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Narendra Modi, Canadian PM Mark Carney agree to build on positive momentum in relations



New Delhi, Oct 13: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday spoke with his Canadian counterpart Mark Carney. The two leaders agreed to build on the positive momentum in India-Canada ties.

"We agreed to work towards concrete outcomes across key areas of our strategic partnership, including trade, energy, technology, security and people-to-people ties. Together, India and Canada are contributing towards a more stable and prosperous world," the PM said, describing the conversation in a post on X.

Meanwhile, Carney's office said on Tuesday that Indian PM Narendra Modi was set visit Canada in December; and the leaders were committed to conclude Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) negotiations at the earliest opportunity.

The conversation between Modi and Carney comes amid efforts by both countries to strengthen ties and advance CEPA negotiations, hoping to conclude it by December. India and Canada are currently in the fifth round of negotiations. The two countries are targeting a bilateral trade to 70 billion Canadian dollars by 2030.

Last month, Carney had said negotiations were making good progress and had expressed his willingness to host Modi in Canada in December. If Modi visits Canada, it would be his first bilateral trip to the country since bilateral relations were strained by a diplomatic row over the killing of a Khalistan separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar. Modi last visited Canada in June 2025 to attend the G7 Summit at Carney's invitation.

Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Anita Anand is also scheduled to meet External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar in New Delhi on Wednesday.

A Canadian statement said Anand at er meeting with Jaishankar, will advance collaboration on roadmap priorities, including trade, energy, people-to-people ties and security and defence cooperation. Anand will reinforce the importance of multilateral and plurilateral cooperation at a time of geopolitical uncertainty and highlight Canada as a reliable partner for India and the broader Indo-Pacific.

Anand is also to meet with senior leaders and government officials, as well as business leaders to expand commercial partnerships, promote collaboration in defence and security, artificial intelligence and innovation, and strengthen people-to-people ties.

New Delhi and Ottawa have been seeking to deepen cooperation on security and defence.

National security adviser Ajit Doval and his Canadian counterpart, David Morrison, also reviewed progress in security and law enforcement cooperation under a shared Security Work Plan concluded in February.

Revanth Eyes 1.3L Govt Job Hires In 2 Years



Hyderabad: Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy said the Congress government would fulfil its promise of providing two lakh jobs in various departments during its tenure, asserting that more than 70,000 vacancies had been filled in the last three years and 1.3 lakh persons would be recruited in the next two years.

He asked ministers, MPs, MLAs, MLCs and cadre to take the government's employment record to graduates and mobilise their support for the party in the upcoming graduate elections to the Legislative Council for the Hyderabad-Rangareddy-Mahbubnagar (HRM) and Warangal-Khammam-Nalgonda (WKN) constituencies.

Revanth Reddy was speaking at a meeting with ministers and senior Congress leaders in Delhi on Tuesday, held to discuss the party's strategy for the polls. According to party sources, the Chief Minister expressed confidence that the Congress would win both seats comfortably and stressed the need to focus on enrolment of graduates and outreach well ahead of the elections.

The Chief Minister said the Congress had the advantage of making an early start in the electoral battle, having announced its candidates — Sama Rammohan Reddy the HRM constituency and Ramreddy Sarvotham Reddy for WKN — more than 15 days ago, while the opposition BRS and BJP were still struggling to finalise their nominees.

He placed the responsibility for ensuring the victory of Congress candidates on ministers, MPs, MLAs and MLCs from the respective districts and asked them to prioritise voter enrolment. He called for large-scale enrolment of eligible graduates, to substantially increase the number of registered voters compared with the 2015 and 2021 graduate MLC elections.

Revanth Reddy directed party leaders to organise outreach programmes in their respective constituencies and conduct 'atmeeya sammelanams' (interaction meetings) with graduates in coordination with the Congress candidates. He emphasised the need to explain the Congress government's initiatives, particularly its efforts to provide employment, and establish direct contact with the electorate.

Highlighting the Congress government's performance on providing jobs, the Chief Minister said it had completed the Group-I recruitment process in Telangana after 13 years, with the previous BRS government failing to conduct even a single Group-I recruitment process during its 10-year tenure. He also cited the completion of the DSC teacher recruitment drive to fill more than 10,000 posts in a record period of less than two months as evidence of the government's commitment to providing employment.

The Chief Minister said the promise of filling two lakh government jobs would be fulfilled within the government's five-year tenure, with recruitment for the remaining vacancies to be completed during the next two years. He asked party leaders to communicate these achievements to graduates and counter the opposition's criticism with facts about the government's recruitment initiatives.

Revanth Reddy said the graduate elections carried considerable political significance for the Congress and that winning both seats was important to demonstrate the party's continued dominance in Telangana politics ahead of the crucial Assembly elections scheduled for the end of 2028. The outcome of the polls would also provide an opportunity for the party to consolidate its support among educated voters.

The Chief Minister has been camping in Delhi since Sunday to participate in protest programmes organised by the I,N,D,I,A, bloc against the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. On Tuesday, he also attended a meeting of I.N.D.I.A. bloc leaders hosted by party leader Rahul Gandhi, along with Karnataka Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar.

Revanth Reddy, along with ministers and senior Congress leaders, returned to Hyderabad on Tuesday night.

Vijay's Presence Adds Fresh Buzz To Utsav: Naidu



VIJAYAWADA, Octy 13 Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu said his Tamil Nadu counterpart, C. Joseph Vijay, had added fresh enthusiasm to Vijayawada Utsav 2.0 with his participation in the celebrations at Punnami Ghat on Tuesday.

The two Chief Ministers joined the festivities, with Vijay's opening address in Telugu, greeting people on the occasion of Navaratri and thanking them for their affection, drawing an enthusiastic response from the gathering.

Welcoming Vijay on his maiden visit to Vijayawada after assuming office as Chief Minister, Naidu praised his political journey, noting that he had formed a party and come to power within two years. He said Vijay was committed to the development of Tamil Nadu and described his visit to Andhra Pradesh as a special occasion for the two states.

"Though our States are different, our aspirations are the same. India should prosper, and Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Karnataka should develop," Naidu said. Congratulating the organisers and artists for making the second edition of Vijayawada Utsav a vibrant celebration, Naidu said the large turnout reflected public enthusiasm. The energy of the youth and their growing technological capabilities inspired confidence that India could achieve anything, he added.

Naidu expressed confidence that river-linking projects would become a reality under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership. He said the Godavari and Krishna rivers would be linked through the Vijayawada region and expressed hope that the Godavari, Krishna, Penna, Tungabhadra and Cauvery rivers would eventually be interconnected, benefiting four southern States through improved water availability.

He also expressed confidence that India would emerge as the world's leading nation by 2047. Technology and knowledge should go hand in hand with spirituality, which cultural and religious festivals could help promote, he said. Naidu invoked the blessings of Goddess Kanaka Durga for the success of the proposed river-linking initiatives.

Vijay began his address with "Andariki namaskaram" (Greetings to everyone), drawing applause from the audience. He described his participation in the Navaratri celebrations as a privilege and extended festive greetings to the Telugu people.

"I am very happy to be here in Vijayawada and to meet all of you. I consider it my good fortune to participate in these Navaratri celebrations. My greetings to everyone on this occasion. I am happy to have come to Vijayawada to discuss river interlinking with the honourable Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu," Vijay said.

Thanking the people for their affection and hospitality, he concluded, "Thank you, Vijayawada, for your hospitality, and thank you, sir, for inviting me." Naidu and Telugu Desam leaders felicitated Vijay at the event.

Prepare For Crushing Defeat In 2029: Amit Shah Hits Back at Rahul Gandhi

New Delhi: Union minister Amit Shah, in his first remarks on the ongoing protests against CEC Gyanesh Kumar and SIR, told Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and the Opposition to be ready again for a "crushing defeat" in 2029, as the people were with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He said that the country could see through the Leader of Opposition's "plan" to get infiltrators registered as voters.

Shah said that while the SIR started only in 2024, the Congress had been losing continuously ever since Rahul Gandhi took over the party leadership.

Noting the Congress' dismal performance in the recent bypolls and local body elections in several states, Shah said the kind of "negative politics" the Congress was engaging in would not benefit it. He said the Congress needed to connect with the public and asked the party to introspect. "You cannot win the trust of the country's people through fabricated media events and echoes of lies," Shah said, adding that the Congress is on a losing spree for decades now.

The home minister said people of India knew of Gandhi's plans of "getting infiltrators registered as voters".

"In the 2029 general elections, the NDA is going to win with a resounding majority, and the Congress is going to face defeat for the fourth consecutive time," he said. The people of this country are with Narendra Modi ji, with the BJP, with the NDA. You cannot deny this truth."



Reacting to Monday's protests, the home minister said the gathering of the cadres of 14 political parties and assembling a crowd of 8,000 in a one-and-a-half-kilometre area did not make Rahul Gandhi the voice of the nation.

"My request to the Congress party is that the voice of the nation is also in the fields and farms, in the villages, in distant hills, in forests, and along riverbanks. You have no reach there.

"In many states of the country — be it Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu — the public has rejected and defeated the Congress party," he said.

SCCL announces Dasara bonus as profit-sharing amount drops from last year

Hyderabad: The Telangana government announced a Dasara bonus of Rs 1,53,912 for each permanent Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) employee, down from Rs 1,95,610 last year. Contract workers will receive Rs 5,500 as last year.Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka made an announcement in this regard, stating that the company earned a profit of Rs 1,754 crore after taxes and that 34 per cent of the amount will be distributed among workers.



Political resistance will continue & triumph: Rahul after hosting INDIA bloc for high tea

New Delhi, Oct 13

After hosting a high tea for INDIA bloc leaders, Opposition MPs, student organisations and civil society representatives at his Sunehri Bagh Road residence on Tuesday, Lok Sabha Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi vowed to sustain the agitation against Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, declaring that "no matter what happened, political resistance would continue and it would triumph".Accusing Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah and the CEC of undermining democratic institutions, Rahul said the Opposition would fight until democracy was restored and those responsible were brought to justice.



How Durga Puja at Delhi's CR Park has changed



Devyani Rudra, 60, recalled her earliest memories of Durga Puja from Chittaranjan Park's J Block: helping her mother, cutting vegetables for bhog — the traditional community meal offered to the Goddess and distributed as prasad — and joining the neighbourhood's cultural programmes.Earlier, only 50 to 100 people would turn up for the pujas," she said.Rudra and her family moved to CR Park from Delhi Cantonment in 1975. Back then, it was known as the East Pakistan Displaced Persons Colony, established as part of the government's rehabilitation efforts for those uprooted by Partition. It housed only 15-20 families, mostly government officials.Chittaranjan Park, Chittaranjan Park Durga Puja, durga puja, durga puja celebrations, Durga Puja pandals, delhi Durga Puja pandals, delhi news, India news, Indian express, current affairs Preparations underway at Mela Ground in CR Park.The celebrations later shifted to Mela Ground and the Shiv Mandir in 1976, now known as Kali Mandir.Five decades later, Durga Puja has become a much larger affair. The colony now has nearly 50,000 residents and hosts around 10 major community pujas, besides several private household celebrations. Lakhs of visitors from across Delhi-NCR descend on the neighbourhood.But as the festivities kick off on October 16 this year, some of CR Park's old residents feel the celebrations have moved away from the intimacy of a festival once centred on the community.

What does a puja cost?

At Kali Mandir, the annual Durga Puja budget is around Rs 1 crore to Rs 1.5 crore, while other major CR Park pujas have annual budgets of around Rs 80-90 lakh.

The temporary pandal and tent structure at Kali Mandir alone costs around Rs 25-30 lakh, said Jaya Ray, a member of the Kali Mandir Society and its Durga Puja organising committee.Chittaranjan Park, Chittaranjan Park Durga Puja, durga puja, durga puja celebrations, Durga Puja pandals, delhi Durga Puja pandals, delhi news, India news, Indian express, current affairs Preparations underway at Mela Ground in CR Park. The bhog operation costs Rs 30-40 lakh. "The kitchen serves at least 7,000 people within about four hours on a single afternoon, with 300-500 kg of food prepared on 10 wood-burning stoves," Ray added.The five-day cultural programme, featuring dance, music, orchestras and other performances, costs another Rs 5-10 lakh. The Mandir committee also spends on printing, decoration, logistics and the salaries of priests and support staff who work through the year.At other venues, the scale is similarly large.Narayan Dey, secretary of the Mela Ground Durga Puja Samiti, said during the festival, the committee runs a daily langar serving around 10,000 meals. Its pandal has expanded to around 180 feet by 85 feet.Saurav Chakravorty, General Secretary of K-Block Cooperative Ground, said that they see a daily footfall of around 1-1.5 lakh people during the festival while cultural shows feature artists who fly in from Kolkata and Mumbai.

Who pays for the celebrations?

Ray said the celebrations were once funded almost entirely by residents. "In the 1970s and 80s, the celebrations relied entirely on personal resident contributions. We would go door to door collecting chanda. Back then, the pandals cost Rs 1 lakh or Rs 2 lakh. But now, that will not cut it," she said.The major shift came in the early 2000s, when corporate houses and public sector undertakings began sponsoring the pujas.Chittaranjan Park, Chittaranjan Park Durga Puja, durga puja, durga puja celebrations, Durga Puja pandals, delhi Durga Puja pandals, delhi news, India news, Indian express, current affairs Preparations underway at Mela Ground in CR Park. At Kali Mandir, corporate sponsorships now account for around 70% of the Durga Puja budget, according to the organising committee. Individual resident contributions make up the remaining 30%. Sponsors are given visibility through stalls at the venue, LED screens, backdrops and flexes at the gates.At Mela Ground, Dey said the committee puts up panels within the pandal area carrying the names of sponsors.The scale of the celebrations has also created a wider ecosystem around the festival.Kali Mandir's idol-making workshop, which began in 1972, produced only around three to five idols a year in its early days. By the late 1980s and 1990s, production had risen to around 100 idols.Today, the Kali Mandir workshop, along with its second workshop at Chandralok Cinema in G Block, produces more than 800 idols every year for puja committees across Delhi-NCR, other parts of India and overseas.The idols are made on commission and sold to other puja committees, providing the temple with an additional source of income. While commissioned idols generally cost around Rs 40,000 to Rs 80,000, larger and more elaborate custom installations can cost more than Rs 10 lakh.The workshops also employ artisans and other workers, allowing traditional idol-making expertise to remain within the community.At K-Block, Chakravorty said the idols are constructed completely in-house, from scratch, inside the pandal. At Mela Ground, 250-300 artisans and staff come from outside Bengal to craft the idols on site.The transformation has also brought criticism from some long-time residents.

Rudra called it a commercialisation of the festival. "Earlier, there were just a small number of food stalls. And that too, they were set up at no cost. But now the puja venues charge you in lakhs to put up stalls."She added that cultural programmes used to be conducted by the locals, and then film screenings. "But now, if you see, popular reality show stars and singers fly in for the event, and local talent is no longer promoted. It is more entertainment than the puja itself."The growing crowds and high footfall have also raised safety concerns, Rudra claimed."The bhakti of the festivities is getting lost, and the present generation no longer understands that," she added.

Stabbed 7 times while sealing petrol pump, IOC officer's killing echoes 2005 Manjunath case



In a case bearing striking similarities to the 2005 Manjunath murder case in Uttar Pradesh, an Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) field officer was allegedly stabbed seven times during an altercation while he was attempting to seal a non-functional petrol pump in Hingoli district on Tuesday evening. Kurunda police have arrested four people, including a mother and her son, in connection with the murder and are searching for a fifth suspect.The deceased was identified as Mahesh Shelke, who worked as Manager (Retail Sales) and Field Officer with IOC and was posted in Nanded North.According to police, Shelke, along with three to four members of his team, went to the Sai Umesh petrol pump in Ambachondi village in Basmat tehsil on October 6 to officially take over and seal the retail outlet. The pump had remained closed for nearly three months but recently resumed operations.Police said the petrol pump owner was not present at the spot. However, his wife, son and some others were present when the IOC team arrived. An argument broke out, and the situation escalated when the group allegedly began pelting stones at the officials, a senior IPS officer said.During the confrontation, Umesh Pandvir, 24, allegedly attacked Shelke with a knife and stabbed him seven times in the abdomen, chest and back. Shelke died on the spot, and the accused allegedly fled the scene, another officer said.Four persons, identified as Umesh Pandvir; his mother, Lata Sahebrao, 46; Shravan Gangadhar Wakude, 24; and a family friend, were arrested within 12 hours. A team is moving to trace a fifth accused.The Indian Oil Officers' Association (IOOA) and IOC have demanded a swift investigation and strict action against the accused."The issue has been taken up with the senior-most officials of the Maharashtra Government and Police to ensure swift and strict action against those responsible, in accordance with law. The safety, dignity and security of our energy-sector personnel, who work tirelessly to serve the nation, remain paramount," Petroleum Minister Hardeep Puri said on social media platform X.Shanmugam Manjunath, a 27-year-old IOC sales officer, was allegedly shot dead in Uttar Pradesh. Manjunath was killed after he conducted a surprise inspection of one of the outlets allegedly involved in selling adulterated fuel that had resumed operations despite the action.

