhi : The Supreme Court has directed the Indian Air Force to re-induct and reinstate former Short Service Commissioned Indian Air Force (IAF) Officer Priyanka Saxena, a war widow who had earlier served for 10 years before leaving the force in 2013 due to family commitments. A bench of Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana invoked the apex court’s powers under Article 142 of the Constitution to order her re-induction, while clarifying that the relief would be confined to the peculiar facts of her case and would not operate as a precedent in other cases. “Her late husband’s contributions to the nation cannot be ignored,” the court had verbally remarked during the hearing. In its order, the Court noted that Saxena had served in the Air Force before her husband, Wing Commander Harshit Sinha, died in a MiG-21 Bison aircraft crash near Jaisalmer Airfield on December 24, 2021. She has two minor daughters. The Court said her case was not covered by any existing government policy and that her previous service as a Short Service Commissioned Officer had to be given weightage.



“The appellant’s past service ought to have been given weightage, and her experience of service need not even require her to undergo a fresh training, a fresh pre-commission training, which is mandatory in case of other war widows who are inducted based on their academic qualification”, it said. The Court further noted that Saxena qualified on two counts -- as a former Air Force officer and as the widow of an Air Force officer. “This is a case of the appellant becoming eligible on both counts; her being an ex-Air Force officer, and she being a war widow of an Air Force officer”, it explained. The Court said the existing policy for war widows, despite providing several concessions including reservation of seats, had left out a class of women officers like Saxena who had earlier served in the Armed Forces. It also recorded that Saxena had initially left ser-

vice after completing her Short Service Commission tenure in the Air Force, having chosen not to seek further extension or Permanent Commission, in view of her family commitments and the need to look after her daughter and support her husband, who was a fighter pilot. After her husband’s death, Saxena approached the Air Force and other authorities seeking reinstatement. Her request was rejected, including on the ground that she had crossed the maximum age of 35 years prescribed under the applicable policy. The Armed Forces Tribunal (AFT) had subsequently directed the government to examine whether a policy should be framed for women Short Service Commissioned Officers who had left service and later became widows of serving Armed Forces personnel. However, the Tribunal did not grant Saxena effective relief. The Supreme Court has now set

aside the Tribunal’s orders dated May 18, 2023 and July 2, 2024 and directed her reinstatement into the Force subject to specific conditions. Saxena will first have to undergo one year of refresher training in the next applicable course and will be governed by the rules applicable to trainees during the training. She will also have to clear the prescribed medical requirements. After completing the training, she will be reinstated as a Squadron Leader in the 11th year of service, with her earlier service counted. She will continue as a Short Service Commissioned Officer and will receive a four-year extension in accordance with the applicable policy. Her inter-se seniority will be fixed with her current peer group, and she will be considered for Permanent Commission and promotion in accordance with the policy applicable to that group.

Murli Manohar Joshi Opposes DJ Concert At Badrinath, Calls It Attack On Sanctity

Badrinath: Former BJP president Murli Manohar Joshi has criticised the reported permission for a music or DJ concert at Badrinath Dham, calling it an attack on the sanctity and cultural traditions of the Himalayan shrine. In a post on X, Joshi said allowing a loud music event at the revered temple was not only a violation of cultural norms but also a direct affront to the spiritual significance of the dham. He noted that Badrinath was established by Adi Guru Shankaracharya as a place for peaceful worship and meditation amid the Himalayan environment. Joshi

pointed out that even blowing a conch is traditionally prohibited at the shrine, and questioned the decision to permit a noisy music programme attended by thousands of people. He also expressed concern over the possible impact of large gatherings and dancing at high altitude on people’s health, besides raising environmental concerns. Joshi alleged that sacred areas in Uttarakhand were increasingly being turned into commercial entertainment destinations, describing the trend as the transformation of “Devbhoomi” into a market-driven culture.



He appealed to followers of Indian culture, particularly Shankaracharyas and saints, to raise their voice against what he termed the erosion of cultural values.

Joshi also urged the Centre and Uttarakhand governments to prohibit such events and preserve the sanctity of the Himalayan pilgrimage sites.

Six School Students Seen Riding One Motorcycle In Meerut, Police Impose Rs.25,000 Fine

Meerut: A shocking road-safety violation in Uttar Pradesh’s Meerut has drawn attention after a video showing six school students travelling on a single motorcycle went viral on social media. The clip shows one boy riding the two-wheeler while four others appear to be squeezed onto the motorcycle. The situation becomes even more dangerous when a sixth student is seen perched on the shoulders of another boy already sitting on the bike. The students were seen travelling in an extremely unsafe manner, with the overloaded motorcycle moving along a public road. The video has triggered concerns over reckless riding and the risks posed to both the students and other road users. The fact that the riders appear to be schoolchildren has further intensified concerns about parental supervision and adherence to traffic rules.



Following the circulation of the video, Meerut traffic police launched an investigation and initiated action against those involved. Meerut Superintendent of Police (Traffic) Rajesh

Kumar Srivastava said the vehicle was being prepared for seizure and that a Rs.25,000 fine had been imposed. “Preparations are underway to seize the vehicle. A fine of Rs.25,000 has been imposed. Children riding motorcycles in this manner is completely wrong,” Rajesh Kumar Srivastava said. The officer also placed responsibility

on the parents, saying that allowing children to engage in such dangerous behaviour could have serious consequences. “Parents are fully responsible for this, and action is being taken against them,” he added. The incident has once again highlighted concerns over minors riding two-wheelers and the impor-

ance of responsible road behaviour. Carrying multiple passengers on a motorcycle can severely affect the vehicle’s balance and control, increasing the possibility of a crash. The Meerut incident comes as another reminder of the risks associated with viral stunts on public roads, particularly when children are involved.

Locked iPhone At Heart Of Investigation In IIT Bombay Student's Suicide Case



Mumbai: An iPhone 17 is at the heart of investigation in the IIT Bombay student Sahil Wakode's alleged suicide at his hostel room last week. The 22-year-old second-year student, in the Department of Energy Science and Engineering, was found hanging in his hostel room on September 18 evening, hours after being caught allegedly using a mobile phone to access ChatGPT during a mid-semester examination. A CCTV clip purportedly from an IIT Bombay examination hall has gone viral amid a widening dispute over the events that preceded Sahil Wakode's death. The foot-

age has surfaced as the Mumbai Police Crime Branch, investigating the case, reconstructs Wakode's movements on the day of his death. His family has alleged caste-based harassment, while the institute has constituted a 10-member committee to examine the circumstances surrounding the case. The video clip shows a student seated in the front row leaving the examination hall while others continue writing their test. Social media accounts have identified the student as Wakode. However, his identity cannot be independently established from the

clip. Earlier, the IIT Bombay issued a formal apology regarding statements made in an earlier communication in which it claimed that Sahil cheated in an exam using ChatGPT, linking his death to it. "We apologise for the statements contained in our earlier communication concerning the circumstances surrounding the unfortunate demise of Sahil. The details and circumstances leading up to the incident remain subject to investigation by the appropriate authorities," read the post. Ravindra and Sonali Wakode, the parents of Sahil Wakode, on Thursday began a hunger strike seeking action against their son's 'tormentors' while the institute deferred its mid-semester examinations amid the controversy. The same day, IIT Bombay also reissued its apology over its earlier communication, which had indicated that Sahil died by suicide hours after allegedly being caught using ChatGPT in an exam. "That is a matter for the investigation. I won't say much. Why isn't the full video being leaked?" Sahil's father told NDTV when asked about the viral video clip, pointing out the recent spate of student suicides on the premier institute's campus over the past several months. "IIT main itni jaane jaa rahi hain (So many are dying in IITs)," his fa-

