Spy in every blink

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PM Modi to attend redevelopment ceremony of 100-year-old Manila gurdwara

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will attend the ceremony marking the commencement of redevelopment works at the over-century-old Gurdwara Khalsa Diwan in Manila on Tuesday, underscoring India's deep civilisational and cultural links with the Philippines and the contribution of the Sikh community to the Indian diaspora.



Modi, who is in Manila to attend the 23rd ASEAN-India Summit and the 21st East Asia Summit, said the gurdwara held immense spiritual significance and remained an important centre for the Sikh community in the Philippines.

"Tomorrow, November 17, is a very special day. I will have the honour of taking part in the ceremony to mark the start of redevelopment works at the iconic Gurdwara Khalsa Diwan in Manila," he said.The Prime Minister said the Sikh community, inspired by the teachings of the gurus, had made a global mark through its commitment to serving humanity and building a better world.

Kulgam Encounter: One Killed, Identity Yet To Be Confirmed Amid Ongoing Anti-Militancy Operation

Srinagar: A person was killed during an ongoing encounter between security forces and suspected militants in the Laroo bypass area of south Kashmir's Kulgam district on Monday, although uncertainty continues over the identity of the deceased.



While police sources have indicated that the slain individual is believed to be a militant, local residents and sources on the ground have expressed doubts regarding that claim, saying his identity has not yet been conclusively established.

According to a senior police officer quoted by the news agency GNS, security forces recovered one body along with a weapon from the encounter site. However, the officer emphasised that the deceased's identity would only be officially confirmed after his family completes the identification process.

The gunfight erupted after a joint team comprising the Jammu and Kashmir Police, the Indian Army and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) launched a cordon-and-search operation in the Laroo bypass area following intelligence inputs regarding the presence of militants.

During the operation, security personnel reportedly came under fire, triggering an exchange of gunfire that continued for several hours.

The operation assumes particular significance as it comes in the aftermath of last week's militant attack on a CRPF picket in the Akhran area of Kulgam, in which three CRPF personnel were injured. Security agencies had since intensified search operations across south Kashmir to track down those responsible for the attack, with intelligence networks activated and multiple search operations launched in the region.

Sources said the operation in Kulgam was supervised at the highest levels, with senior J&K Police officials, including the Director General of Police (DGP) Nalin Prabhat, as well as top CRPF officers, closely monitoring developments on the ground. The Union Ministry of Home Affairs is also understood to have taken a serious view of the recent spike in militant violence, particularly the Kulgam attack and the killing of two Special Police Officers (SPOs) in Kishtwar district.

The BJP has alleged negligence on the part of certain local police officials in connection with the killing of the two SPOs and has demanded that responsibility be fixed if any lapses are established. The party has called for a thorough review of the circumstances that led to the deaths of the policemen.

The Kulgam encounter comes against the backdrop of an intensified counter-insurgency campaign following the senak militant attack on the CRPF picket in Kulgam and abduction and killing of two Special Police Officers, Bobby Chand (57) and Rashpal Kumar (45), in the remote Dachhan area of Kishtwar district. Both officers, residents of Kiyar village, were attached to the J&K Police's Special Operations Group (SOG).

According to officials, the two policemen went missing while travelling to the Dharna-Marwah area, where they were scheduled to perform duty related to operational deployment. Their mobile phones reportedly remained active for some time before becoming unreachable, prompting concern among security agencies and leading to an extensive search operation.

Their bullet-riddled bodies were later recovered from a forested area, with officials saying both men had sustained multiple gunshot injuries. The disappearance of their service weapons further strengthened suspicions that they had been targeted and killed by militants.

In response, security agencies launched one of the biggest anti-militancy operations witnessed in the Chenab Valley in recent months. Hundreds of personnel from the J&K Police, the SOG, the Army and the CRPF have been deployed across dense forests, mountain passes and remote hideouts in an effort to trace those responsible.

Police have also announced a cash reward of Rs 30 lakh for information leading to the arrest of three suspected militants believed to be involved in the murders. The wanted men have been identified as Mohammad Amin alias Jahangir, also known as Jahangir Saroori, a veteran Hizb-ul-Mujahideen commander active since the 1990s, Riaz Ahmed alias Hazari, and Mudassir Hussain.

Posters carrying their photographs and details have been circulated across Kishtwar and adjoining districts, while appeals have been issued through social media and other public platforms seeking information about their whereabouts. Authorities have assured potential informants that their identities will be kept strictly confidential.

Security officials say the operation to apprehend those responsible will continue until the perpetrators are either arrested or neutralised. The killings have drawn widespread condemnation from across the political spectrum, with leaders demanding swift action against the militants and stronger measures to prevent such attacks in the future.

Further details regarding the Kulgam encounter, including the identity of the slain individual and the outcome of the ongoing operation, are awaited.

Congress Targets 1-Lakh Crowd for Revanth's Siddipet Showdown

Hyderabad:The Congress has stepped up preparations for Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy's public meeting in the BRS stronghold of Siddipet, the Assembly constituency represented by senior BRS leader T. Harish Rao, on November 19, with the party targeting a mobilisation of one lakh people for the rally.

The Chief Minister will launch two major welfare schemes at the meeting — the Indiramma Kutumba Jeevitha Bima Scheme and distribution of Indiramma saris on the day which also marks late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's birth anniversary. The family insurance scheme will provide Rs 5 lakh life insurance cover to every ration card-holding family, with the state government bearing the annual premium. The Indiramma saris will be distributed to one crore women across Telangana.

The Congress leadership has entrusted the responsibility of making the Siddipet meeting a grand success to health minister C. Damodara Rajanarsimha, who represents the erstwhile Medak district, Medak district in-charge minister G. Vivek and Rajya Sabha member Vem Narender Reddy. The AICC is closely monitoring the arrangements, with AICC secretary in-charge of Telangana Sachin Sawant overseeing the mobilisation and preparations. Sawant has instructed key party leaders to set aside their differences and work collectively for the success of the meeting. He warned that stringent action would be taken against leaders and functionaries who fail to cooperate with the party's efforts.

The Congress plans to mobilise people from all 11 Assembly constituencies in the erstwhile Medak district, besides Sircilla, Vemulawada, Jangaon, Karimnagar, Manakondur, Kamareddy and Nizamabad constituencies. The party has set a target of 20,000 people from Siddipet and 5,000 each from Gajwel and Dubbak. It has asked leaders in the remaining constituencies to mobilise at least 2,000 to 3,000 people each.



The Congress has laid special focus on the Assembly constituencies represented by top BRS leaders, including former chief minister K. Chandrashekar Rao (Gajwel), BRS working president K. T. Rama Rao (Sircilla) and Harish Rao (Siddipet). Revanth Reddy had challenged that the Congress would win all three seats in the next Assembly elections and announced plans to hold major public meetings in the three constituencies.

As part of the strategy, the Chief Minister addressed a public meeting in Sircilla in October, followed by the Siddipet meeting in November. He is expected to hold a major public meeting in Gajwel in December. The Congress leadership intends to sustain the momentum in these key BRS strongholds until the next Assembly elections, scheduled for December 2028.

The government is also seeking to strengthen its connect with voters in these constituencies through a series of development programmes and new welfare initiatives. The Siddipet meeting is being viewed by the Congress as both a welfare programme launch and a major political mobilisation aimed at challenging the BRS leadership in its traditional strongholds.

Two Empty Train Coaches Gutted at Cherlapally

Hyderabad: Two bogies of a stationary train at Cherlapally railway station were completely guted in a fire accident on Monday.

The train that was under repair was stationed on the railway line between platforms number 5 and 6 entire seats, V Srinivas DFP Malkajgiri district said.

We rushed to the fire scene after being informed by railway police, our 12 firefighters managed to gain access through the window firs as the thick dark smoke prevented from entering the bogies through the doors, Srinivas said/

At the same time as fire tender could not reach the spot due to the absence of an accessible approach route to the affected bogie despite this constraint, our personnel promptly commenced firefighting operations using the water available at the railway line.

The affected bogies were detached from the adjoining coaches, and the fire has been brought under control, Srinivas further said.

Cooling and further firefighting operations are currently confirmed that the bogie was unoccupied at the time of the incident. No passengers or other persons were present inside, and no human casualties have been reported so far, DFO said.

However the firefighters extinguished the fire using exhaust from railway tracks and handheld extinguishers and extinguished the fire late in night.

Railway police registered a case of fire accident, during preliminary they are suspecting a short circuit or miscreants might have smoked a cigarette in the empty bogies that triggered fire, reliable sources disclosed.

In a separate mishap, a major fire broke out at Mandi King Restaurant in Tolichowki on Sunday around midnight and spread to the neighbouring Hotel Zunera, engulfing several floors in thick smoke.

As per information available, the blaze reportedly started in the second-floor kitchen chimney of Mandi King around 1.45 pm Sunday night before spreading to the fourth and fifth floors of Zunera flames were also extended up to the sixth floor.

We rushed to the scene along with hotel staff and



executed several customers safely from the exit door, a police officer disclosed , none were injured, no casualties have been reported, officer disclosed.

