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Dialogue with Maharashtra on Tummidihetti Barrage to Continue: Revanth

Hyderabad: Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy here on Tuesday ordered the irrigation officials to maintain a good rapport and continue the dialogue with the Maharashtra government on the proposed construction of the Tummidihatti barrage.

Instructing the authorities to be fully prepared with comprehensive details of the submerged areas, the Chief Minister emphasized that all relevant documents including existing agreements and other important issues should be exchanged with the Maharashtra government.

Revanth Reddy and Irrigation minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy held a review meeting with officials on Tummidihetti barrage at Jubilee Hills residence. The Chief Minister made some suggestions to the officials with regard to the recent discussions held with Maharashtra and other related issues.

Revanth Reddy said that the government is prepared to provide adequate compensation for any lands in Maharashtra that may be affected by submergence and also ready to deposit funds into a joint account



of the two state governments.

The Chief Minister noted that the state would not object to Maharashtra to conduct its own survey on the potential submergence of lands. The officials were ordered to furnish all the information sought by Maharashtra in a timely manner.



Hyderabad, Nov 3Police have busted a fake currency racket with the arrest of four persons and seizure of Rs. 6.78 crore in counterfeit currency on the outskirts of Hyderabad.

Future City police seized fake Rs. 500 notes worth a whopping Rs 6.78 crore, printers, a laptop and other material.

Personnel from Abdullapurmet Police Station and Shadnagar Special Operations Team (SOT) intercepted a car near Ramoji Film City on NH-65 on November 1 and seized ?8 lakh in counterfeit notes.

Four accused, identified as M Karunakar, Ch Manikya Reddy, Ch Ratnakar Reddy and K Ajay Kumar, were arrested.

Future City Commissioner Tarun Joshi said during interrogation, the accused revealed that they were running a fake currency printing unit from a rented house in Kuntloor.

A subsequent raid led to the seizure of printers, a laptop, currency-cutting machines and bundles of counterfeit notes.

The investigation revealed that the gang was also resorting to extortion.

The accused allegedly used fake police identity cards, walkie-talkies and a dummy pistol to intimidate potential buyers.

After luring prospective buyers with the promise of cheap currency, the accused were posing as police officers to rob them of their genuine cash.

The accused allegedly extorted Rs.2 lakh and Rs.3 lakh from two prospective customers on separate occasions and shared the money among themselves.

According to police, Karunakar learnt how to scan genuine Rs.500 notes, edit their image using Photoshop and print counterfeit versions by watching YouTube videos and other content on social media.

The accused used images of original currency notes and printing equipment to produce fake notes in large numbers. They were offering counterfeit currency to prospective customers, promising three or four times the value of their genuine money in fake notes.

Explaining the modus operandi of the gang, police said that when interested customers came with genuine cash, other members, posing as police personnel, would arrive in vehicles with fake number plates.

With fake identity cards, walkie-talkies and imitation pistols, they would threaten the customers with legal action and make them flee after taking away their genuine cash.

Acting on a tip-off that four persons were transporting counterfeit currency to Vijayawada in a car, police intercepted the vehicle near Ramoji Film City on November 1, arrested four occupants and seized the counterfeit currency.

Police produced them before a court, which sent them to judicial custody.

Three other accused, identified as Jelli Venkatesh, Kunja Balaraju and Kampasati Srinivas, are absconding. Further investigation was to identify others involved.

Couple killed as car crashes into median pole on NH-65 near Sangareddy

Sangareddy: Reckless driving cost the lives of a couple as their car rammed into a pole on road median on NH-65 in Kandi mandal headquarters on Tuesday midnight.



According to the police, the couple Yellamkonda Narsimhulu (40) and his wife Mounika (33), residents of Gajulagudem, were proceeding towards Sangareddy from Shankarpally at midnight when Narsimhulu lost control of the steering wheel and rammed the car into the pole.

They died on the spot as they sustained multiple injuries. They are survived by two children. The Sangareddy rural police registered a case and the bodies were taken to the government hospital in Sangareddy for postmortem.

TDP-led NDA sweeps municipal elections in Andhra Pradesh

Amaravati, Nov 3 The ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in Andhra Pradesh has made a clean sweep of municipal elections, capturing power in almost all Urban Local Bodies.

The results and counting trends on Tuesday night show that the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and its allies, the Jana Sena Party (JSP) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), have bagged the posts of mayors in seven municipal corporations.



The mayoral candidates of NDA partners were leading in five corporations. The opposition YSR Congress Party was leading in one corporation.

TDP and its allies also bagged the posts of chairpersons of 73 municipalities and nagar panchayats and were ahead in eight places. YSRCP won the post of chairperson in a municipality, while others were elected in two places. YSRCP candidates were leading in two municipalities.

The coalition had also bagged the majority of the posts of corporators and councillors.

The counting of votes polled on Sunday in 92 urban local bodies (ULBs) began at 138 counting centres at 8 a.m. on Tuesday.

Polling was held on Sunday in 13 municipal corporations and 79 of the 87 municipalities and nagar panchayats.

According to the State Election Commission, 62.16 per cent polling was recorded. Out of 96,89,061 voters, 60,22,411 cast their votes.

Mukka Sravani of TDP has been elected Mayor of Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation, the biggest municipal corporation in the state.

M. Srinivas Prasad of TDP has been elected mayor of Tirupati Municipal Corporation.

K. Lakshmi Aparna, also of TDP, has been elected mayor of Guntur.

TDP's K. Hemalatha emerged victorious in the election for mayor in Chittoor Municipal Corporation. Sheikh Abdullah Abida of TDP was declared elected as mayor of Machilipatnam.

TDP candidate Vijaya Pratyusha has been elected mayor of Kurnool.

Jana Sena candidate Reddy Appalanaidu has been elected mayor of Eluru Municipal Corporation in West Godavari district.

Elections for the posts of chairpersons of 17 municipalities and nagar panchayats were unanimous. Both chairpersons and ward members were elected unopposed in eight municipalities and nagar panchayats.

As part of the seat-sharing agreement among NDA partners, TDP contested for the mayor posts in 10 Municipal Corporations, leaving two for JSP and one for BJP.

Out of 70 posts of chairpersons for which polling was held, TDP fielded 49 candidates, JSP 17 and BJP four

Reacting to the results of municipal elections, TDP Working President Nara Lokesh said that the verdict is a mandate to serve, not to celebrate.

"We accept it with humility as the people's blessing for the good governance of the last two and a half years. Congratulations to all the victorious TDP, Jana Sena and BJP candidates, and thank you to our three parties' leaders and workers for their collective effort. Now that the municipal elections are over, our only focus is service, for every citizen, beyond party lines. There is no room for arrogance. Keeping the trust people have placed in us is our real responsibility, and we will work harder than ever to deliver on their aspirations," he posted on X.

YSRCP president and former Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy accused the coalition of resorting to rigging at every stage of the municipal polls. He also accused the police and the State Election Commission of complicity with the coalition.

Delhi Police busts mule account, fake SIM card, APK-based cyber fraud networks; arrests six

New Delhi, Nov 3 (IANS) The Cyber Crime Police Station of Delhi Police's Outer North District has busted multiple cyber fraud networks involving mule bank accounts, fraudulent SIM card issuance, and an APK-based cyber fraud module, arresting six accused in four separate operations.

According to Delhi Police, the investigations have exposed a network that arranged around 70 bank accounts for cybercriminals, fraudulently procured approximately 187 SIM cards, and sold three bank accounts for Rs 20,000. A total of 125 National Cybercrime Reporting Portal (NCRP) complaints, involving approximately Rs 1.59 crore, have been linked to the investigations.



In the first case, registered under FIR No. 39/2026, police arrested Devendra alias Sachin, 19, on October 24. Investigations revealed that he and his associate Mohit lured residents of Shahbad Dairy into opening bank accounts on the pretext of insurance benefits and monetary gains. They subsequently collected their banking kits and supplied the accounts to a suspected cybercrime network operating from Hyderabad.

The accused arranged around 70 bank accounts and retained approximately 10 per cent as commission. Police have also identified Mohit, who is currently lodged in Tihar Jail in another case. Nine NCRP complaints involving approximately Rs 14.51 lakh have been linked to this case.

In the second case, three accused -- Atul, Sameer alias Sam, and Pankaj -- were arrested for allegedly operating a fraudulent SIM card network. Police said Atul, a telecom dealer, allegedly used customers' photographs and documents to obtain additional SIM cards without their knowledge and supplied them to his associates for approximately Rs 1,500 each.

EDITORIAL

Digital fraud: Make banks accountable

Growing cybercrimes in India expose lapses in the banking system and its surveillance mechanisms. From celebrities, industrialists and politicians to retired professionals and homemakers, every section has become vulnerable to scams—particularly the 'digital arrest' fraud—being perpetrated by online fraudsters using sophisticated technological tools. India has the dubious distinction of registering the highest number of cyber frauds in the world, with people losing nearly Rs1.5 lakh to cyber criminals every minute. Amid the growing concerns over the widespread instances of cyber frauds, the Supreme Court's firm stance on the issue is a welcome development. The apex court has ruled that banks must compensate victims when fraud occurs due to their staff's failure to exercise due diligence. Such a step would send a strong message that financial institutions cannot escape responsibility by treating cybercrime as merely a customer's problem. This is an important step towards protecting citizens in an increasingly vulnerable digital economy. According to official data, despite a reported 50% decline in cybercrime cases, senior citizens and other people have lost nearly Rs 800 crore this year to organised criminal networks. Scamsters are adopting new technologies faster than the authorities can match. However, banks possess detailed transaction histories and sophisticated technological tools. They should be able to identify unusual transactions, temporarily suspend suspicious transfers and verify their authenticity before the money vanishes. Artificial intelligence can strengthen these safeguards, while coordination with the local police can provide an additional layer of protection. The SC has rightly emphasised that robust preventive measures are better than relying solely on investigations after the damage is done.The proposed RBI framework should clearly define banks' responsibilities, prescribe penalties for negligence and ensure compensation when systemic failure contributes to fraud. At the same time, public awareness holds the key to the success of the anti-cyber fraud drive. The modus operandi of fraudsters indicates that India's cybercrime is becoming increasingly sophisticated, making it difficult for authorities to keep pace. Among various forms of cybercrime, 'digital arrest' has emerged as the most devious one. It poses a threat not only to the country's financial security and stability but also to public trust in the law enforcement machinery. In digital arrest scams, fraudsters impersonate law enforcement officials via video calls, claiming that victims are under investigation for serious crimes. Education and vigilance can prevent many such crimes. Ultimately, digital banking must be built on trust and security, not convenience alone. The SC has rightly reminded banks that they are protectors of customers' savings. Concrete action must ensure that the burden of digital fraud does not fall disproportionately on innocent victims.

Niloufer Hospital faces protest over alleged irregularities, infrastructure gaps



Hyderabad: The campus of the State-run Niloufer Hospital on Monday witnessed some tense moments, with activists from the Progressive Youth League (PYL) and the Progressive Organisation of Women (POW) staging a major protest, demanding immediate intervention by health authorities to clean up alleged corruption and severe infrastructural decay at the premier facility.

Armed with findings from a three-day survey, the agitating leaders marched to the administration block and cornered hospital authorities, ultimately serving a comprehensive memorandum to Superintendent Dr Vijay Kumar after prior attempts to secure an audience were stonewalled.

In the survey report, the PYL and POW members highlighted the tough conditions faced by underprivileged patients and their attendants at Niloufer Hospital.

Expectant mothers are routinely subjected to inhuman conditions, forced to sit in plastic chairs for hours or cram two or three into a single bed due to an acute shortage of accommodation, the survey said.

Grieving and exhausted patient attendants are left stranded in the open air without drinking water and restrooms, while two entire floors of a newly built three-story rest house remain non-functional, they said.

Overflowing, unhygienic toilets in both the old and new blocks are choking the corridors with foul odors, turning the hospital into a breeding ground for hospital-acquired infections, POW members said.

The protesting leaders accused rogue staff of aggressively demanding bribes from hapless patients and deliberately steering them away from hospital diagnostics toward external private labs to rake in fat commissions, backed by concrete evidence.

The Unions flagged a massive, multi-crore outsourcing scam that recently came to light, exposing how corrupt syndicates inflated payroll numbers from 250 to 675 to siphon off public funds through bogus billing.

With compounding grievances ranging from chaotic street-level parking and apathy from Resident Medical Officers to substandard five-rupee meals lacking even basic directional boards and unfilled staff vacancies, the protesters issued an ultimatum to the management to act quickly and address the highlighted issues.

Malkajgiri SOT foils murder plot, arrests five



Hyderabad: The Malkajgiri SOT, along with local police, has foiled an alleged murder conspiracy and arrested five persons who were reportedly planning to kill a man named Arfaj in revenge for the murder of their associate in Uppal on Monday.

The arrested persons were identified as T Thanay Kumar alias Kanna, Shaik Akbar, Aditya Kumar Thakur, Dudani Laxman Singh alias Sonu and Vadtya Venkatesh alias Nani.

Police said the suspects were nabbed in the early hours, when discussing their plan at an open place near the Musi River, behind Uppal Shilparamam.

According to police, the suspects were followers of Dasari Surender alias Suri, who was allegedly murdered by Arfaj in July 2026. After Arfaj was recently released from jail, they allegedly conspired to eliminate him in retaliation.

Police said two of the suspects transferred Rs 35,000 to another suspect, Aditya Kumar Thakur, who allegedly procured two pistols and bullets from Bihar for Rs 30,000 and brought them to Hyderabad to execute the murder plan.

Officials seized two country-made pistols, eight bullets, three knives, and vehicles from them.

Andole commuters stage protest over RTC buses skipping bus station

Sangareddy: Accusing the RTC drivers of not stopping buses at Andole bus station, commuters staged a rasta-roko on the busy NH-161 in Andole town on Monday. Irked over the buses proceeding either side without halting here, the commuters staged a sit-in. Even though Andole had nearly 10,000 population and neighbouring villagers also arrived at the bus station to catch the buses, the commuters accused the drivers of ignoring the stop and they raised



slogans against the RTC regional manager.

They demanded that the Health Minister and local MLA Damodara Rajanarasimha look into their issues and address the issue. Due to the ignorance of the RTC drivers, the commuters said that the students could not attend the schools and colleges in time while the employees were finding it difficult to reach the office on time. Meanwhile, the police who reached the place pursuaded the commuters to withdraw the protest assuring them to take the issue to the notice of the RTC officials.

Hyderabad youngsters travel to Nagpur, Ajmer to procure ganja for quick profits

Hyderabad: Despite intensified crackdowns by the police and enforcement agencies, the illegal ganja trade continues to attract youngsters in Hyderabad, with several of them increasingly travelling to Nagpur and Ajmer to procure the contraband and make quick money.

What is particularly worrying is the growing involvement of people from economically weaker sections, including auto-rickshaw drivers and small-time businessmen, who are being drawn into the trade by the promise of huge profits.

Sources familiar with the illegal trade said some people were reportedly even mortgaging their vehicles to raise money for purchasing ganja, hoping to multiply their investments several times over.

"The profit margins, which can reportedly go up to 300 per cent, have encouraged youngsters, including those who were previously addicted to ganja, to turn suppliers. Some even take along family members or female friends while travelling to avoid attracting suspicion during their journeys," a source said.

Trains, particularly AC coaches, are among the preferred modes of transport, while private buses are also being used. In recent times, the State Prohibition and Excise Task Force caught several individuals at Nampally and Dhoolpet who had allegedly sourced ganja from Nagpur.

An official of the Prohibition and Excise Department said, "Despite regular enforcement drives and seizures, the supply chain continues to operate because of the high profit margins."

