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Murmu inaugurates National SARAS Mela, highlights role of women's SHGs

Vijayawada: President Droupadi Murmu said on Thursday that rural women were no longer mere beneficiaries of government schemes but had become wealth creators and were emerging as drivers of development.

Inaugurating the National SARAS Mela, organised by the Union Ministry of Rural Development and the Andhra Pradesh government in Vijayawada, she said the Centre had given a distinct momentum and direction to the empowerment of rural women through the 'Lakhpati Didi' initiative.

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"Increased participation in various modern sectors, such as digital services and renewable energy, has opened up new avenues for skill development for our rural sisters. Today, rural women are no longer merely beneficiaries of government schemes; they have become wealth creators and are emerging as drivers of development," she said.

Telangana heading for crisis due to unprecedented El Nino situation: CM Revanth Reddy



Hyderabad, Oct 15 (IANS) With declining water reserves and soaring demand for electricity, Telangana is heading for a potential crisis due to an unprecedented El Nino situation, warned Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Thursday.

Stating that the next 9-10 months will be very difficult, he urged farmers to defer the 'Yasangi' (Rabi) crop to secure the state's drinking water supply and appealed to people to conserve water.

He also warned that crops across 10 lakh acres are likely to suffer damage during the 'Vanakalam' (Kharif) despite all the efforts to prevent withering of crops, he said.

Addressing a press conference after a meeting with the ministers to review the situation caused by El Nino, Revanth Reddy said reservoirs in the Krishna basin have 72% less water compared to last year. Similarly, the Krishna basin has 40% less water. The state had a 23% rainfall deficit during the monsoon.

"No reservoir has enough water to supply both drinking and farming needs. Usually, at this time in a typical year, we have 462 TMC of water across all reservoirs. Today, we have only 200 TMC. This is an unprecedented moment of crisis for all of us," he said.

As the state needs to supply drinking water to 24,000 villages, he said that available reserves must be used carefully.

The Chief Minister said that water for irrigation must be used judiciously, and electricity should be consumed sparingly.

He stressed the need to ensure drinking water and fodder for livestock. Otherwise, animals could perish in large numbers.

The state is also facing the problem due to a rise in electricity demand. The demand has soared to 20,003 MW against the normal level of around 15,000 MW for October.

There has been an increase in electricity demand of 5,000 MW mainly due to increased use of agriculture pump sets. The electricity consumption by the domestic sector has also gone up as the temperatures typically seen in March are being experienced in October.

He pointed out that about 30 lakh agriculture pump sets are functioning across the state.

The Chief Minister revealed that the government was purchasing electricity at prevailing market rates to protect standing crops ahead of the monsoon harvest, expected in about 20 days.

Three govt officials caught while taking bribe

Hyderabad, Oct 15 (IANS) A Deputy Tahsildar, a Village Revenue Officer and an assistant engineer of the Telangana Southern Power Distribution Company Limited (TGSPDCL) were caught by the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) while allegedly accepting bribes in two separate cases on Thursday.

Amanaganti Sandeep Kumar Reddy, Deputy Tahsildar, Keesara mandal, Medchal Malkajgiri district, Village Revenue Officer (VRO) Nannuri Vijay Kumar Reddy and a private person, Kavali Balakrishna, were caught in an ACB trap for allegedly demanding ?5 lakh.

The ACB said in a press release that the Deputy Tahsildar demanded ?5 lakh and accepted ?2.5 lakh from the complainant through Balakrishna to remove agricultural properties belonging to a complainant's family from the prohibited list.

The anti-graft agency said the bribe was sought for processing and completing the work related to removing agricultural properties registered in the names of the complainant's mother and other family members from the prohibited list under Section 22-A of the Registration Act, 1908.

On the direction of Deputy Tahsildar, VRO Vijay Kumar Reddy allegedly instigated Balakrishna to receive the bribe amount from the complainant.

The ACB officials caught Balakrishna while accepting ?2.5 lakh. The tainted amount was recovered from his possession at his instance.

The ACB stated that the two revenue officials had acted improperly and dishonestly to obtain an undue advantage. The Deputy Tahsildar, the VRO and Balakrishna were produced before the Principal Special Judge for SPE and ACB cases at Nampally for judicial remand.

In another case, an assistant engineer of the Telangana Southern Power Distribution Company Limited (TGSPDCL) was caught by the ACB while allegedly accepting a bribe of ? 1.2 lakh in Hyderabad.

According to ACB officials, the accused, Pandala Sandhaya Rakesh, who works in the Madannapet section under the Santosh Nagar subdivision, demanded the money from a complainant in return for approving an application to install six new electricity meters in place of old, missing meters.

The ACB said its City Range-II officials caught the assistant engineer red-handed. The alleged bribe amount was recovered from his possession at his instance.

The agency said the officer had acted improperly and dishonestly to obtain an undue advantage.

KTR accuses Telangana CM of creating power crisis to facilitate foreign coal scam



Hyderabad, Oct 15 (IANS) BRS Working President K.T. Rama Rao on Thursday accused Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy of deliberately creating conditions for a coal and power crisis to pave the way for a ?3,000 crore scam through proposed foreign coal imports.

He charged that the government was weakening Singareni Collieries Company Limited while preparing to facilitate expensive imports through questionable arrangements involving Bhotra Logistics.

In an open letter addressed to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka and Union Coal Minister G. Kishan Reddy, Rama Rao demanded that all details relating to the proposed imports, including discussions, tender documents, draft agreements, pricing and the selection of Bhotra Logistics, be made public.

KTR, as the BRS leader is popularly known, alleged that the proposed arrangement could involve commissions of ?1,500 per tonne, potentially translating into a ?3,000 crore scam.

He demanded an independent investigation into the proposals and questioned the basis on which Bhotra Logistics was being considered for the assignment. He emphasised that the proposed imports had not yet taken place and insisted that all decisions and financial arrangements be disclosed before the process advances.

The former minister questioned the decline in Singareni's coal production from approximately 70.02 million tonnes in 2023–24 to around 58 million tonnes in 2025–26. He demanded an explanation for the failure to strengthen domestic production, develop mines and ensure adequate coal supplies despite the predictable rise in electricity demand.

He also sought a comprehensive, institution-wise account of the approximately ?60,000 crore in outstanding dues reportedly owed to Singareni, asking the government to disclose the amounts due, payments received and pending liabilities.

Impact of El Nino very severe, to reach peak by February: Telangana Chief Secretary



Hyderabad, Oct 15 (IANS) Telangana Chief Secretary Sanjay Jaju said on Thursday the impact of El Nino is currently 'very severe' and is expected to reach its peak by February 2027.

He noted that the monsoon has been significantly affected due to El Nino, and temperatures have risen by 2 to 3 degrees Celsius.

Talking to media persons after a visit to the Singur Dam, he stated that the government is taking measures to address the current situation.

He revealed that the issue will be discussed extensively during the cabinet meeting scheduled for Thursday evening.

The Chief Secretary explained that this visit was conducted to assess the outlook for drinking water availability and the status of standing crops.

He urged all departments to work in coordination to protect the standing crops over the next 15-20 days.

Jaju noted that due to a significant decline in groundwater levels, water may not be available even when electricity is supplied; therefore, he has issued directives to prioritise drinking water needs.

He added that nodal officers are being deployed to every district. Under the supervision of the District Collector, officials from the electricity and agriculture departments will remain accessible to farmers on the ground to prepare appropriate plans for the challenges ahead.

The Chief Secretary began a field visit in Sangareddy district to assess changes in weather patterns caused by the El Nino, and their impact on water availability in the state.

As part of this visit, he inspected water levels at the Singur and Manjira reservoirs. He also held a review meeting with senior officials regarding the implementation of the government's contingency plans, designed to ensure an uninterrupted supply of drinking water to Hyderabad, as well as the districts of Sangareddy, Kamareddy, Nizamabad, and Medak.

From chai to pizza, a city learning to stay awake



Chandigarh 24×7 shops, Chandigarh 24×7 operations, Chandigarh 24×7 shops list, shops open 24 hours Chandigarh, Chandigarh night economy, Chandigarh late night shops, Chandigarh restaurants 24×7, 24×7 businesses Chandigarh, Chandigarh night-time economy, Chandigarh commercial operations, Sector 8-B Chandigarh, Chandigarh late night food, Indian Express newsrom fast-food outlets and chai counters to pharmacies, grocery stores and paan shops, the city's 24×7 commercial footprint is expanding. (Express Photo/Enhanced using AI)Chandigarh may have secured permission to stay awake, but the city's businesses are discovering that staying open through the night is another matter altogether.

Nearly two years after the administration launched its 24×7 commercial operations initiative, almost 200 establishments are now on the list: from McDonald's, pizza outlets, and chai counters to pharmacies, grocery stores, paan shops, and petrol pumps. The number of establishments opting for 24×7 operations has risen more than threefold from the initial 48."We are encouraging people to register for 24×7 commercial operations under ease of doing business in the city. Women's safety and adherence to labour laws are two key aspects under this initiative, which we are fully ensuring by coordinating with the department concerned, including the Chandigarh Police," Nishant Yadav, Deputy Commissioner, told The list of nearly 200 establishments paints a picture of a city trying to build a late-night economy that goes well beyond traditional nightlife.Major fast-food chains feature prominently. McDonald's, KFC, Domino's, Pizza Hut and Subway have multiple outlets listed for 24×7 operations across sectors including 8-C, 15-C, 22, 35-C, 40-C, 47-C, Manimajra and the Industrial Area.Tea, too, has found a place in the city's round-the-clock experiment. Chai Sutta Bar, along with Punjabi Chai, Desi Urban Chai, and Audi Chaiwala, features on the list, adding a distinctly local flavour to the late-night food economy.Desserts and quick-service outlets are also part of the mix, with establishments such as Baskin Robbins, Theobroma Foods, The Belgian Waffle Co and Superdonuts among those listed.

Its 24×7 establishments span a wide range of food options, from Baba Chicken, World of Wings and Tikka World to The Belgian Waffle Co, Cakes & Stuff, Superdonuts and El Mexicano.The concentration suggests that Sector 8-B could emerge as one of the city's more prominent late-night food clusters — provided there is enough customer demand to sustain these operations.Grocery and convenience stores, pharmacies and delivery-related establishments have also opted for round-the-clock operations. Blink Commerce has several establishments listed across sectors including 17-B, 34-A and 37-D, while Chandigarh Pharmacy in Sector 11-D is among the pharmacies on the list.Even paan shops and petrol pumps feature. DP Paan House in Sector 15-D, Pandey Paan and Confectioner in Sector 8-C and Nankhu Pan & Confectionery in Sector 44-D have submitted undertakings for round-the-clock operations. Indian Oil outlets in sectors 7 and 33 and a Bharat Petroleum outlet in Sector 21 are also on the list.Taken together, the entries suggest that Chandigarh's 24×7 experiment is evolving from an attempt to keep a few essential or high-demand businesses open into a wider after-midnight commercial ecosystem.

The bigger question, however, is whether the growing list of establishments translates into a sustainable late-night economy.For businesses, staying open through the night means additional manpower, higher electricity and operational costs and, in many cases, separate staff for night shifts. Several entrepreneurs who initially attempted round-the-clock operations say the limited late-night footfall did not justify those expenses."Some people I know had also tried keeping their outlets open round the clock, but they could not sustain it for long," said Abhishek Bajaj, who owns Sindhi Sweets, a chain of shops.Some eventually stopped operating through the night after finding that revenues failed to cover the additional costs."Delhi and Gurgaon, however, have an advantage because public transport connectivity continues through the night and several companies and offices operate round the clock, creating a steady stream of people even during late hours. Chandigarh does not have the same ecosystem yet," Bajaj added.

Zomato bans analogue dairy dishes, warns of action against restaurants



New Delhi: Food delivery aggregator Zomato on Monday announced a zero-tolerance policy on the sale of dishes containing analogue dairy products, including analogue cheese and paneer, by restaurants listed on its platform, saying it reserves the right to delist non-compliant restaurants.Analogue dishes replace traditional ingredients with cheaper or alternative substitutes, such as plant oils instead of real milk or cheese, while retaining a similar look and texture.The move comes against the backdrop of renewed focus on food safety following a reported State-wide crackdown by the Food and Drug Administration in Maharashtra and inspections by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) at five-star hotels in Delhi.With immediate effect, dishes that restaurant partners have declared as containing analogue dairy products have been delisted from the platform, Zomato said.Restaurant partners that remain non-compliant will also be delisted from the platform, it added.In a communication issued to merchants listed on the platform on Monday, Zomato said, "Our priority is to ensure that customers receive food that is accurately represented, safe and meets the expected quality standards.

"Accordingly, we are implementing a zero-tolerance policy on the listing and supply of food products containing analogue cheese, analogue paneer and other analogue dairy products on our platform."The food delivery aggregator said the initiative was being undertaken to strengthen transparency and food quality for consumers, in line with food safety and regulatory requirements."For restaurants that have already declared the use of analogue cheese, analogue paneer or other analogue dairy products on their menus, such items will be turned off from the platform with immediate effect," Zomato stated.It called upon restaurant partners to take immediate measures, including transitioning to natural dairy products; removing items containing analogue dairy products from their menus where such a transition is not immediately feasible; and reviewing product labels and ingredient declarations provided by suppliers to verify the ingredients being used and ensure the accurate representation of products listed on Zomato."If a restaurant is found to be non-compliant, Zomato reserves the right to delist such restaurants from the platform, in addition to taking any other action available to us under our policies and applicable law," Zomato stated.Zomato also reserves the right to recover any loss, cost, damage or expense that the company may incur or suffer if non-compliant products are delivered to customers, it added in the communication.Aditya Mangla, CEO of Zomato, said: "At Zomato, our core mission is better food for more people, and that means safeguarding customer health and upholding clear standards for what's listed and served by our restaurant partners. This policy reflects that commitment, one we're taking together with partners who share it."

IOC ramps up LPG production 30pc amid Strait of Hormuz disruptions

New Delhi: State-owned Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) ramped up liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) production by nearly 30 per cent and kept its refineries operating at more than 100 per cent utilisation as disruptions to maritime trade through the Strait of Hormuz threatened India's energy supplies, its chairman said on Monday.The company also diversified its crude sourcing, realigned refinery operations and secured alternative supplies as the escalating conflict in West Asia disrupted global energy markets, IOC Chairman Arvinder Singh Sahney said in his address at the company's 67th annual general meeting.

"For IndianOil, the priority during this unprecedented crisis has remained crystal clear — to maintain continuity of energy supplies despite constrained sourcing options and volatile international markets," he said.

India imports more than 88 per cent of its crude oil requirements, while about 45 per cent of its crude imports and nearly 90 per cent of its LPG imports are linked to the Strait of Hormuz, underscoring the exposure of the world's third-largest oil consumer to disruptions in the strategic waterway.Shopping For Authentic South Asian Apparel

"With close monitoring and guidance from the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, our teams have responded with agility — diversifying crude sourcing, realigning refinery operations and strengthening supply-chain coordination to secure alternative supplies, optimise cargo movements and rebalance products across regions," he said.IOC used 24-hour control rooms, daily reviews and real-time market monitoring to respond to supply gaps, he said, adding that the company had maintained product availability despite a "significant shift away from Middle Eastern crude grades".

"Despite a significant shift away from Middle Eastern crude grades, our refineries operated at more than 100 per cent utilisation, LPG production was ramped up by nearly 30 per cent within a short period, and our gas business maintained supplies to priority sectors while securing additional LNG from diversified geographies," he said.The disruption came as IOC reported record operating performance. For the year ended March 2026, the company posted a standalone net profit of Rs 36,802 crore on a turnover of about Rs 8.86 lakh crore, with aggregate sales exceeding 105 million tonnes across petroleum products, natural gas and petrochemicals.Its refineries processed a record 75.45 million tonnes of crude during the year, while liquid pipeline throughput reached a record 102.52 million tonnes and domestic petroleum product sales rose to an all-time high of 88.97 million tonnes.