Meanwhile, Zunera owner Shakir alleged that the fire originated at Mandi King and spread to his establishment, denying any responsibility for the incident, the extent of the damage and the exact cause of the fire are yet to be determined.

Rahul Gandhi, other INDIA bloc leaders seek Supreme Court nod to pose 48 questions to EC on SIR

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and 10 other opposition leaders on Monday sought the Supreme Court's permission to serve 48 of 'interrogatories' on the Election Commission demanding answers on sworn affidavits on the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls that allegedly led to mass voter deletions.

In an application filed in the top court, they urged the top court to direct Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar and Election Commissioners Sukhbir Sandhu and Vivek Joshi and Deputy Election Commissioner Bhanu Prakash Yeturu (who affirmed the EC's affidavit dated October 26 and November 14) to file affidavits on specific issues concerning the authorisation of SIR, alleged exclusion of voters and changes made to the online electoral registration systems.

The E had said orders for the SIR were issued unanimously by the three-member body.

However, the application wondered if decisions concerning the nationwide SIR were actually taken by the Election Commission as a collective body and if the CEC exercised the EC's powers without the knowledge, approval or concurrence of the other Election Commissioners. They said the poll panel has not disclosed file numbers, dates or meeting minutes to substantiate its claim.

Referring to an August 2025 Right to Information response in which the EC authorities reportedly stated that no decision had been taken to initiate a nationwide SIR, the application contended that the poll panel's affidavits relied on assertions while withholding crucial official files and records concerning the SIR exercise.

Alleging that the Election Commission has not answered the questions repeatedly raised about 'vote theft' in its affidavit filed in the Supreme Court, the INDIA alliance has sought the Supreme Court's permission to question the CEC, the other two election commissioners and the Director General of IT.

The 48 questions related to approvals, objections and database access and alleged serious flaws in the SIR that paved the way for 'vote theft'.

The petitioners contended that courts could require officials to answer specific questions when facts central to



a constitutional challenge were within the exclusive knowledge of an authority administering a technological system.

On October 15, the Supreme Court had issued notices to the Election Commission and others on a petition filed by Rahul Gandhi, Mallikarjun Kharge and nine other opposition leaders over alleged large-scale irregularities and deletion of 13 crore voters during the SIR of electoral rolls.

A Bench led by CJI Surya Kant had asked the Election Commission, CEC Gyanesh Kumar and ECs Sandhu and Joshi to respond to the petition that sought suspension of the ongoing SIR exercise. In its response, the poll panel denied any wrongdoing.

However, the opposition leaders have sought permission to question the EC, contending its affidavits did not disclose crucial details.

Besides Gandhi and Kharge, other opposition leaders who moved the top court are: TMC leader Saugata Roy, Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav, RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut, CPI (M) leader MA Baby, CPI leader D Raja, Mahua Majhi of JMM, Supriya Sule of the NCP (Sharad Pawar faction), and Indian Union Muslim League leader Mohammed Basheer.

Questions posed by Rahul Gandhi and others

• When and how the CEC and the two ECs approved the October 26 counter-affidavit, whether at a meeting, on

EDITORIAL

The uncomfortable truth behind IITs' glamour

The glamour and hype attached to the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) hide an uncomfortable truth: rampant mental health problems that largely remain unaddressed. Depression, academic pressure, anxiety, and a sense of alienation are among the factors responsible for the growing number of suicides on these prestigious campuses. Unfortunately, mental health issues rarely get the attention they deserve. Recent demonstrations and candlelight vigils across campuses following recurring student tragedies reflect a collective demand for institutional accountability and robust mental health facilities. According to official data, 45 students died by suicide across 23 IITs between 2020-21 and 2024-25. The annual figures are equally concerning: 16 deaths were reported in 2023-24, compared with six in the preceding year, followed by 13 in 2024-25. IIT Hyderabad reported seven deaths, while IIT Kharagpur, Delhi and Kanpur recorded six each. These figures underline the urgency of institutional intervention. If this is the plight of students in institutions regarded as the best in the country, it raises uncomfortable questions about mental health support across India's higher education system. One of the key recommendations made by the University Grants Commission (UGC) is to appoint one qualified mental health professional or psychologist for every 500 students. It also envisages a Student Service Centre in every institution to provide counselling, guidance and health services through in-person consultations, telephone helplines, online assistance and group sessions. The UGC has also recommended collaboration with nearby medical institutions and coordination with student welfare committees. However, none of the recommendations has been implemented on the ground.

The problem is compounded by India's overall shortage of mental health professionals. India has only about 0.75 psychiatrists per lakh population, compared with the World Health Organisation's benchmark of three. In these circumstances, online counselling and teleconsultation offer solutions, particularly for colleges in smaller towns and remote areas. However, students must be educated about these services, their accessibility and confidentiality. Institutions should actively publicise verified online counselling platforms and helplines, while ensuring that students requiring urgent or specialised care are referred for in-person treatment. The Supreme Court has also intervened in response to growing concern over student suicides. In March 2025, it constituted a National Task Force under former Supreme Court judge Justice S Ravindra Bhat to examine student mental health concerns and recommend preventive measures. Subsequently, in July 2025, the court issued guidelines for educational institutions, including colleges and universities, to safeguard students' mental well-being. It also emphasised monitoring, grievance redressal and institutional accountability. These interventions demonstrate that student mental health is not merely an administrative concern but a matter requiring coordinated public action. Every death on the campus must be seen as a cry in the wilderness; a silent scream that should haunt us collectively as a nation. Unreasonable levels of competition, the fear of falling behind academically or in placements, and loneliness are all interrelated issues that demand urgent attention.

IAF officer shared war plans, deployment details with Pak operative: Police to court



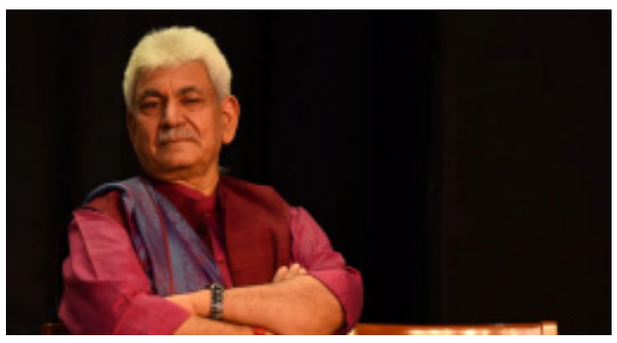
IAF officer shared war plans, deployment details with Pakistani agent, police tell courtThe Wing Commander, according to police, had been in communication over WhatsApp with the suspected operative from January 12 to April 1 this year when he was stopped and checked for carrying a smartphone to the office. A Wing Commander of the IAF, arrested five months ago and booked under provisions of the Official Secrets Act, allegedly shared classified operational information including war-plan documents, drone capabilities, military deployment locations, movements of frontline combat aircraft and coordinates of sensitive installations with a suspected Pakistani intelligence operative.

Detailing this in a chargesheet filed in a Delhi court, police said the disclosure of such information potentially compromised critical military assets, exposed operational vulnerabilities and put national security at risk.According to the chargesheet, information about the strength and structure of a secret drone unit, its operational capabilities, locations earmarked for deployment during hostilities and the movement of combat aircraft were also passed on to the suspected Pakistani operative.The Wing Commander, according to police, had been in communication over WhatsApp with the suspected operative from January 12 to April 1 this year when he was stopped and checked for carrying a smartphone to the office.The officer, according to the police chargesheet, "uploaded" a page of a "secret war plan" after receiving "a nude picture" from the suspected Pakistani operative and "even stated that for each nude pic he will provide a new page of (the) war plan".The chargesheet stated that the officer disclosed the strength and organisational structure of a secret drone unit, details of drone trials, the endurance of the weapon system and its targeting mechanisms.The suspected operative, police said, sent malware applications which could have provided access to sensitive information stored on the officer's devices and communications with his chain of command.The officer "fulfilled the task… to install some specific malwares/spywares in the ICT devices of his five subordinates, deployed in the unit under him," police said.The chargesheet also stated that the Wing Commander disclosed information related to the deployment of fighter aircraft in Leh and a military exercise at the Mahajan Field Firing Range in Suratgarh.The chargesheet details the extent of communication between the officer and the suspected operative. "From the analysis of the WhatsApp PMP data, it is revealed that a total of 3,008 text messages (chats), 65 images, 65 reactions,

'I have no relief funds…': Why L-G Manoj Sinha turned to Red Cross for traders hit by Jammu fires

Jammu & Kashmir's Lt Governor Manoj Sinha on Thursday announced an immediate financial assistance of Rs 1 lakh each from Red Cross to the traders whose shops were damaged in recent fire incidents in Warehouse Nehru Market and Shiv Market areas here, saying that he has no relief funds at his disposal."I have no relief funds at my disposal, but as the President of the Red Cross Society, I requested them to provide some assistance through the organisation. They have arranged cheques of Rs 1 lakh each, which is the maximum support they can offer as per the rule," he told traders during his visit to both the markets to undertake an on-ground assessment of shops that were damaged in recent fire incidents.