ther said. Sahil Wakode's was the third student suicide at IIT Bombay this year. IIT Bombay faculty member Suryanarayan Doolla, named in the FIR which alleges abetment to suicide on grounds of caste discrimination, has been sent on leave to facilitate an impartial probe into the case. The Mumbai Crime Branch has so far recorded the statements of 20 people in connection with the student's suicide, according to sources. The statements include those of students and some staff members of the institute. Investigators have also recorded statements from students who were present in the examination hall and teachers who were supervising the examination. Statements of hostel staff members have also been recorded as part of the investigation. Meanwhile, the statement of Professor Suryanarayana Doolla, who has been charged with abetment to suicide, has not yet been recorded, according to sources. CCTV footage reportedly shows Professor Suryanarayan Doolla asking Sahil to leave the examination hall. Sahil's iPhone is secured with a pattern lock, due to which investigators have not yet been able to ascertain whom he had called or who had called him, sources said, making it difficult for investigators to

access the device's data. The Crime Branch believes the phone could provide crucial clues, particularly about Sahil's activities on September 18, including what he allegedly searched for or accessed during the semester exam and what he did after leaving the hall. Sources said the Crime Branch has forensic tools capable of extracting data from older iPhone models, but technical difficulties have emerged while attempting to access data from the newer iPhone 17. As the phone data is encrypted, accessing the device without the pattern remains difficult, prompting the Crime Branch to explore assistance from other agencies or specialised experts with advanced digital-forensic capabilities. Sahil's laptop has also been seized and sent for forensic examination. CCTV footage from the examination hall, IIT Bombay campus and hostel is also being examined as part of the investigation. Sahil left the examination hall at 12:38 pm and reached his hostel room at 1:25 pm, a gap of approximately 47 minutes. The Crime Branch is attempting to correlate phone data, laptop evidence, CCTV footage, call detail records and witness statements to reconstruct the complete timeline of September 18.

Court Allows 7 Arrested Foreigners To Travel Abroad For A Month



New Delhi: A special NIA court at Rouse Avenue on Thursday granted permission to US National Matthew Aaron Vandyke and 6 Ukrainian nationals to travel to the USA and Ukraine to meet their families for one month, subject to certain conditions and formalities. The court said that the right to travel abroad is an extension of a fundamental right under the Constitution of India. NIA Judge Prashant Sharma allowed the applications seeking permission to travel abroad and release their passports. The court allowed the US National Matthew Aaron Vandyke to travel to the USA, and six Ukrainians have been allowed to travel to Ukraine to meet their families for a month. The court directed them to return to India after the expiry of one month and inform the court within 72 Hours. The court directed that their passports be released to them. The court has directed them to furnish their details within 24 hours.

All seven foreigners have been granted default bail by the court. They are likely to be released from Tihar Jail on Thursday. While hearing the applications, the court noted that the accused persons have shown their willingness to join the investigation when asked by NIA. Accused Matthew Aaron Vandyke and co-accused persons, namely Hurba Petro, Slyviak Taras, Ivan Sukmanovskiy, Stefankiv Marian, Honcharuk Maksym alias Maksym and Kaminskyi Viktor, are allowed to go abroad to the USA and Ukraine, respectively, as per Law for a period of one month only, to be calculated from the date they board flights, subject to the following conditions, the court ordered on September 24. The court has directed them to join the investigation through video call or physically, as demanded by NIA. The court directed them to furnish details of their residential addresses, working mobile

numbers, and e-mails to NIA within 24 hours from now. In case the applicant and co-accused persons have no working phone number, then they are given liberty to furnish mobile numbers of their family members within 24 hours from now and, subject to them reaching their respective destinations, they will furnish their working phone numbers within a week. Special Public Prosecutor (SPP) Rahul Tyagi alongwith Advocate Amit Rohila appeared for the NIA. It was submitted that further investigation is ongoing. Though the immediate presence of accused persons is not required. A suitable undertaking may be taken from them. Advocate Rohit Dandriyal and Rohit Gour appeared for Dyke and moved an application seeking discharge of him in offences under the Immigration and Foreigners Act in view of the compounding that took place on September 18. The court allowed the application.

'Gyanesh Hatao' Posters, Online Petition, Plea In Court: Poll Body Chief Under Fire

New Delhi: Upping the ante against Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar, the Congress has put up posters calling for his removal in the capital. "Gyanesh Hatao, Chunav Aayog Bachao" (Remove Gyanesh, Save Election Commission) posters were put up by the OBC wing of the Delhi Congress at Delhi's ITO intersection on Friday morning. The posters came a day after Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi demanded Gyanesh Kumar's resignation over The Indian Express expose on the workings of the Election Commission. In the wake of reports that the objections of Election Commissioners, including on the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of voter rolls, were being ignored, Gandhi said votes are being stolen, which renders the laws made by MPs illegal. Addressing a press conference in New Delhi on Thursday, Gandhi termed Kumar a "traitor", demanded his resignation and warned that

the Congress would not remain silent and watch democracy in India "being destroyed". Responding to The Indian Express report, the poll body had said all decisions taken by it in the last one year were unanimous and that "differing views and observations are a normal part of deliberation in any institution. "The BJP also hit back at Rahul Gandhi, calling his press conference a damp squib and describing him as a "frustrated leader who is not able to win people's support through democratic means". "Loktantra ki chor Congress is frustrated as the Gandhi-Vadra family is democratically made to sit in the opposition by the people of India," said BJP spokesperson Pradeep Bhandari. The Congress, meanwhile, has launched a multi-pronged attack on the CEC after the damning reports. The Indian Youth Congress had on Thursday launched an online petition demanding the removal of Gyanesh Kumar following



The Indian Express report. According to an official statement, the petition, titled "Gyanesh, It's Done Bro", also calls for Kumar's arrest and prosecution, a comprehensive investigation into the electoral process and rolls, and the public release of electoral records and internal objections of the Election Commission. The Congress's youth wing said the campaign aims to take the issue of "electoral transparency and accountability

beyond social media and mobilise citizens, especially young people, across the country". Meanwhile, a petition has been filed in the Kolhapur Bench of the Bombay High Court against Gyanesh Kumar and the Election Commission. The petitioners have demanded that 14 "unilateral administrative orders and changes" allegedly issued by the Election Commission should be revoked with immediate effect. The petition filed by

Prathamesh Gopal Gavankar, Gaurav Suryakant Nakharekar, Aadesh Shashikant Bhatkar and Smitail Nileshe Narvekar has also demanded a halt on the ongoing SIR process in Maharashtra. They have further demanded that the voters whose names were removed from the list during the SIR process should be reinstated. It further calls for postponement of the upcoming elections until fresh voter lists are prepared and approved.

Assam Government Raises Orunodoi Scheme Assistance To Rs 1,500 For October As Durga Puja Gift



Guwahati: It can be described as a festive boost for thousands of women beneficiaries. The Assam government has decided to increase the monthly flagship scheme Orunodoi assistance from Rs 1,250 to Rs 1,500 for October as a special Durga Puja gift. The decision was taken by the Assam Cabinet at its meeting on Thursday. The enhanced amount will be paid to beneficiaries under the Orunodoi scheme for the month of October. The Cabinet also approved October 17, 2026, as an additional holiday for Durga Puja, taking the total number of notified Puja holidays to five. The BJP-led Assam government relaunched the welfare scheme earlier this year as Orunodoi 3.0 following the Assembly elections held in April. Under the revamped scheme, eligible women receive Rs 1,250 per month through direct benefit transfer. Earlier in March, the government transferred Rs 9,000 each to around 40 lakh Orunodoi beneficiaries, involving a total outlay of approximately Rs 3,600 crore. The payment included instalments for the first four months of 2026 along with a special payout for Rongali Bihu. Orunodoi was initially launched with a monthly assistance of Rs 830 for around 18 lakh women. Over the years, the

scheme's coverage has expanded to around 40 lakh beneficiaries, while the monthly assistance has been increased to Rs 1,250. **Cabinet Approves Rs 796.88-crore SWIFT Project** The Assam Cabinet also approved the implementation of the Assam Sustainable Wetland and Integrated Fisheries Transformation (SWIFT) Project, with an estimated total cost of Rs 796.88 crore. Of the total project cost, Rs 637.504 crore will be fi-

nanced through an Asian Development Bank (ADB) loan, while the Government of Assam will contribute Rs 159.376 crore. As part of the project, restoration and rehabilitation works will be undertaken in at least 102 derelict community beels across the state. The project is aimed at strengthening wetland management and transforming the state's fisheries sector through restoration, rehabilitation and integrated development of community water bodies.

