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Veteran Actor Nana Patekar Dies at 75

Mumbai: Veteran Bollywood actor and filmmaker Nana Patekar (75) has passed away. He reportedly collapsed unconscious at his residence in Dona Paula, Goa. Family members and close associates immediately rushed him to the hospital, where doctors attempted to revive him with CPR for around 45 minutes. However, he did not respond to treatment and was declared dead at 5:20 a.m. Doctors said he died of cardiac arrest. His demise has plunged the Hindi and Marathi film industries into mourning, with several film personalities and fans expressing their condolences.

Over a career spanning more than four decades, Nana Patekar earned a distinct identity through his powerful and versatile performances. He made his Bollywood debut with the 1978 film Gaman and went on to play a wide range of roles in Hindi and Marathi cinema. Films such as Parinda, Agni Sakshi, Ab Tak Chhappan, Welcome, Raajneeti and The Vaccine War stood out in his career. He also appeared in a key role in Rajinikanth's Kaala. However, he earned particu-



lar acclaim as an actor for Krantiveer and Natsamrat. His outstanding performance in Krantiveer earned him the National Film Award for Best Actor. He acted in more than 70 films and was familiar to audiences across Hindi, Marathi and other-language cinema. Besides acting, Nana Patekar also showcased his talent as a director and writer and received several prestigious honours, including National Film Awards. The Government of India honoured him with the Padma Shri in 2013.

He was also associated with national service and held the honorary rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the Territorial Army.

In Major Reform, GST Council Scraps Tax Officers' Arrest Powers



New Delhi: The GST Council, chaired by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, on Thursday approved scrapping the arrest powers of GST officers and raised the threshold to launch prosecution to Rs 5 crore from Rs 1 crore. The minimum punishment stands removed, and the punishment - whether fine, imprisonment, or both - is left to judicial discretion in every case, as per the council decision. The general penalty, which applies where no specific penalty is provided, comes down from Rs 25,000 to Rs 10,000, the Ministry said. A taxpayer who files late, makes an error or delays payment will face recovery, interest and a proportionate penalty, but nothing beyond that. Businesses across India had complained about stringent

tax practices and sought better ease of doing business. The changes approved by the GST Council, comprising Union and state finance ministers, will be implemented from April 1, 2027. Addressing reporters after the meeting, Minister Sitharaman said the Council focused on process-related reforms aimed at improving ease of doing business and reducing compliance burdens rather than making changes to GST rates. "When we say arrest has been taken out, taken out from a tax officer's hands," Sitharaman said, clarifying the decision. However, she underscored that criminal prosecution would continue to be available under the GST law. "The act provides for prosecuting people if

there's a criminality," she said. In another relief for taxpayers, the Council recommended that notices involving amounts below Rs 10,000 should not be issued, while pending notices below the threshold would also be withdrawn. "Equally, we will be with-

drawing pending notices below the said threshold. If it was issued, it'll be withdrawn," Sitharaman said. The GST reform process has been driven from the principle of trust, the Minister said. "Business has to be trusted. Taxpayers have to be trusted.

Government To Release AI Consultation Paper Within A Month: Ashwini Vaishnaw

New Delhi: The government will release a focused consultation paper for public feedback on artificial intelligence within a month, Electronics and IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said, flagging "psychological disorders" and deepfakes among the potential harms that policymakers will need to address. Speaking at the launch of a MeitY-World Bank report on the promise of AI, Vaishnaw said the exercise would focus

on safety, a human-first approach, skilling and ensuring "no person is left behind". The paper will form the basis for future regulation, he said, adding that the government would seek a techno-legal solution to emerging challenges. Vaishnaw identified deepfakes as a growing social concern, saying their quality was improving and people were increasingly believing them. "It sets a wrong narrative,"

'Merit, Recognition Are Sporting Culture Of New UP': Yogi Adityanath

Lucknow: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that opening doors to government service for sportspersons is a testimony to UP's transformation. The "new" Uttar Pradesh recognises the sportspersons' talent, unlike before, when a culture of recommendations and favouritism ruled the roost, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said on Thursday. Adityanath said that a "positive" sporting culture has emerged in the state since he came to power in 2017. "Merit on the field, recognition for



achievements and opportunities for talented sportspersons to serve the nation together represent the new sporting culture of the 'New Uttar Pradesh,'" he said on X, where he announced job letters for over 800 sportspersons. The chief minister said appointment letters will be handed over today to a total of 470 sportspersons selected under the skilled sportsperson quota in the Uttar Pradesh Police. These include 43 Sub-Inspectors (Civil Police), 295 Constables (Civil Police) and 132 Constables (PAC). Adityanath said that opening doors to government service for sportspersons is a testimony to UP's transformation. Before 2017, he alleged, the sports quota was neglected, and recruitment was more a function of recommendations and influence than talent.



he said. He also spoke about the harms linked to AI more broadly. "Many harms are related to psychological disorders," he added.

Investments in AP Are the Goal; We Will Turn MoUs into Reality: CM Chandrababu



New Delhi, October 8: Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu attended the CII Partnership Summit being held in Delhi. He participated in the summit along with Union Minister Piyush Goyal. On the occasion, the Chief Minister prominently highlighted the support being extended by the Central government to Andhra Pradesh. He told industrialists that the government was focusing strongly on turning MoUs into actual investments. He said industrial incentives would be launched soon and announced that the state was working with the slogan "Build AP."

PM Modi's Role Has Been Exceptional

The Chief Minister congratulated Prime Minister Narendra Modi for completing 25 years of continuous public service. He said PM Modi had played a key role in bringing digital infrastructure to the country. He noted that India had the world's second-largest road network and said the country also holds a significant position in terms of railway infrastructure. Chandrababu said the Prime Minister was building a strong nation equipped with ports, airports, railways and road networks. He also praised PM Modi's role in

strengthening India's security and transforming it into one of the safest countries in terms of defence preparedness.

Working with the "Build AP" Slogan

Chandrababu said Indians, who have been at the forefront of adopting technology, are leading several companies across the world. He said the Centre and Prime Minister Modi were at the forefront of supporting Andhra Pradesh. He said the Centre was providing financial assistance for Polavaram, the Amaravati capital project and several other projects. He stated that the Centre had approved the establishment of semiconductor units in various locations, including Visakhapatnam. He said the state was working with the slogan "Build AP", with the objective of creating wealth and generating employment on a large scale. He said MoUs worth Rs. 13.50 lakh crore were signed at last year's Partnership Summit and that the state had managed to attract investments worth Rs. 22 lakh crore over the past 28 months. Chandrababu said the government was not limiting itself to signing MoUs but was working to convert them into

actual investments.

River Linking Can Eliminate Water Shortage

The Chief Minister said leading companies such as Google, with a 1 GW data centre, and ArcelorMittal had come to Andhra Pradesh. He announced that the industrial incentives promised last year would be launched on November 12 and 13. He said the NALA Act, which had been an obstacle to investments, had been repealed. Chandrababu stated that if the Godavari, Krishna, Pennar, Tungabhadra and Cauvery rivers were interconnected, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu would not face water shortages. He said the government had set a goal of transforming Rayalaseema into a global horticulture hub and making Andhra Pradesh the gateway to Southeast Asia. Chandrababu said Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited had come forward to establish a shipbuilding centre at Dugarajapatnam. He added that Goa Shipyard had agreed to establish a shipbuilding facility at Machilipatnam. Drone and electronics clusters have also been established at Tirupati, Lepakshi and Koppurthi, he said.

AP Ready to Implement Development Initiatives

Chandrababu said the Defence Ministry had also initiated a fifth-generation fighter jet project in Rayalaseema. He said agreements had already been signed for generating 110 GW of electricity out of the targeted 500 GW of green energy and that the government was considering establishing a green energy transmission corri-

dor. He announced that Andhra Pradesh was ready to immediately implement any policy that would contribute to the state's progress. He said the curriculum was being designed to prepare students from the school level itself for emerging fields, including AI, as well as entrepreneurship and business. He said products made by DWCR groups would be promoted in international markets under a common brand. Chandrababu said technologies such as AI Stack, supported by systems like a data lake, were enabling faster decision-making. He claimed that implementing AI Stack in GST tax collection had significantly increased state revenue.

AP to Play a Key Role in the Blue Economy

The Chief Minister said the state was implementing Speed of Doing Business to tap the vast opportunities available in agriculture, industry and services. He said Andhra Pradesh had a key role to play in the blue economy and announced that quantum computer operations in Amaravati would begin from February next year. He said efforts were being made through the Global Leadership Centre in Amaravati to develop leadership across various sectors. He said the Bhogapuram International Airport would provide improved access to destinations such as Visakhapatnam. He also highlighted the state's attractive coastal destinations, including Bapatla. Chandrababu Naidu urged the Centre to establish an international convention centre for hosting CII Partnership Summits.

Minister Lokesh's Praja Darbar Receives a Large Number of Petitions



From Our Staff Reporter Amaravati, October, 8:

Andhra Pradesh IT and Education Minister Nara Lokesh held a Praja Darbar at the Telugu Desam Party's central office in Mangalagiri. A large number of people, employees and TDP workers attended the programme and brought their grievances to his notice. Lokesh patiently listened to the problems of

people who had come from various regions. After receiving the petitions, he personally examined them and assured the petitioners that efforts would be made to resolve their issues. Several issues related to employment, education, welfare and rural infrastructure were brought to the minister's attention during the Praja Darbar. Representatives of the Welfare and

Education Employees Association requested promotion opportunities for welfare and education assistants. They also sought the establishment of a promotion channel for employees working in the Education Department. Similarly, representatives of the Banjara Dharma Raksha Samithi requested a monthly honorarium of Rs. 15,000 for priests serving at temples in

Banjara tandas. They also appealed for the implementation of the Dhoopa, Deepa and Naivedyam scheme. Several people sought job security and an increase in the honorarium for Gopala Mitras. They submitted petitions to Minister Lokesh seeking resolution of their problems.

Meanwhile, residents of Cheekatipalle village in Chittoor district requested the construction of CC roads in the village and a BT road to the cremation ground. They appealed for steps to improve basic infrastructure. Lokesh examined every petition received from the public and assured them that he would speak to the concerned officials and take steps to resolve the issues. He said the objective of the Praja Darbar was to directly understand people's problems and find solutions, adding that efforts would be made to act on the petitions as quickly as possible.

Extending Guntur Channel to Parchur is a Welcome Development: Home Minister Anita

Bapatla, October 8: Home Minister Vangalapudi Anitha said that extending the Guntur Channel up to Parchur was a welcome development. She said the project would provide irrigation water to 28,000 acres. The Home Minister visited the Parchur constituency on Thursday and participated in several development programmes taken up at a cost of ₹75 crore. Speaking on the occasion, she said that despite the state facing financial difficulties, Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu was

focusing on welfare schemes. She said the Chief Minister was working round the clock for the development of the state. She criticised the previous government, alleging that development had come to a standstill during its tenure. Anitha said that she too had become a teacher through the DSC recruitment conducted during Chandrababu Naidu's tenure. She said an Eagle Team had been formed to combat the spread of ganja. She stated that many mothers had been calling to report

that their children had become addicted to ganja and that rehabilitation centres had been established to help them. She said special efforts were being made to ensure the safety of women. She called upon people to support and elect the alliance candidates in the local body elections. She alleged that during the previous government's tenure, people were prevented from even filing nominations in local body elections. Home Minister Anitha stated that the NDA coalition government was working with



commitment towards the development and security of the state.