A Hyderabad Commissioner's Task Force official said enforcement agencies were intensifying surveillance on suspected supply networks and local distribution points. "We are focusing not only on bulk suppliers but also on those involved in distributing the contraband in smaller quantities," the official said.

Hyderabad RPO to hold Passport Mela on November 21

Hyderabad: The Hyderabad Regional Passport Office will organise »Passport Melaµ on November 21, keeping in view the increasing demand for passport services and waiting period for appointments, according to Regional Passport Officer, Hyderabad, Madhav R Sulphule.

In an official press statement on Monday, he stated that the RPO, Hyderabad, decided to organise a special drive, Passport Mela, on November 21. During the drive, around 4,000 appointments for all three categories, including Normal Passport, Tatkal Passport and PCC (Police Clearance Certificate), will be released and be made available on November 3 for applicants across all Passport Seva Kendras (PSKs) and POPSKs under the jurisdiction of RPO, Hyderabad,



said the RPO.

The RPO urged the applicants to avail the Passport Mela facility to obtain their passports.

BRS steps up offensive against Congress with KTR's North Telangana tour

Hyderabad: The Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) has stepped up its offensive against the Congress government, seeking to turn agrarian distress and farmers' grievances into a Statewide political campaign. Party working president KT Rama Rao launched a series of public meetings and field visits across North Telangana this month, beginning with Adilabad on Sunday.

The campaign, centred on the slogan "Rythu Garjana", is aimed at highlighting the failed promises of the Revanth Reddy government and betrayal of farmers. It will also seek to reach out to agricultural labourers and other sections affected by the government's policies. The programme marks an attempt by the Opposition party to build pressure on the ruling Congress through direct mobilisation.

With Rama Rao's first public meeting in Adilabad on Sunday receiving massive response from farmers and the BRS cadre, the party has decided to leave no stone unturned for the next three meetings scheduled to be held over next one month. He will address similar meetings in Nirmal on November 11 and Nizamabad on November 19. A Deeksha Diwas rally and public meeting are scheduled in Karimnagar on November 29.During these visits, the BRS working president is reaching out to the families of farmers who died by suicide due to crop losses and mounting debts. The party is also extending financial assistance to the bereaved families to instill confidence and also highlight the Congress government's failure to stand with farmers during loss of their family breadwinner.The party has particularly sought to focus on Adiabad, which was adopted by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy. The suicides of six farmers in the district in October have become a major political issue for the BRS. It has accused the Congress government of discontinuing the previous BRS regime's Rythu Bima scheme, which provided financial support to the families of deceased farmers.Besides addressing public meetings, Rama Rao will hold separate interactions with senior district leaders, former public representatives and mandal-level coordinators.The discussions will focus on the political situation, strengthening the party organisation and chalking out agitations on local public issues.The campaign is also intended to revitalise the BRS cadre and consolidate its organisational network in its traditional stronghold of North Telangana. The party is seeking to bring farmers' distress to the centre of the political debate, challenging the Congress government over the agrarian crisis.On the other hand, BRSLP deputy leader T Harish Rao has been conducting extensive field visits to inspect withered paddy fields,

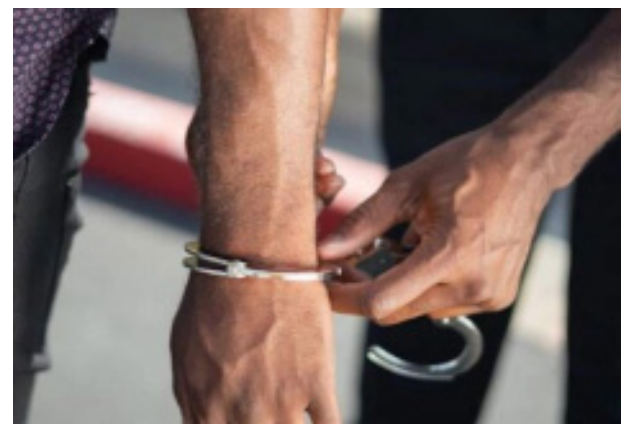
Bike mechanic held for snatching elderly woman's chain in Saidabad

Hyderabad: A 34-year-old bike mechanic, allegedly burdened by debts and cricket betting losses, was arrested on Monday for snatching a gold chain from an elderly woman in Saidabad.

The suspect, Mohd Ghouse Pasha alias Ghouse of Balapur, allegedly snatched the woman's chain on October 26 near Mallikarjuna Swamy Temple on Gaddiannaram Road.

Police said he tricked the woman into stopping by claiming that a mixer repair shop owner wanted to speak to her before suddenly snatching her chain and fleeing on a motorcycle.

Based on a complaint, the Task Force (Charminar) and Saidabad police arrested him and recovered the gold chain and a bike, altogether worth Rs 3.5 lakh, from him.



Golden armour gifted by Jayalalithaa placed on Muthuramalinga Thevar statue



Ramanathapuram (Tamil Nadu): A 13.5-kg golden armour gifted by late Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa for Thevar Jayanthi and Guru Puja adorns the statue of freedom fighter and spiritual leader Muthuramalinga Thevar at his memorial in Pasumpon near here.The tradition of adorning the leader's statue with a golden armour (Kavacham) was observed with religious fervour ahead of the 119th birth anniversary and 64th Guru Puja celebrations of Muthuramalinga Thevar on Friday.

On Monday, the 13.5-kg pure gold armour, which was gifted to the Pasumpon memorial by Jayalalithaa in 2014, was formally retrieved from the Bank of India branch vault on Anna Nagar Main Road, Madurai. AIADMK treasurer Dindigul C Srinivasan completed the mandatory legal and banking formalities along with the memorial's hereditary custodian, Gandhimeenal Natarajan.Prominent party leaders, including former State ministers R B Udhayakumar and Manikandan, accompanied the organisers during the retrieval process.Following the clearance, the high-value armour was transported by road under multi-tier armed police security to Pasumpon village in Ramanathapuram district. Upon arrival, it was ceremoniously placed on the life-sized statue of Muthuramalinga Thevar to mark the commencement of the three-day festival.A large contingent of police personnel accompanied the vehicle to prevent any untoward incidents.

According to the organisers, the golden armour will remain on the statue through the weekend to allow thousands of devotees and political party leaders to pay their respects. It will then be safely returned to the bank vault on November 2.The armour was valued at approximately Rs 4.5 crore in 2014 when it was presented. Due to its immense value, it is not kept permanently at the Pasumpon memorial. Instead, it is securely stored in a designated Bank of India vault in Madurai throughout the year.Every year, days before the anniversary celebrations, the AIADMK treasurer, along with the memorial trustees, formally retrieves the armour from the bank vault under heavy armed security and transports it by road to Pasumpon. It is then fixed onto the statue for the three-day event before being returned to the bank vault.

Bhutan GLOF triggers flash flood alerts in parts of Assam, West Bengal



Thimphu: A glacial lake outburst flood (GLOF) at Shintaphu Lake in northwestern Bhutan has triggered flash flood warnings for parts of West Bengal and Assam, with authorities monitoring vulnerable areas along rivers flowing towards the two states.The incident occurred on Thursday evening in Bhutan's Gasa district, washing away infrastructure at Gasa Tshachu, a popular natural hot spring situated near the Mo Chhu River. No casualties have been reported, as the area had been evacuated before the floodwaters arrived.

Shintaphu Lake, located at the source of the Mo Chhu River, is among Bhutan's 17 glacial lakes identified as potentially dangerous. Gasa Tshachu had previously suffered extensive damage from a flash flood on August 26, 2021, when the swollen Mo Chhu changed its course towards the hot spring.According to reports, the floodwaters have crossed Srigang in Kabesa Gewog, around eight kilometres from Punakha Dzong, raising concerns about downstream areas.

Bhutan has alerted the administrations of West Bengal and Assam about the potential threat to districts bordering the Himalayan kingdom. Assam's Dhubri district and West Bengal's Darjeeling hills, Alipurduar and Jalpaiguri have been identified as vulnerable areas.In West Bengal, the Cooch Behar administration has also alerted residents living along the banks of the Sankosh River. The river originates in northern Bhutan and forms part of the interconnected river system that carries water from the Himalayan region towards the Brahmaputra in Assam.Authorities have urged residents to remain cautious while assuring them that precautionary measures are being taken.Appealing for calm, Amit Kumar Shaw, Superintendent of Police of the Alipurduar Police District, said there was no reason for people to panic.

Speaking to IANS, SP Shaw on Thursday said, "People are slightly in panic, and my appeal to everyone is that there is no need to panic in any way. We are in alert mode, the administration is fully prompt, and all agencies are actively working, so there is no issue. We hope that within two to three hours, we will reach a resolution and address whatever trouble the public is facing."The flash flood has also damaged infrastructure in Bhutan. An official press release said a solar-powered irrigation lifting system installed earlier this year in the Dochhukha-Dzomlingthang-Ritsa Chiwog area under Guma Gewog in Punakha had been partially damaged by the surge in the Mo Chhu River.A local leader said the irrigation system had stopped functioning, although officials have yet to determine the full extent of the damage.Meanwhile, flood-borne debris has covered a section of the Punakha-Gasa Highway in the Dzomlingthang area, potentially affecting road connectivity.A glacial lake outburst flood occurs when water accumulated in a lake formed by glacial retreat is suddenly released, often after the failure of a natural dam. Such events can be triggered by heavy rainfall, landslides, avalanches, earthquakes or rapid melting of a glacier.Rising temperatures associated with human-induced climate change are accelerating glacier retreat and increasing concerns over the stability of glacial lakes. Sudden releases of water can generate powerful flood surges, threatening downstream communities, infrastructure and agricultural land.

Wangchuk welcomes suspension of Ladakh women's protest after govt assurance



Leh/Jammu: Climate activist Sonam Wangchuk said women's organisations in Ladakh had suspended their protest against the Union Territory administration's liquor policy after the government agreed to all their demands and sought a week's time to formalise the agreement.Women-led protests began last week against a newly introduced liquor policy, with the organisations demanding a complete rollback of the policy and that Ladakh be declared a dry Union Territory."Ladakh women leaders suspend their protest against liquor. After the UT administration agreed to all demands and sought a week to finalise the agreement. Let's hope that their trust and faith in the system will be respected," Wangchuk said in a post on X on Thursday.The four organisations on Thursday suspended their dharna, which had been planned from October 29 to November 5, following a written assurance from the UT administration.

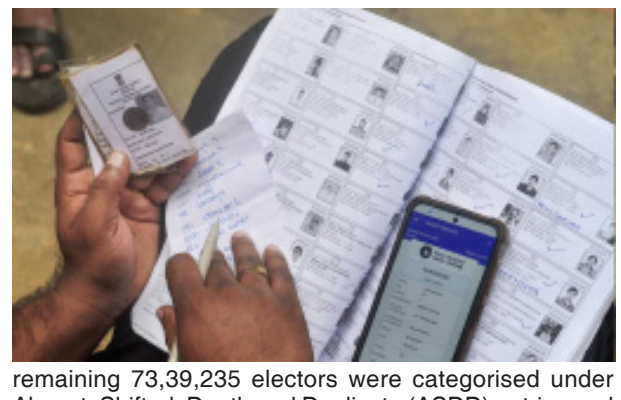
The assurance was conveyed through a letter issued by the Home Department on October 29 and signed by Special Secretary Tashi Dolma. The letter accepted in principle all the points and recommendations submitted by the organisations on the liquor policy.The Ladakh Buddhist Association Women Wing, Anjuman-e-Imamia Women Wing, Anjuman Moin-ul-Islam Women Wing and Christian Community Women Wing had objected to the liquor policy.In a press release, the organisations said the UT administration had sought a week's time to finalise the agreement in the spirit of dialogue and cooperation.Respecting the request, the women's organisations agreed to temporarily suspend their dharna, giving the administration an opportunity to fulfil its commitment and formalise the agreed points in writing, the release said.The organisations said the suspension of the protest should be seen as an expression of their faith in the administration's assurance and thanked the people of Ladakh for their overwhelming support.The protest was launched against the expansion of liquor availability, including the issuance of recent bar licences and wine shop licences. The organisations have been demanding measures to safeguard the future of youth, protect the social fabric and preserve Ladakh's cultural and spiritual values.The organisations reiterated their long-term commitment to a healthier and alcohol-addiction-free Ladakh.

Telangana, Andhra Pradesh final electoral rolls to be published on November 30

Hyderabad: With the Election Commission of India (ECI) again revising the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) schedule in both Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, the final electoral rolls in both states will now be published on November 30.For Telangana, the Election Commission has extended the deadline for notices and disposal of claims and objections to November 26. In Andhra Pradesh, the deadline has been extended till November 20.The final electoral rolls in both the Telugu states are now scheduled for publication on November 30.

The schedule has been revised at the request of the Chief Electoral Officers of both states.In separate communications to the CEOs, the Commission informed them about its decision to revise the schedule.The ECI has directed the CEOs to inform all officials about the revised schedule and ensure wide publicity through all available media. Political parties must also be informed of the modified schedule in writing.The Commission has revised the SIR schedule multiple times in both Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

Earlier, the deadline for the notice phase and the disposal of claims and objections process in Telangana was November 5, with final electoral rolls publication scheduled for November 9.In Andhra Pradesh, the deadline for the notice phase and disposal of claims and objections ended on October 22, while the final rolls were scheduled for publication on October 30.Before the SIR exercise began, Telangana had 3,38,26,448 voters, of whom 2,64,87,213 submitted enumeration forms. The



remaining 73,39,235 electors were categorised under Absent, Shifted, Death and Duplicate (ASDD) entries and were removed from the draft electoral rolls.A total of 92,81,189 out of 92,88,188 SIR notices generated were delivered to voters, leaving 6,999 notices pending for delivery, as of October 29. Hearings have already been concluded for 92,08,443 notices.As many as 2,59,22,684 voter names have been cleared for inclusion in the final voter list as of October 29. Of these, 59,31,395 voters cleared for their logical discrepancies, and 30,64,168 were SIR 2002 unmapped electors.A total of 50,690 electors were found ineligible for inclusion in the final electoral roll.In Andhra Pradesh, hearings have been concluded for 44,28,858 notices. Of these 42,55,630 have been cleared for inclusion in the final voter list. The election authorities found 1,73,662 electors ineligible for inclusion in the final list.

Amartya Sen calls for protection of students from political violence on campuses



Kolkata: Nobel laureate Amartya Sen has expressed shock over the alleged entry of right-wing groups into Jadavpur University (JU) and called for stronger safeguards against political violence on educational campuses.In a message of solidarity addressed to Subhendu Bhadra, founder of the JU Global Alumni Association, Sen said he was "deeply distressed" by the developments at the university, where he had begun his teaching career nearly seven decades ago."I am shocked to hear about the terrible attack on Jadavpur University. There's a need to protect people from political violence. Along with all others in my country, people pursuing education on different campuses need support," Sen said in his message, which was read out at an alumni association meeting on Thursday.Recalling his association with the institution, the economist said, "Jadavpur University is where I began my teaching life 70 years ago, and my solidarity with this great university runs very deep."

"Freedom from violence is a right that we all share. The sectarian ideas behind the violence that has been unleashed demand unhesitating condemnation," he added.The press conference came against the backdrop of allegations that right-wing groups, particularly the RSS-affiliated Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), had entered the university campus, triggering clashes with Left-affiliated student organisations, including the Students' Federation of India (SFI), FETSU, AIDSO and SBVP.Clashes broke out between members of the ABVP and SFI on August 19 and continued the next day, leaving several students injured.The university also witnessed vandalism, damage to its heritage emblem and unauthorised entry by outsiders.The ABVP denied responsibility for some of the alleged acts and accused Left-leaning groups of provoking the confrontation.On September 9, West Bengal Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari participated in a saffron march from Golpark to the JU 8B bus stand, near the university, to uphold the "honour, sanctity, glory and purity of saffron".Several monks also took part in the rally.During the march, Adhikari referred to the "tukde tukde gang", apparently targeting Left-affiliated organisations such as the SFI on the JU campus, and called for action against what he described as "anti-national forces".