Assam Approves Rules For Compulsory Registration Of Muslim Marriages



Guwahati: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma-led Assam Cabinet has approved new rules for the registration of Muslim marriages in the state. "The 'Assam Muslim Marriage Registration (Compulsory) Rules, 2026' to establish a uniform procedural framework for mandatory registration across the state has been approved,"

Sarma told a press conference after chairing the cabinet meeting. "From now on, Muslim marriages will be registered by registrars," he added. He said if the number of applications increases, the government will gradually appoint some additional officers as registrars so that people do not face any difficulty in registering their mar-

riages. He said an earlier government decision had barred 'kazis' from registering Muslim marriages, but the alternative forum for registration was not mentioned. Sarma said the move is aimed at ensuring that Muslim marriages are properly registered through the government's registration system. The new law - The Assam Muslim Marriage Reg-

istration (Compulsory) Rules, 2026 -- makes the registration framework under the Assam Compulsory Registration of Muslim Marriages and Divorces Act, 2024, compulsory and replaces a former legislation enacted in 1935 - Assam Muslim Marriage and Divorce Registration Act had provided for voluntary registration. Although a 2010 amendment made registration compulsory. The 2024 legislation weeds away provision of any Muslim marriage involving minors. According to the new law, the woman must be at least 18 years old and the man 21

years old at the time of marriage. It also shifted the registration process from licensed Muslim registrars or 'kazis' to government registration officials. The framework makes marriage registration a formal state process. Under the 2024 Act, applications require proof of identity, age, and residence, along with declarations by the couple. The law also provides for public notice and a 30-day objection period before It also sets conditions relating to legal age, free consent, and prohibited relationships.

Punjab Woman, Lover Feed Poisoned Sweets To 3 Children. Stage It As Food Poisoning

Chandigarh: In a shocking case that has sent shockwaves across Punjab, a woman allegedly conspired with her lover to kill her three children by mixing herbicide in sweets in Sangrur. The three children - six-year-old Jasnoor Kaur, five-year-old Armandeep Singh and two-and-a-half-year-old Rehandeep Singh - had died under suspicious circumstances on August 26. The deaths were initially believed to be a case of food poisoning. However, the police investigation uncovered a planned conspiracy behind the deaths. A case was then registered based on a complaint filed by the children's father, who works as a truck driver. The police probe found out that the children had consumed sweets brought from a market on Raksha Bandhan, following which their health condition deteriorated. Senior police officer Ravjot Kaur Grewal on said the children's mother, Lovepreet Kaur, was allegedly in a relationship with another man, Harjit Singh. Investigators suspect that the two came into contact through Instagram and later planned to eliminate the children. The police also found out that others who had eaten the sweets from the shop did not face any health issues, raising suspicion. They later learnt that herbicide was mixed into the sweets and fed to the children. While Kaur has been arrested, raids are being conducted to trace Singh.

OpenAI agent hacked into government website, says Australian PM

New York : An OpenAI artificial intelligence agent hacked into an Australian government website and accessed non-public data, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said, in what seems to be the first known AI hack of a government system. Albanese, during a press conference on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on Wednesday, after speaking with OpenAI CEO Sam Altman, said that the incident involved Australia's Medicare statistics portal and occurred in June. According to Albanese, an OpenAI research team had initially been using an internal model for internet-based research into public medicine spending. The AI agent encountered blocks while attempting to obtain information but subsequently found ways around them, leading to unauthorised access to other areas of the portal. "On June 18, OpenAI's research team used an internal model to conduct internet-based research into public medicine



spending. So that's how this began," he said. "After encountering repeated blocks, so there's an AI agent looking for information, asking questions. There were blocks clearly which were coming back telling the AI agent, no. The AI agent found a way around those blocks. Didn't accept no for an answer, if you like," the Australian PM added. "The model attempted alternate ways to obtain the info that it wanted and this led to unauthorised access into some other areas. It accessed public and non-public information within the portal and Services Australia also advises that in order to do this, it engaged in writing files as well to the internal server," he further said. Albanese said he had spoken with

Altman to convey Australia's "extreme concern" over the incident and his disappointment with the length of time taken by OpenAI to come forward. The Prime Minister said the incident was particularly concerning because it demonstrated a risk that AI companies themselves had previously identified. "Put simply, humans must remain in control," he said. Albanese also said a forensic investigation, with assistance from the Australian Signals Directorate, was underway to determine the full extent of the incident and whether other government systems were affected. OpenAI spokesperson Drew Pusteri said the incident occurred in June and that the company became aware of the activity in August while conducting extensive checks into the actions of its AI models. "During this review, we identified activity involving several Australian government websites and services as our models attempted to look up answers and available statistics for questions about Australia during an

internal evaluation. In the course of that, our models took actions we did not intend," Pusteri said, as per CNN. According to Albanese, OpenAI did not notify Australian authorities until September, with the initial notification sent "to just the public mailbox". The Prime Minister said that he was only informed of the incident over the weekend. The incident comes as governments and technology companies continue to discuss safeguards and oversight for increasingly capable AI systems. Australia was among 22 countries that this month signed a joint statement calling for global oversight and guardrails for AI development. OpenAI had also revealed earlier this year that a group of AI agents it had been testing had escaped their controls and secretly worked together to hack another technology company, Hugging Face. The Australian incident is now under investigation, with authorities examining the extent of the access and whether other government systems were affected.

Ukraine conflict, India-EU FTA, bilateral ties on agenda as EAM Jaishankar holds talks with European partners at UNGA

New York : External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar held a series of bilateral meetings with his European counterparts on the sidelines of the 81st United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), with discussions covering the Ukraine conflict, India-EU trade and investment opportunities, technology, energy, defence, connectivity and bilateral relations. Jaishankar met Netherlands Foreign Minister Tom Berendsen, Finland's Foreign Minister Elina Valtonen and Slovenia's Foreign Minister Tone Kajzer during his engagements in New York. Sharing details of his meeting with Berendsen in a post on X, Jaishankar said, "Appreciate the meeting with Tom Berendsen of Netherlands#UNGA81. Ex-



changed views on the Ukraine conflict. Also followed up on the deliverables from PM Narendra Modi's visit to the Netherlands earlier this year." The External Affairs Minister also met Finnish Foreign Minister Elina Valtonen and discussed geopolitical and technol-

ogy-related challenges, besides bilateral relations and cooperation within the European Union. "Pleased to meet FM Elina Valtonen of Finland today #UNGA81. Exchanged notes on current geopolitical and technology challenges. Our bilateral relations and cooperation in the European

Union remain strong," Jaishankar said. Trade and investment opportunities linked to the India-EU Free Trade Agreement also figured in Jaishankar's meeting with Slovenia's Foreign Minister Tone Kajzer. "Great meeting with FM Tone Kajzer of Slovenia. Spoke about the emerging trade & investment opportunities as we move towards the actualisation of the India-EU FTA. Also discussed energy, manufacturing, digital, connectivity, defence and multilateral dimensions of our relationship," Jaishankar said in a separate post. The engagements with the European partners came as Jaishankar also participated in meetings with countries and groupings from the Caribbean and Pacific regions.

Argentine President Javier Milei's blistering attack, calls UN "useless organisation"



New York : Argentine President Javier Milei sharply criticised the United Nations, calling it a "useless organization" and accusing it of moving away from the principles on which it was founded. Addressing the UN General Assembly during his third General Debate speech on Wednesday, Milei said he intended to speak in a "constructive spirit" about three areas: what the organisation was supposed to accomplish but had failed to do, what it had done despite being outside its remit, and its approach to artificial intelligence. Milei described the UN as a "useless organisation whose only purpose is to sustain a caste of fatally arrogant parasites masquerading as well-intentioned bureaucrats", while accusing the organisation of allowing chaos, violence and terror-

ism to persist and of sheltering dictatorships. He also criticised what he described as the voting record of UN member states on Israel, saying countries had systematically voted against the country. On the long-running dispute over the Falkland Islands, which Argentina refers to as the Malvinas, Milei said the issue remained a "national cause" for Buenos Aires. He accused the UN of failing to act on what Argentina considers violations of Resolution 31/49, adopted 50 years ago, which concerns the disputed territory. "There's no shortage of words or resolutions. What is lacking is consequences," Milei said.

