

IN BRIEF

KTR, BRS leaders to ride RTC bus to protest fare hike

Hyderabad, Oct 8 (UNI) BRS Working President KT Rama Rao (KTR), along with former ministers Talasani Srinivas Yadav, Padma Rao, and Sabita Indra Reddy, will participate in a protest against the recent hike in state Road Transport Corporation bus fares by travelling on an RTC bus on Thursday morning.

The bus is scheduled to depart from the Rethifile bus stop at 0900 hours and proceed to the TSRTC Bus Bhavan. The leaders are expected to reach Bus Bhavan by 0930 hours, where they will submit a petition demanding an immediate rollback of the fare hike to the TSRTC Managing Director, a party statement said on Wednesday.

Special pulse polio drive in six Telangana districts on Oct 12

Hyderabad, Oct 8 (UNI) A special Pulse Polio vaccination drive will be conducted on October 12 across six districts of Telangana — Hyderabad, Ranga Reddy, Medchal, Sangareddy, Hanamkonda, and the urban areas of Warangal district — as part of a nationwide campaign to prevent the re-emergence of poliovirus.

The union Health Ministry has identified 290 districts across India for this special drive, focusing on regions that witness frequent movement of people from countries where polio cases are still being reported, such as Bangladesh and Pakistan. Telangana's inclusion of six districts follows this precautionary strategy.

According to health officials, an estimated 17,56,789 children under the age of five in these districts will be administered the oral polio vaccine during the drive. The Health Department has made extensive arrangements to ensure that every eligible child, from newborns to five-year-olds, receives the vaccination. Officials reminded that the last polio case in Telangana was reported in 2007, and the last in India in 2011. Since then, the country has remained polio-free, but continued vigilance is necessary due to reported cases in neighbouring nations.



Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan, Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) General Upendra Dwivedi, Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS) Admiral Dinesh K. Tripathi and Chief of the Air Staff (CAF) Air Chief Marshal A. P. Singh at the National War Memorial after paying tribute on the 93rd Indian Air Force Day, in New Delhi on Wednesday.

Govt to hold local body polls with 42 pc BC reservation: Ministers reaffirm commitment

Hyderabad, Oct 8 (UNI) : BC Welfare Minister Ponnam Prabhakar has reiterated that the state government will conduct the upcoming local body elections with 42 per cent reservation for Backward Classes (BCs), making Telangana the first state in the country to implement such a measure.

Speaking to the media at Gandhi Bhavan on Wednesday evening, the minister said the government has strongly defended its stand before the High Court and is determined to uphold social justice.

“We are going to the polls with 42 per cent BC reservation as promised. The government has argued forcefully in court, and we are confident that justice will prevail,” Ponnam Prabhakar said. He recalled that the resolution to increase BC reservations was passed unanimously in the Assembly, with leaders from the BJP, BRS and AIMIM

supporting it. “Politics aside, we all stood united for the cause of social justice. The BC caste survey had 97 per cent participation, and based on this empirical data, a dedicated commission and sub-committee were formed, leading to the passage of the law,” he said.

SC and ST Welfare Minister Vakiti Srihari said the Congress government was committed to implementing the 42 per cent BC reservation under the leadership of Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, in line with Rahul Gandhi's vision of social justice.

“Some ridiculed the idea, saying Congress was misleading the BCs. But we will never back down on our promises.

Whether it was the formation of Telangana or the issue of reservations, Congress has always stood for the oppressed and the marginalised,” he stated.

Srihari added that he, Deputy Chief Minister

Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, and Minister Ponnam Prabhakar personally presented the BC community's case before the Supreme Court.

“Even today, our legal team has argued the matter strongly before the High Court. We will fulfill our commitment with determination,” he said.

TPCC President and MLC Mahesh Kumar Goud, who also addressed the media, expressed confidence that the government would prevail in court. “We heard strong arguments today. The nomination process for the ZPTC and MPTC elections will proceed as per the schedule from tomorrow. The Congress government is moving forward with sincerity toward implementing BC reservations,” he said. Mahesh Kumar Goud further added that the caste survey conducted after 90 years reflects the Congress government's commitment to inclusive governance.

Kharge, Rahul salute brave air warriors on 93rd Indian Air Force Day

New Delhi, Oct 8 (UNI) On the occasion of 93rd Indian Air Force Day today, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi extended their greetings and saluted the brave air warriors and their families.

Both leaders praised the Indian Air Force (IAF) for its unmatched bravery, professionalism and unwavering dedication in safeguarding the nation's skies.

In a post on X, Kharge said, “On Indian Air Force Day, we extend our heartfelt greetings and salutations to all the brave air warriors and their families. The @IAF_MCC stands as a symbol of unmatched bravery, outstanding professionalism, and unwavering dedication in safeguarding our nation's skies”.

Highlighting the critical role of the IAF in national security and humanitarian mission, Kharge added, “We pay tribute to all IAF personnel and veterans for their selfless service, their extraordinary courage, and their vital role in humanitarian missions across the country”.

Meanwhile, Rahul Gandhi on X said, “Heartfelt greetings and salute to the brave warriors of the Indian Air Force on Air Force Day”. “Your courage in safeguarding our skies and unwavering dedication inspire us all. We honour your unparalleled valour, sacrifices, and selfless service to the nation. Jai Hind,” he added.

KTR slams CM Reddy for ‘heartless negligence’ as Gurukul Schools face closure over unpaid rents

Hyderabad, Oct 8 (UNI) : BRS Working President K T Rama Rao launched a sharp attack on Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Wednesday, accusing the Congress government of allowing Telangana's prestigious Welfare Gurukul Educational Institutions—once considered a model for the entire nation—to reach the brink of closure due to non-payment of building rents. Describing the situation as “a disgraceful and heartless act,” KTR said locking up Gurukul schools that transformed the lives of lakhs of poor students marks a dark chapter in the state's governance. In a statement here, he accused the Chief Minister, who also holds the

Political parties urged to follow model election code

Hyderabad, Oct 8 (UNI) : District Election Officer and GHMC Commissioner R V Karnan has urged political parties and their representatives to strictly adhere to the guidelines of the Central Election Commission (CEC) to ensure that the Jubilee Hills Assembly by-election is conducted in a free, peaceful, and transparent manner. At a meeting held with representatives of various political parties at the GHMC Head Office on Wednesday, Karnan briefed attendees about the election schedule and the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) through a PowerPoint presentation.

He reminded that the MCC came into effect immediately after the election schedule was announced on October 6 and that the removal of posters and banners from public and private properties within the constituency had begun without delay.

Karnan instructed political parties to strictly follow election campaign norms and warned that any violations of the MCC would attract criminal cases. He stated that political advertisements on government property are prohibited, and campaign materials on private property require prior permission. Unauthorized advertisements, even if reinstalled, will be removed again, and the cost will be recovered from the responsible party, he said.

The DEO also informed that the Returning Officer's office has been set up at the Sheikhpet Tahsildar Office, where nominations will be accepted from October 13. He assured that strong security measures would be implemented during the nomination process in line

with CEC guidelines.

Karnan further announced that mobile phones will not be allowed inside polling stations, and deposit counters will be provided for voters to safely leave their phones before casting their votes.

He also emphasised that political parties must disclose the criminal background of their candidates in the media, explaining the reasons for their selection.

Highlighting a first for the state, Karnan said colour photographs of candidates will be printed on EVMs during the Jubilee Hills by-election to enhance voter clarity.

Hyderabad Joint Commissioner of Police Tafseer Iqbal, who also addressed the meeting, assured that the police department would provide full support to ensure peaceful polling. He urged parties to conduct campaign activities responsibly and without causing inconvenience to the public.

Karnan clarified that since Jubilee Hills constituency falls within the state capital and GHMC limits, the Model Code of Conduct applies exclusively to this constituency. He warned that strict action would be taken against anyone found distributing cash, liquor, or inducements to influence voters either within or outside the constituency.

The meeting was attended by Additional Election Commissioner Hemant Keshav Patil, DCP Apoovra Rao, Returning Officer P. Sairam, and representatives from major political parties, including the Congress, BJP, BRS, AIMIM, CPI(M), BSP, AAP, and TDP, an official statement said.



Mamata hits out at ECI's SIR exercise, says it is ill-timed

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee today strongly criticised the Election Commission of India's (ECI) Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise of electoral rolls, saying it was ill-timed as the state is currently dealing with natural calamities and the ongoing festive season. An ECI team, headed by Deputy Election Commissioner Gyanesh Bharti, who arrived last night, began reviewing the preparedness for the SIR at the office of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) in Kolkata today.

(See on page 4)

Ecuador reports assassination attempt on President Noboa



The Ecuadorian government said Tuesday it had filed a criminal complaint over an alleged assassination attempt on President Daniel Noboa during a visit to the southern province of Canar.

(See on page 5)

Djokovic enters quarters at Shanghai Masters



Novak Djokovic overcame pain in his left ankle, the Shanghai humidity and the challenge of Jaume Munar to reach the quarter-finals at the Shanghai Masters for the 11th time. The Serbian received multiple medical timeouts for a leg issue during the two hours and 40 minutes clash and frequently placed an ice towel over his head during changeovers.

(See on page 7)

PDP to introduce Anti-Land Eviction Bill in upcoming ...



PDP President Mehbooba Mufti today announced that the Party has submitted “The Jammu and Kashmir Land Rights and Regularisation Bill, 2025” also known as the Anti-Bulldozer Bill in the forthcoming session of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly.

(See on page 8)

Records impressive growth of 86.21% in Goods Loading during Sept 2025 : Solapur Division of Central Railway

Earns Revenue of Rs 200.55 Crore in First Half of FY 2025-26



(Standard Post Bureau)

Hyderabad, Oct 8 : The Solapur Division of Central Railway has registered remarkable progress in freight loading performance during the month of September 2025, showcasing a strong upward trajectory in both loading volume and revenue generation.

The Solapur Division operates freight with

- Goods Sheds: Arag, Bale, Bhigvan, Dharashiv, Kurduvadi, Latur, Pandharpur, Solapur, Taj Sultanpur, Tilati and Wadi
- Sidings: ACC Cement/

Wadi, Ultratech Cement/ Hotgi, Chettinad Cement/ Tilati, Zuari Cement/Tilati, NTPC/Hotgi, and IOCL (Petroleum) locations at Hirenanduru and Pakni

- Gati Shakti Multi-Modal Cargo Terminal: BPCL GCT (Petroleum) at Hirenanduru

During September 2025, the Division achieved 540000 metric tonnes of goods loading as compared to 290000 metric tonnes during the corresponding period last year, marking a phenomenal growth of 86.21%. The freight earnings also rose

impressively to Rs 35.99 crore, up by 70.89% over last year, reaffirming the Division's operational efficiency and customer-centric approach.

Commodity-wise performance (September 2025)

- Cement: 284000 metric tonnes loaded across 96 rakes, up by 27.53% with freight earnings of Rs 16.81 crore, an increase of 42.06%.

- Clinker: 119000 metric tonnes loaded across 30 rakes, achieving 100% increase in both weight and earnings of Rs 6.60 crore.

- Petroleum, Oil & Lubricants: Newly added traffic with 31 rakes, contributing Rs 4.28 crore.

- Jaggery: Showed significant growth, up by 51.42% in weight and 50.69% in freight.

- Ballast: Registered 19.28% higher earnings.

These achievements have contributed to a consistent positive trend in the Division's year-to-date performance.

April to September 2025 (Cumulative Performance)

In the first half of Financial Year 2025-26, during the period April to September 2025, Solapur Division loaded 2.91 MT (Million Tonnes) of goods, reflecting a 15.94% increase over last year's

April to September 2024 period 2.51 MT (Million Tonnes) with an earning of ₹200.55 crore. This growth has been driven by focused efforts to capture new traffic streams, efficient handling, and improved customer coordination. The Division handled 1,010 rakes during April–September 2025 compared to 892 rakes last year,

marking a 13.23% increase in rake handling efficiency. The overall increase in loading volume underscores the Division's operational resilience and steady demand in its freight segment.