Indian American population in US rises to 5.41 million in 2025: Census data



Washington: The number of people in the United States who identify as Indian American alone rose to about 5.41 million in 2025, according to new American Community Survey (ACS) 1-year estimates released by the US Census Bureau.The figure, from the bureau's detailed Asian-group table, was up from about 5.09 million in 2024, an increase of more than 315,000 in a year. The 2025 estimate carries a margin of error of about 77,000.

When people who reported Asian Indian alone or in any combination with other groups or races are counted, the total rose to about 5.91 million, up from about 5.56 million a year earlier.That makes Asian Indians the largest single Asian group counted alone, ahead of Chinese (except Taiwanese) at about 4.65 million. Counted alone or in any combination, the Chinese (except Taiwanese) figure, about 5.97 million, was roughly level with the Asian Indian total. The US population as a whole was about 341.8 million in 2025, according to the survey.

The survey also showed that India remained the second-largest country of birth for the US immigrant population after Mexico. About 3.40 million residents were born in India in 2025, up from about 3.16 million in 2024.Mexico-born residents numbered about 10.61 million. India was followed by China, excluding Hong Kong and Taiwan, at about 2.40 million, and the Philippines at about 2.24 million. The total foreign-born population was about 50.41 million.

California had the largest Asian Indian population among the states, at about 1.02 million, followed by Texas at about 708,000, New Jersey at about 471,000, New York at about 420,000 and Illinois at about 288,000. Florida came sixth at about 239,000.The ACS data also showed rising household incomes. The national median household income was $84,780 in 2025, compared with $81,604 in 2024.The Census Bureau led its release with new data on electric vehicles, collected for the first time.California had the largest share of households, about 14 per cent, that owned or leased an electric vehicle, more than twice the national estimate of 5.5 per cent, the bureau said."Western states have led the way in switching to electric vehicles. California overall had the highest rate of EV adoption per household, followed by Washington, Hawaii and Nevada," said Tricia Holley, a survey statistician at the Census Bureau.

"And when we look at the county level, Santa Clara County in California led the nation with about 24% of households reporting having an EV," she said.Santa Clara County is home to much of Silicon Valley's technology industry. Loudoun County in Virginia, at 13.9 per cent, and King County in Washington, at 13.4 per cent, were also among the counties with the highest EV shares.Nationally, about 122.3 million households reported access to at least one vehicle, and about 7.3 million said at least one was an all-electric or plug-in hybrid vehicle.The survey also collected data on sewer systems for the first time. Nearly 80 per cent of homes were connected to a public sewer, while 19.2 per cent had septic tanks.

The ACS is the only source of local estimates for most of the more than 40 topics it covers, including language, education, commuting, employment, income, poverty and health insurance. The 1-year estimates cover areas with populations of 65,000 or more.The bureau said release dates for the remaining 2025 ACS products would be announced in the coming months as it works through required methodological changes.

Anant Singh must surrender by December 1, orders Supreme Court

New Delhi: In a setback to expelled JD(U) MLA Anant Singh, the Supreme Court on Friday directed him to surrender on or before December 1 in connection with the murder of Dular Chand Yadav.Singh, who was arrested on November 1 last year for allegedly orchestrating the killing in October 2025 in Bihar, was granted bail by the Patna High Court on March 19 this year.A bench of Justices M M Sundresh and Prasanna B Varale passed the order while hearing a petition seeking cancellation of the bail granted to Singh.The bench directed the Bihar Police to complete the investigation into the case within four months.It posted the matter for further hearing after four months.Recently, the JD(U) expelled Mokama MLA Anant Singh and former legislator Neelam Devi for six years over alleged anti-party activities.Singh, a don-turned-politician, had virtually revolted against the JD(U) when he started campaigning for Jan Suraaj Party candidate Anuj Singh in the recent Bihar Legislative Council elections.Yadav, who was known to be at odds with Singh, was supporting Priyadarshi Piyush, who was fielded by Prashant Kishor's Jan Suraaj Party in the 2025 Bihar Assembly elections from Mokama.Yadav was killed while campaigning for Piyush in Mokama on October 30 last year.According to Yadav's postmortem report, he died of cardiorespiratory failure due to shock caused by injuries to the heart and lungs inflicted by a hard and blunt object, police had said earlier.During Friday's hearing, the counsel appearing for the petitioner said a senior citizen had been murdered in broad daylight.The lawyer argued that Yadav's only fault was that he was campaigning for a rival political party."I (petitioner) am here for cancellation of bail," she said, adding that the petitioner was the grandson of the deceased.The lawyer argued that the High Court had noted in its order that several criminal cases against Singh stemmed from political rivalry.The counsel appearing for Singh said two persons had been granted anticipatory bail, while two others had been granted regular bail in the case.He said the investigation was yet to be completed.When the bench observed that it was inclined to direct Singh to surrender, his lawyer said Singh's daughter was getting married on November 25."Give me at least four weeks' time to surrender. I will surrender after that.

Malkajgiri CP calls for power and water conservation

Hyderabad: Malkajgiri Police Commissioner B Sumathi has directed all police stations and offices under the commissionerate to conserve electricity and water in view of the possibility of drought conditions triggered by the El Niño effect.

Nine months after Ajit Pawar crash, Baramati airfield set for Rs 65-cr revamp



Nine months after a plane crash at Baramati airfield killed then Maharashtra deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar and four others, the state government Thursday approved a Rs 65-crore first phase of the airfield's development, with a focus on upgrading infrastructure and improving safety, officials said.The proposed works include recarpeting the runway, constructing a runway safety area and an air traffic control (ATC) tower, along with other infrastructure upgrades.

"After a lot of hard work, we have today (Thursday) received government approval for Phase 1 of the development work at Baramati Airport, worth Rs 65 crore," said Deepak Kapoor, Vice-Chairman and Managing Director, Maharashtra Airport Development Corporation (MADC)."The first phase will include recarpeting of the existing runway, construction of a runway and safety area, area grading, construction of a compound wall and an ATC tower. Other proposed facilities include a prefabricated technical block, fire station, emergency room, and CCTV surveillance systems," Kapoor said.Kapoor said the process of appointing a consultant to expedite the development work would begin immediately."From Friday itself, we will invite bids for the appointment of a consultant to ensure speedy execution of these works. We will now move ahead with the development of Baramati Airport at a fast pace," he said in a post on X.

Accidents at Baramati airfieldThe approval comes amid heightened safety concerns following the January 28, 2026, Learjet 45 crash at Baramati airfield, which killed Ajit Pawar and four others.A preliminary report by the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB), which examined the Baramati accident, highlighted several infrastructure-related shortcomings at the airfield.The Bureau noted that Baramati lacked a meteorological facility and that the uncontrolled airfield lacked navigational aids beyond wind socks.The inspection also pointed to the poor condition of the runway. The last runway carpeting was carried out in March 2016. The absence of subsequent recarpeting had resulted in faded runway markings and loose gravel on the runway surface.Concerns over the Baramati airfield's safety were further highlighted by two accidents involving trainee aircraft in May and August 2026. In the latest incident, a trainee aircraft from Carver Aviation Academy skidded off the runway while taxiing on August 9.Aviation expert and analyst Dhairyashil Vandekar said the Phase 1 approval was a much-needed step toward strengthening Baramati airfield's safety infrastructure and operational preparedness.However, he cautioned that constructing an ATC tower alone would not transform the uncontrolled airfield into a controlled aerodrome.An ATC tower requires appropriately qualified and authorised personnel, approved operating procedures, reliable communication facilities, suitable airspace arrangements and the necessary regulatory approvals to function effectively," Vandekar said.He said Phase 1 should be viewed as the foundation of a broader airport safety and operational modernisation programme rather than its completion. He also called for additional infrastructure, including Precision Approach Path Indicator (PAPI) systems, appropriate runway and approach lighting, and other visual aids to support safe night operations, subject to applicable regulatory requirements.Vandekar also recommended considering an Automatic Weather Observing System (AWOS) to provide reliable and timely meteorological information to pilots and operational personnel.He stressed the importance of adhering to prescribed meteorological minima, particularly for flights operating under Visual Flight Rules (VFR).A comprehensive Detailed Project Report (DPR) should examine the technical and operational feasibility of introducing Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) operations at Baramati," he said.

He added that the Maharashtra Government and MADC should work closely with the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) to determine the applicable aerodrome licensing, registration or other authorisation requirements, depending on the intended category and nature of operations."All necessary regulatory approvals and compliance assessments must be completed. Equally important is strengthening the DGCA's regulatory surveillance and safety oversight of the flight training organisations operating from Baramati," Vandekar said.Baramati is among the 15 domestic unlicensed airports in Maharashtra listed by MADC. The Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC) owns the airfield, which has a single asphalt runway measuring 7,710 feet (2,350 metres).

The airfield was established in the 1990s and primarily caters to a limited number of charter flights. Shivaji Taware, manager of Baramati airfield, said the facility handled around six to seven charter flights every month, most of them involving politicians.In 2009, the airfield, along with four other similar facilities in Maharashtra, was leased to step-down subsidiaries of Reliance Infrastructure Limited for development. However, citing a lack of development and flight operations, MIDC took back possession of the facility in 2025.At present, Baramati airfield also houses two flight training organisations (FTOs) – Academy of Carver Aviation Private Limited and Redbird Flight Training Academy.

UPSC aspirant makes threat call to ex-roommate in Delhi



Delhi bomb threat hoaxRohit and his roommate, Suman Kumar, both 23 and from Bihar's Madhepur district, had heard about the hoax bomb threats to government offices and private schools across Delhi. The two decided to alert the police. (Photo generated using AI)On Tuesday night, Rohit Kumar was lying on his bed, scrolling through his phone, at his paying guest accommodation — a derelict Lower Income group (LIG) building — in Mukherjee Nagar, one of Delhi's coaching hubs.He received a call from an unknown number.

When he picked up, the caller greeted him with "Assalam Walekum" and, in a deep, husky voice, claimed to be calling from Lahore. "There is a bomb in your PG," the caller then told him, according to the police.Rohit was startled and threatened the caller."He attempted to deter the caller by claiming that his father was a Cabinet Minister in the Uttar Pradesh Government, but the caller made derogatory political remarks and subsequently disconnected the call," said DCP (North West) Akanksha Yadav.Rohit and his roommate, Suman Kumar, both 23 and from Bihar's Madhepur district, had heard about the hoax bomb threats to government offices and private schools across Delhi. The two decided to alert the police."A PCR call was received at Mukherjee Nagar police station from a resident of Indra Vikas Colony," DCP Yadav said. "The complainant said his roommate, Rohit, had received a threat call from an unknown landline number. The caller had claimed that an organisation based in Lahore, Pakistan, had been monitoring them and had selected them to carry out bomb blasts in Delhi," she said.Police traced the landline number to a house in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh, and alerted the local police. When questioned, the owner of the house said he had not used the phone at the time of the call. Instead, a relative who was visiting had used it to speak to someone.The relative was Suraj Verma — Rohit's former roommate."During investigation, we found that Verma was also a UPSC aspirant and had lived with Rohit and Suman at the same accommodation in Indra Vikas Colony. He allegedly used the landline at his relative's house in Kanpur to play a prank on Rohit," said police.Verma, who hails from Auraiya, has been arrested and a case registered under relevant sections, police said.

Delhi's air turns 'satisfactory' after record October rain in 4 years



Delhi recorded its highest single-day October rainfall in four years on Friday, with the Safdarjung observatory receiving 61.4 mm of rain in the 24 hours ending 8.30 am.The widespread showers also brought a sharp improvement in air quality across the Capital. The city's average Air Quality Index (AQI) dropped to 90 in the satisfactory category at 9.30 am on Friday, from 222 in the poor category at 4 pm on Thursday, according to the Central Pollution Control Board.Nearly half of October's total rainfall was recorded in the 24 hours ending Friday morning.

Several weather stations recorded more than 40 mm of rain. India Meteorological Department (IMD) data showed Lodhi Road received 63.4 mm, Ayanagar 55.4 mm, Chhatarpur 53.5 mm, the Ridge 50.3 mm and Palam 43.1 mm. Jharoda Kalan recorded the highest rainfall among the stations, at 89 mm, as of Friday morning.

The last time Delhi recorded higher single-day rainfall in October was on October 9, 2022, when Safdarjung received 74 mm.The rain also brought a sharp change in temperatures. Delhi recorded its lowest maximum temperature for an October day in four years on Thursday, at 25.4°C at Safdarjung — 5.6 degrees below normal. The last time the maximum temperature was lower was on October 8, 2022, when it stood at 23.4°C.The minimum temperature, however, did not see a similar dip. It stood at 17.2°C on Friday, 1.1 degrees above normal. Cloud cover and high humidity can restrict the loss of heat from the surface, limiting the fall in night-time temperatures.

Is rain in October usual?

October is generally among Delhi's drier months, as it is a transitioning month from the post southwest monsoon season to the winter season.However, IMD's historical data shows that the city has received spells of heavy rainfall in October in several recent years.Between 2017 and 2020, Safdarjung had recorded either no rainfall or negligible precipitation during the month. The pattern changed in subsequent years, with Delhi receiving 122.5 mm in October 2021, 128 mm in October 2022 and 89.3 mm in October 2025.In 2021, the monthly total was pushed up by 87.9 mm of rain in a single day. In October 2022, Safdarjung received 74 mm on October 9.This year, the rain also pushed October's cumulative rainfall to more than seven times the monthly normal. According to IMD's historical data, Safdarjung has recorded 123.3 mm of rain so far this month, against the normal of 15.1 mm — a surplus of 108.2 mm, or around 717%.

What brought the rain to Delhi?

An active Western Disturbance was the primary weather system responsible for the rainfall over Delhi and other parts of northwest India, according to IMD officials.Western Disturbances are eastward-moving weather systems that originate in the Mediterranean region and adjoining areas. They travel across West Asia and bring moisture into northwest India, often resulting in cloud cover, rain, thunderstorms and, in winter, snowfall over the western Himalayan region.The system triggered widespread rainfall over parts of Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and adjoining areas.The IMD's national bulletin also referred to the remnant depression of Very Severe Cyclonic Storm 'Arnab', which was located over Chhattisgarh and adjoining Odisha on Thursday and was expected to weaken into a well-marked low-pressure area.The two weather systems were influencing different parts of the country. While the cyclone remnant was affecting parts of central and eastern India, the Western Disturbance was driving the rainfall activity over northwest India, including Delhi.

The IMD forecast further spells of light to moderate rain accompanied by thunderstorms and lightning, prompting an orange alert in entire Delhi on Friday. The weather office has forecast partly cloudy skies on Saturday, followed by mainly clear skies from Sunday.

No legal provision: Municipality in Gujarat withdraws order to shut meat shops for 4 months



The Radhanpur Municipality in Patan district has withdrawn an order to shut down slaughterhouses, meat shops, and restaurants selling non-vegetarian food for four months in the face of a challenge in the Gujarat High Court.Counsel for the Municipality conceded that there "might be no provision" under the Gujarat Municipalities Act, 1963, empowering the administrative head of the civic body to prohibit these businesses from operating for four months.The Municipality also assured the court that it would not press the closure order issued by the Chief Officer of the Municipality on August 17, or take coercive action against the traders concerned.Justice Nikhil S Kariel of the HC was hearing a petition filed by 29 persons, including owners and operators of slaughterhouses, meat and fish sellers, traders of eggs and poultry, and hoteliers serving non-vegetarian food, on Thursday (October 29), when the question of the legality of the order was raised.

