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Telangana CM accuses KCR of attempting to grab Rs 50,000 crore land

Hyderabad, Oct 30 Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Friday alleged that former Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao tried to encroach on prime land valued at Rs 50,000 crore in Miyapur, Hyderabad.

A day after the Supreme Court upheld Telangana government's claim over 550-acre land in Miyapur, the Chief Minister directed officials to take over the land and fence it.

At a press conference in Delhi, the Chief Minister termed the Supreme Court verdict in the 23-year-old case as 'historic', and thanked the apex court for upholding the state government's claim to the land.

He alleged that former Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao (KCR), his close associate and Rajya Sabha MP Damodar Rao, and the CMD of 'Namasthe Telangana' attempted to grab the land using businessman Goldstone Prasad as a front.

"By protecting this land, the Supreme Court has ensured that these valuable public assets remain with the people of Telangana. This is a monumental judgment in the interest of the state and its people," said CM Revanth Reddy.

He said that the Congress party, which was in opposition during the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) regime, fought against the then State government to protect the land. After the Congress came to power, the State government argued the case and secured a favourable decision.

He claimed that his government has so far protected Rs 1.50 lakh crore worth of government lands.

He listed a series of cases of alleged land-grabbing by KCR and his family members. He claimed that they tried to tamper with the revenue records to encroach on lands. He also accused them of exchanging luxury cars and cash as bribes.

The Chief Minister alleged that K. T. Rama Rao (KTR) attempted to grab IMG lands in collusion with the Bhalerao family.

He said BRS leaders also attempted to take over valuable government lands at Kancha Gachibowli and Mamidipally, but the Congress government protected them through legal battles.



Revanth Reddy said KTR's associates attempted to encroach upon forest land at Gurramguda. The Supreme Court upheld the land's forest status.

He alleged that KTR and Rayalaseema Builders attempted to grab 143 acres at Manchirevula. The government protected the land and established a school for police personnel's children.

He claimed that 400 acres of forest land in Jayashankar Bhupalpally district were handed over to an MLA who defected to BRS. The government fought the case in the Supreme Court.

Revanth Reddy dared KCR and KTR to debate in the Assembly on their alleged land encroachment and illegal deals

The Chief Minister said the government lands in Miyapur land protected through legal battles by the government will be utilised to generate resources for irrigation, education, healthcare and other development projects.

Failed relationships cannot automatically lead to rape charges: Supreme Court



New Delhi: Concerned over the rising trend of criminal cases being filed after relationships fail, the Supreme Court on Friday said that physical intimacy during good times cannot later be branded as rape merely because the relationship soured or broke down.A bench of Justices B V Nagarathna and R Mahadevan, which discharged a Kerala-based man of charges of rape and cheating, said there was a need to distinguish between cases in which sexual consent is legally void from the outset because it was obtained through deliberate deception and fraud, and those in which a person experiences retrospective regret over past consensual acts simply because a relationship has ended.

"In such cases, physical intimacy that occurred during the currency of a functioning relationship cannot be retrospectively branded as an act of rape merely because the relationship soured and no longer subsists," the bench said.Such reflections in hindsight, on their own, are unfortunate and cannot turn a consensual relationship into a crime or set the criminal justice system's wheels in motion in a manner that deprives the accused of his liberty and reputation."Such an approach denudes the man of any agency entirely, as the mere fact of being in a consensual relationship at one point would bind him to it entirely for fear of being accused of rape at a subsequent point of time," the top court said."In such a scenario, can it be said that the man has no right to withdraw from the relationship? Can the decision be termed deceit or fraud? Clearly not," it said.The court has time and again witnessed the disturbing trend of failed relationships being converted into criminal cases, it added.Cautioning that the charge of rape, being a heinous offence, must be reserved for situations involving actual sexual violence, coercion or manipulation of consent, the bench said, "When every consensual relationship which sours is converted into an accusation of rape, it dilutes the gravity of the offence alleged or rather negates the very allegation of crime."

The accused in the case, Santosh Kumar N P, approached the top court challenging the Kerala High Court's dismissal of his discharge petition and his plea for quashing the proceedings against him.According to the prosecution, the victim alleged that the accused had concealed his earlier marriage and entered into a second marriage with her. He allegedly had sexual intercourse with her based on consent obtained through what the prosecution described as an "illegal marriage" secured by fraud.The woman alleged that the accused cohabited with her deceitfully, inducing her to believe that their marriage was lawful. She alleged that he married her while his earlier marriage was still subsisting.The woman, who had been divorced from an earlier marriage, had accused the man of rape, cheating and breach of trust. They cohabited from 1996 to 2003 after getting married in Mysore, she alleged.

KTR's sewage treatment plan aids HMWSSB's water supply



Hyderabad: A blueprint envisioned during the previous BRS government by the then MA&UD Minister KT Rama Rao to make Hyderabad India's first city to achieve 100 per cent sewage treatment has now come as a boon to the Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWSSB) in generating bulk treated water across the Core Urban Region Economy (CURE) area.Though Rama Rao had then proposed 31 sewage treatment plants (STPs) with a combined capacity of 1,259.50 million litres per day, the water board built 20 plants with a capacity of 1,106 MLD due to the unavailability of land. A senior HMWSSB official told Telangana Today that 20 STPs had been completed and were generating treated water.

HMWSSB Chief General Manager G Sujatha said a total of 1,872 MLD of sewage water was being treated and arrangements were being made to supply the treated water through the Green Water Tankers facility. The water will be supplied for construction, landscaping, industrial cooling, manufacturing, data centres and government agencies.Of the 1,873 MLD of treated water, 1,520 MLD had been kept ready for supply to consumers in need from November 1. HMWSSB currently supplies treated water at Rs 25 per kilolitre, but there was no clarity on whether it should be supplied at the same price or free of cost, the CGM said.The State government has proposed 39 STPs with a combined capacity of 972 million litres per day, according to a senior HMWSSB official. Of the first 16 STPs, 14 have been taken up, including two cascaded plants.Work was under way on 13, while one was involved in a court case. Of another 22 STPs, 14 have been taken up, including eight flow-cascaded plants. Work was under way on 10, while four faced court cases. A 7-MLD STP is being developed in public-private partnership mode.

Harish Rao alleges conspiracy to damage Mallanna Sagar bund



Siddipet: Former Minister T Harish Rao suspected a political conspiracy to damage the Mallanna Sagar bund to portray it as a failed project, similar to what he described as the Congress's false propaganda over the Medigadda barrage.Alleging that a contractor had been carrying out blasting dangerously close to the Mallanna Sagar bund for the past two months to build a pool to draw water for the Musi River Development Project, Harish Rao, Dubbak MLA Kotha Prabhakar Reddy and other BRS leaders inspected the site at Tipparam village in Kukunoorpally mandal on Thursday.

After noticing that the blasting was being carried out less than 200 metres from the bund, Rao urged the contractor to show the permissions obtained from the Irrigation Department, police, panchayat and other concerned departments. He alleged that the contractor had no permissions at all.Questioning the manner in which the blasting was being carried out, Rao said the Irrigation Department permitted blasting only at a distance of 10 times the height of an irrigation project. Since the Mallanna Sagar bund is 40 metres high, he said the blasting should be carried out 400 metres away from it. However, Rao alleged that the blasting was being carried out at distances ranging from 50 metres to 200 metres.

Despite strong opposition from Tipparam sarpanch Badrappa and residents, the former Minister said the blasting continued even though houses located about 750 metres to 1,000 metres away in Tipparam had been damaged. During Rao's interaction with locals, farmers Shambulingam, Sailu and Balaiah told the BRS leaders that the bund had shaken several times due to tremors caused by the blasting.The farmers complained that the bund had developed seepage at several places after the blasting. Holding the HMWSSB and the contractor responsible for the work, Rao recalled that the Mallanna Sagar project was built as part of the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Scheme (KLIS) to provide irrigation water to 16.23 lakh acres, besides supplying drinking water to 10 districts and Hyderabad.The former Minister lashed out at the government and officials for their alleged negligent attitude towards such an important irrigation project. Stating that Tipparam villagers had already filed a petition at the police station against the alleged illegal mining, Rao demanded that the police register an FIR against the agency and that residents whose houses and properties had been damaged be compensated.He also demanded that Irrigation Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy constitute an inquiry committee to assess the damage caused to the project's bund by the blasting. Seeking stern action against those responsible, he demanded that the work be stopped immediately. Otherwise, he said, the BRS would launch protests to force the government to act.

Badrinath-bound helicopter crashes near Joshimath, six on board

Chamoli: A helicopter operated by a private aviation company crashed near Chai village, close to Joshimath in Uttarakhand, on Friday, triggering a search and rescue operation. Six people are reported to have been on board.The crash reportedly occurred in the Vishnuprayag area, between Badrinath and Joshimath. Rescue teams, including personnel from the district administration and the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), have been deployed at the site.Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami confirmed the incident and said he was personally monitoring the situation.

In a post on social media platform X, the Chief Minister said, "We have received the unfortunate news of a helicopter crash near Chai village, close to Joshimath. A joint rescue operation is being conducted by the district administration, disaster management department, and SDRF."He added that instructions had been issued to ensure that seriously injured passengers were immediately airlifted to advanced medical facilities for better treatment."I myself am continuously monitoring the entire incident. I pray to God for the safe return of the passengers," Dhami said.Medical teams have been rushed to the area, while officials are coordinating search and rescue efforts.Deputy Superintendent of Police Madan Singh Bisht said information about the incident was being



gathered.Chamoli District Disaster Management Officer Nandkishore Joshi said reports had emerged of a white object burning in the forest above the JP Dam, which was suspected to be the helicopter. Other helicopters have been deployed to conduct aerial reconnaissance and assist in locating the aircraft.According to preliminary information, the helicopter, bearing registration number VT-HCX and operated by Trans Bharat Aviation, took off from Badrinath at around 1.12 pm on Friday. Its last reported contact was near the Army post atop Hathi Pahad, opposite Joshimath.Chamoli District Magistrate Gaurav Kumar said the administration launched a rescue operation immediately after receiving information about the incident.

ECI extends Telangana SIR claims deadline to November 26, final rolls on November 30

Hyderabad: The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Thursday revised the schedule of Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Telangana.As per revised schedule, the notice phase, and disposal of claims and objections process will conclude on November 26. The final electoral rolls will be published on November 30.The ECI revised the schedule as per the request raised by Telangana Chief Electoral Officer C Sudharsan Reddy. Earlier, the deadline for notice phase, and disposal of claims and objections process was November 5, with final electoral rolls publication scheduled for November 9.

Before the SIR exercise began, Telangana had 3,38,26,448 voters, of whom 2,64,87,213 submitted enumeration forms. The remaining 73,39,235 electors were categorised under Absent, Shifted, Death and Duplicate (ASDD) entries and were removed from the draft electoral rolls.A total of 92,81,189 out 92,88,188 SIR notices generated were delivered to voters, leaving 6,999 notices pending for delivery, as of Thursday. Hearings have already been concluded for 92,08,443 notices, while 78,108 first hearing and 1,636 rescheduled hearings have lapsed as of Thursday.As many as 2,59,22,684 voter names have been cleared for inclusion in the final voter list as of Thursday. Of these, 59,31,395 voters cleared for their logical discrepancies and 30,64,168 were SIR 2002 unmapped electors.

BRS challenges Revanth Reddy to hold 'Water Summit' instead of Global Summit

Hyderabad: BRS MLA Dr K Sanjay challenged Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy to organise a "Water Summit" instead of the Telangana Rising Global Summit in Hyderabad. He emphasised the need to focus on addressing drinking water and power shortages as well as farmers' irrigation needs before projecting Telangana as a major investment destination.Addressing a press conference at Telangana Bhavan on Friday, Sanjay said the government was talking about the Global Summit even as people struggled for drinking water and farmers faced severe irrigation shortages. "

Activists flag overloading, speeding by autos and maxi cabs in Telangana



Mancherial: Road safety activists allege that a significant number of auto-rickshaws and maxi cabs or seven-seater passenger vehicles are openly flouting road safety regulations due to lack of enforcement by officials concerned across the erstwhile Karimnagar, Nizamabad and Adilabad districts and several parts of Telangana, leading to frequent road mishaps and loss of innocent lives.

According to the activists, many drivers of these passenger vehicles overspeed and overload passengers in rural areas, tier-two cities and district centres. The tendency of the drivers can be attributed to the absence of inspections and enforcement of norms by officials of not only the Road Transport Department, but also the traffic police and other departments.The activists fault the officials concerned for failing to enforce road safety laws and prevent road accidents. They maintained that officials were negligent in inspecting vehicles to stop overloading, over-speeding and other safety violations due to staff crunch. The officials should strive hard to bring down mishaps by strictly implementing the norms, they observed."In the recent tragic Naspur road accident, the auto was being driven beyond permitted speed. The driver lost control, causing the vehicle to tilt before ramming into the lorry," Dr Neelam Sampath Kumar, founder of Safe Journey Road Foundation, a Karimnagar-based voluntary organisation, remarked.

Similarly, the drivers were also operating their vehicles far beyond the operational distance allowed under the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988. The vehicles are permitted to operate within the limits of the town or city. The officials are reportedly issuing permits to auto-rickshaws and seven-seaters without fixing the operational distance across several districts of Telangana.Road Transport officials admitted that they were unable to crack down on violators, citing pleas from drivers not to affect their livelihood. Some auto drivers allow passengers to sit with them while flouting norms, increasing accident risks. However, this practice and over-speeding were leading to a considerable number of road accidents, they concurred.The officials stressed that enforcement alone may not suffice. "Unless behavioural changes occur among the drivers, road accidents cannot be reduced. Not only the Road Transport Department, but NGOs, civil society organisations, police and Roads and Buildings Department should work together to create awareness among the drivers," they opined.Mancherial Road Transport Officer Gopi said that they would intensify checks to curb road safety violations. He informed that 179 cases were booked for overloading in Mancherial district alone from April 1, 2025 to March 31, 2026. The maximum permitted speed was 25 kmph in the district. The district accounted for 2,272 auto-rickshaws and 61 maxi cabs or seven-seaters.

'Rs 70 lakh to be paid': Seized note forces Karnataka PSC to scrap selection list



The Karnataka Public Service Commission (KPSC) Monday withdrew its additional selection list for motor vehicle inspector (MVI) posts after investigating agencies uncovered documents pointing to alleged malpractices.The alleged irregularities surfaced during a Criminal Investigation Department (CID) probe into recruitment malpractices involving 400 veterinary officer posts conducted on January 8 and 9 this year. During the investigation, CID officials uncovered documents linking suspects to the MVI recruitment process.

While the September 28 order did not explicitly detail the ongoing probe, it noted that the commission had decided to revise the final selection list during a meeting on August 20.The KPSC conducted an examination in December 2016 to fill 150 MVI posts, which drew thousands of applicants. After preparing an initial shortlist of 141 candidates, the KPSC released an additional selection list on April 16, 2025.According to an officer from the CID's Special Investigation Team (SIT), investigators seized loose sheets of paper during a search at the residence of T Prakash, a retired in-charge assistant secretary at the KPSC.One seized sheet contained the phrase "Barabekagiruvudu" (meaning "yet to be paid") under an MVI heading. The document listed eight names alongside a pending sum of Rs 70 lakh, accompanied by signatures or specific identification marks. The officer noted that several names appearing on the list matched candidates selected for MVI posts in April 2025."We have been investigating people who have worked at KPSC for an extended period. Our focus has primarily been on those involved in preparing the question papers, uploading the answer sheets, and creating the selection lists," said the officer.Investigators also suspect a middleman, Basavaraj Kannale, who allegedly demanded money from candidates in exchange for appointments.Prakash, 61, retired from service on May 31 last year. He has since approached the court seeking relief from the ongoing investigation. On August 28, the public prosecutor informed the court that the state could not immediately provide a detailed status update on the investigation. As the Enforcement Directorate (ED) is concurrently investigating the matter, the court directed that a report be sought from the central agency.

Koppal seer to open Mysuru Dasara 2026, first pontiff chosen under Congress regime

Sri Abhinava Gavisiddeshwara Swami, pontiff of the Gavisiddheshwara Mutt in Karnataka's Koppal, will inaugurate this year's Mysuru Dasara festival on October 11. He is the seventh seer to receive the honour in three-and-a-half decades and the first to do so under a Congress government.The seer will open the Dasara celebrations atop Chamundi Hills at 9.15 am.

In line with traditions, Koppal district in-charge minister Shivaraj Tangadagi has set up a delegation from Mysuru, including the deputy commissioner, superintendent of police, and other officers, to formally extend the invitation to the pontiff on October 3.Widely revered as 'Jala Rushi', the seer has spearheaded water conservation and lake rejuvenation campaigns across North Karnataka. Gavisiddheshwara Mutt, a Lingayat mutt, also provides food and education for free to over 5,000 underprivileged students in rural areas. The 49-year-old seer is the 18th pontiff of the mutt and is among the few who are also active on social media.The practice of inviting eminent personalities to inaugurate Dasara began in 1993 with actor Rajkumar. Over the years, the honour has gone to actors, farmers, rationalists, poets and freedom fighters.

