

OPEN SEARCH

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'Don't use hammer to kill a fly'

Supreme Court asks Centre to ease metro, train curbs ahead of CJP protest

The bench said the restrictions could affect thousands of daily commuters travelling from Gurugram, Greater Noida and other parts of the National Capital Region to Delhi for work, education and other essential activities.



NEW DELHI.AGENCY

Cautioning authorities against excessive security restrictions ahead of the October 10 protests in the national capital, the Supreme Court on Friday said "don't use hammer to kill a fly" and ruled out a complete shutdown of Delhi Metro services at 57 metro station, asking the Centre instead to adopt proportionate regulatory measures. A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant, Justice Joyimalya Bagchi and Justice

V. Mohana drew a distinction between regulating movement in the interest of law and order and imposing sweeping restrictions that inconvenience ordinary citizens. The court expressed particular concern over the closure of entry gates at 57 Metro stations and the impact on employees, students and senior citizens dependent on public transport. Recording Solicitor General Tushar Mehta's assurance that the restrictions would be reconsidered, the bench said Metro trains

and other railway services should be allowed to operate in a suitably regulated manner, keeping in view the principle of proportionality. It specifically directed that there should be no complete prohibition on movement of Metro trains.

The court also asked the authorities to give wide publicity to whatever regulated arrangement was eventually put in place so that commuters were informed in advance and unnecessary inconvenience could be avoided. Expressing

MHA asks States to stop CJP protesters from mobilising towards Delhi

The Supreme Court on Friday (October 9, 2026) said the right to association and to protest peacefully is a fundamental right of every citizen, while reacting to a mention by senior lawyers of the apex court about the unprecedented "shutting down" of the national capital a day ahead of the CJP protests for the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar on October 10. Supreme Court directed that there shall be "no complete prohibition" on

the movement of metro trains, asking authorities to allow metro and other railway services to operate in a suitably regulated manner ahead of the protests. Citing potential law and order concerns, the MHA flagged intelligence inputs suggesting protesters could attempt to enter Delhi despite the police rejecting the group's request to hold a gathering, and called for real-time intelligence sharing and strict implementation of preventive measures.

concern over the impact of the restrictions on ordinary commuters, CJI Kant said: "Solicitor... we are mainly concerned about the complete closure of these metro station entries. We have serious concerns about this. Our concern is not with respect to any protesters or any individual. Our concern is about the hundreds and thousands of commuters who come from Gurugram, Greater Noida, East Delhi and South

Delhi to Delhi for their livelihood. They are students, employees and senior citizens who travel by public transport. We are speaking on behalf of the common citizens of this city." The bench said law-enforcement agencies undoubtedly had the authority to impose regulatory measures where necessary but cautioned against restrictions that effectively deprived citizens of access to public transport.

Due to the sensitive initiative of CM Sai

Rs 18 lakh has been sanctioned for the treatment of 10-year-old Hrithik

RAIPUR. OPEN SEARCH

Chief Minister Shri Vishnu Dev Sai's sensitive initiative has paved the way for better treatment for 10-year-old Hrithik Yadav, a child suffering from a serious illness in Jashpur district. The Chief Minister has approved financial assistance of Rs 18 lakh under the Chief Minister's Special Health Assistance Scheme for Hrithik's necessary treatment, including a bone marrow transplant. This assistance will enable Hrithik to be treated at a hospital in Bengaluru, Karnataka. This initiative by the Chief Minister has brought great relief and new hope to the family, worried about the child's expensive treatment.

Hrithik Yadav, son of Mr. Meghnath Yadav, a resident of Jashpur district, is suffering from a serious illness. Doctors have determined he requires a bone marrow transplant. The family is facing financial difficulties due to the significant cost of treatment. Consequently, the family reached the Chief Minister's Camp Office in Bagiya and requested financial assistance for the child's treatment. Upon learning of



■ **Chief Minister's Special Health Assistance Scheme becomes a support, Hrithik's bone marrow transplant will take place in Bengaluru.**

the case, Chief Minister Mr. Sai, showing sensitivity, approved a grant of 18 lakh rupees for treatment.

Hrithik will be treated at the Mazumdar Shaw Medical Center in Bengaluru, Karnataka. Treatment includes procedures such as OT-U100, Allogenic BMT, and Haplo-identical BMT. Bone marrow transplant is a complex and expensive procedure for treating serious diseases. The amount of ?18

lakh approved under the Chief Minister's Special Health Assistance Scheme will prove to be a significant help in Hrithik's treatment.

The family received help from the Chief Minister's Camp Office in Bagiya, and found new hope. The Chief Minister's Camp Office in Bagiya is becoming an important medium for resolving the problems of those in need and providing them with the benefits of government schemes. Hrithik's family also visited the camp office and applied for financial assistance for the child's treatment. After the matter reached the Chief Minister, the aid was approved.

This assistance not only provides financial relief to the family, but also brings renewed hope for better treatment for their child. The approval of the assistance will significantly help the family cover the cost of the expensive treatment. The family expressed their gratitude to Chief Minister Shri Vishnu Dev Sai for this sensitive initiative. The scheme is becoming a support for needy families in the treatment of serious diseases.

10 Rajya Sabha candidates get elected unopposed in UP biennial polls

LUCKNOW.AGENCY

Ten candidates, including eight from the BJP and two from the Samajwadi Party, have been elected unopposed to the 10 Rajya Sabha seats in Uttar Pradesh in the biennial elections. These 10 candidates were declared elected after the passage of the last date for withdrawal on Friday. The Returning Officer (RO) handed over the winning certificate to the candidates or their representatives.

Earlier, during scrutiny on October 7, papers of two independent candidates were rejected on technical grounds for not producing the proposers' names and their signatures. The BJP's elected members include state minister Dharampal Singh, the party's OBC Morcha chief Prakash Pal, Shruti Gangwar, Vidyasagar Sonkar, Priyanka Singh Rawat, Radhakant Ojha, Gopi Krishna Pandey, and Ram Pratap Singh Chauhan.

Whistle blows louder as ruling TVK wins both the seats

CHENNAI.AGENCY

The sound of Whistle (TVK poll symbol) blew louder as the ruling TVK of Vijay won both the Reserved Assembly seats of Madurantakam and Dharapuram, with its candidates -- both former AIADMK MLAs -- defeating their nearest DMK rivals by a good margin on Friday.

The victory has improved the TVK's strength in the 234-member House to 109. It had won 108 in April polls, but Chief Minister Vijay, who got elected from two seats, vacated the Tiruchy East seat and retained Perambur in Chennai, reducing it to 107. When the counting of votes polled in October 6 by-elections was taken at 0800 hrs in the morning, it turned out to be a one-horse race in Madurantakam, while the TVK led in the first two

DMK finishes second ahead of AIADMK



rounds in Dharapuram, stuttered in the next three as AIADMK nosed ahead, before wresting the lead in the sixth round and kept consolidating it till the end, to emerge deserving winners in both the seats.

Reports from Madurantakam said, at the end of counting, M. S. K. Maragatham Kumaravel of TVK won by a margin of nearly 20,000 votes over her nearest DMK rival I. Paranthaman. She

polled 72,139 votes, as against 52,008 by the DMK nominee. AIADMK, which had held the seat, finished third with 46,370 votes, followed by Naam Tamizhar Katchi's K. Janakiraman and CPI-M's P. Suganthi who bagged 2,247 and 1,744 votes respectively. In Dharapuram, the TVK faced a mild stutter after initial leads, and recovered in the sixth round. Since then there was no looking back for TVK's P. Sathyabama, whose lead kept swelling with every passing round, when in a key twist the battle for the second spot intensified. The AIADMK which has been giving a tough fight to TVK till the 11th round, fell back to third spot and the main Opposition DMK jumped to the second position and retained that position till the end.

CM Saini Reviews Mukhyamantri Antyodaya Parivar Utthan Yojana

CHANDIGARH : OPEN SEARCH

Haryana Chief Minister Sh. Nayab Singh Saini said that new employment opportunities would be created for Antyodaya families in the state having an annual income of up to Rs 1.80 lakh. These families would be provided loans at concessional interest rates for animal husbandry, along with an incentive of Rs 10 per litre of milk, which would be utilised towards repayment of their loans. The Chief Minister gave these directions to officers for the effective implementation of schemes being run for Antyodaya families, as well as for introducing new schemes while chairing a review meeting of the Mukhyamantri Antyodaya Parivar Utthan Yojana at the Haryana Civil Secretariat on Friday. During the meeting, the Chief Minister reviewed



the progress of various schemes being implemented by different departments to strengthen the economic condition of Antyodaya families and provide them with employment and self-employment opportunities. He also directed bank officers to ensure timely and hassle-free availability of loans to eligible Antyodaya families to enable them to undertake income-generating activities and become economically self-reliant. The Chief Minister said that effective coordination

between the schemes of various departments and the loan facilities offered by banks was essential for creating employment opportunities for Antyodaya families. He said that engaging these families in milk production could prove highly beneficial in meeting the growing demand for milk. He said that while the Animal Husbandry Department was providing a subsidy of up to Rs 80,000 for the purchase of buffaloes by such families, additional financial assistance of Rs 50,000

would be provided through Vita. Vita would procure milk from these buffaloes, while the government would provide an additional incentive of Rs 10 per litre. Interest-free loans would be provided to women's Self-Help Groups and Scheduled Caste families, with the interest being borne by the government. The Chief Minister directed the Animal Husbandry Department to achieve the target of providing loans for the purchase of at least 15,000 buffaloes during the current year.

The Chief Minister further directed officers to formulate new schemes to enhance the income of Antyodaya families. He also instructed them to open as many Har Hit Stores, Vita booths and milk bars as possible across all districts. He said that 1,450 Har Hit Stores were currently operational in the state.

Resolve Issues Received at Samadhan Shivirs on Priority : CM Nayab Saini

Samadhan Shivirs Are a Flagship Scheme of the Govt, 55,365 Complaints Resolved During the Previous Year

VIJAY KUMAR.OPEN SEARCH

CHANDIGARH : Haryana Chief Minister Sh. Nayab Singh Saini said that Samadhan Shivirs are a flagship scheme of the government. Therefore, all officers must ensure that the problems brought before the Shivirs organised in every district are resolved on a priority basis. Every problem should be resolved by taking advantage of the latest technology so that no issue remains pending.

The Chief Minister was chairing a review meeting of the Samadhan Cell in Chandigarh on Friday. Chief Secretary Anurag Rastogi, OSD to the Chief Minister B.B. Bharti, and Special Officer Bhopal Singh Khadri were also present at the meeting. In addition, Deputy Commissioners and administrative officers from all districts joined directly through video conferencing.

The Chief Minister said that the Samadhan Cell provides a framework for the grievance redressal process, a dual-verification



Conduct Special Cleanliness Drives to Resolve Sanitation-Related Complaints

The Chief Minister spoke to the Deputy Commissioners of Sonapat, Rohtak, Panipat, Jhajjar, Panchkula and Sirsa and said that 10 percent of the complaints received by them had been reopened. The officers informed him that some complaints were related to demands, property IDs and the police. He said that demand-related issues should be separated and sent to the headquarters. To resolve complaints related to sanitation, officers should conduct special cleanliness drives in the morning. If officers conduct

cleanliness drives in the morning, sanitation arrangements in urban areas will improve.

Sh. Nayab Singh Saini said that potholes in roads should also be filed along with carrying out cleanliness work. Vehicles are also being provided to all local bodies for cleanliness activities and pothole filling. He said that strict action should be taken against contractors in cities who fail to provide vehicles for sanitation work as per the prescribed norms. In addition, illegal encroach-

ments, particularly on ponds, should be removed, and suggestions should be submitted for developing better projects at those locations. The meeting was also attended by Deputy Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister Dr. Yashpal Yadav; Special Secretary, Monitoring and Coordination Cell, Dr. Priyanka Soni; OSDs to the Chief Minister Rakesh Sandhu and Vivek Kalia; and several officers and employees of the Monitoring and Coordination Cell.

He said that during the past year, 92,848 complaints were received at Samadhan Shivirs, of which 55,365 complaints were resolved.

Natural Farming to Begin on Panchayati Land : Shyam Singh

CHANDIGARH : OPEN SEARCH

Haryana Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Minister Sh. Shyam Singh Rana stated that the state government will also introduce natural farming on Panchayati land. For this purpose, panchayats will be encouraged to promote natural farming on their land. In the first phase, at the beginning of next year, 10 percent of Panchayati land will be leased out for natural farming.

Sh. Rana was chairing a meeting in his office regarding "Budget Announcements" and "CM Announcements". On this occasion, Additional Chief Secretary, Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Department, Vijayendra Kumar was also present.

The Agriculture and



Farmers' Welfare Minister directed the officers to implement the announcements made in the General Budget as soon as possible. He said that natural farming would be undertaken on 800 acres of state government land, and at the same time, natural farming would now also be promoted on Panchayati land. He further said that a separate arrangement would be made in grain markets for the sale of produce obtained through natural farming.

