

EYE SECRETS

Spy in every blink

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Revanth: KTR Owns Star Hotels Near Hitec City

From Our Staff Reporter
Hyderabad, Sept 30

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Wednesday said that the Congress had dethroned BRS president K. Chandrashekhara Rao in the 2023 Assembly elections and declared that its next political battle would be to defeat his son and working president K.T. Rama Rao in Sircilla.

Addressing a public meeting during his maiden visit to Sircilla as the Chief Minister, Revanth Reddy alleged that Rama Rao had converted people's votes into personal wealth, accumulating palatial houses, star hotels in Banjara Hills and Jubilee Hills, farmhouses around Hyderabad and investments in the US and Singapore.

Revanth Reddy said he would disclose Rama Rao's illegal assets in the Assembly as "Part-2", calling his disclosures on the KCR family's assets in the Assembly session as Part-1. He challenged Rama Rao to release a white paper on his own assets and those of his father K. Chandrashekhara Rao, Harish Rao and J. Santosh Rao.

Referring to farmhouses of the Chandrashekhara

Rao family in Janwada, Shankarpally, Moinabad and Erravelli, he questioned how they were acquired. He also questioned the ownership of Deccan Serai, AtHome serviced apartments and star hotels with nearly 400 rooms around Hitec City and alleged that Rama Rao had undisclosed investments abroad.

The Chief Minister alleged that Chandrashekhara Rao exploited Godavari waters through the Kaleshwaram project, Santosh Rao had profited from Mid Manair sand mafia and Rama Rao had accumulated wealth and land in Hyderabad through business dealings with his friends in Andhra Pradesh.

Revanth Reddy claimed that the Chandrashekhara Rao family had amassed around `1 lakh crore and the Santosh Rao family around `10,000 crore during the 10-year BRS regime.

He said Sircilla people should question why their lives had not changed substantially despite repeatedly electing Rama Rao, while the fortunes of the KCR's family had changed dramatically. If Congress wins Sircilla in the next Assembly elections, its MLA would be made a Cabinet minister and he would personally take responsibility for the constituency's development,



he said.

Revanth Reddy recalled that Rama Rao had won Sircilla by 172 votes in 2009 and questioned how he accumulated enormous wealth after entering politics. Referring to Rama Rao's stint in the US, he questioned how such wealth could have been amassed in a short period. He also asked why suicides among handloom workers and migration from Sircilla to Gulf countries had not declined despite Rama Rao's repeated electoral victories.

The Chief Minister said the Congress government had spent Rs 1,730 crore on handloom workers in two-and-a-half years, against around Rs 2,000 crore spent by the BRS government in 10 years.

He appealed to TPCC president Mahesh Kumar Goud to seek the party high command's approval to send a Padmashali leader to the Legislative Council in the forthcoming MLC elections and to make the Sircilla Congress MLA a minister.

Revanth Reddy also criticised Chandrashekhara Rao for not attending the Assembly, as he alleged the BRS chief was unwilling to address the Dalit Speaker as "Adhyaksha".

Questioning why Chandrashekhara Rao had not condemned derogatory remarks made by BRS legislators against the Speaker, he said Dalits might tolerate hunger but not humiliation and asked why the BRS chief ordered 'purification' of roads with turmeric water at his farmhouse after Dalits staged a protest there.

Modi, Trump Talk Ties Days After US Sanctions Russia, Iran

NEW DELHI, Sept 30

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday spoke to United States President Donald Trump about bilateral cooperation, including trade, defence and energy, amid uncertainty over the possibility of American tariffs of up to 100 per cent on India for buying Russian oil.

The conversation took place as the two countries have yet to conclude a bilateral trade agreement.

"Had a productive conversation with President Trump. We reviewed our bilateral cooperation in trade, defence, energy, critical technologies and other areas. We agreed to maintain close engagement to take our Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership forward. We also exchanged views on regional and international issues, including ongoing efforts to advance global peace and security," Modi posted on X.

New Delhi said the leaders agreed to maintain close engagement to deepen cooperation for the benefit of both countries' people.

On Tuesday, external affairs minister S. Jaishankar said at an event in New York that "politics should not be played over oil supplies" when the focus should be on maintaining the stability of global energy supplies and prices.

His remarks came amid the possibility of US sanctions against countries buying Russian oil.

Less than two weeks ago, the US Congress passed the Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act (SRIA), empowering President Trump to impose tariffs of up to 100 per cent on countries such as India and China that purchase Russian oil. Trump subsequently signed it into law.

New Delhi indicated that imposing such tariffs could affect bilateral relations and severely disrupt global oil markets.



A week ago, Jaishankar raised India's concerns with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio during a meeting in New York on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly.

"Good to meet @SecRubio of the US #UNHighLevelWeek. Reiterated India's interests and concerns with regard to SRIA. Also discussed the Gulf and Ukraine situations," he posted on X.

The US State Department said the ministers "also discussed sanctions that could be leveled against states that engage economically with Russia and Iran".

Rubio said the United States remained well positioned to help regional partners address their energy security challenges, according to the department.

Asked on Tuesday what could strengthen India's ties with the Trump administration, Jaishankar cited a bilateral trade agreement and greater understanding of India's concerns about Pakistan-sponsored terrorism.

The latter remarks came against the backdrop of close ties between the Trump administration and Pakistan's military establishment.

SC rules out total ban on firecrackers, says no 24-hour bursting either

New Delhi, Sep 30 The Supreme Court on Wednesday ruled out a complete ban on firecrackers ahead of Diwali, while making it clear that unrestricted bursting of crackers throughout the day would also not be permitted.

A Bench of Justices M.M. Sundresh and P.B. Varale said the apex court would have to strike a balance between religious sentiments associated with Diwali and concerns relating to air pollution and its impact on children, elderly persons and those suffering from illnesses. "Neither we are going to agree with you for total ban. Nor are we going to allow them to do it 24 hours. A total ban will have some sentimental effect, number one. Number two, allowing them throughout the day will have a huge impact on every other living being, including old people, sick people and the children. We need to find a solution whereby we can give specified time, and we can specify what are the crackers to be used," the Justice Sundresh-led Bench observed.

The top court's observations came during the hearing of a long-pending matter concerning the use of firecrackers and their impact on the environment and public health.

The Justice Sundresh-led Bench indicated that it was inclined to permit specified categories of next-generation joint green crackers, subject to conditions relating to their manufacture, noise levels, number and size of shells and the interval between successive bursts.



During the hearing, Additional Solicitor General (ASG) Aishwarya Bhati sought time till October 15 to place on record the report of the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) concerning the environmental impact of barium-based firecrackers.

"Outdoor testing of barium-based firecrackers is yet to be conducted. I am requesting time till October 15," ASG Bhati submitted.

The Supreme Court granted the Centre and the expert bodies time to complete the assessment of barium-based firecrackers. The issue will be considered further on October 15.

The apex court also took note of the submissions regarding the use of new-generation joint firecrackers.

The Union government had proposed permitting such crackers subject to specified restrictions, including conditions concerning the number and size of shells and the time interval between bursts.

The Supreme Court indicated that it was inclined to accept the recommendation concerning such joint firecrackers, subject to the prescribed safeguards. It further recorded that some of the issues before it overlap with those pending in the M.C. Mehta matter relating to firecrackers in Delhi-NCR.

It permitted the parties to mention the issue before the Bench headed by Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant, which is hearing the M.C. Mehta case, so that the overlapping issues could, if considered appropriate, be heard together.

The Justice Sundresh-led Bench clarified that it would not pass any order on the Delhi-NCR issue at this stage, while other applications, including those seeking a ban on the manufacture and sale of firecrackers, would be taken up for hearing. The matter has been posted for further hearing on October 15. In October 2025, the apex court had allowed the limited sale and use of NEERI-approved green crackers in Delhi and adjoining NCR areas during Diwali, subject to strict conditions.

Piyush Goyal represents India as G20 trade meet opens

Milwaukee, Sep 30 Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal is representing India as Trade Ministers from the world's major economies gather in Milwaukee on Wednesday for a two-day G20 meeting focused on the future of global trade, supply chains, excess industrial capacity and the rules governing international commerce.

The G20 Trade Ministerial, hosted by United States Trade Representative Jamieson Greer, comes at a consequential moment for the trading system, with tariff disputes, concerns over manufacturing capacity and differences over World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules increasingly shaping relations among major economies.

For India, the meeting also provides an important platform for engagement with the United States

as New Delhi and Washington continue negotiations aimed at advancing a bilateral trade agreement and finalising an interim deal.

Goyal, who arrived in Milwaukee on Tuesday, is scheduled to hold bilateral meetings with counterparts on the sidelines of the Ministerial, including engagement with the United States.

The Commerce Ministry said that Goyal will engage with his US counterpart Greer "as part of ongoing efforts to advance a balanced and mutually beneficial India-US Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) and finalise an interim deal in line with the joint statement of February 7, 2026".

The Ministerial begins with a meeting of the Global Forum on Steel Excess Capacity on Wednesday morning.



From chai to pizza, a city learning to stay awake



Chandigarh 24x7 shops, Chandigarh 24x7 operations, Chandigarh 24x7 shops list, shops open 24 hours Chandigarh, Chandigarh night economy, Chandigarh late night shops, Chandigarh restaurants 24x7, 24x7 businesses Chandigarh, Chandigarh night-time economy, Chandigarh commercial operations, Sector 8-B Chandigarh, Chandigarh late night food, Indian Express newsrom fast-food outlets and chai counters to pharmacies, grocery stores and paan shops, the city's 24x7 commercial footprint is expanding. (Express Photo/Enhanced using AI)Chandigarh may have secured permission to stay awake, but the city's businesses are discovering that staying open through the night is another matter altogether.

Nearly two years after the administration launched its 24x7 commercial operations initiative, almost 200 establishments are now on the list: from McDonald's, pizza outlets, and chai counters to pharmacies, grocery stores, paan shops, and petrol pumps. The number of establishments opting for 24x7 operations has risen more than threefold from the initial 48. "We are encouraging people to register for 24x7 commercial operations under ease of doing business in the city. Women's safety and adherence to labour laws are two key aspects under this initiative, which we are fully ensuring by coordinating with the department concerned, including the Chandigarh Police," Nishant Yadav, Deputy Commissioner, told The list of nearly 200 establishments paints a picture of a city trying to build a late-night economy that goes well beyond traditional nightlife. Major fast-food chains feature prominently. McDonald's, KFC, Domino's, Pizza Hut and Subway have multiple outlets listed for 24x7 operations across sectors including 8-C, 15-C, 22, 35-C, 40-C, 47-C, Manimajra and the Industrial Area. Tea, too, has found a place in the city's round-the-clock experiment. Chai

Sutta Bar, along with Punjabi Chai, Desi Urban Chai, and Audi Chaiwala, features on the list, adding a distinctly local flavour to the late-night food economy. Desserts and quick-service outlets are also part of the mix, with establishments such as Baskin Robbins, Theobroma Foods, The Belgian Waffle Co and Superdonuts among those listed.

Its 24x7 establishments span a wide range of food options, from Baba Chicken, World of Wings and Tikka World to The Belgian Waffle Co, Cakes & Stuff, Superdonuts and El Mexicano. The concentration suggests that Sector 8-B could emerge as one of the city's more prominent late-night food clusters — provided there is enough customer demand to sustain these operations. Grocery and convenience stores, pharmacies and delivery-related establishments have also opted for round-the-clock operations. Blink Commerce has several establishments listed across sectors including 17-B, 34-A and 37-D, while Chandigarh Pharmacy in Sector 11-D is among the pharmacies on the list. Even paan shops and petrol pumps feature. DP Paan House in Sector 15-D, Pandey Paan and Confectioner in Sector 8-C and Nankhu Pan & Confectionery in Sector 44-D have submitted undertakings for round-the-clock operations. Indian Oil outlets in sectors 7 and 33 and a Bharat Petroleum outlet in Sector 21 are also on the list. Taken together, the entries suggest that Chandigarh's 24x7 experiment is evolving from an attempt to keep a few essential or high-demand businesses open into a wider after-midnight commercial ecosystem.

