Spy in every blink

Eye Secrets

Daily

www.eyesecretdaily.com

Rangareddy Vol No. 1 Issue 149 Date:Wednesday, 28-10-2026 Price:2/- Pages: 8

Drought Hits 365 Mandals in 31 Dists: Nearly 60% of Telangana Affected

Hyderabad, Oct 27

Telangana is now officially in the grip of a drought, and more than half the state is impacted. Only two districts — Hyderabad and Peddpalli — have escaped the clutches of the drought brought upon the El Nino's impact on this year's southwest monsoon.

The state government on Tuesday officially declared drought in 365 mandals, accounting for 58.7 per cent of the total 621 mandals, with the affected mandals spread over 31 districts and initiated the drought protocols that will see several departments getting involved in drought mitigation activities.

Of the 365 mandals in 31 districts, 111 have 'severe' drought, and 254 have 'moderate' drought, the government said, adding that the drought declaration is with respect to the Kharif crop season that is nearly at an end.

With the drought declaration focusing on rural areas, the government orders, issued by Chief Secretary Sanjay Jaju said that notified municipal, or urban areas, should not be included in the official drought notifications to be issued by the respective district collectors for each affected mandal.

As far as such areas are concerned, the government made it clear that they will be treated as drought affected, but only with respect to their drinking water supplies.

The declaration of drought followed a multi-criteria scientific assessment across all mandals. These criteria included crop sown area condition, soil moisture, groundwater drought index along with rainfall data during the South West monsoon that began on June 1 and ended on September 30.

The government said Telangana received a cumulative rainfall of 615.5 mm as against the normal rainfall of 740.6 mm with a deviation of minus-17 per cent during the monsoon, with 18 of 33 districts recording deficit fainfall. The Kharif crop area reduced from 139.28 lakh acres to 126.06 lakh acres. The area under paddy reduced by 18 per cent, from 69.19 lakh to 57 lakh acres.

The drought has also raised the prospect of water shortages, the government said with a rising risk to drinking water supplies, water for livestock, and for agriculture, and there could also be power shortages.



The live storage in major and medium reservoirs as on date was 179.63 tmc ft against 585 tmc ft, which raised concerns on water supplies, the orders said.

Adilabad, Bhadadri-Kothagudem, Hanamkonda, Jagitial, Jangaon, Jayashankar Bhupalapalli, Jogulamba Gadwal, Kamareddy, Karimnagar, Khammam, Komaram Bheem Asifabad, Mahbubabad, Mahbubnagar, Mancherial, Medak, Medchal-Malkajgiri, Mulugu, Nagarkurnool, Nalgonda, Narayanpet, Nirmal, Nizamabad, Rajanna Sircilla, Rangareddy, Sangareddy, Siddipet, Suryapet, Vikarabad, Wanaparthy, Warangal, Yadadri-Bhuvanagiri.

Planning department to furnish memorandum to revenue (disaster management) department, for submission to Union agriculture and home ministries.

Central assistance to be sought from National Disaster Relief Fund

District collectors, director of agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry, vice-chairman and MD, Civil Supplies Corporation Ltd., to initiate immediate relief measures and to maintain a register of beneficiaries and expenditure, submit progress reports on relief operations to the Revenue (Disaster Management) Department.

The declaration of drought in 365 mandals comes just a day ahead of a meeting on Wednesday between the Cabinet sub-committee on El Nino and all the political parties. The meeting is expected to see the government explain the steps it has taken so far and the political parties explaining what they expect the government to do for drought mitigation.

Bhatti Vikramarka To Hold All-party Meet Over El Niño On Oct 28

HYDERABAD, OCT 27

Telangana Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka will host an all-party meeting on Wednesday to take suggestions from parties on dealing with the prevailing drought-like conditions due to El Niño.

The meeting will be held on Wednesday afternoon in the state secretariat to discuss measures to mitigate the adverse impact of rainfall deficit on farmers and other sections of society. The government will take the suggestions on ensuring drinking water supply, planning for alternative crops, and electricity supply to irrigation.

Terming the impact of Super El Nino a "major disaster", Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on October 15 sounded an alert over its adverse fallout in the state. He had said the state's reservoirs were facing a severe shortage of water following a failed monsoon. He appealed to the farmers to postpone paddy cultivation during the upcoming Rabi season in view of the rainfall deficit.

The CM had also said he would lead an all-party delegation to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and other Union Ministers in November to seek the Centre's assistance. The Telangana Assembly on September 18 passed a resolution urging the Centre to provide a Rs 20,000 crore package, among others, to deal with the impact of El Niño, which resulted in a rainfall deficit in the state.



There'll Be 'Tamasha; When My Book Reveals My Side of the Story: Sonia Gandhi

New Delhi: Others have spent decades telling her story and now it's her turn, Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson Sonia Gandhi said on Tuesday, adding with a smile that there is bound to be some "tamasha" when her memoir comes out next month.

In her second post on X after she joined the social media platform last week, Gandhi put out another sneak peek video on her upcoming memoir "Belonging: A Journey of Love" that is releasing on November 10.

"There's bound to be some tamasha when this book comes out. After all, others have spent decades telling my 'story', now it's my turn," the former Congress president said in her post.

In the 1.28 minute video, Gandhi is seen sifting through the pages of her memoir and thinking aloud, "I don't know if I should tell the whole story."

"When my husband was asked to become the prime minister, which I was totally against....," she says and drifts away.

Gandhi says she felt that a lot had been written about her and a lot of it was not quite correct, as it was either "invented or exaggerated", and she wanted to now put down her story and describe facts and things as they were.

"People have different views, some people may change their view about me. Some people's view may become worse but that is what it is, that is what happens when you write a book, or when you are in public life. There is bound to be a 'tamasha' as you say it here," Gandhi says.

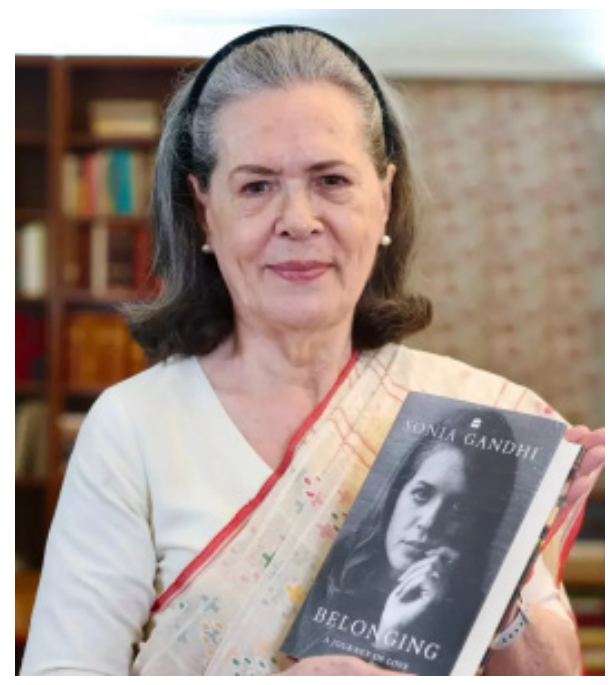
Her remarks in the video were interspersed with footage of key moments from her life -- her marriage to Rajiv to his assassination. There were also glimpses of Sonia Gandhi attending AICC meetings as well as her photographs with Rajiv and her two children -- Rahul and Priyanka.

In her debut post on X on Saturday, Gandhi described her late husband and former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi as a very good-looking and gentle person. She had shared her memories of their life together as she made her debut on social media platform X.

Gandhi made her Instagram debut last Thursday with posts on her upcoming book, which she described as a "story of love, duty, loss and finding a place to belong".

This was Gandhi's first foray into social media. Over the years, she has been using the Congress' X handle to release her video statements or other messages and letters that she wished to make public.

Last month, HarperCollins India said it will publish Gandhi's 544-page memoir "Belonging: A Journey of Love" in India on November 10, ending the uncertainty over the book's domestic publication following an "impasse" between the author's representatives and Penguin Random House India (PRHI).



HarperCollins India's announcement followed a controversy involving PRHI, which was initially keen to publish the memoir but subsequently said it would not be the Indian publisher.

The controversy began amid reports of differences between the publisher and the author's representatives over editorial changes to the manuscript.

Several Congress leaders had raised issues of governmental pressure and freedom of expression with some alleging that there was pressure on Penguin India to remove sections relating to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the RSS and China's occupation of Indian territory during the Modi regime.

PRHI clarified that they were "really keen" to publish the book, describing it as a "hard-won acquisition", but ultimately decided to step away due to a "stalemate over a particular issue".

While maintaining there was no external pressure whatsoever, PRHI declined to disclose the exact nature of the impasse, citing confidentiality clauses and their agreement with the author.

"Belonging" begins with Gandhi's childhood in post-war Veneto, Italy and traces her journey to Cambridge, where in 1965 she met Rajiv Gandhi.

The memoir recounts her marriage to Rajiv Gandhi and her introduction to her mother-in-law, former prime minister Indira Gandhi, as well as her efforts to adjust to life in India, including learning Hindi, wearing saris and adapting to Indian food and culture.

It covers the major tragedies that transformed the Gandhi family, including the death of Sanjay Gandhi in a plane crash, Indira Gandhi's assassination in 1984 and Rajiv Gandhi's assassination in 1991.

KCR to Be Made Prime Accused in Phone Tapping Case

Hyderabad, Oct 27

:BRS president and former chief minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao will be made prime accused in the phone-tapping case of the BRS government tenure, in which the special investigation team (SIT) probing the matter is all set to file an additional chargesheet any time now.

Party working president K.T. Rama Rao, former minister T, Harish Rao and MLC K. Naveen would also be listed as accused. Official sources told Deccan Chronicle that the top brass of the police had recently held discussions with a senior Supreme Court lawyer in Delhi on making the chargesheet watertight and had decided to proceed with its filing after getting the go-ahead from the legal expert.

Sources said Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy had been briefed about the latest developments and a go-ahead obtained from him. "It will be a combination of scientific evidence and statements of the victims, which form a crucial part in any criminal investigation," sources in the government said.

The SIT has listed six police officials, including the former Special Intelligence Bureau chief T. Prabhakar Rao, as accused and would now be including political bosses of the BRS regime. However, there was no hope in the present dispensation that coercive steps could be taken against Chandrashekar Rao or the three other leaders, as the courts had earlier given protection to Prabhakar, prime accused so far, mainly on the grounds that he cooperated with the investigating agencies by appearing for questioning.

Sources said the SIT had accused Chandrashekar Rao as the mastermind behind the illegal operations and supported its claim based on the approvals given at the highest levels of government and statements given by some accused as well as



victims. With regard to Rama Rao and Naveen, the SIT built its case around the statement by the realtor "Sandhya" Sridhar Rao who claimed to have been coerced to donate `13 crore in the form of electoral bonds. The allegations against Harish Rao pertained to enforcing surveillance against his political rivals.

The BRS has been dismissing the case as one of political vendetta, lacking any evidence of involvement of Chandrashekar Rao and other party leaders. "Top police officials themselves were having divergent views on initiating the probe into the phone-tapping case, leave alone the sustainability of the charges against the political leadership of the BRS regime," a senior BRS leader said. There was stiff resistance from among the senior police officials when then city police commissioner K. Srinivas Reddy got a case booked into the case. "Now, the latest move (of making Chandrashekar Rao the prime accused) is to divert people's attention from the government failures, the latest being the mishandling of water utilisation in the wake of El Nino," he added.

Andhra Pradesh fields get water, while Telangana lets it flow into sea: KTR

Hyderabad: BRS working president KT Rama Rao accused the Congress government of allowing water from the Godavari and Krishna rivers to flow downstream and into the sea while crops in Telangana withered for want of irrigation. He said Andhra Pradesh was utilising available water to irrigate its fields, while Telangana was failing to harness its share.

"This is not a drought caused by nature, but one brought about by Revanth Reddy," he said, blaming the Chief Minister's negligence and failure to operate irrigation projects for the prevailing agrarian distress.

Addressing a meeting at Telangana Bhavan to welcome Congress and BJP cadre from Nirmal district into the BRS on Tuesday, Rama Rao said the Congress government had failed to utilise available water despite advance weather warnings. He said operating the pumps at the Kannepalli pump house of the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Scheme could have helped save crops in most districts.

The BRS working president said around 750 TMCft of Godavari river water and another 250 TMCft of Krishna river water had flowed into the sea. He argued that effective utilisation of the 1,000 TMCft could have enabled irrigation of one crore acres in Telangana. He accused Revanth Reddy of keeping the Kaleshwaram pumps switched off for political reasons."

For public health workers in Capital, decades of struggle finally pays off



For years, Madhubala's salary went towards her children's school and college fees, leaving little for herself. A single mother who has raised two sons alone for the last three years, she has spent two decades working as a domestic breeding checker (DBC) with the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD). Now, after years of demanding better pay, the 45-year-old hopes she can finally start saving a little.The reason: On Friday, she received Rs 27,000 in her bank account, a change from the around Rs 17,000 she earned every month until September.

The increase follows the MCD's decision to raise the minimum monthly salary of its public health workers to Rs 18,000, along with dearness allowance, under the principle of "equal pay for equal work"."I have been raising two sons alone since the last three years after I separated from my husband due to domestic abuse. I spent all my salary on my children's school and college fees. I have not spent anything on myself," Madhubala says, adding that she will now try saving some money.According to MCD Commissioner Sanjeev Khirwar, the decision will benefit around 4,000 workers and entail an annual financial burden of Rs 52 crore.

For Madhubala and her colleagues, the revised pay follows years of demands for better working conditions.It was October last year when she took part in a strike along with Multi Tasking Staff (MTS) of the civic body. They demanded standardised pay, medical and earned leaves, and jobs for family members of employees who have passed away. After the strike was called off, the Mayor had promised the workers to consider their demands.Devananda Sharma, the general secretary of the DBC Workers Union who has worked as a frontline worker for over 30 years, recalled: "In 2016, we sat on the streets to protest and got provision for casual leaves, medical leaves and maternity break. Then in 2023, workers were redesignated as MTS."Alka (54), another worker, now wants to start saving for her daughter's wedding. "Even if we don't spend on anything extra, we still need to pay a rent of Rs 10,000. The landlord shows up on the first day of every month," she says. Alka, who has worked for over 25 years now, says her medical expenses also need to be taken care of."We sometimes climb to the upper floors or terrace of buildings to check the water tank for mosquito breeding. Our knees hurt." Alka works in Mayur Vihar and goes door to door to check for breeding. "But I still enjoy my work. This (hike in pay) will push us to do it more nicely," she says.Mayor Pravesh Wahi said the proposal had been announced in the previous Budget and was taken up with Chief Minister Rekha Gupta for an approval.The CM, meanwhile, said on Friday that her government is committed to upholding the dignity, rights and welfare of all those who work tirelessly to serve the people of Delhi.The post of DBC was created after the 1996 dengue outbreak in the Capital, when 10,252 cases and 423 deaths were registered in a year. "Initially, considering the epidemic-like situation, the MCD started hiring workers, but that lasted for just 19 days. Hiring of DBCs on contractual basis began from 1997 onwards," a senior MCD official had earlier said.

After Swati Snacks, Karan Shah comes home with Makaan, his new Gujarati restaurant in Juhu



For Karan Shah, returning to the restaurant business was never going to be about simply opening another place to eat. After nearly eight years at Swati Snacks, where he worked alongside his mami, Asha Jhaveri, Shah wanted to build something of his own, carrying with him the lessons he had learnt there. The result is Makaan, an all-day Gujarati snacking restaurant in Juhu that draws on the warmth of his childhood home in Colaba.The name, which means house, sets the tone. Walk into Makaan and you are greeted by terracotta walls and ceilings, bandhani lamps, a swing in the alfresco seating area, and little Laxmi pagla (footprints) at the entrance. There is a bell and the name 'Makaan' written in Gujarati in small font, but the space is deliberately not steeped in traditional motifs. Shah, 42, wanted it to feel like a Gujarati home with an urban sensibility, somewhere people could drop in wearing shorts and T-shirts, without the formality of a restaurant outing.

"I was scared of the place feeling like an upscale, high-end restaurant, which is the exact opposite of what we wanted," he said. "It should feel like an extension of your living room."The idea goes back to Shah's childhood home in Colaba, where an eight-seater dining table regularly accommodated nearly 30 people. After classes at Campion School, his friends would turn up, not necessarily to see him, but to eat the food made by the family cook, Kailash, fondly called Kalu Maharaj."If you asked him for one pizza, you would get the pizza, but also nachos and spaghetti with it," Shah recalled. Kalu Maharaj loved feeding people, and the house was always full. That memory of food as an act of generosity, of people gathering around a table and staying longer than planned and Gujarati hospitality, is what Shah wants to recreate at Makaan.