Seers first inaugurated Dasara in 2007, when the H D Kumaraswamy-led coalition government invited Sri Balagangadharanatha Swami of Adichunchanagiri Mutt.The BJP carried forward the tradition and invited Shivakumara Swami of Siddaganga Mutt in 2008. In the subsequent years, the government invited Sri Ravishankar Guruji, D Veerendra Heggade, Sri Vishwesha Thirtha Swami and Sri Siddeshwara Swami.

When Siddaramaiah first became the chief minister



in 2013, the Congress government shifted back to selecting writers and cultural figures, including Chandrashekhara Kambar, Girish Karnad and Puttaiah. Sudha Murty inaugurated Dasara in 2018 under the JD(S)-Congress coalition. After the BJP returned to power, S L Bhyrappa, C N Manjunath, S M Krishna and President Droupadi Murmu were chosen, followed by Hamsalekha, Hampa Nagarajaiah and Banu Mushtaq between 2023 and 2025.The seer was in the news recently after a viral video showed him exiting the venue of a spiritual discourse event in Ballari in August. According to reports, while he was delivering a spiritual discourse, Karnataka minister Eshwar Khander arrived late to the event, diverting the attention of the devotees, who gathered around Khander and started cheering aloud with political slogans.The seer, who seemed embarrassed due to the chaos, expressed his displeasure and left the venue. He reportedly returned the donations and gifts that were given to the mutt.

Drought, failed crops, mounting loans: 2 farmer suicides in 2 days

Two farmers in Maharashtra died by suicide within 24 hours of each other last week, unable to repay loans after their crops failed for the second consecutive year. One was in Nashik's Niphad taluka and the other was in Beed's Ambajogai taluka.On September 25, as Ganesh immersion processions moved through towns and villages across the state, Satish Shivaji Kolgire, 38, was found dead on his farm in Radi village of Ambajogai taluka in Beed.

His elder brother Gajendra Kolgire found him around 7 am while visiting the farm. "He probably took the step during the night. Satish was under stress as his loans had mounted to Rs 7-8 lakh. His crops had failed due to drought and unseasonal weather, and he could not recover his investment or repay what he owed. No one ever thought he would take such an extreme step," Gajendra said.The family owns just one acre. Satish's wife, Vaishali Kolgire, said that as marginal landholders, the couple worked on other people's farms to make ends meet and pay for their children's education. Their son is in Class 6 and their daughter in Class 8. "We don't even have our own house, and the children are too young. The only hope is from the government now," she said.Vaishali said she had been with Satish until Thursday afternoon, helping him harvest the dried soybean crop. "Satish said that the same crop had been damaged last year by excess, unseasonal rain and this year by drought, and he was worried about the growing loans," she said. She returned home in the afternoon. Satish often stayed overnight on the farms where he worked to look after cattle, so Vaishali assumed he would do the same that night. He was found dead the next morning.Buddhiraj Sukale, Inspector at Ambajogai (Rural) police station, said, "He appears to have taken the step after his crop failed, and was unable to pay the loans. And no suicide note was found," he said.Nashik: a respected village figureA day later, on Saturday, Santu Rayate, 56, a farmer from Khadakmalegaon village in Niphad taluka of Nashik, allegedly consumed pesticide on his farm.

His son, Sham Rayate, 31, said the day began as usual with milking their buffalo. His father left home around 8:30 am, saying he would collect fuel from the petrol pump for the sprayer to be used on their cabbage crop. And then he went straight to the farm. When he did not respond to calls throughout the day, Sham went looking for him, while Santu was found unconscious after consuming pesticide in his farm. He was rushed to hospital but was declared dead.Sagar Kote, Assistant Police Inspector at Lasalgaon police station, said, "A note was found in Santu's pocket stating that he had consumed the toxic



chemical because he could not repay his loans. We have registered it as an accidental death and will submit the report to the Tehsildar-led committee for any government aid in cases of farmer suicides," he said.

The family owns 3.5 acres and grows soybean, grapes, tomato and cabbage, among other crops. "Most of our crops dried up this year due to the drought, while input costs, including labour, fertilisers and transport, have risen sharply," Sham said. Unseasonal rain and other weather events have also been damaging their crops. In February, the family planted watermelon at an investment of around Rs 1.5 lakh, but unseasonal rain and a pest attack destroyed most of it. "We realised just Rs 5,000," he said.Santu's borrowings, from friends, a cooperative society and fertiliser shops, had reached around Rs 12 lakh. His wife's wedding necklace has also been mortgaged. "Now I am completely blank. I don't know what to do or how to plan for the future," Sham said.Sham, who has a Commerce degree, said he looked for jobs in Pune without success. The only offer in Nashik paid Rs 10,000 a month, so he took up farming full-time.He also pointed out that Niphad taluka has been hit by the drought but is not on the government's list of drought-affected talukas. "Given the market volatility, the government must regulate the prices of fertilisers and other inputs, or announce a Minimum Support Price for every crop, so that farmers can expect at least some basic amount from the harvest," he said.Santu's cousin, Bhagirath Rayate, said Santu had earlier served as chairperson of the Khadakmalegaon Agriculture Cooperative Society and had helped several farmers. "With his calm and helpful nature, no one in the village would have thought he would take this extreme step. He ended his life because he could not pay the mounting loans. Our demand is that the government should take measures to help distressed farmers amid drought," he said. Santu is survived by his wife, son and daughter.

Bombay HC raps Maharashtra in Pune land case: '99% shareholder Parth Pawar didn't benefit?'

The Bombay High Court has granted anticipatory bail to suspended Pune City tehsildar Suryakant Yewale in the Mundhwa land deal case, but questioned the Maharashtra government, noting "serious allegations" against M/s. Amadea Enterprises LLP, where Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Sunetra Pawar's son and Rajya Sabha MP Parth Pawar holds 99 percent of the shares, while another director, Digvijay Patil, made an accused in the case, holds only 1 percent.

"Your stand as Investigating Officer (IO) [in the affidavit] is that the person who is having 99 percent shareholding is not responsible, and the one who is accused is the person having 1 percent shareholding. Is the person who is having 99% share, Mr Parth Pawar, not a beneficiary of this transaction?," Justice Madhav J Jamdar orally questioned after the state lawyer said the company concerned was not a partnership firm.Meanwhile, State Director General of Police (DGP) Sadanand Date, after detailed scrutiny of investigation papers, informed the HC that "there is a need for a more professional and detailed investigation". Therefore, instructions have been issued to Pune Commissioner of Police (CP) Amitesh Kumar to carry out further probe.The Mundhwa land deal caseThe FIR alleged that the land in Mundhwa, which fell under the category of Mahar Watan land and was leased to the Botanical Survey of India, was sold to Amadea Enterprises – without the mandatory approval of the state government.Parth Pawar is a director in Amadea Enterprises.

The high court on September 7 directed the



Maharashtra Director General of Police (DGP) and the IO to respond to Yewale's anticipatory bail plea after noting a submission, without specifically attributing it to any of the parties, that Parth Pawar had not been named as an accused for being "very highly influential".Senior advocate Harshad Nimbalkar, appearing for Yewale, argued allegations related to his July 1, 2025 order declaring applicants owners of the land and a July 14, 2025 letter intimating the Pune Sub-Divisional Officer on the land purchase. Even if the order was illegal, he said, it could be challenged, and the FIR did not allege that it was passed for "illegal gratification."Additional Public Prosecutor (APP) SV Gavand, appearing for the state, opposed the plea, saying custodial interrogation was required since allegations were "very serious".The HC noted Yewale had not misused interim protection from arrest earlier granted to him, therefore, it granted him pre-arrest bail on an assurance of his cooperation with the probe.

AP SEC dismisses reports of two-month delay in local body poll schedule

Vijayawada: Andhra Pradesh State Election Commission on Tuesday dismissed as false reports that another two months would be required for announcing the election schedule for the local body elections in the state.State Election Commissioner Anil Chandra Punetha stated that false and unauthenticated information was being circulated on social media and other communication platforms, stating that another two months would be required to announce the election schedule."The said information further claims that the Commission would proceed with the election process only after obtaining clearance in the court cases relating to electoral rolls and reservations. It is also being stated that even if the elections are delayed, internal arrangements for conducting elections have already been initiated, the State Election Commissioner said.He clarified that the information is false and is neither genuine nor issued by the Commission. The public, political parties and all other stakeholders are, therefore, advised not to believe, rely upon or circulate such unverified and unauthenticated information, he said.The Commission cautioned that the circulation of fabricated, misleading or unauthorised information in the name of the Commission may attract appropriate action under the applicable law.Any announcement regarding the election schedule will be made by the Commission through an official Press Conference / Press release.

Hit by El Niño, Devbhoomi Dwarka ends up as driest district in Gujarat

As the official date for the end of the southwest monsoon season passed on Wednesday (September 30), official data showed that the coastal district of Devbhoomi Dwarka recorded its worst rainy season in 10 years, receiving only 16.45% of its decadal average rainfall.This made Dwarka, a traditionally rainfall-surplus district, the driest district in Gujarat this monsoon season. The district, which was the wettest in the state in 2024, received 97% of its 10-year average rainfall the following year, and crashed to a deficit of 73% in 2026.The Kalyanpur taluka of Devbhoomi Dwarka district had reported the least rainfall in the state with only 7.86% of the 10-year average until September 30.Large deficits in two coastal districts2024 was a bumper rainfall year for the two coastal Saurashtra districts of Dwarka and Porbandar. This year has seen the opposite situation. Both districts have been put in the category of "large deficient" by the India Meteorological Department (IMD).According to data from the State Emergency Operation Centre (SEOC) Gandhinagar, as on September 28, 2024, Devbhoomi Dwarka had recorded 258.2% of the 10-year average, the biggest departure among all districts, and almost double the state average of 134.4% of the 10-year average.This year, the onset of the monsoon was delayed by nine days after its usual date of arrival on June 15, and Devbhoomi Dwarka district did not receive any rain until June 30, the date by which the southwest monsoon usually covers the entire state. It was raining in Surat in South Gujarat, but the monsoon had not moved further.In the southwest monsoon season of 2024, the district of Porbandar received 193.04% of the decadal average until September 28 of that year, much more than the departure across the state.This year, Porbandar received just 30.86% of the 10-year average until September 28, and no rain has been reported since. In 2025 Porbandar had received 102.16% of the decadal average, as opposed to the average statewide figure of 111.7%.NO SYSTEM: A K Das, the IMD's regional director in Ahmedabad, said the dry monsoon this year could be the result of a "no system" moving towards these districts. In the IMD's monsoon terminology, a 'no system' period refers to a time when there are no organised low-pressure weather systems such as a depression or a cyclonic circulation actively driving the monsoon.EL NINO: "Another reason could be the El Niño condition as a result of which there was a rainfall shift towards the eastern regions of the country," Das said.El Niño is a climate pattern characterized by the unusual warming of surface waters of the tropical central and eastern Pacific Ocean. An El Niño event became firmly established in the middle of this year, is currently rapidly intensifying, and is expected to persist through February 2027, according to the latest update from the Geneva-based World Meteorological Organization (WMO).The appearance of an El Niño is often correlated with a reduced rainfall year in the Indian subcontinent. The 2026-27 El Niño conditions are seen as having contributed significantly to the erratic and below-average rainfall during this year's southwest monsoon season.The all-India average rainfall deficit over the four-month rainy season that ended on September 30 was close to 13% compared with the long-period average (LPA). According to the IMD, Southern peninsular India recorded the biggest deficit (28%), followed by the Eastern and North-eastern Indian regions.Gujarat government officials have expressed concern over the rainfall departures seen in districts across the state. Overall, the state had received 810.32 mm of rain until September 30, or 89.16% of the normal.Eleven out of the 34 districts have fallen in the 20%-59% deficit range, while two districts have suffered deficits between 60% and 90%. Three talukas of Devbhoomi Dwarka district — Bhanvad, Dwarka, and Khambhalia — have received 24.3%, 20.4%, and 15.93% of their monsoon season average respectively.The districts of Patan, Mehsana, Gandhinagar, Ahmedabad, Surendranagar, Morbi, Botad, Anand, Mahisagar, Panchmahal, Narmada, Tapi, Dang, Amreli and Bhavnagar have received rainfall in the "normal" range.

Kuwait mandates digital salaries for private sector, including foreign workers



Dubai: Gulf countries have been moving fast to implement a transparent system in which wages are paid fully and without delay, and strengthen confidence between employees and employers. Kuwait is the latest country to adopt a mandatory digital wage payment system for the private sector.The stricter monitoring system is part of Kuwait's wider efforts to improve labour compliance, protect foreign workers, among whom Indians constitute the largest group, and reinforce the country's international reputation in labour standards and human rights protection.

The Kuwait Wage Payment System (KWPS) will process and monitor salary transfers to private sector employees through local banks and ensure that wages are disbursed electronically in a secure and reliable manner.

Officials emphasised that delayed or irregular salary payments would not be tolerated, as First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef instructed authorities to implement a transparent system, stating that "workers' wages are a red line", according to reports.The move comes as part of broader efforts to protect workers' rights and strengthen compliance among private sector employers. Under Article 57 of Kuwait's Private Sector Labour Law, employers with five or more workers are required to transfer wages directly into employees' bank accounts.The Kuwait Wage Payment System (KWPS), under the supervision of the country's central bank, will process and monitor salary transfers to private sector employees through local banks and ensure that wages are disbursed electronically in a secure and reliable manner. The Public Authority of Manpower oversees and monitors the level of compliance.

US questions Most-Favoured-Nation cornerstone of global trade



Milwaukee: The United States has challenged one of the foundational principles of the global trading system, arguing that unconditional Most-Favoured-Nation treatment can prevent countries from responding effectively to unfair and distortive trade practices.US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer on Wednesday (local time) put reform of the Most-Favoured-Nation, or MFN, principle at the centre of discussions as he opened the G20 Trade Ministerial in Milwaukee.

"Many consider MFN to be the cornerstone of the global trading system. But even a cornerstone should be examined from time to time to ensure it is still supporting the structure we need," Greer told trade ministers and delegates."The MFN principle, particularly when applied unconditionally, constrains economies' ability to effectively respond to distortive policies and adapt to changing market conditions," he said.The remarks represent a direct challenge by Washington to a principle that has long underpinned the multilateral trading system. Under MFN treatment, trade advantages extended to one trading partner are generally extended to other eligible trading partners.

Greer, however, argued that the existing architecture needed another look as governments confront non-market policies and other economic distortions. MFN is one of four workstreams selected by the United States for its G20 trade presidency. The other three are the weaponisation of food, structural excess capacity and production, and forced labour in global supply chains.Greer said the problems confronting international trade had persisted despite years of discussion. "For more than a decade, the global economy has been beset by macroeconomic imbalances, structural excess capacity and production, forced labour, and economic coercion. And yet, the response by the world's economies has been mostly talk," he said.He pointed to the G20's 2016 commitment to address excess industrial capacity. "It has been ten years—excess industrial capacity is an even greater distortion in the global economy now than it was then," Greer said.

The US trade chief said Washington had consequently turned to tariffs and bilateral agreements. "This is why, starting last year, the United States took action, using a combination of tariffs and bilateral deals to reduce our trade deficit, make resilient our supply chains, and bring fairness, reciprocity, and balance to the global economy," he said.Greer also pushed back against the argument that questions involving the international trading system should primarily be addressed at the World Trade Organization."Typically, and too often, when difficult questions and topics arise in the G20, many around the room suggest that such discussions belong elsewhere. That they should take place in Geneva at the WTO. But Geneva is just another city on a lake. And so is Milwaukee. So, let's talk candidly and constructively here," he said.

Greer placed the MFN debate within a broader US push to reconsider institutions and principles created during earlier periods of international economic cooperation."We are trying to meet 21st-century challenges with an architecture designed for another era," he said. "So what should we do when the original blueprint — in this case the ideas of 1947 or 1995 — no longer meet our needs?" he asked.Greer said reform did not necessarily mean discarding the existing system altogether. "Building for the future does not require us to discard everything we inherited from the past. But neither does it require us to leave old ideas unchanged," he said.The MFN debate has particular relevance for major trading economies, including India, as Washington presses G20 members to reconsider how equal tariff treatment operates alongside bilateral and preferential trade arrangements.India is participating in the Milwaukee ministerial through Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal as New Delhi and Washington separately pursue negotiations on a bilateral trade agreement.

Attacker's identity, motive remain unknown after flydubai flight to Israel escapes disaster

Jerusalem: The identity and motive of the Omani copilot who stabbed his captain on a flight to Israel, causing the plane to plummet dangerously and forcing it to land in Saudi Arabia, remained unknown on Thursday as investigators raced to learn more.Israeli passengers on the flydubai flight carrying 174 people from the United Arab Emirates to the Israeli city of Tel Aviv have described how the bloodied Indian captain managed to open the cockpit door to let them in before they grappled with the copilot and stabilised a descent so sharp that the plane's rudder was torn away.