EDITORIAL

Another Test of Fire for West Asia

West Asia, already reeling under multiple crises, is facing another alarming situation. As the Houthis intensify attacks on both Yemen and Saudi Arabia, the region appears to be moving from one crisis to another. At a time when Saudi Arabia is stepping up military action to suppress the Houthis, Pakistan and Türkiye are preparing to stand by Riyadh. The decision by all three countries to implement collective defence measures under the Mecca Joint Defence Agreement signed in August marks a significant turning point. The agreement provides that an attack on one member will be treated as an attack on all members, prompting a collective response. Against the backdrop of the latest Houthi attacks, senior defence and foreign affairs officials from the three countries held an emergency meeting in Riyadh and decided to put the agreement into practice. They also agreed to swiftly deploy the necessary military capabilities to Saudi Arabia. However, the number of troops and their exact roles have not been disclosed. While Pakistan is already deploying its forces for Saudi Arabia's defence, issues such as parliamentary approval remain crucial in the case of Türkiye. Until now, the Saudi-Houthi conflict had largely been seen as an extension of Yemen's civil war. But the Houthis' growing control over the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, the threat to shipping in the Red Sea and the rising risk of attacks on Saudi oil infrastructure have turned it into an international security issue. If navigation becomes dangerous along this crucial route for global trade and oil transportation, its impact will extend beyond West Asia and affect the global economy. Saudi Arabia is already preparing for a major counteroffensive against the Houthis. Riyadh's strategy appears to be to put Yemen's pro-government forces at the forefront of the ground offensive, backed by Saudi air power. Pakistan and Türkiye are also moving towards providing defence, intelligence and technical assistance to this effort. However, the key question is to what extent they will participate directly in the war. It is an open secret that Iran supports the Houthis. At a time when Iran-US relations are already tense, if Yemen turns into another battlefield, the situation in West Asia could develop into a multifaceted conflict. Although Saudi Arabia's objective is to limit the Houthis' capabilities, the Houthis could retaliate by targeting Saudi oil fields, airports, ports and shipping routes.

The US stance in this crisis is particularly significant. Although the Trump administration has so far been providing Saudi Arabia with assistance such as intelligence and targeting information, it has been reluctant to launch direct airstrikes against the Houthis. US sources have reportedly said that Washington has, for now, rejected Saudi Arabia's request for direct military assistance. This clearly indicates that the US is in no mood to get entangled in another war. Washington will have to strike a balance between Saudi security on one hand, tensions with Iran on the other, and the safety of shipping in the Red Sea. However, if Houthi attacks pose a serious threat to international trade or critical infrastructure of US allies, the possibility of direct American involvement cannot be completely ruled out. Recent developments make it clear that the Mecca Agreement is not merely a defence arrangement confined to paper. Yet whether it evolves into a full-fledged military alliance will depend on the political will of the three countries, particularly the decision of the Turkish Parliament. The need of the hour is not to expand the war, but to bring it under control. If the Houthi attacks, Saudi counterstrikes, Iran's role and the militarisation of the Mecca alliance together trigger a regional war, the consequences will not stop at West Asia. The repercussions will be felt by every country, from oil prices and shipping to global trade and security. Therefore, the Mecca Agreement must become an instrument for paving the way towards a diplomatic solution rather than a platform for collective warfare.

The Election Commission Faces a Crucial Test

The credibility of the prestigious Election Commission of India (ECI) is now facing a serious test. Unprecedented doubts have emerged over the functioning of this high constitutional institution. The voter is the key pillar of an electoral system that is the lifeblood of democracy. For nearly a year, the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls has remained controversial because of the unusually large number of voter deletions. A major allegation is that Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar is responsible for this situation and that, allegedly under the influence of the Central government, he is running the ECI in a unilateral, unconstitutional and illegal manner. Protests are being held demanding his resignation. At a time when the ruling and opposition parties in the country have adopted different positions on the issue, the Supreme Court has recently issued notices to the ECI and the Central government. Will the ECI's credibility withstand the scrutiny? If wrongdoing is established, will the CEC step down? Will the Supreme Court remove him? What happens next? These are all questions that remain to be answered.

Except for minor administrative shortcomings, the Election Commission of India has enjoyed the trust of the people for decades. It has earned a strong reputation internationally as well. It was regarded as an independent and empowered constitutional institution that performed its duties impartially, regardless of which governments came and went or which political parties rose or fell, and without being influenced by election results. How did the ECI acquire the capacity to register nearly one billion voters and conduct elections in a manner that enables them to exercise their franchise freely and independently? The ECI conducts elections effectively even without its own nationwide administrative machinery, relying instead on the cooperation of the civil service working under governments led by different political parties. The broad powers granted to the

ECI under Article 324 of the Constitution have played an extraordinary role in this. The stature of the Election Commission became widely known to ordinary citizens after T.N. Seshan was appointed Chief Election Commissioner in the 1990s.

Seshan made extensive use of the powers available to conduct free and fair elections without allowing inducements to influence voters, thereby creating a new electoral environment. The first phase of electoral reforms was implemented effectively in several areas, including curbing inducements, regulating campaign practices, controlling the use of money and liquor during elections, and restricting the influence of candidates with criminal backgrounds. At the same time, it became increasingly clear that another round of reforms was necessary to bring about further changes. Against this backdrop, the 2023 amendments to election laws, the appointment of Gyanesh Kumar, the controversy surrounding the SIR process, allegations of "vote theft" under the watch of the BJP government at the Centre, and claims that the names of nearly 13 crore voters were removed across the country have come to the fore. A media investigation claiming that not only consensus but even the majority view was being disregarded within the ECI, with the CEC unilaterally imposing decisions on the country, created a stir. The circumstances that followed led to demands for CEC Gyanesh Kumar to step down.

There is a familiar joke about a school inspection officer asking, "Who broke Shiva's bow?" The children, teachers and finally even the headmaster keep replying, "It wasn't me." Form-6 under the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960, is a basic and crucial application form for registering new voters. It enables adult citizens to easily register themselves as voters. There are allegations that changes were introduced in the form and that a declaration was added, making the process more complicated and contributing to voter deletions.

Critics have alleged that this was among the factors behind the deletion of lakhs of eligible voters in Bihar and West Bengal. It has also been alleged that these changes to Form-6 were not made by consensus within the ECI and that the CEC took the decision unilaterally despite opposition from two commissioners. Opposition parties have used this as the basis for alleging that the Central government, allegedly exercising control over the ECI through the CEC, has engaged in large-scale "vote theft."

In the spirit of the Constitution-makers, even the failure to include an eligible citizen in the electoral roll due to oversight or negligence is undemocratic. If millions of names are deliberately removed because it is believed that those voters will not support a particular side, that would constitute a serious democratic concern. The Commission recently issued a statement saying, "We have not changed Form-6; we have merely added a self-declaration to it, and that too only in places where the SIR process is being implemented, and this was also a consensus decision of the ECI." It further stated that the Supreme Court had previously approved the addition of the declaration to Form-6. Before this statement, while hearing a public-interest litigation (PIL), the Supreme Court had issued notices to the ECI and the Central government concerning the changes to Form-6. The Supreme Court also clarified that it had no role in making those changes. The matter is now before the court. The Congress, the principal opposition party in Parliament, has launched an "Vote Bachao, Desh Bachao" campaign and has called upon other parties to join the nationwide protest scheduled for November 1. The movement is gaining momentum amid demands from several intellectuals and civil society groups that the CEC has lost public confidence and should step down immediately. Some statistics have been cited by the opposition to support its allegations that the ECI's handling of voter deletions is unconstitutional and illegal. Previously, in



any electoral-roll revision, the authority to add or remove a name rested with the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) at the local level. But under the functioning of CEC Gyanesh Kumar, critics allege that this authority has been centralised and brought under the direct control of the ECI. There have reportedly been instances in which bulk deletions were carried out with the electronic signatures of EROs without their even being aware of them, leaving the officers themselves surprised. According to the allegations, this was done through the ECI-Net app under the supervision of the ECI in Delhi. Critics further allege that there was no consensus on this matter either and that unilateral decisions were imposed on the people of the country at the behest of the Central government. The consequences of this alleged arbitrary action become particularly clear in the case of West Bengal. Just before the elections, the names of around 90 lakh voters were deleted, and even after corrections, the names of more than 60 lakh voters were removed. Although they approached the Supreme Court before polling, they did not receive relief. As many as 38.31 lakh people approached the tribunal. So far, only 1.26 lakh cases—around 3 percent—have been resolved, and it emerged that 93 percent of those cases involved eligible voters who had been deprived of their voting rights in the recent elections.

The High Court reportedly observed that, if the tribunals continued at the same pace, it would take 21 years to dispose of all the cases. This means that in the recent by-elections in Rejinagar and Nandigram, around 19,000 voters who were among the complainants could once again have been deprived of their voting rights. The average voter is therefore asking: What kind of justice is this? Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge made a striking statement. He said the party would wage an uncompromising battle on three issues: removing Gyanesh Kumar, stopping the allegedly illegal SIR process, and henceforth conducting elections only through ballot papers. The SIR process, however, is intended to remove from electoral rolls the names of deceased persons, those who have permanently migrated, and those registered as voters in two or more places. Measures and procedures should be explored to prevent any possibility of tampering with electronic voting machines (EVMs). But the principal opposition party must also consider how the public would respond to a demand to return to ballot-paper voting after all these years. With political pressure mounting on one side, the credibility of the Election Commission will depend significantly on what the Supreme Court decides after considering the responses submitted by the ECI and the Central government.

Nana Patekar, And The Sharp, Lasting Sting Of His 'Plain-Speak'

Before his 1991 directorial debut, Prahaar, about life as an army commando, Vishwanath 'Nana' Patekar trained for three years with the Maratha Light Infantry. The film, in which he played Major Chavan, would go on to have a seminal effect on a young Vikram Batra, who did an intensive 35-day course at the Commando Training School at Belgaum, now Belagavi, Karnataka. The course enabled soldiers to join the Ghatak Platoon, becoming the elite first responders of their unit in any combat situation.

It was here that Patekar shot parts of the movie, retaining a lifelong connection to soldiers who saw him join the Territorial Army. It was this movie that was a prime motivator in young Vikram's life, which made him join the army before being martyred in Kargil on July 7, 1999. It was this movie that the Belagavi railway station paid tribute to on X today, with a shot of the opening scene, which was filmed there.

Prahaar was only one of Patekar's several performances that made him stand out from other actors in the film industry in a career that repeatedly underlined his capacity for simmering silence and seething speeches. Prahaar saw him doing both.

It was the kind of thing Patekar lived for, usually far away from the industry's entourage culture and celebrity doublespeak. Raised in relative poverty, he lived, for most of his life, even after becoming a successful actor, in a one-bedroom house. Later, he split his time between a farmhouse in Pune and a home in Goa, choos-

ing to live and work among farmers, for whom he had worked since 2015.

He did not suffer fools gladly, but when he loved, he did so fiercely and fearlessly. His plain-speak had the ability to make people uncomfortable, as did his art. He was the diabolical Anna Seth in Vidhu Vinod Chopra's Parinda (1991), the grisly climax of which left Patekar with burns that took six months to heal. He was the raging Pratap Tilak in Mehul Kumar's Krantiveer (1994), delivering a fiery monologue about "maut ka tamasha" just as he is to be hanged. And he was the abusive Vishwanath in Partho Ghosh's thriller Agni Sakshi (1996), terrorising poor Manisha Koirala's Madhu/Shubhangi.

All three roles earned him National Awards, but Patekar, who rose from painting posters to studying at the JJ School of Art in Mumbai, thanks to a generous benefactor, was not impressed by the glamour of the industry, often finding himself to be a misfit among glib talkers and smooth dressers. In later years, Patekar became a social media sensation, without meaning to, with his one-liners as 'Uday Shetty' in Welcome (2007) and Welcome Back (2015) becoming meme material.

The Appeal Of Stardom, And Why It Didn't Matter To Nana

Success in movies is usually a combination of luck, timing, talent, and an encouraging ecosystem. Celebrity status needs an additional quality: the ability to feed the star machine continuously with publicists, agents, and visible symbols of prestige. Patekar did not have



any interest in the latter, much like another great actor, Om Puri. Unlike Puri, though, Patekar did not emerge from arthouse cinema, cutting his teeth instead on potboilers such as N Chandra's Ankush (1986), in which he is part of a group of vigilantes who take revenge for the rape of a neighbour, and Dayal Nihalani's Andha Yudh (1987), where he is an idealistic young police officer. Men like Patekar are born leading men, clad in character actor skins. These skins allow them to be malleable, flexible, and often invisible, flowing from one role to another, with the willingness to step out of the spotlight.