Designed by Esha Pandya, a friend who also worked on Shah's home, the restaurant balances a Gujarati sensibility with restraint. The terracotta extends across different surfaces, including the ceiling and cabinetry, while the cane-looking chairs were chosen for comfort, ease of maintenance and hygiene. Even the facade has been painted, thanks to a landlord who allowed Shah to carry the look outside. The brief to Pandya was simple, if somewhat unusual: Swedish or Japanese minimalism, with an Indian Gujarati touch.The menu follows a similar approach. It is vegetarian, compact enough to fit on a single sheet printed on both sides, and built around familiar Gujarati snacks and dishes that Shah grew up eating. There are soft, thin pankis, jowar bhel topped with three kinds of house-made sev, dahi batata puri, sev puri and pudla. The bajra chilla, with boiled bajra at its centre for texture, comes with green chutney and mirchi achaar.Among the mains are vatana muthiya with pudina roti, gatte ki sabji with satpadi roti, fada khichdi and bajri pizza. Then there is the baked khichdi, layered with dahi and topped with birista (fried onions), a dish that has already prompted some debate over whether it should be called khichdi or biryani. Shah's intention was to offer the comfort of a biryani in a Gujarati idiom, drawing on a dish that people loved when they ate at his home.For him, the food is not about reinventing a cuisine or dressing it up for a new audience. "There's one thing not allowed in my kitchen: no fusion, no molecular gastronomy, no smoke or nitrous," he said. The recipes are traditional, even as the menu is designed to appeal beyond the Gujarati community.Growing up at Campion, where his classmates included Parsis, Catholics, Muslims, Gujaratis and Marwaris, Shah learnt early that food could cross cultural boundaries. His friends came home and enjoyed Gujarati food without worrying about what cuisine it belonged to. He hopes Makaan will work in much the same way.The kitchen, too, reflects his belief in experience over credentials. Shah develops the recipes and oversees tastings, while the cooking is handled by a team of maharajs, most of whom learnt on the job rather than at culinary institutes. He is conscious of oil and butter, wanting diners to be able to return several times a week without feeling weighed down by what they have eaten.

Choosing Juhu was another deliberate decision. A South Mumbai boy, Shah spent nearly two years looking across the city before settling on this quiet cul-de-sac, which reminded him of a bungalow. He also saw a gap in the neighbourhood: a sizeable vegetarian-eating population, but no restaurant quite offering the Gujarati food he had in mind. On the second day of Makaan's opening, groups of walk-in guests were already streaming in for pankis and chaats.

The return has not been without uncertainty. After leaving Swati Snacks in 2024, Shah wondered whether he should open a restaurant at all or return to movies, a field that had given him the gratification of seeing his writing on screen but offered little financial certainty. Opening a customer-facing restaurant was a different challenge from running a well-established operation.What helped him take the leap was the faith shown by his partners, including Samyukta Nair (granddaughter of Captain CP Krishnan Nair who founded The Leela, and co-founder of LSL Capital that oversees a portfolio of restaurants in London and Dubai), and her father, Dinesh Nair, whose family has known Shah's for years. A call from Dinesh, telling him he believed in him and wanted to start a restaurant together, changed his thinking. "I thought: if someone like Mr Nair has faith in me, why am I second-guessing myself?"There is a visible influence of Jhaveri, who taught him to put the food and the guest relationship ahead of revenue. It is a lesson Shah carries into Makaan, comparing the restaurant to an old Gujarati grandmother who "gently insists you take one more bite" and doesn't stop until you put your hand on your tummy or on the plate. He plans to grow, take Makaan to different cities and countries, but slowly and carefully.

90% of 33 lakh SIR cases 'resolved' or 'parked for final roll' in Delhi

Around 29.5 lakh or nearly 90% of the nearly 33 lakh cases involving unmapped electors and logical discrepancies during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Delhi have been "resolved" or "parked for the final roll" by electoral registration officers (EROs) and assistant electoral registration officers (AEROs), the office of the Delhi Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) said on Friday.The cases include 13.79 lakh electors who could not be linked to the electoral roll of the previous SIR – conducted in 2002 – and 19.33 lakh whose enumeration forms were flagged for logical discrepancies. The CEO's office did not disclose how many cases had been rejected.Delhi had around 1.45 crore electors before the SIR began. When the draft electoral roll was published on August 31, around 97.5 lakh names were retained, while around 47.5 lakh electors were classified as uncollectible after booth level officers (BLOs) found them to be absent, shifted, deceased or having duplicate entries.The disposal process was initially slow, prompting the Election Commission of India (ECI) to simplify hearing procedures. BLOs were asked to visit electors and collect supporting documents in cases involving logical discrepancies and unmapped entries, while the number of AEROs was increased.

Further, since September 30, EROs have been able to dispose of notices without conducting a hearing. A letter from the BLO stating that the elector's details had been verified to their satisfaction is sufficient for the ERO to take a decision, said sources.According to the CEO's office, 13 district election officers, 70 EROs, 902 AEROs and 14,947 BLOs were involved in the exercise. The deadline for disposing of notices is November 30, while the final electoral roll is scheduled to be published on December 4. (See box)The period for claims and objections, which began on August 31, will end on October 30. Electors can apply for inclusion in the electoral rolls or file objections to names appearing on them until then.The CEO's office said 2,50,754 Form 6 applications for enrolment had been received since the claims and objections period began, in addition to 2,12,400 applications received before the draft roll was published. All these applications will be disposed of by November 30.To reach eligible voters left out of the draft roll, special camps have been organised at educational institutions, night shelters and other locations to assist young voters, homeless people, transgender persons and sex workers. Camps were also held in colonies affected by demolitions.According to the CEO office, more than 89,000 special camps had been organised across Delhi's 14,947 polling stations over six Sundays. Another round of camps is scheduled for October 25.On September 29, the ECI ordered a special drive across the 20 States and Union Territories where the SIR had been completed to enrol voters left out of the rolls, directing them to apply using Form 6, prescribed for new voters.In Delhi and Maharashtra, where the SIR is still underway, Form 6 is also being used to bring back voters whose names may have been deleted from the draft rolls.Last week, the office of the CEO in Maharashtra sent a proposal to the ECI to amend Form 6 so that voters deleted during the SIR could seek re-enrolment without declaring that they were enrolling "for the first time". A false declaration can attract criminal penalties.



Karnataka Cabinet rejects mercy pleas of fiancé, her partner in 2003 Bengaluru techie murder case

The Karnataka Cabinet on Thursday rejected mercy petitions filed by Shubha Shankaranarayana and D Arun Verma, who are serving life sentences for the December 2003 murder of Shubha's 27-year-old fiancé, software engineer B V Girish, in Bengaluru.The Cabinet held that the killing was premeditated and exceptionally brutal, and that the requests for clemency could not be accepted within the applicable legal framework."The recommendation will now be sent to Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot for a final decision on the petitions. The Home Department had obtained opinions from the police and prison departments before placing the matter before the Cabinet," home minister Priyank Kharge said after the meeting on Thursday.



The petitions followed a July 14, 2025, Supreme Court judgment that upheld the life sentences imposed on all four people convicted in the case.Dismissing their appeals, the court gave the convicts eight weeks to approach the governor under Article 161 of the Constitution, which empowers governors to grant pardons, suspend sentences, remit punishments or commute them in cases within the state's executive jurisdiction. The Cabinet's rejection does not constitute the governor's final decision. The constitutional process will conclude when the governor decides the petitions.Girish, a software engineer at Intel in Bengaluru, and Shubha, then a fifth-semester student of an integrated BA LLB course at BMS Law College, had got engaged on December 1, 2003, and their wedding was scheduled for April 11, 2004.

According to the prosecution case examined by the Supreme Court, Shubha was unwilling to marry Girish and wanted to pursue her relationship with Arun Verma, a fellow law student. Verma, then 19, was studying in the first semester of the same course.On the evening of December 3, 2003, Shubha asked Girish to take her out for dinner. He picked her up from her home at around 6.30 pm on his scooter, and they went to TGI Friday's, a restaurant near his workplace.After dinner, the couple stopped at the Air View Point on Airport Ring Road to watch aircraft land. Between 9.30 pm and 9.40 pm, they informed their families that they had finished dinner and were returning home. At the viewing point, an assailant struck Girish on the head with a steel rod and fled.Shubha, with the help of passers-by, stopped a car and took Girish to Manipal Hospital on Airport Road. He was declared dead at 8.05 am on December 4.The prosecution alleged that the attack was part of a conspiracy to kill Girish because Shubha did not want to proceed with the marriage. Investigators subsequently arrested Shubha, Verma and two other men, A Venkatesh and Dinesh, also known as Dinakaran.The Supreme Court's 132-page judgment examined communications between the accused in the days leading up to the murder. Phone records showed frequent exchanges between Shubha and Verma before the killing, including communications on the day of her engagement to Girish.

The four accused had exchanged 56 communications on December 2, according to the judgment. On the evening of December 3, Shubha and Verma exchanged 38 text messages between 6.37 pm and 9.39 pm while she was out with Girish.The court considered the volume and timing of these communications alongside evidence about the accused persons' relationships, the recovery of the weapon and their conduct after the attack. It found that the prosecution had established the motive and the conspiracy.The court also examined evidence that messages had been deleted from the accused persons' phones. The communications, together with the other circumstances proved during the trial, formed part of the chain of evidence on which the convictions rested.The trial court convicted all four accused in July 2010 and sentenced them to life imprisonment. The Karnataka high court upheld the sentences later that year. The Supreme Court subsequently examined their appeals and, on July 14, 2025, confirmed the convictions and life sentences.

Mumbai Rapido rider arrested over Jaish-e-Mohammed links, Masood Azhar clips



Mumbai Police has arrested Mohammad Hasan Abu Sarmad Akhtar, 33, over alleged links to Pakistan-based terror outfit Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM).He was arrested from Mumbai's Mahim area on October 22 and produced before a court on Friday, which remanded him to police custody.According to police, Akhtar was active on social media, allegedly promoting the banned organisation through inflammatory posts and audio clips featuring JeM chief Masood Azhar.A native of Bihar, he has reportedly been living in Mumbai for around a decade, selling perfumes near Baba Falooda in Mahim and working as a Rapido driver.Previous arrests linked to Jaish-e-Mohammed

This comes months after Gujarat's Anti-Terrorism Squad arrested eight men in July for Jaish-e-Mohammed links. Seven of them were from Gujarat and one was from Dewas in Madhya Pradesh. The arrests followed joint raids in Banaskantha, Mehsana, Navsari and Patan districts of Gujarat and in Dewas district of Madhya Pradesh.The ATS alleged the group had set up a Jaish-e-Mohammed network in the state and was in touch with two Pakistani handlers. It also claimed the men were recruiting others and had translated Jaish-e-Mohammed literature into Gujarati to spread its ideology.According to the agency, the group had received about Rs 3 lakh in funding, which was used to buy an old car. The ATS said it recovered jihadi books, audio and video, photographs and a JeM flag. It also seized eight Urdu letters addressed to Azhar, asking to join the organisation and a Gujarati translation of his book Dars-e-Jihad.

Adani won't let up on Navi Mumbai airport shift, sends second reminder to airlines

Differences between Mumbai International Airport Limited (MIAL) and airlines over the proposed relocation of flight operations continue, with the airport operator sending carriers a second reminder to discuss the plan. Ahead of an October 28 meeting to finalise the transition, airlines have asked for Terminal 1 (T1) redevelopment and Terminal 2 (T2) capacity enhancement to be added to the agenda.MIAL, which runs Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA), is part of the Adani Group, which also operates the new Navi Mumbai International Airport (NMIA).In its latest communication, MIAL asked airlines to discuss the proposed traffic relocation plan with their network planning and commercial teams. The reminder comes amid continuing differences over how flight operations at CSMIA will be managed during the transition.In an earlier communication, MIAL had reiterated the need to cut the airport's annual passenger capacity by five million from March 2027. It said each airline could choose to move a portion of its weekly international operations to NMIA, temporarily suspend them, or wait until the refurbishment of T1 is completed.The proposal followed MIAL's plan to cut international operations from T2 by 33 per cent, or 265 of 770 weekly flights, to accommodate traffic affected by the redevelopment of T1-B, which was initially scheduled to begin in January 2027.Responding to the latest communication, the Mumbai Airlines Operators Committee (AOC) has sought a detailed presentation on the T1 refurbishment

Farmer allegedly slapped by SI over water dispute in Telangana

EMS News Agency, Oct 26Siddipet: A Sub-Inspector of Police allegedly assaulted a farmer who approached the Gajwel police seeking help over the sharing of water with his cousins at his agricultural field.The farmer, Bhimiri Ravi of Giripally, approached the Gajwel police on Friday evening seeking help in sharing water from a borewell pumpset owned by three cousins. During the inquiry, SI Malla Reddy asked him how many hours of power supply they were getting.



When Ravi replied that he was not sure, Malla Reddy allegedly slapped him on his left cheek. Ravi sustained a bleeding injury just below his right eye. A video showing him bleeding went viral on social media.The SI allegedly kept the farmer in custody instead of taking him to the hospital immediately. He was finally released after the intervention of village elders. The incident came to light on Saturday morning.When asked about the incident, Gajwel ACP K Narsimhulu said that an inquiry was underway. He added that action would be initiated against the SI if he was found guilty.

Worried about storms and cyberattacks, UK tells households to stock up for 3 days



UK Prime Minister Andy Burnham has advised every household in Britain to keep three days' worth of food and water at home. The advice is part of the government's new "Be Ready" campaign, which warns that storms, cyber-attacks and hostile states are a growing threat to everyday services.The campaign recommends storing nine litres of drinking water per person for three days, along with non-perishable food, a first-aid kit, a torch, blankets, cash and a battery-powered or wind-up radio. The aim is to help people manage for 72 hours if a major emergency disrupts electricity, communications, transport or access to essential supplies.Speaking to BBC Radio 5 Live, Burnham said the advice was about taking sensible precautions rather than causing panic.

The UK has experienced powerful storms in recent years. According to The Guardian report, Storm Goretti, which hit in January, left tens of thousands of homes without power across parts of the Midlands, south-west England and Wales, with winds reaching nearly 100 mph.Such events can disrupt supply chains, delay deliveries and make it difficult for people to access everyday necessities. Keeping basic supplies at home would help people manage until the situation gets better.The government is also concerned about the effects of El Niño event, which could contribute to higher global temperatures and put pressure on food supplies and energy systems.In April 2025, a major power outage left Spain and Portugal without electricity for several hours, showing how infrastructure failures can disrupt daily life.The outage affected about 55 million people and was linked to voltage instability in the electricity network, The Guardian reported.Cyberattacks are another concern as they could disrupt services such as online payments and food supplies.The advice came as 32 UK government websites were taken offline as a precaution after a security flaw was found in PHP, a programming language used by millions of websites worldwide. The UK's National Cyber Security Centre sent 50,000 alerts to organisations affected by the flaw, The Guardian reported.The chief executive of the Cold Chain Federation also warned that Russian cyber-hackers were targeting the UK and knew where the food supply system was vulnerable, BBC reported.UK is also concerned that Russia could target their infrastructure, such as power supplies and communication networks, without starting a direct military attack.Defence Secretary Wes Streeting said these threats are "state-sponsored terrorism" and that the risks were real and relevant to UK.As per The Guardian, Russian spy ships have been tracked monitoring undersea pipelines and cables connecting the UK with continental Europe and other regions.Other European countries have also raised concerns about suspected sabotage operations, including incidents like fires and explosions at defence facilities.The government recommends keeping enough supplies to last three days: Nine litres of water per person for drinking over three days, with additional water for cooking and washing.

Tinned goods and other non-perishable items. A battery-powered or wind-up FM radio to receive emergency information if other communication systems fail. A torch with spare batteries, blankets, sleeping bags and warm clothing A first-aid kit, essential medicines, hand sanitiser, wet wipes and toiletries. Cash, payment cards, copies of important documents and a written list of emergency contacts.A charged power bank, baby supplies and food and water for pets.The government says the campaign is about being prepared, not a warning that a disaster is about to happen.

Trump calls Iran war costs 'small price to pay'



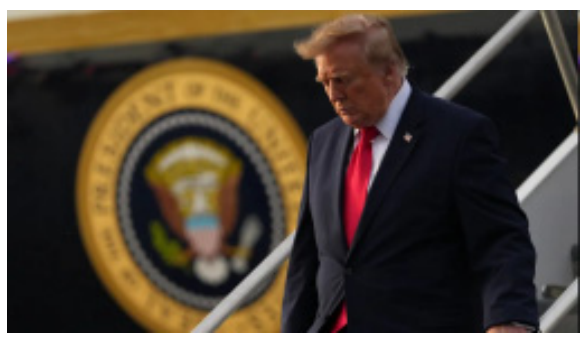
Washington: US President Donald Trump has acknowledged that the war with Iran has driven up oil prices and added to the financial pressures facing American households, but defended the economic consequences as a necessary price for preventing Tehran from acquiring nuclear weapons.In an interview with Florida television station WINK-TV, Trump said he had anticipated an increase in energy prices when he decided to launch military operations against Iran. He insisted that the conflict would end soon and predicted that petrol prices would fall rapidly.His remarks came as Americans prepared for the November 3 midterm elections, with the cost of living emerging as a major political issue and Republicans fighting to retain control of Congress."You know, it's a small price to pay for taking a nuclear weapon away from Iran, which is a very evil country," Trump said when asked about the financial burden on consumers.