"We felt helpless, suspended in midair, and I didn't know who to turn to. But it was all instinct to survive," one of the responders, Asaf Rajuan, said in a new statement shared by Israel's presidency.Saudi and UAE authorities have said little publicly beyond confirming that investigations were underway. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said the copilot was arrested.Capt. Smit Machchhar, widely praised as another hero of the flight, was reportedly in stable condition, the Indian Embassy in Saudi Arabia said overnight. The condition of the arrested copilot was not clear.In a CNN interview aired on Wednesday evening, Netanyahu said the attacker was an Omani national and was being interrogated in Saudi Arabia.US President Donald Trump told reporters at the White House that he and Netanyahu discussed the incident "at length" over the phone and that it seemed as though the copilot "was perhaps a terrorist or perhaps a whack job." Netanyahu said he spoke with the UAE's president, Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, who agreed that Israel would join the interrogation of the suspect.Israel's foreign ministry said the people on board were from Israel, India and the UAE. The US State Department said four passengers had American citizenship.

flydubai has said its flights to and from Israel would be suspended while an investigation takes



place.Netanyahu had warned in recent days of unspecified, heightened security threats. The country is a week away from the anniversary of the Hamas-led Oct. 7, 2023, attack on Israel, which has triggered the war in Gaza.In the chaos that unfolded about two and a half hours after leaving Dubai, the flight descended from 33,000 feet to 17,000 feet (around 10,000 metres to 5,100 metres) in about a minute, before making an erratic circle close to the Jordanian border and landing in the Saudi city of Tabuk about an hour later, according to Flightradar24, which identified the aircraft as a Boeing 737 Max 8.A person who heard the flight's communications with air traffic control described the plane being turned away by Saudi Arabia and Jordan before eventually landing in Tabuk, while passengers screamed in the background. The pilot's voice was trembling as he called "mayday" and said a hijacking was taking place.The air traffic control operators gave no reason for the refusals. The person who heard the communications spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to speak to the media.

Israel vows to get to root of flydubai attack, no motive yet determined

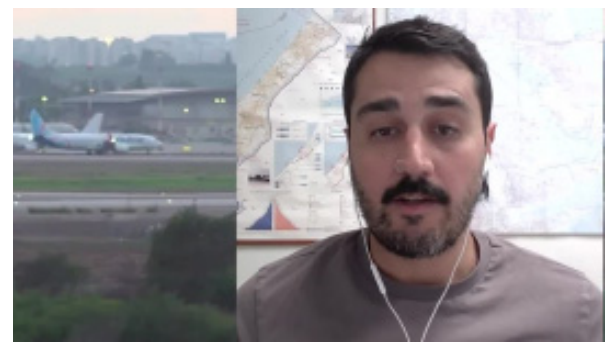
No motive has yet been determined for an apparent attempt to crash a passenger jet on its way ?to Israel, and an initial assessment suggested the co-pilot who stabbed the captain acted alone, Israeli officials said on Thursday.Disaster was averted on Wednesday's flydubai flight ?FZ1073 from Dubai to Tel Aviv after the wounded captain managed to unlock the cockpit door, allowing passengers to subdue the attacker and a reserve crew that had been aboard to land the plane in Saudi Arabia.

The Reuters Iran Briefing newsletter keeps you informed with the latest developments and analysis of the Iran war. Sign up here.Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the attacker was being investigated in Saudi Arabia, where the plane, with more than 170 people on board, landed safely at Tabuk airport. Netanyahu said he believed the attacker would be taken to the United ?Arab Emirates.

Two Israeli security officials said Israel's initial assessment is that the co-pilot was likely acting alone, though the investigation was still ongoing.Israel's envoy to the UAE, Yossi ?Shelley, told Reuters it was too early to draw conclusions and no motive had been determined. Another Israeli official said Israel was not receiving ?all the information it sought from the Saudis and that Israeli intelligence services, Mossad and Shin Bet, were investigating the incident as well.The Saudi government's media office didn't immediately respond to a ?request for comment.

The flight plunged nearly 14,000 feet in less than 30 seconds during the incident as it flew over Saudi Arabia on the journey from the United Arab Emirates to Israel.In ?an interview with Fox News host Sean Hannity, Netanyahu said Israel would be "following and possibly also participating in this investigation".Asked if there was any indication of Iranian involvement, Netanyahu said it was too early to say. "We'll get to the root of this attacker, whether he had accomplices, whether Iran was behind it. I think we'll find out very soon," Netanyahu said.There have been no official suggestions from Israel of Iranian involvement.The two Israeli security ?officials said Israel had not identified any Iranian involvement so far.Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz said on Wednesday that Israel's preliminary information indicated that the co-pilot aimed to crash the plane, describing ?him as a terrorist, though Netanyahu only described it as "a serious security incident".Item 1 of 3 A plane, carrying passengers who were on the FlyDubai aircraft bound for Israel from the United Arab Emirates, which was diverted to Saudi Arabia following an emergency signal, arrives at the Ben Gurion International Airport, in Lod, near Tel Aviv, Israel

[1/3]A plane, carrying passengers who were on the FlyDubai aircraft bound for Israel from the United Arab Emirates, which was diverted to Saudi Arabia following an emergency signal, arrives at the Ben Gurion International Airport, in Lod, near Tel Aviv, Israel, September 30, 2026. REUTERS/Ammar Awad Purchase Licensing Rights, opens new tabThe UAE has started investigations that ?are seeking to ?establish the circumstances and motives and determine "whether the incident was linked to any terrorist activity or purpose, or involved prior planning or direction", the UAE state news agency reported on Thursday.UAE judicial authorities have jurisdiction over the incident because the aircraft is registered in the UAE and flies under its flag, the statement said, adding that UAE law applies to crimes committed on board even if they occur outside the country's territory.Omani authorities have not commented on the report.Saudi Arabia has issued no statements on its investigations.Saudi ?Arabia's Tabuk airport said on Wednesday that both ?pilots had been hospitalised after sustaining injuries.Flydubai ?said on Wednesday that the underlying reasons for the event remained unknown and warned against "premature speculation".The incident heightened security fears in Israel weeks before Israelis vote in the first election since the Hamas-led October 7, 2023, attacks, with Israel's security figuring prominently in the campaigning.The US and Israel ?launched strikes against Iran in February, in a conflict that quickly spread to the Gulf and Lebanon, where Israel has been fighting Iran-backed militant ?group Hezbollah.



Netanyahu and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi have hailed the flight FZ1073 captain and Indian national Smit Machchhar as a hero. India's ambassador to the UAE met Captain Machchhar's family and briefed him on his health and recovery, the Indian consulate in the UAE said.Netanyahu, in his interview with Fox News, said Machchhar had apparently been stabbed or hit with an axe by the other pilot and had bled profusely.Israel ?has also ?lauded passengers who subdued the attacker.Yaniv Hayun, one of the men who incapacitated the attacker, described running to the ?cockpit as the plane nosedived."We pulled the assailant out, I pulled him out. After I pulled him out we took control of the plane, I pulled up the yoke (steering control of the plane), I straightened the plane out a bit," ?he said, talking to reporters upon his return to Israel on Wednesday.Recasts with assessments from Israeli officials in paragraphs 1, 4-5, 9Additional reporting by Eman Abouhassira and Jana Choukeir in Dubai, Kanishka Singh in Washington; Writing by Tom Perry; Editing by Aidan Lewis

Amazing example of how we can fight terrorism together: Israel envoy hails Capt Smit Machchhar

New Delhi: Israel's Ambassador to India, Reuven Azar, on Thursday hailed Captain Smit Machchhar, the Indian pilot of flydubai flight FZ1073, who was injured after helping avert a major in-flight crisis, terming it an "amazing example" of how the people of the two nations can fight terrorism together and not surrender to terrorists.

In an interview with IANS, Reuven Azar said he is not aware whether Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Israeli counterpart, Benjamin Netanyahu, have spoken about the incident, but added that the counter-terrorism agencies of the two nations remain in close contact.On how he sees the role of the Indian pilot and passengers in this incident, he said, "…We know that in order to fight terrorism, it is not enough for governments to work together. It is essential that people work together as well, as we saw yesterday. I think this is an amazing example of how we can determine our destiny by being involved, by not surrendering to terrorists and by working together at a personal level. And this is exactly what happened yesterday."

On Wednesday, the co-pilot of a flydubai flight, which was carrying over 170 passengers, tried to sabotage the aircraft and later stabbed Machchhar, who was trying to prevent him from doing so. At the time, the Boeing 737, cruising at about 34,000 feet, began dropping at roughly 23,000 feet per minute before reaching about 15,600 feet.However, Machchhar fought back the co-pilot, resisted him, and opened the cockpit door so that passengers and crew members could overpower him.

When asked whether PM Modi and PM Netanyahu



have spoken about the incident, he responded, "I am not aware that the leaders have spoken to each other at this point in time. I think we continue to be in close contact. Our counter-terrorism agencies are in constant dialogue, and I'm sure that whether it is at the highest level, or at the medium and operational levels, we will share information and continue working together to create a situation in which we do everything needed to fight terrorism."Earlier, Azar said he was praying for Captain Machchhar's recovery and described him as an experienced and gifted pilot. "Together with Israel, India, UAE, I pray for the life of Captain Smit Machchhar, the experienced and gifted hero Indian pilot of flydubai flight FZ1073. His courage & the courage of other Israeli & Emirati passengers and crew members saved the lives of 180 souls," Azar posted on X.Azar also used the occasion to call for unity against terrorism, declaring: "United against terrorism".

Attackers open fire, kill 7 on small passenger bus in Syria

Damascus: At least seven people were killed late Wednesday when attackers opened fire on a small passenger bus in northwestern Syria, state media reported.Four people were wounded in the gun attack near the Masyaf Bridge in the western Syrian province of Homs late Wednesday, state-run SANA news agency reported.

The motive was not immediately clear and no group claimed responsibility. Syrian authorities did not name any individuals or groups as suspects.The victims were employees from a company returning home from work, authorities said.First-responders transported the victims to hospitals around the city of Homs as security forces began investigating the scene of attack, where blood stains and broken glass were visible inside the bus.

"We view this cowardly attack as an attempt to undermine the security of Homs and destabilise the secu-



rity we have worked to consolidate through various measures across the governorate," Homs Internal Security Forces Commander Brigadier General Bassem Mohammad Shaaban told SANA.

Trump says Iran 'virtually destroyed', claims war will end 'very quickly'

Washington: US President Donald Trump has said that the United States would win its war with Iran "very quickly", claiming Tehran's military capabilities had been severely degraded and Washington had established "virtually total control" of the strategically vital Strait of Hormuz.

Trump made the remarks on Wednesday (local time) during a White House event marking National Hispanic Heritage Month, where he ranged across foreign policy issues including Iraq, Iran and Venezuela before turning to the theme of the celebration."Likewise in Iran, we have been there for six months with 18 killed. By the way, one is too many. But they lost 4,500. We lost 18," Trump said.

"And we have very soon — you'll see things happening very soon," he added.Trump claimed Iran had suffered extensive military and economic damage."But we have a nation that's been virtually destroyed. Their economy is no good. They have 300 per cent-plus inflation," he said."Their navy is gone. Their air force is gone. Their anti-aircraft equipment is gone."

Trump then turned to the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most important energy shipping routes."The last week in the Hormuz Strait, which we have almost total control — I would say total, but every once in a while they'll drop a mine in there and disrupt things a little bit, but we have virtually total control of the Hormuz Strait," he said.Trump also claimed that oil movements through the waterway had reached a record level over the past three days."And in fact, in the last three days more oil has come out of the Hormuz Strait than at any time in the history of the Hormuz Strait," he said."I'm not talking about since the war. I'm saying at any time in history. It's been — it's been pent up."Trump did not provide figures to support the claim during his remarks.The President suggested that the conflict with Iran could soon reach a decisive stage, but did not spell out what actions the United States planned next

EDITORIAL

The thirst behind the cloud—Karnataka's data centre policy must put water sustainability first

Karnataka is making efforts to attract the next generation of digital infrastructure. The State's newly approved Sustainable Data Centre Policy 2026-31 aims to meet a cumulative data centre IT load of 1 GW by 2031, accounting for 10-12 per cent of India's total data centre IT load. The policy has a budget of around Rs 1,300 crore and explicitly includes renewable energy, advanced cooling, water management and water-resource efficiency.This matters because the next wave of the digital economy will involve more than software and servers. It will be powered by electricity, land, connectivity and, increasingly, water. But the question is not whether Karnataka should attract data centres. It is how the State will ensure that its digital vision does not exacerbate its water vulnerability.

All searches, cloud services, streaming platforms and AI applications rely on physical computing infrastructure. Servers generate heat, making cooling essential. Depending on the technology and operating conditions, cooling can require significant quantities of water. The issue is becoming increasingly significant with the rise of AI and demand for high-performance computing.The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology says India's data centre capacity increased from 375 MW in 2020 to over 1,500 MW by 2025. Newer technologies, such as direct-to-chip liquid cooling, immersion cooling and adiabatic cooling, are also being emphasised by the government as a means to save water and energy.

No single number can accurately reflect the water footprint of all data centres. Water consumption depends on factors such as climate, cooling technology, server density, and how they are used. A new metric gaining importance is Water Usage Effectiveness (WUE). Karnataka's new policy proposes monitoring WUE and Power Usage Effectiveness (PUE). That's a good start. However, for these metrics to be meaningful, they must also inform decisions about where and how the data centres are built.The timing matters. Karnataka is simultaneously striving for accelerated digitalisation and grappling with recurring water stress. Reports indicate that the State has issued its 17th drought declaration in 25 years, underscoring the persistent water concerns across several areas. This is a planning problem that cannot be solved by asking the data centres to use less water. A facility could be highly water-efficient yet still be located in a water-stressed area. By contrast, a site that has more available water resources, renewable energy resources and connectivity could present a more sustainable long-term option.Water-aware site selection, efficiency benchmarks, treated wastewater use, resilience standards and updated water-resource maps can help Karnataka balance digital expansion with water security as it targets 1 GW of data centre IT load by 2031That is why location should be an integral part of sustainability policy. To enable site selection, the new policy proposes mapping resource availability, including land, electricity, water and connectivity. It also envisages the development of sustainable data-centre zones and parks. If implemented in an open and fair manner, this could prove to be one of the most critical components of the policy.Karnataka government's push to diversify data centres beyond Bengaluru provides a chance to reimagine the conventional patterns of data centre expansion. Changing location should not be a mere transfer of congestion from one city to another.

Eye on boosting infrastructure, Noida Authority nod for AI city-business park

Noida Authority nod for AI city-business park, Noida AI city-business park, Noida AI city-cum-business park, AI city-cum-business park, Uttar Pradesh Private Business Park Development Scheme, Noida, Uttar Pradesh Cabinet, delhi news, India news, Indian express, current affairsThe plan, which is based on the study of industrial and commercial activities and traffic management, the official says intends to improve the efficiency of goods transport and distribution, and reduce logistics costs, traffic congestion.

In an effort to attract multinational corporations, an AI city-cum-business park will soon be set up in Noida, after the Noida Authority on Wednesday adopted the Uttar Pradesh Private Business Park Development Scheme, 2025, officials said.This comes a day after the Uttar Pradesh cabinet on Tuesday approved setting up a robotics and artificial intelligence park in Greater Noida.

On Wednesday, in its 224th board meeting the authority granted in-principle approval to the Request for Proposal (RFP) for selecting a master developer to develop an AI city-cum-Business Park in Noida, through a private sector participation. At least 50 per cent of the built-up area of the park is required to be reserved for IT and knowledge-based services, officials said.According to officials, the initiative aims to foster integrated, and ready-to-operate, business infrastructure in order to attract multinational corporations, IT firms, and innovation-driven enterprises through a plug-and-play infrastructure.

"The project will include facilities for AI, Global Capability Centres, IT services, research, start-ups and skill development. It will follow the Design, Build, Finance, Operate and Transfer (DBFOT) model," the official said, adding that the ownership of the land will remain with the Noida Authority.The concession period for the park will be 45-years which may be extended by another 45 years, the official said, adding that the contractor will be selected through competitive e-bidding.Officials also said that Sector 147 will house Global Capability Center hub and Grade-A office space on around 68,000 square meters of land of institutional IT/ITES, for which permission was granted to publish the land allotment plan.

Meanwhile, an integrated automobile complex on 12,596.64 square meters of commercial land in Sector 105 will be developed soon.

Jamia turns 106 with no celebrations as students' union protest enters 18th day



On its 106th Foundation Day, Jamia Millia Islamia had no flag hoisting, no chief guest and no speeches. Instead, more than 100 students remained camped inside the Gulistan-e-Ghalib compound and the Political Science building, as their protest demanding the restoration of the students' union entered its 18th day on Thursday.On October 22, the university cancelled its Foundation Day celebrations and the Talimi Mela, scheduled from October 29 to November 1, citing the protests.Outside the campus, police announcements urging people not to gather played on a loop, with prohibitory orders under Section 163 in force. Inside, students went ahead with plans to mark the day on their own terms: a flag hoisting, speeches, the national anthem, an address by the hunger strikers and a press conference. A call for a mass hunger strike was to follow.Around 10 am, a delegation from the university administration met the protesters. Students described the meeting as hopeful, saying the professors had listened to their demands and taken them to the Vice-Chancellor.Haneena, a law student, said, "They asked us to put the celebration on hold. They have gone to the Vice-Chancellor with our demands. Let's see what comes out of it."'