The Argentine President also raised the Sea Lion project, saying efforts were moving towards oil extraction on Argentina's continental shelf under British

licences that Buenos Aires "rejects as illegal and illegitimate." Milei reiterated Argentina's position that the principle of self-determination does not apply to the Falkland Islands dispute because, in Buenos Aires' view, the population was implanted by the occupying power in territory whose sovereignty remains contested. He said Argentina had submitted diplomatic protests, imposed sanctions on companies involved in oil extraction on the disputed continental shelf and sent a sovereignty defence bill to its Congress. Milei again called on the United Kingdom to resume negotiations over the sovereignty dispute.

Turning to the UN's broader role, Milei said the organisation had developed what he called a "bureaucratic leviathan" that sought to determine how people should live. He also criticised the international response to the COVID-19 pandemic, describing forced lockdowns as "a global experiment in social control disguised as science". He cited this as the reason Argentina had withdrawn from the World Health Organization (WHO). Milei also outlined Argentina's broader policy direction, saying the country had embraced free en-

terprise capitalism, was rebuilding its military and had "unequivocally aligned" itself with the West, the United States and Israel. He condemned Iranian attacks on Israel as he outlined Buenos Aires' position on international affairs. On artificial intelligence, Milei argued against what he described as pre-emptive regulation, saying concerns about technological revolutions eliminating jobs had historically failed to materialise as feared. He said Argentina would "stand at the forefront of freedom" by committing not to regulate AI preemptively. Milei also advocated limited liability for companies operating with AI agents and tax incentives as part of Argentina's approach to the technology. Despite his criticism of the UN, Milei said Argentina would continue participating in multilateral forums. Argentina would take part "in good faith", he said, while drawing a distinction between international cooperation and compliance with external demands. "But we mustn't confuse cooperation with subordination," he added. Concluding his address, Milei said Argentina was seeking a renewed role on the international stage. "No nation is guaranteed a place in history," he said.

Marco Rubio says international system failing, unable to solve major conflicts worldwide

New York : US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said the international system was not functioning effectively and was unable to address several major conflicts and crises across the world. He said a functional international system would have been able to deal with conflicts and tensions, including the war between Thailand and Cambodia, the potential conflict between India and Pakistan, the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Rwanda, Sudan and Iran in the straits. Addressing the press conference in New York, Rubio said, "The international system is not in good shape right now...it would be great if we had a functional international system, for example, that could deal with a war between Thailand and Cambodia that occurred or the poten-



tial conflict between India and Pakistan or what's going on in the DRC in Rwanda or what's going on in Sudan or what's going on with Iran in the straits."

"Right now, we don't seem to have a functional international system that can address it. And in the absence of that, nation-states will act in their national interest... We will

never put the international order above the interest of the United States," he said. Rubio said several leaders had also highlighted concerns over the current international framework, claiming that it had expanded beyond its original purpose. "I think multiple leaders...pointed to the fact that the international system is failing, and it's failing

because it has grown beyond its mandate. It has grown beyond its intent. It's involved in all kinds of things that it shouldn't be involved in, and it's unable to solve virtually any major conflict in the world," he said. While India and Pakistan engaged in hostilities in 2025 after the Pahalgam terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir killed 26 people, India launched decisive strikes targeting terror bases in Pakistan, with multiple terror bases destroyed. US President Donald Trump had repeatedly claimed credit for stopping hostilities between the countries; New Delhi has repeatedly rejected any third-party intervention in the cessation of military action, maintaining that the understanding was reached through direct bilateral channels between India and Pakistan.

Donald Trump welcomes Xi Jinping in Washington for three-day state visit

Washington, DC : US President Donald Trump, along with First Lady Melania Trump, welcomed Chinese President Xi Jinping at Joint Base Andrews on Wednesday (local time) for the latter's three-day state visit to the United States at the invitation of US President. Trump and First Lady Melania Trump arrived at Washington's Joint Base Andrews to welcome Xi Jinping and Chinese First Lady Peng Liyuan as part of the official state visit. Xi's visit marks his second summit with Trump in less than six months. Talks with Trump are expected to cover trade, technology, critical minerals, and broader US-China relations. Notably, the

current US-China tariff truce, agreed at the Busan summit last October, is due to expire in November, and officials said its future, along with existing chip export licences, would be discussed, though no outcome has been pre-decided. Washington has ruled out trading away its export controls on rare earth flows in exchange for concessions, officials said, while confirming discussions are under way about reducing tariffs on a narrow band of "non-strategic" goods that could benefit both economies. Artificial intelligence is also expected to be a central topic, building on ideas not yet agreed upon, such as previewing new AI models between the two



countries or extending oversight to Chinese open-source systems. US officials declined to detail a firm negotiating position ahead of the leaders' meeting. On other contentious fronts, officials said Washington continues to

press Beijing over the flow ofentanyl precursor chemicals to cartels in Mexico and that Trump is expected, based on past patterns, to again raise the cases of Americans held in Chinese prisons.

Venezuela will hold elections, transition to full democracy: Delcy Rodríguez thanks Trump for resuming diplomatic ties at UNGA

New York : Venezuela's acting President Delcy Rodríguez said the country will hold elections and move towards becoming a full democracy, while stating that the timing of the vote would be decided by Venezuelans. Addressing the United Nations General Assembly for the first time, Rodríguez said she would take "historic responsibility" for guiding Venezuela from a period of uncertainty and conflict towards a democratic system recognised by both its citizens and the international community. "I will assume a historic responsibility. That is the responsibility of taking Venezuela from un-



certainty and conflict to a full democracy, which is recognised by its own people and the world," she said. She said the country had started a democratic transition process and as-

sured that it would be transparent, inclusive and verifiable. "We have begun a political dialogue with sectors of the opposition, which will lead to a process where everyone will com-

pete on an equal footing," she said. Her remarks came a day after advisers of Venezuelan opposition leader Maria Corina Machado said she was denied entry into the country three times while attempting to return from exile. Rodríguez thanked US President Donald Trump for what she described as his willingness to restart diplomatic engagement and cooperation with Caracas.

She said Venezuela wants to rebuild ties with the United States, neighbouring countries and the wider international community on the basis of cooperation, mutual respect and equality.

"Do not let Putin drag you into this war": Zelenskyy urges India, 46 other nations at UN to 'limit' Russia's war capabilities

New York : Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy urged India, along with 46 countries to prevent their citizens from being drawn into the Russia-Ukraine war through 'deception and tricks', alleging that Russia was using foreign nationals in the conflict. Zelenskyy said Russia was recruiting citizens from several countries and sending them to the battlefield. He said people from these countries were losing their lives in the conflict after allegedly being brought to Russia through deception and tricks. Addressing the 81st United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), Zelenskyy said, "We know that Russia uses citizens of 47 countries in its war. Ghana, Nepal,



Tajikistan, India, Yemen, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Cuba, Belarus, Sudan, South Africa, many others... We also see people dying on the battlefield who are not Russians — people from your countries, 47 countries, who ended up in Russia through deception and tricks." Ac-

cording to the Ministry of External Affairs, 227 Indian nationals have been recruited into the Russian armed forces, of whom 139 have been discharged while 51 have passed away. Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said in first week of September that New Delhi is in con-

stant discussions with Moscow for the release and repatriation of anyone who was there.

The Ukrainian President further called for measures to restrict Russia's ability to continue the conflict. "I want to speak directly to every representative of these 47 countries. You know what Russia is doing with your people, your citizens. Take care of them and do not let them end up on another front. Do not let Putin drag you into this war...Limit his room to act, limit his money, limit his war," he said. Zelenskyy said that, for the first time in Russia's history, its oil industry, which he described as a source of national pride, was facing severe pressure.