Caught cheating? Let student finish exam: IIT Bombay panel after suicide

IIT-B student dies by suicide, iit Bombay student dies by suicide, IIT Bombay, IIT Bombay students protest, ChatGPT, examination question paper on ChatGPT, Mumbai news, Maharashtra news, Indian express, current affairsUntil now, the institute followed procedures framed in 2015, which had a single paragraph on what an invigilator should do. With no central monitoring, each department handled cases in its own way, sources said.If a student is caught cheating during an exam, the invigilator should take away the related material and record the incident, but allow the student to complete the paper with a fresh answer booklet. The quick response team (QRT) helpline should be alerted so the student has support after the exam. These are among the proposals put forward by a committee, set up after the recent student suicide at IIT-Bombay, in its interim report, The Indian Express has learnt.

IIT Director Shireesh Kedare had set up the eight-member commitee — four faculty members and four students — to revisit exam conduct rules, days after Sahil Wakode, a Second Year BTech student who was allegedly found using a cellphone during a mid-semester exam, died by suicide on September 18.The aim was to have guidelines in place before the remaining mid-semester papers are held this weekend. The committee presented its interim report at a special meeting of the IIT Senate on Wednesday.The Senate has also decided to go back to the institute's 2015 punishment rules until a new set is drafted, putting on hold the stricter rules it adopted this year. Under the July rules, a student found carrying a phone into an exam got an FR (or "fail and repeat") grade and suspension for a semester. Under the 2015 rules, carrying a phone in the exam hall would mean "loss of one grade", and using it would mean an FR.Students protest against alleged institutional murder as Sahil Wakode, a second-year student of IIT Bombay died by suicide on friday, inside the IIT-B Powai campus in Mumbai on 19 September 2026. (Express photo by Sankhadeep Banerjee) Students protest against alleged institutional murder as Sahil Wakode, a second-year student of IIT Bombay died by suicide on friday, inside the IIT-B Powai campus in Mumbai on 19 September 2026. (Express photo by Sankhadeep Banerjee)A student caught talking to another during an exam got a straight FR under the July rules. In 2015, it meant loss of one grade unless there was other evidence, such as identical answers.The interim report proposes that the invigilator should record the incident in a prescribed form, give the student a chance to give their version, and alert a quick response team (QRT) so the student has support, it has said. Seized items such as phones may be photographed.



The report proposes limits to the invigilator's role. "An important point to note: When a suspected unauthorised academic practice is noticed, the invigilator's responsibility is to stop that activity, collect related material and record details to the extent possible. Further proceedings will be carried out later by the Disciplinary Action Committee as per norms," it says.Protesting students have alleged procedural lapses in how Wakode's case was handled.The invigilator is to seize the material with as little conversation with the student as possible. If there is doubt about the student's identity, the invigilator can photograph them at the desk, the report says.When the exam ends, the invigilator should fill a form describing the incident and the evidence collected. The student can record their version on another form, at a designated venue with additional staff present. The forms, which the report is prescribing for the first time, are meant to keep a complete record of each case, sources said. These will be sent to the head of the department conducting the course, along with the seized material and the original answer book.When the student leaves the exam hall, the invigilator must alert the QRT helpline, giving the student's name, roll number, course and venue, the report says. The idea is to ensure the student isn't alone after such an incident, sources said.Until now, the institute followed procedures framed in 2015, which had a single paragraph on what an invigilator should do. With no central monitoring, each department handled cases in its own way, sources said.The committee has also proposed stricter exam hall rules. No phones, smartwatches, earphones or other gadgets, and no bags, notes or books will be allowed inside the exam building. Teaching assistants cannot bring phones into the hall. Halls are to be monitored through CCTV, only one student can step out at a time for bio-break, and entry will close 30 minutes after the exam begins.According to sources, members broadly agreed with the report but made several suggestions, and a final version will be prepared once these are considered.

Leaked papers, cancelled government exams, no new dates: MPSC protests grow in Maharashtra

Rahul Mahale, 29, had a simple plan: give the State Services Main Exam this month, write the Group-B Main in December, exit the long preparation phase finally, and end the monetary drain it caused on his parents. Then, his hopes vanished.Mahale is among the thousands of aspirants sitting for exams conducted by the Maharashtra Public Service Commission (MPSC), who have been protesting in Pune – an MPSC exam hub – since October 2.The exam that Mahale was preparing for, having passed the Prelims for the State Civil Services, has been postponed with no new dates announced, since irregularities were found in tests conducted by the MPSC.

"My demand is that the wrongdoers be removed, and the commission adhere to strict exam schedules and transparent conduct," Mahale says. Topping the demand for him and others is the resignation of MPSC Chairman Vivek Bhimanwar.With the government on the backfoot since the NEET paper leak protests, the Opposition, including the Congress, NCP (SP), Maharashtra Navnirman Sena and the Cockroach Janta Party, has lent its weight to the MPSC protests. Maratha quota activist Manoj Jarange-Patil has also spoken up for the aspirants.At least one leader of the ruling coalition, Shiv Sena MP Omraje Nimbalkar, has visited the protest site. He promised the aspirants that he would take up their demand to remove the MPSC chief "personally with the CM".On Monday, in one of its biggest concessions to the demands of the aspirants, the Fadnavis government sent a recommendation to Governor Jishnu Dev Varma proposing a committee to examine the conduct of former and incumbent MPSC chairpersons and members.The CM had earlier said Bhimanwar held a "constitutional" post and hence could not be removed arbitrarily. His recommendation to the Governor was made under Article 317 of the Constitution, which deals with the removal and suspension of chairpersons and members of public service commissions.On Wednesday, hearing a petition by some Pune residents, the Bombay High Court said it was the government's duty to ensure that public recruitment exams are conducted impartially, adding: "If they (students) lack opportunities and (believe) there has been hanky panky, they have the right to agitate. Because they have given hours of study… The protesters are students… not anti-social elements."

A drug inspector examOn June 12, results were declared for the drug inspector posts exam conducted by the MPSC in March, selecting 506 applicants for the interview round. A little over a month after the results came out, NCP (SP) MLA Rohit Pawar held a press conference claiming that the paper had been leaked.It took another month before the MPSC admitted this had happened, and on August 25, it cancelled the recruitment process. By then, of the 506 who qualified for the interview stage, interviews had been conducted for 488 and a provisional general merit list of 485 had been declared.Soon after, the State Services Main Exam 2025 conducted by the MPSC in November last year for 139 vacancies, whose result shortlisting candidates for interviews was declared on August 25 this year, came under a cloud. Widespread protests alleged irregularities in the evaluation of questions requiring descriptive answers – a new format introduced only last year – and questioned the unusual variations in marks.On September 10, Rohit Pawar held another press conference, where he claimed MPSC chief Bhimanwar was close to Fadnavis, and that his record was marked by several controversies.Bhimanwar defended himself saying he took charge of the MPSC only in April this year, and that the alleged irregularities predated his tenure.On September 11, in a further escalation, members of the Maratha outfit Sambhaji Brigade blackened the face of then MPSC secretary Mahendra Harpalkar at the commission's head office in Navi Mumbai.



On September 28, the MPSC announced postponement of the State Services Main Exam 2026, which was to begin on October 3, citing requests from aspirants, parents, student organisations and elected representatives. It also said it would re-evaluate the answer sheets for the 2025 exam, and deferred the Maharashtra Civil Engineering Main Examination 2026 and the Maharashtra Group-B (Non-Gazetted) Main Examination, without announcing revised schedules for any of the three.By mid-August, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis had already announced a complete review of the MPSC system. As part of this, a seven-member committee was asked to visit each Revenue Division, consult students, representatives of educational institutions and other stakeholders, and submit a report by the end of the year.With tempers rising, on October 2, the government transferred Harpalkar.While the government seems to have relented on its position regarding Bhimanwar now, the protesters are also divided over their main demands. If for one group, the main thing is the MPSC chief's removal, another wants the descriptive pattern of exams scrapped, while yet another opposes any return to the objective format.One of the members of the second group of protesters, Dhuldev Tele, 27, says the wide variation in the Mains marks showed that the MPSC lacked the mechanism and experts to evaluate descriptive papers fairly.But Amar Khose (21), who says he has spent "lakhs of rupees" preparing for the State Services Main Exam since 2023, is opposed to a change in format. Preparing for an optional subject alone cost him Rs 70,000, he says, and now the MPSC has decided it will not be a part of the 2027 exam. "If the Mains shift to the objective pattern too, it will be a major setback for lakhs like me who have studied hard for the descriptive format,"

Andhra to build houses for poor using 3D concrete-printing technology



Hyderabad: In a first, Andhra Pradesh is set to construct houses for poor families using 3D concrete-printing technology in the state. The Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and Union Rural Development Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan laid the foundation stone for the project at Burripalem village in Guntur district on Sunday.

Addressing the gathering, Naidu said initially the Centre approved 75,000 houses for the Telugu state but later it considered the special request from the state government and sanctioned additional three lakh houses for poor families.The chief minister said the state requires a total of nine lakh houses to provide shelter for the homeless people and the NDA-led government is committed to ensuring permanent homes for poor families. Expressing confidence in the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Naidu said with the Centre's continued support, Andhra Pradesh would emerge as the country's leading state in infrastructure and rural development.

The project is being implemented under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G) 2.0 scheme. As part of the scheme, the state government will construct three lakh houses for the beneficiaries. Guntur district has been selected for the national-level pilot project, with 117 houses to be constructed at a cost of Rs 14 crore at Burripalem and Obulanaidupalem in Tenali mandal. The 3D concrete-printing technology is expected to herald a new era in modernising rural housing. The Central Building Research Institute (CBRI) has been tasked with technical supervision of the project. According to reports, the pilot project will be completed in six months, with 10 days allocated for the construction of each house using this advanced technology.

Woman journalist questioned for seven hours at CCS, BRS alleges harassment

Hyderabad: A woman journalist, Jalli Rekha, was allegedly subjected to prolonged questioning at the Central Crime Station (CCS) in Hyderabad on Wednesday in connection with a case.

According to BRS party leaders and her friends, Jalli Rekha was made to remain at the police station for nearly seven hours and had to wait there with her six-month-old infant and her three-year-old son. The allegations have drawn criticism from BRS leaders, who claimed that the police action amounted to harassment and was intended to intimidate the journalist. They also raised concerns over the implications of the incident for press freedom.

'They ask me over and over': Bengal BLOs fear tribunal questions in special drive



An organisation representing Booth Level Officers (BLOs) has expressed apprehension that they may face the ire of deleted voters. Others wonder how long the latest turn in the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise, of re-checking those voters "left out", will keep them away from their day jobs. Some point out that it entails them doing an exercise done by them once already. However, the biggest question hanging over BLOs in West Bengal as they set out again is this: how do they tackle questions regarding those whose cases are hanging fire in appellate tribunals?They also hope that clarity will be forthcoming in training sessions to be held for them after the Durga Puja holidays.

With questions swirling, the state CEO's office put out a notice Tuesday saying that the special drive announced by the Election Commission of India (ECI) applies to "left out eligible voters", adding that BLOs should refer to the list of ASDD (Absentee, Shifted, Dead, Duplicate) voters. "Any person in this list may submit Form 6 online or through BLO for inclusion of his/her name in the Electoral Roll," the notice said, apart from first-time voters who have now reached 18 years of age.As reported by The Indian Express first, under fire over the scale of voter deletions, the ECI directed on September 29 that in the 20 states and Union Territories where the SIR was completed, a "special drive" will be held to enrol voters "left out" of the rolls. At a subsequent video conference with all state Chief Electoral Officers, the Deputy Election Commissioner present said pre-SIR and post-SIR rolls should be compared to draw up the list of those deleted, and identify any who may have been left out, as per officers who attended.Bengal BLOs fear tribunal questions, Bengal sir, Bengal sir special drive, SIR of electoral roll, nationwide SIR, Special Intensive Revision (SIR), Assembly elections, Assembly polls, nationwide Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls, nationwide SIR of of electoral rolls, Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls, SIR of of electoral rolls, Election Commission, Election Commission of India, Indian express news, current affairs Distribution of enumeration forms to a resident in Barasat, North 24 Parganas. (Express file)In the final electoral roll of West Bengal published on February 28 this year, 63.66 lakh voters were deleted, nearly 1.9 lakh added, while the cases of 60.06 lakh were listed as under adjudication. Of these, while 33 lakh-odd voters were restored to the electoral roll, cases of 27 lakh were referred to tribunals, which also took up around 16 lakh applications against inclusion.

Speaking to The Indian Express over the phone, Md Sahabuddin Mondol, a BLO of Barasat, North 24 Parganas, said: "Before the SIR, there were 1,279 voters in my booth. During the SIR, we found 120 either absent, shifted or dead. I think now there is a chance for such voters to apply again."

Additionally, from his booth, 586 cases were referred to the tribunals. Of these, "86 have been deleted so far", Sahabuddin says. "I am not sure whether these 86 can apply again, and I don't think those whose cases are still being heard by tribunals can apply either. But I am waiting for the training session."The ECI also said in its September 29 order that the Form 6 for enrolment of voters now will no longer require them to show linkage to the 2002 SIR. Sahabuddin says he has "heard of this change", but is waiting for clear instructions.Pinki Jaiswal, a BLO at Kolkata's Narkeldanga, says of the 191 voters deleted in her booth, 100 were removed as they are dead. "The rest I will re-check. Basically, we have to check the shifted and absentee voters. In my case, I had found that most of them were now in Bihar."Jaiswal adds: "The main problem is with the cases referred to tribunals. I have 28 in my booth who appealed, but there is no news regarding their hearings." The BLO believes "they cannot be included in the exercise".Khurshid Anwar, a BLO from Srirampur in Hooghly district, says he has "heard that we will have to visit and re-check the documents". He mentions that it will take time, and adds: "But the main problem is the tribunal cases. People are stuck there, and they ask me about it over and over."Habibur Rehman, a BLO from Deganga in South 24 Parganas, says: "All I am hearing is that there will be training. Only after that can I tell you anything."A BLO from Central Kolkata who did not want to be named expresses his frustration. "After completing the SIR and then helping with the Assembly elections, we have now been enrolled for Census. That itself is a mammoth task, and the process will only be completed next February. Meanwhile, this special ECI drive has started. When will we do these jobs and when do we do our school duties?"Earlier, an organisation representing BLOs called 'Votekormi and BLO Aikya Mancha' wrote to the Bengal CEO seeking "appropriate measures for complete security… for BLOs working in sensitive areas… where a huge number of voters have been deleted during SIR". Referring to South and North 24 Parganas, Howrah, parts of Hooghly and Kolkata, Malda, Murshidabad and Uttar Dinajpur, the letter said: "In these districts, a huge number of voters were deleted for no reason… They (the BLOs) may be the target of attacks by furious deleted voters."The BLOs themselves had no role in the mass deletion, the letter said, blaming it on the ECI "system" flagging logical discrepancies that had "raised the question of credentials of these deleted voters". Then Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's decision to go to court led to their cases coming under adjudication and finally being referred to tribunals, the organisation wrote. "The entire process was faulty and then we drew the attention of the concerned authority, but without result."Asked about the BLOs' fears, a senior ECI official said, "In this process, they don't have to go to every applicant's house. All District Electoral Officers will organise camps where applicants can apply through Form 6. They can also apply online. Then, if an Electoral Registration Officer or District Electoral Officer thinks that in a particular case physical verification is needed, in only those, BLOs would have to go to the applicant's residence.

North Korea rebuffs Seoul's medical aid offer as 'insult'



Seoul: North Korea on Thursday rejected Seoul's planned humanitarian shipment of medical supplies as "an insult" and "political provocation."Kim Yo-jong, the powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, made the remarks in a statement carried by the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA). South Korea's unification ministry has said it planned to send 1,431 medical items covering 166 categories to a hospital in Pyongyang, necessary for diagnosis, surgery and treatment, as part of a humanitarian medical support program.

The ministry secured a sanctions exemption in May from the UN Security Council's North Korea sanctions committee, Yonhap News Agency reported."This is an insult to our state and mutant political-motivated provocation against it and a grave encroachment upon our national law," Kim said, dismissing the move as "a noisy and ugly act" and "another farce."She had earlier used the same word, "farce," to dismiss Seoul's official conclusion that North Korean mines caused the September 21 explosions that wounded three South Korean soldiers. "Now when it is impossible to expect a good box-office record from their poor farce, they have created another farce titled 'a scenario for aiding medical equipment,' the part 2 of the 'mine explosion case,'" she said.She also repeated that Pyongyang has no intention of engaging with Seoul. "We have nothing to exchange or go with the ROK and no need to face to face with it," she said, referring to South Korea by its official name, the Republic of Korea."There will be no change in the true colours of the ROK, most hostile to the DPRK, and the hostile nature of the DPRK-ROK relations," she said.DPRK is the acronym for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, North Korea's official name. With inter-Korean exchanges and dialogue channels virtually non-existent amid souring ties, it had been unclear whether Pyongyang would accept the aid at all.Earlier in the day, a unification ministry official said the chances of shipping the items as planned were slim and that the government would seek another extension from the United Nations.