The bigger question, however, is whether the growing list of establishments translates into a sustainable late-night economy. For businesses, staying open through the night means additional manpower, higher electricity and operational costs and, in many cases, separate staff for night shifts. Several entrepreneurs who initially attempted round-the-clock operations say the limited late-night footfall did not justify those expenses. "Some people I know had also tried keeping their outlets open round the clock, but they could not sustain it for long," said Abhishek Bajaj, who owns Sindhi Sweets, a chain of shops. Some eventually stopped operating through the night after finding that revenues failed to cover the additional costs. "Delhi and Gurgaon, however, have an advantage because public transport connectivity continues through the night and several companies and offices operate round the clock, creating a steady stream of people even during late hours. Chandigarh does not have the same ecosystem yet," Bajaj added.

Mrinaltai Gore flyover's 'super smooth' surface leaves bikers slipping

The recently opened arm of the Mrinaltai Gore flyover has once again come under the scanner just two months after its inauguration. This time, locals have flagged the 'extremely smooth' surface of the bridge, which has reportedly left many bikers and two-wheelers skidding and led netizens to mock the 'advanced technology' that the citizens are not ready for. Speaking to The Indian Express, residents said Mrinaltai Gore flyover's 'super smooth' surface on the road mastic has become increasingly perilous for motorists. "The site where repeated skidding is being reported is situated on a downward slope. The mastic on the road is super smooth and everytime it rains, the roads become furthermore slippery. This patch has now become a magnet for accidents in the area," said Dhaval Shah, co-founder of Lokhandwala Oshiwara Citizen's Association (LOCA).

Karan Jotwani, co-founder of LOCA, told The Indian Express: "The smooth surface is causing the frequent skidding. To resolve the issue, the BMC must deploy rough tar on the top layer in a bid to make the roads rougher and thereby, less slippery." Inaugurated in July, the flyover provides a direct link between Ram Mandir and Goregaon, allowing motorists to directly zip through instead of taking the SV Road or Link Road. It has also garnered much attention for its cost escalation, prolonged construction period, as well as patchy road surface. Now, citizens have blamed the Mumbai civic body for carrying out shoddy work on the flyover. It has denied the allegations. The 750-metre flyover, built for Rs 247.97 crore, took nearly



eight years to complete. During this period, the project's cost rose by nearly 45 per cent from the original estimate of Rs 170.82 crore. With its 'super smooth' surface making people have the ride of their lives, social media hasn't stayed behind in having its share of fun. "Mrinal tai flyover in Mumbai also comes with the revolutionary 'smooth ride' technology that apparently improve your vehicle's mileage.. Only small issue: the technology is so advanced that bikers haven't learnt how to use it yet.. so they keep falling," a user on social media wrote on X. Earlier in June, some videos surfaced on social media, purportedly showing a melting road surface, loose gravel, and, in one case, a portion of the road caving in under the weight of a motorcycle stand, triggering outrage.

Punjab influencer Manjit Kaur's mother seeks answers after her death



Her daughter is dead. The memorial prayer service is yet to take place. With no other support, Kanta Devi has been forced to postpone her grief, compelled instead to piece together the final weeks of her daughter, Punjabi social media influencer Manjit Kaur. Kaur, who was allegedly kidnapped and assaulted before being set on fire in a forested area near Morinda on the night of July 3-4, died at a Chandigarh hospital on August 26. Her family has accused two acquaintances of kidnapping her and the police of failing to record her statement in time. "I am all alone. No man is there to support me. My daughter's bhog (prayer service) has not taken place. I am doing everything myself with a small child to care for," Devi told s. Devi lives with her 11-year-old son, Manjit Kaur's younger brother, in their home in Kharar. Manjit moved out of her family home about a year and a half ago, relocating to New Chandigarh to build an independent life. A divorced mother of a seven-year-old son who lives with his father, she started a beauty parlour business and regularly sent financial support to her mother. Devi recalled that her daughter was planning to start a new life. "She told me she would marry soon. I didn't know much about her personal plans, only that she was preparing to settle down again." The long gap between the alleged crime and Manjit Kaur's death has made the investigation diffi-

cult. The police are trying to establish the vehicle allegedly used to take her away, while crucial CCTV footage is no longer available. According to the police, the autopsy report revealed that she was around seven weeks pregnant when she died. For Devi, time has made one thing increasingly urgent: the need to know the truth. She does not speak of revenge, nor does she claim to have all the answers. She wants to understand what happened to the daughter whose life, she says, she only knew in fragments during her final months. "I just want to know what happened to my daughter, and the truth should come out," she said.

Second phase IT Hub construction works in Khammam delayed

Khammam: Even five years after the foundation stone was laid for the construction of the second-phase IT Hub in Khammam, the building work remains incomplete. The Congress government's alleged negligence has delayed the construction, much to the chagrin of local unemployed youth, who had hoped to find employment if IT Hub-II was established. It may be recalled that former IT and Industries Minister K T Rama Rao laid the foundation stone for IT Hub-II on April 2, 2021, following the success of IT Hub-I, which was established in December 2020 at Yellandu Circle in Khammam city to promote the information technology (IT) industry in tier-II cities. Rs 36 crore was sanctioned by the Telangana Industrial Infrastructure Corporation (TGIIIC) for the construction of IT Tower-II, with a built-up area of 55,000 square feet and a seating capacity of 570. Speaking to Telangana Today, educationist and senior BRS leader Gundala Krishna noted that although the contractor was given a one-year deadline to complete the construction, the project remains unfinished.

Zomato bans analogue dairy dishes, warns of action against restaurants



New Delhi: Food delivery aggregator Zomato on Monday announced a zero-tolerance policy on the sale of dishes containing analogue dairy products, including analogue cheese and paneer, by restaurants listed on its platform, saying it reserves the right to delist non-compliant restaurants. Analogue dishes replace traditional ingredients with cheaper or alternative substitutes, such as plant oils instead of real milk or cheese, while retaining a similar look and texture.

The move comes against the backdrop of renewed focus on food safety following a reported State-wide crack-down by the Food and Drug Administration in Maharashtra and inspections by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) at five-star hotels in Delhi. With immediate effect, dishes that restaurant partners have declared as containing analogue dairy products have been delisted from the platform, Zomato said. Restaurant partners that remain non-compliant will also be delisted from the platform, it added. In a communication issued to merchants listed on the platform on

Monday, Zomato said, "Our priority is to ensure that customers receive food that is accurately represented, safe and meets the expected quality standards.

"Accordingly, we are implementing a zero-tolerance policy on the listing and supply of food products containing analogue cheese, analogue paneer and other analogue dairy products on our platform." The food delivery aggregator said the initiative was being undertaken to strengthen transparency and food quality for consumers, in line with food safety and regulatory requirements. "For restaurants that have already declared the use of analogue cheese, analogue paneer or other analogue dairy products on their menus, such items will be turned off from the platform with immediate effect," Zomato stated. It called upon restaurant partners to take immediate measures, including transitioning to natural dairy products; removing items containing analogue dairy products from their menus where such a transition is not immediately feasible; and reviewing product labels and ingredient declarations provided by suppliers to verify the ingredients being used and ensure the accurate representation of products listed on Zomato.

"If a restaurant is found to be non-compliant, Zomato reserves the right to delist such restaurants from the platform, in addition to taking any other action available to us under our policies and applicable law," Zomato stated. Zomato also reserves the right to recover any loss, cost, damage or expense that the company may incur or suffer if non-compliant products are delivered to customers, it added in the communication. Aditya Mangla, CEO of Zomato, said: "At Zomato, our core mission is better food for more people, and that means safeguarding customer health and upholding clear standards for what's listed and served by our restaurant partners.

IOC ramps up LPG production 30pc amid Strait of Hormuz disruptions



New Delhi: State-owned Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) ramped up liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) production by nearly 30 per cent and kept its refineries operating at more than 100 per cent utilisation as disruptions to maritime trade through the Strait of Hormuz threatened India's energy supplies, its chairman said on Monday. The company also diversified its crude sourcing, realigned refinery operations and secured alternative supplies as the escalating conflict in West Asia disrupted global energy markets, IOC Chairman Arvinder Singh Sahney said in his address at the company's 67th annual general meeting.

"For IndianOil, the priority during this unprecedented crisis has remained crystal clear — to maintain continuity of energy supplies despite constrained sourcing options and volatile international markets," he said.

India imports more than 88 per cent of its crude oil requirements, while about 45 per cent of its crude imports and nearly 90 per cent of its LPG imports are linked to the Strait of Hormuz, underscoring the exposure of the world's third-largest oil consumer to disruptions in the strategic waterway. Shopping For Authentic South Asian Apparel

"With close monitoring and guidance from the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, our teams have responded with agility — diversifying crude sourcing, re-aligning refinery operations and strengthening supply-chain coordination to secure alternative supplies, optimise cargo movements and rebalance products across regions," he said. IOC used 24-hour control rooms, daily reviews and real-time market monitoring to respond to supply gaps, he said, adding that the company had maintained product availability despite a "significant shift away from Middle Eastern crude grades".

"Despite a significant shift away from Middle Eastern crude grades, our refineries operated at more than 100 per cent utilisation, LPG production was ramped up

Mettur dam to open for Cauvery delta irrigation as inflow rises



Salem: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, C. Joseph Vijay, will open the Mettur dam on Tuesday to release water for irrigation in the Cauvery delta, even as inflow into the reservoir increased to 10,485 cubic feet per second (cusecs). The improved inflow has brought relief to farmers preparing for paddy cultivation across the delta districts. The release is expected to support agricultural operations throughout the Cauvery basin, particularly in tail-end areas where water normally takes several days to arrive. Heavy rainfall in the Cauvery catchment areas of Karnataka has led to a steady increase in the storage levels of the Kabini and Krishnaraja Sagar reservoirs. As the two reservoirs are filling rapidly, Karnataka authorities have increased the discharge of surplus water into the Cauvery. The volume of surplus water released from Karnataka had been reduced during the previous two

days. However, the discharge was stepped up again from Sunday, resulting in a gradual increase in the quantity of water reaching the Mettur reservoir. According to Water Resources Department officials, inflow into the dam rose from 9,035 cusecs to 10,485 cusecs. The increased arrival of water is expected to strengthen the reservoir's position ahead of the planned release for delta irrigation. The water level in the dam stood at 90.47 feet, while the available storage was recorded at 53.70 thousand million cubic feet (tmcf).

Meanwhile, 2,000 cusecs continued to be released from the reservoir to meet drinking-water requirements in districts dependent on the Cauvery. CM Vijay will formally open the sluice gates on Tuesday, marking the commencement of irrigation supply to the delta districts. Officials are expected to regulate the discharge after assessing the reservoir's storage, inflow from Karnataka and the requirements of farmers. The release assumes significance as cultivators have sought an adequate and uninterrupted water supply during the paddy-growing season. Farmers in tail-end districts have also appealed to the government to manage the available water carefully to ensure that it reaches all irrigation command areas. The steady rise in inflow ahead of the opening of the dam is being viewed as an encouraging development for Cauvery delta agriculture. Officials will continue to monitor rainfall in Karnataka and the discharge from upstream reservoirs to assess the likely inflow into Mettur over the coming days.

