

Arunachal Cabinet approves recruitment reforms, healthcare measures, women’s helpline

KHANDU CABINET CLEARS KEY REFORMS

Itanagar, Oct 12: The Arunachal Pradesh Cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister Pema Khandu, approved a series of policy decisions aimed at reforming recruitment standards in technical education, strengthening healthcare delivery, expanding support services for women, and upgrading administrative frameworks across the state.

To enhance transparency and ensure merit-based appointments in government engineering and polytechnic colleges, the Cabinet approved unified recruitment rules aligned with All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) guidelines. In a major step toward supporting women in distress, the cabi-



net sanctioned the creation of 20 dedicated posts under Mission Shakti to operation-

alize the 24x7 toll-free Women Helpline-181 across the state. The helpline will pro-

vide immediate emergency assistance, legal aid, medical assistance, and counseling services.

In the healthcare sector, the Cabinet approved the creation of five Group B Gazetted posts for Food Safety Officers to address personnel shortages and enforce food quality regulations effectively. Additionally, the state government approved an upward revision of grade pay for various categories of staff working under the National Leprosy Elimination Programme to address wage parity concerns and boost employee morale. The Cabinet also approved the renaming of three educational institutions in honor of eminent local personalities.

Clashes in Nagaland leave one dead, houses burned

Kohima, Oct 12: Violent clashes between two tribal communities in Nagaland’s Kiphire and Shamator districts left one person dead, another injured, and over a dozen houses razed to the ground, prompting civil administration to impose strict prohibitory orders and appeal for peace.

The violent standoff erupted between members of the Tikhir and Yimkhung communities over a localized land and territorial dispute. The clashes spread across Pungro town alongside the villages of Zaonger, Longtsunger, Thulinkiu, and Pokphur. According to police reports, armed miscreants torched multiple residential structures in Longtsunger and Zaonger villages. During the arson

and subsequent exchange of gunfire, one individual suffered fatal gunshot wounds in Longtsunger, while another sustained critical injuries. The widespread arson forced scores of local villagers to flee their homes and seek temporary refuge in safer adjacent areas.

Following the escalation, the district administration deployed heavy security forces, including Nagaland Police and paramilitary personnel, to enforce Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS). Prohibitory orders strictly ban unlawful assemblies, the carrying of lethal weapons, and unauthorized vehicle movements in the affected sub-divisions.

The Eastern Nagaland People’s Organisation

(ENPO), alongside the United Sangtam Lijeaba Seyochung (USLP) and local tribal councils, issued urgent public appeals urging both communities to exercise utmost restraint, cease retaliatory actions, and engage in constructive dialogue to restore peace. District officials confirmed that while the situation remains tense, security patrols are conducting ongoing field operations to relocate displaced families, prevent fresh flare-ups, and restore public order.

Nagaland Deputy Chief Minister Yanthungo Patton, who holds the Home portfolio, issued a stern warning against rumor-mongering and unverified social media posts that could further inflame tensions across sensitive border pockets.

ED arrests suspended Punjab Police Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Harcharan Singh Bhullar in connection with an ongoing money laundering probe stemming from alleged corruption and disproportionate assets, securing an eight-day custodial remand from a special PMLA court.

Chandigarh, Oct 12: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has arrested suspended Punjab Police Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Harcharan Singh Bhullar in connection with an ongoing money laundering probe stemming from alleged corruption and disproportionate assets, securing an eight-day custodial remand from a special PMLA court.

The federal agency arrested the 2009-batch IPS officer under Section 19 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) following extensive investigation by the Chandigarh Zonal Office-I. Following the arrest, ED officials produced Bhullar before a Special PMLA Court in Chandigarh and sought custodial interrogation to trace the proceeds of crime, confront him with financial records, and map undisclosed property transactions. The special judge granted the agency eight days of custody to conduct detailed questioning. The money laundering case stems from an earlier corruption investigation initiated by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) over allegations of demanding illegal gratification through an intermediary. During earlier searches conducted at the officer’s premises in Sector 40, Chandigarh, investigating agencies reportedly seized significant financial assets, including cash exceeding Rs 7.5 crore, approximately 2.5 kilograms of gold, and documents linked to 129 acres of landed properties. The ED had previously arrested an alleged middleman, Krishanu Sharda, who reportedly acted as a conduit for handling illegal gratification transactions on behalf of the senior officer.

Kohima to host education and career fair on October 15

Kohima, Oct 12: The Kohima Village Students’ Union (KVSU) announced that it will organize the second edition of the Kohima Education and Career Fair 2026, branded as “NextStepKohima 2026,” on October 15 at the Kohima Village Council Hall.

The day-long career fair aims to empower students, job seekers, and young professionals across Nagaland by providing comprehensive counseling, vocational insights, and direct exposure to diverse higher education and skill development pathways. Organizing officials stated that the event will bring together prominent academic institutions, vocational training centers, career counselors, and industry experts under a single platform to guide participants through emerging career

options, competitive examination strategies, and skill enhancement programs. Students and parents will have the opportunity to interact directly with representatives from various universities and professional training institutes to explore scholarship schemes and enrollment requirements.

Highlighting the importance of early career mapping, union leaders noted that many youth in rural and urban pockets of the state face challenges in accessing updated guidance regarding specialized fields beyond traditional employment sectors. The event is structured to bridge this information gap by featuring dedicated interactive sessions, resume-building guidance, and skill-matching workshops tailored to the evolving demands of the regional and national

job markets.

The KVSU has extended an open invitation to high school pupils, college undergraduates, and unemployed youth across Kohima district to participate in the fair and utilize the platform to make informed academic and professional choices. Organizers revealed that the upcoming edition will feature over 30 interactive stalls set up by leading universities, skill academies, and vocational institutes from across India and abroad. To maximize reach and impact, the union has coordinated with local schools and village youth organizations to facilitate transportation for students attending from outlying areas, while setting up free one-on-one career counseling desks staffed by experienced educationists.

Car, heroin seized; two drug peddlers held in East Siang



and a Narzo Android smartphone. The two individuals traveling in the intercepted vehicle were immediately taken into custody and identified by police authorities as Gonong Taloh and Apat Megu. A formal criminal

Itanagar, Oct 12: Under the ongoing anti-narcotics initiative Operation Dawn 2.0, East Siang Police apprehended two suspected drug peddlers and recovered contraband heroin along with a vehicle near Taga Korong on the way to Silluk village under Mebo Police Station jurisdiction on Monday.

Following credible intelligence regarding the movement of illicit substances along the rural corridor, a police team intercepted a red Hyundai i10 car bearing registration number AS06J 2826. During the subsequent search conducted in compliance with statutory procedures, law enforcement personnel recovered 4.84 grams of suspected heroin, an insulin syringe, two lighters, a keypad mobile phone,

hita (BNS). Both suspects remain in police custody as investigators conduct follow-up interrogations to trace the upstream supply linkages and local distribution networks associated with the seized contraband. East Siang Superintendent of Police Pankaj Lamba reaffirmed the district police department’s firm commitment to a zero-tolerance policy against drug trafficking across the region. Emphasizing the crucial role of local communities in combating substance abuse, SP Lamba urged citizens and village elders to report suspicious activities and share actionable information with law enforcement to support ongoing efforts toward achieving a drug-free East Siang.

Thakur slams Congress political maneuvers

New Delhi, Oct 12: Senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader and Hamirpur Member of Parliament Anurag Thakur launched a sharp attack against the Congress-led Himachal Pradesh government on Monday, accusing Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu of misusing state assets by transforming Himachal Bhawan in New Delhi into a political operations hub.

Addressing media personnel in the national capital, Thakur alleged that over 200 Congress party workers and representatives gathered at the state-owned Himachal Bhawan premises in the Mandi House area to coordinate political demonstrations and make baseless allegations against constitutional authorities. The BJP leader expressed strong disapproval of utilizing state government guest houses and official administrative properties for partisan political agitations, emphasizing that public assets funded by taxpayer money are intended strictly for administrative and public welfare functions rather than serving as party political headquarters. Critiquing the governance record of the Sukhu administration, Thakur highlighted that the current state government has plunged Himachal Pradesh into severe financial distress, accumulating record levels of debt while failing to deliver on its primary electoral promises.

Fifty-day wood carving skill training underway in Dimapur

Kohima, Oct 12: A 50-day skill development training program focused on traditional wood carving craft commenced at Indisen village in Nagaland’s Dimapur district under the Guru Shishya Hasthishilp Prashikshan Programme to empower local artisans.

The initiative aims to train 30 selected participants in mastering intricate wooden carving techniques, preserving heritage craftsmanship, and building sustainable livelihood opportunities through institutional support. Organised under the auspices of the Office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Union Ministry of Textiles, the comprehensive training session is being implemented in active coordination with the Nagaland Handloom and Handicrafts Development Corporation (NHHDC) Limited. During the formal inauguration ceremony, senior officials from NHHDC Ltd. and the Handicrafts Promo-

tion Officer (HPO) from the Handicrafts Service Centre (HSC), Kohima, highlighted the economic potential of handcrafted wooden artifacts in national and international markets. Speakers encouraged the trainees to utilize government welfare schemes, artisan credit cards, and marketing platforms to commercialize their products effectively upon completing the course.

The 50-day curriculum combines hands-on practical instruction led by master craftspeople with theoretical knowledge covering tool maintenance, raw material selection, modern finishing standards, and design innovation. Field officers from the Handicrafts Service Centre will conduct regular monitoring and quality inspections throughout the program to ensure standard instruction and successful skill transfer. To support participants throughout the two-month hands-on workshop,

the organizers are providing all 30 artisans with essential raw materials, specialized carving toolsets, and a daily stipend to cover logistical expenses. Local traditional leaders at Indisen village welcomed the government-sponsored initiative, noting that structured training helps preserve distinct Naga cultural motifs while equipping young craftspeople with commercial woodwork capabilities.

In addition to practical craftsmanship, the curriculum incorporates foundational modules on product design, cost estimation, digital marketing, and accessing credit facilities under various central and state handicraft development schemes. Upon successful completion of the 50-day course, certified artisans will be integrated into the NHHDC marketing network and gain opportunities to showcase their creations at regional craft melas and national trade exhibitions.

Committee on Public Accounts begins sixth sitting in Arunachal

PAC EXAMINES CAG AUDIT REPORTS

Itanagar, Oct 12: The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of the Eighth Legislative Assembly of Arunachal Pradesh commenced its sixth sitting on Monday at the Assembly Conference Hall in Itanagar to examine Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) audit reports concerning key government departments.

The high-level scrutiny committee began reviewing observations detailed in the C&AG Report on Social, Economic, General, and Revenue Sectors, alongside the Audit Report on State Finances. During the opening proceedings, senior officials and department heads from three major state departments deposited before the panel to respond to audit queries, explain financial compliance records, and address administrative irregularities highlighted



ed in the CAG findings. Committee members questioned departmental representatives regarding fiscal discipline, project delays, budget utilization, and procedural compliance in executing public welfare schemes.

Legislative panel officials

emphasized that rigorous examination of CAG observations ensures financial accountability, deters fund diversion, and strengthens governance across state departments. The sitting was attended by senior committee members, state assembly secretariat officials, and

representatives from the Office of the Accountant General (Audit) of Arunachal Pradesh. The PAC’s review process will continue over subsequent sessions to evaluate additional departmental testimonies and formulate comprehensive recommendations for submission to the Legislative Assembly. The deposing officials assured the committee that comprehensive corrective measures and detailed written explanations regarding the flagged audit paras would be submitted within specified timelines. Emphasizing the importance of strict financial management, the PAC instructed state departments to streamline internal auditing mechanisms, clear long-pending audit observations, and adhere strictly to established procurement and fiscal regulations.

Delhi CM Rekha Gupta discusses safety, education with college girls

New Delhi, Oct 12: Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta engaged in a direct interactive town hall session on Monday with undergraduate students and young women representatives from various Delhi University colleges, discussing strategic measures to enhance women’s safety, modern education infrastructure, and public transport access across the national capital.

The interactive session focused on addressing systemic urban challenges faced by female students commuting to academic campuses. Highlighting her administration’s key priorities, Chief Minister Gupta assured the gathering that the Delhi government is actively expanding surveillance networks, installing high-intensity street lighting in dark spots near educational

institutions, and reinforcing dedicated police patrolling along major transit corridors. Students shared ground-level insights regarding last-mile connectivity, the deployment of marshals in public buses, and the need for upgraded hostel accommodations for outstation women scholars. Addressing the educational aspect, Chief Minister Gupta emphasized that expanding

vocational skill development centers and promoting digital research labs within state-funded institutions remain central to fostering youth employability. Drawing from her own student leadership background, she urged young women to participate actively in civic governance, academic union forums, and social leadership roles. Senior officials from the Directorate

of Higher Education and Delhi Police were present during the interaction to note specific policy feedback and infrastructural recommendations provided by the students. The Chief Minister concluded the session by announcing that similar consultative dialogues will be organized periodically across various district campuses to ensure direct public input shapes the city’s admin-

istrative, welfare, and safety policies. Furthermore, Chief Minister Gupta highlighted the ongoing expansion of women’s welfare infrastructure in the national capital, noting that the administration has operationalized 11 One Stop Centres, 15 women’s shelter homes, and 14 working women’s hostels to support women facing distress or seeking safe urban housing.

She reiterated that establishing safer public transit networks, conducting regular gender-sensitivity workshops across government departments, and expanding free self-defense training modules across state-run schools are integral components of her administration’s long-term strategy to ensure total security and equal opportunity for every woman in Delhi.

Nalbari's Billeswar Temple Revives 11-Day Durga Puja Celebration

Nalbari, Oct 12: Festive excitement is building across Assam as preparations for Durga Puja gather momentum, with artisans working to complete clay idols and organisers putting the final touches on elaborate pandals.

From Guwahati to major district centres, puja committees are preparing themed decorations and arrangements to welcome large numbers of devotees during the celebrations. As the festival approaches, the atmosphere across the state is becoming increasingly vibrant.

Artisans are racing against time to finish the idols of Goddess Durga, while organisers are overseeing the construction and decoration of pandals designed to attract visitors. The preparations reflect the scale of the annual celebration, which brings communities together through religious observances, cultural programmes and public festivities. Alongside the preparations, authorities across Assam have stepped



up security arrangements to ensure that the celebrations take place safely. Local administrations have issued guidelines covering crowd management, traffic regulation and the installation of CCTV cameras at designated locations.

These measures are intended to help manage the expected influx of devotees and minimise inconvenience during the festival. While preparations continue across the state, particular attention has turned to Nalbari, where the historic Billeswar Temple has revived its traditional 11-day Durga worship ritual. The extended observance

distinguishes the temple's celebrations from the more widely followed four-day Durga Puja schedule and has become a significant feature of this year's festive countdown. In Guwahati and other major district centres, puja committees are working to complete their pandals in time for the festivities. Themed structures and elaborate decorations are expected to form a major attraction for visitors, with organisers preparing venues to accommodate devotees throughout the celebration. Artisans are also putting in long hours to complete clay idols of Goddess Durga.

Idol-making is an essential part of the preparations, requiring careful work on the figures, their expressions and decorative details. As the festival draws closer, finishing work becomes increasingly urgent to ensure that the idols are ready for installation.

The preparations extend beyond the pandals themselves. Organising committees must also coordinate arrangements for visitors, manage access to the venues and prepare for the large crowds expected during peak hours.

The combination of religious ceremonies and public festivities makes planning an important part of the celebration. Durga Puja is widely marked through worship, cultural activities and community gatherings. In Assam, the festival brings together neighbourhood committees, artisans, priests and local residents, with preparations often beginning well before the main days of celebration.

Several Hurt in Bus and Truck Collision in Assam

Dispur , Oct 12: Several passengers were injured after a bus carrying devotees from Assam's Charaideo district collided head-on with a truck on a four-lane highway at Missa in Kaliabor early on Monday, October 12. All passengers travelling on the bus sustained injuries in the accident and were shifted to a nearby hospital for medical treatment.

The bus was carrying devotees from Tiphuk Bor Namghar in Charaideo district who were travelling to Bordowa Than for a religious visit. Their journey was interrupted when the bus collided with the truck on the highway in the early hours of Monday. Following the collision, the injured passengers were taken to the Kaliabor Sub-Divisional Civil Hospital in Jakhalabandha. They were admitted for treatment, although further details about the severity of their injuries were not immediately available. The accident occurred at



the Missa, a location in Kaliabor, along a four-lane highway.

The head-on collision between the passenger bus and the truck left all those travelling on the bus injured, according to the information available. The devotees had begun their journey from Tiphuk Bor Namghar in Charaideo district and were heading towards Bordowa Than, a religious destination in Assam. The purpose of the trip was to visit the sacred site, but the journey came to an abrupt halt following the crash.

After the accident, the injured passengers were transported to the Kaliabor Sub-Divisional Civil Hospital at Jakhalabandha, where medical personnel provided treatment. The hospital became the immediate point of care for those affected when an accident occurs. The accident also disrupted religious journey of the devotees from Charaideo district. They had set out from Tiphuk Bor Namghar to visit Bordowa Than, but the collision forced them to seek medical attention instead.

Assam Police Seize Truck with 35 Cattle in Cruel Conditions

Nalbari, Oct 12: Nalbari Police recovered an abandoned truck carrying 35 cattle in inhumane conditions near Barkura Bridge on National Highway 27 in Assam, following information about the suspected illegal transportation of cattle.

During an inspection of the vehicle, police found that one of the animals had died, while the remaining 34 were alive. According to Nalbari Police, the vehicle was a 1512 LPT truck bearing registration number AS-01-PC-4440. It was found abandoned near Barkura Bridge after police received information about the alleged illegal movement of cattle in the area.

Police personnel inspected the truck after locating it and discovered 35 cattle. Inspections of suspicious vehicles can help authorities identify possible violations and take appropriate action under applicable procedures.

