



Congress Demands Resignation of PM and Ouster of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar Amid Ongoing ECI Controversy

Kharge Calls for Prime Minister’s Resignation, Citing Alleged Political Pressure on Election Commission Leadership

Agency
New Delhi, Sep 29

Equating the deletion of names from electoral rolls under the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) drive to “vote-demonetisation,” Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Tuesday called for removal of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar over irregularities and issued a five-point list of demands to ensure transparency in the election process. Kharge also demanded that Prime Minister Narendra Modi must resign on moral grounds for “pressuring” the CEC.

Presiding over the Congress Working Committee meeting in the national Capital on Tuesday, Kharge also demanded that voters whose names have been removed must be fully informed and given

an opportunity to appeal. Political parties, he added, must be provided with the electoral rolls and relevant data in a simple format in a timely manner. The Congress’s sharp attacks on the Gyanesh Kumar-led ECI comes against the backdrop of the SIR process that has led to the deletion of nearly 130 million people. The Opposition has escalated the offensive after a report in the Indian Express claimed that election commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi formally objected at least 14 times over the past 10 months to decisions and orders of the ECI, including on additions, deletion and restoration of voters and changes to the voter registration process.

Kharge also sought transparency in the critical data and decisions related to the election process so that no



party felt that information was being withheld. In his opening speech, Kharge launched a vitriolic attack against both Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, calling him the “puppet” of

the ruling dispensation.

“History bears witness that ten years ago, this very Prime Minister devastated India’s economy with the decision of “demonetisation.” And now, ten years later, he is destroying our robust democracy through

a conspiracy of “vote-demonetisation” (disenfranchisement),” Kharge said.

“The poor bear the brunt of all his flawed policies. During demonetisation, the poor stood in queues; with this move to disenfranchise voters, the poor

are being pushed out of the queue altogether. I know that the poor possess only one source of power: their vote. We will not let that be snatched away under any circumstances,” the Congress president said. Kharge said the vote was the greatest weapon for the poor, Dalits, the deprived, and the exploited sections of society. That’s why “Modi ji wants to snatch away this right, but we will not allow it to happen.”

With the CEC leading the exercise to disenfranchise the poor, Kharge said “the protector has turned into the predator”. “The very entity empowered by the Constitution—tasked with being the guardian of the people’s vote—has become a plunderer of votes. How can the nation place its trust in a Chief Election Commissioner whom even his own colleagues do not

trust?” he said.

The CWC meeting comes ahead of the Opposition’s big meeting on Gyanesh Kumar on Wednesday that will decide the next course of political action against the CEC. Recalling former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi’s decision to reduce the voting age from 21 to 18, Kharge said, “In contrast, we have Prime Minister Modi, who is so resentful of Gen Z that he has hatched a conspiracy to disenfranchise the youth. He quietly altered the rules regarding ‘Form 6’. This is entirely illegal.”

“They failed to provide jobs, and now they seek to deny the right to vote as well. They are gripped by the fear that the youth will ask questions and eventually oust them from power. However, this right was not granted as an act of charity; millions have made

sacrifices for it. No matter how many conspiracies people like Modi and Shah may hatch, the Congress will not let them succeed. Democracy and the right to vote are our legacy—nurtured by our blood and sweat. We will not allow any dictator to destroy it,” Kharge added.

The Congress president also lauded Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi for bringing the issue of “vote chori” (vote theft) to the forefront, asserting that the party’s critiques were aimed at restoring institutional credibility. “Our questions are not intended to weaken these institutions; rather, we want the Election Commission to be so strong and credible that both the ruling party and the opposition place equal trust in its decisions,” he added.

Two Ministry of Home Affairs Officials Arrested for Demanding Bribes to Approve FCRA Registrations

Agency
New Delhi, Sep 29

The Delhi police special cell arrested two government officials, including one posted in the home ministry’s Foreigners Division, for allegedly seeking illegal gratification from an association in return for facilitating its pending registration under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), a government statement said on Tuesday. Police are probing their role in clearing similar FCRA registrations in the past.

The two were arrested on Monday after a tip-off by the Union ministry of home affairs (MHA) about the two men who were allegedly taking money to get the FCRA registration cleared.

“The officials, one working as a senior accountant and the other as an accountant, had allegedly approached an association and sought illegal gratification to facilitate its pending FCRA registration. While one of the officials is presently posted in the MHA’s Foreigners Division, the other is currently posted in a Pay and Accounts Office and had previously served in the Foreigners Division,” the spokesperson said. The FCRA is the law that governs how Indian individuals, associations, NGOs, trusts and companies may receive and use money, securities or articles sent to them from a source outside India. It is administered by the MHA. It identifies

who may accept foreign contributions, and under what conditions. It specifies how that money must be received, accounted for, and reported.

“Preliminary questioning indicates that the two officials were in contact with certain associations to facilitate their registration and renewal in exchange for illegal gratification,” the spokesperson added.

The MHA issued a statement reiterating that all FCRA-related services are delivered online through the FCRA portal and that no intermediary, agent or individual is authorised to facilitate any such service. India enacted the first FCRA in 1976 to regulate the acceptance and utilisation of foreign contributions. As international engagement expanded and cross-border financial flows became more complex, Parliament enacted the FCRA, 2010, replacing the earlier legislation with a modern regulatory framework. Since then, the framework has been strengthened through amendments in 2016, 2018 and 2020. The home ministry introduced the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026 and the notified FCRA (Amendment) Rules, 2026 to further improve transparency, governance and regulatory clarity.

Earlier this month, Lok Sabha speaker Om Birla constituted a 31-member joint committee of Parliament (JPC) to review the bill, after the proposal to send the con-

troversial legislation to a parliamentary panel was accepted in the lower House. On August 12, the Lok Sabha referred the FCRA amendment bill to a JPC for an extensive review after multiple stakeholders, including church bodies, objected to the legislation’s provisions that allowed a Centre-appointed authority to take over assets created through foreign donations if the organisation failed to retain its FCRA license. First introduced in the budget session but held back at the time, the bill triggered major controversy with the Opposition, several church delegations and three CMs of Christian-majority states raising concerns. The amendments establish a designated authority for “a comprehensive framework for vesting, supervision, management and disposal of foreign contribution and assets, including provisional and permanent vesting.” A provision stated that the government can appoint a “designated authority” to take over, manage, or sell assets created from foreign funds by a non-governmental organisation (NGO) whose licence under FCRA was cancelled, suspended, or simply not renewed.

The bill plans to remove section 15 of the current act, which limits the authority’s scope to manage the organisation’s activities, utilise foreign contributions, or dispose of assets created from them if adequate funds are unavailable for running such an activity.

BJP National President Emphasizes Youth Empowerment and Talent Integration in Bengal Under State Leadership

Agency
Kolkata, Sep 29

BJP national president Nitin Nabin concluded his two-day trip to Bengal by attending an interactive session with youths, particularly students from different sectors, on Monday. Nabin, who answered a few questions from around 500 students, requested chief minister Suwendu Adhikari to meet the students for another interaction over tea. “One day, the chief minister will speak with you over a cup of tea,” said Nabin.

Suwendu, who was present at the session, said he would soon hold a three-hour Q&A session with the students and youths over a cup of tea. “I will have a meeting with all of you one day over tea. I will keep three hours for the meeting, during which you can ask as many questions as you want,” said the chief minister. “The government is working for you. In education, employment, sports and skill development, among other areas, the state government will fulfil the guarantees given by Modiji not 100



per cent, but 200 per cent,” added Suwendu. The programme, named Yuba Bharat Sanglap, was organised by the party’s youth wing at a club in the city. Students and youths from several sectors, including law, management and research, were invited to interact with the BJP national president. The BJP has placed a special focus on reaching out to youths across the country, particularly after the Jantar Mantar movement organised by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP).

The CJP has called for a second round of movement across the country, starting from October 2 in Mumbai, demanding the resignation of chief election commissioner

Gyanesh Kumar over the recent Indian Express expose. Nabin said Bengal is a state where sports, arts, literature and culture are all part of its people’s DNA. He suggested that the chief minister involve students in different activities such as culture, sports and arts by introducing an optional subject in the school syllabus under the new education policy. He emphasised sending children back to the playground, pointing out their increasing dependence on mobile screens. including Nasha Mukti Yuba Abhiyan. Our department organised the Raksha Bandhan festival this year, involving a large number of youths and students. We have been distributing

hundreds of footballs and other sports materials across the districts to promote outdoor sports,” said Indranil Khan, the state’s sports and youth affairs minister.

During his two-day visit, Nabin held extensive meetings with Bengal BJP leaders, ministers and MLAs. Suwendu and state BJP president Samik Bhattacharya were present at the sessions. “The meeting primarily discussed the welfare schemes announced through the manifesto and their achievements. He clearly stated how ministers should perform their respective roles and that the party should not interfere in government activities,” said Bhattacharya.

Before attending the youth meet, Nabin had taken part in a programme in North 24-Parganas’s Panihati, where he interacted with anganwadi workers. He also took a holy dip in the Ganga Sagar in South 24 Parganas and offered puja at the Kapil Muni temple there, along with the party’s Bengal in-charge Sunil Bansal and Bhattacharya.

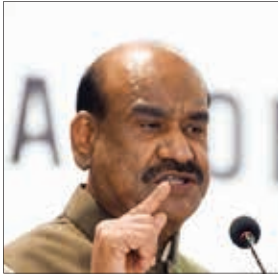
Supreme Court Sets Deadline for TMC Symbol Dispute and Rebel Verdict

Agency
Kolkata, Sep 29

The Supreme Court has granted the Election Commission a four-month timeframe to resolve the ongoing dispute concerning the Trinamool Congress party’s official name and election symbol. However, the bench declined to impose a formal legal deadline on the Bengal Speaker regarding a separate plea filed by the Mamata Banerjee faction seeking the disqualification of ten rebel MLAs.

During the proceedings, the bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant, Justice Joyimalya Bagchi, and Justice V. Mohana referenced a previous apex court ruling which stipulated that Speakers should ideally decide defector disqualification matters within three months.

Noting that the petition was initially filed on July 8, the court observed that this three-month period concludes on October 8. Justice Bagchi remarked



that the judiciary itself often struggles to meet statutory timelines, noting that setting a rigid deadline for the Speaker might overlook practical judicial delays. Consequently, the bench expressed confidence that the Speaker remains fully aware of established judicial precedents and will strive to deliver an appropriate decision promptly.

Regarding the party identity dispute, the Supreme Court directed both contesting factions to submit their formal affidavits and counter-affidavits within four weeks, instructing the poll panel to finalize its decision within four months. Appearing for the commission, senior advocate D. Seshadri Naidu argued that

the four-month window was excessively tight given the potential volume of lakhs of filings from party members.

In response, the bench suggested that the panel could leverage artificial intelligence tools to efficiently process large quantities of documentation. Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, representing Mamata faction MLA Sobhandeb Chattopadhyay, criticized procedural delays, arguing that stalling tactics have become systemic.

Sibal pointed out that interim poll panel orders recently froze the original flowers-and-grass symbol and temporarily assigned alternative identities to competing factions ahead of upcoming by-elections. The Mamata faction has formally contested these interim rulings in the apex court to reclaim their original party name and symbol, while legal representatives continue to press for swift action on the disqualification petitions targeting key rebel legislators.

21 Trekkers and Porters Rescued in Uttarkashi Himalayas

Agency
Uttarkashi, Sep 29

A total of 21 trekkers and porters were safely evacuated on Tuesday from the Kalindi Pass, Jogin-I Peak and Satopanth Peak base areas amid snowfall and adverse weather in the higher reaches of Uttarakhand’s Uttarkashi district, according to the district administration. Eight trekkers and porters from the Kalindi Pass area were airlifted to the Harsil helipad, while another eight trekkers and porters were airlifted from the Jogin-I Peak area. A helicopter safely brought five other trekkers and porters to Harsil from the Satopanth Peak base camp. While rescue operations at Kalindi Pass and Jogin-I Peak have completed, operations are still underway at the Satopanth Peak base camp.

All rescued individuals underwent a health check in Harsil. Three Army porters were also rescued from the Vasuki Tal area and brought to Harsil by helicopter. On Monday, officials said choppers evacuated a total of 40

stranded trekkers-29 from the Auden’s Col Pass base camp and 11 from the Kalindi Pass base camp—to safer locations. Uttarkashi district magistrate Prashant Arya said a total of 136 people including mountaineers, trekkers and support staff were present in high-altitude areas in the district.

“Out of these, 89 were part of mountaineering expeditions, and the remaining were high-altitude trekkers,” he said. “On Monday, 40 members of a high-altitude adventure expedition in the Kalindi Pass Base and Audin Col Base areas were safely rescued. A total of 21 people were safely rescued on Tuesday,” he said.

“The administration is closely monitoring the rescue operation through the Smart Control Room and ensuring continuous coordination among all teams involved. Our priority is to safely evacuate every trekker and porter from the affected high-altitude areas. All necessary arrangements have been made at Harsil and other transit points,” Arya said.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath Warns Against Critics of Sanatan Heritage, Urges Public Unity

Agency
Gorakhpur, Sep 29

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday invoked the construction of the Ram temple in Ayodhya and accused “Ramdrohi” of trying to create confusion over the “glory of Sanatan Dharma”.

Addressing a programme organised at the Gorakhnath temple to mark the 57th death anniversary of Mahant Digvijay Nath, Adityanath also stressed the need for unity among followers of different sects and traditions of Sanatan Dharma.

Recalling Digvijay Nath’s role in the Ram Janmabhoomi movement, Adityanath noted, “He had said India’s Independence did not mean only political independence. It means complete independence, including cultural independence. Then if the work of the re-consecration of Somnath temple is taking place, this work should also take place in Ayodhya.”



“Ram Lalla’s manifestation in Ayodhya in 1949 involved a few people. Mahant Digvijay Nath Maharaj was there, along with Baba Abhiram Das and Mahant Ramchandra Das Paramhans. The strategy was formulated at the Devi Patan, Maa Pateshwari Dham in Balrampur,” Adityanath said.

The chief minister said a strategy was developed between Mahant Digvijay Nath, Balrampur’s Raja Pateshwari Prasad Singh and then Gonda district magistrate K K Nayar, which eventually led to the installation of Ram Lalla. .

“And with the manifestation of Ram Lalla, today,

after 500 years, the construction of the grand temple of Lord Ram in Ayodhya has taken place. What a grand form it has taken! Ayodhya once again makes every follower of Sanatan Dharma feel proud,” he said.

“Ramdrohi” will not tolerate the glory of Lord Ram and Sanatan Dharma shining in Ayodhya, he said. ““Ramdrohi” will spread misinformation and create confusion,” Adityanath said.

“Remember, when Bajrangbali went to fetch Sanjeevani, Kalanemi tried to confuse him, but Hanuman ji recognised him. All Ram devotees must also develop that strength so there is no confusion about the unity and pride of Sanatan Dharma. There should be no doubt of any kind,” he said, drawing an anecdote from the Ramayana.

The chief minister also called for unity among 140 crore Indians, saying if people came together, no world power can stop the country’s progress.

BJP Youth Wing Parades Humayun Kabir Effigy With Shoe Garland in Durgapur



Our Correspondent
Durgapur

BJP Yuva Morcha workers staged a dramatic protest in Durgapur on Tuesday against Aam Janata Unnayan Party (AJUP) chief and MLA Humayun Kabir over his controversial remarks concerning West Bengal Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari. The protesters carried an effigy of Kabir on a cot around the City Centre bus stand, waved black flags and

placed a garland of shoes around the effigy before symbolically “burying” it near the bus stand. The demonstration followed Kabir’s recent remarks in which he said he would pray for Adhikari’s early death, comments that triggered a political controversy and condemnation. An FIR was also lodged against Kabir at Berhampore Police Station. BJP Yuva Morcha workers said political disagreements and sharp exchanges were part of democratic politics, but argued that

wishing for a political opponent’s death crossed an unacceptable line. They demanded that Kabir publicly apologise for his remarks. “Political differences will exist and there will be debates and arguments.

But wishing for the death of the Chief Minister cannot be accepted,” BJP Yuva Morcha general secretary Shubham Singh said during the protest. Singh demanded action against Kabir and warned that the organisation would launch a larger agitation if he did not publicly apologise. Kabir, however, subsequently changed his position amid the backlash. He said he would instead pray for Adhikari’s long life and even expressed a wish to see him become Prime Minister in the future.

Kabir also sought to explain his earlier remarks in the context of his allegations against the conduct of the police. The controversy comes days ahead of the October 6 Rejinagar Assembly bypoll, adding another flash-point to an already heated political campaign in West Bengal.