Civilians in Yemen continue to flee homes amid insecurity: UN

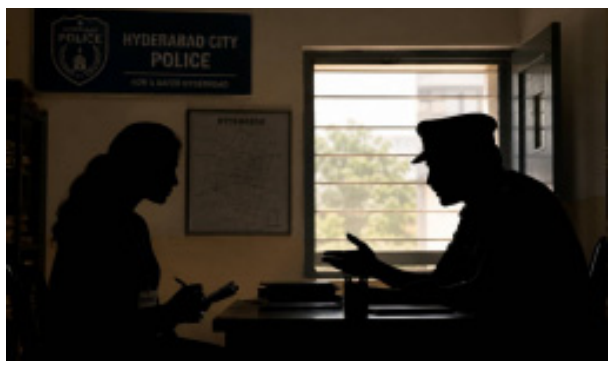
United Nations: Civilians in Yemen continue to flee their homes amid the ongoing conflict, as the humanitarian crisis worsens by the day, UN humanitarians said. Since August 1, more than 184,000 people have been displaced nationwide, including over 21,000 people in the past week alone, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said on Wednesday (local time), citing the International Organization for Migration.According to OCHA, the United Nations and its humanitarian partners have reached more than 126,000 people with life-saving assistance. Nevertheless, it warned that needs continue to outpace the resources available.

The World Health Organization warned of major funding shortfalls as rising displacement, disease outbreaks and conflict put more pressure on an already fragile health system, OCHA said. "Cholera cases have tripled in recent weeks — including in displacement camps — while measles, dengue and malaria continue to spread."Key roads connecting Taiz governorate with major surrounding cities, including Hodeidah, Aden and Sanaa, remain blocked, the office said, adding that the closure severely restricts the movement of civilians and commercial supplies, as well as humanitarian



access.Shortages of essential commodities and medical supplies are being reported, with sharp increases in food and fuel prices, and growing concerns over the availability of flour, cooking gas and medicines, OCHA said.The office said it was alarmed by reports of civilian casualties, damage to civilian property and heightened risks from explosive hazards, which are further constraining humanitarian access and the safe movement of civilians, Xinhua news agency reported."OCHA continues to assess the humanitarian impact and calls on all parties to protect civilians and facilitate humanitarians' efforts to safely and swiftly reach them with the support they need," it said.

India, Myanmar discuss initiatives to strengthen defence cooperation



A woman journalist, Jalli Rekha, was allegedly questioned for nearly seven hours at Hyderabad's Central Crime Station in connection with a cybercrime case, drawing criticism from BRS leaders and journalist organisations.

Guwahati: India and Myanmar reviewed the progress made on bilateral defence initiatives agreed during the last Defence Cooperation Meeting held last year and discussed new initiatives to further strengthen the ongoing cooperation in the field.The discussions were held during a third India-Myanmar Defence Cooperation Meeting co-chaired by Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh and Myanmar's Chief of Armed Forces Training Lt Gen Pyae Sone Linn.

The officials of Myanmar expressed appreciation for India's humanitarian support and assistance as the first Responder and a close neighbour of Myanmar through 'Operation Brahma' in the aftermath of the earthquake in Myanmar."The 3rd India-Myanmar Defence Cooperation Meeting was held in Guwahati on 7 October 2026. The meeting was co-chaired by Defence Secretary Shri Rajesh Kumar Singh and Chief of Armed Forces Training, Myanmar Lt Gen Pyae Sone Linn. The two countries reviewed the progress made on various bilateral defence cooperation initiatives agreed during the last Defence Cooperation Meeting held in Yangon in 2025," Public Relations Officer (PRO) and Spokesperson, Ministry of Defence (MoD), posted on X.

"Both sides exchanged views on new initiatives to further strengthen the ongoing bilateral defence cooperation with special emphasis on training and capacity building as well as enhancing mutual security. India's humanitarian support and assistance, as the First Responder and a close neighbour of Myanmar, through 'Op Brahma', in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake in Myanmar, was appreciated by the Myanmar side," the statement added.In May, then Chief of Naval Staff (CNS) Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi held a meeting with Myanmar Navy's Commander-in-Chief Admiral Htein Win in Naypyitaw, discussing aspects related to growing bilateral ties.Talks also focused on advancing naval engagements between the two countries, including maritime engagement opportunities, capacity building, training exchanges and Mobile Training Teams (MTTs), hydrography, and enhancing interoperability."As part of the ongoing visit to Myanmar, Adm Dinesh K Tripathi, CNS, held discussions with Adm Htein Win, Commander-in-Chief of Myanmar Navy at Nay Pyi Taw on 04 May 26. On arrival, CNS was received with a ceremonial Guard of Honour by the Myanmar Navy. The meeting marks a significant milestone to foster deeper navy to navy ties and enhancing maritime security in the Bay of Bengal region – MAHASAGAR," the spokesperson for Indian Navy posted on X.

"Both Principals discussed aspects related to growing India – Myanmar relations and advancing Navy-to-Navy engagements with a focus on maritime engagement opportunities, capacity building, training exchanges and Mobile Training Teams (MTTs), hydrography, and enhancing interoperability. The interaction highlighted shared perspectives on Maritime Security and the need for collaborative approaches to address emerging asymmetric threats at sea," the spokesperson added.During his visit, Admiral Tripathi met Myanmar's Defence Minister General Htun Aung and discussed the current canvas of bilateral ties."As part of his ongoing visit to Myanmar, Adm Dinesh K Tripathi, CNS, called on H.E. General Htun Aung, Minister of Defence of Myanmar. Discussions reviewed the current canvas of bilateral ties and identified priorities, while also underscoring the strategic-level impact of India–Myanmar defence engagement in promoting regional stability and security," Indian Navy's spokesperson posted on X.

"The exchange included ongoing bilateral activities and further avenues of collaboration, reflecting a steady, forward-looking partnership with growing strategic convergence between the two sides," the statement added.Admiral Tripathi met Myanmar Navy's Central Naval Command chief Rear Admiral Aung Aung Naing and Training Command chief, Rear Admiral Khun Aung Kyaw with discussions focused on strengthening navy-to-navy cooperation, bolstering the existing defence partnership, and augmenting operational engagements. The two sides also spoke about issues related to enhancing training cooperation and future avenues of collaboration.Admiral Tripathi also visited the Naval Training Command in Myanmar, where he handed over various projects executed with Indian assistance."At the Naval Training Command, CNS was briefed on the Myanmar Navy's training infrastructure and ongoing initiatives between the two navies including the effectiveness of Mobile Training Team MTTs reaffirming India's commitment to capacity building and professional exchanges.

The Russia-Ukraine war—a stalemate that is getting more dangerous



The paradox of the Russia-Ukraine war is becoming harder to ignore: Russia is getting better at striking Ukraine, but not at defeating it. Moscow has expanded its long-range missile and drone arsenal and can increasingly threaten targets deep inside Ukraine. Kyiv, meanwhile, is running short of some of the air-defence interceptors needed to stop these attacks.Yet Russia's territorial gains remain limited and costly, while Ukraine has acquired the ability to strike deep inside Russia. The war is therefore entering a more dangerous form of stalemate, in which industrial capacity, technological adaptation and political endurance may matter as much as battlefield strength.This creates a narrow window for diplomacy. President Donald Trump has an obvious political incentive to demonstrate before the November midterm elections that he can deliver an agreement. The Black Sea, including the restoration of blocked Russian and Ukrainian exports, provides a plausible starting point. Trump's criticism of Ukrainian attacks on Russian energy infrastructure, which he has linked to higher global diesel prices, also indicates his desire to contain the wider economic consequences of the war.

But there is little indication that Washington is preparing to press Kyiv into a settlement as favourable to Moscow as the terms reportedly discussed around last year's Alaska summit. A limited agreement may be possible; a comprehensive settlement remains much harder.

The battlefield explains why. Neither side believes that it has exhausted its military options. Russia has made territorial gains, but at a high cost. Its net gain this year may be only about 100 sq km, equivalent to roughly 0.017 per cent of Ukraine's pre-2014 territory. Ukrainian estimates put Russian military deaths at around 6,00,000 and claim that Russia is losing approximately 22,000 personnel a month, excluding wounded.The precise numbers are contested, but the broader trend is significant: Russian losses are running above the current recruitment rate of about 30,000 a month. Kyiv is also apprehensive about additional North Korean reinforcements for Russia.

Russia's principal advantage lies not in territorial conquest but in its ability to generate long-range firepower. That advantage is changing the geography of the war. The distinction between the front and the rear is steadily disappearing. Areas that were once relatively secure are increasingly exposed to drones and missiles.With neither side able to secure a decisive breakthrough, the war is becoming a test of who can sustain the fight longer—and at what costAlong an approximately 80-km-wide zone near the front, soldiers face persistent danger from first-person-view hunter drones. Russian troops have increasingly substituted armoured vehicles with faster, lighter vehicles from which they can dismount quickly when drones are detected. Sometimes they move on foot simply to gain concealment when they hear a drone overhead.The drone revolution has made the battlefield both more transparent and more lethal. Ambush drones can remain concealed along predictable routes before attacking without warning. Both sides now operate drones far behind the front to disrupt logistics and supply lines.Electronic warfare has consequently become central to combat. Russia is attempting to overwhelm Ukrainian communications with dense jamming, while Ukraine remains heavily dependent on satellite connectivity, including Starlink. The contest is no longer simply about destroying the enemy's weapons; it is increasingly about disrupting the communications and data networks that allow those weapons to find their targets.

Railways illustrate the change. Russia initially concentrated on stationary trains carrying military equipment. Its attacks are increasingly directed at locomotives and railway stations themselves, including facilities near the Polish border. The objective is broader than destroying military cargo. It is to impose friction on the entire Ukrainian logistical system.Russia's deep-strike campaign is creating an especially difficult challenge for Ukrainian air defence. Shahed-type drones that were once predominantly propeller-driven are being supplemented by faster jet-powered versions, including systems using Chinese engines. Machine guns and shoulder-fired missiles are inadequate against large numbers of such targets. Ukrainian F-16s and MiG-29s face ammunition constraints, while small quadcopter interceptors cannot easily catch jet-powered Shaheds.The scale of the challenge could grow rapidly. Russia's production target for Shahed-type drones is 24,000 in 2026. It is also accelerating ballistic missile production and has the capacity to launch about 100 missiles of different types in a month. Ukraine's stock of Patriot interceptors is critically low.Kyiv is attempting to develop a domestic equivalent, but a system capable of providing comparable protection is unlikely to be available for several years. Ballistic missile defence requires the integration of sophisticated radars, data links and guidance systems. The jet-powered drones present a different problem: they are cheaper than missiles but increasingly difficult to intercept.Yet Russia's growing advantage in long-range strike capability has not produced a decisive military advantage. Ukraine's military-industrial complex is expanding rapidly. Its defence companies are producing drones at scale, while Ukraine has developed increasingly sophisticated long-range strike capabilities of its own. The country has learned to combine drones, electronic warfare and intelligence to attack Russian logistics, energy infrastructure and military assets deep inside Russia.Ukraine has also overcome much of the psychological advantage Russia possessed at the beginning of the invasion. Kyiv no longer appears to fear the Russian army in the way it did in the opening months. Four years of war have produced an experienced military, an expanding defence industry and a society that has demonstrated considerable resilience. There remains a degree of normality in Ukrainian life even as petrol stations, factories, roads and railway infrastructure bear the scars of repeated attacks.But resilience has limits.

EYE SECRETS

Editorial

Being an Indian citizen

As if public fears over the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) were not enough, a new wave of confusion has now been created over the scope of usefulness of the passport. Ever since the Ministry of External Affairs issued a statement that an Indian passport is not conclusive proof of citizenship, a new layer of uncertainty has been added to the public discourse on identity and citizenship. One wonders how a document issued by the government of India after thorough police verification becomes unworthy of recognition as proof of citizenship. While the Ministry's clarification that a passport serves only as a travel document may be technically correct, an overwhelming majority of Indians view the document as an official recognition of their citizenship. Although nationality and citizenship are legally distinct, this distinction has little practical relevance for the overwhelming majority of citizens. No doubt Section 20 of the Passports Act allows passports to be issued to non-citizens in exceptional cases and in the public interest; such instances are exceedingly rare. Since the Government of India does not issue any citizenship card or certificate, one wonders how one should prove one's citizenship. Since passports and voter ID cards can be issued only to citizens after thorough verification, they must carry the presumption of citizenship. Wittingly or unwittingly, the government has created confusion at a time when there are growing fears over the possible deletion of a large number of voters in the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise of the Election Commission.For anyone born in India, there must be a presumption of citizenship, and voter ID and a passport must be taken as conclusive proof of citizenship. The Supreme Court, in its Bihar SIR judgment, held that the passport is a "conclusive proof" of citizenship. The government cannot deny citizenship to those to whom it has issued a passport or voter ID card, unless the same were obtained fraudulently. The entire issue goes beyond legal technicalities. A passport is one of the most rigorously verified documents issued by the government. It requires extensive documentation, identity checks and police verification. Therefore, the assertion that it cannot conclusively establish citizenship appears bizarre. Indian law does not have any provision for a universally recognised citizenship certificate. Citizenship may be acquired through birth, descent, registration, naturalisation or incorporation of territory under the Citizenship Act, 1955. Consequently, citizenship is often established through a combination of records rather than a single document. A passport, voter ID, Aadhaar card, PAN card, or birth certificate may each support a claim of citizenship, but none is legally unassailable in every circumstance. The key question that arises is what document ultimately proves citizenship. The government's answer is that citizenship is determined by law and supporting evidence, not by possession of any one document.

Death toll in Delhi building collapse rises to 4, more feared trapped



A day after a four-storey building collapsed in Northeast Delhi's New Seemapuri Wednesday afternoon, police officials said one more body was recovered in the wee hours of Thursday, taking the death toll to four.On Tuesday, when Delhi experienced earthquake tremors in the evening, the building had developed cracks, officials said.Rescue operations still continue at the site, with officials saying that they fear that 1-2 people might still be trapped. A Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) official said that 75% of the debris has been cleared but it might be a couple of hours more before the area could be fully clearedThe collapse took place near the Idgah Machhli Mandi area. Four fire tenders were rushed to the spot.Within minutes of the collapse, residents started pulling people out of the rubble and took them to hospitals."The building measured 225 sq ft. Some people have been rescued and sent to hospitals, but we suspect that two to three people are still trapped under the debris. They are talking… rescue operation is underway," DCP (Northeast) R P Meena said.In a statement, the MCD described the structure as a ground-plus-three-floor building located in a jhuggi jhopri area on about 25 square yards of DUSIB land. It said the building was around 20-25 years old and occupied.The building stood next to the mosque in the densely packed locality. The boundary wall of the mosque also collapsed in the impact, while walls of an adjoining building were damaged, the MCD added. Officials said demolition work was being carried out in the adjoining building.Three- and four-storey structures surround the mosque on three sides, leaving little open space. Much of the debris fell inside the mosque compound, said local residents.The building was owned by Anwar. His family members who stayed on the first three floors included his wife Salma, 50;

'Clean South Mumbai doesn't mean clean Mumbai': Bombay High Court's reality check for BMC



Expressing displeasure over inadequate waste management measures across the city, the Bombay High Court on Wednesday pulled up the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), observing that cleanliness in some parts of South Mumbai did not mean similar steps had been taken across the city."Everywhere there is filth… Only because Worli is clean or South Mumbai is clean, or Nariman Point is clean, that doesn't mean entire Mumbai is clean," a bench of Justices Girish S Kulkarni and Neela K Gokhale orally remarked.

The bench was hearing a plea raising concerns about waste disposal at the Kanjurmarg landfill, as well as garbage dumping on city streets and beaches."Once the system is in place and the citizens are also sensitised, one day will come that they will stop doing (throwing garbage on streets). And we are looking at Mumbai to be converted into that kind of city where people themselves will go and throw everything in the dustbin… That will happen as we do it when we go (abroad), because there are deterrents, there are cameras, but here (in Mumbai) there is absolutely no worry," Justice Kulkarni said.Even as senior advocate Anil Sakhare, appearing for the BMC, claimed that the "situation had improved", the HC said it "did not find a very high progress" by BMC ward officers in addressing "problematic areas" related to health and hygiene at public places, hill slopes, pavements and streets.The HC sought a comprehensive affidavit detailing the steps taken by ward officers to ascertain the "correct position" on the ground, as well as measures taken on Gandhi Jayanti as part of the 'Swachhata Abhiyan'.The judges also said that while travelling to the Maharashtra Judicial Academy in Uttan, Bhayander, they had noticed a plastic-strewn hill near a municipal school in Jogeshwari."Can we believe that this is Mumbai? Simple cleaning will take no more than one day. Nothing has happened. It is unbelievable," Justice Kulkarni said, seeking immediate corrective measures.The bench indicated that it may call ward officers from a few western suburban wards during the hearings, citing "a lot of chaos" related to waste management in their areas.The judges further indicated that they may soon visit the Kanjurmarg facility for a second round of inspection. The bench will also hear submissions on redressal of complaints regarding odour and environmental pollution from the site at the next hearing on October 22.