The President was responding to a question from WINK-TV anchor Claire Galt, who pointed out that Americans continued to face high grocery bills and that petrol prices in southwest Florida had reached an average of $4.18 a gallon.Trump acknowledged that beef prices remained elevated and that oil prices had risen because of the conflict."Beef's a little bit high and it's coming down," he said, adding that cattle production meant prices could take longer to adjust.Turning to energy, Trump said he had expected the increase but considered military action unavoidable."We had it very low and I knew that would happen, but it was a choice," he said.The President maintained that Iran posed an unacceptable nuclear threat and argued that previous American administrations should have acted earlier."Number one state sponsor of terror, they can't have a nuclear weapon. Iran cannot have a nuclear weapon. So, I'm honored to have done it," he said.Trump offered no specific timetable for ending the conflict but suggested that a negotiated settlement was not the only possible outcome."I see it ending soon. I see it ending one way or another, through agreement or otherwise," he said.The remarks left open the possibility of further military action even as the administration sought to reassure Americans about the economic consequences of the war.At a separate Republican campaign rally in Fort Myers, Trump returned to the subject and said his administration had weighed the likely economic impact before proceeding with military operations.He recalled seeing petrol prices of $1.85 and $1.95 a gallon during a visit to Iowa before the military campaign.Trump said he subsequently told senior administration officials that preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons had to take priority.He also claimed that oil shipments through the Strait of Hormuz had increased despite the conflict."Tremendous amounts of oil are coming through the Hormuz Strait, more than we actually had before the war, which is pretty amazing," he said in the television interview.The President attributed the movement of oil shipments to American military operations and the US Navy's presence in the region. His claims about shipping volumes were not independently verified in the supplied material.

Trump warns of 'another Epic Fury' on Iran: Will the US-Iran war escalate again?

US President Donald Trump has warned of fresh rounds of strikes on Iran if Tehran fails to agree to a deal, raising fears that the 8-month war between the two countries could see further escalation. The war, which started with the US and Israel attack on Iran in February this year, has escalated into a wider conflict in the West Asia, with several Gulf countries and Iranian proxies getting enmeshed in the war that has failed to yield any signs of breakthrough.

"We may do another little Epic Fury, or they'll agree," Trump said at a campaign rally in Florida, Fox News reported. The war is close to its eight-month mark.Trump's words came after Tom Barrack, the US ambassador to Turkey, said a strike was possible as soon as this weekend, and as Israel and Iran trade threats ahead of Israel's election on Tuesday.



What exactly Trump saidTrump was speaking at a rally in Fort Myers, Florida. He said Iran should come to the table, but that he doubts it will because he does not think its leaders are clever, Fox News said. He also pointed to Operation Midnight Hammer, which he said destroyed Iran's ability to enrich nuclear material, and said the US has beaten Iran in military and financial terms. "We may do another little Epic Fury, or they'll agree." President Trump teases another potential U.S. strike on Iran if Tehran doesn't reach a deal. "If they're smart, they'll just say, 'Let's get down to business.' But, you know, I doubt they'll do that because perhaps they're not smart." Download the FOX News app for the latest details: https://t.co/ISpW9Fc0R — Fox News (@FoxNews) October 23, 2026February strikes killed Iran's former Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and members of his family. The war and a rise in fuel prices are weighing on the US midterm elections, which are due in the first week of November.

Envoy says a strike is possibleBarrack said a strike on Iran could come this weekend. "Could there be a strike this weekend? Absolutely," he said. Barrack is the US point man on Syria and has no direct role on Iran. He added that Trump is open to a deal and that the US has been at the table for months.Asked about Barrack's words, Trump said he did not know of any such plan.Trump has said in the past that he would hold off on new strikes until after the midterm elections on November 3.How Iran is respondingIran has warned the US not to play with fire. Two senior Iranian security officials told Reuters that Tehran has drawn up detailed plans to hit undersea communications cables in the Gulf if the US and Israel attack again. One of them said Iran would try to delay repairs to make the disruption last longer. They said any new US campaign would be met with "a stronger response" than before. The officials gave few details and did not say how or where Iran would act.Analysts told Reuters that cable cuts could slow internet services and disrupt banking, online trade and cloud computing in the Gulf, though the effect on the rest of the world could be limited.

Why Vivek Ramaswamy's ad featuring Amy Acton's mother has divided Republicans in Ohio

A TV ad from Ohio Republican Vivek Ramaswamy that features the estranged mother of his Democratic rival, Amy Acton, calling her daughter a liar has split Republicans in Ohio ahead of the November 3 election, ABC News said on October 23. In the ad, Acton's mother, Donna Arthur, disputes her daughter's account of the abuse she faced as a child. Governor Mike DeWine, who endorsed Ramaswamy, and other Republicans have asked the campaign to pull the ad.President Donald Trump has told Ramaswamy to keep it up, wrote on social media that he would run such an ad himself, and called it "hitting pay dirt". Ramaswamy defended the ad at a campaign stop in northeast Ohio on Friday, saying it is about honesty and not about abuse. Opinion polls show Acton narrowly ahead in the race for governor.What the ad showsThe ad began to circulate on social media on Monday. In it, Acton's mother, Donna Arthur, calls her daughter a liar and says she has not told the truth about her past and her childhood. The ad also disputes Acton's account of homelessness and sexual abuse by her stepfather, and urges Ohioans not to vote for her.Ramaswamy confirmed on Tuesday that his campaign made the ad. His campaign is spending $4 million to promote it. At a stop on Friday, he said the ad is about honesty and has nothing to do with the abuse Acton faced as a child. "The irony is they are lying about an ad that is about lying," he said.

Trump hits out at DeWineTrump said on social media that Ramaswamy should leave the ad up, and he called Arthur "brave" for speaking out against her daughter. At a rally in Iowa on Thursday, he said Ramaswamy had called him for advice and that he told him to ride with it. President Trump hasn't changed his stance on a controversial ad used by Ohio GOP gubernatorial nominee Vivek Ramaswamy featuring the mother of Democratic opponent Amy Acton, he told CBS News' @weijia on Friday. Despite reporters bringing up Acton's mother stayed with her stepfather after being charged with raping Acton as a child, Trump continued to defend the ad. "Her mother went on television and said that the daughter who is running for the governor of Ohio is a liar and a bad person, and that's all I know." Trump also attacked DeWine, who had told reporters in Columbus that the ad is "deeply, deeply troubling" and that the campaign needs to take it down, ABC News said. Trump called the governor disloyal to the Republican Party and said he probably wants a Democrat to win. DeWine, who was a prosecutor in several rape cases, said everyone has a duty to speak up for victims. He added that he is not changing his endorsement of Ramaswamy.Republicans are split

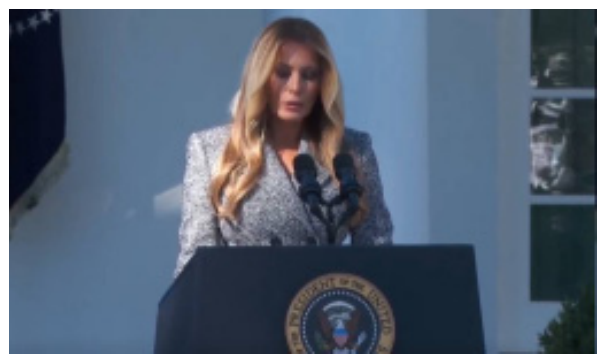
DeWine is not the only Republican to criticise the ad. ABC News said Iowa Senate candidate Ashley Hinson told Jonathan Karl for "This Week" that the campaign should take it down. She said she thought about it as a mother and about a child having to relive that trauma. She also called Vice President JD Vance's remarks on the matter "ridiculous".Ohio Senator Jon Husted, who is running for re-election, said he would not have run the ad. Former Ohio Congressman Jim Renacci asked Ramaswamy to move on from it quickly. Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose said his office is checking complaints to see whether the ad broke any state laws, but he added that each candidate answers for their own ads.Vance defended the ad at a campaign event on Wednesday. He said Ramaswamy had called Acton a liar and that he was "a little bit disgusted" with Republicans who complain about the ad more than about Democratic plans. ABC News said DeWine, who was Acton's boss when she ran the Ohio Department of Health, said that in his experience she told the truth.Acton has spoken in public about the abuse she faced and about her broken relationship with her mother. She says she has not seen her mother since 1978. ABC News said she alleges that her mother's second husband abused her between the ages of 9 and 12. Court papers seen by the Associated Press(AP) show he was arrested in July 1978 and charged with raping her when she was 12. He pleaded not guilty, did not turn up to a court hearing, and died in 2004. Acton's brother, Philip Stearns, has backed her account.Acton has called the ad "despicable" and exploitative.

Many feared trapped as a tall building collapses in Kenya

Nairobi: A tall building collapsed on Friday in a busy commercial area of Kenya's capital, with many people feared trapped beneath the rubble.The building was under construction when it collapsed along a busy commercial street in Nairobi's Eastleigh area, which is often crowded with thousands of traders and residents.Nairobi police chief Issa Mohamud said the building had more than 10 floors under construction. Rescue operations were complicated, with police firing tear gas at people who had begun looting neighboring shops, as officers sought to clear the area and provide access to emergency response teams.The Kenya Red Cross said its teams were on their way and urged people at the site to give responders space to work safely.Building collapses are a recurring problem in Nairobi. County officials responsible for issuing building permits have been accused of failing to conduct adequate inspections to ensure developers comply with safety guidelines and construction standards.



Melania Trump brokers temporary Russia-Ukraine ceasefire in Oleshky: White House



Washington: US First Lady Melania Trump has brokered a temporary ceasefire between Russia and Ukraine in the southern Ukrainian city of Oleshky, securing an agreement to halt military operations to allow humanitarian assistance and the evacuation of civilians trapped in the war-ravaged city.The ceasefire, scheduled to take effect on October 29, will establish a designated safe passageway for aid deliveries and civilian evacuations.

The agreement follows direct negotiations conducted by Melania Trump and her representative with Russian and Ukrainian leadership. The First Lady served as the "Exclusive Intermediary" between the two countries, helping establish the objectives, procedures, timing and operational arrangements.The White House described the agreement as a humanitarian intervention aimed at assisting thousands of civilians, particularly elderly residents who remain in the frontline city."The situation in Oleshky is dire. Oleshky is a front-line war city on the brink of disaster," Melania Trump said.She said the remaining population consisted mainly of elderly residents facing severe shortages of essential supplies."The people of Oleshky have limited electricity, live amid mined roads, and endure regular military attacks. It was abundantly clear that without my intervention, the possibility to bring humanitarian aid into the city and to evacuate the elderly would be impossible," she said.Under the arrangement, civilian representatives from Russia and Ukraine will jointly assess the needs of residents by visiting their homes.Those wishing to leave will receive assistance and transportation to destinations of their choice."Residents who wish to evacuate will receive coordinated support and transportation to their preferred destination. I anticipate some will want to go to Russia, and some to Ukraine," the First Lady said.The agreement also provides for independent media monitoring of the humanitarian operation.

"I have also secured an impartial American media organization to accompany and document Russian and Ukrainian teams on the ground throughout the process," she said.According to the statement, the media presence is intended to help ensure that families' preferences are respected during evacuations.The diplomatic initiative began after Melania Trump learnt about conditions in Oleshky during a private discussion at her Fostering the Future Together event in New York City, held during the 81st United Nations General Assembly.She subsequently used existing communication channels with Russian and Ukrainian authorities to initiate negotiations."My representative and I immediately leveraged the communication channel we established with Russia and Ukraine through the previous six reunifications of 34 children," she said.Both governments then assigned teams to coordinate the operational arrangements, including demining, which will be necessary to facilitate safe movement through the conflict zone."All parties have worked around the clock since that moment," she said.

New York City Council passes law to ban horse carriage, honours Indian teen killed in accident

New York: The City Council has passed a law to ban horse-drawn carriages and named it in honour of an Indian teen tourist who was killed in Central Park in an accident involving such vehicle. Called the Romanch's Law, it was adopted on Thursday.It honours Romanch Mahajan, who was killed in June while trying to save his mother, Priya, when she was thrown off the carriage as the horse bolted. His head hit the ground as he dove after her, and he died in the hospital. Romanch's uncle, Gaurav Mahajan, was at a rally of the supporters of the ban outside City Hall before the bill was passed.He said, "True justice means recognising that these gentle, majestic horses do not belong on the congested asphalt or trapped in dangerous traffic". "On behalf of his parents and his brother, I leave New Yorkers with one final sacred request: please do not forget Romanch", he said.City Council Speaker Julie Menin said, "Our landmark vote to pass Romanch's Law is a demonstration of this Council's commitment to animal welfare, public safety, and worker protection". For many years, animal rights activists campaigned for banning the horse carriages, but were met with opposition from vehicle owners and the union representing the drivers.Romanch's tragedy gave the final impetus to get the law passed. Mayor Zohran Mamdani must now sign the bill, and should refuse, it would still become law because the high number of votes made it veto-proof.Romanch Mahajan had just passed his higher secondary from Angel's Public School in Mamun



EDITORIAL

Global warming—point of no return

It is now official. We have failed to achieve global emission targets. The sum and substance of the latest Emissions Gap Report 2026, released by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), is that the world has reached a point of no return. Nearly a decade ago, at the Paris Climate Summit—Conference of the Parties (COP) 21—nations agreed to strive to limit the global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. That goal is out of reach now. The best option before the world now is to limit the duration of this 'overshoot' as short as possible and bring temperatures back down by 2100. This appears a far cry, given the gap between what the nations promise and what they actually deliver. Climate diplomacy cannot remain a cycle of lofty declarations of ambition followed by patchy implementation. There is consensus among experts that extreme temperatures are directly linked to climate change. The silver lining for India is that it has delivered more than most nations despite being under pressure to meet the growing energy requirements. India is one of only six G20 countries likely to achieve its 2030 NDCs (Nationally Determined Contributions) with existing policies. UNEP says India is also likely to meet its updated 2035 targets, even though these allow total emissions to rise. However, UNEP has flagged concerns over India's net-zero strategy, citing a lack of transparency on carbon removal and the absence of annual reporting.

These concerns could invite international scrutiny at COP31, to be held in Turkiye next month. India's domestic goals are in line with its self-imposed 2070 deadline for reaching net-zero emissions. However, challenges persist in aligning policy with sustainable development. It continues to rely on coal as the main source to meet energy needs. Non-fossil sources make up about 52% of installed capacity but produce only a quarter of the electricity. For India, the key strategic takeaway from the UNEP Report is that its climate strategy must pivot from capacity building to structural integration and resilience. With a global overshoot of the 1.5 degrees Celsius threshold now increasingly difficult to avoid, India faces a double imperative: it must accelerate deep decarbonisation across industrial sectors while rapidly shielding its economy, agriculture, and citizens from severe climate impacts. Adding intermittent renewables alone is no longer enough for India because the core challenge is grid integration and system stability. As an expanding manufacturing hub, India's biggest growth in emissions will stem from industrial sectors such as steel, cement, chemicals, and heavy transport. Therefore, there is a need to move from pilot projects to large-scale commercial adoption of green hydrogen in steelmaking, fertilizer production, and refineries. India can drive transition through public incentives like PLI schemes, but long-term success hinges on multilateral finance. The country must lead Global South negotiations to demand predictable, concessional financing and technology transfers from developed nations.

Jamia protest over students' union intensifies, 10 detained including Congress MP



The ongoing protest at Jamia Millia Islamia over the restoration of the students' union intensified on Friday, with Delhi Police detaining 10 people, including Congress MP Imran Masood, near the university.Samajwadi Party MP Mohibbullah Nadvi was also detained by Delhi police while he was on his way to meet the protesting students and later released, according to a PTI report. Nadvi alleged that police pushed and manhandled him before detaining him. Videos of his detention also surfaced on social media.Jamia has not had an elected students' union since 2006. The last elections was held in 2005. Students began an indefinite hunger strike on October 12, demanding the restoration of the Jamia Millia Islamia Students' Union (JMISU) and an official notification announcing the election schedule.

The protesters have also raised concerns over academic facilities, attendance rules, hostels, scholarships and research stipends. But, they maintain that their immediate demand is a formal announcement of the election schedule.The university administration has formed a committee to draft a new constitution for the students' union. But, the move has not addressed the protesters' demand for a clear timeline for elections.The agitation witnessed unrest on October 17, when authorities attempted to remove demonstrators from the Ghalib lawn near Gate No. 7. Several student organisations have since extended their support to the protest.Women students marched on Friday in solidarity with the protesters, reiterating their demand for the restoration of the union. "We won't stop until the university restores the union by announcing the JMISU date," the protesting students said.Before getting detained, Congress MP Imran Masood stated, "Kashmir is an integral part of India. Even a child here would not say otherwise. I strongly condemn those trying to weaken this movement by putting up such posters. The students' concerns are legitimate. Why don't you restore the student union? They are the future of this country. Why is there an attempt to crush the future of this nation?"

Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Yadav has written to Jamia Vice-Chancellor Professor Mazhar Asif, requesting the administration to restore the students' union and withdraw disciplinary action against protesting students.Yadav called for a transparent, time-bound plan for holding elections, the withdrawal of restrictions imposed on protesters and immediate dialogue with students."An elected students' union is not a privilege; it is an essential platform for democratic representation, academic freedom, nation building and responsible leadership," he said.Citing Jawaharlal Nehru University and Delhi University, where students' union elections are held in line with the Lyngdoh Committee recommendations, Yadav said Jamia could adopt a suitable framework to restore the union.

He also urged the administration to ensure medical care and protection for students on hunger strike, arguing that peaceful dissent should be addressed through dialogue rather than punitive action.Graffiti on Jamia Millia Islamia campus wallsAmid the protest, the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) said it would not allow Jamia to become a "hub of anti-India activities" after graffiti reading "Free Kashmir" and "Free Sharjeel Imam" was reported on campus walls.In a post on X, VHP national spokesperson Vinod Bansal shared photographs showing slogans such as "Free Kashmir", "Free Palestine", "Free Sharjeel Imam", "VC Go Back" and "RSS Go Back".

PTI said it could not independently verify the authenticity of the photographs.Bansal demanded that the university administration and police identify those responsible and take action. He also questioned whether some people were attempting to turn the university into a centre for anti-India activitiesHe further criticised the Congress leadership, asking Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and other senior party leaders to clarify their position on Sharjeel Imam and what he said threats to the Constitution and national unity.Additionally, the university administration has condemned the slogans written on campus walls, including "VC Go Back", and said it was working to identify those responsible. A university official said strict action would be taken against those involved.The administration has cleaned the walls using chemical agents. Officials also said some CCTV cameras in the affected areas had been tampered with, with their wiring disconnected or damaged.Security has been tightened across the campus, with students being checked before being allowed to enter departments and centres.

260-wheel trailer, 4 states: giant Belgian reactor reaches UP plant



After nearly six months on the road, negotiating narrow stretches, overhead electricity wires and overbridge obstructions, a giant reactor that will be at the heart of India's first integrated sugar-to-bioplastic plant reached its destination in Uttar Pradesh's Lakhimpur Kheri late on Thursday night.Carried on a 260-wheel trailer from Odisha's Paradip Port, the cyclisation reactor arrived at Balrampur Chini Mills' Kumbhi facility after a painstaking journey across four states and seven districts of Uttar Pradesh, covering nearly 1,300 km by road at an average of just 10-12 km a day, with the entire journey costing about Rs 15 crore. Its arrival marks a crucial step towards commissioning the company's integrated polylactic acid (PLA) plant, which is expected to begin operations in November.

Sunil Kumar Yadav, Chief General Manager at the company's Kumbhi unit, told The Indian Express that the company had been awaiting the machine for six months. After the machinery reached the plant late on Thursday night, he informed that the installation had started and operations were likely to start next month.

What is the giant machineThe vessel, a cyclisation reactor, is a key component of the facility, which will convert sugarcane into polylactic acid (PLA), a biobased polymer used to manufacture bioplastics. The plant is being established alongside the existing sugar mill, bringing the different stages of production under one roof.The sheer size of the consignment made its transportation a major logistical exercise. The machinery, loaded on the trailer, stood around 20 feet high, and measured approximately 147 feet in length and 23 feet in width. A team of around 35 trained personnel deployed by a Mumbai-based company accompanied it throughout the journey.

How it reached KheriA senior technical official travelling with the machine told The Indian Express that several electricity wires had to be lifted and obstructions along overbridges cleared to facilitate its passage. Where roads were too narrow, temporary pathways were created using heavy iron sheets to allow the trailer to negotiate the stretches.Months before the vessel left Paradip Port, engineers conducted a detailed route survey across Odisha, Jharkhand, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh to identify bottlenecks and assess the suitability of roads and bridges. District administrations coordinated with the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), the Public Works Department, local police and traffic police, municipal bodies, forest officials and electricity departments to facilitate its movement.An official said the transportation alone cost around Rs 15 crore, with the contract awarded to a Mumbai-based transportation company.

From sugarcane to bioplastic: A first in IndiaExplaining the production process, Yadav said sugarcane would be used as the raw material to produce lactic acid, which would then be converted into PLA. The polymer would subsequently be processed into pellets that industries could use to manufacture a range of products."The material will be made from sugarcane. Lactic acid will be produced first and then converted into polylactic acid. Pellets will be made from this, which industries can use to manufacture their products," he said.PLA is a biobased polymer produced from renewable resources such as sugarcane, cornstarch and other plant-based feedstocks. It offers an alternative to conventional plastics derived from fossil fuels and is used in applications such as packaging and textiles.The integrated design of the Kumbhi facility will allow sugarcane processed at the existing mill to serve as feedstock for the biopolymer plant.Balrampur Chini Mills Limited had announced an investment of Rs 3,080 crore in the project, to be deployed in phases over approximately two-and-a-half years.A senior official said the greenfield facility is proposed to have an annual capacity of 80,000 tonnes and is intended to be India's first industrial-scale PLA manufacturing plant.Officials said the project incorporates a Zero Liquid Discharge system to prevent the discharge of industrial liquid waste.With the reactor now at the Kumbhi site and installation underway, the next milestone is commissioning of the plant, which is expected to begin operations in November.

Amit Shah likely to visit Delhi Police Headquarters

Union Home Minister Amit Shah is expected to visit the Delhi Police headquarters on Saturday around 3 pm to take stock of the law and order situation in the Capital, with the fallout of the July protest by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) likely to figure in discussions with senior officers, sources said.The visit is also expected to serve as a morale booster for the force, particularly after the violence during the CJP's 'Sansad Chalo' march and the subsequent allegations of excessive use of force by police personnel during the protests. The meeting is likely to review the circumstances that led to the confrontation, the police response and measures required to ensure that similar incidents do not recur.

The proposed visit on Saturday would mark Shah's return to the Delhi Police headquarters after more than four years. Shah had last visited the headquarters on August 30, 2022. Since then, he has participated in Delhi Police events, including the force's Raising Day celebrations, held outside the headquarters.Apart from the protest-related developments, the meeting is expected to focus on the government's priority areas for the Delhi Police, including the fight against drugs, action against gangsters operating from abroad and their local associates, and crimes against women.Sources said the meeting would provide an opportunity to take stock of the police response to recent incidents and assess the progress made in investigations and enforcement. Senior officers are expected to brief the Home Minister on measures taken across these areas, as well as the challenges faced by the force.Drugs, gangsters and crimes against womenThe crackdown on drug trafficking is expected to be among the key agenda items. The review is likely to cover enforcement action, the identification of drug supply networks and steps to dismantle distribution chains operating in the Capital, said sources.Another major focus is expected to be the network of gangsters operating from foreign locations and directing criminal activities through associates in Delhi and the National Capital Region. Sources said the discussion is likely to cover action against their local operatives, including shooters, arms suppliers and those allegedly involved in extortion and targeted firing.The Delhi Police has previously identified gangsters operating from abroad and their associates in the region as a priority for coordinated enforcement.The third key area is expected to be crimes against women, particularly in view of a series of recent cases that have raised questions about public safety and policing in the Capital.These include the alleged gangrape of a 17-year-old girl at Aastha Kunj Park in Southeast Delhi in September. Three men had allegedly posed as police officers before sexually assaulting the teenager. The case has drawn attention to safety arrangements in public parks, particularly in isolated areas, and the need for effective patrolling and prompt police response.

The meeting is expected to review the steps being taken to prevent such crimes, improve policing in vulnerable areas and strengthen investigations.The Delhi Police headquarters has prepared a detailed presentation for the Home Minister, sources said. It is expected to include data on action taken across the major priority areas, the number of cases registered, arrests made, investigations completed and other enforcement measures.The presentation is also expected to outline the steps taken following the July protest violence, including investigations into incidents of assault on police personnel, damage to public property and alleged attempts to breach security barricades.

Jamia protest over students' union intensifies, 10 detained including Congress MP

The ongoing protest at Jamia Millia Islamia over the restoration of the students' union intensified on Friday, with Delhi Police detaining 10 people, including Congress MP Imran Masood, near the university.Samajwadi Party MP Mohibbullah Nadvi was also detained by Delhi police while he was on his way to meet the protesting students and later released, according to a PTI report. Nadvi alleged that police pushed and manhandled him before detaining him. Videos of his detention also surfaced on social media.The agitation, which began on October 12, has drawn support from student organisations and political leaders.

Why are Jamia students protesting?

Jamia has not had an elected students' union since 2006. The last elections was held in 2005. Students began an indefinite hunger strike on October 12, demanding the restoration of the Jamia Millia Islamia Students' Union (JMISU) and an official notification announcing the election schedule.The protesters have also raised concerns over academic facilities, attendance rules, hostels, scholarships and research stipends. But, they maintain that their immediate demand is a formal announcement of the election schedule.

The university administration has formed a committee to draft a new constitution for the students' union. But, the move has not addressed the protesters' demand for a clear timeline for elections.The agitation witnessed unrest on October 17, when authorities attempted to remove demonstrators from the Ghalib lawn near Gate No. 7. Several student organisations have since extended their support to the protest.Women students marched on Friday in solidarity with the protesters, reiterating their demand for the restoration of the union. "We won't stop until the university restores the union by announcing the JMISU date," the protesting students said.

Before getting detained, Congress MP Imran Masood stated, "Kashmir is an integral part of India. Even a child here would not say otherwise. I strongly condemn those trying to weaken this movement by putting up such posters. The students' concerns are legitimate. Why don't you restore the student union? They are the future of this country. Why is there an attempt to crush the future of this nation?" VIDEO | Delhi: Police detain Congress MP Imran Masood after he arrives at Jamia Millia Islamia University to join students' protest.Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Yadav has written to Jamia Vice-Chancellor Professor Mazhar Asif,

Congress insiders behind 'sting op' on Siddaramaiah, says his minister son Yathindra

KARNATAKA MINISTER Yathindra Siddaramaiah on Friday alleged that some people from his own party, Congress, were behind a purported "sting operation", aimed at tarnishing the image of his father and former chief minister Siddaramaiah.Both Siddaramaiah and Yathindra spoke publicly for the first time about the "fake sting video" from 2023 and indicated that some Congress insiders were involved in the alleged sting by Power TV Managing Director Rakesh Shetty.

Shetty, meanwhile, has been granted interim bail by a local court in Bengaluru in the wake of the city police summoning him for interrogation.The Power TV MD sought anticipatory bail on Thursday fearing his arrest in the wake of the Bengaluru cybercrime police serving a notice for his appearance before police despite previous cooperation with investigations of the alleged sting video case filed on a complaint by Siddaramaiah on October 6.The counsel for Shetty argued that the Power TV MD was "not the owner, creator or administrator of the YouTube channel which was created and is run by someone else" who allegedly uploaded the video on September 27.Siddaramaiah has obtained an injunction from a court against airing or telecasting the defamatory video, which was posted on a social media site."The sting is a fake story. It was done with the intent of blackmailing. This is why I have filed a complaint for the truth to come out. We need to know who is behind this operation. In order to prevent large-scale dissemination of fake news, I went to a civil court and obtained a stay order on the circulation of the fake news," Siddaramaiah told reporters."In the video there is a woman from Mangaluru… There is a man called Rakesh Shetty from Power TV. They joined hands together to film the video. Rakesh Shetty has admitted that he con-



ducted the sting operation and that it was false," the former CM said."Only an investigation can reveal if someone from our own party or some other party is involved. I came to know about this on September 27 (when the video went viral). I am not disturbed by the video because it is totally concocted. It is false propaganda," he said.Yathindra, however, indicated that the woman captured in the video was a Congress worker."This was done to defame my father and destroy his legacy and to blackmail him. The video itself shows that people from our party were involved. There is also the head of a media organisation in the video. An investigation is necessary to find out if they did it themselves or whether someone else was involved," Yathindra said."We do not have suspicions about anybody. There is a woman in the video who indicates that she wants an election ticket to contest the Puttur Assembly polls (in 2023).

322 kg ghee seized in Delhi food safety drive

The Delhi government's Food Safety Department has seized over 322 kg of ghee during inspections of stores advertising steep discounts on social media, as part of a festive-season crackdown on food adulteration and safety violations.The festive season is a time of joy and celebration, but no compromise on food quality or people's health will be acceptable," Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said Thursday, adding that the government would not tolerate adulteration, substandard products, the sale of expired food or incorrect labelling.

During inspections at Maxcart Store and Aggarwal Store in Vikaspuri, officials collected five enforcement samples of ghee and five surveillance samples of other food products, seizing 75.53 litres of ghee. At Aggarwal Store in Hastal village, officials collected three enforcement samples of ghee from the Shri Shan, Vrinda Farms and Avtar brands and seized 246 kg of ghee. The department said it would take further action after reviewing the inspection findings and laboratory reports.

The drive also covered other establishments. Officials collected two samples of sugar-boiled confectionery from Sahib Sons in Azad Market over suspected incorrect labelling. They also collected samples of makhana and turmeric powder from Jain Store in Lajpat Nagar, and biscuits and candies from Yug Basket in Rithala. Officials recorded food safety compliance shortcomings at these establishments.The inspections come days after another enforcement drive by the department uncovered expired food products, pest infestations, unhygienic storage conditions and lapses

Russia backs India's candidature for UNSC permanent seat

United Nations: Russia has backed India's candidature for a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council, saying that any reform of the UN body cannot involve additional seats being allocated to Western countries, especially Germany and Japan.

"Our principled approach is the following: UN Security Council reform cannot involve any additional seats being allocated to Western countries, especially to Germany and Japan, who are now on the path to militarism and revanchism," Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said in his address to the UN General Assembly."We are in favour of broadening the representation of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. We support Brazil's and India's candidatures for a permanent seat, and at the same time, I wish to emphasise this: we must satisfy the interests of the African continent," he said.Lavrov added that through its foreign policy, "Russia is trying to fix the situation in the world, working together with its allies and strategic partners: the BRICS, the SCO, and the Eurasian Economic Union"."We are promoting an agenda which we can all get behind- a unifying agenda, concrete ideas and projects. Today, what's coming to the fore is the topic of international information security. Clearly, the UN should play a central role in these discussions, not other narrow fora," he said.

Relentless rainfall triggers floods, landslides across Nepal



Kathmandu: Relentless rainfall across Nepal since Thursday has triggered fresh floods and landslides, swept away houses and disrupted road traffic, according to a media report, as the Himalayan country reels from the disaster that killed at least 1,453 people and more than 5,000 remain missing.The bodies of 1,451 people have been recovered till Saturday a month after flash floods, originating near the Nepal-Tibet border, devastated towns and villages in northern and central Nepal, according to the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA). Two others had died while undergoing treatment.

A total of 13,795 people have been rescued till Saturday, the NDRRMA said.In Rupandehi district, a part of Lumbini province, floodwaters from the Tinau River swept away six houses along the riverbank in Butwal on Saturday night as the river rose above its danger level, the Kathmandu Post newspaper reported.

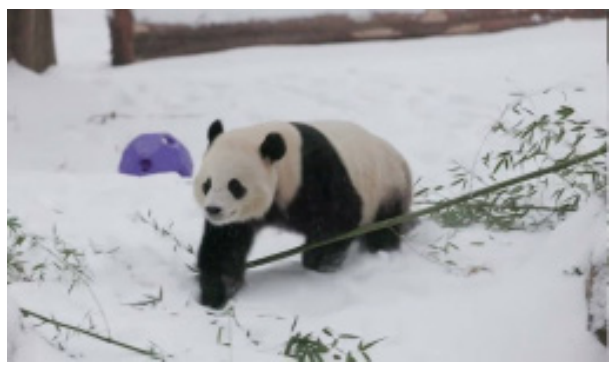
A police official was quoted as saying that around 200 houses along the riverbank in Butwal were at risk, with security personnel evacuating about 1,000 people overnight after the Tinau and nearby streams swelled amid continued rain.Authorities initially moved around 500 residents from Majhuwa, a high-risk area in Butwal Metropolitan City-13, to the Durga Temple holding centre, the report said. They were later transferred to safer locations, in various schools in Butwal-11.The Tinau River crossed its danger mark at around 8 pm on Saturday, prompting security personnel to begin rescue and evacuation operations.The Rupandehi district administration has urged people living near rivers and streams to remain alert and move to safer areas if water levels rise further.In Chitwan district of Bagmati province, the Narayani River and the Riu stream crossed their danger levels early Sunday as rain continued.At the Devghat gauge station, the Narayani River reached 9.23 metres at around 5.15 am, according to the Department of Hydrology and Meteorology. The warning level there is 7.3 metres, and the danger level is 9 metres.The Riu, which flows along the boundary of Madi and Chitwan National Park, reached 3.92 metres. Its warning level is 3.4 metres, and its danger level is 3.8 metres, the Kathmandu Post reported.The Riu flows through southern Chitwan before joining the Rapti River near Meghauli and eventually draining into the Narayani.Heavy rain has also triggered landslides and mudslides at several points in Chitwan, disrupting road traffic.At Dharapani in Ichchhakamana Rural Municipality-4, part of the road subsided further, and a mud-laden landslide blocked traffic in both directions, a police official said.A landslide at Simaldhara in the same municipality has also blocked the road in both directions.Flood and landslide risks also remain high in Karnali, where river levels have continued to rise.The Thuli Bheri River in Dolpa had reached 3.46 metres, just below its 3.56-metre warning level and 3.76-metre danger level, with the water level still rising.