Ensuring timely assistance to eligible families under dayalu yojana is Govt's priority : CM Saini

CHANDIGARH : OPEN SEARCH

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini has directed officials to ensure that eligible families under the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Antyodaya

Parivar Suraksha Yojana (Dayalu-I and Dayalu-II) do not face any difficulties in receiving financial assistance. No applicant should have to approach middlemen to avail the benefits of the scheme, and eligible beneficiaries must receive financial assistance without unnecessary delay.

The Chief Minister was chairing a review meeting of the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Antyodaya Parivar Suraksha Yojana in Chandigarh on Friday. The Chief Minister directed offi-



cial to ensure end-to-end tracking of the entire process, from the submission of applications and verification of documents to the transfer of financial assistance. Once the prescribed procedure is completed, arrangements should be made to transfer the assistance directly to the bank accounts of eligible beneficiaries in real time so that they do not have to wait unnecessarily for payment. He further directed that applications under the

Dayalu-I scheme should be verified on the lines of the Dayalu-II scheme to ensure a smooth verification process and timely benefits for eligible beneficiaries. The Chief Minister directed that if an objection is raised against an application or it is rejected after the death certificate and other required documents have been uploaded, the applicant must be clearly informed of the reason.

The concerned officials should also contact the

applicant by phone so that any deficiencies in the documents can be rectified and the necessary action taken. Sh. Saini also directed officials to take the necessary steps to make the Dayalu scheme proactive, on the lines of the Old Age Samman Allowance Scheme, so that eligible families can be identified and provided benefits conveniently and in a timely manner.

Emphasising the need to make the application process simple, transparent and accountable, the Chief Minister said that eligible families should not have to make unnecessary visits to government offices and that every application must be acted upon within the stipulated time.

The Children sitting on floor in government schools is worrying : Kumari Selja

CHANDIGARH : OPEN SEARCH

The Sirsa MP, Former Union Cabinet Minister, General Secretary of All India Congress Committee and Congress Working Committee (CWC) Member Kumari Selja expressed deep concern over the lack of basic facilities in Haryana's government schools. She said that while Haryana was being described as a developed state, thousands of children in government schools were still compelled to study while sitting on mats spread on the floor. According to a published report, around 3.80 lakh children in nearly 14,000 government schools across the state do not have desks. She described the situation as a matter of serious con-



cern. Kumari Selja said government schools primarily cater to children from poor, farming, labouring and economically weaker families. Complaints have also emerged about inadequate and clean toilet facilities for girls in several schools. She said providing desks, clean drinking water, safe buildings, sufficient teachers and separate toilets for girls was a primary responsibility of the government. A lack of these

The Moisture-related deductions and delayed paddy procurement trouble farmers : Selja

Sirsa MP, Former Union Cabinet Minister and General Secretary of All India Congress Committee Kumari Selja expressed concern over the difficulties faced by farmers during paddy procurement in Haryana's grain markets. She said farmers were facing problems related to moisture testing, portal verification and delays in

procurement. According to published reports, farmers in several mandis have complained of unjustified deductions in the name of moisture and slow lifting of paddy. Selja said farmers were already facing rising input costs and the impact of weather conditions. Their produce should not face unnecessary delays in procurement.

facilities affects both children's education and health. She said the government should move beyond announcements and provide essential facilities in all government schools at the earliest so that children can

study in a good and dignified environment. "Children today are the future of India," she said, questioning how the dream of a developed India could be realised without quality education and better facilities for them.

Nominations can be submitted for State NSS Awards 2025-26 till October 31: Minister Mahipal Dhanda

CHANDIGARH : OPEN SEARCH

Haryana Education Minister Sh. Mahipal Dhanda stated that the Department of Higher Education will confer the 'State NSS Awards 2025-26' to honour coordinators, officers and volunteers who have performed outstanding work in the field of the National Service Scheme (NSS). For this purpose, the State NSS Cell has invited applications from university-level and district and polytechnic-level NSS units. The Education Minister stated that a total of 42 awards will be given for the year 2025-26. These include 1 award for a University NSS Programme Coordinator; 1 award for a District/Polytechnic NSS



Programme Coordinator, 30 awards for NSS Programme Officers and Units, and 10 awards for NSS volunteers. A verified record of activities and achievements for 3 years for coordinators and 2 years for Programme Officers and volunteers will be mandatory. He stated that only nominations submitted through the proper channel will be accepted. Applications sent directly, submitted via e-mail, or received without documents will be rejected.

High Court rejects plea against Beant Singh family's occupation of Chandigarh house, cites security threat

CHANDIGARH : OPEN SEARCH

The Punjab and Haryana High Court has rejected an application challenging the continued occupation of a government house in Chandigarh by Tej Parkash Singh, son of Punjab's former Chief Minister Beant Singh. The Bench made it clear that the Supreme Court's general directions against retention of government accommodation by government servants could not be invoked to question the administration's decision to allow him to continue in the house on security grounds. The Bench of Chief Justice Ashwani Kumar Mishra and Justice Rohit Kapoor observed that the



Chandigarh Administration had taken a "conscious decision" after considering the threat perception and intelligence inputs, and the case was distinguishable from those covered by the Supreme Court's directions.

The court took note of the Chandigarh Administration's affidavit

stating that Beant Singh was "done to death in an act of terrorism" and that his family continued to face security threats. Appearing before the Bench, UT Additional Standing Counsel Abhinav Sood, along with advocate Sayyam Garg, furnished an affidavit dated October 6, stating that the House

It also flagged the "operational vulnerability" that could arise from relocation from the existing premises

Allotment Committee had considered the continued occupation of the Sector 5 house by Tej Parkash Singh.

The letter dated June 6 in the matter, among other things, referred to "recent grenade attacks and terror-related incidents in Chandigarh and the Punjab region", the revival of extremist and radical organisations, persistent threat calls, hostile social media campaigns and intel-

ligence inputs indicating continuing hostile intent against the family. It also flagged the "operational vulnerability" that could arise from relocation from the existing premises.

The letter said the joint security committee recommended that the house was "strategically suitable and security-wise appropriate" for the family's residence. It found the existing security deployment and infrastructure satisfactory, while recommending additional CCTV cameras and strengthened surveillance arrangements. The High Court observed that the Supreme Court's directions were intended to ensure that government servants

did not continue occupying government accommodation beyond retirement. It held that such general directions could not be relied upon to contend that Tej Parkash Singh could not continue in the house, particularly when the UT Administration had considered the threat perception and intelligence inputs before deciding that his continued occupation was warranted.

The Bench noted that the administration had initially cancelled the allotment pursuant to the Supreme Court's directions, but reconsidered the matter after receiving a representation from the occupant and examining intelligence inputs.

Centre Appreciates Haryana's Efforts to Ease Building Bylaws

CHANDIGARH : OPEN SEARCH

Haryana is making significant strides towards becoming one of India's most business-friendly and investment-ready states by accelerating regulatory reforms, simplifying government procedures, and building a more transparent, efficient, and entrepreneur-friendly administrative framework.

The details were shared at a high-level review meeting on the implementation of Phase II of the Compliance Reduction and Deregulation Exercise, chaired by Special Secretary, Cabinet Secretariat, Sh. KK Pathak and Haryana's Additional Chief Secretary, Home, Sh. Sudhir Rajpal.

During the meeting, Sh. KK Pathak appreciated the Haryana Government's efforts to simplify building bylaws and streamline regulatory procedures. He acknowledged the state's progress in making building regulations more practical, transparent, and business-friendly, noting the importance of such reforms in facilitating faster approvals and improving the ease of doing business.



Commissioner & Secretary, Industries & Commerce, Dr. Amit Kumar Agrawal informed that the Haryana Government is pursuing a comprehensive 28-point reform agenda aimed at eliminating unnecessary regulatory hurdles, improving the ease of doing business, promoting entrepreneurship, and creating new opportunities for industrial investment and employment. Substantial progress has been made across key sectors, including industrial development, land regulations, building approvals, labour reforms, electricity connections, environmental clearances, education, healthcare, and citizen-centric service delivery. So far, eight reform proposals have been submitted to the Centre, while 18 have been agreed upon and are under

implementation.

He said the government's focus is on transforming the regulatory environment from a complex, permission-driven system into a simpler, more predictable framework that enables businesses to invest, expand, and operate with greater confidence. Dr. Amit Kumar Agrawal informed that in a major legislative initiative, the Haryana Right to Business Bill, 2026, was passed by the state Legislative Assembly on September 1. The initiative is part of the government's broader efforts to reduce procedural requirements for new enterprises and create a more supportive environment for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). In another investor-friendly move, HSI-IDC has allowed the leasing of vacant industrial plots in industrial estates and industrial model townships, subject to applicable conditions and charges. Industrial allottees have also been given the flexibility to change projects involving permissible industrial activities without obtaining prior approval from HSIIDC.

Briefs News

A total of 66,818 cases addressed up to September 2026

CHANDIGARH : OPEN SEARCH. The 'Sakhi - One Stop Centre' scheme of the Haryana Government is proving to be a significant support system for women affected by violence in the state. Working with the message of "Empowered Women, Safe Women," these centres provide all essential services under one roof to women facing physical, sexual, emotional, psychological or economic violence. A government spokesperson informed that 22 One Stop Centres are currently fully operational in the state. Of these, 10 centres are functioning from their own buildings, while five additional One Stop Centres are also being established. Through these centres, a total of 66,818 cases have been addressed and assistance provided up to September 2026. The spokesperson further stated that the centres provide immediate medical assistance, legal aid for pursuing cases, social and psychological counselling, assistance in filing FIRs and obtaining police protection, as well as short-term safe shelter for up to 20 days. The temporary shelter includes basic facilities for women and their children, including girls of any age and boys up to 12 years of age. If a survivor requires accommodation beyond 20 days or long-term rehabilitation, she is referred to government institutions such as Nari Niketan in Karnal and Mahila Ashram in Rohtak, or to non-governmental organisations such as Bhai Kanhaiya Lal Trust in Sirsa, Ashiana in Karnal, and The Earth Saviours Foundation.

Haryana Govt Invites Online Applications for State-Level Women's Awards for 2026-27

CHANDIGARH : OPEN SEARCH With the objective of encouraging and honouring women who have made outstanding contributions in various fields, the Haryana Women and Child Development Department has invited online applications for the State-Level Awards for the year 2026-27. A government spokesperson informed that several prestigious awards would be conferred under different categories. These include the Smt. Sushma Swaraj Award, carrying a cash prize of Rs. 5 lakh, a citation and a shawl; the Indira Gandhi Mahila Shakti Award, carrying Rs. 1.50 lakh and a citation; the Kalpana Chavla Shaurya Award, carrying Rs. 1 lakh and a citation; and the Bahan Shanno Devi Panchayati Raj Award, carrying Rs. 1 lakh and a citation. In addition, winners in the categories of government employees, social workers and women entrepreneurs will receive a cash prize of Rs. 21,000, along with a citation and a shawl. The spokesperson further stated that all applications received at the district level would be scrutinised by the District-Level Recommendation Committee. After the necessary verification and police verification of eligible cases recommended by the committee, the applications would be forwarded to the headquarters within the prescribed time limit.

Keep Strict Vigil on Bajra and Paddy Arriving from Other States : Chief Minister

CHANDIGARH : OPEN SEARCH Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini has directed district officials to closely monitor the ongoing crop procurement process in the state and maintain strict vigilance over bajra and paddy arriving from across the state's borders. The Chief Minister was issuing directions to district officials through a video conference after a review meeting of the Samadhan Cell in Chandigarh on Friday. He directed officials to ensure the procurement of paddy with a moisture content of 17 per cent, as per the prescribed norms. He said the state government was committed to procuring every single grain brought by farmers at the Minimum Support Price (MSP) and ensuring timely payment for their produce. The Chief Minister said nodal officers had been appointed in every district to monitor mandis and conduct physical verification. These officers are working to facilitate farmers and ensure strict compliance with the guidelines issued for the procurement process. To ensure smooth and transparent procurement, mandis have been geo-tagged and equipped with CCTV cameras.

Kharge accuses Modi Govt of favouring corporate giants

NEW DELHI AGENCY

Congress president and Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge on Friday accused the Narendra Modi government of undermining the foundations of economic liberalisation by allegedly concentrating economic power in the hands of a few favoured corporate groups, claiming that the resulting monopolies and duopolies were hurting small businesses, weakening competition and aggravating the employment crisis facing the country's youth.

In a post on the social media platform X, Kharge alleged that the government's economic policies were designed to hand control of the Indian economy to industrialists close to the ruling Bharatiya Janata

Says monopolies are killing competition



Party (BJP), with the party allegedly benefiting from the concentration of corporate profits. "The objective of Modi ji's economic policy is to hand over control of the economy to his favoured capitalist friends, so that the BJP can secure a share of their profits in

return," Kharge said. Accusing the government of encouraging monopolies and duopolies at the expense of a competitive market, the Congress president alleged that its policies had served to fill the BJP's coffers while dismantling the foundations of econom-

ic liberalisation. "By eliminating competition and establishing monopolies and duopolies, they have worked only to fill the BJP's coffers and destroy the foundations of economic liberalisation," he said.