Patekar did it often enough, in roles big and small. In Sanjay Leela Bhansali's Khamoshi: The Musical (1996), he acts with his eyes, denied his voice, as the hearing-impaired father,

Joseph Braganza. In Shimit Amin's Ab Tak Chhapan (2004), he channels Daya Nayak's naivete and bullheadedness as encounter specialist Sadhu Agashe. And in Prakash Jha's Raajneeti (2010), for instance, he is calm and composed, bereft of the bluster he was usually given, as he advises his young nephews, Prithviraj and Samar.

Few films captured his late-stage sadness as Natsamrat (2016), a film adaptation of the Marathi play by Mahesh Manjrekar. It shows him as stage actor Ganpat Belwarkar, who divides his property between his two children, whose ingratitude leaves him and his wife homeless and broken.

As the Prince said in Hamlet: "What a piece of work is a man. How noble in reason, how infinite in faculty, In form and moving how express and admi-

nable." And "yet to me, what is this quintessence of dust?" Patekar seemed to have been preparing himself for death by living every moment but also reflecting on it, through his life and through his work. Consider his monologue in Anil Mattoo's Yeshwant (1997) about the common man's life. "Subah ghar se niklo, bheed ka ek hissa bano. Shaam ko ghar jao, daru piyo aur bacchee paida karo, aur subah talak phir ek baar mar jao (Leave home in the morning, become part of the crowd. Go home in the evening, drink, make babies, and then wake up in the morning to die another day)," says his character Inspector Yeshwant Lohar. His own comments about death a few days ago only deepen the sense of an ending. A life lived in full, full of achievements, replete with mistakes, but in every way complete.

Coast Guard Assures Action on Ex-Personnel's Welfare Issues DIG C.D. Mahapatra Chairs Quarterly Meeting with Coast Guard Veterans Pension, medical benefits, rehabilitation and pending grievances discussed



VISAKHAPATNAM, PEN POWER, OCTOBER 7: The Indian Coast Guard organised a quarterly welfare meeting with retired Coast Guard personnel at District Headquarters No. 6 in Visakhapatnam on Wednesday. The meeting was chaired by District Headquarters Commander DIG C.D. Mahapatra, who assured the veterans that their grievances would be examined and appropriate steps taken to address them.

A large number of former Coast Guard personnel attended the meeting and raised several issues relating to pensions, medical facilities, rehabilitation and post-retirement welfare benefits.

Key Welfare Issues Discussed

The discussions focused on disability pensions, Pension Payment Orders (PPOs), service record corrections, ECHS medical facilities, canteen benefits, PVC identity cards and Last Pay Certificates (LPCs).

Participants also highlighted pending rehabilitation claims, educational benefits under PMSS, CAP and CEA schemes, accommodation, transport facilities, land mutation issues and parking arrangements at Coast Guard establishments. The veterans emphasised the need for better communication regarding welfare policies and pro-



posed the formation of a dedicated welfare committee.

Veterans Seek Better Opportunities

Former personnel urged the authorities to utilise their professional experience and technical expertise in maritime support services, rehabilitation programmes and suitable second-career opportunities.

They also proposed organising a 'Day at Sea' programme for veterans' families to strengthen their continued association with the Coast Guard.

DIG Assures Follow-Up Action

Responding to the concerns, DIG C.D. Mahapatra assured that issues falling within the Coast Guard's jurisdiction would be examined, while matters requiring intervention from other government departments would be taken up through appropriate channels.

The veterans appreciated the initiative and thanked the Coast Guard authorities for providing a platform to discuss their concerns.

Commandant J. Behara, Assistant Commandant Avinash, Pradhan Adhikari Pathak, Adhikari Goud and former Coast Guard personnel P.S. Rao, P.M. Rao, A.N. Rao, P.S. Prasad, N.R. Babu, N.N. Raju, Y.R.K.R. Yadav, B.G. Rao, Yellaraju and others participated in the meeting.

Special Focus on Roads to Remote Tribal Villages Collector Dinesh Kumar reviews road connectivity works in Polavaram district



Rampachodavaram, October 8: Polavaram District Collector K. Dinesh Kumar said special focus was being given to providing road connectivity to remote and tribal villages across the district. He directed officials to coordinate with various engineering departments to ensure that all eligible villages are connected with proper roads.

The Collector held a review meeting with officials of the Tribal Welfare Engineering Department, Panchayat Raj, PIU, Roads and Buildings, Rural Water Supply and other departments at the ITDA meeting hall in Rampachodavaram on Thursday. District SP K. Chakravarthy and Joint Collector S. Prashanth Kumar also participated in the meeting.

The Collector reviewed the status of roads sanctioned under the PM-JANMAN scheme, proposals submitted, completed works and roads for which tenders were yet to be called. He sought detailed, mandal-wise reports on the road works sanctioned during 2024 and 2026 and their present status. He directed officials to submit village-wise details of PVTG and non-PVTG villages and identify villages that still lack road connectivity. He also reviewed

the progress of roads sanctioned and proposed under the Adavi Thalli Bata programme.

Collector Dinesh Kumar said special attention should be given to providing road connectivity to the 573 PVTG villages in the district. He directed officials to submit details of surveys conducted for providing roads to 101 villages and prepare comprehensive proposals under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana to cover PVTG and non-PVTG villages.

He further instructed the officials to prepare proposals with the support of Central and State government schemes to ensure road connectivity to every village. Details of engineering works required in connection with the upcoming Pushkaralu should also be submitted, he said.

Panchayat Raj Superintending Engineer P. Ramakrishna Reddy, District Panchayat Officer Gorle Bhaskar, DOMA Project Director Ramprasad, DRDA PD Dr. Dasari Ratnakar Rao, DDO Maheshwara Rao, GCC DM Vijayalakshmi, Executive Engineers I. Srinivasa Rao, Raghava Reddy and Seethayya, DEs Ramesh, Bhavani and Subbarao, among others, attended the meeting.

CEC Gyanesh Kumar Must Resign, Says Congress Congress stages protest against detention of Opposition MPs



Rajamahendravaram, October 8, Pen Power Correspondent: Congress leaders on Thursday demanded the immediate resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, alleging that the Election Commission was undermining democratic values and the constitutional right to vote. The protest was organised at the Mahatma Gandhi statue near Gokavaram Bus Stand by the Urban District Congress under the leadership of Balepalli Muralidhar, in response to the AICC and PCC call against the detention of Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi. Party workers raised black flags and held placards after paying floral tributes to Mahatma Gandhi. Addressing the gathering, Mahila Congress State president Amar Jaha Begum, Parliament Coordinator T.K. Visweswara Reddy, PCC Kisan Cell chairman Kamana Prabhakara Rao and



PCC general secretary Akula Bhagya Lakshmi alleged that the Election Commission had failed to satisfactorily respond to concerns raised by the Opposition over deletion of voters and the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process. They demanded reforms in the process of appointing Election Commissioners, including a role for the Chief Justice of India, the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha. The leaders said the Congress would continue its agitation until the Election Commission was reformed and demanded the resignation of Gyanesh Kumar. Martin Luther, Motha Sarada, Medavarapu Bhadram Dora, Chinnam Muralikrishna, Dr Yalla Veerabhadra Rao, Sindhiya Rani, Battina Chandra Rao, Tadi Suribabu and Rafi were among those who participated. Attribute all election-related allegations Tighten the participant list Strengthen the standfirst

East Godavari readies machinery for local body polls 4,398 polling stations identified

*1,842 classified as sensitive or highly sensitive
Rajamahendravaram ward delimitation to be completed within a week*



RAJAMAHENDRAVARAM, OCTOBER 8, PEN POWER CORRESPONDENT: The East Godavari district

administration has stepped up preparations for the forthcoming local body elections, with the focus on completing delimitation, electoral rolls, polling infrastructure and security arrangements within the timelines prescribed by the State Election Commission (SEC). District Election Officer and Collector Keerthi Chekuri told the SEC on Thursday that the district was prepared to take up the elections to rural and urban local bodies. She was speaking during a video conference convened by State Election Commissioner Anil Chandra Punetha to review election preparedness across districts. The district has 342 gram panchayats spread across 21 mandals, covering 4,040 wards and an electorate of 13,43,601, according to the final electoral rolls published on September 7. The electorate includes 6,57,950 men, 6,85,603 women and 48 electors in the other category. The administration has identified 4,398 polling stations at 1,479 locations. Of these, 2,556 have been classified as normal, 926 as sensitive and 916 as highly sensitive, indicating the scale of the security and logistical exercise ahead. The district administration has proposed conducting gram panchayat elections in two or three phases. It has identified 4,812 presiding officers, an equal number of assistant presiding officers, 7,710 polling personnel and 2,149 micro-observers. Training of election personnel is under way. East Godavari Superintendent of Police D. Narasimha Kishore suggested that the MPTC and ZPTC elections also be conducted in two phases. A phased schedule, he said, would enable more efficient utilisation of election personnel, police forces and other resources. Nearly 32.40 lakh ballot papers are proposed to be printed, while the requirement of ballot boxes has been estimated at 6,390. Tenders for procurement of polling and count-

ing material have been invited between October 7 and 12.

Security arrangements tightened

The administration plans to deploy micro-observers, digital photography, webcasting and additional police security at sensitive and highly sensitive polling stations. Ms. Chekuri directed officials to inspect every polling station and ensure drinking water, electricity, toilets, ramps and adequate lighting. She also stressed the need for a secure chain of custody for ballot boxes — from distribution and transportation to their return after polling and storage in strong rooms. Counting centres will have to be equipped with CCTV cameras, barricades, adequate lighting and security arrangements. Counting personnel will be trained in ballot-paper counting, identification of valid and invalid votes and recording of results. Rajamahendravaram delimitation on fast track The draft ward delimitation proposal for the Rajamahendravaram Municipal Corporation is being published on Thursday. The Collector informed the SEC that the process would be completed within seven days of publication of the draft.

The delimitation will be followed by completion of electoral rolls and polling-station arrangements in accordance with the election schedule.

Preparations have already been completed in Mandapeta, Nidadavole and Kovvur municipalities. Mandapeta has 36 wards and 49,059 electors, Nidadavole 32 wards and 35,086 electors, and Kovvur 28 wards and 34,452 electors. The district administration has directed the Revenue, Police, Panchayat Raj, Municipal Administration and Transport departments to work in coordination and ensure that SEC guidelines are followed at every stage. Joint Collector Y. Megha Swaroop, Additional Superintendent of Police Devaraj Patil and other officials participated in the review.

Medical board constituted for education department staff at GG Hospital

RAJAMAHENDRAVARAM, OCTOBER 8, PEN POWER CORRESPONDENT: A medical board has been constituted at the Government General Hospital (GGH) here to examine teachers and non-teaching staff of the Education Department who require medical certification under priority categories, hospital superintendent Dr. K. Rambabu said on Thursday. The board was constituted following a request from the District Education Officer, Dr. Rambabu said in a statement. Employees suffering from serious ailments, including cancer and severe neurological, kidney and liver-related conditions, can appear before the board for medical examination and obtain the requisite medical certificates, he said. The special medical board will function at the government hospital till October 16. Eligible employees have been advised to attend the medical board within the stipulated period and make use of the facility. The initiative is intended to facilitate the medical certification process for Education Department personnel seeking consideration under the applicable priority categories. Hospital authorities have advised employees concerned to bring relevant medical records and reports while appearing before the board.



Kondakonda Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple Celebrates Grand Conclusion of Pavithrotsavams

Pavithrotsavams Conclude on a Grand Note at Korukonda Temple

MLA Bathula Balaramakrishna, MP Daggubati Purandeswari Offer Special Prayers

RAJAMAHENDRAVARAM, OCTOBER 8, PEN POWER CORRESPONDENT: The annual

Pavithrotsavams at the renowned Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple at Korukonda concluded on Thursday amid Vedic chants and devotional fervour.