Senior Divisional Commercial Manager (Sr DCM) Shri Yogesh Patil has appealed industries, factories and traders in the districts of Solapur, Kalaburagi, Latur, Dharashiv, Sangli and Pune especially the Sugar mills and farm producers of Solapur to utilise the facilities of freight transport provided by the railways to expand their trade to different parts of the country.

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Assam police nabs DSP Sandipan Garg in connection with singer Zubeen Garg's death

Guwahati, Oct 8 (UNI) The Special Investigation Team of the CID probing the death of Zubeen Garg, today arrested DSP Sandipan Garg, a cousin of the deceased singer.

Sandipan, an Assam Police Service (APS) officer, was present on the yacht in Singapore on the fateful day when Zubeen Garg died.

SIT chief Munna Prasad Gupta told this to media on Wednesday morning.

"We have arrested Sandipan Garg and we are going to produce him before the court today. We are going to seek his remand from the court," said Gupta while talking to

media. It may be mentioned here that the SIT probing the death of iconic singer Zubeen Garg has already arrested chief organizer of the North East India Festival, Shyamkanu Mahanta, Zubeen's manager Siddharth Sharma, and band members including Sekharjyoti Goswami and Amritprabha Mahanta.

Sandipan Garg was a cousin of Zubeen Garg and he has accompanied Zubeen on the Singapore trip.

Sandipan was also present on the yacht where Zubeen reportedly died after a swim near an island.

It may be mentioned here that the SIT has

summoned Sandipan Garg for questioning several times

in last few days. He was summoned to the CID headquarters in Guwahati on Wednesday for questioning and arrested after that.

"At this moment I can only say that investigation is on and we have decided to arrest him," Gupta said.

He also added that the process is on to bring the members of the Assam Association Singapore, who were present on the yacht on that day with Zubeen Garg, for questioning. "As they live in a foreign country, the process needs to be followed," he added.

Kiren Rijiju urges flood mapping in North Bengal

Kolkata, Oct 8 (UNI) : Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju, who is on a two-day visit to the flood affected areas of Darjeeling and Mirik, called on the West Bengal government to urgently conduct disaster mapping in North Bengal to enable effective relief, rehabilitation, and long-term reconstruction after devastating floods and landslides swept through the region.

Rijiju, accompanied by Darjeeling MP Raju Bista and MLA Neeraj Zimba, visited the severely affected areas including Bijanbari, Thaneline, and Pulbazar, where torrential rains caused the collapse of the Chhota Rangeet bridge and washed away several roads.

"The local administration, MLA, and MP are doing commendable work on the ground. But for a long-term solution, the state government must take the lead in mapping the extent of the disaster," Rijiju told reporters.

"Only with proper planning can we rebuild houses, bridges, and roads. The Centre is fully prepared to provide financial support, but it depends on the state submitting a Detailed Project Report (DPR)," he said.

He specifically pointed to the collapse of the Chhota Rangeet bridge at Pulbazar, urging the state to prepare a DPR without delay so that the Centre could expedite assistance.

Calling the destruction "unprecedented", Rijiju said, "I have visited Darjeeling many times, but never seen such devastation. Beyond political differences, there must be unity between the state and Centre to rebuild infrastructure and ensure long-term rehabilitation."

He added that he would submit a detailed report to Prime Minister Narendra Modi after returning to Delhi.

Darjeeling MP Raju Bista, describing the situation as "heart-breaking", said the floods had claimed several lives, including that of a young man named Upendra, whose body was recovered three days after being swept away by the swollen Chhota Rangeet river.

"People are still struggling to grasp the scale of this tragedy," Bista said. He demanded that the West Bengal government officially declare the calamity a disaster, stressing that joint action by the state and Centre was vital for relief and recovery.

Both Rijiju and Bista paid tribute to Upendra and met the bereaved families. "We assured them that we stand by them beyond politics, and every possible help will be extended," Bista said.

According to administrative figures, the Darjeeling Hills alone have witnessed 406 landslides, destruction of 546 houses, damage to 67 roads, collapse of 10 bridges, and disruption of 59 water connections since the onset of heavy rains. At least 15 households have been completely destroyed, forcing displaced families to take shelter with relatives or neighbours.

"The life of Prophet Muhammad is a message of love" : Prof. Ram Puniyani



(Standard Post Bureau)

Hyderabad, Oct 8 : "The life of Prophet Muhammad is itself a message of love. Hatred should not be spread against people today based on what the kings did in the past." These views were expressed by renowned intellectual and eminent historian Prof. Ram Puniyani today at Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MANUU). He was delivering a keynote address at the inaugural of the two-day international conference "Peace and Harmony: A Religious Perspective," organized by the Department of Islamic Studies, MANUU in collaboration with the Henry Martyn Institute, Hyderabad. Prof. Syed

Ainul Hasan, Vice Chancellor, MANUU presided over the inaugural session. Large number of distinguished scholars, experts on religion and civilization, professors and researchers from various universities both from within the country and abroad attended the inaugural session.

Prof. Syed Ainul Hasan in his presidential address said that we should strive to understand truth and reality and reach the correct conclusion. Today, it is necessary to set aside sectarian and religious differences and promote academic unity and intellectual harmony so that dialogue and research are based on knowledge rather than prejudice, he

added. Maulana Khalid Saifullah Rahmani, President, All India Muslim Personal Law Board and General Secretary of Islamic Fiqh Academy, India in his inaugural speech, said that Islam considers every human being worthy of respect and honors the dignity, property, and resources of all individuals. Establishing better relations based on shared moral values between Hindus and Muslims is the greatest demand of the time. Prof. Muhammad Habib, Head, Department of Islamic Studies and Seminar Director delivered the welcome speech. He highlighted that in the current global scenario, the need for religious tolerance, dialogue, and social harmony has increased more than ever before. Dr. Packiam T. Samuel, Director of the Henry Martyn Institute, stated that such academic gatherings play a practical role in promoting social harmony. He raised certain questions for deliberations.

The inaugural session was moderated by the conference coordinator Dr. Atif Imran, Assistant Professor and Ms. Zeeshan Sarah, Assistant Professor proposed the vote of thanks.

Railways Extends Route of Solapur-Dharmavaram Weekly Specials up to Anakapalle

(Standard Post Bureau)

Hyderabad, Oct 8 : On demand of passengers, Railways have extended the route of Solapur-Dharmavaram (earlier up to Tirupati) weekly specials up to Anakapalle and will run additional 8 weekly special trains between Solapur and Anakapalle.

The details are as under:- Solapur-Anakapalle Weekly Specials (8 Trips)

- 01437 weekly specials will depart Solapur at 23:20 hrs every Thursday from 09.10.2025 to 27.11.2025 and arrive Anakapalle at 13:00 hrs the third day. (4 trips)

- 01438 weekly specials will depart Anakapalle at 17:35 hrs every Saturday from 11.10.2025 to 29.11.2025 and arrive Solapur at 10:30 hrs on the third day. (4 trips).

Stoppages: Kurduvadi, Barsi Town, Dharashiv, Latur, Latur Road, Kalaburagi, Wadi, Yadgir, Krishna, Raichur, Mantralayam Road, Adoni, Guntakal, Anantapur,

Dharmavaram, Kadiri, Madanpalle Road, Piler, Pakala, Tirupati, Renigunta, Sri Kalahasti, Gudur, Nellore, Ongole, Chirala, Tenali, Vijaywada, Eluru, Tadepalligudem, Nidadavolu, Rajamundry, Samalkot, Annavaram and Elamanchili.

Composition: 1 AC-II Tier, 1 AC-III Tier, 11 Sleeper Class, 4 General Second Class and 2 Luggage Cum Brake Vans. (19 Coaches)

Reservation & Booking : Reservations for continued trips of special trains 01437/01438 on special charges are open at all computerised reservation centres and on website www.irctc.co.in.

Bookings for unreserved coaches can be done through booking counters at stations and UTS app also.

For detailed timings and halts of these special trains, please visit www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in or download NTES App.

Odisha lawyers observe 'pen down' protest over advocate Pitabas Panda's murder

Bhubaneswar, Oct 8 (UNI) Lawyers across Odisha staged a "pen down" protest today against the murder of senior advocate and BJP leader Pitabas Panda, who was shot dead by unidentified motorcycle-borne assailants in Berhampur city. The attack has triggered widespread outrage amid growing concerns over the state's law and order situation.

Members of the State

and District Bar Councils abstained from their daily work, expressing deep concern over the killing and the failure of the police to apprehend the culprits 36 hours after the incident.

"Police ought to arrest the killers within 48 hours and ascertain the motive of the murder. The State Government should order a judicial inquiry into the crime without further delay as the incident has laid bare the fact that each law-

abiding citizen including the Bar members are feeling unsafe as criminals are having a field day. The bereaved family members should be awarded Rs 1 crore compensation by the government", Sitanshu Mohan Diwedi, President of the Odisha State Bar Council said. In a related development, the Bar Council of India (BCI) yesterday called for the constitution of a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to

probe the case in a time-bound manner. "The safety and dignity of advocates are non-negotiable. BCI demands swift and decisive action from the state government to bring all perpetrators and conspirators to justice, protect witnesses and the victim's family, and reassure the Bar that the rule of law will prevail," said BCI Chairman Manan Kumar Mishra in a statement. Meanwhile, police are yet to make any

headway in identifying the assailants. A senior police official however refusing to divulge details said "police are investigating into the professional and political rivalry angle of the murder. We are hopeful of cracking the case shortly". Former Chief Minister and Leader of Opposition Naveen Patnaik criticised the BJP government in Odisha, accusing it of pushing the state into a spiral of fear, lawlessness, and corruption.

Security forces arrest insurgent cadres, drug peddlers in separate operations in Manipur

Imphal, Oct 8 (UNI) Security forces and Manipur Police have intensified their operations against insurgent elements and drug traffickers across the state, leading to multiple arrests yesterday.

Security forces arrested an active member of a proscribed group from Kongpal Khaidem Leikai under Porompat Police

Station, Imphal East district. The individual was apprehended along with a mobile phone was seized from his possession.

In a separate operation, Manipur Police arrested another active member of a banned outfit involved in extortion activities from his residence at Kwakeithel Kongjeng Leikai under

Singjamei Police Station, Imphal West district. A mobile phone and an Aadhaar card were recovered from him.

On the same day, police teams also arrested two individuals along with 26.470 kilograms of contraband ganja from the Awang Sekmai area under Sekmai Police Station, Imphal West district.



People from Sikh community take part in a religious procession, commemorating the 350th martyrdom anniversary of Guru Tegh Bahadur, in Prayagraj on Wednesday.

MCMC nod must for campaign ads in Jubilee Hills bypoll: DEO

Hyderabad, Oct 8 (UNI) : District Election Officer (DEO) and GHMC Commissioner R V Karnan clarified that political parties must obtain permission from the Media Certification and Monitoring Committee (MCMC) for political campaigns and advertisements related to the Jubilee Hills Assembly by-election.

Speaking after inaugurating MCMC, Media Center in the CPRO section at the GHMC headquarters on Wednesday, Karnan said that permission should be taken through the MCMC committee for

advertisements in electronic media, local cable, social media, e-paper, radio, and other online and electronic media from the release of the election schedule. On advertisements in print media, MCMC permission is mandatory for campaign advertisements on the day before polling and on polling day. Political parties, contesting candidates and their agents should also apply to MCMC for advertisements.

The District Election Officer has suggested that the election code of conduct should be followed in the case of printing the publisher's name, address,

handbill and other documents on the pamphlets printed by the printing press. Karnan has instructed the PRO department officials to provide information regarding the conduct of the elections to the media representatives from time to time through the media center. Karnan will act as the chairman of this committee and GHMC Public Relations Officer Mamindla Dasharatham will act as the member secretary.

Secunderabad RDO, Jubilee Hills Assembly Constituency Returning Officer P Sai Ram, GHMC Deputy Engineer (IT Wing-Social Media) Narsing Rao,

Hyderabad PIB Deputy Director Manasa Krishna Kant and Indian Express Daily Principal Correspondent Bachanjeet Singh are the members of the committee.