To buttress his allegations, Kharge cited developments in the telecom and domestic aviation sectors since 2014, arguing that the number of significant players had declined sharply. He claimed that the telecom sector, which had 13 players before 2014, now had only three major private players. In domestic aviation, he said, the number of significant players had fallen from seven to just two. Kharge also flagged what he described as weakening

competition in other sectors, including digital payments, cement and food-delivery applications, contending that growing market concentration raised serious questions about the ability of smaller businesses to compete with dominant companies. Seeking to contrast the Congress's economic legacy with the BJP's record in government, Kharge asserted that his party had laid the foundations of economic liberalisation in India, while accusing the Modi government of prioritising corporate interests over broader economic development. "The Congress party is the mother of economic liberalisation," he said, accusing the BJP of pursuing what he described as "economic terrorism" for its own financial benefit.

CTI seeks ban on protests in Delhi till Diwali, says business hit

NEW DELHI (AGENCY)

The Chamber of Trade and Industry (CTI) has demanded a ban on large-scale protests in Delhi's key commercial and central areas from Navratri till Diwali, citing their impact on businesses. The outfit also urged the government to designate a permanent protest zone outside the city. In a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, CTI chairman Brijesh Goyal called for restrictions on large gatherings at Jantar Mantar, Parliament Street and Lutyens' Delhi, saying repeated demonstrations and disruptions to metro services were affecting traders and customer movement. Goyal said the festive period, beginning with Navratri and Ramlila events on October 11, is crucial for traders, with Diwali and the wedding season following. The organi-



sation said restrictions are needed to protect the business of around 15 lakh traders in the national capital. BuyMaps According to a CTI survey, business activity in Delhi's markets has fallen by around 70 per cent over the past three days. The number of customers visiting the city from outside Delhi for shopping has declined from an estimated two to three lakh daily to around 40,000-50,000, and the local footfall dropped by more than 50 per cent, the collective claimed. Repeated metro station closures, traffic congestion and disruptions around Jantar Mantar, Parliament Street and Connaught Place were discouraging people from visiting markets, it said.

Delhi schools, colleges shift classes online, postpone exams amid security concerns

NEW DELHI (AGENCY)

Several schools and colleges in Delhi have shifted classes online, rescheduled parent-teacher meetings and postponed examinations scheduled for October 10 amid security concerns and disruption of metro services ahead of a proposed protest at Jantar Mantar. Sardar Patel Vidyalyaya has informed parents that classes for students from Classes 6 to 12 will be conducted online on Saturday, citing extensive barricading in the New Delhi area and concerns over students' safety. The school has also discontinued its stay-back facility for students on Friday. The inauguration of its Activity Week, scheduled for Saturday, has been postponed, with a fresh date to be announced later.

Raghubir Singh Junior Modern School has rescheduled its parent-teacher meeting (PTM), scheduled for Saturday, to



discuss students' report cards. The revised schedule will be communicated to parents soon, the school said. Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's Mehta Vidyalyaya, at Kasturba Gandhi Marg, said that due to the proposed protest at Jantar Mantar and in the interest of students' safety, sports day practice and enrichment classes for classes 9 to 12 scheduled for Saturday have been canceled. Bharati Vidyapeeth's College of Engineering in Paschim Vihar has postponed its

mid-term examinations scheduled for Saturday to Monday, citing anticipated closure of entry and exit gates at several metro stations and possible disruption of services.

In a notice, the college said the decision was taken in accordance with directions from the dean of the University School of Information, Communication and Technology (USICT), Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University (GGSIUP), and the Joint Commissioner of

Police, Transport Range, Delhi. The examination timings will remain unchanged on the revised date. The Maharaja Agrasen Institute of Technology in Rohini has also postponed its mid-term examinations scheduled for Saturday to October 12 following a communication from the Delhi Police regarding anticipated metro restrictions.

The institute said the decision was approved by the dean of USICT, GGSIUP, and the BTech Programme Coordination Committee. Department heads have been asked to inform faculty members and students about the revised schedule.

The Delhi Police had requested the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation to close entry and exit gates at 57 metro stations from 9 pm on Friday until further notice, citing a proposed protest at Jantar Mantar and the possibility of unruly movement towards sensitive locations.

Delhi HC stays order mandating Aadhaar biometrics-enabled attendance for prosecutors

NEW DELHI (AGENCY)

The Delhi High Court on Friday stayed an order of the city government mandating public prosecutors in trial courts to mark their attendance daily through the Aadhaar Enabled Biometric Attendance System (AEBAS). Justice Amit Mahajan issued notice on a petition by the Delhi Prosecutors' Welfare Association challenging the order issued by the Delhi government's Directorate of Prosecution on October 5. According to the directive, all prosecuting officers must mark daily attendance on the biometric attendance machine or on their mobile phones through the attendance App at their respective district court complex/office of the district incharge. The petitioner, represented by senior advo-



cates N Hariharan, Ashish Mohan and Sachin Puri, contended that public prosecutors and additional public prosecutors are officers of the court, appointed under sections 18 and 19 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, and their presence is recorded daily in the judicial order sheets. FindLegal Help The government order asking them to compulsorily register and mark attendance through the AEBAS was, therefore, unreasonable, arbitrary, contrary to the law on Aadhaar and the right to privacy, it was argued.

Smriti Irani questions Kharge's 'smash patriarchy' call over JNU professor-MP Akoijam row

NEW DELHI (AGENCY)

BJP leader Smriti Irani on Friday questioned Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge's commitment to his recent call for "smashing the patriarchy", asking why the party had not taken political action against its Manipur MP Angomcha Bimol Akoijam despite allegations by female students at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) and reports of an internal inquiry into the matter.

Addressing a press conference at the BJP headquarters in New Delhi, Irani said the issue raised questions about the Congress's approach to allegations of sexual harassment involving one of its own parliamentarians. Irani referred to media reports about complaints by female students against Akoijam, a



Congress MP and JNU professor, alleging that he had sought to exploit students in the context of marks. She said an internal complaints committee at the university had conducted an inquiry in accordance with the law and claimed that the allegations against the MP had been substantiated.

"Why has no political action been taken against the Congress MP?" Irani asked, questioning Kharge's silence on the matter. Her

remarks came as she sought to contrast Kharge's public rhetoric on gender equality with what she described as the Congress's handling of allegations against its own leader. Irani also invoked Kharge's January 15, 2025 remarks, in which the Congress president had said that the party's fight was not against BJP but against the "Indian State". She said the statement was unprecedented in India's political history and

alleged that Kharge and the Congress had subsequently continued to target constitutional institutions.

"Never before in the political history of our country has a political leader declared war on the Indian State," Irani said, arguing that an attack on the Indian State was effectively an attack on citizens and institutions through which the democratic system functions. The BJP leader then returned to the issue of patriarchy, saying slogans were easier to deliver than to implement in practice.

Irani also referred to a recent confrontation involving Kharge and a woman police officer in Delhi, using it to question whether women could expect the Congress leadership to act against an MP facing allegations of sexual harassment.

Delhi Police deny nod for October 10 CJP protest at Jantar Mantar, cite late application, past violations

NEW DELHI (AGENCY)

The Delhi Police have denied permission to the Cockroach Janata Party (CJP) to hold a protest against Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar at Jantar Mantar on October 10, citing the late submission of its application and alleged violations of conditions during a previous demonstration.

The police have also imposed prohibitory restrictions across the New Delhi district for Saturday, citing concerns over public safety, law and order, and traffic management.

Joint Commissioner of Police Nupur Prasad said



the application for the proposed protest was received on October 7, just three days before the scheduled demonstration. Under the prevailing guidelines, an application to organise an event at Jantar Mantar must be submitted at least 10 days in advance, she said. "On October 7, 2026, an

application from Saurav Das, Co-Convenor of the Cockroach Janata Party, was received in the New Delhi District. As per the application, an intimation was given regarding a protest to be held at Jantar Mantar on October 10 concerning the accountability of the Chief Election Commissioner

On October 7, 2026, an application from Saurav Das, Co-Convenor of the Cockroach Janata Party, was received in the New Delhi District

(CEC)," Prasad said. She added that the police had also taken into account the party's past conduct, alleging that undertakings and lawful directions issued on a previous occasion had not been followed. "In light of the non-compliance with prescribed procedures, the failure to adhere to past legal direc-

tions, and the current state of public safety, law and order, and traffic regulation, permission for the proposed protest at Jantar Mantar is hereby denied," she said. The police said Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) was in force across the New Delhi area, with preventive restrictions imposed to maintain public order and safety. Prasad warned that violations of Section 163, vandalism or damage to public property would invite legal action in accordance with court judgments.

Meanwhile, the Delhi Police have written to the Delhi Metro Rail

Corporation (DMRC), seeking the closure of entry and exit gates at 57 metro stations and a reduction in train frequency at these stations in view of the proposed protest. The proposed measures are to begin at 9 pm on Friday and continue on Saturday until the situation normalises. The police communication does not, by itself, confirm that the DMRC has approved or implemented the restrictions.

The stations identified include Rajiv Chowk, Central Secretariat, Patel Chowk, Janpath, New Delhi, Mandi House, ITO, Supreme Court and Kashmere Gate, among others.

Dr. Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital honours Zam Zam Foundation

NEW DELHI. OPEN SEARCH

On the occasion of World Sight Day, Dr. Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital, located in Karol Bagh, organised an awareness programme to educate the public about eye health. This year's theme, "Love Your Eyes," aimed to raise awareness about eye diseases, encourage early detection and timely treatment, and help preserve people's eyesight. On this occasion, the hospital's Administrative Officer, Piyush Maurya; Director Dr. K. Anand Sudhan; Dr. Nikunj Patel; Dr. Sunil; and Coordinator Mohammad Muzammil honoured Shamim Ahmed Khan, President of Zam Zam Foundation, with a certificate of appreciation and the Best Performer Award 2026.

The hospital representatives stated that Zam Zam Foundation had played a significant role in organis-



ing eye camps at various locations and referring needy patients to the hospital through letters to facilitate free treatment. They emphasised that Dr. Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital is committed to making quality eye care accessible to everyone. Through partnerships and collaboration with organisations such as Zam Zam Foundation, the hospital aims to provide eye care services to as many people as possible and help preserve their vision. Speaking on the occasion, Shamim

Ahmed Khan, President of Zam Zam Foundation, said that World Sight Day reminds us that our eyes are invaluable and that neglecting eye health can put the gift of sight at risk.

He further observed that increasing dependence on digital devices in modern lifestyles is contributing to a rise in eye-related problems among both adults and children. Conditions such as cataracts, glaucoma and myopia are among the various eye health concerns requiring greater attention.

Briefs News

Delhi Police registers 25 FIRs over SIR protests since Oct 2

NEW DELHI (AGENCY) The Delhi Police have registered 25 FIRs related to the SIR protests in the national capital since October 2, with Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra among those named, sources said. The cases relate to alleged vandalism of public property, assaults and scuffles involving police personnel, obstruction of government work and violation of prohibitory orders imposed under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) in the New Delhi district. Police have taken action against protesters following repeated incidents of alleged lawlessness during the demonstrations, a police source said. The opposition MPs have held a series of protests in the national capital after a report by The Indian Express said Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi objected to multiple decisions and orders related to the SIR of electoral rolls.

Delhi Police denies nod for Saturday's CJP protest at Jantar Mantar

NEW DELHI (AGENCY) Delhi Police has denied permission for a protest called by the Cockroach Janata Party and some student organisations against Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar at Jantar Mantar on October 10, a senior police officer said on Friday. Police cited late submission of application and rule violations during a previous demonstration as reasons for denying the permission. Police received the application seeking permission for the protest on October 7, just three days before the protest. However, according to rules, such applications have to be submitted at least 10 days in advance, said Joint Commissioner of Police, New Delhi range, Nupur Prasad. Section 163 (prohibitory orders) of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), which empowers authorities to issue orders to prevent potential disturbances, has been imposed in New Delhi district, she said.

Railways cancels select Mail, Express trains arriving at New Delhi, Nizamuddin stations on Oct 10

NEW DELHI (AGENCY) The Railway Board on Friday cancelled certain Mail and Express trains scheduled to arrive at New Delhi and Hazrat Nizamuddin stations between 4 am and 2 pm on October 10. According to a circular, trains departing from their originating stations after 2 pm on October 9 and scheduled to arrive at New Delhi or Hazrat Nizamuddin stations between 4 am and 2 pm on October 10 will be cancelled at their originating stations. "All Mail/Express trains starting at source after 14:00 Hrs today, ie, 9th Oct which are reaching New Delhi, Hazrat Nizamuddin Railway Station on 10th October from 04:00 to 14:00 hrs be cancelled at source," the circular read. The Railways cited unexpected road traffic between the two stations as the reason for the cancellations. The Cockroach Janata Party has announced a protest at Jantar Mantar on Saturday, demanding the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar over alleged irregularities in the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.