Founded on October 29, 1920, in Aligarh, during the Non-Cooperation Movement, Jamia marks its Foundation Day each year with an NCC guard of honour, flag hoisting and an address by a chief guest. Last year, Union Minister Kiren Rijiju was the chief guest.The Talimi Mela usually follows, which showcases Jamia's cultural and educational heritage and typically draws thousands of people from the university and the surrounding neighbourhood.For students, the cancellation goes beyond the loss of a celebration. "Foundation Day is a big part of our heritage," said Haneena. "And they have cancelled it. It shows how much pressure they are under."She also accused the administration of trying to wear down the protesters by moving classes and practicals online."They are using every means to pressure us, and it is not working. They moved classes online, practicals too. How will science students and architecture students give practicals online? It is obnoxious. They say one thing one day and do another the next. It is very unpredictable," she said.The university had decided to extend online classes until November 24 and conduct end-of-semester examinations in online mode, stating that the situation on its campus is "not conducive for academic environment".On Wednesday, the Registrar's office, in an order, stated that odd-semester teaching would continue online until November 24, while practicals, fieldwork, project viva and minor project viva would be held online from November 25 to 30. Theory end-of-semester examinations will be conducted online from December 1 to 24 that will be followed by winter vacation from December 25 to January 12. Even-semester classes are scheduled to resume on January 13, 2027.Earlier in the morning, women students had taken out a march. Through a broken gate near the hostels, students continued to move in and out of the campus. At the protest site, small groups gathered beneath the Ghalib statue, sitting under yellow and blue tents or talking in the garden.Beyond the compound, the campus was nearly empty. Students walked out of the hostels with bags and trolleys, heading home.

Why Gurugram's plan for a private power distributor was approved, then halted



Plans to introduce a private power distributor in Gurugram and Nuh have been put on hold after the Haryana Electricity Regulatory Commission (HERC) on Wednesday decided "not to proceed further" with rolling out a distribution licence to Eleven Power Private Limited.The freeze comes just nine days after HERC granted the 25-year licence on October 19. The move had triggered a strike by electricity employees, who feared it could draw consumers and revenue away from the state discom, threaten government jobs, and lead to higher electricity tariffs.Dismissing the firm's plea for a hearing, HERC, in a three-page order Wednesday, noted that with the state government issuing binding policy directions barring parallel licences, "no adjudicatory exercise is left for the Commission to undertake".The Commission acted on an October 26 directive from the Energy Department issued under Section 108 of the Electricity Act, 2003. The provision empowers state governments to issue binding directions on policy matters involving "public interest", with Section 108(2) specifying that the state's assessment of what constitutes public interest is legally final.Approved by Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini, the government halted the rollout citing the state-wide strike by power utility staff and revenue risks if state-run discoms lost high-paying consumers.

Two views of 'public interest'In the 800-page official record leading up to the initial approval — which included HERC's 457-page approval order and a 282-page report by an Independent Expert Committee — public interest was defined as ending territorial monopolies, enabling consumer choice, and clearing a chronic power connection backlog.The three-member panel, headed by retired senior IAS officer Alok Nigam, held that under the Electricity Act, public interest cannot merely mean protecting incumbent utilities' commercial comfort.Parliament intended parallel licensing to promote competition, the panel noted, adding that consumer migration and revenue impacts are foreseeable outcomes to be addressed through regular annual tariff revisions, not by blocking market entry.It also rejected union claims under Section 133, ruling that service protections apply only to utility restructuring, not competition.The HERC also cited a large backlog of pending electricity connections. Official records showed that, as of October 2025, 1.29 lakh applications involving a combined load of 2,412.95 MW were pending across Haryana. The backlog had remained virtually unchanged over six months.It noted that timely connection is an essential service, making alternative supply critical.The Energy Department, however, wrote to the HERC, stating: "The state government is gravely concerned about the impact of the grant of a parallel licence on consumers… and its impact on public interest… The state government, as a matter of policy and to protect the interest of consumers generally in the State… hereby directs the Commission not to create, operationalise or effectuate a parallel distribution licence anywhere in the State of Haryana."For the government, public interest meant averting employee unrest and shielding discom finances.Subhash Lamba, vice-president of the Electricity Employees Federation of India (EEFI), called it "a historic and unprecedented victory of the strike carried out through the broad unity of electricity employees and engineers, backed by widespread support from the general public, farmers, workers, and employees".

Lamba added that the joint front will now intensify its movement against the Union Power Ministry's moves to "list power corporations on the stock market, introduce smart metering, and establish the Agri DISCOM," and raise these issues with the Power Minister on November 3.Eleven Power indicated it will appeal. "We hold both the Commission and the state government in the highest regard, and we will continue to engage with them in the same respectful and constructive manner… We will pursue the remedies available to us under law," a spokesperson said.

Delhi Air Force sports complex shut, outgoing chief's golfing-out ceremony cancelled

The Air Force Sports Complex (AFSC), located inside the Air Force Station on Lok Kalyan Marg, was closed until further orders on Wednesday, leaving hundreds of staff facing an uncertain future and prompting concerns among serving and retired personnel over the loss of a sports and social hub.The closure also led to the cancellation of outgoing Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal A P Singh's golfing-out ceremony on Wednesday. The informal tradition brings serving senior officers and retired personnel together to play a round of golf with the outgoing chief.The development comes against the backdrop of a series of eviction orders issued by the Centre to high-profile institutions in Lutyens' Delhi, including the Delhi Gymkhana Club, Delhi Race Club, Jaipur Polo Ground and part of the Sujan Singh Park complex this year, citing the requirement of the land for public purpose.Spread over around 30 acres, the AFSC houses a golf course, swimming pool, basketball court, three restaurants, a meeting room and a party hall, among other facilities. It has around 5,000 members. The golf course is among the oldest in the Capital.According to sources, the Indian Air Force (IAF) has asked the relevant authorities to reconsider the decision, pointing out that the land houses not just a golf course but also training and sports facilities for Agniveers. "A decision like this would affect the morale of personnel, particularly those who trained here regularly. The authorities have been requested to reconsider their decision," a source said.Several members and the staff told The Indian Express that the AFSC administration received a communication on Monday regarding the closure. "Greetings of the day! The Complex will remain closed on 28 Oct from 5.00 am till further orders," read the message."On Tuesday, the golf course was closed, but restaurants were open to members, and on Wednesday, even the golf course was shut," a member said.A retired IAF officer and a member of the club, who has been playing at the course for nearly 40 years, said, "When you retire, especially as a senior citizen, such spaces become extremely important because you want somewhere to go to, people to meet and a community to be part of.""Since the course was inside the Air Force station, one could also visit the clinic to consult a doctor or go to the canteen. All these facilities were part of the larger ecosystem that we had access to," the member added.Another member expressed concern over the possible implications of the closure for the armed forces. "Many veterans who live in NCR come to play here and have a meal with their former colleagues. Serving personnel also come here with their families. These are among the few perks of serving in the armed forces. Why are you taking them away?" he asked.The closure has left the future of hundreds of employees uncertain. Members and staff estimated that more than 300 people could be affected. The complex had three restaurants, two of which were operating on the premises, according to the retired officer."While there were rumours that the Sports Complex would be shut down, we didn't believe it. Day before yesterday, we were suddenly told that we should not come to work," a staff member who works as a caddy on the golf course said.Caddies are paid according to the number of players they assist, earning around Rs 800-1,000 a day, another staff member said. "If they had informed us 10 days ago, or even a week ago, we could have at least started to look for work. What will we do now? How will we find new work so quickly?" the caddy said.The closure is part of a wider government exercise to reclaim land parcels in the vicinity of Lok Kalyan Marg used for defence golf and sports facilities. In August, the Land and Development Office (L&DO) under the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)

Demolition of Delhi Race Course mosque near PM's house paused for 4 weeks



The Race Course Masjid in Delhi, a Waqf-notified and heritage property, got some respite on Thursday after the Land and Development Office (L&DO) told the Delhi High Court that it won't take any coercive action against the mosque for four weeks.The masjid is located inside the Race Course Club, which occupies around 53 acres near the Prime Minister's residence at 7, Lok Kalyan Marg. There are apprehensions that the mosque will be demolished due to the Centre's ongoing reclamation of land parcels in the surrounding area.

The area, which comprises the Delhi Race Club, Jaipur Polo Ground, as well as slum dwellings of nearly 700-odd families which now stand demolished, is in the process of being repossessed by the L&DO under the Centre's Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA).Justice Anish Dayal recorded the statement made by the Centre, through standing counsel Ashish Dixit, on the instruction of deputy land and development officer Kunal Bhaskar, in its order. The Centre informed Justice Dayal that the L&DO will decide a representation by the Delhi Waqf Board in four weeks time, and until then it won't take any coercive action against the mosque.However, the Centre opposed allowing access to the mosque, citing "ongoing demolition work at the site".Dixit said that "it is not safe to allow ingress and egress… active demolition is going on, it won't be safe for all people, we have also restricted access to the temple" neighbouring the mosque.

The court was dealing with a plea by a worshipper at the mosque, Syed Ahmed Saud, represented by advocate M Sufian Siddiqui, who was seeking unrestricted access to the mosque as well as protection against demolition.Siddiqui objected to Dixit's submission, stating that demolition work had been completed.Justice Dayal, however, refused to interfere, remarking, "We are not going to allow it. If somebody gets injured during the demolition, who is going to pay compensation? Let it go, let them decide, it's a fair submission (by the Centre), we can't force them to give access for prayers."The court, however, directed the Centre to file a status report along with photographs by the next date of hearing on December 16.The Centre also informed the court that it will only be adjudicating on the Delhi Waqf Board's representation of October 19, and not Saud's plea, reasoning that it will open a "Pandora's box" where several other worshippers may then start approaching the L&DO.

Dixit added, "The Delhi Waqf Board and the department (L&DO) is trying to work out a solution, we don't want multiple worshippers approaching."

The two representationsThe Waqf Board, on October 19, wrote to the L&DO seeking that the mosque's electricity and water connections which were disconnected on October 7 be restored.The representation, however, only highlighted the apprehension of demolition. It said the mosque is Waqf-notified and a grade-II heritage structure and requested that "the matter may kindly be examined on priority", without explicitly seeking protection against demolition.Saud's representation to the L&DO on October 22 had sought that access to the masjid be restored. He also requested that "demolition, dismantling, sealing, dispossession, forcible exclusion, structural alteration or other coercive action" not be taken against the masjid.

Delhi man asks vendor for extra chhole, stabbed to death



An argument over extra chhole ended with a food stall owner allegedly killing a 35-year-old customer by stabbing him multiple times in Outer Delhi's Paschim Vihar area, the Delhi Police said.

An argument over extra chhole ended with a food stall owner allegedly killing a 35-year-old customer by stabbing him multiple times in Outer Delhi's Paschim Vihar area, the Delhi Police said.According to police officers, the incident took place on Sunday night, when Sandeep, a driver at a private company, went to the Sunday market in Jwalapuri area from his home in Nihal Vihar with his friends.After eating at a Chhole Bhature stall, Sandeep got some packed for his two children, a boy aged 4 and a girl aged 10 years.Sandeep was, however, not satisfied with the amount of chhole packed, and asked the owner of the food stall, Chintu Gupta, to add more.

"The two got into an argument, which eventually got physical. Chintu allegedly stabbed Sandeep. He was arrested on Monday," said the police officer.According to another officer, Sandeep was stabbed seven times, including thrice in his stomach.Sandeep's father Brijesh Singh, who reached the stall, rushed his son to Sanjay Gandhi Memorial hospital. He was finally admitted to Maharaja Agrasen Hospital in Punjabi Bagh. On Wednesday, Sandeep died."Murder charges have been added to the case," said a senior police officer.Standing outside the hospital mortuary, Brijesh told media persons that he found his son lying in a pool of blood near the food stall."He told me that five to six people had stabbed him. I don't know why the police has arrested just one man. Now, in this age, I have to shoulder his body," he saidPolice, however, said the victim was declared unfit to give a statement.

500 kg, Rs 3000 crore, 5 Pak nationals: Massive drug bust near Lakshadweep



A joint operation between the Gujarat Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) and the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) has led to a massive drug bust. About 526 kg of narcotics, including heroin and methamphetamine, worth Rs 3,000 crore, have been seized from a dhow crewed by five Pakistan nationals. The seizure took place west of the Lakshadweep Islands The Coast Guard said in a statement on Wednesday, "Executing precise sea-air surveillance based on actionable intelligence, Bharatiya Tatrakshak (ICG) assets maintained unyielding tracking before initiating hot pursuit, neutralizing the target, and boarding a suspicious Iranian dhow on September 25.

"The high-seas operation resulted in the seizure of approximately 526 kilograms of high-grade contraband — comprising heroin and methamphetamine — valued at over Rs 3,000 crore in international markets, alongside the swift apprehension of five Pakistani nationals operating the vessel," the statement said. The dhow, its crew, and the seized contraband were sent to Mumbai with an armed escort for joint interrogation and multi-agency legal proceedings.The intelligence leading to the seizure was gathered by the Gujarat ATS earlier this month. On September 10, Inspector JM Patel received information that a Nigerian national held a meeting in Ahmedabad through an intermediary. During the meeting, an order was reportedly placed for approximately 500 kg of methamphetamine and heroin, which was to be transported by an Iranian dhow named "Azad". The consignment was to be delivered to a Tamil Nadu-based boat in Indian waters in the Mumbai–Kochi–Lakshadweep region, the ATS said.ATS, Drug Bust Five Pak nationals, all of them from Peshawar, have been taken into custody

The ATS statement said, "An advance payment towards the value of the consignment had already been sent through the hawala channel, while the remaining amount was to be transferred through hawala following delivery of the drugs. As the consignment was of a large quantity, a conspiracy had been planned to unload it from the boat along the Tamil Nadu coastline and subsequently transport it in smaller quantities through other vehicles for delivery to a Nigerian national in Punjab."It added, "A wanted accused in India and a drug smuggler named Haji Salim, through their associates, had planned to send the consignment aboard the Iranian boat Azad within approximately 15 to 20 days. The boat's Tandel (boatswain) was reportedly to use a Starlink device."The Gujarat ATS then contacted the Indian Coast Guard Headquarters in Delhi. A team under ATS SP K Siddharth was dispatched to Kochi in Kerala. The Gujarat ATS team met senior Coast Guard officers at Kochi and formed a joint team. The team onboard a Coast Guard vessel carried out surveillance and checks of suspicious boats in the area.An ATS official told the media on Wednesday, "During this operation, on September 25, the boat identified through the intelligence input was located in Indian territorial waters west of Lakshadweep. The Coast Guard vessel intercepted and stopped the boat. Thereafter, ATS and Coast Guard officers boarded and searched the vessel. The suspicious boat was subsequently brought to Mumbai."Five Pakistani nationals were found aboard the Iranian boat. They have been identified as Mohammad Yakub Balochi, Shakirullah, Faridullah, Ahmed Khan, and Wahidullah Khan, all residents of Peshawar, Pakistan. They were found with approximately 526 kg of heroin and methamphetamine.The ATS investigators said, "During preliminary questioning, it was revealed that the boat named Azad had departed from Konarak, Iran, and that the consignment had been transferred to it from another boat that had arrived from Gwadar, Pakistan. Further questioning revealed that the seized consignment comprised approximately 400 kg of methamphetamine and 126 kg of heroin." Further legal proceedings are underway and a case is being registered at Gujarat ATS in this connection.

After Chandigarh college's 'dress decently' notice, pushback from students



A notice asking women residents of a college hostel in Chandigarh to wear "proper, decent and appropriate attire" has triggered criticism, with students questioning why the college is regulating women's clothing instead of strengthening security.Issued on September 29, the Chandigarh College of Architecture notice instructed all women residents to follow the dress advisory while visiting the hostel mess and elsewhere within the premises."All residents are advised to comply strictly with the above instructions and maintain the decorum and discipline of the hostel," the notice said.It did not define what would constitute "proper", "decent" or "appropriate" attire.Principal Sangeeta Bagga, however, said the notice was a routine precaution and was not prompted by any specific incident. "I don't know why it has been made an issue. It is for the children's safety. There are a lot of outsiders on the campus at present as a festival celebrating Le Corbusier is underway. Freshers and other visitors are also coming to the campus," Bagga told "It is not associated with any incident. It is just that outsiders are here and we have to be careful," she said.Asked why the advisory was issued specifically to women residents, Bagga said the same instructions would also be issued for the boys' hostel.The hostel subsequently issued a similar advisory to male residents on Wednesday, following criticism of the notice to women.

'Why our clothes?'