The momentum continued into the first quarter of the current financial year. IOC processed a record 19.17 million tonnes of crude at 109.4 per cent capacity utilisation, while pipeline throughput reached a quarterly record of 28.55 million tonnes. Its domestic petroleum product market share rose to 43.1 per cent, the chairman said."While profitability during the quarter remained under pressure from higher crude costs arising from the West Asia conflict, the strength of our operating performance gives us confidence in the underlying resilience of your company," Sahney said.

The company is also accelerating investment in its core refining operations. Expansions at Panipat, Gujarat and Barauni are expected to raise IOC's group refining capacity from 80.75 million tonnes a year to about 98 million tonnes.As India expands its refining capacity towards 300 million tonnes a year, IOC expects to account for more than 40 per cent of the incremental capacity, he said.

The company is simultaneously seeking to reduce its dependence on its traditional refining business, targeting higher contributions from petrochemicals, natural gas, renewables, biofuels, green hydrogen and sustainable aviation fuel.It plans to raise its petrochemical intensity to about 15 per cent by 2030 and increase natural gas sales by 1.5 times by the same year. It also aims to raise upstream integration to more than 10 per cent by 2031.On the energy-transition front, construction has begun on a large-scale green hydrogen plant at Panipat, while IOC has received ISCC CORSIA certification for sustainable aviation fuel production through co-processing at the refinery. Its renewable energy arm, Terra Clean, is developing 1 gigawatt of capacity, with another 4.3 gigawatts under preparation.Sahney said the experience of the West Asia crisis had reinforced the need to build resilience before disruptions occur."

Mrinaltai Gore flyover's 'super smooth' surface leaves bikers slipping

The recently opened arm of the Mrinaltai Gore flyover has once again come under the scanner just two months after its inauguration. This time, locals have flagged the 'extremely smooth' surface of the bridge, which has reportedly left many bikers and two-wheelers skidding and led netizens to mock the 'advanced technology' that the citizens are not ready for.Speaking to The Indian Express, residents said Mrinaltai Gore flyover's 'super smooth' surface on the road mastic has become increasingly perilous for motorists."The site where repeated skidding is being reported is situated on a downward slope. The mastic on the road is super smooth and everytime it rains, the roads become furthermore slippery. This patch has now become a magnet for accidents in the area," said Dhaval Shah, co-founder of Lokhandwala Oshiwara Citizen's Association (LOCA).

Karan Jotwani, co-founder of LOCA, told The Indian Express: "The smooth surface is causing the frequent skidding. To resolve the issue, the BMC must deploy rough tar on the top layer in a bid to make the roads rougher and thereby, less slippery."Inaugurated in July, the flyover provides a direct link between Ram Mandir and Goregaon, allowing motorists to directly zip through instead of taking the SV Road or Link Road. It has also garnered much attention for its cost escalation, prolonged construction period, as well as patchy road surface.Now, citizens have blamed the Mumbai civic body for carrying out shoddy work on the flyover. It has denied the allegations.The 750-metre flyover, built for Rs 247.97 crore, took nearly



eight years to complete. During this period, the project's cost rose by nearly 45 per cent from the original estimate of Rs 170.82 crore.With its 'super smooth' surface making people have the ride of their lives, social media hasn't stayed behind in having its share of fun."Mrinal tai flyover in Mumbai also comes with the revolutionary "smooth ride" technology that apparently improve your vehicle's mileage.. Only small issue: the technology is so advanced that bikers haven't learnt how to use it yet.. so they keep falling," a user on social media wrote on X.Earlier in June, some videos surfaced on social media, purportedly showing a melting road surface, loose gravel, and, in one case, a portion of the road caving in under the weight of a motorcycle stand, triggering outrage.

Punjab influencer Manjit Kaur's mother seeks answers after her death



Her daughter is dead. The memorial prayer service is yet to take place. With no other support, Kanta Devi has been forced to postpone her grief, compelled instead to piece together the final weeks of her daughter, Punjabi social media influencer Manjit Kaur.Kaur, who was allegedly kidnapped and assaulted before being set on fire in a forested area near Morinda on the night of July 3-4, died at a Chandigarh hospital on August 26. Her family has accused two acquaintances of kidnapping her and the police of failing to record her statement in time."I am all alone. No man is there to support me. My daughter's bhog (prayer service) has not taken place. I am doing everything myself with a small child to care for," Devi told s.Devi lives with her 11-year-old son, Manjit Kaur's younger brother, in their home in Kharar.Manjit moved out of her family home about a year and a half ago, relocating to New Chandigarh to build an independent life. A divorced mother of a seven-year-old son who lives with his father, she started a beauty parlour business and regularly sent financial support to her mother.Devi recalled that her daughter was planning to start a new life. "She told me she would marry soon. I didn't know much about her personal plans, only that she was preparing to settle down again."The long gap between the alleged crime and Manjit Kaur's death has made the investigation difficult. The police are trying to establish the vehicle allegedly used to take her away, while crucial CCTV footage is no longer available. According to the police, the autopsy report revealed that she was around seven weeks pregnant when she died.For Devi, time has made one thing increasingly urgent: the need to know the truth. She does not speak of revenge, nor does she claim to have all the answers. She wants to understand what happened to the daughter whose life, she says, she only knew in fragments during her final months."I just want to know what happened to my daughter, and the truth should come out," she said.

Second phase IT Hub construction works in Khammam delayed

Khammam: Even five years after the foundation stone was laid for the construction of the second-phase IT Hub in Khammam, the building work remains incomplete.The Congress government's alleged negligence has delayed the construction, much to the chagrin of local unemployed youth, who had hoped to find employment if IT Hub-II was established.

It may be recalled that former IT and Industries Minister K T Rama Rao laid the foundation stone for IT Hub-II on April 2, 2021, following the success of IT Hub-I, which was established in December 2020 at Yellandu Circle in Khammam city to promote the information technology (IT) industry in tier-II cities.Rs 36 crore was sanctioned by the Telangana Industrial Infrastructure Corporation (TGIIC) for the construction of IT Tower-II, with a built-up area of 55,000 square feet and a seating capacity of 570.

Mettur dam to open for Cauvery delta irrigation as inflow rises



The Mettur dam will be opened on Tuesday to release water for Cauvery delta irrigation as inflow into the reservoir rose to 10,485 cusecs. Increased discharge from Karnataka's upstream reservoirs has raised hopes among farmers preparing for paddy cultivation

Salem: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, C. Joseph Vijay, will open the Mettur dam on Tuesday to release water for irrigation in the Cauvery delta, even as inflow into the reservoir increased to 10,485 cubic feet per second (cusecs). The improved inflow has brought relief to farmers preparing for paddy cultivation across the delta districts.The release is expected to support agricultural operations throughout the Cauvery basin, particularly in tail-end areas where water normally takes several days to arrive.Heavy rainfall in the Cauvery catchment areas of Karnataka has led to a steady increase in the storage levels of the Kabini and Krishnaraja Sagar reservoirs. As the two reservoirs are filling rapidly, Karnataka authorities have increased the discharge of surplus water into the Cauvery.

The volume of surplus water released from Karnataka had been reduced during the previous two days. However, the discharge was stepped up again from Sunday, resulting in a gradual increase in the quantity of water reaching the Mettur reservoir.According to Water Resources Department officials, inflow into the dam rose from 9,035 cusecs to 10,485 cusecs. The increased arrival of water is expected to strengthen the reservoir's position ahead of the planned release for delta irrigation.The water level in the dam stood at 90.47 feet, while the available storage was recorded at 53.70 thousand million cubic feet (tmcft).

Meanwhile, 2,000 cusecs continued to be released from the reservoir to meet drinking-water requirements in districts dependent on the Cauvery.CM Vijay will formally open the sluice gates on Tuesday, marking the commencement of irrigation supply to the delta districts.Officials are expected to regulate the discharge after assessing the reservoir's storage, inflow from Karnataka and the requirements of farmers.The release assumes significance as cultivators have sought an adequate and uninterrupted water supply during the paddy-growing season.

Global bond rout deepens as Japan yield hits key milestone

TOKYO/LONDON/SINGAPORE, A sell-off in global bond markets deepened on Tuesday, with Japan's ?10-year bond yield hitting 3% for the first time since 1996, the latest manifestation of trader angst about energy-driven inflation, monetary tightening and worsening fiscal conditions.The rout took ?in major economies from the United States to Germany as well as Britain, where bond yields surged 10 basis points, playing catch-up with global moves after Monday's UK public holiday. Euro zone yields hit fresh over-10-year highs as the Middle East crisis stokes price pressures globally, driving market bets central banks will raise interest rates soon.Make sense of global markets with the Trading Day newsletter. Sign up here.

A deluge of bond sales from big tech companies aggressively raising money to fund the AI boom, in an environment where the U.S. ?debt load has passed $40 trillion, has exacerbated government bond selling in recent weeks. Yields rise when bond prices fall.Governments are jittery, and last month the U.S. Treasury stepped into markets in ?a bid to cap a rise in borrowing costs. Still, 30-year Treasury yields have already recovered around two-thirds of their fall after that move.And the ?scale of the global shift is underscored by the rise in 10-year Japanese government bond (JGB) yields to 3% for the first time in 30 years, something seen as practically unthinkable until recently after over a ?decade of massive central bank debt purchases kept rates artificially low.The rise in U.S. and Japanese yields reflect inflation and fiscal worries, said Tai Hui, APAC chief market strategist at J.P. Morgan Asset Management.

"The ?stalemate in the Middle East risks pushing energy prices higher ... meanwhile, few actions have been taken to consolidate fiscal deficits in both economies."Brent crude rose 2% to over $92 a barrel on Tuesday and European natural gas prices were at their highest since March, after Monday saw the first exchange of direct attacks between the U.S. and Iran in a month.

END OF ERA? DEFINITELYFor Japan in particular, higher yields increase the cost of servicing the developed world's biggest debt pile ?at a time when Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi is planning aggressive investment. Five-year JGB yields hit a record high 2.26% .U.S. 10-year Treasury yields also pushed to the highest since January 2025 at around ?4.79%, while the 30-year yield was at 5.27% just 6 basis points shy of levels before August's intervention.Germany's 10-year yield was at 3.35%, its highest since 2011, and France's at 4.21%, its highest since 2008, as data ?showed euro zone inflation ?rose above 3% in August, cementing bets on a September European Central Bank rate rise.Britain's 10-year gilt yield rose to 5.25%, its highest since 2008.Analysts noted some different forces at play as global borrowing costs



rise."In Europe and the UK it is more because of heightened inflation expectations, while in the U.S. the upticks in long-end yields are still more driven by higher real yields although inflation expectations have been creeping up too," said Frances Cheung, OCBC's head of FX and rates strategy.Real yields are the returns that a bond investor demands above inflation, an indicator of true borrowing costs for governments ?and companies.

Concern that the U.S. Federal Reserve was ?too relaxed about inflation has also been ?in the mix for Treasuries.This started to shift last week, as new Fed Chair Kevin Warsh sounded tough on inflation, sending longer-dated yields lower and shorter-dated ones higher as bets on a September Fed rate hike rose."The idea... is that the hawkish pivot by Chair ?Warsh at Jackson Hole was going to rein in long-end yields and restore stability and inflation credibility," said Kenneth Broux, head of corporate research FX ?and rates at Societe Generale.

"The ?resumption of the conflict between the U.S. and Iran and higher energy prices has effectively killed that idea and added new bearish impetus to bonds."U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent shrugged off worries about the bond market in an interview with Reuters on Sunday, saying the effect of higher energy prices would fade and higher yields reflected confidence in the economy.But as governments competing for the same broad pool of capital, higher yields ?in one market ?can push them up elsewhere.Australian 10-year yields notched their sharpest rise in five months on Tuesday, in part due ?to fears higher JGB yields would mean fewer Japanese buyers of Australian debt.Further Japanese yield rises could drive a gradual re-allocation into Japanese assets, said TD Securities senior rates strategist Prashant Newnaha."It's a genuine regime change. JGBs were the anchor for global ?fixed income for a long time," he said.

Nepal battles misinformation as AI-generated visuals flood social media after disaster

Kathmandu, Nepal is battling a deluge of misinformation, alongside rescue and relief operations as fake and AI-generated visuals inundated social media following the devastating flash floods, prompting the government to order 72 users to remove inappropriate content over the past few days.The Nepal Press Council, the country's media regulatory body, has opened a dedicated portal, titled "Special Complaints on the Bhotekoshi Incident", through which the public can report misinformation and graphic material related to the disaster, The Kathmandu Post reported on Monday.The move comes as social media platforms have been inundated with dramatic videos and images purportedly showing the destruction caused by the flash floods in the Himalayan nation.While some of the footage is genuine, fact-checkers have found that several widely circulated videos and images are from disasters in other countries, recycled from earlier events or generated or manipulated using artificial intelligence, the report said.

The rapid spread of misleading content has complicated an already chaotic information environment at a time when families are desperately searching for missing relatives and authorities are trying to establish the full extent of the disasterFor social media users chasing views and virality, the tragedy has also become a source of lucrative content, prompting concerns among authorities, journalists and fact-checkers.According to Nepal Press Council Chairman Umesh Shrestha, 72 social media users have been instructed to remove inappropriate content, most of it posted through personal accounts.

The council's dedicated portal had received 101 complaints by 5 pm on Saturday, including complaints against 67 personal accounts that had posted gruesome visuals, Shrestha said."Similarly, complaints have been lodged against some online news portals and their social media pages," he said, adding that mainstream media organisations had largely avoided publishing misleading information and excessively graphic visuals."This is a positive takeaway," Shrestha said.One widely circulated video purported to show Home Minister Sudan Gurung inside a tunnel at the disaster site helping with rescue operations. The footage, however, was traced to a tunnel rescue operation in Uttarakhand, India, and had originally been posted by the Fire Service Uttarakhand Police on August 14.Another video posted on X on August 27, showing what appeared to be a catastrophic flood, garnered more than seven million views. It was assessed by Hive Moderation, an AI detection tool, as 97.2 per cent likely to have been generated through artificial intelligence, while X's community notes also flagged it as fabricated.



A separate video purporting to show a bridge collapsing during the Nepal-Tibet floods was also assessed as entirely AI-generated.Nepal Fact Check, a fact-checking website, debunked another video claiming to show a glacial lake outburst flood (GLOF) in Rasuwa. Fact-checkers traced the footage to a glacial outburst flood at Columbia Glacier in Alaska, the United States.Similarly, "before and after" photographs claiming to show a settlement in Rasuwa before and after the floods were found to be fabricated by the Australian Associated Press fact-checking unit.Fact-checkers say the growing use of AI has added a new dimension to the longstanding problem of recycled and falsely attributed disaster footage.The government's Social Media Regulation and Management Committee, which has been tasked with addressing graphic content, AI-generated misinformation, fake QR codes and other forms of online deception, has also begun discussions with social media platforms, the Post report said.

The crisis has also raised concerns over the circulation of graphic footage showing bodies, injuries and devastated communities, often without warnings or consideration for victims and their families.The flash floods, believed to have been triggered by a collapse or avalanche of ice and rock near the Nepal-Tibet border, devastated towns and villages in northern and central Nepal on August 26.Over 900 people were killed, while more than 4,245 people are still missing following the disaster, authorities said.The Bhotekoshi River, which flows south from the Himalayan border region, carried the floodwaters downstream, sweeping away homes, vehicles, roads and bridges and damaging hydropower projects.