CJP protest : Delhi Police requests DMRC to shut 57 metro stations

NEW DELHI (AGENCY) Delhi Police has requested the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) to shut 57 metro stations from 9 pm on Friday till Saturday, the day of CJP's protest, citing the likelihood of "unruly mob movement towards sensitive locations." In a letter on Thursday, Joint Commissioner of Police (Transport Range) Rajneesh Gupta said the frequency of metro trains passing through the stations may also be reduced on October 10, depending on the situation. The restrictions have been proposed in view of the Cockroach Janata Party's protest at Jantar Mantar on October 10 against Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar. The 57 stations include Janpath, Patel Chowk, Central Secretariat, Rajiv Chowk, Mandi House, Barakhamba Road, Supreme Court, Indraprastha, Kashmere Gate, Chandni Chowk, INA, Hauz Khas, Azadpur, Jamia Millia Islamia, Shaheen Bagh, Wekome and Rohini West.

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EDITORIAL

America tightens its grip on Green Cards

On October 8, 2026, the administration of US President Donald Trump decided to suspend several major IT companies, including Infosys, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Wipro and HCL Technologies, from the Permanent Labor Certification (PERM) programme linked to green cards. Microsoft, Adobe, Cognizant and Capgemini are also among the companies affected by this action. According to the US Department of Labor, new applications associated with these companies will not be accepted, while the processing of pending applications will also be halted. The government alleges that some companies misused the system for hiring foreign workers, thereby affecting employment opportunities for American workers. However, detailed findings regarding the allegations against each company have not been made public.

The most significant aspect of this decision is that the United States' immigration policy is now placing not only temporary employment visas but also the process of obtaining permanent residency under stricter scrutiny. PERM is a labour certification process under which employers are generally required to demonstrate that the availability of qualified American workers and the potential impact on their wages and working conditions have been taken into account. This process is an important step in several employment-based green card categories.

This development is particularly significant for India because the United States is a major market for Indian IT companies and skilled technology professionals. Employees of Infosys, TCS and other affected companies who are pursuing permanent residency through their employers may face delays and uncertainty. However, the decision does not mean that the existing H-1B visas of all Indian employees working for these companies, or green cards that have already been issued, will automatically be revoked. The suspension directly concerns PERM applications, and the actual impact on an employee will depend on their immigration status and the stage of their application. The Trump administration presents this move as an effort to protect employment opportunities for American citizens and curb alleged irregularities in programmes involving foreign workers. At the same time, it is important to assess the potential impact of this policy on the talent requirements of the American technology industry, recruitment plans of multinational companies and the long-term careers of Indian professionals. While imposing excessive restrictions on the recruitment of foreign specialists may benefit domestic employment, it could also affect companies' ability to attract talent and their global competitiveness.

In this entire episode, the importance of impartial investigations and transparent procedures has increased. If any company has violated the rules, action should be taken against it on the basis of concrete evidence. At the same time, the interests and legal rights of employees who have applied in accordance with the prescribed rules must also be protected. Companies must ensure compliance with US labour laws, while the government should clarify the duration of the suspension, the conditions for review and the procedures available to affected applicants.

Action stations on a war footing

LT GEN SYED ATA HASNAIN RETD

IN the Army, there is an expression we often hear: "Koi kadi nahin lagi hai." There is no war on; why the hurry? Yet, over a lifetime in intelligence, operations, planning, command and strategic affairs, I believed the opposite. For me, we were always at war not literally, but institutionally. Something could always become a crisis. Preparedness could never begin after the crisis announced itself. Much of this is practised by soldiers on the ground. In every command appointment, during contingencies, I followed one rule for subordinates: inform me at the first instance. Do not wait for the complete picture. Staff and subordinate commanders continued doing what they were trained to do. I would monitor, offer advice, discuss options or intervene when necessary. The commander should not lose opening minutes while someone assembles a tidier picture.

I could be woken at any hour of the night. I had instructed my communicators to give me half a minute before putting my communication through. Warm water was always beside my bed. Those seconds allowed me to gather my thoughts and clear my throat. In a crisis, a commander's voice must convey composure and authority. Preparedness is ultimately a collection of habits created when there is no crisis. The 26/11 Mumbai attacks remain an enduring reminder that information, even when available in fragments and over time, does not automatically induce preventive action. Possessing information is different from converting it into preparedness. Between detection and response lie interpretation, dissemination, decision, orders, mobilisation and execution. Every transition is a potential point of failure.

This is starker in disaster management (I spent six years at the National Disaster Management Authority). Warning time is brutally short. A satellite may spot an abnormality; radars detect extreme precipitation; a river gauge shows a dangerous rise; a scientific agency issues an accurate warning. Yet none of these, by themselves, saves a life. I saw the importance of this first-hand during the Silkyara tunnel collapse in November 2023. Prime Minister Narendra Modi grasped the gravity of the situation early and directed that every resource required be made available without delay. We worked passionately to deliver success. In my media interactions, I have often said that I treated the rescue operation as a war. Technical information must first be converted into comprehensible language. The person on the ground needs no scientific dissertation. He needs answers to five questions: What is likely to happen? Where? When? Who is at risk? What must be done now? That conversion from technical information to operational instruction is a neglected function in emergency management. It must be accurate but rapid. Information in a fast-moving emergency is perishable.

ANIL RAMAN

On 8 September, the Labour Department's Inspector General had announced on X that Cognizant's filings were suspended, without stating any allegation

US Visa Shock : It's Time India Stopped Playing Nice With Trump's America



On Thursday, at a White House briefing, US Labour Secretary Keith Sonderling, with Vice President JD Vance beside him, suspended eight companies from the programme that lets American employers sponsor foreign workers for a green card. Four of them are India's largest IT firms. The announcement came on the day the commander of America's Pacific forces, Admiral Samuel Paparo, ended a six-day visit to Delhi. He came at the end of one of the most substantial US-India land exercises, even as the US Air Force flew F-35 fighters with the Indian Air Force. This raises a question Delhi can no longer avoid. How long can a partnership work when one side seeks India as a security partner but unfairly shuts out Indian engineers seeking better prospects? Should India keep saying yes to the first while it meekly accepts the second?

The programme, known as PERM, is the first step towards an employer-sponsored green card. Before a company can sponsor a foreign employee for permanent residence, it must prove to the Labour Department that it tried and failed to find a qualified American for the job. The Department will now accept no new PERM applications from the eight companies and will not process any already pending. The eight are TCS, Infosys, Wipro, HCL, Cognizant, Capgemini, Microsoft and Adobe. No end date has been announced. On 8 September, the Labour Department's Inspector General had announced on X that Cognizant's filings were suspended, without stating any allegation. In one month, the list has grown to eight, and the announcement has shifted from a social media post to the White House.

The companies will absorb the blow; their

employees will feel it more. H-1B visas remain valid, but the route from a temporary work visa to permanent residence is shut. Indians hold about 70 per cent of H-1B visas, so most affected workers are Indian. The green card queue was already long. Indians in the EB-3 category receive green cards only if they applied before January 2014, and EB-2 is closed to them. In May, the Department of Homeland Security said it would grant green cards to applicants already in the US only in "extraordinary circumstances". A worker whose PERM application is now frozen loses years she cannot recover. There is a further risk. American law lets an H-1B worker stay beyond the six-year limit if her labour certification has been pending for a year or more. If the Department moves from suspending applications to rejecting them, people who have lived in America for a decade could lose the legal basis to remain. This is blatantly cruel. Why has Washington done this? The stated reason is fraud. Vance said

nearly 1,000 of Microsoft's 3,682 PERM applications were for jobs from which American workers had been laid off. He claimed that workers hired through outsourcing firms earn about \$48,000 less than comparable Americans. The outsourcing firms have paid visa settlements before. If a company certified that no American was available for a job an American had just lost, that is fraud, and Delhi should not defend it. So far, however, no specific charge has been made public against the four Indian firms.

The manner of action, however, points to politics. Normal enforcement investigates first and penalises after it finds wrongdoing. Here, pending applications were frozen before any finding, and the Vice President made the announcement four weeks before the midterm elections of 3 November. Placing Microsoft on the list lets the administration present this as a fight against Big Tech and answer any charge of targeting Indians. Doubts about outsourcing

also cross party lines. Senators Dick Durbin (Democrat) and Chuck Grassley (Republican) spent more than a decade drafting bills to curb it.

India has many friends in American politics and very few who would pay a price for, making it strategically essential and politically disposable. Disposable means that no American voting group loses anything when India is hurt, so a small, determined group of opponents can turn Indian workers into a political symbol at no cost to itself. Meanwhile, the security relationship keeps moving forward. In Delhi, Paparo met the service chiefs and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar. In August, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri and US Under Secretary Allison Hooker advanced the Indian Ocean Strategic Venture, which covers maritime security, undersea cables, and strategic infrastructure.

How can both pathways move together? The Pentagon wants Indian naval strength in an ocean where America is stretched

The White House answers to voters who see foreign workers as a threat. The National Security Council once balanced these decisions. That machinery was weakened in 2025, and nobody now asks how a PERM freeze affects a defence partnership. India keeps separate tracks too, but it separates countries. America is separating its interest in India from its treatment of Indians. Delhi has stopped hiding its irritation. In New York on 28 September, Jaishankar said countries "should not be so self-centred", faulted America's understanding of India's concerns on terrorism, and said, "the economics of mobility and the politics of mobility are at odds".

On 5 October, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said trade talks had reached a "plateau" and that tariffs had been "weaponised", with a new American law allowing 100 per cent tariffs on buyers of Russian oil due within weeks. Part of this tone is for voters at home. What does all this mean? The more serious damage is to public opinion, on both sides. Pew's 2026 survey found that Indian favourable views of the US fell from 54 per cent to 45 per cent in a year, while, for the first time since 2008, more Americans view India unfavourably than favourably.

Students, engineers and the diaspora once held this relationship steady. A partnership that rests on governments alone is narrower and more transactional, and Delhi will find it harder to explain defence ties to its own voters. How long can such a divided strategy work? It depends on a Washington calculation that India needs America against China more than America needs India. Washington feels India will absorb any cost on trade and visa costs and still cooperate militarily.

Best of Both Sides : Each player in its own separate groove

SUGATA SRINIVASARAJU

The common sense among Congress allies seems to suggest that aggressive 'vote chori' allegations will only consolidate the majority vote in favour of the BJP

A Congress protest video emerging from Delhi's Chhatrasal Stadium on Wednesday, October 7, showed something that was both an imitation and a pointer to an involuntary absorption. When a group of Congress leaders, including Priyanka Gandhi, performed the rock-a-bye action to their sloganeering, it seemed like raw plagiarism. They had borrowed the action from a video that had gone viral during the Jantar Mantar protests of the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) in July, but had wrapped it in their own unimaginative shrillness. In the original video, a young woman from the Left student movement was seen acting out the rocking of "Bal Narendra" as a dāli-playing comrade chanted alongside.

If imitation is a sign of acknowledgment, then it could be argued that the grand old Congress party, which has not extended its support either formally or informally to the CJP-led protests so far, appears to secretly envy its effectiveness and impact. Why can't the seemingly organised and the ostensibly unorganised opposition fuse to create a wider movement and a bigger force? Why is Congress keen to furrow its own path with half-hearted and sometimes disloyal alliance partners? As a political party with the best of history on its side, there is nothing wrong if it desires to be the singular alternative to the BJP-led regime. But can it do so given its own chequered past? That



is the question that has drifted around in public consciousness for a dozen years now.

Each of the players in the space occupied by those opposing the Narendra Modi regime has a different motive to be in the fight, with varying levels of competence and conviction. Among them, Congress has the largest footprint, one that spans India, but it also carries the maximum amount of dead weight, not excluding its own dynastic leadership model. While the narrative that Congress has built since 2014 seeks the restoration of the "glorious years" of liberal values and

compassionate governance, others in the opposition space seem to have other ideas. They clearly operate outside Congress's liberal nostalgia.

If the CJP advocates a clean break from the past, mobilising a younger demographic and weaponising impatience, Congress's regional and ideological allies have a more cautious approach. They are often seen gerrymandering the boundaries of their opposition to the Modi regime, often appearing more suspicious of Congress than the BJP. As a result, they prefer to maintain a certain status quo of engagement with

the ruling establishment despite the Congress proposal of a complete rupture. The reason for this, perhaps, lies in their own genesis. Many of the regional outfits either grew in opposition to Congress or broke away from it. They know well that if Congress recovers and expands electorally, it would do so solely at their expense. That insecurity is real, and existential in nature.

Also, while Rahul Gandhi's Congress tries to make ideological considerations paramount in the opposition space, putting forward a deracinated secular argument, its allies are

still dependent on Mandal and minority politics. This aspect, which has too many local variables to be manageable, does not always make for ideological unity or unity of action. In this regard, the Left parties may be an exception, but their blind paradigms of class theory or their paradoxically constrained pragmatism no longer have the pull factor. Therefore each of the Opposition parties is in its own unpredictable groove.