EYE SECRETS

Editorial

EC forced into damage-control mode

The damage-control exercise initiated by the Election Commission in the wake of widespread criticism over its handling of the revision of electoral rolls falls short of public expectations. The show of unity put up by the poll panel—Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar and Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi—by holding an all-member meeting and later issuing a slew of clarifications has not adequately addressed the issues pertaining to the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls across the country. The core issue is whether the electoral process is being conducted transparently, in accordance with the law, and with adequate safeguards against the wrongful exclusion of eligible voters. The EC has not come up with a satisfying response to the question of fixing accountability for the severe hardships inflicted on citizens by the whimsical and authoritarian acts at the behest of the ruling dispensation. Not surprisingly, the opposition parties and rights activists are persisting with their demand for the resignation of the CEC and a halt to the SIR process, which has already been completed in 20 States and Union Territories. The poll panel came under intense scrutiny following media reports revealing that the two Commissioners—Sandhu and Joshi—had objected on record at least 14 times over 10 months to decisions and orders concerning the SIR exercise, including changes to the statutory Form 6, the handling of additions and deletions from electoral rolls and centralised control over the electoral roll database. Apparently bowing to public pressure, the EC has announced a slew of measures, including stopping physical hearings for un-mapped voters or those with logical discrepancies in their enumeration forms.It is a positive sign that the poll panel has decided to allow those left out during the SIR or thereafter to apply to the electoral registration officer (ERO) concerned for inclusion of their names in the electoral rolls. A special drive will immediately be launched for their enrolment. A voter who receives a notice need not undergo a bureaucratic ordeal merely to prove a democratic entitlement. If officials can collect documents at citizens' homes and process applications online, those mechanisms should be accessible, reliable and adequately staffed. When citizens' names are at risk of being deleted from voter lists, administrative convenience cannot take precedence over accessibility, transparency and due process. The Commission has announced home visits by Booth-Level Officers, help-desks and special camps for vulnerable groups, online hearings in exceptional cases and extensions for filing claims and objections in Delhi and Maharashtra. These steps could reduce the burden on voters, particularly labourers, homeless citizens, and the poor, who cannot navigate complicated procedures. The decision to allow authorised family members to participate in hearings is similarly practical. However, implementation is a litmus test for the poll body. The right to vote is too fundamental for citizens to be left to the mercy of the administrative machinery.

6 months, 4 slain Punjab police officers, and a supply chain police can't crack

A covert threat looms on law enforcers in Punjab as four Punjab Police officials have been shot dead in cold blood and one left injured in the past six months. With a few of the perpetrators 'neutralised' and others arrested, some police officials claim that "handlers based in Pakistan" are behind these attacks, allegedly using an already laid out supply chain and smuggling network.

Police sources say that these handlers target local drug addicts and unemployed individuals to carry out the attacks — supplying them with weapons and asking them to record the act — in return for financial gain.The series of killings began on February 22, when Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) Gurnam Singh and Home Guard Ashok Kumar were shot at close range in Gurdaspur — barely a kilometre from the zero line between India and Pakistan. Police were quick to claim the involvement of Pakistan's ISI, alleging that local men had been recruited and paid to carry out the killing. Three suspects were identified. Two — Dilawar Singh and Inderjit Singh — were arrested. The third, Ranjit Singh, was killed in a police encounter.Only Inderjit Singh had a previous police record. Dilawar and Ranjit — were working in Delhi — were lured by the promise of quick money. Later, police named Sukhjinder Singh, alias Heera — a local businessman — as the financial conduit for the operation, accusing him of routing Rs 8 lakh on the instructions of a handler abroad and charged him under UAPA's terror-funding provisions.By the time the final chargesheet was filed on June 8, police had reversed course — stating no evidence had been found against him and seeking his discharge — even as internal records reportedly indicated investigators had built a detailed evidentiary trail. The supply of the weapon used in the killing was never explained.Three months later, on May 24, ASI Joga Singh, a 54-year-old traffic officer with 35 years of service, was intercepted and killed by two motorcycle-borne shooters on the Fatehgarh Churian–Majitha road. No arrest has been made in the case.DGP Gaurav Yadav later claimed that the accused had been identified; however, no information was made public. Two days after Singh was killed, a group calling itself Tehreek-e-Taliban Hindustan (TTH) claimed responsibility and released a video of the killing. The same group also claimed responsibility for the Gurdaspur attack.“Being in the police force always carries a risk to life... However, no one expected that a person heading home would be shot down like that.

An affair, a mom’s advice and a pilgrimage: Plot behind a Karnataka man’s murder



When Nagesh's body surfaced in a stream on the outskirts of Bengaluru, his death did not come as a shock to many who knew him. The 36-year-old was known to be an alcoholic, and his family and friends assumed he had either died by suicide or accidentally fallen into the water. The autopsy report, however, revealed two deep stab wounds, including one that pierced his rib—and changed the course of the police investigation, which revealed a planned murder, and three accused known to Nagesh.The case dates back to December 2013. Early on December 2, Lalitha M, a 30-year-old homemaker, returned to her home in Mandur village, on the outskirts of Bengaluru, after a three-day pilgrimage to Dharmasthala to find her husband, Nagesh, missing. Nagesh drove trucks and taxis for a living. When she tried contacting him on his mobile phone, she realised it was switched off. Lalitha checked with her neighbours and friends but no one had seen Nagesh in the last three days.In the evening, an anxious Lalitha visited the Avalahalli police station and reported Nagesh missing. Police Sub-Inspector Srinivas took up the investigation.The next day, a dead body was found floating in a stream. The Avalahalli police were alerted. “We learnt about the dead body at around 4.30 pm. Nagesh's brother, N M Raju, visited the spot,” recalled Ramesh Kumar H B, then a police inspector. The Avalahalli police station was under his charge.By then, the police learnt that Nagesh was an alcoholic. Though people suggested that he may have died by suicide or may have fallen into the stream, Raju was unconvinced and requested the police to investigate further.

A marriage in trouble: What the probe revealed“We sent the body for post-mortem and started to gather information about Nagesh and the people associated with him,” Kumar said. The police learnt that on November 30, 2013, Lalitha, her mother Jayamma, and her in-laws left Bengaluru on a pilgrimage trip to Dharmasthala in a car owned by Nagesh's friend, Raja K. Raja's brother Roopesh was the driver. The police had a timeline: Nagesh could have died between November 30 night and December 2 morning. The police also started scouring Nagesh's call detail records (CDR) and his phone location.A police officer who was part of the investigation said that by then the ground intelligence they had collected revealed that Nagesh and Lalitha had been dealing with marital trouble. Lalitha was allegedly having an affair with Raja, who was nine years younger to her. Nagesh had discovered the extra-marital relationship and had warned Raja of dire consequences, the police said.On December 4, the police received the autopsy report. It confirmed that Nagesh had been murdered. There was an injury on the right side of the neck and a deep stab wound on the left side of the chest that pierced his rib. There were other injuries too.A look at the CDRs of Nagesh's contacts revealed that between October 1, 2013, and December 2, 2013, Lalitha and Raja were in constant touch with each other. “They did not know about the autopsy report. We did not arrest them immediately...we just followed their movements and

Court lifts interim restraint on retired HC judge from publishing or sharing material



A district court in Chandigarh on Friday lifted “interim restraint” on retired judge of the Punjab and Haryana High Court Justice Ranjit Singh, which had prohibited him from publishing or sharing material related to an alleged Rs 5-crore bribery demand, observing that a person approaching the court must come with “clean hands”.On September 8, the court had restrained Justice Ranjit Singh, who heads the Punjab Human Rights Organisation (PHRO), SAD leader Bikram Singh Majithia, and Congress MLA Sukhpal Singh Khaira from publishing, circulating, or making any “unverified defamatory content” over an alleged bribe demand by Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann's wife Gurpreet Kaur to secure the release of an accused in a rape case.

Civil Judge (Junior Division) Dr Prikshit of Chandigarh District Court had passed the order on a suit filed by Gurpreet Kaur on September 8 after the retired High Court judge — in a TV programme — and others made comments about the alleged Rs 5 crore bribe demand by Kaur. Gurpreet Kaur had alleged that Justice Singh, Majithia and Khaira made baseless and defamatory allegations against her and circulated them on social media, damaging her reputation.Justice Singh subsequently challenged the order, arguing that the complete context of his remarks had not been placed before the court.Challenging the order, Justice Singh's counsel Charanjit Singh Bakshi told the court that Justice Singh had not independently made any allegation against Gurpreet Kaur at the press conference, and that he had only referred to allegations contained in proceedings before the High Court.The counsel placed before the court the complete video of a press conference held on August 20, along with a relevant Punjab and Haryana High Court

studied their behavioural pattern. Lalitha had convinced relatives and neighbours that Raja fell into the lake and died.” Kumar recalled.Meanwhile, the police started speaking to people to determine who saw Nagesh the last. S Vijay Kumar, Nagesh's friend, told the police that he had seen him around 9 pm on December 1 when he was waiting for a bus. There were two other men with him, he added. Vijay later identified Raja as one of the men, the police said.

On December 9, the police arrested Lalitha and Raja, who allegedly confessed during interrogation, revealing the alleged involvement of Lalitha's mother, how the pilgrimage was planned as a cover-up, and details of the crime.“Nagesh was an alcoholic. Raja, a driver, often visited their house. Over time, Lalitha and Raja fell in love. When Nagesh found out, he was furious and assaulted his wife. It was then that she decided to kill him,” Kumar recalled. According to Kumar, Lalitha needed a second opinion. “She approached her mother, Jayamma, who gave her the green signal,” he added.Going to Dharmasthala was a part of the plan. According to the police, Raja hired his friend Arun Kumar, 22, to kill Nagesh. He was paid Rs 10,000 and was assured that he would get an additional Rs 10,000 after the murder. Raja also bought a new mobile phone, which he planned to dispose after the crime, Kumar recalled.Solving Crime Karnataka driver murder 2013 Ramesh Kumar H B was a police inspector in charge of the Avalahalli police station when Nagesh's body was found floating in a stream.

According to the prosecution, on December 1, 2013, Nagesh called his wife and asked her when she would return. At 7.30 pm, Raja and Arun arrived near Nagesh's house. The trio left on a bike and purchased liquor from a five-star bar in Mandur by 9 pm.Around the same time, Nagesh called Roopesh and told him he was drinking with Raja and Arun—the last recorded contact he had with anyone.The trip then travelled through a eucalyptus grove behind the Prestige Villa Company near Mandur. After getting Nagesh heavily intoxicated, Arun allegedly stabbed him in the neck with a knife. When Nagesh tried to flee, both accused allegedly grabbed him and forced him to the ground. According to the police, Arun stabbed him in the chest, while Raja strangled him, leading to his death. Later, both of them allegedly carried the body and threw it into the Yanakanakunte stream.

All 4 sentenced to life: The case in courtRamesh Kumar, the investigating officer, filed a chargesheet naming four accused: Lalitha, Arun, Raja, and Jayamma. While Lalitha, Raja, and Jayamma were released on bail in 2014, Arun was released in January 2015.More than 12 years after the incident, the second additional district and sessions judge in Bengaluru rural district convicted all four to life imprisonment on September 18, 2026.“As a result of the acts of the accused...the daughters of the deceased Nagesh have lost their father and consequently, they have become orphans and dependents,” Judge Saraswathi K N said.

While the defence counsel cited Jayamma's age, the judge cited the State of Himachal Pradesh vs Nirmal Devi case judgement. “Imprisonment is one of the methods used to handle the convicts in such a way to protect and prevent them to commit further crimes for a specific period of time and also to prevent others from committing crime on them out of vengeance. The concept of punishing the criminals by imprisonment has recently been changed to treatment and rehabilitation with a view to modify the criminal tendency among them,” the bench said.“There are many philosophies behind such sentencing justifying these penal consequences. The philosophical/jurisprudential justification can be retribution, incapacitation, specific deterrence, general deterrence, rehabilitation, or restoration. Any of the above or a combination thereof can be the goal of sentencing. Notwithstanding the above theories of punishment, when it comes to sentencing a person for committing a heinous crime, the deterrence theory as a rationale for punishing the offender becomes more relevant.

order.After watching the complete press conference, the court found that Justice Singh was not claiming personal knowledge of any alleged demand of Rs 5 crore, and was rather referring to allegations made in a petition pending before the High Court.