Iran urges US to comply with interim deal after Trump threatens further strikes

DUBAI, - Iran said on Tuesday it would reciprocate if the United States honoured its commitments under a ?June interim deal on halting their conflict, but tensions remained high after U.S. President Donald Trump threatened Tehran with further strikes.Oil prices rose after the ?first exchange of direct attacks since late July, and following reports of two tankers coming under fire leaving the Strait of Hormuz, the global oil supply waterway that Iran has effectively closed to shipping.

The Reuters Iran Briefing newsletter keeps you informed with the latest developments and analysis of the Iran war. Sign up here.The six-month-old conflict had shifted into an economic standoff before a U.S. attack on Iran's Larak Island on Sunday, which Iran responded to by launching missiles overnight at two U.S. air bases in Jordan."We're going to hit ?them hard ... There will be a response," a Fox News reporter quoted Trump as telling the channel on Monday, although the president separately told reporters that the renewed strikes ?did not signal a return to full-scale war.A senior Iranian source told Reuters the exchanges of fire were a "limited and contained confrontation" ?but said Tehran would deliver a harsh response if attacked again.While neither side appears to want a return to all-out war, their pledges to respond to further attacks highlight how ?quickly a conflict that has increasingly been fought through sanctions, blockades and economic pressure could spill back into military action.

FEARS THAT IRAN CONFLICT COULD 'RUN AND RUN'Tehran has repeatedly said it ?will allow free navigation through the Strait of Hormuz only if Washington implements the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding that was signed by both sides in June but quickly unravelled.The MOU declared an end to fighting but deferred many of the most difficult issues and paved the way for a broader 60-day negotiation period - which passed without further agreement.

"I am stating clearly that if the U.S. returns to its ?commitments under the Memorandum of Understanding, the Islamic Republic of Iran will immediately reciprocate," Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said.He was speaking in Bishkek, capital of Kyrgyzstan, during a summit ?of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, whose members also include Russia, China, India and Pakistan.

He had also said on Monday that war was in no one's interest and that Tehran was still open to a ?negotiated solution.But ?there has been no sign of a breakthrough and the heightened tensions this week have renewed fears of oil supply disruptions from the world's key crude-producing region, with Brent futures rising another 1.3% on Tuesday."The tit-for-tat missile exchanges be-



tween the US and Iran bring validation to those who believe that even if not a 'forever war', this conflict will run and run," said PVM analyst John Evans.Highlighting such concerns, two supertankers carrying Saudi oil were struck by unknown projectiles within minutes of each other while transiting outbound through the Strait of Hormuz late on ?Monday, according to data from shipping intelligence and ?tracking firms Marisks and Kpler.

ECONOMIC PRESSUREThousands ?have been killed in the conflict, mainly in Iran and Lebanon, since it began with U.S. and Israeli strikes on Iran on February 28. Washington has increasingly relied on economic pressure to try to force Tehran to stop blockading the Strait and end the conflict.U.S. ?Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent has warned that countries doing business with Iran could face U.S. sanctions and said secondary sanctions are likely to be ?unveiled weekly in the effort ?to pressure Iran, with an initial focus on banks.Iran's central bank governor, Abdolnaser Hemmati, said on Tuesday that Tehran had sufficient foreign currency reserves.The central bank was ready to inject up to $2 billion into the foreign exchange market to calm recent volatility, Hemmati was quoted as saying by the semi-official Tasnim news agency.

"I am telling the president of the United States: Iran has (foreign) currency ?and it has ?enough," he said.His comments appeared partly aimed at reassuring markets after Iranian officials, including Pezeshkian, pointed to growing ?difficulties for Iran's economy.Iran's currency plunged to a record low in August, crossing the psychological threshold of 2 million rials to the dollar, while annual inflation reached 66% in July.Additional reporting by Dubai newsroom, Phil Stewart and Kanishka ?Singh in Washington, David Lawder in Asheville, North Carolina, Helen Coster in New York and Yasmine Ghania and Hatem Maher in Cairo; Writing by Timothy Heritage; Editing by Kevin Liffey

Majority of Americans oppose Trump's new Canada tariffs, renaming Lake Ontario, Reuters/Ipsos poll finds

WASHINGTON, A majority of Americans ?oppose President Donald Trump's moves last week to raise taxes on imported Canadian goods and his order to rename Lake Ontario as "Lake America," a new Reuters/Ipsos poll found.The three-day poll, which concluded on Sunday, showed Americans are ?wary of the feud with Canada — for decades a top U.S. trading partner — which ?has escalated since trade talks between the two countries collapsed and Trump last ?week ordered the hike in tariffs on Canadian goods.

The Reuters Daily Briefing newsletter provides all the news you need to start your day. Sign up here.Only 20% of poll respondents supported higher ?tariffs on Canadian goods compared to 57% who opposed them and 21% who couldn't say where they stood. ?About one in five poll respondents hadn't heard about the development.

U.S. households are already under financial pressure from the surge in gasoline prices since Trump launched a war on Iran in February, and American voters rate the ?cost of living as the top issue determining how they will vote in November 3 midterm elections. ?Trump's Republican allies will be defending slim congressional majorities in the elections. Trump's approval rating in recent weeks has ?been mired ?at the lowest level of his political career.The trade conflict took a theatrical turn last week when Trump on Thursday renamed Lake Ontario, one of the five Great Lakes of North America, as "Lake America." Trump's designation applies to U.S. fed-



eral usage about the lake, and does not govern ?what Canada, international bodies or ?other organizations call ?the lake. The president has often ribbed Canada, threatening to annex the longtime ally as a 51st U.S. state. He ordered the Gulf of ?Mexico be renamed the "Gulf of America" at the start of his second ?term in ?January 2025.Just 14% of Americans in the Reuters/Ipsos poll said they supported changing the name of Lake Ontario, which has gone by that name for more than 400 years. Sixty-three percent of poll ?respondents opposed ?the name change and the rest were unsure or didn't ?answer the question.The poll, which was conducted online and nationwide, gathered responses from 1,023 U.S. adults and had a margin ?of error of 4 percentage points.

Germany set to blame Russia for attempted airport drone attack



Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul stopped short of fully confirming the reports on Tuesday during a visit ?to Algeria but signalled new measures against Russia were being contemplated. When he returns to Germany ?later on Tuesday he is du

BERLIN, Germany is set to blame Russia for an attempted drone ?attack on a Ukrainian cargo plane at Leipzig/Halle airport in August and could prepare new ?sanctions against Moscow in coordination with allies, two sources said on Tuesday.Airport workers had found a drone laden with explosives and a detonator at the airport, an important civilian freight and NATO logistics hub in eastern Germany ?that is also a base for several giant Ukrainian Antonov An-124 cargo planes.The Reuters Daily Briefing newsletter provides all the news you need to start your day. Sign up here.Germany had ?previously stopped short of blaming Russia but called the incident part of a ?hybrid war being waged on Europe. Relations between Russia and the West collapsed after the ?full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022.The two sources who spoke on condition of anonymity confirmed reports in ?German media that the government would blame Russia and could prepare new sanctions. They did not disclose details of the proposed sanctions.

Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul stopped short of fully confirming the reports on Tuesday during a visit ?to Algeria but signalled new measures against Russia were being contemplated. When he returns to Germany ?later on Tuesday he is due to hold a press conference alongside Interior Minister Alexander Dobrindt."There is no ?overreaction on ?our part, but there is a response when we are attacked," Wadephul said. "Russia must understand that Germany is a stabilizing force in Europe — one that is always ready to negotiate but will not be intimidated in any way."

The Russian embassy had no immediate comment, but it has previously ?dismissed accusations about its possible ?involvement as a "fabricated ?provocation" and as "a new wave of anti-Russian hysteria in Germany".European intelligence officials have long monitored what they describe as Russian sabotage incidents in Europe aimed at ?weakening NATO's unity and its member states' willingness to support Ukraine against ?Russian aggression.Marie-Agnes ?Strack-Zimmermann, the German chair of the European Parliament's Committee on Security and Defence, called for Russia to be clearly identified as the mastermind behind the attempted attack."

Hindu identity not tied to worship: RSS chief at Toronto event

Toronto: RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat has said Hindu identity cannot be defined by a particular language, form of worship or way of life, arguing that its central principle is respect for diversity and recognition of the unity of existence.Addressing a gathering of more than 2,000 Hindus and friends of the community in the Greater Toronto Area, Bhagwat said outward differences were natural but did not divide humanity at its core. "When I say Hindu, the word Hindu cannot be defined by any specific language, through any specific worship, or through any living style," he said."All these are there. These are diversities of human beings. Hindus respect all, Hindus accept all. They don't mind," Bhagwat added. His remarks came at a Hindu Vishwa Bandhu gathering centred on the theme "Embracing the world in friendship." The programme brought together community and faith leaders, scholars, professionals and representatives of organisations from across Canada.Bhagwat said India's civilisational traditions had trained people to identify a common principle beneath visible differences. "They have been trained to see the unity underlying the diversity," he said. "So in Bharat, diversity is never a problem for unity because our tradition tells us not only unity in diversity, diversities of unity."He said differences should be accepted, respected and celebrated because they were expressions of an underlying unity.

EYE SECRETS

Editorial

Strong message from Bishkek Declaration

The unequivocal condemnation of terrorism in all its forms by the 26th Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit came as a vindication of India's long-held position on the issue. The tone and tenor of the Declaration at the end of the summit, held at Kyrgyzstan's capital, Bishkek, reflected New Delhi's concerns over cross-border terrorism and its implications for peace and stability in the region. The summit was attended, among others, by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Pakistani counterpart Shahbaz Sharif. The Declaration condemned terrorism "in all its forms and manifestations" and stated that double standards in combating terrorism, separatism and extremism were unacceptable. It called for a zero-tolerance approach towards terror networks, safe havens, and financial support. In tune with what India has been advocating for years, it said that groups defined as terrorists, separatists, or extremists cannot be used for selfish or mercenary purposes by any state or state-sponsored groups. The summit concluded that nations must work together to stop the cross-border movement of terrorists and to fight the illegal drug trades that fund terror groups. The tough messaging marked a diplomatic win for India, which has been pushing for a no-nonsense approach towards terrorist groups. Addressing the summit, Modi called upon member states to dismantle the "entire ecosystem of terrorism" — its financing, recruitment, radicalisation and safe havens — and insisted that there could be no "double standards" in how that fight is conducted. He went further, warning that states which use terrorism "as an instrument of policy" and shelter its perpetrators should be told plainly that terrorism can never be treated as a strategic asset.Geographic ReferenceModi framed terrorism as a grave challenge to all of humanity and cautioned against a mindset that reduces counter-terrorism to mere action and reaction. Sharif, on the other hand, sought to recast his country as a victim of terrorism rather than its alleged sponsor, citing what he called Pakistan's own sacrifices in the fight against extremism. Obviously, there would be no takers for such an argument. Islamabad must first demonstrate its commitment to dismantling the terror infrastructure and reining in the anti-India terror outfits operating on its soil. Another embarrassing moment for Pakistan came when its Prime Minister's Office circulated a cropped version of the official summit photograph with Modi edited out. The backlash was swift, forcing Sharif's office to quietly restore and repost the original, uncropped image on X. For a country about to assume the chairmanship of the SCO for the next two years, doctoring the one image that symbolises the group's unity was an unacceptable mistake. The SCO, a Eurasian political, economic, and security grouping, has ten members, including Russia, China, India, Pakistan, Iran, Uzbekistan, and the Kyrgyz Republic. India became a full member in 2017. The organisation marked 25 years at the Bishkek summit, making it one of the largest regional groupings.

As monsoon withdraws from Maharashtra, Pune braces for a warmer October



As the India Meteorological Department (IMD) announced that Southwest Monsoon has withdrawn completely from Maharashtra on October 8, Pune and its surrounding areas are expected to witness mostly dry weather in the coming week, with temperatures likely to rise gradually.The line of withdrawal now passes through Ranchi, Sundargarh, Bargarh, Bijapur, Hyderabad, Belagavi and Panjim.This year, the monsoon began withdrawing early from the state. It retreated from Pune and Mumbai, among others, on October 3, at least five days ahead of schedule. This marks the earliest exit of the monsoon in these parts in more than 20 years.

On October 8, the Shivajinagar weather station recorded a maximum temperature of 35.2 degrees Celsius. On October 6, the temperature at the weather station had soared to 35.7 degrees — the highest for October since 2002.In the coming days, the maximum temperature at Shivajinagar, Pune's chief weather observatory, is expected to touch 36 degrees.At the Pashan and Lohegaon stations, the maximum temperature was 35 degrees while Chinchwad was marginally higher. Magarpatta and NDA recorded a maximum temperature of 33.5 degrees Celsius on Thursday.

The minimum temperature is also rising across Pune, from 21.1 degrees on October 8, it is expected to touch 23 degrees in Shivajinagar, Pashan, Lohegaon, Chinchwad and Lavale in a couple of days. The warmest mornings in Pune are expected to be in Magarpatta, where the minimum temperature is likely to reach 26 degree C in three-four days.The broader weather picture across the region also points to above-normal conditions at several stations. On the morning of October 8, IMD announced that the maximum temperature was 35.7 degrees in Satara, 36.3 degrees in Ahmednagar and 37.6 degrees in Solapur, with departures from normal of 4.8 , 4.5 and 4.8 degrees Celsius, respectively.Mahabaleshwar was relatively cool, recording a maximum of 27.9 degrees and a minimum of 18.6 degrees. Till the morning of October 8, none of these stations recorded rainfall during the 24-hour period.

Rebel TMC MPs seek two more weeks to reply to Lok Sabha disqualification plea



ok Sabha Speaker Om Birla. The Speaker has granted 20 TMC MPs, who merged with the NCPI, time till September 22 to respond to a petition seeking their disqualification on grounds of defection.Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla sent a notice to rebel TMC on a petition seeking their disqualification under the anti-defection law.Twenty rebel TMC MPs, who have aligned themselves with the NCPI, on Thursday sought two more weeks to respond to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla's notices on a petition seeking their disqualification under the anti-defection law.

According to NCPI sources, the fresh request came after 10 MPs held a meeting at a hotel in Kolkata. Although 10 MPs skipped the meet, those present, including Sudip Bandopadhyay, spoke to them over phone and the decision was unanimous, sources said.NCPI MP Arup Roy said, "We have sought two weeks' time from the Speaker. Durga Puja and festive season is on, that's why we have sought extension."Regarding absence of MP's in the meeting, Roy said, "Some are not in Kolkata, some are busy and one is in the US. That is why they were not able to be physically present. But we had a talk with all of them and the decision was reached unanimously."Speaking to the media, Sudip Bandopadhyay said, "We are an important constituent of NDA. Lawyers of the bigger party are looking into it. We spoke with all 20 MPs. We deliberated on the content and finally we all sent letters to the Speaker.""The deadline ended on Thursday. So we have sent a letter requesting the Speaker to give us an extension. Our legal team needs time to collate documents," said another MP present in the meeting. Those absent in the meeting include Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar, Mala Roy, Shatabdi Roy among others.The request drew a sharp response from the Mamata Banerjee-led TMC faction, which sought to turn the delay into a political attack on the rebels."They themselves don't know which party they are in now. They need time to say that. These turncoats, opportunists and ungrateful people make tall claims, conduct Facebook revolutions and win elections on anti-BJP votes but now are serving the interest of the BJP. They cannot even answer a notice? They should be ashamed of themselves and resign. Anyway they will be disqualified," TMC leader Kunal Ghosh said.