The court noted that the order was issued on the ground that a senior Jain religious leader would be staying in Radhanpur for four months in connection with Paryushan, the annual eight-day period of spiritual reflection, fasting, and practice of forgiveness observed by Jains.The court also noted that the August 17 order mentioned expected visits by several senior religious leaders and devotees over a period of five months, and stated that their religious sentiments could be hurt by these businesses.

The court order said: "It appears that the Chief Officer, Radhanpur Municipality has passed orders dated 17.08.2026 whereby the Chief Officer has…directed the petitioners to close their slaughter houses for a period of four months from the date of the order on the ground that a senior leader of a Jain religion is going to stay in the limits of Radhanpur Town for a period of four months on account of a religious occasion (Paryushan) of the community in question and whereas, various senior leaders and devotees of the religious leader…would be visiting Radhanpur Town for a period of five months…"Since the business being carried out by the petitioners could hurt the religious feelings of such persons, therefore, it was directed that the business of slaughter houses should remain closed for a period of four months."The Municipality's directive warned traders that failure to comply would invite action under the Gujarat Municipalities Act, 1963.Counsel for petitioners Zubin Bharda told the court that all the establishments held the requisite licences to carry out their respective businesses, including licences issued by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). The Municipality had not disputed the licensing status of the petitioners.

Counsel submitted that the traders had no objection to voluntarily shutting their establishments for nine days during the Paryushan festival celebrated by the Jain community in Radhanpur.However, extending the closure to four months was "arbitrary and infringed upon their fundamental right to practise any profession or carry on any occupation, trade or business" under Article 19(1)(g) of the Constitution, counsel argued.The court order also recorded Bharda's submission questioning the legal basis of the directive. Counsel had pointed out that the Municipality's order did not specify the statutory provision under which the Chief Officer had exercised the power to shut down the businesses for such an extended period.

The Municipality's directive threatened the livelihoods of the owners and hundreds of employees of these establishments, and the petitioners had sought the quashing of the August 17 order, along with interim protection against any coercive action by the Municipality.Advocate Deepak Sanchela, who appeared for the Radhanpur Municipality, made the significant submission that the 1963 Act may not have a provision under which the closure orders could have been issued"…Mr Sanchela would very fairly submit that there may not be any provision in the Gujarat Municipalities Act whereby the Chief Officer could have directed the respondents to not carry out the businesses for a period of four months," the court recorded in its October 29 order.Counsel for the Municipality also submitted that in view of this submission, the civic body would not press the August 17 directive, and would not take any coercive steps against the petitioners.Following this submission, Bharda told the court that the petitioners would not press their plea and sought permission to withdraw it, while retaining the liberty to approach the appropriate forum if the Municipality took another similar decision in the future.The court allowed the request and disposed of the petition as withdrawn. It recorded in its order, "Having regard to the above, the present petition stands disposed of as withdrawn with the liberty as above being granted to the petitioners."The court did not examine the constitutional validity of the four-month closure directive or strike it down on merits.

BRS warns Revanth Reddy against selling prime lands in Hyd

Hyderabad: With Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy announcing plans to monetise valuable public lands in Miyapur, Kancha Gachibowli and other places, the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) has warned him against any such attempts. The party opposed the sale of valuable public lands for the government's real estate ventures and demanded that the disputed Miyapur lands be used for the benefit of the poor and for public infrastructure.Accusing the Chief Minister of continuing to act like a realtor despite holding the highest public office, MLC Dasoju Sravan said the government should not turn public assets into a source of commercial deals. "We will not remain silent if lands are sold off in the name of development and fresh deals are pursued," he said.Referring to the Miyapur land controversy, he said Rangareddy Collector Narayana Reddy had already clarified that the dispute had been pending since 1995. He advised the Chief Minister to study the Collector's observations and relevant court orders instead of making statements against the previous BRS government and former Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao by allegedly

Surat police arrest five in alleged nationwide fraud involving weight-loss and skin-treatment medicines



Surat: Five key accused allegedly involved in a fraud targeting women across India in the name of weight-loss and skin treatment medicines have been arrested by the Surat City Police's Cyber Crime Branch, which said bank accounts linked to the company at the centre of the investigation had received transactions worth crores of rupees.

The accused allegedly operated through companies named Curest Science & Wellness, Vedic World, Divya Antra Wellness LLP and Glozenic Skin Care, using social media advertisements and promises of effective treatments to attract customers.According to the police, employees posing as courier delivery personnel were sent from Delhi to different locations to deliver parcels and collect cash directly from customers.

The arrests follow an investigation into a complaint in which a woman was allegedly cheated after being contacted on WhatsApp by a person posing as Dr Akash Malhotra.After enquiring about her skin problems, the accused allegedly asked her to transfer Rs 8,000 online to a QR code belonging to Curest Science & Wellness for skin medicines.Instead, she received weight-loss medicines through a courier. "The accused subsequently obtained another Rs 9,000 from her in the name of skin medicines, while the initial Rs 8,000 was not refunded," police said.

A case was registered at the Surat Cyber Crime Police Station under Sections 316(5), 318(4), 319(2), 61(2) and 3(5) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, and Section 66(D) of the Information Technology Act, 2008.During the investigation, the police found that Curest Science & Wellness had allegedly cheated another woman from Surat of Rs 1,77,40,500 (Rs 1.77 crore) in an earlier case.After technical investigation, the police laid a trap in Surat and apprehended a courier delivery worker operating under the name Rahul Raj. Information obtained from him led investigators to the company's call centre in Haryana's Gurugram, where a raid was conducted.Around 160 people, including tele-callers, advisers and courier delivery workers, were reportedly working at the facility. Four accused had been arrested in connection with the earlier case, while the alleged masterminds had evaded arrest.

"The five accused have now been arrested in the present investigation," police said.The arrested men have been identified as Amit Gaurav, 31, a director of Curest Science & Wellness and Glozenic Skin Care; Pankaj, 30, a director of Curest Science & Wellness and Divya Antra Wellness LLP; Rupesh Kumar, 43, and Puneet Kumar, 43, both partners in Curest Science & Wellness; and Deepak Kumar, 24, who worked as a manager at the company.The accused are from Delhi, Haryana, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, with Puneet Kumar originally from Punjab.

According to the police, the companies advertised medicines on social media using attractive packaging, product photographs and claims of weight loss and skin treatment.Customers were allegedly told that the products would be delivered through standard courier companies.However, employees of the companies were reportedly sent from Delhi by air or train, posing as courier delivery workers, to hand over the parcels and collect cash payments.The investigation also revealed substantial transactions through the company's banking and payment accounts.Curest Science & Wellness's IDFC First Bank account received Rs 6,99,06,268 (Rs 6.99 crore) between January 1 and June 29, 2026, while its Kotak Mahindra Bank account received Rs 6,58,19,741 (Rs 6.58 crore) between April 7, 2025, and June 29, 2026.

"Transactions worth Rs 8,30,95,532 (Rs 8.30 crore) were also recorded through its Razorpay merchant account," police said.

‘Jane Doe V. Cornell’: Netflix releases documentary on Cornell gangrape case amid growing calls for President’s resignation

The 36-minute documentary titled Jane Doe V. Cornell represents the fifth episode in what the streaming service refers to as ‘Instadocs’, which are rapidly produced narrative nonfiction accounts that explore latest news stories.This documentary was released less than two months following Doe's civil lawsuit, in which she claims to have been drugged and raped at the Chi Phi Fraternity house in October 2024.

Cornell President faces scrutiny, resignation callsThe documentary comes at a time when several faculty members are seeking the removal of Cornell President Michael Kotlikoff and other officials, claiming that their response to the "persistent issue of sexual assault" on campus has been insufficient.On October 29, the Cornell Faculty Senate commenced voting on a symbolic no confidence resolution directed at university administrators, while the American Association of University Professors chapter at the institution officially urged the president to step down.Two lawyers defending clients accused of sexual assault at Cornell University are requesting the dismissal of New York Attorney General Letitia James from her position as the special prosecutor overseeing the investigation into these allegations.In early October, New York Governor Kathy Hochul appointed James, despite the attorney's previous public endorsement of Jane Doe in her lawsuit alleging she was drugged and raped at a fraternity house in 2024.Hochul's decision followed public outcry after it was revealed in September that the local district attorney in Tompkins County chose not to present the case to a grand jury.During a hearing on Thursday, Judge James Farrell inquired of the defendant's attorney, Andrew Miltenberg, about the reason the accused men have not come together to request James' removal, as per CNN.“We got here because people were not satisfied with the investigation done by Cornell and the results of that,” Miltenberg, the defendant Gillio Lopes, reportedly told the judge.“We’re here because people were not satisfied with the Tompkins County district attorney’s approach to this. Why do we need to put the people of this state in the position of again lacking confidence in the result?”James did not attend the hearing. Assistant Attorney General Kaitlin Vigars informed the judge that James' public opinion does not constitute a conflict of interest or an "impediment" to the investigation, emphasizing that a prosecutor "has a duty of fair dealing to the accused," according to CNN.Disclaimer: If you or someone you are aware of has experienced sexual assault, please reach out to the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 1-800-656-HOPE (4673) or visit rainn.org.

Vivek Ramaswamy seeks to become Ohio’s first Indian-American Governor: Political rise, controversies, bid against Amy Acton



Vivek Ganapathy Ramaswamy, the Republican candidate running for Ohio governor, will be facing Democratic candidate Amy Acton and Libertarian candidate Don Kissick in the November 2026 elections. Whoever wins will succeed Republican incumbent Mike DeWine who won’t be appearing for re-elections due to term limits. Competing to become the 71st governor of Ohio, if elected, Ramaswamy would become the first Indian American governor of the state.Ramaswamy made it to the headlines during his 2024 presidential bid, entering the race as a Republican candidate. Although he later withdrew and endorsed President Donald Trump, the campaign brought him a lot of recognition. Trump endorsed Ramaswamy for governor, calling him a strong candidate. Ramaswamy went on to call Trump “the best president of the 21st century” as well. In 2025, he announced his bid for Ohio governor, taking his political career from the national stage to his home state. Before entering politics, he founded Roivant Sciences in 2014, a pharmaceutical company and went on to co-found Strive Asset Management in 2022.Ramaswamy's personal life and background

Born on August 9, 1985, in Cincinnati, Ohio, to Indian immigrant parents, Ramaswamy’s roots can be traced back to Palakkad in Kerala. Born and raised in the US, Ramaswamy is fluent in English and Tamil. His father, V. G. Ramaswamy, worked as an engineer while his mother Geetha Ramaswamy studied medicine at Mysore Medical College and worked as a geriatric psychiatrist. They migrated to the US in the 1970s.Ramaswamy attended St. Xavier High School, a Catholic school in Cincinnati, Ohio. He went on to study biology at Harvard College, where he also served as president of the Harvard Political Union. He later enrolled at Yale Law School and earned a Juris Doctor degree in 2013. He even received a Paul and Daisy Soros Fellowship for New Americans in 2011 to support his legal studies.

During his college years, Ramaswamy was also involved in rap music. At Harvard, he performed under the stage name “Da Vek”, delivering Eminem covers and original rap songs influenced by his libertarian ideas. He even performed Eminem’s Lose Yourself at the Iowa State Fair in 2023. Moreover, he studied classical piano from childhood and was a national junior tennis player during his school years.Ramaswamy, 41, is married to Apoorva Tewari Ramaswamy, a physician and surgeon specializing in otolaryngology. The couple met in 2011 at a party while studying at Yale University. They have three children, two sons and a daughter. The family currently lives in the Columbus metropolitan area in Ohio.Ramaswamy has made reduction of Medicaid fraud and affordability of healthcare a key part of his campaign. He has proposed stricter checks to prevent the misuse of Medicaid funds, along with simplifying the system to improve supervision. He also wants Ohio to seek federal approval in order to keep 65% of the money recovered through Medicaid fraud investigations. He says the money could be used to lower health insurance and support rural hospitals. His plan also includes an 80-hour monthly work or education requirement for eligible adults to receive Medicaid benefits.

Moreover, Ramaswamy has urged to reduce government spending and make Ohio’s state government more efficient. He has proposed cutting unnecessary regulations and reducing bureaucracy to save public money. His plan also includes bringing different government agencies together. He believes these changes can prevent fraud and increase efficiency. His priorities and positions are heavily influenced by Trump. He expressed that while Trump’s job was to put Americans first, his own job was to put Ohioans first.Ramaswamy has promised to take strict actions for crimes in Ohio. He supports tougher bail rules and longer sentences for people who repeatedly commit violent crimes. He also wants to give local police officers and sheriffs greater support in dealing with violent offenders. Ultimately, his broader goal is to strengthen Ohio’s economy and public safety. By using slogans like “Revive the American Dream in Ohio”, he aims to create more jobs, attract businesses and make the state more affordable for people.

Ramaswamy's stand on immigration, jobs, trade and tariffsRamaswamy has supported stricter immigration policies and stronger security along the US-Mexico border. His views on immigration are broadly aligned with Trump’s efforts to deport illegal immigrants and to increase border security. If elected, he promises to abolish sanctuary city policies in various cities of Ohio, including Cincinnati and Cleveland. He even proposed to end birth right citizenship for children born in the US to undocumented immigrants.Beyond immigration, Ramaswamy has promised to bring more high paying jobs to Ohio and make the state a better place for business opportunities. He wants to attract new industries, encourage businesses to invest in the state and reduce regulations that affect economic growth. He has also called to reduce the dependence of the US on China. He believes that the US should encourage local industries, while strengthening trade relations with countries like India, Japan and South Korea. During this campaign, he also advocated to protect domestic industries from foreign competition.

Ramaswamy's views on Iran war and artificial intelligenceRamaswamy has called for an end to the Iran conflict, arguing that it has contributed to rising fuel prices and increased costs for Ohio families and farmers. In October 2026, he said he wanted the war to end but acknowledged that foreign policy was beyond the control of an Ohio governor. He has focused on reducing high fuel prices and proposed a temporary suspension of Ohio’s gas and diesel taxes. During his 2024 presidential campaign, Ramaswamy also opposed sending US troops into a war with Iran.Furthermore, Ramaswamy supports introducing artificial intelligence into education and believes students should learn how to use the technology. He has said schools must prepare children for a future dominated by AI and other technologies. He has also made AI data centers a key issue in his current campaign, urging data centers to provide electricity benefits, pay property taxes, along with meeting air and water quality standards. His plan also calls for pausing new data centers until these rules become a law.In October 2026, Ramaswamy faced criticism for launching a campaign advertisement that featured Donna Arthur, estranged mother of his Democratic opponent Amy Acton. In the video, Arthur called her daughter a “liar” and challenged her claim of being homeless as a child. She also questioned Acton’s ability to become a governor. The advertisement garnered criticism because Acton has said that her stepfather sexually abused her when she was 12 and that her mother failed to protect her.