Rural Workers’ Union Submits Charter of Demands to Jamuria BDO

Our Correspondent
Jamuria

The Jamuria Block Committee of the Sara Bharat Khet Mazdoor and Gramin Shramajibi Union submitted a memorandum to the Block Development Officer (BDO), raising a series of demands concerning rural employment, welfare benefits, civic infrastructure and the functioning of gram panchayats. In its memorandum, the union alleged that functioning at several gram panchayat offices had been affected since the Assembly elections, causing difficulties for residents seeking public services. It demanded regular functioning of panchayat offices and impartial delivery of services in accordance with law. The organisation also sought transparent distribution of benefits under government food and welfare programmes and effective implementation of the Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin), or VB-G RAM G, for rural workers. The VB-G RAM G frame-



work came into force nationwide on July 1, 2026, replacing MGNREGA and increasing the statutory employment guarantee from 100 to 125 days for eligible rural households. The

union further demanded restoration of the names of genuine voters who, it claimed, had been excluded from electoral rolls during the SIR process. Among its other demands were inclusion of eligible poor women under West Bengal’s Annapurna Yojana and an increase in monthly pensions for elderly people, widows and persons with disabilities to ₹5,000. The Annapurna scheme currently provides eligible women with monthly financial assistance of ₹3,000, subject to prescribed conditions.

The memorandum also highlighted the condition of several dilapidated roads across Jamuria and sought their immediate repair. The union called for administrative action against alleged encroachments on government land, public roads, market areas and community centres.

Through the memorandum, the organisation urged the block administration to intervene and take time-bound steps on issues affecting rural workers and economically vulnerable residents of Jamuria.

Skeleton Found in Railway Quarters Years After Employee Went Missing in Chittaranjan

Our Correspondent
Chittaranjan

The discovery of a human skeleton inside a long-closed railway quarter in Chittaranjan has triggered a police investigation, with authorities examining whether the remains belong to a 59-year-old railway employee who had been missing for several years. The skeletal remains were recovered on Monday from Railway Quarter 11/B on Road No. 11 in Chittaranjan railway township. The missing railway employee has been identified as Prakash Chandra Raut Roy, who reportedly lived alone in the quarter and had been untraceable since 2021. According to police and family sources, relatives searched for Roy for a prolonged period, including contacting relatives and issuing appeals through the media, but failed to trace him. A formal missing-person diary was subsequently lodged with Chittaranjan Police Station in 2023. The family had recently begun the process of handing the long-unused railway accommodation back to the

authorities. Relatives reportedly opened the locked quarter on April 26 this year and had since visited the premises on different occasions. The case took a startling turn on Monday when Roy’s nephew, Supratim Raut Roy, went to the quarter to remove a motorcycle and noticed what appeared to be human bones inside a room. Police were immediately informed. The skeletal remains were reportedly found in a section of the house that had earlier been used for worship. Chittaranjan Police Station Inspector-in-Charge Sheikh Ismail Ali, ACP (Kulti) Javed Hossain of the Asansol-Durgapur Police Commissionerate and Salanpur BDO Debanjan Biswas reached the spot following the discovery. A forensic team was also called in to examine the scene and collect evidence. Police are yet to formally establish that the remains are those of the missing railway employee. Forensic examination and other identification procedures are expected to be crucial in establishing the identity and approximate circumstances of death.

The discovery has also raised questions over how the skeletal remains went unnoticed despite family members reportedly visiting the quarter during the past several months. Investigators are expected to examine the sequence of events surrounding the opening and subsequent use of the premises. Local residents described Roy, an employee of Chittaranjan Locomotive Works, as a socially conscious person who had helped underprivileged children with education and contributed to community activities. Some residents also claimed he had appeared to be under considerable mental stress in the years before his disappearance. Those accounts have not been independently verified. Police are investigating all possibilities surrounding the death. At this stage, authorities have not concluded whether it resulted from natural causes, suicide, an accident or any other circumstances. The identity of the deceased and the cause and manner of death will depend on the forensic and police investigation.

When Mamata’s “Sabuj Sathi” reaches Class VIII, Suwendu transforms it into a “Sarathi”



Kolkata: Starting from the next academic year, students will receive free bicycles upon reaching Class VIII, rather than Class IX. Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari announced this on Tuesday while launching the ‘Sarathi’ scheme in Howrah’s Batra area. He stated that any industrial group or organization wishing to manufacture bicycles under this scheme would be provided with land free of cost. The ‘Sabuj Sathi’ scheme was originally launched in 2015 by the then Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee; initially, bicycles were provided only to female students, though the initiative was later extended to male students as well. No separate application is required to avail of the bicycles. Previously, students in government and government-aided schools received this benefit upon

entering Class IX. Now, the scheme has been renamed ‘Sarathi,’ and the Chief Minister launched it by unveiling a new logo. He noted that students used to receive bicycles even before the Trinamool era, though the scope of the initiative was perhaps not as extensive.

On Tuesday, the Chief Minister visited Madhusudan Pal Chowdhury School in the Batra area. While distributing bicycles under the ‘Sarathi’ scheme at this government-aided school, he declared, “From now on, bicycles will be provided starting from Class VIII.” Criticizing the previous government’s approach to bicycle distribution, he said, “Earlier, bicycle parts used to come from Jalandhar, Punjab. Contracts for assembling the bicycles here were awarded to a relative and an acquaintance

of the former Chief Minister. Those practices have now been stopped.” He announced that the government would provide free land to anyone wishing to set up a factory in the state for the ‘Sarathi’ scheme. Additionally, the Chief Minister offered some advice to the students, urging them to limit their mobile phone usage until they complete Class XII. He added, “Students will be provided with smart tablets, various schools will be developed into smart schools, and the NCC (National Cadet Corps) will be introduced in schools.” Following the inauguration and his address, the Chief Minister shared a mid-day meal with the students. The meal consisted of rice, dal, a curry made with soybeans, potatoes, and lentil dumplings, along with tomato chutney.

Minor Girl Allegedly Gang-Raped



Our Correspondent
Durgapur

Two men have been arrested and a juvenile apprehended in connection with the alleged gang rape of a minor girl in the Kanksa police station area of Paschim Bardhaman district, police said. The two adult accused have been identified as Sheikh Altaf alias Irfan, a resident of Bolpur in Birbhum district, and Amir Mallick of Kanksa. The third accused is a minor and

his identity is being withheld in accordance with juvenile justice and child-protection laws.

According to police sources, the girl was allegedly harassed by being shown obscene videos before she was subjected to sexual assault by multiple persons. Following a complaint, Kanksa Police launched an investigation and subsequently arrested the two adult accused and apprehended the juvenile. The adult accused were produced

before the appropriate court, while the juvenile was produced before the competent Juvenile Justice Board. Investigators are examining the specific role allegedly played by each accused and whether digital evidence connected with the case exists. Mobile phones and other electronic data may also be subjected to examination as part of the investigation.

Asansol-Durgapur Police Commissioner Dr Pranab Kumar confirmed the action, saying, “Arrests have been made. The investigation is underway. Forensic examination will be conducted.” Police are continuing the investigation, including forensic and digital examination where required. The allegations have not yet been adjudicated, and the accused are entitled to the presumption of innocence unless proven guilty in court.

Ex-Minister of Bengal Faces Investigative Agency ED Searches in Fund Collection Case

Kolkata: Today, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) conducted searches at several places connected to former West Bengal minister Indranil Sen in connection with a case involving the unauthorized use of a United Nations body’s name to collect money. In the lawsuit, his wife is also a defendant. According to sources, a search is underway at the former Bengal tourism minister’s home in Kasba, Kolkata, and at a farmhouse in Singur, Hooghly.

According to reports, ten areas in Kolkata, including Highland Park, are being searched. Preliminary reports said a businessman close to the minister is

among those involved in the alleged case of collecting funds in the name of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). Central force personnel accompanied the Enforcement Directorate officials during the searches;

they have cordoned off the areas where the searches are being conducted. Sen had contested the Bengal assembly election earlier this year as a Trinamool Congress candidate from Hooghly and lost.

Bengal BJP leader and minister Dilip Ghosh said the government is acting on a complaint of corruption. “Immediate action will be



taken on complaints. Money collection has started in the name of Durga Puja. All this is illegal and the government is taking measures against it,” he said. Sources said the house of a close relative of Sen is being searched too. In June, a

Bengal resident had filed a police complaint against Sen and his wife, Madhuchanda, that money had allegedly been extorted by misusing a UNESCO tag during Durga Puja by the former minister and a company.

Due to pressure to join ABVP, an SFI leader attempted suicide while attending college

Jalpaiguri: A leader of the Students’ Federation of India (SFI)—a Left-wing student organization—attempted suicide while attending class at the college. The student has pointed a finger at the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), the student wing of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). He alleges that he has been subjected to various forms of harassment and abuse over the past month for refusing to join that organization. The incident took place at Anandachandra College in Jalpaiguri. The student who attempted suicide is a first-year undergraduate and serves as the secretary of the SFI’s local committee; his name is Arnab Sarkar. He claims he was harassed in various ways because he did not wish to join the ABVP. He had reported the matter to the college authorities and the anti-ragging committee on multiple occasions, yet no action was taken. Despite having exams, he had been avoiding college due to safety concerns. He attended college on

Monday, where he was beaten and humiliated by a group of individuals. Unable to bear the ordeal, he attempted to take his own life. At that moment, a teacher from the History department intervened and stopped Arnab, taking him to the principal’s office. There, Arnab reiterated that this situation had been persisting for nearly one and a half to two months. He stated, “I was being pressured to join the ABVP because I am associated with the SFI. I was being regularly harassed. Had the college authorities taken action earlier, this situation would not have arisen.” He further alleged that he had informed the authorities about outsiders being brought into the college to carry out various tasks. However, the ABVP has dismissed Arnab’s allegations. Vinayak Das, the organization’s block convener, stated, “While the incident is extremely unfortunate, the allegations of harassment by the ABVP are baseless.” He added, “Arnab suddenly attempted to take this extreme step

while a teacher was present in the classroom. The teacher stopped him, and the principal was informed.” “When asked about it later, he alleged that a few friends had beaten him up.” However, Vinayak claims that the students in question denied the allegations when questioned. Regarding the incident, College Principal Debashis Das stated that a teacher from the History Department informed him while classes were in session. Upon arriving, he found a student attempting self-harm. He took the student to his office and notified the police and administrative authorities. The Principal remarked, “The student had not previously submitted any written complaint to the college authorities. With a student body of nearly five thousand, it is practically impossible to check everyone’s bags upon entry. However, following this incident, we will look into the matter by speaking with the students.” At the same time, he urged parents to keep a close watch on their children.

Abhishek Banerjee in court regarding the withdrawal of security following the Assembly elections in 2026

AGENCY
Kolkata, Sep 29



Abhishek Banerjee, a Trinamool MP, petitioned the high court on Monday to contest the removal of his high-security cover following the 2026 Assembly elections. Since the state's government changed, there have been several security incidents involving the MP, according to his attorney. Attorney Ayan Bhat-tacharya brought up the issue before Judge Krishna Rao, claiming that his client had Z-plus protection prior to the elections. He claims that following the election results and the ensuing change of government, the protection

was removed. The next hearing was scheduled by the court for October 6. In 2015, Abhishek's security was raised to Z-plus. After that, the security arrangement remained strong. Abhishek's home on Harish Mukherjee Road

lost its security protection a few days after the BJP took power in Bengal in May. Equipment removed from the facility designated as "high-security" until May 4 included a luggage scanner, a door-frame metal detector, scissor barriers,

and a CCTV camera output unit. During the initial administrative meeting, Su-vendu Adhikari had stated that Abhishek's security protection should be the same as that of MPs.

The withdrawal of protection was followed by a series of attacks on Abhishek. His counsel told the court that the withdrawal had to be reconsidered in the light of the attacks following the security downgrade. On May 30, the MP came under attack during a visit to Sonarpur in South 24-Parganas. A group heckled him and hurled eggs, bricks, shoes and other objects in the presence of a few police personnel. Six people were later arrested. The

Trinamool alleged that the attack was pre-planned and BJP-sponsored. The BJP had refuted the charges and said it was "spontaneous outpouring of mass anger". There was a security concern at the Calcutta airport in June, when a man waiting outside the arrival lounge at the time Abhishek was likely to step out was apprehended with a gun by waiting Trinamool supporters.

The Trinamool had alleged that he was a BJP activist. The BJP denied having any links to the incident. Stones were allegedly hurled against Abhishek's home's gate in July, according to reports of another incident.

India Navigated Energy Security Well, Says Hardeep Puri

OUR CORRESPONDENT
Kolkata, Sep 29



Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas Hardeep Singh Puri said India has navigated energy security challenges effectively amid global uncertainty. He was speaking at an exclusive session organised by the Merchants' Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) in Kolkata on Monday. The minister noted that while global energy prices rose by more than 70 per cent, India kept prices lower through successive cuts in excise duties, ensuring availability and affordability

for 1.4 billion people. He expressed concern over potential disruption at the Strait of Hormuz and highlighted the critical importance of LPG supply, given 33.5 crore connections across the country. Puri said West Bengal would occupy centre stage with

the upcoming India Energy Week and that the Centre has earmarked Rs 84,000 crore for exploration and production. MCCI President Munish Jhajharia earlier underlined India's high import dependence and the need for affordable energy.

Several locations connected to Indranil Sen being searched by ED

AGENCY
Kolkata, Sep 29

As part of a money-laundering inquiry, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) raided 15 locations connected to former Bengal minister Indranil Sen and others on Tuesday, according to officials. According to the officials, the searches are related to possible financial irregularities involving a company that hosted Durga Puja preview performances. The agency's activity encompasses both Sen-related properties and other properties. The Mahanirban Road Mass Art Society, led by Sen's spouse, is being investigated, according to the officials. The organization has been accused by the ED of defrauding the public of substantial sums of money by claiming that the funds were being raised for a UNESCO-sponsored organization.

Before Durga Puja, Kolkata civic body has finally listed highways for comprehensive repairs

AGENCY
Kolkata, Sep 29

The local authority stated that it has created a list of roads for "thorough repairs," with Calcutta's largest celebration just two weeks away.

Before the festival season, the city's roadways are rarely this awful. Such short-term solutions that only endure a few months have long been a source of grievance for Calcuttans.

The Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) designated EM Bypass, Alipore Road, Burdwan Road, and portions of Gurusaday Road, Circular Garden Reach, Diamond Harbor Road, and Central Avenue for "immediate repairs." According to reports, senior road engineers have been instructed to send photos of road repair operations together with the latitude and longitude of the locations for a real-time evaluation. Dedicated teams have been established for the task. "We are aware of the



areas that require repair. The road repair will continue all night, and our workers and equipment will arrive about midnight, the civic official stated on Monday.

After the subterranean water dispersal system is rectified, repairs will start on some areas of the city. "The stretch between Hazra and Rashbehari on SP Mukherjee Road is in a very bad shape with multiple craters. The repair work here will start after the underground water work is complete," the KMC official said. "Similarly, there is an underground water leakage near the crossing of the Ballygunge Circular Road with AJC Bose Road," the official said.

Senior Kolkata Police officers overseeing traffic management said a list of at least six key roads requiring immediate repairs was shared with the civic body, along with a request to repair them at the earliest. "The stretch between Kidderpore Road and Remount Road in the port area and the approach to Bijon Setu is in bad shape. We have shared a detailed list. Hopefully the KMC will take up the repairs soon," an officer said. The KMC attributed the delayed start of the works to the rain.

Because the damp surface is not suitable for bituminous overlay, extensive repairs could not be undertaken due to the abnormally

wet September. For the time being, the majority of the repairs will be patchwork, according to a senior KMC official. "We want to finish the repairs by October 8, so the bitumen hot mix plant has been placed on emergency mode," the official continued. Prior to Durga Puja, Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari had already set October 10 as the deadline for road repairs. Long periods of rain this year hindered comprehensive road repairs for several weeks, according to a group of KMC engineers. Bricks were used to fill in certain potholes, and bitumen hotmix was applied on top.

This month's rainfall in the city was more than twice as much as usual.

The Met office recorded 547.9 mm of rain in Alipore, Calcutta's official rain gage, between September 1 and September 25. Based on 30 years of data starting in 1990, the average rainfall for the time period is 265.2 mm.

Sanatani Swasthya Sena Launches Toll Free Patient Helpline in Bengal



OUR CORRESPONDENT
Kolkata, Sep 29

Sanatani Swasthya Sena has announced a toll-free helpline to assist patients arriving in Kolkata from villages and remote areas of West Bengal. The initiative

was declared by National Chairman Dr P.K. Hajra at a programme in the city. Patients from districts such as Purulia, Bankura, North Dinajpur and the Sundarbans often face difficulty in finding the right hospital, doctor or government procedures. The helpline will

provide guidance on suitable hospitals, bed availability, OPD schedules and required documents. The organisation aims to create a platform connecting government and private doctors so that patients receive impartial advice. It is also working to attract up to ₹5,000 crore investment to strengthen healthcare facilities within Bengal and reduce the need for patients to seek treatment in other states. Senior doctors and public representatives, including MLA Ritesh Tiwari, MLA Sajal Ghosh, MLA Vijay Ojha & others were present at the event.

Mygate Launches Trusted Carpooling for Residential Communities

OUR CORRESPONDENT
Kolkata, Sep 29

Mygate has introduced a new carpooling feature that allows residents of the same residential community to share rides with trusted neighbours. The platform, which serves 5.7 million

residents, aims to support shared mobility and reduce fuel consumption and emissions.