Speaker Seeks Legal Advice on UDP-BJP Merger Claim



Shillong , Oct 12: The political future of eight former United Democratic Party (UDP) legislators who recently joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Meghalaya now depends on the decision of Assembly Speaker Thomas A. Sangma. The Speaker is examining the legislators' merger application and seeking legal advice before taking a call on the disqualification petition filed by their former party.

The matter has drawn attention to the constitutional provisions governing mergers and disqualification of elected representatives. The Speaker must

assess whether the legislators' move to the BJP meets the requirements prescribed under the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution, which deals with disqualification on grounds of defection.

Speaking to The Shillong Times about the progress of the case, Sangma said the matter had reached his office and was still under examination. Asked when a decision could be expected, he indicated that no immediate timeline could be provided as the legal and procedural aspects were being considered. "I'm seeking some legal counsel and all," Sangma said, explaining that he would take a de-

cision after receiving the opinions he had sought. His remarks suggest that the next step will depend on the advice received and the examination of the documents submitted by both sides. The eight legislators joined the BJP in New Delhi on September 23, bringing about a significant change in the numerical strength of political parties in the 60-member Meghalaya Legislative Assembly. Following their move, the BJP's strength increased from two legislators to 10, while the UDP's numbers fell from 12 to four.

The development has also affected the political equation within the Meghalaya Democratic Alliance (MDA), the ruling coalition led by the National People's Party (NPP), of which the BJP is a constituent. The shift has strengthened the BJP's presence in the Assembly and reduced the UDP's representation, adding another dimension to the ongoing political dispute. The UDP initiated legal proceedings against the eight legislators on the same day they joined the BJP. The party submitted a disqualification petition seeking action against the MLAs, with the document filed by Allantry Dkhar, secretary of the UDP's State Parliamentary Board. Two days after the legislators joined the BJP, they claim requiring consideration under the applicable constitutional and procedural framework.

CM to Decide Rymbui's Political Future Dhar

Shillong , Oct 12: Meghalaya Deputy Chief Minister Sniawbhalang Dhar has said that the decision on whether Education Minister Lakhmen Rymbui should continue in the Cabinet following his switch from the United Democratic Party (UDP) to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) rests entirely with Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma.

The question of Rymbui's continued role in the state Cabinet has become a subject of political debate following the recent realignment involving eight UDP legislators who joined the BJP. With calls growing for the Education Minister to step down or be removed from his ministerial position, Dhar has declined to comment on what action should be taken, maintaining that the Chief Minister is the appropriate authority to address the issue. Speaking to reporters, Dhar said the decision was a matter for Sangma alone. "I think Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma is the right person to give the reply to this question. It is the prerogative of the Chief Minister," he said.

Manipur JTC Gives Government 48 Hours to Recover Slain Naga Man's Missing Head

Imphal , Oct 12: The Joint Tribes Council (JTC-Manipur) has suspended the post-mortem examinations of two Naga men allegedly killed in an attack by suspected armed Kuki militants in Manipur's Kangpokpi district.

The council has given the government 48 hours to recover the missing head of one of the victims and arrest three individuals named in its statement. The decision has intensified demands for action following the deaths of Dibambou Ringkangmai, 48, and Ajinbou Ringkangmai, 52, both residents of Makui village.

Their mortal remains were brought to the Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Medical Sciences (JNIMS) in Imphal late on Sunday for post-mortem examinations.

However, the examinations have been put on hold after family members and civil society organisations decided not to claim the bodies until Ajinbou's missing head is recovered. They have demanded that the remains be handed over to his family so that the deceased can be given a proper burial. The JTC's ultimatum places pressure on the authorities to address



the demands within the stipulated period. The council has called for the recovery of the missing body part and the arrest of the three individuals identified in its statement, linking these demands to the decision to suspend the post-mortem process. The decision not to claim the bodies reflects the families' demand for the recovery of all the remains before proceeding with the final rites. The missing head of Ajinbou has become the central issue, with the family seeking its return to ensure that the burial can take place.

The bodies were taken to JNIMS in Imphal late on

Sunday, but the post-mortem examinations have remained suspended amid the demands raised by the families and civil society groups.

The situation has left the victims' relatives waiting for the recovery of the missing remains before taking the next steps. For the families, the recovery of Ajinbou's head is essential to completing the funeral arrangements.

Their decision to withhold the bodies from collection underscores the seriousness of their demand and the importance they have placed on ensuring that the deceased is laid to rest with all his remains.

Tripura Assam Rifles Recover Yaba Tablets Valued at Rs 2 Crore

Agartala, Oct 12: Assam Rifles, in a joint operation with the Assam Rifles Field Intelligence Unit (ARFIU) and the Customs Department in Agartala, seized Yaba tablets valued at approximately Rs 2 crore in West Tripura district.

The operation was conducted at Mohanpur on October 10, during which one individual was apprehended and 1.994 kg of the suspected contraband was recovered. According to the available information, the joint team apprehended a resident of Sidhai Mohanpur in West Tripura district during the operation. The personnel also seized a motorcycle from the individual. The recovery of the tablets and the vehicle marked the key outcome of the operation.

The estimated value of the seized Yaba tablets stands at around Rs 2 crore, making it a significant drug seizure in the area. The operation involved coordination between Assam Rifles, its Field Intelligence Unit and the Customs Department in Agartala.

The operation was carried out at Mohanpur, a locality in West Tripura district, on October 10. Personnel from Assam Rifles worked alongside the ARFIU and Customs officials as part of the joint action that led to the recovery. The involvement of the Field Intelligence Unit and Customs Department highlights the coordinated approach adopted by the agencies in the operation. The individual was apprehended at the location, and the suspected contraband was seized along with a motorcycle. The apprehended individual is a resident of Sidhai Mohanpur, also in West Tripura dis-



trict. Further details about the circumstances leading to the operation, the intended destination of the tablets or the possible involvement of others were not provided in the available information.

The seizure comes amid continuing enforcement efforts by security and law enforcement agencies to detect and intercept the movement of illegal drugs. Such operations involve coordination among different agencies to identify suspected consignments and take action against those allegedly involved in their transportation or possession. The joint team recovered 1.994 kg of Yaba tablets during the operation.

The estimated market value of the seized tablets was placed at approximately Rs 2 crore. Yaba is a drug commonly associated with a combination of methamphetamine and caffeine. Methamphetamine is a powerful stimulant that can pose serious health risks, including dependence and adverse effects on the cardiovascular and nervous systems.

Jantar Mantar Off Limits for Protests Three Alternative Venues Identified



Dispur , Oct 12: The Delhi Police has announced a major change in the city's protest arrangements, declaring that Jantar Mantar will no longer be an approved venue for demonstrations with immediate effect.

The decision marks a shift in the arrangements governing public protests in the national capital amid ongoing unrest. Jantar Mantar has long been associated with demonstrations, public campaigns and gatherings organised by political groups, civil society organisations and other collectives. The latest notification changes its status as an authorised protest site, requiring those planning demonstrations to consider alternative locations permitted by the authorities.

The decision places renewed focus on how public gatherings and protests will be accommodated in Delhi. While demonstrations remain an important means of expressing public concerns,

the authorities regulate such activities through designated venues and applicable permissions.

The police notification takes effect immediately, meaning organisers planning future demonstrations at Jantar Mantar will need to take the revised arrangement into account.

The move also raises practical questions for groups that have traditionally used the location to draw attention to their demands. The decision to remove Jantar Mantar from the list of approved protest

sites represents a significant administrative change for demonstrators in Delhi. The location has been widely recognised as a venue for public mobilisation, allowing organisations and groups to gather and communicate their demands.

Over the years, Jantar Mantar has served as a prominent setting for protests on political, social and public-interest issues. Its visibility and location in the national capital have made it a familiar venue for groups seeking to attract public and media attention.

With the new notification, however, the Delhi Police has made clear that the site will no longer be available for authorised protests. Organisers will therefore have to review their plans and seek permission to hold demonstrations at locations permitted under the revised arrangements.

The immediate implementation of the decision leaves little time for groups with scheduled programmes at the venue to adjust their plans. Organisers may need to consult the police regarding applicable rules,

alternative locations and permission requirements before proceeding with planned gatherings. The change is likely to affect organisations that regularly hold demonstrations in Delhi, particularly those that have relied on Jantar Mantar as their preferred venue. For such groups, the notification means that future protest plans must be reconsidered in accordance with the new arrangements.

The availability of a designated venue can be important for coordinating participants, managing crowds and ensuring that demonstrations take place within the applicable regulatory framework. A change in the approved locations may require organisers to revise logistical plans, communicate new arrangements to participants and obtain the necessary permissions. For groups seeking to raise public concerns, the choice of venue can also influence visibility and access to audiences.

Aaditya, Amit Thackeray Booked After Sit-In Against Gyanesh Kumar

Mumbai, Oct 12: The Mumbai Police has registered a case against Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Aaditya Thackeray and Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) leader Amit Thackeray following a sit-in protest demanding the removal of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar. The action came on Monday, a day after the two leaders led the demonstration.

The development has added a new dimension to the political confrontation over the demand for Kumar’s removal. The protest, led by the two Thackeray leaders, brought the issue into focus, while the police action has drawn attention to the response of the authorities following the demonstration.

Despite the case being registered, the agitation is set to continue. Shiv Sena (UBT) and the MNS have announced another round of protests scheduled for Monday at 4 pm, signalling that the parties intend to maintain pressure over their demand. The announcement of a fresh demonstration indicates that the issue remains a point of contention for the two po-



litical organisations. Their decision to organise another round of agitation comes a day after Aaditya Thackeray and Amit Thackeray jointly led the sit-in against the Chief Election Commissioner.

The Mumbai Police booked the two leaders on Monday in connection with the protest held a day earlier. Aaditya Thackeray represents Shiv Sena (UBT), while Amit Thackeray is associated with the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena.

The demonstration centred on the demand that Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar be removed from office. The sit-in brought together the two leaders in a joint political

action, with their parties continuing to press the issue.

However, the available information does not specify the legal provisions under which the case was registered or provide further details about the police complaint.

It also does not indicate whether any additional individuals were named in the case or whether the leaders were formally summoned in connection with the matter. The police action nevertheless marks a significant development following the protest. The registration of a case against the two leaders places the demonstration under scrutiny as the political agitation continues. The two parties have announced another

round of agitation for Monday at 4 pm. The planned demonstration comes amid the continuing dispute over Gyanesh Kumar’s position as Chief Election Commissioner.

By announcing a fresh protest, Shiv Sena (UBT) and the MNS have indicated that their campaign will continue despite the case registered against their leaders.

The latest announcement also places the focus on the next stage of the agitation and how the authorities respond to the planned gathering.

The parties have not provided further details in the available information about the proposed protest’s venue, expected participation or the specific form the demonstration will take. The announcement confirms only that another round of agitation is scheduled for 4 pm on Monday. The timing is notable because the fresh protest follows closely after the sit-in led by Aaditya and Amit Thackeray. The sequence of events has kept the demand for the Chief Election Commissioner’s removal in the political spotlight.

Delhi Metro Seat Row Man Dies Former IAS Officer and Son Arrested

New Delhi, Oct 12: A 48-year-old man died following an alleged assault during a dispute over a seat reserved for senior citizens inside a Delhi Metro train, police said. A former Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer and his son have been arrested in connection with the incident, which reportedly took place at the Supreme Court Metro station on October 8.

The deceased, identified as Pawan Sharma, allegedly became involved in an argument with the two accused, identified in the First Information Report (FIR) as Sanjay Pratap Singh and his son, Sidharth Singh. According to the complaint, the disagreement began over a seat reserved for senior citizens and subsequently escalated into a physical confrontation.

Police sources said the two men were arrested after a case was registered in connection with the incident. The allegations outlined in the FIR state that Sharma was slapped and pushed during the altercation, causing him to fall and sustain head injuries. The incident has drawn attention to the consequences of disputes over seating inside public transport and the importance of ensuring the safety of passengers. However, the precise sequence of events and the circumstances that led to Sharma’s death remain matters for the police investigation. According to the FIR, the confrontation occurred on October 8 at the Supreme Court Metro station. Sharma allegedly got into an argument



with Sanjay Pratap Singh and his son, Sidharth Singh, over a seat designated for senior citizens. Seats reserved for senior citizens are intended to make public transport more accessible to elderly passengers. Disagreements over the use of such seats can sometimes lead to confrontations, particularly when passengers differ over who should occupy them. In this case, the dispute allegedly escalated beyond a verbal exchange. The complaint states that Sharma was slapped and pushed during the altercation. He reportedly fell as a result of the confrontation and sustained injuries to his head. The

allegations form a key part of the case registered by the police. The exact circumstances surrounding the physical confrontation, including how it unfolded and the events immediately before and after Sharma fell, will need to be established through the investigation.

The incident took place within the Delhi Metro system, where passengers regularly share confined spaces during their daily journeys. The reported escalation of a disagreement over a reserved seat into a fatal incident has raised concerns about passenger safety and the need to prevent disputes from turning violent.

Man Told to Surrender Within 30 Days in 2013 Accident Case

New Delhi, Oct 12: A Delhi court has upheld the conviction of a man in a 2013 fatal road accident in Hauz Khas, observing that driving at high speed, hitting a motorcyclist and a pedestrian, and mounting a footpath reflected a serious disregard for the safety of other road users. The court has directed the man to surrender within 30 days.

The case relates to a road accident in Hauz Khas in which the accused was found to have driven in a manner that endangered other people on the road. While examining the conviction, the court highlighted the responsibilities that come with operating a vehicle and the need for motorists to exercise due caution to prevent harm to others.

According to the court’s observations, the circumstances of the accident demonstrated a failure to uphold the duty of care expected from a driver. The vehicle’s high speed, the impact involving a motorcyclist and a pedestrian, and its movement onto the footpath were among the factors considered significant in assessing the incident. The ruling leaves the conviction intact and requires the man to surrender within the stipulated period. The decision

marks another stage in legal proceedings arising from the fatal accident that occurred more than a decade ago. In upholding the conviction, the court emphasised that road users are expected to operate vehicles responsibly and remain mindful of the safety of others. Driving at high speed in circumstances that lead to collisions with vulnerable road users can have serious consequences, particularly when pedestrians and two-wheeler riders are involved.

The court’s remarks focused on the nature of the driving described in the case. The vehicle allegedly struck a motorcyclist and a pedestrian before mounting the footpath, circumstances that the court viewed as demonstrating a disregard for the precautions required while driving.

Footpaths are intended primarily for pedestrians, who depend on designated walking spaces to move safely alongside roads. When vehicles mount such areas, pedestrians can be exposed to serious danger. The incident in Hauz Khas brought these risks into focus, with the court considering the vehicle’s movement onto the footpath as part of the circumstances surrounding the accident.

INDIA Bloc Leaders March to Supreme Court, Seek CEC Gyanesh Kumar’s Resignation

New Delhi, Oct 12: Leaders of the INDIA bloc began a protest march towards the Supreme Court on Monday, demanding legal intervention to protect democratic and constitutional rights amid allegations of irregularities in the electoral process. The opposition leaders also called for the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar over allegations of “vote theft”.

The march took place amid heavy security arrangements in the national capital, with Delhi Police personnel deployed and barricades put up along the route. The opposition leaders said they intended to submit a representation to the Supreme Court, seeking its intervention in the matter. The demonstration brought together opposition leaders around their concerns over the electoral process and the need to safeguard democratic institutions. Their demand for Kumar’s resignation formed a key part of the protest, alongside the call for legal action to address the alleged irregularities.

Speaking to reporters, Congress MP Manish Tewari said the opposition planned to approach the Supreme Court collectively with its representation. “We want to submit a



representation to the Hon’ble Supreme Court. Therefore, the entire Opposition is collectively going to Barakhamba Road.

Let’s see where it goes from here,” Tewari said. His remarks indicated that the opposition leaders intended to take their concerns to the court, although the next steps would depend on how the situation developed. The INDIA bloc leaders said their march was aimed at seeking legal intervention to protect democratic and constitutional rights. Their decision to approach the Supreme Court reflects the opposition’s attempt to raise its concerns over the electoral process through a formal representation. The allegations of “vote theft” and irregularities in elections have been central to the opposition’s

demand for action against the Chief Election Commissioner. During Monday’s protest, the leaders reiterated their call for Gyanesh Kumar to resign from his position.

The march also highlighted the opposition’s stated concerns about the functioning of democratic institutions and the conduct of the electoral process. By seeking the Supreme Court’s intervention, the leaders indicated that they wanted their concerns to be considered through the judicial system.

However, the allegations raised by the opposition remain claims made by the protesting leaders. The information available does not detail the specific evidence cited in the proposed representation or indicate whether the Supreme

Court had agreed to receive or consider it. The leaders’ stated objective was to submit their concerns to the court, with the protest serving as a public expression of their demand for accountability. The protest march was held under tight security, with Delhi Police making arrangements to manage the movement of the opposition leaders. Barricades were placed along the route as the demonstrators began moving towards the Supreme Court. The security measures formed a prominent part of the scene as the leaders attempted to advance towards their intended destination. Police deployment and barricading were aimed at managing the gathering and movement around the protest route.

The presence of security personnel also meant that the march took place under restrictions on movement in the area. The available information, however, does not specify whether any protesters were detained, whether clashes occurred or whether the leaders ultimately reached the Supreme Court. The immediate focus remained on the opposition’s plan to submit a representation and its demand for the Chief Election Commissioner’s resignation.

Science Ministry, Peptris Sign AI Drug Discovery MoU



Bengaluru, Oct 12: The Technology Development Board (TDB) under the Ministry of Science has signed an agreement with Bengaluru-based Peptris Technologies Pvt Ltd to provide financial support of ₹86 crore for accelerating the development of next-generation therapies using artificial intelligence (AI). The agreement is aimed at supporting the application of AI in drug discovery and development, according to an official statement issued on Monday.

The collaboration marks an effort to strengthen the role of advanced technologies in pharmaceutical research and the development of new treatments. By extending financial support to Peptris Technologies, the board intends to facilitate work on AI-driven approaches that could help advance the development of next-generation therapies.

