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17 Killed, Many Injured After Stampede At Kolkata Durga Puja Pandal



Kolkata: At least 17 people died, and several were left injured in a stampede at a popular Durga Puja pandal in North Kolkata on Saturday. The incident took place at the Chore Bagan Sarbojanin Puja pandal. At least 35 people have been rushed to the MCH hospital. "Today (17/10/26), at around 19:40 hrs, a stampede occurred at the exit gate of the Sarada Park (Chor Bagan) Puja Pandal in the Girish Park Police Station area due to heavy crowds of pandal visitors during rain. All injured persons were rescued and taken to MCH," the Kolkata Police said in a statement. "Reinforcement from the Control Room, Fire Brigade, Kolkata Police,

DMG team and ambulances with medical teams were deployed. The Puja Pandal is now closed to visitors. As per the information received so far, around 35 people have been taken to MCH," they added. West Bengal Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari and Chief Secretary Manoj Agarwal reached the hospital to take stock of the situation. Former Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee has expressed shock at the incident and wished the injured speedy recovery. "Deeply shocked and saddened to learn about the stampede at the Chore Bagan Puja Pandal. I pray to Maa Durga for the speedy recovery of all those injured and for

The incident took place at the Chorbagan Sarbojanin Puja pandal in Kolkata. The injured have been moved to the hospital.

strength and courage for their families during this difficult time," she wrote on X. A witness told news agency ANI that many people lost consciousness during the stampede crush. Many were rushed to the hospital on motorcycles. "The entrance was very narrow, and the exit gate was also narrow. There was no lighting in the area...My daughter and granddaughter are hospitalised," said another witness.

Tension Grips Municipal Nomination Process Across Erstwhile Kadapa District

Kadapa District, October 17: Reports have emerged alleging that YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) leaders are conspiring to create disturbances during the local body elections. It is alleged that leaders of the party, referred to by critics as the "Axe Party," brought an interstate criminal gang into Rayachoti. According to unverified reports, individuals allegedly carrying deadly weapons were brought from Punjab by leaders associated with Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy's party. There are also allegations that criminal gangs armed with dangerous weapons were deployed to create unrest in different areas. On Friday, a group allegedly linked to the YSRCP reportedly created a disturbance near the nomination centre in Rayachoti.

Alleged Plans for Large-Scale Violence

Reports suggest that criminal gangs were allegedly mobilised to unleash large-scale violence during the local body elections. YSRCP leaders have been accused of planning to intimidate the public using unlicensed firearms and illegal weapons. Amid these developments, police seized two firearms and ammunition in Rayachoti. Police also arrested 10 alleged members of an interstate gang for possessing illegal weapons.

Tension at Gandhinagar School Nomination Centre

Meanwhile, tensions continued during the nomination process across the erstwhile Kadapa district. Clashes erupted between YSRCP and TDP supporters near the nomination centre at Gandhinagar School in Kadapa city, where both groups reportedly pelted stones at each other. According to allega-

tions, hundreds of YSRCP supporters threw chilli powder at TDP workers and attacked them with stones.

In Rajampet, supporters of YSRCP MLA Amarnath Reddy reportedly arrived at the nomination centre carrying sticks and stones. Tensions escalated when TDP workers attempted to stop them. The situation also remained tense in Rayachoti.

Yemmiganur Municipal Chairman Post Sparks Infighting in YSRCP

In Kurnool district, the contest for the Yemmiganur Municipal Chairman post triggered internal differences within the YSRCP. Party leaders reportedly split into two rival factions, one led by Rajeev Reddy and the other by Butta Renuka. Dr. Raghu filed his nomination as the official YSRCP candidate for the Municipal Chairman post.

Meanwhile, Nazeer Ahmed, a former Municipal Vice-Chairman associated with the Butta Renuka faction, also filed his nomination.

Section 144 Imposed at Chittoor Nomination Centre

Section 144 restrictions have been imposed near the nomination centre for the Chittoor Municipal Corporation elections. Katari Hemalatha filed her nomination as the TDP mayoral candidate, while Chandrasekhar submitted his nomination as the YSRCP candidate.

Minor Tension in Madanapalle

Mild tension prevailed near the nomination centre for the Madanapalle municipal elections after a large number of TDP and YSRCP leaders gathered at the venue. Police intervened and dispersed the party leaders to prevent any untoward incidents.

Rain Alert for Andhra Pradesh: Thunderstorms and Lightning Expected in Next 3 Hours

Amaravati, October 17: The Andhra Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority (APSDMA) has warned that several parts of the state are likely to experience thunderstorms accompanied by lightning over the next three hours. The authority has issued an orange alert for several districts. According to APSDMA, moderate rainfall accompanied by lightning is expected in Alluri Sitarama Raju, Polavaram, Anakapalli, Kakinada, East Godavari, Prakasam, Markapuram, Nellore, Kadapa, Kurnool, Nandyal, Anantapur and Tirupati districts.

The authority also warned that strong winds with speeds ranging from 40 to 50 kmph could accompany the thunderstorms. An orange alert has been issued for the affected areas. Weather experts have forecast thunderstorms with lightning in and around Rampachodavaram, Narsipatnam, Krishnadevipeta, Rowthulapudi, Madugula, Orvakal, Veldurthi, Dhone, Gooty, Podili, Badvel, Satyavedu, Srikalahasti, Sullurupeta, Naidupeta and Gottiprolu. Disaster management officials have advised residents and concerned authorities in these areas to remain alert and take necessary precautions.

Journalist Files Police Complaint Against Rahul Gandhi In 'Pushing' Case

New Delhi: Journalist Richa Parashar had claimed that Gandhi "grabbed" her hand and "yanked" it so hard that she fell on some stairs, with her stomach hitting the ground, during the INDIA bloc's march to the Supreme Court on Monday to submit a petition over alleged irregularities in the Special Intensive Revision process. "I was inside the Supreme Court premises, positioned right by a gate, waiting for him to exit so I could get a soundbite, specifically from Rahul Gandhi... Before I could fully process what was happening, Rahul Gandhi moved forward with a very unpleasant expression. Suddenly, he grabbed my

hand and yanked me forward. He pulled me so hard, and then - it all happened so fast - his bodyguards shoved me away. I fell face-first onto the Supreme Court steps," Parashar, who works for the news website Oneindia, had said from a hospital bed.

On Friday, Parashar submitted a complaint to the deputy commissioner of police of the New Delhi district, demanding the immediate registration of a First Information Report (FIR) against Gandhi and others. She said in the complaint that she is three months pregnant and was subjected to mistreatment, threats, and pushing or the use of force. The sections



cited in the complaint include assault or use of criminal force with the intent to outrage the modesty of a woman, voluntarily causing hurt, and acts done so rashly or negligently as to endanger human life or the personal safety of others. After filing the complaint, Parashar released a

video and thanked people for standing by her. "I have always stood by the truth, and I will continue to do so, no matter how many threats I receive, how much I am trolled, or how many paid campaigns are run against me. For me, my self-respect, my dignity, and my right as a journalist to report and ask

questions are paramount. This is not just a personal right - these are rights granted by the Constitution of India, which must be protected at all costs," she said. "I have submitted a criminal complaint and I have full faith that the law will do its work and an impartial investigation will be conducted.

"Will Sit On Dharna": Supreme Court's Quip Over Delayed Road Work Near Delhi High Court

New Delhi: The protest remark was made in a lighter vein and was particularly striking at a time when Delhi is witnessing multiple protests over various issues. The Supreme Court on Friday quipped the Centre over the delay in resolving road safety concerns near the Delhi High Court, warning officials that

concrete measures must be implemented by November 25 or they would "sit on a dharna" near the court's main gate.

"If you don't do it, both of us (the top court bench) will be at the main gate of the Delhi High Court, and we will not go home until you complete the work. That's for sure. We won't allow you to go

home either," the top court remarked. The protest remark was made in a lighter vein and was particularly striking at a time when Delhi is witnessing multiple protests over various issues. During the hearing, the Additional Solicitor General informed the bench that a committee was examining the issue and

that he had spoken to officials at the highest levels. The court, however, questioned the need for a high-level committee and suggested involving the amicus curiae to identify the precise problems at the site and help find a solution.

The case concerns road safety at the crossing on Mathura Road

near the Delhi High Court, where concerns have been raised over the lack of adequate traffic management and pedestrian safety measures. The bench made it clear that the authorities must move beyond committee discussions and complete the necessary ground-level work before the next hearing.

Municipal Nominations in Full Swing in Nellore; Uncertainty Over Seat-Sharing Among Alliance Parties

From Our Staff Reporter

Nellore: The nomination process for the municipal elections is proceeding amid considerable political activity across the erstwhile Nellore district. Candidates turned out in large numbers to file their nominations in Nellore, Buchireddypalem, Atmakur, Naidupeta, Sullurupeta and Venkatagiri municipalities.

Major Candidates File Nominations

Roop Kumar filed his nomination as the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) candidate for the Nellore Mayor post, while Anam Vijayakumar Reddy submitted his nomination as the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) candidate. However, seat-sharing ar-

rangements among the alliance partners have not yet been finalised. As a result, candidates from all three alliance parties filed nominations independently across the 72 municipal divisions. In other municipalities, the three parties have reached seat-sharing agreements and are contesting the elections together. TDP mayoral candidate Roop Kumar said development works worth thousands of crores of rupees were underway in Nellore. He expressed confidence that, through the collective efforts of Minister Narayana, MP Vemireddy Prabhakar Reddy and MLA Kotamreddy Sridhar Reddy, the alliance would secure sweeping victories with



huge majorities in all divisions of Nellore City and Rural areas. Meanwhile, YSRCP mayoral candidate Anam Vijayakumar Reddy criticised TDP leaders, al-

leging that they had created a situation in which contesting elections had become a battle. He said the Anam family had always competed against wealthy

and influential opponents. However, he alleged that police personnel and government officials were now severely harassing YSRCP candidates.

Tension Outside Darsi Municipal Office; Police Resort to Lathi Charge

Darsi, Prakasam District: Tense conditions prevailed at the Darsi Municipality in Andhra Pradesh's Prakasam district amid the ongoing local body elections. The situation escalated when candidates from the ruling Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and the opposition YSR Congress Party (YSRCP), along with their supporters, arrived at the municipal office simultaneously to file their nominations. Candidates from both the TDP and YSRCP were preparing to submit their nomination papers for the Darsi municipal elections. As a result, a large number of party workers and supporters from both sides gathered at the municipal office premises, leading to a tense standoff. Anticipating possible



scuffles and clashes between the rival groups, police personnel immediately swung into action. To prevent the situation from spiralling out of control, the

police resorted to a lathi charge to disperse supporters of both parties from the area. In view of the attacks and clashes reported during the nomination pro-

cess in other parts of the state, including Rayachoti, Punganur and Dharmavaram, the police deployed heavy security at the Darsi Municipal Of-

fice. Strict security measures have been enforced, with only candidates being allowed inside the municipal office to file their nominations.

EDITORIAL

Drug Mafia Tightens Its Grip on Punjab

The deadly grip of the drug mafia in Punjab is destroying countless lives. While young people are falling victim to drug addiction, courageous activists fighting against this menace are losing their lives. The murder of prominent anti-drug activist Parvinder Singh Jhota, allegedly at the hands of a pharmacist on Tuesday morning, has triggered widespread outrage across the state. Parvinder's father refused to allow his son's last rites to be performed and instead called for a statewide shutdown on Thursday. The bandh received overwhelming support from almost every section of society. Political parties, including the Congress, BJP, Shiromani Akali Dal and Waris Punjab De, along with farmers' organisations and religious institutions, unanimously supported the protest.