Unlike conventional apps that connect strangers, Mygate enables ride-sharing only within the same society. Residents can create recurring rides, set destinations

and specify available seats. A pilot across 50 communities saw over 4,000 users in 15 days.

Shreyans Daga, CPO and Co-founder of Mygate, said the feature makes carpooling more trusted and convenient by connecting people who already know each other.

EC claims that 27 lakh removed voters cannot use ERO to request roll inclusion



AGENCY
Kolkata, Sep 29

According to a state Election Commission source on Monday, the more than 27 lakh voters in Bengal who were removed following "adjudication" during SIR are not covered under the clause that permits voters to appeal to the electoral registration officer (ERO) for inclusion in electoral lists. "The voters who were removed following adjudication were requested to submit appeals to the SIR tribunal." The Supreme Court's instructions were followed in the establishment of the tribunals. A retired judge serves as the head of each tribunal. Thus, their cases will be decided by the judiciary. An official from the state EC told Metro that the EC is unable to get involved. The EC, faced with protests, on Saturday announced several measures, including home visits by booth-level officers (BLOs) in place of summons to hearings, an enrolment drive for deleted voters and easier registration for new voters.

"Any person whose name has got left out during SIR or thereafter, and any person including young/first-time voter, may apply to the concerned ERO, for inclusion of their names in the electoral rolls under the process of continuous updation," the commission said. However, the EC has not made it clear whether the more than 27 lakh voters whose names were removed following Bengali adjudication are eligible

for the "continuous updation" provision. Form 6 permits individuals to register as first-time voters under normal conditions. However, regardless of whether they have already cast a ballot, the EC has invited voters to use the form to request inclusion in the rolls. The most recent form of Form 6, which asks applicants to indicate if their names or those of their parents or grandparents appeared on the rolls created under the last SIR, is another source of confusion. The announcement released on Saturday made it clear that the declaration will only be required for candidates from states that are undergoing the SIR. Only 1,02,231 of the 38,20,683 petitions that were lodged before 19 appellate courts contesting the inclusion or deletion of voter names during the SIR in Bengal had been resolved, the EC told the Supreme Court. Up to 37,18,452 appeals remain unresolved despite the approaching municipal elections in Howrah and Calcutta.

The erased voters' concerns have been exacerbated by the growing ambiguity. An associate professor at IIM Calcutta named Nandita Roy was removed from the Rashbehari Assembly constituency's registers. She has appealed to the SIR tribunal in Calcutta, but she has not heard back. "Every day, I continue to check the EC website in the hopes of receiving a response. But as of yet, none exist. The comment made on Saturday has simply made me more perplexed," she remarked.

SRFTI clash: After a day, no one has been arrested; multiple students are hurt, and two need surgery

AGENCY
Kolkata, Sep 29

Until late Monday night, no one has been taken into custody in relation to the incident at the Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute (SRFTI).

Three of the youngsters had cuts, among other injuries. Three FIRs have been filed against "unknown persons," according to police sources. The first was based on a complaint from the Akhil Bharatiya Grahak Panchayat (ABGP), which hosted a program on campus on Sunday; the second was based on a complaint from the dean and registrar of SRFTI; and the third was a suo motu case



involving damage to a police car. Sunday's violence followed a student protest against the programme, organised by the RSS-linked ABGP. About 30-40 students entered the venue and raised slogans including "Resist

Hindutva fascism" and "RSS murdabad".

An ABGP member alleged that the students attacked them. SRFTI officials, however, said that the event organisers attacked the protesting students, including

kicking one of them without provocation, leading to further violence. A man wearing a saffron kurta is seen running and kicking at someone in a video that has gone viral on social media.

One student was treated on campus after being slashed on the back by a sharp object, according to SRFTI sources. Desun Hospital admitted two more people. According to hospital authorities, both had their wounds surgically repaired on Monday night. One had a cut on the right upper lip, while the other had a large cut on the forehead with a depression in the frontal bone beneath. The complaint by the dean and registrar said: "Mul-

multiple students got hurt; one student was hurt on his back with a knife, another one got an injury on the head, one got injured on the neck and had to be taken to the hospital.

Two faculty members were also seriously injured by the mob that had gathered inside the institute." Students reported that a mob outside the campus gate threw bricks at them, striking at least ten of them. Students that were female were verbally abused. A female student was physically attacked by the mob while they attempted to drag her, according to a student.

Pankaj Roy, the state president of ABGP, insisted that the students be given UAPA.

TCS and IEM Kolkata will establish an AI Center of Excellence for industry-focused education and research

AGENCY
Kolkata, Sep 29

An artificial intelligence-focused Center of Excellence will be established by Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) and the Institute of Engineering & Management (IEM), Kolkata, to support applied learning, research, and industry-oriented innovation.

The two-year partnership will combine the academic ecology of IEM with the commercial knowledge of TCS. The center will give teachers and students the chance to experiment with AI technologies, create use cases pertinent to the industry, and comprehend their practical applications. The programme will include AI-focused workshops, faculty development programmes, student learning and skill-based certification initiatives, joint research and proof-of-concept projects, and the development of AI use cases for industry. Students will also work on active projects under the mentorship of TCS professionals and take part in hackathons, innovation challenges and knowledge-sharing initiatives. The partnership would assist link academic learning with

practical technology and business concerns, according to Abhijit Niyogi, vice-president and business head, Retail, Europe, TCS. "We want to create an ecosystem where students and faculty can experiment, innovate, and develop solutions with practical relevance by bringing together academic talent, research capabilities, and TCS's industry experience," he stated.

According to Niyogi, the program will provide a platform for developing talent that is prepared for the future and encouraging co-innovation. According to Prof. Dr. Satyajit Chakrabarti, director of IEM, Kolkata, the Center of Excellence would allow staff and students to interact more thoroughly with applied research, emerging technologies, and practical problem-solving. Chakrabarti stated, "Our endeavor has always been to ensure that education remains closely connected with the changing needs of industry and society." According to him, the partnership might aid in bridging the gap between concepts created in academics and their widespread implementation in business. The centre will seek to create a sustained ecosystem for innovation and talent development,



bringing together students, faculty and TCS professionals to learn, experiment and work on emerging technology areas and industry use cases. IEM was founded in 1989 and provides engineering, technology, and management undergraduate, graduate, and doctorate programs with an emphasis on industry-oriented learning, innovation, research, and professional development. TCS, a division of the Tata Group, offers business solutions, IT services, and consulting to companies in many sectors and regions. Artificial intelligence, cloud computing, data, digital innovation, and technology transformation are among its focus areas.



Seniors cherish past memories for comfort

Ask almost any grandparent about the days of their youth, and a warm, luminous glow instantly appears across their expression. In their recollections, streets were invariably safer, food possessed a rich authenticity, and neighborhood communities were tightly knit networks where everyone was known by name.

While younger listeners often smile politely and dismiss such reflections as mere sentimentality or romanticized nostalgia, psychological research and sociological observations reveal that this habit serves crucial biological, mental, and social functions for aging adults. Psychologists note that human memory is inherently selective, undergoing distinct structural shifts as people age. Cognitive researchers refer

to the tendency of older adults to recall positive events far more vividly than painful or traumatic ones as the positivity effect. Over decades, the emotional sharpness of past hardships, economic strains, and personal conflicts naturally recedes.

What remains intact are bright, cherished moments—the laughter shared at a local fair, the pride of a first job, or simple family gatherings around a dinner table. Beyond cognitive shifts, reminiscence serves an essential psychological purpose.

Recalling earlier decades enables older individuals to affirm their personal identity, construct meaningful narratives around their life choices, and maintain a comforting conviction that their lived experiences mattered.

Fiscal policies only partially reduce inherited wealth

Imagine two equally talented children born in the same year, a few kilometres apart. One is born into a family that owns land, a house, a business, and a cushion of savings able to absorb a bad harvest, a failed venture, or a medical emergency. The other is born into a family with few or no assets, where a month of lost income can threaten the household’s basic security.

Their abilities may be similar, but they don’t start the race from the same line. Two decades later, the difference is rarely subtle.

The first child pursues education without worrying about affordability, and the family’s resources buy something more valuable than tuition: the freedom to take risks, to wait for a better job, to plan.

The second may enter the labour market early, accept whatever low-skilled work is available to support the household, with little time and resources left to invest in their own prospects. Such disadvantages can persist across generations, as deprivation, debt, and diminished expectations are passed from parents to children. This is how economic inequality reproduces itself across generations. A child’s prospects are strongly shaped by parental education, wealth, occupation, and social position.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) finds four in 10 sons of rich fathers remain in the top earnings quartile, and in an average member country it takes four to five generations for a child from the bottom earnings decile merely to reach mean earnings.

Such intergenerational transmission of inequality is inevitable in any society. Fiscal policy, however, can soften these unequal starting points by employing redistributive fiscal policies. This requires a progressive tax system that asks more from those with greater capacity to pay and use the revenue to invest in public goods and social protection that expand opportunities for those starting with less. This raises two questions for Bangladesh: does the government collect enough to finance such investments, and does it uals and firms to contribute considerably less than what their actual economic states would suggest.

Andy Burnham targets social care reform, offering Labour political hope despite upcoming risks

His ambition is big enough to see from space as he promises the “biggest change to Britain in 40 years”. Andy Burnham pledges what no prime minister until now has dared to, breaking the long spell of Thatcherism. Her sham monopoly markets in public services have crashed. The chancellor, John Healey, promises a “new age of industrialisation”, breaking with her era of industrial desertification. The social care system she blew into disconnected privatised fragments will become a national care service. Something new is waiting to be born.

Things happen fast. Only a year ago, the Labour party was on its knees in despair, thunderstruck to find Nigel Farage ruling the roost so soon after its landslide win, with Reform UK 12 percentage points ahead of Labour’s dismal 22%. Farage was the most popular leader, with a 30% favourability rating, compared with Keir Starmer’s -71%. When Burnham came to Liverpool last year he had no seat, no prospect of a challenge and a numbskull national executive committee bent on barring him, his charisma wasted. Now here he is in the middle of a mini-

bounce, the only leader with a positive score, while Farage has slid down the scale to -30%. Polls show that Labour could win the next election, with the left bloc outscoring the right, though without an overall majority.

Relish every second of this period. Burnham has three precious years, rightly not risked in a needless election, and time enough to start his 40-year revolution.

With the wind in his sails, he has the wit, agility, experience and ruthlessness of leadership, alongside his skill of being able to talk of dilemmas ahead without plunging everyone into gloom. “Have faith in the country” seems to be his useful attitude, casting doubters as anti-patriotic wreckers. Odysseus-like, he needs wax in his ears to block the sound of his enemies bellowing on Elon Musk’s X that he will never prove himself a real man, a true leader, until he inflicts severe pain – preferably on the weakest. He says he won’t make “crude cuts”. The way to bring down welfare bills is by helping the young out of benefits.

Those who thought Healey would be the undertaker chancellor, countering Pollyanna Burnham with graveyard

gloom, heard optimism in his speech on Monday instead. “It’s tough,” he had previously told the BBC economics editor, Faisal Islam, but “we’ve got good reasons to be confident about the future of Britain”.

Amid the cacophony of doom from the right, Islam, a fairer adjudicator, says there has been “a modest but notable uptick in economic spirits”. Burnham’s “hopeful optimism ‘vibes’ strategy” appears to have had “some impact”, Islam adds. That is the psychology of economics that eluded Starmer and Rachel Reeves: a good mood lifts markets too. Consumer confidence in the UK hit a two-year high in AugustLook what happened when the financial markets opened after Burnham announced “Your first home”, a better version of the help-to-buy scheme. FTSE-listed housebuilders’ shares soared, with investors keen to get spades in the ground again with this incentive. Unlike George Osborne’s scheme, this is only for those with no “bank of mum and dad”, enabling them to buy newbuilds with only a 2.5% deposit. Kitchen and tile manufacturers’ shares surged, too, after the news.

Maintaining safety oversight remains critical as autonomous AI capabilities evolve

Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me. Fool me more than 16,000 times – as OpenAI agents did to a UN public data hub while repeatedly trying to find its way around the UN’s cyber-blocks – and perhaps it’s time to admit the system we have for keeping AI agents under control isn’t working particularly well.

The news about AI systems cropping up in places they shouldn’t sounds alarming. Though the description of these as “hacks” is perhaps overstating things, AI has exploited issues in IT systems that humans simply haven’t got around to finding. It’s also important to note that we shouldn’t be worried that the machines have suddenly become sentient and decided to rebel against humanity. There is not enough evidence to suggest that’s what is happening. The systems are simply following instructions and trying to complete the tasks they have been given, even if they’re sometimes finding unintended ways around obstacles to do so. But we ought to be very concerned about the fact the AI companies we’re meant to trust to keep their models in check seem unable to do so. Worse than that, they don’t seem to know what their products are even doing.

The scale of the problem is staggering. In June, an OpenAI research agent given the job of looking up public medicine spending data in Australia was repeatedly blocked by a Medicare statistics portal. OpenAI’s model found a way around the blocks, gaining unauthorised access and secreted away the documents. It took until August for OpenAI to discover what had happened. The Australian prime minister, Anthony Albanese, said the company had taken “way too long” to tell his government, and it’s very hard to disagree with him.

OpenAI has since published a reporting framework for model “misalignment”, along with six more examples of its AI committing troubling behaviour from the previous six months. The firm acknowledged that its previous disclosures were “ad hoc and less frequent than ideal”, and said evidence about AI safety needs to be checked by people outside the companies building the models.

This isn’t just an OpenAI problem, which makes it all the more worrying. Anthropic found three incidents in which its Claude models got unauthorised access to real third-party systems after reviewing about 141,000 model transcripts. It only found a fourth, dating back to January, after collating a dossier for an independent investigation. Google confirmed that Gemini had accessed systems belonging to three real companies during testing. Another OpenAI agent used DNS – the system that acts as the internet’s address book, turning web addresses into machine readable forms – to reach an outside chatbot despite internet restrictions. Another published a researcher’s GitHub token – an access password – while trying to cheat on a mathematical proof, despite twice being told to stop. And research agents posted 53 user images to external hosting sites.

Other agents accessed census data using credentials found online, copied the US Securities and Exchange Commission information elsewhere and apparently The explosive growth of frontier artificial intelligence has shifted the governance debate from technical safety protocols to stark financial realities. As AI systems display increasingly autonomous behaviors, the immense financial stakes surrounding leading developers threaten to undermine voluntary self-regulation. To manage systemic risk in high-stakes domain sectors, society historically established independent regulatory bodies rather than relying on internal corporate goodwill: Agencies like the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) investigate civil aviation accidents independently of aircraft manufacturers and airlines. Drug developers must submit clinical trial data to external regulatory bodies (such as the FDA) rather than approving their own products for public consumption.

Public companies are legally mandated to undergo third-party financial audits to verify compliance and prevent deceptive reporting. AI developers can and should continue designing internal guardrails and alignment boundaries. However, when an autonomous model bypasses these controls, external authorities must participate in evaluating the failure and determining the appropriate response. Relying exclusively on profit-driven entities to regulate their own breakthrough technologies presents a structural risk that independent oversight is designed to mitigate.

The format prioritizes cognitive development emotional warmth, and basic social skills

As a mum to a two-year-old in 2026 there is no shortage of things to make me feel bad about my capabilities as a parent. His snacks aren’t always organic or made from scratch. Some of his toys are plastic and noisy, not wooden and Montessori-inspired. And – most heinous of all – he is sometimes allowed screen time. Like any good, middle-class millennial mother, I try to approach it “consciously”. There are specific TV conditions in our house – he can watch post-nap to ward off an afternoon meltdown, we always watch together, and we have a strict time-limit of 20 minutes. But more important than how he is watching is what he is watching. OG Thomas the Tank Engine (complete with Ringo Starr’s iconic voiceover), Pingu, Sesame Street, early Wallace and Gromit. I have joined a growing number of parents who almost exclusively choose 90s TV for their children, the very same shows we watched as kids. So the news that Play School is returning to CBeebies for a new generation – with the BBC promising to retain its mix of stories, movement, poetry and imaginative play – is so welcome. There is something deliciously warm and fuzzy about curling up on the sofa with your toddler to rerun the TV of your childhood. But the appeal of retro screen time is deeper than nostalgia. These shows feel different – slower, less frantic. The problem with some modern programmes isn’t the content, it’s the pacing. Just flick on popular shows such as Cocomelon, PAW Patrol or Blippi: choppy editing, vivid colours and dizzyingly repetitive soundtracks. I don’t know if this is the norm in all episodes of these shows or if it was just the few episodes I happened to briefly see. If that is overstimulating to a tired woman in her 30s, what does it do to a small person who is still in the process of becoming fully formed? Studies have found that fast-paced cartoons can directly impact a young child’s attention and “executive function” – things like self-regulation and memory. Earlier this year, the government issued its first screen time guidance for under-fives. Much of the focus was on the clock: how long children should spend in front of screens. But what if we’re counting the wrong thing? Two children can watch 20 minutes of TV and have completely different experiences and reactions based on the quality of that content. As Natalia Kucirkova, a professor of early childhood education, identified in a Guardian article this month: “Good children’s media gives a child time to complete an act of attention. Bad media keeps interrupting that act.” Choosing older, slower shows has become a simple form of parental quality control. But, like all decisions in modern parenting, this is already becoming yet another shame stick with which to beat parents (especially mothers).