Acton and her brother were removed from their mother’s custody after her stepfather was charged with rape. Acton accused Ramaswamy of using her childhood trauma to gain political support. Her brother, Philip Stearns, also criticized the advertisement, calling it a “disgusting attack.” However, Ramaswamy continued to defend the advertisement, arguing that voters should hear from people who know Acton personally.In December 2025, Ramaswamy clashed with far-right commentator Nick Fuentes over racism and the meaning of American identity. At Turning Point USA’s AmericaFest conference, Ramaswamy rejected the idea that a person’s ancestry determined how American they were, saying that “there is no American who is more American than somebody else. You either are an American, or you are not”. At the conference on December 19, Ramaswamy directly criticised Fuentes for praising Adolf Hitler and promoting hatred against different ethnic groups. Fuentes responded by saying that he would oppose Ramaswamy’s bid for Ohio governor in 2026. He said, “we have to deny Vivek Ramaswamy the governorship” and used a racial slur against him.Ramaswamy's net worth and moreAccording to Forbes, Vivek Ramaswamy has an estimated net worth of $2.3 billion as of September 2026. He built much of his fortune through investments in the biotechnology industry and by founding Roivant Sciences. If elected, Ramaswamy would be the third richest elected US official, claimed Forbes.As the 2026 elections approach, Ramaswamy’s bid for Ohio governor marks another step in his political career. If elected, he would become the first Indian American to serve as governor of Ohio.

BRS sets up help desks to assist graduate voter enrolment

Hyderabad: To assist with graduate voter enrolment, the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) is setting up help desks in various wards and constituencies, equipped with laptops and volunteers to help graduates scan documents and complete the registration process. Through these help desks, the BRS will facilitate the registration of graduate voters in the Warangal-Khammam-Nalgonda and Hyderabad-Ranga Reddy-Mahabubnagar constituencies.

All eyes are on Israel President Herzog as Netanyahu, Eisenkot fall short of majority



Israel's final election results have left the country facing uncertainty, with neither Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's bloc nor the main opposition alliance securing enough seats to form a majority government. With the outcome now clear, the role of Israeli President Isaac Herzog, who has a key constitutional role in deciding who gets the first opportunity to form the next government, is in focus.The final count announced by the Central Elections Committee showed that Netanyahu's bloc won 53 seats in the 120-member Knesset, significantly fewer than the 68 seats it held at its peak in the previous parliament. The opposition alliance, led by Yashar, the party of former military chief Gadi Eisenkot, secured 48 seats, while Arab-led parties won the remaining 19. Notably, the parliamentary majority mark required to form the government is 61. Click here to track live updates on Israel electionsAlthough the counting process is complete, the results must still be formally certified and submitted to the president by Wednesday, November 4.With no alliance securing a majority, the next step will depend largely on Herzog and the choices he makes during government formation. Before looking at the process, here is what to know about the Israeli president.

What we know about Isaac HerzogHerzog, Israel's 11th president, was elected by the Knesset, the Israeli Parliament, in June 2021, and he took office the following month.His father, Chaim Herzog, served as Israel’s ambassador to the United Nations before becoming the president and serving from 1983 to 1993.Also read: From Texas to Kansas, the Senate and House midterm races that could decide which party runs US CongressHis grandfather, Rabbi Yitzhak Halevi Herzog, was Ireland's first chief rabbi and held the position for more than a decade before becoming the chief rabbi of Palestine and then Israel, serving from 1936 to 1959.A trained lawyer, Herzog entered politics through the centre-left Labor Party. He served in several ministerial roles, including as minister of welfare and social services, before leading the party from 2013 to 2018. In 2015, he contested against Benjamin Netanyahu for the prime minister's post but was unsuccessful.After losing the party leadership role, Herzog took charge of the Jewish Agency in 2018, which plays a key role in maintaining ties between Israel and Jewish communities worldwide.Herzog is often seen as softer-spoken and less outspoken than many of his contemporaries. Some observers have suggested that these traits may have blocked his ambition of becoming prime minister, The Guardian reported.Also read: Netanyahu, Eisenkot or fresh polls? With no clear mandate, here are four ways Israel can form its next governmentYair Lapid, who is now part of Eisenkot's broad opposition bloc, had praised Herzog earlier, describing him as "a worthy and wonderful man who is always focused on the good of the country and the Jewish people".

Herzog has faced pressure from Trump repeatedlyAs president, Herzog has faced pressure from US President Donald Trump to pardon Netanyahu, who is facing long-running corruption trials that could result in a prison sentence if he loses power. Netanyahu, the only sitting Israeli prime minister to face trial, has denied the allegations and called the case a witch hunt orchestrated by the media, police and judiciary.In April, Herzog had invited Netanyahu's lawyers and prosecutors to his residence to discuss the matter.Ahead of Tuesday's crucial vote, Herzog said he expected pressure but would not allow external influence, including from Trump, to affect his decision."I don't think the president of the United States or anybody else can intervene in my discretion," he told American outlet MS Now. "It's Israel's democracy and Israel's constitution, and that's what counts for me."Earlier this month, Herzog had called Trump Israel’s “No 1 friend”. In an interview with Axel Springer Global Reporters Network’s Jan Philipp Burgard, he said, “First of all, we have many friends. I think President Trump is the No. 1 friend. We have great friendship with the administration and with him.”

Israel president has vowed to try to avoid fresh round of pollsAs votes were being counted on Wednesday, Herzog declared that he would do everything he could to avoid a fresh round of elections."One thing must be clear, and I said this before the elections too: we must do everything we can, certainly after yesterday, to avoid another round of elections," he said. "So I expect everyone who comes here to come with an open mind."

Why Herzog’s role as president matters nowIsraelis do not directly elect their prime minister. Instead, voters choose political parties, which receive seats in the Knesset based on their share of the vote. The leader who eventually becomes prime minister is chosen through the government formation process after the election.This is where the president comes in. The Knesset elects the president separately, and the president is responsible for meeting representatives of the elected parties before deciding which lawmaker should get the first chance to form a government.The president is not required to choose the leader of the party that wins the most seats. Instead, the decision can go to another leader if the president believes that person has a better chance of securing enough support to form a coalition and win a confidence vote in the Knesset.There is a precedent for this. In 2009, then-President Shimon Peres invited Benjamin Netanyahu to form the government even though his right-wing Likud party had won fewer votes than the centrist Kadima party.The president has seven days from the formal announcement of the election results to consult all party leaders before making a decision.Once the certified election results are received by the president, he holds meetings with representatives of all parties elected to the Knesset. During these consultations, party leaders recommend the candidate they believe should become prime minister.

After hearing their views, the president selects the lawmaker he believes has the best chance of forming a government.Also read: Israel election: Arab parties projected to win record seats but may not be 'kingmakers'The person chosen is generally given 28 days to complete the process. The president can grant an additional 14 days if required. If the candidate fails to secure sufficient support, the president can offer another lawmaker the opportunity, in accordance with constitutional procedure.

The possible options before HerzogThe election outcome has made government formation difficult. Netanyahu's bloc has 53 seats, the opposition has 48 and Arab-led parties hold 19.It is possible that Herzog could give Eisenkot the first opportunity if more than 61 lawmakers recommend him, including members of the Arab parties, reported Israeli news outlet Ynet.If Eisenkot cannot form a government, Herzog could then turn to Netanyahu. If both leaders fail to secure a coalition, the president may try to bring them together to form a national unity government.Ynet, citing officials at the President's Residence, reported that Herzog would not necessarily grant the first mandate to the leader of the party with the most seats. The level of support each candidate receives during consultations will also matter.Notably, both Arab parties have indicated their willingness to work with Eisenkot's camp. Ra'am became part of Naftali Bennett's government in 2021, marking the first time an independent Arab party joined an Israeli coalition. The government, however, collapsed after 18 months.

Trump calls for prosecution: ‘Peltola should suffer’



The Democratic campaign for the US Senate seat in Alaska sought to include on the ballot a candidate sharing the same name as the Republican incumbent, Dan Sullivan, in an attempt to mislead voters in a crucial race that may influence which party holds control of the chamber, reported the New York Times on Wednesday.The timing suggests that approximately 58,000 voters might have cast their ballots before discovering the alleged initiative, which critics claim aimed to generate confusion with a candidate sharing the similar name.Peltola's campaign denies involvementBoth Peltola's campaign and the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee have refuted any involvement.

The newspaper acquired text messages exchanged among members of Democrat Mary Peltola's campaign, which talked about finding people who share the same name as the two-term Republican opponent. They ultimately chose a retired schoolteacher from the small fishing town of Petersburg named Dan J. Sullivan. He successfully advanced through the state's open primary in August and is now one of four candidates listed on the ranked voting ballot for the general election on Tuesday.A senior state elections official determined that Dan J. Sullivan was ineligible to appear on the ballot following his declaration of candidacy, saying that it was “filed with a purpose to confuse or mislead and to thereby compromise the ballot’s fairness or neutrality."

The matter was brought before the Alaska Supreme Court, which concluded that he was indeed qualified to participate in the election. The U.S. Constitution specifies only age, citizenship, and residency as prerequisites for Senate candidacy.Sen. Sullivan's campaign says ‘Alaskans deserve the truth’Nate Adams, a representative for Sen. Sullivan's campaign, has denied any role, saying that “Alaskans deserve the truth.”“Mary Peltola, her campaign and her senior advisers colluded with the DSCC, national Democrat lawyers and Alaska Democrat operatives to recruit candidates to deliberately confuse and deceive voters,” Adams said.President Donald Trump on Wednesday urged for the criminal prosecution of the Democratic candidate competing for the Senate seat in Alaska, following disclosures that her campaign seemed to be engaged in the recruitment of a candidate sharing the same name as the Republican incumbent Sullivan.“I think they should be prosecuted,” POTUS said in reference to Peltola and the other Sullivan. On social media, Trump had earlier stated, “Peltola should suffer the Legal and Political consequences for what she has done.”This election is one of several Senate races this year that could influence the balance of power in the chamber. Trump had earlier instructed his Department of Justice to initiate a lawsuit aimed at preventing the certification of the Senate race if Peltola were to win against Republican Sen. Dan Sullivan.Last week, the Department of Justice (DOJ) initiated a lawsuit aimed at postponing the certification process in the event that Sen. Dan Sullivan is defeated, referencing the potential for confusion.

Netanyahu’s bloc falls short of majority amid fraud allegations

Tel Aviv: Israel’s parliamentary election has left government formation uncertain, with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s bloc falling short of a majority and allegations of electoral fraud and foreign interference drawing pushback from election officials and the Shin Bet security agency.

Netanyahu’s Likud-led bloc won 53 seats in the 120-member Knesset, Israel’s parliament, while the opposition bloc secured 48. The two Arab-led parties won the remaining 19 seats, according to the final tally published by the Central Elections Committee (CEC) early Friday.The opposition bloc comprises Gadi Eisenkot’s Yashar party with 21 seats, Naftali Bennett’s B’Yachad party with 12, Yair Golan’s Democrats with eight and Avigdor Liberman’s Yisrael Beytenu with seven.The Arab-led Ra’am and Joint List parties won 11 and eight seats, respectively.Turnout in Tuesday’s election was 77.9 per cent, the highest in decades, with 5,716,665 votes cast, the CEC said.The results are to be presented to President Isaac Herzog on November 4, after the committee completes any final inquiries into errors or complaints.

Physicists propose tabletop experiment to test gravity's quantumness



General relativity and quantum mechanics are two highly successful theories. The former explains gravity and the latter teams up with special relativity to describe the other three forces of nature: electromagnetic, strong nuclear, and weak nuclear forces.However, scientists don't know how gravity fits into quantum mechanics. In fact, they have been proposing experiments that can test the quantumness of gravity. On October 29, 2024, one such proposal appeared in the journalPhysical Review Letters.With concepts like superposition, illustrated by the Schrödinger's cat thought experiment, and entanglement, quantum mechanics defies classical intuition. Quantum mechanics also allows seemingly absurd phenomena, e.g. the measurement of a quantum system (like a particle) can cause the system to instantaneously 'collapse' into one possible state that described the system before the measurement.In fact, if a system undergoes measurement-induced collapse, it's said to live by the rules of quantum mechanics. Classical systems like planets orbiting stars, cricket balls flying in the air, and cars on the road don't do this.

Ruling out alternativesMultiple experiments have found that both quantum mechanics and general relativity are legitimate theories of nature — yet they remain incompatible with each other. This has encouraged physicists to try and come up with a larger theory that can accommodate both. One strong contender is string theory, another is loop quantum gravity. Both of them predict deviations from quantum mechanics and general relativity either at the beginning of the universe or inside black holes, meaning they're nearly impossible to test."So far, experimental tests are extremely difficult — the situation looks very bleak — it is not clear if it can be done at all," Dipankar Home of Bose Institute, Kolkata, and one of the authors of the new paper, said.To check whether gravity is quantum mechanical, scientists need precise tests that rule out alternative possibilities.Unlike the classical Newtonian mechanics, where measuring a system doesn't alter it, quantum mechanics dictates that observing a system forces it into a definite state. This isn't a matter of how carefully a physicist is making the measurement. The measurement will always collapse the state. So measuring the state versus not measuring it creates a way to test whether the system is behaving according to the laws of Newtonian mechanics or quantum mechanics.As a first step, physicists said they needed an experiment where gravity helps an inherently quantum mechanical process happen. If gravity causes the state to collapse, it will be a sign that gravity behaves quantum mechanically.The new study suggested the following design: a test mass is in a superposition of two possible paths it can take. A probe mass will interact with it gravitationally to force it to choose one of the paths. Here, both masses are in a superposition of which paths they take. These two paths come close, resulting in different distances between the two pairs of paths. That is, for each path of the test mass, there are two possible paths the probe mass can take."Such simple, yet novel proposals ... are very interesting to the community," said Sreenath K. Manikandan, a theoretical physicist at the Nordic Institute for Theoretical Physics, Sweden, who wasn't involved in the study.Testing weak gravityThe idea is also interesting because it proposes to test weak gravity. Say you're performing an experiment where you're looking for light. If the light is bright, you can find it just by looking at it. But if it is very dim, you need sophisticated light-detecting cameras. Similarly, ideas to look for quantum gravity have so far involved strong gravity, like that near black holes, whereas the new test proposes looking for weak gravity, like the force near a small object.

"Our contention is that fundamental quantum gravity features can persist in this limit," Home said.Igor Pikovski, a quantum gravity researcher at the Stevens Institute of Technology and Stockholm University, commended this: "The important lesson is that quantum gravity signatures might show themselves even … in tabletop set-ups and not just in science-fiction scenarios."But independent experts said the experiment is still challenging because the masses need to behave quantum mechanically.Quantum properties usually show up in a measurable way in systems that exist at a smaller than microscopic scale, like inside atoms, whereas gravity is easier to measure around larger objects, like a building.This is why Vivishek Sudhir of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology said, "Preparing a spatial quantum superposition of an object massive enough such that its gravitational force is also measurable is an enormous experimental challenge."Creating a superpositionBose et al. have proposed the use of masses weighing about one-trillionth of a gram while maintaining a separation of around one-tenth of a millimetre. Nanocrystals meet these criteria.Yet the team still estimates a decade for their experiment to be conducted. Thus far, "the largest objects that have been placed in two places at once are macromolecules. We will have to place a nanocrystal, which is a billion times larger, in two places at once," Sougato Bose, one of the coauthors of the study, said."Creating this superposition is by far the main challenge," Debarshi Das, another coauthor, added.To do so, the authors have proposed using a quantum property of the nanocrystals called spin. Simply speaking, the spin affects the nanocrystals' motion (and can be manipulated by an external magnetic field). The spin of each nanocrystal exists in a superposition of two states until it is measured. Since the state affects the nanocrystal's path, it also exists in a superposition of two paths until a measurement.