Rajahmundry MP Daggubati Purandeswari, Rajanagaram MLA Bathula Balaramakrishna and RUDA Chairman Boddur Venkataramana Chowdary participated in the concluding celebrations and offered special prayers to the presiding deity. Temple priests and organisers accorded them a traditional Poorna Kumbham welcome. The final-day rituals included Vishwakshenaradhana, Punyahavachanam, Pavitra Visarjana, Poornahuthi and Saphthadasha Kalasa Prokshana, performed as per Vaikhanasa Agama traditions. Shanti Kalyanam, special offerings, Neerajanam, Mantrapushpam and distribution of Theertha Prasadam were also conducted. The celebrations concluded with Pavithra Mala Prasadam distribution, Veda Ashirvachanam, Yagasala Devatha Uddvasana and Mangala Shasanams. Speaking on the occasion, MLA Bathula Balaramakrishna said participating in the concluding rituals was a blessing and a matter of great spiritual significance for him. He prayed for the well-being, health and prosperity of every family in the Rajanagaram constituency with the blessings of Lord Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy. He assured that every effort would be made on behalf of the government for the comprehensive development of the temple and provision



of necessary basic amenities for devotees. Anuvamsika Dharmakartha Parashara Rangaraja Bhattar, temple officials, hereditary priests Sri Pedapati, Sri Peddinti and Sri Peravali, Agama scholar Sri Vakhani Manikanthacharyulu, and leaders and supporters of the Jana Sena, TDP and BJP were among those present.

Four Excise Shops Awarded Licences Through Lottery

Transparent draw conducted for 2026–27 excise licences



RAJAMAHENDRAVARAM, OCTOBER 8, PEN POWER CORRESPONDENT: The selection of licences for four excise retail shops in East Godavari district for the 2026–27 excise year was completed through a lottery on Thursday. The draw of lots was conducted as part of the process for granting licences to retail outlets selling Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL) and foreign liquor. The lottery was conducted in accordance with the district Gazette notification and Rule 5 of the Andhra Pradesh

Excise Act, 2024. Applications had been invited for excise shops located in Bikkavolu, Kadiyam, Kovvur and Mandapeta Rural mandals. The non-refundable application fee was fixed at ₹23 lakh per shop. The licence period will be from October 1, 2026, to September 30, 2027. Officials said the selection process was conducted strictly in accordance with the rules and guidelines prescribed by the government. The draw of lots was held under the supervision of Rajamahendravaram Sub-Collector Shubham Nokhwal. Srilatha, District Prohibition and Excise Officer, East Godavari, along with officials of the Prohibition and Excise Department and the Enforcement wing, participated in the process. The lottery was conducted in the presence of applicants and departmental officials in a transparent and impartial manner. Officials said the process was completed peacefully without any untoward incident and the successful applicants for all four shops were selected through the draw. The Excise Department officials instructed the selected licensees to strictly comply with all government-prescribed licence conditions, regulations and guidelines during the licence period.

SSR Process Being Conducted Transparently

Re-verification to ensure no eligible voter is left out



Rampachodavaram, October 8: Polavaram District Election Officer and Collector K. Dinesh Kumar said the Special Summary Revision (SSR) of electoral rolls was being conducted transparently and impartially across the dis-

trict. He said Booth Level Officers (BLOs) had conducted house-to-house surveys, identified absent, shifted and deceased voters, and issued notices wherever discrepancies were found. So far, 39,928 voters have been identified under the ASD (Absent, Shifted, Death) category. The Collector said notices were issued to 16,182 voters and inquiries conducted, following which around 15,100 were found eligible and 1,077 ineligible. To ensure that no eligible voter is wrongly deleted, re-verification of 40,004 voters has been taken up through BLOs from Thursday. He said eligible new voters and those whose names were wrongly excluded would be given an opportunity to enrol through Form-6. The final SSR electoral roll is scheduled to be published on October 16, the Collector said. He thanked political parties and the public for their cooperation in the electoral revision process.

Delhi: 17-Year-Old Allegedly Drives Rented Audi, Crashes Into 3 Vehicles, Kills Pedestrian



Delhi: A birthday celebration took a tragic turn in Delhi after a 17-year-old allegedly rented an Audi for Rs 16,000 through an app for an overnight drive. The luxury vehicle reportedly collided with three vehicles and struck a 45-year-old pe-

destrian, who later succumbed to his injuries. Police have detained the minor allegedly behind the wheel and taken the Audi into custody. Investigators are also examining whether the company that rented out the vehicle followed the

required procedures before handing it over. The deceased has been identified as Umashankar. According to a police officer quoted, the juvenile was produced before the Juvenile Justice Board via video conferencing. As part of the probe,

authorities are seeking details from the rental company about how the booking was made, whether the teenager's age was verified, how his driving licence was checked and the circumstances under which the vehicle was handed over. If the investigation establishes that mandatory checks were skipped or regulations were breached, the company could face action. Police are also examining whether the teenager remained behind the wheel for the entire duration of the rental or if someone else drove the Audi at any stage. Investigators are further working to establish the identities and ages of everyone who was allegedly inside the luxury car when the crash took place, PTI reported.

Justice Oka Backs Bhuyan Over ‘Mass Disenfranchisement’ Remark, Says No Judicial Impropriety

New Delhi: Former Supreme Court judge Justice Abhay Oka has defended Justice Ujjal Bhuyan over his recent remarks that mass disenfranchisement of voters cannot be condoned by any court, saying the sitting judge did not commit any judicial impropriety. Speaking during an interaction with former Judge Advocate General Nileendra Kumar, founder-director of Lex Consilium Foundation, Justice Oka said he had carefully read Bhuyan's speech and found no reference to the merits of any pending case or any Su-



preme Court order concerning the Special Intensive Revision (SIR). Oka said judges must exercise restraint and should not comment publicly on the merits of matters pending before their own bench or a coor-

dinate bench. However, he said this principle did not apply to Bhuyan's remarks. According to Oka, judges are also citizens and cannot remain indifferent to important national issues. While they should refrain from

speaking to the media or publicly advocating their views on specific issues, they can participate in academic discussions as students of law. "I don't think he has crossed limits," Oka said, adding that Bhuyan was highlighting the importance of adult franchise and its role in a democracy to law students. Oka further said a judge could even discuss whether an earlier Supreme Court judgment required reconsideration in an academic setting, without necessarily adopting the same view while deciding cases from the judicial side.

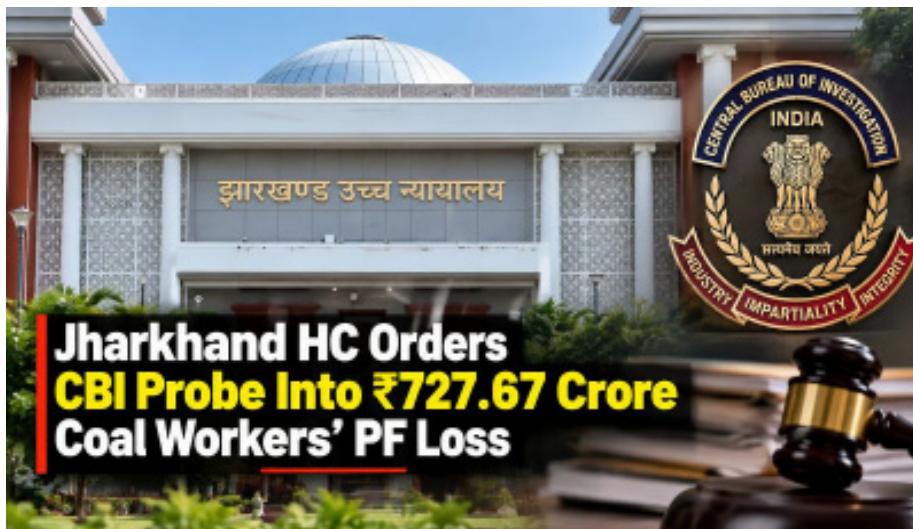
Slap, Counter-Slap! Congress Women Leaders Clash During Faridabad Protest



Faridabad : The Opposition's protest march against Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar in Haryana's Faridabad took an unexpected detour on Thursday, from raising slogans against the poll body to raising hands against fellow party workers. Two Congress women leaders reportedly got into a physical altercation during a march from Chandi Wali Dharamshala to Pathwari Temple in Old Faridabad.

Jharkhand HC Orders CBI Probe Into Rs.727.67 Crore Loss In Coal Workers' PF Investment In DHFL

Ranchi: The Jharkhand High Court ordered a CBI probe into the loss of Rs 727.67 crore from provident fund money belonging to employees of coal companies after Rs 1,300 crore was invested in Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Limited (DHFL), which later went bankrupt. A division bench headed by Chief Justice M.S. Sonak passed the order while hearing a PIL filed by the Coal Employee Welfare Association. The court disposed of the petition after ordering the CBI probe. The case relates to an investment of Rs 1,300 crore made by the Coal Mines Provident Fund Organisation (CMPFO) in DHFL. The housing finance company subsequently went bankrupt, resulting in a loss of Rs 727.67 crore from CMPFO's investment. The petition filed by an organisation representing coal company workers alleged that



the investment was not withdrawn in time despite warnings about DHFL's deteriorating financial condition. According to the petition, CMPFO's fund managers, the State Bank of India (SBI) and UTI, had flagged concerns over DHFL's financial health as early as June 24, 2019. They had warned that the company

could run into trouble and advised that the investment be withdrawn. However, the petition alleged that no timely action was taken despite the warning. DHFL subsequently went bankrupt, resulting in the loss of Rs 727.67 crore of CMPFO funds. Nearly six months later, on December 20, 2019, the CMPFO held a meeting

in which a proposal was passed to withdraw the investment from DHFL. By then, however, the extent of the loss had already become known. Nearly two years later, on November 22, 2021, an investment-related sub-committee of the CMPFO board met, and a proposal was placed before it to write off Rs 727.67 crore.

‘Some Boys Were Troubling Me’: Assam Student Missing From Train Found Dead In Andhra Pradesh

Guwahati / Vizag: A 20-year-old tribal student from Assam, who went missing while travelling by train from Visakhapatnam to Guwahati, was found dead in Andhra Pradesh on Wednesday, with police investigating the circumstances surrounding her death. The deceased, identified as Himashree Boro, was a student of B Baroah College in Guwahati. According to her family, she had travelled to Visakhapatnam on September 30 as part of an Assam dance team to attend an event and was returning home on the Dibrugarh



Vivek Express (22503). Her mother said Himashree boarded the train's S2 coach from Visakhapatnam at around 11.50 pm on October 5. The train was scheduled to reach Guwahati at 9.05 am on October 7.



At around 2.39 am on October 6, Himashree reportedly called a friend and said that some boys were allegedly troubling her. The call was abruptly disconnected and her phone was subsequently switched off. The friend then alerted the Government Railway Police

(GRP) in Guwahati and a complaint was also lodged through railway helpline 139. During the initial search, police found Himashree's belongings in the S2 coach but could not trace her. Later, railway police were informed about the body of a young woman found near the railway tracks at Tikulampur in Andhra Pradesh. Authorities subsequently identified the deceased as Himashree. Her body was handed over to the family after post-mortem examination. Police are investigating the circumstances leading to her death.

Mumbai Weather: IMD Issues Yellow Alert For Heatwave In Mumbai, First Such Warning For City After Monsoon



Mumbai: The India Meteorological Department has issued a yellow alert for heatwave conditions in isolated pockets of Mumbai and Raigad. The warning is the first heatwave alert of the post-monsoon season, with temperatures expected to remain several degrees above normal. For Thane

and Palghar, the IMD has forecast hot and humid conditions at isolated locations. According to the weather forecast, hot and humid conditions were also expected in parts of Mumbai, Raigad and Ratnagiri on Thursday. Temperatures are expected to remain high in isolated

parts of Maharashtra over the coming days, with humid conditions likely to persist in several districts. Some areas may also receive light to moderate rainfall.