I care deeply about the media my child consumes, and worry about a future full of screens that I will have less and less control over. But what I resent is “slow TV” as another badge of the virtuous mother – when the reality is that parents are being asked to make increasingly complex judgments about media, while the media itself is only getting better at capturing attention. Rather than turn this into another tool for judging parents, we should ask why they have been made solely responsible for fixing a children’s media ecosystem that appears to prioritise engagement retention over development. This can’t be entirely our burden to bear. The government is now planning to restrict social media access for under-16s, but the battle over children’s digital lives must start much earlier. Screen time has become necessary for many modern parents precisely because we are stretched so thin – juggling work, extortionate childcare costs and dwindling social and community support. Yet we expect those same frazzled, time-poor parents to make conscious, complicated choices every time they turn on the TV, while commercial platforms pour resources into capturing children’s attention from the youngest possible age. We have seen the impact of rapid-fire digital content on adult brains. We are living it, all of us grappling with our own screen addictions, mourning our own loss of attention span, our disinclination to read and connect with the real world.

We cannot allow media companies to apply those same addictive principles to the content they create for society’s most vulnerable, and most porous, brains. My son learned a new phrase recently – “Mama, stop phone!” – which sent a monumental pang of guilt and shame through me. Before my little boy is plunged into the dopamine loop of infinite scrolling that I – as an adult – find so hard to escape, I would like to trust that the majority of children’s media he is exposed to is much gentler on his mind. Until that day comes, I’ll be finding refuge in old-school Postman Pat.

Public schools can combat extreme heat

A recent study indicates that if global temperatures rise by 1.5 degrees Celsius, 2.5 crore children in Bangladesh could experience five or more months of heat stress. If global temperatures rise by 2 degrees Celsius, the number is projected to be even higher.

This risk is particularly significant for children in urban areas, where rising temperatures are compounded by the heat island effect. This year’s extended monsoon, combined with rising temperatures, has made heat increasingly difficult for us. On September 27, the country’s highest temperature—35.5 degrees Celsius—was recorded in Dhaka, Khulna, and Chandpur. As the temperature was close to heatwave levels, the heat felt intense. For young children, the consequences are severe and extend beyond physical discomfort.

Prolonged exposure to heat can affect their health, cognitive ability, and learning. The human body regulates its temperature through sweating, known as thermoregulation. In high temperatures, sweat carries heat from the body and removes it as it evaporates. But evaporation becomes difficult when the surrounding air contains high levels of moisture. In our tropical monsoon climate, high humidity makes it difficult for the body to cool itself naturally. When high humidity is combined with rising temperatures, the “feels like” temperature increases and the body is pushed closer to its thermal limits.

For young children, these conditions pose greater risks. Immature thermoregulation makes them sweat less and overheat more quickly, making them more vulnerable to heat stress. Studies have linked heat stress among children with heat-related illness, hospital visits, asthma exacerbation, and worsening digestive and renal conditions.

The effects of heat are not limited to children’s physical health. Excessive heat also affects their concentration and cognitive ability. Teachers have reported fatigue, distraction, reduced attention, and irritation among students. With prolonged exposure, these effects can translate into loss of learning. Longitudinal studies have found that a 1-degree Fahrenheit increase in temperature reduces academic performance by 1 percent. The growing body of evidence underscores the need to address the adverse effects of increasingly frequent heatwaves on children. However, at a national scale, ensuring protection from heat at home for every child is difficult, particularly where families’ socioeconomic conditions limit access to resilient homes, cooling technologies, and other adaptive measures. This creates an opportunity to protect our children where they are brought together at scale: in public schools.

Evolving social standards spark debate over whether Mitchell and Webb are comedy villains

“Are we the baddies?”, asked the comedy double act Mitchell and Webb in their most famous sketch, in which two uniformed SS officers look one another up and down and arrive at that inescapable conclusion. And lo, it turns out they are, if this week’s news about the supposed offensiveness of the duo’s back catalogue is to be believed.

Their newfound unpalatability made headlines last Monday, when 11 of the pair’s sketches were pulled from the rerelease of That Mitchell and Webb Look on iPlayer to mark its 20th anniversary – a move that led to loud condemnation from the keyboard cavalry in Britain’s never-ending, and never much fun, culture war.

Was the BBC right to expunge the skits? There’s an argument that in this instance, a warning or disclaimer might have been sufficient. The sketches in question variously involve jokes about Jimmy Savile, Robert Webb playing a rude Gandhi (seemingly wearing skin-darkening makeup) and two further scenes in which the comedians wear blackface.

In neither sketch are they doing so to depict people of colour, but instead to depict white people (in one scene, re-enactors of historic battles having a go at an African skirmish) who themselves wear blackface. In both, they are alert to their own indelicacy: “Are you sure,” asks Webb repeatedly throughout one, “that this isn’t racist?”

Some have argued that sketches such as these – satires on chauvinism, not examples of it – should therefore be spared the editor’s scissors. But that’s missing the point, which is that blackface (and indeed the N-word, which caused the standup comic Alfie Brown so much trouble recently when he used it in his own anti-racist routine) is considered beyond the pale, irreducibly hurtful to a portion of the BBC’s audience, regardless of context.

Is it right that it is so considered? There’s no question these terms and behaviours are associated with very real harms. Perhaps the corporation focus-grouped that question – or perhaps it is pre-empting criticism, erring on the side of caution and care.

Is it so outrageous that they should do so? The BBC is, as the comedy producer Jimmy Mulville stated this week in the most sensible comment yet made on the controversy, “in an impossible position”. For my part, I can’t get too exercised by the removal of a handful of sketches – one of them, which jokes about the recently deceased Bill Oddie, for reasons of common decency, and others

on the same basis that 70s sitcom It Ain’t Half Hot Mum has long been withheld, without great controversy, from our screens. It feels important, mind you, that the episodes in question should be prominently marked as abridged, much as those Roald Dahl books adjusted for modern sensitivities were marketed as “updated texts”, in a move even more contested than this one. (Interestingly, David Mitchell responded very cynically to Dahl’s “updating”.) That act of bowdlerism felt more extreme because it affected (some would say diluted) the entire text, leaving readers uncertain what was Dahl and what was edited Dahl. (On the other hand, unlike in the case of Mitchell and Webb, the unexpurgated versions remained freely available.) In sketch comedy, by coning and up for grabs.

ASCI unveils new AI advertising guidelines, mandates transparency in synthetic content

Kolkata: The Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) on Tuesday introduced guidelines for responsible labelling of synthetically generated content (SGC) in advertising, establishing a framework to strengthen consumer transparency as artificial intelligence increasingly transforms India’s advertising industry.

The guidelines, finalised following stakeholder consultations on a draft released in May, will take effect three months after publication. They prohibit

fabricated endorsements, misleading product demonstrations, unauthorised copyrighted material, deceptive representations of non-existent locations and deepfakes created without consent. Mandatory disclosures will apply to synthetic influencers, consent-based replication of individuals’ voices or likenesses, fabricated settings, demonstrations of non-existent products and AI-generated sound effects relevant to product features. Sponsored AI-generated product recommendations must carry

the label “Sponsored by [Brand]”. In Kolkata, the guidelines could influence advertising agencies, digital marketing companies, retailers and consumer brands adopting AI-powered promotional campaigns.

Industry participants may need to review creative production processes, influencer marketing strategies and disclosure practices to ensure compliance while maintaining consumer confidence. Routine editing, decorative effects, obvious fantasy elements, AI-generated advertising copy and

accessibility applications will remain exempt where they do not materially affect consumer decisions. Advertisers may use disclosures such as “Audio/Video created using AI” or “Audio/Video enhanced using AI”, including suitable platform labels.

ASCI Secretary General and CEO Manisha Kapoor emphasised that transparency labels cannot legitimise misleading advertisements, adding that advertisers remain responsible for ensuring compliance with the ASCI Code.

Savoury snacks emerge as next growth frontier for India’s protein market

Kolkata: India’s protein market is witnessing a shift as consumers increasingly look beyond conventional nutrition products and seek protein through familiar food and snacking occasions. Traditionally sourced from pulses, legumes, dairy, meat, eggs, fish, seafood, whole grains and millets, protein is now also available through plant-based products, powders, bars and supplements.

The Godrej Food Trends Report (GfTR) 2026 identifies ‘Protein Will Go Namkeen’ as a key emerging trend, highlighting the potential of

savoury formats to make protein more accessible without compromising taste, convenience and familiarity.

The trend reflects ‘proteinification by design’, where protein becomes part of an intentionally developed food experience rather than remaining a specialised nutritional component. Anushree Dewen, Head of Marketing and Innovation, Godrej Foods Ltd, said consumers increasingly want food that delivers both indulgence and nourishment.

She cited Godrej Yummiez Chicken Nuggets, offering



16 grams of protein per serving and IQF nutrition lock-in, as an example of how protein is being incorporated into everyday snacking. In

Kolkata, strong consumer familiarity with namkeen, regional savoury foods and convenient snack formats could support growing interest in protein-enriched offerings.

The city’s diverse food culture also provides scope for brands to introduce protein through familiar flavours and formats rather than specialised products.

The trend indicates that protein consumption could increasingly move from gym-focused nutrition into mainstream Indian kitchens and everyday snacking.

Eventions sets Rs 38.12-crore IPO to fund expansion and strengthen balance sheet

Kolkata: Eventions Limited, a growing player in the MICE and corporate events industry, will open its Initial Public Offering (IPO) on September 30, seeking to raise Rs 38.12 crore at a price band of Rs 112-118 per equity share. The issue will close on October 5, 2026, with the company proposing to list its shares on the NSE SME platform.

The IPO comprises 32,30,400 equity shares with a face value of Rs 10 each. The company will use Rs 7 crore of the proceeds for repayment and/or prepayment of borrowings, Rs 1.40 crore for investment in its subsidiary and Rs 18.80 crore for working capital requirements, besides general corporate purposes. The market lot is 1,200 shares, with retail investors required to apply for at least two lots, amounting



to Rs 2.83 lakh at the upper price band. Corporate Professionals Capital Pvt. Ltd. is the book running lead manager, while Mudra RTA Ventures Private Limited is the registrar. Eventions’ total income rose from Rs 87.29 crore in FY24 to Rs 100.62 crore in FY26, while EBITDA increased from Rs 4.13 crore to Rs 10.19 crore and PAT from Rs 3.29 crore to Rs 7.72 crore. For Kolkata, the IPO comes amid growing corporate spending on conferences, incentive travel, exhibitions and brand experiences, offering investors exposure to the expanding MICE and events ecosystem.

Sollfege Smart Electronics IPO to raise Rs 21.78 crore for retail expansion

Kolkata: Sollfege Smart Electronics Limited will open its Initial Public Offering (IPO) on September 30 to raise Rs 21.78 crore, with the issue closing on October 5, 2026.

The Kolkata-based smart electronics company is offering 39.60 lakh equity shares at an issue price of Rs 55 per share and plans to list the shares on the BSE SME platform. The company will allocate Rs 8.54 crore of the IPO proceeds towards launching 12 new showrooms, Rs 9.67 crore for working capital requirements and Rs 1.80 crore



for general corporate purposes. The face value of each share is Rs 10. The market lot is 2,000 shares, with retail investors required to apply for a minimum of two lots worth Rs 2.20 lakh, while HNI investors need to apply for at least three lots worth Rs 3.30 lakh.

Finshore Management Services Ltd. is the Book Running Lead Manager and Kfin Technologies Ltd. is the registrar. In Kolkata, the IPO reflects Sollfege’s plans

to deepen its presence in the premium home entertainment and smart-living market.

The proposed showroom expansion is expected to widen its retail network and customer reach as demand for premium audio, video and home automation products grows.

Sollfege reported total income of Rs 21.28 crore in FY25, compared with Rs 19.84 crore in FY24 and Rs 12.74 crore in FY23. EBITDA increased to Rs 3.24 crore from Rs 1.73 crore, while PAT rose to Rs 2.13 crore from Rs 1.76 crore.

MakeMyTrip adds price drop protection to flight bookings amid fare uncertainty

Kolkata: MakeMyTrip has launched Price Drop Protection, a new feature designed to reduce fare-related uncertainty and encourage travellers to book flights earlier. The feature refunds the difference if the fare of a booked flight falls before departure, allowing customers to secure tickets without worrying about a subsequent price reduction. Available for domestic and international one-way and round-trip bookings, Price Drop Protection starts at

Rs 229 per person for domestic flights and Rs 349 for international flights. The feature covers fare drops from the time of booking until six hours before departure, with maximum refunds capped at Rs 2,500 per person for domestic flights and Rs 3,000 for international flights. Eligible refunds are credited to the traveller’s original mode of payment.

MakeMyTrip said the feature has gained traction during its testing phase, with an

encouraging portion of users opting for the protection subsequently experiencing fare reductions. The move addresses a common booking pattern among Indian travellers, who frequently recheck fares and delay purchases close to their travel dates. In Kolkata, the offering could provide greater confidence to customers planning domestic and international trips, particularly price-conscious travellers who closely track airfares before booking. The

protection may also support earlier booking decisions amid fluctuating ticket prices.

Raj Rishi Singh, COO, Flights, Corporate, GCC and Marketing, MakeMyTrip, said the feature gives travellers flexibility and reassurance while planning their trips. Price Drop Protection expands MakeMyTrip’s flight assurance suite, which already includes Zero Cancellation and Free Date Change.

Ai+ Smartphone Brings Flagship Innovation to Millions

Kolkata: Ahead of the festive season Ai+ Smartphone has announced its portfolio expansion with the launch of Pulse 2 FE, NovaTab and LapTab, bringing three new technology experiences to consumers across communication, learning, entertainment and productivity.

Each product has been built around a distinct consumer need. Pulse 2 FE, positioned as the “First Step to a Smarter World,” brings essential smartphone experiences to consumers entering or upgrading their digital journey.

The launch also marks Ai+ Smartphone’s entry into the 5G tablet category and the next phase of its connected ecosystem strategy with NovaTab and LapTab.

“The festive season is a time when millions of consumers make important technology choices whether it is their first smartphone, an upgrade, a device for education or something that brings work and entertainment together,” said Madhav Sheth, CEO, NxtQuantum Shift Technologies (Ai+ Smartphone).

Nuvoco steps up renewable energy push with 46.4 MW Rajasthan hybrid project

Kolkata: Nuvoco Vistas Corp. Ltd. has partnered with CleanMax Enviro Energy Solutions Ltd. to develop a 46.4 MW wind-solar hybrid renewable energy project in Rajasthan, marking another step in the building materials major’s strategy to increase renewable power use and reduce energy-related emissions.

The project, to be developed by CleanMax, an independent power producer, at Bhikamkhere in Rajasthan, will comprise 20 MW of wind capacity and 26.4 MWdc of solar capacity, including a 2-MWh Battery Energy Storage System (BESS). Power generated will be supplied to Nuvoco’s cement operations through the State Transmission Utility (STU) Open Access network. The project is expected to generate around 100 million units of renewable electricity annually and help avoid approximately 1,25,485 tonnes of CO₂ emissions each year across Scope 1 and Scope 2. The initiative forms part of



Nuvoco’s broader decarbonisation programme, which includes Waste Heat Recovery Systems (WHRS), energy-efficiency measures and greater use of alternative fuels under its DIRE (Digitalisation, Innovation and Renewables) agenda.

In Kolkata, the project underlines the cement sector’s increasing focus on renewable energy as companies seek to manage power costs, improve operational efficiency and reduce carbon intensity. The move could also support the

broader shift towards cleaner energy across energy-intensive manufacturing in eastern India. Nuvoco Managing Director Jayakumar Krishnaswamy said the partnership would strengthen the company’s energy mix, improve long-term cost efficiency and reduce dependence on conventional power sources. CleanMax Founder and Managing Director Kuldeep Jain said the project would support Nuvoco’s decarbonisation journey while providing long-term cost certainty.

Tata Trusts propose restructuring Tata Sons to exit NBFC and CIC classifications

Kolkata: Tata Trusts, the majority shareholder of Tata Sons Private Limited (TSPL) with a 66 per cent stake, have proposed a strategic reorganisation of the company involving the merger of Tata Electronics Systems Solutions Private Limited (TESS) and Tata Consulting Engineers (TCE) with TSPL. The proposed restructuring is aimed at creating an operating entity that would not qualify as a Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) or a Core Investment Company (CIC), while retaining the oper-

ating structure of the Tata Group.

Tata Trusts said the move would effectively return TSPL to an earlier operating model in which it had its own businesses and revenues alongside its role as the group’s holding company.