Artificial intelligence is increasingly being explored across the pharmaceutical sector for its potential to improve the drug discovery process. Developing a new medicine traditionally involves extensive research, laboratory testing and evaluation to identify promising compounds and assess their suitability for further development.

AI-based systems can help researchers analyse large volumes of scientific data, identify potential drug candidates and prioritise areas for further investigation.

The agreement between TDB and Peptris Technologies is expected to support the company’s efforts to apply AI to drug discovery and therapeutic development. The financial assistance is intended to accelerate this work, although the available announcement does not specify the individual therapies, disease areas or development milestones covered under the agreement.

CJP Sets 24-Hour Deadline for Delhi Police Over Protest Permission

New Delhi, Oct 12: The Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) on Monday said it would give the Delhi Police 24 hours to respond to its request for permission to hold a protest at Jantar Mantar, as the party continued its agitation against Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar.

CJP Co-Convenor Sauro Das said the party had sought approval for the proposed demonstration and had left it to the police to decide a suitable date and time. However, he maintained that the request should not remain pending indefinitely and announced that the party would give the authorities a 24-hour ultimatum to respond.

The party’s demand comes amid its continuing protest



against Kumar. By seeking permission to demonstrate at Jantar Mantar, CJP is attempting to continue its agitation through a peaceful public gathering in the national capital. Speaking about the request, Das emphasised that peaceful protest was a constitutional right and said people would continue

to exercise that right. He argued that the authorities should respond to the party’s request rather than leave it unresolved without a clear timeline. “Peaceful protest is a right, a constitutional right, and people are already exercising it. People will continue to hold peaceful protests. The police always complain

that we should approach them 10 days in advance. This time, we have left the choice to them and asked them to suggest a date and time for our protest. We are leaving everything to them, but we are also saying that they should not keep the matter pending indefinitely.

We will give them a 24-hour ultimatum. Let us see what happens after we speak to them,” Das said. Das said the party had taken into account the police’s stated expectation that requests for demonstrations should be submitted well in advance. According to him, the authorities generally ask organisers to approach them at least 10 days before a proposed protest.

He said CJP had adopted a different approach this time

by allowing the Delhi Police to suggest a suitable date and time for the demonstration. The party, he indicated, was willing to accommodate the authorities’ scheduling preferences, provided its request received a response.

The 24-hour deadline announced by the party is intended to press the police to clarify their position on the proposed gathering. Das did not say that the demonstration would automatically take place once the deadline expired, but made clear that the party did not want the permission request to remain unresolved indefinitely.

The announcement places the next step with the Delhi Police, which has been asked to respond to the request and suggest when the demonstration could be held.

The party’s position also highlights the practical issues that can arise when organisers seek permission for public demonstrations. Authorities may need to consider arrangements relating to security, crowd management and the use of designated protest locations before responding to such requests.

However, the available information does not specify whether the police had formally rejected the request, asked CJP to provide additional details or communicated any proposed date for the protest. A central argument in Das’s statement was that peaceful protest is a constitutional right. He said people were already exercising this right and would continue to do so.

Mutt Head Held in Bengaluru in Sexual Exploitation Case

Bengaluru, Oct 12: A 40-year-old head of a religious mutt on the outskirts of Bengaluru has been arrested after a 25-year-old woman accused him of sexually exploiting her and threatening to kill her, police said.

The arrest followed allegations made by the woman, who accused the religious leader of sexual exploitation and issuing threats against her life. Police confirmed that the accused had been taken into custody in connection with the case.

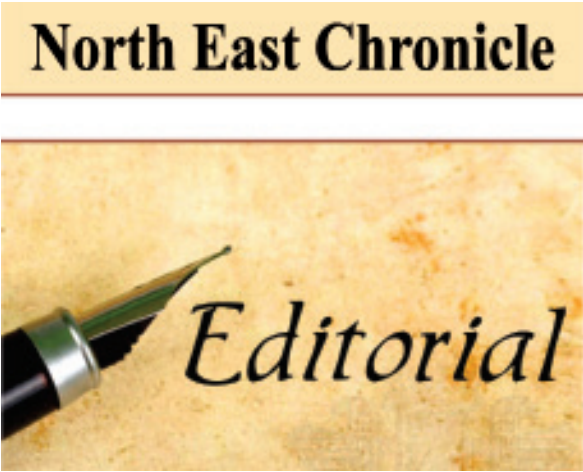
Further details about the circumstances of the alleged offences and the nature of the relationship between the two were not immediately available.

The case has brought attention to serious allegations against the head of a religious institution in the Bengaluru outskirts. The accusations include sexual exploitation and criminal intimidation, though the claims remain allegations

and will be subject to investigation and legal proceedings.

According to police, the complaint was lodged by the 25-year-old woman against the 40-year-old mutt head. Following the complaint, the police took action and arrested the accused. The investigation is expected to examine the allegations raised by the complainant and establish the circumstances surrounding the case.

The woman has alleged that the religious leader sexually exploited her and threatened to kill her. However, the available information does not provide further Sexual exploitation allegations require careful investigation, particularly where questions of consent, coercion or threats are raised. The outcome of the case will depend on the evidence gathered by investigators and the subsequent legal process.



Foreign funding serves national interest

A sovereign nation cannot afford to be naïve about money crossing its borders. Foreign contributions may finance hospitals, schools, disaster relief and community welfare, but the declared nobility of a cause cannot place its finances beyond scrutiny. Every contribution carries obligations; every recipient must answer for its use. India’s Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026, brings this principle into sharp focus. Charitable work does not allow one to disregard the law, and receiving foreign funds does not exempt one from public accountability. A nation that takes its sovereignty seriously must retain the authority to determine the conditions under which foreign money enters and operates within its borders.

The Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010, replaced the law from 1976 and set up a legal framework for getting and using foreign contributions. Introduced in the Lok Sabha on 25 March 2026, the Amendment Bill proposes a more comprehensive mechanism for managing funds and assets when an organisation’s registration is cancelled, surrendered or ceases to be valid. Its referral to a Joint Parliamentary Committee is an opportunity to refine the legislation, not a reason to question the legitimacy of regulation itself. India needs no apology for protecting its financial sovereignty. The true test is the law’s ability to prevent misuse, safeguard public resources, and maintain clarity for enforcement without unnecessary disputes. The proposed designated authority is central to the bill. The existing Act already provides for the vesting of foreign contributions and assets in specified circumstances following cancellation or surrender of registration. The proposed amendments establish a more detailed framework for custody, supervision, management and disposal, while extending the vesting mechanism to cases in which registration ceases, including non-renewal. Vesting would initially be provisional; if registration is restored, renewed or granted afresh within the prescribed period, the relevant funds and assets would be returned in accordance with the proposed provisions. If registration is not secured within that period, vesting could become permanent, with assets applied to public purposes, transferred to government bodies or disposed of under the law. The religious character of a place of worship must be preserved. The underlying objective is legitimate: assets created through regulated foreign contributions should not be left in administrative limbo when the legal status of the organisation changes.

Those who oppose stronger oversight frequently invoke the indispensable work of civil society. They are right to value that work but wrong if they imply that a charitable purpose should confer immunity from scrutiny. A hospital does not become exempt from financial discipline because it treats the poor; an educational trust cannot disregard statutory obligations because it serves a remote community. Genuine voluntary organisations

stand to lose the most if the misuse of funds or deliberate non-compliance tarnishes their sector’s reputation. When people perceive accountability as hostility, they view both rule-abiding organisations and those that violate rules with suspicion. The state must be firm against violations, and civil society must recognise that public trust rests on more than just positive intentions. Yet a persuasive case for regulation must also confront the consequences of the proposed framework. Consider a school or hospital established partly with foreign donations but sustained over subsequent years through domestic contributions. Because the Bill covers assets created wholly or partly from foreign funds, the treatment of such property raises a serious practical question: how should domestic donors and communities be protected when contributions have been combined to build an indivisible facility? Parliament should ensure that valuation, attribution and management procedures are sufficiently precise to prevent arbitrary outcomes. This is not an argument against the government’s authority. It is an argument for making that authority effective, defensible and worthy of public confidence. Precision strengthens regulation; ambiguity weakens it.

The Bill also proposes reducing the maximum term of imprisonment for violations of the Act from five years to one year and requiring prior central government approval before state agencies initiate investigations under the Act. Coordinated enforcement may prevent duplicative proceedings under a central law, while proportionate penalties can distinguish different levels of wrongdoing. Coordination must not cause delays, and a lower maximum sentence must be understood as a commitment to addressing violations, not indifference. The purpose of reform should be effective enforcement, not merely administrative consolidation. Deliberate misuse must attract consequences, investigations must rest on evidence, and decisions must withstand legal scrutiny. The strength of a regulatory regime is measured not by how intimidating its provisions appear, but by how consistently and fairly they work. For the Northeast, this debate has consequences beyond the corridors of administration. Across Assam and the other northeastern states, voluntary organisations work in healthcare, education, disaster relief, livelihood development and environmental conservation. In flood-prone settlements and remote hill districts, a small institution may provide services that residents cannot easily access elsewhere. These organisations should be enabled to serve communities, but their public value cannot justify opacity in their finances. The region’s strategic location makes vigilance against external influence necessary; it does not justify treating every foreign-funded organisation as suspect. The sensible course is neither blind trust nor indiscriminate suspicion but verifiable accounts, lawful use of funds and enforcement that distinguishes genuine public service from wrongdoing.

Fat commissions, thin markets

What should take precedence the livelihoods of one million employees in insurance distribution or the financial well-being of hundreds of millions of Indian policyholders? The fight between disaggregated, voiceless consumers without a platform and well-funded, organised insurance companies and distributors is unfair. That is where the role of a regulator comes in, especially in retail finance, where the product being sold is invisible, is created in the buyers’ mind when being sold and whose moment of truth is sometimes 30-40 years in the future. The battle in India’s insurance industry today is about whether the industry protects a high-cost, distribution-led model with little accountability or moves towards a consumer-first market, built on efficiency, innovation and value. The pushback against the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)’s September 23, 2026, consultation paper that seeks to bring about a much-awaited change in India’s insurance sector is coming from the incumbent insurance firms and distributors. The Insurance Brokers Association of India (IBAI) has pleaded in a letter to the prime minister (PM) that a million livelihoods would be affected. They also want time beyond October 30 to even respond to the paper. The general insurance companies are playing a more nuanced game, where

they seem to be missing from the channels with their anti-consumer views, but through the General Insurance Council (GIC), want the consumer to pick up 10% of the hospital bill by January 1, 2027.

The broking community asking for a business model that preys on retail investors and is geared toward maximising commission rather than policyholder well-being should remember that the government did not hesitate to shut down online gaming despite the same livelihood argument. The GIC is expecting a policyholder, admitted to the hospital, to argue with doctors over treatments recommended to prevent hospitals from overcharging. This is serious hubris. The GST benefit on lower premiums has already been creamed away by the industry. The rise in health insurance premiums for existing policyholders is extractive. Instead of better underwriting and improving claims ratios for individuals, the GIC wants to squeeze the helpless individual. My prediction is that if the 10% co-pay comes into effect, the Indian health insurance industry will see degrowth.

India’s insurance industry needs to understand that any market, other than luxury products, that carries fat distribution commissions and opacity in the product and sales will stay in a low-value equilibrium. Over the past 30 years, the Indian stock and mutual fund

markets have gone through rounds of regulator-induced transparency and lowering of distribution costs due to both regulation and technology. The impact has been transformational in terms of size, reach and value. Unless transparency is increased and distribution costs are lowered, the insurance industry will decline, taking away a reasonably priced and serviced safety belt that Indians need. In 1990, the Indian stock market was in a low-volume, high-cost deal. Though the brokerage limits of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) were 2.5%, its 1998-99 annual report put the actual commission charged at 0.5-5%. Retail investors never got to know the actual price of the trade since the open outcry system was conducted behind closed doors. They usually sold at the lowest recorded price and bought at the highest. The BSE was, then, a brokers’ club that resisted any kind of change. Setting up the NSE with screen-based trading brought transparency and lower costs. Of course, the lowering of costs came along with a full regulatory suite of depositories, dematerialisation, setting up of custodians, insider trading regulations, electronic clearing and settlement, and much tighter regulatory norms by Sebi, which progressively got more teeth as markets expanded. The market cap (number of shares of a company multiplied by stock price)

has grown from around ₹1 lakh crore to over ₹411 lakh crore over a 36-year-period starting in 1990, an average annual growth rate of 18%. From around 100,000 demat accounts in 1998 to over 230 million accounts in 2026. From less than 30 million unique investors in 2019 to over 130 million in 2026. Markets are larger, safer, and more transparent. The mutual fund story is similar: Commission reform began by 2006, with the removal of the “new fund offer” charge, wherein 6% of the amount collected in a new offer was taken as “marketing costs” by the fund house. So, ₹10,000 crore collected resulted in ₹600 crore of costs borne by investors. In 2009, Sebi took away the 2.25% front load that reduced ₹100 of investment, through an embedded sales charge, to ₹97.75 getting invested. Some said the industry would die. But Sebi’s focus on building transparency, reducing costs and working in consumer interest grew the industry from less than ₹2.5 lakh crore in assets under management in 2006 to over ₹87 lakh crore today.

These changes arrived with the fund houses kicking and screaming. In fact, in 2009 a group of mutual fund agents approached the Delhi High Court to declare the abolishment of the front commissions of 2.25% embedded in the price of the product and a requirement to disclose commission as “ultra vires and illegal”. The court dismissed the writ petition in the interest of consumer protection. I see a similar story playing out in the insurance space. An industry that has resisted change, technology and consumer interest for decades is now screaming loudly with letters to the PM and other ways to exert power. The changes on costs and transparency that look imminent in the Indian insurance industry should have begun 20 years ago, and incrementally, the market would have been in a very different place. But every attempt to bring transparency, consumer protection, and lower costs was successfully resisted, and the industry now finds itself facing either staying caught in a low-value, declining market or strong regulatory action. The government needs to look at evidence from the Indian financial sector to see the benefits of lower costs and transparency. Insisting that insurance is “different”, and therefore, beyond the reach of regulatory action has harmed the growth of the industry. Both life and medical insurance are essential products in a household’s financial life. By making them expensive, opaque and full of tricks and traps, the industry does itself, and the consumer, a disservice. Working with the regulator on the proposed changes might be a current bitter pill, but it is medicine that will finally give both energy and a growth spurt.

The service industry of tax evasion: fake firms, mule accounts, and invoices

Ninety-one shell firms shared one mobile number. That was the thread Central GST officers in Meerut uncovered. Within a few months, the investigation led them to 232 such shell firms, goods-less (fake) invoices worth Rs 5,842 crore, and Rs 1,048 crore in ineligible input tax credit (GST fraud) passed on to buyer firms to help them evade tax. Earlier, the Directorate General of GST Intelligence (DGGI), the premier agency of the Government of India for investigating GST frauds, detected a beneficiary firm in Jaipur that had availed itself of ineligible credit from shell firms operating in Sonipat and Delhi through goods-less, fake invoices. During further investigation, it was found that a Ghaziabad-based resident was engaged in the creation, operation and sale of shell firms (registered with GST and having active GST Numbers—GSTINs) to pass on ineligible ITC for a commission. This individual passed on ineligible credit (GST fraud) of Rs 1,033 crore through 294 shell firms he created and received a commission of 1.25 per cent of the taxable value.

The 1.25 per cent commission is what it takes to create a shell firm and obtain a GSTIN for facilitating fraudulent credit, illustrating the commercial incentive behind the fraud. The rest of the money goes to other people in the fraudulent or partially fraudulent supply chain. This commission paid by buyer firms gets them supply-chain credibility, a ready-to-use GSTIN and bank accounts through forged documents. Call it ‘GSTIN-as-a-service’, with ‘mule-account-as-a-service’ alongside. Identity papers are fraudulently taken from people promised a job, a commission or a loan, and shell firms are registered in their names without their knowledge.

Rent agreements are forged. Mule accounts are opened to route the money. Then come invoices and e-way bills to match: some for trucks that did not run, others that pad a real consignment with invented quantities, which is harder to catch. Local trade is hardest: small or short-haul movements can leave little of a verification trail. This ecosystem of ‘GSTIN-as-a-service’ with ‘mule-account-as-a-service’, where shell firms pass on fake and ineligible credit at scale, can only be described as ‘fraud-as-a-service’. The number of GST input tax credit (ITC) fraud cases detected in FY 2025-26 almost doubled to 30,162 from 15,283 in FY 2024-25, after rising 66.3 per cent from 9,190 cases in FY 2023-24. Similarly, the fraud amount detected more than doubled from Rs 36,373 crore in FY 2023-24 to Rs 74,781 crore in FY 2025-26, with a cumulative value of Rs 1.7 lakh crore. As per data on ITC frauds unearthed by central and state GST officers, 42,140 fake firms were detected over the two years 2023-24 and 2024-25. The Union and state governments and GSTN have taken various steps to prevent fake ITC claims, including providing intelligence inputs, detecting fraudulent registration, and flagging suspicious e-way bill activity. Data on ITC frauds detected demonstrate the scale of this ‘fraud-as-a-service’ challenge and the growing reach of enforcement.