As per the guidelines of the Central Election Commission, the MCMC committee will monitor the news, advertisements and paid news published in the media during the elections.

Additional Election Commissioner Hemant Keshav Patil, Vigilance ASP, MCC Nodal Officer Narasimha Reddy, PRO Mamindla Dasharatham and committee members participated in the inaugural programme.

BJP nears final decision on Jubilee Hills by-election candidate

Hyderabad, Oct 8 (UNI) The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has entered the final stage of selecting its candidate for the upcoming Jubilee Hills Assembly constituency by-election.

The party's state leadership had appointed a three-member committee to conduct detailed consultations with key leaders and party workers to ensure a comprehensive selection process.

The committee, comprising former MLA . Dharma Rao, former MP Pothuganti Ramulu, and senior leader and advocate Komala Anjaneyulu, has completed its report and submitted it to BJP Telangana State President Ramchandra Rao at the party's state office on Wednesday.

Based on the committee's recommendations, Ramchandra Rao is expected to meet with senior leaders to finalise the candidate.

The party is likely to announce the name of the BJP nominee for the Jubilee Hills by-election in the coming days.

The BJP has emphasised that the candidate selection process has been carried out in an inclusive manner, taking into account the opinions of local leaders and party workers to reflect the aspirations of the constituency's residents, a party statement said.

Govt defends RTC reforms, criticises political exploitation of “Chalo Bus Bhavan” call

Hyderabad, Oct 8 (UNI) : Transport Minister Ponnamp Prabhakar today strongly defended the state government's reforms in the RTC and criticised political parties attempting to exploit the “Chalo Bus Bhavan” call. Speaking to the media at Gandhi Bhavan, he highlighted the government's achievements in transforming the RTC and ensuring employee welfare.

Minister Ponnamp Prabhakar said the government started free bus travel for women within 48 hours of taking office, and since then, women passengers have travelled 250 crore times at no cost.

“We are bringing the RTC from losses to profits while focusing on three main agendas—passenger comfort, organisational protection, and employee welfare,” he said. He

pointed out that 2,800 electric buses will be introduced in Hyderabad to reduce pollution, with charging stations and high-tension power lines being established to support the EV fleet. Currently, 265 electric buses are operational, and 275 more will be added in the next three months.

The minister accused the previous BRS government of weakening the RTC by neglecting bus purchases, failing to make appointments, and suppressing employee protests, including a 55-day strike in 2019. He criticised BRS leaders for attempting to politicise the “Chalo Bus Bhavan” call, saying, “Those who imposed an iron fist on employees for a decade have no right to stage such protests now.” Ponnamp Prabhakar also emphasised

that fares have not been increased since the formation of the current government, except for minor amendments related to green fees for electric buses.

He further said that RTC employees are being provided with PRC, bonds, PF, and CCS dues, and that ongoing initiatives include depot construction, bus station renovations, compassionate appointments, and passenger infrastructure upgrades funded by Rs 110 crore allocations.

The minister said that the government has consistently treated RTC employees as part of the family, ensuring their welfare while increasing operational efficiency, and warned the public to recognise attempts to give political colour to genuine employee and passenger concerns.

Congress announces Naveen yadav as its candidate

Hyderabad, Oct 8 (UNI) The ruling Congress party tonight announced V.Naveen Yadav as its candidate for November 11 Jubilee Hills Assembly bypoll. In a release, AICC General Secretary K C Venugopal said the Congress President Mallikarjuna Kharge has approved the candidature of Naveen Yadav as Congress party candidate for the ensuing bye-election to the legislative Assembly of Telangana from Jubilee Hills constituency. Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy along with AICC in charge of Telangana Meenakshi Natarajan and

TPCC president B Mahesh Kumar Gound, reportedly cleared Jubilee Hills Assmelby constituency in-charge Naveen's name during akey meeting on Tuesday after reviewing multiple survey reports. The main opposition Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) had already announced Maganti Sunitha as its candidate for Jubilee Hills bypoll. Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) president K. Chandrashekar Rao (KCR) announced Maganti Sunitha Gopinath as the party's candidate for the upcoming Jubilee Hills Assembly by-election., necessitated with the death of her husband Maganti Gopinath.

Ponnamp Prabhakar clarifies remarks, calls Adluri Laxman ‘like a brother’

Hyderabad, Oct 8 (UNI) Telangana Transport and BC Welfare Minister Ponnamp Prabhakar on Wednesday clarified that his recent remarks had been misinterpreted and reaffirmed his long-standing friendship with SC & ST Welfare Minister Adluri Laxman Kumar, describing him as “like a brother.”

In a statement, Ponnamp said the two leaders have shared a close bond within the Congress party for over three decades — a relationship that goes beyond politics.

“The friendship we have had in the Congress for 30 years is built on mutual respect and affection. No one is separated,” he said.

He denied making any personal comments against Laxman Kumar and expressed regret over the controversy created by political opponents. “As someone who rose from the grassroots and represents the BC community, I have never held any negative opinion about anyone. Unfortunately, some people with political malice have distorted my words and spread false interpretations,” Ponnamp said.

Expressing remorse over the misunderstanding, he added, “I am deeply sorry if my brother Adluri Laxman Kumar has been hurt by this. I value our friendship and respect immensely.”

Reiterating his commitment to the Congress party's ideology, Ponnamp said both leaders would continue to work together to strengthen the party's principles, uphold social justice, and serve the people under the leadership of Rahul Gandhi.

Heavy rain likely in Telangana in next 24 hours: Met Centre

Hyderabad, Oct 8 (UNI) The Meteorological Centre, Hyderabad, has forecast heavy rainfall at isolated places in Nalgonda, Nagarkurnool, and Wanaparthy districts of Telangana during the next 24 hours.

In its daily weather report issued on Wednesday, the Met Centre said light to moderate rain or thundershowers are likely to occur at a few or isolated places across the state over the next seven days.

It also warned that thunderstorms accompanied by lightning and gusty winds with speeds of 30–40 kmph are likely at isolated places in Telangana during the next five days.

The report stated that the southwest monsoon has been normal over the state.

Heavy rainfall was recorded at isolated places in Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district during the past 24 hours, while light rain occurred at one or two places elsewhere in Telangana, the report added.

Congress Ministers Ponnamp Prabhakar and Adluri Laxman reconcile after meeting mediated by PCC chief

Hyderabad, Oct 8 (UNI) : The rift between Telangana Ministers Ponnamp Prabhakar and Adluri Laxman Kumar came to an amicable end on Wednesday following a conciliatory meeting initiated by Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) President and MLC Mahesh Kumar Goud at his residence.

The meeting, attended by senior party leaders, successfully resolved the misunderstanding between the Transport and BC Welfare Minister Ponnamp Prabhakar and SC & ST Welfare Minister Adluri Laxman Kumar, who reaffirmed their unity and commitment to the Congress party's ideals.

The meeting was attended by Minister Vakati Srihari and MLAs Makkan Singh Raj Thakur, Kavvampalli Satyanarayana, Shivsena Reddy, Sampath Kumar, Anil, and Vinay Kumar, among others.

Speaking after the reconciliation, Minister Ponnamp Prabhakar said the Congress party has always been a champion of social justice and that he and Minister Laxman Kumar

share the same commitment to the welfare of weaker sections.

“As someone born and raised in the Congress Party, I have no ill intentions other than to strengthen the party. Although I did not say what was reported in the newspapers, I sincerely apologise for the pain caused to Laxman. We have grown up together in Karimnagar, and there is no space for such misconceptions between us,” he said.

Ponnamp emphasised that the Congress party had never taught him a culture of division or disrespect and reiterated that personal issues must not overshadow the larger goal of achieving social justice.

“Under the leadership of Rahul Gandhi, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, and PCC Chief Mahesh Kumar Goud, we are striving to secure 42 per cent reservations for BCs and to build an equitable society. We will continue working together for this cause,” he added.

TPCC Chief Mahesh Kumar Goud described the incident as a “family matter” that had now been amicably settled. He

appreciated both ministers for demonstrating maturity and unity, noting that their reconciliation would strengthen the Congress party.

“Both Ponnamp Prabhakar and Adluri Laxman Kumar are hardworking leaders who rose from the grassroots. I appeal to all sections of society not to be influenced by this misunderstanding. The Congress party represents every community and stands firmly for social justice,” Mahesh Kumar Goud said.

He also urged ministers and party representatives to act responsibly in public life. Highlighting the government's initiatives, Goud said that under the leadership of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, the Congress government has conducted a transparent caste survey and enacted three important laws providing 42 per cent reservation for BCs. The meeting concluded with both ministers reaffirming their camaraderie and pledging to work together for the unity and progress of the Congress party in Telangana.

Telangana DCA issues public alert, bans two cough syrups found contaminated with toxic diethylene glycol

Hyderabad, Oct 8 (UNI) The Drugs Control Administration (DCA) of Telangana has issued a public alert and stop-use notice after receiving an intimation from the Drug Testing Laboratory, Government of Madhya Pradesh, confirming that two cough syrups were found adulterated with Diethylene Glycol (DEG), a highly toxic substance known to cause serious health hazards.

According to the laboratory reports, “Relife” Cough Syrup, containing Ambroxol Hydrochloride, Guaiphenesin, Terbutaline Sulphate and Menthol, manufactured by M/s Shape Pharma Private Limited, Gujarat, and “Respifresh TR” Cough Syrup, containing Bromhexine Hydrochloride, Terbutaline Sulphate, Guaiphenesin and Menthol, manufactured by M/s Rednex Pharmaceuticals Private Limited, Ahmedabad District, have been declared unsafe for human use. Both

products are from batches expiring in December 2026.

In light of these findings, the DCA has strongly advised the public to immediately stop using these cough syrups if they are in possession of them and to report the matter to the nearest Drugs Control Authority without delay. People can also contact the DCA directly through the toll-free number 1800-599-6969, which operates from 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on all working days. All Drugs Inspectors and Assistant Directors across Telangana have been directed to alert retailers, wholesalers, distributors and hospitals to freeze any available stocks of the said products and ensure that they are not sold or dispensed under any circumstances.

The DCA has initiated strict enforcement measures and is closely monitoring the situation to prevent any further risk to public health.

Scientists convene in Hyderabad to explore alternatives to animal testing

Hyderabad, Oct 8 (UNI) : A three-day national conference aimed at finding alternatives to animal use in scientific experiments began at the CSIR–Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), Hyderabad today.

The event, titled SAAE-I 2025 Conference, is being jointly organised by the Society for Alternatives to Animal Experiments–India (SAAE-I) and CSIR-CCMB and will continue till October 10. The conference has drawn more than 180 participants from universities, research organizations, and industries across the country. It provides a platform to share ideas and

discuss innovations that align with the global principle of 3Rs — Replacement, Reduction, and Refinement — in animal research. The programme includes keynote addresses, oral and poster presentations, and interactive sessions covering diverse fields such as organoid models, in vitro systems, computational biology, toxicology, and ethical research innovations.

Speaking about the initiative, Dr Bokara Kiran Kumar, Principal Scientist, and Dr Mohammed Idris, Chief Scientist at CSIR-CCMB, emphasised that humane science is gaining global momentum.