The Speaker's office had, on September 25, directed the MPs to file their responses by October 8. The MPs had earlier sought four weeks, after an initial extension of three weeks had expired.The disqualification proceedings stem from petitions filed by TMC leader Abhishek Banerjee on June 18, after 20 of the party's 27 Lok Sabha MPs broke ranks with the Mamata Banerjee-led organisation and joined the NCPI, extending support to the BJP-led NDA.While the rebels have sought recognition as a separate political entity in the Lok Sabha, parliamentary records continue to list them as TMC members.Senior BJP Lok Sabha MP and Union Minister of State for Education Sukanta Majumder said, "It is the prerogative of the Speaker. He will take a decision."

In Ayodhya, Akhilesh dares Yogi: 'Turf open, contest 2027 polls from here'



As the Congress and other INDIA bloc allies continued their protest in Delhi demanding the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar, Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav took a "spiritual" route to target the Election Commission (EC) and the ruling-BJP.Attending a Bhagwat Katha recitation in Ayodhya, organised by former local party MLA Pawan Pandey, Yadav challenged Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to contest next year's election from Ayodhya.

Claiming that the BJP was not finding a new candidate for the seat, Yadav said, "If the chief minister, who makes tall claims, is so sure (of winning), (he must) prove it by contesting the election from Ayodhya… The Ayodhya turf is open for him."Adityanath is currently MLA from Gorakhpur Urban seat in Gorakhpur district. BJP's Ved Prakash Gupta is the current MLA from Ayodhya, who defeated SP's Pawan Pandey in 2022.Yadav skipped day 3 of the INDIA Bloc protest; he had sent MPs Rajeev Rai and Mohibbullah to represent the party at the lunch that the Congress hosted in Delhi today.

Addressing the gathering in Ayodhya, Yadav said the current "sattadhish (ruler)" and the EC should learn from Lord Krishna that "raaj chhall se nahi, prem aur janmat se milta hai (power is not won through deceit, but through love and the people's mandate)."Yadav said Krishna never cheated to get the throne of Hastinapur for the Pandavas, and he stood in support of "dharma" to get justice."Shri Krishna taught that there is no bigger raaj-dharma than love. One who has no love, kindness and affection, that person will be finished like Kans," he said.He appealed to the people to choose between a "government that increases hatred" or "brotherhood taught by Krishna"."We have to protect the Constitution because the Constitution is today's great epic poem of love and equality," Yadav said, adding that for him, the Bhagwat Katha is a collection of examples of rule of social justice."Like, Krisha called poor Sudama his best friend, gave him equal space, this is the first example of PDA where a poor person is accepted as friend with equality," he said.The PDA or Pichhda, Dalit, Alpsankhyak (backward classes, Dalits and minorities) formulation was projected as the SP's social coalition against the BJP-led NDA in 2023.

Makes development pitch for AyodhyaFrequently targeted by the BJP for not visiting the Ram temple in Ayodhya, Yadav called Ayodhya an auspicious land and the birth place of Lord Ram. "For me, Lord Ram and Krishna are the same," he added.He also referred to the alleged donation theft from the temple, and said the people of Ayodhya and UP will not forgive those who stole religious money.Yadav also said the Bhagwat Katha is a lesson for government officials. "Government officers and agencies should learn from Lord Krishna that Sudarshan Chakra was to protect the gentlemen (Sajjan log), and not to intimidate them… power is for a good use and not for misuse," SP chief said.He said that if the SP comes to power, the development of Ayodhya would be on par with global standards of infrastructure.Yadav claimed the BJP had done injustice to the people of Ayodhya by demolishing their shops and houses without giving them respect. He assured that there would be no such discrimination against Ayodhya residents under an SP government and their properties would not be demolished.

Industry must take primary responsibility for AI risks: Vaishnaw



New Delhi: Electronics and IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said on Thursday that the government plans to bring out a consultation paper on artificial intelligence (AI) regulations within a month, with a key focus on ensuring AI safety and curbing the dangers posed by deepfakes."I will request the department to come out with a regulation-focused consultation paper, which focuses on safety. That's the most important point — safety related to AI use," the minister said at an event.

Vaishnaw pointed out that deepfakes are a nuisance that can cause huge problems in society."People believe them, and it sets a totally wrong precedent. It sets out a totally wrong narrative, and people get lured into doing wrong things and believing wrong things," he said.The minister further stated that the consultation paper will focus on skilling, safety and ensuring that no one is left behind as AI technology advances.He emphasised that the human impact of AI must remain at the centre of the regulatory approach.The minister said AI cannot be governed through legislation alone and called for a combination of technology and regulation. "We have to bring a techno-legal solution," he said, adding that stakeholders would need to be brought on board.Vaishnaw said that the industry would have to take primary responsibility for tackling the risks associated with AI amid the mounting menace of cyberattacks and deepfakes.The government's India AI Governance Guidelines, released earlier this year, have already outlined a principle-based approach centred on trust, people-first governance and responsible AI innovation. The framework also identifies misinformation, deepfakes, algorithmic bias and unintended societal harm among the major risks that need to be safeguarded against.

The guidelines recommend reviewing existing laws to identify regulatory gaps around AI, including issues

'She was still clutching her house keys': Death toll in Delhi building collapse rises to 4

The children had been playing at the Kadimi Eidgah ground at New Seemapuri, in Northeast Delhi, on a hot Wednesday afternoon.Other than the two Eid prayers held during the year, residents said the maidan was mostly frequented by the children because the narrow residential lanes offered no space to play.Among those watching over them was Hazra Bibi. The 60-year-old had locked her house and stepped out to visit her relative, Salma, who lived in the building overseeing the ground.Around 3.15 pm, a four-storey building next to the ground began to give way.

According to neighbours, Hazra saw the impending danger and shouted out to the children, including her 17-year-old grandson Ayaan, to run towards the adjoining lane. She also pushed her relative, Devruddin Mirja, 28, out of the way of the falling structure. But as she tried to escape, the building collapsed towards the lane, burying her beneath the debris.When rescuers recovered her body early Thursday morning, Hazra was still clutching the keys to her locked house in her right hand.Hazra was among four people killed in the collapse, which also left 8 injured.The building was owned by Anwar. His family members who stayed on the first three floors included his wife Salma, 50; son Abdul Rehman, 28, and wife Sakeena; his daughters Nusrat and Ameena; as well as Nusrat's three-year-old son Abdaan.

Police said Anwar is on the run.Nusrat's body was recovered in the early hours of Thursday. She had come from Uttar Pradesh to visit her ailing mother, her uncle Ismail said. She was on the staircase, carrying food for her three-year-old son Abdaan, when the building came down.Abdaan and Salma were found trapped on the ground floor. Neighbours found them and managed to pull both of them out. The boy suffered minor injuries to his legs and was taken to hospital before being discharged. In the aftermath, relatives said he remained restless, repeatedly asking for his mother. Ghulafsa, 21, was also among those killed. She was around four months pregnant and had come to visit her ailing mother. She had been sitting near the entrance of the building with her four-year-old daughter Zoya when it collapsed. Both were killed.Among the injured were Sakina, 35, a tenant on the third floor who suffered serious facial and head injuries, and her husband Samad, also known as Hasin, a scrap worker. A 34-year-old mason, Chote, who was working on the structure, was also pulled out.Police said body parts have also been recovered from the debris. "Their identification is pending and will be ascertained through



DNA examination." A case has been registered under relevant sections, police added.'My son could not be found'For Muslima Bibi, 27, the first question after the collapse was whether her son was alive.She had been living in Anwar's building with her five-year-old son Arhaan for the past three months. Her monthly rent for her single room on the third floor was Rs 3,000, including electricity and water bills.She was washing dishes and sweeping floors at a nearby house when her brother called around 3.30 pm. "I had left my son along with my uncle in the room. My brother called me, screaming that the building had collapsed and that my son could not be found. I rushed there."Arhaan had survived by squeezing himself into a corner of the room. Neighbours eventually found him and pulled him out without a scratch.But almost everything Muslima owned — around Rs 2,500 in cash, three gas cylinders and household possessions were lost — was still under the rubble.

For Muslima, however, the rescue did not end with finding her son. Her rented room, belongings and savings were all buried under the rubble. Even her jewellery, which included four gold nose pins, ear tops, two pairs of silver anklets and her son's silver bracelet, were gone."I have spent the night at the site in the same clothes I had worn to work, waiting for rescue teams to clear the rubble. I haven't eaten or drank anything till now. We have very few belongings. Also the IDs of both my children were in the room," she added.Muslima's family, originally from Medinipur in West Bengal, has lived in Delhi for decades. Her husband, who worked in scrap and labour, is away in Bengaluru.Residents had raised concernsIn a statement, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) described the structure as a ground-plus-three-floor building located in a jhuggi jhopri area on about 25 square yards of land belonging to the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board.

VIF hosts discussion on evolution of Maoist insurgency in India

New Delhi: Vivekananda International Foundation (VIF) hosted the release and discussion of the book titled "India's Maoists: Glimpses into Red Insurgency", authored by Dr P V Ramana, examining the evolution, geographical spread and security dimensions of Maoist insurgency in India.

Commencing the session, Gen Anil Chauhan, Director, VIF, highlighted insurgency as an important national security challenge, particularly for a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-linguistic society like India. Quoting Chanakya, he identified four types of threats: "internal threat, external threat, internal threat with external abetment and external threat with internal abetment." He underscored the necessity of understanding these multi-dimensional threats to maintain internal national stability.Dr P V Ramana, author, drew upon historical episodes and anecdotes from different parts of India to illustrate the evolution and geographical spread of the Naxalite/Maoist movement. He discussed regions including undivided Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Telangana, Karnataka and West Bengal, tracing the Red Corridor and North-South Corridor, different phases of insurgency across the decades, and critical attacks that had a major impact on the movement, while placing these developments within the longer history of communist movements since Independence.Dr Arvind Gupta, former Deputy NSA and former Director, VIF, congratulated Dr P V Ramana, describing the book as "a delight to read" and authentic. He noted the considerable efforts that had gone into ending insurgency in India and welcomed the government's declaration that India was insurgency-free. He highlighted questions on why insurgency emerged, why it persisted and why it took so long to control, noting that deficits were addressed and that the strategy pursued in recent years had been coherent. Shri Pankaj Singh, IPS, took the audience through the chronology of Left-Wing Extremism (LWE), from its first phase in West Bengal in the late 1960s to its subsequent movement towards South India. He discussed the developments of the 2000s, including how Central Armed Police Forces operated in unfamiliar terrain and conducted counter-insurgency operations. He also noted the Naxal groups' emphasis on propaganda through songs and books to influence the masses, observing that it was fortunate that social media had not yet emerged during that period. book.



Used-car sale racket in Gujarat: Police hunt for Tata Motors showroom manager



Imagine handing over your car for sale or exchange to someone who promises you an attractive price and/ or a big discount on your new car. But the proceeds of the sale never reach you – and you discover that you have lost both your car and the money that you thought you would make.At least four disputed vehicle transactions have brought a manager at a Tata Motors dealership in Nadiad in Kheda district under police scrutiny. The complaints of alleged cheating against this individual suggest a pattern of deception involving both customers and dealers of used cars.

On Tuesday (September 16), an FIR was registered at the Kapadvanj Town police station against one Rajan Joshi, who police said is a manager at Progressive Cars Pvt Ltd, a Tata Motors franchise in Nadiad that is allied with the dealership's main showroom in Anand.This was the fourth FIR in five days accusing Joshi of used-car fraud – the first FIR had been lodged at Nadiad Town police station on September 9.In the first complaint, the owner of a Maruti Suzuki Nexa XL6 had alleged that Joshi had sold off the car for Rs 6.25 lakh without the knowledge of the complainant, and had also not paid the complainant the money from the sale.Joshi is on the run, police said. A spokesperson at the Progressive Cars Tata Motors dealership in Nadiad confirmed that Joshi was a "Team Leader" there.The spokesperson said Progressive Cars was keen to give a statement, but needed "some time". He alleged that Joshi appeared to have swindled the dealership as well, and that the company was currently gathering details to file a police complaint against him.

The first FIR opened the floodgates for a series of complaints from both car owners and car dealers, police said. Nadiad Deputy Superintendent of Police V R Bajpayee told The Indian Express that a total of 13 individuals had come forward with similar complaints since the matter came to light."The case pertains to a manager of a Tata Motors showroom in Nadiad. The accused promised the car owners good value for their used cars and went ahead and sold them – in some cases without even letting the owners know. He did not transfer the money to the owners either," Bajpayee said.A phone call from a used-car dealer to an owner whose car was hypothecated to a bank blew the lid off the alleged scam, Bajpayee said."When the car dealer called the owner for the required No-Objection Certificate, the owner was surprised to know that his car had been sold off without his permission," the officer said.

"It was after this case that 12 other complainants came forward," Bajpayee said. "The police are lodging FIRs in the cases where the complainants are willing to take the legal process forward," he said.

'Rs 25 lakh collected from dealer, zero cars delivered'In the Kapadvanj FIR on Tuesday, a used-car dealer and his brother have alleged that Joshi collected more than Rs 25 lakh in connection with deals involving several vehicles, but had failed to complete the promised transactions.According to the complaint filed by Bhadresh Patel, who runs a used-car dealership called Jay Ambe Auto Consult in Kapadvanj, Joshi offered to arrange a Honda Amaze, a Hyundai Aura, a Tata Nexon and a Suzuki Ertiga for him.Patel alleged in the complaint that he had paid Joshi several instalments of cash, and made transactions through bank accounts. But despite receiving the money, Joshi allegedly failed to provide Patel with the promised NOCs.In the case of an Ertiga, Joshi allegedly took Rs 7 lakh but did not deliver the vehicle, says the complaint. Patel also alleged that the original owner of an Aura supplied by Joshi had told him (Patel) that he (original owner) had not received the payment for the car.The complaint also alleged that Joshi had taken a Tata Altroz from another person and sold it without paying the owner of the car the promised sum of Rs 7.20 lakh.Alarm bells started ringing after Joshi allegedly stopped responding to phone calls. Patel said Joshi's mobile phone was switched off in the first week of September.

A Hyundai Aura, a WagonR, and three alleged victimsSome complainants have said they came in contact with Joshi through the Tata dealership and ended up trusting him, police said.In a complaint registered at the Nadiad Rural police station on September 12, one Dilipkumar Barot, a resident of Manjipura in Nadiad town, alleged that Joshi took his Hyundai Aura saying that the car would be displayed at the showroom, and later sold it without his consent.In his complaint, Barot said he had bought the car in 2022 after taking a bank loan of Rs 8.09 lakh, with a repayment EMI of Rs 13,278. On August 26, Barot visited the Tata showroom to inquire about a new car. There he met Joshi, who allegedly valued both Barot's Aura as well as the vehicle of a friend at approximately Rs 4.20 lakh, the complaint said.According to the complaint, Joshi got back to Barot two days later with an alleged "festive exchange offer" under which benefits of Rs 1.50 lakh to Rs 2 lakh would be available to him.But Barot was not convinced – so Joshi allegedly assured him that he would only take the Aura to display at the showroom, and the car would not be sold without first checking with Barot. Joshi allegedly left his WagonR behind with Barot.On September 8, Barot received a call from Bhadresh Patel, who allegedly told him that he had bought the Aura from Joshi for Rs 4.90 lakh, paying Rs 3.70 lakh by cheque and Rs 1.20 lakh in cash.A horrified Barot tried to contact Joshi, but found his phone switched off. Later that afternoon, a man showed up at Barot's home and allegedly claimed that the WagonR that Joshi had left behind actually belonged to him, and that he too had been duped by Joshi. This man had then driven away with the WagonR, Barot told police.A lawyer's Tata Altroz, and promise of 'benefits' on new carThe second FIR lodged at Nadiad Town police station on September 10 was filed by lawyer Nitiraj Mistry, who alleged that he was cheated of Rs 8.60 lakh after he handed over his Tata Altroz for "exchange".According to the FIR, Mistry had purchased the car in his mother's name in 2023 after taking a loan from a bank. Joshi had allegedly told the lawyer that the car would fetch Rs 8.60 lakh, and had collected the vehicle from the parking area of the Nadiad court complex.