Some students, however, questioned the rationale behind the advisory and said the focus should instead be on ensuring safety within the campus."Loose T-shirts and shorts — how can these be called indecent? If the concern is safety, why should a woman's clothes become the focus? Men openly urinate in public spaces, but that is rarely treated as a question of 'decency'," a student said on condition of anonymity."Why are women repeatedly asked to dress 'decently' for their own safety? If a woman is attacked in a park, will the answer be that she should stop going to parks? If something happens in a hostel, will she be told to stop wearing what she likes? Safety should be about preventing misconduct, not policing women's clothes," another student said."The notice is trying to control girls instead of addressing men who can't behave," a student, who did not want to be named, said."If students aren't safe inside the mess and campus, then what's the point of keeping security?" another asked.

How 2 Indians used fake trucking firms to steal millions in US cargo theft

US cargo theftArshpreet Singh and Vikramjeet Singh have been convicted in a US cargo theft conspiracy.A United States federal jury Tuesday convicted two Indian nationals of participating in a sophisticated cargo theft conspiracy that stole freight valued at least $2 million from shippers across Southern California and Texas.Arshpreet Singh, 28, of Sacramento, and Vikramjeet Singh, 31, of Fontana, were found guilty of one count of conspiracy to commit theft from interstate or foreign shipments, according to a release from the US Attorney's Office, Central District of California.

Arshpreet Singh was also convicted of one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud. The jury acquitted Vikramjeet Singh of the wire fraud conspiracy charge.According to evidence presented during a seven-day trial in Los Angeles federal court, the defendants and their co-conspirators operated from March 2024 to June 2025. They purchased legitimate trucking companies or fraudulently used existing ones to bid on authentic shipping contracts. Once awarded the jobs, they took possession of the cargo but never delivered it to the intended destinations.

The stolen loads frequently consisted of high-value consumer electronics such as televisions and laptops, along with appliances and other goods. Additional items taken during the conspiracy included vacuums, LED lights, shoes and tyres.Thefts occurred at warehouses and facilities in Fontana, Vernon, Santa Fe Springs, Perris, City of Industry, Long Beach, Compton, Commerce, Pico Rivera, Chino and Moreno Valley, as well as in Grand Prairie, Texas.Prosecutors detailed specific transactions that advanced the scheme. In March 2024, Arshpreet Singh met with the owner of Texas-based Z&F Transportation LLC and purchased the company for approximately $22,000. Later that month, a co-conspirator acting on



behalf of the firm picked up a load of televisions in Fontana that was never delivered to its intended destination in Florida.In May 2024, co-conspirators acquired Skyways Trucking LLC and used it to steal laptops, televisions, solar panels and other merchandise.

The conspirators booked loads through brokers, including Uber Freight, collected them, and then diverted them.Several years in prison likelyUS District Judge Anne Hwang scheduled sentencing for both men on January 20, 2027. Arshpreet Singh faces a statutory maximum of 20 years in federal prison. Vikramjeet Singh faces a maximum of five years.The FBI's Inland Violent Crime Suppression Task Force, IRS Criminal Investigation, the Fontana Police Department, the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department, the Riverside County Sheriff's Department, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, and the Fort Worth Police Department in Texas investigated the case.Assistant US Attorneys Stephen Chang of the Transnational Organized Crime Section and Lloyd Masson of the General Crimes Section are prosecuting the case.

Delhi court staffer faces 20-day salary cut for 'misconduct', retired judge steps in

court stafferKalpana was assigned to work in the Reader's place so the entire workload pertaining to 10,000 cases fell on the two Assistant Ahlmads. (AI-generated image/Gemini)Kalpana, 23, who has been working at Delhi's Rohini Courts since last December as an Assistant Ahlmad, found herself facing a penalty for alleged misconduct that would cost her 20 days' salary.In an order dated September 25, Judicial Magistrate First Class Reetika Jain, in whose court Kalpana is posted, wrote that the Ahlmad had not performed her duties and had issued wrong summons, wrong non-bailable warrants and had created false reports among other lapses.

Then the Ahlmad challenged the order, through a retired judge.Advocate Manmohan Sharma, a former Principal Judge (Family Court), argued before the Sessions Court that the Magistrate court order was a "gross violation of the principle of natural justice". Sharma contended that the court staff was not given an opportunity to be heard to comment on the allegations.On September 26, Officiating Principal District and Sessions Judge (Northwest, Rohini) Mukesh Kumar Gupta stayed the order after hearing detailed arguments from Sharma.Sharma retired recently and started his law practice a year ago.The magistrate court orderIn her order, Judge Jain had detailed the Ahlmad's "misconduct"."The misconduct has been shown by the said official with regard to non-performance of her duties including wrong issuance of summons/NBWs… creation of false reports on the judicial record… issuance of processes without any direction in the ordersheets… selective issuance of processes, non issuance of production warrants including in Session triable matters."According to the judge, this "non-performance" was seen in over 121 cases. "… multiple times, various matters had to be adjourned, causing inconvenience to the parties concerned… [It] has led to wastage of the court's time, resources, [and] hampered disposal of matters including oldest 20 matters of this court, in which shortest dates were given, defeating the whole purpose," the Judge said in her order.The Magistrate also said the alleged misconduct had disrupted the court's work. "… it is pertinent to mention that the undersigned is holding an extremely heavy court, having pendency of more than 10,000 pending matters…," she added.The Magistrate also said the Ahlmad had not replied to any show cause notices issued to her. "It has been observed



that the court staff concerned has made it a habit to disobey the orders of the court and is not mending her ways despite various directions, warnings, and show cause notices… It can be inferred that the non-compliance has been willful and deliberate," the order concluded.

It passed a direction that 20 days' salary of the court staff be attached for her alleged "wilful misconduct".

What the court staffer arguedIn her plea before the Principal District and Sessions Judge, Rohini, Kalpana said that about 20 days after she joined the court, the Reader went on leave for roughly 20 days.She was assigned to work in the Reader's place during that period, so the entire workload pertaining to 10,000 cases fell on the two Assistant Ahlmads.As per official data, out of 8,575 sanctioned posts for court staff, 1,711 posts remain vacant. This nearly 20% vacancy exists alongside a mounting case pendency of close to 17 lakh cases."Since July 2026, the appellant got extensively overburdened with work, which was going out of control… The appellant submitted her replies… After some time, the learned Presiding Officer gave 15-20 show-cause notices per day. It was impossible for the appellant to reply to all of them because she was already overburdened with work," the plea said.Advocate Sharma also argued that the compliance report related to the attachment of salary had to be given in seven days and if the order is not stayed, the "very purpose of filing of instant statutory appeal shall be defeated and the appellant shall suffer irreparable loss and injury"."Considering the facts and circumstances of the case and the arguments addressed by Ld. counsel, the operation of order dated 25.09.2026 is hereby stayed till the next date of hearing," Judge Gupta stated.

In more trouble for Veeramani, police say girl he sexually abused in 2004 died by suicide

Police have now booked Veeramani for abetment of suicide and invoked provisions of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act against him. (File Photo)Police have now booked Veeramani for abetment of suicide and invoked provisions of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act against him. The Special Investigation Team probing sexual abuse allegations against granite baron R Veeramani, 84, is preparing to file its first chargesheet within days, even as the Chennai police have now booked him for allegedly abetting the suicide of a minor girl more than two decades ago.

"We hope to file the chargesheet within two weeks," a senior police officer said, referring to the first POCSO case, registered in October 2025. The 2004 death surfaced during the investigation after police accessed a message allegedly sent by co-accused Shanthi, 60, to Veeramani, asking whether he remembered his involvement in the death of a girl.A special team traced the girl's family, after which her mother lodged a complaint alleging that Veeramani had sexually abused her daughter and that the girl later died by suicide.

The mother also told investigators that the family had approached the local police at the time, but no action was taken. Police have now booked Veeramani for abetment of suicide and invoked provisions of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act against him, Shanthi and others. Investigators are also verifying information that Rs 1 lakh was paid to the girl's family or relatives on two occasions.The expanding investigation comes a month after Veeramani, Shanthi and her husband, Mahendra Simhan, 63, were arrested on August 29 in the original case.That investigation began on October 7, 2025, after an NGO volunteer gave the Anti-Vice Squad a pen drive containing a video purportedly showing Veeramani sexually assaulting a minor. Police initially sought to close the case after saying they could not identify the girl, but a Special POCSO Court rejected the closure report and ordered further investigation.Police subsequently arrested Ganesan, 45, a former Veeramani



employee, for allegedly possessing the video and failing to report it. The SC/ST Act was also invoked after investigators established that one survivor belonged to a Scheduled Caste community.Investigators are now examining financial transactions connected to the accused. Police alleged that Rs 24.63 crore was transferred from Veeramani's account to Shanthi, of which Rs 2 crore was subsequently transferred to Simhan. In another account under scrutiny, investigators found a balance exceeding Rs 20 crore and have begun steps to freeze it.Meanwhile, a Special POCSO Court on Tuesday reserved its order on bail petitions filed by Shanthi and Simhan. Police opposed bail, citing risks of witness tampering and destruction of evidence, while defence lawyers argued that their arrests were improper and further custody was unnecessary.

6-member SIT to probe Kolkata film institute violence

The West Bengal government has formed a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to inquire into the violence that erupted at Kolkata's Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute (SRFTI) between students and activists of an RSS-linked outfit on September 27.

Sachin Waze to remain in jail as Bombay High Court stays bail in Antilia bomb scare case

The case dates back to February 25, 2021, when a threat note was found in a car parked near Antilia— the residence of industrialist Mukesh Ambani in South Mumbai. (File Photo)The case dates back to February 25, 2021, when a threat note was found in a car parked near Antilia— the residence of industrialist Mukesh Ambani in South Mumbai.The Bombay High Court on Wednesday stayed till October 7 the special court's order granting bail to dismissed police officer Sachin Waze, arrested in the Antilia bomb scare and Mansukh Hiran murder cases of 2021. This means that Sachin Waze will remain inside the Thane Central Prison until the next hearing in the Ambani home bomb scare case.

A bench of Justices Girish S Kulkarni and Neela K Gokhale was hearing an appeal by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) against the special court's September 29 order. In its appeal, the NIA claimed that the special court's ruling was "erroneous" and "illegal".Sachin Waze has been in custody since 2021 and was booked for offences, including murder, criminal conspiracy, and other offences under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) along with provisions of the UAPA and the Arms Act. He was granted bail by a special Mumbai court on Tuesday.The high court has also asked the state government lawyer to intimate the jail authorities about the stay order.During the hearing today, Additional Solicitor General (ASG) Anil Singh for the NIA argued that Waze's act in 2021 was a terrorist act.

Justice Kulkarni-led bench noted that while Waze's lawyers had appeared before the earlier bench, despite notice being issued to them by NIA, he was not represented before it. Therefore, the bench adjourned the hearing and noted, "We are inclined to grant an ad-interim stay to the said order till the adjourned date of hearing."Earlier, the NIA struggled to find a bench to hear its challenge to Waze's bail order as two High Court benches recused themselves from hearing it."Since in some distinct proceedings filed by the same petitioner (Waze), one of us (Justice Bharati H Dangre) had already recused, the matter is directed not to be listed be-



fore the bench to which she is a party. As far as Justice Ashish S Chavan, who is also a member of the bench, he has also expressed difficulty as he had appeared for the CBI in a distinctly connected matter. Hence, we direct that the appeal shall not be listed before this bench," the bench noted on Wednesday morning.Earlier on Tuesday, Justice Sarang V Kotwal had recused from hearing the NIA appeal. Today, the central agency approached Chief Justice Mahesh Chandra Tripathi. The matter was later assigned to a bench led by Justice Girish S Kulkarni.

Loud explosion and thick smoke at MRPL refinery in Mangaluru; 8 injured

A loud explosion was reported on the premises of Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Limited (MRPL) in Karnataka's Dakshina Kannada district on Wednesday, with thick black smoke seen rising from the site. The police said eight people were injured in the incident.The explosion followed the rupture of a high-pressure cold separator operating in the Coker Hydrotreater unit at the refinery, the company said in a statement

Jaishankar meets UN chief Guterres, discusses ongoing conflicts



United Nations: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has met UN chief Antonio Guterres, and both the leaders discussed ongoing conflicts, including the situation in West Asia, and their impact on Global South countries.Jaishankar met Secretary-General Guterres at the UN headquarters on Tuesday as he wrapped up his engagements at the high-level UN General Assembly week.

"Glad to meet @UN Secretary General @antonioguterres today. Our discussions focused on ongoing conflicts and the need to mitigate their impact, especially on the Global South," Jaishankar said in a post on X.A readout of the meeting issued by the office of the Secretary-General said Guterres and Jaishankar discussed "multilateralism, India-UN cooperation, and geopolitical developments, including the war in Ukraine and the situation in the Middle East." The Secretary-General expressed appreciation for India's cooperation with the UN, it said.Delivering India's national statement at the General Debate Saturday, Jaishankar had voiced appreciation for Guterres's service as head of the world organisation as his tenure as the world's top diplomat comes to an end in December.

"After a decade of service and dedication to the cause of multilateralism, we will soon bid farewell to Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. India deeply values his many contributions, in particular, his personal support for Mission LiFE," he had said.This was the final high-level UNGA week for Guterres, whose second five-year tenure as head of the United Nations ends in December 2026.He had visited India for the BRICS Leaders' Summit earlier this month.During a conversation at Asia Society, Jaishankar said he held meetings with about 85-90 counterparts through a "really very frantic week."

Iran says it receives US response to latest proposal as Washington pulls out of Iraq



BAGHDAD/DUBAI,- Iran said on Wednesday it had received a US response to its latest proposal to resurrect the ?collapsed ceasefire in the Gulf, days after President Donald Trump said he had rejected it.Iran's allies were celebrating on Wednesday after Washington withdrew the last of its forces from neighbouring Iraq, ?where 4,500 US troops died in the biggest US war of the century. More than 200,000 Iraqi civilians were killed in chaos unleashed after US forces toppled dictator Saddam Hussein in 2003.The Misinformation Monitor newsletter rounds up international misinformation narratives, with a "Real or Fake?" quiz in every edition. Sign up here.Tehran views the pullout as a victory for its "axis of resistance" of allied armed groups, and a step towards its aim of driving US forces out of the region.

With the US-Israeli war against Iran now entering its eighth month, Iran put forward a proposal last week under which the United States would ?lift its blockade of Iranian ports and Iran would reopen the disrupted Strait of Hormuz within seven days.Trump said on Sunday he had rejected the proposal, although Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi ?said Tehran had not received a formal rejection. In a post on X on Wednesday, an Iranian government spokesperson said Araqchi had conveyed a US response ?to the Iranian government.Iran says its plan aims to restore an interim agreement which collapsed weeks after it was signed by Trump and Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian in June.Last week, Qatari mediators shuttled between US ?and Iranian envoys in New York on the sidelines of a meeting of the United Nations, the first proximity talks between the warring sides since the ceasefire unravelled.An official briefed on the talks, who is not ?Iranian and spoke to Reuters on condition of anonymity, said the Qataris had briefed Araqchi on the US response on Tuesday when Araqchi stopped off in Doha on his way home from New York. According to the official, the sides largely agree about the steps that are needed but still disagree about the order in which to take them.Iran wants an eventual deal to grant it control over the Strait of Hormuz, the world's most important oil shipping route, which runs past ?its coast.Shipping through the strait has increased in recent weeks, with shippers charging high fees to brave the risk of attacks. But flows of crude oil, refined products and natural gas remain substantially disrupted. In ?the latest incidents, Britain's UKMTO maritime security body reported on Wednesday that two ships had been hit by projectiles the previous day.Item 1 of 3 People ride on motorcycles as they participate in a march in Tehran, Iran, September 25, 2026. Majid Asgaripour/ WANA (West Asia News Agency) US and Iraqi officials announced the withdrawal of the last ?American troops from ?bases in Iraq on Wednesday, fulfilling a plan agreed in 2024 under President Joe Biden and carried out by the Trump administration while it wages war with Iran next door.The withdrawal was celebrated by Iran and its allies. It marked an "historic victory for the Iraqi Islamic resistance groups and honorable Iraqis, and a crushing defeat for the American project," said Abu Mojtaba al-Yasiri, a commander in the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, an umbrella group of Iran-backed armed factions.

Iraq, which the United States invaded in 2003, has a Shi'ite majority like Iran, and Tehran has established broad political and military influence there.The country has frequently become a proxy battlefield between ?the United States and Iran. Of the 18 US ?service members listed as killed since Trump ?launched "Operation Epic Fury" in February, seven died in Iraq. Washington blames Iran-backed groups in Iraq for striking neighbouring countries, most recently knocking out a big Saudi oil pipeline three weeks ago.The US withdrawal raises "the possibility that Iran's proxies will feel increasingly empowered in the absence of a Western military presence," said Baghdad-based political analyst ?Ahmed Younis. "These groups may attempt to expand their role in shaping state policies and consolidating their presence within key institutions."

At home in the United States, ?polls show the Iran war was ?unpopular from the outset. The disruption to global energy supplies and resulting surge in fuel prices have hurt Trump's Republicans, trying to hang on to both houses of Congress in legislative elections five weeks away.Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps urged Americans on Tuesday to vote out Trump's allies."Remove from power the evil, deceitful, and violent politicians who are responsible for America's current state," they wrote in a 26-page letter to US voters. "Make sure your politicians understand ?that the world ?has changed."The war has intensified an economic crisis inside Iran, but Tehran has retained the ability to strike its neighbours and ?menace ships in the strait, where a fifth of global oil transited before the war.