Parvinder Singh himself had once been addicted to drugs. However, he overcame his addiction and transformed his life. Realising that the future of Punjab's youth could be protected only by stopping the illegal sale of narcotics, he launched a campaign through an organisation called "FORCE". He regularly recorded videos of illegal drug sales on his mobile phone and broadcast them on Facebook. Tragically, his murder was also reportedly captured on camera while he was livestreaming such activities on Tuesday. The incident sparked widespread public anger across Punjab. Meanwhile, the murder of social media influencer Mad Sandhu is also suspected to have links with an interstate drug mafia. Both incidents highlight the role of digital platforms in exposing illegal activities and the dangers faced by those who challenge organised criminal networks. While the illegal drug trade continues unchecked at the local level, mafia syndicates are increasingly carrying out murders with apparent impunity. As a result, public safety is under serious threat. Allegations of police involvement in drug trafficking, along with attacks on police personnel, have further intensified concerns. Within just two weeks, two Assistant Sub-Inspectors were shot in Tarn Taran and Amritsar districts. Punjab Police constable Karandeep Singh was also reportedly caught with a large quantity of heroin. Regardless of which political party has been in power, the drug mafia has continued its operations. However, the present Aam Aadmi Party government is facing severe criticism over alleged failures in maintaining law and order. In 2025, the Punjab government launched the "Yudh Nashian Virudh" campaign against drug trafficking. Under the initiative, 68,850 alleged drug traffickers were arrested, and properties worth Rs. 319 crore were seized. Nevertheless, these measures have not been sufficient to eliminate the problem. Unemployment and growing frustration among young people are major factors contributing to drug addiction. Many believe that employment opportunities are scarce in Punjab and that moving abroad is their only option for a better future. Parents, too, are increasingly willing to spend substantial amounts of money to send their children overseas. According to a survey conducted by the All India Institute of Medical Sciences during 2017-18, approximately 1.28 per cent of Punjab's population aged between 10 and 75 years was dependent on opioid drugs. Another study conducted by the Chandigarh-based Institute for Development and Communication, covering 1,527 people from border districts, revealed that drug addiction was particularly prevalent among young people aged 15 to 35. The study also indicated that nearly 70 per cent of those affected belonged to rural areas. Against this backdrop, Parvinder Jhota launched his movement to protect young people from the drug crisis. Besides raising awareness among the youth, he encouraged several village panchayats to pass resolutions against drugs. These initiatives posed a direct challenge to the interests of drug trafficking networks. The drug crisis is not merely a public health issue. It is a complex social and legal challenge involving an illegal economy, gangster networks, cross-border smuggling, targeted killings and serious shortcomings in public security. Having witnessed decades of violence, the people of Punjab do not want their state to return to the dark days associated with the widespread use of "chitta", a term commonly used for heroin and other narcotic substances. During that period, drugs such as heroin and cocaine had become dangerously common among young people. The upcoming elections are likely to present several challenges to the Bhagwant Mann government. Recognising the seriousness of the situation, the Aam Aadmi Party government has formulated a two-pronged strategy to combat the drug menace. However, its effectiveness will depend on how successfully these measures are implemented. Ultimately, the drug mafia can be confronted only when courageous social activists like Parvinder Jhota mobilise public awareness and inspire collective resistance. Such efforts require wholehearted support from every section of society.

Jantar Mantar Notes

According to reports published in Delhi newspapers, Jantar Mantar has served as a platform for citizens to register their protests for the past 33 years. People from different communities and regions across the country have gathered there to peacefully express their grievances in various forms and bring their problems to the attention of the Central Government. These demonstrations have generally not created problems either for the government or for the protesters. Whenever authorities found it necessary to remove demonstrators for any reason, they took appropriate action. The protesters were arrested and removed, but they did not resort to violence. During these 33 years, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has also held power at the Centre and in the Municipal Corporation of Delhi. BJP leaders themselves have organised protests at Jantar Mantar. However, on the 11th of this month, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government took a step that no previous government had taken.

Delhi Police Commissioner Anurag Kumar, working under the administrative authority of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, banned Jantar Mantar as a venue for demonstrations. It was the authorities themselves who had earlier designated Jantar Mantar as an official protest site, replacing India Gate, where demonstrations had previously been held. Now, the government, allegedly unable to tolerate peaceful public protests against its actions and fearing that continued demonstrations might threaten its political authority, has closed Jantar Mantar to protesters. Lawyers representing the demonstrators challenged the decision in the Supreme Court. The judges directed the authorities to identify at least an alternative venue for protests. Unable to disregard the court's directions, police officials announced three alternative locations. However, the choice of these locations, according to critics, reveals an attempt to discourage demonstrations rather than facilitate them. The three alternatives are Ramlila Maidan, approximately four kilometres from Jantar Mantar; CBD Ground, about 12 kilometres away; and Burari Ground, nearly 18 kilometres away.

A closer examination of these alternatives suggests that none is particularly convenient or suitable for public demonstrations. Critics therefore argue that the government's actual intention is to prevent protests altogether. Lawyers have brought these difficulties to the Supreme Court's attention and filed a petition seeking the restoration of Jantar Mantar as a protest venue. The outcome of that petition remains uncertain. Meanwhile, the leadership of the Cockroach Janata Party (CJP) has openly declared its defiance of the ban, asserting that Jantar Mantar is not anyone's private property. Young men and women have continued to organise scattered demonstrations there in violation of the restrictions. Police have reportedly detained and beaten protesters on a daily basis. On the 13th, Ashutosh Ranka and Saurav Das were arrested and sent to five days of judicial custody. This was reportedly the first occasion since the current protests began that demonstrators had been remanded to custody for such a period. Although the protesters were demonstrating peacefully, they were accused of disturbing public order. Those who have closely observed the Modi government's conduct over the past few months may not find this surprising.

The difficulties with alternative protest venues

Let us examine the alternative venues announced by the authorities. Police permission is required to organise demonstrations anywhere, including Jantar Mantar. However, while Jantar Mantar has been available free of charge, the other venues reportedly require payment of thousands of rupees per day. This is the first major difference. The second is that, except for Ramlila Maidan, the other two locations are considerably farther away. Third, while Jantar Mantar is specifically designated for demonstrations, the three alternative grounds are also used for weddings, festivals and other events. Consequently, protesters would have to book these grounds well in advance. Fourth, unlike Jantar Mantar, these venues are reportedly available for booking only for limited periods. Fifth, basic facilities such as food, toilets and even minimal shelter are report-



edly inadequate or unavailable for demonstrators at these locations. Sixth, apart from Jantar Mantar and Ramlila Maidan, reaching the other two venues is difficult for people without private vehicles. Seventh, young women, elderly citizens and other members of the public have been participating in the Cockroach Janata Party movement on an unprecedented scale. Lawyers have also been frequently joining the demonstrations after attending court proceedings. The alternative locations would make their participation considerably more difficult. Anyone can understand the possible intention behind proposing such inconvenient alternatives. In simple terms, the objective appears to be to prevent youth-led demonstrations altogether. Farmers who travel in tractors carrying tents and food supplies might still be able to organise large gatherings, although even they would be unlikely to pay thousands of rupees in daily venue charges. The article argues that the Modi government's fear of public demonstrations has driven it to adopt such undemocratic measures. The BJP, which once participated in a major movement against the Emergency imposed in 1975, is now accused of creating conditions reminiscent of that very period. In its anxiety to protect political power, the ruling party appears to be acting out of fear. The author argues that this anxiety itself reveals the extent to which the party's political position has weakened. As CJP leader Abhijeet Dipke has repeatedly remarked, Modi has become a "cowardly dictator". The article also refers to re-

searchers who have observed that many dictators are fundamentally driven by fear.

Jantar Mantar as a symbol of democracy

Although Jantar Mantar has remained one of India's symbols of democracy for decades, the present situation is described as unprecedented. Historically, demonstrations held there concerned specific grievances of particular communities or groups. The recent NEET protests also belonged to this category. However, the controversy surrounding the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls is fundamentally different. The ruling party, according to the author, views the SIR process as directly connected to its political survival. On the other hand, citizens, youth organisations such as the CJP and opposition parties consider the issue inseparable from the survival of India's democratic system. Thus, the dispute has developed into a fundamental political confrontation. The article identifies two major concerns underlying the ruling party's position. The first is the preservation of its existing political authority. The second, described as even more significant, concerns the long-term objective of the Sangh Parivar, of which the BJP is a part, to establish a Hindu Rashtra. According to the author, the ruling establishment fears that the present developments could obstruct that objective. Whether such an obstruction would be permanent cannot be predicted, but even the possibility of a temporary setback appears to be causing anxiety. The combination of these two fears, the article ar-

gues, has led the authorities to behave in an increasingly authoritarian manner. Unable to find a way out of this political predicament, the ruling establishment is allegedly becoming more fearful and more repressive.

Allegations of police repression

The government's actions, the article claims, have shocked not only the younger generation but also civil society and observers around the world. It alleges that police entered the Supreme Court premises, detained lawyers, dragged them along the ground and assaulted them. The article further alleges attacks on Members of Parliament, senior officials who had served the country for decades, intellectuals, writers and artists. According to the author, such incidents were not witnessed even during the Emergency. Those targeted, the article maintains, had not violated any laws. They had merely extended their support to young demonstrators participating peacefully in programmes at Jantar Mantar. The alleged brutal suppression of peaceful protests at a venue that has served citizens for 33 years is described as an unforgettable and disturbing chapter in the history of democratic India. The author characterises these actions as a burden that an increasingly fearful authoritarian establishment has imposed upon itself. Numerous incidents of alleged repression have been reported, while many others may never have come to public attention. The article refers to allegations of misconduct, abusive language and physical attacks against women protesters and women journalists.

Will Ramappa Be Sacrificed for Coal?

The Telangana government is preparing to position the state as a major destination for global investment. At the Global Summit 2.0, scheduled to be held in Hyderabad on December 7, 8 and 9, the government plans to showcase not only the state's industrial progress and investment opportunities but also its rich history, culture and artistic heritage.

In this context, the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Ramappa Temple is expected to stand as a symbol of Telangana's pride. But can the government, which wants to showcase Ramappa's greatness to the world, answer the concerns surrounding its future? While efforts are underway to present the artistic excellence of the Kakatiya dynasty on an international platform, local communities are expressing concern over the potential impact of a proposed opencast coal mine near Ramappa. This contradiction raises a fundamental question: Is protecting Ramappa not even more important than promoting it to the world? The proposed P.V. Narasimha Rao (PVNR) Opencast Coal Mine by Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) at Venkatapur in Telangana's Mulugu district is no small project. According to central environmental appraisal records, the project proposes annual coal production of 2.5 million tonnes, with a maximum

production capacity of 3.75 million tonnes. The mining lease covers approximately 1,071 hectares. The minutes of a Central Environmental Appraisal Committee meeting held in March 2021 indicated that the project could generate employment for 931 people. Coal mining can provide benefits through electricity generation, industrial activity, employment and government revenue. These advantages cannot be dismissed. However, economic benefits must be weighed against the environmental and social costs that local communities may have to bear.

Ramappa is not merely a tourist destination. Its sculptures and architectural techniques bear testimony to the extraordinary skills of the Kakatiya craftsmen. The temple, its lake, surrounding villages and traditional ways of life together form the region's unique cultural landscape. Reports indicate that the proposed mine is located approximately five kilometres from the Ramappa Temple and lake. However, distance alone neither proves the existence of danger nor guarantees safety. The actual risks can be determined only by examining geological formations, groundwater movement, the impact of blasting, the stability of the lake's earthen embankment and the cumulative effects of other mines in the surrounding region. According to offi-

cial records of the National Institute of Technology Karnataka (NITK), Surathkal, a study sponsored by Singareni was conducted in 2020 to assess ground vibrations associated with the proposed Venkatapur mine. The purpose was to provide technical evidence for obtaining a no-objection certificate from the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) concerning Ramappa and for the approval process involving the Directorate General of Mines Safety (DGMS).

Similarly, the National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI) stated in its official records that it conducted a study between 2021 and 2023 to assess the potential effects of the proposed PVNR and KTK OC-III mines on the Ramappa heritage site.

However, the mere fact that studies have been conducted does not mean that all risks have been eliminated. Their complete reports, measurements, methodologies, limitations and recommendations must be carefully examined. According to a report published by The New Indian Express in 2023, the ASI reviewed studies conducted by NEERI and NITK and reportedly found that field measurements did not exceed permissible limits. The report indicated that the ASI had no objection to mining operations. The same news report stated that, following

consultations with the Palampet Special Development Authority (PSDA) and the Kakatiya Heritage Trust, responses were sought to 15 technical questions concerning ground vibrations and the possible effects of groundwater on the temple's sand-box foundation.