While 29 shops in Shiv Market were destroyed in the October 25 fire, several shops were reduced to ashes in the Diwali night fire at the Warehouse Nehru Market earlier this week."I understand that this amount is very small compared to the losses you have endured, but I hope it provides at least some help during this difficult time." the L-G said, adding, "In the meantime, the Divisional Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner of Jammu are making every effort to ensure that you receive your insurance claims as soon as possible."While Rs 11 lakh as immediate financial assistance has been given to businessmen at the Warehouse, Rs 27 lakh has been handed to shopkeepers affected by the Shiv Market fire.During the visit, the L-G also interacted with affected shopkeepers and members of the trade and business community. He listened to their concerns, and reviewed the extent of losses along with senior officials.He was accompanied by Nalin Prabhat, DGP; Govind Jaiswal, Principal Secretary to Lieutenant Governor; Vikas Kundal, Divisional Commissioner, Jammu; Shridhar Patil, DIG, JSK (Jammu-



Samba-Kathua) Range; Minga Sherpa, Deputy Commissioner, Jammu; Aayushi Sudan, Municipal Commissioner, Jammu; and Vidhu Shekhar, Vice Chairman, Jammu Development Authority, and other senior officials.The L-G directed the officials to expedite the damage assessment process and ensure prompt relief measures are extended to all those affected. He also emphasised the need to review and strengthen fire safety protocols across major commercial hubs to prevent such unfortunate incidents in the future.The entire UT administration stands with you. I assure the business community of all possible support from the administration to help you rebuild your business at the earliest," he said.The L-G has already set up an inquiry committee, comprising Inspector General, Jammu, and Divisional Commissioner, Jammu, to ascertain the cause and circumstances of the fire incident at the Warehouse Nehru Market.The committee has been directed to probe any lapses or negligence, fix responsibility, and submit its report within 15 days.The L-G said that the inquiry will be completely impartial, and accountability will be fixed. If there is any negligence, strict action will be taken, he added.

Chennai Metro's Thirumangalam project to feature train running through the building



Chennai Metro Thirumangalam Project: Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL) has awarded a contract worth Rs 446.88 crore to build four buildings near Thirumangalam Metro station. The project will have a unique design, with the metro train viaduct passing through the buildings. The project is part of Chennai Metro Phase II and is set to be completed within 24 months of commencement.CMRL has awarded the contract to Capacite Infraprojects Limited. The development will cover 3.85 acres of land along Corridor 5 and include four towers on either side of Thirumangalam Metro station.Four buildings planned

The four towers will have different floor structures. Towers A and C will have three basement levels, a ground floor, and nine upper floors. Tower B will have a ground floor and nine upper floors, while Tower D will have a ground floor and two upper floors.The Phase II Thirumangalam Metro station will be located between Towers B and C. This integrated design aims to give commuters easy access to the metro station within the same complex.The project is part of CMRL's Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) initiative, which focuses on developing commercial and other properties around public transport facilities.According to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA, TOD increases the accessibility of the transit stations by creating pedestrian- and Non-Motorised Transport (NMT) friendly infrastructure like footpaths and cycle tracks that benefit a large number of people, thereby increasing the ridership of the transit facility and improving the economic and financial viability of the system.Chennai Metro recorded a total ridership of 1,08,23,408 passengers in October 2026. The highest single-day ridership during the month was recorded on October 16, when 4,51,705 passengers travelled on the network. Of the total passengers, 1,02,40,136 travelled on the Green and Blue Lines, while 5,83,272 passengers used the Yellow Line. The 14.64-km Yellow Line operates between Poonamallee Bypass and Porur Junction, connecting with Vadapalani Metro Station.

A month in jail, but no change of heart: Arunachal dam activist vows to fight



Protests have erupted across several districts in the state, with a section of residents along the Siang River opposing the prop

After nearly a month in detention, activist Adum Tayong has said protests against the proposed Siang Upper Multipurpose Project (SUMP) will continue, reiterating that the project is an existential threat to those living in the Siang Valley. This, even as authorities in the district said detentions were necessary to maintain law and order in the region.Tayong was among four activists detained under the Arunachal Pradesh Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (APUAPA) and released on November 7. The four, including Omak Paron, Okut Paloh and Oson Paron, were detained on October 9.

Speaking to The Indian Express, Tayong claimed, "Initially we had no information, and it was only after detention that we were told that APUAPA had been invoked. For nearly a month, we were lodged in the same prison cells as murder convicts. Our phones were seized, and we had little information about what was going on. We were allowed to speak to our families only once in 15 days.""We will continue with the protests," he said.

Protests have erupted across several districts in the state, with a section of residents along the Siang River opposing the proposed 11,200-MW SUMP. While the state government maintains that it has invited different stakeholders for dialogue, organisations like the Siang Indigenous Farmers' Forum (SIFF) have sought the release of all activists before talks resume.Tagori Mize, an advocate based out of Itanagar, said, "The four who were released are from Geku village. There are others from different districts who still have FIRs against them and remain in custody."Urging the state government to release all activists, Mize, who is also the spokesperson of SIFF, said, "Our stand is clear, and we have listed out our demands to the Arunachal Pradesh government. All FIRs against the protesters and activists should be withdrawn without conditions. The government should also withdraw all paramilitary and armed forces deployed in the state."Ashok Tajo, the Deputy Commissioner of Upper Siang, said APUAPA had to be invoked to maintain law and order in the area.

"APUAPA is basically preventive detention, and for the last few weeks, there were several incidents of houses being attacked and vehicles being torched. Despite repeated requests, a few people from the area had been mobilising people. The environment was quite tense, and in order to contain that, we had to pick up a few people.""While they were detained initially, now they are free. The effect of detentions can be seen. Such incidents (of arson) have not been reported in the last few days. People have realised that there is a rule of law. As a district magistrate, it is my duty to maintain law and order and ensure it is peaceful, and I have done my part."

Burglars drill through nine-inch showroom wall to rob jewellery worth Rs 12 crore

Burglars drill through nine-inch showroom wall, rob jewellery worth Rs 12 crore in MPThe burglary took place at Kisna Jewellers in the Bargawan area, near the LIC office, during the early hours of Thursday. (Image generated using AI)In what is suspected to be a carefully planned burglary, thieves broke through a nearly nine-inch-thick rear wall of a jewellery showroom in Madhya Pradesh's Katni, entered the premises, and escaped with gold and diamond ornaments estimated to be worth Rs 12 crore.

The burglary took place at Kisna Jewellers in the Bargawan area, near the LIC office, during the early hours of Thursday. The thieves allegedly spent considerable time inside the showroom, breaking into safes and emptying display counters, before escaping with a substantial quantity of jewellery.The scale of the theft became apparent when employees arrived to open the showroom on Thursday morning. They found the interiors ransacked, the display counters emptied out, and the safes broken open.The owner, Mohan Bajaj, was informed and the police were subsequently alerted.

Bajaj said the showroom had additional jewellery stock due to the festive season. "Gold and diamond jewellery worth approximately Rs 12 crore has been stolen," he said.The method used to enter the showroom has become the central focus of the investigation. Rather than breaking the shutter or forcing open the main entrance, the burglars made a hole in the rear wall and used it to gain access to the premises, said police. The thickness of the wall and the manner in which it was breached lead investigators to suspect that the operation involved prior planning, they added.Katni Superintendent of Police Abhinav Vishwakarma, who visited the crime scene, said preliminary investigations suggested that the burglary took place between 4 am and 7 am on Thursday."The thieves targeted the safe and the display counters. They appear to have studied the layout of the showroom in advance," Vishwakarma said.Police have taken possession of CCTV footage from cameras installed inside the showroom and are examining recordings from those on nearby roads, in markets and at other strategic locations.Investigators are attempting to establish how the burglars reached the showroom, and the route they took after escaping.A forensic team besides fingerprint experts were also called to the spot. They collected evidence from the damaged wall, safes and display counters in an attempt to identify those involved. Police have constituted several teams to investigate the case and trace the stolen jewellery.

No meal after 10 pm: Kashmiri wedding chefs have had enough of late-night feasts

For years, late-night wedding feasts have been a subject of public criticism in Kashmir, with guests and hosts routinely complaining about dinners being served well past midnight. Yet, the practice has continued unabated.Now, in an unusual intervention, the Wazas — traditional chefs responsible for cooking and serving the elaborate multi-course meal — have decided that they have had enough, warning that they will not serve dinner or lunch after a stipulated time.