Meanwhile, the withdrawal of the Southwest Monsoon continued this week. According to reports citing the IMD, the with-

drawal line passed through Supaul, Ranchi, Raipur, Brahmapuri, Parbhani, Baramati and Harnai. The weather agency also reported weak Southwest Monsoon activity over Konkan-Goa, Madhya Maharashtra, Marathwada and the Gujarat region. Mumbai's air quality deteriorated on Thursday evening, with the city's overall Air Quality Index (AQI) reportedly recorded at 162. The reading indicates a decline from the comparatively cleaner air quality reported across Mumbai in recent months. Under the standard AQI classification, readings between 0 and 50 are considered 'Good', while 51 to 100 fall under the 'Moderate' category. AQI levels between 101 and 200 are classified as 'Poor', 201 to 300 as 'Unhealthy', and readings above 300 as 'Severe'.

'Kicked, Punched & Pulled Down': Delhi Cops Recount Ordeal During Congress-Led SIR Protest

New Delhi: A couple of Delhi Police personnel who allegedly came under attack from the Congress workers and supporters during the INDIA bloc stir in the national capital a day before, narrated the ordeal that they underwent while trying to contain the surging crowd. A couple of Delhi Police Constables, including women personnel spoke to IANS, recounting the physical attack inflicted on them while the Congress-led INDIA bloc protested against the Election Commission's Special Intensive Revision (SIR). They claimed that they were kicked and punched by the mob while doing their duty. Deependra Sandhu, a Delhi



Police Constable, said that he was assaulted while trying to control the unruly protesters on Wednesday. "They (protesters) deliberately targeted us because we were informing everyone that Section 163 was in force in the area and that they could not protest here. Suddenly, they went behind us and pulled us from

behind. They then pushed us to the ground and started kicking and punching us. We somehow managed to protect ourselves and get away," he recalled. The Constable also told IANS that he saw the attacker running from the protest site after assaulting him from the behind. "The man who pulled me down from

behind and kicked me was wearing white clothes," he said. Head Constable Bhupendra Ahlawat had a similar tale to share. He, too, was attacked allegedly by Congress workers while he was in police uniform. He called it a planned attack as the attacker was allegedly given a "cover and escape route" by the protesting party workers.

"I am the one who was kicked. They intentionally and deliberately pulled me from behind by my waist and made me fall. When I turned around to see who it was and whether I recognised him or not, as soon as I made eye contact with him, the Congress workers hid him.

India calls for Flexibility, Pragmatism and Mutual Respect to secure Ambitious and Balanced Outcomes at upcoming UNFCCC COP31



India has called for greater flexibility, pragmatism and mutual respect among Parties to bridge remaining differences and secure ambitious and balanced outcomes at UNFCCC COP31. Speaking at the Plenary Discussion on Political Landing Zones and Outcomes at the Pre-COP31 meeting in Fiji, Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Bhupender Yadav said the intensifying impacts of climate change demand moving beyond rhetoric towards implementation and convergence. Reflecting on discussions during the Pre-COP, Shri Yadav said that the shared ground among Parties was “far greater than our divisions”. He highlighted broad convergence on remaining collectively anchored to the aspirational

goal of limiting global warming to 1.5°C; recognising that higher ambition requires proportionally higher commitments, particularly through scaled-up climate finance, technology transfer and capacity-building; and shifting the collective focus decisively towards implementation. India, he said, firmly believes that implementation must respect nationally determined pathways, allowing each country to transition according to its unique national circumstances and development imperatives. The Minister stressed on the urgent need for innovative solutions and continued reforms to accelerate climate action. He stated that while global goals are shared, greater convergence is needed on approaches to achieving them. “The time has come

to demonstrate flexibility on all sides,” he said, calling for optimisation of the tools already available under the Convention and the Paris Agreement. He highlighted the inclusion of Article 9.1 on the provisional agenda as a vital formal opportunity to address the matching of finance to country needs, while also emphasising the strategic use of Article 6 cooperative approaches to plug critical gaps in finance and other means of implementation and unlock market-driven resources for sustainable development. Shri Yadav said India expects COP31 to chart a definitive way forward to enhance engagement, technical cooperation and targeted support for building capabilities. He stated that India stands ready for open and transparent dialogue to resolve

these issues in the run-up to COP31 to ensure “a balanced, equitable, and historic outcome” for the global community, particularly the most vulnerable. He further emphasised that climate multilateralism can be strengthened at COP31 through an inclusive, consultative and consensus-based approach.

Concluding India's intervention, Shri Yadav said, “As we leave Fiji, our objective should be clear: to carry the constructive elements of these discussions into Antalya”. He added that the landing zone should be an outcome that is ambitious and balanced, advancing mitigation and adaptation while delivering the means of implementation that developing countries need. He reaffirmed India's readiness to work with the Presidency, Chairs and all Parties towards this objective. In the end, the Union Minister thanked Mr. Chris Bowen, President of Negotiations, for his efforts in ensuring open and engaging discussions during Pre-COP31, and extended best wishes to the COP31 President for the success of COP31. The Pre-COP is a preparatory meeting held a few weeks before the annual UN Climate Change Conference, which this year will be held in Antalya, Türkiye, in November.

Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Education, Organises Nationwide Screening of Inclusive Education Sensitization Module through PRASHAST

New Delhi, October, 8 (PIB): The Department of School Education & Literacy (DoSEL), Ministry of Education, organised the nationwide screening of a 30-minute Sensitization and Orientation Module on Inclusive Education for Children with Special Needs (CwSN) through the PRASHAST Portal in schools across the country. The initiative aims to promote a whole-school approach to inclusion, ensuring that teachers, special educators and non-teaching staff understand the needs of CwSN and contribute to creating a safe, accessible and supportive school environment. The module uses practical examples and interactive activities to help school personnel adopt appropriate and respectful practices. It is available in 12 Indian languages and is intended for heads of schools, teachers, special educators and non-teaching staff, including aayahs, drivers, clerical staff, receptionists, deans and wardens. DoSEL has been conducting continuous



ous sensitisation of general teachers on Inclusive Education through PRASHAST for the past three months. More than 72 lakh teachers have already been sensitised through the dedicated module. PRASHAST is a school-based digital tool for identifying children with probable disability conditions covered under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016. Its two-

part checklist enables teachers to screen students based on observable indicators, while special educators validate cases and facilitate referrals for medical assessment, wherever required. More than 60,000 schools participated in nationwide screening, with participation expected to increase further during the month.

The initiative reinforces that inclusive education is

a shared responsibility. Every interaction a child has at school, from the classroom and office to transport and other common spaces, contributes to their experience of inclusion. The initiative is part of the Ministry's continued efforts to strengthen equitable, accessible and inclusive education, in line with the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020 and the RPwD Act, 2016.

National Institute of Naturopathy, Pune Invites Applications for BNYS Degree Programme for Academic Session 2026–27



New Delhi, October, 7 (PIB): The National Institute of Naturopathy (NIN), Ministry of Ayush, Government of India, has invited applications for admission to the Bachelor of Naturopathy and Yogic Sciences (BNYS) programme for the academic session 2026–27 at its flagship Nisarg Gram campus, Yewalewadi, Pune. NIN, an autonomous organisation under the Ministry of Ayush, is carrying forward the legacy and vision of Mahatma Gandhi by promoting Naturopathy and Yoga through healthcare, educa-

tion, training and research. NIN is the first Central Government institution in the country to offer the BNYS programme in affiliation with a Central University, Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri National Sanskrit University, New Delhi. This marks a significant milestone in strengthening institutional education and academic standards in Naturopathy and Yoga.

The 5½-year full-time residential BNYS programme comprises 4½ years of academic and clinical training, followed by one year of Compulsory

Rotatory Residential Internship (CRRI). The programme offers integrated academic education along with extensive clinical exposure in Naturopathy and Yoga. A total of 100 seats are being offered for the academic session 2026–27. Candidates who have passed 10+2 or an equivalent examination with Physics, Chemistry, Biology (PCB) and English from a recognised Board and fulfil the prescribed eligibility and medical fitness requirements are eligible to apply. Preference will be given to candidates who

have appeared for NEET-UG 2026. Any remaining vacant seats will be filled on the basis of 10+2 PCB merit, in accordance with the prescribed admission procedure and reservation norms.

The flagship Nisarg Gram campus, spread over 25 acres, houses a 250-bedded Naturopathy Hospital, academic and research facilities, separate residential hostels for boys and girls, state-of-the-art yoga halls and modern Naturopathy treatment infrastructure. The campus provides an integrated environment for education, clinical training, research and wellness. The online application process commenced on 29 September 2026 and will close on 19 October 2026 at 5:00 PM. The provisional merit list is scheduled to be released on 27 October 2026, followed by the final merit/waiting list on 30 October 2026. Counselling is scheduled to be conducted on 12–13 November and 18–19 November 2026, while classes are scheduled to commence from 30 November 2026.

NLMC Organises Mock E-Auction Training Ahead of RINL Land E-Auction



New Delhi, October, 7 (PIB): The National Land Monetization Corporation (NLMC), under the Department of Public Enterprises (DPE), Ministry of Finance, Government of India, conducted a physical mock e-auction platform training in Visakhapatnam on October 6, 2026, to familiarise prospective bidders with the online bidding process ahead of the upcoming e-auction of 459 land parcels of Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL), the corporate entity of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant. The hands-on training was organised for providing prospective bidders and other interested stakeholders an opportunity to experience the e-auction platform in a simulated environment. The sessions covered the bidding interface, participation procedure and other key aspects of the online auction process, enabling participants to gain practical familiarity with the platform ahead of the live auctions.

To facilitate participation

by prospective bidders who could not attend the physical training, NLMC also conducted an online mock e-auction platform training on October 7, 2026. The online session provided participants an opportunity to familiarise themselves with the digital bidding process remotely ahead of the live auctions scheduled for October 12 and 16, 2026. The mock e-auction initiatives are being conducted just days ahead of the two-phase RINL land e-auction, with the first phase scheduled for October 12, 2026, from 11:00 AM to 7:00 PM, followed by the second phase on October 16, 2026, from 11:00 AM to 7:00 PM.

During the event, CEO, NLMC, Shri Rohan Chand Thakur said that, the physical and online mock e-auction sessions are important steps towards ensuring that prospective bidders are familiar with the digital bidding process ahead of the live auctions. Our endeavour is to make the auction process transparent, accessible and participant-



friendly, while providing prospective bidders adequate opportunity to understand the platform and complete the necessary formalities within the prescribed timelines. The RINL land auction presents a significant asset monetisation opportunity, and NLMC remains committed to facilitating the process in a professional, transparent and structured manner.

459 Land Parcels Spread Across 93,572.21 Square Yards

The RINL land portfolio comprises 459 premium, encumbrance-free plots aggregating 93,572.21 square yards in Visakhapatnam, including locations such as HB Colony, Maddilapalem and Auto Nagar, Gajuwaka.

Investor Outreach Across Three Cities

Ahead of the auction, NLMC also conducted Investor Meets in Visakhapatnam, Vijayawada and Hyderabad, providing prospective buyers and other stakeholders an opportunity to obtain detailed information about the land

parcels, auction process, eligibility requirements and related procedures. The Investor Meets witnessed participation from prospective buyers through both physical and virtual modes, including participants based outside the region and overseas. The physical and online mock e-auction sessions further strengthen this outreach by providing prospective bidders with practical exposure to the digital bidding platform. The two-pronged mock training initiative, physical training in Visakhapatnam on October 6 and online training on October 7, is aimed at ensuring wider access and greater bidder preparedness before the live auctions. NLMC is facilitating the monetisation of surplus land and non-core assets of Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) and Government agencies as part of the Government's broader objective of unlocking the value of under-utilised assets through transparent and structured processes.