These findings must be assessed in a balanced manner. Even if measurements taken at certain locations fall within permissible limits, questions may remain regarding long-term impacts and changes in groundwater conditions. At the same time, the existence of unanswered questions does not establish that the temple will necessarily suffer damage. Therefore, the complete NEERI and NITK reports, along with the original documents supporting the ASI's decision, should be made publicly accessible. Critics have raised several important questions. Could mining operations affect the stability of the earthen embankment of Ramappa Lake? Could groundwater flow patterns change through natural geological formations and rock fractures? Could changes in groundwater levels affect the temple's sand-box foundation? These issues require scientific investigation. Suggesting that mining could alter groundwater movement is not the same as claiming that the lake embankment will inevitably collapse. Equally, it would

be inappropriate to declare the project completely safe without adequate scientific examination. Details of the Geological Survey of India (GSI) observations, groundwater measurements recorded over different periods, the relationship between the mining area and the lake's catchment, groundwater infiltration pathways and assessments of embankment stability should be made public.

The cumulative impact of other mines in the surrounding area must also be evaluated. Regarding vibrations caused by blasting, the structural condition of the temple should be documented before mining begins. Applicable safety standards must be clearly announced, and continuous monitoring should be undertaken. Monitoring data and records should be accessible to independent experts for scrutiny. According to the cost-benefit analysis presented in the Centre for Economic and Social Studies (CESS) Annual Report 2024-25, mining may generate economic benefits, but its environmental costs, particularly those associated with carbon emissions, can be substantial. The report indicated that quantifiable social costs were nearly equal to the economic benefits. It also acknowledged that some costs and benefits could not be quantified and that certain social and environmental impacts might continue even after a mine is closed.

Negligence in Election Duties Will Invite Strict Action: Collector

- Special Planning and Coordination Essential for Elections in Agency Areas



Rampachodavaram, October 17: Polavaram District Collector and District Election Officer K. Dinesh Kumar warned that strict action would be taken against officials found negligent in performing election duties. Addressing a training programme on local body elections at the ITDA conference hall in Rampachodavaram on Sat-

urday, the Collector directed officials to discharge their responsibilities efficiently, ensuring free, fair and peaceful elections.

He stressed the need for close coordination between Revenue and Police departments, particularly in remote Agency areas. Returning Officers and Assistant Returning Officers were instructed to strictly follow

election guidelines during nomination scrutiny and other procedures. The Collector directed officials to ensure drinking water, toilets and other basic facilities at polling stations. He warned that show-cause notices would be issued to officials neglecting their duties, followed by disciplinary action as per election rules. District SP K. Chakravarthy empha-

sized advance security planning, intelligence gathering and safe transportation of ballot boxes from remote areas before nightfall.

Joint Collector Surapati Prashanth Kumar, Sub-Collectors Prithvi Raj Kumar and Narendra Padal, DPO G. Bhaskar, ZP CEO Purushotham and other district officials attended the meeting.

Foundation Stone Laid for District Police Office in Rampachodavaram

- District SP Chakravarthy Performs Special Prayers and Launches Construction Works

- Major Step Towards Strengthening Police Infrastructure in Newly Formed Polavaram District

- Senior Police Officials Attend the Ceremony



Rampachodavaram, October 17 (PEN POWER): In a significant step towards strengthening police administration and infrastructure in the newly formed Polavaram district, the foundation stone was laid for the new District Superintendent of Police (SP) Office at Rampachodavaram on Saturday.

Following the formation of the new Polavaram district, the establishment of a dedicated District SP Office has become essential for ensuring effective police administration, coordination, and supervision of law enforcement activities.

The proposed office building is expected to provide improved infrastructure for administrative op-

erations, monitoring of law and order, coordination among various police wings, and efficient delivery of policing services to the public.

Once completed, the new office is also expected to make it more convenient for citizens to approach senior police officials regarding grievances and other police-related matters.

Senior Police Officials Attend the Ceremony

Additional Superintendent of Police (Administration) Jawali, Rampachodavaram SDPO Ashroff Ali, AR DSP Seetharam, Circle Inspector

Narendra Prasad, Sub-Inspector Ramesh, and Andhra Pradesh Police Housing Assistant Engineer Tejas were among those who participated in the foundation stone-laying ceremony.

The launch of construction works for the District SP Office marks an important milestone in developing essential police infrastructure in the newly established Polavaram district.

The initiative is expected to contribute to more effective police administration and improved public service delivery in the region.

Tension in Pulivendula: SP Warns MP Avinash Reddy of Arrest

From Our Staff Reporter Kadapa, October 17: Tense conditions prevailed in Pulivendula during the filing of nominations for the local body elections. A large number of YSRCP supporters, led by MP Avinash Reddy, gathered at the nomination centre in Pulivendula. Kadapa Superintendent of Police Nachiketh Viswanath arrived in Pulivendula to assess the situation. As the deadline for filing nominations had expired, the SP asked the Kadapa MP to leave the premises. He also warned that Avinash Reddy would be arrested if he failed to comply with the



instructions. Following the SP's warning, MP Avinash Reddy instructed YSRCP supporters

to disperse from the area. He subsequently left the premises as well. Meanwhile, a heated argument

broke out between TDP and YSRCP supporters near the nomination centre in Pulivendula.

SP Reviews Security for Civic Polls

- Strict action against election code violations; intensified checks at checkpoints

RAJAMAHENDRAWARAM, OCTOBER 17, PEN POWER CORRESPONDENT: East Godavari Superintendent of Police D. Narasimha Kishore, IPS, has directed police personnel to remain on high alert to ensure the peaceful, free and fair conduct of the forthcoming municipal elections. Addressing a review meeting at the Kovvur Sub-Divisional Police Office, the SP instructed officials to strictly enforce the Model Code of Conduct and strengthen security arrangements at sensitive and highly sensitive polling stations.

He directed officers to intensify vehicle checks at checkpoints to prevent the illegal transportation of cash, liquor and other inducements intended to in-



fluence voters. The SP also called for preventive action, including bind-over proceedings against habitual offenders and troublemakers, besides the immediate execution of pending non-bailable warrants. Warning against the spread of misinformation, rumours and

inflammatory content on social media, Mr. Kishore said legal action would be initiated against violators. He emphasised the need for effective intelligence gathering, close coordination with local communities and prompt reporting of incidents. Police personnel

were instructed to discharge their duties impartially, without yielding to political pressure, and ensure that voters could exercise their franchise without fear. Kovvur Sub-Divisional DSP G. Devakumar, inspectors and sub-inspectors attended the meeting.

Collector, SP Inspect Arrangements for Municipal Elections

- Review nomination process, strong rooms and polling stations in Kovvur and Nidadavolu

RAJAMAHENDRAWARAM, October 17 (Pen Power Correspondent): East Godavari District Collector Keerthi Chekuri, IAS, and Superintendent of Police D. Narasimha Kishore, IPS, on Saturday inspected the arrangements being made for the forthcoming municipal elections in Kovvur and Nidadavolu.

As part of the inspection, the Collector and the SP visited the municipal offices in both towns and reviewed the ongoing nomination filing process. They directed the officials concerned to ensure transparency and strict adherence to election guidelines. The officials subsequently inspected strong rooms, polling stations and surrounding areas to assess security arrangements and infrastructure facilities. They reviewed barricading, traffic management, entry and exit routes for voters and other logistical arrangements required for the smooth conduct of polling. The Collector and the SP instructed officials to identify sensitive and vulnerable polling locations in advance and implement adequate security measures to prevent untoward incidents. They emphasised the importance of close coordination between police and revenue departments to ensure free, fair and peaceful elections. The officials were also directed to provide essential facilities at polling stations



and ensure that voters could exercise their franchise without inconvenience or intimidation.

Mr. Narasimha Kishore warned that violations of election regulations would invite strict legal action. He stressed the need for preventive mea-

sures to maintain law and order throughout the election process.

The Collector directed the departments concerned to complete all arrangements well ahead of polling day. Kovvur Revenue Divisional Officer K. Anand Rao, Municipal

Commissioner G. Sandeep, Kovvur DSP G. Devakumar, South Zone DSP A. Sivapriya, Kovvur Circle Inspector P. Viswam, Nidadavolu Circle Inspector P.V.G. Tilak, sub-inspectors and other police personnel accompanied the officials during the inspection.

Jagan Should Stay Away from Politics Until Investigations Are Completed: Somireddy

From Our Staff Reporter Nellore, October 17: MLA Somireddy Chandramohan Reddy launched a scathing attack on former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, describing him as a "rare piece" in Indian politics. He alleged that Jagan was an accused in so many cases that even the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and Enforcement Directorate (ED) would struggle to find sufficient time to investigate them all. Somireddy accused Jagan and his associates of being responsible for desecrating the sacred Tirumala Srivari prasadam through the alleged use of adulterated ghee. He claimed that the ED investi-

gation was exposing the details of the alleged adulterated ghee scandal.

He further stated that with the CBI court conducting daily hearings, Jagan would have to spend much of his time attending court proceedings. He demanded that Jagan stay away from politics until the investigations and trials in the cases against him were completed, if he had genuine integrity. Somireddy alleged that Jagan had amassed illegal assets worth Rs. 43,000 crore by misusing his father's political authority and said the case had reached the stage of daily hearings in the CBI court. He also stated that the ED had attached assets worth Rs. 130 crore belonging to individuals and organisations



accused in the adulterated ghee case. Referring to the murder case involving Jagan's paternal uncle, Somireddy claimed that the ED was seriously examining

alleged financial transactions involving Rs. 40 crore. He said several prominent leaders, including MP Avinash Reddy, were appearing before the ED for questioning.

Supreme Court-Appointed Panel Invites Complaints Over July Jantar Mantar Protest Violence, Launches Portal For Victims And Police Personnel



New Delhi: The Supreme Court-constituted High Powered Enquiry Committee (HPEC) has started inviting complaints and representations from people affected by incidents relating to violence at Jantar Mantar in Delhi and other cities in July, an official said. For the convenience of the affected people, including the affected police personnel, the HPEC, headed by former Justice R. Subhash Reddy, has launched a portal, <http://hpec.nic.in>, the Union Home Ministry official said in a statement. The five-member HPEC has been tasked to look into all aspects of the incidents relating to violence at Jantar Mantar, Delhi, and at places outside the Capital, in July

affected persons, said the statement. The affected persons and other stakeholders are encouraged to access the portal and upload their complaints/representations, making use of the formats as applicable, it said. Apart from the above, any person wishing to provide information/suggestion relating to the issues referred to the HPEC under the Supreme Court orders dated August 18, 2026 and September 10, 2026 may also do so through the portal, the statement said. Those who wish to submit the complaints, representations and other relevant material physically can do so at the Office of the HPEC at Shiksha Sadan, 17, Rouse Avenue Institutional Area, New Delhi 110002 between 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. on all working days. Submissions can also be sent by post at the above address or by email, the statement said. While constituting the HPEC, a Supreme Court bench headed by Chief Justice Surya Kant directed the panel to look into "the use of excessive

force and violence against protestors by police authorities and other agencies, including the deployment of pellet guns, electric batons, lathi charges, and tear gas without adequate warning or proportionality, resulting in severe bodily harm and injuries, some of which are alleged to be of a grievous and lasting nature". The CJI clarified that the larger constitutional questions related to facial recognition technology, surveillance and privacy will be decided by the apex court itself and not by the committee. The Supreme Court also directed the presentation of CCTV footage to the Committee for investigation. "The Police Authorities, Para-Military Forces, and other Investigating Agencies, who were directed vide order dated July 28, 2026, to preserve all CCTV footage, drone footage, body-worn camera recordings, videography, wireless communication records, and PCR call logs about the student protests, and furnish the entire record to the HPEC and extend their full cooperation," it said.