Who pays the cost of ITC frauds and ‘fraud-as-a-service’? It is the neighbouring trader, manufacturer and genuine service provider who pays for it. A firm that buys fake credit cuts its tax bill without becoming more efficient, and then can quote below its competitor. The customer sees two “valid invoices” and picks the cheaper option. The American economist George Aker-

lof has shown that when buyers cannot tell quality apart, the doubtful product crowds out the sound one. The honest competitor firm loses the order, thins its margin, or learns where fake invoices are sold in the market. Add up enough markets and the state and national economy pays. A value-added tax like GST is built to police itself, since each buyer’s credit is some seller’s declared liability. A fake firm breaks that chain at the first link, and orders and bank loans begin to follow paper turnover instead of productive capacity. It is estimated that better allocation of capital and labour could raise Indian manufacturing productivity. Fake credit pushes this productivity in the opposite direction. The exchequer pays too, in roads and courts left unbuilt and delayed public services. The last installment falls on society. Central GST Meerut uncovered that the money was routed through money changers. DGGI Bengaluru unearthed shell firms engaged in circular trading to inflate turnover and manipulate stock-exchange prices. DGGI, as part of its commitment to proactively tackle the menace of illegal offshore betting and gaming entities, has revealed through its investigations that these entities operated through ‘mule’ bank accounts to process transactions regardless of the nature of their activity hawala, cyber fraud, money laundering or organised crime. They legitimise illicit money flows under the guise of “legitimate” everyday commerce, turning the digital public infrastructure meant for economic growth into a conduit for organised crime.

Set against that bill, the argument that GST enforcement is against ease of doing business now appears short-sighted. Though some of the complaints are fair and honest,

they blur two things that the law keeps apart. A mismatch in returns, a disputed classification or a late filing: these are civil matters that deserve notice, reasons and quick correction. A shell firm built on a stolen PAN, or a manufacturer or service provider purchasing fake invoices through a ‘fraud-as-a-service’ mechanism, is something else, and above a certain threshold of tax evasion, it is justly an offence liable for prosecution to create deterrence. When GST enforcement against such a trader, manufacturer or service provider who benefits from a fraudulent supply chain is narrated as an inconvenience to trade, the honest businesses, markets and the society they undercut drop out of the story. It is also important to keep these two lanes apart ensuring honest mistakes face only civil inquiries while fraudulent acts face criminal action. GST enforcement investigations must be rooted in the realities of legitimate trade and commerce, while looking for the markers of fraud. When this debate is seen this way, taxpayer facilitation and tax enforcement are two sides of the same coin. Facilitation makes it frictionless for an honest business to establish its legitimacy, while enforcement makes it difficult and risky for a fraudster. A tax administration owes honest businesses both of these protections, because a system that fails to punish fake firms inevitably ends up burdening real ones. Taxpayer facilitation is making compliance easier. With GST 2.0 reforms, 96 per cent of new small and low-risk applicants are expected to receive GST registration within three days. The next step could be a single verification through geotagged video and one-time password (OTP) authentication across GSTIN, e-Way Bill and bank accounts. This not only benefits honest and small

taxpayers but crucially also makes impersonation through borrowed identities harder, similar to the compulsory identity verification mandated by the UK for company directors. If a fake identity slips through, it still needs a bank account. KYC protocols must therefore track the actual controller behind the account. Warning signs often appear at the bank long before tax returns are filed: a “small trader” receiving and draining crores in a single day, an APMC account used strictly for cash-outs, or loans secured against fake turnover. Currently, the RBI’s MuleHunter.AI and the tax department’s analytics might be tracking the same syndicate network in silos. Establishing a legal, real-time data-sharing channel between them—similar to the European Union’s Eurofisc network and beyond the routine suspicious transaction reports—would allow financial and tax authorities to transform isolated red flags into actionable, cross-agency intelligence and dismantle these syndicates in real time. The digital tax infrastructure of GST is built exactly for this cross-agency intelligence sharing. e-Way Bills, e-Invoicing and analytical tools connect isolated records, as the Meerut case study has shown in busting shell-firm syndicates. Moving forward, Diagnostic AI can go further, testing whether identity, capacity, goods and money flows tell one consistent story, and highlighting red flags. A system-generated red flag may trigger an evidence-based inquiry. Executed well, this approach can reduce unnecessary interventions, facilitate honest businesses and concurrently check fraudsters. Tackling the industrialised scale of ‘fraud-as-a-service’ requires more than routine audits. It demands the predictive, AI-integrated enforcement and cross-agency data shar-

ing needed to protect the broader Indian economy and national security. Crucially, through such targeted GST enforcement, tax administration is actively defending the market share, profit margins and competitiveness of genuine enterprises from artificial price-undercutting. To weed out the fake is to protect real entrepreneurs. However, enforcement is only half of the equation. As part of facilitation, honest businesses should be able to publicly demonstrate their legitimacy. A public compliance rating has largely remained unused. A compliance score that buyers can verify would directly solve Akerlof’s market dilemma, rewarding genuine taxpayers with market trust. There is a proven, highly successful precedent for this in cross-border trade: the World Customs Organization (WCO) enabled Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) framework, which explicitly rewards highly compliant businesses with faster clearances, reduced scrutiny and global recognition. The syndicate behind those 91 shell firms in Meerut has been dismantled. Yet the legitimate and honest businesses that lost their competitive edge to them never knew the syndicate network existed. Through such enforcement, authorities level the playing field and reward honesty. Today, at a 1.25 per cent commission, a forged business remains cheap. True ease of doing business begins only when the compliance cost for real entrepreneurship is reduced and the expected cost of organised fraud is raised. It serves honest enterprises when fair competition and predictable procedures are protected. Targeted GST enforcement against a ‘fraud-as-a-service’ supply chain is another form of taxpayer facilitation. This defends the trust upon which market systems operate.

Morgan Stanley sees double digit returns for Indian REITs

Mumbai: Morgan Stanley expects Indian real estate investment trusts (REITs) to deliver double-digit total returns, supported by strong leasing demand from global capability centres (GCCs) and improving distributions to unitholders. The foreign brokerage remains ‘Overweight’ on Mindspace Business Parks REIT, Nexus Select Trust and Knowledge Realty Trust, while downgrading Embassy Office Parks REIT to ‘Equal-weight’ and Brookfield India Real Estate Trust to ‘Underweight’. In its report, Morgan Stanley said Indian REITs gained around 20 per cent over the past two years, or nearly 33 per cent including yield, compared with a 12 per cent decline in Sensex.

The performance was supported by recovering distributions per unit (DPU) growth and strong GCC-led leasing demand

Citing Nasscom estimates, the brokerage said India’s GCC base could expand around 1.4 times by FY30, supporting office demand. However, rising office supply and interest rate hikes remain key risks for the sector. Morgan Stanley noted that Indian REITs are expected to deliver DPU growth of 9-12 per cent in FY27, compared with 0-7 per cent for regional peers, at comparable yields of 5.5-6.7 per cent. The brokerage also highlighted Mindspace’s data centre portfolio, comprising five assets with approximately 1.7 million square feet of area and capacity exceeding 250 MW, as a potential growth driver.

Global Markets Send Mixed Signals; Asian Stocks Trade on a Cautious Note Amid Regional Divergence

New Delhi: Global markets are presenting a mixed picture on Monday, with Asian equities trading on a divergent note. US markets ended the previous session on a strong footing, while Dow Jones futures were also trading higher. European markets, meanwhile, witnessed sustained buying during the previous session, with major indices closing firmly in positive territory.

Continued buying in the US market during the previous session helped Wall Street’s major indices close with solid gains. The Dow Jones Industrial Average advanced 423.31 points, or 0.83 per cent, to settle at 51,654.95. Similarly, the S&P 500 rose 0.59 per cent to close at 7,811.54. The Nasdaq Composite gained 172.83 points, or 0.64 per cent, to end the session at 27,366.17. Meanwhile, Dow Jones futures were trading 195.78 points, or 0.38 per cent, higher at 51,850.73. European Markets Close Firmly in Positive



Territory. European equities also maintained a positive momentum during the previous session, with major indices registering significant gains amid sustained buying interest. The FTSE index surged 110.45 points, or 1.05 per cent, to close at

10,552.05. The CAC index advanced 0.94 per cent to finish the session at 7,803.33. Meanwhile, Germany’s DAX index climbed 280.30 points, or 1.12 per cent, to settle at 25,087.27. Asian Markets Present a Mixed Picture. Asian markets

were trading on a mixed note on Monday, with six of the nine tracked indices in negative territory and the remaining three trading higher. India’s GIFT Nifty was up 0.18 per cent at 22,643.50. Singapore’s Straits Times Index gained 0.38 per cent to reach 5,422.27, while Hong Kong’s Hang Seng Index edged up 0.03 per cent to 24,218. On the other hand, Thailand’s SET Composite Index was down 0.42 per cent at 1,571.10, while China’s Shanghai Composite Index slipped 0.12 per cent to 3,809.08. South Korea’s KOSPI suffered a sharper decline, falling 201.82 points, or 3.05 per cent, to 6,424.11.

Indonesia’s Jakarta Composite Index was also under considerable pressure, declining 0.92 per cent to 6,037.73. Meanwhile, Taiwan’s Weighted Index edged down 0.03 per cent, while Japan’s Nikkei 225 slipped 0.02 per cent to trade at 69,030.92.

KEC International bags transmission and distribution orders worth Rs 1,014 crore

New Delhi: KEC International has secured new orders worth Rs 1,014 crore in its India transmission and distribution (T&D) business. The company announced the wins on Saturday.

The orders include its first contract for a 765 kV transmission line. The line will carry power from a Pumped Storage Plant (PSP) in Western India. The company said the contract came from an existing client. It did not name the client. It also did not give a break-up of the Rs 1,014 crore total among its orders.

KEC informed the National Stock Exchange and BSE Limited of the development in a filing. The company said all the orders were received in the normal course of business. A pumped storage plant stores energy by moving water between two reservoirs at different heights. Such plants are seen as a way to support renewable power. The new line is meant to evacuate the electricity generated at the plant. “We are delighted to secure this prestigious order from an existing client for the evacuation of power from a PSP. This marks an important milestone for our T&D business as we support the growing power infrastructure requirements of the Renewables segment. With these wins, our YTD order intake stands at over Rs. 9,600 crores.” Vimal Kejriwal, Managing Director and CEO of KEC International, said. KEC International



is a global infrastructure engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) company, headquartered in Mumbai. It operates in power transmission and distribution, civil, transportation, renewables, oil and gas pipelines, and cables and conductors. Its footprint spans more than 110 countries, including EPC projects and the supply of towers and cables. KEC is the flagship company of the RPG Group. The group has interests in infrastructure, tyres, pharma, IT and speciality businesses, besides emerging technology ventures.

SBI, IndusInd, PNB, ICICI, YES Bank shares Nifty Bank stocks are falling

New Delhi: Ten out of 10 Nifty Bank shares fell in Monday’s trade, led by State Bank of India (SBI), ICICI Bank Ltd, Punjab National Bank, Union Bank of India, IndusInd Bank Ltd and YES Bank Ltd as the RBI raised daily cash reserve ratio (CRR) maintenance requirement for banks to 99 per cent from October 16. Jefferies, for now, sees some impact on net interest margin (NIM), though it said the same can be passed on to borrowers. On an average, banks maintain 10 per cent of buffer above the required threshold of 90 per cent of CRR, the global investment bank noted. Following the development, SBI fell 1.77 per cent to Rs 942.10. PNB shares were quoting 1.35 per cent lower at Rs 115.40. ICICI Bank declined 1.34 per cent to Rs 1,336.90. Union Bank and IndusInd Bank slipped 1.2-1.3 per cent. Canara Bank, AU Small

Finance Bank (AU SFB) and YES Bank also dropped over 1 per cent each. Axis Bank, HDFC Bank and Kotak Mahindra Bank fell up to 0.8 per cent

In line with the change in MPC stance to ‘calibrated tightening’, RBI raised daily CRR from 90 per cent to 99 per cent, Jefferies noted on Monday, noting that banks would be required to fully meet full CRR norm of 3 per cent of NDTL. “At 100 per cent CRR, banks would carry Rs 8 lakh crore in CRR & if this lifts balances by 5-10 per cent, it can withdraw Rs 40,000-80,000 crore of liquidity & add 1-2bps to cost of funds.

It’s a small dilution of NIMs & banks may be able to pass to borrowers. In a rising rate period, we prefer banks over NBFCs,” Jefferies said. The global investment bank maintained ‘Buy’ on all eight



private lenders under its coverage. They included HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Axis Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank, IndusInd Bank, IDFC First Bank, Bandhan Bank and AU Small Finance Bank. Among three PSU banks under its coverage, Jefferies has ‘Hold’ on Bank of Baroda but ‘Buy’ on SBI and PNB.

Ex-Flipkart staff seek stock option exit amid



New Delhi: Former employees of the Flipkart group have approached the boards of Walmart and Flipkart, seeking an exit for their vested employee stock options (Esops) amid repeated delays to the company’s proposed initial public offering (IPO). About 1,000 former employees of Flipkart, Myntra, Cleartrip, Shopsy, Super Money and ANS Commerce have sent a representation dated October 10 to the two boards, seeking inclusion in the group’s Esop buyback, people aware of the matter said. The group aims to bring together 20,000-30,000 former employees. The representation seeks a dialogue with the company’s management before the terms of the buyback are finalised.

The move follows a letter dated October 1 to Walmart’s board by former senior executives of the group, seeking an exit for their vested options. The signatories reportedly included former Myntra chief executive Mukesh Bansal, former chief business officer Ankit Nagori and former chief financial officer Sanjay Baweja. Former employees say they retained their options because they were repeatedly told that an IPO was imminent. However, the company has yet to announce a listing date, leaving them uncertain about when they will be able to realise the value of their holdings. Walmart acquired a controlling stake in Flip-

kart for about \$16 billion in 2018 and indicated that year that the company could go public within four years. The listing has since been deferred repeatedly. In May, Walmart reportedly asked Flipkart to defer its IPO and achieve Ebitda breakeven before the end of FY27. Although Flipkart shifted its domicile from Singapore to India in March, there has been no clarity on the IPO timeline. Sources said the plans were recently dropped following a valuation mismatch. Current employees have had some opportunities to unlock the value of their stock options. In July, Flipkart conducted a second \$50-million buyback round, allowing eligible employees to sell up to 5% of their vested options. Former employees were excluded from the exercise. Flipkart is now reportedly considering another buyback of options held by current employees between January and March 2027, with Walmart expected to acquire the shares. It remains unclear whether former employees will be offered a separate exit. Current and former employees together hold options worth about \$4 billion, with former employees accounting for roughly half of the total, according to people familiar with the matter. Former employees fear that, in the absence of a firm IPO timeline, they could have to wait several more years before being able to sell their vested options.

Copper up 38% in 1 year Jefferies sees cable industry growing 4x by 2035

New Delhi: Surging copper prices is expected to boost the revenue growth of India’s cables and wires (C&W) industry. International brokerage firm Jefferies believes that the industry may grow fourfold by 2035 as copper prices rise 38%. “Indian C&W industry is estimated at Rs 90,000 crore and is expected to grow approximately 4x by 2035 (implying +15% CAGR)” Copper up 38% in a year, cable prices rise 20%

The sharp rise in copper prices has pushed cable manufacturers to increase product prices. Copper price fluctuations are generally passed on to customers in the Indian cables and wires industry, helping companies protect themselves against higher input costs. The distributor said manufacturers have largely passed on raw material price increases to end consumers without significant demand disruption. Copper prices have risen 38% over the past 12 months, while aluminium prices have increased 16%. Against this backdrop, average price hikes across the cables and wires industry are estimated at around 20% over the same period.

Channel inventory also remains normal at around 35-40 days, suggesting that higher prices have not triggered a major change in stocking patterns.



Jefferies noted that Cables and wires account for only a small share of the total cost of large infrastructure projects. As a result, customers have continued to place orders despite price increases, as delays in project completion can prove costly. Demand conditions in the cables and wires industry remain healthy, with power and real estate emerging as the key drivers, the report said. Power cable demand is increasing as state governments, electricity boards and select private-sector players ramp up proj-

ects. State governments remain important drivers of demand for power transmission and distribution products. States such as Maharashtra and Gujarat are seeing steady growth in cables and wires consumption. Eastern and northeastern India could also emerge as promising markets in the coming years. In the real estate sector, premiumisation in residential housing, particularly in metropolitan cities, is supporting demand for cables and wires. Data centres and solar projects are also emerging

as additional growth opportunities. Data centres require copper cables to ensure a reliable power supply, while solar projects are driving demand for cables, including aluminium-armoured cables. The distributor did not report any major challenges in the availability of raw materials or labour across most end-user sectors. Jefferies flags volume growth concerns. Price-led revenue growth does not necessarily indicate an equivalent increase in volumes, Jefferies highlighted. The pace of demand and the ability of manufacturers to manage input costs will remain important factors in determining profitability. Operating Leverage Deficit to Squeeze Operating Margins. The global investment bank has identified Polycab India and Finolex Cables as its key buys. It expects the two companies to report sales growth of 18-20% year-on-year in Q2FY27, driven mainly by higher prices. However, it expects average operating profit margins (OPM) for the two companies to decline by around 150 basis points year-on-year. Lower volume-driven operating leverage compared with the previous year could weigh on margins. Operating leverage refers to the benefit companies get when higher sales volumes help them spread fixed costs across more products.

Stabilising the rupee RBI measures may buy more time but more structural steps required

New Delhi: The rupee surged on Monday morning, opening 97 paise higher at 95.76 against the US dollar, as the Reserve Bank of India stepped up its efforts to lift the currency over the weekend. The rupee may get a near-term boost, but, despite the measures, medium-term pressure on the rupee may still remain, amid continued geopolitical tensions that have driven up oil prices, foreign investor outflows, and high global bond yields, and more durable and broader policy measures may be required, analysts warn. In the recent days, despite the Reserve Bank raising the repo rate by 25 basis points, and accumulating around \$143 billion

in US dollar inflows via special concessional swap window for foreign currency non-resident bank (FCNR (B)) deposits, external commercial borrowings (ECB) and overseas foreign currency borrowings (OFCB) as of September-end, the rupee has again been under pressure. On Friday, October 9, the rupee had closed at around 96.72 against the greenback. It had touched a record low of 96.96 against the dollar in May.

The fresh steps RBI announced to shore up the rupee include special window for oil marketing companies’ dollar demands, restrictions on forex derivative contracts, introduction of a foreign exchange risk re-

serve (FERR) and reduction in the threshold for undertaking foreign exchange derivative transactions without establishing underlying exposure.