CENTRAL RAILWAY E-TENDER NOTICE		
'Renovation of Brake Valve Testing room at EMU Matunga Workshop'. Dy. Chief Electrical Engineer (EMU), 2nd floor, New Admn. Bldg., Carriage Workshop, Central Railway, Matunga, Mumbai-19, invites Single e-tender for the work of 'Renovation of Brake Valve Testing room at EMU Matunga Workshop', Approx. Cost of work - ₹ 8,34,650.59/-, EMD- ₹ 16,700/-, tender Document Cost - Rs. Nil, Completion Period - 04 months, Closing date/time - 03.11.2025 up to 15:00 hrs. Tender shall be accepted only in E-Tendering format through the web site www.irops.gov.in . Tender document is available in website. Tender No. EST/EMU/MTN/BE/Renovation/04/07-2025. [527]		
अनुचितकृपया से बचें साइड को पार करना दंडनीय अपराध है		
SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY Publication of Corrigendum to E-Tender		
Notice No. CAO/CN/BNC/127/2025 dated 15.07.2025		
The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-Tender for the following work.		
Sl.No.	Item of Work	Approx.Value
1.	Construction of New Broad Gauge line between Chainage 66400 & Chainage 90000 (23.600 km) including Civil & Track works, Signal & Telecommunication works, Railway Electrification and Electrical General Services between Tavarekere (excl.) & Hiriyur (excl.) Stations in Tumkur-Chitradurga-Davangere new line project.	Rs. 413,07,10,552/-
Last date for Submission of bids : Upto 15.00 hrs on 31.10.2025 For details log on : www.irops.gov.in		
Deputy Chief Engineer/Construction/Works, Bengaluru Cantonment		
PUB/526/AAD360/PRB/SWR/2025-26		
Download the UTS Mobile App from Google Play Store for ease of booking of unreserved tickets		
South Western Railway - SWR CSIRCC CSIRALWAYS @swr_cirw		

STANDARD POST

India's boardrooms still struggle to empower women directors

Indian companies have made measurable progress in appointing women to corporate boards as mandated under the Companies Act 2013. However, a new report finds that meaningful representation and influence remain limited.

According to the joint study by Khaitan & Co, Aon, and Ladies Who Lead, “Presence to Influence: Advancing Women in Indian Boardrooms”, about 98 percent of BSE-200 companies now include at least one woman director on their boards.

However, despite this progress, the report finds that women’s participation is often symbolic, with many directors lacking substantive roles in boardroom decision-making.

The report combines board composition data from BSE-200 companies (FY 2023–24) with interviews of 40 women independent directors, offering a dual-lens view of progress and challenges.

It concludes, “Having a seat at the table doesn’t guarantee a voice at the table,” highlighting that 77 percent of BSE 200 companies have only 1–2 women on their boards, limiting diversity of thought and meaningful participation, a trend that persists even on larger boards with 15 or more members.

Sukanya Hazarika, director, Khaitan & Co said, “India’s progress is undeniable with women making up nearly one-fifth of directors at leading companies. Regulatory mandates from India’s Companies Act, 2013 and SEBI helped kickstart diversity, yet sustaining diversity on boards will require us to go beyond compliance.”

Our research shows that companies need to build a stronger leadership pipeline for women, foster an inclusive work culture, and amplify women’s influence in decision-making.

“Our report proposes frameworks for organisations to build inclusive boards, and for women directors to strengthen their impact and lead effectively at the board level. Companies that embrace this shift are not just ticking the DEI box, they are unlocking stronger governance, innovation, and long-term competitive advantage.”

The report said symbolic representation and limited influence at the top, as only 11 percent of women directors in BSE 200 companies hold executive positions, compared to 65 percent of men. This stark disparity highlights the ongoing exclusion of women from key strategic and operational decision-making roles.

Further, the underrepresentation is even more pronounced at the chairperson level, with only 7 percent of BSE 200 and 5 percent of NIFTY- 500 board chairpersons being women.

These positions are crucial for guiding strategic decisions and driving board culture and the limited presence of women in these key positions, highlights the gap between representation and real influence.

Even on board committees, women remain underrepresented, holding 23 percent of NRC and CSR seats, but only 14 percent on Risk Management committees, down from nearly 30 percent in 2023.

Shilpa Khanna, Associate Partner, Talent Solutions at Aon said, “Boardrooms are powerful spaces where key decisions are made and people in the room have the power to influence change. While our report shows progress in increasing gender diversity on boards in India, true inclusion, through active participation and meaningful presence, is still lacking. To achieve genuine gender inclusion at the top, organizations must boldly rethink their strategies and focus on ways to build a critical mass of representation while also harnessing the power of inclusion to ensure women’s participation is substantive and impactful.”

Over-reliance on networks for boardroom entry: As per the findings, progress is constrained not only by numbers but by structures. With 97 percent of women directors relying on networks to secure their first board role, entry pathways remain narrow and exclusionary.

Persistent biases and microaggressions undermine women’s impact as over 1 in 3 women directors report dismissive attitudes, stereotyping and tokenism, ranging from trivialisation of their presence to subtle questioning of their qualifications and commitment.

The report highlights that women directors demonstrate remarkable resilience, often working harder than their male peers to overcome bias and contribute meaningfully to the board.

The report highlights a notable link between women CEOs and more gender-diverse boards. BSE 200 firms led by women CEOs have an average of 31 pc female board representation, nearly double the 17.7 pc seen in male-led firms.

Yet, women CEOs account for only 6 percent of leadership, highlighting the urgent need to accelerate the advancement of women in top executive roles.

Our research also indicates that companies with 4–6 women directors tend to report higher overall gender diversity and make sustained progress in equitable workplace policies.

Regular Eye Check-ups Hold the Key to Healthy Vision for All Ages

(Standard Post Bureau)

Every year, World Sight Day serves as a global reminder of the importance of eye health and the impact it has on our overall well-being. This year, observed on October 9th, the theme “Love Your Eyes” is not just a campaign slogan but a call to action for each of us to take proactive measures towards protecting and preserving our vision. Eyes are our windows to the world, yet they are often neglected until problems become unavoidable. Caring for them consistently is vital for maintaining a good quality of life.Cataract remains one of the most common causes of vision loss worldwide, particularly among individuals above the age of 50. It occurs when the natural lens of the eye becomes cloudy, causing blurred vision, glare, and difficulty in carrying out everyday tasks. If left untreated, cataracts can lead to complete vision impairment. However, advancements in eye care technology have made cataract surgery one of the safest and most precise medical procedures today.

The introduction of bladeless femtosecond

laser-assisted cataract surgery has transformed outcomes—offering unparalleled precision, minimal discomfort, and rapid recovery. The laser can fragment and remove the cataract with exceptional accuracy, often completing the critical laser step in as little as 10 seconds. Similarly, the latest generation of LASIK and laser vision correction technologies—powered by AI-driven eye-tracking systems and high-speed lasers—deliver unmatched precision and safety, ensuring clear vision and faster return to normal life. Together, these innovations represent the future of safe, effective, and personalized eye care.

Regular eye check-ups are one of the most effective ways to safeguard vision. Many eye diseases, including glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy, and age-related macular degeneration, develop silently without early symptoms. By the time patients experience noticeable vision loss, the damage may already be irreversible. A timely eye examination can detect these conditions at an early stage, allowing interventions that

World Sight Day – 9 Oct 2025 – Love your Eyes



Dr. Mahipal Singh Sachdev, Chairman and Managing Director – Centre for Sight Group of Eye Hospitals

preserve sight. For children, eye check-ups are crucial to detect refractive errors, lazy eye (amblyopia), or squint, which if untreated can affect not only vision but also their academic and social development. For adults, particularly those above the age of 40, regular screening is essential to monitor for presbyopia, cataracts, and other age-related conditions.

Lifestyle factors today—such as prolonged screen exposure, increasing digital device

dependency, and sedentary habits—have also contributed to a surge in vision-related complaints. Computer vision syndrome, dry eyes, and early-onset myopia in children are becoming increasingly common. In such scenarios, an annual eye exam serves as a preventive tool, helping individuals adapt corrective measures, lifestyle modifications, or treatment at the right time. Loving your eyes is not just about reacting to symptoms, but about preventing problems

Jharkhand demands better 108 ambulance service

Ranchi, Oct 8 (UNI) : Concerned over recurring reports of delays and mismanagement in the 108 ambulance service across Jharkhand, Additional Chief Secretary of Health, Medical Education & Family Welfare, Ajay Kumar Singh convened an emergency meeting today to review the situation. During the meeting, Singh reprimanded the service provider, Samman Foundation, for its poor performance and directed the agency to ensure immediate and visible improvement in service delivery. He expressed dissatisfaction over the frequent complaints highlighting delayed ambulance arrivals, particularly in remote areas, which have adversely affected the state’s image.

Singh emphasized that the quality of service must remain uncompromised and patients should not face any hardship in availing ambulance support.

SEIL energy wins Prestigious golden peacock award for excellence in Corporate Governance

award, which acknowledges our dedication to transparency, accountability, and responsible business practices. This recognition motivates us to continue pushing the boundaries of excellence in corporate governance and sustainability, ultimately contributing to the growth and prosperity of our stakeholders and the nation."The award will be presented to Mr. Janmejaya Mahapatra on 4th

November 2025, during the Golden Peacock Awards Presentation Ceremony at IOD India's 2025 Annual London Global Convention on Corporate Governance and Sustainability.

As one of India's leading independent power producers, SEIL Energy has consistently demonstrated its commitment to delivering reliable and sustainable energy solutions while maintaining the highest standards of corporate governance.

NephroPlus Crosses 500 Dialysis Clinics Globally

(Standard Post Bureau)

NephroPlus, Asia’s largest dialysis service provider (Source: Frost & Sullivan Report, 2025), has achieved a historic milestone by crossing 500 centres globally, with the launch of a 2,000 sq. ft. brownfield dialysis centre in Saharanpur, Uttar Pradesh, in collaboration with Amrit Hospital.

Commenting on the launch, Mr. Rohit Singh, Group Chief Executive Officer, Nephrocare Health Services Limited, said: "Reaching 500 clinics is a proud milestone for all of us at NephroPlus.

This achievement belongs to our guests who trust us, our partners who support us, and our teammates who power us every day.

For us, 500 is not a finish line — it’s a launch pad. We are moving faster, reaching further, and aiming higher to redefine dialysis

care in India and across borders.”From a single clinic in Hyderabad in 2010 to more than 500 clinics today, NephroPlus’s journey is a testament to what Indian healthcare can achieve on the world stage.

Beyond India, it has extended its model overseas, with 43 international clinics spanning Nepal, the Philippines, and Uzbekistan, alongside partnerships in Saudi Arabia, replicating its playbook of hospital partnerships, public private partnerships (PPP), and cluster growth.

NephroPlus also continues to pursue growth through brownfield opportunities, which involves taking over and operating existing dialysis clinics run by hospitals, not-for-profits, or other private providers looking to outsource their dialysis operations.

SEIL energy wins Prestigious golden peacock award for excellence in Corporate Governance

(Standard Post Bureau)

SEIL Energy India Limited, one of the largest independent power producers (IPP) in India, is thrilled to announce that it has been declared the Winner of the prestigious 'Golden Peacock Award for Excellence in Corporate Governance' for the year 2025. This esteemed award, declared by the Institute of Directors (IOD), recognizes SEIL Energy's commitment to upholding the highest standards of corporate

governance.The Golden Peacock Awards, instituted by the Institute of Directors (IOD), are a benchmark of excellence in corporate governance, sustainability, and business performance. This recognition is a testament to SEIL Energy's relentless pursuit of reliability, transparency, and stakeholder value.

On this occasion, Mr. Janmejaya Mahapatra, CEO - SEIL Energy India Limited, said; "We are honoured to receive this prestigious

before they escalate.

Equally important is the recognition that eye health is tied closely to systemic health. Diabetes and hypertension, two of the most prevalent lifestyle diseases, have a direct impact on eye health and can lead to sight-threatening complications if unchecked. A comprehensive eye check-up often acts as the first point where underlying health issues are flagged, making it a vital element of preventive healthcare.

At Centre for Sight, our mission has always been to provide world-class eye care through cutting-edge technologies and expert medical teams. Today, the field of ophthalmology has seen remarkable advancements, and we are proud to be at the forefront of offering these to patients. From bladeless LASIK surgery for vision correction to advanced cataract surgery using femtosecond lasers, patients can benefit from procedures that are safer, more precise, and deliver faster recovery. For retinal diseases, we offer state-of-the-art diagnostics and treatments including OCT (Optical Coherence Tomography), retinal lasers, and intravitreal injections, ensuring that

conditions like diabetic retinopathy or age-related macular degeneration are managed effectively.