Unstabilised Approach, Low-Altitude Stall Caused 2023 Mumbai Learjet Crash: AAIB Report

Mumbai: The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) has identified the flight crew's decision to continue an unstabilised approach under marginal weather conditions and improper aircraft handling as the probable cause behind the crash of a VSR Ventures Learjet 45XR at the Mumbai airport in September 2023. According to the final report released by AAIB on Saturday, the handling lapses resulted in an aerodynamic stall at low altitude, leading to the accident on September 14, 2023. The aircraft, operating a non-scheduled passenger charter flight from Visakhapatnam to Mumbai, was carrying eight people on board, including a Pilot-in-Command (ATPL holder), a co-pilot (CPL holder), one flight attendant, and five passengers. The AAIB noted several critical contributory factors, including the crew's failure to monitor airspeed, a delayed go-around decision, adverse weather conditions with strong tailwinds and poor visibility, and an undue commitment by the cockpit crew to complete the landing before the onset of Mumbai airport's



scheduled restricted operational hours. The investigation was conducted under the Aircraft (Investigation of Accidents and Incidents) Rules, 2017, in coordination with the US National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) and technical advisers from the aircraft manufacturer in compliance with ICAO Annex 13 standards. In its safety recommendations, the AAIB urged the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) to review recurrent pilot training requirements—specifically emphasizing stall recovery in landing configuration—and conduct a one-time audit of training records of

fixed-wing pilots working with non-scheduled and general aviation operators. The bureau also recommended stricter enforcement of go-around procedures during unstabilised approaches, enhanced crew resource management training, stronger internal audits and verification of operator manuals. Furthermore, the report called for improved checklist compliance by VSR Ventures, proper maintenance of aircraft logbooks and adherence to wake turbulence separation norms by AAI air traffic controllers. On September 14, 2023, a Learjet 45XR operated by VSR Ventures crash-landed

at Mumbai Airport during heavy rain and low visibility on a flight from Visakhapatnam. During the landing approach, the aircraft became unstable, veered off course, and triggered stall and ground-proximity cockpit warnings before coming down off the runway and catching fire. All eight people on board were evacuated and hospitalized with injuries. Emergency crews extinguished the fire, and an official investigation was launched by Indian aviation authorities alongside the US National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) to determine the cause of the accident.

Mumbai: Special PMLA Court Denies Relief To Mehul Choksi's Wife Priti, Refuses To Cancel Bailable Warrant

Mumbai: The special PMLA court has refused to grant any relief to Priti, wife of Mehul Choksi, who has been booked by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) for her role in a money laundering case linked to her husband. The court refused to cancel the bailable warrant against her, observing that she herself was a wrongdoer while fleeing abroad. Priti's lawyers, Yash Agarwal, Rahul Agarwal and Jasmin Purani, had moved applications seeking cancellation of the warrant and had also pleaded with the court to recall its order issuing the warrant against her. They had accused the ED of suppressing material facts while seeking the warrant against her for failing to answer summons asking her to appear. It was contended that Priti is a resident of Belgium and that the ED had known this from the beginning. Hence, they argued that the agency ought to have served the summons at her Belgian address. The Ministry of Home Affairs has issued guidelines on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, but the ED had failed to follow the procedure, the defence argued. The CBI is the proper authority, as per its manual, to serve the process/summons on accused persons residing abroad, and not the ED. The summons sent to the present accused or her husband by email did not constitute valid service.



The service of summons at the applicant-accused's last known address was not proper, Priti's lawyer contended, accusing the ED of suppressing these facts and obtaining a warrant against her. ED prosecutor Kavita Patil contested their claims and argued that Priti and her husband, Mehul, were absconders. It was claimed that summons had been served at their last known address in India. She claimed that the order issuing the bailable warrant was just and proper. "After issuance of Bailable warrant only she made appearance through her advocate by submitting appearance memo and Vakalatnama. However, there is no authenticity to these appearance memo and vakalatnama by the concerned embassy of Belgium by making necessary endorsement." Besides, the ED contended that there was no proof that Priti was

still in Belgium. It was also contended that Priti had not filed any authenticated document on record to show her valid address. She had been avoiding appearing before the court for years, the ED contended. The court accepted the prosecution's contentions and said, "the applicant-accused is watching this proceeding but hiding her existence in abroad. Certainly she has knowledge about this proceeding since beginning." While refusing to set aside the warrant and recall the order issuing it, the court said, "they have not yet informed the Investigating Agency/ Court about their legal existence/stay in any country. Therefore, initially the ED has rightly served the summons to the applicant on her last known address in India. The applicant herself is a wrong-door while fleeing away to abroad and hence she cannot

claim that the Investigating Agency should serve the summons to her on any unauthorized address in foreign country." "The guidelines issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs are for the purpose to facilitate the investigating agency to serve the summons and to process the extradition proceeding against the absconding accused. But absconding accused has no right to claim the process on any unauthorized address in foreign country," the court said. "The court hence held that the ED had rightly served the summons on Priti and her husband at their last known address, which they had failed to comply with. Hence, the court said, "there is no reason to cancel the said order in absence of the applicant-accused before this Court. So also, there is no reason to recall the said order."

BJP, Shiv Sena (UBT) Clash Over Naming Vidyavihar East-West Connector After Nana Patekar Or Captain Smit Machchhar

Mumbai: A controversy has emerged over the proposed naming of the newly constructed Vidyavihar East-West connector near Vidyavihar railway station, with Shiv Sena (UBT) and the BJP proposing different names for the structure. Days after BJP MLA Parag Shah proposed naming the bridge after Captain Smit Machchhar, an Indian commercial pilot credited with thwarting a mid-air hijacking attempt on a Tel Aviv-bound flydubai flight, Shiv Sena (UBT) activists put up a banner demanding that it be named "Padma Shri Nana Patekar Setu". Earlier, former Shiv Sena (UBT) corporator Tukaram Patil, in a letter to Municipal Commissioner Ashwini Bhide and Mayor Ritu Tawde, had demanded that the bridge be named after actor Nana Patekar. "We strongly demand that the bridge be named after Padma Shri Nana Patekar, a son of Maharashtra who has left an indelible mark on Marathi theatre, Marathi cinema



and Indian cinema through his acting, and has made a significant contribution to helping farmers and the underprivileged through the Naam Foundation," Patil said. Leader of the House Ganesh Khankar accused the Sena (UBT) of politicising the issue to claim credit for the naming proposal. "Nana Patekar is one of the most talented actors in the country. I feel it would be more appropriate to name a major theatre or theatre complex after him

rather than a bridge," Khankar said. The 613-metre-long, four-lane Vidyavihar flyover will connect Ramkrishna Chemburkar Marg in the east with Lal Bahadur Shastri Marg in the west, while providing direct pedestrian access to Vidyavihar railway station. The connector is expected to cut peak-hour travel time between the eastern and western parts of the suburb from 40-45 minutes to 10-15 minutes and ease congestion along the Vidyavihar-

Ghatkopar-Kurla corridor. Built over Central Railway tracks, the flyover features a 100-metre railway span, with each girder weighing approximately 1,100 metric tonnes. Its approach roads measure 220 metres on the eastern side and 330 metres on the western side. The project also includes links connecting the bridge to station footpaths and the reconstruction of ticket booking offices, the station master's office and staircases, the BMC said.

Imran Khan Moves Bombay HC Against Notice Directing Him To Leave India By October 28

Mumbai: Actor Imran Khan has approached the Bombay High Court challenging a notice directing him to leave India by October 28 over his alleged participation in a political protest in Mumbai, calling the order arbitrary, unlawful and disproportionate. The 43-year-old actor, a United States citizen and Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cardholder, has sought the quashing of the Leave India Notice issued by the Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO), along with an interim stay on its implementation. In his petition, Khan contended that the notice violated his fundamental rights under Articles 14 and 21 of the Constitution. He argued that there was no provision under the existing law prohibiting OCI cardholders from participating in peaceful protests.



"The notice has been issued without disclosing any reasons, supporting material, or specific statutory contravention," the plea

stated, adding that it was issued without an inquiry, show-cause notice or an opportunity for him to explain his position. The petition is expected to be mentioned for an urgent hearing before a bench of Chief Justice Mahesh Chandra Tripathi and Justice Advait Sethna on October 19. Khan was briefly detained by Mumbai Police on October 10 near August Kranti Maidan, where he had gone amid a protest linked to an agitation organised by the Cockroach

Janta Party in Delhi. The demonstration called for the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar over the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. According to Khan, no gathering was underway when he reached the spot. He claimed that he neither entered a restricted or barricaded area nor disobeyed any police instruction to leave. He further alleged that he was apprehended only after media personnel surrounded him

while he was returning to his vehicle. The actor argued that he had not violated any provision of the Immigration and Foreigners Act or the Citizenship Act. He also highlighted that he had lived in India since the age of two and had deep familial, marital, educational and professional ties to the country, with no criminal antecedents. Authorities, however, issued the departure notice invoking Sections 7(2)(c) and 29 of the Immigration and Foreigners Act.

Indian Army Seeks To Terminate Major Over Alleged Affairs With Fellow Officers' Wives

New Delhi: The Indian Army is pursuing administrative termination of a Major accused of having extramarital relationships with the wives of two fellow officers, opting to proceed without a court-martial. The officer was issued a show-cause notice on August 10 under Army Rules 19 and 14, asking him to explain why his service should not be terminated through administrative action. The notice stated that the circumstances made a court-martial inexpedient. The Major approached the Principal Bench of the Armed Forces Tribunal (AFT) in New Delhi, seeking to stop the proceedings. However, the

tribunal declined to grant interim relief. On October 14, a bench comprising Justice Rajendra Menon and Lieutenant General CP Mohanty directed the officer to raise his objections in his response to the show-cause notice. At the same time, it instructed the Army to provide him with the findings of the Court of Inquiry and the proceedings of the hearing of charge, both of which he had sought. The matter dates back to August 2023, when the officer's then-wife approached the Additional Directorate General of Discipline and Vigilance at Army headquarters with allegations of adultery, sub-

stance abuse and neglect. She further alleged that the Major had relationships with four women, including the wives of two serving Army officers. In October 2023, Headquarters 55 (I) Mechanised Brigade initiated a Court of Inquiry into alleged conduct unbecoming of an officer and a gentleman. The inquiry covered the allegations concerning the relationships with fellow officers' wives, and further investigations followed. The officer has challenged the inquiry process, claiming the Army violated Army Rule 180, which provides safeguards to personnel whose character or

military reputation may be affected by an investigation. According to the Major, the women named in the allegations and their husbands were neither summoned nor examined, despite his repeated requests. He has also raised concerns over alleged procedural lapses involving the seizure of his electronic devices, including mobile phones, a laptop and pen drives, as well as the search of his married accommodation. In March 2025, the Army prepared a tentative chargesheet under Sections 45 and 63 of the Army Act. It subsequently compiled a summary of evidence and an additional summary of evidence.

Noida Couple, 3 Children Ate Noodles At Night. They Were Found Dead Next Day



Greater Noida: Five members of a family, including three children, were found dead under suspicious circumstances in Rabupura area of Greater Noida. Police said preliminary findings suggest the deaths could be a case of food poisoning and hence a field unit and a forensic team are conducting a thorough investigation at the scene. Police have identified the victims as Mahesh (37), his wife Lalita (35), their sons Laddu (11) and Sakshat (3) and daughter Mishti (7). Neighbours and the mother of one of the victims, Mahesh, said that the family had consumed noodles the previous night. The exact cause of death has not yet been confirmed. Further legal action will be taken based on the post-mortem report and the results of other scientific investigations. Meanwhile, local police, senior officials, ambu-

lance and a team from the Food Safety Department immediately arrived at the scene after receiving the information. Inquest proceedings are being completed, and the bodies have been sent for post-mortem examinations. Speaking on the incident, BJP's Jewar MLA Dharendra Singh, said he has apprised the chief minister's office about the tragic incident. "Particular attention is being paid to determining whether any toxic substance was present in the food consumed by the family or whether the deaths occurred due to some other reasons. The exact cause of the deaths can be confirmed only after the post-mortem reports are received," he said. "The untimely death of five members of a family, including three children, in such circumstances is deeply painful and heart-wrenching. The police, ad-

ministration and food department teams are engaged in the investigation," Singh added, quoted PTI. Greater Noida Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Shrawan Kumar Singh told ANI, "A very tragic incident has occurred in Rabupura; a husband and wife, along with their three children, have died. Upon receiving the information, we arrived at the scene, and ambulances also reached the location. Other departments, including the forensic team, are conducting a scientific investigation." The DCP said the family had food around 10 pm before going to sleep. The incident came to light on Saturday morning when one of the children did not wake up for an examination. "They had a meal at 10 to 10:30 PM. When one of the children did not wake up in the morning for an exam, the situation came to light," Singh

said, the news agency quoted. "We are proceeding based on the items they consumed, and further action will be taken following a more detailed investigation. Once the report is available, the actual truth behind the incident and why this happened will be revealed," Singh said.