In Humla, the Karnali River at Sarkegad stood at 2.74 metres, below its 4-metre warning level, but was rising. The river level at Biunhidhanda was 2.42 metres.The Mugu Karnali stood at 5.1 metres, below its 7.5-metre warning level and 9-metre danger level, with the water level rising.A landslide has blocked the Nagna-Gamgadhi road at Jharikhola in Mugu, the report said.In Kalikot, a mudslide at Gagne Khola in Shubhakalika Rural Municipality-1 has blocked the Karnali Highway. The Tila Karnali there stood at 3.27 metres, below its 5-metre warning level and 5.45-metre danger level, with the river level falling.Landslides have also disrupted traffic along the Karnali Corridor at Khaccha in Sarkegad-1, Gopchegauda in Kharpunath-1 and Yalwang in Namkha-4 in Humla.In Jumla, water levels in the Tila Karnali and Sija rivers remained stable at 3.74 metres and 2.86 metres, respectively.With rain continuing,

2 giant pandas set off to Atlanta zoo from China after Xi-Trump summit

Bangkok: Two giant pandas departed Chengdu in southwestern China early Sunday for their new homes in Atlanta as part of an agreement between the Chinese and American governments.While in Washington for a three-day summit with US President Donald Trump, Chinese President Xi Jinping announced that the pandas would arrive in Atlanta in the coming days.

The loan of the pandas to the Atlanta zoo was one of the few concrete outcomes to come out of the state visit, which saw expressions of goodwill between the leaders, but no fixes to any of the long-standing differences between the two countries.Atlanta said farewell to its last pandas in 2024, leaving the zoo without the bears. The new agreement was announced back in April, but without any dates.Ping Ping and Fu Shuang are the two adult pandas that will be on loan to Zoo Atlanta for 10 years as part of the agreement. Both pandas were born in 2020 and were kept at the Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding.



Ping Ping, the male, has dark black circles around his eyes, while Fu Shuang, the female, has a forehead that protrudes a bit, according to the Xinhua News Agency.China has long used the pandas as part of its diplomacy globally, deploying the bears in loan programs as expressions of goodwill and letting loan agreements lapse when tensions arise.Xi had said the loan program was an example of "friendship between the Chinese and Americans."

Iran insists on diplomatic solution after Trump rejects peace plan

WASHINGTON/UNITED NATIONS/CAIRO, Iran on Sunday insisted that only diplomacy ?can solve its conflict with the United States and Israel after US President Donald Trump said he rejected an Iranian proposal to reopen the Strait ?of Hormuz and end fighting."Our conditions are clear, and any move toward reopening the Strait of Hormuz is contingent on these conditions being met," Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi posted on social media. "Only a negotiated solution can get them out of this deadlock."Make sense of global markets with the Trading Day newsletter. Sign up here.

Iran announced a peace proposal last week at the UN General Assembly in New York, saying it had been transmitted to the Americans via Qatari mediators. ?Trump said on Saturday he rejected the plan and argued that desperation was driving the Iranians' push for an agreement on the key waterway.

"They want to make ?a deal to open the Hormuz Strait immediately because they're losing so badly," Trump told reporters at the White House.Despite Trump's ?public statements, mediators facilitating Iran's talks with the United States have not officially relayed a US rejection of the plan, according to Araqchi."We are waiting for the mediators to ?convey the definitive views to us, and we will make a decision based on them," Araqchi posted.

The US has imposed an economic blockade on Iran to put pressure on ?Tehran to stop Iranian attacks on vessels in the Strait of Hormuz, which have drastically reduced shipping through the area even as Trump repeatedly asserts that the US controls the waterway.The Wall Street Journal first reported that Trump had rejected the Iranian proposal, citing unnamed US officials.

It said Trump was privately skeptical that Iran would meet his demands and had told his staff that he sees ?a renewed bombing campaign as likely after the November US midterm elections.A US official had said earlier that discussions with Iran through mediators were "positive and constructive"The Iranians also engaged their Saudi rivals regarding the Strait of Hormuz, underscoring the stakes of a seven-month-old conflict that has disrupted oil flows through a critical shipping ?lane and ?taken a toll on the global economy.Araqchi told reporters at the United Nations on Friday the proposed deal would trigger a seven-day countdown to reopening the strait and a pause in regional fighting.



"If there is seriousness on the US side to come to a deal and reopen the Strait of Hormuz, everything is now prepared," Araqchi said. If the US were to agree, the warring parties could start wider talks "on mutually agreed subjects."That could potentially include discussions of Iran's nuclear program. Trump has said Tehran must never acquire a ?nuclear bomb, while a senior Iranian official told ?Reuters that Iran wouldover its nuclear program even if the US accepted its peace deal.Iran would grant no concessions over its rights, including enriching uranium or shipping its highly enriched uranium out of the country, the official said.Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, in an interview with the ?CBS show "Face the Nation", said Tehran was ready for talks on its nuclear program and other issues, but would not accept "bullying ?or coercion".

"Iran is not ?seeking war, but will defend itself against pressure, threats and attacks," Pezeshkian said, adding that it had already agreed that "we're not supposed to develop nuclear weapons".Previous attempts at diplomacy have failed to end the war, which began on February 28 with US and Israeli attacks.Since then the war has alternated between pauses and renewed strikes, killing thousands while degrading the conventional ?forces of Iran ?and damaging its already ailing economy.Iran and its allies have retaliated by extending the conflict throughout the ?region. Iran has struck US allies in the Gulf with drones and missiles while its Houthi allies in Yemen have targeted Saudi interests.Yemen's Saudi-led coalition said early on Saturday it had intercepted two ballistic missiles and two ?drones launched by the Houthis towards the kingdom.Adds background on Saturday attack blamed on Houthis in final paragraph

India joins UN push to secure sea lanes

United Nations: India has joined maritime and Gulf nations in calling for the protection of international sea lanes as leaders at the UN warned that attacks on ships and disruptions at strategic waterways were threatening energy supplies, food security and global trade.External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar voiced deep concern over continuing hostilities in the Gulf and the targeting of commercial vessels and maritime crews in international waters. He called for restraint, de-escalation and the uninterrupted movement of energy and commerce.India also sought greater protection for ships and seafarers caught in regional conflicts. The warnings extended across speeches delivered during several days of the UN General Assembly debate this week.Ministers from Oman, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Singapore, the Philippines, Djibouti and other countries described maritime security as a global economic and humanitarian concern. Oman said the recent regional war had paralysed navigation and trade through the Strait of Hormuz.The disruption had affected energy security, price stability and confidence in the international order, Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr bin Hamad bin Hamood Albusaidi said.

Oman remained committed to safeguarding navigation through the strait under international law and the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, he said. He urged all parties to cooperate in protecting the interests of countries dependent on the route.Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud also linked Gulf stability directly to global energy security and trade. "Safeguarding international navigation and the resilience of global supply chains is a shared responsibility," he said.Saudi Arabia opposed fees or restrictions on movement through the Strait of Hormuz. It also rejected the use of critical waterways as instruments of pressure against other countries. Bahrain Foreign Minister Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani said the effects of a maritime disruption extended far beyond coastal states."A waterway is not merely a security issue of concern for coastal States," he said. Such routes carry food, medicine and energy, he said, and their disruption affects families even in landlocked countries.Bahrain opposed permit and fee systems for passage through strategic straits. The Philippines placed seafarers at the centre of the debate.Foreign Secretary Theresa Lazaro said nearly 90 per cent of world trade moved by sea with the support of about two million seafarers. More than a quarter of them were Filipinos. She referred to a recent incident in the Strait of Hormuz that killed two Filipino seafarers and injured others.

New 737 MAX glitch raises landing concern

Washington: A newly identified Boeing 737 MAX software glitch could disable an automated navigation feature after a missed approach, raising fresh safety questions for a jet widely used by Indian carriers, The Wall Street Journal reported.The problem emerged from an update to cockpit software. It can occur when pilots change their planned flight path after abandoning a landing attempt, according to the Journal.In one scenario, pilots may have to fly manually without some autopilot functions. Industry officials said that could increase the crew's workload at a critical stage, when the aircraft is at low altitude and may also be encountering bad weather.Boeing has acknowledged the glitch but said it does not pose a safety risk. It notified 737 MAX operators about the issue in late August, the Journal reported, citing a company document."We shared information with operators that reinforced existing pilot procedures for safely handling such cases," Boeing said. "Our engineers are working on a software update to permanently address the issue."The company is also developing a procedure that would allow pilots to restore the automated navigation feature if it becomes unavailable. Southwest Airlines and United Airlines have told Boeing they do not want to accept new 737 MAX aircraft carrying the affected software, according to industry officials cited by the Journal.

The airlines instead requested an earlier software version. The Federal Aviation Administration is investigating the problem and will act if necessary, a senior agency official told the newspaper.The review could affect approval of Boeing's newest variants, the MAX 7 and MAX 10, if regulators determine that the glitch creates an unsafe condition. The FAA approved the MAX 7 for passenger service last month.Boeing Chief Executive Kelly Ortberg has said he expects the MAX 10 to receive regulatory approval soon. The issue presents a complication for Southwest, which has waited years for the smaller MAX 7 and plans to place it in service next year.Delta, United, American and Alaska Airlines have MAX 10 aircraft on order. It is not known how many aircraft may be operating with the affected software. Boeing said it was seeking an accurate count because airlines are not required to tell the manufacturer when they install an update. There are 2,422 MAX 8 and MAX 9 aircraft flying worldwide, according to aviation data firm Cirium.



Alaska, American, Southwest and United said none of their aircraft carries the flawed software. Boeing has told airlines they can return to an earlier version. Boeing told operators in August that it expected to issue further guidance by November and provide a permanent fix in early 2028.The company now says it is trying to accelerate both timelines. The manufacturer said it first learned of the problem from a MAX operator in November 2024. The issue did not initially meet Boeing's threshold for a safety review.It began a formal review this month after receiving additional feedback and shared its findings with the FAA. WestJet offered a different assessment. "This is not considered a safety issue, we have standard operating procedures and training to mitigate this type of event," the Canadian airline said.GE Aerospace, which developed the software, said it was supporting the FAA's evaluation. The development is closely watched in India because

US intel flags Saudi nuclear weapons option

Washington: Saudi Arabia has not ruled out developing nuclear weapons, according to a classified US intelligence assessment that has intensified congressional concern over President Donald Trump's civilian nuclear cooperation agreement with Riyadh, The Washington Post reported.The assessment was contained in classified documents sent to Congress last month, US officials told the newspaper. The intelligence findings have not been made public, and the CIA declined to comment.The documents were provided as Congress reviews an agreement that would permit American companies to begin nuclear energy projects worth tens of billions of dollars in Saudi Arabia.The Trump administration says the partnership would strengthen relations with Riyadh, create opportunities for US companies and prevent Saudi Arabia from turning to Russia or China for nuclear technology.The State Department defended the agreement and said Washington "does not and will not support a Saudi nuclear weapon program".It said the agreement combined expanded nuclear energy cooperation with the strongest non-proliferation standards that were diplomatically achievable.The Saudi government did not answer the Post's questions about the intelligence assessment. It referred the newspaper to an earlier statement by Energy Minister Abdulaziz bin Salman, who said the kingdom's nuclear programme would be "peaceful" and developed with "the highest levels of responsibility and transparency".The agreement initially limits Saudi uranium enrichment to below 5 per cent. But it could eventually permit enrichment of up to 20 per cent after an additional study and a separate written agreement, according to details reported by the Post and The Wall Street Journal.Uranium enriched to 20 per cent is below weapons grade. However, experts say reaching that level substantially reduces the time and technical work needed to produce material suitable for a nuclear weapon.Lawmakers have also raised questions about inspections. The agreement does not require Saudi Arabia to adopt the International Atomic Energy Agency's Additional Protocol, which gives inspectors broader access to nuclear fuel-cycle facilities, research sites and suspected undeclared locations.A group of Democratic senators led by Edward Markey and Jeff Merkley wrote to Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Friday and demanded that the administration abandon the agreement. "With this deal, the Trump Administration is departing from precedent, adopting looser restrictions, and caving to Saudi demands," the senators said. They argued that Riyadh should accept what lawmakers call the non-proliferation "Gold Standard".That would prohibit domestic uranium enrichment and plutonium reprocessing while requiring the kingdom to implement the IAEA Additional Protocol. The letter was also signed by Senators Tim Kaine, Chris Van Hollen, Peter Welch and Ron Wyden. Congress is in a 90-day review period.Lawmakers may introduce legislation rejecting the agreement. However, supporters would need a two-thirds majority to override a presidential veto and prevent it from taking effect. Supporters of the agreement say US participation would provide Washington with more influence over Saudi nuclear activities than allowing Russian or Chinese companies to build the kingdom's programme.Trump has also made Saudi normalisation of relations with Israel a condition of the nuclear agreement, according to the Post.Riyadh has said it will not establish diplomatic relations with Israel without progress towards a Palestinian state.

Delhi SIR deadline revised for fourth time, final roll now on December 4



SIRResidents can now file claims and objections until October 30, while the deadline for disposal of notices, claims and objections has been extended to November 30.The deadline for the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Delhi was revised for the fourth time on Saturday, with the Election Commission of India (ECI) pushing the publication of the final electoral roll from November 4 to December 4 and giving residents one more month to file claims and objections.

Residents can now file claims and objections until October 30, while the deadline for disposal of notices, claims and objections has been extended to November 30.Also, the ECI eased the process for voters who have received notices over discrepancies in their records. From now on, they will not have to appear at an election office for a hearing but booth level officers (BLOs) will visit their homes to collect documents and upload them on the ECINet platform for a decision by the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO).

The revised schedule was issued "in view of the request received from CEO Delhi", the ECI said. It followed a request from the Delhi Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) in a letter dated September 23, it added.The latest change is the fourth revision of the SIR schedule since the exercise was ordered on May 14. The deadline to issue the final roll was earlier October 7, which was then revised to October 19, October 27 and November 4.The extension comes as the claims and objections phase has seen a relatively low number of applications from people seeking fresh enrolment. Since the draft rolls were published on August 31, only 1.21 lakh Form 6 applications – used to seek registration as new electors – have been filed, according to Delhi CEO office data.The figure assumes significance in the context of the number of deletions in the draft electoral roll.

Delhi had around 1.45 crore electors before the exercise. Among them, 97.5 lakh were included in the draft electoral roll, while around 47.5 lakh electors were classified as "uncollectible" – after BLOs found them absent, shifted, dead or having duplicate entries, among other reasons – and were struck off the roll.Among the 97.5 lakh who did make it to the draft roll, one-third or around 33.1 lakh electors were issued notices to prove that they are eligible to be on the final roll. While 13.79 lakh electors got notices because they could not link themselves to the electoral roll of the last SIR, 19.33 lakh were flagged for "logical discrepancies" in their enumeration forms.Several prominent voters, including former deputy prime minister L K Advani, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, Election Commissioner S S Sandhu, former Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar and former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, have received such notices. Officials said the details of most had been validated through field verification and their names had been reserved for inclusion in the final roll.Sources in the Delhi CEO's office said the decision to seek more time was taken after a meeting with representatives of political parties earlier this week. "All parties requested that more time be given for filing claims and objections," an official said.Further, the ECI directed district election officers to create adequate helpdesks and hold special camps for people living in night shelters, labourers, poor people and the homeless, as required.

Six decades, 88 deaths: The dangers that come with a police uniform



The death of 56-year-old Police Sub-Inspector Kisan Kamlakar Bhoir after he was allegedly attacked with a cement brick during a night patrol has added another name to a long roll of policemen who have lost their lives while performing their duties across the Mumbai Metropolitan Region.Bhoir's death takes the number of police personnel from the Mumbai, Thane and Navi Mumbai commissionerates listed in the police memorial records examined for this story to at least 88. The records include 76 personnel from the Mumbai Police commissionerate, six from Thane police units and five from the Navi Mumbai commissionerate over the last six decades. Bhoir is the latest addition to the list.

But the numbers tell only part of the story. The circumstances in which these policemen died have changed dramatically over the decades — from communal violence and encounters with armed criminals to terrorism, crowd-control operations, rescue missions, traffic enforcement and, in Bhoir's case, an apparently routine intervention during Ganpati security duty.The deadliest year in the Mumbai-related memorial records was 2008, when 12 Mumbai Police personnel were killed. When Mumbai Railway Police and ATS personnel included in the Mumbai-linked records are added, the number rises to 14.Most of those deaths occurred on the night of November 26, 2008, when 10 Pakistani terrorists carried out coordinated attacks at multiple locations in Mumbai.The 26/11 attack therefore accounts for the single largest concentration of police deaths in the Mumbai-linked records.However, this was not the first time that policemen were targeted by terrorists. In 1990, Sub-Inspector Lakhmersingh Sardar, who was on traffic duty, was shot at by Sikh terrorists in Ghatkopar and later succumbed to his injuries.