The decision to fix a time for serving the wedding feast was taken during a meeting of the chefs held in Srinagar on Tuesday. Narrating their experiences, the chefs said that some wedding feasts were being served as late as close to the break of dawn."We have decided that the wedding feast should be over by 10 (in the night)," Ghulam Nabi Baba, President of the Kashmir Waza (Chefs) Association, told The Indian Express. "It is better for everyone: For the hosts, for the guests, and, of course, for us as well."Wazwan — the traditional multi-course non-vegetarian meal — is an integral part of Kashmir's elaborate marriage celebrations. Traditionally a seven-course meal, it can comprise as many as 15 dishes. The main dishes include Rista (minced meat balls cooked in spicy curry), Tabakhmaaz (lamb ribs slowly fried on low heat), Roganjosh (Mutton cooked in spicy curry), Kebab, and Goshtaba (minced meat balls cooked in curd).While guests from the bride's side are served Wazwan during the day, at lunch, the baraatis (guests accompanying the groom) are traditionally treated to dinner.At the peak of militancy in Jammu and Kashmir, both sides were served during the day. As violence dipped in the Valley, the practice of hosting late-night dinners for the guests accompanying the groom gradually returned.Though the wedding



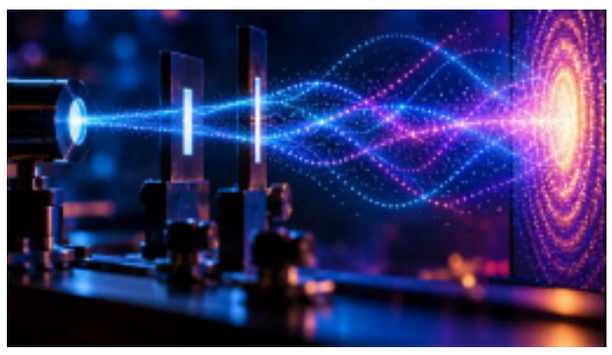
invitation cards generally specify lunch around 2 pm, it is often served around 4 pm to men and 6-7 pm to the women. The reception for the groom usually goes well past midnight.The chefs have now set the timings for both lunch and dinner and warned that if they are not abided by, the feast will not be served. "We want that lunch should be, at max, served at 2pm to men and at 3 pm to women," Baba said. "Similarly, the reception of the groom should be completed by 10 pm," he said.Baba says the chefs are determined to strictly enforce the decision."We are preparing an agreement. We will seek a written undertaking from the hosts that the feast would be served by 10 pm," he said. "If the guests arrive late, we will leave without serving them and the responsibility would lie with the hosts."Baba said the timing restrictions would not be limited to wedding feasts but would also apply to engagement and other marriage-related functions.

Telangana DPH issues seasonal flu advisory as temperatures set to drop

Hyderabad: The Director of Public Health (DPH), Telangana on Thursday issued an advisory urging the public to take precautions against seasonal flu and spread of acute respiratory infections, as the temperatures are expected to drop by at least 2 degrees Celsius to 3 degrees Celsius in the coming days.

Seasonal flu is an acute and contagious respiratory infection characterized by fever, cough, sore throat, body ache and fatigue and it spreads easily between people when they cough or sneeze, the advisory said.People with seasonal flu are advised to rest at home, drink plenty of fluids, and usually recover on their own within a week. The vulnerable groups such as pregnant women, children under 5 years, senior citizens and individuals with chronic medical conditions are at greater risk of severe illness. If they develop seasonal flu symptoms then they are advised to consult a doctor immediately, DPH, Dr Dr.B.Ravinder Nayak said.If individuals having the warning signs such as high fever, difficulty in breathing, blue colour of skin or lips, blood in sputum or altered behavior should, then they should consult the doctor immediately, he added. If you have fever, cough and sneezing, avoid stay away from public places Drink plenty of water and eat nutritious food. Adequate ventilation with outdoor air is recommended in all settings to reduce the transmissionDon'ts: Avoid shaking handsAvoid reuse of tissue paper or handkerchiefAvoid crowded places, frequent touching of eyes, nose & mouth Avoid spitting in public places and self-medicate

Six, including quantum and climate change researchers, win Infosys Prize



Infosys Science Foundation, Infosys Prize, Infosys Prize 2026, Gautam Bhatia, climate change researchers win Infosys Prize, Indian express news, current affairsManoj Kumar Joshi of Singapore University of Technology and Design got Physical Sciences award for work using trapped ions to build programmable quantum machines capable of simulating complex quantum phenomena. (Image generated using AI)The Infosys Science Foundation (ISF) on Thursday announced the six winners of the Infosys Prize 2026, recognising scholars in fields ranging from constitutional law, climate change and economics to quantum physics.

Constitutional law scholar Gautam Bhatia won in the Humanities and Social Sciences category for legal scholarship that, the ISF said, brings "law into conversation with sociology, political theory and moral philosophy." Bhatia, an adjunct professor at Jindal Global Law School and a Green Fellow at the University of New South Wales in Sydney, was recognised for a prolific body of writing, including five books.The other winners include Karthik Sastry, associate professor of Economics and Public Affairs at Princeton University, for his contributions to the study of climate change, technological innovation and business-cycle fluctuations. Swarun Kumar, assistant professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering at Carnegie Mellon University, won in Engineering and Computer Science. In Life Sciences, Isha Jain, associate investigator at Gladstone Institutes and assistant professor of Biochemistry at University of California, San Francisco, was honoured for discoveries in oxygen biology.Riddhipratim Basu, associate professor at International Centre for Theoretical Sciences of Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Bengaluru, won in Mathematical Sciences for contributions to probability theory and statistical physics. Manoj Kumar Joshi of Singapore University of Technology and Design got Physical Sciences award for work using trapped ions to build programmable quantum machines capable of simulating complex quantum phenomena.

Nara Lokesh pitches Andhra Pradesh as investment destination at CII Summit



Visakhapatnam: Andhra Pradesh on Thursday invited companies to invest, set up factories and shift their headquarters to the state, citing the vast business opportunities it offers.Addressing the CII Partnership Summit here, Andhra Pradesh Minister for Information Technology, Electronics and Communications, and Human Resources Development Nara Lokesh said the state's beautiful coastline, connectivity and talent were among the reasons for companies to shift their offices to Andhra Pradesh."Do not just build factories, move your headquarters here….My invitation is that invest here and innovate here….Our doors are always open for you," Lokesh said.He said several major companies, including LG Electronics and Google, were investing in the state.Lokesh said the state's '3S' mantra — speed, stability and services — was a key factor attracting domestic and global companies to invest in Andhra Pradesh."Once we shake hands (with a company), it is our project," he said, adding, "We do not keep you (industry) waiting; we ensure commercial production happens."He said, "At this summit, we are talking about trade, technology and trust. In Andhra Pradesh, we want to give these three words a concrete shape and transform them into investments, partnerships and opportunities."Andhra Pradesh has a coastline of more than 1,000 kilometres. Visakhapatnam is a major port, along with other ports in the state, and currently handles approximately 100 million tonnes of cargo annually, he said."Four new greenfield ports are under construction at Ramayapatnam, Mulapeta, Machilipatnam and Kakinada. With these additions, our cargo-handling capacity is set to double," he added.Highlighting the investment opportunities offered by the state, Lokesh said, "I am delighted to share that since June 2024, Andhra Pradesh has received investment commitments worth Rs 22.6 lakh crore. More importantly, 73 per cent of these commitments have been converted into approved projects. These projects are worth Rs 17.2 lakh crore and are expected to generate employment for 12.7 lakh people."

In farmer interest, Government hiked diesel price by just Rs 7, not Rs 50

Praising his government for shouldering the burden of the crude oil price rise due to the West Asia war, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Thursday that when oil prices increased, his government hiked the diesel price by just Rs 7 per litre instead of the required increase of Rs 50 per litre in the interests of farmers."The government is bearing a loss of Rs 14,000 crore a month," he said, adding that in neighbouring countries, the prices soared by 40-50%. The PM was speaking at the India Today Group's 'Kisan Tak Agriculture Conference' months before Uttar Pradesh and Punjab go to the polls.In an oblique attack on the Congress, he said intoxicated by power even when in opposition, some people who carry the Constitution in their pockets "think that Indian democracy and the Constitution are in their pocket".

Recalling the time when the Congress-led UPA was in power, Modi said Gujarat stood first in one of the media rankings when he was the Chief Minister. "The agency that ranked Gujarat first was named after a former Prime Minister. Those in power did not like Gujarat's praise, and they told the researchers to seek permission before publishing any report. Those very people preach tolerance today," he said.He said Viksit Bharat could not become a reality without smart farming and empowerment of farmers, adding that while previous governments had ignored farmers, his government was focusing not just on surplus production in agriculture but also on empowering farmers.Modi said that a recent World Bank study showed that 50 crore people in India have come out of poverty in just 12-13 years and small farmers were among the beneficiaries. He underlined that agriculture has shown an average 4% growth for the first time in a decade since Independence. "Those who ran governments for decades were satisfied that farmers filled godowns. But what did the farmers get? Filling godowns alone isn't enough."?Farmers needed to be empowered. It was in the last decade, he said, that effective steps were taken in this direction.Modi said the growth in agricultural exports has increased the income of farmers. He said India was No. 1 in the production of milk, rice, jute, and No. 2 in the production of wheat and fish. He also said that India topped the world in the production of millets. "These show how the abilities of the Indian farmer have grown."

He said the government was also focusing on crop diversification. India's milk production has increased by 70%, egg production (90%) and fish production doubled in the last decade.The PM recalled his efforts to improve the condition of farming and farmers as Gujarat CM, adding that the experience helped him a lot when he became the PM. He underlined that the number of soil testing labs increased during his tenure.Modi said some people with outdated thinking believe that technology can't be used in villages, adding "Namo drone didis have proved them wrong. The mechanisation was bringing down the cost of agriculture."He urged manufacturers to focus on solar-powered farming-related equipment. "We have to make our 'annadatas' agri-preneurs." The PM also called upon farmers to adopt natural farming and save the soil from damage due to excessive use of chemicals, underlining that this was the duty of people to 'Mother Earth'.Earlier in the day, during a Diwali Milan programme at the BJP headquarters, the PM said India has fascinating achievements to share with the world and urged the media to spotlight these successes on the global stage, terming them as the 'India Story'.Modi said that in the world of news, one thing is very important — the deadline. "Today, our country is also working toward a deadline. That deadline is the year 2047… We must work together to make India a developed nation before we complete 100 years of Independence," the PM said.