Neighbours Say Mahesh's Mother Had Cooked Noodles

Meanwhile, neighbours of the family have alleged that domestic disputes over property had been taking place within the house. They said the mother of Mahesh had already transferred the property to her daughter's name and had told the victim family to leave the house. The neighbours mentioned there used to be constant arguments among them. The neighbours further claimed that the man's mother had cooked noodles and served it to the family after they returned home from visiting a fair. "The children were sleeping. The mother of the man who died was fighting and saying that she would not let them live here and would put all the property in her daughter's name. She had already put all the property in her daughter's name. She told them to leave the house," the neighbours told ANI. "They used to fight every day... They should be punished strictly," the neighbours added.

Nagpur Teen Arrested For Rape, Tried To Abort Minor's Pregnancy Using YouTube



Nagpur: An 18-year-old boy has been arrested in Maharashtra's Nagpur on a rape charge after his 16-year-old schoolmate became pregnant and gave birth at home following an alleged attempt by him to terminate her pregnancy using a herbal concoction prepared after watching YouTube videos. According to the police, the boy and the girl studied at the same school in Nagpur, where they became friends. The accused allegedly became physically involved with the girl last year at his home when his family members were away. Police said he continued to have physical relations with her on the pretext of marrying her. After the girl became pregnant, the 18-year-old allegedly searched YouTube for ways to induce an abortion instead of seeking immediate medical help. He is accused of preparing a herbal medicine concoction after watching tutorials on the platform. For several weeks

leading up to the onset of labour pains on Monday, the girl was allegedly forcefully fed the herbal mixture and other abortion pills. However, the alleged attempt to terminate the pregnancy failed as it was already at an advanced stage. The 16-year-old girl's health deteriorated and she subsequently gave birth to a baby at home. Earlier this week, the girl's family rushed her to a government hospital, while the newborn

was taken to a private hospital. Doctors at the Government Medical College and Hospital (GMCH) alerted the police after the girl developed severe medical complications following childbirth. The police recorded the girl's statement and registered a rape case against the 18-year-old on Thursday. He was subsequently arrested. A case has been registered under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita

(BNS) and the POCSO Act. According to police sources, although the boy is now 18, he was a minor at the time of their first physical relationship. His age at the time of the alleged offence will be verified while determining the legal proceedings. Police sources said the rape survivor will receive timely counselling and psychological support, and the case will be transferred to the Child Welfare Committee.

1 Killed As Speeding Delhi Transport Bus Rams Into Vehicles, Pedestrians



New Delhi: One person was killed, and two others were injured after a Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) bus hit vehicles and pedestrians in Delhi's Anand Parbat area on Saturday, officials said. According to the officials, an e-rickshaw, two bikes, and a scooter rider were hit by the bus, which was heading towards Tikri Border. One person died on the

spot, while two others were seriously injured and were shifted to the hospital. The officials added that the bus driver fled the scene following the accident. According to the eyewitnesses, the bus was speeding when it hit the pedestrians. "The bus was being driven by a female driver. The bus was at a very high speed. Pedestrians tried to save themselves; however, some

were hit by the bus. Around 4-5 people were injured," an eyewitness told IANS. "There is always a traffic jam in this area. There is no place to walk on this road. Rickshaws and shops have encroached upon the road. Everyone fears to walk on this road. Today, a person has died because of all this," another said. "Several accidents keep happening here. The situation is miser-

able. The police also don't arrive on time," a local told IANS. Police and forensic teams have reached the spot and are investigating the incident. Further details are awaited. In a separate incident, one person was killed, and three others were injured after a truck hit two motorcycles near Crescent Apartment Red Light in Dwarka Sector 18 in the early hours of Saturday. According to Delhi Police, the fatal accident occurred at around 12.45 am. The two motorcycles were carrying four people, with two persons on each vehicle, when the truck struck them. Police apprehended the truck driver, Hotam Singh, 41, a resident of Agra, Uttar Pradesh. The truck, both motorcycles, and other exhibits were seized. A case has been registered at Dwarka North police station under relevant sections, and further investigation is underway.

Reactor Blast In Gujarat Kills 5, Gas Leak Shrouds Area In Dust And Haze

Bharuch: At least five workers were killed and six injured after a 15-kilolitre reactor exploded during a hydrogenation process at a pharmaceutical manufacturing unit in Gujarat's Bharuch district late on Friday night, with a reported methylene dichloride (MDC) gas leak adding to the impact of the incident, according to reports on Saturday. The explosion occurred at SynZeal Pharmachem in the Saykha Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation (GIDC) estate in Vagra taluka. The force of the blast sent debris from the reactor beyond the company premises, while machinery parts and metal sheets were scattered across the plant, according to reports. The subsequent gas leak reportedly left the area shrouded in dust and haze, with workers and others at the site complaining of severe eye irritation. The injured were taken to hospitals in Bharuch and Vadodara for



treatment, while the bodies of the victims were shifted to Bharuch Civil Hospital. The incident triggered panic across the industrial estate, prompting police and district authorities to reach the site and initiate rescue operations. Teams from the Gujarat Pollution Control Board (GPCB) and the Industrial Safety and Health Department also began an investigation into the explosion and the circumstances surrounding the reported

chemical leak. Bharuch Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Manisha Manani, said the blast occurred during the hydrogenation process. Officials are examining the cause of the explosion and whether the unit complied with applicable industrial safety requirements. The precise cause has not yet been established. Four of the dead were reportedly identified as Jaideep Patel, 27, a shift in-charge from Vagra; Aniketkumar Harikishor, 24;

Arjun Ramsingh Gautam, 20; and Vrund Talavia. Authorities were still verifying the identity of the fifth victim. The company had reportedly begun operations with 53 employees and had not completed a year at the Saykha GIDC estate. The investigation is expected to establish what caused the reactor to explode, the extent of the chemical release and whether any safety lapses contributed to the deaths and injuries.

Gurugram Woman Found Dead In Bathroom With Hands Tied, Face Covered In Tape



Gurugram: A woman was found dead with her hands tied and her face covered in tape inside her bathroom here on Friday, police said. The woman, Neetu (34), was first discovered by her husband when he returned home, which he said seemed to have

been ransacked. The husband, Prashant, rushed to the hospital where doctors declared her dead. The fact that belongings were found scattered inside the house in Dohla village near Sohna suggests the possibility of a robbery, they added. Prashant was a teacher at a private

school. "The case is under investigation. Footage from nearby CCTV cameras is being examined to identify suspects. At present, the motive for the murder has not been established, nor has it been confirmed whether any items were stolen from the house. A probe is underway and the picture will be cleared soon," said a senior police officer. According to the police, the incident came to light when the woman's husband returned home from school with their children and found his wife in the bathroom. After

getting information, a police team reached the spot along with the FSL team and launched an investigation. Suspecting that something was amiss, he searched the house and found his wife in the bathroom. Her hands were tied, and her face was covered with tape. He immediately rushed her to a private hospital in Sohna, where doctors declared her dead, the complainant said. An FIR was registered against the unknown accused and police sent the body for a post-mortem, police said.

Gujarat Government School Teacher Rapes Girl, Molests 3 Others, Arrested

Gandhinagar: A government school teacher has been arrested in Gujarat's Amreli district for allegedly molesting four girl students and raping one of them, Deputy Superintendent of Police (Rajula) Nayana Goradiya said on Saturday. A complaint under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and charges of rape were registered at Jafraabad Town Police Station on Friday, Goradiya said. Explaining how the alleged incidents came to light, Goradiya said the Jafraabad Police Station team had been conducting seminars on 'Good Touch and Bad Touch' at the school under Amreli district's 'Mission Smile' initiative. "Although these incidents had been going on for a long time, the intervention and awareness



created through 'Mission Smile' gave the girls courage. In particular, the girl who was subjected to the sexual assault found the courage to inform her parents/guardians at home," she said. According to the DSP, the parents immediately contacted the police,

following which the police team, along with the Station Officer, reached the school and initiated an inquiry. "During the initial inquiry and investigation, several facts came to light—specifically, that the accused used to call these female students into the staff room under the

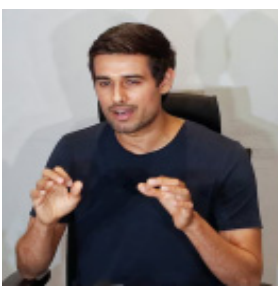
pretext of having them make tea, where he would molest them, and committed rape against one student," Goradiya said. She added that the accused had been arrested and taken into police custody. Further investigation into the case is underway.

YouTuber Dhruv Rathee Faces Bailable Warrants In 2018 Defamation Case

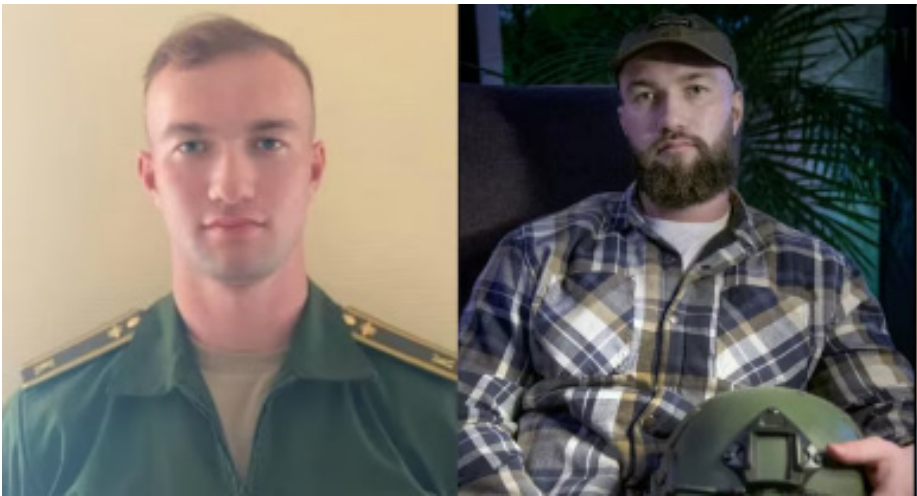
New Delhi: A Delhi court on Saturday issued bailable warrants against YouTuber Dhruv Rathee in a 2018 defamation case filed by a BJP IT Cell member after a process server reported that his house was locked while attempting to serve a summons notice. Judicial Mag-

istrate Rahul Jain issued the warrants in the case filed by Vikas Pandey, who accused Rathee of defamation over a video uploaded on his YouTube channel. The detailed order is awaited. The court has listed the matter for further proceedings on October 31. The develop-

ment comes days after the court issued fresh summons to Rathee on October 12, noting that the complainant had been trying to serve him for several years. In the order, the court directed that fresh summons be issued to Rathee at his residence in Gurugram, Haryana.



A Russian Officer Helped Ukraine Kill 300 Soldiers, Then Escaped To Kyiv: Report



A 26-year-old Russian military officer secretly turned against his country and provided battle plans and intelligence to Ukraine, helping its forces kill more than 300 Russian soldiers before he escaped across the frontline and joined a unit fighting against Russian President Vladimir Putin's government, a Wall Street Journal report said. Lt. Lev Stupnikov used his position in the Russian army to share sensitive military information with Ukrainian intelligence. His role gave him access to troop movements, battle plans and feeds from reconnaissance drones and surveillance cameras. However, his secret work came at a personal cost. After reaching Ukraine, he joined the fight against Moscow but eventually lost contact with his wife, who accused him of betraying both Russia and their marriage.

"There's Just Meat": How He Helped Ukraine Strike Russian Troops

A graduate of the Budyonny Military Academy of the Signal Corps, Stupnikov was appointed chief signals officer of a battalion tasked with capturing Vuhledar, a key stronghold in Ukraine's defence of the Donbas region. His job was to keep commanders connected with their units and ensure they received information from surveillance systems. Instead, he secretly supplied Ukrainian military intelligence with precise details about Russian positions and planned movements. On a freezing morning in eastern Ukraine, Stupnikov

pretended to suffer from stomach cramps to get away from his fellow soldiers. Soon afterwards, Ukrainian missiles struck the coordinates he had shared. The attack killed 68 Russian soldiers, including Colonel Gusein Musayev, who was supposed to be one of Kyiv's top targets. Another 60 were wounded. "Were there explosions? Send a photo", a Ukrainian contact messaged Stupnikov after the strike. "There's just meat," he replied. His role was part of a wider intelligence operation that relies on Russians willing to pass information to Ukraine. According to the report, thousands of people, including soldiers and homemakers, have been communicating with Ukrainian agents through encrypted platforms.