The court, thus, observed that Justice Singh, as the chairman of a human rights organisation, was dealing with an issue concerning alleged human rights violations and referring to the matter in that context.The court also noted that the petitioner had not disclosed certain material facts, while seeking the ex-parte relief. “A petitioner, who conceals important facts from the court, cannot question the conduct of another person, the court observed.The Rs 5 crore bribery allegation stems from an alleged abduction and rape case in Amritsar, in which the survivor's father approached the High Court, alleging that attempts were being made to get the FIR cancelled.The High Court's July 20 order recorded allegations in pleadings that “a person allegedly close to Gurpreet Kaur was involved and that a demand of Rs 4-5 crore had been made for securing cancellation of the FIR”. Gurpreet Kaur, however, denied the allegations as false and defamatory.

Justice Singh later referred to these allegations at a press conference, making it clear that he was referring to what had been stated in the High Court pleadings and was not making the allegation from his personal knowledge.While transferring the investigation to a senior police officer, The High Court specifically said it was not determining the truth of the allegations at that stage.

Eight arrested for clash inside Kothagudem police station

Kothagudem: Police arrested eight persons for clashing in the Kothagudem Three Town police station premises over a family dispute on Friday.

In a statement, Kothagudem DSP Adinarayana said that while the district police were engaged in security duties for the Ganesh immersion, two groups had come to the police station regarding a family dispute involving Koradala Kumar and his wife Vinoda

Maharashtra declares drought in 265 tehsils, covers nearly three fourths of state

Maharashtra on Saturday declared drought in 265 of the state's 358 tehsils, covering nearly three fourths of the state, after prolonged rainfall deficits and dry spells affected crops across large parts of Maharashtra.The declaration triggers an immediate assessment of crop losses and a series of relief measures for farmers, including waiver of land revenue, restructuring of crop loans and a stay on recovery of agriculture related loans. Financial assistance for crop damage, however, will be announced separately after the assessment is completed.

The decision came two days after Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, following a tour of rain deficit areas, said the government would soon issue the drought notification.According to the Government Resolution, the Agriculture Commissioner's report found drought like conditions in 265 talukas from June onwards due to rainfall deficit and other factors. Trigger 1, defined as a continuous dry spell of at least 21 days without significant rainfall during the monsoon, has been found applicable in these areas.

What does the declaration mean?

District Collectors have been directed to immediately begin crop loss assessment through panchnamas. Officials have to document crop conditions, including photographs with GPS coordinates, and submit reports to the government through the Agriculture Commissioner.The assessment will form the basis for determining crop damage assistance. The government has said financial assistance to affected farmers will be announced through a separate GR after the prescribed procedures are completed.

Agnimitra, Indranil among six ministers relieved of BJP organisational duties in rejj



Among the key appointments announced on Friday, actor-cum-politician Anjana Basu was named as the new state president of the BJP Mahila Morcha, replacing Phalguni Patra who has been appointed state vice president of the party.

The West Bengal BJP on Friday announced a major organisational overhaul in its state wing, appointing fresh faces across the organisation, from its Mahila, Yuva and OBC morchas to district presidents and state secretaries.

According to the changes, made in line with the 'one individual, one post' principle, six ministers, including Tapas Roy, Jagannath Chattopadhyay, Agnimitra Paul, Dipak Burman, Shankar Ghosh and Indranil Khan, were relieved of their respective organisational responsibilities in favour of their administrative commitments. However, Samik Bhattacharya remains state president and Amitabha Chakraborty remains general secretary (organisation), while Satish Dhand has been removed from the post of co-general secretary (organisation).

The reshuffle comes a day after BJP and RSS leaders held a high-level coordination meeting in New Delhi to review the political setup in the state.Among the key appointments announced on Friday, actor-cum-politician Anjana Basu was named as the new state president of the BJP Mahila Morcha, replacing Phalguni Patra who has been appointed state vice president of the party.The party's Jadavpur MLA, Sharbari Mukherjee, who has hogged the media spotlight in recent times over her comments in connection with the unrest at the Jadavpur University campus was, removed from her position as one of the state secretaries despite her not holding a portfolio in Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari's council of ministers.The party's Amta MLA Amit Samanta replaced Behala West leader and Sports and Youth Services minister Indranil Khan as president of the BJP Yuva Morcha.Locket Chatterjee and Bishnupur MP Soumitra Khan were appointed state general secretaries, while Darjeeling MP Raju Bista was made vice-president. Chatterjee, a former MP, has been relieved of her responsibilities in the party's Mahila Morcha.The party named two MPs Jyotirmay Singh Mahato and Soumitra Khan as state general secretaries, MLA Sanjay Singh as state vice president and MLAs Dipanjan Guha and Sintu Senapati as state secretaries.Anal Biswas, considered a close associate of party's state president Samik Bhattacharya, and Sanjay Varma, perceived close to actor and former BJP Rajya Sabha member Mithun Chakraborty, were also named state secretaries.

Changes have also been made in the OBC Morcha. Ajit Das, who was in charge of OBC Morcha was given the post of secretary, while he was replaced by Falta MLA Dhananjay Ghosh. Bishwajit Biswas has come in as a new face in charge of the SC Morcha.The party also named fresh convenors in nine Bibhags (branches) Siliguri, Malda, North and South 24 Parganas, Howrah-Hooghly, Medinipur, Purulia, Bardhaman and Nabadwip across the state.According to sources, changes were made in the remaining districts as well. In Bangaon, Nipen Biswas has been brought in to replace Bikash Ghosh. Rajib Poddar was the BJP district president in Barasat. He has been replaced by Dipankar Chakraborty. In Sreerampur, Shashi Singh has been brought in to replace Suman Ghosh.In Arambagh, MLA Prashanta Digar has been brought in in place of Sushanta Bera.

After resigning as UK PM, Keir Starmer to stand down as MP: ‘Will focus on...’



Former United Kingdom Prime Minister Keir Starmer announced on Tuesday that he will stand down as member of Parliament from MP for Holborn and St Pancras, reported local newspaper Camden New Journal.Starmer said that he will turn his focus to other things such as defence and international affairs."I will now focus on other things and that will be international affairs including defence, security, trade and technology in a fast-changing world," he was quoted as saying.

Following this move, which comes after speculation over whether Starmer will stay as MP after resigning as PM, a by-election will be conducted in London's Holborn

and St Pancras parliamentary constituency.Starmer announced his resignation as UK PM and Labour Party leader on June 22 and was succeeded by Andy Burnham, who took office on July 20.Starmer, after his resignation, had told BBC that will continue as MP until next general elections in the country. However, in his statement on Tuesday, he said that he was "ready to pass the baton to a successor" and to focus on "other things".

"I will also continue, as I have done for a long time now with others, to work on combating violence against women and girls; that is an issue that matters to me hugely," he said."It's work I started before I became an MP and it's work I'm keen to continue after I'm an MP. So international affairs on the one hand, and continuing my work on violence against women and girls on the other," he added.Starmer served as director of public prosecutions, the UK's top public-sector prosecutor, before starting his Parliament stint in 2015 and leading the Labour Party from 2019 to 2026.In 2024 general elections, Starmer secured a landslide victory but soon saw his popularity plummet. Facing a sharp decline in poll ratings, Starmer announced his resignation as Labour leader in June this year and was succeeded by Andy Burnham.Meanwhile, Burnham will face lawmakers in the House of Commons on Tuesday for the first time since taking office six weeks ago.

What to know about the US primary election in Massachusetts

Voters in the US state of Massachusetts head to the polls on Tuesday for a primary election featuring a closely watched United States Senate contest between Democratic incumbent Senator Ed Markey and US Representative Seth Moulton.The race is the latest contest that pits the Democratic Party's progressive and moderate wings against each other. But in a twist, Moulton, the challenger, is part of the moderate New Democrat Coalition, while Markey, the longtime progressive incumbent, is fighting to hold on to his seat.Voters will also decide competitive Democratic primaries in the 6th and 8th Congressional Districts, as well as races for the state's governor, state legislature, and district attorney.

What time do polls open and close in Massachusetts?

In the 6th District, voters will choose a Democratic nominee to succeed Moulton. The top contenders include former local election official Dan Koh, financial technology executive John Beccia, and Massachusetts State Representative Tram Nguyen.Koh enters Tuesday as the leading fundraiser, with about \$4.7m in contributions, and has endorsements from former US President Joe Biden and former Vice President Kamala Harris. Nguyen has raised about \$895,000, while Beccia has boosted his campaign's spending power with a \$4m personal loan.The winner will face Republican Micah Jones, who is unopposed for his party's nomination.

In the 8th District, 13-term Democratic incumbent Representative Stephen Lynch, 71, faces a primary challenge from progressive attorney Patrick Roath, 39, who is endorsed by Leaders We Deserve, the political action committee (PAC) headed by gun-safety activist and political organiser David Hogg.Roath has criticised the centrist voting record of Lynch, who broke with Democrats to vote against former US President Barack Obama's Affordable Care Act in March 2010, and who was Massachusetts's only congressional member to vote for current US President Donald Trump's Laken Riley Act, which requires federal law enforcement to detain and deport immigrants who have been charged with nonviolent crimes regardless of whether those charges ever result in a conviction. The winner will face a midterm election against Republican Robert Burke, who runs uncontested and who lost his 2024 bid for Congress to Lynch.Get instant alerts and updates based on your interests. Be the first to know when big stories happen.

In the gubernatorial race, the Democratic primary is effectively uncontested, with incumbent Governor Maura Healey running for the Democratic nomination, but with two Republican candidates vying for Healey's seat. Brian Shortleeve and Michael Roger Minogue, who are running in the GOP primary, are both military veterans with business backgrounds. The most notable difference between the two candidates is that Shortleeve backs abortion rights, while Minogue does not. Both of them have supported Trump.

Who is running in the Massachusetts US Senate primary?

The biggest statewide contest is the Democratic US

World needs India's 'third way' to tackle conflicts, environmental crisis: Mohan Bhagwat

Toronto: RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat has said the world needs an Indian "third way" to address conflict, environmental degradation and the tension between individual well-being and social progress.Addressing more than 2,000 Hindus and friends of the community in the Greater Toronto Area, Bhagwat said humanity had achieved unprecedented scientific progress but had often used it for destructive purposes."There are so many conflicts. Ecology, environment, it is in danger. World is in a dilemma. Nations are there, but then nations quarrel," he said. He warned that the pursuit of national progress could sometimes come at the expense of other countries. "So if we talk of national progress, it may mean the calamity for other nations," Bhagwat said.The RSS Sarsanghchalak cited the splitting of the atom as an example of scientific achievement being directed first towards destructive ends. "Clean energy is on second place. Weapons of mass restrictions, they are with the priority. We use the atom first for those," he said.

Bhagwat said prevailing models often presented individual happiness and social well-being as competing objectives. "If an individual has to be happy, society has to suffer. If we try to create a happy society, individuals have to be current. What is the way?" he asked. "There has to be a third way, and this new third way is ancient very old way of Hindustan," he said.Bhagwat described that alternative as a worldview in which the individual, society and nature could advance together without harming one another. He said it arose from the recognition of an underlying unity across humanity and the natural

world. "Individual society and the environment can progress together without harming each other," he said. "We can earn livelihood. We can satisfy our desires without forgetting the salvation, real- realising ultimate reality through Dharma. We can do it."He distinguished dharma from a particular religious practice or form of worship. "That is not worship. That is sustenance. That is balance. That is looking towards everybody as their own," Bhagwat said. He also argued that Hindu identity could not be restricted to a single language, belief system or way of living."When I say Hindu, the word Hindu cannot be defined by any specific language, through any specific worship, or through any living style," he said. "All these are there. These are diversities of human beings. Hindus respect all, Hindus accept all. They don't mind," he added. Bhagwat said differences were natural and should be respected. They should not, however, obscure the essential unity connecting people and the rest of creation. "Diversity is natural. Unity is the reality," he said."You have to tackle with natural, keeping mind, keeping in mind the reality." He said this understanding could help nations prosper without weakening others. It could also allow societies to cooperate in advancing humanity and protecting creation. "All the nations will thrive, will prosper, will cooperate, will contribute to the human progress and progress of the creation," he said.Bhagwat called for introspection instead of treating disagreements as a contest in which only one side could be correct."Whether you are right, whether I am right. Both are right and both have some wrongs," he said.