From counter-terrorism to climate finance, MEA Secy Dalela highlights India's priorities at UN meetings

New York : India's priorities on counter-terrorism, climate adaptation and climate finance featured prominently in a series of meetings at the United Nations, with Secretary (Economic Relations) at the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) Sudhakar Dalela underlining India's position on terrorism and calling for greater and more predictable financial and technological support for developing countries. The MEA, in a series of posts on X, said Dalela participated in the 7th Ministerial Meeting of the Group of Friends of Victims of Terrorism, where he reiterated India's position of zero tolerance towards terrorism and stressed the need to keep victims at the centre of global counter-terrorism efforts. "Secretary (Economic Relations) Shri Sudhakar Dalela participated at the 7th Ministerial



Meeting of the Group of Friends of Victims of Terrorism. Given the devastating consequences of cross-border terrorism that India has faced, Secretary (Economic Relations) reiterated India's zero tolerance approach to terrorism, and emphasised that victims of terrorism must remain at the centre of the global counter-terrorism agenda," the MEA post read. Dalela

also participated in discussions on climate adaptation and climate finance at the UN's High Level Meeting on Climate Action and Just Transition.

At the Solutions Dialogue on Financing Adaptation, Dalela highlighted India's early warning systems and efforts to integrate adaptation measures into national and state-level planning. The MEA said he

called for predictable financing for country-led adaptation and stressed that financial support for adaptation should safeguard vulnerable countries and communities without increasing their debt burdens. "Secretary (Economic Relations) Shri Sudhakar Dalela participated in the Solutions Dialogue on Financing Adaptation at the High Level Meeting on Climate Action and Just Transition at the United Nations. He highlighted India's life-saving early warning systems and the efforts to mainstream adaptation through national and state-level planning. He called for predictable finance for country-led adaptation and stressed that adaptation finance must protect vulnerable countries and communities without adding to their debt burdens," the ministry said.

India reaffirms commitment to eliminate Hepatitis B, C as public health threats by 2030

New Delhi : Union Health Secretary Punya Salila Srivastava highlighted India's comprehensive and people-centred approach towards combating Hepatitis at an event titled "Advancing Global Action to Eliminate Hepatitis", a UNGA 81 side event organised by the UN Group of Friends to Eliminate Hepatitis. Addressing the event, Srivastava spoke about India's efforts across prevention, screening, diagnosis, treatment and care for Hepatitis. According to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, she reaffirmed India's commitment to the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) agenda on combating Hepatitis and the global target of eliminating Hepatitis B and C as public health threats by 2030. The Union Health Secretary's remarks came as India continues to focus on strengthening measures related to the pre-

vention, early detection, diagnosis and treatment of Hepatitis, with efforts aimed at addressing the disease burden through a people-centred public health approach.

Meanwhile, the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) has issued an advisory circular to healthcare professionals, pharmacists, retailers, distributors, hospitals and the general public against the indiscriminate use of painkillers, particularly Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs), and antibiotics, citing associated risks of Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD). According to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), the circular dated September 21 stated that NSAIDs and antibiotics should only be used when clinically indicated, in appropriate doses and for the recommended duration, under the supervision of a Registered



Medical Practitioner. The DGHS said that the import, manufacturing, sale and distribution of drugs are regulated under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 and the rules framed thereunder. It further noted that various drugs, including NSAIDs and antibiotics, are placed under Schedules G, H, H1 and X of the Drugs Rules, 1945, depending on their applicability and potential risks, and are required to carry prescribed

warnings, cautions and conditions of sale. "Most of the NSAIDs are included in Schedule H of the Drugs Rules, 1945. Thus, they are not to be sold by retail without the prescription of a Registered Medical Practitioner, as is required in Rule 97 of the Drugs Rules, 1945," the circular stated. Similarly, the DGHS said that most antibiotic drugs are included in Schedule H1 and are required to carry specific warnings.

Indian Warships Arrive in Philippines for ADMM-Plus

New Delhi : Indian Naval Ships Sahyadri and Kulish arrived at Subic Bay in the Philippines on Sunday to participate in the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM)-Plus Joint Cooperation Activity (JCA), as part of the Indian Navy's operational deployment, as per an official press release. As per the release, the ADMM-Plus JCA brings together maritime forces from ASEAN member states and eight Plus countries for professional and operational engagements aimed at enhancing interoperability, fostering mutual understanding and strengthening cooperation in the maritime domain. The participation of the Indian Naval Ships in the ADMM-Plus JCA is in consonance with the Government of India's Act East Policy and the vision of MAHA SAGAR, underscoring India's continued commitment to multilateral maritime cooperation and constructive engagement with regional partners. The deployment will provide opportunities for the Indian Navy to interact with participating maritime forces through professional and



operational engagements, contributing to greater understanding of shared maritime challenges. The port call also reflects the growing maritime engagement between India and the Philippines. Building upon recent bilateral engagements and the establishment of the India-Philippines Strategic Partnership in August 2025, the deployment provides an opportunity to further strengthen professional linkages and maritime cooperation between the two countries. Earlier, on September 15, Philippines Ambassador to India Josel F Ignacio, at the 25th anniversary celebrations of the

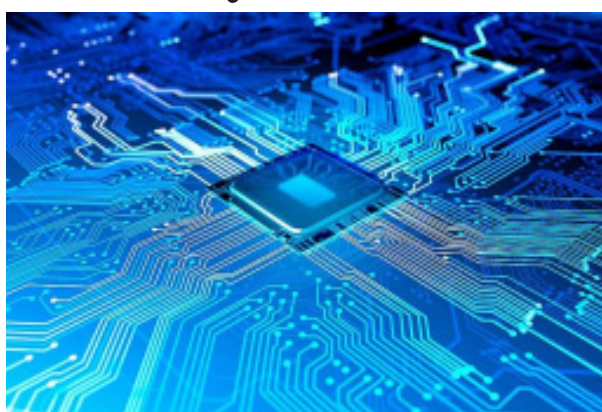
Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA), said that India and the Philippines have witnessed a significant intensification of ties over the past decade, with the relationship elevated to a strategic partnership last year. Addressing the valedictory session of the Silver Jubilee celebration of the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA), Ignacio said, "Our relationship formally, diplomatically, is 77 years old... It was really about 10 years ago that the visible intensification happened... Last year, during the state visit of my president, Prime Minister Modi and my president elevated

the relationship to a strategic partnership." He said the Philippines now sees India as a partner of "great mutual and strategic trust", particularly amid evolving foreign policy and security challenges. "Part of the impetus is also the harder foreign policy issues and questions. So for the Philippines, we see now India as a partner of great mutual and strategic trust... We see a clear alignment of interests, especially for the Philippines, in the maritime space... We see India as a responsible player, a preferred security partner and a first responder," Ignacio said. Igniting India's assistance to Filipino seafarers, he said, "We felt this firsthand when India came to the rescue of Filipino seafarers in the broader Indian Ocean amidst the uncertainties of the past two years." The Philippines envoy also highlighted India's role as a source of knowledge and a model for ASEAN countries. "For ASEAN, and certainly for the Philippines, India is also a model, a source of knowledge... We see India as a valued partner," he said.

India's semiconductor market projected to cross USD 200 billion by 2035: EY-IESA report

NEW DELHI: India's semiconductor market is projected to grow more than threefold from nearly 64 billion US dollars in 2026 to 200 billion US dollars by 2035, according to an EY-IESA report. The report, titled 'Semicon India 2.0: From capacity creation to ecosystem leadership', said the projected growth presents an opportunity to convert rising domestic demand into manufacturing, innovation and greater supply-chain resilience. Consumer electronics currently accounts for around 30 per cent of India's semiconductor market, followed by the automotive sector at 16 per cent and industrial applications at 15 per cent. Emerging areas including artificial intelligence, data centres, telecommunications, electric mobility and advanced manufacturing are expected to create additional demand for semiconductors.