COP31 should focus on Closing Gaps, Fulfilling Commitments and Accelerating Implementation of Paris Agreement, stresses India

New Delhi, October, 7 (PIB): Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Shri Bhupender Yadav addressing the plenary discussion on COP31 priorities at the UNFCCC Pre-COP31 meeting in Fiji today, called for greater focus on closing gaps in understanding, fulfilling existing climate commitments and accelerating implementation of the Paris Agreement. He is leading the Indian Delegation at the UNFCCC's Pre-COP31 meeting being co-hosted by Australia, Fiji and Tuvalu. Beginning his intervention, Shri Yadav saluted the spirit of the people of Tuvalu for “bravely combating the challenges of climate change” and setting an example of a successful model. He said that their efforts strengthen hope, confidence and the resolve to stand united in combating climate change. The Minister said that the long-term objectives and goals have already been established under the UNFCCC and its Paris Agreement, including the ambition of limiting global

temperature rise to 1.5°C. He emphasised that achieving this ambition would require commensurate means of implementation and that the focus now should be on assessing how the world can accelerate its journey towards these goals.

Referring to the COP31 Presidencies' focus on consensus, decision-making and implementation, Shri Yadav said there is an overall Consensus on the long-term goals and direction of climate multilateralism. However, there is a need to identify and develop consensus on existing gaps in understanding, including gaps between science and traditional knowledge and community practices, between practices and ethics, and between available resources and felt needs. The Minister said that COP31 should endeavour to close these gaps in understanding. On Decision-making, Shri Yadav said the key decision required from Parties is to fulfil their commitments under the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement “in true let-



ter and spirit” and enable each Party to fulfil these commitments. On Implementation, the Minister called for addressing identified gaps where the need is highest and the impact is visible and felt by the majority. He emphasised the need for greater capacity building and urged Parties to bring concrete examples and success stories every year—demonstrating high-impact mitigation, large-scale adaptation and effective delivery of means of implementation. Yadav said that consistently sharing and scaling

such examples year after year would yield better results on the ground in achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement. He concluded that success in Antalya should not be measured simply by new targets or declarations, but by whether implementation is accelerated, support reaches those who need it, and existing solutions can be taken to scale. The Pre-COP is a preparatory meeting held a few weeks before the annual UN Climate Change Conference, which this year will be held in Antalya, Türkiye, in November.

LAUNCH AND KEEL LAYING OF FLEET SUPPORT SHIPS

New Delhi, October, 7 (PIB): FSS-1, the first of the Fleet Support Ships, under construction at Hindustan Shipyard Limited, Visakhapatnam, was launched on 06 Oct 2026. In keeping with the Naval traditions, Smt Laila Swaminathan, President NWWA (Navy Welfare & Wellness Association), launched the ship in the presence of the Chief Guest,

Hon'ble Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh. The event also marked the keel laying of FSS-5, the fifth of the Fleet Support Ships, and inauguration of Augmented Slipway, a key infrastructure upgrade at HSL, by the Chief Guest. Adm Krishna Swaminathan, Chief of the Naval Staff and other senior officials from Indian Navy, Ministry of Defence HSL, Visakhapatnam were amongst the dignitaries who

attended the ceremony. The Fleet Support Ships are indigenously designed and built by HSL, Visakhapatnam with over 82 percent indigenous content signifying highest levels of mutual cooperation between the Navy, Shipyard, Defence industries and MSMEs. On induction, the ships will augment the 'Blue Water' capabilities of the Indian Navy through replenishment of Fleet Ships at

Sea. The ships will significantly bolster Operational logistics, thereby enhancing the Fleet's strategic reach and mobility. In their secondary role, these ships would be capable of undertaking Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations and Non-Combatant Evacuation Operations (NEO) for expeditious delivery of relief material and evacuation of personnel.

Xi Jinping Rolls Into Trump Summit With China's Trade Engine Roaring



Washington:In the four months since the leaders of the two global superpowers last met, Xi Jinping has overseen a surge in China's trade with the world while Donald Trump has struggled with falling approval ratings at home. That shift in fortunes has tempered expectations for their summit in Washington this week, analysts say, with Xi in no rush to make concessions and Trump constrained by a costly war with Iran that has hurt both his popularity and Americans' wallets. While thorny issues like Taiwan may surface, the main focus of the September 24 meeting is whether the leaders will signal an extension to a trade truce struck last year that averted a major shock to the global economy. "Xi is not really looking for anything tangible. He wants to extend the gentleman's agreement with Trump so that China has time to fortify itself," said Jon Czin, a foreign policy expert at the

Brookings Institution who formerly served as China director at the US National Security Council.

'Living In Xi's World'
White House officials have sought to downplay the potential for major breakthroughs. US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng helmed preparatory talks in New York on Sunday aimed at teeing up some potential agreements on AI guardrails and trade in non-sensitive products. That is a far cry from Trump's vow when he returned to office in 2025 to use tariffs to address a trade imbalance with China that was "killing" the United States. But since agreeing the truce with Xi in October of that year, his attention has been divided among myriad other foreign policy battles, from the wars in Iran and Ukraine to disputes with Europe over free speech. China has faced its own challenges, such as slowing domestic demand

and a protracted property crisis, but the export juggernaut that Trump sought to tame has kept roaring in what economists are increasingly referring to as China Shock 2.0. China's global trade surplus is on pace to top \$1 trillion for a second straight year. While US efforts to curb the cheap parcels that online retailers such as Shein and Temu rely on have worked, more than half of the roughly 6,500 product categories China sold to the US so far this year have grown compared to 2025. A delegation of Chinese business leaders, potentially including some firms facing US regulatory scrutiny as they seek greater market access, is set to accompany Xi to Washington. The Trump administration "thought they could use massive unilateral pressure to force China to make concessions, and that did not occur," said Scott Kennedy, an expert on the US-China economic relationship at Washington-

based think tank CSIS. "Now this is Xi Jinping's world, and we're all living in it."

Taiwan And Trade Wins
If Xi is in the driver's seat as analysts suggest, that will further unnerve US allies in Asia who expect the Chinese leader to push Trump to soften Washington's support for Taiwan, the democratically governed island claimed by Beijing. Xi repeatedly asked him about Taiwan when they met in Beijing in May, including about arms sales and Washington's resolve to defend the island, Trump told reporters. The US president described a pending \$14 billion arms package for Taiwan as a "negotiating chip" with Beijing. Some officials in Taipei and Tokyo worry he may be tempted to cash in that chip for political wins ahead of November's midterm elections, which could prove challenging for his Republican Party. That could include Chinese purchases of Boeing jets or farm goods, or commitments to curb the flow of fentanyl precursor chemicals that have fuelled the US opioid crisis. "China-US ties have become more transactional," said Wu Xinbo, a professor at Shanghai's Fudan University who advises China's foreign ministry. While Washington may want to prioritise trade talks, for Beijing, the US approach to Taiwan could be key, he said. "If you accommodate our concern on the Taiwan issue, then we would be

willing to accommodate your concerns on other issues, be it law enforcement or on purchases of US agricultural products," Wu said.

Putting Pressure On Iran
Washington also sees Xi as uniquely able to exert pressure on Iran to bring an end to the war that has dragged Trump's approval rating to the lowest of his political career. However, Xi has shown little inclination to do so. Reuters earlier this month reported that Beijing is selling billions of dollars' worth of goods to Iran through a sanctions-evasion scheme. China's foreign ministry says it is not aware of such a scheme. US threats last month of secondary sanctions on countries doing business with Iran -- which Bessent called an "Economic D-Day" -- appear not to have yet been wielded against Tehran's largest trading partner. That is more evidence, analysts say, that Trump is eager to keep relations with Xi steady as he focuses his energies elsewhere -- an arrangement that also suits the Chinese leader. "Both Xi and Trump feel it's quite helpful to have stability in the relationship so that they can focus on more pressing things," said Ruby Osman, senior geopolitical researcher at the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change. "For Trump, that is Iran. For Xi, that is building out China's domestic resilience for whatever comes after Trump."

ICE Agent Shoots And Wounds Venezuelan Immigrant In Texas, US Officials Say

Washington:AUS Immigration and Customs Enforcement officer shot and wounded a man Sunday afternoon in Austin, Texas, local authorities said, and anti-ICE protesters quickly gathered at the scene. The man was in serious but stable condition at a hospital after being shot once in the torso on the capital city's north side, Austin officials said at a news conference. The Department of Homeland Security, which oversees ICE, did not participate in the news conference and didn't respond to repeated requests for details. City police officers were not involved in the operation or the shooting, which occurred after a traffic stop, Austin Police Chief Lisa Davis said while briefing reporters along with the city's mayor and other officials. Mayor Kirk Watson, a Democrat, said he wants the city's police department to have a role in the investigation so it can provide "clear, third-party eyes" in the process. Watson said he does not think it would be appropriate for ICE to conduct an investigation on its own. Austin residents have "a right to feel safe in their city," Watson said. A proper investigation will only enhance credibility, he added. The chief said there

were not many facts she could provide so soon after the incident but added that her department's special investigation unit was at the scene. An immigration attorney representing the man's family identified him as Wilber Rafael Garces Perez, a 28-year-old Venezuelan man. Attorney Kate Lincoln Goldfinch said in a video posted to her Instagram account that she believed he had no criminal history and no final order of removal from the U.S., but she later told The Associated Press that she did not know his current immigration status. The man's family has struggled to get any information from the hospital about his status or location, Lincoln-Goldfinch said. Just before 7 p.m., the man's wife was informed by the hospital's attorney that the man had been released into ICE custody a few hours earlier, Lincoln-Goldfinch wrote in a text to AP. "No one bothered to update her," she wrote. It wasn't immediately clear if the man remained hospitalized while in ICE custody or if he had been transferred elsewhere. A dark blue Toyota Corolla was parked under an overpass with damage to its passenger-side door and what appeared to be bullet holes. The car was towed away in



the early evening, and traffic began moving again. A large law enforcement presence was present along with a crowd of about a hundred protesters. Some demonstrators cursed at police officers holding riot shields, while others yelled out as passing cars honked in support of the protest. One man held a sign saying, "Nobody is safe" and, on the other side, "ICE Nazi." Asked if Austin authorities knew where the involved federal agent is, given that agents have left states after previous shootings nationwide, the mayor said: "We do not know that. But my hope would be that, an agent that's involved in an officer-involved shooting would not leave the city. Certainly not leave the state." The

office of Travis County District Attorney José Pompa Garza asked that local police and prosecutors be included in the investigation. "We further request cooperation from the federal government in giving us access to the evidence," the DA's office said in a statement Sunday evening. US Rep. Greg Casar, a Democrat representing parts of Austin, called for transparency as the shooting is investigated. "It is awful that this horror has come to our doorstep," Casar told reporters. "For Austin to be safe, ICE should end its surge here." The shooting comes as ICE surges enforcement across the country this summer, producing more than 50,000 arrests a month for the first

time in its history in July and August. In July, an ICE officer fatally shot 52-year-old Lorenzo Salgado Araujo, of Houston, after federal agents driving unmarked vehicles pursued him while he was taking his construction crew to a job site. Also in July, 25-year-old Johan Sebastián, a Colombian man, was shot by an ICE officer in Maine. The officer is an Army veteran who has struggled with serious mental health issues since early childhood and never should have been given a badge and gun to patrol American streets, several of his close relatives told AP. The administration's enforcement efforts were widely condemned last winter after the killings of Alex Pretti and Renee Good in Minnesota.

Converse Pulls Sneaker Ad That Critics Said Had Racist Ku Klux Klan Imagery

Washington:The sneaker company Converse has removed a social media ad that sparked outrage among critics who viewed it as evoking the Ku Klux Klan and lynching. The Instagram ad photo showed K-pop singer Karina wearing a skirt and holding a pair of Chuck 70 X sneakers. Critics lashed out online, saying that a white triangular image created by lighting on the skirt

resembled a KKK hood and that the way she held the sneakers made them look like the dangling feet of a lynching victim. Converse, owned by Nike, issued a statement apologizing and saying it removed the ad. "We're sorry," said the statement, first released on Friday. "We understand why this image is deeply upsetting and recognize that we got this wrong. We removed it from our chan-

nels and are working to remove it everywhere it appeared. This should not have happened and we will do better." Converse, based in Boston, declined on Sunday to answer questions seeking additional information, including how the company screens ads before they are posted and how the ad was approved. Karina and her management company, SM Entertainment Group, did not imme-

diately respond to messages through their Instagram accounts. Retailers and top fashion brands have issued a string of apologies over the years for products criticized as being racially insensitive. Last month, retailer Target pulled a children's Halloween costume from its shelves after widespread social media backlash, apologizing for selling a garment that critics said evoked racist min-

strel caricatures. The Converse photo sparked swift criticism, including calls for staff involved in the ad to be fired and for a boycott of the company. In a slew of comments on social media, posters questioned how the ad could have cleared the company's advertising vetting process. Other commenters defended Converse, saying they didn't believe it was intentional.