The other major spike came during 1992 and 1993, when Mumbai was engulfed in communal violence.The Mumbai Police memorial records list 10 personnel who died in 1992 and one in 1993. Six of these deaths occurred after policemen were targeted during the 1992-93 riots.When mobs turned on the policeApart from terrorists and armed criminals, the police have also faced the threat of large crowds, with several incidents in which policemen were specifically targeted.

One of the earliest such cases was in 1972, when Police Constable R M Rane was lynched by criminal elements during a factory workers' protest in Vikhroli.Nandkumar Gokhale, a 28-year-old Sub-Inspector of the Mumbai Police, was brutally lynched in Kamathipura's Fifth Lane.On May 18, 1984, a rampaging mob, amid communal riots that had engulfed parts of erstwhile Bombay, Thane and Bhiwandi, inflicted 38 wounds on the officer. Despite being off duty and dressed in civilian clothes, Gokhale had decided to help his fellow policemen control the mob.Known as a dashing officer who suffered from an extreme fear of heights, Gokhale was killed when his attackers, many of them allegedly affiliated with the Mumbai underworld, took him to the terrace of a building and threw him from the top. His body was subsequently hidden inside a sewer and covered with a lid. It was discovered after an extensive search.On the same day, his colleague, Police Constable Shaikh Gula Shaikh Amir, was also lynched in Peru Lane, under the jurisdiction of Dongri police station.The Thane region has its own history of policemen being killed during communal violence.On July 5 and 6, 2006, Police Naik Balu Sukhadev Gangurde and Head Constable Ramesh Yashwant Jagtap, both attached to Thane Police, were lynched while deployed for bandobast duty in Bhiwandi amid rioting and arson.The incident unfolded on July 5, 2006, when hundreds gathered near the proposed Nizampura police station site in Bhiwandi amid opposition to its construction. As tensions escalated, the mob attacked the structure and clashed with police, who opened fire, killing two youths. News of the firing triggered further violence elsewhere in the city, where two policemen, Ramesh Jagtap and Balasaheb Gangurde, encountered a mob near the Baug-E-Firdous mosque while trying to prevent attacks on state transport buses. T

Since Satya Niketan collapse, 596 properties razed, 190 sealed over violations: Delhi Corporation



Satya Niketan collapseAccording to the MCD's recent submissions before the Delhi High Court, the civic body identified 2,453 buildings in the Capital being used as PG accommodations.At least 596 properties have been razed, 190 have been sealed and over 200 show-cause notices and nearly 100 demolition orders have been issued so far amid a Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) crackdown after a five-storey building collapsed in Southwest Delhi's Satya Niketan on September 6, killing seven persons.

In an official statement on Saturday, the civic body said, "The MCD continued its ongoing city-wide enforcement drive against dangerous buildings, unauthorised constructions and violations of the Master Plan of Delhi (MPD) and building bye-laws. Strict enforcement action is being undertaken across all 12 zones of the Corporation to ensure compliance with building norms and safeguard public safety."The enforcement drive follows a citywide survey of paying guest (PG) accommodations, which revealed widespread gaps in building approvals and safety clearances.According to the MCD's recent submissions before the Delhi High Court, the civic body identified 2,453 buildings in the Capital being used as PG accommodations.However, building plans or sanctioned plans could be traced for only 730 buildings. MCD officials told the court that some of the buildings are 50–60 years old and that ownership of several properties has changed hands multiple times, making it difficult to trace records.The survey had earlier highlighted several other regulatory gaps. Of the 2,453 PG buildings, only 31, or 1.2%, had a No Objection Certificate from the Delhi Fire Service, while sanctioned building plans were available for only 729 buildings. Just eight buildings had structural stability certificates, according to the survey findings, as reported by The Indian Express earlier.The latest MCD submission also stated that only four of the 2,453 PG buildings had been classified as "dangerous". Separately, its survey of 3.99 lakh residential properties found more than 21,099 instances of commercial activity in residential areas, with around 30–40 properties sealed for such violations.The affidavit filed by the MCD before the High Court gave a closer picture of the situation in Satya Niketan. The civic body said it had conducted a detailed inspection of around 300 properties, of which 101 were being used as PG accommodation. Three of these buildings were declared dangerous and vacated after proceedings under the DMC Act. Their owners challenged the notices in the High Court, which, while staying the notices in separate proceedings, directed that no PG could operate from the properties until they were found structurally safe.The affidavit further said 10 buildings were found vulnerable, with owners and occupants directed to undertake strengthening, renovation, and major repairs recommended in structural audit reports. Another 14 properties required minor repairs, according to the MCD.

'How can body be cremated with belongings?': Court slams Gurugram Police in realtor murder



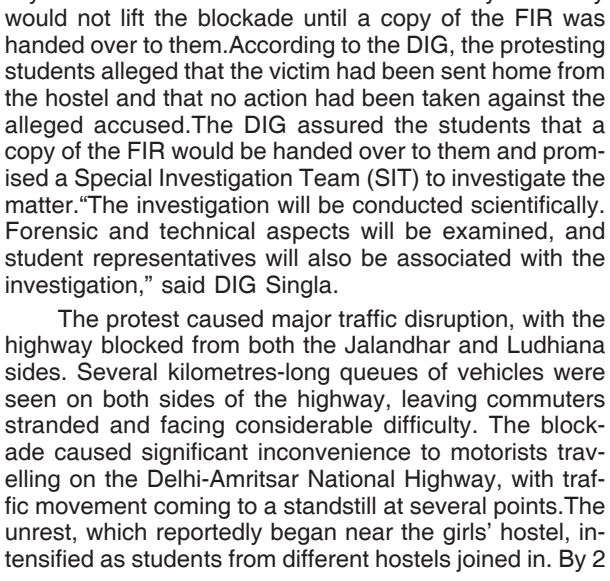
"How can a body be cremated along with belongings? How can the law not be followed," Judicial Magistrate Rahul Jain of Saket court asked the Gurugram Police in response to a submission by senior advocate Amit Prasad, who appeared for Yuvraj's sister, that a burnt watch and kada were recovered from the cremation site.

A Delhi court on Saturday pulled up the Gurugram Police, asking how it cremated the body of real estate professional Yuvraj Singh Manchanda along with his belongings without following mandatory legal procedures.

How can a body be cremated along with belongings? How can the law not be followed," Judicial Magistrate Rahul Jain of Saket court asked the Gurugram Police in response to a submission by senior advocate Amit Prasad, who appeared for Yuvraj's sister, that a burnt watch and kada were recovered from the cremation site.The remarks came after the court on Thursday said the Gurugram Police had "botched up" the case and described its handling of the body as a "complete hotch potch".Yuvraj was allegedly killed by his former colleague and her partner in Gurgaon on September 6 and thrown into a drain.Describing the sequence of events as a "shocking state of affairs", the court asked, "Do you not upload details of an unidentified body on ZIPNET in cases of murder or otherwise? Isn't that the procedure followed by Gurugram Police?"Yuvraj's details, including a photograph, were uploaded by the Delhi Police on ZIPNET — an interstate police database — on September 12, two days after Gurugram Police recovered an unidentified body from a drain in Badshahpur. However, the body, which later turned out to be Yuvraj's, was cremated on September 14 without being identified.The court was hearing an application moved earlier by Yuvraj's sister, in which she had raised concerns over the handling of the body by Gurugram Police and alleged that vital forensic evidence and personal belongings were mishandled or destroyed during the cremation. It reserved its order on the application.

According to PTI, questioning an officer from Gurugram's Badshahpur police station, the judge asked why the nearest executive magistrate or sub-divisional magistrate was not informed on the second day after recovery of the unidentified body for the inquest proceedings. "Isn't it the norm to inform the nearest executive magistrate… regarding inquest proceedings for the unidentified body? Why wasn't it carried out," the court said.The judge further raised serious questions over the post-mortem process, noting that two reports appeared to contain materially different findings. While one report mentioned bullet injuries, the other attributed the cause of death to asphyxia due to antemortem drowning."The postmortem reports are different… How can such basic procedures be skipped," the court asked, while also taking note that the viscera had not been preserved.The court observed that the lapses had resulted in Manchanda's family being deprived of the right to perform his last rites. "The complainant not only lost her brother by cremating his body, you snatched away her family's right to dutifully carry out his last rites," it said.Police have alleged that Yuvraj met Anya and Sanyam in Gurugram on September 6, when he was shot inside their car.

Protest over alleged rape turns violent at Punjab university; police file FIR



A protest by students of Lovely Professional University (LPU) in Punjab's Phagwara over the alleged rape of a female student by an outsider on the university campus turned violent early Sunday morning. The protesters damaged property on the campus, set some objects on fire and blocked the Jalandhar-Phagwara National Highway outside the university.Following the protests, the police have registered an FIR on charges of rape against an unknown suspect based on students' statements."We are verifying the facts. Student leaders and LPU management will have a meeting at noon to resolve the issues being raised by students," said Naveen Singla, Deputy Inspector General of Police, Jalandhar range, who visited the spot and talked to the protesting students.Meanwhile, Lovely Professional University, in a statement to the media, said that "there is no truth in the rumours presently being circulated" and urged students and the public not to amplify them.

The students claimed that the alleged rape had taken place around three days ago and alleged that the university administration had taken no action. They said they would not lift the blockade until a copy of the FIR was handed over to them.According to the DIG, the protesting students alleged that the victim had been sent home from the hostel and that no action had been taken against the alleged accused.The DIG assured the students that a copy of the FIR would be handed over to them and promised a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to investigate the matter."The investigation will be conducted scientifically. Forensic and technical aspects will be examined, and student representatives will also be associated with the investigation," said DIG Singla.

The protest caused major traffic disruption, with the highway blocked from both the Jalandhar and Ludhiana sides. Several kilometres-long queues of vehicles were seen on both sides of the highway, leaving commuters stranded and facing considerable difficulty. The blockade caused significant inconvenience to motorists travelling on the Delhi-Amritsar National Highway, with traffic movement coming to a standstill at several points.The unrest, which reportedly began near the girls' hostel, intensified as students from different hostels joined in. By 2 am, a large number of students had gathered and moved towards the main entrance of the university. Students began sharing videos from inside the campus on social media, prompting the police to reach the spot.Videos circulating from inside the campus also showed protesters moving through the university mall and other areas amid the escalating protest. Some objects were set on fire during the unrest.Outside the campus, students blocked the National Highway around 4 am, disrupting traffic on the busy Jalandhar–Phagwara stretch. Protesters raised slogans of "We want justice", demanding action over the alleged crime.

"The protest was triggered after information about an alleged sexual assault of a female student began circulating among students. Different versions of the incident were being shared, both among students and on social media," a BSc student told Kapurthala Senior Superintendent of Police Gaurav Toora reached the spot as the situation escalated and told students that the police had not received any complaint regarding the alleged sexual assault at that point.Dr Monica Gulati, registrar, Lovely Professional University, in a statement to the media said, "The University categorically clarifies that there is no truth in the rumours presently being circulated. Students, parents and members of the public are requested not to believe, circulate or amplify such rumours. They should rely upon information communicated through official channels of the University only".

The protest at LPU came a day after a protest at Chitkara University, another private university, in Punjab's Rajpura over claims of two girls missing.The protesting students raised several other demands concerning the functioning and security of the university's boys' and girls' hostels.Singla said a meeting with the university management was scheduled for Sunday afternoon to discuss these issues. The police would also look into students' concerns about security arrangements in the hostels.One of the students' demands was that all female staff be deployed in the girls' hostel. The DIG said the demand would also be considered.During his interaction with the protesters, DIG Singla was also informed about the alleged suicide of a female student at LPU around 15 days ago. He said that the student was from Telangana, and the police had registered criminal proceedings regarding the unnatural death. The student's parents had also arrived at the university after the incident.The DIG said that the police had taken possession of the student's mobile phone and sent it for forensic examination. He said the forensic findings would be reviewed and further action taken based on the evidence.Singla further said that if the investigation revealed any indication of foul play, or if credible information was brought before the police suggesting wrongdoing, appropriate action would be taken in accordance with the law.

Supreme Court to examine plea challenging new UPI merchant charges

New Delhi: The Supreme Court will on Monday hear a plea challenging the Centre's decision to impose a Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) on specified UPI person-to-merchant transactions of over Rs 2,000.The new framework, which is scheduled to come into effect from October 15, imposes a 0.4 per cent MDR on specified person-to-merchant (P2M) UPI transactions above Rs 2,000. The MDR will be capped at Rs 300 for transactions of Rs 75,000 and above.Essential and thin-margin sectors, including railways, telecom, insurance, fuel and agricultural inputs, will attract a flat MDR of Rs 5 per transaction above Rs 2,000. Payments into mutual funds, securities and through stockbrokers and dealers will attract an MDR of 0.02 per cent, capped at Rs 300.Person-to-person (P2P) UPI transfers will continue to remain free irrespective of the amount, while payments to merchants up to Rs 2,000 will also remain free. The government has said around 96 per cent of P2M transactions will remain unaffected under the new framework.According to the Supreme Court's cause list for September 28, the plea will come up before a bench comprising Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana.The public interest litigation (PIL), filed by advocate Anjan Datta, challenges the Centre's September 14 notification and the MDR framework announced on September 15.The plea alleges that the levy was introduced without adequate statutory safeguards, transparency or public consultation. It also challenges the constitutional validity of the amended Section 10A of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007, alleging that it gives unguided powers to the executive to decide which electronic payment modes would receive no-charge protec

Athletes see climate change as threatening their sports and their health. Some are speaking up

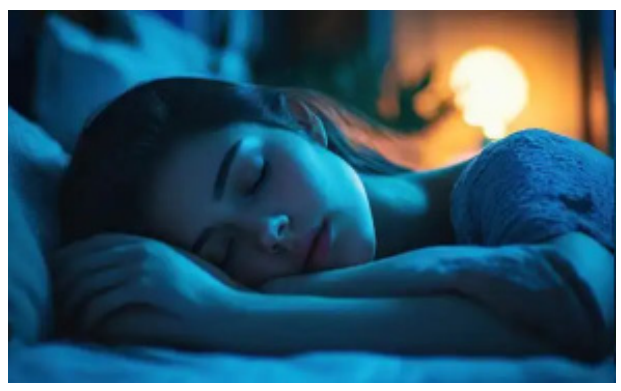


Pragnya Mohan has been a professional triathlete for nearly a decade, but summers in her native India are now so hot that she can't train there anymore. She escaped the heat to train in the United Kingdom but worries about a day when a warming world kills her sport entirely. American discus thrower Sam Mattis described temperatures as high as 44 Celsius (111 Fahrenheit) at the 2021 U.S.

Olympic trials in Eugene, Oregon, caused some fans, officials, and athletes to pass out. New Zealand soccer player Katie Rood recalled training in heat chambers to prepare for the Tokyo Olympics, and warmups cut short in high heat and humidity. All three spoke at the United Nations climate summit in Baku, Azerbaijan to talk about the threat that climate change poses to them, to fans, and to sport itself.With billions of fans worldwide, they're among athletes and leagues trying to get more people to care, and act, on climate change. "In the future, if climate change is not addressed and is not thoughtfully handled, triathlons can cease to exist," Mohan said at a panel discussion. It's not all about heat. Mohan noted this year's Paris Olympics had to delay some triathlon events because heavy rains — which have increased as a warming atmosphere holds more water — contributed to high bacteria levels in the Seine River.Some top soccer clubs have gotten together in a climate action alliance aimed at reducing emissions and inspiring fans to act on climate change. One of those is La Liga club Real Betis. Rafael Muela Pastor, general manager of the club's foundation, said at another panel in Baku that soccer is "the most powerful and massive sport in the world" and it's crucial that "we have to do something."