Russia's Invasion Changed Everything For Him

Stupnikov's decision to turn against his own military grew out of his opposition to the invasion of Ukraine. In February 2022, he woke up to videos of Russian helicopters flying over Ukrainian cities and bombs exploding as Moscow launched its full-scale invasion. The images left him horrified. "They were dropping bombs on innocent civilians," he said. "It was evil." He struggled to understand how his fellow soldiers could carry on with their lives while the war unfolded. At home, he spent evenings with his wife, Liza, watching videos featuring Russian opposition figures and interviews with Ukrainian-held Russian prison-

ers of war. Even at his military academy, a small group of cadets shared similar views, exchanging glances that suggested they understood one another. Some tried to leave the academy, but their requests remained pending for months.

"I couldn't show my emotions," he recalled. "But inside, I was on fire."

His Mother Helped Him Contact Ukrainian Intelligence

Stupnikov's mother, Tatiana Yantsen, also opposed Putin. The 49-year-old office worker had taken part in protests against his rule. In February 2024, three months after her son began serving on the frontline, she contacted Dmytro Karpenko, a computer programmer who worked closely with Ukrainian military intelligence. Karpenko operated a network of Russian informants using encrypted communication platforms. He had also gained attention for posting video interviews with Russian prisoners of war on YouTube. Some servicemen reportedly contacted him after returning home and offered military information in exchange for money. In October 2023, Karpenko announced a payment of 250,000 rubles, or about \$2,700, to Russian servicemen willing to provide information to help Ukraine's war effort. Stupnikov's escape was eventually arranged through this network. He, Karpenko and Ukrainian scouts used encrypted applications to work out a route through the dangerous frontline.

The Escape Across The Frontline

In July 2024, Stupnikov escaped at night from his Russian unit and headed north towards Ukrainian positions. Ukrainian operators followed his movements in real time from an underground bunker using a live video feed. After around 40 minutes, he approached a tree line where soldiers from Ukraine's 72nd Brigade were positioned. The Ukrainian troops saw a man in a Russian uniform approaching their position. Peering out from a dugout, they aimed their rifles at him and demanded, "What's the passcode?" Stupnikov gave the pre-arranged answer, "peanut shop", after which he was led into Ukrainian custody. He later joined the Russian Volunteer Corps (RVC), a Ukrainian army unit made up entirely of ethnic Russians fighting against Putin's government. He now serves as a communications specialist. In February 2025, his mother and sister packed a backpack and a suitcase each and prepared to travel to Moldova. From there, they planned to cross into Ukraine on foot and meet Karpenko. Meanwhile, Tatiana had spent months dealing with calls from Russian military officials who wanted her to persuade her son to surrender if he was still alive. She acted like a distressed mother, insisting that finding him was the authorities' responsibility. A year later, Stupnikov recounted his story in a two-hour video interview with Karpenko. The interview brought renewed attention to his defection and the intelligence he had supplied to Ukraine. However, Stupnikov insisted that his actions were consistent with the oath he had taken at the military academy nearly a decade earlier. He had promised to defend his country's freedom, independence and constitutional order. He believes Putin's invasion destroyed those very principles. "Did I betray my oath? I pledged to defend freedom, independence, and the constitutional order," he said. "But Putin destroyed all three."

Indian-Origin Man In US Kills Wife For Dating Colleague, Tries To Go To India

New Delhi: A 31-year-old Indian-origin man in Chicago, United States, stabbed his estranged wife to death after she began dating one of their former colleagues and refused to reconcile with him. The incident took place in August this year - nearly three months after the accused, Ankur Patel, and his 32-year-old wife - who have a daughter together - had separated, following which she had moved out of their Wisconsin home in May. According to reports, the woman had briefly moved back with Patel after their separation due to pressure from family members but left again soon, following which she began dating another man and moved to Louisiana. She had allowed their daughter to remain with Patel. However, officials said that Patel subsequently began threatening to kill both his estranged

wife and her new partner, and also did not allow her to speak to their daughter - leading to frequent fights. Around two weeks before the crime, Patel reportedly moved in with his relatives in Chicago and sent his daughter to live with his parents in India without informing his wife. Patel then reportedly invited his wife to Chicago to meet their daughter. Unaware of the child's departure to India, the woman and her new partner drove to Chicago. Upon arrival, her partner waited outside the building while she went to Patel's apartment. However, to her shock, her daughter was not in the house. Instead, Patel expressed his desire to reconcile - which she refused, and told him that she would remain with her new partner. Angered by this, Patel reportedly stabbed his wife in the neck. In the meantime, the woman's partner

began repeatedly messaging her. But when she did not return, he called the police, the local media reported, adding that officers went to the building to find Patel and the woman but left after her partner could not identify the apartment she went to. The crime came to light when Patel's friends - whom he was supposed to meet that night - went to his apartment as he failed to appear. To their shock, they found his wife dead near a washing machine and Patel missing. Local media reported that the woman's autopsy found multiple defensive wounds. According to reports, Patel rushed to the O'Hare International Airport in Chicago after the killing in an attempt to flee to India, but he could not purchase the ticket as the counter was closed. He then reportedly checked into a nearby hotel and allegedly disposed of the



weapon - a knife - he used to murder his wife. Patel reportedly went to a Target store and bought new clothes. The next day, he bought a flight ticket to India. However, the police arrested him before he could board the plane. During questioning, Patel revealed that he did not intend to kill his wife but "finished her" after she told him she wanted to stay with her new partner. Patel has been arrested and charged with first-degree murder.

Ukraine Out Of US-Made Patriot Interceptors Amid Increased Russian Attacks: Report



Kyiv: Ukraine has reportedly exhausted its stock of Patriot interceptor missiles, leaving it largely defenceless against Russian ballistic strikes just as its relationship with Washington reaches a new low. The shortage comes at a fraught moment when Kyiv was already dealing with restrictions on Starshield, the military-grade version of Elon Musk's Starlink, adding to the pressure on its battlefield capabilities. At least four people were killed and 25 others injured

after Russian ballistic missiles struck three power plants in Kyiv and targeted energy infrastructure in Kharkiv during that attack overnight into Wednesday morning. Citing sources, CNN reported that "almost all the ballistic missiles from the last strike were not intercepted due to a lack of (interceptor) missiles." It is believed this won't be the first time Ukraine has fully run out of Patriot interceptors, as Zelensky has been vocal about his ongoing struggle to obtain more

stocks. But this time, it coincides with a bitter public feud between US President Donald Trump and his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelensky, who recently said he felt "betrayed" by Washington's oil deal with Moscow. Ukraine also attacked a Russian oil refinery, abandoning a brief truce involving energy-related targets that it said Moscow did not heed. The strike could further complicate Kyiv's relations with Trump, which have soured again in recent days amid the

White House demand for a truce. Zelensky has complained that Ukraine in recent days was denied the usual Western intelligence on Russian ballistic missile strikes, and limits were placed on its use of US-made Starlink communication terminals-- both vital for the Ukrainian military's defence capabilities. For months now, Zelensky has also repeatedly complained that Ukraine is running short of US-made interceptors, which are one of the few defensive weapons capable of knocking down a ballistic missile. But the interceptors are not only expensive but also running in short supply globally, as other countries have burnt through their stockpiles amid the war in Iran. During a July visit to Washington, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said he had discussed obtaining licenses for making Patriot interceptors with his counterpart, Donald Trump. At the time, Trump said the United States should be "very careful" before granting Ukraine authorisation.

Trump's Truth Social Sees 30% Traffic Crash Ahead Of US Midterm Elections



Truth Social, the social media platform owned by US President Donald Trump is currently experiencing a significant drop in user traffic despite him posting more frequently as the 2026 US midterm elections approach. According to a digital intelligence report from Similarweb, engagement on the platform has sharply declined with daily traffic plunging more than 30 per cent over the past year. The platform averaged approximately 260,000 daily users last month, a steep drop from its peak of 420,000 daily users in June 2025. Trump, who has the

most followers on Truth Social, continues to treat the platform as his primary personal megaphone, occasionally publishing dozens of posts in a single day, such as a flurry of 25 posts within a matter of hours. However, this relentless output has failed to retain or grow a sustainable audience. Trump uses the platform to announce new policies, military actions related to the Iran war and AI generated videos. Over the past week, he's used his account to push a semiconductor investment, post positive media coverage about himself, and shared a graphic clip

of himself playing with a tiger that attacked and killed a man in the UK. A statement issued by the spokesperson of Trump Media & Technology Group Corp. (TMTG) in response to the Washington Post report, dismissed the critical metrics and countered by accusing the newspaper of systemic media bias against the service and its owner, Trump. During the first quarter of this year, the company suffered a net loss of over \$405 million on net sales of just above \$871,000 and attributed the loss to "unrealised losses on digital assets, digital assets pledged,

and equity securities (\$368.7 million), accreted interest (\$11.5 million), and stock-based compensation (\$11.8 million)." The Trump family owns nearly half of the company, which saw its annual losses spike to over \$712 million in 2025 from \$400.9 million in 2024. The platform was established as a direct response to his indefinite suspensions and bans from major tech platforms, including Facebook, Twitter (now X), and YouTube, following his actions surrounding the January 6, 2021, attacks on the US Capitol.

Earthquake Of Magnitude 7 Strikes Russia, Japan Mistakenly Issues 9.9 Warning

Moscow: An earthquake of magnitude 7 has struck the Kamchatka Peninsula region of Russia, the European-Mediterranean Seismological Centre (EMSC) said. The quake was at a depth of 140 km (86.99 miles). Its epicentre was located around 123 km southwest of Vilyuchinsk in Russia's Far East, EMSC said. The seismic event was recorded at around 3:35 pm

local time. No tsunami alert was issued in the immediate aftermath of the quake, with the US National Tsunami Warning Center saying there was no danger following the tremors. Further details about any damages or casualties due to the impact of the earthquake were not immediately available. Japan's Meteorological Agency (JMA) mistakenly

issued an early warning estimating a magnitude 9.9 earthquake and forecasting strong shaking across much of the country, contrary to the fact that their actual reading measured 6.9, according to data cited by BNO News. If the warning was correct, it would have been the strongest earthquake ever recorded. The largest instrumentally recorded earthquake in his-

tory was the 1960 Valdivia earthquake, with a magnitude of 9.5. The Kamchatka Peninsula lies on a tectonic belt known as the Ring of Fire, which surrounds most of the Pacific Ocean, and is a hotspot for seismic activity. Last year in July, an 8.8-magnitude mega-quake off the region's coast triggered a tsunami that swept part of a coastal village into the sea.



Tesla CEO Elon Musk on Thursday unveiled his company's new Roadster that he described as a "flying" car. During a livestreamed event at his SpaceX rocket company's facility, the sports car, equipped with thrusters, launched from a steep ramp

and landed on his wheels. Musk said the car will go into production in 2028, but nobody is sure if the new Roadster is just an "engineering flex" to show off extreme physics, or will it be available to everyday commuter? American aviation pioneer Glenn Curtiss debuted the first fly-

ing car prototype in 1917. Since then, they have come a long way and are mostly being designed as Electric Vertical Takeoff and Landing (eVTOL) vehicles. These vehicles are catching daily commuters' fancy because they open the prospect of shifting the travel from congested

roads to airspace. However, daily commuting by air faces strict limitations from city noise regulations, safety/air-traffic control over dense buildings, and high maintenance or energy costs. Here are a few personal flying vehicles that you can buy or reserve currently and fulfill your dream of owning a roadable aircraft. Klein Vision AirCar: This is a sports car that transforms into an airplane in 90 seconds. Sales are set to begin at a starting price of roughly \$800,000. Alef Model A: A road-legal electric vehicle that can drive on streets and take off vertically. It has received special airworthiness certification from the FAA with reservations open. Samson Switchblade: A three-wheeled roadable aircraft that switches between driving and flying modes in about three minutes. It is priced around \$170,000 to \$195,000 as a kit-built aircraft. AeroMobil: A two-seater hybrid transformable vehicle that converts from a car to an aircraft in under three minutes, featuring a turbocharged internal combustion engine and a ballistic recovery parachute. Apart from these, there are some personal eVTOLs (Electric Vertical Takeoff and Landing) as well, such as Rictor X4 (RTOR X4), priced at \$39,900, Jetson ONE, costing roughly \$128,000 to \$148,000, Pivotal Helix (BlackFly) and Air ONE.