Our hospitals are also equipped with advanced technologies such as corneal cross-linking for keratoconus, minimally invasive glaucoma surgeries, and cutting-edge treatments for pediatric ophthalmology. The adoption of AI-driven diagnostic platforms further enhances our ability to detect diseases at their earliest stages. Through constant innovation and a patient-centric approach, Centre for Sight remains committed to making high-quality eye care accessible and affordable.

This World Sight Day, let us pledge to truly “Love Our Eyes.” By prioritising regular eye examinations, adopting healthy lifestyle habits, and leveraging the latest in medical science, we can ensure that vision is protected across all ages. Eye health is not a luxury—it is a necessity that allows us to live fully, work productively, and connect meaningfully with the world around us. At Centre for Sight, we stand with the global community in advocating for vision care for all, today and for generations to come.

Mamata hits out at ECI's SIR exercise, says it is ill-timed

Kolkata, Oct 8 (UNI) : West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee today strongly criticised the Election Commission of India's (ECI) Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise of electoral rolls, saying it was ill-timed as the state is currently dealing with natural calamities and the ongoing festive season.

An ECI team, headed by Deputy Election Commissioner Gyanesh Bharti, who arrived last night, began reviewing the preparedness for the SIR at the office of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) in Kolkata today.

Returning from landslide-affected areas in North Bengal, Banerjee told reporters at the airport that, with the state battling natural disasters, the rainy season, and a month of major festivals, it is unreasonable to expect people to participate in the SIR exercise within only 15 days.

Following the completion of a similar exercise in Bihar, the ECI initiated the SIR in West Bengal and directed that all preparations be completed by October 15.

Criticising the move, Banerjee said even BJP leaders have claimed that lakhs of names will be deleted from the electoral rolls.

“What do they think? Does the Commission belong to the BJP? Has the Commission been set up

to serve citizens' rights, or is it just to serve civic rights?" asked the Chief Minister.

Banerjee also vehemently criticised the Centre, accusing the ruling party of discrimination and depriving Bengal of its fair share.

Citing examples, Banerjee pointed out that while airfare during the Chhath festival in Bihar was reduced, people fleeing the disaster in Siliguri had to pay more than double the regular fare.

“For coming to Kolkata from Bagdogra airport, one has to pay Rs 18,000 per passenger, and if via New Delhi, the charge was Rs. 42,000,” she stated.

“The BJP always plays electoral politics, and under its governance, the country is heading for the doomsday,” the Chief Minister said.

She alleged that everything is being done under the directive of Amit Shah, who, she claimed, is acting as the de facto Prime Minister.

“Sorry to say, the Prime Minister may be aware of this, but trusting Amit Shah too much would be disastrous. We request the Prime Minister not to trust Amit Shah blindly, or else the man would turn into a big Mir Jafar (former Bengal Nawab), as the morning shows the day,” Banerjee concluded.

US Navy Destroyer USS Fitzgerald arrives in Bangladesh on 3-day 'goodwill' visit

Chattogram, Oct 8 (UNI) The US Navy destroyer, USS Fitzgerald (DDG-62), arrived in Bangladeshi waters, landing at Chattogram Port as part of three-day 'goodwill' visit.The vessel was greeted by the Bangladesh Navy ship, BNS Abu Ubaidah, upon arrival, with naval officials from both sides exchanging greetings.According to a report by the Inter-Services-Personal-Relations (ISPR) – the media wing of its armed forces – the visit is meant for strengthening bilateral defence relations by sharing knowledge, experience, expertise, reports Daily Star.

As per the ISPR, the two navies will partake in joint activities with direct observation of professional excellence being instrumental for enhancing mutual understanding and coordination between naval personnel of the two countries.

It added that the visit would provide an effective platform for skills sharing and help the Bangladesh Navy advance in line with modern naval technology.

Representatives of the US Embassy in Bangladesh were present during the visit. Earlier, the US Navy ship also visited Bangladesh on a goodwill visit in 2022.

The 'goodwill' visit is expected to further strengthen bilateral relations, as well as provide opportunities for professional exchange, future training and mutual cooperation between naval officers and sailors of the two countries, the ISPR added.

The ship will depart Bangladeshi waters on Oct 10.

1 killed, 4 injured in boat collision on Tokyo's canal

Tokyo, Oct. 8 (UNI) : One man was killed and four others were injured when two workboats collided on the Toyosu Canal in Tokyo's Koto Ward at around 6:40 a.m. local time Wednesday, local media reported.

According to the Tokyo Coast Guard Office, the vessels that collided were the Senbamaru No. 12 and the Senbamaru No. 80. The No. 80, which had been pushing a barge, struck the No. 12 while it was underway.All five victims, including the 58-year-old man who died and the four injured crew members, were aboard the Senbamaru No. 12.The site of the accident lies about 700 meters north of Toyosu Station on the Yurakucho subway line, surrounded by high-rise apartment buildings and company warehouses.

Ecuador reports assassination attempt on President Noboa

Quito, Oct. 8 (UNI) : The Ecuadorian government said Tuesday it had filed a criminal complaint over an alleged assassination attempt on President Daniel Noboa during a visit to the southern province of Canar.

Environment and Energy Minister Ines Manzano said Noboa's motorcade came under attack in the town of El Tambo on Tuesday when it was heading to a local stadium for the launch of new public works.

"About 500 people appeared and began throwing stones, and there are also bullet marks on the president's car," Manzano told reporters, adding that Noboa was unharmed.Police arrested five suspects who will face terrorism charges, and several vehicles in the convoy were damaged.The presidential office accused the attackers of trying to block the inauguration of a community project.

The incident occurred on the 16th day of nationwide protests led by indigenous communities against the government's decision to end diesel subsidies on Sept. 12 -- a move that sharply increased fuel prices and has triggered widespread unrest.

UN frees 410 children from armed groups in eastern DRC

United Nations, Oct 8 (UNI) : UN peacekeepers and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) worked together to free 410 children held by armed groups in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), a UN spokesman said on Tuesday.

Stephane Dujarric, spokesperson for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, said the peacekeeping mission in DRC, known as MONUSCO, worked with UNICEF from January to September to release 344 boys and 66 girls held by armed groups in North Kivu and Ituri provinces. Dujarric said the freed children have been referred to services that will help them reintegrate into a normal life after their experience.

"During the same period, 165 cases of child recruitment and use (by the armed groups) were verified by the United Nations, including 30 girls and 135 boys," he said. "Our colleagues tell us these numbers underscore the continued vulnerability of children in areas impacted by conflict and also highlight the urgent need for sustained protection measures, including prevention, accountability, and long-term reintegration support."Dujarric said that under the world body's children and armed conflict framework, peacekeeping missions work to prevent and respond to grave violations against children, including their recruitment and use by armed forces and groups.

He said that MONUSCO supports DRC's national authorities in implementing action plans, strengthening the capacity of security forces, and reporting violations through the UN's monitoring and reporting mechanism, with the aim of promoting accountability and increasing child protection. MONUSCO, which has the largest child protection service of any UN peacekeeping mission, said on its website that peacekeepers have helped release thousands of children associated with armed forces and groups. The mission also said it provides technical support for DRC legislative reforms to strengthen child protection systems.



United Kingdom Prime Minister Keir Starmer arrives at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport, in Mumbai on Wednesday.

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Israeli Navy intercepts another flotilla mission, detains 150 activists

Tel Aviv, Oct 8 (UNI) : The Israeli Navy early Wednesday intercepted a new flotilla mission, which attempted to break its maritime blockade on the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip as part of a symbolic support for Palestinians, detaining an estimated 150 activists who were transferred to Israeli shores for interrogation and deportation, reports Times of Israel.

The Navy's interception of the flotilla comes a week after it stopped the 42-vessel Global Sumud Flotilla – the largest convoy to challenge Tel Aviv's blockade to date -- and deported a vast majority of the 479 activists who took part in that armada, including Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg and South African politician Mandla Mandela.

The IDF actions come after organisers rejected

Donald Trump says some furloughed workers might not get back pay

Washington, Oct 8 (UNI) : US President Donald Trump said Tuesday that some furloughed federal employees may not receive back pay once the government reopens, following earlier threats to lay off federal workers during shutdown.

"I would say it depends on who we're talking about. I can tell you this, the Democrats have put a lot of people in great risk and jeopardy, but it really depends on who you're talking about," Trump said at the White House Oval Office.

"But for the most part, we're going to take care of our people. There are some people who really don't deserve to be taken care of, and we will take care of them in a different way," he said.The US president did not provide further details on which furloughed federal employees might not receive back pay.

Earlier in the day, Axios reported that furloughed federal workers are not guaranteed compensation for their forced time off during the government shutdown, citing a draft White House memo.

As Trump continued to blame Democrats for the shutdown stalemate,

Democratic leaders blamed Republicans.

"The Republicans shut down the government instead of fixing health care for Americans across this country," Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer said on X.

After the previous government shutdown, which lasted 35 days and ended in January 2019, Trump signed a law guaranteeing back pay for federal employees affected by future shutdowns.

Before the law was passed, the US Congress routinely approved back pay for federal workers once a funding bill was approved to reopen the government.

Roughly 750,000 federal workers are expected to be furloughed during this shutdown, according to an analysis by the Congressional Budget Office last week.

Federal workers deemed essential -- such as air traffic controllers and law enforcement officers -- will continue working without pay until the government reopens.US Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy said Monday that the government shutdown is adding pressure on already overworked air traffic controllers.

ship.Due to the large size of the Conscience vessel, the naval commandos boarded the ship by rappelling from an Air Force helicopter, landing onto the ship's deck.The other eight sailboats were boarded by naval commandos at sea atop naval vessels.

Israel's Foreign Ministry blasted the flotilla mission on Wednesday morning for its attempted breach of the IDF's maritime blockade, stating that the navy was able to prevent them from realising their "futile" goal.

The vessels and passengers upon interception were taken to Ashdod Port for deportation, much like the Global Sumud before.

"Another futile attempt to breach the legal naval blockade and enter a combat zone ended in nothing," Foreign Ministry wrote on X.

US DNI Tulsi Gabbard directs all intel agencies to review feasibility of random polygraph tests in stemming info leaks

Washington, Oct 8 (UNI) : US Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard issued a memo back in September ordering all of the country's intelligence agencies to conduct a review of whether random polygraph examinations of their employees or contractors are feasible, in a bid to stem the wave of intel leaks in recent years.

As such, the directive also stresses on the need for tests to include questions about whether employees or potential applicants have leaked information to members of the press as part of the standard battery of questions during the security clearance adjudication process, reports CBS News.

While questions related to leaks have been commonplace for U.S. intelligence community employees and applicants, the Trump administration is intensifying its crackdown on all possible avenues for disclosing state secrets, and cautioned members of the intelligence community that they'll face additional scrutiny over any leaks of sensitive information to media outlets.In many ways, Gabbard's directive echoes earlier hard-line stances undertaken by previous administrations of both political parties to root out sources of revelations

Afghanistan's modest economic growth threatened by rising poverty, population

Kabul, Oct 8 (UNI) Afghanistan's economy has grown modestly in the past four years and continues to rise, though increasing poverty, lack of infrastructure, weak governance, persistent displacement, and persistent security threats continue to hamper this trend, reported the World Bank.

It further warned that these factors could overshadow the few strides the war-ravaged country has made in recent years.According to Khamma News, these findings were published as part of the World Bank's latest Economic update on West Asia, North Africa, Afghanistan and Pakistan, titled 'Jobs and Women: Untapped Talent, Unrealised Growth'.Kabul's GDP is projected to grow by about 4.3 percent in fiscal years 2025–2026, driven largely by household and public consumption.

However, this rise - expected to be around 8.6 percent, per capita income - is insufficient to keep with its increasing population, and is thus projected to decline by nearly 4 percent, keeping millions of Afghans in extreme poverty.

that were either potentially damaging to national security or politically embarrassing.

As per two sources of CBS News, the DNI's directive emphasises polygraph test questions related to topics like info leaks to media agencies, adding that these practices will be made more routine in conjunction with counterintelligence investigations.