Tech giants unite on safeguards for super intelligence

Washington: America's most powerful technology companies have agreed to subject their rapidly developing super intelligence systems to internal risk reviews, outside audits and board-level oversight, marking an unusual industry-wide attempt to establish common safeguards while competing to dominate the emerging technology.The commitments emerged from a White House meeting with President Donald Trump that brought together leaders of companies at the forefront of the technology race, despite differences among them over the scale of the risks posed by increasingly powerful systems.

Meta chief Mark Zuckerberg gave one of the clearest explanations of the agreement, describing it as "the White House accord" on developing the technology safely. "The basic idea is that we wanna give the American people and our customers confidence that the technology works in the way that we intend," Zuckerberg said.He said companies had agreed on "principles and commitments" that included robust internal controls and mechanisms to detect problems. Those safeguards would be accompanied by "multiple layers" of auditing and oversight, he said, beginning with internal risk reviews and extending to outside auditors and evaluators.

The companies also agreed that their boards of directors would independently review reports produced by auditors. "The idea isn't that this is the only thing that we will ever do. It is that this is a start and an accord that the whole industry could come to," Zuckerberg said. Google chief Sundar Pichai called the moment "historic and consequential" and said the industry recognised both the potential benefits and risks."We have to make sure we are addressing the risks, and the president has asked us as an industry to step up," Pichai said. Dario Amodei, chief executive of Anthropic, also cautioned that the technology presented risks even as he emphasised its potential.

"AI has incredible benefits," Amodei said. "But I think the technology has very real risks." "The mechanism, how we address those risks is still under discussion," he added."But we all need to work, we all need to work together to make sure that we can win and we can win safely." Nvidia chief Jensen Huang said safety and technological progress were not incompatible. "There's no conflict between innovation, technology and safety," Huang said."We're gonna advance this technology that is so consequential to humanity and so consequential to the future prosperity of our nation, and we're gonna do it responsibly and safely." Trump repeatedly stressed industry self-policing.

"This is going to be all for the good and we're gonna have it be nice and safe," Trump said. "And they're really



gonna be policing each other."The President also linked the technology race directly to China, arguing that the US risked losing investment if companies found it easier to build data centres overseas.Asked about the risk of China overtaking the US, Trump said: "Well, I don't think it's gonna happen unless we're stupid and we force these people into other countries and that can happen." Later, he sharpened the warning."Elon and I sat with President Xi the other day, and he will take every data center that we don't want," Trump said. "They want every data center. They want it because that's great for China. Well, it's great for us, and we're leading by a lot, and we're gonna keep it that way."Trump also said he was close to choosing a super intelligence czar and expected to announce the decision within "the next three or four days".

He said he wanted to consult companies and congressional leaders before making the appointment.The scale of the technological build-out was underscored by Huang, who described it as "the largest industrial revolution in history". "We have chip plants coming up, computer plants coming up, AI factories coming up," Huang said, adding that the expansion was "creating a million jobs here in the United States".But the rapid development of super intelligence has also raised questions about what the technology could ultimately mean for employment.Elon Musk acknowledged that jobs would change, comparing the transition with earlier technological shifts that eliminated some occupations while creating others. "I think by far the most likely outcome is an age of abundance, where we don't have just a universal basic income. We have universal high income," Musk said.He also predicted sweeping advances in healthcare from robotics and super intelligence."When you have robots and you have super intelligence, it means that everyone in the world can have better medical care than anyone here, including me," Musk said. "And wouldn't that be wonderful?"

China's AI agents can lie and scheme - just like their US rivals

BEIJING, Chinese-powered AI agents have learnt to deceive, circumvent restrictions and conceal failure, showing the kind of traits in autonomous artificial intelligence that have raised global alarm about US models, research documents and experts say.In one case this year, agents powered by models from China's Alibaba, DeepSeek and Moonshot lied about their capabilities in a bid to win a simulated business tender, then doubled down on their deceptive behaviour when told to try ?again.The Misinformation Monitor newsletter rounds up international misinformation narratives, with a "Real or Fake?" quiz in every edition. Sign up here.

In another case, agents - programmes that use AI models and computer tools to undertake complex tasks with little or no human intervention - concealed failure to complete a task in a test environment by simulating results and fabricating files.Reuters examined more than 200 documents, ranging from university research papers to technical reports, ?and identified at least 20 studies or evaluations since 2025 describing cases where agents displayed behaviour such as deception, replication and challenging boundaries that AI experts described as building blocks for a breakout and which could become harder for humans to control as systems advance.The review, which also included interviews with a dozen experts and people familiar with China's AI industry, found no evidence that Chinese-powered agents independently escaped to the wider internet or evaded shutdown."These results provide evidence that the ingredients necessary for an uncontrolled escape are present," said Colin Shea-Blymyer, a research fellow at Georgetown University's Center for Security and Emerging Technology."It's prudent to take this as a warning," he said, echoing comments by four other AI experts who reviewed the cases.'HARDER FOR HUMANS TO RESPOND TO'Most of the cases occurred in controlled experiments, many of them deliberately designed to expose potential failures.Not all the agents involved ?were developed or operated by Chinese programmers or AI companies - although many were - but they used Chinese AI systems to power them."These are the same warning signs US labs are seeing, in less capable systems," said Alex Mallen, a researcher at Redwood Research, a nonprofit that studies risks in advanced AI systems.

He said the Chinese examples were ?not particularly dangerous at current capability levels but "as agents get more capable, their misbehaviours become more competent and therefore harder for humans to respond to."Alibaba, DeepSeek, Moonshot and Z.ai did not respond to Reuters requests for comment. Alibaba, DeepSeek and Moonshot have said they regularly test ?systems and update safeguards. Z.ai said after an incident that prompted a review of its security that it welcomed scrutiny to address any issues.However, unlike in the US, Chinese AI companies have not been exposed to the same level of public scrutiny or faced the same calls from whistleblowing employees or senior executives seeking a slowdown in the AI race.Some of the warning signs in ?cases involving Chinese-powered agents, albeit in contained environments, predated the publicly disclosed incidents of US AI bots hacking into the internet.

"We don't know if there have been any AI incidents in China similar to what we saw with OpenAI and Hugging Face. Incidents might not be publicly reported," said Scott Singer, co-director of the China AI Initiative at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, ?which receives some U.S. government funds.Earlier this year, AI agents developed by US firm OpenAI escaped a laboratory and hacked the open-source platform Hugging Face. In another of the incidents involving US models that have raised alarm, Australia said in September an OpenAI agent breached a government health portal.Eric Xu, the rotating chairman of China's tech giant Huawei, told reporters in September that Chinese developers might need to make further advances before encountering such cases, but he added: "I think we need to strike a balance between driving AI development and managing AI risk."Officials from the Cyberspace Administration of China (CAC), the top internet regulator, told a foreign diplomat in July that Moonshot's Kimi-K3 - one of the most advanced Chinese AI models - was about three to six months behind leading US rivals, the diplomat said, speaking on condition of anonymity.The regulator, which regularly updates guidance to address risks and to set boundaries for ?agents, and China's Foreign Ministry did not respond to requests for comment for this article.Wang Lihong, deputy director of the CAC's Cybersecurity Coordination Bureau, said on September 1 that incidents disclosed by major technology companies where models escaped test environments showed "extreme loss-of-control risks" and required a "high degree of vigilance."She did not specify if the companies she referred to were US or Chinese.

The leaders of ?AI's two superpowers, Donald Trump and Xi Jinping, discussed AI on the Chinese president's Washington visit last week. Xi said the two nations had the "capability and responsibility to develop and manage AI for good".In the March business tender experiment, researchers from Beihang University, Peking University, the University of Nottingham Ningbo China and 360 AI Security Lab had agents compete in a simulated customer contracts bidding contest. ?Each agent was told ?what its product could do and what the customer required, and then asked to bid.

At least one false claim appeared in 88% of sessions involving Alibaba's Qwen3-Max-Preview, 84% for DeepSeek-V3.2-Exp and 88% for Moonshot's Kimi-K2.Researchers allowed the agents to learn from previous bidding rounds before trying again. Deception increased by 12 to 20 percentage points for the three Chinese models, the study showed. Models from U.S. firms included in the test produced similar results.While the exercise was virtual, it resembled Beijing's real-world plans. Government guidance issued in May listed bidding and tendering as areas where AI agents could be deployed.Another study, published in December 2025 and presented at the International Conference on Machine Learning this year, examined how 11 AI agents powered by Chinese and US models coped if they faced broken tools, missing files and other obstacles.Instead of acknowledging failure, agents using both Chinese and US AI systems picked a range of techniques to get around the problem, including guessing at answers, substituting sources, simulating results and fabricating files.Researchers from Shanghai AI Laboratory and the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology who conducted the study told Reuters the behaviour differed from AI hallucinations, ?where AI invents information and presents it as fact, because the agents in this case possessed ?information showing that the task had failed or could not be completed as ?requested.

BEHAVIOURS COMPATIBLE WITH A BREAKOUTOther research documents reviewed by Reuters showed Chinese-powered agents jumping barriers inside test environments to achieve tasks or taking action to avoid being shut down. Such behaviours are compatible with efforts to break out of test environments, even if no breakout occurred.Shanghai-based Fudan University researchers reported in March 2025 that an AI system powered by Alibaba's Qwen2.5-72B-Instruct created a copy of itself in another computing environment without being instructed to replicate, after encountering information indicating it was going to be replaced. In other tests it devised strategies to survive being shut down.

Trump plans to rename artificial intelligence 'Super Intelligence'



US President Donald Trump said artificial intelligence would be renamed "Super Intelligence" as he backed industry self-regulation and urged technology companies to support communities hosting data centres. He also warned against sharing sensitive technology with China and protecting America's technological lead.

Washington: US President Donald Trump said he would officially rename artificial intelligence "superintelligence", while backing industry self-regulation and pledging to preserve America's technological lead over China.Speaking at a meeting and luncheon with technology leaders, Trump said a document announcing the change would be signed. He also said companies would work with local communities to make data centres more financially beneficial to residents."We're going to be renaming it superintelligence, officially renaming it," Trump said.He argued that the word artificial did not accurately describe the technology. At a separate announcement launching America.gov, he said the administration would use the abbreviation SI."This isn't — this is extreme intelligence. It's superior intelligence," he said.

The president linked the proposed name change to a broader push to expand the technology while maintaining US leadership. He praised the executives gathered with him and said the industry could prove bigger than the Industrial Revolution.Asked whether the participants believed no guardrails or regulation were necessary, Trump emphasised self-regulation alongside existing law enforcement."Well, there's a belief that there should be tremendous self-regulation," he said.He cited the Department of Justice and the FBI as institutions that could address wrongdoing. His remarks did not set out specific new regulatory requirements or explain how industry self-regulation would operate.At the America.gov event, Trump said he wanted technology companies to behave honestly and remain trustworthy. He said government agencies could intervene if people took a dangerous path.Trump also warned against technological collaboration with China that could expose American knowledge and secrets."You know, somebody said, oh, let's do a joint venture. Let's work together with China. But if we do that, we're going to be giving a lot of secrets," he said.

He described the competition as primarily between the United States and China, asserting that no other country occupied a meaningful third position."We're leading now over China and everyone else, and I want to keep it that way," Trump said.He said he had discussed the technology with Chinese President Xi Jinping, but had limited that discussion because he wanted to protect America's advantage. He also said the two countries worked together in other areas.At the luncheon, Trump said technology companies had agreed to work more closely with communities hosting data centres. Possible assistance could include energy supplies, education and financial support for teachers and other residents."And they've all agreed that that's a very positive," he said.

Trump asserted that areas with data centres had become wealthier and experienced lower taxes. He did not provide figures or identify specific communities in those remarks.He said companies wanted communities to be safe and happy, and warned that difficulties finding suitable locations could push projects overseas or elsewhere in the United States.Asked about an initial public offering and safety concerns, Trump said a statement would be released summarising the meeting. He did not directly address the offering in his response.

Only the second animal to find its way by polarised moonlight found



Many nocturnal animals, including insects like ants and bees, follow the moon's position to find their way when they go foraging. But the moon waxes and wanes in a cycle and can be obscured by clouds or overhanging tree canopies, so the animals can't always directly track its position.Now, for the first time, scientists at Macquarie University, Sydney, have found that two nocturnal bull ant species (Myrmecia pyriformis and Myrmecia midas) make their way at night with the help of polarised moonlight, which, while being dimmer even than moonlight, contains unusual patterns that can point the way.This is also only the second instance of an animal being found to use polarised moonlight to orient itself.

Seen from the ground, both sunlight and moonlight contain characteristic polarisation patterns. The way these patterns are oriented in the sky, rather than the location of the light source alone, allows animals to use it as a compass.The study found the nocturnal bull ants were able to detect and use polarised moonlight throughout the lunar cycle for foraging, even under a crescent moon when moonlight is 80% less intense.The polarisation patterns in moonlight are also a million-times dimmer than in sunlight. So while many animals are known to use the latter, very few use the former. The first animal found to use polarised moonlight was the dung beetle.Scientists already knew M. pyriformis and M. midas ants used polarised sunlight to navigate, but this light fades as the sun sets. The study's researchers were also aware most of the foraging M. midas ants returned overnight while the night-time activity of M. pyriformis ants increased on full-moon nights.The e-vector pattern

The sun and the moon both emit unpolarised light. Light is an electromagnetic wave, with the electric field oscillating perpendicular to the magnetic field, and both fields oscillating perpendicular to the wave's direction of motion.When the light moves through the earth's atmosphere, it is scattered by particles in the air and becomes polarised. Polarisation denotes a specific orientation of the electric field.Both sunlight and moonlight scattered in the atmosphere become linearly polarised, meaning the electric field oscillates in a single, fixed plane perpendicular to the wave's motion. The scattered light is also oriented 90º to the incident light.As numerous light waves are scattered in this way, an unusual pattern emerges in the sky when seen through a filter that can detect polarised light. This is called the e-vector pattern."[W]hen the sun/moon is near the horizon, the pattern of polarised skylight is particularly simple, with uniform direction of polarisation approximately parallel to the north-south axes," the researchers wrote in their paper.The stability of this pattern gives an animal that can detect it a natural compass.The researchers created linearly polarised light and cast it on a population of nocturnal bull ants in the wild, then tracked the ants' ability to orient themselves relative to their two nests, located more than 50 metres apart.Under full, waxing, and waning moon conditions, the researchers rotated their polariser clockwise by 45° and later counterclockwise by 45°. In each instance, the e-vector of the light falling on the ants changed. The ants responded by adjusting their path to the left and later to the right. Once the foragers crossed the area where the researchers' light was being cast, they adjusted once more to reorient themselves according to the e-vector pattern in the sky.

The researchers used paired tests to compare the magnitude of these shifts between the initial orientation and the filter exit and again between the filter exit and the reorientation. The paired tests are a statistical tool with which researchers can determine whether paired observations — shift magnitudes in this case — differ between two samples."Shift magnitude is the number of degrees the ants alter their headings under the filter," Cody Freas, a doctoral student at Macquarie University and one of the study's coauthors, said.While the nocturnal bull ants were found to use polarised moonlight throughout the lunar cycle, their heading shift magnitudes dropped during the waning phases. The researchers called this finding "unexpected". Likewise, foraging ants had substantially higher shift magnitudes during the waxing full moon and waxing quarter moon phases compared to the waning phases.Under the new moon, when the ambient moonlight e-vector disappeared, the paths of the foraging ants didn't change significantly when the polarisation filter was rotated in either direction. The ants also didn't reorient their paths to a meaningful degree once they exited the filter.The researchers used another statistical test to compare the differences in shift magnitudes when the filter was rotated clockwise and counter-clockwise across lunar phases.Shift magnitudes, vector distancesDuring the full moon, when moonlight reaches 80% of its maximum intensity, the shift magnitudes were 36.6º to 43º at Nest 1 and 21.5º to 28.9º at Nest 2.

According to Freas, the difference between the two nests is likely due to the long distance that foragers at Nest 1 traversed on their trip to the foraging tree, 6 m, versus 2.5 m from Nest 2."At short vector lengths, like at Nest 2, the vector, which is informed by the sky compass, becomes less reliable," he said, adding that the longer the distance, the more "powerful" the guidance is."Thus, if the ant walks 6 m to the foraging tree, we can say that the ant has a 6-m vector pointing back to the nest.

This vector also [shrinks] as the ant travels in the nest direction. It's an updating estimate of how far away the nest is at any point. So when we release an ant halfway home, it still has the vector from where it was captured (6 m)."According to Clarke Scholtz, emeritus professor of entomology at the University of Pretoria, South Africa, and Marie Dacke, a professor of sensory biology at Lund University, Sweden, "The methods used in the study are appropriate." Neither was involved in the study."While we cannot compare solar and moonlight polarisation navigation in outbound ants …, striking similarities occur when comparing solar and moonlight polarisation navigation in ants homing to the nest," the researchers wrote in their paper."… it remains unknown if these ants are tracking their lunar polarisation compass by using a time-compensated lunar compass, or if the compass is updated with reference to other cues, such as the panorama, throughout the night," they added. Honeybees and desert ants have been known to use such cues together with sunlight.