The question of nationalism too only finds diffident arguments in the Opposition space. Not all use the same language against the BJP. Rahul Gandhi used the word "treason" a few days ago, but that seemed borrowed, too — this time from the virulent parlance of the ruling party itself. Long before Rahul Gandhi could arrive at the discourse of treason, the BJP had crucified him with the label, leaving him little room in which to fling it back. The common sense among Congress allies seems to suggest that aggressive "vote chori" allegations will only consolidate the majority vote in favour of the BJP. That is because all attempts to disenfranchise the minority, and even a whisper around it, will further abet hyper-nationalist emotions. The JP movement of the 1970s struggled with similarly disparate Opposition concerns. It fired imaginations with the idea of unity for a short, distracted period before permanently deepening divisions in Indian politics.

VinFast India Named 'EV Manufacturer of the Year' at HT Auto Leaderboard Awards 2026

NEW DELHI (AGENCY)

VinFast Auto India, a subsidiary of global electric vehicle manufacturer VinFast, has been awarded the “EV Manufacturer of the Year” at the HT Auto Leaderboard Awards 2026. The recognition highlights VinFast's growing contribution to India's electric mobility ecosystem and its focus on building a comprehensive EV proposition spanning products, technology, manufacturing, retail and customer experience. Hosted by HT Auto, Hindustan Times' dedicated automotive platform, the HT Auto Leaderboard Awards is a prominent industry initiative that brings together automotive leaders, brands and enthusiasts to recognise excellence and celebrate the achievements shaping India's evolving mobility landscape.

Reflecting the broader



evolution of India's electric mobility landscape, the “EV Manufacturer of the Year” honour recognises companies that advance electrification not only through their products, but also through infrastructure, technology, service and long-term commitment. Against this benchmark, VinFast's recognition reflects its sustained efforts to support the development of India's electric mobility ecosystem and contribute to the country's transition towards electrification. Commenting on the

recognition, Mr. Tapan Ghosh, CEO, VinFast Asia, said, “We are honoured to receive the ‘EV Manufacturer of the Year’ recognition at the HT Auto Leaderboard Awards. This is a meaningful acknowledgement of the work we are doing to build a strong and sustainable foundation for electric mobility in India. Our approach has always been to look beyond the vehicle and build an ecosystem that brings together locally manufactured products, a growing retail and

service network, financing, charging and customer-focused ownership solutions. As we deepen our presence across India, we remain focused on raising the bar for electric mobility and creating an experience that delivers greater value and confidence to Indian customers.”

Mr. Prashant Singh, Editor, HT Auto, said, “In a relatively short span of time, VinFast has established itself as a significant player in India's EV ecosystem. With a strategically posi-

tioned portfolio that caters to the needs of Indian EV buyers, a supporting charging ecosystem, and competitive pricing, VinFast Auto India is well-positioned to strengthen its presence in one of the world's largest and most competitive automotive markets.”

The award builds on the recognition VinFast has received across leading automotive platforms in India, including “EV Manufacturer of the Year” at Times Drive Auto Summit and Awards, “EV Champion of the Year” at the Jagran Hi-Tech Awards 2026, and “Breakthrough Brand of the Year” at the Car&Bike Awards 2026, along with product honours such as “EV SUV of the Year – Editor's Choice” for the VF 7 at the BBC TopGear India Awards 2026 and “Value for Money Car of the Year” for the VF 6 at the Autocar India Awards 2026.

2 Mumbai-based firms, 5 Indian nationals face US sanctions over Iran oil trade

WASHINGTON (AGENCY)



The US on Thursday imposed sanctions on two Mumbai-based firms and five Indian nationals associated with them over allegations of being involved in the trade of petroleum products from Iran. The US Department of State action targeted SSPL Solutions Private Limited and Samudra Marine Services Private Limited for facilitating the import of petroleum products from Iran.

Two people associated with SSPL Solutions – Dhvani and Nisarg Vora, and three people related to Samudra Marine Services – Ketan Kochikar, Bhupendrasingh Sahu and Harishyam Hariharan Chundakattil -- have also been blocked from performing any transactions related to their respective firms. The action against the Indian entities and individuals is part of the US crackdown against Iran

under Operation Economic Outcast. “The Department of State is sanctioning 10 entities, six individuals, and five vessels in connection with trade in Iranian-origin petroleum, petroleum products, and petrochemical products,” an official statement said.

The State Department said these entities channelled millions of dollars to the Iranian regime, bolstering one of its most critical revenue streams and enabling its continued illicit conduct. “The US government is imposing sanctions on both the buyers and sellers driving this trade in Iranian petrochemical products,” the department said. At the same time, the US also

authorised wind-down transactions by Samudra Marine Services till October 23. A wind-down of transactions is a temporary, authorised grace period allowing parties to safely finish existing business and exit operations before new sanctions or liquidations take full effect.

Additionally, the Treasury Department also sanctioned 17 entities and their shadow fleet vessels to deprive the Iranian regime of funds. “Treasury is starving the tyrannical regime in Tehran of the money it uses to wage war in the region, and we will continue exposing those who enable the regime's oil sales,” said Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent.

1,200 IEM Students, Faculty join Mental Health Awareness Rally in Kolkata

KOLKATA (AGENCY)

Nearly 1,200 students, faculty members, volunteers and representatives of service organisations took to the streets on Wednesday as the Institute of Engineering & Management (IEM) organised a mental health awareness rally aimed at breaking the stigma around seeking psychological support. The rally, titled ‘IEM United for Wellness’, was organised by the Department of Basic Science and Humanities, IEM, in association with the Rotary Club of Salt Lake Silicon Valley, Lions Club of Kolkata IEM and Lions Club of Kolkata Salt Lake IEM. The initiative was held under the theme ‘Together for Mental Well-being’. The rally began at



3pm from IEM Management House. Participants carrying placards and banners with messages on mental wellness, emotional resilience, empathy and seeking timely support marched through College More and RS Software before returning via Ring Road to IEM Management House.

The organisers said the objective was to take conversations around mental health beyond classrooms and counselling spaces and

into the wider community, particularly among young people. “Mental health awareness must move beyond classrooms, counselling rooms and seminars to become a collective social responsibility. When nearly 1,200 young people and members of our community walk together for mental well-being, the message becomes stronger no one should have to face emotional struggles in silence,” said Psychologist and Counsellor Prof (Dr)

Samapika Das Biswas, Assistant Head, Department of Basic Science and Humanities, IEM, also Convener of the Mental health rally.

She said the initiative sought to create a culture in which seeking psychological support is seen as a sign of awareness and strength rather than something associated with stigma. Prof (Dr) Satyajit Chakrabarti, Vice Chancellor and Director, IEM-UEM Group, said mental well-being was an essential component of education and student development. “Education is not limited to academic achievement; it is equally about developing emotionally resilient, socially responsible and compassionate individuals.

Higher repo rate may constrain MFI credit access, raise lending costs: Industry Executives

NEW DELHI (AGENCY)

The Reserve Bank of India's recent repo rate hike could tighten credit availability for microfinance institutions (MFIs) and put pressure on their margins, industry executives said, while noting that the extent to which lenders pass on higher borrowing costs to borrowers remains uncertain. Speaking to ANI on the sidelines of Sa-Dhan's 21st Annual National Conference on Inclusive Growth, Jiji Mammen, Chief Executive Officer of Sa-Dhan, said the 25-basis-point increase in the repo rate from 5.25 per cent to 5.50 per cent was unlikely to have a major immediate impact on the microfinance sector, as most institutions were adequately capitalised.



“I don't think it is going to create much kind of a problem, especially in microfinance sector,” Mammen said, adding that any transmission of the rate hike to lending costs would take time. He said borrowing costs could rise slightly for businesses, including micro, small and medium enterprises, but the increase was unlikely to have a major impact on their performance.

However, Subrat Sabyasachi Roy, Head of

Strategy at Annapurna Finance Pvt Ltd, said the rate hike could affect the availability of credit for MFIs as banks may tighten lending. “Anytime the repo rate increases, the impact will be that there will be a liquidity crunch,” Roy said, adding that interest rates charged by lenders to MFIs could also increase. Roy said the ability of microfinance institutions to pass on higher borrowing costs to their borrowers remained uncertain, given the regula-

tory requirements governing their lending practices.

“Maybe the net interest margin will be impacted,” he said, adding that the impact on individual institutions would become clearer over time. The conference brought together policymakers, banks, investors, rating agencies, fintech companies and microfinance industry representatives to discuss the sector's challenges and future growth. Mammen said the conference could help institutions identify ways to address recent challenges and prepare for future risks. He also described the GST Council's recent recommendations as a step in the right direction, particularly measures that had been pending since the introduction of the tax regime.

India must ensure AI benefits reach every citizen, prevent digital divide from widening : Scindia

NEW DELHI (AGENCY)

India must ensure that the digital divide does not become an Artificial Intelligence (AI) divide, with technology serving as an instrument of inclusion and improving access to essential services, Union Minister for Communications Jyotiraditya Scindia said on Friday. Addressing the 10th edition of the India Mobile Congress (IMC) 2026 and inaugurating the International Telecommunication Union's (ITU) AI for Good Lab workshop, Scindia said the success of AI would depend on its ability to deliver tangible benefits to citizens rather than technological sophistication alone.

“The real test is whether it helps a farmer make a better decision, it enables a doctor to diagnose faster, it allows a teacher to reach a child



more effectively,” he said. Highlighting the need to make AI responsible, inclusive, secure and accessible at scale, Scindia said nearly 2.2 billion people worldwide remained offline, warning against allowing the digital divide of the past two decades to become the AI divide of the next two decades.

He said India's approach to AI was built on developing essential capabilities as shared infrastructure, enabling wider access to computing resources, datasets, models and connectivity.

Eveready Diversifies into Mosquito Protection with India's First Portable Liquid Vaporiser

MUMBAI (AGENCY)

Eveready Industries India Ltd, India's No. 1 battery brand, has announced its entry into the mosquito protection category with the launch of Eveready ULTIMA Liquid Vaporiser, India's first portable liquid vaporiser. The launch marks another step in Eveready's strategy of diversifying into relevant consumer categories by leveraging its established expertise in portable power to address evolving everyday needs.

The Indian household insecticide market is currently valued at more than Rs 5,000 crore, with liquid vaporisers accounting for approximately Rs 2,800 crore and showing healthy growth. However, conventional liquid vaporisers are designed to remain connected to fixed plug points, while mosquitoes can move



across different areas of the home. This creates a need for a more flexible solution that can provide mosquito protection across spaces, without being restricted by the availability of a plug point. Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Anirban Banerjee, Chief Executive Officer, Eveready Industries India Ltd, said, “Eveready has always been in the business of bringing power and convenience to consumers, and our portfolio has evolved as their needs have changed.

Our entry into mosquito protection is a natural

extension of this approach, allowing us to bring our expertise in portable and rechargeable power into a new category. With Eveready ULTIMA Liquid Vaporiser, India's first portable liquid vaporiser, we are making mosquito protection more convenient and adaptable to the way consumers use their spaces today. The product allows consumers to UNPLUG mosquito protection and use it where they really need it. With mosquito-borne diseases continuing to be a concern, consumers

are increasingly seeking effective protection across different spaces within their homes. While 99 mosquitoes may be eliminated, even one remaining mosquito can continue to pose a threat to the health and safety of the family.

Mosquitoes can hide in corners, move between rooms and enter spaces where conventional plug-in vaporisers may not always provide continuous protection. While consumers have access to a range of mosquito protection solutions, SOS formats such as sprays, coils and incense sticks can come with challenges such as smoke, odour and the need for repeated application.

“In many ways, this is a rethink of a format that has remained largely fixed for decades. We are making it more adaptable to consumers' lifestyles and the way they use their spaces today.

M-SANVI Real Estate Broadens Residential Offering as Delhi-NCR Buyers Seek More Space-Flexibility

NEW DELHI (AGENCY)

M-SANVI Real Estate Pvt. Ltd., a leading real estate firm based in Delhi-NCR, is strengthening its residential property offerings across different configurations, including 2BHK, 3BHK, 4BHK and 5BHK homes, as homebuyers increasingly look for properties that offer greater space, functionality and flexibility.

The preference for larger homes has been gaining traction across Delhi-NCR, with recent industry data showing strong demand for 3BHK homes in the region. At the same time, affordability continues to remain an important consideration, making configuration, location and overall value key factors in the homebuying decision. Against this changing demand, M-SANVI



is focusing on offering residential options across different sizes and configurations to cater to varied requirements, from buyers seeking a practical 2BHK home to families looking for additional space through 3BHK, 4BHK and 5BHK residences.

“Homebuyers today are looking at a property from a much broader perspective. The requirement is not simply about having an additional room, but about having a home that works for the family's current lifestyle

and future needs. While affordability remains important, buyers are also paying closer attention to space, layout, connectivity and the overall convenience offered by a location,” said Mukesh Kumar, Founder & Director, M-SANVI Real Estate Pvt. Ltd. The shift towards larger homes is also being seen alongside a more selective approach to residential purchases. Buyers are spending more time comparing configurations, locations and the overall value of a property before

making a decision. For residential businesses, this is creating greater emphasis on understanding different buyer requirements rather than offering a one-size-fits-all approach.

M-SANVI's residential portfolio across 2BHK to 5BHK configurations is aimed at giving buyers greater choice based on family size, lifestyle requirements and budget. The company continues to focus on residential properties across Delhi with an emphasis on helping homebuyers identify options suited to their individual requirements.