Pakistan Taliban Rejects Islamabad's Afghan Territory Claim, India Links



Islamabad:Terror group Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) has rejected allegations by Islamabad that the militant group uses Afghan territory to launch attacks against Pakistani security forces, claiming that the organisation's military and administrative structures are based inside Pakistani territory. In a recent interview in Pashto, Mufti Ghafran, a senior member of TTP's leadership, said Pakistan's government and military have failed to provide "concrete evidence" that TTP fighters were crossing from Afghanistan to conduct attacks. He claimed the group maintains organisational structures across at least 39 districts of Pakistan, with only a limited number located close to the Afghanistan-Pakistan border.

'Areas Of Ops Deep In Pak'

Ghafran argued that many areas where TTP claims to operate -- including parts of Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa - are hundreds of kilometres from the border. Referring to recent fighting in Hangu, he claimed that TTP operations had inflicted casualties on Pakistani soldiers and asserted that the area was not adjacent to Afghanistan. He also questioned how fighters could routinely cross the heavily fortified border, saying Pakistan had installed fencing, surveillance posts, alarms, lighting systems, and landmines along sections of the frontier. Islamabad has repeatedly accused TTP of maintaining sanctuaries in

Afghanistan and using them to plan or support attacks inside Pakistan.

'No Link To India'
Ghafran further denied allegations that India supports TTP, describing such accusations as part of a longstanding Pakistani narrative against its opponents. He insisted that the group's campaign was independently financed and organised. Asked why TTP activity has historically been concentrated in Pashtun-majority areas rather than Punjab, Ghafran said the organisation's operations had already extended to parts of Punjab, Sindh, Karachi, and Balochistan. He said TTP could expand its activities further if Pakistani military operations intensified. On attacks against economic infrastructure, Ghafran said TTP had so far refrained from systematically targeting gas pipelines and other economic institutions because of what he described as its interpretation of Sharia. However, he suggested that attacks on such targets could be considered in the future if the group concluded that Pakistan was using revenues from natural resources against it.

'Refugees Killed In Pak Strikes'

Ghafran also addressed the possibility of negotiations with Islamabad, accusing Pakistan of repeatedly abandoning talks when they no longer served its interests. He said TTP remained open to what he termed meaningful negotiations conducted according to Islamic principles. Re-

garding Pakistani claims that military strikes in Afghanistan target TTP members, Ghafran denied that members of the organisation had been killed in such strikes. He claimed victims included Afghan-based Pashtun refugees who had fled Pakistan during earlier military operations.

NDTV could not independently verify these claims.

'A Resistance'
On the disputed Durand Line, Ghafran said neither the Pashtun nor Baloch populations had accepted the frontier, describing it as an imposed arrangement. He also accused Pakistan's intelligence services of involvement in targeted killings—an allegation he offered without publicly presented evidence. Ghafran portrayed TTP's armed campaign as resistance against the Pakistani military and said the group would continue fighting. He rejected accusations that TTP members were motivated primarily by financial incentives, while repeating allegations concerning Pakistan's past cooperation with the United States. His remarks come amid continued tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan over cross-border militancy, with Islamabad repeatedly demanding action against TTP elements it says are operating from Afghan soil. Kabul has denied allowing Afghan territory to be used against Pakistan, while the security situation along the border remains a major source of friction between the two countries.

Imran Khan's 3 Sisters Arrested In Pakistan Before PTI's Mega Protest



Islamabad:Authorities in Pakistan have arrested former prime minister Imran Khan's three sisters, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party has alleged. Aleema Khan, Dr Uzma Khan, and Noreen Khan, who have been calling for Khan's release, have been sent to Kot Lakhpat Jail in Lahore, the party said. "Punjab police have raided Aleem Khan's home and have abducted Imran Khan's other two sisters, his nephews, and their children," PTI spokesperson Zulfi Bukhari said on his social media platform X. PTI's information secretary Sheikh Waqas Akram told AFP that 73-year-old Khan's sisters and their children were taken into custody, but the children

were released. "All three sisters have been sent to Kot Lakhpat Jail, Lahore," he added. The law enforcement agencies arrested Khan's sisters in Lahore, the capital city of Punjab province. While Aleena Khan was taken into custody on Sunday, Dr Uzma Khan and Noreen Khan were arrested on Monday. The arrests came after Lahore's deputy commissioner Muhammad Ali Ijaz passed two separate orders for the three sisters' 30-day detention under the Maintenance of Public Order law of Punjab province.

The Protest Call
So far, Pakistani authorities have not released any statement on the matter, but arrests

followed PTI's call for a mega protest on September 27, seeking his release from jail. Pakistan's Information Minister Attaullah Tarar has termed PTI's protest call illegal. He said, "We will not allow them to block roads and disrupt people's lives." The cricketer-turned-politician has been in jail since 2023 and was sentenced late last year, along with his wife, to 17 years in jail on corruption charges they both deny. Khan, who was also a former Pakistan cricket captain, was prime minister from 2018 to 2022 before being removed in a no-confidence vote during a political crisis over tensions between his government and Pakistan's powerful military establishment.

Hyderabad Golf Association plans bigger golf calendar with IGPL partnership

Hyderabad: The Krishna Invitational 2026, AM Green IGPL presented by Punjab Raptors, is being held at Hyderabad Golf Club this week, with the Hyderabad Golf Association (HGA) looking to build on the partnership and attract more professional golf events to the city. The Hyderabad leg, being hosted by Krishna Punjab Raptors GC, runs from October 7 to 10. It is the first of two IGPL legs in Hyderabad this season and the ninth of 15 events on the 2026 calendar. "We are proud to host IGPL's first leg in Hyderabad. IGPL is promoting golf in a different way. It is a league that goes outside India as well, and women play alongside men and earn on the same tour. We met the owners and promoters and discussed several plans, and they are willing to partner with a place like HGA. We want them to bring not only their tour to our course but more professional events, and we will be happy to host it," said Hyderabad Golf Association president Bhaskar Reddy.

"Our course is moving up a level. We have added two more holes, and we are bringing in an



international maintenance firm to take the playing conditions to the next level. We are also hiring top professionals for course maintenance," he added. "Our association with HGA began in 2024 by sponsoring the Telangana Golconda Masters, and it is good to be back," said Uttam Singh Mundy, CEO, AM Green IGPL. "I would like to thank the HGA president, Mr Bhaskar Reddy, the captain and

the entire HGA team for their hospitality and for giving us the course in such great condition. The players have been full of praise for it all week. I also thank Krishna Punjab Raptors GC for playing host. We have discussed several ideas with HGA, and we would be glad to build on this partnership." "Any schoolchild who wants to come and play here is welcome, and we will support them," Reddy

said. "We have a big short-game area here. Thanks to IGPL for bringing an event like this to HGA and for running programmes like the one we had this week, where young players learnt from the best. It takes a lot of time to reach this stage, and a platform like this will help young golfers go ahead and make golf a career," said Sandeep Rathi, committee member, Hyderabad Golf Association.

Indian women boxers eye early LA 2028 quotas at 2027 World Championships



New Delhi: Santiago Nieva is already looking beyond India's successful 2026 campaign, with the national women's boxing team's focus now firmly on securing Olympic quotas at the earliest opportunity ahead of the Los Angeles 2028 Games. The Indian women boxers signed off from the Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya with three medals, including two

gold, following an impressive season that also saw the team return from the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow with six medals, five of them gold. Nieva, who is serving as the National Women's Team head coach, wants India to make the most of the first available Olympic qualification opportunity at the 2027 World Championships in Kazakhstan. "The first quali-

fier will be in Kazakhstan, which is the World Championships, where ideally we get as many quotas there as possible," Nieva told SAI Media. "Later on, there will be the Asian Olympic Qualifier and 2028 will have another two Olympic Qualifiers. For Nieva, early qualification would be crucial in allowing the boxers to shift their attention towards long-term, Olympic-specific preparation rather than carrying the uncertainty of qualification into the final stages of the cycle. "Ideally, if we get to qualify next year early on, we get a good preparation time," Nieva continued. "It will be a tough pathway, and hopefully we can qualify as many boxers as possible so we can form a strong team for the Olympics." The results of 2026 have underlined the progress made by the

women's programme under Nieva, who previously served as High Performance Director of Indian Boxing from 2017 to 2021 before returning to the Indian boxing set-up in 2025.

He credited the team's consistency this year to a sustained preparation programme that combined international exposure, domestic camps and high-quality sparring. The women's team spent considerable time at the Sports Authority of India's National Centre of Excellence in Patiala, where Nieva believes the depth of the support system has played an important role in their development. "We have a staff of 40 people working with the boxers, around 20 coaches and another 20 support staff," he said. "We have improvements in all areas, sports science, the boxing hall, the boxing equipment and so on."

Pramod Bhagat, Bhavina Patel to lead India at Asian Para Games

Hyderabad: Paralympic champions Pramod Bhagat and Bhavina Patel will lead the Indian contingent as flag bearers at the Opening Ceremony of the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Para Games on October 18 in Nagoya, Japan. The honour brings together two of India's most accomplished para-athletes, whose careers have been defined by excellence, resilience and a relentless pursuit of sporting success. Pramod Bhagat, one of India's most decorated para badminton players, has won six Asian Para Games medals between 2014 and 2023, including two gold and four bronze medals. Bhavina Patel, one of India's leading para table tennis players, has won two Asian Para Games medals between 2018 and 2023, including one silver and one bronze medal. Together, the duo has won eight Asian Para Games medals and will now carry the Tricolour at the head of the Indian contingent as the country begins its



campaign at the fifth Asian Para Games, being held from October 18 to 24, 2026. The Paralympic Committee of India (PCI) will formally see off the Indian contingent at a special Send-Off Ceremony on October 8 at ITC Maurya, New Delhi. The ceremony will be graced by Dr Mansukh Mandaviya, Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports, as Chief Guest, with Raksha Nikhil Khadse, Minister of State for Youth Affairs and

Sports, as Guest of Honour. The selection of Bhagat and Patel carries special significance. Both athletes have been at the forefront of India's rise in para sport, inspiring a generation while consistently delivering on the biggest international stages. Their presence at the head of the contingent will symbolise India's journey from participation to performance, and from representation to recognition on the global para-sport stage. Devendra

Jhajharia, President, Paralympic Committee of India, said, "It is a matter of immense pride for us to have Pramod Bhagat and Bhavina Patel lead the Indian contingent at the Opening Ceremony. Both are exceptional champions who have contributed immensely to the growth of Indian para sport. Their journey, achievements and resilience make them fitting representatives of the Indian contingent, and I am confident they will inspire our athletes as they embark on this important campaign." Bhavina Patel said, "It is a very proud moment for me to be chosen as India's flag bearer. When you carry the Tricolour, you realise that you are representing something much bigger than yourself. I am excited to walk into the Opening Ceremony with Pramod and lead our contingent. I hope all our athletes compete with confidence, enjoy the moment and give their very best for India."

Brilliant Trophy chess tournament to be held in Hyderabad on October 10-11

Hyderabad: Brilliant Chess Academy will organise the 245th Brilliant Trophy Chess Tournament on October 10 and 11 at Brilliant Grammar High School, Dilsukhnagar, with a total prize money of Rs 10,000. Special prizes will be awarded to the top two finishers in the Under-7, Under-9, Under-11, Under-13 and Under-15 age groups in the junior category. Players must register their names at the venue before 1 pm on Saturday, October 10. For further details, contact J



Subrahmanyam on 9247399717. Rapid chess tournament A2H Chess Academy

will organise an open prize-money rapid chess tournament at its Kukatpally facility on Oc-

tober 10, with a total prize money of Rs 15,000.