Mistry told police that Joshi had asked him to clear the outstanding loan and obtain an NOC from the bank. Mistry subsequently paid Rs 3,47,583 to the lender, obtained the NOC, and sent it to Joshi.Joshi had allegedly told Mistry that the car would be repaired at a workshop in Anand, and that Mistry would receive a cheque after its sale. He also allegedly offered Mistry Rs 1.50 lakh in "dealer and loyalty discounts" on the purchase of a new car.When payment did not arrive, Mistry visited the showroom, and allegedly discovered that another individual had already made full payment for 'his' vehicle, police said.

DGFT approves import of 642 UK cars under India-UK FTA quota



New Delhi: The commerce ministry's arm, the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), has approved applications from seven companies to import 642 cars from Britain for the remainder of this year under the tariff rate quota provisions of the India-UK free trade agreement, an official said on Wednesday.The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) in July invited applications for the allocation of 2026 import quotas for fully built passenger cars and goods vehicles under the duty concession provisions of the agreement. The applications were sought for a quota of about 5,000 units."The directorate had received applications from eight companies. We have approved applications from seven. Quota has been approved for 642 cars," the official said.Under the India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), which came into effect on July 15, New Delhi has allowed the import of a total of 3.78 lakh units of conventional-engine passenger cars, including those in the mass segment, from the UK at a concessional customs duty during the first 15 years of implementation of the trade pact between the two countries.Under the pact, tariffs on automotive imports will fall from about 110 per cent to 10 per cent, with quotas on both sides.Only original equipment manufacturers (OEMs), dealers and channel partners duly authorised by the OEMs of vehicles originating in the UK were eligible to apply for the Tariff Rate Quota (TRQ).

Alamgir Alam's discharge plea rejected by Supreme Court in money laundering case



New Delhi: In a setback to former Jharkhand Minister Alamgir Alam, the Supreme Court on Wednesday refused to interfere with the High Court order dismissing his discharge plea in a money laundering case.The PMLA case against Alam is linked to an alleged tender scam. His request to be discharged from the case has consequently been rejected.

A Bench comprising Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice Sheel Nagu heard the matter and declined to grant relief to the former minister.Earlier, a special PMLA court in Ranchi had rejected Alam's discharge application. Subsequently, the Jharkhand High Court also refused to interfere with that order and dismissed his plea.

According to the High Court's May 6 judgment, material placed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) included documents and statements relating to the alleged collection of commissions in exchange for the award of tenders and Alam's alleged role in the arrangement.The court observed that at the stage of considering a discharge plea, it is required only to determine whether a prima facie case exists against the accused.The ED's investigation reportedly involved searches conducted at multiple locations in May 2024, during which around Rs 37.55 crore in cash was allegedly recovered.According to the agency, the probe uncovered an alleged mechanism for collecting commissions from contractors in return for the allotment of tenders in the Rural Works Department.The ED has alleged that commissions amounting to roughly 3.2 per cent of the total tender value were collected, of which about 1.5 per cent was earmarked for the then minister.The High Court judgment also referred to statements and documents submitted by the ED.It held that, on the basis of the material available on record, Alam's alleged involvement could not be ruled out at this stage.The court, however, clarified that these observations do not amount to findings on guilt and are limited to an assessment of whether sufficient prima facie material exists to proceed with the trial.

Onion prices fall 9pc in wholesale markets in nine days: Govt



New Delhi: Consumer Affairs Secretary Nidhi Khare on Wednesday said onion prices had declined by 9 per cent in wholesale markets over the past nine days and expected retail rates to start moderating.The all-India average retail price of onion stood at Rs 53.92 per kg on Tuesday, up 48 per cent from a month ago and 94 per cent from a year ago.According to the latest government data, inflation in onion prices rose to 48.27 per cent in August from 22.54 per cent in July.

To control prices, the Centre last month started selling onions at Rs 35 per kg, lower than market rates, through retail outlets of NCCF, NAFED and Kendriya Bhandar, as well as mobile vans, as part of its efforts to provide relief to consumers."There is no dearth in the availability of onions. Since the time that we started the retail intervention to make sure that onions reach consumers at Rs 35 per kg, we have been able to reach about 48 cities in the country. We have used a hybrid way, both transportation by retail rates as well as trucks," Khare told reporters on the sidelines of an event organised by industry body PHDCCI."I can say that now, when we see and analyse the mandi prices in the last nine days, there has been a decrease of 9 per cent in the prices," she said, while replying to a query regarding the price and availability situation of onions in the country.The secretary said the decline in wholesale rates would have a positive impact on retail prices, which were expected to moderate.

The government has begun a calibrated release of onion buffer stocks under a hybrid transportation model, combining railway rakes (Kanda Express) and road transport, to ensure adequate availability and check seasonal price pressures.The disposal of onions from the Price Stabilisation Fund (PSF) buffer, which began on August 24 through NAFED and NCCF, has helped improve market availability and ease prices.The government maintained 1.21 lakh tonnes of onions in its buffer stock for the current year.Onion production stood at 307.37 lakh tonnes in 2025-26, a marginal dip from 307.67 lakh tonnes in the preceding year.Onion prices typically see a seasonal uptick from August to September due to festive demand, weather-related disruptions, supply chain movements and shifting demand patterns.

Sia urges strict punishment for all four in Golf Course Road hit-and-run case



New Delhi: Gurugram's Golf Course Road hit-and-run victim Sia on Wednesday appealed for strict punishment for all four occupants of the car that hit her motorbike, saying it was necessary to convey the right message to society regarding women's safety.Speaking to IANS, Sia said she had high expectations from the court and hoped to get justice."I have great expectations from the court that I will get justice. It is absolutely essential. If we don't ensure these people are punished, it will send a very wrong message to society," she said.

"I stated in court yesterday that all four who were in the car should be arrested and strict action should be taken against all of them. In my opinion, they should face harsh consequences; that is the only way to send a message to such young men so that anyone thinking of committing such an act would think twice," she added.Responding to the accused's claim that he was hurrying to use the restroom, Sia said: "That is a despicable statement. I have no idea what kind of mentality they — and their lawyer — have. How can these people make false statements when the entire incident was recorded on video?"She further said that if the accused really needed to use the washroom urgently, he could have gone straight from the first lane.

"Instead, they came into the third lane at such high speed, hit me and fled. It wasn't as if it was 3 pm and there was traffic; it was 7 am on Golf Course Road — the three-lane road was completely empty. People could have made their way out from anywhere," she said."No matter how hard they try, they won't escape; and right now, a lot of people are supporting me. The entire country is watching this case to see how the department handles it. I don't think they would send out the wrong message after an incident like this," she added.Sia also said that had the dashcam on her bike not recorded the incident, she "probably wouldn't have even been able to justify what happened".

"So many women who might be heading to work have to face this kind of harassment. They don't have cameras, and often, cases like this don't even get registered," she said.She reiterated that all four occupants should be punished so that an example could be set for society.Her brother, Deepankar Chauhan, echoed the view, saying the accused should not be released within a week and that an example should be set for society.Meanwhile, accused driver Kalyan Bainsla has been sent to two days of police custody, his lawyers told reporters. The next hearing is scheduled for September 18.Along with Bainsla, his friend Lavnish, who is also an accused in the case, has also been sent to police custody. Both were arrested by Gurugram Police a day earlier.Earlier, Sia's father, Roshan Chauhan, had appealed for the accused to be remanded in judicial custody."We appeal to the police to take the remaining two people who were in the car into custody as well. When four people are sitting in a car and one person is engaging in such an act, the others should have stopped him. They did not stop him, which allowed him to engage in such an act and flee," he told IANS, urging strict punishment for all four.

CII Energy Efficiency Summit 2026 focuses on India's Net Zero transition

Hyderabad: The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), on day 1 of the 25th Energy Efficiency Summit 2026, brought together policymakers, industry leaders, technology providers, and sustainability experts at the HICC, Hyderabad, to deliberate on accelerating India's transition towards a Net Zero economy.Organised by the CII – Green Business Centre, the Summit was held under the theme "Accelerating the transition to a Net Zero economy through energy efficiency, clean technologies, and sustainable practices."The inaugural day also featured the 22nd Power Plant Summit 2026 and the 20th PaperTech 2026, creating a comprehensive industry platform focused on energy efficiency, clean technologies, industrial decarbonisation, resource conservation, digitalisation and sustainable manufacturing.Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, Deputy Chief Minister, Tejpreet Singh Chopra, Chairman, Energy Efficiency Summit 2026, Ajay Sharma, Chairman, Power Plant Summit 2026, Ganesh Bhadti, Chairman, PaperTech 2026, and others addressed the session.

Fake-drug racket suspect holed up in Azerbaijan, Karnataka mulls CBI probe

The Karnataka government is considering handing the probe into the multi-crore-rupee counterfeit drug racket unearthed near Bidadi over to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), as the prime accused is holed up in Azerbaijan and the racket has interstate links, sources said Wednesday.A Special Investigation Team (SIT), which has arrested five people in the case, is exploring steps to bring back R Prashant, one of the key suspects, from Azerbaijan, where immigration authorities have reportedly seized his passport, the sources said.Counterfeit and expired medicines worth around Rs 5 crore were seized in Bengaluru South district in August. Investigations indicate the medicines were manufactured in other states and brought to Karnataka for distribution.Health and Family Welfare Minister U T Khader, speaking to reporters in Mangaluru on Tuesday, said the state government was considering referring the case to the central agency for a comprehensive investigation, given the alleged involvement of manufacturers and distributors operating across multiple states.Among the arrested accused is Veeresh Kumar Jain, owner of Krupa Health Care. The SIT raided his unit near Minerva Circle in Bengaluru last week.Spurious medicines, illegal repackaging, 50% discountThe racket, involving critical-care, ICU, and cancer medicines, was busted at an alleged illegal repackaging and relabelling facility operating from a farmhouse near Bidadi and Hejjala in Bengaluru South.According to the preliminary investigation, the unlicensed facility sourced cheap, substandard, and expired medicines from illegal manufacturing units in states including Himachal Pradesh and Telangana.The operators allegedly transferred the medicines into new vials and affixed forged labels and stamps bearing the names of prominent multinational pharmaceutical companies,



including Pfizer.The allegedly spurious and substandard medicines were then supplied to hospitals and pharmacies at steep discounts, reportedly around 50 per cent below the market price, potentially putting patients receiving critical and intensive-care treatment at risk.Treat sale of fake medicines as attempt to murder: MinisterKhader said penalties for offences involving counterfeit medicines were inadequate as they often resulted only in licence cancellation or nominal fines. He said he would urge the Union government to introduce stringent legal provisions against the manufacture and sale of counterfeit medicines.The minister also advocated treating the manufacture and sale of fake medicines as an attempt to murder, citing the potential threat they pose to patients."Those running such mafias and playing with people's lives must be prosecuted under stringent criminal provisions," Khader said.He alleged that existing laws allowed offenders to shift their operations to places such as Kerala or Chennai and establish new businesses in the names of family members.Police and health department officials said they were yet to receive laboratory reports on allegations that the cartel had

HC bars Punjab government from large-scale ad campaigns till pending DA paid to employees



The Punjab and Haryana High Court on Monday directed the Punjab government to release the pending Dearness Allowance (DA) to its employees and pensioners within 15 days and barred it from issuing any large-scale advertisement campaigns until the dues are paid.Rejecting appeals by the State and Punjab State Power Corporation Limited (PSPCL) challenging a single-judge verdict, a division bench of Acting Chief Justice Ashwani Kumar Mishra and Justice Rohit Kapoor also made it clear that if the payment is not made by the end of the deadline, the government will have to pay six per cent simple interest on the outstanding amount."The State of Punjab and PSPCL are directed to grant and release all up-to-date pending installments of Dearness Allowance/Dearness Relief (DA/DR) to all its employees and pensioners, respectively, at the same rates as has been paid to the members of the All India Services (IAS/IPS/IFS) serving within the State of Punjab, in accordance with the Central Government pattern, within a fortnight," the bench ruled.

"Till all such dues are cleared, the State of Punjab shall not resort to any unproductive expenditures such as large-scale advertising campaigns in print or social media as these expenses cannot justify the denial of dues admissible to State employees", the Bench ordered.The bench also directed the Punjab chief secretary to to ensure "scrupulous compliance of the directions" and "file a compliance report by way of affidavit" by August 31, 2026.The State government had earlier submitted that it was not in a position to comply with the single bench directions to release arrears amounting to more than Rs 15,000 crore.Delivering the order, the division bench laid emphasis on "unproductive expenditures"."…the issue of financial constraints is being raised as a ground for withholding the legitimate dues of the State's own employees. However, as per the information available in the public domain, the State is expending large amounts of money on grant of freebies, doles, advertorial campaigns, and other expenditure, which would not strictly fall within the domain of essential expenditure by a welfare State, cannot be brushed aside, lightly," the bench said.

The bench further held that State cannot withhold the legitimate dues payable to the employees. "Viewed in any manner, large scale advertising campaigns in print or social media and other unproductive expenses cannot justify denial of dues admissible to the State employees," it added.If implemented, close to 8 lakh employees and pensioners will benefit from the order. The salary of certain employees could increase by approximately Rs 10,000 to Rs 15,000 per month.The State government had challenged the order submitting that it was not in a position to comply with the single bench directions to release arrears that amount to more than Rs 15,000 crore.Rejecting Punjab's submission, a single bench of Justice Harpreet Singh Brar on April 8 had directed the state government and PSPCL to grant 58 per cent DA alongwith arrears to all employees and pensioners at par with officers from the IAS, IPS, IFS and judicial services. The court had given the State to comply with the order by June 30.The petitioners had earlier submitted that DA instalments with effect from July 1, 2023 have not been released to serving employees and pensioners. They had also challenged a liquidation plan submitted by the Punjab government proposing to pay the pending pension and DA to employees over five financial years and for pensioners below the age of 75 years over 42 instalments without interest.

The division bench, however, termed the proposal a "discriminatory approach" and held that the state government was bound by its policy decision of adopting the central government pattern for payment of DA.The then Congress led dispensation in Punjab had in June 2021 approved the recommendation of the 6th Pay Commission to grant DA to the state employees on the patter of central government. It, however, failed to release the money following which employees moved the court.In the high court, the Punjab government had argued that it had not accepted the June 2021 report. It had submitted that a new plan had been introduced on February 18, 2025. The government had further contended that Punjab already provides its employees with higher pay scales than many other states ("high pay master"), and therefore there was no need to grant additional DA.However, Advocate Sunny Singla, appearing for the employee organizations, argued that the Punjab government is legally bound to provide DA to its employees and pensioners in accordance with the central government pattern. He pointed out that IAS, IPS, IFS, and judicial officers were already receiving DA at central government rates, while other employees and pensioners were being unfairly denied the same benefit.According to Singla, the court also directed the government to release the DA pending from January 1, 2016. The Punjab government is currently paying 42% DA to its employees. However, compared to central government staff, 18 per cent DA remains unpaid. Employee organizations had long been demanding that this gap be eliminated and the outstanding amount be released.Employee organisations also relied on a judgment of the Supreme Court, which held that DA is not a bonus or an ex gratia payment but an integral component of an employee's salary.