These steps should ideally boost the rupee. For instance, the special window for OMCs, where by RBI will undertake dollar sales to public sector oil marketing companies through designated banks effective October 12, should reroute around \$11-12 billion of monthly dollar demand from the spot market to the RBI, analysts say. The existing threshold of \$100 million equivalent for undertaking foreign exchange derivative transactions to hedge contracted exposures without establishing

the existence of the underlying exposure has been reduced to \$5 million equivalent, across all authorised dealers. Separately, under the new FERR requirement, for contracts exceeding \$2 million, authorised dealers must maintain a 20% rupee-equivalent reserve with the RBI. This, pointed Madhavi Arora, lead economist at Emkay Global Financial Services, raises hedging costs for importers and discourages excessive derivative positioning, especially as banks are likely to pass on the additional cost, implying an additional hedge cost increase of 1.3-1.5%. Lower hedging demand could support the rupee and ease forward premiums, she pointed.

Trump announces partial ceasefire in Ukraine war as Zelenskyy says deal is ‘news to me’

Kyiv: Donald Trump has announced an energy ceasefire between Ukraine and Russia, apparently without consulting Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who said the deal to stop long-range attacks was “news to me”.

In a social media post, the US president claimed the two sides had reached an agreement. “Effective immediately, there is an ENERGY CEASEFIRE in the War between Russia and Ukraine. Both parties have agreed. Do not break it!” he wrote on Truth Social.

He offered no further details. Zelenskyy said he was surprised by the announcement but would agree to it if Vladimir Putin did the same. “If President Trump negotiated it with Putin – please tell us when the ceasefire begins. We are ready and we will accept it,” the Ukrainian president told the Axios website.

Earlier, Zelenskyy rebuffed Trump’s demand made on Saturday that Kyiv stop bombing Russian oil refineries. Zelenskyy said Moscow had to first halt its own “brutal” attacks on his country’s energy infrastructure.

Any deal to end long-range drone strikes by Ukraine on targets inside Russia would have to be “reciprocal”, he said. It should be backed by “real guarantees” – meaning punitive measures against Moscow from Ukraine’s allies, including the US.

There was no sign that the Kremlin was observing Trump’s ceasefire. According to Zelenskyy, Russian drones took to the sky “throughout the day” on Sunday. There were also “unfortunately” several airstrikes, he said, including on energy infrastructure.

The Ukrainian president said the Russians hit thermal power station No 5 in the eastern city of Kharkiv – the latest of more than 200 strikes this week against electricity generation and transmission facilities in Ukraine. There were another 17 hits on gas and oil facilities, he added.

The fast-moving row between Washington and Kyiv began on Friday when Trump announced he was lifting sanctions on Russian diesel exports. He said the move would reduce global and domestic fuel prices before next month’s US midterm elections.

A furious Zelenskyy called the decision “weak” and said it would generate “billions” in extra revenue for Putin, enabling him to wage war “even more intensely”. An equally irate Trump said Zelenskyy should “damn well stop” hitting Russian refineries. Ukraine needed a “new leader”, he said on Saturday.

Responding to Trump, Zelenskyy said it was up to Ukrainians to choose “one or another leader”. He told ABC News he was willing to accept Trump’s demands and to organise elections, but only if Putin agreed to a “total” 60-day ceasefire.

The bitter public feud is the most serious between the US and Ukraine since last year, when Trump berated Zelenskyy in the Oval Office. The Financial



Times, citing officials in Europe, reported on Sunday that the US is threatening to stop the procurement system that provides Ukraine with weapons to press Kyiv to halt its deep strikes on Russian energy infrastructure.

The New York Times has reported that US officials have offered the Kremlin lucrative economic incentives in exchange for a ceasefire. They reportedly include releasing billions in Russian sovereign assets that are frozen. The Trump administration also revisited a plan to sell parts of Russia’s energy company, Lukoil. The multibillion deal would benefit Middle Eastern investors, the paper reported, some with “business ties” to US negotiators.

On Saturday, Trump criticised Zelenskyy and said he had refused to make a deal to end the fighting. In response, Ukraine’s president laid the blame for Europe’s biggest war since 1945 on “Russia and Russia alone”. “It is possible to stop strikes on energy infrastructure as early as today, but Putin does not want to do so,” he said. Ukrainian officials

Zelenskyy said Moscow’s aerial campaign involved thousands of aerial bombs and jet-powered drones. It continued “unabated”, he said. The head of Ukraine’s foreign affairs committee, Oleksandr Merezhko, said Trump’s “bullying” demand for Zelenskyy to quit had strengthened him at home “paradoxically”, after recent damaging corruption scandals. “Putin’s plan is to decapitate Zelenskyy and remove him as a wartime leader. Trump is siding with Putin,” Merezhko said.

He added: “I’m afraid that behind this situation is Trump’s worldview. He wants to do business with Putin. For him, Ukraine seems like an obstacle to be removed. Both Trump and Putin wish to pressure us into capitulation.”

Referring to the notorious 1939 agreement between Nazi Germany and the USSR, Merezhko said: “We are moving to a new Molotov-Ribbentrop pact and to a world of strongmen and spheres of influence.”

Merezhko said Ukraine would continue to destroy enemy oil refineries, against US wishes, because they funded Russia’s war machine and acknowledged that a cutoff of US intelligence sharing with Kyiv – threatened by the Trump administration – would “blind” Ukraine’s air defence systems. “This would be an act of complicity with Putin’s genocide. It would mean more dead civilians and dead children,” he said.

Ukrainian negotiators had been meeting in Florida with their American counterparts, Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, when Trump announced the US was lifting sanctions on Russian diesel. Blindsided, the Ukrainians went home early. “It felt like a trap,” one stunned Ukrainian official told the Kyiv Independent newspaper.

On Sunday, Zelenskyy shored up support in a series of conversations with key allies including Canada’s prime minister, Mark Carney, the Polish leader, Donald Tusk, and the European Commission president, Ursula von der Leyen. Earlier Zelenskyy spoke with the UK prime minister, Andy Burnham, France’s president, Emmanuel Macron, and the Finnish president, Alexander Stubb. Downing Street said Burnham recognised the last 24 hours had been “difficult” for Ukraine and “reiterated his complete solidarity”. Downing Street said the two leaders agreed “to maintain pressure on Russia” and to strengthen the sanctions regime, despite Trump’s efforts to the contrary. “Russia should agree to an immediate energy ceasefire, ending its brutal strikes on Ukrainian infrastructure and its attacks on shipping in the Black Sea,” a statement added.

Speaking over the weekend, Zelenskyy said Trump’s decision empowered Putin and gave him “extra money for the war”, running into millions and “perhaps billions”. “It is certainly not fair. It is certainly not how partners should act. And, in my view, it is a weak decision,” he said.

Indonesia looks to mosque loudspeakers to double as earthquake warning systems

Indonesia: Scientists working on an early warning system in earthquake-prone Indonesia have taken the spiritual path to designing a network of alarms that will reach even the remotest communities: they hope to use mosques to save lives.

A five-year trial is assessing whether the ubiquitous loudspeakers used to broadcast the call to prayer can double up as warning klaxons for earthquakes.

“Every community has a mosque,” says project lead Dr Inoue Hiroshi, speaking to the Guardian from Indonesia. The pilot scheme was the brainchild of the Japanese disaster scientist, who says he came up with the idea nearly two decades ago while researching deadly quakes in Sumatra, Indonesia.

Inoue, of the Disaster Prevention Research Institute at Kyoto University in Japan, is working with the Indonesian government to assess whether the country could implement an early warning system similar to Japan’s.

“I thought if Indonesia had the same service and people received the warning before the shaking came, then many people among those few hundred wouldn’t have died,” he says of a devastating 2009 quake in western Sumatra which killed at least 1,000 people.

Indonesia’s disaster agency has to grapple with huge distances and hard-to-reach territories, but it has the benefit of an already established network of regularly serviced loudspeakers, something many other countries do not.

With the largest population of Muslims worldwide, Indonesia has hundreds of thousands of mosques, which broadcast the call to



pray five times a day. The pilot scheme has already hooked up several mosques to its seismic sensor network.

For an earthquake early warning system to save lives, there are two critical factors – it needs a network of alarms, and they need to work. “The advantage of a mosque speaker is that they’re existing and well maintained,” says Inoue. “For any disaster infrastructure, maintenance is the big challenge ... but the mosque speaker is maintained by the people”.

Many modern disaster preparedness strategies work using mobile phones, although those are vulnerable because earthquakes can disrupt communication infrastructure.

The country has a tsunami early warning system dating back to 2008, but the earthquake initiative could be a “breakthrough”, says Andi Eka Sakya, senior researcher at the Indonesian government-affiliated National Research and Innovation Agency and the Indonesian head of the joint research team.

While tsunamis affect coastal areas and can be predicted in minutes or even hours, earthquake waves move through the ground at incredible speeds, and Sakya says a village 50km from the epicentre could have only five to 10 seconds to respond.

“It’s still a prototype, and they don’t issue warnings to the public yet,” he says. “The ultimate goal is

actually to alert the people so that they can respond as early as possible.”

The project, which runs until 2030, is also looking at installing alarm systems in school loudspeakers and using radio and television transmissions.

Indonesia and Japan both lie on the Pacific Ring of Fire and are frequently affected by earthquakes. Researchers are looking at how behaviours and survival strategies differ between Japan and Indonesia.

In Japan, official disaster guidelines focus on the widely used “drop and cover” strategy – taking immediate shelter, for example, under a table and staying indoors.

In contrast, low-rise homes in some developing

countries like Indonesia are frequently built from unreinforced masonry that is highly vulnerable to collapsing, and so people have survived by escaping outside. In some cases, two-storey buildings in Indonesia have seen the first floor crushed and the second floor remain relatively intact.

“The way people react is they quickly escape out of the room,” says Inoue. “They know how to survive.”

Because standard international advice does not always suit fragile buildings, project researchers are conducting simulations and human experiments to establish guidelines grounded in science. “This is actually one of the main research topics,” says Inoue.

Other countries in the Muslim world have looked at similar systems. When the United Arab Emirates government planned to start its Barakah nuclear power plant, an official on the project said mosque loudspeakers would be part of a broader network of alarms in the event of a radiation leak.

A far more extensive mosque loudspeaker project is going on in Uzbekistan, where the Ministry of Emergency Situations announced a pilot project this year for devices to be installed in 272 mosques. The alarms would alert people to floods, mudflows, landslides and avalanches.

“The selection of mosques is not incidental,” the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which partnered in the initiative, said in a statement. “They are traditionally perceived as authoritative social institutions with significant influence on local communities.”

US plan to livestream execution elicits global condemnation

America: The US is facing worldwide condemnation over a “barbaric” plan to execute a disabled man by firing squad and livestream it to the public, with critics comparing the Trump administration to dictatorships in Iran and Afghanistan.

The Pentagon confirmed on Thursday that the execution of Nidal Malik Hasan, convicted of killing 13 people at a military base at Fort Hood in Texas in 2009, would be livestreamed on 3 December.

The United Nations’ office of the high commissioner for human rights warned on Friday that broadcasting the killing would amount to a public execution and “breach the absolute prohibition of torture”.

The plan also drew opprobrium from politicians, religious leaders and human rights advocates in the US and abroad. Hillary Clinton, the former US secretary of state, wrote on social media: “A barbaric idea, beneath our dignity as a country. Push back on this.”

Yassamin Ansari, the first Iranian American Democrat elected to the US Congress, posted: “In Trump’s America, we’re doing public executions now. WTF. This is what happens under brutal dictatorships like Iran and Afghanistan. It’s all part of Trump’s authoritarian takeover of the United States.”

Britain, which abolished the death penalty in the 1960s, moved to distance itself from the execution. Bridget Phillipson, the UK’s equalities minister and Labour party chair, told BBC Radio 4’s Today programme that she found the concept “rather disturbing”.

Phillipson stressed that the decision was a matter for the US government,

adding: “They are a close ally. Does that mean that we support everything the US government does? No.”

Under US military law, a president must approve an execution by firing squad. Trump did so on the recommendation of his defence secretary, Pete Hegseth, according to the Pentagon.

JD Vance – a practicing Catholic – told reporters on Friday he wouldn’t watch the livestreamed execution of Hasan, but stopped short of criticizing the administration’s decision.

When asked how his Christian beliefs influence his view of the public execution, Vance dismissed controversy about the manner of execution and appeared to question whether the livestream will happen.

“Whatever the controversy is about the method of the execution, I hope the people don’t forget that this is a guy who brutally murdered a lot of innocent people,” the US vice-president told reporters. “That said, if it’s ultimately livestreamed, I’m not going to be watching it.”

Hegseth gleefully confirmed the livestream plan after previously saying that the execution would be public. Speaking to the conservative broadcaster Real America’s Voice, he said people should be able to watch because they need to understand that there were “serious consequences” for such crimes.

Asked whether Hasan had made any final requests, Hegseth replied: “Don’t care. We’ll see him on December 3.”

Now 56, Hasan was sentenced to death by a military jury in 2013 after being convicted of 13 counts of premeditated murder and 32 counts of attempted premeditated murder.

Twelve of those killed and 30 of the wounded were soldiers.

The former army psychiatrist opened fire with a handgun at a medical facility at Fort Hood on 5 November 2009 as soldiers waited for medical checks before deployment. He was shot by a police officer during his arrest and left partly paralysed, and now uses a wheelchair.

The execution is expected to be the first by firing squad carried out by the US military since 1945, when army private Eddie Slovik was executed for desertion during the second world war. The last US military execution of any kind took place in 1961, when John Bennett was hanged.

Hasan’s case comes amid renewed scrutiny of capital punishment in the US following the botched lethal injection of Tennessee death-row prisoner Christa Pike last week.

Her lawyers said she awoke in hospital “angry and confused” and remained seriously ill and shackled to her hospital bed.

Media have sought to televise US executions in the past, but have been blocked by the courts. No other country is known to televise or livestream legal executions, experts said.

Indeed, public executions have largely disappeared around the world. Amnesty International recorded at least 17 in 2025, including 11 in Iran and six in Taliban-run Afghanistan.

In the US, executions have been conducted privately for about nine decades. The hanging of Rainey Bethea in Kentucky in 1936, witnessed by thousands, is generally regarded as the country’s last public execution, although another hanging took place in Missouri the following year.

Ten lipsticks to round off your Diwali ensemble, ranging from festive reds to nude browns



Diwali presents a magnificent canvas for beauty experimentation where the richness of traditional attire like sarees, lehengas, or kurtas pairs effortlessly with everything from classic understated elegance to bold, avant-garde cosmetic choices, and while flawless complexion coverage, intricately smudged kohl eyes, and strategic highlighter placements all play critical roles in building a stunning festive look, the true anchor of your makeup ensemble remains the lipstick, which possesses the remarkable ability to instantly tie together disparate elements of color, texture, and mood. Whether you lean toward timeless, opulent crimsons and deep, dramatic berry hues that evoke

regal heritage, or prefer to modernise your look with warm terracotta neutrals, subtle mauve undertones, and vibrant coral-tinted pinks that radiate youthful exuberance, there is a vast and sophisticated spectrum of shades available to elevate your celebration. Furthermore, navigating this rich palette allows you to customize your finish based on the exact vibe you wish to project—opting for long-lasting, transfer-proof matte formulas that withstand endless hours of visiting, sweets-tasting, and sparkling sparkler sessions without budging, or alternatively choosing luscious satin or high-shine glosses that catch the flickering glow of hundreds of diyas and lanterns, ensuring

your lips remain deeply hydrated, plush, and undeniably captivating. Ultimately, the secret to mastering festive lips lies not only in matching the undertones of your embroidered fabrics and glittering accessories but also in selecting a hue that instills confidence and joy, transforming your ritualistic getting-ready process into a cherished celebration of personal style and festive radiance that will leave a lasting impression on everyone you celebrate with throughout the auspicious season. If you are updating your beauty kit this festive season, Amazon.in offers lipsticks in a variety of finishes, including matte, creamy and glossy formulas. The key is to choose a shade and texture that complement your outfit while remaining comfortable enough for family gatherings, festive lunches and evening celebrations. Here are 10 lipsticks worth considering for your Diwali makeup kit, with options across different brands, colours and finishes.

1. Maybelline New York Super Stay Matte Ink Liquid Lipstick, 70 Amazonian: If you want a lipstick that can keep up with a busy Diwali schedule, this liquid lipstick is worth considering. Its highly pigmented matte finish makes it suitable for evening parties, family get-togethers and festive dinners. Choose a classic red, deep pink or berry shade to complement traditional outfits. Apply a thin, even layer and allow it to dry before adding another coat. Its long-wear formula is designed to reduce the need for frequent touch-ups.
2. Lakme 9 To 5 Primer + Matte Lipstick- Cinnamon Spice 3.6g: Lakmé's 9

to 5 range is a useful option if you prefer a classic matte lipstick for festive makeup. The primer-infused formula is designed to provide a smooth-looking finish, while the range offers shades suitable for both subtle daytime celebrations and glamorous evening looks. Try a warm red with a gold saree or a muted rose shade with pastel ethnic wear. Prep your lips with a light balm before application for a more comfortable finish.

3. Maybelline New York Color Sensational Creamy Matte Lipstick: Not everyone enjoys the feel of a liquid matte lipstick. Maybelline's Color Sensational Creamy Matte range is an alternative for those who prefer a traditional lipstick with a creamy texture and matte appearance. It works well for daytime pujas, office celebrations and casual festive lunches. A rosy pink or nude-brown shade can keep your makeup understated, while a rich red adds definition to a more elaborate look.
4. SUGAR Cosmetics Matte As Hell Crayon Lipstick for Indian Skin: A lipstick crayon is handy when you want more control while defining your lips. SUGAR Cosmetics' Matte As Hell Crayon range is worth exploring for its pigmented matte finish and selection of statement-making shades. Pair a deep red or berry colour with a simple outfit when you want your lips to be the focus. Use the pointed end to outline the lips before filling them in. Check whether your chosen shade comes with a sharpener or requires a separate one.
5. Nykaa Matte to Last Liquid Lipstick, Matte Finish, 5ml - 18 Chai: For those

who prefer liquid formulas, Nykaa's Matte To Last range offers options for creating a defined, matte pout. A terracotta, brick-red or deep pink shade can complement festive Indian wear without competing with heavily embellished outfits. Apply the product carefully along your natural lip line and let it set. If your lips tend to feel dry, exfoliate gently when needed and use a nourishing lip balm before applying your lipstick.