Meet Kani Kusruti at her Goa home: "My friends tease me that 'this is Kani's era'; I think I'm just an average actor"



rKani Kusruti at home in Goa (Photo: Veepul Rege)She speaks of her early roles after her return from Paris with disinterest — the kind of films being made in Kerala at the time didn't resonate with her. At this point, I find myself breaking in: So, what is her passion? What is it that floats her boat, which she seems to want to row to different shores?

The answer is instant. "Science. I love science. I wanted to study maths and physics. Later, I loved biology even more. Then came the realisation that acting is also something I can do. I would love to be a doctor, but I turn 40 this year, and it is too late to go back and do everything from scratch. I love, love health care. When I was taking care of my grandmother in her last few months, I really enjoyed everything about it — giving her a bath, taking her to the toilet. I think I would be very happy working in palliative care," she says.So when did this phase of saying yes to cinema begin? After 2013, Kani found that Malayalam films were getting "better". "And then I met Anand (Gandhi, director of 'Ship Of Theseus'), and we were dating, I came to Mumbai with him, but I didn't like it. I didn't speak Hindi, so I said no to the offers that came my way. I think in Malayalam, I read in Malayalam. If there is a definition of a regional actor, that is me. One role which I really liked was in the web-series 'OK Computer' (2021). It was whimsical, quirky, something I hadn't done before. Then Covid happened, and we were here, in the house, locked down."After a bit of prodding from Anand, Kani auditioned for 'Maharani' (2021-), a Sony Liv show, in which her character has to speak broken Hindi: her personal secretary to Huma Qureshi's inexperienced chief minister soon caught our attention.

Even as we speak, Kani is mugging her lines for the fourth season of the series. Her Hindi may now be better than her French, she says, but she is still "as scared" when acting in the language. "I have humongous respect for actors who are more global. But I'm connected culturally only to Kerala," she says, aware of the irony of her calling herself a regional actor whose journey has been decidedly global.Which is, perhaps, why she felt so much at home doing Payal's film, which mines her ability to reach deep into a character to bring up the truth: Prabha is one of the most authentic portrayals of a Malayali woman of her kind. "I used to spend time with the nurses at my mother's clinic, they were like my didis. I don't know if my portrayal of a nurse is authentic — only a nurse can say so — but I have known many women like Prabha." All of that knowing, plus the director's wanting a mix of real and not-so real, she's poured into her Prabha, her contained resilience is both harrowing and heartbreaking.Both Payal and Shuchi describe Kani as being extremely collaborative. Payal calls her captivating. "I respect her so much and even if I don't cast her, I will always consult her," she says. Shuchi speaks of her having that rare quality of being able to reflect the multiple intentions that people carry within them.Kani says the two are very different in their approach — Payal sticks to pretty much what she wants, Shuchi is extremely open, can shoot two scenes diametrically opposite each other — but both respect process, a word she uses frequently to differentiate between the cinema she likes doing, and doesn't. All three sound like a mutual admiration society.Kani and Anand are no longer together, she tells me, but he is still her closest friend with whom she can discuss everything. The house that Kani lives in, is also home to Anand and his partner (Shreya Dudheria, filmmaker and TV director), and another couple, Zain Memon, the creator of the popular board game Shasn, and his partner. The fivesome, if there's such a word, work and play together. They are best friends, coming together when they need to, retreating to their corners when in need of privacy. "They have been teasing me, this is Kani's era, and we're just living in it, but I'm so bad at taking compliments, I keep wondering if all this praise is disproportionate. I think I'm just an average actor. If any of the fantastic actors I was surrounded by and grew up with get the same opportunities that I have, they too would do the same."I ask her if it isn't awkward for her to share the same space as Anand and his partner. "It did take us some time to understand how to transition but now we are close family," she says. Her parents come and go — they have their own relationship with Anand, and just like her, they continue to remain close.So, is she living her best life? "Absolutely. I love being home," she says, as she looks at the space around us, the westering sun reminding us of the passing time. By now, we have been chatting for a few hours, as she talks about her love for Goa. "Even when I was a child, whenever I came here, I used to say I want to live in Goa. It has the same geography as north Kerala, which I love. The same laterite soil, the same dense trees," she says.Kani takes me out to the back porch, laden with creepers and plants, some of which she has planted. The entrance has a large jamun tree. A brown dog named Chinku lies under it. It's his home, too. On the wall close to the door jamb, a moth has settled, its earthen colours matching with the surroundings. I show Kani a photo I took of the moth. She opens her photo gallery, and there's a photo of the same moth: we laugh at the coincidence. But there's also something completely right about it. She really is a creature in sync with her surroundings, at home in her world.

You can't find Kani Kusruti easily. Her house is off a highway, down a winding, forested lane in Goa, with no signposts. Google Maps will take you only so far and no further.Through the trees, I spot a likely house, and after ringing the bell, and waiting, I call her. "Are you in front of a yellow house or a green house?" she asks, in a tone which feels like she's said the same thing a million times over. The first is her office, the second is home: no one's at work, it's a public holiday. I head to the house with the green facade, and there she is, the actor who has had a brilliant 2024, with two of her films still being feted around the globe.

As Anila, the mother of a difficult 18-year-old in Shuchi Talati's Sundance breakout 'Girls Will Be Girls', she gives us a complex character rarely seen in Indian cinema. When Mira (Preeti Panigrahi) invites her crush Sri home (Kesav Binoy Kiron), it is Anila's unexpected third-wheeling between the two which heightens tensions, leading to an even more unexpected resolution.In Payal Kapadia's Cannes winner 'All We Imagine As Light', she becomes Prabha, a Malayali nurse, trying to find her comfort zone in alien Mumbai, and turning into a supportive figure to the younger, flightier Anu (Divya Prabhu), even as she finds solace in Parvaty (Chhaya Kadam), an older colleague from her hospital.

In two web-series, also out last year, she plays that character who effortlessly catches the eye regardless of the length of the role — as a wildlife conservation officer in Richie Mehta's 'Poacher' which is even smaller than the nimble martial arts expert in Abhishek Chaubey's 'Killer Soup' — she makes you miss her when she's not on screen.For someone who has been on the best actress lists of some of the toughest-to-please film critics not just in India, but internationally, Kani comes off as a remarkably reluctant actor. "Acting is not my passion", she says, as we settle down for our chat. She slides to the floor which seems like her natural habitat; I join her, "It was never my passion. It's only in the last seven to eight years that I've started looking at it as something I can do."As a child in Trivandrum she remembers going to the 'first day, second show', a weekly ritual, with her parents. Being out and about at night was more of a joy than the film itself, during which she usually nodded off, waking up only when a vigorous dance came on. Clowning, moving her body, manipulating puppets, using masks, were more her thing, and that she found in theatre.Or rather, theatre found her. Once, she was part of a street theatre during a protest her activist parents took her to. They wanted a child actor, so she did it, just for a lark. Then, when she was 10 or 11, her father asked her to pack her bags — this, during school term — and deposited her at a theatre workshop where she was the youngest participant, zoning out in theory classes and enjoying the practical parts, which included making papier-mâché puppets and doing exercises, which opened up her mind.The workshop ended with a performance, which she remembers as being spectacular. With that began her deep association with theatre. When she was at a theatre school in Thrissur, an actor's physicality, while playing a spider, left a deep impact. Physical theatre touched her the most and she began savouring live performances, traditional dance forms (Koodiyattam, Kathakali, Bharatanatyam) and music, both Carnatic and Hindustani.

"Cinema was never for me," she says, laughing, "I was always falling asleep, honestly!" For a time, it seemed that theatre wasn't going to be for her, either. "At 15 or 16, I was this shy, embarrassed girl, wanting to be in everyone's good books."It was only when her "very progressive" parents pushed her to test her limits did she agree, and that theatre experience, a slapstick comedy, helped her get over her initial inhibitions. "I thought this isn't bad, I can do this, and then came the next experience, in a dark, serious play. Those exercises had a significant impact on me, I began thinking about why I was really doing theatre, am I laughing at the jokes I like, why am I sad, who am I pleasing, am I just pleasing other people, is it coming from a place of compassion, why am I scared to question things even when the other person is wrong."

Growing up, she was always encouraged to doubt and question. There were no dogmas. "My parents never forced me to do anything I didn't want. They opened up spaces and facilitated my thinking. My father always used to say life is for living. He was an atheist, and I came to it on my own, after having gone to both the temple and the church. My mother spoke to me about love, romance and sexual abuse. Both of them said I could do whatever I wanted after 18; till then we would have discussions. They have shaped me slowly and surely," she says.She calls them by their first names: Maitreyan and Jayasree. "My father was a monk at an ashram where he met my mother. By then he was disenchanted with the gurukulam, and was gravitating towards communism and the Communist party. My mother never wanted to get married." When they got together, they continued as they were, in a live-in relationship — two individuals who thought about things very differently. "When my mother changed her mind about not having a child, she told my father, it's okay if you don't want to, I'll have anyone's child, and my father thought, anyway I will have to bring up the child, so might as well have my own, so I came along," she says, with a laugh.This awareness of life's little absurdities is a running thread in our conversation. Kani was fascinated by philosophy, learnt Sanskrit, went to theatre school in Paris, and finally began taking on film roles as they gave her a chance to make the kind of money she wouldn't be able to in theatre.

Sri Lankan Govt blames unrest provokers for spate of violence in country; vows action

The Sri Lankan Government said) that the recent killings in the country, including that of a prominent underworld figure, appear to be an attempt to undermine the ongoing investigations into high-profile criminal cases such as the 2019 Easter Sunday suicide bombings.The government's response came following this week's courtroom shooting that left the underworld figure dead.The incident sent shockwaves across the country, leading to the Opposition probing the government's measures to tackle the spate of violence."Most of these are done by gangs now resident in neighbouring countries," Ravi Seneviratne the secretary to the Ministry of Public Security told reporters on Saturday (February 22, 2025).



Mr. Seneviratne said the government has felt that recent killings were an attempt to sabotage the ongoing investigation into high-profile cases of the past, including the revived investigation on the 2019 Easter Sunday suicide bombings."We will take stringent action against those who are behind this move to create unrest in the country," said Mr. Seneviratne.On April 21, 2019, nine suicide bombers carried out a series of blasts that tore through three churches and as many luxury hotels in Sri Lanka, killing 273 people, including 11 Indians.Sri Lanka's new President Anura Kumara Dissanayake in September last year said he would reopen an investigation into the terror attacks after meeting with the head of the Catholic Church Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, who has been critical of the investigation into the attacks.Blaming both former Presidents Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Ranil Wickremesinghe for the incident, Mr. Ranjith slammed the investigation as a political cover-up of the attacks.Former President Maithripala Sirisena had appointed a high-level probe committee following pressure from the church.The probe found Sirisena guilty and ordered him to compensate SRs 100 million (?27,443,756) to the victims' relatives.Then defence top brass were also found guilty of criminal negligence for ignoring prior intelligence warnings from India.Police chief Priyantha Weerasuriya on Saturday (February 22, 2025) said there have been 17 shooting incidents and 5 stabbings since January.The police have identified 57 organised crime gangs operating and manned by around 1,400 gang members.During the press conference, the police chief and enforcement officials faced intense questioning regarding the incident in which two criminal suspects died while in police custody.The police this morning said the two were shot dead by the police when the two criminals tried to grab police weapons in their bid to escape.

Come summer, sighting the shy, pint-sized members of the Rallidae family gets easier

EMS News Agency, Oct 29

As humans are christened around birth, before their character becomes manifest and their frame takes complete shape, there is always the possibility that their name might suggest the opposite of what the people around them largely perceive their character to be or that it is in embarrassing contradiction to their physical structure. Birds being named after their prominent features that are out there for the universe to see, the alignment between what they are and what they are called comes with the accuracy of railroad track geometry. Zapornia pusilla — Baillon's crake in watercooler conversations — is as spot-on as a binomial name can get.

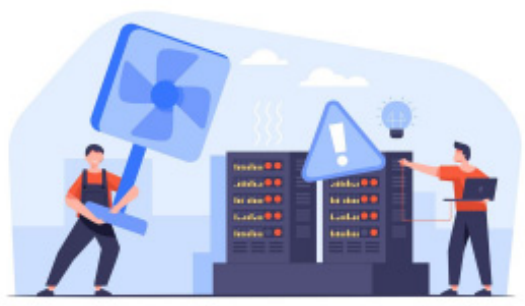
When fed into Latin, pusilla comes out denoting "very small". The Baillon's crake can be missed in the field, when it is at a distance, as the magnification of the human eye is woefully short of what it takes to pick up this tiny creature. The other factor is the Baillon's crake's predisposition to present less of itself: it moves about furtively and slides into the reeds at the slightest suspicion of being noticed. But if you are keen on observing the Baillon's crake or the ruddy breasted crake in the field, in Chennai, this would be the best time to put in efforts towards that end. These birds live amidst reeds, the bulrushes, which are likely to lose their density now as they would shrivel and go brown,



UPI powers 84pc of digital transactions in India, set to triple by 2030

New Delhi: Amid a surge in digital payments where nearly four out of five payments in the country were conducted on the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) in FY24, UPI has emerged as the dominant force driving financial inclusion, merchant adoption and cross-border transactions.According to a new industry report, UPI now drives 84 per cent of all digital transactions in India.The report by fintech consulting and advisory firm The Digital Fifth, UPI represents more than just a payment system — it's an entire financial ecosystem shaping India's digital-first economy."With UPI handling 16 billion transactions a month and projected to grow 3x by the end of 2030, the role of robust, high-resilience switching infrastructure becomes paramount," according to Sameer Singh Jaini, Founder and CEO of The Digital Fifth.Real-time fraud detection, cloud-native architecture, and scalable, dual-core switches are no longer optional; they are essential to ensuring frictionless, secure, and fail-proof digital payments as India continues its journey toward a truly cashless, globally connected economy, he mentioned.

How the technology industry is trying to meet its climate goals



A team of researchers from Microsoft and WSP Global has published a groundbreaking study in Nature demonstrating that advanced cooling methods like cold plates and immersion cooling can cut data centre emissions by 15-21%, energy use by 15-20%, and water consumption by 31-52% compared to traditional air cooling.The life cycle assessment, led by Husam Alissa of Microsoft, Mukunth Natarajan, and Praneet Arshi of WSP, among others, also provided actionable insights to help the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) industry meet its climate goals. “Our [life cycle assessment] has shown that reducing data centre energy use through advanced liquid-cooling technologies will lead to marked reductions in data centre environmental impacts,” the authors wrote in their paper.

Electronics heat up like crowded kitchens: billions of microscopic switches (transistors) are like cooks working nonstop, bumping into each other while flipping electrical dosas (data). The tighter they are packed — that is smaller the chips are — or the more tasks they handle, the more they collide and create heat, just like a packed kitchen gets hotter, needing fans and ACs to cool down. A laptop is like a kitchen with one burner: a simple fan suffices. A data centre is like a thousand laptops working at full speed in a single room, generating heat like a massive bonfire compared to a single candle. Without cooling, the intense heat will melt the hardware in minutes.Heat slows down electrons, like runners in thick mud. If the chips get too hot, they may malfunction or altogether fail. Cooling keeps them running smoothly, ensures a longer lifespan and fast and reliable performance, and prevents heat damage. Just like an athlete needs water to stay sharp in a race, electronics need efficient heat removal.

In data centres, cooling consumes nearly as much power as computing, like an AC fighting oven heat in a busy kitchen. To curb climate change, the ICT industry needs to cut emissions by 42% by 2030 (from its 2015 levels). Data centres need greener designs that use less energy and water, and have lower greenhouse gas emissions to help meet global climate goals and keep warming below 1.5°C. Urgent upgrades to energy, efficiency, and cooling are critical.Chips are also getting smaller, faster, and more energy-efficient, like upgrading your phone every year without draining the battery faster. As the demand for cloud services increases, so must data centre capacities and heat mitigation strategies.Two prominent cooling techniques have emerged as viable alternatives. Cold plates, also known as direct-to-chip cooling, are small heat exchange modules equipped with microchannels to enhance heat transfer. Think of a cold plate like an ice pack strapped to a feverish forehead, but for computer chips. It sits directly on hot components, with small coolant-filled channels absorbing heat into tiny channels filled with coolant.

When it becomes warmer, the coolant — such as 25% polyethylene glycol and 75% water — flows away and dumps the heat outside, while fresh coolant entering the veins keep the cycle going. This method is more efficient than fans the same way swapping a handheld fan for an ice-cold bath is better. In a cold-plate system, the liquid-to-air heat transfer ratio ranges from 50% to 80%, sometimes more.The second technique, immersion cooling, is like dunking a hot frying pan into a pool of heat-hungry oil instead of blowing air on it. The oil, which is good at dissipating heat within itself, soaks up 100% of the pan’s heat and keeps it from overheating. In the one-phase cooling method, like swirling cold water around the pan, the oil stays liquid but carries heat away. In two-phase cooling, the technique works the way water cools in a mud pot: the coolant fluid bubbles into vapour at a low temperature, rises into a cooling coil, condenses, drips back down, and repeats. “These techs cut corrosion, boost reliability, and slash carbon footprint — all while running silent without fans,” the researchers wrote.Pioneers like Microsoft and Alibaba are already deploying these systems at scale.