UK has billions in contracts with firms tied to illegal Israeli settlements



At least 17 companies linked to illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank hold United Kingdom public-sector contracts worth more than 2.1 billion pounds (\$2.85bn), an Al Jazeera investigation reveals.The findings come as more than 140 UK Labour MPs are calling on the government to ban trade with illegal Israeli settlements, a move Prime Minister Andy Burnham is considering.

Our analysis of procurement records, company filings and corporate disclosures found that businesses named by the United Nations over their involvement in illegal Israeli settlements – and companies those businesses ultimately own or control as subsidiaries – have secured contracts across the British public sector, including in areas such as road maintenance, transport, emergency services and driving licensing."Evidence is growing that the UK may be in breach of its international obligations ... by continuing to contract with entities identified by the UN as providing assistance of this sort," Stephen Humphreys, professor of international law at the London School of Economics, told Al Jazeera.Data compiled by public procurement analysts Tussell, and shared with Al Jazeera, shows the 17 companies and entities hold 125 public-sector contracts with a combined award value of 2.129 billion pounds (\$2.89bn).

Companies owned by Motorola Solutions, the United States technology and communications giant, account for more than 1.7 billion pounds (\$2.3bn) of the total – the vast majority through its British subsidiary Airwave Solutions. Other contracts we reviewed are held by firms within four other corporate groups including Heidelberg Materials, a German multinational building materials company; the French engineering group Egis; the Spanish train manufacturer CAF and Chinese conglomerate Fosun.A report by the United Nations Human Rights Office identifies the five corporate groups as involved in business activities related to illegal Israeli settlements.

Heidelberg Materials' Israeli subsidiary owns a quarry on Palestinian land in the occupied West Bank, while Motorola is embedded in the security infrastructure of illegal settlements. Egis and CAF are involved in Jerusalem's expanding light-rail network – a project activists say entrenches Israel's control by integrating settlements into the city while further fragmenting Palestinian neighbourhoods.Fosun International, whose subsidiary Breas Medical receives UK public money, also owns the controversial Israeli cosmetics manufacturer Ahava, which operates in the Mitzpe Shalem illegal settlement in the occupied West Bank. Civil rights groups, including the Palestinian Solidarity Campaign in the UK, decry Ahava as a firm that is "complicit" in the theft of Palestinian land and livelihoods.Meanwhile, violence is escalating in the occupied West Bank.

Get instant alerts and updates based on your interests. Be the first to know when big stories happen.In July 2024, the International Court of Justice found Israel's continued presence in the occupied Palestinian territory unlawful and said it must end "as rapidly as possible". The court also placed obligations on other states "not to render aid or assistance in maintaining the situation created by Israel's illegal presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory".That raises questions over Britain's continued commercial relationships with the companies identified in Al Jazeera's investigation, observers said.

'UK government is propping up apartheid'Humphreys believes that Britain may also be failing to meet its legal obligations by "failing to launch its own investigation into their activities, with a view to preventing them if necessary".The UK has also warned businesses against bidding for construction tenders in illegal settlements."Businesses should not consider bidding for construction tenders," a government statement issued this month said, warning of "legal and reputational consequences" and the risk of involvement in "serious breaches of international law".

Former Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn said Al Jazeera's findings expose a contradiction between the UK's stated position and its economic ties."Quite simply, the UK government is propping up apartheid," Corbyn told Al Jazeera. "Every day, the UK deepens its complicity in Israel's economy of occupation and, in turn, Israel's economy of genocide."settler attacksThe Cabinet Office told Al Jazeera that individual public authorities make decisions to exclude suppliers case-by-case for each contract. It said public procurement in the UK should not be used to boycott suppliers linked to other countries unless formal UK sanctions, embargoes or restrictions are in place.Here's what we found about some of the companies involved in settlement trade:

Motorola Solutions: Tech embedded in illegal settlementsThe UN identifies Motorola in connection with two settlement-related activities: the "supply of security services, equipment and materials to enterprises operating in settlements" and the "provision of services and utilities supporting the maintenance and existence of settlements, including transport".Al Jazeera contacted the Motorola Solutions group for comment but received no response.It is the largest beneficiary of UK public money that we investigated.

Motorola's subsidiaries are entrusted with providing communications equipment to the emergency services in the UK. The largest contract identified by Al Jazeera is held by Airwave Solutions, a Motorola subsidiary. The Home Office awarded Airwave an extension worth 1.562 billion pounds (\$2.13bn) to provide the secure communications network used by police, fire and ambulance services across England, Scotland and Wales. Motorola Solutions UK separately holds contracts worth 123.9 million pounds (\$170m), including a 36.5-million-pound (\$49.8m) Ministry of Defence contract for Airwave radios, accessories and airtime.Five companies now ultimately controlled by Motorola Solutions Inc – Airwave Solutions Ltd, Motorola Solutions UK Ltd, CRFS Ltd, 3TC Software Ltd and Noggin IT Ltd – hold 91 active

UK public-sector contracts worth 1.726 billion pounds (\$2.3bn), according to the latest Tussell data.Motorola Solutions Inc and its Israeli subsidiary, Motorola Solutions Israel Ltd, were included when the UN Human Rights Office first published its database of businesses involved in specified settlement-related activities in 2020. Both remain in its latest version.

Official records provide a glimpse of how the company's technology has been embedded in settlements.Tenders from Mateh Binyamin Regional Council and the municipal corporation of Ariel, both illegal settlements, show Motorola command-and-control technology being used in security and surveillance infrastructure.

Motorola equipment has also been bought by the Israeli Civil Administration, the military body through which Israel administers civilian affairs in the occupied West Bank.In 2005, the UN reported that Motorola supplied surveillance systems to settlements including Hebron, Karmeit Zsur and Bracha.Motorola's relationship with the Israeli authorities continues today. An Israeli government procurement document obtained by Al Jazeera shows Motorola Solutions Israel was awarded a 25.5-million-shekel (\$8.7m) contract in May 2026 to maintain approximately 19,000 police radios and provide encryption licences until April 2028.

Heidelberg Materials: A controversial quarry on occupied landThe UN has listed Heidelberg Materials over the commercial use of natural resources in occupied Palestinian territory.In Britain, five Heidelberg Materials companies hold 25 public-sector contracts worth 184.79 million pounds (\$252m). Almost all of that – 179.03 million pounds (\$244m) – is held by Hanson Quarry Products Europe Ltd. Its contracts include 60 million pounds (\$81.9m) from Westmorland and Furness Council for road surfacing and highway works between 2024 and 2027, and a 50-million-pound (\$68.3m) surfacing maintenance contract with Somerset Council.Its Israeli subsidiary, Hanson Israel, owns the Nahal Raba quarry, south of Qalqilya in the West Bank. The quarry sits on land belonging to the Palestinian villages of az-Zawiya and Rafat, according to Who Profits.

An official Civil Administration planning notice reviewed by Al Jazeera shows a proposal was approved to expand the site.Who Profits, a group that researches links between the private sector and the economy in the Israeli-occupied territories, said the approval was granted on May 28, 2025.Heidelberg told Al Jazeera that in 2023, Hanson Israel "ceased all activities at the Nahal Raba quarry and the associated asphalt plant and ready-mix concrete plant", adding that only security personnel are present on site.

Egis: Selling transport infrastructure that supports settlementsFrench engineering group Egis provides another type of connection via transport infrastructure linking illegal Israeli settlements in occupied East Jerusalem with the rest of the city.The UN lists Egis in connection with the "provision of services and utilities supporting the maintenance and existence of settlements, including transport".Egis's own material shows that its involvement in Jerusalem's expanding light-rail network continues today, with the company website advertising a job for an engineering expert based in Jerusalem on its light-rail projects.

A general view shows Jerusalem's light rail tram as it passes by the old city's walls in Jerusalem November 13, 2014. If there has been a constant target of Palestinian attacks during weeks of unrest in Jerusalem, it is the city's Light Rail, a sleek tram that snakes through downtown, past the ancient walls of the Old City, symbolically uniting the Jewish West and the Arab East, an area Israel captured in a 1967 war. Launched in 2011, the project was hailed as a piece of infrastructure that would transform the city, bringing Israelis and Palestinians closer through shared public rail transport. While in some ways that has happened, the past few months have torn that cosmopolitan picture apart. Picture taken November 13, 2014. REUTERS/Ronen Zvulun (JERUSALEM - Tags: TRANSPORT POLITICS CIVIL UNREST TPX IMAGES OF THE DAY)ATTENTION EDITORS: PICTURE 01 OF 26 PICTURES FOR WIDER IMAGE STORY 'RIDING THE FINE LINE' SEARCH 'TRAM RONEN' FOR ALL IMAGES

A general view shows Jerusalem's light rail tram as it passes by the old city's walls in Jerusalem November 13, 2014 [Ronen Zvulun/Reuters]Jerusalem Transportation Master Plan procurement documents from 2017 also identify Egis Rail as its general consultant, responsible for supervising and coordinating planning and design work on the Blue and Green lines.

Jerusalem's light rail crosses into occupied East Jerusalem and links illegal Israeli settlements there with West Jerusalem. UN reports have described the railway as "additional infrastructure serving the illegal settlement network" and said it further isolates occupied East Jerusalem from the rest of the occupied West Bank.Egis told Al Jazeera it "formally expressed its disagreement with this inclusion" in the UN database.In Britain, five companies and entities controlled by Egis hold six public-sector contracts worth 133.60 million pounds (\$182.4m). Almost the entire amount comes from a single contract, with the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency awarding Egis Projects UK Ltd a 133.23-million-pound (\$181.9m) contract for enforcement services across Britain. Egis businesses also hold UK public contracts, including Galson Sciences, Helios Technology, Egis Transport Solutions and architecture practice WestonWilliamson+Partners.

CAF: Constructing project to continue into 2027Spanish train manufacturer CAF is also involved in Jerusalem's light-rail network. The company has disclosed that the 1.8-billion-euro (\$2.10bn) Jerusalem project was awarded in 2019 to TransJerusalem J-Net Ltd, a firm owned 50 percent by CAF and 50 percent by Israeli construction business Shapir.

CAF said the project includes construction of the Green Line and extension of the existing Red Line, "which partially run through East Jerusalem". The construction phase is expected to continue until 2027.The UN identifies CAF over the "supply of equipment and materials facilitating the construction and the expansion of settlements" and the "use of natural resources, in particular water and land, for business purposes".

Al Jazeera contacted CAF for comment but received no response.Meanwhile, CAF has an extensive relationship with Britain's public sector, including supplying trams for one of the country's major urban networks. The West Midlands Combined Authority awarded CAF an 83.5-million-pound (\$114m) contract for a new generation of trams for the West Midlands Metro. The contract runs until December 2027, according to Tussell data.Fosun:

How to pay for the poor world to go green



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

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

Excluding adaptation finance from this budget makes the picture clearer. Take the funds to foster renewables first. One of the developing world’s problems is that building lots of solar farms and wind turbines requires a great deal of up-front capital that private investors, cagey about putting money into risky markets, are unwilling to provide. Commercial lenders, for their part, often charge extortionate rates. The good news is that, in many of these countries, a little help from public backers can go a long way towards luring investors and slashing borrowing costs. The Energy Transitions Commission (ETC), a think-tank, estimates that yearly climate investments in the developing world (excluding China) need to triple to \$900bn

to keep global temperatures from rising by more than 2°C above pre-industrial levels. Most of this will come from governments and the private sector, but development banks’ green subsidies will also need to rise, from \$50bn now to \$144bn.This is not a benefit that can be achieved by simply lending to renewable ventures at bargain rates. That would lock in a lot of capital in each transaction and create opportunity costs. Better to provide commercial lenders and investors with guarantees, where a public entity offers to take losses should a project fail to make its promised returns. Those instruments are in fashion: in February the World Bank launched a fund to double loan guarantees to \$20bn by 2030. Regional development banks have also clubbed together to provide insurance for green projects and ease repayment schedules.