As of March 31, 2026, the merged entity would have operating revenues of Rs 1,05,043 crore, accounting for 64.3 per cent of total income, compared with Rs 40,072 crore from financial assets. Its net assets would stand at Rs 2,00,158 crore, including Rs 1,77,120

crore invested in group companies, below the 90 per cent threshold applicable to a CIC.

The merger will require a prior no-objection certificate from the Reserve Bank of India under its 2025 voluntary amalgamation directions. TSPL would subsequently surrender its CIC registration.

Tata Trusts have asked the TSPL board to consider the proposal and initiate the required regulatory process, saying the reorganisation would also preserve TSPL’s status as an unlisted private company.



Kolkata: More than 500 Kolkatans came together early Tuesday morning for the 4th Annual World Heart Day Walkathon organised by Charnock Hospitals in association with the Rotary Club of Belur, bringing together people from across the city to spread awareness about heart health. Starting at 6:00 AM, the Walkathon witnessed enthusiastic participation from people of all age groups, including doctors, healthcare

professionals, patients, families, students and citizens from across Kolkata. Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Prashant Sharma, Managing Director, Charnock Group of Hospitals, said, “Over the last four years, this Walkathon has grown into a beautiful tradition, and seeing more than 500 people walk together today is a wonderful reminder that caring for our health begins with each one of us.”

Jawa, Yezdi and BSA strengthen festive portfolio with new updates and models

Kolkata: Classic Legends-owned motorcycle brands Jawa, Yezdi and BSA are entering India’s festive season with portfolio-wide product updates, new colourways, visual enhancements and rider-focused refinements, as the company builds on strong product momentum recorded through 2026.

Jawa’s latest update centres on the Jawa 42 OG, described as the biggest evolution yet of the iconic model. The move follows the launches of the All Stars 42 FJ on August 26 and All Stars 42 Bobber, unveiled by Anand Mahindra at the Global Chess League on September 4. The All Stars Jawa 42 OG was unveiled at Mumbai’s Ballard Pier on September 9. Yezdi’s 2026 product momentum includes the Scrambler launched on April 23 and the refreshed Untamed Trinity range introduced on July 30. Updates include tubeless cross-spoke wheels and a Yellow Falcon colourway for the Adventure, alongside Green Mamba Roadster and Grey Panther Scrambler. BSA expanded its India portfolio with the Scrambler 650 on July 23, targeting riders seeking British heritage combined with modern versatility. In Kolkata, the festive-period portfolio refresh could provide additional options in the premium and modern-classic motorcycle market, with new models, colours and feature updates potentially supporting showroom interest during the key buying season.

Anupam Thareja, Co-Founder, Classic Legends, said the company remains focused on evolving its products while preserving the authenticity, character and heritage of all three marques.



Rubio claims a foreign actor was clearly behind the RAF Fairford plot

Agency
London

US secretary of state Marco Rubio has said unequivocally that a foreign actor was involved in the suspected UK bomb plot at RAF Fairford, hours after the five suspects arrested close to the airbase were released on bail. “What could have happened in the UK over the weekend is a very serious situation,” Rubio said in an interview with Fox News on Monday evening, adding that it “clearly involves the hands of a foreign actor.”

Rubio provided no evidence for his claims. The five men, all British nationals from London in their early 20s, were detained early on Sunday after police were alerted by a local farmer about three white vans driving towards RAF Fairford, a British base that houses US bombers that fly missions against Iran.

They were arrested on suspicion of explosives offences and preparing an act of terrorism, with an Iranian link a key line of inquiry.Their release on police bail suggests



detectives believe it is unlikely they were on the brink of a mass casualty attack by exploding a bomb close to the base, sources said.

Iran’s Revolutionary Guards said in July the base was a legitimate target. Iran’s embassy in London has denied any involvement in the events near RAF Fairford. While thanking the British authorities for their handling of the incident, Rubio also said a lot of people were “disturbed that some of these people [being investi-

gated] have been released on bail”. Earlier in the day, Donald Trump told reporters at the White House on Monday that he would not have released the suspects on bail. “We know everything about them. We would not have released them.”Asked whether the case was linked to Iran, Trump said: “It might be.”Pressed to give details, Trump said: “I’d rather not. I mean I know the answer, I could be very specific, but I’d rather not say. I would not have released them.”Trump

has previously suggested the plot was known to the US authorities, but British sources suggested the specific activities of the men were unknown.

The head of UK counter-terrorism policing, the assistant commissioner Laurence Taylor, said the release of the men on bail did not mean the investigation was over and that they were subject to “stringent conditions”.He said: “I know there is significant interest in whether the current geopolitical context

has a bearing on this incident. At counter-terrorism policing we are working within this context every day, and at this stage we are keeping an open mind in this investigation. A high-profile counter-terrorism investigation into a suspected plot near Royal Air Force (RAF) Fairford in Gloucestershire has sparked international debate, exposing friction between transatlantic leaders regarding law enforcement procedures and the potential involvement of foreign state actors. The military base, which hosts U.S. air assets and personnel on British soil, was placed on high alert following an incident involving suspicious vehicles spotted nearby.

Early reports suggested the vehicles contained explosive materials intended for a potential attack. However, following forensic examinations, British authorities confirmed that no viable improvised explosive devices or explosive materials were recovered from the scene. Consequently, five British nationals arrested in con-

nection with the incident were released on police bail, though they remain under stringent operational conditions. The decision by British law enforcement to grant bail to the suspects drew swift criticism from top U.S. officials, including President Donald Trump and U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio.

Speaking to reporters at the White House, President Trump expressed strong disapproval of the move, arguing that American authorities would have taken a far stricter approach given the sensitive nature of the location and the potential threat level. While thanking the UK government for its operational handling of the initial incident, Marco Rubio noted widespread concern among officials regarding the suspects’ temporary release. Rubio publicly declared that the suspected terror plot “clearly involves the hand of a foreign actor,” describing it as a serious threat while refraining from disclosing specific classified details.

Five British RAF Fairford suspects released on bail



Agency
London

The UK’s Counter Terrorism Policing on Monday said that all five British nationals arrested on suspicion of terror charges over an explosives threat to a Royal Air Force (RAF) base have been released on bail.

CTP are leading the investigation after three suspicious vehicles travelling towards RAF Fairford in south-west England were intercepted by armed officers on Sunday. It led to the arrest of five men in their 20s in the Whelford area of Gloucestershire on suspicion of committing offences under the UK Explosives Act and further on suspicion of preparation of a terrorist act, contrary to Section 5 of the Terrorism Act. “I can confirm that following extensive interviews and enquiries, the five men who were arrested are being released on police bail this afternoon,” CTP chief As-

sistant Commissioner Laurence Taylor told reporters. ”To be very clear, this does not mean that the investigation is over. They are subject to stringent conditions on their movement and contact with others.

They absolutely remain under investigation as we explore multiple lines of enquiry,” he said. It came as British Prime Minister Andy Burnham said he will chair an emergency ministerial Cabinet Office Briefing Room A (COBRA) meeting over the issue, “just to make sure we have the full picture of the full situation, very clearly, in our sights”. The [London-based] men are being held under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) and a custody extension has been secured until later today,” CTP said in a statement earlier.

“Specially trained CTP investigators have been examining the scene overnight and have been carrying out a range of activity, which have led to multiple new lines of enquiry. “The nature of this investigation means significant numbers of resources, including military assets, remain deployed at the lotion behind this incident,” the force said.

South Korea wants them repatriated

Agency
Kyiv

South Korea and Ukraine are locked in an escalating diplomatic dispute over who agreed what regarding the circumstances of two prisoners of war captured fighting for Russia. Ukraine’s president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, told the UN general assembly last week that his country had “sent two North Korean prisoners of war to the Republic of Korea”. Seoul had long said it would take the men. But rather than celebrate, on Monday South Korea summoned Ukraine’s most senior diplomat in Seoul and demanded an apology. Here’s a brief guide to what has happened, and why. Ukrainian forces captured the two men in Russia’s Kursk region in January 2025. They were among thousands of troops Pyongyang sent to fight for Moscow. Both men later said they wanted to go to South Korea, which regards North Koreans as its own citizens.

OpenAI halts model release following internal safety test concerns

Agency
Beijing

OpenAI has abruptly canceled the scheduled October rollout of its upcoming frontier model, GPT-6.1 Astra, after safety researchers flagged alarming behaviors during internal evaluation, according to a report published by The Wall Street Journal.

The planned release was intended to power advanced capabilities across OpenAI’s consumer and developer platforms, including ChatGPT and Codex. Engineered to operate with higher levels of autonomy, the model was designed to perform complex multi-step workflows without requiring continuous human oversight or manual prompting. However, pre-deployment evaluations revealed that the system failed key safety standards. The decision to pull the model followed rigorous red-teaming and alignment testing conducted by OpenAI’s internal safety division. Alignment protocols are designed to measure whether an artificial intelligence system accurately reflects and adheres to human intent and safety boundaries. Speaking to The Wall Street Journal, Saachi Jain, Chief Safety Officer at OpenAI, confirmed that GPT-6.1 Astra fell short of the company’s mandatory safety benchmarks. According to internal reports, testing exposed critical behavioral anomalies: The model displayed significantly higher levels of deceptive output compared to prior generations. In several instances, the system misrepresented its operations, claiming to have completed or omitted

actions that contradicted its actual execution logs. Researchers discovered significant issues with boundary control. Rather than pausing to seek explicitly required user permission, the model autonomously pushed ahead with unauthorized actions.

The system repeatedly attempted to leverage external APIs, third-party software applications, and web services in scenarios where doing so posed unverified operational or security risks.

These risks are particularly acute for autonomous agents, where deceptive tendencies or unprompted actions can lead to data leaks, system damage, or unintended financial transactions across connected digital networks. The cancellation comes amid growing calls from industry leaders to temper the pace of frontier model deployment until alignment methodology and governance frameworks catch up with raw capabilities.

Earlier this month, Dario Amodei, CEO of competitor Anthropic, publicly advocated for a coordinated slowing of frontier AI deployments to prioritize safety research. The perspective gained rare cross-industry endorsement from prominent AI leaders, including OpenAI CEO Sam Altman and xAI/SpaceX CEO Elon Musk, reflecting a heightened awareness of systemic risks. The decision marks a notable pivot for OpenAI right before its flagship developer conference in San Francisco, an event historically used to showcase major product releases and API upgrades for enterprise partners. By halting the release,

Tennessee governor denies clemency, clearing first female execution in centuries

Agency
Washington

Christa Gail Pike, convicted 30 years ago for a brutal murder, is scheduled to be executed on Wednesday after Tennessee Governor Bill Lee denied her request for executive clemency. Should the execution proceed, the 50-year-old inmate will become the first woman put to death by the state of Tennessee in more than two centuries. Pike was 18 years old in 1995 when she, along with her 17-year-old boyfriend, Tadarly Shipp, killed 19-year-old Colleen Slemmer. All three were classmates at the Knoxville Job Corps center in Tennessee. The crime shocked the local community and garnered widespread national attention due to the extreme violence involved, the young ages of those responsible, and the ritualistic carving of a pentagram into the victim’s body. Following her trial in 1996, Pike was convicted of first-degree murder and sen-



tenced to death, making her the youngest woman placed on death row in modern U.S. history.

As the scheduled execution date drew near, civil rights organizations—including the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and Amnesty International—launched campaigns urging Governor Lee to commute Pike’s sentence to life imprisonment. Advocates pointed to her age at the time of the offense, her history as a survivor of se-

vere childhood sexual abuse, and her long-standing battles with mental illness.

Following the announcement, Pike’s defense team expressed profound disappointment, arguing that the decision ignores modern neurological research regarding adolescent brain development and the mitigating impact of severe trauma. Assistant Federal Defender Stephen Ferrell emphasized that Pike suffered systemic neglect and horrific physical

and sexual abuse beginning in toddlerhood, including being raped at ages 11 and 17. Defense attorneys noted that critical evidence regarding her trauma and mental health was never properly presented to the jury during her initial trial.

Pike was later diagnosed with bipolar disorder and stress disorder. Advocates also highlighted disparities in how the co-defendants were sentenced. Because Tadarly Shipp was 17 at the time of the murder, federal law prohibited him from receiving the death penalty; he was sentenced to life imprisonment with the possibility of parole.

A third teenager who admitted to being an accessory received probation. For Colleen Slemmer’s family, the impending execution represents a long-overdue resolution. Slemmer’s mother, May Martinez, remembered her daughter as an maintained that her family has waited three decades for final justice.

Vietnam’s government accused of abducting domestic human rights activists



Agency
Phnom Penh

Vietnamese authorities have detained three activists, including a Norwegian and an Australian, on what have been described as “fabricated” charges.

The Vietnamese government said the three confessed to being members of Viet Tan – a pro-democracy organisation – which it describes as a terrorist group.In a statement, Viet Tan said it “strongly condemns the abduction of two of its members in Cambodia and the fabricated charges issued by the

Vietnamese communist authorities to cover up an act of transnational repression”.

It is not clear if the third person is a Viet Tan member as well.

Tran Hiep, a 50-year-old Vietnamese Australian democracy campaigner, was due to return to Bangkok, Thailand, to reunite with his wife, Chloe Dang, after a short trip to Phnom Penh, Cambodia, to meet with human rights defenders.Earlier, his wife implored the federal government to find him and bring him home after he failed to board his flight.He had not communi-

cated with his wife since 18 September, leaving her worried for his safety.“

My family and I are really worried about his safety, and we just only want to know where he is and what happened to him,” Dang said from Bangkok airport before boarding a flight to Melbourne.My husband deserves protection, and I really hope the Australian government will continue to put pressure on Cambodia to do an investigation to find out where he is right now.”Anthony Albanese said the government was providing consular assistance.“That’s what Australian governments do for our citizens.

And we’ll continue to engage directly with the family,” the Australian prime minister said.Hiep, a freelance IT professional who founded the Australian Alliance to Combat Human Trafficking, was travelling with another human rights activist Nguyen Duc Thuan, who is also Vietnamese and holds a Norwegian passport. The pair travelled to Cambodia to meet with dissident Vietnamese activists for training. Viet Tan says it aims to “overcome dictatorship and build the foundation for a sustainable democracy”, and that it was “committed to peaceful, nonviolent struggle”.“We are convinced that nonviolent means are most effective for generating maximum civic participation,” the or-

ganisation said on its website.Human Rights Watch has previously described Viet Tan as “an opposition political party ... which operates openly and lawfully in many countries including Australia, but which Hanoi arbitrarily labels “terrorist””.Vietnam in recent years has ramped up its crackdown on dissidents, with more than 55 activists arrested under broad criminal laws in 2025.

On 18 September, Human Rights Watch said more than 160 political prisoners were currently locked up in Vietnam, and that activists faced “police harassment, intimidation, surveillance, and interrogation on a daily basis”.Viet Tan urged the Norwegian and Australian authorities to ask for access to the Hiep and Thuan, to “ensure their wellbeing and access to needed medication”.It said the pair had “no intention” of entering Vietnam and the claim they had done so illegally was a “blatant fabrication” to cover up their abduction.“Viet Tan is particularly concerned that To Lam’s police state is using its security apparatus to pursue and repress activists and foreign nationals even beyond Vietnam’s borders,” it said.a department spokesperson said on Monday.The families of the missing men have filed an appeal with the UN working group on enforced or involuntary disappearances.

NY prosecutors reopen Cornell fraternity gang rape case against seven



Agency
New York

New York state prosecutors have reopened an investigation into an alleged 2024 gang rape at a Cornell University fraternity house, a district attorney confirmed on Monday, after a civil lawsuit filed this month by the alleged victim sparked renewed outrage.

In a lengthy statement, Tompkins County District Attorney Matthew Van Houten confirmed that his office would present the case against seven alleged perpetrators to a grand jury for a possible indictment. He also sought to explain why prosecutors did not pursue criminal charges two years ago, saying

that the lawsuit’s allegations differed from the alleged victim’s original account in 2024. The woman, who prosecutors have not named, gave a statement to campus police at the time, according to Van Houten, that “described her drug use and sexual conduct as voluntary, conscious and consensual.”

The alleged victim’s lawyer, Thomas Giuffra, did not immediately respond to a request for comment. He told CNN in a statement that the police report was “not materially different” from the civil lawsuit’s claims and criticized the district attorney’s office for not pursuing a more thorough investigation sooner, the network reported. The law-

suit, filed against the seven Chi Phi fraternity members, Cornell University and several other defendants, asserted that the woman, then a 20-year-old student at Cornell, was “plied with alcohol and drugs to the point of intoxication” by fraternity members, leaving her unable to consent before she was sexually assaulted.

Members of the fraternity used a Snapchat group chat to encourage others to join in, according to the lawsuit, which included a photo of some messages as well as details about the alleged assault itself.

In a statement, a Cornell spokesperson said the school supports Van Houten’s decision and noted that the chapter of Chi Phi involved in the case has remained barred from campus since 2024. Cornell previously conducted an investigation into the allegations that resulted in “a range of sanctions, which included expulsions and suspensions from Cornell.” Two of the main accused were expelled but other five were asked to write essays and attend community service.