M-SANVI Real Estate Pvt. Ltd is a leading real estate firm based in Delhi, focused on residential properties and helping homebuyers find homes suited to their requirements.

Why indian founders are choosing dubai as their global base, and how avyanco helps them set Up

Dubai (AGENCY) Ten years ago, an Indian entrepreneur opening a company in Dubai was usually a trader with family already in the city. Today, software founders from Bengaluru, exporters from Gujarat, consultants from Mumbai and second-generation business owners from Delhi are all setting up in the emirate, and many of them never plan to move here full time.

Avyanco, a Dubai-based corporate services consultancy, says most Indian clients now want one well-regulated company that serves customers in the Gulf, Africa, Europe and India.

Official figures show how strong the trend has become. Dubai Chamber of Commerce reported that 18,486 Indian-owned com-



panies joined as new members in 2025, roughly one in every four new members that year and more than any other nationality. Another 7,579 joined in the first half of 2026, taking the number of active Indian members to 85,841 by June. Trade has grown alongside them. Non-oil trade between Dubai and India was worth AED 222.5 billion in 2025, against AED

94.2 billion in 2016. “What has changed is ambition,” said Jashvantkumar Prajapati, CEO and Founder of Avyanco. “Indian clients now arrive with a plan for three or four markets. They see Dubai as the place to hold contracts, manage payments and build a team that can travel anywhere in a few hours. For them, moving into Dubai is a strategic

decision, not a lifestyle one.” A currency that holds its value. The UAE dirham has been pegged to the US dollar for decades. For founders who trade in dollars, that means far fewer exchange-rate losses eating into their margins.

Low corporate tax, and sometimes none. UAE corporate tax is 9% on taxable income above AED 375,000, and small businesses with revenue of up to AED 3 million can claim Small Business Relief until the end of 2029. Trading companies that buy and sell goods between other countries may go further. A business set up in a free zone, often a designated zone, can qualify for a 0% rate on qualifying income if it meets the conditions for a Qualifying Free Zone Person.

Developed Chhattisgarh will be built only with the active participation of youth power: CM Sai

RAIPUR. OPEN SEARCH

Chief Minister Shri Vishnu Dev Sai today held a cordial interaction with the participants of the second batch of the Chief Minister's Good Governance Fellowship at his residence office in the capital, Raipur. Chief Minister Shri Sai answered the youth's questions and shared his experiences, from his student days, struggles, family responsibilities, to his journey in public service and public life. He urged the young fellows to use this opportunity not only to understand the workings of governance, but also to bring positive change to people's lives through their knowledge, skills, and innovative ideas.

Chief Minister Shri Sai stated that youth power is national power. Active participation of youth is paramount in building a developed Chhattisgarh and a developed India. Youth possess the power of education, energy, talent, and new ideas. When this power is combined with public wel-



fare and social betterment, it becomes the basis for major change. He stated that clear goals, consistent hard work, and the faithful and honest discharge of every responsibility provide success as well as self-satisfaction. During the interaction, the young participants asked Chief Minister Shri Sai a number of questions regarding their expectations for the fellowship, good governance, education, employment, invest-

ment, modern technology, the role of youth in the state's development, and his personal and public life. The Chief Minister answered all questions with ease and warmth. The youth play an important role in realizing the resolve of a developed India.

Chief Minister Shri Sai said that Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has pledged to make India a developed nation by the year 2047. In line with this

national resolve, Chhattisgarh is also moving forward towards becoming a developed state. Today, India is rapidly progressing in various fields and establishing a strong role in the world. The role of youth is crucial in further accelerating this journey.

He urged the young fellows to continually hone their capabilities, come up with new ideas, and work with the government and administration to offer

The Chief Minister shared his experiences of struggle, public service and public life and urged the youth to work with dedication and sensitivity

practical solutions to issues of public interest. The Chief Minister's Good Governance Fellowship is an important platform for young people from diverse educational backgrounds to learn, gain experience, and utilize their talents for the state's development.

Chief Minister Shri Sai said that while working in the districts, it would be most important to understand the local conditions and the actual needs of the people. By establishing better coordination with the concerned departments, suggestions should be made based on data, evidence, and field experience to make the implementation of schemes and public services more effective.

Disparity in tretment of persons weighs in favour of luthra bros bail

PANAJI : OPEN SEARCH

The persons who handled and operated the sparkler machines at Birch By Romeo Lane at Arpora were not arrested during investigation and the disparity in treatment of persons who were at the spot and those who were not goes in favour of the Luthra brothers, the Mapusa court observed while granting bail to Saurabh and Gaurav Luthra.

"The persons who, on the case of the prosecution, handled and operated the machines at the spot, and who are alleged in the charge sheet itself to have had direct knowledge of the combustible interior and of the contact of the sparkles with the roof, were not arrested during the investigation," said Addl Sessions Judge-1 North Goa, Mapusa, Divijle V Patkar.

"The case of the prosecution that the applicant (Luthras), who was in Delhi and is not alleged to have been at the spot, is more culpable than those persons rests on the proposition



that ownership implies knowledge. I have already found that proposition insufficient for the purposes of Section 105 (Part II). The disparity in the treatment of the persons who were at the spot and those who were not is a circumstance which the prosecution has not explained, and which weighs in favour of the applicant when custody is considered," the court said.

"The charge sheet records the following. Accused no. 12 (Mayur Kolwalkar), the Director of K-Dance Events Pvt Ltd, was present at the spot on the day of the incident.

Accused no. 13

(Mohammed Afif Abdulsab Bateri) its General Manager, was managing the event, operating the electronic sparkle machine, lighting and performing other related work. Both are charged under Section 105, with the allegation that they were fully aware that the deck was made of combustible material such as dry reed grass and bamboo, that acoustic foam was fixed beneath the metal roof, that the sparkles touched the roof every time, and that the establishment had a single entry-cum-exit; and that, with that knowledge, they intentionally used the machines. The charge sheet records the status of each of

Punjab CM Mann says OSD Rajbir Ghuman ready to join CBI probe if summoned

CHANDIGARH (AGENCY)

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Thursday said his OSD Rajbir Singh Ghuman was ready to join the investigation by the CBI, provided he received the summons. Talking to mediapersons here, Mann, in response to a question about his OSD not appearing before the CBI on Wednesday, said the summons were not served to him. Ghuman, who has been named as an accused in the case registered by the CBI, was summoned to the CBI office here on Wednesday afternoon, but he did not go there. When asked about the CBI raid at his camp office, Mann retorted that this was a statement by the BJP that it had started its election campaign in Punjab.

"The ED raided those close to Mamata Banerjee just three months before



the West Bengal elections. In Delhi, Arvind Kejriwal and Manish Sisodia were arrested in false cases just months before the elections there. The same script was followed in Chhattisgarh and Haryana," he said. When asked that the CBI registered an FIR on the directions of the Punjab and Haryana High Court, Mann asked, "Don't you know how the courts work? It was all planned and then executed. There is no other party than AAP that has worked to end corruption. We have brought all systems online to bring in transparency in governance.

Himachal Leader of Opposition Jai Ram Thakur slams Congress over infighting, SIR agitation

MANDI (AGENCY)

Former Chief Minister and Leader of Opposition Jai Ram Thakur on Thursday accused the Congress of growing internal factionalism and urged its leaders not to create an atmosphere of disorder in the country. He was speaking after inaugurating the BJP Mahila Morcha's 'Seva Ke Rang, Rashtra Ke Sang' rangoli programme here. He later addressed a meeting of the party's women's wing.

Thakur said special programmes were being organised across the country to mark 25 years of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's public service. Turning to state politics, he criticised Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu over his handling of the Congress leadership. He said recent statements by Congress leader Pratibha Singh had brought the party's internal differences



into the open. The CM frequently points to factionalism in the BJP, he alleged, but the Congress itself has several groups and faces questions over its leadership.

Reacting to the protests in Delhi against the Election Commission, Thakur said the Gandhi family was "not above the Constitution". He called on Congress leaders to respect constitutional institutions. He also alleged that Rahul Gandhi's approach reflected the influ-

ence of developments in neighbouring Bangladesh, and said attempts to create instability could not be used to remove an elected government.

Separately, BJP state media in-charge and Naina Devi MLA Randhir Sharma attacked the Congress at a press conference in Shimla over its agitation against the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. He accused the party of misleading the public and opposing an established

constitutional and statutory process, terming the agitation unconstitutional.

Sharma said Rahul Gandhi and other senior leaders had repeatedly alleged vote theft, duplicate registrations and fraudulent entries in the rolls. "If Congress genuinely believes that electoral rolls contain duplicate names, it should welcome the revision process," he said, adding that the party's stand exposed the "contradictory mind-set" of its leadership.

He said carrying a copy of the Constitution did not demonstrate an understanding of its provisions. He also accused the Congress of double standards on EVMs and the ECI, accepting results when it won and questioning the system when it lost. Sharma criticised the participation of the CM and his Cabinet colleagues in demonstrations against the ECI.

NGO head ends indefinite fast after written assurance from Nurpur SDM, Civil Hospital

NURPUR (AGENCY)

Akil Bakshi, head of NGO RB Jankalyan Foundation, ended his indefinite fast on its seventh day on Thursday morning after the local administration and the Civil Hospital gave a written assurance to him on his demands. Bakshi had started the fast on the premises of the Civil Hospital on October 2 in support of his demands that the 50-bed Mother and Child Hospital (MCH) be made functional and his NGO be included in its Rogi Kalyan Samiti (RKS). The MCH, built at a cost of Rs 15 crore and inaugurated in 2022, has remained non-functional for around four years. The equipment and furniture at the health facility were shifted to Una a few months after the Congress formed



government in the state.

Nurpur SDM Arun Sharma and Medical Superintendent Dr Anupama Sharma intervened on Thursday and gave Bakshi a written assurance, prompting him to call off his fast. According to the letter issued on behalf of the Medical Superintendent, the functioning of the MCH would be ensured only after the executing agency, BSNL, handed over the building to the Health Department. The hospital authorities also said that the MCH would

require the requisite medical equipment from the National Health Mission, deployment of manpower and the posting of medical specialists before it could be made operational. The pending work related to power and water supplies in the MCH building is nearing completion. On Bakshi's second demand, the Medical Superintendent allowed him to attend the governing body meeting of the Rogi Kalyan Samiti as a special invitee and put forth his representation, grievances and suggestions for improving health-care facilities at the hospital. The hospital administration also informed Bakshi that the matter regarding his official induction as a member of the Rogi Kalyan Samiti's governing body had already been taken up with the higher authorities.

Rift Within Trinamool Rebel Camp? MP Who Led Exodus Skips Group's Meet

KOLKATA (AGENCY)

The rebel TMC MPs who merged with the little-known NCPI have sought two more weeks to respond to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla's notices on a petition seeking their disqualification under the anti-defection law, even as signs have emerged of a clear rift within the group. Twenty MPs from Mamata Banerjee's party had defected and merged with the NCPI to support the ruling in Parliament after the Trinamool's defeat in the Assembly polls.

The grouping met in Kolkata on Thursday afternoon to discuss its strategy, but its leader Kakoli Ghosh



Dastidar skipped the meet, which was organised by MP Sudip Bandyopadhyay at a hotel in Kolkata.

There has been speculation about a rift within the rebel bloc. The rumours have been further fuelled by Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar skipping the meeting. Has learnt that the MPs who attended the meeting include Jagadish Basunia, Abu Taher Khan, Bapi Haldar, Sharmila Sarkar, Khalilur Rahman, Sudip

Bandopadhyay, Shatabdi Roy, Prasun Banerjee, Rachana Banerjee and Arup Chakraborty.

NCPI MP Rachana Banerjee, however, downplayed the meeting, calling it "just a pre-puja get-together". But sources said the issue of seeking an extension to reply to the Lok Sabha Speaker was on the agenda. While speaking to actor-turned-MP Rachana Banerjee said, "It's just a pre-puja meeting, we wanted to catch up and discuss some of the issues".

Rachana Banerjee also spoke about seeking additional time to reply to the Speaker. She said, "That is the party policy. It was a mutual decision".

RAJESH D'SILVA.OPEN SEARCH

Siolim, Goa: The cornerstone ceremony for the 1.10 crore upgradation of the Siolim market was unveiled on Friday at Siolim by Chief Guest Michael Lobo, MLA of Calangute Constituency and Chairman of the Goa State Infrastructure Development Corporation (GSIDC) Ltd. The event was graced by Delilah Lobo, MLA of Siolim and Vice Chairman of ESG, alongside members of the Siolim Marna Panchayat.

Speaking on the occasion, MLA Delilah Lobo expressed gratitude to Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant for enabling the execution of long pending development projects in Siolim. "We have been facing challenges to get the upgradation work since the last two years, but with the help of the Chief Minister we have been able to move forward with development projects in the constituency," she said.