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

Birthing targets must go beyond maternal survival



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

But is it enough that more women and infants survive?

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

Second is the issue of ‘too much, too soon’, which refers to the problem of routine over-medicalisation; unnecessary use of harmful and non-evidence-based interventions; and the use of interventions that can be life-saving when used appropriately, but detrimental when overused. Pregnancy and childbirth are physiologic processes, not an illness. Too much, too soon leads to unnecessary morbidity for the mother and newborn. In India, this can be seen in extremely high rates of Caesarean-

sections (C-sections), labour inductions, augmentations, and episiotomies. Public health research suggests ideal C-section rates are in the range of 10-19%. India’s nationwide private sector C-section rate is 47%, and many states and districts cross 80%.Third, Disrespect & Abuse (D&A) of pregnant women and women in labour is rampant across India, with an estimated prevalence of around 71%. D&A is an inherent violation of human rights. It takes several forms, such as physical and verbal abuse, a lack of informed consent, a lack of privacy, and a lack of confidentiality. It is present in varying degrees based on the facility type, and is compounded by factors like caste and socio-economic status. Widespread D&A leaves women feeling disempowered. It also reduces willingness to seek institutional health care, which, in turn, drives up mortality.Neither poor quality of care, nor D&A, are limited to low-income settings. Usage of harmful, outdated practices happens across India, and even privileged women thus bear a lot of unnecessary morbidity. Moreover, women in elite urban hospitals also experience D&A, particularly through a lack of informed consent and a lack of bodily autonomy. While they may be consenting to procedures and interventions in a legal sense, this is often after being misled through fear-based consent processes in which the true benefits and risks are not conveyed.

The barriers women face in maternity care are complex. It is an issue that suffers from sitting at the intersection of India’s challenges in both women’s disempowerment and health care. Women suffer from public health shortcomings, just as men do, but face additional mistreatment. Moreover, women often have low bargaining power within their own households, which makes it difficult for them to demand high-quality or respectful care.We need to situate the maternal health conversation within the larger feminist debates on bodily autonomy and women’s rights.

Why world must call for peace in Ukraine



Russia’s war on Ukraine completed a thousand days on Tuesday. That it has continued so long makes it a standing testimony to the ineffectiveness of international bodies such as the United Nations. Since February 24, 2022, when Russian President Vladimir Putin announced a full-fledged invasion of Ukraine, at least 12,162 civilians, including 659 children, have been killed in Ukraine, as per the UN human rights office, OHCHR. Thousands of Russian and Ukrainian combatants have also been killed in the fighting. Cities such as Mariupol have been bombed to dust and at least six million Ukrainians have sought refuge in other countries.The war indicates a stalemate in global power politics: Russia has weathered the sanctions storm with help from allies such as China — and even India, which has refused to stop doing business with Moscow despite the nudge from the West — but it failed to defeat Kyiv’s over-stretched army, which, of course, has

been embellished with weapons from Nato nations. The global economy has been hit by the Russian blockade of Ukrainian ports affecting wheat supplies and Nato sanctions on Russian oil and gas.Now, the war may have entered a deadlier phase. Recently, the outgoing US president, Joe Biden, gave the nod to Kyiv to use American long-range missiles that can strike inside Russia, which Ukraine did on Tuesday. The same day, Putin endorsed a nuclear doctrine that allows Moscow to launch nuclear weapons at non-nuclear powers. Clearly, neither power is willing to de-escalate or factor in a possible nuclear catastrophe. European nations, which have now become frontline States in the war, a first since World War II, have much to lose if the conflict escalates. The global community must talk with Russia, address its fears about Nato, and negotiate peace with Ukraine. Moscow should realise it would only be enhancing its status as a responsible power if it listened to voices of reason.

How SC read the right to property and its limits

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

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

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

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



trated in the hands of private players. In an individual case, a court could apply this test to the facts at hand, and determine if Article 31A was attracted or not.Justice Chandrachud framed his holding as being based on the premise that the Constitution did not encode any one economic ideology (such as that of socialism). This is no doubt correct. However, it is interesting to note that Justice Krishna Iyer’s judgment went much beyond even what socialist thinkers advocate. The distinction between personal property (such as, say, your toothbrush) and private property that serves as the means of production (such as, say, a factory) was made as far back as The Communist Manifesto. It is therefore unclear what ideology Justice Iyer was invoking to hold that all property could be presumptively nationalised, but very evidently, this was an unsustainable position in law — whether or not it would be ever acted upon by the State.At the same time, reporting around the judgment has also tended to overstate its impact. As noted above, Justice Chandrachud was quite clear that certain kinds of private property would fall within the meaning of “material resources”. This judgment is not, therefore, a ringing endorsement of a privatised political economy – far from it. What remains to be seen now is how future courts will understand and apply the indicators to determine, on a case by case basis, which kind of property can be properly called a “material resource of the community”. These might be battles of the future.

Centre's push for homestays via Mudra loans can boost local economies, say stakeholders

New Delhi: The Centre’s move to promote homestays as part of its broader push for tourism development has been welcomed by stakeholders, with many saying it could help boost local economies and create employment opportunities.Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, in her Budget speech on Saturday, announced that homestays would be eligible for Mudra loans, a move aimed at supporting small-scale hospitality businesses in rural and semi-urban areas.The initiative is expected to provide financial assistance to individuals looking to establish or expand homestays, particularly in popular and emerging tourist destinations.K Syama Raju, president of the Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI), said the introduction of Mudra loans for homestay businesses is another positive step which will give local entrepreneurs the chance to start and grow small tourism businesses and help create more jobs and encourage tourism in these regions.The decision comes as the tourism sector witnesses a steady revival post-pandemic, with demand for new accommodation options rising.Industry reports suggest that the homestay segment has grown significantly in recent years, driven by domestic travel and interest in experiential tourism.However, industry experts stress the need for streamlined implementation to ensure the benefits reach those who need them the most.“Financing has always been a challenge for small hospitality ventures.

Sawan Barwal ends India’s 44-year-old wait for Asiad marathon silver with steady race pace

On the damp streets of Nagoya, Barwal won silver in the Asian Games marathon, ending the country’s 44-year wait for a medal in the event — and becoming the first Indian to win one outside home soil. The 28-year-old clocked 2:11:37, lowering his own national record, but there was no catching Japan’s Ichitaka Yamashita, who pulled away to win gold in 2:10:49. “This feels special. To win a medal, and set a national record doing it and ending a long wait for a marathon medal... this was my target.”For Barwal, competing in only his second marathon, the silver was the culmination of an extraordinary transformation — and not bad for someone who had taken up marathon running just a year ago.

Barwal had spent much of his career running middle- and long-distance events before coach Scott Simmons encouraged him to make the switch to the marathon. He had joined the Indian Army in 2019, having found athletics almost by accident, and began training specifically for the 42.195-kilometre distance last year.The switch demanded a different kind of runner. The speed work gave way to long sessions and punishing mileage; Barwal now runs around 190 kilometres a week, according to Simmons, and had completed three marathon simulations in the three months before the Asian Games. A training stint in Colorado Springs, after being sent there by the Athletics Federation of India, further helped him adapt to the demands of the marathon.It was all preparation for this one morning. “The plan was always to challenge for the podium. I had been training for this moment for so long, so if I didn’t win a medal, all of it would have felt like a waste of effort,” Barwal said.The race unfolded under an overcast sky, a light drizzle falling over Nagoya. The rain offered some respite from the heat, but the humidity remained, making the conditions uncomfortable for the runners.The early pace was brisk. After five kilometres, Barwal was in a six-man lead group, just a second behind China’s Feng Peiyou, who had briefly taken the lead, with the Indian clocking 15:28. The pace then ebbed and flowed. Around 15 kilometres, it dipped sharply, with the leading group covering a kilometre in 2:53-2:54. The field was already beginning to thin, but Barwal stayed tucked into the pack.At halfway, he was running shoulder to shoulder with Yamashita, both crossing in 1:05:54. The Japanese runner had the home crowd — that had lined up the city’s streets early in the morning — behind him. Barwal had Simmons’ instructions in his ears. “We didn’t want to slow down. The race went fast in the beginning. But after three-



four kilometres, it slowed down and remained up and down,” Barwal, who drank just 120ml of fluids from all eight water stations, said. “Our target was to stay with the group till the end. If we could maintain that position, the chances of winning the medal would increase.”

The strategy was less about making a move than refusing to make the wrong one. Barwal wanted to remain in the middle of the pack, never pushing beyond his limit. That patience became crucial after 30km, when the race suddenly changed. The pace rose as the runners reached an uphill stretch and the group of six began to splinter. Soon, only three or four remained.Barwal briefly lost contact as Yamashita accelerated up the hill. But he did not panic. Once the road tilted downwards again, he clawed back the lost ground. “After 30 km, when you see the hill and the pace increases, you feel a little different. I got left behind, but when we crossed it, I covered it on the downward slope,” he said.By the final 10km, there were only three runners left in contention. Barwal knew the danger of going beyond what his body could sustain. His experience at the Rotterdam Marathon earlier this year, where he had set the national record, had taught him how brutal the closing kilometres could be. “We didn’t try to go too fast. We kept the limit at 2:58 per kilometre,” he said. “Our target was not to go beyond our limit.”Yamashita eventually found another gear. By 39 kilometres, he had begun to pull away, and at 40 kilometres the gap was 26 seconds. The gold was slipping away, but Barwal’s silver was not.The Japanese runner entered the stadium to a roar from the home crowd and crossed the line in 2:10:51. Barwal followed, holding on for second and lowering the national record he had set in Rotterdam in April.That race had already been a breakthrough. Barwal had become the first Indian to break 2:12 in the marathon, bettering Shivnath Singh’s 48-year-old national record in Holland. In Nagoya, he went faster still — and added an Asian Games medal to it, ending India’s 44-year wait.

How a Bahraini’s finishing kick outclassed India’s Gulveer Singh in 10,000m

The pack bunched, stretched, re-formed and slowly shed runners, but Gulveer Singh remained exactly where he needed to be — near the front, not setting the pace but matching the rest stride for stride. Then, with one lap to go, Birhanu Balew made his move. The Bahraini runner came around the outside, taking the lead as the bell rang, and suddenly a race that had, until that point, been a test of patience became a straight fight between two men. Gulveer stayed on his shoulder.For the next few metres, there was nowhere to hide. Balew pushed, Gulveer answered. Balew held the inside, Gulveer remained within striking distance. The Indian had survived every acceleration thrown at him and now had one final question to answer: could he find enough for the finish?With 250 metres remaining, Balew found something extra. The gap began to open, and Gulveer chased, his body leaning into the effort, legs still turning after 24 and three-quarter laps of the track.But Balew had one more gear. The Ethiopia-born runner sprinted to the finish in 28:27.51, arms spread wide, with Gulveer taking silver in 28:29.38. The Indian stopped almost immediately, dropped to his knees, bent forward and kissed the track. Then he got up and sprinted out of the stadium.