Centre eases sugar sale rules to boost supply during festive season



New Delhi :The government has allowed sugar mills to sell the entire quantity of sugar produced in October during the months of October and November. The move is aimed at improving sugar availability in the domestic market during the festive season and preventing unnecessary price increases amid higher demand.Under the relaxation, mills will be able to sell sugar produced in October over and above the quantities allocated to them under the regular monthly release quota. This means the October production will not have to be adjusted against the normal sales quota for October or November. For example, if a sugar mill produces 1,000 metric tonnes of sugar in October, it can sell the entire 1,000 tonnes during October and November in addition to its regular monthly quota. The decision is expected to help bring sugar from the new 2026-27 crushing season to the market faster while giving mills greater flexibility to sell their fresh production. The measure is also aimed at ensuring adequate domestic supply during the festive period. The Centre on Wednesday (October 14) set up a committee to examine demands for higher payments to sugarcane farmers and a possible revision in the minimum selling price of sugar, amid rising production costs and concerns over the financial position of sugar mills. The panel will be headed by former NITI Aayog member Professor Ramesh Chand and will review pricing issues affecting both farmers and sugar mills, according to the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution.

Sugar MSP, recovery and weighing practices under review

The committee will also examine the demand for re-

vising the ex-mill minimum selling price of sugar, taking into account production costs, market realisations and the financial position of sugar mills. Any revision could affect the earnings of sugar mills and their ability to make timely payments to sugarcane farmers. However, the government has not announced any immediate change in sugar prices. The panel was formed following discussions between representatives of sugarcane farmers from Karnataka and Maharashtra and the Union Ministers of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare and Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution. Apart from pricing, the committee will review the system used for testing and reporting sugar recovery and look at ways to make the process more transparent. Sugar recovery refers to the amount of sugar produced from sugarcane and plays an important role in determining payments to farmers. The panel will also examine sugarcane weighing practices at mills, including deductions made from mechanically harvested cane. It will assess whether these deductions reflect actual losses and how they affect the amount payable to farmers. The Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution said the committee will consult farmers' representatives, sugar mill associations, state governments and other experts or organisations as required. The panel, which includes senior officials from the agriculture, food distribution and consumer affairs ministries, will submit its findings and specific recommendations to the government at the earliest. Ex-mill sugar prices have fallen by around 28 per cent and have remained stable over the past three weeks, prompting the government to step in and ensure that the benefit of lower prices reaches consumers.

Is this song made by AI? YouTube Music adds labels to its player; how will it detect them?

New Delhi :YouTube Music is introducing labels to help listeners identify songs created or altered using artificial intelligence (AI). As generative AI becomes more prevalent in the music industry, the disclosures will be right in the music player itself, providing users with more information on how a track was created. The shift brings transparency to the music streaming landscape, where AI-generated vocals, compositions, and other elements are increasingly present in the production process.

What are AI labels in YouTube Music?

YouTube Music will have disclosures to show whether the audio has been modified or completely AI-generated. One of the labels states: "Made with AI. This audio has been modified or fully synthesized with AI." The plan is to put this data into the player so that using AI will become more transparent during the listening of music. But it doesn't necessarily mean that the whole song is AI-generated. The disclosure may also be applicable in cases where AI has been

used to manipulate audio, so it is important to differentiate between fully AI-generated music and music that has been produced with the aid of AI.

How can YouTube tell if a video's audio is AI-generated?

YouTube will use the automated detection tools and data provided by its music partners to identify the music that needs AI disclosures.

The company has also been working on technology to detect AI-infused parts in video footage. Its more general features encompass detection properties linked to Veo and Dream Screen features, as well as C2PA metadata, which may offer details regarding the start and life history of digital content. The measures are part of YouTube's broader initiatives to increase transparency around synthetic media. But automated identification does not automatically mean that all AI-produced and/or AI-assisted tracks will be identified. Identification can be based on detection technology and information available from creators and/or music partners.

FSSAI issues notices to Radisson Blu Delhi operator, Flipkart, BigBasket over food safety lapses

New Delhi :The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has issued an improvement notice to AB Hotels Ltd, which operates Radisson Blu Hotel in New Delhi, over multiple food safety and hygiene violations. The regulator has also issued notices to Gemini Edibles & Fats India Ltd, e-commerce platforms BigBasket and Flipkart, over allegedly misleading claims for Freedom Cooking Rice Bran Oil. In separate enforcement actions, the FSSAI has suspended the licence of DNV Food Products Ltd with immediate effect and cancelled the licence of Jhanvitanni for continued non-compliance with food safety requirements. According to the FSSAI's notices, the action against these food business operators (FBOs) follows findings related to unhygienic conditions, inadequate food safety practices, licensing deficiencies and claims that did not comply with applicable regulations.

FSSAI issues improvement notice to Radisson Blu Delhi operator

The FSSAI issued an improvement notice to AB Hotels Ltd, which operates Radisson Blu Hotel, New Delhi, for non-compliance with food safety and hygiene requirements. The regulator observed poor maintenance of the premises and equipment, including rusted machinery, freezer leakage and deficiencies in refrigeration, temperature monitoring, ventilation, flooring and lighting. Inadequate cleaning and sanitisation, stagnant water, drainage problems and food-waste management issues were also reported. The notice flagged deficiencies in pest control, including cockroach and fly activity. Food procurement and receiving checks were found inadequate. The hotel was



found to have received fungal-affected and deteriorated fruits and vegetables, while approved-vendor records and food traceability were also deficient. The FSSAI further found that cooking oil suitability checks were not being carried out as required. Oils with total polar compound (TPC) values of 31 and 24.4 were found in use in the hotel's NYC Kitchen. Other observations included improper segregation of raw and cooked foods, vegetarian and non-vegetarian items, allergenic and non-allergenic foods, and food and non-food items. Food handlers were found working without gloves and hairnets, wearing jewellery and having long nails. The notice also flagged that the FSSAI licence was not prominently displayed and that there were deficiencies in compliance with licence conditions and the coverage of food business activities. The hotel operator has been directed to take immediate corrective measures and submit a detailed Action Taken Report (ATR), along with supporting documentary and photographic evidence wherever applicable. The regulator warned that failure to comply could lead to further action, including suspension of the FSSAI licence. FSSAI issues notices over Freedom Cooking Rice Bran Oil claims In a separate action, the FSSAI issued notices to Gemini Edibles & Fats India Ltd,

Innovative Retail Concepts Pvt Ltd, which operates BigBasket, and Flipkart India Pvt Ltd over claims made for Freedom Cooking Rice Bran Oil. According to the regulator, the product was promoted through e-commerce platforms and social media using claims such as "reduces bad cholesterol and maintains/increases good cholesterol" and "10,000+ PPM Natural Oryzanol". The claims associated consumption of the oil with cholesterol management and heart health. The FSSAI stated that the cholesterol and heart-health claims were not covered or permitted under the applicable provisions for edible vegetable oils, including rice bran oil, under the Advertising and Claims Regulations, 2018. Food handlers were found not wearing gloves and masks while handling and packing food. The notice also flagged the absence of adequate handwashing and sanitation facilities. Rust and corrosion were observed on processing equipment, alongside damaged flooring, damp walls, flaking paint, and inadequate ventilation and lighting. The FSSAI further found that raw materials, packaging materials and finished products were not properly segregated or stored. Some products were kept directly on the floor or adjacent to walls. Other violations included processing and repacking products without the required licence

endorsement. Required food-grade packaging certificates, migration reports and mock recall records were also unavailable. The regulator said the licence issued to DNV Food Products Ltd had been suspended with immediate effect in the interest of public health and food safety. The suspension applies to all food business activities covered under the licence until further orders.

FSSAI cancels Jhanvitanni's licence for continued non-compliance

In another enforcement action, the FSSAI cancelled the licence of Jhanvitanni with immediate effect following continued non-compliance with food safety requirements and operation despite suspension of its licence. The regulator observed serious hygiene and sanitation deficiencies at the premises, in violation of mandatory food safety and sanitary requirements. According to the notice, the food business operator continued conducting food business activities despite the suspension of its FSSAI licence, violating directions issued by the authority.

The FSSAI also found the corrective actions submitted by the operator unsatisfactory, with several previously identified non-compliances remaining unaddressed. The notice further stated that Jhanvitanni had failed to comply with mandatory hygiene, sanitation and Food Safety Management System (FSMS) requirements, including the requirement for a Third-Party Audit (TPA), despite repeated directions and regulatory action. The FSSAI said Jhanvitanni's licence had been cancelled with immediate effect due to continued non-compliance and food business operations despite suspension. The operator has been directed to stop all food business activities under the cancelled licence.

HDFC Bank Q2 Preview: Net profit may rise 9% to Rs 19,370 crore, NII up 5% YoY - Details

New Delhi :HDFC Bank is expected to report a stable performance in the July-September quarter of the financial year 2026-27, with growth in net interest income and net profit, according to Zee Business estimates. The bank's net interest income (NII) is estimated to increase 5 per cent year-on-year to Rs 34,370 crore in the second quarter, compared with Rs 31,551 crore in the corresponding period last year. Net profit is projected to rise 9 per cent to Rs 19,370 crore from Rs 18,641 crore in the year-ago quarter. Provisions for the September quarter are estimated at Rs 3,200 crore, down 9 per cent from Rs 3,500 crore in the corresponding quarter last year. The bank's retail loan portfolio, deposit growth and asset quality will remain among the key factors determining its quarterly performance. Investors will also track management's commentary on credit growth, loan expansion and the pace of normalisation following the merger with Housing Development Finance Corporation (HDFC).

Asset quality and provisions in focus

HDFC Bank's asset quality is expected to remain stable in the September quarter, with an improvement in the gross non-performing assets (GNPA) ratio. The GNPA ratio is estimated to decline to 1.1 per cent from 1.2 per cent in the previous quarter. The net non-performing assets (NNPA) ratio is expected to remain unchanged at 0.4 per cent on a quarter-on-quarter basis. The estimated decline in provisions

to Rs 3,200 crore from Rs 3,500 crore a year ago would indicate lower provisioning requirements compared with the corresponding period last year. In the June quarter of FY27, the bank's standalone net profit increased 5 per cent year-on-year to Rs 19,060 crore from Rs 18,155 crore. Its gross NPA ratio improved to 1.17 per cent of gross advances at the end of June, compared with 1.4 per cent a year earlier. The NNPA ratio also declined to 0.41 per cent from 0.47 per cent in the year-ago period. Provisions and contingencies for bad loans stood at Rs 3,060 crore in the June quarter, significantly lower than Rs 14,442 crore in the corresponding period of the previous financial year.

Net interest margin and loan growth

HDFC Bank's net interest margin (NIM) and loan growth will remain key indicators for investors tracking its earnings performance. The bank's NIM has remained in the range of 3.35-3.5 per cent over the past several quarters, according to the estimates. The pace of recovery in its loan book and the sustainability of margins will be important factors in assessing its performance. In the June quarter, net interest income increased 7 per cent year-on-year to Rs 33,530 crore from Rs 31,440 crore. The bank reported a NIM of 3.26 per cent on total assets and 3 per cent on interest-earning assets during the quarter. Interest income rose to Rs 79,363 crore in the June quarter from Rs 77,470 crore in the



corresponding period a year earlier. However, total income declined to Rs 92,184 crore from Rs 99,200 crore in the year-ago quarter. Operating profit also fell to Rs 28,169 crore from Rs 35,734 crore during the same period. Investors will monitor whether the bank can sustain growth in net interest income while maintaining margins and controlling operating costs.