3 FIRs against Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka for 'assaulting cops' during Delhi protest

At least three FIRs have been registered against Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi and Wayanad MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra for allegedly assaulting officers during the INDIA bloc MPs protest on Wednesday, Delhi Police sources have said.According to police officers, the FIRs were registered under sections pertaining to assault and obstructing police officers in conducting their duties.Wednesday was the second consecutive day when opposition MPs had protested, demanding the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar.It was also the second consecutive day when Rahul, Priyanka and several other senior leaders were detained by the police.



The MPs had initially boarded a bus after lunch at Sagar Ratna restaurant in Connaught Place, but were stopped from going towards the Election Commission office near Windsor Palace by security forces.The parliamentarians led by Rahul Gandhi got off their buses and attempted to begin an impromptu sit-in.Priyanka Gandhi Vadra lay on the road with a copy of the Constitution, shielded by other MPs and party workers, while her brother stood guard, pushing back the police personnel attempting to break up the protest. "This is my sister," the LoP had shouted at the police.A scuffle followed with the police, with some purported videos showing Priyanka Gandhi allegedly elbowing a woman police officer. In another clip, a police officer was allegedly kicked in the back by a protester.Constable Ankit Kasana also sustained bruises during the scuffle with the MPs. "Is it my mistake, doing my duty," he told mediapersons later.Both the LoP, Priyanka Gandhi, and other Opposition leaders were eventually pushed into police buses amid allegations that the police used force on them. Trinamool MP Mahua Moitra sustained injuries to her face and hands, and was seen showing her counterparts that she had been left bloodied.

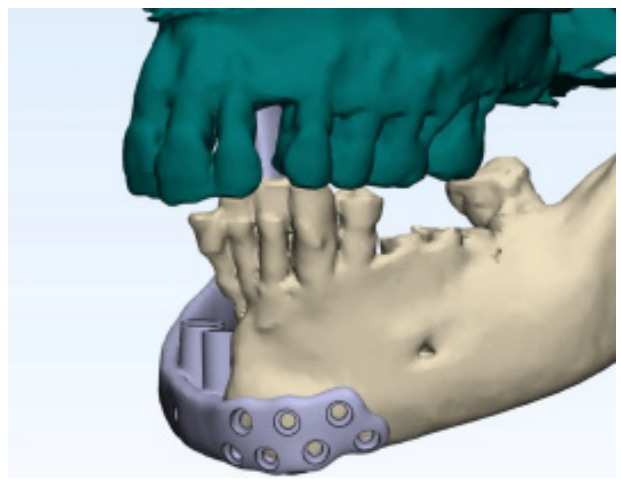
Beat cancer, then lost his jaw: How a 3D model helped rebuild it

The 49-year-old retired engineer from Indore was diagnosed with Stage III cancer of the right buccal mucosa, the inner lining of the cheek, in March 2024. Extensive surgery and multimodality treatment followed. When it ended, he was left with a major defect in his jaw and face, restricted mouth opening, and an oronasal fistula, an abnormal opening between the mouth and nose that sent food and liquids up into his nose.

"After going through cancer treatment, I thought the hardest part of my journey was over, but living with the changes to my face and difficulty eating, speaking and swallowing was another challenge. I wanted to regain not only my appearance but also the confidence to live my everyday life normally. The doctors explained how 3D technology could help rebuild my jaw according to my own facial structure, which gave me hope," Tagare said.Once a PET-CT showed he was disease-free, doctors at SSO Cancer Hospitals moved to rebuild his jaw. Left alone, the fistula could have led to worsening regurgitation, poor nutrition and progressive facial disfigurement, said Dr Amit Chakraborty, lead head and neck surgical oncologist at the hospital.

Patient-specific titanium implant designed to recreate the patient's individual mandibulofacial anatomy. Patient-specific titanium implant designed to recreate the patient's individual mandibulofacial anatomy. (Source: Express Photo)It wasn't a simple repair. Radiation had hardened and scarred the tissue, earlier surgery had distorted the normal tissue planes, and his limited mouth opening made access difficult. The blood vessels needed to supply transplanted tissue could also have been damaged by the earlier treatment.

So the team built the jaw on screen first. Using his CT scans, they created a 3D model of the defect and used the unaffected side of his face as a template for contour



and projection. A customised titanium implant was designed from that model and prepared four days before surgery.Conventional reconstruction relies more on estimating during surgery and bending implants by hand, Dr Chakraborty said. The custom implant is meant to make the result more accurate and predictable.Jaw reconstruction combined with vascularised soft-tissue coverage to support oral function and healing. Jaw reconstruction combined with vascularised soft-tissue coverage to support oral function and healing. (Source: Express Photo)In surgery, the implant formed the jaw's framework. Living tissue taken from his left thigh covered it. The procedure went without complications, doctors said.Tagare was fed through a nasal tube for about two weeks to protect the repair and was discharged on August 30. Rehabilitation now focuses on helping him chew, speak and swallow again, and work towards independence in daily life.

Man poses as Lokayukta official to blackmail forest officers in Bengaluru, held

The Bengaluru police on Monday arrested a 45-year-old man from Kolar who allegedly impersonated a Lokayukta official and used forged corruption complaints to threaten Forest Department officers and extort money from them.B Murali, who claims to be a farmer, allegedly misused the formats and proformas used for filing Lokayukta complaints and primarily targeted Forest Department officials, the police said.According to the police, Murali misused authentic Lokayukta complaint proformas—including affidavit formats—and altered the names and details of existing complaints to make it appear that fresh corruption charges were registered against targeted officers.He then dispatched the forged documents alongside bogus official correspondence to the victims' addresses. Shortly after, Murali would contact the officials, offering to "settle" or withdraw the non-existent complaints in exchange for payments ranging from Rs 3,000 to Rs 50,000.The police have found that Murali has so far targeted at least three Forest Department officers.The



alleged fraud came to light when a Forest Department officer who received one such complaint cross-checked the details with the Lokayukta, which confirmed that no such case existed on record."He was misusing the complaint proforma, including the affidavit and other formats used for Lokayukta complaints.

5 trekkers missing in Himachal amid heavy snowfall in Dhauladhar Range

Five trekkers have gone missing in the higher reaches of the Dhauladhar Range in Himachal Pradesh while heading towards the remote Bada Bhangal tribal area, which has witnessed heavy snowfall over the past two days, officials said The missing trekkers have been identified as Ankur Malani, Satyam Sabu, Pawan, Shyam R and Tarun Rathi, all believed to be between 28 and 35 years of age. Their native places are yet to be confirmed.

According to the administration, the trekkers had set out from Bir in Kangra district towards Rajgundha on October 5. From Rajgundha, they were expected to trek towards Bada Bhangal and scheduled to reach Bharmour in Chamba district on Wednesday. However, when they failed to arrive at the designated point, an alert was sounded."When they did not reach Bharmour as scheduled, a woman who was to receive them contacted the Bharmour administration and informed officials. The Bharmour administration passed the information to us. We have alerted our teams and are coordinating efforts to trace them," Sankalp Gautam, Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Baijnath, said.Himachal Pradesh trek trekkers missing A high altitude glacial lake at Thamshal Pass, which is at an altitude of around 5,000 metres above sea level. Gautam added that the trekkers had not informed the administration about their movements and that the prevailing weather conditions made trekking in the area particularly risky."The administration had not been informed about their trekking plan. This is not the right time to undertake a trek in this area. The weather has deteriorated considerably and there has been snowfall in the higher reaches. Satellite phones are also not functioning in Bada Bhangal and adjoining areas, which is making communication difficult," Gautam said."We have learnt from local shepherds that the trekkers crossed Rajgundha. The Thamsar area received snowfall yesterday. Thamsar Pass is at an altitude of around 5,000 metres above sea level, and the conditions there can change very quickly," he said.Bada Bhangal is a remote valley situated amid high mountain ranges in the Baijnath area of Kangra district.

Over 71 lakh voters found eligible for inclusion in Telangana final voter list



More than 71.23 lakh voters have been cleared for inclusion in Telangana's final electoral rolls after the disposal of notices issued during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process. BJP has urged the Election Commission to conduct field re-verification of around 1.63 lakh electors linked to high-density households with 15 or more voters registered at the same address.

Hyderabad: Over 71.23 lakh voters have been cleared for inclusion in the final electoral rolls in Telangana following the hearing and disposal of notices issued to them under the Special Intensive Revision (SIR).Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) C. Sudharsan Reddy said that, as of October 7, a total of 71,23,526 electors had been found eligible for inclusion in the final electoral rolls.

A total of 92,88,180 notices were generated on account of logical discrepancies and non-mapping of records during the notices phase and the disposal of claims and objections under the SIR.The election authorities delivered 91,92,625 notices.According to the CEO, 95,555 notices are still pending delivery.The claims and objections phase of the SIR process concluded on October 7, while the deadline for disposal of claims and objections is November 5, 2026.The final electoral rolls will be published on November 9, 2026.

More than 73 lakh voters in Telangana were marked as ASDD (Absent, Shifted, Dead, Duplicate), while over 92 lakh voters were issued notices over discrepancies.The Election Commission published the draft voter list on August 17 following door-to-door enumeration.Out of 3,38,26,448 electors, 73,39,235 were identified as ASDS.These include 57.46 lakh electors who had permanently shifted or were found absent.The election authorities also identified 9.22 lakh deceased electors, while 6.70 lakh voters were found enrolled at multiple places.As many as 60 lakh voters were issued notices for discrepancies in their names, their family members' names, age details or other inconsistencies.Another 32 lakh electors were identified as unmapped, meaning they could not be linked to the 2002 electoral rolls.Meanwhile, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has requested the CEO to undertake mandatory field re-verification of high-density household electoral roll entries across all 119 Assembly constituencies through Booth Level Officers (BLOs) and Assistant Electoral Registration Officers (AEROs), particularly households having 15 or more electors.M. Shashidhar Reddy, Chairman of the BJP Election Affairs Committee, and Vemula Ashok, BJP State General Secretary and SIR State Convenor, wrote to the CEO stating that, through a systematic data audit and algorithmic screening of electoral roll data, they had identified approximately 1,63,000 electors associated with dwelling units or house numbers where 15 or more electors are presently recorded at the same address across Telangana's 119 Assembly constituencies."We respectfully submit that the mere presence of multiple electors at one address does not, by itself, establish that any elector is bogus, ineligible or improperly registered," the letter stated.

BJP fields mother of murdered Suvendu aide for Nandigram bypoll



The BJP on Tuesday announced its candidates for the bypolls to two Assembly constituencies in West Bengal, fielding Hasirani Rath, mother of Chandranath Rath—Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari's aide who was murdered in May—from Nandigram and former Murshidabad BJP president Shakharav Sarkar from Rejinagar.Chandranath was shot dead in Madhyamgram in the North 24 Parganas district on May 6, two days after the results of the West Bengal Assembly elections were declared. The probe into his murder has been handed over to the Central Bureau of Investigation.

Before the formal announcement, Hasirani visited the Siddheshwar Shiva Temple and Janakinath Temple in Reyapara, Nandigram, indicating she would contest the election. "I have received the message from the chief minister. I hope to get the cooperation of our party organisation. The two-time MLA and the current chief minister have done most of the work that the people of the area want," she said, adding that she would work for Nandigram's welfare.Hasirani is scheduled to submit her nomination papers at the Haldia sub-division office on Tuesday. Adhikari is expected to be present.Voting for the Nandigram and Rejinagar bypolls will be held on October 6, while the last date for filing nominations is September 16. The counting of votes is scheduled for October 9.The Nandigram bypoll was necessitated after Adhikari vacated the seat following his victory from two constituencies in the Assembly elections. In Rejinagar, a bypoll became necessary after Aam Janata Unnayan Party (AJUP) leader Humayun Kabir resigned the seat after winning from two constituencies. His son, Golam Nabi Azad (Robin), is contesting the bypoll.Other parties have also announced their candidates. In Nandigram, the Mamata Banerjee camp has fielded Sanchita Pradhan Dey, while the Congress has nominated Milan Pradhan. CPI candidate Shantigopal Giri is also in the fray. The rival Trinamool faction led by Ritabrata Banerjee has named Mohammad Ehetash Mul Haque as its candidate.In Rejinagar, the Mamata Banerjee camp has fielded Rabiul Alam Chowdhury, while the rebel Trinamool camp has nominated Sheikh Safiuddin Zaman. Congress candidate Abdullahil Kafi and CPM nominee Syed Asad Ali will also contest. The RSP, contesting separately due to disagreements with the CPI(M) over seat allocation, has fielded Bikash Chandra Mishra.Meanwhile, it is still unclear which Trinamool faction will contest under the party's 'Jora Phul' symbol, with the Election Commission expected to decide on the matter this week.

Look at results and understand what India achieved at BRICS, says Uruguay FM



New Delhi: Uruguay's Foreign Minister Mario Lubetkin has hailed India's leadership of BRICS and hosting of the highly successful BRICS Summit, asserting that the concrete and consensus-based Delhi Declaration has shown how Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed and reached agreement on many important and highly sensitive issues.

"I think the outcome of the summit was an incredible success. There were many questions and very few answers during the process of preparing for the summit about what might happen. But, we ultimately achieved a very serious, concrete and consensus-based final declaration, which addressed and reached agreement on many important and highly sensitive issues," Lubetkin told IANS in an interview."There were different protagonists involved in some of the ongoing wars and conflicts, but I think the Prime Minister and the Government of India, as the chair of the meeting, were able to facilitate the process and achieve consensus. That shows India as one of the key leaders at this moment, especially in the Global South. We do not need to simply use words, we need to look at the results and understand what India achieved," he added.He also showered praise on PM Modi's leadership and highlighted India's diplomatic triumph for successfully aligning diverse interests, with the BRICS nations reaching consensus and adopting the 'New Delhi Declaration' on the very first day of the summit despite sharply divergent geopolitical positions among various countries.

"The success of the summit was an Indian success, and it was also PM Modi's success. You could see during Saturday and Sunday how Prime Minister Modi interacted with some of the most important leaders in the world, and how those leaders listened to him and treated him as a real point of reference. I was not part of the bilateral meetings, but you could see that dynamism during the internal meetings. The fact that, at the end of the meetings, the Prime Minister announced that consensus had been achieved speaks louder than thousands of words about what Prime Minister Modi means at this moment."Lubetkin, who arrived in New Delhi last week, said he is very satisfied and happy with his visit as, besides attending the BRICS Summit, the purpose was to strengthen bilateral relations with India and further develop the relationship between India and Mercosur.

Over the last four days, the Foreign Affairs Minister from Uruguay also held several key meetings, including with Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar in New Delhi."It was a very important meeting with the Minister of External Affairs. One of the challenges we face, and I believe the Foreign Ministers of India and Uruguay are in exactly the same position, is that it is time to deepen and expand our relationship. In fact, this is linked to the meeting between Prime Minister Modi and President (Yamandu) Orsi of Uruguay at the BRICS Summit in 2025 in Rio de Janeiro. It was their first meeting after many years, and they discussed a long-term process for strengthening relations between India and Uruguay. I was very impressed by Prime Minister Modi because he came to that meeting with a piece of paper beside him on which he had outlined his vision for the relationship over the next 10 to 15 years. It was a long-term mission," said Lubetkin.

The Uruguayan Foreign Minister hoped that both countries could achieve the desired goals before the planned October 2027 visit to India by President Yamandu Orsi."The challenge for our two Foreign Ministries is now to put into practice the understanding and agreements reached between the Prime Minister and President last year. During our half-hour meeting, we carried out a very interesting exercise and created a roadmap for India-Uruguay relations for the coming year. We are trying to translate the broad and strategic discussions between the two leaders into concrete action. There are many areas that we can develop over this one-year period of economic,

According to Lubetkin, there is a strong synergy and agreement between the governments of India and Uruguay on the direction that they need to take to take the partnership to the next level."We also share a similar democratic vision on many issues, and there is a lot on which we can collaborate. I see three different highways, or tracks, that can work together. First, bilaterally, in areas such as the economy, culture, audiovisual cooperation, including Bollywood, as well as sports and many other fields. Second, today I agreed with the Minister of Trade to launch the next step in negotiations between Mercosur and India. This is a very important strategic process, not only for Uruguay but also for Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay, the other Mercosur countries. The third track is through our regional roles. Uruguay currently chairs Mercosur and also chairs CELAC, which brings together 33 countries from Latin America and the Caribbean. This provides another important avenue to develop relations between India and CELAC," he told IANS.Later this month, Lubetkin and EAM Jaishankar are scheduled to meet again in New York, during which a meeting between the Ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean through CELAC is also likely to take place with the objective of deepening relations between the region and India."I have said this to some of my European colleagues as well: In Uruguay, this is a time for India. When I say this is a time for India, I mean that India is much stronger today than we could have imagined 20 or even 10 years ago. This creates a new scenario. I am absolutely convinced that if we agree on three or four important areas, including economic, cultural, sports, social and others, they will be important for both Uruguay and India. No country can work alone. Now is the moment to reach concrete agreements and move forward in a world marked by fragmentation, divisions and conflicts…

In drugs crackdown, Gujarat police plan rejig of units, adoption of new methods

The focus on the narcotics trade follows a string of major seizures of contraband drugs over the last few years, including the huge offshore haul of more than 3,000 kg of hashish, meth and morphine in February 2024.The focus on the narcotics trade follows a string of major seizures of contraband drugs over the last few years, including the huge offshore haul of more than 3,000 kg of hashish, meth and morphine in February 2024.Gujarat Police will set up 41 new "Anti-Narcotics Wings (ANWs)" of the force, including at least one in each of the state's 34 districts.These ANWs will act as a force multiplier for the Anti-Narcotics Task Force (ANTF) that was announced in August 2025. The Narcotics Cell of the CID Crime was upgraded to the ANTF last year to "control the sale, trafficking and production of banned drugs".The strength of the unit was increased from 34 to 211, and six specialised police stations were proposed to be set up across the state.