"Once prepared in such a state, the gravitational field produced by this configuration will need to be measured very rapidly," according to Sudhir. "This is because any spatial quantum superposition will be extremely fragile and will die quickly, [so] measurements have to be made before this happens."Bose also said the nanocrystals can collide with gas atoms and other objects and forces in their environment, which could destroy the superposition. "This could include things like the gravitational forces from seismic activity in the earth or perhaps even those due to clouds moving in the sky," Sudhir said.For these reasons, the experimental set-up will have to happen in a near-perfect vacuum and the masses' properties will have to be measured with extreme efficiency.Despite all these challenges, physicists are hopeful. The proposed test has a much shorter timeline than the centuries required for humankind to develop the technologies to test quantum gravity near black holes.Pikovski agreed the future is bright:

'We have lived with macaques for very longperiods of time and have co-evolved with them'



When primatologist Anindya Sinha first came to Bengaluru in the early 1990s, he couldn't help but notice the number of bonnet macaques in the city. "They were not just in Cubbon Park or Lal Bagh, but also on the city walls and the terraces of houses," he says at a recent talk at Science Gallery, Bengaluru. "But, of course, we knew that times were changing and their existence was doomed," he says.According to Sinha, a professor at the National Institute of Advanced Sciences (NIAS) in Bengaluru, as the city transitioned from the Garden City of yore to the Silicon Valley of India that it is today and lost its gardens as well as the relatively relaxed pace of life that had once defined it, many other non-human inhabitants of the city began to leave. One such "legitimate citizen of the city" was the bonnet macaque, a species of monkey native to peninsular India.

"What subsequently developed was not only negativity about the macaque, but also these other ideas and conceptions that came in, about aesthetics, for example," he says in this talk titled Changing Ecologies, Transforming Lives: Complex Coexistence of Human and Non-Human Primates in Our Cities. "If Bengaluru was to be a beautiful city, it shouldn't have monkeys just as it shouldn't have dogs. I find that personally very difficult to accept because what it is clearly saying is that we are speciesists," says Sinha, whose lecture offered insights into the profound relationship Indians have shared with nonhuman species, including macaques, why this co-existence is under threat and how these macaques have learnt how to survive in human-altered landscapes, often resorting to pilfering, begging or forging new friendships to adapt to an urbanised world."We fight being racists, we fight being sexist. But I don't think we have any qualms about announcing loudly that only we will stay in the city, not the macaques or dogs."

The kinship that Indians have traditionally had with non-human species has been an integral aspect of our culture, he says, adding that this aspect of our attitude towards other forms of life still exists in many parts of the country. "I will stick out my neck and say that the closeness that humans feel towards non-humans in India far out-surpasses any other community anywhere in the world," he says, attributing this to two specific reasons."The first is that our philosophy looks at all other species in a continuum with ourselves. This is in marked contrast with the West, where either because of Judeo-Christian faith or generations of philosophers, the human and the non-human were very starkly separated," he says. The second reason, in his opinion, is religion, with "many of our deities, many of the vehicles of our gods and goddesses being non-human. That gave them pride of place in our communities and belief systems," he says.To make his case, he uses the example of the fishing folk of Charotar in Gujarat, who have lived in relative harmony alongside the mugger or marsh crocodile for centuries. "This is a remarkable friendship.

There have been very few attacks, about four or five in the last 40 years, with almost no deaths," says Sinha, showing the audience a photograph taken at Charotar depicting one such friendship — between Ramubhai, a fisherman and Raju, a marsh crocodile. "The relationship is so close that Ramubhai can call out to Raju, and Raju responds to him," he says.This attitude, unfortunately, is fast disappearing, says Sinha. "I do not understand why this spirit, this philosophy of being with other beings, does not pervade our modern thinking of other beings," he says. "Maybe we have lost much of the idyllic kind of world that we imagine where we could co-exist without stress, strain and conflict."

The macaques who love humansMacaques are a genus of old-world primates consisting of around 24 species spread across the world, 12 of which are found in India, including the Assam macaque, the Rhesus macaque, the southern pig-tailed macaque, the white-cheeked macaque and the lion-tailed macaque. "They have the largest range of non-human primates, to the extent that there is one species that lives in Northern Africa, but all the other species extend from Afghanistan in the west to Japan in the east," says Sinha. In his opinion, what is most remarkable about them is that they are flexible in their social and individual ecologies and behaviour. "As a result, they have been extremely successful evolutionarily."Of these, there are two species — the North Indian Rhesus macaque and the South Indian bonnet macaque — that are especially interesting because they have a "remarkable ability to adapt to almost any kind of ecology, both natural and human-made." Additionally, both these species as well as the Nicobar long-tailed macaque, tend to move towards human habitation, says Sinha. "In some sense, crudely speaking, if you give these macaques a choice between living in a forest and living with people, they prefer to live with people," he says.According to him, the ability of macaques to adapt to urban dwellings is not new — they have been doing so for centuries. Sinha brings up a poem featuring a monkey on a jackfruit tree who "mistakes for fruit… the eye… on the thronged drumheads," and explains, "This was originally a poem in Tamil by a poet called Mutamociyar," he says, pointing out that the poet wrote this poem about 2000 years ago. This indicates that "we have lived with macaques for very long periods of time and have co-evolved with them."And yet, the relationship between human beings and macaques is also often fraught with tension, with many early biologists even referring to these macaque species as "weed macaques" since they "are very prolific, they multiply in large numbers and are even called pests, just as weeds are." Sinha, however, does not see the macaques this way. "In our research group, we decided very consciously to do away with that term because of the kind of value system this term had," he says. "We call them anthropophilic macaques since they love people, or the prolific macaques since they multiply at very high rates," he says."Once a macaque has tasted human food, her life has changed forever," says Sinha.One offshoot of this close relationship with human beings is that these interactions irretrievably change the macaques. "Once a macaque has tasted human food, her life has changed forever," says Sinha, expanding on some of the behaviours that have resulted from this.In Bandipur National Park, for instance, where tourists have been interacting with these animals by throwing food to them, juvenile bonnet macaques have developed new modalities of communicating with people who carry foods in their hand, he says, showing a photograph of a young monkey with its arm stretched out, almost in a begging gesture. "It consists of four behaviours," he explains." These juvenile monkeys end up tracking people who have food in their hands and orient themselves so that they are making eye contact with these people.""While they are doing this, they give a coo-coo call, and finally, when eye contact is made with a human, the macaque puts out its hand," he says. "This is remarkable because they don't do it with other macaques; they do it only with people. The interesting reason for that is there is no food-sharing amongst these macaques, but people are willing to share food with them. "It is a very human appeal," says Sinha, adding that this entire set of behaviours is completely newand "never before seen in any wild monkeys.""When people provide food to these females, that bond is tested because the competition for the food becomes so high," says Sinha."When people provide food to these females, that bond is tested because the competition for the food becomes so high," says Sinha. | Photo Credit: RAJEEV BHATTHuman presence in Bandipur is also gravely impacting the integrity of macaque social groups. Like most primates as well as mammals like elephants, lions and hyenas, macaques are female-bonded, forming very close relationships with others in their group, which typically consists of a few adult males, many females and all their offspring. "When people provide food to these females, that bond is tested because the competition for the food becomes so high," says Sinha, whose team is now seeing group fission with females often leaving these large multi-male, multi-female groups to bring down social tensions."You end up with small groups of females with a single male. In the last three decades, many of the groups in Bandipur and Mudumalai, especially those around the highway, have developed a new form of social organisation — a single adult male and these small groups of females — and they don't do very well," he says.Doomed city dwellersIn his talk, Sinha also discusses how changing ecological circumstances are causing many of these animals to move from forests to highways to villages and cities. "Their forests are being removed, they have no way to go back, and so they adapt to different kinds of human habitations," says Sinha. Macaques, he adds, have a high degree of what he calls phenotypic flexibility, the "ability to quickly adapt to changing conditions, so you are not left in a difficult situation," he says.This phenotypic flexibility makes it easier for them, as compared to many other animals, to adapt to urban ecosystems. For instance, "they may not have their trees, canopies and branches, but they use this mass of electric cables and wires to move across the city," he says, sharing a video of a macaque stealing a woman's glasses and refusing to return it unless given food bought from a nearby vendor. "Clearly, this is a barter system, which they have learnt to negotiate," he says. "And don't forget that shopkeepers also benefit."While macaques may have learnt to adapt to urban spaces, the people who inhabit these same spaces aren't always happy to have them there. "Across virtually every city, we have gotten into negative relationships with macaques," he says. The problem, in his opinion, is very complex, affecting both humans and animals. "Where you stand on it will depend on where your empathies lie and how you think the problem can be solved," he says.However, it is important to remember that macaques, world-over, are struggling to survive, with research showing that many of them are disappearing from across their traditional distribution ranges, "primarily due to anthropogenic factors and their own maladaptive responses to such influences. Their lives are not becoming easier, and in fact, they are doomed," says Sinha, who believes that more detailed ecological behavioural studies of wild, urban and semi-urban macaques are essential. "

A 'summer checklist' for Perumbakkam wetland



Perumbakkam wetland is beginning to develop a "tan". The bulrushes are beginning to shrink resembling ageing human skin drained of fat. These are nature's aide-memoire on what next to expect. It is a "gentle reminder" — using a phrase that makes nudges to action palatable in polite society — that the Perumbakkam wetland is an easy target for fires during summer. And it is time to start efforts to scuttle that possibility, checking factors that can be controlled. Summer heat can cause fires on dry vegetation, but there could be something else at work. Before proceeding further, here is what is at stake. At risk of repeating the evident, Perumbakkam wetland is not the sole preserve of waterbirds. Certain parts of it host ground-nesting birds, and these are the parts susceptible to fires, due to a cocktail of factors — brown vegetation during summer, the summer heat and burning cigarette stubs. These parts — particularly a kuccha road that marks the western border of the wetland — are hoofed by humans, and unknown to themselves, some of them carry in their hands an agency to start a fire.

The Perumbakkam wetland is swamped by intense developmental activity on three sides. On its northern side, lined by the Sholinganallur-to-Perumbakkam road, Metro Rail pillars are rearing up their head. In addition to Metro Rail work, there is activity pertaining to the Water Resources Department. On its southern side is a neighbourhood that is "mobilising" residents at a rapid pace. Housing projects abound on this side and frequently, a project becomes a collection of homes. There is constant work and work presupposes the presence of workers. On both sides — the northern and the southern — there is a noticeable presence of workers. Some of them live in temporary shacks arranged for them next to their worksites. Perumbakkam wetland is known for movement of people down a kuccha road on its western side, a good number of them belong to this workforce. Besides, on the other side of the kuccha road that is housing construction activity, leading to movement on the road.A careless cigarette butt thrown on the brown, dry vegetation before it has burnt out, can cause considerable mischief. From where the fire often started in recent years — particularly in the 2022 and 2024 fires — there is reason to believe it was the trigger and the intense summer heat did the rest.

Cell and Gene therapy facility launched by Bharat Biotech

Hyderabad: Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech International Limited (BBIL), on Thursday announced the launch of country's only vertically integrated, purpose-designed Cell and Gene Therapy (CGT) Infrastructure and Viral Vector Production Facility at Genome Valley.

Spread over 50,000 sft, the CGT facility will explore gene and cell therapies to tackle targetted gene expression, immune system modulation, and long-term cell survival. The work will span from boosting immune responses against cancer to ensuring that therapeutic proteins are safely accepted in patients with genetic diseases like haemophilia, a press release said.

Dr Krishna Ella, executive chairman, Bharat Biotech, said, "Gene and cell therapies represent some of the most intricate, scientifically advanced treatments available today."Dr Raches Ella, chief development officer, Bharat Biotech, spearheading the CGT initiative, said: "Oncology and rare diseases' treatment therapies are our key focus area and this facility will support a wide array of advanced therapies, including CD19 CAR T Cell Therapy for Blood cancers and Gene Therapy."Prof Krishanu Saha, University of Wisconsin, Madison, said that his lab has initiated a pioneering collaboration with Bharat Biotech to develop next-generation CAR (chimeric antigen receptor) cell therapies using AI.

Farmers in Telangana face rising threat of counterfeit seeds

Hyderabad: As Telangana gears up for the Kharif 2025 season, meeting the seed requirements for its vast agricultural expanse remains a pressing challenge.

The State's gross cropped area expanded from 129.04 lakh acres in 2014-15 to 232.58 lakh acres last year.

How to pay for the poor world to go green



The trickiest issue facing the climate negotiations at COP29, which began in Baku on November 11th, goes by the opaque name of the "new collective quantified goal" (NCQG), mainly because that is more dignified than "bigger pile of money". The NCQG is meant to replace the longstanding goal of an annual $100bn a year in climate finance from richer countries to poorer ones. It is supposed to be in place by next year, when all countries are expected to say what they are going to do to cut emissions in the next ten years.A small NCQG, say some developing countries, means less ambitious plans. The chances of a large one, though, look slim. In part that is because rich countries dragged their feet over the old smaller goal. In part it is because Donald Trump, America's president-elect, is a climate sceptic who wants to spend less abroad. And in part it is because negotiators from all sides tend to make the optics dire whether or not there is progress to be made.

If the negotiators can get their act together, though, there is a significant win to be had. Paying for poor countries to go green should cost less than is widely thought. Moreover, robust channels exist to raise and deploy the money.To estimate the developing world's requirements in climate finance, economists add together three financing needs. One is the amount of public money necessary to spark enough private investment in renewable energy. Another comprises compensation paid to poor countries for shutting coal plants (which pollute a lot) while keeping rainforests untouched (allowing for carbon to be stored). Both are crucial to keep net emissions under control. The third bucket—which includes "adaptation" funding to cope with a warmer planet—pursues a different goal. It is obviously necessary; it is also an inherently fuzzier category, and one where developing and developed countries sit far apart.

Excluding adaptation finance from this budget makes the picture clearer. Take the funds to foster renewables first. One of the developing world's problems is that building lots of solar farms and wind turbines requires a great deal of up-front capital that private investors, cagey about putting money into risky markets, are unwilling to provide. Commercial lenders, for their part, often charge extortionate rates. The good news is that, in many of these countries, a little help from public backers can go a long way towards luring investors and slashing borrowing costs. The Energy Transitions Commission (ETC), a think-tank, estimates that yearly climate investments in the developing world (excluding China) need to triple to $900bn to keep global temperatures from rising by more than 2°C above pre-industrial levels. Most of this will come from governments and the private sector, but development banks' green subsidies will also need to rise, from $50bn now to $144bn.This is not a benefit that can be achieved by simply lending to renewable ventures at bargain rates. That would lock in a lot of capital in each transaction and create opportunity costs. Better to provide commercial lenders and investors with guarantees, where a public entity offers to take losses should a project fail to make its promised returns. Those instruments are in fashion: in February the World Bank launched a fund to double loan guarantees to $20bn by 2030. Regional development banks have also clubbed together to provide insurance for green projects and ease repayment schedules.

To encourage developing countries to ditch coal power and keep trees alive—the second aim—rich countries have few options other than offering money. The ETC reckons that, to stick to 2°C of global warming, such handouts must reach $300bn by 2030. Together with subsidies needed to jumpstart renewable projects, this means rich countries must mobilise around half a trillion dollars each year by the end of the decade. Some of this would end up not being spent, as guarantees are intended only as safety-nets. Yet most estimates reckon that adaptation needs could end up doubling the amounts required.How should climate funds be disbursed? A package of bilateral deals between rich and developing countries would expose funding to geopolitical whims and make it hard to track total commitments. It would probably be wasteful, too, as rich-world governments seek a return on their investments by demanding that the money is used to purchase their own equipment. Creating new multilateral institutions, on the other hand, could end in failure, as rich countries hesitate to trust them and would-be shareholders squabble over terms and conditions. Specialised institutions launched in recent decades are struggling to take off: the Green Climate Fund, the biggest such venture, has disbursed only $16bn since it opened in 2010.It would be wiser to entrust the World Bank with such a mission. That would require the lender to grow: the ETC's recommended climate-finance pot is worth about six times what the bank doles out in a year. The institution could borrow a bit more against its equity without damaging its credit rating. On October 15th Ajay Banga, its president, announced that it would decrease its equity ratio to 18% of its borrowing, down from 19%, which, along with his other reforms, will free up $15bn a year. The bank would need a mighty capital injection, too. Geopolitical tensions complicate the task. China is unlikely to be more generous without more of a say, and America refuses to give up its veto over the institution's decisions.Sticking with the status quo would be a huge wasted opportunity. Rich countries would get a much bigger bang for their buck—in terms of global emissions reductions—by spending money in the global south. The financial channels and the instruments exist, and the will is there. In an interview with The Economist, Mr Banga says he wants 45% of its lending to go to helping poor countries reduce emissions rather than alleviate poverty (triple the current ratio). On November 12th, multilateral development lenders including the World Bank pledged to increase their climate finance to $120bn by 2030 (including $42bn for adaptation).