"We have a superpower and we have a responsibility with that," he said. Leslie Mabon, a lecturer on environmental systems at the United Kingdom's Open University, said athletes can raise awareness on issues like global warming, but the most transformative activism often comes from elsewhere."I do think athletes can move the needle, but sometimes it's away from the very highest levels," said Mabon.Climate change is also making sports more expensive and widening disparities. Climate change is also making sports more expensive and widening disparities. (Source: Freepik)"The financial implications of what's at stake do make it very difficult, and particularly the governing bodies — the leagues, the FIFAs of this world — it's very hard to get them to take action." FIFA — the governing body for world soccer — was unmoved by concerns about heat and human rights in holding the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, a country criticized for its treatment of migrant workers, among other issues. And at times, outwardly positive actions from sports leaders can be little more than greenwashing.FIFA President Gianni Infantino attended COP29 and posted on Instagram about extending a partnership with Pacific Island nations to foster "climate-resilient football development" and raise awareness about climate change. That came just months after FIFA signed a sponsorship deal with Saudi Arabia's state oil giant Aramco. Women soccer players from around the world signed an open letter urging FIFA to end the deal, citing both the country's record on the rights of women and LGBTQ+ people and the impact of fossil fuel production on climate change.FIFA did not immediately respond to a request for comment from The Associated Press. "It's very hard for anything that comes from the top levels to be taken seriously or to be taken credibly when you still have these kind of deals in place," Mabon said.Climate change is also making sports more expensive and widening disparities. Jessica Murfree, assistant professor of sports administration at the University of North Carolina, said athletes will have to travel farther and spend more to train and compete as some places become incompatible with sport because it's too hot or there isn't enough snow. "That's going to have a massive impact on athletes and athlete hopefuls," she said."It drives a bigger socioeconomic wedge between the haves and the have-nots, which then becomes a justice issue."Sports are seeking to adapt to a hotter planet. Sometimes competitions get moved to different places, or starting times get shifted to cooler parts of the day.Then there's technology: Qatar spent billions on air-conditioned stadiums at its World Cup to keep fans and players cool.But sports can't air-condition its way out of the climate crisis, said Rood, the New Zealand soccer player. The energy it requires "is a huge cost to the environment," she said in an interview, adding: "It's not just the isolated events that happen once or twice a year. It's the training and the lead-up … those conditions can't necessarily be created every time."And that's concerning for Tina Muir, a former elite runner from the United Kingdom who talks about the threat of climate change through the business she founded, Running for Real. Athletes are conditioned to push themselves beyond their limits, she said."

Night lights vs. pitch black: How your sleep environment affects health and longevity



Sleep quality has long been linked to overall health and longevity, but recent discussions have shed light on the impact of sleeping environments on well-being. Dr Sudhir Kumar recently shared a video on X, mentioning that sleeping in complete darkness, as opposed to sleeping with a night light or in a dimly lit room, may significantly lower the risk of premature death. He wrote in the caption, "Those sleeping in completely dark rooms have 30% lower risk of premature death, as compared to those who sleep with lights on (even if the room is dimly lit)." Three secrets for longer and healthier life 1. Sleep in pitch darkness Those sleeping in completely dark room have 30% lower risk of premature death, as compared to those who sleep with lights on (even if the room is dimly lit), 2. Maintain a regular sleep schedule. So what exactly happens to the body when you sleep in total darkness, and how does this compare to sleeping with a night light? Dr Kadam Nagpal, senior consultant neurologist at Salubritus Medcentre, tells indianexpress.com, "Circadian rhythm is a 24-hour biological clock that usually coordinates the time of sleep." He explains that light plays a crucial role in regulating this internal clock. "Whenever light enters the eye, there are special cells in the retina where the inputs are being generated and carried out to the brain, and it is being interpreted as information about the time of the day."

How does sleeping in complete darkness affect the body's natural circadian rhythm compared to sleeping with a night light?The impact of light exposure on our sleep patterns is significant. Dr Nagpal reveals, "When a person is being exposed to natural light, a person's circadian rhythm becomes synchronised with sunset and sunrise." This natural synchronisation can be disrupted by artificial light sources.

He continues, "Whenever poorly timed artificial light exposure, such as light from a device or light from a mobile phone, is given to a person or a patient, especially at night, it can affect the sleep and wake cycle of the person and can thereby affect the circadian rhythm or the biological clock."Impact of exposure to light during sleep on hormone production, overall health and longevityLight exposure significantly affects the production of melatonin, a crucial hormone for sleep regulation. Dr Nagpal explains, "Melatonin is a hormone or a neurotransmitter that is naturally made by the body, and its production is closely tied to light and response to darkness."He adds, "Exposure to lights slows the production of melatonin, and especially in the evening or at night as the sun sets, it brings about an increase in melatonin level, which further facilitates sleep." This highlights the importance of controlling light exposure for optimal sleep quality.

What steps can individuals who are used to sleeping with a night light or dim lighting take to transition to sleeping in complete darkness?

Transitioning to sleeping in complete darkness can be beneficial, but it requires careful consideration. Dr Nagpal advises, "It is best to sleep whenever there is pitch darkness as pitch darkness reduces potential distractions and disruptions around us and sleep disruptions."He emphasises the importance of sleep hygiene: "For adequate nighttime sleep, we often encourage our patients to have adequate sleep hygiene. Sleep hygiene means the person should not consume tea or coffee before sleep, that the person should be in a very peaceful environment, that there shouldn't be any kind of loud music, and that the nearby vicinity should be absolutely pitch dark."Dr Nagpal suggests practical steps for those looking to improve their sleep environment. "Even if there is some sunlight peeping in, there are blackout curtains that can be used. Also, reduce the technology in the bedroom, especially the screens' glow light coming from the TVs or other gadgets, which might just disrupt the circadian timing and the melatonin production, thereby resulting in decreased sleep."Sleep hygiene is basically that the person should not have consumed tea or coffee prior to sleep, the person should be in a very peaceful environment, there shouldn't be any kind of loud music, and the nearby vicinity should be absolutely pitch dark. Sleep hygiene is basically that the person should not have to consume tea or coffee before sleep, the person should be in a very peaceful environment, there shouldn't be any kind of loud music, and the nearby vicinity should be absolutely pitch dark. (Source: Freepik)Validity of the claim that sleeping in entirely dark rooms has 30% lower risk of premature deathWhile Dr Nagpal doesn't directly address this specific claim, he does highlight potential health risks associated with sleeping with lights on. He states, "There are researches which often determine and depict that if the person is not sleeping in a pitch dark environment, it might result in eye strain, and there are studies that patients who sleep with the light or the TV on are susceptible to weight gain and increased cardiovascular risk, and even cancer risk is also seen to be increased in such patients."Dr Nagpal concludes by stressing the importance of a dark sleep environment for overall health and well-being.

Democratising AI needs a radically different approach

The growing power and influence of Big Tech companies is a concern for policymakers worldwide. To break Big Tech's hold over the Artificial Intelligence (AI) ecosystem and democratise AI development, India, like many other countries, is investing in sovereign cloud infrastructure, creating open data platforms and supporting local start-ups. However, these efforts are unlikely to be enough and may even deepen Big Tech's dominance.

The enormous computational costs of building deep learning models make it nearly impossible for smaller players to compete. Deep learning is now the popular form of AI because it has generalised capabilities. But this is precisely also what makes it computationally expensive. As of 2023, Gemini Ultra was the most costly model, costing about $200 million to train. To make it affordable, any new entrant would necessarily be beholden to Big Tech companies for compute credits. These costs also incentivise Big Tech companies to keep advocating for deep learning as the future and pushing out larger and larger models — it locks in their position as the dominant actors and provides the primary revenue stream through which they can recover their costs.Some recent policy proposals suggest investing in public compute infrastructure or developing a federated model, taking a leaf out of India's Digital Public Infrastructure model. However, it is not enough just to provide alternate infrastructure. This infrastructure also has to be competitive with the Big Tech offering. Big Tech companies offer a wide range of developer tools which make workflows easier and more efficient, and these tools are optimised for their cloud infrastructure. Along with access to cloud infrastructure, they give companies access to the latest algorithmic models, making tasks such as image or video analysis far easier, along with tools to simplify data preparation and labelling. Big Tech's end-to-end service offering makes development cheaper and easier and drives up the costs of switching to other providers.Big Tech's data monopoly is even harder to contend with. These companies access a continuous data stream across various domains, social interactions and geographies. This "data intelligence" is likely to be more sophisticated than what other players can achieve, giving them a substantial competitive edge. Unsurprisingly, many smaller AI companies find their end game is to sell to Big Tech, further entrenching the cycle of dominance. While public data initiatives aim to democratise data access and create a more equitable playing field, they often fall short. Open data initiatives are prone to commercial capture, where the better-resourced actors — here, Big Tech with its advanced computational infrastructure and data intelligence — are positioned to best leverage these open data architectures.The shift toward deep learning as the most popular form of AI has also meant that commercial firms, particularly Big Tech, now dominate AI, and academia has a diminishing role. Industry players now have more academic publications and citations and are shaping the direction of AI research.Prioritising a theory of changeWe need a radically different approach to AI development that does not aim to compete with or replicate the Big Tech model but changes the rules of the game altogether. As long as we are locked into a 'big-data' and 'larger is better' imagination of AI, we will only keep chipping away at an exploitative model of commercial surveillance and even a wasting of precious public resources.A model of AI development whose starting point is a theory of change, i.e., understanding the causal mechanisms through which various factors link together and developing hypotheses about how potential interventions may contribute to change.In this model, domain expertise and lived experience guide AI development rather than statistical patterns in Big Data alone. This knowledge and experience are harnessed to develop theories of change and build purpose-driven and smaller models that reflect frameworks for progressive change. Data collection is then targeted and curated to test and further refine the theory of change.



By championing "small AI", firmly anchored in a theory of change, we can carve out a space for AI development that is inherently more democratic and effective.Historically, significant advancements in medicine, aviation, or weather forecasting typically relied on theory-driven models, where hypothesis testing and scientific rigour in fields such as biology, physics, and chemistry were prioritised over sheer volumes of data. In our obsession with 'bigger is better' we seem to have forgotten this entirely.Another missed opportunityWe need to change course urgently, and we cannot do that as long as we keep viewing Big Data and deep learning as the holy grail. On this current path, we only increase our dependence on Big Tech. The recently signed Global Development Compact is a missed opportunity to re-think the current paradigm. While it makes all the right noises about democratising AI, it ultimately falls back into the same trap of assuming that if countries build large enough data sets and are given access to computational power, we will magically be able to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and address Big Tech monopolies.

Mahindra may hike SUV prices again in coming weeks amid rising commodity costs

New Delhi: Mahindra & Mahindra is weighing another price increase across its SUV portfolio amid recent increases in commodity prices, with a decision expected in the next couple of weeks, said Nalinikanth Gollagunta, CEO, Automotive Division, Mahindra Group.In an interview with PTI, Gollagunta said the company has already taken three price increases this year — in January, April and July, with the July increase being about 2.7 per cent on sports utility vehicles (SUVs).

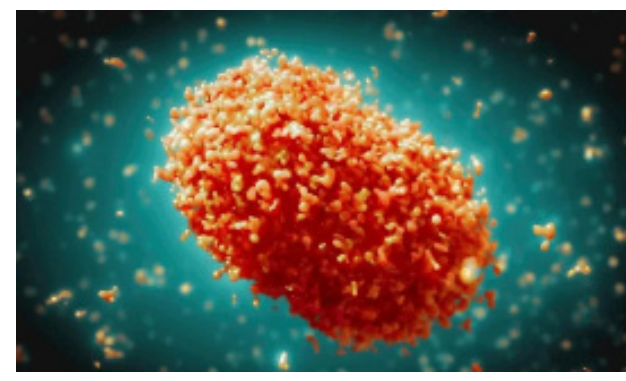
"We're watching it very closely. As you know, we've already taken three increases — one in January, one in April, and a fairly significant one in July, about 2.7 per cent on SUVs. That said, it's something that can be very dynamic, so we continue to watch it," he said.

Elaborating further, Gollagunta said, "We'll probably take a call in the next couple of weeks on whether we need a price increase…

Indian researchers find new method to detect Monkeypox virus

New Delhi :Researchers from JNCASR, an autonomous institution of the Department of Science and Technology (DST), have identified a new method to understand the virology of monkeypox virus (MPV).The new findings can help develop diagnostic tools for the deadly infection, declared a global health emergency twice by the World Health Organization (WHO) in the last three years. The 2024 global outbreak saw the disease spread to about 15 countries in Africa, and three out of Africa.The outbreak has raised serious concern about its unanticipated spread across the globe, as the modes of transmission and symptoms are not well understood. A comprehensive understanding of virology, alongside the rapid development of effective diagnostic and therapeutic strategies, is of paramount importance.

"MPV is a double-stranded DNA (dsDNA) virus. The detection of the extracellular viral protein gene through polymerase chain reaction (PCR) is a widely established technique for identifying MPV in clinical specimens," said the researchers.Currently, the disease is detected via PCR, relying on the amplification of double-stranded DNA (dsDNA), which also employs fluorescent probes for quantifying amplification.The team identified and characterised highly conserved GQ — a four-stranded unusual and characteristic DNA structure within the MPV genome. They specifically detected a specific GQ sequence using a tailored fluorescent small-molecule probe, enabling precise detection of MPV."These GQ sequences are stable under physiological conditions, highly conserved, and are not present in other pox viruses, other pathogens, and the human genome. These characteristics make the GQ sequences valuable targets for the development of diagnostic tools and therapeutic intervention," explained the team.Their fluorogenic molecular probe (BBJL) delivered

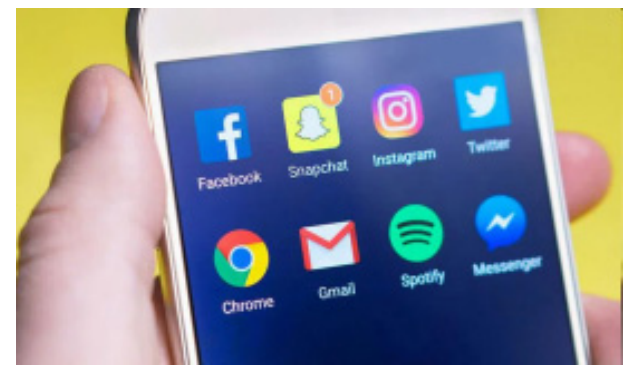


"more than 250-fold enhancement in fluorescence output upon binding with MPV GQs (MP2). The ability of BBJL to selectively detect this highly conserved sequence in the MPV genome sets a precedent for the development of detection techniques targeting noncanonical nucleic acids".Additional mapping of the MPV genome is being performed to identify potential GQ targets for future therapeutics.

Consequently, this study augments the development of potential detection platforms based on GQ, and the GQs identified can be further investigated for their antiviral properties.Such molecular probes with superior conformation or sequence-specific recognition of nucleic acids could alleviate the challenge in existing amplification-based techniques, in discriminating false-positive results arising from non-specific amplification.The identification and characterisation of new GQ sequences in the MPV could help the broader scientific community seeking to understand the virology of MPV or develop diagnostic and therapeutic interventions, said researchers.

Seven tips to be safe while using social media platforms

Hyderabad: In today's digital age, there are very few individuals who do not have a social media account. From children to elderly everyone are glued to social media leaving lesser scope for safety and privacy. Moreover, having a social media account and marking your digital presence have grown to become a mainstream profession.As social media has become an integral part of our life and hard to be ignored, it is at least necessary to remain safe while using the public platform.Just with a mere click, you can fall prey to crimes such as identity theft, blackmail, cyber bullying, or even having to compromise on your personal information.Here are a few guidelines listed to make sure your are shielded and empowered in this digital age:1. Keep your Information Private: While opening a social media account, the networks request details regarding your personal information such as address, phone numbers, emails, and birthdays. Make sure you have not disclosed any information that might become a potential threat. Always keep your account private2. Strong Passwords: It is a common practice to keep our birth dates as our passwords. Do not do that. It is important to have a strong password which is a mix of letters, numbers, and signs3. Accept Requests only from your Friends: It is common to receive follow requests on your social media account, but make sure you accept requestes only from your friends or acquitences4. Do not open Unwarranted Links: Be cautious while clicking on



links as you may fall prey to a devious crime just by opening a random link sent to you either by your friend or a follower5. Be Mindful of Sharing Information on Social Media: It is good to be active on social media and share about your life. But make sure you are being mindful about the information your sharing in the public platform. Remember, the internet is permanent.6. Do not Enable Auto Log in: Ensure that you do not have applications set to auto log in by deault. It is always not recommended to have the option of auto log in on to remain on the safer side7. Close other Social Media Networks you do not use anymore: If you have an account in other social media platforms that you hardly use anymore, then remember to log out and close the account.