6. FACESCANADA Lipstick Peach Candy 14: A classic bullet lipstick is a practical addition to your makeup pouch, especially if you want something easy to apply and reapply. Faces Canada's Weightless Matte Finish range offers options for those who prefer a matte look without using a liquid formula. Choose a soft pink for daytime events or a warm brown for a contemporary festive look. The creamy or matte feel can vary by formula, so check the shade and product details before buying.
7. Swiss Beauty Pure Matte Creamy Lipstick | Non-drying, Highly pigmented Lipstick: If you are shopping for festive makeup without spending too much, Swiss Beauty's Pure Matte Lipstick is worth a look. Its range of shades makes it possible to experiment with everyday nudes, pinks and bolder reds. A nude-brown lipstick pairs well with dramatic eye makeup, while a brighter shade can add colour to a simple kurta-and-earrings combination. This is also a useful option if you want to build a small collection of lip colours for different occasions.
8. REVLON Super Lustrous Creme

Lipstick, 80% Conditioning Ingredients: For a softer alternative to matte lipsticks, consider Revlon's Super Lustrous Creme range. Its creamy finish is suitable for those who prefer their lips to look smooth and comfortable rather than completely flat or powdery. Choose a classic red for a traditional Diwali look or a rosy shade for a more understated appearance. Cream finishes may transfer more easily than some liquid mattes, so carry the lipstick with you for touch-ups after meals.

9. L'Oréal Paris Infallible Matte Resistance Liquid Lipstick, 150 Lazy Sunday: If your Diwali plans include an evening party, consider L'Oréal Paris Infallible Matte Resistance. It delivers a matte finish and is designed for extended wear, making it ideal for those who prefer liquid lipstick over traditional bullets. Try a rich red or mauve shade with softly defined eyes and a luminous base. For best results, apply an even layer to clean, dry lips and avoid layering too much product.

10. Lakmé Forever Matte Liquid Lip Colour, Crimson Rose, 5.6 ml: Lakmé Forever Matte Liquid Lip Color is worth considering if you prefer a liquid lipstick with a defined matte finish. The range includes shades that can work with traditional and contemporary festive outfits. A deep berry or wine colour can complement jewel-toned clothing, while a warm red looks striking with gold jewellery. As with other matte liquid formulas, start with a thin layer and give it time to set before pressing your lips together.

How to determine whether a design trend will fit your clothing and style

In today's hyper-connected and relentlessly fast-paced fashion environment, maintaining comprehensive awareness of every micro-trend, viral aesthetic, and fleeting runway fad can prove genuinely daunting, making it not only acceptable but often deeply liberating to selectively engage with or entirely opt out of them. Nevertheless, the constant digital barrage of social media algorithms showcasing influencers draped in contemporary styles may frequently evoke feelings of apprehension regarding missed opportunities—commonly known as FOMO—and create an uncomfortable sense of exclusion or inadequacy when your personal wardrobe feels out of sync with the digital zeitgeist. However, it is vital to remember that the ubiquitous, manufactured presence of a fashion trend across Instagram and TikTok feeds does not inherently indicate that it will flatter your unique body proportions, enhance your individual aesthetic, or integrate seamlessly into your existing lifestyle and wardrobe. Rather than succumbing to the pressure of mass consumerism dictated by viral loops, true style longevity stems from discerning curation, recognizing that personal authenticity far outweighs algorithmic popularity, and investing in pieces that genuinely resonate with your comfort, personality, and values. By consciously stepping back from the pressure to adopt every new look, you cultivate a healthier relationship with fashion, transforming your closet from a repository of temporary impulses into a curated collection of timeless expressions that celebrate your individuality without the anxiety of keeping pace with an impossible digital standard.

Evolving fashion trends
“I love fashion trends, but I have absolutely no intention of wearing all of them. In fact, I think knowing what not to wear can be just as important to developing personal style as knowing what to wear,” said Anushka.
She highlighted that we are living in a dizzying moment where contemporary fashion moves at an unprecedented velocity, with trends emerging, peaking, and vanishing almost overnight, all intensely amplified by the relentless algorithms of Instagram, TikTok, and our increasingly visual culture. This hyper-accelerated cycle means that one week the collective consciousness is obsessed with understated, monochromatic quiet luxury, only to pivot abruptly the next week toward unbridled maximalism, until suddenly everyone across the feed appears to be simultaneously dressing for an imaginary,



sun-drenched summer in Capri regardless of the actual weather or season outside their window. This dizzying pace creates an exhausting culture of instant obsolescence where clothes barely have time to become worn before they are declared outdated, turning personal style into a reactive race against the digital clock. Ultimately, this rapid-fire trend turnover forces both consumers and designers to constantly chase ghosts of novelty, questioning whether our wardrobes are meant to be deeply personal expressions of identity or merely disposable costumes designed for a fleeting moment of screen time.

How to tell if a fashion trend will suit your style and wardrobe
The sheer volume of trends can make it difficult to distinguish between something you genuinely like and something you have simply become accustomed to seeing. Here are the questions you should ask yourself:

Would I still like this if I had not seen it everywhere?
That distinction is important. Fashion should inspire you, but it should not dictate your identity. If a particular silhouette, colour or aesthetic continues to appeal to you even after the initial hype has passed, there is probably something about it that resonates with your personal style.
The next question is much more practical: Does it make sense for my life?
According to Anushka, a trend can look incredible on a runway or in an editorial and still have very little relevance to your wardrobe. Before investing in it, I think about where I

would actually wear it. Would it work for my everyday life? Can I style it in more than one way? Does it work with pieces I already own? And, perhaps most importantly, would I still want to wear it once the trend has moved on?

How to build a personal style?
Personal style is ultimately built through repetition. “The pieces we truly love are the ones we return to, often in different combinations and across different phases of our lives. That is also why I don't believe in adopting a trend from head to toe,” said Anushka.

The most interesting interpretation of a trend is often a personal one. If you love metallics, perhaps it is a shoe, a bag or even a subtle accessory rather than a complete metallic look. If oversized tailoring appeals to you, start with a blazer. If you are drawn to a dramatic silhouette, pair it with something familiar from your wardrobe. The idea is not to replicate a trend exactly as you have seen it. It is to translate it into your own visual language. “I also think we underestimate the importance of how clothes make us feel. Something can photograph beautifully and still not feel right when you are wearing it,” said Anushka. Conversely, an unexpected piece can become a wardrobe favourite simply because it makes you feel more confident, more comfortable or more like yourself. That instinct is worth listening to. Ultimately, the best test is not whether something is fashionable. It is whether you put it on and feel like yourself, only slightly more considered, more confident or more interesting.

Using Kitchen Leftovers for Zero-Waste Skincare

Utilized Coffee Grounds Body Scrub: Combine desiccated spent coffee grounds with coconut oil to create an invigorating exfoliating treatment for the body. The caffeine content enhances blood circulation and provides temporary skin firming effects, whereas the abrasive texture of the grounds effectively removes deceased epidermal cells, thereby exposing a refined, luminous complexion. Over-ripe Banana Hydrating Face Mask: Mash an overripe, spotty banana with a teaspoon of honey to create a deeply hydrating mask. Bananas are rich in potassium and vitamin A, restoring moisture and elasticity to dull, dry skin without harsh chemicals.

Fermented Rice Water Brightening Toner: Save the water used to rinse or boil rice, allow it to ferment overnight, and strain it. Packed with amino acids, vitamins, and minerals, this traditional Asian toner tightens pores and brightens uneven skin tones naturally. Citrus Peel Exfoliating Powder: Dehydrate lemon or orange peels and grind them into a fine powder. Rich in natural AHA citric acid and vitamin C, this fragrant powder can be mixed with water or yogurt to gently clarify and brighten oily skin. Watermelon Rind Soothing Cooling Rub: Rub the inner white fleshy part of watermelon rinds directly onto sun-exposed or inflamed skin. The rind contains high concentrations of lycopene, antioxidants, and water, offering instant hydration and calming inflamed, sun-irritated areas.

Potato Peel Dark Circle Treatment: Place freshly washed, raw potato peels skin-side down under your eyes for fifteen minutes. Potatoes contain catecholase enzymes and vitamin C, which help brighten stubborn under-eye dark circles and soothe tired, puffy eyes naturally. Oatmeal Water Calming Facial Wash: Steep leftover rolled



oats or oat dust in warm water, strain, and use the milky liquid as a soothing face rinse. Colloidal oat lipids calm sensitive, itchy, or redness-prone skin while preserving the natural skin barrier. Papaya Seed And Peel Enzyme Scrub: Puree papaya seeds and inner peel scraps into a smooth paste. Rich in the natural enzyme papain, this gentle mixture gently dissolves dead surface skin cells and clears clogged pores for a luminous complexion. Tomato Skin Pore-Tightening Pack: Rub leftover tomato skins and seeds over your face and leave the juice on for ten minutes. The natural acidity and lycopene in tomatoes balance excess oil production, tighten enlarged pores, and restore skin radiance. Spoiled Milk Lactic Acid Exfoliating Wash: Use slightly sour, unpasteurized milk as a gentle rinse or foot bath instead of pouring it down the drain. Sour milk is rich in natural lactic acid, an alpha-hydroxy acid that gently exfoliates dead skin cells.

Which holiday design should you choose, embroidered kurtas or chikankari

For festive attire, the choice between Chikankari kurtis and embroidered kurta sets depends on your desired look, the event, and your intended style. While embroidered kurtas include a greater variety of motifs, from subtle neck details to elaborate Anarkali sets, Chikankari is renowned for its delicate threadwork and traditional charm. If you're shopping for ethnic wear for family gatherings, festive dinners or celebrations, both styles offer versatile options. A Chikankari kurti can be styled with different bottoms for a more personalised look, while a coordinated embroidered kurta set makes getting dressed easier. Neither style is automatically better for every occasion. Chikankari is itself an embroidery tradition, so the distinction is between a specific style of needlework and the broader category of embroidered kurtas.

1. Ada Women's Muslin Straight Fit Hand Embroidered Chikankari Kurti: This muslin kurti from Ada combines a straight-fit silhouette with traditional Chikankari embroidery. Its lightweight fabric description makes it worth considering for warm-weather dressing, while the embroidered detailing adds interest without requiring elaborate accessories. Why choose it: Consider this style if you prefer delicate traditional embroidery and want a kurti that can be styled with different bottoms. Styling tip: Pair it with white palazzos, silver jhumkas and embroidered juttis for an understated ethnic look.
2. Sidhidata Rayon Embroidered Kurti with 3/4 Sleeves: This Sidhidata kurti features three-quarter sleeves and an embroidered neckline. The relatively minimal design makes it an option for shoppers who want a decorative detail without an all-over embroidered look. Why choose it: Consider it for workwear or casual ethnic dressing if you prefer a simple silhouette with a defined neckline. Styling tip: Wear it with straight trousers, Kolhapuri sandals and a tote bag for an office-ready outfit.
3. Seva Chikan Hand Embroidered Chikankari Cot-

ton Short Kurti: This Seva Chikan short kurti combines cotton, according to the product title, with hand-embroidered Chikankari detailing. Its shorter silhouette offers a different styling option from the longer straight-fit kurtis in this comparison. Why choose it: This is worth exploring if you prefer short kurtis that can be paired with a range of bottoms rather than buying a complete coordinated set.

4. KLOSIA Women Embroidery Solid Anarkali Kurta and Pant Set with Dupatta: This KLOSIA set features an embroidered Anarkali silhouette, coordinated pants and a dupatta. The flared shape gives the outfit a more occasion-oriented feel, making it an option for festive evenings and family functions. Why choose it: Consider an embroidered Anarkali set if you want a coordinated outfit with a more pronounced silhouette rather than a stand-alone kurti. Styling tip: Pair it with traditional juttis, statement earrings and soft curls for a festive gathering.
5. Nermosa Women Embroidery Solid Straight Kurta and Pant Set with Dupatta: This Nermosa straight-cut kurta set features embroidery, matching pants and a dupatta. Its structured silhouette offers an alternative to the flared Anarkali, particularly if you prefer a cleaner outline for festive dressing. Why choose it: A coordinated straight-cut set can be a practical option when you want a complete ethnic outfit without the volume of a flared kurta. Styling tip: Add statement earrings, comfortable block heels and a small clutch for a polished festive look.
6. Nermosa Women Embroidery Solid Anarkali Kurta and Pant Set with Dupatta: This Nermosa set offers another embroidered Anarkali option, with matching pants and a dupatta. It gives shoppers another silhouette to compare with the KLOSIA Anarkali and the straight-cut Nermosa set. Why choose it: Consider this style if you prefer a flared kurta and want a coordinated outfit for a celebration. Check the listing images and specifications for the exact colour, fabric and embroidery details.

ENTERTAINMENT

Mamitha Baiju cast in Prasanth Varma’s ‘Jai Hanuman’



Hyderabad : Mamitha Baiju’s rapid rise in Malayalam and Tamil cinema has caught everyone’s attention. Her breakthrough performances in films such as Super Sharanya, Premalu, Bethlehem Kudumba Unit and Vishwanath And Sons

have earned her widespread recognition. Filmmakers have taken notice of her natural acting ability and expressive performances, while the success of these projects has established her as one of the rising stars of South Indian cinema.

Keen to expand her reach, Mamitha is now reportedly venturing into Telugu cinema, with several promising projects said to be coming her way. The latest reports suggest that she will play a significant role in the Telugu mythological film Jai Hanuman. According to reports, Mamitha will share the screen with Rishab Shetty in the sequel to the 2024 blockbuster HanuMan. Director Prasanth Varma is said to have been impressed by Mamitha’s confident, relatable performances and spirited screen presence. Her ability to balance light-hearted characters with comic timing and emotional depth reportedly worked in her favour.

Jai Hanuman explores the fulfilment of the promise Lord Hanuman made to Lord Rama. The story is expected to draw on the emotional and spiritual dimensions of this bond,

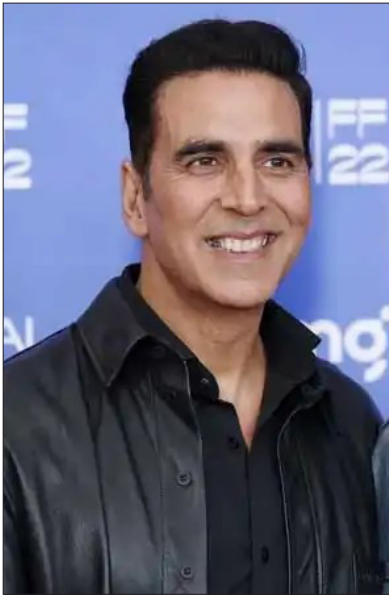
with its characters playing a central role in the narrative. Mamitha is expected to bring a fresh dimension to the film through her portrayal. A source close to the production house said, “Mamitha has been looking to expand her footprint in Tollywood. She was excited when the makers of Jai Hanuman approached her for the key role. Mamitha believes that the mythological drama would be the right follow-up after her back-to-back successes in Tamil cinema and an ideal project for her Telugu debut. Moreover, she is thrilled to be part of a pan-India franchise. She has reportedly begun shooting for her part as the film’s leading lady.”

Produced by Mythri Movie Makers, Jai Hanuman features Rishab Shetty as Lord Hanuman, with Prasanth Varma returning to direct the next chapter in the franchise.

‘Samuk’ progress: Akshay Kumar concludes UK leg, heads to Mumbai

Mumbai : The cameras have officially stopped rolling in the United Kingdom for Akshay Kumar’s eagerly anticipated sci-fi thriller, Samuk. Helmed by director Kanishk Varma and bankrolled by Vipul Amrutlal Shah under his Sunshine Pictures banner, the high-octane spectacle has successfully wrapped up its expansive, rigorous overseas schedule. Now, the adrenaline-fueled production is ready to shift base to Mumbai for its ultimate 20-day sprint toward the finish line.

The cast and crew set camp across scenic British locales in late August, clocking in non-stop shifts to pull off what insiders describe as a visually ambitious survival saga. With nearly 80 per cent of the film safely in the can, this extensive international leg marks a massive milestone for a passion project that has been quietly brewing in development for over two years. While plot intricacies remain strictly locked in the vault, the ensemble cast alone guarantees fireworks. Sharing the frame with Akshay Kumar is a dynamic mix of scene-stealers and fresh faces: Rukmini Maitra, Vineet Kumar Singh, Rajat Kapoor, Swanand Kirkire, Banita Sandhu, and Sushant Singh. Bringing together talents from varied cinematic schools, the makers are teasing a



high-stakes, character-driven journey packed with edge-of-the-seat tension.

Raising the bar on sheer scale, the production has enlisted Hollywood royalty to craft its otherworldly menace. Academy Award-nominated creature-effects wizard Alec Gillis, the mastermind celebrated for his iconic work on the Alien and Predator franchises, has designed the central extraterrestrial entity. Rather than leaning purely on green screens, the team is

championing a tactile, grounded aesthetic, fusing practical creature design with jaw-dropping practical action set-pieces. Adding an extra dose of nostalgia, Samuk marks the much-celebrated reunion of Akshay Kumar and Vipul Amrutlal Shah after a long 13-year hiatus. Co-produced by Aashin A. Shah, this grand genre-bender is shaping up to be a true cinematic event, aiming for a massive pan-India theatrical release in 2027.