One in 3 Indian women over 50 at risk of bone fractures: Can a new scorecard identify risk early?



One in three Indian women aged 50 and above is at risk of osteoporosis — a condition where bones lose density and become brittle — while around 1.4 million osteoporosis-related fractures occur among Indian women every year, according to figures cited by the International Osteoporosis Foundation (IOF) from 2021.Osteoporosis is often described as a silent condition because it can weaken bones without causing obvious symptoms until a fracture occurs. The risk increases with age, particularly among postmenopausal women, as declining oestrogen levels accelerate bone loss. Fractures can compromise mobility and independence, while hip fractures can have particularly serious consequences for older adults.

According to the Osteoporosis Society of India (OSI), osteoporosis affects an estimated 22.9% of Indian adults, equivalent to around 33 crore people. Osteoporotic fractures also impose an estimated annual economic burden of ?14,000–20,000 crore in India. The figures underscore the challenge of identifying people at risk before a fracture occurs.Against this backdrop, the OSI, in association with Sun Pharma, has launched a Bone Health Score Card as part of its year-long Why Wait? Till It Breaks initiative. The tool is designed to help healthcare professionals assess osteoporosis risk and identify people who may need further investigation.Dr Sushrut Babhulkar, president of OSI, said the need for a screening tool arose partly because doctors across specialties—including orthopaedics, gynaecology, endocrinology, rheumatology and nephrology—may follow different guidelines when managing osteoporosis. This can result in inconsistencies in how patients are assessed, he said. The concern, Dr Babhulkar explained, extends beyond osteoporosis alone. "Osteomalacia, a condition involving defective bone mineralisation that is often associated with calcium or vitamin D deficiency, and sarcopenia, which involves the loss of muscle mass and strength, can coexist with osteoporosis. The combination can complicate treatment and recovery following a fracture," he said.He cited a World Health Organization (WHO) figure suggesting that 25–30% of patients who sustain an osteoporosis-related hip fracture die within a year, despite receiving treatment. The figure highlights the potentially serious consequences of such fractures, particularly among vulnerable older adults.

How does the Bone Health Score Card work?

The Bone Health Scorecard is a rotating cardboard wheel that assesses osteoporosis risk using eight parameters. According to Dr Babhulkar, these include age, body mass index (BMI), family history, co-existing medical conditions, smoking, systemic steroid use and certain cancer treatments, including therapies used for breast cancer. For each parameter, the user selects the applicable response and rotates the corresponding ring to align it with a red marker. The marker indicates the score for that factor. The scores across all eight parameters are then added to calculate the total."For instance, a smoker receives two points for the smoking parameter, while a non-smoker receives zero. The final score is used to place the person in a risk category. A total score of zero to three indicates lower risk, while a score above 12 indicates very high risk," Dr Babhulkar explained.A history of a fragility fracture after the age of 40 automatically places a person in the very-high-risk category, irrespective of the total score. A fragility fracture is one that occurs after a fall or impact that would not ordinarily fracture a healthy bone. The score card is intended for initial screening, not diagnosis.People identified as being at high or very high risk may require further evaluation, depending on a doctor's assessment. This could include a dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry (DXA or DEXA) scan or quantitative computed tomography (QCT), both of which can be used to assess bone density. Blood tests to measure calcium, vitamin D and parathyroid hormone levels may also be considered when clinically indicated.Dr Babhulkar said these investigations can be expensive and may be difficult to access, particularly in rural areas. The score card is intended to help identify people who may benefit from further testing, rather than requiring everyone to undergo scans.How will the tool reach doctors and the public?

How SC read the right to property and its limits

The Constitution of India is a document of compromises, which was drafted by a Constituent Assembly whose members had diverse — and sometimes — competing sets of interests. One of the starkest examples of the compromise nature of the document — when it was enacted — could be found in its property rights clauses. The Constituent Assembly was aware of the deeply unequal property structures that the country was inheriting from its colonial history, and the urgent need for land reform. This is reflected in various provisions of the Directive Principles of State Policy, which mandate the State to undertake policies that would lead to a more egalitarian distribution of resources among the country's people. At the same time, however, the Constituent Assembly was wary of radical change: They wanted incremental change that could be controlled from above. The Constitution, therefore, also contained a set of enforceable rights that would serve as guardrails within which the legislature could pursue its reformatory policies — but not beyond. These included a fundamental right to property, a requirement that land acquisition only be for a public purpose, and accompanied by compensation, and so on.

The initial years of the Constitution saw multiple amendments to the text, as Parliament saw its land reform laws often stymied by Supreme Court judgments that held that the property clauses had been violated. However, Parliament continued to keep the basic structure of the property clauses intact, even as it tried to exclude judicial review over its laws.This position changed with the advent of the 1970s. There were two reasons for this. The first was the rise to power of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, whose main plank was top-down economic populism, with little patience for institutions that stood in the way. The second was a change in the composition of the Supreme Court: The 1970s saw the appointment of judges who were either unwilling to confront Indira Gandhi, or were largely in agreement with her ideology. In this decade, therefore, the government-driven constitutional amendments grew broader and more sweeping, attempting to undo the property rights framework of the original Constitution; at the same time, the Court's interventions grew more limited, although they did not die out (this was the decade when the Court articulated the famous basic structure doctrine).

The high water-mark of this era came in a judgment called State of Karnataka vs Ranganatha Reddy. In this case, Justice Krishna Iyer held that when Article 39(b) of the Constitution (a Directive Principle) directed the State to ensure "that the ownership and control of the material resources of the community are so distributed as best to sub serve the common good", the term "material resources of the community" included all private property that served any material need. This holding was important because Article 31C of the Constitution stipulated that laws directed towards securing the purposes of Articles 39(b) and (c) of the Constitution were immune from scrutiny under Articles 14 (right to equality) and 19 (rights to freedom). In laypersons' terms, this holding granted sweeping immunity to nationalisation – including the nationalisation of private property.

The irony, of course, is that Justice Krishna Iyer's judgment was soon overtaken by events. Soon after, the Indian State began to move away from a command-and-control economy, a break that was formalised in 1991. Thus, Ranganatha Reddy stood as something of an anachronism: It vested broad powers in the State, but the State was no longer keen on using them.Earlier this month, a nine-judge bench of the Supreme Court resolved the anachronism by formally overruling Ranganatha Reddy in Property Owners Association vs State of Maharashtra. Writing for the majority, the Chief Justice of India (CJI) Dhananjaya Y Chandrachud held that some private property could indeed amount to "material resources of the community", but not all private property. CJI Chandrachud also laid down certain indicators to determine when "private property" would meet this test: These were the nature of the resource, its impact on the community, its scarcity, and the consequence of the resource being concentrated in the hands of private players. In an individual case, a court could apply this test to the facts at hand, and determine if Article 31A was attracted or not.



Justice Chandrachud framed his holding as being based on the premise that the Constitution did not encode any one economic ideology (such as that of socialism). This is no doubt correct. However, it is interesting to note that Justice Krishna Iyer's judgment went much beyond even what socialist thinkers advocate. The distinction between personal property (such as, say, your toothbrush) and private property that serves as the means of production (such as, say, a factory) was made as far back as The Communist Manifesto. It is therefore unclear what ideology Justice Iyer was invoking to hold that all property could be presumptively nationalised, but very evidently, this was an unsustainable position in law — whether or not it would be ever acted upon by the State.At the same time, reporting around the judgment has also tended to overstate its impact. As noted above, Justice Chandrachud was quite clear that certain kinds of private property would fall within the meaning of "material resources". This judgment is not, therefore, a ringing endorsement of a privatised political economy – far from it. What remains to be seen now is how future courts will understand and apply the indicators to determine, on a case by case basis, which kind of property can be properly called a "material resource of the community". These might be battles of the future.

Birthing targets must go beyond maternal survival



As United-States-based maternal health expert Neel Shah says, survival is just the floor of what people deserve during childbirth. We should be aiming for the ceiling — not only survival, but also good health and quality of life; dignified, respectful, and positive birthing experiences; and memories of fulfillment and joy at the arrival of a new family member.

One of India's greatest public health successes has been the dramatic fall in maternal and infant mortality throughout the 21st century. The Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) in India — maternal deaths per 100,000 live births — that was 384 in 2000 had fallen to 103 by 2020. There is much more access to modern health care. In 2019-2021, 89% of babies were born in hospitals and other health care institutions, compared to just 41% in 2005-2006. The quality of care has improved within institutions as well, saving even more lives.

But is it enough that more women and infants survive?

As United-States-based maternal health expert Neel Shah says, survival is just the floor of what people deserve during childbirth. We should be aiming for the ceiling — not only survival, but also good health and quality of life; dignified, respectful, and positive birthing experiences; and memories of fulfillment and joy at the arrival of a new family member.To get to that aspirational ceiling, we have to understand the three key challenges in India's maternal health landscape.First, we must address the problem of 'too little, too late,' that is, inadequate care, or delayed care. For example, not having access to skilled health care providers, medical facilities, ambulances, or drugs. Despite overall national progress, vast swathes of the country still suffer from too little, too late. We are still losing too many mothers and babies.

Second is the issue of 'too much, too soon', which refers to the problem of routine over-medicalisation; unnecessary use of harmful and non-evidence-based interventions; and the use of interventions that can be life-saving when used appropriately, but detrimental when overused. Pregnancy and childbirth are physiologic processes, not an illness. Too much, too soon leads to unnecessary morbidity for the mother and newborn. In India, this can be seen in extremely high rates of Caesarean-sections (C-sections), labour inductions, augmentations, and episiotomies. Public health research suggests ideal C-section rates are in the range of 10-19%. India's nationwide private sector C-section rate is 47%, and many states and districts cross 80%.Third, Disrespect & Abuse (D&A) of pregnant women and women in labour is rampant across India, with an estimated prevalence of around 71%. D&A is an inherent violation of human rights. It takes several forms, such as physical and verbal abuse, a lack of informed consent, a lack of privacy, and a lack of confidentiality. It is present in varying degrees based on the facility type, and is compounded by factors like caste and socio-economic status. Widespread D&A leaves women feeling disempowered. It also reduces willingness to seek institutional health care, which, in turn, drives up mortality.Neither poor quality of care, nor D&A, are limited to low-income settings. Usage of harmful, outdated practices happens across India, and even privileged women thus bear a lot of unnecessary morbidity. Moreover, women in elite urban hospitals also experience D&A, particularly through a lack of informed consent and a lack of bodily autonomy. While they may be consenting to procedures and interventions in a legal sense, this is often after being misled through fear-based consent processes in which the true benefits and risks are not conveyed.

The barriers women face in maternity care are complex. It is an issue that suffers from sitting at the intersection of India's challenges in both women's disempowerment and health care. Women suffer from public health shortcomings, just as men do, but face additional mistreatment. Moreover, women often have low bargaining power within their own households, which makes it difficult for them to demand high-quality or respectful care.We need to situate the maternal health conversation within the larger feminist debates on bodily autonomy and women's rights. With growing recognition of mistreatment, abuse, and neglect of women giving birth in facilities, what we need is a paradigm shift.We must stride towards a world in which women not only survive

ChatGPT assists in brownie sensory evaluation, study suggests AI can aid food development

New York: ChatGPT can be used in the sensory evaluation of foods, specifically brownies, according to a study, which offers insights that could streamline development of new products, and possibly enhance recipes.Researchers from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in the US looked at 15 different brownie recipes, ranging from standard ingredient lists to unusual combinations, including mealworm powder and fish oil.Study author Damir Torrico, assistant professor in the Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition, provided ChatGPT with recipe formulas, and asked the AI to describe sensory characteristics of each brownie, including taste, texture, and overall enjoyment.Torrico then categorised the themes of ChatGPT's responses to determine if they were positive, negative or neutral."Sometimes, relying on human testers can slow down the process, especially when multiple product prototypes need to be evaluated simultaneously. Sensory panels require time and careful coordination, and in some cases, certain ingredients may not be food-grade, making them unsuitable for tasting," said Torrico in the study published in the journal Foods.That is why large language models such as ChatGPT are being considered for sensory evaluation. It is possible to create models that can replicate certain human responses.Surprisingly, ChatGPT's responses were overwhelmingly positive, even for recipes that included unusual ingredients.

The rot starts at the top of the aviation ladder



There is a version of Murphy's law which says that "if there is a possibility of several things going wrong, the one that will cause the most damage will be the one to go wrong".The fiery end to Air India flight AI171 at Ahmedabad, Gujarat, on June 12, 2025, just after its departure for London Gatwick, is a rude wake-up call — one that has been sounded for several years. But the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA), the judiciary, the statutory body the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), the Airports Authority of India (AAI) and all airlines in India have been turning a blind eye to the need to ensuring stringent training and safety standards. Sound bites such as the one about India being the fastest growing aviation system have all come to nothing due to years of corruption and political manipulation in the system. A major failure in India is the complete lack of accountability. Other than pilots being blamed, no one else has been held accountable. The rot starts at the top of the aviation ladder.Downward slide

After every major crash, beginning with the Indian Airlines Airbus A320 crash (IC605) in Bangalore on February 14, 1990, followed by an Alliance Air Boeing 737 crash (CD7412) at Patna on July 17, 2000, an Air India Express crash (IX-812) in Mangaluru on May 22, 2010 and another Air India Express crash at Kozhikode (IX1344) on August 7, 2020, the aviation authorities have been lulled into complacency. The crash of the Air India Boeing 787 at Ahmedabad is another accident in the chain. Meanwhile, the same set of people continue to be at their desks even as safety and training have been on a downward slide over the years. The lack of accountability and the inaction have cost the lives of hundreds of passengers.Take the case of the Union Minister of Civil Aviation. After every crash, the first statement made is to defend the safety standards of airports in India even when there are blatant violations of International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) standards. It is no exaggeration to say that accident investigators are picked and chosen on the basis of who will toe the line and place the blame squarely on pilots. There have been violations in the Ahmedabad accident. We have had the DGCA issuing a statement that is in clear violation of ICAO standards — naming the pilots who were involved in the crash. No other country would mention the names of the crew even in the final report. We need professionals to head the DGCA and the AAI, and not bureaucrats and persons who seek publicity in these crucial organisations and positions. India has one of the weakest judicial systems as far as aviation safety is concerned. After the crash in Mangaluru, a public interest litigation was filed that listed irrefutable data and safety violations by the MoCA, the DGCA, the AAI and Air India. A Bench of the Supreme Court of India swept this aside by passing on the case file to the MoCA to check whether this was a valid case.