Deposit growth and post-merger normalisation

Deposit growth and the performance of the retail loan portfolio will be among the key factors to watch in the September quarter. According to Zee Business estimates, deposit growth is expected to remain strong, supporting the bank's ability to maintain a stable cost ratio. The gradual recovery in the loan book and easing of post-merger challenges are also expected to support the bank's movement towards normalisation. Management commentary on credit growth, loan demand and the outlook for loan expansion will be important for investors assessing the

bank's performance in the coming quarters. The movement in provisions and slippages will also be monitored to assess the sustainability of asset quality improvements. In the June quarter, HDFC Bank's consolidated profit after tax increased 18 per cent year-on-year to Rs 19,245 crore from Rs 16,258 crore. The bank reported consolidated net revenue of Rs 85,480 crore during the quarter. Its capital adequacy ratio stood at 19.57 per cent at the end of the June quarter, compared with 19.88 per cent at the end of the corresponding quarter of the previous financial year.

HDFC Bank share price, market capitalisation

Shares of HDFC Bank closed at Rs 728.85 on October 16, gaining Rs 2, or 0.28 per cent, from the previous close. The stock has declined 26.70 per cent over the past year and 26.46 per cent so far in 2026. In comparison, the Nifty 50 has fallen 9.53 per cent over one year and 11.48 per cent year-to-date. HDFC Bank shares touched a 52-week high of Rs 1,020.50 on October 23, 2025, and a 52-

PNB Q2 Results: Net profit rises 12.8% to Rs 5,532 crore; NII grows 10.8%



New Delhi :Punjab National Bank (PNB) reported a 12.8 per cent year-on-year (YoY) rise in net profit to Rs 5,532 crore. The public sector lender's global business grew 11.9 per cent YoY to Rs 31.18 lakh crore. Global deposits increased 9.9 per cent to Rs 17.77 lakh crore, while global advances rose 14.7 per cent to Rs 13.41 lakh crore. Operating profit increased 8.2 per cent year-on-year to Rs 7,532 crore. Net interest income (NII), which is the difference between interest earned and interest paid, rose 10.8 per cent to Rs 11,601 crore during the quarter. Total income grew 5.4 per cent YoY to Rs 38,185 crore, while total interest income increased 8.5 per cent to Rs 34,585 crore. Fee-based income rose 16 per cent to Rs 1,954 crore, compared with Rs 1,685 crore in the year-ago quarter. For the first half of FY27, PNB's operating profit increased 5.2 per cent year-on-year to Rs 15,051 crore, while NII grew 6.4 per cent to Rs 22,400 crore. Total income rose 2.7 per cent to Rs 75,416 crore, and total interest income increased 5.7 per cent to Rs 67,482 crore.

PNB deposit growth: CASA deposits rise 7.3 per cent

PNB's savings deposits increased 6.7 per cent year-on-year to Rs 5.43 lakh crore in September 2026. Current deposits grew 11.9 per cent to Rs 83,053 crore. The bank's current account and savings account (CASA) deposits rose 7.3 per cent to Rs 6.26 lakh crore. CASA deposits accounted for 36.6 per cent of the bank's total deposits as of September 2026.

Retail, agriculture and MSME advances record strong growth

PNB's retail advances, excluding inter-bank participation certificates (IBPC), grew 16.3 per cent year-on-year. Housing loans increased 14.3 per

cent to Rs 1.42 lakh crore, while vehicle loans registered stronger growth of 29.6 per cent to Rs 38,234 crore. Agriculture priority sector advances rose 18.1 per cent year-on-year to Rs 1.71 lakh crore. Advances to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) increased 19.8 per cent to Rs 2.15 lakh crore. Overall, advances under the retail, agriculture and MSME (RAM) segment grew 13.6 per cent year-on-year to Rs 7.22 lakh crore.

PNB asset quality improves

The bank reported an improvement in its asset quality, with both gross and net non-performing assets declining from their year-ago levels. Gross non-performing assets (GNPA) fell by Rs 6,153 crore to Rs 34,190 crore as of September 2026, compared with Rs 40,343 crore a year earlier. As per exchange filing, the GNPA ratio declined by 90 basis points (bps) year-on-year to 2.55 per cent. Net non-performing assets (NNPA) declined by Rs 713 crore to Rs 3,313 crore, compared with Rs 4,026 crore in same month last year. The NNPA ratio fell by 11 bps to 0.25 per cent. PNB's provision coverage ratio (PCR), including technical write-offs, increased by 41 bps to 97.32 per cent. Meanwhile, the special mention account (SMA)-2 ratio for domestic advances above Rs 5 crore declined by 8 bps to 0.09 per cent. SMA-2 accounts are loans where payments have been overdue for 61-90 days.

PNB's book value and return on assets

PNB's tangible book value per share increased 16.7 per cent year-on-year to Rs 111.94. The bank's return on assets (RoA) stood at 1.05 per cent. The September-quarter performance reflects growth in PNB's core banking business, including interest income, deposits and advances.

Government clears ITI clusters in Pune, Odisha, Jammu and Srinagar under PM-SETU

New Delhi :The government has approved investment proposals worth Rs 1,194.92 crore to upgrade 25 Industrial Training Institutes across Maharashtra, Odisha and Jammu & Kashmir. The projects will be implemented in partnership with five industry players, including Tata Steel Foundation and Belrise Industries, with a focus on improving vocational training and employment opportunities for young people. The approvals were granted at the sixth meeting of the National Steering Committee under the Pradhan Mantri Skilling and Employability Transformation through Upgraded ITIs (PM-SETU) scheme, the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship said.

With these latest approvals, the total investment cleared under the PM-SETU scheme has increased to Rs 3,687 crore. Five ITI clusters covered

The five approved plans cover ITI clusters in Pune and Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar in Maharashtra, Kataka in Odisha, and Jammu and Srinagar in Jammu & Kashmir. Each cluster will have one hub ITI along with four associated institutes. Debashree Mukherjee, Secretary in the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, said the approvals mark an important step in the implementation of PM-SETU and are expected to strengthen ITIs, improve training quality and increase industry participation. Pune has been allocated Rs 241 crore in partnership with BVG India, while the Kataka cluster in Odisha has received Rs 240.50 crore in partnership with Tata Steel Foundation. The Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar cluster has been approved for Rs 238.01 crore with Belrise Industries. The Jammu and Srinagar clusters have been allocated Rs 240 crore and Rs 235.41 crore, respectively, in partnership with Eagle Infra India and Inderdeep Infra India.

Vijay-Puri's Slum Dog Breaks Pumpkin



The journey from the sets to the big screen has entered its next phase for Slum Dog: 33 Temple Road. The Vijay Sethupathi-starrer, directed by Puri Jagannadh, has successfully completed filming, with the final schedule concluding

in Hyderabad today. The makers broke the pumpkin, bringing the film's production to a close. The makers are now turning their attention towards the next stage of the film's journey, with plans to step up promotions before bringing it to theatres

soon. The project has already created curiosity through its promotional content, particularly the character introduction videos that have revealed different shades of the ensemble. Produced by Puri Jagannadh and Chamme Kaur through Puri

Connects, the film features cinematography by Sam K Naidu, music by Harshavardhan Rameshwar and editing by Santosh Noozilla. Samyuktha, Tabu, Zareena Wahab and Duniya Vijay Kumar are the other prominent cast.

Priyanka, Avantika and Amita Rao Steal the Show at LA Awards

Priyanka Chopra Jonas was honoured with the Woman of Impact Award at the 2026 InStyle Imagemaker Awards in Los Angeles. The global star made a stunning appearance at the awards ceremony, turning heads in a dramatic pink two-piece ensemble. The blush-pink creation, from the Spring 2027 collection of Paris-based fashion label Matières Fécales, paired contemporary couture with intricate detailing, making her one of the evening's standout personalities.

Held on October 15 at a private residence in Bel-Air, California, the third annual InStyle Imagemaker Awards celebrated the creative professionals behind some of Hollywood's most memorable looks. The evening also saw the presence of Indian-origin actors Avantika Vandanapu and Amita Rao, bringing attention to the growing representation of South Asian talent in the international entertainment industry.

Avantika, who has Telugu roots, has been building her presence in Hollywood. She is known for her roles in Mean Girls and Senior Year and has been emerging as a familiar face among younger South Asian performers in Hollywood.

While the fashion statements



made headlines, the central highlight of the evening was Priyanka's recognition as a Woman of Impact. The honour acknowledged her contributions to entertainment and her efforts to challenge stereotypes, amplify women's voices and create opportunities for women in Hollywood.

Actors Avantika Vandanapu, Amita Rao and Megan Suri pre-

sented the award to Priyanka, celebrating her influence both on and off screen. The occasion also featured a personal moment when her husband, singer Nick Jonas, surprised her with a video tribute.

The ceremony also brought together several prominent names from the international entertainment and fashion industries, including Heidi Klum,

Megan Thee Stallion, Joey King, Adam Driver, Simu Liu, Elizabeth Debicki and Charli XCX.

With Priyanka receiving a significant industry honour and Avantika Vandanapu and Amita Rao also in attendance, the event brought together established global stars and Indian-origin performers making their mark internationally.

Pranitha Subhash Turns Heads In Lingerie Style



Pranitha Subhash won Telugu fans with Attarintiki Daredi and Brahmotsavam, and also did well in Tamil with Saguni. Her last Telugu appearance was a cameo in NTR Kathanayakudu in 2019. In these photos, Pranitha wore a dusty pink lingerie style slip dress with a slipped off shoulder strap. She added pearl drop earrings, simple silver rings and a soft nude manicure. Loose straight hair and light makeup kept the look clean, while the window light gave the shoot a calm mood. Pranitha has no proper film in hand at the moment, and fans are waiting to see her back on the Telugu screen. A strong comeback role could bring back the attention she once enjoyed in the early 2010s.

Ranabaali's Jayamma: One of Rashmika's Career Best Performances!



Rashmika Mandanna is receiving appreciation for her performance as Jayamma in Ranabaali. Although the Vijay Deverakonda-starrer opened to mixed reviews, audiences who watched the film have been praising Rashmika for bringing honesty and freshness to her character. Over the years, Rashmika has shown considerable improvement as a performer. Whether it is her dressing, body language, dialogue delivery, or chemistry with Vijay Deverakonda, she appears comfortable in the role. Her portrayal of Jayamma adds emotional depth to the film, and the romantic portions become more engaging whenever she is around. In many ways, her presence helps the narrative connect better with the audience. One of the notable aspects of her performance is the way she handles the Rayalaseema slang. Rashmika gets it right and makes her character feel more natural. Her expressions and mannerisms also suit the rural setting of the film. This appreciation comes at a time when Rashmika has been choosing roles that allow her to showcase different shades of acting. From Pushpa to The Girlfriend, she has demonstrated her ability to adapt to varied characters and deliver convincing performances. With Ranabaali, she continues that progress through a sincere portrayal that audiences are finding relatable. While the film itself has received a mixed response, Rashmika's work has emerged as one of its positives.

The Master of Postponements : AK 47 Hints Another Date



Adarsha Kutumbam is slowly earning the tag of a master of postponements. Despite not being a pan-India film or a big-budget spectacle, Venkatesh and Trivikram's film has

missed multiple release dates, testing the patience of Venky fans. After missing the October 2 and October 9 dates, the film has now hinted at another release date, with October 30 emerging as the likely target.

The film's release date came up

again during the success press meet of Jailer 2. Producer Naga Vamsi revealed that a new date had been finalised, but audiences had stopped believing release announcements after repeated delays. He said Hero Venkatesh would announce the date along with the trailer after returning from Ooty, where he is shooting for his January 12 Vidudala. The announcement is expected around October 21 or 22.

Though Naga Vamsi did not directly confirm the date, his comments strongly indicate that Adarsha Kutumbam is targeting October 30. However, Vishwak Sen's Cult and Nagarjuna-presented Itlu Arjun are already lined up for the same date. It remains to be seen whether they move to November or take on the competition.

With barely two weeks left, the team will have to speed up promotions, including the release of pending songs, the trailer launch and the pre-release event, if the October 30 plan holds. Directed by Trivikram Srinivas, Adarsha Kutumbam 47 has generated good interest among trade circles, particularly because it marks the first collaboration between the star director and Venkatesh. However, the film needs a stronger promotional push to build wider buzz. So far, only Narayanamma among Thaman's songs has been released.