Construction of highway spur connecting NH-205A to Zirakpur bypass to begin in Dec



The construction of the 10.30-km spur (PR-07) — connecting the Ambala-Chandigarh section of the National Highway (NH) 205A to Zirakpur bypass — is set to begin in December this year, with the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) targeting completion within two years.A spur is a small section that splits off from a main highway to connect commuters to a particular destination.The six-lane greenfield corridor, whose foundation was laid by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in July, is being developed under the Hybrid Annuity Mode (HAM). According to the details, the project has been awarded to M/s Ceigall Infra Ltd for its execution.

HAM is a public-private partnership model used by the government, especially for highway projects, to reduce financial risk for private developers while ensuring timely construction.The government (through the NHAI) will give 40 per cent of the project cost to the developer during the construction period in stages while the private developer will finance the remaining 60 per cent, construct the highway, and is responsible for its maintenance for a specified period.After the road is completed, the NHAI repays the developer's investment through fixed semi-annual annuity payments, along with interest, over the concession period.This stretch is expected to become a key missing link in the proposed Tricity Ring Road and aims to provide a seamless bypass for long-distance traffic around Chandigarh, Panchkula and Mohali.

While speaking to The Indian Express, NHAI project director Aashim Bansal said that the project would allow long-distance traffic travelling from Ambala towards Chandigarh and beyond to bypass the congestion-prone urban stretches of Dera Bassi and Zirakpur."Vehicles will be routed directly to the Zirakpur bypass and Aerocity without entering these towns, significantly reducing travel time and vehicle operating costs while improving road safety," he said, adding that nearly 20,000 vehicles will be diverted daily away from the congestion-prone urban stretches of Dera Bassi and Zirakpur.By providing a direct, access-controlled connection to the Zirakpur bypass and Aerocity, the corridor will enable through traffic and freight vehicles to avoid entering densely populated areas, reducing travel time, fuel consumption and vehicular emissions while improving road safety and traffic flow."The 10.30-km corridor has been designed as a fully access-controlled six-lane greenfield highway with grade-separated interchanges, eliminating at-grade intersections and separating through traffic from local urban traffic. This is expected to improve the operational efficiency of the Zirakpur bypass while easing congestion across the Tricity road network," Bansal added.Officials said the PR-07 Spur is an integral component of the planned Tricity Ring Road, which aims to provide uninterrupted, high-capacity movement around the Chandigarh urban agglomeration. Once completed, the link will enable through traffic and freight vehicles to bypass Chandigarh, Panchkula and Mohali entirely, reducing pressure on city roads.Apart from improving regional connectivity, the project is also expected to boost logistics efficiency, attract investment and support economic growth in the surrounding areas by strengthening the highway infrastructure network.

57 booked as trading platform probed for forex investment scam



Pune Rural police launched a probe into the operations of TP Global FX, a multi-asset trading platform that has been the subject of major criminal investigations — including by the Enforcement Directorate — for allegedly running a massive illegal forex trading and investment scam across India. In a case registered, 57 people linked to the entity including its key officials and local agents were booked.A First Information Report (FIR) was registered at Narayangaon police station under Pune Rural police last week based on the complaint filed by a 50-year-old businessman from Junnar taluka who was duped of over Rs one crore by the company and its representatives.

"Multiple cases have till now been registered in West Bengal, Gujarat and Maharashtra against the company and its representatives. Based on the case registered at Narayangaon, we will investigate the footprint of the company in Pune district." said an officer.The officer added, "The complainant had approached Kolkata police with the complainant. A Zero FIR was registered at Hare Street Police station in Kolkata which was transferred to Pune Rural police. The case was registered at Narayangaon police station as the complainant is a resident of the jurisdiction."Directorate of Enforcement (ED), Kolkata Zonal Office has filed multiple prosecution complaints in connection with the ongoing investigation under provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002. The ED said TP Global Forex trading illegally collected over Rs 2,000 crore from the public in the name of forex trading. The amount was collected in dummy bank accounts opened with the assistance of associates.ED initiated investigation based on FIRs registered by police in Kolkata, Maharashtra and Gujarat. "As per the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the website of TP Global FX is neither registered with RBI nor does it have any authorisation from RBI for forex trading. The RBI issued an alert list including the name of TP Global FX vide a press release in September 2022, which was published to caution the public against unauthorised trading platforms," the ED has said."ED investigation revealed a sophisticated deception was orchestrated by individuals by utilising numerous dummy companies to entice investors/general public into a fraudulent scheme promising high returns on forex trading investments through TP Global FX. The total amount of seized/frozen/attached assets in the case stands at approximately Rs 291 crores, in the form of cash, gold, real estate, hospitality establishments, office spaces, agricultural land, vehicles, cryptocurrencies, and bank balances," the ED has said.

'Vicky aaya hai': Faridabad teacher's killer used husband's name to trap her

Sandhya, a 30-year-old English teacher at Saraswati Senior Secondary School in Faridabad's Sikrona, was at work when she was informed that "Vicky" was waiting for her. Her husband, Vikas, often went by 'Vicky'. She did not know then what awaited her.CCTV footage from the school shows a man waiting at the school entrance, his face covered with a cloth. As soon as Sandhya stepped out, hoping to find her husband, the man pulled her by the hand and stabbed her at least 20 times. The footage shows Sandhya falling to the ground, screaming, but the stabs didn't stop. A colleague, Tejpal, tried to save her, but the attacker threatened him with a knife. Sandhya succumbed to her injuries soon after. The attacker fled the scene on a bike without a number plate, the school staff said. However, police identified and caught the accused, Amit (21), within two hours.According to the police, Sandhya earlier worked at a school in Faridabad's Kot village. Amit's family owned the school building, and that's how he first spoke to her. Subsequently, Amit started harassing Sandhya. She left the job and moved to the Sikrona-based school, but the stalking continued. Sandhya also registered a police complaint against Amit, following which he apologised. Police said he nursed a grudge."The victim explicitly asked the accused to stop following her and warned him of legal action if he continued to harass her. Agitated by her refusal to talk to him, the accused planned the attack," a police officer said.Following the murder, Sandhya's husband Vikas registered a complaint at the Sector 58 police station, and a murder case was registered. "Our team acted swiftly on technical inputs and human intelligence. The suspect was traced and nabbed from the area within two hours of the crime being reported," the officer said, adding that the knife used in the crime had been recovered.



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An exhibition with a political edge, open to all – to see, interpret and buy



There's a fire extinguisher covered by typography print, a graffiti-painted toilet bowl with illustrated toilet paper rolling out of it, and blue and orange crates with zines, stickers, matchboxes, and puzzles in them.There are no "Do not touch" signs; everything in the exhibition is meant to be picked up, flipped through, bought, and taken home.Advertising professional Priyanshi said she admired the "smaller tangibles like postcards, comics, and clay miniatures" "because these days people like to have art that they can use". Vasudha, a lawyer, said she wanted the art around her to remind her of a place, an experience or a particular moment.Organisers of the 'Paper and Play' exhibition, ongoing at Gallery XXL in Defence Colony until August 22, said it was important to ensure that interest in the exhibits was not limited to art collectors alone.So the least expensive exhibit costs only Rs 100, Sarah Malik, who has curated the show with Giulia Ambrogi and Priyanshi S., said. "And the most expensive is a hand-painted work by (the Japanese-American graffiti artist) AIKO which costs Rs 2 lakh."

An exhibition with a political edge, open to all – to see, interpret and buy A fire extinguisher artwork. (Express Photo)More than 200 artworks are stickers, prints, and matchboxes; around 500 are publications. "We want the exhibition to be for students, culture workers, and anyone who is interested in art," Malik said.AIKO, who is a co-founder of the artists' collective FAILE, which came to be known for wheatpasting and stencilling images around New York City, said street graffiti offered her a language that was "immediate, free, and alive".

"A mural isn't experienced in isolation, it is shaped by the neighbourhood, the architecture, the people passing by, and even the time of day. Viewers often discover the work unexpectedly, which creates a more direct and spontaneous connection. You don't need a ticket or an invitation to experience it. For me, it's about creating something that captures attention while also encouraging people to pause, reflect, and maybe see their surroundings a little differently," she told over the phone from New York City.Khatra, the artist who created the fire extinguisher artwork as part of a 2022-23 series on the emotional weight of safety in the post-pandemic period, said he wanted to "turn a familiar emergency object into something that invites attention and reflection, rather than disappearing into the background until it is needed".Khatra uses retroreflective vinyl which is used in street signs and on trucks and taxis, along with spray paint and paint markers, which are staples of street art.'Zines' – short for magazine or fanzine; self-published booklets that are usually made by hand or photocopied in small numbers, with a focus on creative freedom rather than profit – are an important part of the 'Paper and Play' exhibition.Debashish, an artist from Bangladesh, said the nature of the exhibition allowed artists to choose those for whom their art was intended. "These formats, posters, zines, matchbox labels, packaging design…are not exclusively designed for gallery walls or artistic establishments… When I work with these forms, I'm making a decision about who the work is for and how it should travel," he said.

Co-curator Malik pointed out that posters, zines and similar forms of visual communication were able to reach people who may never enter a gallery in the normal course. The language of visuals – brash and eye-catching – has increasingly become part of protests, memes and political culture online; it was a very prominent part, for example, of last month's GenZ and student protests at Jantar Mantar.The political context of art stands out in the Paper and Play exhibition. The names of the zines – 'How To Write (Not another hero) Journey', 'KNAP', 'Sports Sucks' – the text on exhibits such as matchboxes ('Caution: May ignite conversation'), and publications such as 'Modernism/Murderism' and 'Blaft's Anthology of Gujarati Pulp Fiction', make a series of statements on caste discrimination, queer identity, political resistance, and feminism.None of the works carry description tags, and the name of the artist is taped on the floor, so only those who seek them see them.

Social media influencer seeks arrest of CJP founder over assault

New Delhi: A social media influencer has submitted a written complaint to the police against Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) founder Abhijeet Dipke, seeking his immediate arrest over allegations of physical assault and concerns related to his personal security.The complainant, Faizan Ansari, alleged that individuals linked to Dipke had physically attacked him in Pune and Aurangabad. He claimed that police complaints had already been lodged in connection with both incidents in Maharashtra and asserted that the previous complaints and related evidence were available with him.

In his complaint, Ansari further alleged that Dipke had extended support to individuals associated with anti-national activities and had allegedly provided financial assistance to people to participate in the protests held at Delhi's Jantar Mantar.He demanded that the police conduct a detailed investigation into the allegations, register an FIR, and initiate action in accordance with the law.Speaking to IANS, Ansari said, "I have submitted a written complaint to the DCP, requesting the immediate arrest of Abhijeet Dipke. I want to tell the public about what I have gone through. I was attacked by him, once in Pune and once in Aurangabad. I have filed police complaints in both cases and have evidence related to them."

Claiming that the protests were being backed financially, he further said, "This is a paid campaign. He is paying celebrities to attend the protest… I received all this information from Mumbai."He further claimed that Dipke's alleged activities could pose a threat to social harmony and public order, urging the authorities to conduct an impartial probe and take strict legal action if any wrongdoing is established."These people (CJP members) support the person who had once said, 'Bharat tere tukde honge'. I would like to tell Dipke that India will not be broken into pieces; we won't let that happen; however, your party surely will be broken. I will fight this till my last breath.



The body has more than one clock, says new study



Imagine two people who are both 60. Chronologically, they are identical in age. Biologically, they may be anything but. One person's brain may appear relatively young while their metabolic system shows signs associated with accelerated ageing. Another may have an older-appearing immune system but comparatively preserved brain biology.Now add gender to the equation. The biological processes associated with ageing may not be distributed in exactly the same way in females and males. If so, a model that treats everyone as biologically equivalent could be smoothing away some of the very differences researchers are trying to detect.

That is the central proposition of a new multi-cohort and multi-researcher study published in Nature: Biological ageing may need to be measured in a way that accounts for both gender and organ, rather than assuming that one ageing clock can describe everyone.To test that idea, researchers built 38 biological-ageing clocks covering 15 organ systems, drawing on three very different sources of biological information: proteins circulating in the blood, metabolites (small molecules that tell you what is happening in the body) and MRI measurements of organs. Crucially, they trained the models separately in females and males. They found that some aspects of ageing appear to be sex-specific, some appear to be organ-specific, and many are shared. That finding turns the biological-ageing clock from a simple measurement problem into a modelling problem.

What if there is no single biological age?

We know how old we are. It is the number on our birth certificate. But biological age is a different question. Scientists have been developing "ageing clocks" that try to estimate how old a person's biology appears compared with others of the same chronological age. The hope is that these clocks might reveal why some people remain healthy into old age while others develop disease earlier. But there is a problem with the idea of a single number.The study suggests that biological ageing may be better understood as a collection of different trajectories rather than a single score. Your brain could be ageing along one path, your immune system along another and your metabolic system along a third.The researchers found that some ageing clocks worked better when females and males were modelled separately. This was particularly apparent for some measures involving body fat, the immune system and metabolism. But there was no universal advantage to splitting the sexes. In some cases, the separate models became less reliable because they had fewer people from which to learn.The researchers also looked at genetics and found 359 significant genetic associations across the ageing measures. Again, the patterns varied by sex and organ.

Some liver and metabolic ageing measures showed stronger genetic signals in females, while some immune, skin and spleen measures showed stronger signals in males. The interesting message is that different parts of the body may have different mixtures of genetic and environmental influences—and those mixtures may differ between females and males.In other words, there may be no single genetic blueprint for ageing.

An older organ may have different causesThe researchers linked seven imaging-based ageing measures to 2,923 proteins circulating in the blood. The proteins associated with older-appearing organs differed between females and males. That does not mean scientists have discovered a "female ageing protein" or a "male ageing protein".Instead, it suggests that two people whose brains, for example, appear biologically older may have arrived at that state through different molecular pathways. That possibility could eventually matter for personalised medicine.

Can an ageing clock see disease coming?

Using long-term health records, the researchers found that some biological-ageing measures were associated with diseases that developed later, including high blood pressure, high cholesterol and type 2 diabetes. Associations were also found with several other conditions and with mortality.But an association is not the same thing as causation. A clock may identify a biological state associated with disease without being the thing that causes the disease. Even sophisticated genetic analyses cannot by themselves prove that making an ageing clock look "younger" would prevent illness.

What about Alzheimer's?

Among people who already had mild cognitive impairment, those with older-appearing brains were more likely to progress to Alzheimer's disease. The association appeared in both men and women. But when the researchers directly compared the two groups, the difference between them was not statistically significant.

The end of the single ageing clock?

Hormones, menopause, hormone therapy, reproductive history, lifestyle and environmental exposures can all influence ageing. The genetic analyses also focused on people of European ancestry. Whether the same patterns apply across South Asian, African, East Asian, indigenous and other populations remains an open question. And the clocks still need extensive testing in independent populations. Instead of telling someone, "Your biological age is 63," the future might describe something more nuanced:

Indore water contamination: 20 new diarrhoea cases detected during screening; 142 in hospitals



As many as 142 people are currently hospitalised amid an outbreak of diarrhoea caused by contaminated drinking water in Indore, including 11 in ICUs, even as 20 new patients were detected during screening of over 9,000 people in Bhagirathpura area, the ground zero of infection.Health teams examined 9,416 individuals from 2,354 households during an ongoing survey in Bhagirathpura, where six persons have lost their lives due to contaminated water, and identified 20 fresh cases, officials said on Sunday (January 4, 2026).According to officials, 398 patients had been admitted to hospitals so far following the outbreak. Of them, 256 patients have been discharged after recovery.They stated that 142 patients are currently undergoing treatment in hospitals, including 11 admitted to intensive care units (ICUs).The outbreak is under control now, they added.Indore water contamination: 20 new diarrhoea cases detected during screening

As many as 142 people are currently hospitalised amid an outbreak of diarrhoea caused by contaminated drinking water in Indore, including 11 in ICUs, even as 20 new patients were detected during screening of over 9,000 people in Bhagirathpura area, the ground zero of infection. | Video Credit: The HinduChief Medical and Health Officer Dr. Madhav Prasad Haasani said a team from the Kolkata-based National Institute for Research in Bacterial Infections (NIRBI) has arrived in Indore to probe the health crisis.He said experts from NIRBI, which is affiliated with the Indian Council of Medical Research, are providing technical support to the health department to contain the outbreak.The administration has confirmed six deaths so far. Mayor Pushyamitra Bhargava had put the death toll at ten, whereas locals claimed that 16 people, including a six-month-old child, died due to the diarrhoea outbreak.Amid the outrage over deaths, the Congress staged bell-ringing protests across Madhya Pradesh demanding the resignation of senior Minister Kailash Vijayvargiya over the usage of the word "ghanta" while responding to reporters' questions about the developments in Indore.