Why the increased focus on the narcotics trade?

The focus on the narcotics trade follows a string of major seizures of contraband drugs over the last few years, including the huge offshore haul of more than 3,000 kg of hashish, meth and morphine in February 2024.This May, the Gujarat Anti-Terrorism Squad and Coast Guard recovered 118 kg of cocaine valued at almost Rs 1,200 crore from five bags thrown into the sea off Mundra, the largest commercial private port in the country.Over the past five years, the Gujarat Police has registered more than 3,700 cases under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 (NDPS Act), and arrested 5,346 accused.During this period, more than 1.36 lakh kilograms of drugs worth about Rs 13,600 crore have been seized.These seizures suggest that Gujarat acts as both a landing point for international maritime consignments of narcotics, as well as a local base for the production of synthetic or psychotropic drugs. In 2021, the government launched a "Narco Reward Policy" to combat the menace.In February 2026, Ahmedabad Crime Branch seized 400 kg of ganja worth Rs 2 crore allegedly hidden in sacks of onions. Archive In February 2026, Ahmedabad Crime Branch seized 400 kg of ganja worth Rs 2 crore allegedly hidden in sacks of onions. Archive

So how will the new ANW units of the Gujarat Police work?

41 UNITS ACROSS THE STATE: An ANW each is planned in 33 of the state's 34 districts, and two in the coastal district of Kutch – East and West. Kutch is the largest district by area in the country, sprawling over an area bigger than that of the states of Haryana and Keralam.Two ANWs each are planned in the Ahmedabad and Surat police commissionerates, and one each in the Rajkot and Vadodara commissionerates.COORDINATION: According to the order issued by Gujarat Director General of Police G S Malik on September 5, the ANWs will operate under the district/ city police who already have Special Operations Groups (SOG) to conduct anti-drug investigations.Other units of the police such as the Local Crime Branch, the Prevention of Crime Branch, as well as local police stations where cases under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act are filed, are also part of the anti-narcotics effort.



SUPERVISION, STAFFING: Each ANW will be supervised by a joint / additional commissioner of police in the commissionerates, and the superintendent of police in the districts. They will be staffed by eight officers, including an Inspector and a Sub-inspector. However, no additional hirings will be made in order to staff the ANWs.EXCLUSIVE FOCUS: The police chief's order said that unlike other units of the force, the ANWs would focus solely on drugs. Cases will be registered in the police station in whose jurisdiction raids are conducted. The order warned of action against local police officers if the ANW reported any negligence on their part during the investigation.

How will the ANWs coordinate with the Anti-Narcotics Task Force?

The September 5 order asked all Commissioners and SPs to set up the ANWs within a week. The plan is to coordinate this with the setting up of the six zonal police stations dedicated to the Anti-Narcotics Task Force – in Ahmedabad, Surat, Vadodara, Rajkot, Kutch (Border Range) and Gandhinagar.The order creating the ANWs stated that while they would function under the local police jurisdictions, they would send regular reports on their work to the task force in the same way that cybercrime units report their work to the state Cybercrime Cell.A senior officer said that the task force would work with the ANWs, guide them, and work in an interoperable manner to crack down on narcotics, their supply lines and syndicates.Besides the creation of these new units, are any operational upgrades in their functioning expected as well?Along with the formation of ANWs in each police jurisdiction and the setting up of six police stations of the Anti-Narcotics Task Force, it is expected that gaps in the process of investigation of NDPS cases will also be addressed, officers said.This includes the gap at the officer level where issues such as proof of chain of custody and possession with intent to distribute, as well as evidence of storage, persist. There is also a lack of expertise among personnel.The state police are expected to deploy the Narcotics Analysis & RAG-based Investigation Tool (NARIT-AI) designed to assist in handling complex narcotics cases under the NDPS legal framework.The system, developed by IPS officer Abhay Soni, integrates legal provisions, case law

Masked men allegedly attack KTR's staff inside Saifabad police station

Hyderabad: A group of masked men allegedly attacked BRS working president KT Rama Rao's PRO Mahesh and PA Mahender Reddy inside Saifabad police station on Monday. The BRS accused the police of allowing the attack, prompting strong condemnation from the party leadership.Police registered cases against Mahesh and Mahender Reddy under Sections 132, 352 and 351(2), read with 3(5), of the BNS on a complaint alleging obstruction of officials performing their duties when the BRS legislators were prevented from entering the Assembly premises at Gate no.3 on September 7. They summoned both Mahesh and Mahender Reddy for questioning on Monday, despite the festive occasion of Ganesh Chaturthi.

While the questioning was underway, around 15-20 masked men reportedly entered the station premises at about 6.30 pm and attempted to attack the two. The BRS legal team present at the station came to the rescue of the duo, following which the attackers fled. Speaking to the media, the BRS legal team alleged that the attack occurred in the presence of the Saifabad police. The visuals of the masked attackers coming into the police station were captured on the CCTVs of a nearby hotel. political vendetta against the BRS leaders. He asked whether the attackers were Congress workers or policemen in plain clothes wearing masks. He held Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, who also handles the Home portfolio, responsible and sought an immediate response. He demanded an inquiry by a sitting judge into the attack.He said the High Court had directed that no action be taken against Mahesh and Mahender Reddy until further orders, and alleged that the incident was an attempt to intimidate them despite the court directions. He demanded that the CCTV footage from inside and outside the station be preserved, and the attackers be identified and punished. He also sought security and medical treatment to for his injured staffers.BRSLP deputy leader T Harish Rao suspected the masked personnel to be Task Force police, as they attempted the attack inside the interrogation room. He accused the government of using the police station to carry out an attack. He demanded that the CCTV footage be made public and an FIR registered against those involved. He called the attack inside the police station as evidence for complete failure of law and order in the State under the Congress rule.

RBI begin rate-hike cycle as inflation edges up



New Delhi: The Reserve Bank of India is expected to begin a rate-hike cycle as headline inflation and wholesale price inflation accelerate, with the policy repo likely to move closer to 6.5 per cent, a report said on Tuesday.The report from Systematix Group states the early-October MPC meeting may show the first signs of such a pivot from the central bank."The RBI's current position of keeping the rate at 5.25 per cent as long as possible looks increasingly out of step with the inflation trajectory," the report said.Inflation is expected to sustain its rise, potentially crossing 6 per cent by October-November, driven by the feedback loop from elevated WPI inflation. El Nino-related effects on food supply and persistently elevated crude oil prices point to further upside risk for India's inflation trajectory.Headline consumer price index inflation rose to 4.82 per cent in August from 4.45 per cent in July, marking the highest reading under the new series and the third consecutive month above the RBI's 4 per cent target midpoint.

Food inflation rose to 5.95 per cent from 5.52 per cent, with rural inflation at 5.23 per cent outpacing urban inflation at 4.31 per cent. In rural areas, food inflation was even sharper at 6.13 per cent.Wholesale price inflation also inched higher, rising to 9.92 per cent in August from 9.78 per cent in July.

"Food prices remain the dominant pressure point across both indices, particularly certain vegetables and spices. Beyond food, elevated fuel and energy costs linked to global factors, especially developments in West Asia, along with rising manufactured and input costs, are broadening the base of price pressures," said Dhananjay Sinha, CEO & Co-Head, Institutional Equities, Systematix Group.Within CPI, other notable contributors included personal care, social protection and miscellaneous items.

Vaishnaw to launch logistics, passenger projects in Gujarat



Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw will launch several logistics and passenger amenity projects in Gujarat on Tuesday. Four Gati Shakti Cargo Terminals will be dedicated to the nation, while Gopalpur railway station and the Bhuj-Shalimar Express stoppage at Anjar will be inaugurated

Ahmedabad: Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw will launch various logistics projects and passenger amenities in Gujarat via video conferencing on Tuesday.He will dedicate four Gati Shakti Cargo Terminals (GCTs) at Bhimasar (Kutch), Devaliya (Junagadh), Chandisar (Banaskantha) and Shivlakha (Kutch) to the nation and also lay the foundation stone for the GCT at Linch in Mehsana.The Union minister will inaugurate Gopalpur railway station in Kutch district and the stoppage of the Bhuj-Shalimar Express at Anjar station, also in Kutch, an official release said on Monday.These projects and passenger amenities will significantly boost and strengthen goods transportation, commercial activities, logistics facilities and passenger rail connectivity in Gujarat, the release stated.

"The new Gopalpur railway station aims to strengthen rail connectivity and passenger amenities in the region, while also improving access to rail transport for local commuters. It eliminates the need for engine reversal at Gandhidham for trains travelling to and from Ahmedabad and Bhuj, thereby saving operational time," it added.The four GCTs that he will dedicate to the nation will boost rail-based freight transportation while promoting modern cargo management and logistics facilities, it said."These GCT projects will expand modern freight transport and logistics facilities, offering industries and businesses more effective options for transporting goods via rail. Additionally, through private sector participation, additional infrastructure for rail transport will be developed, and rail-based logistics will receive a boost," the release stated.The stoppage of the Bhuj-Shalimar Express at Anjar station represents a significant and long-awaited railway facility for passengers in the area."

Is reboiling water safe or harmful?



Wollongong: The kettle is a household staple practically everywhere – how else would we make our hot drinks? But is it okay to re-boil water that's already in the kettle from last time? While bringing water to a boil disinfects it, you may have heard that boiling water more than once will somehow make the water harmful and therefore you should empty the kettle each time.Such claims are often accompanied by the argument that re-boiled water leads to the accumulation of allegedly hazardous substances including metals such as arsenic, or salts such as nitrates and fluoride.This isn't true. To understand why, let's look at what is in our tap water and what really happens when we boil it.

What's in our tap water?

Let's take the example of tap water supplied by Sydney Water, Australia's largest water utility which supplies water to Sydney, the Blue Mountains and the Illawarra region.From the publicly available data for the January to March 2025 quarter for the Illawarra region, these were the average water quality results: -pH was slightly alkaline – total dissolved solids were low enough to avoid causing scaling in pipes or appliances -fluoride content was appropriate to improve dental health, and -it was "soft" water with a total hardness value below 40mg of calcium carbonate per litre.The water contained trace amounts of metals such as iron and lead, low enough magnesium levels that it can't be tasted, and sodium levels substantially lower than those in popular soft drinks.These and all other monitored quality parameters were well within the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines during that period. If you were to make tea with this water, re-boiling would not cause a health problem. Here's why.It's difficult to concentrate such low levels of chemicalsTo concentrate substances in the water, you'd need to evaporate some of the liquid while the chemicals stay behind. Water evaporates at any temperature, but the vast majority of evaporation happens at the boiling point – when water turns into steam.During boiling, some volatile organic compounds might escape into the air, but the amount of the inorganic compounds (such as metals and salts) remains unchanged.While the concentration of inorganic compounds might increase as drinking water evaporates when boiled, evidence shows it doesn't happen to such an extent that it would be hazardous.Let's say you boil one litre of tap water in a kettle in the morning, and your tap water has a fluoride content of 1mg per litre, which is within the limits of Australian guidelines.

You make a cup of tea taking 200ml of the boiled water. You then make another cup of tea in the afternoon by re-boiling the remaining water. On both occasions, if heating was stopped soon after boiling started, the loss of water by evaporation would be small, and the fluoride content in each cup of tea would be similar.But let's assume that when making the second cup, you let the water keep boiling until 100ml of what's in the kettle evaporates. Even then, the amount of fluoride you would consume with the second cup (0.23mg) would not be significantly higher than the fluoride you consumed with the first cup of tea (0.20mg).

The same applies to any other minerals or organics the supplied water may have contained. Let's take lead: the water supplied in the Illawarra region as mentioned above, had a lead concentration of less than 0.0001mg per litre. To reach an unsafe lead concentration (0.01mg per litre, according to Australian guidelines) in a cup of water, you'd need to boil down roughly 20 litres of tap water to just that cup of 200ml.Practically that is unlikely to happen – most electric kettles are designed to boil briefly before automatically shutting off. As long as the water you're using is within the guidelines for drinking water, you can't really concentrate it to harmful levels within your kettle.Whether re-boiled water actually affects the taste of your drinks will depend entirely on the specifics of your local water supply and your personal preferences. The slight change in mineral concentration, or the loss of dissolved oxygen from water during boiling may affect the taste for some people – although there are a lot of other factors that contribute to the taste of your tap water.

A tectonic shift in thinking to build seismic resilience



The tremors that were felt in Delhi on July 10, 2025, at 9.04 a.m. with a magnitude of 4.4 on the Richter Scale — as reported by the National Center for Seismology (NCS) — are a wake-up call for India's seismic vulnerability. The epicentre, which was located approximately 20 kilometres southwest of the city at a shallow depth of five kilometres, did not cause significant damage but but exposed the fragility of the capital's infrastructure, where over 80% of buildings, especially those pre-dating the year 2000, fail to comply with seismic codes.The July event follows a series of earthquakes across Asia since March 2025, including the devastating quake in Myanmar and Thailand (magnitude 7.7), tremors in Tibet and Greece, and recurring seismic activity along the India-Myanmar border. As India sits on one of the world's most tectonically active plates, the urgency to build seismic resilience has never been greater.

The danger of unpreparednessIndia's seismic risk is rooted in the northward drift of the Indian Plate, colliding with the Eurasian Plate at 4 centimetres to 5 cm a year, shaping the Himalayas, which is a region overdue for a "Great Himalayan Earthquake" of magnitude 8 or higher, potentially impacting over 300 million people across northern India, Nepal, and Bhutan. Delhi, which lies in Seismic Zone IV (high risk), with a peak ground acceleration (PGA) factor of 0.24g, lies perilously close to this tectonic frontier.

The tremors felt in July, though moderate, highlighted the risk to the city's estimated 33.5 million residents and over 5,000 high-rises, many built without adhering to the Bureau of Indian Standards' IS 1893:2016 Code, which mandates ductile detailing and shear walls. Historical events such as the Bhuj earthquake of 2001 (7.7 magnitude, 20,000-plus deaths) and the Nepal quake of 2015 (7.8 magnitude) underscore the catastrophic potential of unpreparedness.Beyond Delhi, India's seismic zones, which range from Zone II to V, span a vast vulnerable area. The northeast, including Manipur, Nagaland, and Mizoram in Zone V (very high risk, PGA 0.36g+), has felt the ripple effects of seismic activity in Myanmar, notably the 7.7 magnitude Mandalay quake on March 28, 2025, and a 5.2 magnitude event on May 17, 2025. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands, also in Seismic Zone V, remain prone to tsunamis following subduction zone activity, as seen in 2004. The 5.7 magnitude Tibetan quake on May 12, 2025, caused tremors in Sikkim, reinforcing the restlessness in the Himalayan belt. Even distant events, such as the quake of magnitude of 6.2 in Greece on May 22, 2025, reflect a global pattern of tectonic unrest, though their direct impact on India is minimal.Greater danger with urbanisationDelhi's rapid urbanisation exacerbates the risk it faces. Older structures in East Delhi, built on liquefaction-prone soils, and poorly designed high-rises pose a threat during strong quake shaking. The NCS's real-time monitoring using the IndiaQuake app offers early warnings, but enforcement and public awareness lag behind. Compare this to Bangkok, where updated seismic codes since 2007 mitigated damage despite a flat-slab collapse in 2025, or Myanmar, where unenforced codes worsened the quake toll in 2025. India must bridge this enforcement gap to protect its cities.

The global seismic context heightens the urgency. The Greece earthquake, though 5,000 km away, is part of a series of tremors since March, including those in Indonesia, the Chile-Argentina border, and Ecuador on May 3, 2025. While these do not directly trigger Indian quakes, they signal a dynamic earth, pointing to the need for preparedness. The Himalayan seismic gap, where strain has built since the quake in Kangra (1905) and the 'Gorkha quake' (Nepal, 2015), are a ticking clock, with a major event potentially devastating Delhi and beyond.To counter this, India must enforce seismic codes rigorously. In Delhi, retrofitting older buildings with steel jacketing and mandating deep pile foundations in vulnerable areas can enhance stability. Guwahati, in Zone V, needs strict IS 1893:2016 compliance, avoiding Brahmaputra floodplain construction to prevent liquefaction, and adopting base isolation for critical infrastructure. Bhuj requires expanded retrofitting and community disaster response teams. The Delhi Development Authority should accelerate compliance checks, while the NCS expands early warning systems to rural Zone V areas.