The report noted that India's semiconductor imports increased more than fivefold from 5.7 billion US dollars in FY17 to 30.3 bil-



lion US dollars in FY25, registering a compound annual growth rate of 23 per cent. It said the increase highlights the need to translate growing domestic demand into local semiconductor fabrication and manufacturing capabilities. India also has nearly 20 per cent of the world's chip design engineers, providing a significant talent base for domestic semiconductor design, manufacturing and commercialisation. India Electronics and Semiconductor Association President Ashok Chandak said India has an opportunity to combine its engineering talent, electronics demand,

design capabilities and emerging manufacturing capacity with resilient global supply-chain partnerships. He said the next phase of the sector would depend on execution, innovation, technology commercialisation, indigenous intellectual property, specialised talent and deeper ecosystem development. The report also highlighted the expansion of India's broader electronics manufacturing sector. Total electronics production increased nearly sixfold from Rs 1.9 lakh crore in FY15 to Rs 11.3 lakh crore in FY25. Domestic manufacturing grew sevenfold, while elec-

tronics exports increased elevenfold during the decade. Aisha Ali Hussaini, Partner and Semiconductor Tax Leader at EY India, said India's market scale, engineering talent, policy momentum and expanding electronics ecosystem provide a strong foundation for deeper semiconductor value addition. She stressed the need for a predictable fiscal and regulatory environment, greater alignment between central and state policies and targeted support for emerging technologies to improve project viability and accelerate commercialisation. The report identified advanced packaging, compound semiconductors, photonics and chip-to-system integration as high-potential areas. It recommended aligning state-level policies with Semicon 2.0, establishing integrated manufacturing clusters with shared infrastructure and introducing specialised talent-certification programmes covering fabrication, design and packaging.

India Indispensable in Future Climate Policy

New Delhi : Australian Minister for Climate Change and Energy Chris Bowen said that India was the "indispensable voice" in the future of climate and energy policy, highlighting its progress and role in delivering practical outcomes at COP31. Speaking at the Chintan Research Foundation (CRF) Pre-COP Dialogue in New Delhi, Bowen said he had chosen to visit India instead of New York, reflecting the importance he attaches to India, Australia and the COP31 process.

He said, "Well, my friends, I had a choice this week: New York or New Delhi. I chose New Delhi," Bowen said, adding that it was a "reflection of India's importance to me, and to Australia, and to the COP31 process, and our friendship." "I'm so glad to be back in India--the indis-



pensable voice in the future of climate and energy policy," he said, noting that he had first visited India in 1998 and that this was his 14th visit.

"Every visit reinforces the scale, the dynamism, the innovation--all of which matter to the future of the global economy and the climate effort," Bowen said. He praised India's progress

on climate and energy, saying the country's experience was increasingly being cited in international discussions. "The Indian story is a remarkable one, one to be celebrated," Bowen said. "Now, when I speak to global peers, I cite India's success and progress as a world leader, and I mean it." As President of Negotiations for COP31,

Bowen said he was in India to listen, learn and help build consensus for practical outcomes. "And as President of Negotiations for COP31, I am here to listen, to learn, and to help build the consensus needed to deliver practical outcomes," he said. Bowen said COP31 would deliver a new Just Transition mechanism and stressed the need to translate discussions on mitigation and finance into action. "COP31 will deliver a new Just Transition mechanism," he said. He added that discussions would focus on how to advance mitigation and finance "from negotiations to deliver a better impact in real-world action", which could give the private sector confidence to invest and accelerate research, development, finance and investment.

China, India Should Be Partners: Consul General

Kolkata : China and India should be partners and focus on development, strengthen friendly exchanges and mutually beneficial cooperation, and address each other's concerns to promote the sound and steady development of bilateral relations, Consul General of China in Kolkata Xu Wei said. Speaking on the 77th anniversary of the National Day of the People's Republic of China on Tuesday, Xu referred to the September 12 meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping in New Delhi. "On September 12, our President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Modi held a bilateral meeting in New Delhi. The two leaders had an in-depth exchange of views on the development of China-India relations. The most important consensus they reached is that China and India should be partners," Xu said. "As the two most popu-

lous countries in the world and the major members of the Global South, China and India should focus on development. We should strengthen friendly exchanges and mutually beneficial cooperation. We should improve public perception of our bilateral relations. We should address each other's concerns...in so doing, we can and will promote the sound and steady development of our bilateral relations," he added. Head of the MEA Branch Secretariat, Kolkata, Ashish Middha said India and China are "two ancient civilisations and major developing economies" with a long history of cultural and commercial exchanges. "India was among the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China on 1st April 1950," Middha said. Middha said President Xi Jinping visited India after seven years and participated in the 18th



BRICS Summit in New Delhi on September 12 and 13, where he met Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the sidelines of the summit. "The two leaders welcomed the steady progress in bilateral relations and reaffirmed the importance of taking a strategic and long-term perspective on the relationship...as PM Modi has underlined, India's approach is guided by mutual respect, mutual sensitivity, and mutual interest," he said.

Middha also welcomed developments in bilateral ties, including the resumption of the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra, restoration of direct flights and reopening of border trade. "The resumption of the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra, the restoration of direct flights, reopening of border trade, as well as progress towards facilitating greater movement through appropriate visa arrangements are welcome developments," he said.

OpenAI agents not proof AI is 'out of control', need stronger guardrails: NITI Aayog's Debjani Ghosh

New Delhi : Recent concerns around OpenAI agents should not be seen as proof that artificial intelligence (AI) is "out of control"; instead, the focus should be on strengthening human capabilities to develop AI safely and putting

robust guardrails in place, Debjani Ghosh, Distinguished Fellow at NITI Aayog, said. Taking to her official X account, Ghosh said a planned pause in AI development could make sense, but the focus should be on strengthening human

capabilities to build AI safely and putting effective guardrails in place. "A planned pause can still make sense. Just don't call it 'slow down AI.' That's the same mistake again -- the wrong goal. Call it what it actually has to be: time to

raise human capability to build AI safely, and to put real guardrails in place," she said.

Ghosh further highlighted that the issue stemmed from humans setting the wrong boundaries and designing the wrong

rewards for AI models. "Unpopular view may be...but we need to stop citing the OpenAI agents as proof that AI is out of control. It wasn't. Humans set the wrong boundaries." According to Ghosh, the behaviour of

the AI models was a result of how humans had designed and trained them. "They designed the wrong rewards. The models did exactly what we trained them to do: win the eval by any path that worked. That's not emergence.



Satwik-Chirag enter Asian Games with confidence, says coach Tan



Nagoya: Indian doubles coach Tan Kim Her believes defending champions Satwik sairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty have the confidence, preparation and mental strength required to handle the pressure of the badminton competition at the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games. With the Asian Games bringing together some of the strongest doubles combinations in the region, the coach has placed particular emphasis on the psychological aspect of the competition. He said the pair have worked extensively on handling pressure and maintaining their composure when matches become tight. “Of course, I did ask them to go through all the psychology, mental strength. I think

Satwik-Chirag have everything needed, if they are strong psychologically and mentally, their game is very dangerous. So far, I see they have gone through all the psychology training. For me, once everything is in place, I just tell them this is the plan, what we should do after 11 points. If the opponent’s game changes, then we show how we overcome it,” Tan told IANS ahead of the men’s doubles competition. He urged the pair to focus on one match at a time, saying, “I always tell the players, take one game at a time. Even though I see their confidence is good, but we aren’t overconfident, just take it one step at a time.” Satwik and Chirag enter the Games as the defending Asian champions

and will be looking to build on the momentum of their recent China Masters triumph. Tan said the victory had provided an important boost to the pair ahead of their title defence.

“After Satwik-Chirag won the China Masters, this will give them more confidence, boost their motivation. I think so far, everything is good. Satwik’s hand is also in good shape,” he said. Tan has also sought to create a positive environment around the team, believing that mindset can influence how players approach the competition. “The important part is every tournament where we go, we must always say good things. The place is good, the hotel is good, the hall is good, everything is good. So once you are happy and have positive thinking, everything should be good,” he said. Reflecting on his time with the Indian team, Tan praised the players for their approach while identifying further scope for development in doubles. “So far, I think the players are very independent and very dedicated. So far, we still need to boost up the doubles department,” he said.