The need for gender equity in urban bureaucracy

India is in the midst of a profound urban transformation. By 2050, over 800 million people, about half the population, will live in cities, making India the largest driver of global urban growth. As cities expand spatially, economically and demographically, they are rewriting the social contract of a modern India and shaping the future of its democracy and development.In the last three decades, progressive constitutional reforms have advanced gender equity. The 73rd and 74th Amendments mandate 33% reservation for women in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and Urban Local Governments (ULGs), further strengthened to 50% by 17 States and a Union Territory. Today, women comprise over 46% of local elected representatives (Ministry of Panchayati Raj, 2024), as a rising presence of mayors and councillors.However, the bureaucratic apparatus that implements their decisions remains overwhelmingly male. While women's representation in grass-root politics has increased, administrative cadres (city managers, planners, engineers, police) exhibit a stark imbalance, limiting the ability of cities to respond equitably to all citizens. As we invest in highways, metros, and smart cities, we overlook a foundational aspect of inclusive development — gender equity in bureaucracy.The bureaucratic gender gap

Despite more women entering the civil services, the urban administrative architecture remains male-dominated. As of 2022, women constituted just 20% of the Indian Administrative Service (IndiaSpend-2022), with even lower representation in urban planning, municipal engineering and transport authorities. In policing, only 11.7% of the national force are women (Bureau of Police Research and Development-2023), and often confined to desk roles.This gap is cause for concern. In cities, the engagement of women is different. They rely more on public transport, make multi-stop journeys for work and caregiving, and depend on neighbourhood-level infrastructure. An Institute for Transportation and Development Policy and Safetipin study found that 84% of women in Delhi and Mumbai used public or shared transport; it was 63% for men. Yet, urban planning prioritises mega-projects over safe, accessible, neighbourhood-level mobility. A 2019 Safetipin audit across 50 cities found over 60% of public spaces were poorly lit. With few women in policing, community safety initiatives often fail to resonate with women.This underrepresentation is not superficial; it affects outcomes. Women officials bring perspectives shaped by lived realities. Studies by the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations and UN Women show that they prioritise water, health and safety, and improve public trust in law enforcement through empathetic enforcement. Gender-sensitive design requires gender-diverse institutions.Gender-responsive budgeting (GRB), which integrates gender considerations into public finance, is a promising but underutilised tool in India's urban governance. Introduced globally in the 1990s, GRB recognises that budgets are not neutral and can reinforce inequities if left unchecked.I

A reset in West Asia, a 'de-escalation' for the world



West Asia has been reset with the bombing of Iran by Israel and the United States. It has been done with the tacit or open approval of almost all countries in the region and beyond. The Europeans have been their usual contradictory noisy self, but made no difference to what is unfolding in West Asia. Even Russia and China, which signed, with much fanfare, Comprehensive Strategic Partnership agreements with Iran in January 2025 and March 2021 respectively, were silent spectators. It is not that all these countries were helpless. They made a conscious decision not to interfere when Iran and its proxies are being dismantled in the region.Now with the so-called Iranian nuclear threat being rendered ineffective, West Asia is faced with a sole dominant nuclear power — Israel. The region has 40,000 American troops stationed on its soil in addition to numerous air and sea assets. They will make sure that there is no more military challenge to Israel. West Asia will now live with this reality.

Initially, the Gulf and other countries of West Asia feared, probably rightly, Iran and its proxies as much as the Israelis. The Iranian strategic and military depth in the region, when seen through the prism of its political ideology, made it the predominant threat in the region. In some ways, the presence of an aggressive Iran made the Gulf countries soft pedal, and even make compromises on many other issues which the region has been plagued with, including Palestine. They needed Israel and the U.S. to balance their vulnerability vis-à-vis Iran, which only encouraged Israel to go all the way out to dismantle the Iranian proxies, both state and non-state actors, in Lebanon, Syria and Gaza. The threat has receded except perhaps for the Houthis in Yemen and the militias in Iraq. In the meantime, the Gulf countries have been busy building bridges with the U.S. administration and waiting to operationalise Abraham Accords, which normalised their relations with Israel. They have made U.S. President Donald Trump happy by doling out goodies. But, with the cutting down of Iran to size in West Asia, do they relish the prospect of an Israel without any checks? Probably not. Can they do something at least now?Iran has hit back. Its missiles have targeted U.S. military bases in Qatar — the biggest U.S. base in West Asia with 10,000 personnel, and in Iraq. Iran claimed proportional retaliation in that the number of missiles used was equal to the number of bombs the U.S. used to attack Iran's nuclear facilities. This represented a dangerous escalation, violating the territorial integrity of one of its own "brotherly" countries, Qatar, and with the situation threatening to spiral out of control. The retaliation was not entirely unexpected.For Iran's leadership, it is an existential crisis. For the Supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and the leadership, surrendering or keeping quiet in the face of these attacks are not options if they must survive politically.They know that the end game is regime change to dismantle their theological foundation and political ideology — an ideology which threatens everyone in the region. To that extent, the war with Iran is still a work-in-progress for Israel and the U.S. They will not stop until they do a "Syria" on Iran. But there is no alternate "regime" waiting to take their place. Consequently, for their own good, the Gulf states need to step up now to prevent an Iraq- or a Libya-like collapse, which will destabilise everyone in the region. Destabilising regimes in the region has only given a fillip to Islamic fundamentalism and to terrorist organisations such as the Islamic State and al-Qaeda.As one spat ends another crisis beginsThe dramatic announcement by the U.S. of an immediate ceasefire between Israel and Iran is a surprising voice of reason, at a time when reason has become the biggest casualty in West Asia. After retaliation for the U.S. bombing and proving to the world — and more importantly to its people — that it will not be cowed down, the ceasefire call gives Iran a way out to back down. Let us not forget that Israel too has been hit hard though the western media has played it down. The fact that Iran was ready to hit American bases in the Gulf would have weighed on the U.S. to pressure Israel to stop.

It is also a wakeup call for the Gulf leadership that they are not immune. Hopefully, this should stop Iran from making good on other threats such as closing the Strait of Hormuz or exiting the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The focus shifts back to the nuclear deal, where both the U.S. and Iran may well be in a mood to find a solution. It is time for the Gulf states to support this process, even if it is late, to save the region from further conflagration.While this spat sputters to an end, the next crisis in West Asia is in the making. With the long-cherished dream of Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu realised under Mr. Trump — to take out Iran's nuclear programme — his domestic political fortunes have been revived dramatically. There are hardly any obstacles now for him to realise his "Eretz Israel" dream — the promised land from the Jordan river to the Mediterranean Sea. This is the New Middle East map which Mr. Netanyahu waved before the UN General Assembly to 193-member states — a map without Gaza or the West Bank. Israeli plans to annex them very soon and certainly before the U.S. presidential elections in 2026. If his main ultra-right coalition ministerial colleagues Itamar Ben-Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich are to be believed, and there is no reason why they should not be, this annexation will happen this year. All state and non-state actors, which can potentially oppose the move, have been defeated or chastised. The U.S. is also in sync with Mr. Netanyahu in his ambitions. The question will then boil down to these: After its annexation of Palestinian territories, will Israel continue to be an apartheid state by choice to preserve its Jewishness, where the Palestinians will not enjoy equal citizenship and remain second class citizens? Or it will become a genuine democracy by giving the Palestinians equal rights as its Jewish citizens. History indicates that it will be the first.While the opposition to this annexation should come from countries within the region, the Gulf leadership has almost given up pushing Israel for a Palestinian state or even stopping the Gaza war as the price to pay for regional stability and integration with Israel and the outside world, their noisy protestations within and outside the UN notwithstanding.

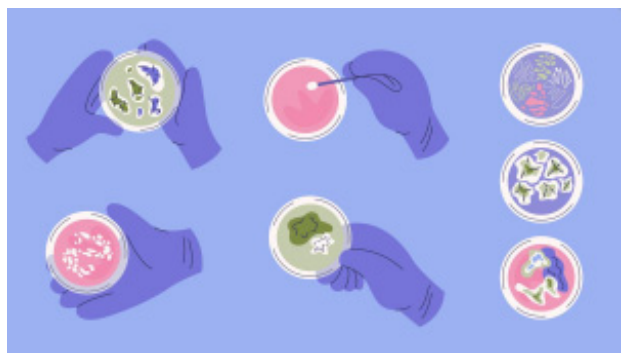
However, if they think that peace and security will be restored by annexing Palestinian territories or even status quo of occupation retained (56,000 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza, those displaced, face daily threats, starvation and displacement, while people in the West Bank are driven out of their homes to make way for Jewish settlers), they may be forced to rethink their strategy. Expectedly, India has neither made pronouncements on the Israeli preemptive strikes on Iran nor taken an active role — just as it has not in other wars elsewhere. Israel was one of few countries to stand by India during Operation Sindoor. However, India's joint initiatives with Iran, including Chabahar port connectivity, are equally important. India's stakes in the region are high and it is doing all it can to minimise the impact. India has, tongue in cheek, called for a "de-escalation", giving the same advice to warring parties which it received during Operation Sindoor from many parts of the world, asking India and Pakistan to de-escalate. It was a case of equating the aggressor and the aggressed. It matters no more to the world, whether one is right or wrong or whether international law or territorial integrity have been violated,

Widely used fungicide found to be driving C. tropicalis infections

Candida tropicalis is an important fungal pathogen in India and many parts of the world. Its infections are associated with a mortality rate of 55-60%. Anti-fungal drugs called azoles, such as fluconazole and voriconazole, are used to treat its infections. But there is a growing concern in medical circles that clinics are seeing an increasing number of infections by strains of C. tropicalis that exhibit high resistance to these drugs. What is driving this alarming increase in drug resistance?A paper published recently in PLoS Biology by researchers from Fudan University in Shanghai has provided the answer. They found that an azole-related fungicide called tebuconazole widely used by farmers and gardeners, and which can accumulate and persist in the environment has driven the increase in azole-resistant C. tropicalis infections seen in clinics.The team also found that tebuconazole-resistant strains exhibited aneuploidy — meaning their chromosome number showed differences from the normal chromosome count for the organism. Such deviation from the normal chromosome complement is known as ploidy plasticity.

In the human body, most cells have two sets of the genome: thus they are diploid. One set of 23 chromosomes comes via the father's sperm and the other set of 23 from the mother's egg. When we, in turn, make eggs or sperm, a process called meiosis ensures only one set of chromosomes each of the 23 pairs is transmitted to them. Eggs or sperm are the only haploid cells in us — meaning they each have one copy of the genome. When a sperm fertilises an egg to make the zygote, diploidy is restored. The zygote then develops into the baby.On rare occasions, meiosis isn't as efficient and produces sperm or eggs that contain one copy more or one copy less of one or more chromosomes. Such eggs and sperm are said to be aneuploid. Aneuploidy can have serious consequences.A zygote with three copies instead of two of the smallest chromosome leads to the development of Down syndrome. These individuals have delayed development, characteristically aberrant physical features, and mild to moderate intellectual impairment. Aneuploidy for any of the other chromosomes almost invariably ends in prenatal death. In short, humans don't tolerate ploidy plasticity well — nor do most other animals, plants, and fungi,For a long time, C. tropicalis was also thought to be a diploid organism. Thus, finding that in most tebuconazole-resistant strains the ploidy was altered surprised the researchers.Enhanced resistance to antifungalsThe team started with five different C. tropicalis strains that were susceptible to tebuconazole and also to clinically-used fluconazole and voriconazole. They exposed the strains to incrementally more tebuconazole concentrations from 0.125 to 16 micrograms/millilitre in liquid medium, then grew them on tebuconazole-containing semisolid media in Petri plates. Finally, they picked 35 tebuconazole-resistant colonies. All these colonies exhibited cross-resistance to fluconazole and voriconazole.

The tebuconazole-resistant strains showed slower growth than their progenitor strains in the absence of antifungals. But in the presence of antifungals, they grew much better. It seems the resistant strains had traded cell growth for antifungal resistance.The researchers found



that the ploidy of tebuconazole-resistant strains ranged from haploid to triploid (that is, three copies of the genome). Those identified as diploid or close to diploid were found by more detailed analyses to, in fact, be segmental aneuploids: they carried duplications or deletions of some chromosome segments.

The duplicated chromosome segments carried genes whose overexpression was known from other studies to increase resistance to azoles. For example, several TBZ-resistant strains had duplications of a chromosomal segment carrying a gene named TAC1, which encodes a protein that helps the cell to produce more of another protein named the ABC-transporter. The ABC-transporter pumps toxic compounds such as the azoles out of the cell.Conversely, other segmental aneuploids showed haploidisation, that is, deletion of one copy of a segment of another chromosome that carried the HMG1 gene. The overexpression of HMG1 decreased the biosynthesis of a chemical in cell membranes named ergosterol.

Previous studies had shown that in budding yeast, HMG1 overexpression led to lower synthesis of ergosterol and a lower resistance to fluconazole — whereas reduced expression of HMG1 stimulated ergosterol synthesis and elevated resistance to fluconazole. Thus, although the aneuploidies created imbalances in the C. tropicalis genome that reduced their growth rate, they enabled the strains to better resist antifungals.The researchers also verified that the strains with altered ploidy were more virulent than the progenitor strains in mice treated with fluconazole.An unanticipated haploidAnother unexpected bonus from the new study was the discovery that tebuconazole-resistant strains included stable haploid strains of C. tropicalis. The haploid cells were able to undergo mating. These serendipitous findings now provide researchers a useful tool for future genetic analyses.The researchers recovered a haploid cell from among the tebuconazole-resistant strains generated in the laboratory. They wondered whether any of the 868 C. tropicalis strains recorded in clinical visits around the world might include any haploids (that is, naturally haploid rather than as an abnormality). They examined publicly available genomic sequences of these strains and found that two of them, isolated from Spain, were indeed haploid.

In conclusion, the research showed that the reckless use of triazole antifungals in agriculture can unwittingly promote the emergence of pathogenic strains showing cross-resistance to azoles of clinical importance. Further, some of the resistant strains were haploid

Tamil Nadu InFocus | When a prisoner was made to 'run like a horse'



In his autobiography Ungalil Oruvan, Chief Minister M.K. Stalin described the Madras Central Prison during the Emergency as a "torture camp" that echoed with wails. Accounts presented to the Justice M. M. Ismail Commission in 1977 appear to validate that grim depiction.According to testimonies, prison staff seemed to take pleasure in humiliating detainees. "When one of them returned after a visit to Bangalore, he was made to run like a horse while being beaten," recounted K. Vezhavendan, a former DMK Minister who later founded the Makkal DMK. He also alleged that the staff used "disrespectful language."'Even refused water'"Mr. Vezhavendan said they were not even given a bedsheet or mat. They were not given water to drink when they wanted. They were in the lock-up for 24 hours for nine days after their imprisonment till the DIG visited them. On February 2, 1976 night, he was shocked to hear shrieks and cries from other cells and the prisoners asking the staff not to beat them...The next day, the doctor, on his routine check-up, saw his condition, but he (Vezhavendan) was afraid of complaining. He was warned not to, lest more cruelty be unleashed on them. The inmates did not have a change of clothes for about eight days," reported The Hindu on the Commission proceedings.Vezhavendan said one prisoner was so desperate he contemplated suicide. After his release, Jail Superintendent K. Vidyasagar and his father K. Kolandaivelu, a former Deputy Commissioner of Police, met him in May 1977, asking him to "forget the incidents and forgive them." [Vidyasagar, however, told the Commission it was Vezhavendan who had visited him at his home.]

Dravidar Kazhagam general secretary (now president) K. Veeramani, in his deposition, told the Commission that the jail warders ignored his plea not to assault V.S. Sambandam, who had recently undergone spinal surgery. "I warned them it might kill him," Mr Veeramani said. Sambandam confirmed he collapsed after being struck. But the warders showed no sympathy, allegedly telling him to "stop pretending" and get up.Senior DMK leader Arcot N. Veeraswami, arrested on February 1, 1976 — a day after the DMK government was dismissed — said detainees were subjected to "indecent and demeaning" language by staff. Seven inmates were packed into one cell, beaten, and denied drinking water or basic amenities for days. "New arrivals were beaten... were allowed to bathe and change clothes only on February 9," he deposed.According to The Hindu Archives, Mr. Veeraswami added that on one occasion, a large amount of salt was deliberately mixed in the soup. "On another occasion, sand was sprinkled on the food. Once the orderlies who used to help them in the kitchen were suddenly removed and replaced by four others, one of whom used to do scavenging work. Another had scabies and eczema on his hand, and the third suffered from a skin disease. The detenus protested and did not take tea in the morning.

Telangana's world-famous Balanagar custard apple inches closer to GI tag

Hyderabad: In a bid to boost local farming and gain national recognition, farmers and officials from the State have on Monday filed an application seeking Geographical Indication (GI) tag for the world-famous Balanagar custard apple.This is the 19th GI application filing from Telangana. The application has been filed by GI Practitioner Subhajit Saha of Resolute4IP on behalf of three key farmer-based organizations: Pomal Farmer Producer Company Limited, Balanagar Farmer Producer Company Limited, and The Primary Agricultural Cooperative Society, with funding support from NABARD.The application was technically facilitated by Sri Konda Laxman Telangana Horticultural University (SKLTGHU) represented by Dr Saidaiah Pidigam, who played a pivotal role in compiling scientific documentation and validating the fruit's unique agro-morphological characteristics.Majorly cultivated in Mahbubnagar, Vikarabad and Rangareddy districts, the Balanagar custard apple is prized for its thick rind, high pulp content, minimal seeds, naturally sweet flavour, and long shelf



life. These qualities distinguish it from other varieties and make it highly suitable for both fresh consumption and industrial processing.

Andhra Pradesh simplifies building norms for small structures, offers relief to plot owners and developers

Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh Minister P Narayana has said that the State Cabinet has approved key relaxations in building rules to support small constructions. Narayana, the Municipal Minister, said earlier, norms applied only to buildings above five floors, but now structures below five floors will also benefit from simplified approval."Builders can mortgage 10 per cent of the plot area and construct as per the rules. For government lands, submitting an affidavit will be sufficient," said Narayana, addressing a press conference after the Cabinet meeting

Printed at SMILYS ONLINE 6-7-48,VANASTHALIPURAM SHOPPING COMPLEX RANGAREDDY , RANGAREDDY, TELANGANA - 500070
Publisher,Editor: Kasoju Shankara Chary, PRGI NO: TGENG/26/A3169, Ph No: 9949791999, Email Id: eyesecretdaily@gmail.com