The international lessons are instructive. Bangkok's use of high-strength concrete (30MPa-40 MPa) and ductile detailing offers a model, though its lower seismic risk (0.1g-0.2g) differs from India's Zone V challenges. The damage seen in Myanmar due to unreinforced masonry is a warning about neglect — a risk India must avoid. Tailored solutions — accounting for the Northeast's soft soils and Kutch's sandy basins — require annual retrofitting investments of ?50,000 crore, as estimated by experts.With seismic activity intensifying regionally and globally, India cannot afford delay. The Government of India must lead with stringent enforcement, public education, and resilient infrastructure investment. Citizens should educate themselves about the need for emergency kits, safe building practices, and evacuation plans.

The Bhuj disaster, where unpreparedness amplified casualties, remains a haunting lesson. As tremors punctuate India's seismic landscape, building resilience is a technical and moral duty in order to protect lives and livelihoods.There needs to be a national dialogue urging action before the next major quake strikes. Delhi's tremor echoes this urgency, demanding a transformation from vulnerability to strength.

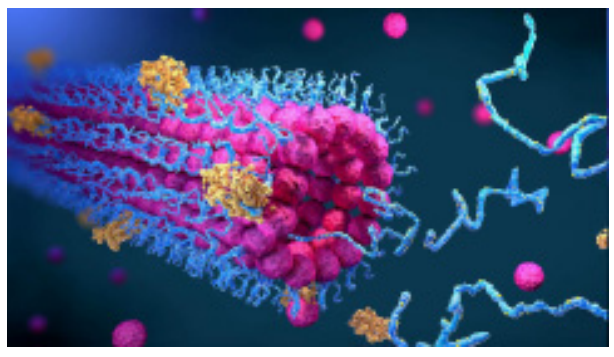
BioEmu AI reveals protein choreography in biological conditions

Proteins aren't rigid sculptures. They twist, flex, and sometimes unravel — movements essential to understanding their function. Some proteins, like enzymes, open like clamshells to grab molecules. Others such as signalling proteins shift shape to control cell processes. Still others briefly reveal hidden gaps where drugs can bind. Artificial intelligence (AI) tools like AlphaFold have made structure prediction routine, but they typically yield just one stable form, a single frame from what is really a moving picture.A new deep learning system called BioEmu, developed by Microsoft and researchers at Rice University in the US and Freie Universität in Germany, predicts the full range of shapes a protein naturally explores under biological conditions. Known as the equilibrium ensemble, it allows high-resolution protein flexibility modelling at scale, unlike slower, more classical approaches. Described in Science, BioEmu is faster and cheaper, enabling large-scale predictions of protein function.

To understand BioEmu's significance, it helps to see what it's up against. The gold standard for modeling protein flexibility is molecular dynamics (MD), which tracks atomic movements at millionths of a billionth of a second using tools like GROMACS or Anton.Despite its ultrafine resolution and accuracy, MD is slow and costly. Simulating motions over microseconds or milliseconds can take tens of thousands of GPU-hours, even on supercomputers.

BioEmu sidesteps this bottleneck by relying on an AI diffusion model. To train BioEmu, researchers first fed it real protein structures, from millions of AlphaFold-predicted assemblies, 200 milliseconds of MD simulations spanning thousands of proteins, and half a million mutant sequences from experimental stability measurements. It's like dropping a sugar cube into a glass of water: the original structure, clear and defined, is gradually dissolved. BioEmu's real task is to learn how to run that process in reverse: from noise to a sugar cube. Once trained, it can generate thousands of plausible protein conformations from scratch.BioEmu excelled at benchmarks. It captured large shape changes in enzymes, local unfolding that switches proteins on or off, and fleeting cryptic pockets, temporary crevices that can serve as drug docking sites, like in the cancer-linked protein Ras. It predicted 83% of large shifts and 70-81% of small changes accurately, including open and closed forms of a vital enzyme called adenylate kinase. It also handled hard to predict proteins that don't have a fixed 3D structure and how mutations affect protein stability.

Fast but not fully detailedWhile MD simulates how



proteins move over time, including interactions with water and drugs, BioEmu quickly generates snapshots of all the stable shapes a protein is likely to adopt. It can produce thousands of these structures in minutes to hours on a single GPU. But it can't show how a process unfolds."If a researcher wants to understand how a drug reaches a hidden binding site, MD can reveal the step-by-step pathway," says Kalairasan Ponnuswamy, bioinformatician and assistant professor at SRM Institute of Science and Technology. "BioEmu shows the final shapes, not how the protein gets there."MD also handles temperature shifts, membranes, and other conditions that BioEmu's static predictions can't yet model.BioEmu also can't model cell walls, drug molecules, pH changes or show prediction reliability like AlphaFold. It's also limited to single chains and can't model how proteins interact, a key part of most biological processes and drug targets."It's better seen as a hypothesis-generating tool than a source of final conclusions," says Ponnuswamy.As the system grows to handle more complex proteins and chemical interactions, researchers may still need experiments or older simulation methods to validate what it proposes.Still, the conceptual advance is clear. If AlphaFold provided the protein world's blueprint, BioEmu sketches its choreography. By capturing flexibility quickly across thousands of proteins, it enables large-scale drug discovery and function studies with fewer resource constraints, Ponnuswamy notes: "Tasks that took weeks will now take hours."He does however emphasise the need for proper training and skill-set acquisition."Future scientists will not only need a deep grounding in physics and chemistry, they'll also need fluency in machine learning and physical modelling to unlock the true potential of such hybrid approaches."The researchers see BioEmu and MD as complementary tools. BioEmu can quickly generate a range of plausible conformations, which MD can then explore in detail.

What is the directive on sugar, salt labelling?

The Union Health Ministry has asked all government departments to prominently display the amount of oil and sugar content on popular Indian snacks including-- samosas, vada paavs, kachoris, pizzas and burgers etc -- and has said this information has to be shared in cafeterias/canteens, lobbies, meeting rooms and even on government stationary.

"We are proposing a display of sugar and oil boards initiative to promote healthier dietary habits in various settings. These boards serve as visual behavioural nudges in schools, offices, public institutions etc. displaying key information about hidden fats and sugars in everyday foods," wrote Union Health Secretary Punya Salila Srivastava in a recent letter to all ministries, departments and autonomous bodies of the Union government.Apart from the boards, the Health Ministry has also requested that all official stationery -- letterheads, envelopes, notepads, folders, etc -- and all publications print health messages as daily reminders to reinforce the fight against obesity.

The move comes just weeks after CBSE instructed its over 24,000 affiliated schools across India to establish 'sugar boards', where information is displayed for educating students about the risks of excessive sugar intake.Earlier this year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had urged people to reduce oil consumption by 10% and fight obesity.

Why has this measure been brought in?

The Health Ministry has said that these warnings are designed create awareness about the role that diets can play in our health. "The goal is to promote moderation, not restriction," it added.According to information released by the Health Ministry, India is currently facing an unprecedented rise in non-communicable diseases (NCDs), which account for over 66% of all deaths across the country.With the rapidly-changing demographic and epidemiological landscape in the country, the burden of NCDs such as cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, chronic respiratory diseases, and cancers has become a significant public health challenge, particularly among individuals over the age of 30, it noted.

What is the role of food in disease burden?

"Too much sodium, added sugar, refined oils, and sugar-sweetened drinks, often disguised as healthy options derail even the best diets. These contribute directly to the risk of heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, and poor metabolic health. At the same time, many people fall short on essential nutrients by not getting enough fibre, fruits, vegetables, whole grains, healthy fats, or fermented foods that support gut health. Functional snacks which promise health benefits also add to the problem," said Pariksha Rao, director of nutrition and medical affairs at The Good Bug, a private venture in the wellness industry.Too much sodium, added sugar, refined oils, and sugar-sweetened drinks derail even the best diets. Photograph used for representational purposes onlyToo much sodium, added sugar, refined oils, and sugar-sweetened drinks derail even the best diets. Photograph used for representational purposes only | Photo Credit: Getty Images/iStockphoto

How is the nutrition value for food calculated?

The nutrient values of foods are calculated by conducting laboratory assessments of prepared foods and are represented as a per 100g basis for ease of understanding, taking into consideration, total sugar, saturated fat, and salt levels. Where lab-based nutrient analysis is



not available/feasible, evaluations are based on aggregating the nutritional values of ingredients available in the Indian Food Composition Tables (IFCT) published by Indian Council of Medical Research-National Institute of Nutrition, Hyderabad (ICMR-NIN). Foods are usually evaluated for their healthiness using validated nutrient profiling models.

The recently-released ICMR-NIN's Dietary Guidelines for Indians, 2024, made an attempt to indicate HFSS foods as the foods in which calories from total sugar exceed 10% of total energy, calories from added fat/oil exceed 15% of total energy, and salt content is more than 625 mg per 100g of solid food, explained Bharati Kulkarni, who has extensive experience of nutrition research as a scientist at the ICMR-NIN.HFSS foods stands for high fats, sugar, salt foods, which are usually processed and are typically low in essential nutrients. Excessive consumption of HFSS foods can contribute to various health problems, including obesity, diabetes, and heart disease.

What are the unhealthy snacks that fall in the unhealthy category?

Any snack or food - Indian or Western, homemade or packaged - can be unhealthy if it exceeds the limits of sugar, salt and fat content."It would not be pertinent to single out Indian snack foods or Western ones, or even packed foods or the ones we buy on the street. The focus should be on the nutritional content of a food irrespective of its origin. Initiatives of the Health Ministry are a part of a non-punitive, awareness-driven approach to create behavioural nudges and empower consumers to make informed choices.

India gets US speciality-drug tariff relief

Washington: India has been included among countries eligible for zero US tariffs on several categories of speciality pharmaceutical products and ingredients, offering targeted relief to one of America's leading sources of medicines.The US Commerce Department published the list as Washington prepares to impose a 100 per cent tariff on certain patented pharmaceutical imports and their associated ingredients from September 29. The exemption does not cover every pharmaceutical product shipped from India. It applies to specified medicines and ingredients covered by a presidential proclamation issued in April.

Eligible products include orphan drugs, nuclear medicines, plasma-derived therapies, fertility drugs, cell therapies, gene therapies and antibody-drug conjugates. The list also covers medical countermeasures connected to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear threats, along with certain animal-health products.India was listed alongside Argentina, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Ecuador, El Salvador, the European Union, Guatemala, Indonesia, Japan, Jordan, Malaysia, North Macedonia, South Korea, Switzerland and Liechtenstein, Taiwan, Thailand, Britain and Vietnam.

The notice said qualifying products from these jurisdictions could receive a zero per cent tariff because they have a current or forthcoming trade and security framework agreement with the United States. The exemptions are part of the implementation of President Donald Trump's April proclamation adjusting imports of pharmaceuticals and pharmaceutical ingredients under Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act.

The proclamation imposed a 100 per cent tariff on specified patented pharmaceuticals and ingredients. It took effect on July 31 for companies named in one annex and will apply to other covered companies from September 29. Generic pharmaceutical products and their associated ingredients are not subject to the Section 232 pharmaceutical tariffs, according to the Commerce Department notice.That distinction is important for India. A large share of Indian pharmaceutical exports to the United States consists of generic medicines, although Indian companies also manufacture patented products, active ingredients and specialised therapies.The decision gives Indian manufacturers a defined route to preserve duty-free access for eligible high-value therapies even as Washington uses tariffs to encourage more pharmaceutical production inside the United States.India is one of the world's largest manufacturers of generic medicines and an important supplier to the American healthcare system. Indian companies also provide active pharmaceutical ingredients and finished formulations used by US hospitals, pharmacies and patients.

Modi's 'revdi' warning was lost on Opposition, BJP states. Now, it has reached Trump

It's not very often that an idea travels from a lower-middle-income country to the far-away rich developed world. But if it is about winning elections and staying in power, it catches the attention of even the POTUS (President of the United States of America). The humble Indian revdi whose recipe every political party here has mastered finally reached America — some 12,000 kilometres away. So what if it took a while?Last Wednesday, Trump promised $5,000 as a "dividend" to every adult citizen in the US if his Republican party managed to retain control of Congress in the midterm elections scheduled in November. This, he said, was "because of our tremendous strength and success economically…" Indeed, the US is the largest economy in the world, although not without its blemishes, and with China right on its heels.

The big Trump revdi is estimated to cost the US exchequer at least $1 trillion, given that there are about 245 million citizens over 18 years, as per the US 2024 Census Bureau data. To put it in perspective, this amount is equal to almost a fourth of India's GDP, which stands at $3.92 trillion in 2025-26.What is important to understand, however, is whether it will encourage the poor and lower-income Americans to step out and vote. For the citizens of the world's largest economy with a per capita annual income of $94,430 (almost 34 times India's per capita income, $2,813), what does this $5,000 mean?

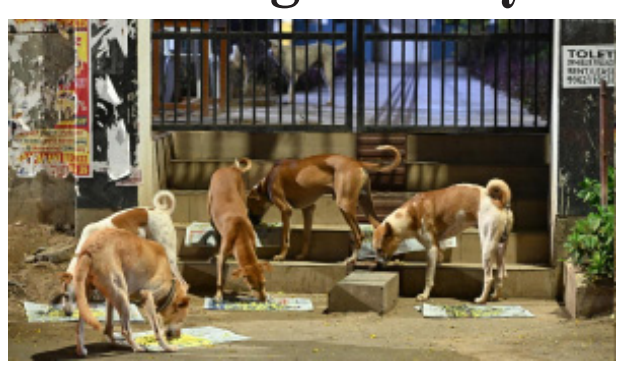
America is a rich and developed country, but that doesn't mean every American is rich. According to the US Census Bureau's 2024 American Community Survey, for the lowest quintile, that is, the bottom 20 per cent or one-fifth of the American population, the mean household annual income is only $17,132 a year. For this household, $5,000 means more than 100 days of its annual income. And, for the next 20 per cent of the population, it means a little more than a month's income (their household income is $48,852 a year). Inequality is high in the US. For instance, the annual household income of the top 5 per cent of the population in the US is $5,25,113, which is more than 30 times the mean annual household income of the bottom 20 per cent of people.When Trump announced this $5,000 dividend, Indian policymakers and ministers were quite amused. At least one government official and one Cabinet minister told this correspondent in jest that rich countries are moving in the direction of the developing countries.But such is the universal appeal of a populist economic idea.

In India, Direct Benefit Transfers (DBTs) enabled by the Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mobile (JAM) trinity was a powerful idea of the UPA government in its second term. In fact, an influential advisor to the then Congress-led government had imagined a scenario where, with the click of a mouse, funds could be instantaneously transferred to the bank account of a voter. "And if this is done ahead of elections, imagine what the political party in power can achieve," the advisor said with excitement and a gleam in both eyes.Over the years, DBT-based social welfare has become a prominent feature of India's political economy. From all regional parties to Congress to the Bharatiya Janata Party, none risk not including cash handouts to sections of the voter base in their election manifestos.Prime Minister Narendra Modi attempted to run it down four years ago by warning against the revdi culture during the inauguration of the Bundelkhand Expressway on July 16, 2022, but his own party succumbed to the enticement of its political returns.A key advisor to Modi, who does not wish to be named, says it used to be difficult for Cabinet ministers in the past to get the Prime Minister's nod on any proposal involving freebies. But not so much anymore. His party units in other states made cash handouts an essential ingredient in their poll strategy. In fact, it has now become a race to the bottom between the BJP state units, regional parties and the Congress. The Sixteenth Finance Commission estimates large-group unconditional cash transfers by states to be Rs 1.96 lakh crore in 2025-26, which is approximately $20 billion. The bulk of this went to women in Maharashtra, Karnataka and West Bengal.

'Why don't you feed them in your house?' SC asks petitioner over feeding of strays

The Supreme Court while hearing a plea alleging harassment over the feeding of community dogs in Noida, asked the petitioner, "Why don't you feed them in your own house?"A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta told the petitioner's counsel, "We should leave every lane, every road open for these large-hearted people? There is all the space for these animals, no space for humans. Why don't you feed them in your own house? Nobody is stopping you."The plea related to a March 2025 order of the Allahabad High Court.

The petitioner, the counsel said, was subjected to harassment and was unable to feed community dogs in line with the Animal Birth Control Rules.Rule 20 of the Animal Birth Control Rules, 2023 deals with feeding of community animals and puts onus on resident welfare association or apartment owner association or local body's representative of the local area to make necessary arrangements for feeding of community animals residing in the premises or that area.The top court, however, said, "We give you a suggestion to open a shelter in your own house. Feed every dog in the community in your own house."The petitioner's counsel claimed compliance with the rules and said the municipality was creating such places in Greater Noida but not in Noida.He said feeding points could be made at a place not frequented by people."You go on cycling in the morning?" the bench asked, "try doing it and see what happens".'Walkers at risk, cyclists at greater risk'When the counsel said he goes on morning walks and sees several dogs, the bench said, "Morning walkers are also at risk. Cycle riders and two-wheelers are at greater risk."The bench then tagged the plea with a separate pending plea on a similar issue.In the High Court, the petitioner sought directions to the authorities to implement provisions of the rules with due care and caution keeping in view the provisions of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960."While protection of street dogs would be warranted in accordance with the provisions of the applicable statute, at the same time, the authorities will have to bear in mind the concern of common man, such that their movement on streets are not hampered by attacks by these street dogs," the High Court said.The High Court, therefore, expected the state authorities to exhibit "due sensitivity" to the concerns of the petitioner and the common man on the streets.The High Court said the observation was necessary because there were many instances of attacks by street dogs on people of late, which has resulted in loss of lives and grave inconvenience to pedestrians.It disposed of the plea with a direction to the authorities to ensure that concerns highlighted by the court were duly taken care of and appropriate measures were taken to ensure protection of strays besides ensuring interest of people on the streets was not jeopardised.