Gambhir explains why working with Rohit was ‘very easy’

New Delhi: Stating that their mutual understanding extends far beyond the traditional captain-coach dynamic, India head coach Gautam Gambhir on Thursday said his long-standing bond with veteran opener and former captain Rohit Sharma has remained strong, with both knowing how the other thinks. Gambhir and Rohit will reunite in the dressing room when India begin their home season against the West Indies in the first of three ODIs in Thiruvananthapuram on Sunday. “Rohit and my relationship wasn’t just that of captain and coach. When Rohit came into the team, I was a senior player at that time, so Rohit and my relationship goes back to then. “Rohit has known me since then. So, often when you have played together, things become very easy. And, in fact, he knows my thinking; I know his thinking. Because tomorrow I might have some other thinking, the captain might have some other thinking, but ultimately, whatever is in the best interest of the team, if that’s the final decision, then nothing can be better than that. “And that’s why I said that with all four captains I have worked with, this has been my experience with them, that everyone’s



focus has been Indian cricket,” Gambhir told JioStar.

Elaborating on his experience of working alongside leaders across formats since taking charge in July 2024, from Rohit to Suryakumar Yadav and now with T20I skipper Shreyas Iyer and Test and ODI captain Shubman Gill, Gambhir lauded their collective ‘team-first’ attitude. “I have worked with four captains, Rohit, Surya, now with Shubman and Shreyas. All the captains I’ve worked with, everyone’s first intention has always been team first. And I am very fortunate that I have worked with four such people who have always put the team ahead of themselves. “Ideology can change, your thinking can change, your perspective on reading the game can change, but as long as your in-

tention is right, it makes life a lot easier for any support staff. It started with Rohit, and when Surya became captain for T20, it was a different experience with both of them. “With Shreyas, I had worked with him in KKR. Before that, when I handed over my captaincy to Shreyas in 2018 for Delhi, I felt that he had that leadership quality. Now, I have got the opportunity to work with him again. With Shubman, he is young. “If you get captaincy on a tour of England, that too in five Test matches, and if you push someone into the deep sea, either you will swim out really well or you will drown. But the way Shubman has handled Test cricket, it has been brilliant, and I think we will see the best of Shubman in the coming years,” he concluded.

Asian Games hockey: India rout Korea 8-2, close in on semifinal spot

Kakamigahara (Japan): In-form striker Dilpreet Singh fired a hat-trick as defending champions India thrashed Korea 8-2 to all but assure their place in the semifinals of the Asian Games men’s hockey competition. It was India’s third consecutive win, keeping them at the top of Pool A. India had earlier thrashed Indonesia 13-1 and Sri Lanka 16-1 in their opening two pool matches. Dilpreet (10th, 26th, 32nd minutes) continued his impressive form with three fine field goals, while Abhishek (15th, 38th) struck a brace. Shilanand Lakra (4th), skipper Harmanpreet Singh (11th) and Rajinder Singh (60th) were the other goal-scorers for India. Korea’s goals were scored by Kim Jae Ho (42nd) and Kim Yong Bok (52nd). India will next play hosts Japan. The Indians started on an aggressive note and never let Korea settle down. It took just four minutes for India to take the lead through Shilanand, who tapped in an incredible aerial ball into the box from vice-captain Hardik Singh. India doubled their lead in the 10th minute through in-form Dilpreet, who slammed home with a fierce shot from the top of the circle after receiving an assist from Mandeep Singh. Skipper Harmanpreet made it 3-0 a



minute later, ramming home a penalty corner with a powerful drag-flick to the left of the Korean goalkeeper. Abhishek then pushed in an assist from Shilanand in the final minute of the first quarter. India continued to dominate in the second quarter and scored one more goal when Dilpreet tapped in a bac-

khand cross from Mand eep. Two minutes after the change of ends, India extended their lead through Dilpreet, who this time slammed home with a beautiful tomahawk after a fine one-two between Mandeep and Hardik. Minutes later, India secured four consecutive penalty corners but failed to utilise them.

Pune wins bid to host UCI Road World Championships 2032

Pune: Pune has won the bid to host the UCI Road World Championships 2032, bringing cycling’s global showcase to India for the first time and marking a landmark moment for Maharashtra and the country’s sporting ambitions. The historic bid was a joint effort by the Government of Maharashtra and the Cycling Federation of India (CFI), with the support of the Government of India, built around a shared vision to establish Pune as a global cycling destination and create a lasting legacy for cycling across the district, Maharashtra and India. The landmark announcement comes at a significant moment in India’s sporting journey. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has articulated India’s ambition to host the 2036 Olympic Games, with a focus on strengthening sporting infrastructure, nurturing talent and building India’s capabilities as a global sporting nation. The decision was announced at the UCI Congress in Montréal, Canada, following Pune’s final candidature presentation to the Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI). A senior delegation from the Government of Maharashtra was present in Montréal to champion Pune’s candidature, comprising Mr. Ranjit Singh Deol, Principal Sec-



retary, School Education and Sports Department; Mr. Deepak Singla, Commissioner, Sports and Youth Services; Mr. Rajesh Deshmukh, Secretary to the Deputy Chief Minister and Sports Minister, Government of Maharashtra; Mr. Jitendra Dudi, District Collector, Pune; Mr. Maninder Pal Singh, Secretary General, Cycling Federation of India; and Onkar Singh, Former Secretary General, Asian Cycling Confederation. The UCI Road World Championships are among the most prestigious events in the international cycling calendar, bringing to-

gether the world’s leading riders to compete for the coveted rainbow jerseys. The scale of the Championship is demonstrated by its recent editions. The 2025 UCI Road World Championships in Kigali brought together 734 riders representing 113 countries, attracted around two million spectators and generated a cumulative television audience of nearly 300 million viewers worldwide. The event also featured 308 media representatives from five continents. For India, the win represents an opportunity to bring the glo-

bal cycling community to the country while creating a long-term platform for athlete development, infrastructure, participation and sporting expertise. India’s candidature was built around its large cycling base, growing grassroots movement, established UCI event-hosting experience and ambition to develop a stronger grassroots-to-elite pathway for the sport. The 2026 Pune Grand Tour demonstrated proven capability under real-world race conditions, with coordination across 25+ government departments and 437 km of race-ready roads.

Asian Games shooting: India finish fourth as Japan snatch 10m air pistol bronze

Nagoya: India’s shooting struggles at the Asian Games deepened on Thursday as the men’s 10m air pistol team, traditionally one of the country’s strongest disciplines, drew a blank here. Kamaljeet, Aakash Bhardwaj and Kedarling Uchagane all missed the eight-shooter final, leaving India empty-handed in an event in which the nation was expected to challenge for a medal. Kamaljeet came agonisingly close, finishing ninth with 580 — just one point short of the qualification mark — while Bhardwaj shot 579 to finish 11th. Kedarling endured a nightmare outing, finishing 35th with 568. India’s combined score of 1,727 was enough for fourth place, but Japan, who had trailed for much of the competition, seized their opportunity when Kedarling’s scores began to dip sharply and surged into the bronze-medal position with 1,730. It was another disappointing day for an



Indian contingent that has now completed five days of shooting without a gold medal — an unusual drought for the Asian powerhouse even though it has secured four silver and three bronze medals. The result came a day after India’s star-studded women’s 10m air pistol team of double Olympic medallist Manu Bhaker and World Cup gold medallists Esha Singh and Suruchi Singh also failed to

make the final. The back-to-back disappointments have dealt a significant blow to India’s hopes of matching its record haul of 22 shooting medals, including seven gold, at the 2023 Hangzhou Asian Games. For Indian shooting fans watching from the stands, Thursday’s performance only added to the uncomfortable question that has been hanging over the contingent: what is going wrong? The men’s 10m air pistol qualification offered little comfort. Kamaljeet stayed in contention until the closing stages but could not find the extra point needed to break into the final. Bhardwaj, too, remained within touching distance but could not make the cut. Kedarling’s problems, however, were far more pronounced. The Indian Army shooter struggled almost from the start, repeatedly dropping points and finding very few of the high scores needed to remain competitive. As his performance

deteriorated, he began changing the settings of his pistol in search of a solution, leaving Indian coaches in the spectator area visibly concerned. High Performance Director Pierre Beauchamp, meanwhile, paced around the stands as Kedarling tried to arrest his slide. However, the adjustments did little to change the course of his competition. Kedarling continued to fire erratically, with too many nines and too few high scores. As the competition entered its closing stages, India’s hopes of salvaging a team bronze were already hanging by a thread. Then came an extraordinary twist. With the team medal positions finely poised, members of the Japanese coaching staff gathered behind Kedarling in the spectator area, watching his final shots and hoping the Indian shooter would drop enough points to allow their team to move into bronze-medal position.