Mr. Vijayvargiya sparked a row on the night of December 31 when he responded with the expression "ghanta" to a question by reporters on camera when asked about the water contamination crisis.The Congress demanded a judicial inquiry and sacking of Mr. Vijayvargiya, who holds the Urban Development and Housing portfolios, since Bhagirathpura is part of his Indore-1 Assembly constituency.State Congress president Jitu Patwari threatened to launch an agitation on January 11 if the party's demands for rectification measures were not met.He demanded registration of a culpable homicide case against Indore Mayor Pushyamitra Bhargava and concerned civic officials."Sixteen persons have died. These deaths are the murder of the mandate that people gave to the BJP in the previous elections. There must be a judicial probe into the deaths caused by contaminated drinking water, and those guilty should be given strict punishment," Mr. Patwari told reporters.He claimed residents of Bhagirathpura had been complaining for the past eight months that contaminated water was coming from municipal tap connections, but no action was taken."They are also saying water currently being supplied through municipal tankers in Bhagirathpura is also contaminated," Mr. Patwari alleged.Meanwhile, a sub-divisional magistrate (SDM) in neighbouring Dewas was suspended on Sunday for allegedly referring to a minister's (read Vijayvargiya) controversial remark and Congress's allegations in an official order amid the Indore water contamination crisis, officials said.Ujjain division revenue commissioner Ashish Singh suspended the SDM on charges of serious negligence, indifference, and irregularities in the discharge of official duties.The officials said the SDM had issued a government order on Saturday (January 3, 2026) to deploy subordinate revenue officers to maintain law and order in view of a Congress protest held in Dewas."The wording of a portion of the Congress memorandum was copied verbatim in the SDM's order issued for official purposes. This amounts to serious negligence," an official told PTI.

The Congress memorandum had targeted the BJP government and stated that Mr. Vijayvargiya's use of the objectionable word reflected "inhumanity and authoritarianism.The word "Ghanta" has different shades of meaning, but in common parlance, its usage conveys nonsense.Renowned water conservationist Rajendra Singh termed the deaths due to contaminated drinking water a "system-created disaster," alleging that deep-rooted corruption is to blame for the tragedy.Watch: Indore water tragedy sparks protests, officials suspendedThe Magsaysay Award winner, popularly known as the "Waterman of India," expressed alarm that such a crisis could unfold in Indore, which has been consistently ranked as India's cleanest city."If such a tragedy can occur in the country's cleanest city, it shows how serious the condition of drinking water supply systems must be in other cities," Mr. Singh told PTI.Government officials admitted the sewage overflow from the toilet spilled over into the water mains, causing the outbreak of severe episodes of vomiting and diarrhea."Indore's contaminated drinking water crisis is a system-created disaster. To save money, contractors lay drinking water pipelines in close proximity to drainage lines," Mr. Singh claimed.

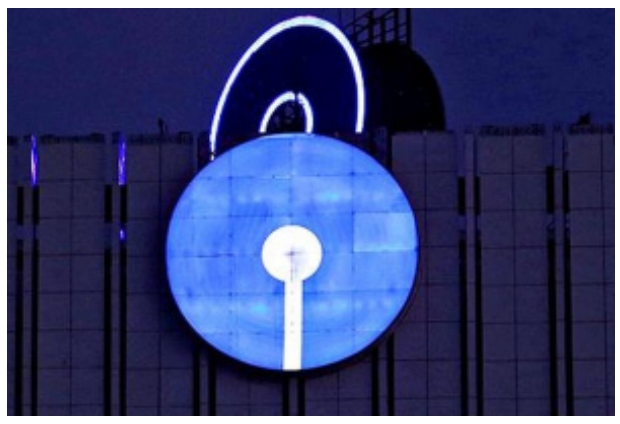
He alleged "corruption" has ruined the entire system. The Indore tragedy is the direct result of this corrupt system, he added."The year-on-year decline in groundwater levels in Indore is the most worrying. I visited Indore for the first time in 1992. Even then, I had asked how long the city would depend on water from the Narmada river?" Mr/ Singh said.A large amount of money is lost to corruption in the project to bring Narmada water to Indore from 80 kilometres away, the water conservationist charged.Indore depends on the Narmada River for its water needs. Through pipelines laid by the municipal corporation, water from the Narmada river is brought to Indore from Jalud in neighbouring Khargone district, located 80 km away, and supplied to households on alternate days.According to civic officials, around ?25 crore is spent every month from the municipal corporation's treasury only on electricity bills for this project.

SBI to promote India-Israel trade in rupee

Amid deepening strategic ties and discussions around Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between India and Israel gaining momentum, the State Bank of India (SBI), the only Indian bank with a presence in Israel, is looking to facilitate bilateral trade in Indian rupees."In view of India's significant trade flows from/to its partner countries and growing interest among the global trading community to trade in the Indian rupee, it has been envisaged by our banking regulators, i.e. Reserve Bank of India, to permit Indian banks to facilitate settlement of exports and imports of their respective corporate clientele in INR. Israel has been identified as one of the partner countries under this mechanism," CEO of SBI Israel, V. Manivannan, told PTI.Israeli entities undertaking exports/imports through this mechanism shall receive and make payments in INR, which shall be credited into the Special Rupee Vostro Account (SRVA), against invoices for the supply/purchase of goods or services from the Israeli seller/buyer, the SBI executive said.

"SBI Tel Aviv has all the requisite approvals in place to facilitate these transactions", he added.The SBI branch has held several meetings and organised webinars recently in collaboration with the Israel-India Chamber of Commerce to promote trade in rupees. It has also involved most of the major defence entities in Israel in these discussions.Indian workers in Israel

With more than 40,000 Indian workers joining the Israeli workforce recently, SBI is also looking to facilitate the flow of remittances to India by facilitating the opening of their NRI accounts in India at its Tel Aviv branch."There has been an influx of the Indian workforce in the Israeli labour market, especially in construction and agriculture. SBI Tel Aviv is now facilitating the services for the Indian diaspora by connecting them with NRI accounts facility on the Indian side and exploring collaborating with fintech and local banks to facilitate their INR remittance business," Mr. Manivannan said.SBI opened its branch in Israel in 2007 and has since managed to retain a full-fledged



operation, demonstrating resilience in the face of the pandemic and more than two years of turmoil in the region due to the ongoing war.It has a presence in 29 countries through 241 'points of presence' outside India.Situated in the Diamond Exchange in Ramat-Gan, next to Tel Aviv, the SBI Branch caters to local corporates offerings trade finances, bank guarantees for India-related projects, business account and related operations."As cooperation between India and Israel is on the rise, the branch is already acting as a bridge to facilitate activities. With SBI's vast global network (across all time zones and correspondent relationships across the globe), support from SBI Treasury and connect with India, presents a unique capability and outreach for local corporates dealing with India or any other part of the world," the SBI CEO noted.The branch is committed to further strengthening the connection with its present and prospective clientele and be a trusted partner in their business endeavours, the executive added.Pushing for economic collaborationThe push for rupee trade comes at a time when both countries are making efforts towards realising the full potential of economic collaboration.External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar visited Israel in December following the visit of Minister of Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal in November.

Govt issues advisory to regulate stem cell therapy

New Delhi: The government on Thursday said it has issued an advisory to regulate stem cell therapy, saying the therapy is permitted as standard care in routine clinical practice only for disease conditions or indications included in the list approved by the Health Ministry.With regard to Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), the advisory stipulates that the therapeutic use of any type of stem cell in autism is to remain restricted to duly approved clinical trials, in accordance with the National Guidelines for Stem Cell Research, 2017.The advisory, dated September 16, has been sent to all states and Union Territories that have adopted the Clinical Establishments (Registration and Regulation) Act, 2010, regarding regulation of stem cell therapy. The advisory reiterates the existing framework governing stem cell research and therapy.The advisory also draws attention to the consequences of non-compliance with the framework governing stem cell therapy. The Supreme Court, in its judgment dated January 30, 2026, held that non-compliance with the statutory mandate must attract consequences, including professional misconduct under Regulation 7.22 of the IMC Regulations, 2002, as well as action under Sections 32 and 40 of the Clinical Establishments (Registration and Regulation) Act, 2010, which provide for cancellation of registration and penalty."The Ministry has accordingly requested the concerned state and District Regulatory Authorities and clinical establishments to ensure strict compliance with the applicable framework governing stem cell research and therapy," the statement said. Moreover, the National Medical Commission (NMC), in its advisory, reiterated that stem cell therapy may be offered as standard clinical care only for the approved indications.The advisory further states that unauthorised administration, prescription, promotion or advertisement of stem cell therapy beyond the approved indications would constitute to professional misconduct

Presentations at work: Where influence often begins

It was a glass-walled boardroom on the 18th floor of a large enterprise client's office. The kind of room where every decision carries reputational risk.The sales leader had prepared well.As he presented, the room stayed calm. Heads nodded. Notes were taken.Halfway through, the client leaned back and said, "This is interesting. But help me understand what should I do differently after this?"The seller moved to the next slide. Internally, he felt a bit of discomfort. Maybe the value will land by the end, he told himself.When the presentation ended, the client smiled and said, "Thank you. We'll come back to you."Walking out of the building, the seller felt uneasy with his shoulders drooping. Not rejected. Just… unclear.

Two weeks later, after follow ups, the client got back saying -? 'we don't have the budget'.? Looking back, the problem wasn't trust. The client trusted him enough to give time and attention. The problem was influence.The presentation had explained the solution, but it hadn't helped the client see their problem differently or feel confident about a decision. And that is why, even in 2026, sales presentations still decide outcomes.In sales, most deals are not lost because the product is weak or the price is high. They are lost because the seller failed to influence the audience in the right moment. That moment is almost always the presentation.In 2026, a sales presentation is no longer about informing prospects. Buyers arrive informed. What they are evaluating instead is clarity, credibility, and confidence. In other words, they are deciding whether you can influence their thinking and help them make a safe decision.This is why presentations continue to sit at the heart of successful sales, not as slide decks, but as influence tools.Influence is the real objective of a sales presentationMany sales professionals believe presentations are meant to "explain" offerings. That belief is outdated.A modern sales presentation has one job: to influence how the buyer frames the problem, evaluates options, and chooses next steps.Buyers today are overwhelmed: with data, vendors, opinions, and internal pressure. In such an environment, the seller who brings clarity influences the room. The seller who structures thinking influences the decision.This is where presentations quietly win or lose deals.Attention has shrunk. Influence hasn't.Research shows that audience disengagement begins within seconds if relevance isn't established early. Buyers don't lack intelligence, they lack patience. They are scanning for signals:Do you understand my problem?

Can you simplify complexity?

Are you helping me decide, or just selling?If the answer isn't clear quickly, influence is lost, no matter how good the solution is. This is why influence today is not about persuasion or pressure. It is about earning attention through relevance.

Why most sales presentations fail to influence



Despite years of experience, many sales teams still struggle to influence their audience during presentations. The reasons are consistent:

1. Seller-centric narratives

Presentations often start with company history, features, or credentials. The buyer is forced to wait to see relevance. Influence drops before it even begins.

2. Information overload

Long decks filled with data create cognitive fatigue. Instead of influencing clarity, they create confusion.

3. Generic storytelling

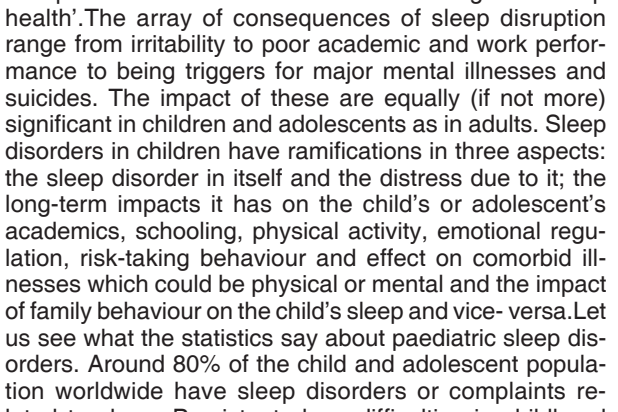
A standard deck signals a standard understanding. Buyers feel spoken at, not spoken to.

4. Lack of presence

Influence is not only in slides — it's in how confidently and calmly the seller guides the conversation, handles questions, and pauses at the right moments.

Influence starts with a mindset shiftAs I like to put it: "The moment you shift your thought process from, 'Selling is convincing' to 'Selling is helping', the pressure eases and you are more relaxed."This mindset shift is critical because influence does not come from force. It comes from helping the audience think better.When sellers stop trying to convince and start trying to help, their tone changes, their structure improves, and their presence becomes more assured. Buyers sense this immediately.How to influence your audience through sales presentationsInfluence in presentations is built deliberately, not accidentally. Here's what works today:1. Frame the buyer's problem better than they canInfluence begins when the buyer feels understood. Start by articulating their challenge clearly, including risks they may not have fully verbalised. When you help buyers see their problem more clearly, you earn the right to propose a solution.2. Lead with insight, not featuresFeatures inform. Insights influence. An insight changes how the buyer looks at their situation and positions you as a thinking partner, not a vendor.3. Structure thinking for the roomA strong presentation guides the audience through a logical journey:

Sleep disorders in children: how to recognise and handle them



Sleep has long been recognised as an active process by the scientific community, contrary to the popular belief of it being a period of inactivity. Sleep is defined as a normal, reversible, recurring state of reduced responsiveness to external stimulation and relative physical immobility.Understanding the functions of sleep is crucial to understanding the consequences of sleep-deprivation and sleep-related disorders. The functions of sleep include: fostering optimal brain growth and development; enhancing learning, attention and memory; regulating emotions, appetite and decision-making; strengthening of the immune functions as well as optimal time for rest and repair of body tissues.

The composition and functions of sleep vary with age and development. The changes noted with increasing age from infancy to adulthood are a decrease in total sleep time and the gradual setting up of a consistent sleep-wake cycle. Sleep health is a topic that has just recently garnered worldwide interest in scientific circles; however, this is yet to make much headway amongst the general public. There has also been a much-needed shift in importance from 'treatment of insomnia' to 'prevention of sleep disorders and maintenance of good sleep health'.The array of consequences of sleep disruption range from irritability to poor academic and work performance to being triggers for major mental illnesses and suicides. The impact of these are equally (if not more) significant in children and adolescents as in adults. Sleep disorders in children have ramifications in three aspects: the sleep disorder in itself and the distress due to it; the long-term impacts it has on the child's or adolescent's academics, schooling, physical activity, emotional regulation, risk-taking behaviour and effect on comorbid illnesses which could be physical or mental and the impact of family behaviour on the child's sleep and vice- versa.Let us see what the statistics say about paediatric sleep disorders. Around 80% of the child and adolescent population worldwide have sleep disorders or complaints related to sleep. Persistent sleep difficulties in childhood predict psychiatric problems in adult life and sleep deprivation also increases health complaints in children. Crucially, parental stress related to the behavioural problems in sleep-deprived children can affect their mental and/or physical well being

There are two main types of sleep disorders: primary sleep disorders and secondary sleep disorders, which have consequences of physical or mental illnesses or drug abuse. Primary sleep disorders seen in child and the adolescent population present in various forms. Insomnia, which is defined as persistent reduction in total sleep duration or poor quality of sleep is one. Hypersomnia, which is an increase in sleep duration is another. Parasomnias are undesirable physical events or experiences that occur during entry into sleep, within sleep or during arousal from sleep. There are also sleep-related breathing disorders and sleep-related movement disorders like restless leg syndrome and nocturnal teeth grinding. This apart, there are disorders of the sleep-wake cycle. All these conditions impact sleep in terms of duration and /or quality of sleep.