Aishwarya Rai's sweet birthday post for Amitabh Bachchan features young Aaradhya

Mumbai : Amitabh Bachchan turned 84 on Sunday, October 11, and social media was filled with birthday wishes for the Bollywood legend. From fellow actors to his fans waiting outside his Mumbai home, everyone had a little something to say on his special day. But one birthday wish that caught everyone’s attention came from

his daughter-in-law, Aishwarya Rai Bachchan. Aishwarya took to Instagram on Sunday to wish Amitabh, sharing a lovely picture of him with his granddaughter, Aaradhya Bachchan. The photo shows Aaradhya hugging her grandfather as they pose together. Amitabh is seen in an oversized jacket and a beanie. Sharing the

picture, Aishwarya wrote, “Happy Birthday dearest Pa-Dadaji. Love and God Bless. always.”

Aishwarya wasn’t the only one sending birthday wishes to Amitabh. Sanjay Dutt, Chiranjeevi, Prabhas, Anupam Kher, Ajay Devgn, Farah Khan, Kajol and Shaughan Sinha were among the celebrities who wished



him on social media. As he does every year, Amitabh

also stepped out of his Jalsa residence to greet fans who had gathered outside to celebrate his birthday. Standing in front of a giant garland put together by his fans, the actor waved to the cheering crowd. He was dressed in a red kurta and a matching shawl.

The birthday celebrations also made their way to Kaun Banega Crorepati. Amitabh’s

son, Abhishek Bachchan, joined him on the show, while Madhuri Dixit, Ayushmann Khurrana and Sara Ali Khan came in as special guests. A warm hug between Amitabh and Abhishek was one of the lovely moments from the episode. Amitabh has a busy schedule ahead. He is currently shooting for Kaun Banega Crorepati 18

and has often spoken about how his hectic work routine leaves him with little time to sleep. He will also return as Ashwatthama in the sequel to Nag Ashwin’s Kalki 2898 AD, which stars Prabhas and Kamal Haasan. Deepika Padukone, who appeared in the first film, will not be part of the sequel, the makers have confirmed.

Allu Arvind praises Pawan Kalyan’s remarkable journey

Hyderabad : Marking Pawan Kalyan’s completion of 30 years in cinema, veteran producer Allu Arvind has shared a heartfelt note congratulating the actor on his remarkable journey in the industry.

Recalling their first film together, Akkada Ammayi Ikkada Abbayi (1996), which marked Pawan Kalyan’s debut as a lead actor, Allu Arvind expressed surprise at how quickly three decades had passed. He congratulated Pawan Kalyan on this significant milestone and wished him many more years of success and fulfilment in whichever path he chooses.

Going beyond his cinematic journey, Allu Arvind also acknowledged Pawan Kalyan’s broader vision for society and appreciated his contributions beyond cinema. Concluding his note on a warm and personal note, Allu Arvind extended his best wishes and blessings to Pawan Kalyan, celebrating not just three decades in the film industry but also the journey that lies ahead.



Sunny Deol unveils ‘Suryaa’ first look; crime thriller out November 20

Mumbai : Bollywood star Sunny Deol, who was last seen in Batwara 1947, is all set to surprise audiences with a never-seen-before avatar in his upcoming film ‘Suryaa: Ant Se Aarambh Tak’. The actor officially announced the film today by unveiling the film’s intense motion poster. He looks intense and fierce in the first look poster. Apart from this, Sunny Deol also announced that the film will release in theatres on November 20, 2026.

Rugged, weathered and carrying the weight of a complicated past, Sunny Deol’s first look from Suryaa offers a striking departure from his larger-than-life screen persona. His piercing gaze and brooding presence hint at a man caught between



the life he has left behind and a truth he can no longer escape. The motion poster offers a glimpse into the intriguing world of SURYAA, built around the powerful tagline, ‘Ant se aarambh tak’.

As the past collides with the present, the story follows a man drawn into a web of unanswered questions and buried truths. What begins as an investigation soon takes

him into territory far more complex than he anticipated, setting the stage for a gripping crime drama driven by mystery, emotion and confrontation.

With a deeply weathered look and an intense, restrained presence, Sunny’s character raises questions about not just what he is searching for, but the experiences that have shaped

him. SURYAA sees the actor explore a different dramatic space, bringing together internal conflict, investigation and the intensity audiences have come to associate with his memorable performances. The film also stars Ravi Kishan and Pragya Jaiswal, bringing together a compelling ensemble for the crime thriller. Directed by M. Padmakumar, SURYAA is produced by MM Moviez, with Deepak Mukut, Hemmant Mukut and Lokesh Mukut as producers, alongside Kamal Mukut.

Meanwhile, Sunny Deol also has other interesting projects in the pipeline. He will also be seen in Nitesh Tiwari’s Ramayana, starring Ranbir Kapoor, Yash and Sai Pallavi. The film will release in theatres on November 5.

Arun Govil and Dipika Chikhlia reunite for new social drama film



Mumbai : For anyone who grew up watching Ramanand Sagar’s Ramayan, Arun Govil and Dipika Chikhlia will always be Ram and Sita. Their on-screen pairing became a part of Indian television history, and now, 39 years after the show first aired in 1987, the two actors are coming together for a new film. This time, however, they have a very different story to tell.

The duo will star in Notice, a social

drama directed by Pradeep Gupta. The film will premiere on the streaming platform Waves on November 6. Notice tells the story of a man trying to save a 150-year-old shop that is under threat because of development. Arun Govil plays the man, who takes on a corrupt system to protect the shop. Dipika Chikhlia plays his wife, who stands by him as he fights for justice.

Speaking to Mid-Day, producer-ac-

tor Aditya Pratap Singh Raghuvanshi explained why he felt the Ramayan duo was perfect for the film. He believes the story will connect with people who have lost their homes or shops because of development. “The story has a 150-year-old shop at its centre. All those who have lost their homes or shops due to development will identify with it. And who can tell this story better than Ram and Sita? Where there is a fight between truth and untruth, Ram and Sita’s jodi has to be there. You can call it a modern-day Ramayan.”

The makers want Notice to reach as many people as possible, which is why they have chosen an OTT release. Raghuvanshi told Mid-Day that Waves’ subscriber base would help the film find a wider audience. He also pointed out that while cinema audiences today largely have an urban mindset, Arun and Dipika continue to enjoy a strong following among television viewers. The team hopes to reach people across the country through mobile streaming. Apart from its premiere on Waves, Notice will also air on 36 satellite television channels.

SS Rajamouli targets epic scale with Mahesh Babu, Priyanka Chopra in ‘Varanasi’

Hyderabad : Director SS Rajamouli’s Varanasi is drawing attention for its unusual narrative anchor. A key portion of the film reportedly draws on an episode from the Ramayana, unfolding over a 30-minute stretch. The filmmaker is weaving this ancient material into a much larger canvas. Rather than adapting the epic in its entirety, he is placing one of its episodes at the heart of what he has described as a “globe-trotting, time-trotting” spectacle.

Speaking on The Empire Film Podcast, the Baahubali filmmaker reflected on why he chose to explore this material. He acknowledged that Indian cinema, particularly the Telugu film industry, has produced several notable films rooted in the epics. However, he felt that something had been missing from their treatment. “I was never satisfied with the scale



and grandeur displayed in those films,” the RRR director said. The remark offered a candid glimpse into his creative ambitions. Rather than simply revisiting familiar material, Rajamouli appears keen to challenge himself with Varanasi. He has identified scale, grandeur and emotion as key elements of the cinematic experience he

hopes to create, making the film a test of his own creative limits.

It is an ambitious undertaking. Rajamouli’s comments suggest that his interpretation of the epic material in Varanasi will reflect his own creative sensibilities. The incidents, characters and emotional dimensions may take on a distinctive shape, while

the film’s visual language could depart from familiar conventions. Varanasi may therefore offer more than a retelling of a story audiences already know. By placing an episode from the Ramayana within a globe-trotting narrative that moves across time, Rajamouli appears to be exploring how ancient mythology can be reimaged for contemporary cinema.

The filmmaker has also spoken of his long-standing ambition to make a multi-film series based on the Mahabharata, underlining his enduring interest in bringing India’s epic narratives to the screen on an expansive scale. Starring Mahesh Babu, Priyanka Chopra Jonas and Prithviraj Sukumaran, Varanasi is reportedly nearing the completion of its shoot. The film is scheduled for a worldwide theatrical release on April 7, 2027.

Delhi Metro and Traffic Restrictions Before the Indian Bloc's Supreme Court March



New Delhi, Oct 12: Due to “security” concerns, the Delhi metro restricted entrance and exit at six Central Delhi metro stations on Monday from 6 a.m. to 4 p.m. The traffic police also issued a comprehensive advise in response to the opposition’s INDIA bloc’s demand for a protest march to the Supreme Court. Their protests against Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar on the amendment of the voter roll are ongoing. Two days after the authorities closed 45 metro stations due to the Cockroach Janta Party’s (CJP) protest, the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) issued a new regulation. “On October 12, 2026, admission and exit at the following metro stations will be blocked from 6:00 AM to 4:00 PM due to security concerns. The security authorities will also assess the situation and provide any required updates. All of the relevant metro stations would still have access to interchange facilities, the DMRC stated in an X post. The Delhi Traffic Police has also issued cautionary warnings of potential traffic delays and diversions at many sites due to potential traffic congestion at several stretches starting at 6 am due to rigorous security precautions and metro closure. Additionally, office workers and other travellers in Delhi-NCR are likely to see increased traffic congestion today due to waterlogging caused by the heavy rain that fell overnight. The Delhi traffic police have

requested that commuters comply with the traffic officers while travelling in the nation’s capital today and follow all of the developments on their social media accounts. In order to maintain efficient traffic flow, drivers are asked to refrain from making unnecessary trips through impacted areas, obey traffic officers’ instructions and diversion signs, and cooperate with Delhi Traffic Police, according to an X post from the traffic police. Round About Shankar Road-Vande Matram ‘T’ Point toward New Delhi, Dhaula Kuan Flyover, Round About Jhandewalan, Round About Panchkuian, Round About Mandi House, Dr. Dinesh Nandini Dalmia Chowk (W-Point), Ram Charan Aggarwal Chowk (A-Point), Minto Road-Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, Bharian Road-MGM (Ring Road) T-Point, Lodhi Road Flyover, Round About Neela Gumbad, Madarsa T-Point, Round About Samrat Hotel, Sardar Patel Marg-Panchsheel Marg junction, beneath Bhikaji Cama Place, under Moti Bagh Flyover, and Ring Road-San Martin Marg T-Point are further impacted areas. The advisory also mentioned that Round About Ashoka Road-Jan-tar Mantar Road, Round About Windsor Palace, Tolstoy-Janpath crossing, Round About Rail Bhawan, Jai Singh Road-Sansad Marg crossing, Outer Circle Connaught Place-Barakhamba Road T-Point, Round About Gol Dak Khana, Round About Patel Chowk, Jai Singh

Road-Ashoka Road T-Point, Round About RML Hospital and Outer Circle Connaught Place-Sansad Marg T-Point are locations where traffic movement could be disrupted. Two days after CJP’s protest against Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar, the Opposition has called a march towards the Supreme Court on Monday. The march is a part of their ongoing protest over alleged irregularities in the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process and their demand for the removal of CEC Gyanesh Kumar. Leaders of several INDIA bloc parties are expected to participate in the march and raise their concerns. Hours before the planned march, Congress MP Rahul Gandhi shared a video on X and said, “Yesterday, the nation’s young came out in Delhi to peacefully protest. They came with love in their hearts, not hatred or anger. They were beaten, both by cops and BJP goons. This is not the India we want.” “As Indians, unified across party, gender, caste, community, and state, we shall march to the Supreme Court tomorrow. We will be accompanied by young people, opposition parties, civil society organisations, and everyone who upholds the Indian Constitution and democracy. On behalf of the country, we will send a note to the Chief Justice requesting the termination of vote chori, the suspension of SIR, and Gyanesh Kumar’s resignation,” he stated. “Amit Shah, Mohan Bhagwat, Ajit Doval, and Narendra Modi cannot suppress India’s voice. We are not intimidated by these cowards. They’ll have to move aside. Together, with love, fraternity, and patriotism, we shall march. Daro mat. The Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha said, “Everyone in India will march to the Supreme Court tomorrow.” “Amit Shah, Mohan Bhagwat, Ajit Doval, and Narendra Modi cannot suppress India’s voice. We are not intimidated by these cowards. They’ll have to move aside. Together, with love, fraternity, and patriotism, we shall march. Daro mat. The Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha said, “Everyone in India will march to the Supreme Court tomorrow.”

Max Verstappen Wins the Singapore Grand Prix for the First Time

Marina: After winning the sprint race and securing pole position in both races, Max Verstappen completed a flawless weekend on Sunday by winning the Singapore Grand Prix for the first time in his career. After 62 laps under the Marina Bay Street Circuit’s lights, Red Bull’s Verstappen finished 7.335 seconds ahead of Ferrari’s Charles Leclerc, while Mercedes’ Kimi Antonelli, who led the championship, finished third. In nine prior efforts since making his Toro Rosso debut in 2015, the four-time world champion has never won or even achieved pole position. Verstappen said, “It has taken a while but I think this race was very good,” as he celebrated winning back-to-back races following his first victory of the 2026 season in Malaysia seven days prior. When we needed to have it on the medium and soft tires, we had pace. After securing the top spot on the podium during his 250th Grand Prix start, the Dutchman said, “So of course, very happy to win here.” The past several races, in my opinion, have been quite beneficial for us. The crew is highly motivated to strive for even greater outcomes. “Hopefully we can have a bit more fun until the end of the year.” The McLaren pair of Lando Norris and Oscar Piastri were fourth and fifth, ahead of Ferrari’s Lewis Hamilton, who dropped from third on the grid to sixth after botching his tyre strategy. Liam Lawson’s RB was seventh, Nico Hulkenberg eighth for Audi, and George Russell, who started from the back of the grid due to engine penalties, came home ninth in his Mercedes. “It was a very tough race out there, but really happy with a podium in the end,” said Antonelli,



li, who increased his championship lead to 102 points over Russell. Isack Hadjar, in the second Red Bull, started from the pit lane and rounded out the points scorers in 10th. “We were quite strong at the beginning of the race, then we started degrading,” said Leclerc. “We did a different strategy to Max, I gave it my all and I don’t regret anything. I don’t think there was much more to do today.” Verstappen was put under immediate pressure from the fast-starting Leclerc as he launched from pole position at lights out. The Dutchman had to move across to his left to cut off the Ferrari driver and stay ahead into Turn 1. Leclerc stayed close behind Verstappen through the opening laps as his teammate Hamilton kept Antonelli at bay. Hamilton was the only one of the front-runners to start on the slower medium tyres and was the first to pit, taking on fresh soft rubber on lap 19. Verstappen stayed out until lap 32 before making his stop, and once all the top six drivers had pitted, the order remained

unchanged. Antonelli and Leclerc pitted for a second time under a Virtual Safety Car period caused by Lance Stroll’s Aston Martin breaking down. However, Hamilton surprisingly decided to stay out on much older tyres despite being called in by his team, a decision that ultimately cost the seven-time world champion a podium finish. Leclerc, on fresher rubber, quickly passed Hamilton for second. Norris attempted to overtake Hamilton at the start of lap 55, only to lose his position to Antonelli, who then overtook the Ferrari driver to move up to third. “I managed to take advantage of the fight with Lando and Lewis, and very happy with that,” Antonelli remarked. On the following lap, Norris finally overtook Hamilton, whose tyres were exhausted, and Piastri soon followed. I’m sorry, boys. Over team radio, Hamilton remarked, “I let you down today with that strategy. I lost my important points because of my call. In the next one, I’ll strive to atone for it.”

Lionel Messi laments, “Wasted My Time,” as he concludes his Argentina career

New Delhi: Lionel Messi, perhaps the greatest football player of all time, has achieved every possible victory. Messi has won everything, including the World Cup with Argentina, individual awards like the Ballon d’Or, and club championships like the Champions League. However, the 39-year-old has some regrets as he hangs up his boots in international football.

One of those is not learning English, as the ability to speak a different language would have allowed him to converse with some of the most memorable individuals in his life. But he was unable to do so due to the linguistic barrier. Messi continued to speak just one language despite becoming a global celebrity. No matter where he travelled, he spoke Spanish and frequently needed a translation when another language was required. He acknowledged that he had the opportunity to study English at one point but chose not to. “I regret a lot of things,” Messi said on the Mexican podcast Miro de Atras. “To not have studied English as a young man. I had the opportunity to at least study English,



but I chose not to. I sincerely regret it. As he looks back at his career now, Messi admitted that there is a deep regret inside him because he couldn’t speak to some important people as he lacked English language skills. “I experienced situations where I was with incredible and spectacular personalities, where I could have talked and had a chat, but you feel half-ignorant. I always thought: ‘What an idiot, how I wasted my time.’ When you’re young, you don’t realise it. Today, that’s what I tell my children: [the importance of] having a good education, studying, and being prepared.” Learning from his mistakes, Messi is now

asking his children to learn the language. “I always tell my children to take advantage of it. They have a different situation from the one I had, although I never lacked anything...” “It [my last year of school in Argentina] was a disaster,” he admitted. “I knew that I was leaving [for Barcelona]. At Barcelona, I finished my high school with the other children who went to [Barcelona’s youth academy] La Masia.” “I was able to do everything and reach the top [in football], but along the way, there are many experiences and lessons learned,” the eight-time Ballon d’Or winner said. “It’s true that

football is a way of life. It teaches you a lot, it gives you a lot of values. It creates lifelong bonds. You get to know places.” Messi’s observations serve as a powerful reminder that even unmatched international achievement cannot make up for lost chances for personal development. His remorse serves as a reminder of the significance of learning a new language as a bridge to deep human connection rather than just as a communication instrument. In a sense, Messi has taught his followers another lesson in life by being honest about his flaws and utilising his experiences to help his kids have a well-rounded education.