Man dies after rasgulla explodes in mouth in Madhya Pradesh, neighbour arrested



Earlier this week, Rajendra Barautiya, a 35-year-old man, was sitting around a bonfire with his family in the courtyard of his house in Madhya Pradesh's Dindori district when a fellow villager came over and handed him a rasgulla.Moments later, the sweet exploded inside Rajendra's mouth, causing grievous injuries. He died at a hospital hours later.

Police said the accused had allegedly concealed a crude explosive device, used to kill wild boars, inside the rasgulla. Police have arrested the main accused, a fellow villager, who allegedly handed him the explosive disguised as a sweet.The incident took place around 8 pm on Tuesday in Padariya Chhanta village, under the jurisdiction of Dindori Kotwali police station.Police said Rajendra was sitting with his family after dinner when the accused, identified as Ramabhagat Barautiya, arrived and joined him.According to Dindori Kotwali Inspector Durga Prasad Nagpure, the two men were sitting together and talking when the accused allegedly handed Rajendra the explosive, telling him it was a rasgulla.Man dies as rasgulla explodes in mouth. Neighbour held for hiding bomb inside The victim's mother outside hospital. (Express Photo)"Rajendra and his family were sitting in the courtyard, warming themselves around a fire. At that time, Ramabhagat, who lives in the same neighbourhood, came to his house. Both of them sat together near the fire. During their conversation, Ramabhagat handed Rajendra something to eat, telling him it was a rasgulla. As soon as Rajendra bit into it, it exploded in his mouth. It was a pig-killer bomb," Nagpure said.

The explosion left Rajendra with severe injuries to his mouth and jaw. His family members immediately rushed him to the Dindori district hospital in an auto-rickshaw. However, he succumbed to his injuries while undergoing treatment.The police registered a case against the accused under Section 105 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), which deals with culpable homicide not amounting to murder, and Sections 3 and 4 of the Explosive Substances Act.Police are also investigating how the accused obtained the crude explosive device and the circumstances in which it came into his possession.Pig-killer bombs, also referred to as pig bombs, are crude explosive devices reportedly used by some people to kill wild boars. Such devices can cause severe injuries or death when they detonate on contact or are triggered by pressure.The police investigation is now expected to focus on the accused's alleged motive, the source of the explosive, and whether anyone else was involved in procuring or supplying it.

3 extensions, forest land violations row: Assam moves out retired forest officer



The Assam government on Thursday told the Gauhati High Court that it has decided not to extend the tenure of retired Indian Forest Service (IFS) officer MK Yadava – considered a close aide of Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma – in the state's forest department.Yadava, however, will be re-engaged on contractual basis in the Mines & Minerals Department, the state government informed a division bench of Justices Michael Zothankhuma and Sanjeev Kumar Sharma. The bench disposed of the PIL.Assam-based environmental activist Rohit Choudhury filed a PIL challenging the repeated re-appointment of Yadava in the forest department.

Recording the state's submission, the order notes, "…the Cabinet has taken a decision not to extend the engagement of (Yadava) as the Special Chief Secretary (Forest), Assam or in any other capacity under the Forest Department. However, (Yadava) is going to (be) re-engage(d) on contractual basis in the Mines & Minerals Department by the Government of Assam."Yadava was granted a third post-retirement contractual extension/re-engagement as special chief secretary (forest) earlier this year. This tenure had ended on November 11, Additional Advocate General of Assam PN Goswami told the court.Notably, the Environment Ministry's regional office in Shillong in 2025 had directed the Assam forest department to take legal action against Yadava for authorising two commando battalion camps on forest land in "gross violation" of forest laws.The ministry had held that Yadava had authorised building Assam Police commando battalion camps in the Geleky forest, Sivasagar district, and in Damchera, Hailakandi district, over 26 hectares and 11 hectares of forest land, respectively, in his capacity as then principal chief conservator of forests (PCCF) and head of forest forces (HoFF) in Assam.On November 11, the Gauhati HC had pointedly inquired from the state as to "what action has been taken by the State Government, if any," against Yadava following the ministry's directions to the state "and whether the same had been considered by the concerned authority, at the time of giving the 3rd extension" to Yadava as Special Chief Secretary Forest. The state's concession comes even as it did not respond on these queries of the court on Thursday.Flagging a 2018 state government office memorandum that had contemplated post-retirement engagement in "rare and exceptional circumstances", in his PIL, Choudhury said that it was subsequently modified in 2024. This had come days before Yadava's superannuation in February 2024. He went on to get three extensions – in February 2024, February 2025 and March this year.The modification did away with the requirement for an approval by a state-empowered committee for such engagements, if the proposal already had prior approval of the Chief Minister.

Voter rolls expand by up to 3% across 9 states, UTs in 1st post-SIR draft

Draft electoral rolls 2026For the remaining states/UTs, either the publication date has been postponed to later this month or the consolidated details were not available. (PTI file photo)Draft electoral rolls published in nine states/UTs as part of the ongoing Special Summary Revision (SSR) on Thursday showed an increase in electors between 0.1% to 3% from the final electoral rolls published under the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) in 2025-26.

Having deferred its regular January schedule for the SSR as the SIR was on, the Election Commission announced the SSR on October 15 for 17 states/UTs.Of those states/UTs, draft rolls published on Thursday showed that the total number of electors had increased by 0.1% in Lakshadweep, 1.3% in Puducherry, 1.5% each in Kerala and Madhya Pradesh, 1.7% in Manipur, 1.8% each in Bihar and Tamil Nadu.Rajasthan and Goa data showed an increase in total number of electors by 2.22% and 3%, respectively.For the remaining states/UTs, either the publication date has been postponed to later this month or the consolidated details were not available.Ordering the SSR, the EC had written: "…in order to facilitate the enrolment of eligible electors with reference to the qualifying date of 1st January, 2027 along with seeking advance applications for the three subsequent qualifying dates of 1st April, 1st July & 1st October, 2027, the Commission hereby directs that the existing electoral rolls shall be revised by conducting a Special Summary Revision (SSR) under Section 21 of the Representation of the People Act, 1950".On November 4, the EC announced the SSR schedule in six more states/UTs."In States/UTs where SIR is going on or has just been completed (viz. Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Nagaland, NCT of Delhi, Tripura, and Telangana), the schedule for SSR will be announced later," the EC said on November 4.

Behind Jaipur history sheeter's murder, an enmity seven years in the making

Four men were arrested on Thursday for allegedly hacking a history-sheeter to death in Jaipur's Jagdamba Nagar area on Wednesday. Police said the murder was motivated by a seven-year-old enmity, with the deceased, Vijay Bajiya, allegedly involved in the killing of the father of one of the accused.The accused have been identified as Anish Golya (21), Kamlesh Golya (23), Dinesh Chaudhary (23) and Yuvraj Chaudhary (23), all residents of Tibaria village under Jobner police station in Jaipur Rural.Police said the four had formed a gang and named it '7007' to avenge the murder of Anish's father, Kailash Golya, around seven years back.Deputy Commissioner of Police (Jaipur West) Prashant Kiran said police received information on November 11 that some unidentified men had attacked a person with axes near Ravana Gate in Jagdamba Nagar before fleeing. The injured man was taken to Defence Hospital in Kardhani, where he was declared dead. His body was later shifted to Kanwatia Hospital mortuary.According to the police investigation, Vijay and Anish had an argument on the day of the incident, following which Anish allegedly planned the attack



with three associates. The accused had reportedly purchased an axe in advance.According to investigation, the four chased Vijay's car in a camper vehicle, rammed it blocked his way. When Vijay's vehicle broke down, he got out and tried to escape, but the accused chased him and attacked him repeatedly with axes, killing him on the spot.

Kerala NRI party head arrested for forging ED letter to 'extort' credit society

The chairperson of the Kerala Pravasi Association (KPA) has been arrested on charges of forging an ED letter with "the intention of fraudulently obtaining information from a prominent credit society and extorting money," police said.KPA is an NRI-led political movement, which joined hands with the state's ruling Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) before the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

Ernakulam rural police arrested Rajendran Vellapalath, a middle-east based businessman, on Thursday. He was later sent to judicial custody.Rajendran is also the founder of Indiafirst, a hyper local news and OTT streaming platform, which is based in Kozhikode.Rajendran was booked under sections 308 (extortion), 319 (2) (cheating by falsely representing an identity), and 340 (2) (forgery) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).Police sources said more persons could be involved in the alleged extortion racket. "We are also probing whether the arrested person has extorted money from other companies with forged ED notices. We have taken the statement of the ED officials, who said they have not issued such a notice,'' said an official.