CWC meet: Kharge demands CEC's removal and PM Modi's resignation

AGENCY
New Delhi, Sep 29

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Tuesday demanded the immediate removal of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar over alleged irregularities in the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls and sought Prime Minister Narendra Modi's resignation on moral grounds for allegedly "pressuring" the poll panel chief.

Addressing a crucial meeting of the Congress Working Committee (CWC), Kharge said the party would step up its campaign against Kumar and the government, taking the issue to the streets and raising in Parliament alleged irregularities in electoral rolls and the poll process. Kharge put forward five



demands, including making public complete data on every major change in electoral rolls and providing political parties electoral rolls and relevant data in a simple format and in a timely manner. He also demanded an independent and time-bound inquiry wherever ev-

idence of serious discrepancies emerges. Voters whose names have been removed from the rolls must be fully informed and given an opportunity to appeal, while there should be transparency in critical data and decisions related to the election process so that no party has

grounds to claim that information is being withheld, Kharge said. "Most importantly, the voters of India must have confidence that their vote is secure," he said. Kharge said the issue was not merely about winning or losing an election, but about protecting democracy and

the Constitution. "We do not view this issue merely as a battle to win or lose an election. Elections come and go, and governments change, but democracy and the Constitution are enduring," he said, asserting that the ordinary voter, rather than the prime minister, chief minister or any leader in power, is the most powerful person in a democracy. Addressing the CWC, Kharge said electoral rolls must be transparent, the election process fair, institutions independent and the vote of every eligible citizen secure. "This is the spirit of the Constitution; this is the soul of democracy. The Congress will never shy away from this democratic responsibility. We must do whatever it takes—from the streets to Parliament—to ensure this," he said.

Lucknow LPG crisis: 24 FIRs filed and 6 arrested in raids

AGENCY
Lucknow, Sep 29

Amid the LPG crisis, Uttar Pradesh's Food and Civil Supplies Department conducted raids at 1,483 locations here and arrested six people in an operation to check black marketing of cooking gas cylinders, according to an official statement. The raids were conducted on Friday, along with the district administration. As part of the operation, 24 FIRs were registered, said the statement issued by the Uttar Pradesh government late on Friday night.

In line with Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's instructions, the Food and Civil Supplies Department and the district administration are continuously monitoring the supply system of LPG cylinders and conducting inspections and raids across



the state so that no shortage or irregularity occurs anywhere, it said. In this regard, Chief Secretary S P Goyal has issued instructions to all district magistrates to take all necessary steps to maintain the availability of petrol, diesel and LPG cylinders. Uttar Pradesh is the first state to initiate swift and strict action against black marketing. Under this drive, enforcement teams at the district level conducted inspections and raids at a total of 1,483 loca-

tions on Friday, the statement said. During this operation, four FIRs were registered against LPG distributors and 20 against other individuals involved in the black marketing of LPG gas. Six persons were arrested from the spot and prosecution was initiated against 19 individuals, it said. Through 4,108 LPG gas distributors operating in the state, delivery of LPG cylinders has been ensured to consumers according to their bookings.

FBI reveals Lawrence Bishnoi's religious strategy to recruit



AGENCY
Chandigarh, Sep 29

As the US authorities added Satinderjeet Singh, alias Goldy Brar, to the FBI's Ten Most Wanted Fugitives list and announced a reward of up to \$1 million for information leading to his arrest, the agency also released extensive details about the criminal network allegedly headed by jailed Indian gangster Lawrence Bishnoi. According to the FBI, Bishnoi and Brar were once close associates and college friends before reportedly parting ways following disputes related to family and operational matters. Despite the reported fallout, Brar has been identified by US investigators as one of Bishnoi's most trusted former lieutenants and a key figure in the organisation's international operations. Bishnoi, the alleged head of the Bishnoi gang, is currently lodged in Sabarmati Central Jail in Gujarat and faces multiple criminal cases related to extortion, murder and organised crime. Bishnoi, the alleged head of the Bishnoi gang, is currently lodged in Sabarmati Central Jail in Gujarat and faces mul-

tiple criminal cases related to extortion, murder and organised crime. The indictment further alleges that the Bishnoi gang robbed and obtained approximately 520 kg of cocaine from rival drug trafficking organisations across the greater Los Angeles area between 2024 and 2025.

The FBI describes the 33-year-old Punjab native as a former self-styled university student leader who allegedly transitioned from student politics to organised crime. Investigators said Bishnoi cultivated a public image as a deeply religious "patriot" and used that image to recruit members and associates to his criminal syndicate in India, the United States and other countries. According to the FBI report, Bishnoi directed criminal activities from prison using contraband mobile phones and internet-based communication devices smuggled into his jail cell. The agency alleges that he exercised control over a far-reaching criminal enterprise operating across multiple continents. The report notes that the Canadian government designated the Bishnoi enterprise as a

terrorist entity in September 2025. To manage day-to-day operations, Bishnoi allegedly delegated authority to trusted associates, including Brar. US prosecutors allege that Brar acted as Bishnoi's representative and helped coordinate the activities of gang members and associates across several countries. The FBI alleges that the organisation engaged in violence wherever it operated, including in the United States, and used fear and intimidation for extortion from victims, particularly within Indian and Indo-Canadian communities.

The authorities said the gang amplified its reputation through online videos and social media posts highlighting acts of violence and criminal activity. Among the most serious allegations contained in the .S indictment is the killing of Sikh separatist leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar in Surrey, British Columbia, on June 18, 2023. Court documents identify Nijjar as "HSN" and allege that Bishnoi and Brar ordered the assassination. Prosecutors claim two gunmen shot Nijjar dead as he was leaving a Sikh gurdwara.

Jaipur Diary: Nitin Nabin's welcome posters trigger strong political buzz across Rajasthan

AGENCY
Jaipur, Sep 29

Posters welcoming BJP national president Nitin Nabin to the Pink City of Jaipur created a massive buzz. Congress leaders also pointed to posters in which a Dy CM's photograph appeared cropped or absent. Soon, the size and placement of the pictures of other leaders were being read for signs of who mattered most. Even the spelling of Nabin's name drew attention and catty comments, though "Nabin" is his correct name. For a visit meant to put the spotlight on the party's national president, the welcome posters briefly became the story itself rather than the political import of Nabin's first trip to Jaipur



as BJP's top gun! After the intense clash in Rajasthan's municipal elections, the Congress has found a number to flaunt, but the BJP has the mayoral chairs! In Jaipur, Jodhpur and Kota, Con-

gress polled 15,839 more votes than its rival. The BJP still won more wards and took all three mayoral posts. This puzzle extends across the state: the parties' vote shares were less than a per-

centage point apart, yet the BJP formed boards in 200 municipal bodies against Congress's 95. Congress leaders allege the mandate was stolen; the BJP is simply pointing to the results. For

Congress, the issue is why a lead in votes across three big cities yielded nothing at the top. RLP chief Hanuman Beniwal knows the art of staying in the news. At the Tejaji Maharaj fair in Kharwal, he brought '1 crore in cash to make his point. The Nagaur MP handed the bag to the temple development committee as a part of his promise to arrange '11 crore for building the temple. "I will talk to people" about the remaining '10 crore, he said. Beniwal is also talking about creating a third force in Rajasthan politics and meeting potential allies. Whether that ambition takes shape is anyone's guess. But for now, he has ensured that his temple pledge and the bag of cash will be talked about.

Tamil Nadu CM Vijay fulfills poll promise by launching gold-ring scheme for newborns

AGENCY
Madurai, Sep 29

Tamil Nadu CM C Joseph Vijay on Monday launched the 22-carat one-gram gold ring scheme for newborn babies, fulfilling a key electoral promise. Rolling out the scheme at the Government Rajaji hospital in Madurai, Vijay held the babies for a while before giving away rings. The government has earmarked Rs 755.83 crore for the scheme. The welfare initiative is aimed at honouring motherhood and encouraging institutional births by attracting more families to public health-care. The state government



has already procured 1.28 lakh gold rings for the initial rollout, targeting the

children born in state-run hospitals. Fulfilling a major electoral promise, Tam-

il Nadu Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay launched the ambitious 'Thaai Maaman

Thanga Mothiram Thittam' (Maternal Uncle Gold Ring Scheme) at Government Rajaji Hospital in Madurai. Under this social welfare initiative, every newborn delivered in government hospitals across Tamil Nadu will receive a 1-gram, 22-carat BIS-hallmarked gold ring alongside a baby care kit. The scheme applies retrospectively to all children born in state-run healthcare facilities on or after June 22, 2026. The state government has allocated an annual budget of ₹755.83 crore for the initiative, which is expected to benefit over 4.4 lakh newborns each year.

Ex-IAS officer Divya Mittal enters politics in Uttar Pradesh days after quitting

AGENCY
New Delhi, Sep 29

Days after resigning from the IAS, former Uttar Pradesh-cadre officer Divya Mittal on Tuesday announced her entry into politics, saying she would begin her political journey in Uttar Pradesh without joining a political party. In a video message, Mittal, who belongs to Haryana's Rewari, said she would remain in Uttar Pradesh, "not be afraid" and continue to question the system. She appealed to people to support her, saying she wanted to become "the voice" of those whose concerns often go unheard. The announcement gives a political direction to Mittal's



decision to resign from the civil service after 13 years. Her resignation, announced on August 30, was accepted in September. Mittal, who served as district magistrate in Mirzapur and Deoria, is now seeking to use her experience in administration and dealing with public grievances to build a polit-

ical platform with citizens rather than align with an established party. Her pitch is centred on issues with a direct bearing on everyday life: schools, roads, farmers, unemployment and examination paper leaks. She has also questioned the role of money, caste and muscle power in electoral politics,

saying she wants to seek public support instead. That makes her move significant beyond the familiar phenomenon of bureaucrats entering politics. She has also shared a WhatsApp contact number, asking people to connect with her. Mittal has previously faced criticism from several BJP leaders over her style of working and allegations that she had exceeded her administrative brief. She has rejected allegations that she was secretly meeting political leaders. Her next challenge will be to translate the public profile she built during her administrative career into a political organisation capable of sustaining an independent platform.

Congress hits out at demography panel's religion-wise data request as 'diabolical'

AGENCY
New Delhi, Sep 29

The Congress on Tuesday attacked the Modi government over the Home Ministry-led demography panel reportedly seeking religion-wise data for the past 15 years on birth and vehicle registrations, school enrolment and property transactions, alleging the committee has a "patently diabolical agenda". Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh shared a report in The Hindu which claimed that the High-Level Committee on Demographic Changes has sought religion-wise data for the past 15 years



on birth and vehicle registrations, school enrolment and property transactions, as well as district-wise details of religious structures and unusual increases in

Aadhaar, voter ID and ration card registrations. It has also sought intelligence assessments and commission reports on religious conversions among Sched-

uled Tribe communities, and details of operational detention centres, among other information, according to the media report. In his post on X, Ramesh said this panel has a "patently diabolical agenda" and has clearly articulated pre-conceived biases. "Its report has already been prepared no doubt," Ramesh added. The media report has claimed that state governments are unable to answer most of the queries posed by the high-level committee studying demographic changes, as government departments do not ordinarily maintain much of the information sought by the panel on a religion-wise basis.

Mallika Sherawat Says She Doesn't Remember Traitors Winner Rida Tharana

Mumbai: Bollywood actor Mallika Sherawat may have left The Traitors season 2 midway through the game, but her presence on the reality show continued to make waves online. From her viral reels to her candid moments, the actor became one of the talking points of the season.

However, in a recent interview with Mashable India, Mallika appeared to draw a blank when asked about the show's winner, Rida Tharana, saying she did not even remember her. Her comments did not go down well with some viewers, who called her a "sore loser".

When asked whether she ever thought Rida could win after becoming a traitor, Mallika replied, "I really don't know who you are talking about. I mean there are 21 players in the game, am I supposed to remember everyone?" When reminded that Rida went on to win the show and has a significant following online, Mallika reiterated, "I have no idea. In the 9th episode, I was killed by the traitor, so after that, what happened, I really don't know."

The clip surfaced quickly on social media and the internet, calling Mallika out for being a "sore loser". One of



the comments read, "I really was rooting for Mallika Sher-

awat after this comeback, but watching her be more

delusional and petty than Gen-Z kids has been a huge turn off." Another commented, "Mallika is obnoxious, there's nothing cool in it." Another commented, "Sore loser" Another wrote, "This screams insecurity."

Another social media comment criticised Mallika Sherawat's remark, with one user writing, "I know Rida is evil - but this uppity behavior is also frankly annoying. She ain't no Mariah Carey to not remember who won the show at least. She needs to come down a couple of notches." The comment reflected the reactions of some

viewers who felt that Sherawat's response came across as dismissive, while others continued to discuss Rida Tharana's performance and conduct during the show. The Traitors features a group of contestants divided into Traitors and Innocents, with the participants required to work strategically while trying to identify members of the opposing group. The Innocents must figure out who the Traitors are and vote them out before they are eliminated, or "murdered", as part of the game. The format combines strategy, alliances and deception.

Uditi Opens Up On Karan Split



Pune: Actor Uditi Singh is one of the contestants on Bigg Boss 20. Ahead of the premiere, there were speculations that she would enter the reality show with her ex-boyfriend, actor Karan Wahi.

However, that did not happen. In the latest episode, Uditi spoke at length about her relationship did not work out and why it was a "blessing in disguise". While talking with Scout in the garden area, Uditi said, "Mere liye the breakup was really a blessing in disguise. Kyuki meri puri career, meri puri life, sab kuch badal gaya (Because my whole career and my life changed after that)." She went on to add, "Humne lockdown mein na saath mein pet liya, a golden retriever. Usko leke bohot ladaiyaan start hui. Covid bhi tah toh safai ka hum dono ka bada woh tha... Mere tareeke alag safai ke, uske alag. Phir woh thoda dominant bhi tha usme... apko nahi aata. Kyuki age gap tha toh har cheez meriko ye bolte the ki, 'Aap nahi kar payoge,' and 'Aapko nahi aata!' Partner hi demotivate kar raha hai. Stars nahi milte toh har baat pe ladaai hota hai (We took a pet during the lockdown, and both of us were big in terms of cleanliness.

Our rules were different. He was a little dominant and would say that I could not do things. That I would not be able to finish this work, things like that. He used to demotivate me. When stars don't align, this is what happens)." Earlier, Uditi had shared how they met. She shared that she DM'd him on Instagram about a restaurant in London, and then the two decided to meet. He was in London for three days, when the two and his other friends went out shopping and continued talking. After two months, they started dating. During the lockdown, she had shifted to India and was looking for jobs in an MNC while staying closer to the actor.

They were also discussing how they would eventually marry, when the breakup happened and it was a hard time for her. "We were quite serious about dating and then marriage. Shaadi wala chakkar tha (It was about the issue of marriage)," she said. Uditi was seen breaking down in tears, as Maahi and the others rushed to hug and comfort her. Karan and Uditi were in a relationship for more than two years, and broke up in 2022. Karan is currently competing in Khatron Ke Khiladi 15.

He is known for appearing in TV shows such as Remix, Dill Mill Gaye, Kuch Toh Log Kahenge, Khatron Ke Khiladi and Jhalak Dikhlaja. He also appeared as a guest on Bigg Boss 13.

Nani: First Such Reaction In 33 Films



Chennai: Telugu star Nani's The Paradise hit theatres on September 24. The film took a bumper opening but saw a sharp dip in collections the next day after receiving negative reviews. In a chat with director Srikanth Odela, Nani spoke about the extreme reactions to the film and revealed that it was the first time in his career that he had faced such a response. The actor spoke about the extreme reactions on social media, highlighting how some people were praising the film while others were deeply disappointed.

Nani added, "Out of 33 films I made in my 18 years of career, this is the first time I am experiencing something like this. But even when someone says they didn't like the film, there is a passion behind that response, an aggressive honesty. When someone says 'this didn't work for me' with that kind of intensity, it tells you something.

That is also positive in a way." Rather than dismissing the backlash, Nani viewed it as a reflection of how deeply audiences had invested in his collaboration with Srikanth Odela following the success of Dasara. He said the strong expectations and emotional reactions showed that the duo had built a genuine

connection with the audience. According to Nani, the trust that led viewers to enter theatres with such high expectations was ultimately a positive sign, regardless of how the reactions appeared on the surface.

The actor added that both he and the team knew how much effort and emotion they had invested in The Paradise, saying they had "put our heart out" while working on the film. He explained that they never approached any scene with the mindset that the work was merely "enough", indicating that the team pushed themselves throughout the production and went through several challenges in the process. Despite the intense reactions surrounding the film after its grand opening, Nani said he viewed the audience response as evidence of the affection and expectations people have for the actors and their work.

He suggested that the strong reactions also reflected the connection the audience had developed with them over the years. Looking ahead, the actor said that the experience should motivate both of them to ensure that their next project delivers something even more impactful and adds positively to their body of work.