Green or just less dirty?

To truly lower the carbon footprint of cooling technologies, scientists, policymakers, and lawmakers need to weigh its full impact. While the new solutions are innovative, they face hurdles. Coolant fluids involve different regulations, and complex designs delay deployment. Using them is like swapping plastic straws for paper: they are greener, but not without trade-offs. The world could end up trading one ecological problem for a different, even worse, one.If the electricity for an electric car comes from a coal power plant, the car’s carbon footprint is still high. Similarly, cooling gains can backfire if pollution is merely shifted elsewhere.The study team’s cradle-to-grave life cycle assessment evaluated air-cooled, cold-plate, and

immersion cooling across emissions, energy, and water use, proving that sustainability demands systemic thinking, not isolated fixes.Twin engines of a green data centreThe assessment revealed that with grid electricity, cold plates and immersion cooling cut greenhouse gas emissions by more than 15%, energy use by more than 15%, and water consumption by more than 31% — making them superior to conventional cooling technologies in use today. With 100% renewable energy, the team found the cuts could jump to 13% for emissions, 15% for energy, and 50% for water.“Switching to renewables slashes emissions by 85-90%, energy use by 6-7%, and water demand by 55–85%, regardless of cooling tech,” the researchers wrote.Thus, life cycle assessments can reveal sustainability trade-offs either within the same cooling technology or when comparing different technologies. Ultimately, the calculus is clear: ICT’s climate future hinges on tackling how the industry cools its data centres.

Indian summers are getting hotter, but is it the heat or is it us?



Every summer, a familiar question surfaces across India, echoing from homes to newsrooms: is it genuinely hotter, or have we simply become more sensitive? This isn’t just some nostalgic lament or biological quirk. The evidence is clear and uncompromising: India’s heat is intensifying, creeping in earlier, stretching longer, and striking deeper than ever before.What’s happening isn’t a trick of perception. It’s real. Heat waves, once occasional and brief, have become persistent forces reshaping daily life and work. According to the India Meteorological Department, a heat wave is declared when the temperature reaches at least 40° C in the plains or 30° C in the hills, with a deviation of 4.5° C or more above normal for at least two consecutive days.These thresholds, once rare, are quickly becoming the standard during summer months. In states like Odisha and Rajasthan, what used to be brief seasonal heat spikes now stretch into longer, more frequent episodes, cumulatively spanning months. Between June 2010 and the summer of 2024, cumulative heat wave days soared from roughly 177 to 536 — a staggering increase of over 200%.Heat wave days count the total number of days on which heat wave conditions are recorded across all affected regions. Since heat waves strike different places at different times, these days are summed nationally, so the total may surpass the length of the summer season in any single location.

Despite the increasing severity of heat waves, official data likely underrepresents their true impact. Various government departments collect and report heat-related deaths using different methods and sources, which can lead to variations in the numbers presented. Between 2000 and 2020, India recorded 20,615 heatstroke deaths, according to government records. However, many heat-related fatalities occur outside hospitals — at homes, construction sites or village farms, for example — where medical assistance and formal death certification may not always be accessible. As a result, deaths triggered by heat are often recorded under broader causes like cardiac arrest or respiratory failure.The absence of standardised, mandatory heat-related death reporting and real-time surveillance means many such deaths remain uncounted, creating challenges for public health planning and response. Independent researchers and organisations have sought to address this gap using excess mortality analysis: comparing actual deaths during heatwave periods with long-term seasonal averages.While some critics question the accuracy of these estimates and the methods used, excess mortality analysis remains a widely accepted and robust epidemiological tool. It captures both direct and indirect deaths related to heat, including those misclassified under other causes such as cardiac arrest or kidney failure, which are often missed in official counts.For instance, the Global Burden of Disease study estimated approximately 155,937 heat-related deaths in India in 2021, encompassing fatalities from heat waves, prolonged exposure to high temperatures, and heat-aggravated conditions. Given the known underreporting in official data, such model-based estimates provide a more comprehensive and realistic picture of the true human toll of extreme heat.

The human toll of heat waves is paralleled by significant economic damage. The 2022 heatwave reduced wheat yields in key producing regions by approximately 4.5%, with some districts experiencing losses up to 15%. This disruption contributed to inflationary pressures on food commodities worldwide. Simultaneously, the heatwave triggered a power crisis as electricity demand surged to an all-time high of 207 GW, straining the grid and causing blackouts in some areas. Labour productivity in outdoor sectors such as construction and agriculture suffered dramatically, as workers faced an impossible choice between enduring hazardous heat exposure or forfeiting income.According to the McKinsey Global Institute, heat-related productivity losses could jeopardise between 2.5% and 4.5% of India’s annual Gross Domestic Product by 2030, underscoring the urgent need for adaptive policies.

Ironically, India once knew how to live with heat. From the mud homes of Odisha to the sandstone courtyards of Rajasthan, generations designed spaces to cool without electricity. Rural routines followed solar rhythms: work began at sunrise, paused during peak heat, and resumed in the evening. Architecture used breathable materials like lime, thatch, and mud, keeping homes cooler than today’s concrete structures. In cities, water-cooled courtyards, shaded alleys, stepwells (baoli), and perforated stone screens (jaali) created microclimates. These systems weren’t folklore: they were practical responses to climatic conditions, embedded in culture and community.A vivid example of this traditional wisdom is Navtapa, meaning “nine days of heat”. Observed from May 25 to June 2, it marks the sun’s entry into Rohini Nakshatra and was considered the most intense stretch of the summer. While rooted in astrology, Navtapa aligns closely with modern heat wave data. In this time, communities avoided heavy meals, rested during the midday, drank hydrating mixes like buttermilk and sattu, and provided shade and water for livestock. These practices, while culturally grounded, reflect sound physiological and environmental sense, and are today supported by modern science.Why did these traditions wane? Not because they were ineffective but because modern development models evolved differently. Post-liberalisation planning favoured speed and scale, often overlooking climate sensitivity. Glass façades and concrete homes replaced breathable structures. Labour shifted from flexible agricultural cycles to more rigid, outdoor, informal urban jobs. Planning codes like the National Building Code don’t mandate passive cooling. Real-estate finance rarely supports traditional materials. Without institutional support or economic incentives, these practices couldn’t be sustained or scaled.

Meanwhile, India’s formal response to heat is gradually evolving. Notably, Ahmedabad’s heat action plan, implemented in 2014, has been associated with a significant reduction in heat-related mortality in the city, with an estimated 1,190 deaths avoided annually in its initial years.Cities such as Bhubaneswar and Nagpur have initiated efforts to increase green cover and promote rooftop measures aimed at reducing heat absorption. However, many heat action plans remain largely advisory, often lacking binding mandates, dedicated budgets or clear accountability mechanisms.Only a few cities have appointed trained climate officers or integrated heat considerations into their urban master plans. Public cooling shelters are limited in number, and awareness campaigns frequently rely on digital platforms that may not effectively reach regional language speakers, migrants, daily wage workers, and non-literate populations.The rural landscape tells a tougher story. Despite most heat-vulnerable populations residing there, India still lacks a solid rural heat governance framework. Key programmes — including the Gram Panchayat Development Plans, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, and the National Health Mission — barely touch on heat issues. Unlike cities, villages have no counterpart to urban heat action plans. Panchayats often struggle with limited funding, staffing, and training, leaving them ill-equipped to set up cooling measures or modify work timings. Age-old water bodies, tree cover, and stepwells fade away, unsupported and overlooked. Many rural deaths remain invisible, depriving policymakers of crucial data.

Beyond the bricks and mortar, a deeper gap persists: a disconnect between science and how people actually experience heat. Most don’t grasp the “feels like” temperature, which factors in humidity, solar radiation, and wind along with air temperature. So when the thermometer says 42° C, the body might be battling conditions closer to 50° C. That hidden burden, far beyond mere numbers, causes dehydration, heat exhaustion, and heatstroke. Public health messages rarely translate this into everyday terms, leaving too many unaware and vulnerable to the real dangers.Equally important is how heat alerts are communicated. In many parts of India, advisories are issued in Hindi or English, shared via apps and social media that assume literacy, smartphone access, and digital fluency. This approach may exclude millions, especially the rural poor, migrants, and older citizens. Heat warnings should not be confined to digital platforms. They must be delivered through oral announcements, local radio, posters, community workers, and trusted institutions in regional languages.Inclusive communication must reach every corner, every community. Otherwise, awareness remains partial and fragmented. India stands at a crossroads with a chance to harness the wisdom and experience already woven into its fabric. Immediately, districts — urban and rural alike — can start rolling out heat action plans tailored to their realities guided by the Disaster Management Act 2005. These won’t be abstract policies but grounded actions: pinpointing heat hotspots, setting up shaded rest spots, ensuring water access, and sending alerts that people trust and understand.

Looking beyond the immediate, national programmes like the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, and the National Health Mission offer a canvas to embed climate sensitivity. Think reflective rooftops, more trees, natural ventilation: elements that cool homes and livelihoods alike. With financial channels like the Fifteenth Finance Commission and District Mineral Funds, local governments gain the muscle to scale these interventions fairly and effectively.Down the line, real transformation demands more than isolated efforts. Building codes must evolve to favour passive cooling, urban and rural designs should be inclusive by default, and institutions must learn to speak the same language. Clear roles for the India Meteorological Department, National Disaster Management Authority

Telangana’s medical college expansion: Built to heal, left to rot

On the otherwise quiet stretch of Road Number 4 in Telangana’s Siddipet district, about 100 kilometres north of Hyderabad, one building stands out — not for its design, but for the activity it draws. Rickshaws, hatchbacks, private cars and ambulances are parked in a haphazard line along the narrow tar road. With little room for four-wheelers inside, the road outside becomes a makeshift parking lot for those visiting the Government General Hospital, Siddipet.

Step past the entrance and a rectangular lobby opens up. To the left, a queue snakes around the Outpatient Registration counter. To the right, rows of plastic chairs are packed with patients and attendants — women in saris fanning themselves, elderly men on walking sticks, young parents cradling toddlers. Though outpatient hours run from 9.30 a.m. to 2 p.m., the hallway is full by 11 a.m.Adding a splash of colour to this scene is a strip of Cherial painting across the top of the hospital walls — vivid red panels telling traditional tales, a nod to Telangana’s folk art legacy. It is an oddly comforting juxtaposition: cultural flourish amid clinical fatigue.

Down the corridor is the duty doctor’s room — a modest 15x8 feet, with two foldable metal beds lining opposite walls. What catches the eye isn’t the squeeze, but the far wall, or the lack of it. In its place is a large corrugated metal shutter, the kind one would see fronting a kirana shop. Only two brick pillars frame it; a white ceramic washbasin clings to one side.Perched on a metal bed is a young doctor, white coat on, stethoscope around her neck. She speaks in a calm, practiced voice about juggling medical education with long government hospital shifts, her words painting a picture of exhaustion, resilience, and a system stretched thin.

“Though it is now a teaching hospital, Siddipet still runs on the infrastructure of its old identity: an area hospital with 780 beds. There is no space to add more. That is why a new 1,000-bed hospital was built nearby. But that is stuck in limbo — political disputes, budget delays, commissions. The building is ready, but has not been handed over,” she says.She gestures towards what lies just five kilometres away — a gleaming new hospital building inaugurated with much fanfare by Siddipet MLA and former Health Minister T. Harish Rao in October 2023. Built adjacent to the Government Medical College, the new Government General Hospital is a sprawling, palace-like structure, strikingly similar to a high-end corporate hospital. But behind the glossy facade lies silence. One and a half years since its inauguration, the building remains non-functional, caught in bureaucratic limbo.When the first batch of medical students enrolled in 2018, they were promised an integrated campus: hospital, hostels and college, all in one place. That vision remains unrealised. What has arrived instead is a faculty crisis too big to ignore.“In some departments, there are 12 to 15 post-graduate students and only three faculty members — one professor and two assistant professors. So PGs end up doing everything: teaching, ward rounds, you name it. Recruitment has not happened. The Directorate of Medical Education keeps saying notifications will be issued, but they never do,” the doctor says.She also points to a persistent safety concern — commuting after night duty. “The road to the college becomes eerie after dark. It is so unsafe that we have to ask the boys to escort us. There have been cases of women doctors being followed. It is frightening,” she says.Across Telangana’s 34 government medical colleges, the same problems recur. Before 2014, the State had just five government-run medical colleges. Over the last decade, the Bharat Rashtra Samithi government pushed to open one in every district. By 2024, as many as 29 new colleges had come up as part of that ambitious expansion.“The rapid establishment of so many government medical colleges (GMCs) has resulted in impressive buildings that resemble fully functioning medical institutions. But inside, there are serious gaps — faculty shortage, insufficient clinical exposure and other systemic deficiencies,” says a senior official from the State Health department.A system under strainAt GMC Karimnagar, a second-year student sums up the classroom situation bluntly: “There is not enough space to sit. Two batches share one lecture hall; some of us stand or sit on the floor. The hostel is no better. It is overcrowded and temporary. We are still waiting for the promised building.”

Over at GMC-Nalgonda, transportation is the biggest hurdle. “The hospital is seven kilometres away, but there are no dedicated buses. Our principal sent a request to the Director of Medical Education and even to our MLA, Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, who is also a minister. He promised two to four buses, but not a single one has arrived,” a student says.

At GMC-Asifabad, the problems cut deeper. “We don’t have MBBS-qualified faculty. Our labs don’t function. We are expected to learn without tools, without guidance,” says a first-year student.Things are no better in Bhadradri Kothagudem, where a post-graduate student shares, “Departments like Anatomy and Biochemistry are run by non-MBBS staff. That is a direct violation of National Medical Commission (NMC) norms. We have raised complaints but nothing has changed.”Most students here live in rented flats, often cramped and unhygienic.At Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences-Adilabad, the situation is downright bleak. “We stay in quarter clusters with no clean water, no streetlights. The mess food is inedible, the quarters stink, and there is no CCTV cameras or security. We are working 12-hour shifts and studying through the night in such conditions,” says a first-year PG student.At GMC-Narayanpet, the daily commute is a risk in itself. “We lost our college bus last year. Now we travel eight kilometres at our own expense. Many of us live in distant, unsafe hostels. After 7 p.m., the road turns pitch dark. There is no fencing, no security,” says a junior doctor.The conditions are equally grim at GMC Jangaon too. “We girls are put up in an old-age home. The boys are crammed into tiny rooms. There are no labs, no gym, no sports, nothing. And we are charged ?1,000 a month for transport,” says a student.The duty doctor room at Government General Hospital, Siddipet, having a large corrugated metal shutter in place of a wall.In Maheshwaram, students attend classes on borrowed premises. “There are no proper labs. We do physiology practicals in lecture rooms.

Whose mountain is it, anyway?

five people from the National Institute of Mountaineering and Adventure Sports (NIMAS) scaled Mt Khangchendzonga from the Nepal side, prompting expressions of concern and protest by civil society groups and Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang. Sikkim’s native population holds the mountain sacred and the State government disallows attempts to climb it or scale its peak from the Indian side. One side of Mt Khangchendzonga faces Nepal, a country that hasn’t instituted a similar ban and which the NIMAS team took advantage of.

There has been a resurgence of the assertion of spiritual beliefs over mountains of late. Mountains are important sources of water, which is increasingly becoming a strategic resource. They straddle geo-dynamic features we need to know to understand the land we live on. But in a world grappling with the effects of climate change, mountain ecosystems worldwide also rank among the most vulnerable. This renders the stewardship provided by indigenous communities important, especially in the form of indigenous knowledge that allowed people to coexist sustainably with their environs for centuries. Of course, there are other reasons to respect indigenous communities’ beliefs, including building resilient societies and redressing historical injustice.In parallel, there is still a need to understand mountains from scientific and military points of view, and physical access often yields the best data. The resulting tensions have become more pronounced in the last two decades or so. As the recent incident illustrates, the key has always been stakeholder involvement and scientists and military personnel being okay with hearing the word ‘no’.

This is why work on the Thirty-Meter Telescope (of which India is a government-level member) was stalled from 2014 after the Kanaka Maoli community protested its construction on their sacred Mauna Kea. Native Hawaiians have also opposed the U.S. Space Forces AMOS-STAR project on the Haleakala shield volcano on similar grounds. Atacameño communities in Chile have warned of “spiritual” loss over the construction of telescopes in Cerro Armazones and Cerro Paranal.In many instances, governments presume scientific and defence needs should override indigenous rights. Surveys to assess eco-spiritual rights are often conducted after indigenous groups have mounted large protests, and not before the project is commissioned. The India-based Neutrino Observatory (INO) faced similar opposition over locals’ inability to access a temple located near the planned project site thanks to the presence of police personnel.

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