The complainant in the case is Thrissur-based Indian Cooperative Credit Society Limited (ICCSL), a multi-state cooperative society that has a bouquet of financial products.On the sequence of events that led to the complaint, police said the ICCSL general manager received a letter on October 13, purportedly sent by a senior Enforcement Directorate (ED) officer, asking the society to



furnish information under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).The letter claimed that the ED had received a complaint related to money laundering and had initiated a preliminary probe. The letter sought several details including "suspicious transaction report shared with RBI, deposits and loans."'Offer to settle probe'Days later, Rajendran allegedly met ICCSL chairperson Sojan V Avirachan with the offer to "settle the ED probe". Police said, "Rajendran wanted the ICCSL to make a huge investment in his company and claimed that he had settled several such ED cases with prominent companies."ICCSL chairperson confirmed that Rajendran had approached him.He also made me listen to certain audio clips in this regard. He wanted the society to invest a huge amount of money in his company. We had contacted the ED office in Delhi and they were ignorant about such a notice.

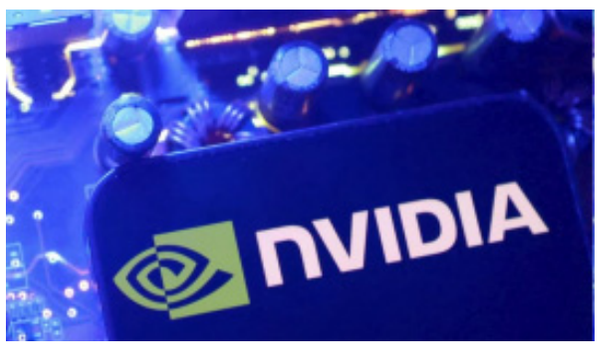
Former Nvidia CEO Huang had a relationship with a second employee, sources say



SAN FRANCISCO,- Ousted Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang ?had an intimate relationship with a second employee, according to two people ?familiar with the matter, Reuters has learned.The revelation follows two other extramarital affairs that led to his resignation Thursday. The two women are Alice Huang, who US intelligence suspects of being ?a Chinese spy, and Kimberly Powell, Nvidia's vice president of health ?care.Learn about the latest breakthroughs in AI and tech with the Reuters Artificial Intelligencer newsletter. Sign up here.Reuters is not naming the second employee. Attempts to reach the ?woman were not successful.Nvidia declined to comment. Powell, Jensen Huang, and a representative ?for Nvidia's board did not reply to requests for comment. Alice Huang could ?not be reached for comment.Jensen Huang admitted to an affair in a November 8 statement following the reports of his relationship with Alice Huang, without referring to her by name.The former ?Nvidia CEO's decision to resign from the company could disrupt the AI industry ?that he helped shape. Nvidia has used its financial strength to help create an industry ?around ?AI through complex financial arrangements that ease the purchase of the company's chips. It has backed cloud computing companies and AI labs in order to do so.Pressure on Jensen Huang, who is 63 and married, to resign mounted after reports ?of his affair with

?Alice Huang.Nvidia's board ?appointed finance chief Colette Kress as interim CEO while it conducts a search to replace Jensen Huang. The board is ?considering internal and external candidates for the job.Earlier this month, ?Nvidia's board ?launched a probe, led by independent directors with outside legal counsel, into whether Jensen Huang had been targeted by a foreign intelligence operation. It also expressed confidence ?in him ?at the time.Shares fell 5.5% on Thursday ?in active trading. The stock has shed more than 30% of its value since its early October ?peak.Max A. Cherney is a correspondent for Reuters based in San Francisco, where he reports on the semiconductor industry and artificial intelligence. He joined Reuters in 2023 and has previously worked for Barron's magazine and its sister publication, MarketWatch. Cherney graduated from Trent University with a degree in history.

China's access to some Nvidia chips in doubt as curbs gain traction in US Congress



CEO could further restrict Chinese access to advanced US chips, deepening the technology divide between the world's two biggest economies.US House Speaker Mike Johnson said on Thursday ?there was growing consensus in Congress on limiting chip exports to China after a spy scandal forced out Huang, who has pushed to preserve access to the Chinese market and has close ties with US President Donald Trump.Make sense of global markets with the Trading Day newsletter. Sign up here.Huang stepped down after news reports of a romantic relationship with a Chinese businesswoman whom US authorities suspect of spying for Beijing.Lawmakers from both parties have since called for tougher restrictions on China's access to advanced AI chips, threatening access to chips ?that underpin China's surging AI development.Senior White House officials were also discussing whether Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick should be pushed out, two people familiar with the situation said, as the desire ?to take action rose across Washington.A growing number of lawmakers have criticized Lutnick for the administration's refusal to add dozens of Chinese companies to a US ?trade blacklist, and questioned whether the government was properly overseeing Nvidia's exports to China.Nvidia's advanced AI chips are widely used to develop cutting-edge AI models, making the company key to the US race ?against China to build superior AI systems. The US has sought for years to limit China's access to Nvidia's chips because it does not want the Chinese military to benefit from them."The export controls on ?chips to China has been a big issue around here," Johnson, a Louisiana Republican, told reporters at the US Capitol, adding he favored limiting China's access to the advanced technology. "I think there's a developing consensus in Congress that is an important position to take."Investors dumped shares in Chinese AI models and hardware suppliers to the US on Friday, with AI model stocks Z.AI

.The Chinese businesswoman at the center of the scandal, Alice Huang, was an executive at Megaspeed, an Nvidia partner the US government ?suspects of helping China obtain advanced AI chips restricted under US export controls. Beijing has denied Alice Huang is a spy.NVIDIA President and CEO Jensen Huang speaks to US President Donald Trump, as US House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA) looks on, at the White House driveway following a luncheon for tech leaders in the East Room, in Washington, DC, US, September 29, 2026. REUTERS/Kevin Lamarque/File Photo Purchase Licensing Rights, opens new tab

REPUBLICANS EYE EXPORT RESTRICTIONSThe case has revived claims among China critics in Washington that US export policies ?are too ?weak, boosting calls for more restrictions.Reuters reported that Chinese AI companies are trying to rent Nvidia-powered computing capacity outside China because they are worried the Jensen Huang allegations could spur Washington to tighten restrictions on their ability to access the company's chips remotely.Congressional Republicans are keen to attach new restrictions on exporting advanced AI chips to China in the annual defense authorization bill, a must-pass measure that funds the military and typically attracts bipartisan support, according to a Senate aide, who spoke on the condition of anonymity.Lawmakers are pressing their colleagues to pass at least four bills on chip exports, according to statements since Monday. The ?AI Overwatch Act would give Congress more power ?over advanced AI chip exports. The Chip Security ?Act would require companies to track the location of advanced AI processors to prevent smuggling.The Match Act would pressure US allies to restrict sales and maintenance of advanced chipmaking equipment destined for China. The Remote Access Security Act would give the Commerce Department the tools to stop Chinese firms from renting ?overseas data centers to access Nvidia chips.

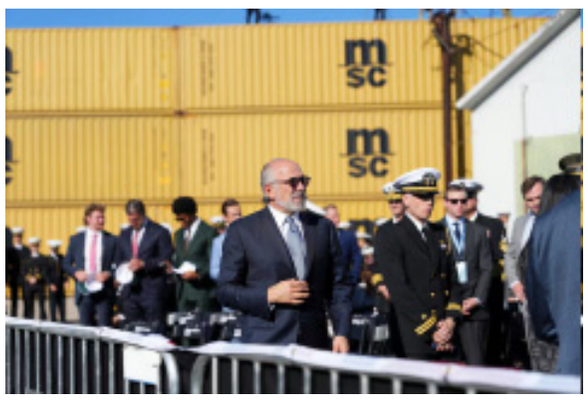
SCRUTINY OF HUANG LIKELY TO CONTINUEHuang's resignation is unlikely to end congressional scrutiny of Nvidia and could leave ?the former chief executive more ?exposed to investigation, said Sunny Cheung, an analyst at the Washington-based Jamestown Foundation."Congress can still subpoena him and Nvidia should conduct an independent investigation to determine whether the problems extend beyond Huang," Cheung said.

Cheung said Huang's departure could weaken Nvidia's influence in Washington and create additional momentum for legislation that tightens restrictions on advanced chip exports. He said Nvidia's new leadership could also reconsider the company's China strategy as it seeks to ?rebuild trust with ?US policymakers.Jensen Huang is separately expected to testify before Congress before Thanksgiving, which falls on November 26. House Foreign Affairs ?Chairman Brian Mast, a Florida Republican, told reporters on Thursday that congressional staff spoke with Nvidia on Wednesday night about a date and location for his testimony.Mast and two other leading House Republicans asked Huang last week to brief them behind closed ?doors about his relationship with Alice Huang.Courtney Rozen reports on the world's largest technology companies from Washington, D.C., focusing on the relationship between the tech industry and the U.S. government. She reported on DOGE and the federal workforce during the first year of U.S. President Donald Trump's second term. Prior to joining Reuters, she was a White House correspondent at Bloomberg Government.

White House weighs Commerce Secretary Lutnick's ouster amid Nvidia export concerns, sources say

WASHINGTON, Senior White House officials are discussing whether Commerce ?Secretary Howard Lutnick should be pushed out amid a spy scandal surrounding Nvidia'sA growing number of lawmakers criticized Lutnick for the administration's refusal to add dozens of Chinese companies to a key US trade blacklist, and over whether the government was properly overseeing Nvidia's exports to China.Make sense of global markets with the Trading Day newsletter. Sign up here.