In 'Millennium City' Gurugram, problem isn't flooding or infrastructure — it's the rural state of mind

The so-called Millennium City's waterlogging problems are in the news again. In Gurugram, flats and houses that sell for prices that compare to real estate in Western countries and rentals that might equate starting salaries of many white-collar professionals have become islands surrounded by surging rain-induced floods. As a result of the waterlogging, there were also sustained cuts to the electricity supply as the privately owned transformers that kick in when the government supply fails also went underwater. There was, reasonably enough, an outcry over the state of infrastructure in a locality that is home to the offices of many Fortune 500 companies and a citizenry that has achieved wealth in many walks of global activity and expects a certain level of an "international" lifestyle.

But Gurugram's problem is not primarily physical infrastructure. It is one of the mental attitudes through which our cities are built and occupied. Physical infrastructure is not so difficult to build and operate. How we choose to live in urban environments — that are supposed to rid us of "backward" rural attitudes — has always been a more complex task. It is made more complex in places such as Gurugram because new urbanism has simply built upon old attitudes rather than changing them. The most fundamental of these is the idea of publicness or the distinction between the private and the public.When we think of contemporary urbanisation in India, the easy way out is to blame its ills on privatisation and that largely meaningless concept of "neoliberalism", where the state is supposed to have ceded ground to private capital. Public interest would have been much better served, it is frequently suggested, had public authorities looked after the welfare of citizens. This gross oversimplification overlooks the history of publicness in our everyday lives, one that also lies at the heart of the state of Gurugram and other such urban developments.

The first "licence" for private development was issued to the Delhi Land and Finance (DLF) corporation on April 21, 1981, under the Haryana Development & Regulation of Urban Areas Act of 1975 in the village of Chakkarpur in Gurgaon district. Everyday social life in Chakkarpur, as in all villages around it, was organised through the arrangements of caste: Public life was entirely expressed through caste hierarchies and beliefs. Who could say what, pray where and clean the garbage were matters of caste. There was no generalised public life but, rather, one that was entirely expressed through the personal attributes of caste. You looked after your own. "New Gurgaon" has simply built on that, keeping the old social attitudes alive while giving off the idea of newness. New highways, metro stations and shopping plazas appear to speak of a new public life, but that is a mirage.Urban life in Gurugram is largely organised through the idea that there is no public except that which belongs to one's family, caste and class circuits. It is this that also lies at the heart of what passes for urban planning. If, for example, it is considered personally beneficial to cement over a waterway or clear a forest area for a private residence, then that activity comes to pass. The wider ramifications are rarely considered as there is really no sense of a public and hence, public welfare beyond the immediate circles in which people live. This, however, has little to do with the privatisation of urban development in cities such as Gurugram. It is fundamentally connected to a ruralism practised by the urban well-to-do.

At the present time, the most significant urban development in Gurugram is taking place in what were earlier its rural hinterlands, the areas furthest away from Delhi. Lands are being bought, sold and cleared for residential, commercial and infrastructure purposes. It is not difficult to see how, while multiple modern technologies are being used for mapping and digitising records to make land market-ready in these areas, the state, private capital and citizens have combined to further the ends of private benefit through wilfully rejecting the idea of publicness and public welfare.Land consolidation and rectangularisation (chakbandi and kilabandi) are important for the rationalisation of holdings that might otherwise be scattered or irregular lands that prevent the construction of roads and other infrastructure. However, in most cases, these are also contexts when panchayat lands — meant for general benefit — are appropriated for personal use and profit. The assistance of a variety of government officials — able to bend GIS technologies that are meant to produce transparency to the needs of private benefit — is, of course, crucial. As urbanisable land is built upon and becomes urban, the attitudes towards publicness displayed in appropriating public lands for private benefit simply scatter in different directions. The re-fashioning of rural spaces into urban ones is not accompanied by a different attitude towards publicness and public welfare.Gated residential enclaves, where the problems of public life are simply pushed out to the spaces

Run, Fauja, Run: The man who never stopped running



Fauja Singh was 100 when he became 'the oldest man to run a marathon' – clocking 8 hours and 11 minutes at the Toronto Marathon in 2011. Some years earlier, when he was a sprightly 95, and soon after he had finished a marathon, Fauja Singh, resplendent in a big, black turban paired with a matching satin shirt, had told a group of journalists gathered around him in Chandigarh: "Zindagi inni sohni hai ki maran nu te jee hi nahin karda (Life is so beautiful that I just don't feel like dying)." His eyes twinkled and his face creased into a wide smile.

He ran some more, before he finally hung up his boots in 2013, when he turned 102. But Fauja Singh never gave up on life – or his shoes. He collected at least 100 pairs and much later in life, ditched his kurta-pyjama for joggers and fancy suits. "I love clothes too," he told The Indian Express that afternoon in Chandigarh, volunteering to open his suitcase to display his collection.At 114, Fauja Singh died too soon. For a man who led a remarkable life, the end was abrupt, almost staccato – hit by an unidentified vehicle while crossing the road.Fauja Singh was 100 when he became 'the oldest man to run a marathon' – clocking 8 hours and 11 minutes at the Toronto Marathon in 2011. Some years earlier, when he was a sprightly 95, and soon after he had finished a marathon, Fauja Singh, resplendent in a big, black turban paired with a matching satin shirt, had told a group of journalists gathered around him in Chandigarh: "Zindagi inni sohni hai ki maran nu te jee hi nahin karda (Life is so beautiful that I just don't feel like dying)." His eyes twinkled and his face creased into a wide smile. He ran some more, before he finally hung up his boots in 2013, when he turned 102. But Fauja Singh never gave up on life – or his shoes. He collected at least 100 pairs and much later in life, ditched his kurta-pyjama for joggers and fancy suits. "I love clothes too," he told The Indian Express that afternoon in Chandigarh, volunteering to open his suitcase to display his collection. Chandigarh-based writer Khushwant Singh, who wrote a 2011 biography of the marathoner, recalls that when he first met him in 2005, Fauja was wearing an electric blue suit, a tie that read "Marathoner" and a pair of shoes with "Fauja" on one and "Singh" on the other. If Fauja first ran, it was to escape a personal tragedy. Villagers in his Beas village in Jalandhar district say Fauja was building a dhaba for his son Kuldeep when the roof collapsed and killed the youngster, the fifth of his six children. That was in August 1994, just two years after his wife, Gian Kaur, died. Devastated, Fauja lost all will to live. His youngest son Harvinder Singh remembers seeing him mourning for hours at the cremation ground. That's when Sukhjinder, the eldest of his sons who lived in England, took him along. In London, he went on long walks. "I had nothing to do at home. My son told me to take a bus to the local gurdwara, but I decided to walk instead," he would recount. A chance encounter with Harmander Singh, a marathon coach who met Fauja at a neighbourhood park just six months earlier, would lead to the 89-year-old running his first marathon in April 2000, at age 89. He ran 6 hours, 54 minutes to finish the 26-mile (41-km) run. And soon, he was famous. Adidas appointed him as its brand ambassador and his billboards appeared across London. He was also a torchbearer for the 2012 London Olympics. Khushwant Singh says Fauja was once invited by Queen Elizabeth II, a meeting for which he was briefed extensively for two days. "They told him, 'Don't try to hug her, just shake her hand'," he says. "The best part was the affection that came my way," Fauja told The Indian Express in an earlier interview. "Even the memsahibs would call me grandad." Soon, Fauja was a jet-setting marathoner, greeted aboard flights with public announcements. A British Airways crew even printed "World traveller, centurion marathoner" on his boarding pass, and Fauja beamed. In 2011, after running nine full marathons in 11 years, he ran the London Marathon, his last when he clocked 7 hours, 49 minutes and 21 seconds. He later transitioned to the shorter 10-km category in marathons. At the 2013 Mumbai Marathon, Fauja rubbed shoulders with actors John Abraham and Gul Panag, jogging with one and cooking pasta with the other. When a reporter asked Abraham how it felt to be with Fauja, he replied: "Ask me how it feels to be with Fauja Singh ji." The same year, Fauja ran in the 10-km category in the Hong Kong marathon – his last international run. Khushwant Singh, who spent two years writing Fauja's 2011 biography Turbaned Tornado, recalls how he interviewed the marathoner on foot in East London: "He said, 'I can either walk or sleep.' So walk we did". Khushwant says Fauja's accomplishment as the "oldest marathoner" was not recognised by the Guinness World Records because he did not have a birth certificate to prove his age. Fauja, he says, had a British passport that showed his date of birth as April 1, 1911, while a letter from Indian government officials stated that birth records were not maintained in 1911. Khushwant, who once travelled with Fauja to Australia, recalls how he never lost his humility or his large heart, not even when fans from the expat Sikh community thrust dollars into his palm at gurdwaras, "On the way back, he would quietly put all the money into the gurdwara's gullak," he says. Khushwant says that when Nestlé asked for Fauja's address for a sponsorship cheque, he gave the name of an Amritsar-based charity organisation. Back home in Punjab, Fauja was courted by politicians, yet was never dazzled by authority. In 2011, in a meeting with then CM Amarinder Singh, he quipped, "Bibi Bhattal (former CM Rajinder Kaur Bhattal and Amarinder's rival) speech badi takri dendi hai (Bhattal gives very powerful speeches)." How Amarinder took the quip isn't part of the records. Around three years ago, Fauja finally moved back from London to his home in Beas, where he lived with his youngest son Harvinder's family. "He never sat still," says Bhanjit Kaur, Fauja's daughter-in-law in Beas village. "From room to courtyard to street, he was always on the move." Once awake, he wouldn't stop. He would start his day with a desi pinni (a ladoo made with flaxseed or dal and dry fruits), followed by a light brunch of chapati and a sabzi. He loved ghiya (bottle gourd), tinda (apple gourd), and was "crazy about mangoes. Even till the end, he would eat a kilo a day," smiles Bhanjit. The trees in the family compound bore fruits from the seeds he once planted. At 3 pm, he would have a cup of tea, after which he walked for hours through the village. "Jis din reh gaya, ussi din baith jaunga (The day I skip my walk is the day I give up)," he told The Indian Express once. On July 14, too, he was walking. He was crossing the highway to visit a small roadside eatery named after his late son, Kuldeep Singh, when an unidentified vehicle struck him down. The house of veteran marathon runner Fauja Singh, who died after being hit by an unidentified vehicle while out for a walk in his native village, in Jalandhar district, Tuesday, July 15, 2025. (PTI Photo)Chandigarh-based writer Khushwant Singh, who wrote a 2011 biography of the marathoner, recalls that when he first met him in 2005, Fauja was wearing an electric blue suit, a tie that read "Marathoner" and a pair of shoes with "Fauja" on one and "Singh" on the other.

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Fauja Singh, Fauja Singh centenarian, Punjab centenarian, Toronto Marathon, Harmander Singh, Queen Elizabeth II, remembering Fauja Singh, Fauja Singh obit, Fauja Singh obituary, Indian express news, current affairs Fauja Singh, resplendent in a big, black turban paired with a matching satin shirt, had told a group of journalists gathered around him in Chandigarh: "Zindagi inni sohni hai ki maran nu te jee hi nahin karda (Life is so beautiful that I just don't feel like dying)."A chance encounter with Harmander Singh, a marathon coach who met Fauja at a neighbourhood park just six months earlier, would lead to the 89-year-old running his first marathon in April 2000, at age 89. He ran 6 hours, 54 minutes to finish the 26-mile (41-km) run. And soon, he was famous. Adidas appointed him as its brand ambassador and his billboards appeared across London. He was also a torchbearer for the 2012 London Olympics.Khushwant Singh says Fauja was once invited by Queen Elizabeth II, a meeting for which he was briefed extensively for two days. "They told him, 'Don't try to hug her, just shake her hand'," he says."The best part was the affection that came my way," Fauja told The Indian Express in an earlier interview. "Even the memsahibs would call me grandad."Fauja Singh, Fauja Singh centenarian, Punjab centenarian, Toronto Marathon, Harmander Singh, Queen Elizabeth II, remembering Fauja Singh, Fauja Singh obit, Fauja Singh obituary, Indian express news, current affairs Chandigarh-based writer Khushwant Singh, who wrote a 2011 biography of the marathoner, recalls that when he first met him in 2005, Fauja was wearing an electric blue suit, a tie that read "Marathoner" and a pair of shoes with "Fauja" on one and "Singh" on the other.Soon, Fauja was a jet-setting marathoner, greeted aboard flights with public announcements. A British Airways crew even printed "World traveller, centurion marathoner" on his boarding pass, and Fauja beamed.In 2011, after running nine full marathons in 11 years, he ran the London Marathon, his last when he clocked 7 hours, 49 minutes and 21 seconds. He later transitioned to the shorter 10-km category in marathons.At the 2013 Mumbai Marathon, Fauja rubbed shoulders with actors John Abraham and Gul Panag, jogging with one and cooking pasta with the other. When a reporter asked Abraham how it felt to be with Fauja, he replied: "Ask me how it feels to be with Fauja Singh ji."

The same year, Fauja ran in the 10-km category in the Hong Kong marathon – his last international run.Khushwant Singh, who spent two years writing Fauja's 2011 biography Turbaned Tornado, recalls how he interviewed the marathoner on foot in East London: "He said, 'I can either walk or sleep.' So walk we did".Fauja Singh, Fauja Singh centenarian, Punjab centenarian, Toronto Marathon, Harmander Singh, Queen Elizabeth II, remembering Fauja Singh, Fauja Singh obit, Fauja Singh obituary, Indian express news, current affairs In 2011, after running nine full marathons in 11 years, he ran the London Marathon, his last when he clocked 7 hours, 49 minutes and 21 seconds. He later transitioned to the shorter 10-km category in marathons.

Khushwant says Fauja's accomplishment as the "oldest marathoner" was not recognised by the Guinness World Records because he did not have a birth certificate to prove his age. Fauja, he says, had a British passport that showed his date of birth as April 1, 1911, while a letter from Indian government officials stated that birth records were not maintained in 1911.Khushwant, who once travelled with Fauja to Australia, recalls how he never lost his humility or his large heart, not even when fans from the expat Sikh community thrust dollars into his palm at gurdwaras, "On the way back, he would quietly put all the money into the gurdwara's gullak," he says.

Khushwant says that when Nestlé asked for Fauja's address for a sponsorship cheque, he gave the name of an Amritsar-based charity organisation.Back home in Punjab, Fauja was courted by politicians, yet was never dazzled by authority. In 2011, in a meeting with then CM Amarinder Singh, he quipped, "Bibi Bhattal (former CM Rajinder Kaur Bhattal and Amarinder's rival) speech badi takri dendi hai (Bhattal gives very powerful speeches)." How Amarinder took the quip isn't part of the records.Around three years ago, Fauja finally moved back from London to his home in Beas, where he lived with his youngest son Harvinder's family.He never sat still," says Bhanjit Kaur, Fauja's daughter-in-law in Beas village. "From room to courtyard to street, he was always on the move."Once awake, he wouldn't stop. He would start his day with a desi pinni (a ladoo made with flaxseed or dal and dry fruits), followed by a light brunch of chapati and a sabzi. He loved ghiya (bottle gourd), tinda (apple gourd), and was "crazy about mangoes. Even till the end, he would eat a kilo a day," smiles Bhanjit. The trees in the family compound bore fruits from the seeds he once planted.At 3 pm, he would have a cup of tea, after which he walked for hours through the village. "Jis din reh gaya, ussi din baith jaunga (The day I skip my walk is the day I give up)," he told The Indian Express once.On July 14, too, he was walking. He was crossing the highway to visit a small roadside eatery named after his late son, Kuldeep Singh, when an unidentified vehicle struck him down.