This was a move that hammered the last nail in the coffin of aviation safety. Apart from the last crash, at Kozhikode, there have been so many accidents and serious incidents, but things carry on without any accountability. The loss of over 300 lives in Ahmedabad (the passengers and also local residents) should shake the people in the system who are in slumber. Even the Pakistan Supreme Court comes down very hard on its aviation regulator and airlines.

Reading the visual evidenceThe video recordings and images of the Ahmedabad accident that are out on social media are the only sources of information available at this moment. The take-off captured on CCTV at Ahmedabad airport has led to more information. There is much speculation about the flaps of the aircraft not having been configured for take-off. All modern Boeing aircraft, which includes the Boeing 787, have take-off configuration warnings and no pilot would attempt a take-off if all conditions are not met. There is also much commentary floating around about this flight having taken off from an intersection. Data from a leading flight data provider clearly shows that the crew used the full length of the runway, from the beginning. The initial part of the CCTV footage from the airport clearly shows the growth of a fair amount of grass along the sides of the runway. The southwest monsoon has arrived, but monsoon preparation mandates the mowing of grass at airports to less than three inches before the rains arrive. This will aid in reducing insects and worms which would otherwise attract bird life. Ahmedabad has a history of bird menace in the airport area.The initial take-off acceleration of the Air India plane appears normal until lift off. Going by the statement of the sole passenger/survivor and also a video grab quoting a person during a television interview, a loud thud has been reported about 30 seconds after lift off. It is quite possible that birds flying close to the runway in search of worms and insects may have got sucked into the powerful aircraft engines and caused a compressor stall at the point of rotation. The lift off and initial climb appear shallow before the nose is raised high. But the climb rate is very shallow due to possible partial thrust loss as a result of bird ingestion in both engines. Thereafter, the nose is raised and the aircraft appears to descend slowly with a high nose angle. The aircraft appears to have stalled and the impact on the building with the tail section intact, points to a stall. The Digital Flight Data Recorder and Cockpit Voice Recorder will give us the clear picture.The second reason that may have caused the partial thrust loss could be Foreign Object Damage such as what happened to the Air France Concorde flight (AF4590) on July 25, 2000 while on a flight from Charles De Gaulle airport in Paris to New York. The crash was caused by a metallic strip that had fallen from a flight that had taken off minutes earlier. It was lying on the runway and punctured the wheel of the Air France plane. Fragments from the exploding tyre hit the fuel tank, causing a leak and fire. All lives were lost with some fatalities on the ground. It would be worthwhile checking whether something similar happened to the Air India flight.

The most intriguing part of the video is of the aircraft's landing gear extended throughout the climb till the final moments. If there had been bird ingestions in both engines, the loud noise may have been due to a compressor stall, which could have created what is called the startle effect.The DGCA's statement which mentions the names of the pilots and their experience levels, also says that the captain was line training captain. Was this a training flight? And was the copilot at the controls? In such a situation, the change of controls and the partial loss of thrust could have been overwhelming and may have been a reason for the crew to miss landing gear retraction. If the gears had been raised, the drag would have not been present and the aircraft would have had a better climb gradient to clear the obstacles on the ground.Focus areas in the investigationWith global aviation bodies such as the National Transportation Safety Board from the United States, and the Air Accidents Investigation Branch from the United Kingdom now a part of the crash investigation, the officials should also look at obstacles in the take-off funnel. The building which the aircraft crashed into was multistoried (one plus five floors, according to a report). Having a seventy-foot structure so close to the take-off path should be investigated. This should also be a lesson for authorities in India not to issue no objection certifications for construction activity by caving in to political pressure.

'Celebrating Crop Diversity': Pune to host India's debut in global botanical art exhibition project



India will be joining over 30 countries, including the US, the UK, Canada, Brazil, Australia, Germany, South Africa, Cuba, and Indonesia, in simultaneously hosting a botanical artworks' exhibition titled 'Celebrating Crop Diversity'.The exhibition highlights the biodiversity in crops that have been closely associated with the human species over thousands of years.In India, the exhibition will be held in Pune's Rupa Rahul Bajaj Centre for Environment and Art (RRBCEA) in partnership with the Indian Botanical Art Society, running from May 17 to May 24 to coincide with Worldwide Day of Botanical Art on May 18.The exhibition in Pune will showcase 32 works by 18 artists from India and Sri Lanka."The exhibition will be officially held on May 18, with each country deciding how many more days they want to extend it and what other programmes they would like to host.

At RRBCEA, we are hosting the exhibition from May 17 to 24. Apart from the exhibition, there will be workshops, demonstrations, and talks," says Dr Dhanashree Paranjpe, head of RRBCEA.Highlighting the importance of botanical art, Prerna Gupta, an artist from Kanpur, says, "If I am a watercolour artist doing a painting of an apple, I would focus on the beauty of the apple or what emotions it inspires in me. But, if I am a botanical artist, I would adhere to a more scientific accuracy, focusing on shape, colour, form, and botanical details. If I am showing a dissection of the apple, I am going to show exactly how many seeds it has, if there are any distinguishing features, and which variety of apple it is."

Gupta, who began to create botanical art during Covid, is exhibiting works showing the wild Himalayan pomegranate and the ivy gourd, which is known as 'tendu' in Marathi."Commercial pomegranate varieties often get a bacterial blight, so scientists decided to solve it by crossing them with the wild Himalayan pomegranate. This resulted in a new, more bacteria-resistant variety. Through my artwork, I want to show how important it is to conserve wild varieties because they are gene banks. At the moment, we may not know their importance as there are a lot of things still waiting to be discovered," explains Gupta.Her work on the ivy gourd, which is widely eaten across India but also grows wild and is consumed by tribal communities, is an attempt to highlight wild plants that can provide us with nutritional support, and it is important to conserve them.Sri Lankan artist Maria Abeyesekere says her botanical art is "a reflection of my deep connection with nature".She captures the essence of local plant species through her plein air botanical artworks. Her passion for botanical art not only showcases the beauty of her surroundings but also serves as a celebration of the rich flora that surrounds her every day.This is the second Botanical Art Worldwide Project and the works fall under categories, such as Heritage Crops, featuring crops that are not used in modern, large-scale monoculture agriculture; Crop Wild Relatives, about plants that can be hybridised with cultivated crops to impart a new characteristic to the cultivated crop, or that are foraged wild plants; and ancient crops that have been cultivated for hundreds or thousands of years in the same form."The exhibition will help create awareness around crop diversity that India has to offer, but in an artistic way. The artists, being from all over India, have tried to find unique or different crops in their region that they can represent through their art. So, in Pune, even if we don't see these varieties, we will be able to see them through this botanical art exhibition. We will be aware that such beautiful varieties of crops exist in India and wonder why we don't explore or know about them," says Paranjpe.

India vs Japan: Growth in numbers, gaps in development



The International Monetary Fund (IMF) in its April World Economic Outlook report projected India, which is currently the fifth-largest economy, will become the world's fourth-largest economy in 2025, with an estimated GDP of USD 4.19 trillion. This would place India just ahead of Japan, whose GDP is expected to be USD 4.186 trillion. After achieving this milestone, India will be behind only the United States, China, and Germany.NITI Aayog Member Arvind Virmani commented that while this is still a forecast, he is confident that India will officially achieve this milestone by the end of 2025, once the full-year GDP data is available. This economic rise may inspire policymakers, economists, and citizens' confidence. Yet, as with all proud narratives, it demands a deeper, more critical examination. Can a country truly be called "developed" or even "genuinely growing" just because it has climbed the GDP ranks? The answer requires a thorough examination of the realities beyond GDP, realities defined by health, education, equity, employment, and overall human well-being.

Despite the remarkable GDP figures, India's development story remains riddled with contradictions. One of the most pressing issues is poverty. As per the Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2024, 234 million Indians continue to live in acute poverty, the highest absolute number in the world. Food insecurity is also a chronic problem, with India ranked 111th out of 125 countries in the Global Hunger Index. The label of a booming economy loses meaning when millions still go to bed hungry.Healthcare remains another weak link in India's development chain. Public expenditure on health is less than 2 per cent of the GDP, resulting in overburdened hospitals, a shortage of medical staff, and high out-of-pocket expenses for patients. The healthcare infrastructure remains alarmingly inadequate for a population of over 1.4 billion.

At the same time, access to quality education remains uneven across rural and urban areas, as well as along gender lines and socio-economic classes. The literacy rate, at around 77 per cent, lags behind many nations with far smaller GDPs.Inequality, both economic and social, has also intensified. India ranks 108th in the Global Gender Inequality Index and 126th in the World Happiness Index. The concentration of wealth continues to rise, with a significant portion of national resources and opportunities confined to a small elite.The labour market reflects this skewed growth. Despite an increase in GDP, employment generation remains weak. Youth unemployment stands at around 23 per cent, and a significant portion of the workforce remains engaged in informal, low-productivity jobs, particularly in agriculture and small-scale industries. This phenomenon, often referred to as "jobless growth," highlights that rising output is not being matched by increasing incomes or quality employment.

In contrast, Japan, despite being overtaken in GDP, offers a more balanced and mature development profile. Japan's GDP stands at around $4.1 trillion, but its GDP per capita is nearly USD 34,000, compared to India's approximately USD 2,400 in 2025. Japan ranks 23rd in the Human Development Index, compared to India's far lower rank of 130, and has near-perfect literacy and comprehensive public health systems. While India struggles to meet basic health and education needs, Japan spends around 11 per cent of its GDP on health and has virtually eliminated extreme poverty.India is projected to become the world's fourth-largest economy, surpassing Japan, yet vast gaps in health, education, equity, and employment persist. GDP growth alone doesn't ensure development, and India must address its human development challenges to achieve inclusive prosperity

Japan's model is a contrasting example with important lessons: a slower-growing but inclusive and equitable economy that prioritises the well-being of its citizens. The comparison reinforces the idea that economic size does not automatically mean development. Development is multidimensional, and the GDP is only one of those dimensions. Although there are many differences between India and Japan, this comparison can help clarify the layman's misunderstanding that growth means development.The IMF has projected India's growth rate for 2025 to be 6.2-6.5 per cent, which is substantial but still below the 8 per cent threshold that economists believe is necessary to replicate the high-growth phases once seen in China and Japan. Moreover, India's capital formation rate, an indicator of investment activity, is only 24 per cent, while the ideal threshold for sustained development is around 32 per cent.Without strong capital formation, growth may stagnate and become unsustainable in the long run.

Experts have pointed out another significant fact: India's per capita GDP today is comparable to Japan's in the 1950s. Assuming Japan's economy stagnates, it would still take India approximately 22 years to reach Japan's current level of per capita income. Furthermore, India currently falls behind countries such as Kenya, Morocco, Libya, Mauritius and South Africa in per capita GDP, underlining how far the average Indian is from benefiting equally from national economic growth.

While challenges exist, one must also acknowledge the country's notable achievements. One of India's key strengths lies in its domestic consumption, which accounts for nearly 70 per cent of its GDP. This reflects the growing aspirations and spending capacity of a rising middle class that plays a crucial role in stabilising and expanding the economy.India has also made commendable mark in global trade. According to World Trade Organization (WTO) data, India ranked 7th in global merchandise imports and 14th in leading merchandise exports in 2024. The country is also witnessing a boom in digital infrastructure, fintech, and e-commerce sectors, which have the potential to generate employment opportunities and boost productivity.Additionally, India continues to lead the world in remittance inflows, receiving over $100 billion for the third consecutive year, as per the World Bank. These remittances — accounting for over 14 per cent of global flows, serve as a financial push for millions of Indian households, contributing to rural consumption and investment.Yet, these positives cannot distract from the broader truth: India's development remains uneven and incomplete. Rising GDP figures are necessary but not sufficient. A truly "growing" economy must also grow in inclusiveness, equity, and human well-being. It must reduce poverty, bridge inequality, empower women, and provide quality education and healthcare for all. A growing economy must ensure job-rich growth and guarantee dignity and opportunity for every citizen.As India aspires to move to the fourth-largest economy spot, it must also aspire to become a nation where prosperity is measured not just by numbers but by the lives those numbers touch. GDP can open doors, but it is the human development indices that reveal whether people are walking through them.

Climate change worsening heat stress and disease risks in India: Lancet report

Climate change is increasingly affecting health in India, from exposure to dangerous heat and heat-related illnesses to rising risks of infectious diseases and deaths linked to air pollution. Half of the heatwave days experienced by people in India between 2016 and 2025 were directly attributable to climate change, while heat exposure caused an estimated 193 billion potential labour hours to be lost annually.The 2026 Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change report warns that these impacts extend beyond extreme weather, affecting sleep, productivity and livelihoods, and calls for climate change to be recognised as a global health emergency. The report finds that changing environmental conditions are increasing the suitability for dengue, malaria and waterborne infections, while air pollution continues to cause substantial premature mortality. Its findings highlight the growing links between climate change, public health and India's economic well-being.Global health risks are escalating

The 10th annual Lancet Countdown report, led by University College London (UCL) in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), draws on the work of 146 researchers from more than 100 institutions across over 30 countries. It tracks 54 indicators of climate change's impact on health.Globally, heat was linked to an estimated 540,800 deaths annually between 2016 and 2023, with 68% attributed to climate change. In 2023 alone, heat was associated with an estimated 710,000 deaths worldwide. Heat-related reductions in labour capacity cost the global economy an estimated US$1.07 trillion in potential income in 2025. While clean energy investment and health-system preparedness have improved, the report warns that progress remains insufficient."A decade after the Paris Agreement, our findings are unambiguous: the health harms of climate change are growing faster than the world's response to them, and in many cases even accelerating," Professor Marina Romanello, executive director of the Lancet Countdown at UCL, said. The India findings and takeaways are significant.

Heat threatens health, sleep and livelihoodsPeople in India experienced an average of 10.6 heatwave days annually during 2016–2025, of which 5.3 days, or 50%, were directly attributable to climate change.The effects extend beyond heatwaves. People were exposed to more than 2,600 hours annually, on average, when heat posed a moderate or higher risk of heat stress during moderate outdoor activity, such as brisk walking. This was over 200 hours more than the annual average in the 1990s. High night-time temperatures also disrupted sleep: people lost an estimated 64 hours annually during 2021–2025, around three hours more per year than during 1986–2005.According to Dr Puneet Mishra, the heatwave led to a surge in heatstroke, dehydration, dizziness, and cardiovascular complications among vulnerable populations. "Hospitals reported a severe increase in emergency visits for heat-related illnesses within a few weeks," he said.The report does not provide a standalone estimate of total heat-related deaths in India. However, the monetised value of heat-related mortality among people aged over 65 averaged US$33.8 billion annually during 2021–2025, a 205% increase compared with 2000–2004. Heat exposure caused an average annual loss of 193 billion potential labour hours in India during 2016–2025, 75% higher than the annual average in the 1990s.Dengue and malaria transmission risks are changingThe transmission potential of dengue spread by Aedes albopictus mosquitoes increased by 84% between 1951–1960 and 2016–2025, rising from below to above a transmission threshold of one. Transmission potential for Aedes aegypti remained high, averaging 2.4 during 2016–2025.The number of months environmentally suitable for malaria transmission increased by approximately 19% for Plasmodium falciparum and 18% for P. vivax compared with 1981–1990, reaching an average of around four months annually. The findings underline the need for climate-informed disease surveillance and preparedness.The length of India's coastline with environmental conditions suitable for Vibrio bacteria transmission increased by 27% compared with 1982–1991, reaching approximately 2,740 km in 2025. Estimated vibriosis infection cases nearly doubled between the two periods, reaching an annual average of approximately 97,500 during 2016–2025. Coastal sea surface temperatures around India were 0.4°C higher during 2023–2025 than the 1981–2010 average.Wildfire smoke and air pollution cause substantial harmWildfire smoke was associated

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