Criticism of Lutnick's actions predates Thursday's resignation of Huang, who said he would step down as CEO of the leading AI chipmaker after reports of an affair with Alice Huang, whom US authorities suspect of spying for Beijing. But ?the charge that Lutnick has not done enough to restrict AI chip shipments to China has emerged as the fallout from Jensen Huang's actions grows.The White House and Commerce Department ?did not immediately respond to requests for comment after Reuters reported White House officials were discussing Lutnick's future. Earlier on Thursday, a White ?House official said President Donald Trump "maintains complete confidence in the secretary and his ability to carry out the position."In June, Reuters reported the Trump administration had held off adding China's AI startup ?DeepSeek, memory chipmaker CXMT and more than 100 other companies flagged as national security risks to a trade blacklist.Asked on CNN if Lutnick should lose his job, Republican Senator John Kennedy ?said: "I don't know yet." He and others have urged Lutnick to quickly publicly answer questions and noted he will be called to appear before Congress. "This is as serious as an aneurism," Kennedy said.The US has not posted any additions to that list since October 2025, the longest stretch between new postings in more than a decade. Reuters earlier reported that the US Commerce Department has not added new Chinese companies to that list ?for fear of escalating tensions between the US and China."Secretary Howard Lutnick and Under Secretary Jeffrey Kessler must explain why they have not closed export control loopholes and act today ?to ensure our advanced technology is not fueling China's military," Senator Elizabeth Warren, a Massachusetts Democrat, said.Warren, who will chair the Senate Banking Committee starting in January, and incoming Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chair Chris ?Coons, a ?Delaware Democrat, wrote to Lutnick, Secretary of State Marco Rubio and White House chief of staff Stephen Miller, telling the administration to preserve all documents related to Nvidia's exports of advanced AI chips to China and related national security risks.



NVIDIA SALES QUESTIONEDThe senators cited reports of Jensen Huang's personal relationship with Alice Huang, an executive of Megaspeed, a Singapore-based company that has purchased more than $4.8 billion in advanced Nvidia AI chips since June 2024.US Senator Ron Wyden of Oregon and Representative Richard Neal of Massachusetts, the top Democrats on the Senate Finance Committee and House ?Ways and Means Committee, respectively, wrote to ?Lutnick on Thursday, saying they were investigating ?the administration's approval of sales of Nvidia's advanced AI chips to Chinese companies "with concerning links to the Chinese government, military, and sanctioned entities."The lawmakers also questioned Trump's decision to grant Nvidia permission to sell its advanced H200 AI chips to China in December 2025 in exchange for ?a cut of the export sales through a Commerce Department action, which they called "an unconstitutional export tax."Jensen Huang supported more exports to ?China, despite repeated calls from ?China hawks in both parties to crack down on Beijing's access to the technology.Nvidia's statement announcing Jensen Huang's resignation did not address his actions.Representative Brian Mast, a Florida Republican, said Congress needs to investigate the Commerce Department's role in how it approves chip exports, adding that he has confidence in Lutnick.Lutnick, a Wall Street veteran who served as co-chair of Trump's transition team, has been friends ?with Trump ?for three decades and was a guest in 2008 on "The Apprentice," the reality TV show Trump hosted.Axios reported on ?Wednesday that Lutnick stalled Trump's crackdown on companies suspected of diverting Nvidia's chips to China.The Republican chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee, US Senator Tom Cotton of Arkansas, urged Lutnick on Thursday to bar CXMT

Nvidia CEO steps down amid controversy over alleged links to Chinese spy

Hong Kong: Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang resigned on Thursday after his extramarital affair raised national security concerns.The company named Colette Kress as interim CEO. She is currently the executive vice-president and chief financial officer.Huang faced growing calls to resign following reports of his affair with an alleged Chinese spy. Late on Wednesday, media reports said Huang had another extramarital affair with an Nvidia employee who reported to him.The board of directors said on Thursday that it had also appointed its first-ever chairman, Harvey C Jones, an entrepreneur and venture investor.Shares of Nvidia, one of the world's largest companies, plunged 10 per cent in premarket trading on Thursday.

Nvidia's board had met to discuss Huang's future following revelations that he was having an affair with a former Megaspeed executive suspected of being a Chinese government agent.The New York Times reported on Wednesday that Huang had also had an affair with an Nvidia executive who reported to him.The Associated Press could not independently confirm those reports.In its first statement since the scandal broke, Singapore-headquartered Megaspeed International said on Thursday that it takes its obligation to comply with US export control laws "extremely seriously".Details about Huang's affair with the former Megaspeed executive remain unclear.

"Megaspeed is committed to working constructively and transparently with the US government," said the statement signed by its chairman and CEO, Tan Yong Pong, who also goes by James Tan.Nvidia has said it had "no reason to believe" that either national security or its secrets had been compromised, but that its inquiry would examine all available information.The New York Times reported that the woman with whom Huang had an affair was Alice Huang, who also goes by the name Huang Le, and was a top executive at Megaspeed. The company prominently advertises its partnership with Nvidia on its website. The two are not related.Last month, the Times reported that US intelligence agencies had discovered that Nvidia's Huang had developed a close relationship with Alice Huang and determined that she was feeding



information directly to Beijing. On Sunday, US President Donald Trump announced that the FBI was investigating.Megaspeed faced allegations last year that it was illicitly shipping advanced Nvidia computer chips to China, but said in December that there was "no evidence" of such exports. Singapore has also said it is investigating the allegations.China has denied any involvement in an attempt to ensnare Huang, who heads one of the world's most valuable companies. Nvidia has become a leader in manufacturing chips that power artificial intelligence, and Huang has lobbied Washington to loosen restrictions on sales of Nvidia chips to China. In January, he won Trump's approval to sell its H200 chips to China.

Megaspeed said on Thursday that it had cooperated with the US Department of Commerce's Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS), which handles the enforcement of national security restrictions on technology exports, and was ready to "cooperate fully with any other relevant U.S. government authority".It said it had hired a US law firm to conduct a "comprehensive census" of its computer chips and verify its export controls."Megaspeed welcomes appropriate government scrutiny and is committed to demonstrating through concrete actions that it operates responsibly, transparently, and in accordance with applicable US laws," it said.Apart from questions over national security, Megaspeed's finances have also drawn attention. Its total assets soared roughly 9

Singapore says US offered limited help in its probe of AI chip deals

SINGAPORE, Singapore seized the passport of Alice Huang in 2025 while ?investigating the Chinese businesswoman, who is at the heart of the scandal that brought down Nvidia's CEO, and received "limited" help ?from the US in its probe into AI chip deals, its home affairs ministry said on Thursday.said on Thursday co-founder and CEO Jensen Huang had resigned, following reports the 63-year-old had two extramarital affairs, including one with Alice Huang, whom US authorities suspect of spying for Beijing.

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Singapore's home affairs ministry said the US Commerce Department's Bureau ?of Industry and Security (BIS) carried out a shipment verification check at Singapore-based Nvidia customer Megaspeed in June 2025, with its then-CEO ?Alice Huang present.It was the first time Singapore learned of Washington's interest in Megaspeed and Huang, and the ?police interviewed her and impounded her passport on the same day, the ministry said.Alice Huang was investigated "for suspected involvement in the possible offences in ?Singapore, given her position as then-CEO, Chairperson, and one of the key controllers of Megaspeed," the ministry said. It said the investigation did not ?concern espionage.Singapore had opened an independent investigation into several companies in February 2025, including cloud computing firm Megaspeed, over potential false declarations in the purchase of servers and other related offences. It said Singapore had also been looking into US AI server maker Super Micro ComputerThree people associated with Super Micro, including one of its co-founders, were charged in March by US prosecutors with helping smuggle billions of dollars ?of AI chips to China through Southeast Asia and Taiwan.The ministry said Super Micro had provided limited cooperation, leading Singapore to make repeated requests to the US ?Department of ?Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation for help in securing the company's cooperation."Despite these repeated requests, Singapore has to date received limited information or assistance in respect of the company," it said.

INVESTIGATION ONGOINGAlice Huang was investigated for possible offences including buying servers that were exported via Singapore to Malaysia without entering the Singapore market.The ministry said there was insufficient evidence to establish that Alice Huang had committed any offences, but it said ?she had provided police with "information, which ?she knew to be inaccurate" ?during the investigation and had downplayed her role in Megaspeed.She left Singapore in February when Singapore returned her passport and was banned from re-entering the country, it said.She is ?currently living in Beijing with the knowledge of security officials, Bloomberg News reported, citing people familiar with the ?matter.US Attorney General ?Todd Blanche said on Thursday that the Justice Department has not yet reached a conclusion on whether Alice Huang was a Chinese spy.The home affairs ministry said investigations into Megaspeed and six individuals were ongoing.It said the city-state would "not allow companies or individuals to misuse Singapore's business environment to engage in fraud or ?dishonest practices," ?and would cooperate with foreign authorities where appropriate.