Chairman Michael Lobo highlighted GSIDC's ongoing role in Goa's holistic development, which includes building roads, bridges, hospitals, colleges, schools, libraries, stadiums, jetties, bus stands, Ravindra Bhavans, swimming pools, and market complexes. He informed that the Siolim project will upgrade the existing fish and vegetable market, toilet block, and parking area. "We had assured the general public of the development of Siolim, and we have accomplished it," he said.

Michael Lobo further announced that Calangute

Chairman Michael Lobo highlighted GSIDC's ongoing role in Goa's holistic development, which includes building roads, bridges, hospitals, colleges, schools, libraries, stadiums, jetties, bus stands, Ravindra Bhavans, swimming pools, and market complexes



will serve as the base for electricity supply to Siolim, Calangute, and Assagao, with uninterrupted power and a new water treatment plant in the pipeline. "The 15 MLD water plant will be operational shortly. Almost 70 percent of our development work has already received approval from the

Chief Minister. Development is a continuous process, and we will strive for the betterment of Siolim constituency," he emphasized.

The upgraded market building will feature a contemporary design with a plinth area of 267 sq.m., dismantling of the old roof

and structures, ample parking space, proper drainage, and modern illumination. Construction work is set to begin immediately, with completion expected in about two months. MLA Delilah Lobo assured that temporary sheds will be provided for vegetable and fish vendors to continue

their business during the construction phase.

The welcome address was delivered by Panchayat member Mrs. Sharmila Vernekar, who introduced the distinguished panel. The dignitaries were warmly received with floral tributes by members of the Siolim Marna Panchayat.

PM Modi interacts with team india participants at worldSkills competition shanghai 2026

NEW DELHI (AGENCY)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday interacted with representatives of Team India who participated in the WorldSkills Competition in Shanghai 2026, at 7, Lok Kalyan Marg in the national capital. During the interaction, the participants shared their experiences during the competition. They expressed pride in representing their country at the world stage.

The participants also discussed adapting to new tools, software, technical systems and work processes during the international competition. They also spoke about the work being done by the government towards skill development, which is helping youth. Notably, Team India secured 10th position at the



48th WorldSkills Competition in Shanghai 2026, winning 6 Silver Medals and 20 Medals for Excellence. Improving upon its 13th-place finish at WorldSkills Lyon 2024, where India secured four Bronze Medals and 12 Medals for Excellence, the result marked an important milestone for the country's skilled youth on the global

stage. The six Silver Medals at WorldSkills Shanghai were won by Smriti Nambiar in Bakery, Mohammed Salam in Dental Prosthetics; Kovid Ajay Gangrade in Digital Interactive Media Design, Parth Vohra in Industrial Design Technology, Mehruissa Begum in Logistics and Freight Forwarding, and Saniya

Joshi in Retail Sales. Their achievements span creative, technical and service-sector skills, reflecting the breadth of Indian talent on the global stage, as per the press release. India also secured 20 medals for Excellence across technical, industrial, digital, creative and service skills. Smriti Nambiar, Silver Medallist in Bakery, was recognised as

Best of the Nation for India. The six-day international event, held from 22-27 September 2026, brought together over 1,400 young competitors from around 70 countries and regions. Representing India was its largest-ever contingent of 70 competitors participating across 63 skills, spanning emerging technologies, advanced manufacturing, engineering, creative industries and specialised services. Following four days of intense competition from 23-26 September, the winners were recognised at the grand closing ceremony on 27th September in Shanghai. The ceremony celebrated exceptional technical proficiency, innovation, precision and craftsmanship, bringing together competitors, international delegations, experts and industry representatives from across the world.

Raipur to host India-Zimbabwe women's T20Is from October 16, tickets from Rs 250

RAIPUR : OPEN SEARCH

Raipur will host the three-match T20I series between India and Zimbabwe women's teams on October 16, 18 and 20, with tickets priced from Rs 250, Vijay Shah, Director of the Chhattisgarh State Cricket Association, announced on Friday. All three matches will be played at the Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh International Cricket Stadium in Naya Raipur and are scheduled to begin at 7 pm.

Ticket sales will begin online on October 12 at 4 pm. Spectators can purchase a maximum of six tickets at a time, while digital tickets will be used for entry to the stadium. Spectators will be required to scan the QR code on their



tickets to gain entry. A 'Series Ticket' covering all three matches will be available for Rs 499, while a 'Combo Ticket' for two matches will cost Rs 350. Individual ticket prices have been fixed at Rs 3,500 for Platinum, Rs 2,500 for Gold and Rs 2,000 for Silver. A Corporate Box will cost Rs 70,000, while a single seat in the Corporate Box will be available for Rs 3,500. Addressing a press

conference, Shah also spoke about the arrangements made in view of the National Green Tribunal's (NGT) directions concerning groundwater use at the stadium. He said clearance had been received to host the matches and that a Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) had been installed at the venue. A flow meter has also been installed to monitor water usage on the ground.

West Champions owner Ajay Sethi hosts Dwayne Bravo's birthday celebration in Dubai

DUBAI (AGENCY)

West Champions owner Ajay Sethi hosted a post-birthday celebration for former West Indies all-rounder Dwayne Bravo at his residence in Dubai, attended by several prominent West Indies cricketers and former players. Bravo, who celebrated his birthday on October 7, was joined by a host of Caribbean cricket stars, including Chris Gayle, Carlos Brathwaite, Lendl Simmons, Sheldon Cottrell, Fidel Edwards, Chadwick Walton, Jermaine Blackwood, Raymon Reifer, Rayad Emrit, Nikita Miller



and Suleiman Benn. The gathering brought together several familiar faces from West Indies cricket, with players joining the celebration hosted by Sethi in honour of Bravo.

Bravo, one of the most recognisable names in T20 cricket, has enjoyed a distinguished career across international cricket and franchise leagues around the world. The all-rounder,

renowned for his flair and skill with both bat and ball, will be remembered as one of the pioneers of T20 cricket.

He featured in seven T20 World Cups, winning two titles with the West Indies, and claimed more than 15 trophies across franchise leagues. Bravo also etched his name in the record books as the first bowler to reach 500 wickets in T20 cricket. Bravo became a mainstay of the Chennai Super Kings line-up in the IPL, finishing as the tournament's leading wicket-taker in 2013 and 2015.

'This medal was for 1.4 billion people': Rower Satnam Singh after historic Asian Games bronze

NEW DELHI (AGENCY)

Rower Satnam Singh, who partnered with Salman Khan to clinch a historic bronze medal in the men's double sculls at the 2026 Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya, said the achievement belonged not just to him but also to India's 1.4 billion people. Since the Asian Games began in 1951, India had never won a medal in the Men's Double Sculls event. Punjab-based Satnam partnered with Salman to bag the bronze for India, registering a time of 6:13.25 at the Nagaragawa International



Regatta Course. This marked his second Asian Games medal; Satnam had won the bronze in the quadruple sculls event in Hangzhou.

Speaking to ANI, Satnam said he was delighted to win the bronze medal and expressed hope that the country would win more medals in the event in

the future. "I am very happy from the bottom of my heart that we won a bronze medal in the men's double sculls at the Asian Games. This is India's first medal since 1951, and we hope to bring home more medals in this event in the future," he said. Satnam said the moment of standing on the podium with the Indian flag rising was an indescribable feeling that only a sportsperson could truly understand. He said the medal belonged not just to him but to India's 1.4 billion people, adding that the historic achievement brought immense happiness and

inspired them to aim for even better results in the event in the future. "I don't think anyone but a sportsman can truly feel this moment. I mean, people are watching on TV, but this medal wasn't just mine. It was a medal for 1.4 billion people. It was India's first medal in this event so we were just incredibly happy beyond happy. We hope to do even better in this event going forward," he said. Satnam credited the government, the Sports Authority of India and the Target Olympic Podium Scheme for supporting the athletes with financial assistance.

Briefs News

Indian para-shooters protest against PCI ahead of Asian Para Games 2026

NEW DELHI (AGENCY) Indian para-shooters staged a protest against the Paralympic Committee of India (PCI) in New Delhi during the official send-off ceremony for the 2026 Aichi-Nagoya Asian Para Games on Thursday. The shooters gathered outside ITC Maurya, New Delhi, with placards. The 5th Asian Para Games are scheduled to take place from October 18 to 24, 2026. SH1 para-shooters Sandeep Kumar and Aakash staged a protest against the PCI, alleging unfair selection practices and a last-minute change in policy ahead of the 2026 Asian Para Games. Earlier, Union Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya unveiled the new Team India jersey and formally flagged off the Indian contingent ahead of the 2026 Asian Para Games in Japan. Organised by PCI, the ceremony was attended by several prominent para-athletes and officials, including PCI president Devendra Jhajharia. Speaking to the reporters about the protest, the PCI president said the committee was in regular communication with athletes and maintained that their concerns were discussed, adding that athletes remained its top priority.

Keya Badugu clinches Southern India Golf Championship title after dramatic playoff

BENGALURU (AGENCY) Delhi's Keya Kumar Badugu won the Ladies title at the IGU Bio-Gen Rotary Southern India Golf Championship for Ladies and Junior Girls, defeating Kolkata's Anaahat Bindra in a playoff at the Karnataka Golf Association course in Bengaluru. Keya and Anaahat finished tied at one-under-par 215 after 54 holes, with Keya returning rounds of 73, 71 and 71, while Anaahat carded 70, 72 and 73. Priya Kumari finished third with an aggregate of 220, following rounds of 75, 70 and 75. The three-day championship witnessed a closely contested battle between the two leading golfers. Anaahat made an impressive start, taking the opening-round lead with a two-under-par 70, three strokes ahead of Keya. She maintained her lead after the second round with an even-par 72, while Keya moved into second position with a one-under-par 71, reducing the deficit to two strokes heading into the final day. The final round saw a notable turnaround in the closing stages. Keya, who was two-over-par for the day after 14 holes, recorded three consecutive birdies on the 15th, 16th and 17th holes, bringing her round to one-under-par.

Chandigarh cricket body appoints Vinayak Samant as senior men's head coach ahead of Ranji opener

CHANDIGARH (AGENCY) In a last-minute arrangement after the team's left for playing their Ranji Trophy opener in Mumbai and a day after appointing a 'temporary' coach, the UT Cricket Association (UTCA) Chandigarh has appointed former first-class cricketer and NCA Level-B coach Vinayak R Samant as head coach of the Chandigarh senior men's cricket team for the upcoming season. Samant will join the local team in Mumbai, where Chandigarh is scheduled to play their Ranji Trophy opener on October 11. With this appointment, the senior setup now has two coaches: Ravikant Sharma, who just few days back had replaced former coach Rajiv Nayyar, as the latter left the contract and joined Delhi, and Samant.

Hockey India senior men National Championship to begin in Jhansi

JHANSI (AGENCY)

The 16th Hockey India senior men's National Championship 2026 is set to begin on October 10 in Uttar Pradesh's Jhansi with 29 teams competing across three divisions. The tournament will conclude on October 21, with the Division 'A' final scheduled for the final day of competition. In the previous edition, Hockey Punjab were crowned champions of the prestigious 15th Hockey India Senior Men National Championship 2025 after defeating Hockey Madhya Pradesh 4-1 in the Division 'A' final. Uttar Pradesh

Hockey secured third place, defeating Manipur Hockey 5-1 in the third-place match. The 2026 edition will feature Division 'A', Division 'B' and Division 'C', with teams grouped according to their rankings from the 2025 edition. The championship will provide a competitive platform for teams from across the country to showcase their talent and compete for honours at the national level. Division 'A' will feature 12 teams divided into four pools of three teams each. Pool A comprises Hockey Punjab, Hockey Unit of Tamil Nadu and Hockey Bengal, while Pool B features Hockey Madhya



Pradesh, Maharashtra and Le Puducherry Hockey. Pool C includes Uttar Pradesh Hockey, Hockey Karnataka and Hockey Chandigarh, while Pool D consists of Manipur Hockey, Hockey Haryana and Delhi Hockey. The pool stage will be followed by the Quarter-Finals

on 18 October, with the top two teams from each pool advancing to the knockout stage. The Semi-Finals will take place on 19 October, followed by the third-place match and the Final on 21 October. Division 'B' will see 10 teams compete

across two pools. Pool A features Hockey Association of Odisha, Assam Hockey, Kerala Hockey, Hockey Uttarakhand and Chhattisgarh Hockey. Pool B comprises Hockey Jharkhand, Telangana Hockey, Goans Hockey, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu Hockey, and Hockey Arunachal. Meanwhile, Division 'C' will feature seven teams divided into two pools. Pool A includes Hockey Mizoram, Hockey Himachal and Hockey Jammu & Kashmir, while Pool B comprises Hockey Andhra Pradesh, Hockey Rajasthan, Bihar (BSSA) and Hockey Gujarat.

The Division 'B' and Division 'C' matches will begin on 10 October, with teams looking to make a strong start to their campaigns. Division 'A' fixtures are scheduled to begin on 14 October, featuring several competitive encounters as teams look to secure their places in the knockout stage. With teams competing across three divisions, the 16th Hockey India senior men National Championship promises an exciting fortnight of domestic hockey in Jhansi, as participating teams aim to make their mark and challenge for the respective titles.