He will be back on Saturday for the 1,500m heats — the second of the three events he will run in Nagoya. “I won a bronze medal last time (in Hangzhou). So coming into these Games, the plan was to change the colour of the medal,” Gulveer said.Fine marginsFor Gulveer, the silver was both a reward for the work that had brought him here and a reminder of how fine the margins are at this level. Scott Simmons, his coach, believed that the Indian’s best chance of winning lay in turning the race into a quicker affair. “The only way that Gulveer had a chance for gold was, honestly, if it was a 27-minute race,” Simmons said.The reasoning was straightforward. Balew, the Diamond League 5,000m champion, had demonstrated his finishing speed at the highest level, including a commanding performance in Belgium. Even Gulveer knew what he was up against. “His finish is strong. He is faster than me. But I will try to challenge him,” he said.A faster race, Simmons felt, might have given Gulveer a better opportunity to challenge Balew over the final lap. Instead, the Indian had to rely on his finishing speed against a runner who had more in reserve. “He finished very well in 57



seconds,” Simmons said, referring to Gulveer’s final lap. “Yeah. But (Balew’s was) 55 seconds.”Could Gulveer have taken the initiative and pushed the pace towards a 27-minute finish? Simmons was reluctant to suggest that it would have changed the outcome, particularly with the Indian still scheduled to run the 1,500m and 5,000m.

“He has a big menu for the rest of the week,” Simmons said. “And even then... You never know. This is a man who ran under 59 minutes for the half marathon. I mean, Gulveer ran very well under 60 minutes, but he is not at the same level at this point.”The two seconds that separated them over the final lap were the difference between gold and silver. But Gulveer’s ability to stay in contention against a runner of Balew’s calibre reflected how far he has come.At the 2023 Asian Games in Hangzhou, Gulveer had won bronze in the 10,000m, having only begun competing in athletics in 2019. Since then, he has rewritten the Indian national records in both the 5,000m and 10,000m, clocking 12:59.77 and 27:00.22 respectively. He went on to win both events at the 2025 Asian Athletics Championships before adding a silver in the 10,000m and a bronze in the 5,000m at the 2026 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow.Those performances have changed the expectations surrounding him. He is no longer simply an Indian runner trying to keep pace with the leading athletes in Asia. He has become one of the men expected to challenge them, with the national records and international medals to back up those ambitions.Gulveer, though, resisted making any bold claims. “I have not set any target as such. I haven’t kept a point for me to reach. I just want to keep improving, climb up the ladder one step at a time and not lose any rhythm,” he said.The silver in the 10,000m was the first of three tests in Nagoya.

How Baranica Elangovan evaded pole problem en route historic Asian Games bronze

A few days before Baranica Elangovan was due to leave for Japan, there was still one question hanging over her Asian Games campaign: would her pole make it there?On Friday, the 29-year-old cleared 4.15 metres to win bronze in the women’s pole vault, becoming the first Indian to win an Asian Games medal in the event. But getting the equipment that would carry her over the bar to Nagoya had been a struggle of its own.The 4.30m pole was hardly something she could simply check in with her luggage. More than six or seven airlines were approached, emails were sent, and the answer kept coming back the same: their regulations allowed equipment only up to 3.40 metres. Baranica’s pole was 90 centimetres longer. “It was a big struggle,” said her coach Milber Bertrand Russell. “We tried more than six to seven airlines, we tried, sent emails. The problem was the length was too high.”The Athletics Federation of India then stepped in. “They explained to the airline officials that this is sports equipment and we are going to the Asian Games to represent our country,” Russell said.The clearance came a few days before Baranica’s departure. The poles would travel with her after all.For pole vaulters, transporting their equipment is a familiar logistical headache. Thankfully for Baranica, the problem was solved before she left India. In Nagoya, she had another one to deal with: clearing

the bar.Her 4.15m clearance was below the 4.23m national record she set earlier this year, but it was enough to put her on the podium. She shared bronze with Kazakhstan’s Polina Ivanova, who also cleared 4.15m. Japan’s Misaki Morota won gold with a jump of 4.55m while Niu Chunge of China clinched silver after clearing 4.50m.India’s Baranica Elangovan poses for a picture after winning bronze in the women’s pole vault at the Asian Games 2026, in Nagoya on Friday. (ANI Photo) India’s Baranica Elangovan poses for a picture after winning bronze in the women’s pole vault at the Asian Games 2026, in Nagoya on Friday. (ANI Photo)

For Baranica, the medal carried the weight of a much longer struggle. She tore the ACL in her take-off leg in 2020 and spent years trying to rebuild her body and career. This year, she began finding her heights again, breaking the national record twice.On Friday, she needed two attempts to jump over 4.15m. She could not get over 4.25m, but by then the medal was secure. “I’m really feeling happy that... I’m really happy that I was able to bring a medal for my country,” she said. “It’s my dream, actually, to change it, rewrite history, and I did it today.”

Dhiraj Bommadevara smashes Asian Games record in recurve

qualification

Okazaki: India’s Dhiraj Bommadevara smashed the Asian Games record to top the recurve individual archery qualification event at the Okazaki Chuo Sogo Park Multi-purpose Sq hereDhiraj produced a stellar show to finish with a score of 698 out of the 720 possible and earn the top seed in the individual event, as India ended the team qualification as the second seed.

Dhiraj broke the previous Asiad record of 690 points, which belonged to Korea’s Lee Woo. Dhiraj was in top form across the two halves as he earned 348 of the 360 points. The archer then improved in the second half with a score of 350 in the final 36 arrows, dropping only 10 points out of the 360 possible.Other Indians in the fray, Neeraj Chauhan and Sanjay Yashdeep Bhoge, finished the individual event in 20th and 25th place, respectively. Neeraj collected 676 points, while Sanjay took 665 in the event.

The trio helped the team finish second in the team qualification with 2039 points, just behind the Korean side, which had 2064 points. This has given the Indian men’s team a bye into the pre-quarterfinals as they are seeded second in the 32-team draw. Dhiraj has also received a



bye into the second round, being the top seed.In the women’s event, India’s Chikitha Taniparthi topped the individual compound event with a score of 705 out of 720 in a stellar outing. She came within touching distance of breaking the Asian Games record of Chinese Taipei’s Chen Yi-hsuan, who had shot 706 in the 2018 Games.India’s Jyothi Surekha was 13th with a score of 699, while Prithika Pradeep was 20th with 695 points. In the team event, the Indian women secured a second-place finish. The trio helped India combine for 2099 points (T74;84), while China took the top spot with 2099 points (T82;76).

India to face Afghanistan in Asian Games cricket quarter-final after Nepal-Japan washout



Nisshin: India will face Afghanistan in the men’s cricket quarter-finals at the Asian Games 2026 after Nepal topped Pool A following a rain-affected washout between Nepal and Japan in Nisshin on Saturday.The quarter-final between India and Afghanistan is scheduled for September 28 in Nisshin, with Nepal’s first-place finish in the group determining the knockout-stage line-up. Japan’s abandoned match ended their campaign, while Afghanistan advanced alongside Nepal from Pool A.The equation was settled after Japan’s chase against Nepal was completely washed out. Nepal had posted 149 for four in 15 overs after being put into bat, but persistent rain prevented Japan from beginning its pursuit.

Nepal’s innings was built around an explosive finish

Gukesh helps India beat Germany, move to second place

Samarkand: Reigning World Classical Chess Champion Dommaraju Gukesh secured a clutch win to help India beat overnight joint-topper Germany 2.5-1.5 in the ninth round of the Open section of the 46th FIDE Chess Olympiad in Samarkand, moving up to second position in the standings.With this win, India roared back into title contention as they are in good position to challenge table toppers Uzbekistan for the title.

In the crucial clash on table 2, R. Praggnanandhaa, Arjun Erigaisi and Nihal Sarin were held to draws on the first three boards before Gukesh secured the lone victory of the match against Germany as India moved to 15 points, sharing the second spot with Uzbekistan 2 and Armenia. The main team of hosts Uzbekistan, who defeated top-seeded United States in the ninth round, lead the standings with 16 points.Praggnanandhaa, playing white, was held to a draw by top German GM Vincent Keymer, while Arjun Erigaisi drew with Bluebaum Matthias. With Nihal Sarin also being held by Frederik Svane on the third board, it appeared that India would drop points in the second successive round.

But Gukesh pulled out a grand Houdini act from a seemingly lost position to turn things in India’s favour with a fine performance to secure a crucial win on the fourth board.Playing with black against Alexander Donchenko, Gukesh was in trouble and heading for defeat before he staged a comeback with precise moves to win the day for India.In the women’s section, B Savitha Shri’s incredible



run of seven successive wins came to an end but remained unbeaten after a draw against Karimova Guldona of Uzbekistan on the top table.Koneru Humpy, playing with white pieces, was held by top Uzbek Afzuza Khamdamova. But Women’s World Cup winner

Divya Deshmukh and Ventika Agrawal won their games to secure a 3-1 win for India.The victory took them to 15 points from nine rounds as they shared the second spot with Kazakhstan and Mongolia. Armenia went down 1-3 to leaders China while Mongolia drew 2-2 with Kazakhstan.China extended their lead to two points as they lead with 17 points, and Saturday’s 10th-round clash with defending champions India will make things clear.

Hardik Pandya suffers fresh shin injury, out of New Zealand series



New Delhi: Senior all-rounder Hardik Pandya has sustained a fresh injury to his right shin, which is all set to rule him out of competitive cricket for at least three weeks, including the white-ball tour of New Zealand.Pandya’s ‘Return To Play’ date was set for September 20 and, accordingly, the selectors picked him for India A for the upcoming One Day series against Australia A starting October 6.“This is very unfortunate, but Hardik’s latest scan reports have revealed an injury to his right shin. He has been advised complete rest for a period of two weeks. BCCI’s medical panel head Dr Dinshaw Pardiwala has seen his reports and, on his return from Japan, will as-

sess him and decide when he can start his rehabilitation,” a BCCI source tracking COE developments told PTI on condition of anonymity.The New Zealand T20I series starts on October 22, followed by the ODI series. There is no chance of Hardik making a comeback by then.

It is understood that BCCI wanted Pandya to travel with the squad to Japan for the Asian Games and BCCI’s operations team had taken his passport for visa-related work.However, just before the start of the Afghanistan T20 series, he suddenly developed a shooting pain around his knee while doing his fielding drills. He, in fact, took a break and decided to take a few days’ rest. However, just as he was ready to get a fitness certificate, the pain resurfaced and scans revealed that there was an injury.The 32-year-old Pandya is based out of Bengaluru since the end of the IPL and now trains at the Centre of Excellence, having relocated to the Garden City.But over the course of the last four months, at least thrice (Afghanistan ODIs, England T20Is and now Australia A), the all-rounder has suffered a fresh niggle, which has proved to be an impediment to his comeback.With the New Zealand series also out of his way, Pandya will now have to wait for the Zimbabwe ODIs if he is fit to play, or perhaps check his fitness in the Vijay Hazare or Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy.

Sonali Kulkarni defends playing Salman Khan’s mother in Bharat



Sonali Kulkarni has had a rich and diverse filmography across multiple languages. Across her over three decade-long career, she’s been a part of indie films with a heart as well as landmark mainstream films. One of those is Ali Abbas Zafar’s 2019 coming-of-age period drama Bharat, in which she essayed Janki Devi, the mother of the titular protagonist, played by Salman Khan.

Why Sonali Kulkarni played Salman Khan’s mom

Interestingly, Sonali, now 51, is nine years younger than Salman, now 60, who played her son in Bharat. Sonali defends her decision of taking up that role despite the age difference between her and her onscreen son. “During casting, I said, ‘I can’t be playing this role,’” Sonali reveals on SCREEN Spotlight. But she recalls both Ali

Abbas Zafar and casting director Mukesh Chhabra being “very sure” about her casting because of the emphasis they placed on the flashback sequences. “The flashback meant everything to that film. That’s how Bharat gets his name and reacts to situations,” says Sonali, adding, “No director or casting director would like to fit in a wrong person somewhere. That would be a failure on their part also. So, I tried to understand that. So, I took it up as a challenge.” Sonali Kulkarni admits it did take “a lot of convincing” from the director and the casting director to cast her. But what also helped was her own “temptation” to meet Salman Khan, whom she had heard a lot about. “We bonded very well on the sets of Bharat. One can learn from him to treat people well. He was ever gracious. And he scored a point when he gave me his cycle to ride,” said Sonali, laughing.