An official in the Office of Director of National Intelligence (ODNI), stated that instead of establishing any new policies, the directive merely reinforces questions related to leaks to members of the press, and hardens all existing regulations and legal statutes.The directive also does not direct organisations to begin random polygraph examinations, but instead asks US intelligence agencies to review the feasibility of conducting random polygraphs in conjunction with counterintelligence investigations.

As per the ODNI official, the lack of polygraph tests within the intelligence community has emboldened all potential double agents within agencies to leak sensitive state secrets to hostile nations, though the official declined to give any additional details.

Delegations of Islamic Jihad – PFLP members join Gaza peace talks in Egypt

Sharm el-Sheikh, Oct 8 (UNI) : A delegation from the Islamic Jihad terror organisation has arrived in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, as it is set to participate in the ongoing negotiations aimed at securing a Gaza truce and the release of hostages.

The organisation will be joined by representatives of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP).

Their participation marks an expansion of the talks, which initially involved delegations from Israel, Hamas, and mediators from Egypt, Qatar, and the US.

On Monday, Qatar announced that its prime minister would attend the discussions, while Turkey's intelligence chief was also reported to be taking part, highlighting a growing regional involvement in what is being described as the most decisive phase of the talks so far, as per Al-Hadath.

In a speech marking the second anniversary of the October 7, 2023, Hamas-led massacre, the leader of Islamic Jihad said it was possible "to reach agreement on the clauses in the deal relating to the release of prisoners within the coming days," referring to an expected exchange of Israeli hostages for Palestinian detainees, including convicted terrorists.

He added that such a move would "strip Israel of its pretexts for aggression."

The second day of negotiations focused on the lists of Palestinian prisoners whose release is being demanded by Hamas, as well as discussions over a mechanism for Israel's phased withdrawal from the Gaza Strip under the US-brokered peace framework.

However, a senior Egyptian security official told the German Press Agency that "the situation remains unchanged compared to the first day," indicating that both sides were holding firm to their initial positions.

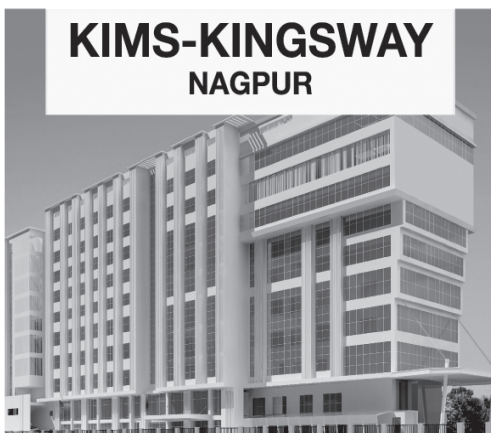
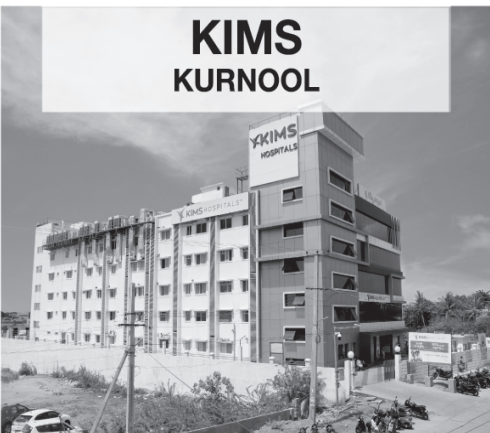
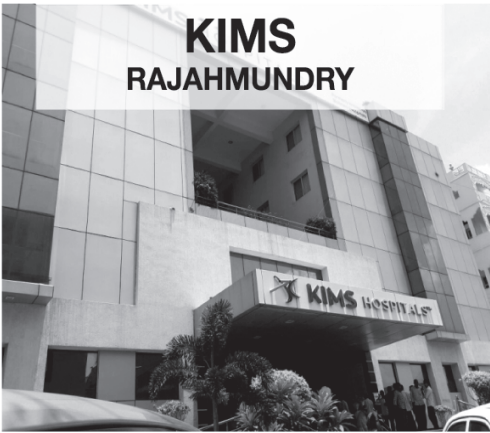
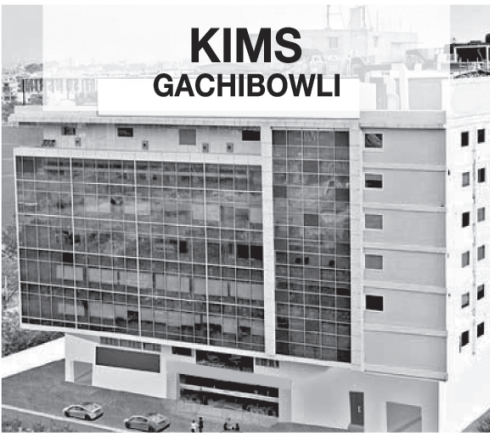
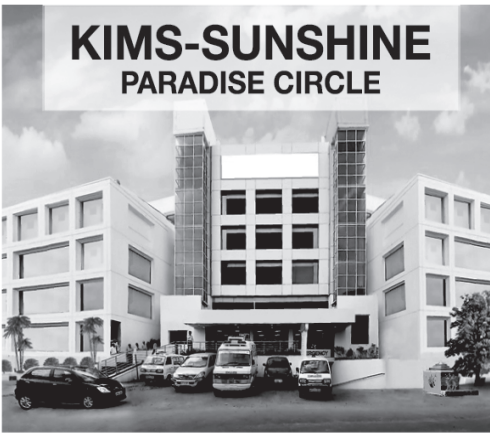
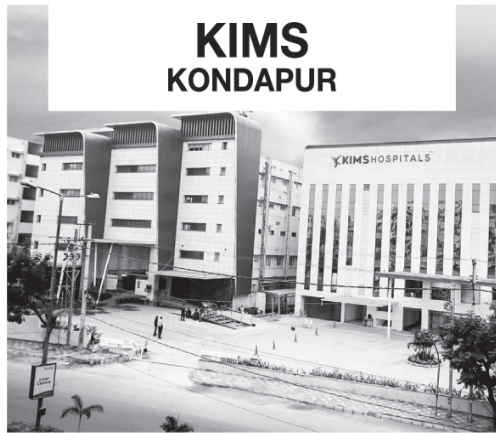
According to the official, Hamas continues to insist on absolute guarantees that Israel will not resume military operations once the exchange begins, while Israel has refused both the demands of issuing security guarantees or prospects for a phased exchange, insisting that it will only comply with Hamas' demands if it releases all hostages in full.

Egyptian officials, commenting on the inclusion of members of the two extremist organisations opined that their participation could either help consolidate a unified Palestinian stance—or further complicate the process, should they stick to their Islamic extremist ideologies.

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India U23 men's head coach Naushad Moosa names

New Delhi, Oct 8 (UNI) : India U23 men's team head coach Naushad Moosa named a 23-member squad for the friendlies against Indonesia U23 on October 10 and 13 in Jakarta during the FIFA International Match Window.After a brief training camp in Bengaluru, the Blue Colts landed in the Indonesian capital on the afternoon of Wednesday.

Both matches will be played at the Gelora Bung Karno Madya Stadium in Jakarta, and will kick off at 18:30 IST.

India U23's squad for friendlies against Indonesia in October 2025:

Goalkeepers: Dipesh Chauhan, Mohanraj K, Priyansh Dubey.

Defenders: Bikash Yumnam, Dippendu Biswas, Harsh Arun Palande, Muhammed Saheef AP, Ricky Meetei Haobam, Roshan Singh Thangjam, Sanatomba Singh Yanglem, Sumit Sharma Brahmachari mayum.

Midfielders: Ayush Dev Chhetri, Bekey Oram, Danny Meitei Laishram, Lalrinliana Hnamte, Mohammed Aimen, Vibin Mohanan.

Forwards: Muhammed Suhail, Korou Singh Thingujam, Parthib Sundar Gogoi, Sreekuttan MS, Suhail Ahmad Bhat, Thoi Singh Huidrom.

Head coach: Naushad Moosa, Assistant coach: Noel Wilson



Students take part in a volleyball competition as part of Chief Minister’s Trophy Games 2025, in Tiruchirappalli.

Parthsarathi, Akansha & Riddhi sail into pre-quarters of Fenesta Open National Tennis Championship

New Delhi, Oct 8 (UNI) : Top seed Parthsarathi Arun Mundhe, Akansha Ghosh, and Riddhi Shinde continued their winning streak to reach the pre-quarterfinals of the Fenesta Open National Tennis Championship in the Girls’ U-16 Singles category at the DLTA Complex in New Delhi today.

Parthsarathi faced a tough challenge at the beginning of the contest against Swanika Roy as the scores were levelled at 2-2 before the top seed rallied to win the next seven games with ferocious baseline

play and notched up the victory by 9-2 to move into the next round of the tournament.

Supported by DCM Shriram Ltd., and held under the aegis of the All India Tennis Association (AITA) and the Delhi Lawn Tennis Association (DLTA), the Fenesta Open continues to showcase India’s most promising junior talent.

Meanwhile, third seed Akansha Ghosh defeated Keertama Rangineni also by the scoreline of 9-2 to reach the round of 16. Akansha showcased her sublime skills against

Keertama, winning six straight games to establish a significant lead and securing a comfortable victory.

Riddhi Shinde caused an upset by defeating sixth seed Aashi Kashyap 9-4 to advance to the next round. Riddhi broke her opponent’s serve four times to take a commanding lead before sealing the victory.

In the Girls’ U-14 category, Aniha Gavinolla upset seventh seed Eshitha Sriyala 9-5, while top seed Padma Rameshkumar defeated Shubhi Sharma 9-

3 in the round-of-32 clash.

On the other hand, in the Boys U-16 Singles category, top seed Prakaash Saran beat Saksham Bhansal 9-8 (7-1) in straight sets. Eighth seed Tavish Pahwa got the better of Puneeth M 9-5 to move into the pre-quarterfinals

Besides the prestigious titles, the winners will be awarded kit allowance in the junior categories.

The winners and runners-up in the U-16 and U-14 singles events will also receive a tennis scholarship of Rs 25,000 each.

Djokovic enters quarters at Shanghai Masters

Shanghai, Oct 8 (UNI) : Novak Djokovic overcame pain in his left ankle, the Shanghai humidity and the challenge of Jaume Munar to reach the quarter-finals at the Shanghai Masters for the 11th time.

The Serbian received multiple medical timeouts for a leg issue during the two hours and 40 minutes clash and frequently placed an ice towel over his head during changeovers, with humidity levels exceeding 82 percent on Tuesday.

Djokovic threw up court-side on several occasions and collapsed to the floor after losing the second set before he received medical support.

However, despite the challenging conditions, the 38-year-old dug deep to grind down Munar 6-3, 5-7, 6-2 in one of the most physical matches of the season.

Djokovic has reached the quarter-finals in all 11 of his Shanghai appearances, lifting the trophy a record four times. The world No. 5 is the highest-ranked left player in the draw and he will next meet Belgian Zizou Bergs.

Delhi Metro to run special, free services on Oct 12 for Vedanta Delhi half marathon participants

New Delhi, Oct 8 (UNI) : Delhi Metro rail Corporation (DMRC) will be running special and free services for the participations of the Vedanta Delhi Half Marathon scheduled for October 12 (Sunday). The DMRC will commence services on Sunday earlier, at 3: 15 am and they have issued 4000 QR codes for the participants so that they can reach the venue of the race- JLN stadium free of cost. Mohinder Yadav, General Manager, Corporate Communications, DMRC in an exclusive interaction with UNI shared the details regarding race day “We will commence our services on Sunday at 3:15 am at the Red, Yellow and Blue lines- which are the most popular lines, aim is that the participants reach the JLN stadium seamlessly. From 3:15 am to 4 am, trains will be available every 15 minutes, from 4 am to 6 am they will run every 20 minutes, after 6 am we

will be running our usual services. We have tied up with the organisers Procam and provided 4000 QR codes which they will be distributing to the participants. The racers can just show it at the stations for entry and outward journey after the event.”