Indian Army athletes script history at Asian Games with best-ever 20-medal haul



NEW DELHI (AGENCY)

The Indian Army's sporting contingent delivered its finest-ever performance at the Asian Games 2026, returning with a record 20 medals, 6 Gold, 8 Silver and 6 Bronze. The performance by 62 Army athletes across 15 disciplines made a significant contribution to India's overall fourth-place finish and added several new chapters to the country's sporting history, as per a release. The six Gold medals represent a 100 per cent increase over the Army's Gold-medal tally at the 2022 Asian Games. Army athletes accounted for 23.52 per cent of India's total medals, winning 20 of the country's 85 medals, while their six Gold medals made up 29 per cent of India's 21 Gold medals.

The achievement is also a reflection of the sporting ecosystem that the Indian Army has built over the

years. The process begins with identifying sporting talent and providing promising athletes the opportunity to develop within a structured environment. Athletes are then nurtured at specialised training nodes for different disciplines, with access to state-of-the-art facilities, specialised coaching, technical and scientific support, equipment, competition exposure and sustained motivation. The focus is not simply on finding talent, but on giving athletes the environment and support needed to turn potential into performance. This ecosystem allows sportspersons to train with purpose, compete at the highest level and continue their pursuit of excellence with the backing of the institution.

The Army has a long and distinguished tradition of sporting excellence. Major Dhyan Chand, one of the greatest names in the

history of Indian hockey, remains an enduring symbol of that legacy. In more recent times, athletes such as Lieutenant Colonel Neeraj Chopra have carried this tradition forward, reaching the highest levels of international athletics and bringing global recognition to Indian sport.

The Indian Army's success at the Asian Games 2026 resonates with the Chief of the Army Staff's vision of VIJAY, placing the Yodha at the centre of transformation. The Sporting Yodha embodies the same discipline, resilience, determination and resolve to win that define a soldier. These achievements reflect the Army's commitment to nurturing talent and transforming individual potential into national excellence. Beyond medals, every Sporting Yodha carries the aspirations of a nation, demonstrating that the arena may change, but the spirit of the Yodha remains constant.

Army representation at the 2026 Games also grew significantly. Its athletes constituted 12.6 per cent of India's contingent, compared with 9 per cent in 2022. Of the 62 athletes, nine were women, whose performances included two Gold medals and one Silver. Women Army athletes contributed 15 per cent of the Army's total medals and an impressive 33 per cent of its Gold medals.

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'Ramayana' makers release posters of Lara Dutta as Queen Kaikeyi, Sheeba Chadha as Manthara



On Friday, the makers of the Namit Malhotra-produced Ramayana released new character posters on social media showcasing Lara Dutta as Queen Kaikeyi and Sheeba Chadha as Manthara, two pivotal figures whose actions drive the dramatic turning points of the epic. The newly

released character posters offer a glimpse into the pivotal catalyst of the epic. Kaikeyi's fateful wishes alter the destiny of King Dashrath and Lord Rama, while Manthara's cunning counsel manipulates the Queen's choices, setting off a chain reaction that forever transforms the kingdom's future. The latest

character-reveals follow the earlier unveiling of Arun Govil as King Dashrath. Govil, who famously immortalized Lord Ram for generations of television viewers, now returns to the legendary world of the Ramayana to portray the revered King of Ayodhya. Lara Dutta's portrayal of Queen Kaikeyi is depicted in a striking, regal aesthetic, adorned with intricate traditional garments and ornate jewelry that befit her high status as the Queen of Ayodhya.

In contrast, Sheeba Chadha's Manthara sports a distinctive, weathered appearance in her character poster, captured firmly gripping her walking staff. The caption read: "A queen. A mother. Whose whispers would turn a mother's love into a kingdom's darkest hour. Directed by Nitesh Tiwari, the epic is being planned as a two-part film. The first instalment is scheduled to release during Diwali 2026, while the second part is expected to arrive during Diwali 2027. Ranbir Kapoor and Sai Pallavi stars in the role of Lord Rama and Sita, respectively. The film also features Ravi Dubey as Lakshmana. Yash takes on the role of Ravana, with Sunny Deol as Hanuman, Rakul Preet Singh as Surpanakha and Lara Dutta as Kaikeyi. Ramayana is reportedly being made on a budget of around Rs 4,000 crore, with Oscar-winning composer Hans Zimmer and AR Rahman handling the music. DNEG and Prime Focus are also among the teams working on its visual effects. (AGENCY)

Vijay Deverakonda fights colonial oppression in famine-stricken village

Actor Vijay Deverakonda plays a rebellious warrior fighting for the rights of his townspeople against the British Empire in the trailer of Ranabaali, dropped by Mythri Movie Makers on Thursday. The three-minute-53-second-long trailer opens with the birth of Deverakonda's character, Ranabaali. Born atop a hill at the entrance to a mystical cave, he is blessed and named by a sage-like figure. The narrative then moves to Singanamala, a village in Rayalaseema that was ravaged by famine in the 1870s. As millions of Indians lose their lives under British oppression, Ranabaali emerges as a force of resistance, taking on the ruthless colonisers to protect his people.



Ranabaali soon marries Jayamma (Rashmika Mandanna), who is told by his family that she bears the responsibility of carrying forward their lineage. The trailer then returns to the Madras famine, depicting a region devastated by farmer suicides and violence perpetrated by the British. These scenes are interspersed with glimpses of the colonisers indulging in luxury while taking pleasure in the suffering they have inflicted on the local population. Recurring visual

motifs in the trailer highlight how food grains became a tool of socio-political control during the period. In one scene, a British officer walks over the grains, while Jayamma, as a newlywed entering her marital home, carefully places her foot beside them without stepping on them. The trailer concludes with action-packed sequences of Ranabaali taking on members of the British army. Actor Arnold Vosloo plays British commissioner Sir Theodore Hector in the upcoming film. Directed by Rahul Sankrityan and produced by Mythri Movie Makers, Ranabaali features music by Ajay-Atul and cinematography by Jishnu Bhattacharjee and Nirav Shah.

Awarapan 2' OTT release: When and where to watch Emraan Hashmi-starrer action-romance film

Emraan Hashmi-starrer Awarapan 2, a sequel to his 2007 action-romance film, is now available to stream on Prime Video, the streamer announced Friday. Directed by Nitin Kakkar and produced by Vishesh Bhatt under the banner of Vishesh Films, Awarapan 2, also starring Disha Patani and Shabana Azmi, hit theatres on August 14. Sharing an announcement teaser on Instagram, the streaming platform wrote, "Toh phir aao ek baar phir shivam pandit se milne. Awarapan2onPrime, Watch Now." The video shows Emraan Hashmi getting papped as he approaches for a take, with the song Tera Mera Rishta from the original film playing in his headphones. The original Awarapan, directed by Mohit Suri, also starred Shriya Saran, Mrinalini Sharma and Ashish Vidyarthi. Produced by



Mukesh Bhatt, the 2007 film went on to attain cult status despite underperforming at the box office upon its release. Awarapan 2 picks up with Shivam still carrying the emotional wreckage of his past. The first film transformed him from a cold-blooded hitman into a tragic figure through his relationship with Reema, a woman held captive by the gangster Malik. His decision to help her escape ultimately cost him everything. The sequel brings him back into the dark underworld nearly two decades later. The grief remains, but the dominant emotion has changed. Awarapan 2 has grossed Rs 213.01 crore worldwide, with net collections of Rs 150.59 crore across 139,063 shows, according to Sacnilk. (AGENCY)

Kashmiri filmmaker released from ICE detention after two weeks, legal proceedings to continue

Award-winning Kashmiri filmmaker Arfat Sheikh was released on bond Thursday after spending two weeks in the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention. His release was confirmed by a campaign organized by his friends and relatives to advocate for his freedom. According to the campaign, Sheikh's bond was granted on Tuesday ahead of his release two weeks after being detained, though his deportation proceedings remain ongoing. Reuters reported that Sheikh was taken into custody by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) - an agency under the Department of Homeland Security - on September 24 as he stepped off a flight from California at Washington Dulles International Airport. Filmmaker Tara Dorabji, who was accompanying Sheikh, said in a statement that they were travelling from San Francisco International Airport to Dulles that day. "Arfat said to me, 'Tara, Tara. This is ICE.



They have come for me.' The men were in plain clothes and not wearing any uniforms that indicated that they were federal agents. During the entire interaction, I never saw any of the men present a warrant or say why they were taking Arfat.

They took Arfat Sheikh off the jetway onto the tarmac. He did not resist. I was shaking and could barely move," she said. While the campaign stated that Sheikh had a pending immigration application and authorization to live and work in the U.S., the Department of Homeland

In an exclusive chat with Prem Kumar, who's currently shooting a film with Fahadh Faasil, opens up about the enduring love for the film starring Trisha and Vijay Sethupathi.

put up a poster marking the film's anniversary, whether it is two years, three years or eight years of 96. The response I receive every time is mind-blowing. It's unimaginable for a film to receive so much love, even though it is just a movie. It is beyond my comprehension," says the

Cricket to poetry to farmers' cause : Acting was only one facet of Nana Patekar's persona

I was still in school when I first saw Nana Patekar on screen, at a touring talks in our village playing the Marathi film Aavhaan. It was his debut as the lead, a hero. He had previously appeared in renowned director Jabbar Patel's widely acclaimed Sinhasan, but that was a cameo, one I hadn't even watched back then. So my first encounter with him was through Aavhaan, and he left me spellbound. His raw, rugged persona, with a commanding baritone and above all, a piercing gaze won over not just me, but my entire circle of friends. Naturally, at that time I could not have imagined that this screen icon would one day become a dear friend, or that I would work alongside him on his life's passion: the NAAM Foundation. It is with a mind and heart deluged with memories and emotions that I sit to write about him today. Everyone knows Nana was an exceptional actor. Yet acting was only one facet of a profoundly gifted persona. An alumnus of Mumbai's prestigious Sir J.J. Institute of Applied Art, he had an innate artistic flair.

He was an accomplished painter, a gifted poet and a writer with a nuanced appreciation for literature. His calligraphy was exemplary; when he first stepped into theatre, he lovingly designed calligraphic titles for several Marathi plays. Later in life, he took up competitive rifle-shooting. A late entrant to the sport, Nana went on to make a mark at the national level. In recent years, as Nana scaled back his Bollywood commit-



ments to embrace farming, he proved to be an equally dedicated agriculturist. When discussion once turned to his boundless versatility and his knack for excelling in every chosen pursuit, cricket legend Sunil Gavaskar remarked that poverty had robbed Indian cricket of a formidable fast bowler.

Gavaskar had played school cricket with Nana and recalled how his raw pace terrorised opposing batsmen. Had circumstances permitted, Nana might well have donned the India cap. Poverty, however, cut short any sporting dreams. After a business partner cheated his father, the family lost their home and ended up on the street. Thrust into hardship at just thirteen or fourteen years of age, Nana had to take up any available odd job to keep the hearth burning. That gruelling grind forged his street-smart resilience, an education earned in the unsparing university of life. Was that what bred in him an outward defiance, a swaggering bravado he wore like an armour over his inherently delicate, sensitive soul? On the streets, that toughness meant sur-

Meiyazhagan director, who then goes on to talk about how he penned this story during the floods in Chennai in December 2015. "I strongly believe, and I am not saying this out of humility, that the story chooses me. It is not me who chooses the story. That is how 96 happened, and that is how the film with Fahadh Faasil happened as well. Sometimes a story chooses me, but the time isn't right for it to materialise. Recently, I finished a script based on an idea I had in 2002 and I'll be starting to shoot for that next. (AGENCY)



'DeSu7' trailer : Dev and Subhashree's romance meets action and revenge

The trailer for DeSu7, starring Dev and Subhashree Ganguly, was dropped by the makers on Thursday ahead of the film's theatrical release on October 16. The upcoming action drama marks Dev's debut as a director. DeSu7 also features Anirban Bhattacharya in a key role. The two-minute-21-second-long video opens with glimpses of Dev's romantic moments with Subhashree, followed by scenes hinting at their separation and his longing for his lover. The subsequent sequences show Dev embracing a 'massy' avatar, taking on goons and lighting a cigarette from the flaming barrel of a gun. The video also offers a glimpse of his showdown with the antagonist, played by Anirban in a never-seen-before avatar. A dialogue by Subhashree hints at a possible reunion of estranged lovers: "Who are you? You are not the same Dev I knew in the



past." DeSu7 marks Dev and Subhashree's on-screen reunion after more than a decade. They had last appeared together in Kaushik Ganguly's Dhumketu, which hit theatres last year after a 9-year delay. DeSu7 is set for a competitive Durga Puja release, going up against Srijit Mukherji's Emperor vs Sarat Chandra, Shiboprosad Mukherjee and Nandita Roy's Bohurupi: The Golden Daku and Joydeep Mukherjee's The Eken: Kerala-e Kurukshetra. The film will also clash with Rajinikanth's Jailer 2, which is scheduled to release on October 15, and Rajkumar Rao-starrer courtroom drama Prahara, which is slated to hit theatres on October 16. (AGENCY)

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