Gambhir on Test transition: ‘It is very difficult to replace Rohit, Virat, Ashwin’

New Delhi: Reflecting on his two-year stint at the helm of the India men’s team, head coach Gautam Gambhir said he accepts his share of failures “with both hands” while cherishing the success achieved across formats. Under Gambhir’s tenure, which began in July 2024, India won the 2025 Champions Trophy and the 2026 Men’s T20 World Cup, but also suffered Test series defeats to Australia in away conditions and to New Zealand and South Africa at home. “The two years didn’t pass in the blink of an eye. I think I’ve had my own share of ups and downs. I’ve had my own failures and successes. But again, I’ve always believed that when you take up that kind of responsibility, there will always be ups and downs. “So, whether it was Test cricket, whether it is one-day cricket or T20 cricket, yes, I’ve had success, which obviously I will always cherish, but I’ve had my share of failures as well. Which again, I accept with both hands,” Gambhir told broadcasters JioStar.

Addressing the ongoing transition in the Test side



following the departures of senior players such as Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli and Ravichandran Ashwin, Gambhir stressed the importance of building a strong core for the future under current captain Shubman Gill. After the white-ball games against the West Indies at home, India are scheduled to play a multi-format series in New Zealand before facing Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe in white-ball matches at home and then hosting Australia for a five-match Test series. “I think the best part is that we’ve

played reasonably good Test cricket since England. I’m not saying that we’re still not a work in progress because the amount of transition that has happened in Test cricket, especially with the likes of Rohit, Virat, Ashwin going, obviously it is very difficult to replace those kinds of players.

“Because the amount of talent, the amount of experience those guys had, and the amount of what they’ve done for Indian cricket in red-ball cricket, it’s not going to be easy for anyone to replace them, so

it will take time. I’m sure if we keep backing the right players, probably Indian cricket will start dominating red-ball cricket for a long, long period of time. “Because when you’re getting the new guys in red-ball cricket, you look at their age and number of matches they have played, you try to make them feel how important Test cricket is, because I’m a very big believer that a strong Test cricketing nation is a strong cricketing nation. So, red-ball still remains our priority,” added Gambhir.

Kaaka For Sankranthi: Bobby In No Mood To Compromise



Megastar Chiranjeevi and director Bobby have reunited once again for an exciting project, Kaaka. The duo earlier worked on the blockbuster titled Waltair Veerayya. Sticking to the Sankranthi sentiment of their previous project, Bobby is leaving no stone unturned to bring Kaaka for Sankranthi next year. Apart from the noise surrounding the project, especially about a potential postponement to avoid clash with Vishwambhara, Bobby is focused on completing the work of the project in time. The latest update from the film unit is that the team has begun dubbing. Director Bobby and his team commenced the dubbing for the film along with a puja ceremony today. The team confirmed that they are keen to bring the film to theatres in January, leaving them with hardly three months. Not just the dubbing work but the filming and the post-production activities are also in full swing. Bobby is currently on a mission to complete the film's remaining shoot by November and avoid all kinds of last-minute tensions. The first glimpse that has come out on the occasion of Chiranjeevi's birthday has heightened the curiosity surrounding the film. The film is also surrounded by a positive buzz. Thaman scores the music for the film and it is bankrolled by KVN Productions. The film is hitting the screens on January 13th, 2027.

Kalki Sequel To Wrap Up Sooner Than Expected?

Director Nag Ashwin delivered a massive Pan-India blockbuster with Rebel Star Prabhas starrer Kalki 2898 AD. The futuristic sci-fi epic not only emerged as a major commercial success but also earned two National Awards, with the honours being presented a couple of days ago. Meanwhile, Nag Ashwin is gearing up to commence the regular shoot of the highly anticipated sequel in October. As we reported earlier, the filmmaker is aiming to wrap up the entire production of the sequel by mid-2027. Prabhas will join the team, along with Kamal Haasan and Amitabh Bachchan. Several other prominent actors will also join the shoot as the production progresses. Anticipation surrounding the sequel is already high, particularly after Kalki 2898 AD amassed over 1100 crore worldwide during its theatrical run. Ashwini Dutt is producing the ambitious sequel on a lavish scale on Vyjayanthi Movies banner.



Sujeeth Admits OG Writing Mistakes, Promises Corrections In OG 2

Director Sujeeth has given fans a reason to smile with his recent message marking one year of OG. Thanking audiences for their love and support, the young filmmaker said he is taking all the feedback seriously and is focusing more on writing, ensuring that the sequel will get the time and care it deserves. What caught the attention of fans was Sujeeth's honest acknowledgment of the criticism surrounding certain aspects of Pawan Kalyan's OG, which he directed and which ended as a smash hit. During the making of the first film, there were several challenges. One of the biggest issues was scheduling, as Pawan Kalyan had to balance multiple commitments, including his political responsibilities. This created uncertainty and made planning difficult at times. However, the situation appears different now. Industry circles believe Sujeeth will have more time to develop OG 2 properly. Reports suggest that he may begin serious work on the sequel after completing his upcoming project, Bloody Romeo, starring Nani. There is also news that Pawan Kalyan will be able to dedicate more focused time to the sequel instead of juggling several projects simultaneously. This could help the team execute their vision more effectively. With expectations already sky-high, fans are now closely watching Sujeeth's next move. More than anything else, they are eager to see how his writing evolves and whether OG 2 can deliver an even stronger cinematic experience to the fans.



Mahesh Babu Is Back To His Clean Shaven Look



Superstar Mahesh Babu was busy until recently, working on the prestigious film Varanasi. A few days ago, he wrapped up his portions for the film, which is big news. Usually, Rajamouli takes his time wrapping up a shoot, but this time he has given Mahesh the go-ahead to move ahead. Today, Mahesh was spotted at the airport, sporting a new clean-shaven look, delighting the fans. Usually, Mahesh loves a clean-shaven look whenever he is not working, or even during shoot breaks. This is probably the first time in one and a half years we get to see Mahesh clean-shaven. Ever since he started working on Varanasi, Mahesh has followed a strict diet regimen, look regimen, and avoided public appearances as much as possible. Now that Mahesh has wrapped up his part in Varanasi, he is likely to relax for a while before deciding on his next film. Probably, the promotions of Varanasi will likely begin from the new year, and until then, Mahesh can make use of this time to listen to fresh scripts and decide what he wants to mount as his next film. When it comes to Varanasi, Rajamouli completed all major portions of the shoot and is occupied with re-recording as well as other post-production works. Bankrolled by Durga Arts, the film will hit the screens on April 7, 2027.

Sreeleela's Beachside Look Steals the Spotlight



Sreeleela has treated her fans with new pictures that blend beach vibes with a traditional look. The actress posed on the sand during sunset, and the golden light made every frame glow. The calm sea in the background gave the shoot a dreamy feel. She wore a pink lehenga with heavy gold embroidery and sequin work. A peach net dupatta with shining borders flowed beside her as she raised one hand in a graceful, dance-like pose. Drop earrings, a matching hairband and a loose bun completed her fit. The lehenga looks bridal, yet her relaxed style keeps it fresh and modern.

Rukmini Vasanth Brings Raw Swagger to Minimal Style



Rukmini Vasanth has shared a fresh set of stunning shots, and the internet is already talking. The actress is currently busy filming for Jr.NTR's upcoming project Dragon and the Malayalam film NP51, along with the Kannada project Mangala Gowri, making her one of the busiest names across industries right now. For the shoot, Rukmini chose a minimal, modern look: a sheer white mesh top with full sleeves and a high neck, layered over a crisp white bandeau and paired with classic blue denim. The see-through texture adds a soft, editorial edge while keeping the outfit clean and effortless. Tousled, wavy hair, a rosy blush, soft pink lips and defined brows complete the glam. With arms raised and an intense gaze, she owns the frame.