Yadav said that a network of volunteers will be deployed at four stations to assist the participants “Apart from this, four stations will have volunteers from Procam, they will be guiding the participants - there stations are Jorbagh, jangpura, Janpath and JLN stadium.

The Vedanta Delhi Half Marathon will feature several races with the first race- half Marathon for Amateurs & Police Cup being flagged off at 5 am from Jawaharlal Nehru stadium. This year, which will be the 20th edition of the half marathon will see more than 40,000 participants, including runners from 22 other nations.

India Women set for a high-stakes with South Africa

Visakhapatnam, Oct 8 (UNI) : Cricket lovers are in for a treat tomorrow as India Women take on South Africa Women in a pivotal ICC Women’s World Cup clash at the Dr. Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy ACA-VDCA Cricket Stadium.

The game starts at 3 pm, and by the look of it, the drama will unfold long before the first ball is bowled. India’s hopes rest heavily on Smriti Mandhana, a batswoman who plays with an elegance that few can match. Averaging 54 against South Africa in ODIs, with three centuries and five half-centuries, Mandhana is not just in form—she is in command.

Pratika Rawal will partner her at the top, providing solidity, while Harleen Deol, who has been a consistent performer, will anchor the number three spot. The middle order of Harmanpreet Kaur, Deepti Sharma, Jemimah Rodrigues, and Richa

Ghosh has the power to turn matches in a blink, but they will need to handle the Proteas’ in-form bowling with patience and poise.

Speaking of form, South Africa will be led by the unstoppable Tazmin Brits. Four centuries in her last five World Cup innings—yes, four!—Brits has been a whirlwind at the crease, and India’s bowlers will need to conjure something special to stem her momentum. Laura Wolvaardt and Sune Luus provide steady support, while the all-round prowess of Marizanne Kapp and the precision of Nonkululeko Mlaba give the Proteas balance. The VDCA pitch offers something for everyone. Batswoman get early reward for their strokes, yet as the day wears on, the surface slows, giving spinners more bite. History suggests the team chasing has the advantage—ten of fifteen ODIs here have gone to the second-battling

side. Weather-wise, expect the usual Indian warmth with partly cloudy skies and gentle winds teasing the outfield. India Women have dominated recent meetings, winning the last five encounters, but this won’t be a stroll in the park. With Brits in red-hot form and Mandhana yet to unleash her full repertoire in this tournament, tomorrow promises a contest of skill, strategy, and nerves.

Predicted Playing XIs: India Women: Pratika Rawal, Smriti Mandhana, Harleen Deol, Harmanpreet Kaur (c), Jemimah Rodrigues, Richa Ghosh (wk), Deepti Sharma, Amanjot Kaur, Sneha Rana, Kranti Gaud, Shree Charani South Africa Women: Laura Wolvaardt (c), Tazmin Brits, Sune Luus, Marizanne Kapp, Anneke Bosch, Sinalo Jaftha (wk), Chloe Tryon, Nadine de Klerk, Masabata Klaas, Ayabonga Khaka, Nonkululeko Mlaba

Ravindra Jadeja, Mohammed Siraj attain career-best positions in ICC Men’s Test Player Rankings

Dubai, Oct 8 (UNI) : India all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja’s standout performance in the first match of their ICC World Test Championship series against the West Indies in Ahmedabad has helped him reach a career-best 25th position in the ICC Men’s Test Batting Rankings.

The previous best for the 36-year-old, who scored 104 not out in India’s only innings, was the 29th position that he achieved in July this year. He is now at a career-high of 644 rating points. Jadeja’s four wickets in the second innings have also helped him extend his

lead at the top of the all-rounders’ table by a good 125 points over Bangladesh’s Mehidy Hasan. Fast bowler Mohammed Siraj continued his good work from the England tour, his figures of four for 40 and three for 31 lifting him three places to a career-best 12th position and above the 700-point mark for the first time in his career following India’s victory by an innings and 140 runs.

Other gainers from the Indian team include K.L. Rahul and Dhruv Jurel, who have both progressed in the batting rankings after notching centuries. Rahul

has moved up four places to 35th and Jurel is up 20 places to 65th after his maiden Test century.

Left-arm wrist-spinner Kuldeep Yadav has gained seven places to reach 21st position after taking two cheap wickets in the match. There was little to cheer for the West Indies players though as no batter scored a half-century and no bowler took more than two wickets.

In the ICC Men’s T20I Player Rankings, Australia captain Mitchell Marsh has returned to the top 10 of the batting table for the first time since February 2024 after scoring 85 in the first

match and 103 not out in the third match of the series against New Zealand.

New Zealand’s Tim Robinson struck an unbeaten 106 in the first match of the series at Mount Maunganui which helped him advance 58 places to joint-22nd.

Bangladesh defeated Afghanistan 3-0 in their series in the United Arab Emirates, with Saif Hassan’s unbeaten 64 in the third match helping him into the top 20 batters for the first time. Tanzid Hasan has moved up from 43rd to 37th and Parvez Hossain from 71st to 53rd.

Afghanistan leg-

spinning all-rounder Rashid Khan’s hauls of four for 18 and two for 29 in the first two matches have helped him claw back to number two in the bowling rankings, his highest position since June last year.

The bowling rankings also see Noor Ahmad (up eight places to 17th) and Mujeeb Ur Rahman (up six places to 23rd) of Afghanistan progress, while Bangladesh players Tanzim Hasan Sakib (up nine places to 33rd), Shoriful Islam (up 21 places to joint-49th) and Player of the Series Nasum Ahmed (up from 131st to 44th) have all advanced, an ICC media release said.

Botafogo defender Bastos to miss rest of season

Rio De Janeiro, Oct 8 (UNI) : Botafogo defender Bastos is set to miss the rest of the 2025 Brazilian top flight season due to complications from a knee injury. The 34-year-old Angolan underwent surgery on his left knee in July in the hope that he would resume training in October. But the center-back has yet to rejoin first-team training after aggravating the injury during his recuperation, Globo Esporte reported.

Bastos, capped 58 times for Angola, has made 60 appearances across all competitions for Botafogo following his 2023 move from Al-Ahli. He was part of the Rio club’s squad that won last year’s Copa Libertadores - South America’s top club trophy - and Brazilian Serie A title.

We are excited about opportunity to strengthen our squad: Bhupathi ahead of TPL auctions

Bengaluru, Oct 8 (UNI) : Ahead of the Tennis Premier League (TPL) 2025 auctions scheduled for October 9, SG Pipers are shaping up as one of the strongest teams this season.

The franchise has already made a statement by announcing that two-time Grand Slam champion and the oldest player to win both a Grand Slam and an ATP Masters 1000 title, Rohan Bopanna, will be part of the SG Pipers. The squad now turns its focus to securing new players to further strengthen the team ahead of what promises to be a highly competitive season.

Bopanna’s addition reflects SG Pipers’ approach of combining experience with emerging talent, a strategy designed

to mount a serious title challenge this season.

The team’s preparations come at a time when Indian tennis is experiencing a renewed wave of interest and investment.

Amid this momentum, the Tennis Premier League continues to emerge as a key platform to bring the sport closer to fans and provide players with valuable competitive exposure by showcasing some of the best talent from across the country and beyond.

Mahesh Bhupathi, one of India’s most decorated tennis players and CEO of S Gupta Sports, the company that owns SG Pipers, said, "Our focus has always been on building a team that reflects the highest standards of Indian

tennis, both in terms of performance and professionalism. We are absolutely thrilled to have Rohan Bopanna join SG Pipers. His wealth of experience, proven leadership, and winning mentality will be invaluable as we aim for the top. Having someone of his calibre reinforces our commitment to excellence.

As we approach the auctions, we are excited about the opportunity to strengthen our squad further."

Bhupathi, who has been closely involved with the sport’s evolution in India, believes the league is playing a pivotal role in shaping its future.

"Leagues like Tennis Premier League are essential to the sport’s growth in India. They

provide a platform for domestic talent to compete alongside established names. This not only guides young players but also helps build a stronger ecosystem around the game. The momentum we are seeing now can translate into a deeper talent pool and greater global competitiveness over the next decade," he added.

The auction is expected to attract significant attention as franchises compete for top Indian and international players.

With Bopanna already part of their line-up and a clear roadmap for the season ahead, SG Pipers are well-positioned to make a strong bid for the title in the upcoming edition.

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Central Railway conducts Seminar on CTE-Type Intensive Examinations Under Vigilance Campaign



(Standard Post Bureau)

Mumbai, Oct 8 : As part of the ongoing Central Vigilance Campaign themed “Vigilance: Our Shared Responsibility”, the Vigilance Organization of Central Railway organized a seminar focused on CTE-

Type Intensive Examinations under the Capacity Building Program.

The seminar, held on October 7, 2025, at Central Railway Head Quarter Office, Mumbai, aimed to enhance awareness and build competence among

officers in maintaining transparency and accountability in public procurement and infrastructure projects.

Shri Neeraj Kumar Dohare, Senior Deputy General Manager (SDGM) and Chief Vigilance Officer,

Central Railway presided over the function.

A key highlight of the event was an insightful lecture delivered by Shri Subhash Kumar Singla, retired IRSE officer (Indian Railway Service of Engineers). Drawing from his vast experience, Shri Subhash Kumar Singla provided valuable perspectives on effective inspection techniques, common lapses, and best practices to uphold integrity in public works.

The seminar witnessed enthusiastic participation from officers across various departments of Central Railway.

This initiative forms part of a series of awareness programs and workshops are being conducted during the 3 month Vigilance Awareness Campaign (18th August 2025 to 17th November 2025).

Restoration of halts of few trains at Surat Staton from Oct 10 : Western Railway

(Standard Post Bureau)

Mumbai, Oct 8 : In view of the forthcoming festive season, such as Durga Puja, Diwali and Chhath Puja, many festival Special Trains will originate/ terminate at Udhna station, which is expected to result in significant increase in passenger footfall at this station. A substantial surge in passenger traffic is anticipated and hence as a crowd control measure, the halt of few trains that were temporarily discontinued at Surat station is being restored back with effect from 10th October, 2025, till further advice.

According to a press release issued by the Chief Public Relations Officer of Western Railway, Shri Vineet Abhishek, the halts of some of the UP & DOWN trains that were temporarily skipped at Surat station in view of ongoing station redevelopment work, are being restored with effect from 10th October, 2025. The details of these trains are as under:

UP Trains provided Halt at Surat station

1. Train No. 12655 Ahmedabad – Puratchi Thailaivar Dr. M.G.Ramachandran Central Navajeevan Express, Journey commencing on (J.C.O) 09th October, 2025
2. Train No. 12833 Ahmedabad – Howrah SuperFast Express, J.C.O 10th October, 2025
3. Train No. 19483 Ahmedabad – Saharsa Express, J.C.O 10th October, 2025
4. Train No. 19435 Ahmedabad – Asansol Express, J.C.O 16th October, 2025
5. Train No. 20824 Ajmer – Puri SuperFast, J.C.O 09th October, 2025
6. Train No. 20820 Okha – Puri Weekly Express, J.C.O 15th October, 2025
7. Train No. 22939 Okha – Bilaspur Express, J.C.O 11th October, 2025
8. Train No. 12993 Gandhidham – Puri SuperFast Express, J.C.O 10th October, 2025
9. Train No. 20804 Gandhidham – Visakhapatnam SuperFast Express, J.C.O 12th October, 2025
10. Train No. 22664