What is insomnia?

Insomnia can present in the form of difficulty in falling asleep, bedtime resistance, frequent nighttime awakenings, imposed sleep restrictions, unrefreshed sleep and /or poor sleep hygiene persisting over three monthsThe risk factors for insomnia include: predisposition to mental or physical illnesses; stressors like difficult home or family situations, safety concerns or domestic abuse; poor limit-setting by parents which may cause bedtime stalling or refusal; environmental factors like cramped sleeping conditions, lack of a conducive temperature; sleep difficulties or poor sleep hygiene in parents and excessive use of technology especially in the form of screensStrategies that can be implemented by family members to help the child with insomnia include identifying the stressors; try to eliminate or alleviate them and initiate good sleep habits.Sleep hygiene is a set of practices that helps individuals sleep better. These include creating conducive and optimal bedroom or bedtime conditions; restriction of screens, beverages and water intake a few hours prior to bedtime; maintaining consistent bedtime routine; a consistent sleep schedule; regular physical activity; restriction of daytime naps and most importantly, role-modelling healthy sleep habits.If the symptoms of insomnia persist or continue to be problematic, it is best to to consult a pediatric sleep expert at the earliest.

What is obstructive sleep-disordered breathing?

This disorder is characterised by snoring and laboured breathing due to a partial blockage of the air passages within the body. The symptoms include nighttime snoring, excessive daytime sleepiness, bedwetting, morning headaches, restless sleep and irritability during the day. The obstruction of the air passages in children is commonly due to tonsils or adenoid enlargement or obesity.The risk factors for this disorder include obesity, exposure to passive cigarette smoke and poor air quality. Steps that can be taken by parents include measures to alleviate risk factors and a consultation with an expert.

What is a nightmare disorder?

This is a type of parasomnia where the child has frequent, vivid and distressing dreams, which often result in awakenings. This disorder is usually the result of a stress in the form of a recent psychosocial issue or a major event that may even lead to diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).Family members can do quite a bit to help these children by consistently reassuring the child, avoiding negative associations or responses to the symptoms, encouraging sleep hygiene especially by restricting TV viewing before bedtime. They can also help by re-scripting or reframing the content/plot of the nightmare. Rarely, such children may require therapy and medication.

What is sleep enuresis?

Sleep enuresis or bedwetting is considered normal from infancy up until toddlerhood. However =, its persistence after the age of five years qualifies for a diagnosis and needs medical attention. In some cases, children who may have been previously dry by night (for more than 6 months) may resume bedwetting , and this is called secondary enuresis. This disorder is more frequently seen in girls than boys until the age of 11. This disorder is also highly under-reported due to social stigma and a lack of awareness.The risk factors for this illness include a history of similar symptoms in parents, urinary tract infections, excessive evening fluid intake and stress in the form of parental divorce, neglect, physical and/or sexual abuse. the psychological consequences of bedwetting range from self-esteem issues, feelings of guilt and shame, social anxiety and isolation, frequent nighttime awakenings, depressive symptoms and significant family conflicts.Parental strategies for managing bed-wetting start with understanding and recognising the problem followed by help-seeking. This step is often the most crucial and decisive in the management of this problem. The next steps would be: forming a plan, in collaboration with the child, for reduction of fluids before bedtime , encouraging daytime urination, preventing daytime restriction of urination (a malady frequently seen in young girls wanting to avoid public toilets) , avoiding negative responses to the symptoms and refraining from punishments.Parents can also instate an alarm system by which the child is encouraged to use the toilet during bed hours. As we can see, the steps require a lot of effort and dedication from the parents; however the results have been shown to be rewarding.Last but not the least, seek professional help when the symptoms begin to interfere with the child's day-to-day functioning.Sleep disorders secondary to psychiatric disorders

Sleep is frequently disrupted in children with psychiatric disorders and neurodevelopmental disorders. Anxiety and depressive disorders are commonly associated with delays in sleep onset and frequent nighttime awakenings, sometimes with nightmares. Restlessness and bedtime tantrums are frequently seen in children with neurodevelopmental disorders like intellectual disabilities, ADHD and autism. These sleep disorders may resolve with the adequate management of the primary psychiatric diagnosis and relevant therapy. In corollary, improvement in sleep difficulties positively impacts the symptoms of the primary psychiatric disorder.

Sleep disorders secondary to medical conditionsMany physical conditions have profound effects on children's sleep. Common conditions like gastro- oesophageal reflux disorder (GERD) where a child has the frequent re-entry of stomach content into the oesophagus may disrupt the child's sleep. Migraines or other pain syndromes affect the onset and maintenance of sleep w

Call for 'sampoorna kranti' shook Indira govt: How a semi-retired Jayaprakash Narayan stirred student protests into a storm



The JP Movement which began 51 years ago this month left an indelible mark on the country, shaping the course of not only Bihar but also national politics as it paved the way for an alternative to the Congress's dominance.In Bihar, the imprint of the movement led by socialist icon Jayaprakash Narayan is illustrated by the fact that two of its products, Lalu Prasad and Nitish Kumar, have governed the state for 35 years, with only Jitan Ram Manjhi providing a brief nine-month break in between. While Prasad, the RJD supremo, has transferred leadership duties to his son and Leader of Opposition in the Assembly Tejashwi Prasad Yadav, Kumar, the Bihar CM and JD(U) chief, continues to be a crucial player in state politics on the strength of his political constituency that he has meticulously cultivated on the back of a social justice agenda combined with development. As Bihar goes to the polls later this year, leaders in both the socialist and NDA camps moulded by the JP Movement continue to be at the thick of things in Bihar.

While the defining moment of this important chapter of Indian political history is JP's "Sampoorna Kranti" call from Patna's Gandhi Maidan on June 5, 1974, the seed of the movement was planted a few months earlier when, on March 18, students gheraoed the Bihar Assembly.The protests against the then Congress-led state government of Abdul Ghafoor were over high college fees, bus fares, and alleged mismanagement of university administration. They came at a time of high poverty, challenges on the economic front, and allegations of corruption and nepotism against the Indira Gandhi government that had started mounting right after her win in 1971.

The late Sushil Kumar Modi, former Deputy CM and another product of the JP Movement, once told this correspondent, "Though it was a students' movement, some young leaders such as me were backing it. When the 5-km protest march started from the Science College to the Vidhan Sabha, there were barely 30-odd people. But as we started walking, the crowd started building up spontaneously. When we reached Vidhan Sabha, there was a surging crowd of thousands of people. The government was caught unawares and the police had to open lathicharge."There were incidents of arson during the protest — the printing presses of two newspapers were torched — and three students were killed. As the situation looked to spiral out of control, some students and young leaders, including Modi and Shivanand Tiwari (later a Rajya Sabha MP), approached JP at his home in Patna's Kadamkuan locality to request him to lead the movement. Though the veteran socialist had been away from active politics for over two decades, the month before, he had visited college students in Gujarat whose protests were triggered by mess fee hikes.

according to activist K N Govindacharya, the veteran leader was angry with the students over the violence, but calmed down when he was told that the miscreants were not from among them. According to Govindacharya, on April 8, JP addressed a meeting of students in Patna and placed a few conditions before them, including that they wouldn't engage in any kind of violence. The students agreed and JP came to lead the movement.By then, JP engaging with the students had alarmed Gandhi who, at a public meeting in Bhubaneswar on April 1, labelled him a "fascist" and accused him of walking on the path of "violence".At Gandhi Maidan on June 5, 1974Then came the Gandhi Maidan meeting and the "Sampoorna Kranti" call in which JP demanded changes on all fronts, from the economic and social to the political. Recalling the meeting, former MLC and socialist litterateur Prem Kumar Mani told The Indian Express, "I was in the audience at Gandhi Maidan that had not seen such a crowd before that. There was no bridge over the Ganga in those days, and yet, people arrived using whatever means of transport they could find. JP, sitting in a chair, talked of 'Sampoorna Kranti', adding it was nothing but the 'sapta kranti (seven revolutions framework)' of Dr Rammanohar Lohia."JP also invoked Jawaharlal Nehru to drive home his point. "I am not going to use angry language. But what I am going to say will contain the ideas of a revolutionary. It will not be easy to act upon them. You will have to make sacrifices, undergo sufferings, face lathis and bullets, fill up jails.Properties will be attached. Friends, this is a revolution, a total revolution. This is not a movement, not merely for the dissolution of the Assembly. We have to go far, very far. In the words of Jawaharlal Nehru, the people have still to travel many long miles to achieve that freedom for which thousands of the country's youths made sacrifices, for which Sardar Bhagat Singh and his comrades, revolutionaries of Bengal, of Maharashtra, of the whole country were shot dead or were hanged to death. Millions of countrymen filled the jails again and again to attain freedom, but after 27 years of that freedom, the people are groaning. Hunger, soaring prices and corruption stalk everywhere. The people are being crushed under all sorts of injustice. Educational institutions are corrupt. Thousands of youths face a bleak future. Unemployment goes on increasing. The poor get less and less work."

In their book The Dream of Revolution, Bimal Prasad and Sujata Prasad quote JP as saying, "Dissent is not just an intellectual luxury but a necessary catalytic agent to which society owes its progress, its revolution, and its technological and scientific advances. Without dissent, society would become stagnant and moribund."As the political situation continued to simmer, JP's call for another public meeting in Patna on November 4 made Gandhi open a communication channel with him, and three days before the rally, the two met in Delhi. As per JP's account, the meeting lasted 90 minutes, with Babu Jagjivan Ram, the Deputy PM, joining towards the end. While the PM requested him not to hold the rally, JP demanded the dismissal of the Ghafoor government and drew her attention to the mishandling of democratic institutions.The talks broke down and as JP went ahead with the rally, the Centre deployed paramilitary forces in Patna. During a lathicharge, JP narrowly escaped injury when Jana Sangh leader Nanaji Deshmukh shielded him. This incident further angered the protesters. Following his failed attempt to bring about a reconciliation between JP and Gandhi, Chandra Shekhar, who later became PM, wrote in his weekly Young Indian, "JP is not fighting for political power; he cannot be defeated by deploying state power.Mani said JP, honoured with the moniker Lok Nayak (People's Hero), had also tried to make a point against Gandhi when, in the latter half of 1974, he got her cousin Nayantara Sahgal, the daughter of Vijaylakshmi Pandit, to attend one of his public meetings.The situation in Gujarat took a sharp turn starting in March 1975 after Morarji Desai undertook hunger strikes in support of the Nav Nirman movement of the students in Gujarat and calling for fresh elections in the state. Things came to a head on June 12, when the Allahabad High Court set aside Gandhi's election from Rae Bareli in 1971, acting on a petition of socialist leader Raj Narain.This led to JP intensifying the movement and he met the national committees of the Akali Dal, the Congress (Organisation), and the Lok Dal, all of whom called on Gandhi to resign as PM. The non-Congress and non-Left parties held a public meeting on June 12 at the Ramlila Maidan in Delhi, but JP could not attend it as his flight was diverted.He, however, was not deterred and called another meeting at the same venue two days later. "Information had reached the Prime Minister that Jayaprakash Narayan was to hold a mammoth rally at the Ramlila Maidan in Delhi on June 25 at which he was going to ask the armed forces and the police to revolt and disobey orders, which they did not consider lawful," Union Minister Ram Nath Thakur, the eldest son of forner Bihar CM Karpoori Thakur, told Gandhi's biographer Pupul Jayakar has written that on being confronted with the escalating situation, the PM told her key advisor and West Bengal CM Siddhartha Shankar Ray, "Siddhartha, we cannot allow this. I want something done. I feel that India is like a baby and just as one should sometimes take a child and shake it. I feel we need to shake India."Within hours of Emergency being imposed on June 25, top Opposition leaders, including JP, Morarji Desai, Raj Narain, Chandra Shekhar, Piloo Mody, Ashok Mehta, and L K Advani, were jailed. So were the many young leaders who had stood with JP and were shaped in the cauldron of those turbulent times. Among them were Lalu, Nitish, Ram Vilas Paswan, Ravi Shankar Prasad, Ashwini Kumar Choubey, Narendra Singh, Raghuvansh Prasad Singh, and Jagdanand Singh."While Lalu Prasad and Sushil Kumar Modi had been at the forefront of the JP Movement, Nitish Kumar also joined it at a later stage.

In T.N., where dengue cases hit 26,000 this year, tracking every case, forecasting outbreaks is helping prevent deaths

In 2024, over 26,000 cases of dengue were recorded in Tamil Nadu. Public health officials attribute this rise to improved surveillance, increased testing, and the bringing in of more private hospitals under a daily reporting system, thereby ensuring that all cases were counted.As of December 26, Tamil Nadu has recorded 26,740 cases of dengue and 13 deaths according to data from the Directorate of Public Health (DPH) and Preventive Medicine. A closer look at the year-wise dengue infection trends in the State showed that this was the highest number of cases to be registered since 2012. The last time the State recorded over 20,000 cases was in 2017, when there were 23,294 cases. However, unlike in 2017 when 65 deaths had occurred, the number of deaths has remained low in 2024.

What is dengue?

Dengue is a viral infection transmitted to humans through the bite of infected mosquitoes.About half of the world's population is now at risk of dengue with an estimated 100–400 million infections occurring each year.While many dengue infections are asymptomatic or produce only mild illness, the virus can occasionally cause more severe cases, and even death.Prevention and control of dengue depend on vector control. There is no specific treatment for dengue/severe dengue, and early detection and access to proper medical care greatly lower fatality rates of severe dengue.Source: WHOCases throughout the year

In fact, public health officials, who took up a retrospective study of dengue cases in T.N. from 2012 to 2023 and published their findings in an article, 'Prevention and control strategies to counter the dengue cyclical trend in Tamil Nadu', in the Tamil Nadu Journal of Public Health and Medical Research earlier this year, noted that dengue cases were identified throughout the year with an increase in incidence during monsoon. Since 2012, there were two peaks: one in 2012 itself (13,204 cases and 66 deaths) and the other in 2017."This year, we focussed on improving surveillance for dengue. We ensured that more reporting units were brought under the system. We brought in compulsory reporting of cases on a daily basis, and included private hospitals as well.



National Institute of Virology develops portable kit for rapid Nipah virus detection

New Delhi: India will now be able to detect the Nipah virus within minutes as the National Institute of Virology (NIV) in Pune, under the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), has developed a portable 'point-of-care' test kit for detecting the virus.This kit can provide instant results even outside laboratory settings and will be deployed soon in high-risk areas like Kerala and West Bengal, Dr Naveen Kumar, the director of NIV, said. "We have developed a LAMP-based portable kit for quick and reliable detection of the Nipah virus. It provides results in just a few minutes without the need for a laboratory. The kit has also been patented," Dr Kumar said.The Nipah virus primarily spreads through fruit bats and has caused several outbreaks in India. With a mortality rate exceeding 50 per cent, it is one of the most lethal viral diseases. In India, the capability to culture the Nipah virus exists only at NIV Pune,

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