Adding that the project, backed by Salman Khan Films, paid her “really well”, Sonali also pointed out that she had “maximum scenes with the child artiste” who played the young Bharat, and “very few with the elder Bharat”, essayed by Salman. But she doesn’t have any regrets of tracing that arc either as she got to see Katrina Kaif dance live. “Oh god, she’s such a graceful dancer, and she’s beautiful. We had a gala time on set! So, no complaints from my end,” says Sonali. Katrina, who played Bharat’s longtime love interest Kumud Raina in Bharat, shook a leg with Salman on the popular song “Aithey Aa.” Also starring Disha Patani, Sunil Grover, Tabu, Jackie Shroff, and Nora Fatehi among others, Bharat amassed over Rs 325 crore at the worldwide box office.

‘He had his own set of people’: Boman Irani on reuniting with Priyadarshan after 12 years

One of the most anticipated films of the year, Priyadarshan’s Haiwaan is set to hit screens on September 11. The dark thriller stars Akshay Kumar, Saif Ali Khan, Boman Irani, Shriya Pilgaonkar and Saiyami Kher. While the trailer has already piqued curiosity, Boman says that despite Priyadarshan’s filmography spanning several genres, the “comedy stamp” continues to follow both the filmmaker and him. “The comedy stamp always chases me,” Boman said during an exclusive interview with SCREEN. The conversation came up while discussing Priyadarshan’s body of work. Over the years, the filmmaker has explored several genres, including action, romance and drama. Yet, it is his comedies that audiences most closely associate him with. On reuniting with Priyadarshan after 12 years SCREEN also asked Boman why it took 12 years for the actor and filmmaker to reunite, despite the two being a “deadly combination” of talent. Boman and Priyadarshan had previously worked together in the 2012 film Tezz, which starred Ajay Devgn, Anil Kapoor and Kangana Ranaut. “I think he had his own group of people whom he was comfortable with. It’s like asking Raju Hirani, ‘Why didn’t you work with so-and-so actor?’ It becomes a family kind of situation, and I think that’s great. But somehow, I was made to believe that I was the first choice for this role,” Boman said.

Watch the trailer of Haiwaan below: Haiwaan also brings Akshay Kumar and Saif Ali Khan together on the big screen after more than three decades. The actors were last seen together in Main Khiladi Tu Anari (1994). Given that Akshay plays a dark character in Haiwaan, we asked Boman if audiences would accept the actor in such a role. “You watch 3 Idiots. Imagine 3 Idiots was not a good movie. Think about it. What would the acceptance of a character like Virus be? They would say, ‘Irritating.’ But when the movie is good, everything gets accepted. You say, ‘Oh well, that was very interesting. It was pretty



good advice.’ Think of Munna Bhai MBBS. Sanjay Dutt was 44 years old, hardly a college-going student. Why did they accept it? The movie was good. The story was good,” said the 66-year-old actor. “But if the movie was bad, then people would have questioned, ‘How could they have cast Sanju?’ But the movie was great. So, there was no question of age. Having said that, they (Akshay Kumar and Saif Ali Khan) will be accepted because they are good in the film. But the movie has to be good, and the movie is good,” he concluded. Haiwaan is the official remake of the Mohanlal starrer Oppam (2016), directed by Priyadarshan.

Rahul Roy says struggling with speech issues after brain stroke: ‘Turned vegan, quit smoking’



Actor Rahul Roy has made a return to acting with his latest project Super Badshah, after his brain stroke in 2020. The actor, known for Aashiqui (1990) and Junoon (1992), suffered the health scare while shooting for a film in Kargil. In a recent interview, Rahul opened up about making changes in his daily routine after the stroke, like turning vegan and quitting smoking. He also revealed taking 8 medicines in a day. During an interaction with Free Press Journal, he shared, “When Karanvir Bohra and Madhavi approached me for the role, I was very excited. The only thing I was sceptical about was my speech problem because of the brain stroke which I had in 2020 when I was shooting in Kargil. But Karanvir was supportive throughout.”

The actor continued, “After my brain stroke, I didn’t even know if I would be able to walk or talk again. I used to be a heavy smoker and a non-vegetarian, but I’ve turned vegan, and am off onion, garlic and milk and am basically having Jain food. Every day after breakfast, I have 8 medicines. But things are much better now than before.”

Rahul Roy suffered a severe cerebrovascular brain stroke in late November 2020 while shooting for the film LAC – Live the Battle in the high altitude and freezing weather conditions of Kargil. He was diagnosed with

motor aphasia (an impairment which impacts speech and the ability to do muscular movements for talking). In April this year, Rahul Roy was in the headlines for making ‘dancing reels’ on social media, only to pay his fees for legal cases. The actor, who was once celebrated as a national sensation, shared Instagram reels of him dancing with a content creator on his iconic songs. The clips drew attention online, and the videos were met with widespread trolling. While addressing the backlash in a note on Instagram, Rahul wrote, “I do my work with honesty and modesty. I have some legal matters to pay for, and these are not from today, they are from before the brain stroke happened. If you mock my simplicity or make fun of my struggles, it says less about me and more about you. If you are truly so concerned, then help me find some genuine and decent work so I can pay for these cases. At least I am earning through hard work, not by mocking others.”

He further added, “And after the brain stroke, it is important for me to stay active. I want to work for as long as I am alive. It keeps my mind active and gives me the sense of purpose and responsibility that I am still working today. Yes, it may hurt a little sometimes, but you cannot break me.” Rahul Roy rose to fame with his debut in Aashiqui by Mahesh Bhatt. He then featured in movies like Phir Teri Kahani Yaad Aayee, Junoon, Gumrah, and Pyaar Ka Saaya. The actor also won the first season of Bigg Boss in 2007.

‘Sandeep Reddy Vanga will go to any extent for me’

Hyderabad: Stating that the love he had for ace director Sandeep Reddy Vanga was not something that he could express in words, popular Telugu star Vijay Deverakonda has said that he could go to any extent for the sake of director Sandeep Reddy Vanga. The actor, who participated in the pre-release event of director Venu Gopal Reddy’s romantic drama ‘Romanchakam’, which is being presented by Sandeep Reddy Vanga, Vijay Deverakonda said, “I can’t express the love I have for Sandeep in words.

‘He had his own set of people’: Boman Irani on reuniting with Priyadarshan after 12 years



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Priyadarshan had previously worked together in the 2012 film Tezz, which starred Ajay Devgn, Anil Kapoor and Kangana Ranaut. “I think he had his own group of people whom he was comfortable with. It’s like asking Raju Hirani, ‘Why didn’t you work with so-and-so actor?’ It becomes a family kind of situation, and I think that’s great. But somehow, I was made to believe that I was the first choice for this role,” Boman said.

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Shankar Mahadevan reveals 21-mix story behind Dil Chahta Hai title song

Mumbai: Music composer Shankar Mahadevan has revealed that the rough mix of the title track of the iconic film Dil Chahta Hai made it to the final cut despite the team producing 21 versions of the song. Mahadevan said he, fellow composers Ehsaan Noorani and Loy Mendonsa, and sound engineer Vijay Benegal, known as Benny, had worked on 21 mixes of the track.

However, the scratch version was eventually retained after it received the most appreciation from the filmmakers and the team. In a special video for Spotify, Mahadevan sat down for a conversation with Noorani, Mendonsa, playback singer Shaan and Meiyang Chang. “Shall I reveal one more secret about this song? Benny did about 21 mixes of the song. And this, what you’re hearing is the rough mix. There was something, something magical about it,” Mahadevan said. “What you’re hearing is actually the first scratch that we did of the song. The bass lines and all. We had some new samples and great drums, we experimented, and it paid off. People get scared of being minimalist,” he added. Mahadevan also spoke about the importance of restraint in music production. Most people in the business want to fill it up. That shows a person’s insecurity. If you’re very confident about your melody, if you’re confident about your groove and your bass line and that minimal thing, you don’t need stuff. If you have a good engineer who mixes it well, it fills up the space,” he



said. Dil Chahta Hai, directed by Farhan Akhtar in his directorial debut, became a defining film of modern Hindi cinema, particularly for its portrayal of urban friendship, romance and youthful independence. Its Goa road trip became a cultural touchstone, inspiring generations of friends to recreate the journey. The film’s visual style, casual fashion and conversational storytelling also influenced Bollywood’s depiction of contemporary urban India. Its soundtrack was equally influential, blending rock, pop and Indian musical elements.

Javed Akhtar ‘proud’ of Shabana Azmi for backing CJP protests: ‘Old Shabana has woken up’



Javed Akhtar says he’s “proud” of wife Shabana Azmi for being one of the very few Bollywood celebrities who participated in the Cockroach Janata Party (CJP) protests in New Delhi last month. While a few others extended their support online, the veteran actor was at Jantar Mantar, walking side by side with students protesting against the leak of National Eligibility Entrance Test (NEET) papers.

Javed Akhtar on Shabana Azmi’s activism: “This isn’t the first time she’s done this. She’s aged now, so does it less now,” said Akhtar, laughing, on a recent podcast. After Delhi Police hurled tear bombs on the protesters on July 20, Shabana even suffered an asthma attack. Soon after, she was diagnosed with the H1N1 virus, which prevented her from attending the student protests in Mumbai a couple of days later. “I’ve gone to the police station to bail her out. She’s gone for a hunger strike in Mumbai. She’s been quite active,” Akhtar said on Lets Talk With Devnag. “When our relationship was developing, this is what she was involved in,” he added. The two began dating in the late 1970s after Javed met Shabana at the Mumbai home of his family friend and fellow legendary poet Kaifi Azmi, her father.

“She called me when I was in London to tell me she’s going to Delhi for the protests. When she told me, I knew she would. It’s the call of the conscience. Not once I told her to not go or think twice. The moment she told me I cannot not go, I knew the old Shabana had woken up, and nobody can stop her. And good she did! I’m proud of her,” said Akhtar. Over the past few decades, Shabana has often raised voice against a wide range of issues. These included the 1993 protests at Cuffe Parade in Mumbai, when she sat with slum dwellers to protest against demolition of their homes. Mumbai Police arrested her and 16 others, and she even refused to seek bail or accept the charges against her.

So much so that her mother and veteran actor Shaukat Kafi had to convince the cops to escort Shabana to Tata Theatre for her performance in the popular play Tumhari Amrita during her jailtime. Shabana famously made it to the stage in the very dusty clothes she was detained in. Eventually, Javed Akhtar had to bail out his wife. “It’s not like we don’t feel scared. We feel scared most of the times. But in some moments, you’ve to get over the fear and have to call a spade a spade. Otherwise you won’t be able to look into the mirror. If I don’t, I have no loyalty with either my zameen, zamana or zameer (land, time, and conscience). I don’t do it much, but when your conscience is pushed against the wall, you have to do it,” added Akhtar, echoing Shabana’s vocal approach to injustice. When Shabana showed up at the CJP protests last month, she revealed that she and Akhtar first wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, requesting him to discuss the issue with the protesting students. But after acknowledgement of receipt, once they didn’t get a response for the next three days, Shabana chose to participate in the protests herself.

Sreeleela reveals how medical career influenced her acting journey

Mumbai: Actress Sreeleela, who is gearing up for the release of her upcoming film with Kartik Aaryan, has shared how her medical career has shaped the actor in her. The actress opened up about how her exposure to real-life situations during her medical journey has helped her approach acting with greater sensitivity and perspective. Talking about whether her medical experience helps her in cinema, Sreeleela shared, “Definitely. 100 per cent. I feel it is important for an actor to have a lot of knowledge about everything around the world. General knowledge is also very important. Experiences and your sensitivity meter have to be high.”

She further mentioned that her hospital postings exposed her to several deeply personal stories and emotional journeys. She went on, “Hospital stories, what I’ve seen in my course of being in the hospital or in my postings, was, people’s emotional journeys very closely. You see life and death, you see situations, you see people having financial situations to clear bills. There are so many stories. What is cinema? It’s a story and like that I’ve been grateful.