Jodhpur – Tambaram SuperFast Express, J.C.O 14th October, 2025

11. Train No. 22738 Hisar – Secunderabad SuperFast Express, J.C.O 10th October, 2025
12. Train No. 22724 Sri Ganganagar – Hazur Sahib Nanded SuperFast Express, J.C.O 11th October, 2025
13. Train No. 22967 Ahmedabad – Prayagraj SuperFast Express, J.C.O 16th October, 2025
14. Train No. 12905 Porbandar – Shalimar SuperFast Express, J.C.O 15th October, 2025
15. Train No. 22905 Okha – Shalimar SuperFast Express, J.C.O 12th October, 2025
16. Train No. 12949 Porbandar – Santragachi Kaviguru Express, J.C.O 10th October, 2025
17. Train No. 16734 Okha – Rameswaram Express, J.C.O 14th October, 2025
18. Train No. 22138 Ahmedabad – Nagpur Prerana Express, J.C.O 12th October, 2025
19. Train No. 20903 Ekta Nagar – Varanasi Mahamana Express, J.C.O 14th October, 2025
20. Train No. 20905 Ekta Nagar – Rewa Mahamana Express, J.C.O 10th October, 2025
21. Train No. 22937 Rajkot – Rewa SuperFast Express, J.C.O 12th October, 2025
22. Train No. 12844 Ahmedabad – Puri SuperFast Express, J.C.O 11th October, 2025
23. Train No. 20862 Ahmedabad – Puri Weekly Express, J.C.O 10th October, 2025
24. Train No. 22689 Ahmedabad – Yesvantpur SuperFast Express, J.C.O 14th October, 2025
25. Train No. 22973 Gandhidham – Puri SuperFast Express, J.C.O 15th October, 2025

DOWN Trains provided Halt at Surat station

1. Train No. 12906 Shalimar – Porbandar SuperFast Express, Journey commencing on (J.C.O) 10th October, 2025
2. Train No. 22906 Shalimar – Okha SuperFast Express, J.C.O 14th October, 2025
3. Train No. 12843 Puri – Ahmedabad SuperFast Express, J.C.O

09th October, 2025

4. Train No. 20861 Puri – Ahmedabad SuperFast Express, J.C.O 08th October, 2025
5. Train No. 12994 Puri – Gandhidham SuperFast Express, J.C.O 13th October, 2025
6. Train No. 12950 Santragachi – Porbandar Kaviguru SuperFast Express, J.C.O 12th October, 2025
7. Train No. 20904 Varanasi – Ekta Nagar Mahamana Express, J.C.O 09th October, 2025
8. Train No. 20823 Puri – Ajmer SuperFast Express, J.C.O 09th October, 2025
9. Train No. 22940 Bilaspur – Okha SuperFast Express, J.C.O 13th October, 2025
10. Train No. 12834 Howrah – Ahmedabad SuperFast Express, J.C.O 08th October, 2025
11. Train No. 19484 Saharsa – Ahmedabad Express, J.C.O 08th October, 2025
12. Train No. 19436 Asansol – Ahmedabad Express, J.C.O 11th October, 2025
13. Train No. 12656 Puratchi Thailaivar Dr. M.G.Ramachandran Central – Ahmedabad Navajeevan Express, J.C.O 09th October, 2025
14. Train No. 22938 Rewa – Rajkot SuperFast Express, J.C.O 13th October, 2025
15. Train No. 20906 Rewa – Ekta Nagar Mahamana Express, J.C.O 11th October, 2025
16. Train No. 22968 Prayagraj – Ahmedabad SuperFast Express, J.C.O 10th October, 2025
17. Train No. 22663 Tambaram – Jodhpur SuperFast Express, J.C.O 11th October, 2025
18. Train No. 22737 Secunderabad – Hisar SuperFast Express, J.C.O 14th October, 2025
19. Train No. 22137 Nagpur – Ahmedabad Prerana Express, J.C.O 11th October, 2025
20. Train No. 20819 Puri – Okha SuperFast Express, J.C.O 12th October, 2025
21. Train No. 20803 Visakhapatnam – Gandhidham SuperFast Express, J.C.O 09th October, 2025

22. Train No. 22723 Hazur Sahib Nanded – Sri Ganganagar SuperFast Express, J.C.O 16th October, 2025

23. Train No. 22974 Puri – Gandhidham SuperFast Express, J.C.O 11th October, 2025

24. Train No. 16733 Rameswaram – Okha Express, J.C.O 10th October, 2025

25. Train No. 22690 Yesvantpur – Ahmedabad SuperFast Express, J.C.O 12th October, 2025

Trains to originate from Surat station instead of Udhna station

1. Train No. 22828 Surat – Puri SuperFast Express, Journey commencing on (J.C.O) 14th October, 2025
 2. Train No. 09065 Surat – Chhapra Clone Special, J.C.O 13th October, 2025
 3. Train No. 20925 Surat – Amravati SuperFast Express, J.C.O 10th October, 2025
 4. Train No. 13426 Surat – Malda Town Express, J.C.O 13th October, 2025
 5. Train No. 09117 Udhna – Subedarganj Special, J.C.O 10th October, 2025
 6. Train No. 05018 Udhna - Mau Festival Special, J.C.O 28th September, 2025
- Trains to Terminate at Surat station instead of Udhna station
1. Train No. 22827 Puri – Surat SuperFast Express, Journey commencing on (J.C.O) 12th October, 2025
 2. Train No. 13425 Malda Town – Surat Weekly Express, J.C.O 11th October, 2025
 3. Train No. 09066 Chhapra – Surat Clone Special, J.C.O 15th October, 2025
 4. Train No. 20926 Amravati – Surat SuperFast Express, J.C.O 10th October, 2025
 5. Train No. 09118 Subedarganj – Udhna Special, J.C.O 11th October, 2025
 6. Train No. 05017 Mau – Udhna Festival Special, J.C.O 27th September, 2025
- For detailed information regarding the timings, halts & composition of the above trains, passengers may please visit www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in.

Central Railway to run Additional Special Trains during Diwali & Chhath Festival

(Standard Post Bureau)

Mumbai, Oct 8 : To increase for passengers during the upcoming Diwali & Chhath festival season, Central Railways have decided to run additional special trains between various destinations as per the details below:

1) Khadki - Hazrat Nizamuddin - Khadki Bi - Weekly Special (8 trips)
01427 Khadki – Hazrat Nizamuddin Bi - Weekly Special will leave Khadki at 16.45 hrs every Wednesday & Sunday from 15.10.2025 to 26.10.2025 (4 trips) and will arrive Hazrat Nizamuddin at 20.00 hrs next day.

01428 Hazrat Nizamuddin - Khadki Bi Weekly Special will leave Hazrat Nizamuddin at 21.25 hrs every Thursday & Monday from 16.10.2025 to 27.10.2025 (4 trips) and will arrive Khadki at 23.55 hrs next day.

Halts: Lonavala, Kalyan, Bhiwandi Road, Vasai Road, Palghar, Vapi, Valsad, Surat, Vadodara Junction, Godhra Junction (only for 01428), Ratlam, Shamgarh, Bhawani Mandi, Ramganj Mandi Junction, Kota Junction, Sawai Madhopur Junction, Gangapur city Junction, Bharatpur Junction, Mathura.

Composition: Sixteen AC 3-Tier & 2 Luggage / Generator cum Guard’s brake van.

Bookings for train no 01427 will open from 09.10.2025* at all computerized reservation centres and on website www.irctc.co.in.

For detailed timings at halts of these special trains please visit www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in or download NTES App.

Passengers are requested to avail the facility of special trains during the festive season.

Additional stoppage provided to Bandra Terminus - Barhni special at Balarampur station

(Standard Post Bureau)

Mumbai, Oct 8 : For the convenience of passengers, Western Railway has provided an additional stoppage at Balrampur station to Train No. 09043/09044 Bandra Terminus – Barhni Special.

According to a press release issued by Chief Public Relations Officer of Western Railway, Shri Vineet Abhishek, the details are as under:

Train No. 09043 Bandra Terminus – Barhni Special will halt at Balrampur station for journey commencing from Bandra Terminus on 12th October, 2025. The train will arrive Balrampur station at 06:22 hrs and depart at 06:24 hrs. Similarly, Train No. 09044 Barhni – Bandra Terminus Special will halt at Balrampur station for journey commencing from Barhni on 13th October, 2025. The train will arrive Balrampur station at 14:40 hrs and depart at 14:42 hrs.

For detailed information regarding the timings, halts & composition of the above train, passengers may please visit www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in.

WR continues Swachhata Pakhwada 2025 with of focus on cleanliness of trains and tracks



(Standard Post Bureau)

Mumbai, Oct 8 : Western Railway is observing Swachhata Pakhwada 2025 from 1st to 15th October, 2025 to promote cleanliness, hygiene, and environmental awareness across stations, offices, workshops, and trains. Building on the launch and initial activities, the campaign progressed with focused initiatives on Swachh Trains, and Swachh Tracks & Yards during Days 6th and 7th.

According to press release issued by Chief Public Relations Officer of Western Railway, Shri Vineet Abhishek, on the sixth day, 6th October, 2025, intensive cleaning and inspection of trains were carried out in primary base rakes and stabled rakes at the washing line with teams

of Supervisors and Officers. To encourage cleanliness, awards were declared for best performing contractual supervisors & staff based on zero passenger complaints, as well as best performance. 2 contractual staff were awarded for best performing contractual staff for best performance and zero passenger complaints.

On 7th October, the focus was on Swachh Tracks and Yards. Emphasis was on cleaning of tracks and adjacent area in block section and nearby stations. 80 stations areas were cleaned.

Also, cleaning of more than 70 drains alongside the tracks was done. Unwanted grass and bushes were removed along the tracks for maintaining hygiene and visibility. Urban Local Bodies, State Government

representatives, Community Based Organisations (CBOs), Self Help Groups (SHGs), NSS and youth organisations participated and helped in Shramdaan activities and awareness drives to prevent open defecation near tracks.

More than 110 km of tracks were cleaned over Western Railway.

Western Railway’s dedicated commitment and efforts during the Swachhata Pakhwada reflects its strong resolve towards maintaining cleanliness and hygiene ensuring passengers experience in a clean, safe and hygienic environment not only within the station premises but also in the surrounding areas, contributing to overall public health and enhanced travel experience.

Record CAPEX utilisation by IR

(Standard Post Bureau)

Mumbai, Oct 8 : 56.5% CAPEX utilised till September 2025 in FY 2025-26

Overall Capex Utilization by IR:
Total Budgetary Grants : ₹ 2,52,200 Cr
Total utilized till September 2025 in FY 2025-26: ₹ 142,487 Cr i.e. 56.5% utilisation
Highest ever CAPEX utilization till date
Break-up of 56.5%
Key sectors
Safety Works:
Includes KAVACH related works, track renewals, Road Over Bridges, bridges and Level crossings
Budget: ₹ 139,456 crores; Utilization: ₹ 22,286 crores (56%)
Capacity Augmentation:
Includes New lines, doubling, gauge conversion, electrification, metropolitan transport
Budget: ₹ 1,09,986 crores; Utilization: ₹ 49,001 Cr (45%)



Customer Amenities:	Rolling Stock:
Budget: ₹ 12,004 crores; Utilization: ₹ 5,863 crores (49%)	Budget: ₹ 56,693 crores; Utilization: ₹ 25,948 crores (46%)

PDP to introduce Anti-Land Eviction Bill in upcoming J&K Assembly session: Mehbooba

Srinagar, Oct 8 (UNI) : PDP President Mehbooba Mufti today announced that the Party has submitted “The Jammu and Kashmir Land Rights and Regularisation Bill, 2025” also known as the Anti-Bulldozer Bill in the forthcoming session of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly.

The proposed legislation aims to regularise land holdings of individuals, families, and institutions who have been in continuous possession of land for over 30 years, thereby securing ownership rights, preventing arbitrary

evictions, and ensuring social and economic stability across Jammu and Kashmir.

The Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly session in Srinagar will begin on October 23.

Highlighting the ongoing land and lease crisis in Gulmarg and other parts of Kashmir, Mehbooba in a statement said that the Land Grant Rules, 2022 have ended the renewal of old leases, putting dozens of hotels operating on expired leases at risk of eviction or government takeover through auction. Nearly 60

hotels in Gulmarg, including heritage establishments such as Nedous and Highlands Park, have received takeover notices from the Gulmarg Development Authority (GDA).

Hoteliers who have invested heavily now face severe financial distress, legal uncertainty, and threats to livelihoods. She further said that the absence of a clear government policy on lease renewal and land regularisation has created deep uncertainty, hurting tourism, local employment, and investor confidence in Kashmir’s hospitality sector.