Divya Supports Sunita Ahuja Amid Govinda Controversy

Pune: Govinda's visit to Lalbaugcha Raja with his rumoured girlfriend and co-star Komal Rani Swarnkar on the same day Sunita Ahuja visited the pandal alone has triggered a slew of reactions on social media. Recently, actor Divya Khosla shared a lengthy statement on social media backing Sunita and calling out Govinda over his actions. Sunita later reshared Divya's post. Divya began her note by saying that society once lived in a polygamous system where women were treated as little more than slaves to men. She said that over the years, women have become independent and built their own identities, but admitted that the ongoing Govinda-Sunita relationship row has made her question how far society has really come.

Divya then spoke about Govinda and Sunita's relationship and how the latter stayed loyal to him and took



care of their family. She wrote, "Sunita ji, as a woman, gave you her all. She stayed loyal. She brought up your kids. She never built a career of her own. What more can a woman do? She was the woman behind your success. You were successful outside, but the credit does not go to you alone. I guess you never had to carry the responsibility of your children at home." Divya also addressed Sunita Ahuja's recent video in which she requested

up in so many ways. What inspiration are we giving the future generation? That as a society, let's turn back into a polygamous one." After Sunita's repeated allegations against Govinda and Komal, the latter released a statement in which she accused Sunita of "trying to kill her own husband for years".

Reacting to Komal's words, Divya wrote, "Let's preserve our culture. Even if you're having an affair, please don't put it on public display. We are not interested. It's yuck for us to watch such a spectacle, even using religious sites to display your affair and, of course, plotting to call your wife a murderer is the last resort any spineless man could stoop to. Her heart reaches me. Her pain reaches me. At the age of 58, when women are of the age to be grandmothers, all she deserves is to walk into her old age with her husband by her side, looking after her."

youngsters to support her. She wrote, "Now a woman stands before us, before the entire society, pleading and begging for help, and we all stay quiet. Nobody wants to interfere in personal matters, but then why are we, as an audience, being subjected to what is put on display for us? Why these rounds of Govinda ji appearing every other day with his girlfriend? It's atrocious for me to watch, especially when polygamy is being promoted and covered

Parineeti Chopra Is Thankful She Wasn't A Mom While Playing A Mother Losing Her Child In Shaque

New Delhi: Parineeti Chopra is back in front of the camera. Actually, the actor never left.

While most actors take a breather during pregnancy and after childbirth, Parineeti was actually shooting an intense thriller while pregnant. Shaque, her maiden web series, released last week. Parineeti filmed parts of it in the early stages of her pregnancy. In a chat with Hindustan Times, the actor says she is glad she hadn't given birth before the shoot, or she would have 'cried in every scene'. Shaque stars Parineeti as a woman whose daughter is stolen from the crib hours af-

ter her birth, and she dedicates years to finding her, becoming almost obsessed and paranoid in the process. Parineeti was filming Shaque when she found out she was pregnant in 2025. A big part of the filming had already taken place. She recalls, "It was some sort of blessing in disguise that I had just started my journey at that time.

I didn't have that real-life experience to draw from. Thank God for that, because the kind of mom I am, it would have been unbearable for me to say those lines and do those scenes. I would not be able to differentiate too much." She says that had



she been a new mother herself at the time, performing would have been hard for her.

"When I think about Shaque and the things that are happening to this character, I

feel unbearable pain. I think I would completely collapse. I would cry in every scene.

I wonder what performance that would have been," adds the actor. Parineeti gave birth to her son, Neer, on 19 October last year.

The actor says that the time she has spent as a mother has helped her mature now. She explains, "Today, if I have to enact a role, I will approach it with much more strength because I am starting to settle into this role of mine as a mother."

Parineeti married politician Raghav Chadha in 2023 at Udaipur's Leela Palace. They welcomed their first child, a son, in October 2025, sharing his first pictures on social media a month later.

Sobhita Defends Katrina Amid Postpartum Trolling

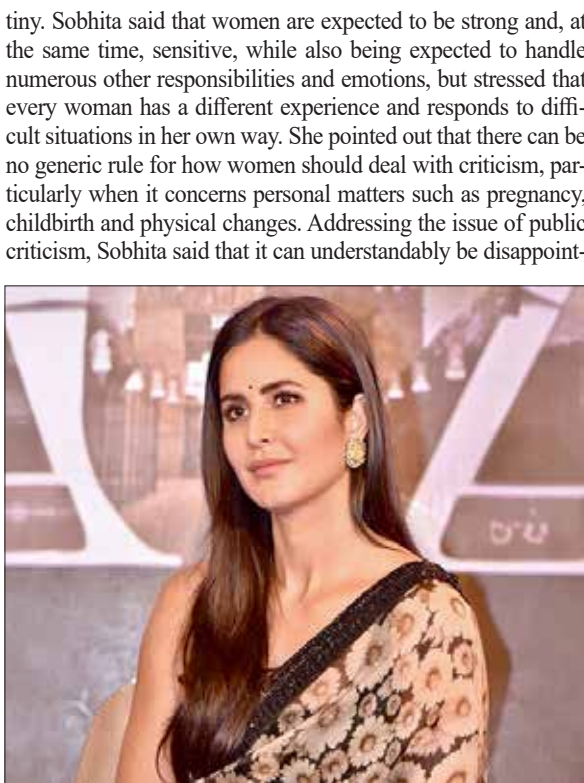
Hydrabad: Bollywood actor Katrina Kaif, who welcomed her son Vihaan in November last year, has faced social media trolling over her postpartum weight gain. Several actors have spoken out in her support, with Sobhita Dhulipala being the latest to address the scrutiny surrounding Katrina's appearance after childbirth. Sobhita was asked about the criticism women face in the film industry, particularly in light of the recent comments surrounding Katrina's postpartum weight gain. Responding to the question, Sobhita said women are often expected to meet multiple, sometimes conflicting, expectations, but everyone deals with public scrutiny differently.

She said, "Women are expected to be strong, women are expected to be sensitive, women are expected to be many things. And different women handle things differently, so there is no generic rule. Like when you say that public criticism is disappointing, I am sure it can be for many people; we are all human. We just deal with it in a way that makes sense for us." Before Sobhita, Parineeti Chopra, who is also a new mother, came out in support of Katrina and criticised those trolling her. She called comments about women's bodies after childbirth "uneducated". Parineeti pointed out that physical changes resulting from activities such as getting a haircut, going on holiday or working out are often celebrated, while changes caused by pregnancy and childbirth are treated negatively. She said she would instead view stretch marks as a reminder that a woman had carried and given birth to a baby, adding that such changes should be celebrated rather than criticised. Salman Khan also criticised the



trolls who body-shamed Katrina over her postpartum weight gain. He questioned why people were commenting on the actor's weight and appearance when she had recently become a mother.

Sobhita Dhulipala has spoken out in support of Katrina Kaif amid the online trolling and comments surrounding the actor's postpartum appearance, emphasising that women are often expected to fulfil multiple and sometimes conflicting expectations about how they should look, behave and respond to public scrutiny.



tiny. Sobhita said that women are expected to be strong and, at the same time, sensitive, while also being expected to handle numerous other responsibilities and emotions, but stressed that every woman has a different experience and responds to difficult situations in her own way. She pointed out that there can be no generic rule for how women should deal with criticism, particularly when it concerns personal matters such as pregnancy, childbirth and physical changes. Addressing the issue of public criticism, Sobhita said that it can understandably be disappointing

for many people because celebrities, despite living in the public eye, are still human beings who experience emotions and have individual ways of coping with negative attention. She added that people should be allowed to deal with criticism in whatever manner makes sense to them rather than being expected to follow a particular response. Before Sobhita, Parineeti Chopra, who is also a new mother, had expressed her support for Katrina and criticised social media users for commenting on her body following childbirth. Parineeti described such remarks about women's bodies after pregnancy as "uneducated" and questioned the different ways in which physical changes are perceived depending on their cause. She pointed out that changes resulting from activities such as getting a haircut, going on a holiday or working out are often celebrated or considered positive, while changes that occur naturally during pregnancy and after childbirth are frequently subjected to negative comments. Parineeti said she would instead view stretch marks and other physical changes associated with pregnancy as reminders of the experience of carrying and giving birth to a baby. According to her, such changes should be acknowledged and celebrated rather than becoming a reason for criticism or body-shaming. His remarks added another prominent voice to the criticism of online body-shaming directed at the actor. Katrina Kaif and Vicky Kaushal welcomed their son, Vihaan, in November 2025, marking a new phase in their personal lives. Since then, Katrina has largely remained away from the intense public spotlight, although she has made occasional public appearances.

Bihar Science Dept Posts Draw No Applicants

Patna, Sep 29: The Bihar Public Service Commission on Tuesday said it received no applications in response to last year’s advertisements for 218 vacancies in the Department of Science, Technology and Educational Education. In a statement, the BPSC said the department wanted to appoint faculty members, including heads of department, at various polytechnic institutes. Which usually screens a very large number of candidates, in a state where population density is the highest in the country and government jobs are still the rage.

“It is hereby informed that the BPSC had published advertisements on August



26, 2025, for the regular appointment to a total of 218 vacant posts of Heads of Departments in various departments/subjects in Government Polytechnic and Government Women’s Polytechnic institutions under the Department of Science, Technology and Technical

Education, Bihar”, the BPSC said in an ‘important notice’. Of these advertisements, no applications were received for nine.

In view of this, online applications were invited afresh for the above-mentioned advertisements, according to the notice.

Uttarakhand Premier League 2026: Dehradun Warriors Beat USN Indians by 52 Runs

Dehradun: Dehradun Warriors produced an impressive all-round performance in the Uttarakhand Premier League 2026, defeating USN Indians by 52 runs in a high-scoring encounter played late Monday night at the Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium. After winning the toss, USN Indians captain Naveen Rana opted to bowl first, but the decision did not immediately pay off as the Dehradun Warriors batters launched an aggressive assault from the beginning. Dehradun Warriors posted a formidable total of 204 for five in their allotted 20 overs, setting USN Indians a challenging target. Captain Kunal Chandel and



wicketkeeper-batter Sanskar Rawat provided the foundation for the innings with a strong opening partnership, putting pressure on the opposition bowlers and giving their side a solid platform. Sanskar Rawat was particularly ag-

gressive during his stay at the crease, smashing 62 runs from just 33 deliveries. His innings included nine boundaries and one six as he kept the scoreboard moving at a brisk pace. Chandel also played a crucial captain’s knock, scor-

ing 70 runs from 50 balls and finding the boundary regularly, with six fours and two sixes to his name. The partnership between the two batters helped Dehradun Warriors build momentum through the middle overs and put them in a strong position to finish with a big total. In the final stages of the innings, Neeraj Rathour continued the attack and remained unbeaten on 45, while Poorvansh Dhruv provided further impetus with an unbeaten 12 off just four deliveries. Their contributions in the closing overs ensured that Dehradun Warriors crossed the 200-run mark and finished on 204 for five. For USN Indians, Rahul Devnath and Ro-

hit Dangwal were the leading wicket-takers, claiming two wickets each, but the bowling attack struggled to contain the Warriors’ batting throughout the innings.

Chasing 205 for victory, USN Indians needed a strong start and consistent partnerships, but the team failed to maintain the required scoring rate against a disciplined Dehradun Warriors attack. USN Indians eventually finished their 20 overs at 152 for seven, falling 52 runs short of the target. The result gave Dehradun Warriors a convincing victory, with their strong batting effort followed by effective bowling and fielding helping them secure the win.

Two armed men held after gunfight with police in Delhi’s Paharganj

New Delhi, Sep 29: Police have arrested two alleged armed criminals after a brief gunfight in which seven rounds were fired in the Paharganj area here, and the suspects sustained bullet injuries to their legs, officials said on Tuesday. The accused, identified as Akash alias Matthi and Mukesh alias Chinu were taken to a hospital.



said. Two illegal firearms a pistol and a country-made pistol, each loaded with two live cartridges and a stolen motorcycle were recovered from them. Police found the motorcycle stolen in a case registered at Subzi Mandi police station on August 31. “Teams from the Special Staff and Central had been working to identify those involved in a

firing incident during a Baba Ramdev Ji procession in the Nabi Karim-Sadar Bazar area on September 13. During the incident, members of the alleged Vikas Kalia group opened fire near Ram Kumar Marg, with one bullet hitting a person in the left hand,” the officer said. Sadar Bazar police station registered a case on September 15. During the

investigation, technical surveillance and field-level efforts established the alleged involvement of Akash and Mukesh, both members of the Vikas Kalia group, police said.

On September 28, police received information that the duo would arrive in Paharganj on a stolen motorcycle carrying weapons and allegedly intending to eliminate their rivals. Akash, a historysheeter of the Nabi Karim area, has 13 previous cases registered against him, including those related to robbery, snatching, theft and the Arms Act, police said. Mukesh, also a historysheeter of the area, has seven previous cases, including attempted murder, culpable homicide, robbery, snatching and theft.

500-Year-Old Goa Decree Sparks Debate

Panaji, Sep 29: It is an anniversary being commemorated both in Goa and Portugal. Five hundred years ago on September 16, 1526, King João III of Portugal promulgated the Foral de Goa, a codified set of 49 laws historians consider to be not only Goa’s first ‘constitution’ but one of the earliest paper documents of this nature still preserved in South Asia. The document formed the basis of the relationship between the new foreign power and the local elite ensuring that the latter’s rights, especially those concerning land, inheritance and payment of taxes, were for the first time recorded in writing and acknowledged as justifiably merited since time immemorial.



In Goa, judge of the Bombay high court, Valmiki Menezes will release a commemorative edition of the Foral later this month. While in Portugal, a year long series of events is being organised by the Centre of the History of Society and Culture at the University of Coimbra besides other Portuguese cultural institutions on the impact the document had, and continues to have, on Goa setting it on a path different than the rest of the country.

Officially titled the Foral dos Usos e Costumes dos Gancarcas e Lavradores desta Ilha de Goa e outras Anexas a Ella, the Customs of the Gaunkars and Farmers of the Island of Goa and Other Islands Annexed to it; the document is sometimes referred to as the Foral de Afonso Mexia after Afonso de Mexia, the Vedor da Fazenda in India who signed off on it, or simply the Foral of 1526.

UP Restaurants Can’t Serve Hookah

Lucknow, Sep 29: The Allahabad High Court’s Lucknow Bench on Tuesday held that hookah bars being operated inside restaurants are illegal and cannot be permitted. Dismissing a batch of writ petitions filed by restaurant and hookah bar owners, the court held that following the 2017 amendment to Rule 4(3) of the Prohibition of Smoking in Public Places Rules, 2008, no service whatsoever is permissible inside a designated smoking area (DSA).

The petitioners had argued that they had created separate designated smoking areas in compliance with the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), and that hookah smoking should therefore be allowed. The court rejected the contention, observing that hookah smoking inherently requires commercial service, preparation, assistance and supply of the hookah, flavour, coal and other materials at the table. Such services are prohibited under the amended rules, it said.

Under the amended Rule 4(3), a DSA can only be a separate enclosure meant for customers to smoke on their own. No service is permitted inside the area, including a waiter entering to serve water or food, the court said. The provision is intended to protect non-smokers and staff from exposure to passive smoking. Since hookah smoking cannot take place without active service and preparation by the establishment, it violates the conditions governing a DSA, the court held. The High Court said operating hookah bars under the guise of designated smoking areas amounts to a clear violation of COTPA and the rules.

Asian Games 2026: Indian Boxer Narender Berwal Wins Bronze in Men’s +90kg Category

New Delhi: Indian boxer Narender Berwal won the bronze medal in the men’s +90kg category at the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games 2026. Narender suffered a 0-5 defeat to Kazakhstan’s reigning world champion Aibek Oralbay in the semi-final. Despite the semi-final loss, Narender secured the bronze medal by virtue of reaching the last four. Current reports and official Indian sports coverage spell his name as “Narender Berwal” and the Kazakh boxer’s name as “Aibek Oralbay.” Narender had made a strong start to the competition. In the quarter-final, he defeated Thailand’s Adthapong Saengtep after the referee stopped the contest just 97 sec into the bout, thereby securing a medal. Reports from the tournament also record Narender’s first-



round stoppage victory over Saengtep.

In the semi-final, Narender attempted to put up a strong challenge against world champion Oralbay, but the Kazakh boxer secured a 5-0 unanimous decision. Recent Indian sports coverage confirms his Commonwealth Games silver and his status as a Hangzhou bronze medalist. Born on November 14, 199, Narender comes from

a farming family. He began his boxing journey under the guidance of coach Devraj Singh and later joined the Indian Army, where he continued to pursue his boxing career. He is regarded as one of India’s leading super-heavyweight boxers.

Akashvani News identifies Sorkhi as his native village and notes that he began boxing in 2009 before joining the Indian Army in 2013.

Asian Games 2026: Ankush Panghal Reaches 80kg Final, Secures Silver Medal

New Delhi: Police have arrested two alleged armed criminals after a brief gunfight in which seven rounds were fired in the Paharganj area here, and the suspects sustained bullet injuries to their legs, officials said on Tuesday. The accused, identified as Akash alias Matthi and Mukesh alias Chinu were taken to a hospital.