Street Demonstrations, Legal Path: India Bloc Increases Attention on Gyanesh Kumar

New Delhi, Oct 12: Starting today, the campaign by the unified opposition against Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar will proceed on alternative platforms. In addition to using the legal road and challenging the statute that shields Election Commissioners from prosecution, the Opposition will carry on the fight on the streets, aided by the Supreme Court’s directive to restore normalcy and prohibit unlawful detentions. On this important day, all of the leaders of the India bloc are gathering in Delhi. Mamata Banerjee, the leader of the Trinamool Congress, has already arrived in Delhi. Tejashwi Yadav, the leader of the Rashtriya Janata Dal, and Akhilesh Yadav, the leader of the Samajwadi Party, are anticipated to come early. Congress leader Mallikarjun Kharge said in a statement in Bengaluru, “Modi-jiji passed a legislation in 2023 giving the Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners legal protection. They were granted immunity that neither the Indian President nor the nation’s Chief Justice could claim. But why was an Election Commissioner given such extraordinary protection? Vote theft, EVM tampering, and election fraud all started once this protection was granted. No matter how many mistakes the CEC makes, they are immune from responsibility for those mistakes for the rest of their lives,” he continued. “This implies a direct attempt to snatch away the people’s votes and [under-



mine] democracy... it is a conspiracy to commit fraud against [the people]. This is precisely what is happening, and we will continue our fight against it,” he stated. President Droupadi Murmu has already been met by the INDIA alliance, and a memorandum has been presented. However, the sources claim that Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant has asked them to submit a petition instead of meeting with them. The memorandum they plan to submit will detail the allegations against the Chief Election Commissioner and discuss the 2023 law that shields him from investigation or punishment after retirement.

The memorandum will also address the exclusion of the Chief Justice from the selection process for the Chief Election Commissioner. It will also raise the issue of alleged vote theft via the ETPBS (Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot System) and present documentary evidence to substantiate these claims. The Congress has instructed all

its Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha MPs to remain in Delhi. Rahul Gandhi postponed a scheduled visit to Goa and has met the party general secretaries and other leaders. Since October 6, when the INDIA Alliance undertook the march from Parliament to the Election Commission office that made headlines following the detention of its key leaders including Rahul and Priyanka Gandhi, the bloc has been continuously staging protests. These include demonstrations in Central Delhi following a ‘lunch meeting’ to a sit-in at Rajghat. The leaders of the alliance said today that over 7,000 paramilitary soldiers and over 30,000 police officers were stationed in Delhi on Saturday and Sunday. About 3,000 demonstrators who planned to participate in the Cockroach Janata Party’s rally against the Chief Election Commissioner were arrested on Saturday. The leaders of the Bloc stated that in order to combat such an unprecedented incident, extraordinary measures are required.

The first home player to win the China Open is Zheng Qinwen

Beijing: Zheng Qinwen defeated Russian youngster Mirra Andreeva 7-5, 6-4 on Sunday to become the first home champion of the China Open. Due to form and fitness issues after elbow surgery in 2025, the current Olympic champion and previous world number four was a wildcard participant in Beijing. Zheng, ranked 54th, celebrated her first triumph in over two years with tears in her eyes as she collapsed into the floor. During the trophy ceremony, she remarked, “It was an amazing feeling to win here in Beijing... in front of my home crowd is one of my dreams.” “I’ve been through a very, very tough year,” she added. She congratulated Andreeva on her French Open title earlier this year before serenading the crowd with a song about chasing the “light of dreams”. Zheng, 24, is the first Chinese player to win the prestigious tournament since its inception in 2004. Andreeva, ranked fifth in the world, was the more consistent player early on, but Zheng pulled back a break and stayed with her 19-year-old opponent as they battled from the baseline. Zheng saved three set points to level at 5-5 and won every point thereafter, serving an ace to take the first set. A crowd desperate to see their homegrown talent crowned champion was at times disruptive, as cheers erupted before points had ended and shouts for Zheng punctuated serves on both sides of the net. But the players kept their focus, holding serve until Zheng found a way through in the ninth game of the second set, firing a brilliant shot down the line to break and move ahead 5-4. A double-fault threatened to derail an imminent triumph, but Zheng responded with an ace to seal victory on her first match point. It is Zheng’s first trophy since October 2024, when she beat Sofia Kenin in Tokyo, and her first title at WTA 1000 level.

The players’ only previous meeting came in the 2024 China Open quarter-finals, where Zheng defeated Andreeva in three sets.

Vijay’s balancing act: coffee with Rahul Gandhi, riding the metro with PM Modi

Chennai, Oct 12: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Vijay shared a metro ride and a temple visit with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday, a day after hosting Congressman Rahul Gandhi for lunch and coffee at a cafe. This highlights the political balancing act between his important ally and the BJP-led government at the Center. Vijay joined PM Modi on a metro ride and a visit to a shrine on the campus of IIT Madras as he launched Chennai Metro Rail Phase II. The purpose of the Prime Minister’s visit to Chennai was to lay the foundation stones for projects valued at around Rs 13,000 crore. The TVK’s clamour of “Vijay for PM” coincided with the divergent engagements, which increased the Congress’s unease with his expanding national aspirations. Rahul Gandhi has been promoted by the Congress,

which backs the TVK administration, as its candidate for prime minister in the 2029 Lok Sabha election. The purpose of Vijay’s coffee and lunch visit with Rahul seemed to be to dispel rumours that things were not going well between the allies. Certain ministers have openly questioned why Tamil Nadu, an engine of India’s prosperity, should not produce a prime minister, while the TVK claims that the Vijay for PM slogan is the ambition of certain cadres and not its official viewpoint. Even Vijay has not ruled out playing a more significant national role. Vijay has also referred to the BJP as his party’s ideological adversary. However, he must collaborate with the Union government on funding, plans, and investments in his capacity as Chief Minister. His administration has refrained from portraying its



relationship with the Center as fundamentally hostile. Nirmal Kumar, the TVK leader and minister of electricity, attempted to clarify the disparate activities. We understand. We just descend for Tamil Nadu’s well-being and advancement. It was a political meeting with Rahul yesterday and a government function today, and that demonstrated their camaraderie,” he remarked. By citing his professional connections with the late J Jayalalithaa, Edappadi K Palaniswami, and M K Stalin, among other Tamil Nadu chief ministers, Modi also struck a conciliatory note. I have collaborated with Stalin, EPS, and Jayalalithaa in my capacity as prime minister. Even if the guards have changed, I’m still committed to working for Tamil Nadu’s development since I now collaborate with Chief Minister Vijay,” he stated.

Arunachal Pradesh forfeits Ranji opener amid crisis

New Delhi: Arunachal Pradesh have forfeited their Ranji Trophy Plate Group opener against Nagaland, which was scheduled to begin on Sunday in Ahmedabad, amid an administrative crisis in the state cricket association stemming from a dispute between two warring factions and a case pending before the Itanagar bench of the Gauhati High Court. The forfeiture comes after Arunachal Pradesh failed to field their Under-19 team for a Vinoo Mankad Trophy match against Sikkim in Bhubaneswar on Thursday, with the ongoing dispute leaving the association without a functioning authority to take decisions on team selection. The association held its elections in September, with Nabam Vivek elected as president. However, multiple district associations subsequently approached the Gauhati High Court, alleging irregularities in the polls. The High Court has reserved its order in the matter, preventing the BCCI from intervening and constituting



an independent selection panel, as it did in the case of Bihar. "There is a stay order from the court and the BCCI cannot step in. There is no one running the state body. Until the court gives the clearance, we cannot do anything," BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia had told PTI. Arunachal Pradesh had finished at the bottom of the Plate Group standings last season, losing all five of their matches. Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Sikkim are the other teams in the Plate Group alongside Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh. Arunachal Pradesh forfeit-

ed their Ranji Trophy Plate Group opener against Nagaland due to an administrative crisis within their cricket association caused by a factional dispute and a pending Gauhati High Court case. This conflict halted team selection, leading to failure to field their Under-19 team previously. Elections held in September were contested, and the court's stay prevents BCCI intervention. Without a functioning authority, Arunachal Pradesh remains inactive, impacting their participation in the tournament alongside teams like Manipur and Sikkim.

Blackcaps reveal special ODI jersey celebrating 100 years of Indian ties Centenary Jersey Honors Ties

New Delhi: New Zealand have unveiled a special ODI jersey featuring Indian and Maori artwork to celebrate 100 years of sporting ties with India. The Black Caps will wear the limited-edition shirt during the five-match ODI series against India, starting November 4. The jersey, named 'Kotahitanga', features lotus flowers, mandala art and traditional Maori patterns, bringing together elements of both cultures. New Zealand Cricket (NZC) said the shirt was designed to recognise the long-standing sporting relationship between the two countries. Three artists, Ben Thomason, Shiv Narandas and Jai Pancha, worked on the design, each bringing different cultural influences to the jersey. Narandas and Pancha chose three Indian motifs for the shirt. These include the lotus, India's national flower, an ogee pattern commonly seen in Indian architecture, and the mandala, whose symmetrical structure complements traditional Maori designs. Thomason added kowhaiwhai, a form of traditional



Maori scrollwork, along with hae-hae lines. The artwork pays tribute to those who have contributed to sporting ties between New Zealand and India over the years. NZC Chief Marketing and Commercial Officer Glenn Critchley praised the artists for bringing the two cultures together in the design. "We're absolutely wrapped with the design. The artists have created a beautiful balance between a distinct Maori design and a distinct Indian design that speaks to the bond between our nations," Critchley said. "Sport

underpins the unity between New Zealand and India and we hope this shirt will be a collector's item treasured by New Zealand and Indian cricket fans for years to come." For Narandas, whose family comes from India, working on the jersey was particularly special. "This shirt feels like a journey of our life here. I hope that everyone can feel the energy that's been put into this project and they can wear the shirt with pride," he said. India and New Zealand will first meet in a five-match T20I series beginning

October 22 before turning their attention to the five ODIs from November 4. New Zealand Cricket unveiled a special ODI jersey named Kotahitanga, blending Indian and Maori artwork to celebrate 100 years of sporting ties with India. The limited-edition jersey, featuring lotus flowers, mandala art, and traditional Maori patterns, symbolizes cultural unity. Designed by artists Ben Thomason, Shiv Narandas, and Jai Pancha, it honors the shared cricket history between the two nations. The Black Caps will wear the jersey during the five-match ODI series against India starting November 4, following a T20I series. Aussie resistance outlasts Proteas - Come the afternoon session, the pitch eased a touch without losing its sideways movement. To be very fair, the South African bowlers did little wrong, but Renshaw absorbed all of it, blunting both the old ball and the new. He farmed the strike, found the odd boundary and went past his previous Test best of 184 against Pakistan.

Portugal seeks Ronaldo return despite ongoing disciplinary action over exit

New Delhi: Portugal want Cristiano Ronaldo back in the national team despite opening disciplinary proceedings against the veteran forward following his departure from the squad's camp ahead of their Nations League match against Denmark. The Portuguese Football Federation (FPF) has confirmed that disciplinary action is being pursued against the 41-year-old, who left the team's base in Copenhagen last week following a reported disagreement with head coach Jorge Jesus over his role in the side.

However, FPF president Pedro Proenca has indicated that there is a collective desire within the national team setup to welcome Ronaldo back once the matter is resolved. The outcome of the disci-



plinary process will be decided by the federation's independent Disciplinary Committee. According to Portuguese newspaper A Bola, the FPF confirmed that proceedings

had been initiated against Ronaldo and that the case had been given urgent status. "Without prejudice to the automatic preventive suspension to which he was subject until

the date of initiation, a non-automatic preventive suspension of the player was determined, and the proceedings were given urgent status," the federation was quoted as saying. Despite the disciplinary action, Proenca stressed that the federation, the coaching staff and the players all wanted the captain to return to the national team. "The Portuguese Football Federation and its president, in this spirit of tranquility, speaking with all parties, who have already publicly demonstrated their desire to have the captain back with us, there is an expressed wish from everyone," Proenca was quoted as saying by A Bola. "This includes the federation, the FPF president, the national team coach, the captain and the players."

Kumkum Mohod returns as Chero Archers lose thriller

Hyderabad: Kumkum Mohod returned to action following her golden run at the Asian Games, but Chero Archers suffered their first defeat of the Archery Premier League (APL) Season 2 after a dramatic shoot-off against Prithviraj Yodhas on Saturday. In the match of the day at Hyderabad's People's Plaza, the Yodhas prevailed after multiple rounds of sudden death, with Mexican recurve archer Matias Grande delivering the decisive shot to seal a 4-4 (1-0) victory. Chero Archers fought back to force a tie after winning the fourth set. The first tie-breaker proved inconclusive, with all eight archers missing the inner yellow ring in the league's



hit-or-miss shoot-off format. The contest then moved into sudden death, where archers from both sides took turns attempting to hit the target. Grande finally found the inner ring in the third sudden-death round, while Prithika Pradeep was unable to match his shot, handing the Yodhas the win.

Mohod, competing for the first time since her Asian Games gold-medal triumph, produced some impressive shots for Chero Archers. However, her team's unbeaten run came to an end in a contest that went down to the final arrow. "This is a very small target.

Coco Gauff faces China Open racial abuse; UN Human Rights responds

New Delhi: The United Nations Human Rights office has condemned the racist online abuse directed at American tennis star Coco Gauff following a controversial incident during her China Open victory over China's Sun Xinran. The incident sparked a social media backlash against the two-time Grand Slam champion, who was targeted with racial slurs after a disputed point in the match. Gauff had stopped play during a crucial rally after raising her hand to complain about a flickering advertising board as Sun prepared to hit a winner. Following a video review, the chair umpire ordered the point to be replayed. Gauff subsequently won the match 7-5, 6-1, but the controversy continued online, prompting a wave of racist comments directed at the 21-year-old American. The UN Human Rights office issued a strong statement on Saturday, calling on the tennis community and sports organisations to stand against racism and sexism. "Racist messages such as those targeting tennis



player Coco Gauff online are appalling and illustrate that Black female athletes are specifically targeted for vitriol and racial abuse," it wrote on X. "There is no place in sport for racial or sexist slurs and abuse. Players, coaches, and sports bodies need to stand up for those facing such attacks and fans need to push back against those

who sully sport with racism and sexism," the statement added. Gauff also responded directly to the abuse, making it clear that disagreement over a sporting decision could never justify racism. "You can dislike me or disagree about what happened without being racist," she wrote on X in reply to a post containing a racial slur. The incident

has once again highlighted the online hostility faced by Black women in elite sport. A study by the WTA and World Tennis found that players were subjected to more than 12,000 abusive social media posts and messages in 2025, compared with approximately 8,000 the previous year, underlining the scale of the problem. Gauff later acknowledged that the controversy had taken an emotional toll, leaving her drained. The abuse also renewed calls for stronger action from governing bodies, platforms and sporting communities to ensure that athletes are protected from discriminatory attacks, both on and off the court. Despite securing a convincing victory over Sun, Gauff's China Open campaign ended in the round of 16 on Wednesday, when she suffered a defeat to Elise Mertens. Her tournament therefore concluded earlier than she would have hoped, with the controversy and the subsequent online abuse casting a shadow over her performances in Beijing.

Man United stumble while Arsenal, Chelsea win

New Delhi: Manchester United dropped more points in the Premier League after Dominic Solanke struck in stoppage time to earn 10-man Tottenham Hotspur a 1-1 draw at Old Trafford on Saturday, while Arsenal fought back to beat Leeds United 2-1 and Chelsea thrashed Bournemouth 5-1. United appeared to be on course for a much-needed victory when Bryan Mbeu-

mo broke the deadlock in the 73rd minute. However, Rodrigo Bentancur's dismissal five minutes later failed to derail Tottenham, who found a late equaliser through Solanke to leave the hosts facing more questions about their start to the season. The result extended United's frustrating run, with the club having managed just one league victory in their



opening six matches. Their supporters voiced their dis-

pleasure at half-time and again at full-time after an-

other uneven performance. For Tottenham, the draw offered some relief but did little to resolve their own problems. Roberto De Zerbi's side remain winless, with three points from six matches, although Solanke's late intervention lifted them off the bottom of the table. Tottenham began the contest with greater intensity, using a high press and quick passing to pin

United back and create the better chances in the first half. Solanke, Mohammed Kudus and Conor Gallagher all missed opportunities as Spurs struggled to turn their early dominance into goals. They have now failed to score in the first half of 18 Premier League matches in 2026, a statistic that underlines their recurring problems in front of goal.

Verstappen wins Singapore sprint as Antonelli leads



Singapore: Max Verstappen returned to the top of Formula 1 with a statement performance at the Singapore Grand Prix, winning the sprint race before securing the 50th pole position of his career in qualifying on Saturday. The Red Bull driver clocked a fastest lap of 1 minute 31.373 seconds at the Marina Bay Street Circuit, beating Ferrari's Charles Leclerc by just 0.045 seconds. Lewis Hamilton qualified third, while championship leader Kimi Antonelli secured fourth for Mercedes. Verstappen's performance marked a turnaround at a circuit where he has often struggled. Despite reporting gearbox issues during qualifying, the four-time world champion delivered when it mattered to claim his second consecutive pole of the season. "The margins are very close between us throughout all of qualifying, so of course, very happy to be on pole because this is the one that

I wanted," Verstappen said ahead of his 250th Grand Prix. "The car has been pretty strong all weekend. Of course, I always think that you can be better, but it was enough for pole, so very happy with that." Verstappen's sprint victory came in chaotic wet conditions after Mercedes driver George Russell initially took the lead off the line. Russell lost control on the opening lap after running over a painted line, spinning across the track and crashing into the barriers. With Russell out, Verstappen moved clear to take the win, with Hamilton and Leclerc completing the top three. The Dutchman carried that momentum into qualifying, edging Leclerc in a closely contested final session. However, Red Bull still have a weakness to address. Verstappen lost the sprint lead at the start, repeating a problem he experienced in Malaysia last week, despite eventually winning that race.