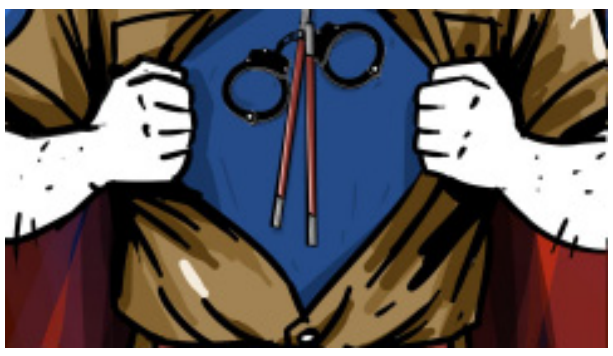
When the crows came together



It was a little past dawn. The sun hadn't fully risen yet, but there was that soft, golden light beginning to seep over the Attappady Hills. Mist still clung to the trees, and everything felt damp and fresh. We were on one of our road trips — no real destination, just a familiar route winding through the woods. The windows were down, and that earthy, rain-soaked smell drifted in. Somewhere out there, birds were singing — nothing dramatic, just the quiet music of a forest waking up.I was half-awake, sipping black coffee from a thermos, letting my thoughts wander. The road curved ahead, and then the driver, a local man, slowed down. He pointed towards a massive banyan tree by the side of the road. At first, I did not notice anything unusual — but then I caught a flutter of black wings.

A crow was making quite a scene. It flapped and cawed, darting around the branches like something was wrong. We looked closer — and there it was. A snake. Long, still, and sunlit, curled around a thick branch not far from a fragile little nest. The crow must have been the parent. It kept diving at the snake, trying to drive it away.We stepped out, careful not to disturb anything, and just stood there watching. The snake did not seem to be in a hurry. It moved slowly, creeping toward the nest, while the crow kept attacking. You could feel the tension build. Then, one by one, more crows showed up. Maybe they had heard the call, or maybe they just knew something was happening. They joined in, attacking from different angles.It got loud. Wings beating, caws echoing, the snake twisting and striking back — but the crows did not stop. They were fierce. Finally, the snake hesitated. It paused, then slowly began to retreat, slipping back down the tree into the undergrowth. The crows did not chase it far, just hovered above, crying out like victors.We stood there for a while, not saying much. Just taking it in. There was something powerful in that moment — not just the drama, but the way those birds came together. That tree must have seen countless stories like this one. And for some reason, watching it all unfold made the world feel a little wilder, a little more connected.

Creating a humane police force



Even as the Global Week Against Torture was being observed, newspapers reported on June 25 that a constable was suspended for assaulting three women inside a police station in Tiruvallur district of Tamil Nadu. Another report on the same day published an order of the State Human Rights Commission in V. Priyadharshini vs K. Santhamoorthi, directing the State to pay ?50,000 as compensation for human rights violation by Santhamoorthi, who, as Inspector of Police, C2 Race Course police station, Coimbatore City, disrespected and harassed a woman complainant.

On the same day, The Hindu reported about the "threat of moral policing shadowing young couples in Chennai's public spaces". These are just a sample of the excesses committed by the police in their routine everyday interactions with the larger public, especially women.V. Kanadasan, SHRC Member, in the order in the Coimbatore case, quoted Section 58 of the Police Act, 2006, enunciating the social responsibilities of the police, assigning special duties with regard to the vulnerable sections of society: "Behave with the members of the public with due courtesy and decorum, particularly in dealing with senior citizens, women and children. Ensure that in all situations, especially during conflict between communities, classes, castes and political groups, the conduct of the police is always governed by the principles of impartiality and human rights norms, with special attention to protection of weaker section including minorities. Preserve, promote and protect human rights and interests of weaker sections, backward classes, poor, weak and the downtrodden."

Hence, the duty of the police officials is to behave with the members of the public with due courtesy and decorum. The higher officials in the Police Department may be well-mannered and well-trained to behave courteously. But they are not available for interactions with the general public.In 1998, a 21-year-old homemaker, Chitra, was found dead after being taken to the Aminjikarai police station in Chennai at night for investigation of an offence of theft allegedly committed by her husband, Ravi. She was humiliated at the station. After her death, the then City Police Commissioner had initiated sensitisation training for all police personnel and it percolated to the entire State police force.

As an advocate, I have personally visited various police stations. My experience is that it is a hierarchical place that is drunk with power. The personnel view complainants as a nuisance and a spoke in their wheels. The accused are seen as inhuman slaves at their mercy. The words spoken are generally insulting, rude with no respect or culture. There is an atmosphere of fear that makes people afraid of stepping into a police station.Policemen generally think that they are above the law. They are still in a colonial mindset. They are more adept at protecting the elite and more dutiful in maintaining law and order at the cost of the common man. They stop the entire traffic, even ambulances, to give way for a VIP convoy on roads. Crime investigation and victim justice are not their priority. Policing have turned against the common man's interest and dignity. Pedestrians, two-wheeler users and autorickshaw drivers are at their receiving end forever on the roads as the policemen vent their power and authority on them using vulgar language and physical intimidation. It is just not custodial violence or murder but torture simpliciter.Even as we find fault with the functioning of the policemen on duty at the police stations and outside, it is essential that we look at and advocate reforms. While the higher police officers are educated, trained and protected by service laws, the lower officials are definitely exposed to all imaginable vagaries. They are on duty round the clock, with very little rest or humane conditions of service. They are treated with contempt by the superior officers, politicians and the rich and powerful.

As early as 2006, the Supreme Court in the Prakash Singh judgment has suggested wide reforms in the police. One of the most important reforms suggested is separation of investigation and law-and-order wings. In 2010, the Common Wealth Human Rights Initiative, in one of its report on "Seven steps to police reforms", said the problem was "Investigations are poorly mounted, slow, done by inadequately trained and unspecialized staff and frequently subject to manpower deflection into other pressing law and order duties". "Both investigation and law and order are vital and specific police functions. In order to encourage specialization and upgrade overall performance, the Court has ordered a gradual separation of investigative and law and order wings, starting with towns and urban areas with a population of one million or more. It is felt that this will streamline policing, ensure speedier and more expert investigation and improve rapport with the people," it said.As the police were seen with suspicion and not as part of the community for whose welfare they exist, in 1993, Philip V. Prateep, an IPS officer, founded the Friends of Police (FoP), a community policing initiative in Tamil Nadu. It was to focus on promoting crime awareness, preventing crime, and enhancing fairness and transparency within the police force. But sadly, it was disbanded in 2020 after allegations of its members abusing their powers.The need of the hour is to ensure that the police force is revamped with sensitive, friendly, and honest people. Reward the best ones publicly, promote constant people-friendly interactions with the local police and citizens of the neighbourhood. A few years ago, in every zone, there used to be a police-citizens meet which was attended by the Deputy Commissioner in charge of the locality and police officers from every police station in the zone.

Searching for alien life means asking the right questions first

Since the 1990s, scientists have discovered hordes of planets outside the solar system together with tantalising hints of life — or more accurately hints of hints of life. So far, however, there exists no proof that there's life anywhere in the universe except on the earth.

Does that mean our quest for alien life has failed?

A team led by researchers at the Institute for Particle Physics and Astrophysics at ETH Zurich, in Switzerland, recently offered a more nuanced answer to this question — one reminiscent of an important attitude to have when doing research at the cutting edge.Writing in a recent paper in The Astronomical Journal, the team contended that a "no signs of life detected" conclusion can also offer valuable information to guide and refine future exoplanet studies. More broadly, the team emphasised the importance of recognising that every observation carries with it a degree of uncertainty and that it is important to ask the right questions.Nothing is somethingWith the ultimate goal of assessing the habitability of exoplanets and finding potential signs of life, researchers have used a statistical method called Bayesian analysis. "It's a way of updating our understanding or beliefs based on new evidence," Daniel Angerhausen, a scientist in the Department of Physics at ETH Zurich and lead author of the new paper, said.

This is like making a first guess based on what one already believes, then fine-tuning it. For example, you could start by assuming life is very common in the universe. When you observe a hundred exoplanets without finding signs of life, you adjust your guess to accommodate factors that might explain how life can be common yet not found on these worlds. As you continue this process over time, your answer to "how common is life?" acquires a more informed shape.In the new paper, the team explored how different starting assumptions affect final estimates of how common life might be.The researchers simulated observations of 100 exoplanets, ranging from 1 to 100, to determine the minimum number of exoplanets that must be examined to conclude how many worlds are possibly habitable.Their work suggested that if scientists examine between 40 and 80 exoplanets and find no evidence of life, they can confidently conclude that fewer than 10% to 20% of similar planets are likely to support life. That is, life would be relatively rare.If the prevalence of life is indeed low, around 10-20%, it would be understandable for no signs of life to be found in a sample of 40-80 planets. But if life was more common, scientists should expect to observe some indications of it in that same sample. At least, this is the team's argument.Need for better questionsThis key finding suggests the number of planets observed so far may suffice to establish an upper limit on the number of potentially habitable worlds. However, the authors were careful to note that "ideal" results are likely impossible because every observation has some uncertainty.This uncertainty can manifest in many ways (e.g. a false negative occurs when a significant sign of life is overlooked) and is related to the challenges in the questions researchers ask when they set out to find life signs.

In Frames: Stampede country



According to the International Institute for Population Sciences, India's population clocked 1,45,48,50,455, some time around the afternoon on July 11, World Population Day. These masses of people go to work squeezing themselves inside packed suburban trains, celebrate festivals as a community, elect governments by the sheer might of their mandate, and carry their heroes on their shoulders. However, there have also been occasions when their numbers were overwhelming and went out of control, leading to stampedes. In the past 12 months, dozens lost their lives in multiple such tragedies. On July 2, 2024, in Hathras in Uttar Pradesh, followers gathered in large numbers to see a self-styled godman. As they rushed to collect sand from his footsteps, which they considered sacred, there was a stampede and 121 followers lost their lives. Worn-out and broken slippers strewn around reflected the gravity of the tragedy.

In Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh, six people died and 20 others were injured on January 8, 2025, while trying to collect tokens at counters for the Vaikunta Ekadasi darshan at the Tirumala temple. The tragedy struck despite 94 counters having been set up in Tirupati to avert crowding.Dozens sleeping on the banks of Sangam in Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh were trampled to death during the Kumbh Mela on January 29, 2025, when thousands converged here to take a dip in the Sangam on the occasion of Mauni Ammavasya, considered auspicious by devotees. While the official death toll is put at 37, a BBC Hindi investigation counted it at much higher 82.On June 4, 2025, IPL franchise Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) team members were to attend a celebratory event at the Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru after lifting their first ever IPL trophy. Already basking in celebration and amid an emotional outburst, RCB fans started flocking to the yet unopened stadium gates, in numbers not anticipated by the police, from the morning. By afternoon, the crowd was uncontrollable. In the resultant stampede, 11 people died and many others were injured.Except for the Bengaluru stampede and one at a Hyderabad theatre for an Allu Arjun film's premiere which occurred in cities, other tragedies struck during mass gatherings observing an act of faith.In New Delhi railway station, 18 people died during a rush of devotees to catch a train headed to the Kumbh Mela.Pall of gloom: Family members gather after the death of their loved ones during a stampede at a religious gathering of a godman in Hathras in Uttar Pradesh on July 2, 2024.Rushing to help: Devotees' belongings lie scattered on the ground as rescue personnel carry away a victim after a stampede at the Sangam in Prayagraj on January 29, 2025Me before you: Devotees at a counter for tokens to attend a religious event at the Tirumala temple, minutes before the stampede on January 8, 2025.

Fatal charm: Actor Allu Arjun being shifted to a hospital after his statement was recorded in connection with a stampede at a movie theatre in Hyderabad that claimed a life in December 2024.According to the International Institute for Population Sciences, India's population clocked 1,45,48,50,455, some time around the afternoon on July 11, World Population Day. These masses of people go to work squeezing themselves inside packed suburban trains, celebrate festivals as a community, elect governments by the sheer might of their mandate, and carry their heroes on their shoulders. However, there have also been occasions when their numbers were overwhelming and went out of control, leading to stampedes. In the past 12 months, dozens lost their lives in multiple such tragedies. On July 2, 2024, in Hathras in Uttar Pradesh, followers gathered in large numbers to see a self-styled godman. As they rushed to collect sand from his footsteps, which they considered sacred, there was a stampede and 121 followers lost their lives. Worn-out and broken slippers strewn around reflected the gravity of the tragedy.In Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh, six people died and 20 others were injured on January 8, 2025, while trying to collect tokens at counters for the Vaikunta Ekadasi darshan at the Tirumala temple. The tragedy struck despite 94 counters having been set up in Tirupati to avert crowding.Dozens sleeping on the banks of Sangam in Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh were trampled to death during the Kumbh Mela on January 29, 2025, when thousands converged here to take a dip in the Sangam on the occasion of Mauni Ammavasya, considered auspicious by devotees. While the official death toll is put at 37, a BBC Hindi investigation counted it at much higher 82.On June 4, 2025, IPL franchise Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) team members were to attend a celebratory event at the Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru after lifting their first ever IPL trophy. Already basking in celebration and amid an emotional outburst, RCB fans started flocking to the yet unopened stadium gates, in numbers not anticipated by the police, from the morning. By afternoon, the crowd was uncontrollable. In the resultant stampede, 11 people died and many others were injured.Except for the Bengaluru stampede and one at a Hyderabad theatre for an Allu Arjun film's premiere which occurred in cities, other tragedies struck during mass gatherings observing an act of faith.In New Delhi railway station, 18 people died during a rush of devotees to catch a train headed to the Kumbh Mela.

How is Mizoram handling the refugee crisis?

The story so far: Mizoram has been grappling with a refugee crisis since the February 2021 military coup in Myanmar. After months of lull beyond the State's borders, some 4,000 refugees crossed over from Myanmar in the first week of July following a fratricidal battle between two rival armed groups. Mizoram is now caught between pushing back the refugees who are ethnically related to the State's dominant Mizos and letting them stay despite limited resources and a tepid response from the Centre.



Who are the Chins? What led to the fresh inflow? What ties does the dominant Mizo community of Mizoram share with the Chins of Myanmar, the Bawms of Bangladesh, and the Kuki-Zos of Manipur? How are foreigners identified in the State?

What triggered the fresh inflow of people?

Within a week from July 3, some 4,000 from Myanmar's Chin State crossed into Mizoram's Champhai district. This was after a fierce gunfight between two anti-junta armed groups, the Chin National Defence Force (CNDF) and the Chinland Defence Force-Hualngoram (CDF-H). The two groups are part of the People's Defence Force aligned with the pro-democracy National Unity Government of Myanmar, which has seized control of large swathes of the Chin State from the junta over the last few months. They are said to have turned against each other to control areas in the region deemed strategic for trade with India. Indian intelligence officials said the CNDF prevailed over the CDF-H and captured its camps.While the sounds of gunshots have ceased across the Tiau river, which marks a segment of the 510-km border between the two countries, the refugees have not mustered the courage to return to Khawmawi, the village facing Mizoram's Zokhawthar. Champhai district authorities recorded 3,980 Myanmar nationals in Zokhawthar, a major border trade village, and Saikhumphai on July 6.

When did Mizoram's refugee crisis begin?

Present-day Mizoram has been used to Myanmar nationals moving in and out of the State even before the Free Movement Regime (FMR) between the two countries came into existence in 1968, allowing residents along their 1,643-km-long border to travel up to 40 km inside. The limit was reduced to 16 km from the border in 2004, and additional regulations were enforced in 2016.The Centre announced the suspension of the FMR in February 2024, but there has been no official notification or bilateral agreement in this regard, apart from the Ministry of Home Affairs bringing in a fresh protocol in December 2024 to limit the free movement to 10 km. The regulations had little impact on the ground until the February 2021 military coup in Myanmar drove thousands into Mizoram. The State's government, civil society groups, and villagers provided food, shelter, and security to the refugees on humanitarian grounds, although the Ministry of Home Affairs asked the northeastern States bordering Myanmar not to let the refugees in.The refugee crisis deepened when some 2,000 Bawm people sought refuge after fleeing persecution in Bangladesh's Chittagong Hill Tracts in 2022, and thousands of Kuki-Zo people displaced by the ethnic clash in Manipur crossed over. Mizoram houses more than 40,000 shelter-seekers from Bangladesh, Myanmar and Manipur.

How is the State dealing with the situation?

The dominant Mizo community of Mizoram shares ethnic and familial ties with the Chins of Myanmar, the Bawms of Bangladesh, and the Kuki-Zos of Manipur. All belong to the greater Zo ethnic group. In 2024, Chief Minister Lalduhoma told the Centre that ethnic affiliations and humanitarian reasons prevent his government from pushing the refugees back to where they came from. Influential organisations such as the Young Mizo Association (YMA), church bodies, and resourceful individuals have been contributing in cash and kind to take care of the basic needs of the refugees, Myanmar government officials and politicians among them.Initially reluctant, the Centre provided ?8 crore as assistance to provide relief for the refugees. However, some villagers began to feel the pressure of handling waves of refugees. In March, the Farkawn village council in Champhai district issued an order asking all Myanmar refugees to stop trading by March 31 and desist from moving out of their designated camps. Civil society groups issued similar diktats in Melthum, a village in Aizawl district, and Lawngtlai town later.In a departure from the hospitality extended since 2021, the refugees were threatened with eviction if they did not comply with the order. Almost simultaneously, Aizawl-based activist V.L. Thlamuanpuia wrote to Home Minister Amit Shah, underlining the churning in the State over the refugee issue. He stated that the uncontrolled movement of Myanmar refugees was threatening national security, changing the demography, and draining local resources.

How is the government responding?

India is neither a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention nor does it have a specific national law on refugees, and it usually deals with them under laws related to foreigners.

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