A total of six rounds will be conducted in the Swiss League format. The latest FIDE rules will be applicable. Each round will have a 40-minute time control, with each player having a base time of 15 minutes and a five-second increment per move. There is no age limit for the event, which is open to all players, including rated, unrated and new players. For registrations, contact S Subba Raju, FIDE Arbiter, on 9866702431.

Ganguly vows to make Delhi Capitals successful in upcoming IPL season

New Delhi: Newly appointed Delhi Capitals (DC) head coach Sourav Ganguly on Wednesday said he was excited to take on his new role and pledged to give his best to make the franchise successful in the upcoming Indian Premier League (IPL) season. Ganguly shares a long-standing association with DC across various capacities. The former India captain served as DC's mentor during the 2019 season before stepping away to assume the role of BCCI president. He was subsequently appointed JSW's director of cricket in 2024. Ganguly, who is also the president of the Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB), made his formal coaching debut with Pretoria Capitals in the 2025 SA20 season and has also been actively involved with the DC setup in the Women's Premier League (WPL). "Well, I'm very, very excited. I've been with them for two seasons, both as director of cricket. The first season in 2019, we lost in the semis and then I went away as BCCI president. So I'm really, really excited for the season ahead. "It's the next year, IPL, and Delhi is a very good team. This is a very good side, and I'll be giving my best to make the side successful," Ganguly said in a video shared on the



franchise's official YouTube channel on Wednesday. Asked what prompted him to take up the role of DC head coach, Ganguly said, "I wanted to experience the mindset of a coach because it's not the same as a player. It's a bit different. You need to understand things. You need to be relaxed. You still need to find a way to get the best out of play-

ers and work with the players because players are different. "It's not you batting or you bowling anymore. It's about somebody else batting and bowling and winning cricket matches. So it's important that you sync with them and understand what they want, how they can get better, and work with them, which is very important," he explained.

Smriti praises Harmanpreet's decade-long leadership after captaincy exit



New Delhi: Newly appointed India women's cricket team captain Smriti Mandhana and middle-order batter Jemimah Rodrigues on Wednesday paid rich tributes to outgoing skipper Harmanpreet Kaur following her decision to step down from leadership across all formats. The BCCI on Tuesday named Smriti as the new captain of the women's national team after Harmanpreet stepped down from the position. Harmanpreet's leadership future came under scrutiny at a BCCI review meeting in Guwahati on Monday following India's second

successive group-stage exit at the T20 World Cup in England in June. "It has been a pleasure playing with you for so many years. Ten years of your leadership have been fantastic, and together, we will strive to bring many more laurels for our nation," Smriti, who will take over the reins starting with India's white-ball series against Zimbabwe from October 16, wrote on her Instagram Stories. Signing off on a high after guiding India to a gold medal at the Asian Games in Japan, Harmanpreet will also be remembered for captaining India to its maiden

women's global championship title at last year's ODI World Cup. In all, Harmanpreet captained India in five Tests, 51 ODIs and 155 T20Is. Echoing similar sentiments, Jemimah, who is recovering from a high-grade hamstring tear sustained while playing The Hundred in England, posted on Instagram: "Congratulations on everything you've achieved. Thanks for the years of leadership and for everything you did for the team!" Smriti's elevation to full-time national captaincy marks a new chapter in her international career. She has represented India in nine Tests, 120 ODIs and 179 T20Is since her debut in 2013, and has been the backbone of the batting line-up alongside Harmanpreet. She played a pivotal role in the recent Asian Games gold medal win by hitting a stellar 45-ball 79 in the final against Sri Lanka in Nisshin, Japan, and enters the India captaincy job on the back of leading Royal Challengers Bengaluru to two Women's Premier League (WPL) titles, in 2024 and 2026.

Regional cricket consumption rises as JioStar launches 'Beyond Boundaries'



Hyderabad: JioStar has announced the launch of 'Beyond Boundaries', an initiative aimed at bringing advertisers closer to the growing and highly engaged regional-language cricket audience through live cricket feeds and pre- and post-programming (PPL) partnerships. Cricket consumption in regional languages is becoming an increasingly significant part of how audiences experience the game, with strong engagement on digital plat-

forms. During TATA IPL 2026, the reach of the Kannada feed increased by 30 per cent year-on-year, while Telugu and Tamil feeds recorded upticks of 23 per cent and 12 per cent, respectively, on JioHotstar. The digital watch-time share of Telugu recorded the highest growth at 30 per cent among the three markets, followed by Kannada and Tamil. The growth reflects the continued evolution of cricket consumption beyond Hindi and English, with au-

diences increasingly engaging with the tournament through feeds that combine the scale of live sport with language and cultural relevance. The 2026 season also witnessed strong growth across digital platforms, with Connected TV reach growing by 22 per cent, underscoring the rapid convergence of television-scale reach with digital precision for advertisers. Digital video views reached 25 billion, marking an 8 per cent year-on-year increase.

Vijay Deverakonda Is Unbothered By Organized Negativity



Vijay Deverakonda's survival in the film industry comes with a big struggle. The actor didn't achieve success overnight; it took more than a decade of hard work. But he is the most trolled person on social media lately. Especially with the release of his upcoming film Ranabaali, there is a lot of hate

directed at him on social media. The film is also set to clash with Rajinikanth's Jailer 2, and the criticism is getting more severe with each passing day.

In view of the same, Vijay said, "All of a sudden, there are a lot of reels popping up on our feeds, straightaway basing our movie and asking people to

watch Jailer 2. But these are not opinions. Usually, anyone who shares opinions will be different from one another. What's currently happening is different, as someone is selectively targeting by pumping this content to the front."

That said, Vijay also shared his views on tasting success and achieving stardom at a young age. Vijay reacted to the hatred he faced, especially on social media. Assessing the same, Vijay said, "If someone thinks that my hard work and passion are a big waste, why should I stop from growing? If he mistakes my honesty for arrogance, why should I start faking? If someone mistakes my self-confidence for attitude, why should I step back? If he can not digest my journey, why should I stop my journey?" said Vijay Deverakonda.

Vijay added, "It is not me who should change, but it is them," said the actor, adding,

"They should also do great in life for themselves. I always embrace success stories and enjoy them. If one person becomes successful, everything around them changes."

Mythri Movie Makers are producing Ranabaali with Vijay Deverakonda, and they have collaborated with him in the past as well. Producer Ravi Shankar also reflected on his journey with Vijay, saying, "Vijay is a very good actor, and I do not know why people target him unnecessarily. I too came across hate posts on Ranabaali and wonder why people do this, especially when the trailer did not come out yet. Vijay is a no nonsense person and we wish him the best."

On that note, Ravi also assured the fans that Ranabaali is going to become a big blockbuster. Directed by Rahul Sankrityan, the film is hitting the screens on October 16th, with Rashmika Mandanna playing the leading lady.

Ranabaali Trailer: Rooted And Ruthless Revolution!

Vijay Devarakonda's Ranabaali has created huge buzz with songs and teaser. Today, makers dropped the trailer in a grad launch event. Ranabaali theatrical trailer offers a striking combination of rooted storytelling and massive cinematic ambition. Director Rahul Sankrityan takes viewers into the harsh reality of British-era India, where famine and colonial exploitation become the foundation for a larger story of resistance. Instead of immediately rushing into hero elevations, the trailer establishes the pain of the people and allows that emotion to fuel the arrival of its central warrior. And then Vijay Deverakonda takes over. As Singanamala Bobbili Ranabaali, Vijay brings extraordinary macho energy to the screen. His rugged styling, intense eyes, powerful physique and forceful dialogue delivery make the character feel like a man born from the soil he protects. The Rayalaseema slang is particu-



larly effective, adding authenticity and giving his mass dialogues different high. When Ranabaali rises against the system, his rage feels justified by everything the trailer has established. The action is ferocious. Vijay's combat sequences have a physical intensity that makes every confrontation feel dangerous and immediate.

The scale of the fights, combined with Ajay-Atul's high-energy score, gives the trailer a pulsating vibe. Arnold Vosloo's Sir Theodore Hector provides a threatening counterpoint to Vijay, while Rashmika Mandanna's Jayamma brings an emotional presence to the narrative. The trailer also leaves intriguing questions

about the mysterious elements hidden within the story. Ranabaali is set to storm theatres worldwide on October 16. Produced by Naveen Yerneni and Y. Ravi Shankar under Mythri Movie Makers and presented by T-Series, Ranabaali has the scale of a pan-India event film while remaining deeply rooted in its regional setting.

Interval & Climax Shoot Left, Fauzi Eyes March 18 Release!

After the producers of Prabhas starrer Fauzi officially confirmed the film's postponement, the curiosity around the film's new release date has gone up. So far, the team has not dropped any hints about the new release date. Sources say the film unit plans to release the movie on 18 March. Directed by Hanu Raghavapudi, the team is still shooting the film.

According to the latest information, the makers are currently filming the interval sequence, one of the movie's major highlights. The current shoot is reportedly set to wrap by the 12th of this month, after which the team will take a short break. However, the makers will embark on a lengthy schedule next month.

The team still needs to shoot the climax portions, which require extensive planning and preparation. The team is likely to begin a new schedule on the 15th of November and may go up to the 15th of December to complete the crucial climax portion and other essential parts so post-production can begin in full. During the one-month schedule, the team plans to wrap up as much of the pending lot as possible. With Prabhas celebrating his birthday this month, the



team wants to release a special teaser on October 23, and we may also get a release-date announcement, provided everything falls in place. If the plan stays on schedule, the team will have ample time to focus fully on post-production and promote the film with ease. However, we will reach a conclusion only later: Prabhas plays an Azad Hind Fauj soldier and is paired with Imanvi, who makes her acting debut. Sajjad Delafrooz, Mithun Chakraborty, and Anupam Kher also appear in the film. Ravi Shankar and Naveen Yerneni are producing the film jointly under Mythri Movie Makers and T-Series Films.

Shruti Haasan Looks Like a Walking Painting



Shruti Haasan was the beauty who ruled Telugu with hits like Gabbar Singh, Race Gurram and Srimanthudu, while Tamil and Hindi never gave her the same run. Yet she is still getting films in every industry, from cameos and short roles to special songs. Shruti looks like a living painting in a black saree dotted with red motifs and finished with a rich red and gold embroidered border. She pairs it with a sleeveless embellished blouse with a mandarin collar. Gold jhumkas, stacked bangles, a sleek centre-parted bun and a confident hand-on-hip pose complete the regal look against the maroon arched backdrop. Next, Shruti will be seen in Aakasam Lo Oka Tara alongside Dulquer Salmaan, where she plays a bold science teacher. The film hits theatres on 20 November 2026.

This Is Not Expected From Thaman!

Music director SS Thaman is well-known for his chill attitude. He is jovial, friendly and even outspoken. Thaman attended Ilu Arjuna movie event at Vizag Gitam college and the young students thronged the event. Speaking to the youngsters, Thaman talked about the over enthusiasm of some netizens where they put many bold comments.

Thaman said he read those comments, some are funny. Thaman said, "One would say he'll build a temple for me. Another one says remove your pants." Thaman went on to say he will take the audience's comments in his stride. But the point here is Thaman should avoid such kind of statements in public especially in front of students.

Social media comments are bold and disgusting too. Some active social media users are trying their best to grab the attention of the celebs by posting such comments. Celebs should usually let them go by ignoring them completely.

These days, some over enthusiastic people on social media use the term "remove your pants (pant vippu)" whenever music directors



like Thaman and Anirudh drop sensational music. Everyone understands what it means, so celebrities should avoid repeating such comments in public.

Especially one of the most popular musicians and most followed celeb like Thaman should refrain citing those on a public stage. This might be a slip of the tongue moment, but many opine that Thaman should not repeat such in the future.

Meanwhile, Thaman made a laudable promise to the students of Gitam college. Thaman promised to make a live concert for the Gitam students for their next college fest and he said he will do it for free. He asked for a stage and good speakers. With this act, Thaman has won the hearts of students.