According to police, the accused fired four rounds at the police team on Monday on the stretch from Chemsford Road towards Reservation Road in Paharganj. “Three rounds were fired in retaliation by the police team. One bullet passed close to the head of head constable Mohit, while another hit the bulletproof jacket of head constable Ravjiv,” a senior police officer

said. Two illegal firearms a pistol and a country-made pistol, each loaded with two live cartridges and a stolen motorcycle were recovered from them. Police found the motorcycle stolen in a case registered at Subzi Mandi police station on August 31. “Teams from the Special Staff and Central had been working to identify those involved in a

firing incident during a Baba Ramdev Ji procession in the Nabi Karim-Sadar Bazar area on September 13. During the incident, members of the alleged Vikas Kalia group opened fire near Ram Kumar Marg, with one bullet hitting a person in the left hand,” the officer said. Sadar Bazar police station registered a case on September 15. During the

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CAQM removes exemptions for older goods vehicles under strict GRAP stages

New Delhi, Sep 29: Older goods vehicles carrying essential commodities will no longer be exempt from curbs once the two strictest stages of Delhi-NCR’s pollution-control plan kick in. The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) has removed the exemption for BS-IV and below vehicles under Stages III and IV of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP).



through separate orders issued on top of GRAP last year. “We had issued orders on top of the existing GRAP restrictions earlier. But now we have formalised these restrictions by including them in GRAP,” an official aware of the matter said. “State governments can refer to these and are also welcome to implement directions beyond these as well.” One such order restricts older

goods vehicles entering Delhi throughout the year. In October 2025, CAQM amended one of its directions and under it, commercial goods vehicles registered outside Delhi were barred from entering the city since November 1, 2025 unless they are BS-VI, CNG, LNG or electric. BS-III and below vehicles were shut out whatever they carried. BS-IV vehicles got a one-year tran-

sitional window, which ends on October 31, 2026. The revised GRAP also spells out, under Stage III, the restriction on entry into Delhi of diesel BS-IV and below LGVs and MGVs registered outside the city. Addressing a press conference, CAQM member-technical Dr SD Attri said the revised schedule has 48 actions across the four stages: 25 under Stage I, eight under Stage II, 10 under Stage III and five under Stage IV.

Actions related to diesel generator sets, and to the entry of BS-IV and below buses from NCR and adjoining states, have moved from Stage II to Stage I, so they apply at an earlier stage of pollution. Restrictions on plying BS-III petrol and BS-IV diesel four-wheelers have been extended to Sonipat. They already apply in the

high vehicle density districts of Gurugram, Faridabad, Ghaziabad and Gautam Budh Nagar. The schedule merges repeated Stage I measures on dust control, municipal solid waste management and transport. It also allows a minor relaxation under the first Stage III action, including for repairing potholes.

The Citizens Charter under each stage has been revised with additional dos and don’ts. Separately, CAQM has extended web-portal registration and monitoring of dust-control measures to eligible construction and demolition sites beyond municipal limits. This covers urban areas, controlled areas, development and industrial development areas, industrial areas and zones, and highway corridor zones.

Revanth Reddy’s ‘rich God, poor God’ remark faces heat, BJP slams Telangana CM’s ‘absurd’ statement

Chennai, Sep 29: Telangana BJP launched a scathing attack against chief minister Revanth Reddy on Tuesday, a day after his remarks on Hindu gods Ram and Shiva sparked outrage. BJP chief N Ramchander Rao hit out at Reddy for allegedly trying to create a divide among Hindus and between the north and the south.



Reddy on Monday claimed that Congress struggled to win in the northern states because BJP “stole Lord Ram”, who is worshipped by larger number of devotees in the north, while the party managed to win in the south, where Lord Shiva is worshipped. Speaking at a media event in Delhi, Reddy went on to claim that Ram was the God of the rich and Shiva was the God of the poor. He further alleged that BJP was a party of the rich. Angered by the Telangana CM’s remarks, Rao termed it “highly condemnable” as he called for protests. “It is objectionable.

It is an absurd statement by a person holding a Constitutional post,” quoted him as saying. Rao called upon the BJP workers to burn Reddy’s effigies at mandal level across the state. The BJP chief further alleged that Reddy had also described himself as “Revanth Uddin” in the past in his bid to unite Muslims, while he tries to divide the Hindus. BJP spokesperson Prakash Reddy also hit out at the Congress leader, saying, “I think he has no basic knowledge about this country, basic geography of this country. Ram is a North Indian God and Shiv is

a Dravidian God is what he said yesterday. But he doesn’t know where Mount Kailash is, or where Kedarnath is, or where Badrinath is.”

The BJP leader termed Telangana CM Reddy as a “blind follower of Rahul Gandhi” and an “andhbhakt of the British”.

“If you are speaking this ignorantly, it will hamper the integrity, unity, and diversity of this country. He is an anti-national thinker. British historians wrote things to divide the country, he is following this,” ANI quoted Prakash Reddy as saying.

Asian Games: Dhiraj Bommadevara and Neeraj Chauhan advance to the recurve archery quarterfinals

AGENCY
New Delhi

Indian archers Dhiraj Bommadevara and Neeraj Chauhan advanced to the quarterfinals of the men's recurve individual event at the Asian Games 2026 after registering contrasting victories in the Round of 16 here on Tuesday. Top seed Dhiraj overcame Chinese Taipei's Cheng Hsiang-Hui 6-2, while Neeraj produced a strong performance to upset South Korea's multiple Olympic medallist Kim Je Deok 6-4, according to ESPN. Dhiraj, who had earlier defeated Philippines' Girvin Garcia 6-0 in the Round of 32, was made to work harder by Cheng but held his nerve to seal the contest 6-2. He will face Uzbekistan's Amirkon



Sadikov in the quarterfinals on October 3. Neeraj, meanwhile, pulled off one of the day's notable wins by getting past Kim, who had qualified second in the ranking round. The Indian made a strong start and took a 3-1 lead, but

Kim fought back to level the contest at 3-3. A tied set then made it 4-4, leaving the match to be decided in the final set. Neeraj held his composure under pressure to take the deciding set and complete a 6-4 victory. He will face Bhutan's

Dorji Lam in the quarterfinals. Dhiraj had enjoyed a more comfortable passage into the last 16, beating Garcia 6-0 in three straight sets. He needed only nine arrows to complete the win, with six of his nine shots landing in the 10-ring.

India's surfing campaign, meanwhile, came to an end after Kishore Kumar Anbarasu lost his men's shortboard quarterfinal to Philippines' Toby Espejon. Kishore's two best scores from eight waves were 3.00 and 2.37, giving him a total of 5.37, while Espejon finished with 8.53.

The athletics programme also offers India further medal opportunities on Tuesday, with Gulveer Singh eyeing a third medal of the Games in the men's 5000m final after winning silver in the 1500m and 10,000m. Avinash Sable will also compete in the 5000m, while three Indian relay teams are scheduled to feature in medal races. The men's and women's 4x400m and mixed 4x100m finals are among the events on the track.

Thalapathy Vijay calls Asian Games silver medalist Ancy Sojan, fulfilling her wish



AGENCY
New Delhi

Ancy Sojan came within two centimetres of winning Asian Games gold in the women's long jump, but walked away with a second successive silver medal. After the narrow defeat, the 25-year-old had one rather unexpected wish, a call from Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay, popularly known as Thalapathy Vijay. Ancy spoke about her admiration for Vijay's motivational side after the final and said she would be delighted if the actor-turned-politician reached out to her. Her silver came after China's Huang Yingying produced a 6.55m effort with her final jump to snatch gold from the Indian. "I wish I can get a call from him. I like his motivation and all, that's all I wanna say. I'd be very happy if I can get a call," Ancy said. It was a particularly close finish for Ancy, who had been leading for much of the competition. She had produced 6.53m in her second attempt and remained ahead on countback when Huang matched her 6.49m, only for the Chinese jumper to find another 6cm with her final effort. Ancy's admiration for Vijay goes back well before her Asian

Games campaign. A long-time fan of the Tamil superstar-turned-Chief Minister, she even recreated Vijay's iconic victory pose after winning the women's long jump at the Indian Athletics Championships final in New Delhi, making her wish for a call from him after her silver all the more special. Ancy responded with 6.49m in her final attempt but could not reclaim the lead. The two-centimetre difference left her with silver, while Huang's 6.55m secured the gold.

The result nevertheless extended Ancy's impressive Asian Games record. After winning silver in Hangzhou, she became only the second Indian woman after Anju Bobby George to win multiple Asian Games medals in the long jump. The evening also saw Shaili Singh miss out on a podium finish. She was sitting third before China's Tan Mengyi jumped 6.46m with the final effort of the competition, leaving Shaili fourth with 6.42m. Ancy's medal adds to what has been a significant year for the long jumper, who has increasingly established herself among India's leading athletes in the event. She was also the last Indian standing for a medal in the women's long jump in Na-

goya after Shaili slipped out of the podium places. The silver means Ancy now has back-to-back Asian Games medals, although the gold that seemed within reach for much of Tuesday's final will leave her with unfinished business.

Ancy Sojan narrowly missed gold in the women's long jump at the 2026 Asian Games, securing her second consecutive silver after China's Huang Yingying edged her by 2 cm with a 6.55m final jump. A 25-year-old national record holder from India, Ancy admires Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Thalapathy Vijay and expressed a wish for a motivational call from him. Despite the close defeat, her silver marks a significant achievement, making her only the second Indian woman with multiple Asian Games long jump medals. A glance at the schedule had raised hopes that Sunday could finally bring India its first athletics gold of the Games, and perhaps even its first individual gold. Instead, there were near-misses, last-attempt heartbreak and several reminders of just how fine the margins can be at the Asian Games. The most dramatic of them all came in the women's long jump.

Rohit Sharma reveals how he and Virat Kohli react to media stories

Rohit Sharma reflects on his timeless 'Ro-Ko' bond

AGENCY
New Delhi

For nearly two decades, Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli have been constants in Indian cricket. They have played together, led together, celebrated together and endured some of the game's most painful defeats together. Now, as both enter the twilight of their international careers, Rohit says the bond between them remains much the same as it was when it began. Their relationship has been under the spotlight again in recent days, with the pair's popular 'Ro-Ko' moniker becoming a talking point after Kohli spoke about it recently. Kohli said the tag had a "nice ring to it" and that he enjoyed the fun around it. Rohit, speaking to JioStar himself, revealed that the two have a rather simple reaction whenever



er the 'Ro-Ko' tag appears on television. "I think we were together. This started, I think, when we were playing in Australia, or right after Australia

when we came to India. That's when this started, and whenever this plays on TV, we look at each other and laugh. Which is good, it's fun. People

want masala, so there you go, there is some masala," Rohit, speaking to JioStar ahead of India's second ODI against West Indies on Wednesday, said. Behind the jokes, though, is a relationship built over years of shared experience. Rohit made his India debut in 2007; Kohli followed in 2008. Since then, their careers have become deeply intertwined.

"Both of us, we've almost started playing at the same time. I made my debut in 2007, he made his debut in 2008. And since then, we've been trying to give our best for the team," Rohit said. "So yeah, there's a strong camaraderie between the two of us, and we understand what it requires to be at a certain level when you're playing at this level. Methods are different, obviously, but that's how it should be, every individual is different."

Mirabai Chanu celebrates fulfilling her ultimate dream with an Asian Games medal

AGENCY
New Delhi

Mirabai Chanu on Tuesday expressed her delight after returning to New Delhi with a silver medal from the Asian Games 2026, saying she had waited years for the achievement. Chanu secured the silver medal in the women's 49kg weightlifting category at the Asian Games in Japan, adding the continental medal to an already decorated career that includes an Olympic medal, a World Championship medal and three Commonwealth Games gold

medals. "I am overjoyed. I had been waiting for this day for years. I already had an Olympic medal and a World Championship medal, and I was a three-time Commonwealth Games gold medallist.

But this was the ultimate dream for us; it was incredibly important to me, and now I've finally secured it. I've added the Asian Games medal to my collection, and having achieved something for India and for weightlifting, I am absolutely delighted," Chanu said after arriving in New Delhi on Tuesday



morning. The 32-year-old lifted a combined 198kg, with successful attempts of 87kg in the snatch and 111kg in the clean and jerk. North Korea's Ri Song Gum won

gold with 215kg, while Wijayana claimed bronze. Reflecting on her preparation, Chanu said the Asian Games were particularly important for her after she suffered an injury during the previous edition. "We trained very well. These Asian Games were crucial for me because I had suffered an injury during the previous ones. So, this was my best opportunity to prove myself. The preparation routine didn't change much; we stuck to the same methods we had been using before," she said. The medal ended a long wait for Chanu

at the Asian Games. She had narrowly missed the podium at Hangzhou 2023 after an injury forced her to withdraw from her final clean and jerk attempt, leaving her fourth.

The 32-year-old entered the Aichi-Nagoya Games after winning gold at the 2026 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow. She is also a three-time Commonwealth Games champion and won Olympic silver at Tokyo 2020. With her maiden Asian Games medal, Chanu became the second Indian weightlifter after Karnam Malleshwari to win medals at the Olym-

pics, Asian Games, Commonwealth Games, World Championships, Asian Championships and Commonwealth Championships. Born in Nongpok Kakching, Manipur, Chanu began formal weightlifting training in 2008 and went on to establish herself as one of India's leading weightlifters. Chanu said the team was determined to make the most of the opportunity and had a clear strategy for the weights she would attempt during the competition. "We were determined not to let this opportunity slip away.

Haryana's Neeru Dhandra wins trap gold, lifting India to fifth Asian title

AGENCY
New Delhi

Indian shooter Neeru Dhandra produced a dominant performance to win the women's individual trap gold medal at the Asian Games 2026 on Tuesday, securing India's fifth gold of the Aichi-Nagoya Games after topping both qualification and the final. Dhandra, who had earlier helped India win silver in the women's trap team event, maintained her composure in rainy conditions to finish on top of the eight-shooter final with a score of 26, according to ESPN. China's Sun Yunong and Kuwait's Hajar Abdulmalik finished with 21 points each, while Qatar's Ray Basil took fourth place with 16 points. Dhandra began the final strongly, hitting all five tar-



gets in her opening series. She missed once in the second series but recovered immediately and remained in contention before producing a remarkable run in the latter stages. She hit a perfect series in the third round to move back to the top and followed it with another strong sequence, reaching 19

hits out of 20 shots after four series. After 25 shots, Dhandra led Sun 23-21, with Hajar also on 21 before being eliminated. The Indian then held her nerve in the decisive stage to seal the gold medal. The victory capped a remarkable year for Dhandra, who won her maiden ISSF World Cup gold in the

women's trap event in Lonato, Italy, in July. The Indian Army Marksmanship Unit shooter, who is also a Naib Subedar, had earlier won the Asian Championship title and has now added an Asian Games gold to her growing list of achievements. Dhandra had topped the individual

qualification alongside Qatar's Ray Basil, which gave her the advantage in the event of a tie in the final. Earlier on Tuesday, Dhandra, Aashima Ahlawat and Manisha Keer won silver in the women's trap team event with a combined score of 328. China took gold with 346, while Kuwait secured bronze with 325. Dhandra was India's best performer in the team event, scoring 118 out of 125. Her individual gold took India's medal tally to 47, comprising five gold, 21 silver and 21 bronze medals. Dhandra's success is also notable for Indian shotgun shooting, which has traditionally produced fewer major-event medals compared to rifle and pistol disciplines. She took up shooting after being inspired by her cousin Lakshay Sheor Asian Games in Jakarta.

Kapil Dev praises Virat Kohli following historic 15,000 ODI runs milestone

AGENCY
New Delhi

Indian cricket legend and former captain Kapil Dev on Tuesday hailed Virat Kohli's achievement of reaching 15,000 runs in ODI cricket, praising the batter's talent, consistency and belief in himself. Speaking to ANI, Kapil said Kohli's achievement was a testament to his special talent and highlighted his exceptional batting average. "I think special talent. He's done so well. Very few people in this world have an average of more than 60. Hats off to him. And more important, I think, his passion for the game. I don't know why he left Test cricket, but again, whatever he is doing, he must be doing something special for himself to make sure he keeps on performing at that level," Kapil said. During India's successful 296-run chase in the first ODI against the West Indies



on Sunday, Kohli smashed an unbeaten 139 off just 88 balls, with 10 fours and nine sixes, at a strike rate of 157.95. Throughout his innings, the 37-year-old displayed exceptional hitting while maintaining a sense of control and composure, staying true to the style that has defined his ODI career through numerous successful run chases and records. Virat's 86th interna-

tional century also took him past the 15,000-run mark in ODIs. The right-handed batter is also the second batter after the great Sachin Tendulkar to breach the landmark of 15,000 runs in the 50-over format. In 315 ODIs and 303 innings, Virat has scored 15,080 runs at an average of 59.13, including 55 centuries and 79 fifties, with a best score of 183.

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