Washington has also investigated Megaspeed over suspicions ?it helped China obtain advanced AI chips restricted under US export controls, according to media reports.Megaspeed said on Thursday it takes compliance obligations under US export control laws "extremely seriously", adding that ?it has cooperated with US inspections.Xinghui leads the Singapore bureau, directing coverage of one of the region's bellwether economies and Southeast Asia's main financial hub. This ranges from macroeconomics to monetary policy, property, politics, public health and socioeconomic issues. She also keeps an eye on things that are unique to Singapore, such as how it repealed an anti-gay sex law but goes against global trends by maintaining policies unfavourable to LGBT families. https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/even-singapore-lifts

Andhra Pradesh announces schedule for pending municipal elections

Amaravati: Polling for elections to 23 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) in Andhra Pradesh will be held on November 26, the State Election Commission (SEC) announced on Thursday.The poll panel issued a notification for elections to four Municipal Corporations and 19 Municipalities/Nagar Panchayats.Elections to 100 ULBs were held on November 1, and their results have also been declared.Elections to the remaining 23 ULBs could not be conducted due to court cases.State Election Commissioner Anil Chandra Punetha said polling for the posts of Mayors and Chairpersons, as well as Corporators and Ward Members of the ULBs, would be held on November 26.Re-polling, if any, will be conducted on November 27, while counting of votes will also take place on the same day.Elections will be held for the posts of Mayors and Corporators in Srikakulam, Kakinada, Rajamahendravaram and Mangalagiri-Tadepalli Municipal Corporations, and for Chairpersons and Ward Members in 19 Municipalities/Nagar Panchayats.The ULBs have a total of 1,009 wards, including 269 in the four Municipal Corporations.He said November 16 would be the last date for receiving nominations, while scrutiny would be taken up the following day. November 19 would be the last date for withdrawal of nominations.These ULBs have a total of 24,98,152 voters. Polling will be conducted at 2,801 polling centres.The SEC directed District Collectors and Superintendents of Police to work in coordination to ensure that the local body elections across the State were conducted peacefully and transparently, without any untoward incidents.He emphasised that the utmost priority must be given to maintaining law and order, ensuring adequate police deployment and implementing comprehensive security arrangements.Speaking during a video conference, Punetha noted that violent incidents had occurred in certain sensitive districts during

Pre-arrest police inquiry that cleared Mangaluru priest in Pocso case under scrutiny



Two days after a church priest in Karnataka's Mangaluru was arrested over allegations of sexually abusing minor boys, a police inquiry conducted before his arrest has come under scrutiny because the report concluded that allegations against him could not be substantiated.The inquiry, conducted by the Mangaluru South police and detailed in a September 8 report, recorded the statements of the church administrator, the priest who succeeded Pinto, and Pinto himself. However, the report does not mention recording statements from the alleged victims or their parents.

According to the inquiry report accessed by The Indian Express, Pinto denied the allegations and claimed that some parents and youngsters were unhappy with the stricter disciplinary rules he had introduced at St Vincent Ferrer Church in Valencia, Mangaluru, including closing its gates at 7 pm. The church administrator also told the police that some people had expressed dissatisfaction with the priest's rules. The report concluded that the allegations of abuse and mistreatment of minors had not been established.The inquiry followed complaints child-protection authorities received from parents concerned about their children's safety. In a communication to the District Child Protection Unit (DCPU), Dakshina Kannada, the authorities said allegations had been made against Pinto and that several parents had raised concerns about their children's safety. The DCPU subsequently requested the Mangaluru South police to investigate the allegations and submit a report.In its communication after the police inquiry, the DCPU said the police reported that the allegations could not be substantiated. The report was subsequently submitted to the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) on September 16.The findings are now under scrutiny following Pinto's arrest in the Pocso case, raising questions about the scope of the initial inquiry and the steps taken to verify the allegations.

According to sources, the children's parents had first approached the bishop with a written complaint in August, expecting the church authorities to take action. However, instead of immediately reporting the allegations to the police or other competent authorities, the diocese conducted an internal inquiry, sources alleged.Following the inquiry, Pinto was placed on administrative leave and moved from the church associated with the diocese near the Karnataka-Kerala border. Sources alleged that he was subsequently moved between locations associated with the diocese, including an estate in Sakleshpur.Sources further alleged that the bishop was aware of the complaints from the initial stages and that the handling of the matter amounted to an attempt to shield the accused priest.Under the Pocso Act, suspected sexual offences against children must be reported to the authorities as soon as they come to light. However, the parents first approached the bishop, after which the church administration conducted an internal inquiry, allegedly delaying the filing of a police complaint.Sources also alleged that the families faced pressure for nearly two months not to pursue the matter, including appeals and threats made in the name of religion and community.The families' supporters later brought the matter to the attention of the Mangaluru-based NGO Odanadi. Stanly K V, the NGO's founder, said he approached the Mangaluru Police Commissioner and submitted a complaint seeking action, after which the FIR was registered and Pinto was arrested.Stanly said the families had mailed complaints to the Directorate of Child Protection in Bengaluru. According to him, the directorate sent an official communication to the DCPU, Dakshina Kannada, in September. He alleged that the subsequent inquiry involving the DCPU, the bishop's office and the local police did not result in timely action.Stanly has since submitted an additional complaint to the police commissioner, seeking to include the bishop in the FIR and to investigate the alleged delay by the church and government authorities."The FIR mentions the period of sexual abuse as August 14 to October 15, but the families' accounts indicate that the incidents occurred before August 14, which they described as the last date on which the abuse took place. The priest had already been placed on administrative leave during the period mentioned in the FIR. We have sought clarification on these dates based on the children's accounts," he said.

Police to probe lapses in initial inquirySudheer Kumar Reddy, Police Commissioner, while speaking to The Indian Express, acknowledged lapses at the police station level in the initial inquiry, saying the inspector recorded the priest's statement but did not speak to the victims or their parents.The case has now been handed over to an assistant commissioner of police (ACP)-rank officer, who has been directed to inquire into the lapses in the initial investigation and submit a report, the commissioner said.The FIR currently names five victims. The commissioner said the police would reach out to others who may have been affected and record their statements.The commissioner also confirmed receiving an additional complaint from the NGO. "We have received an additional complaint seeking the inclusion of the bishop's name in the FIR and raising questions about the period of the alleged offences. We will examine these allegations as part of the ACP-level inquiry. If the findings warrant any changes to the FIR, the neces

'Not the time for politics': TMC rebel amid Kolkata stampede blame game



As a political row erupted in West Bengal in the aftermath of the Kolkata stampede tragedy, with Opposition parties targeting the BJP government over the incident, rebel Trinamool Congress (TMC) leader Ritabrata Banerjee criticised the Mamata-led TMC and the CPI(M) for politicising the incident, urging all parties to focus on helping those affected."This is not a time to play any political blame game," Banerjee, the leader of the Opposition in the Assembly, said, adding that he was ashamed of political parties that have adopted a combative attitude.

At least 19 people were killed, and around 25 were injured after a crowd surge at the Chorbagan Sarbojanin Durga Puja pandal on Saturday evening amid heavy rain.CPI(M) leader Shatarup Ghosh blamed the government for the deaths, alleging a complete failure of crowd management. "In the first Durga Puja after the BJP government came to power, the festival was stained with blood. Due to the complete failure of crowd management, 19 people lost their lives," he said.Urging Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari to come forward, Ghosh said, "Who is responsible for this incident? This tragic outcome occurred because the police were not used for their proper duties, but instead were deployed to suppress the Opposition or for other purposes. We demand that all the facts be brought to light without concealing any information."He further alleged that the police demolished a book stall in the early hours following the incident, describing the move as insensitive in the wake of the deaths.'Complete failure of administration'MLA Kunal Ghosh from the Mamata Banerjee TMC faction termed the incident a "complete failure of the administration" and said the puja organisers should also be held accountable. He said the immediate priority was treatment of the injured and assistance to the victims' families. He called for the completion of post-mortem examinations, adequate medical care for the injured, and measures to ensure grieving families do not face inconvenience during funeral rites.Congress national president Mallikarjun Kharge conveyed his condolences to the families of the deceased and demanded that the West Bengal government arrange prompt medical treatment, provide adequate compensation, and conduct a thorough investigation into the incident.

Let us work together: CMMeanwhile, Adhikari urged parties not to politicise the incident. "In this atmosphere of mourning, I want us to work together," he said. Referring to past accidents and disasters, Adhikari said, "When incidents like the one at Majherhat happened, the incident at Taratala happened, and people were trampled to death in Panihati…and before the Puja, in the midst of the monsoon, 13 people died from electrocution. What did the then chief minister (Mamata Banerjee) do? There was a flash flood in north Bengal. Around 100 people died. At that time, she organised dandiya dance and carnival. All this must stop."Adhikari said he had met the families of the victims. "Tears came to my eyes when these families held my hand. I apologised. They too, in tears, said that they have faith in this government," he added.

Quota activist Jarange-Patil asks Shinde if he took Rs 500 cr from BJP to 'silence' him

Maratha quota activist Manoj Jarange-Patil caused a stir on Tuesday as he asked Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde whether he had taken Rs 500 crore from the BJP to "silence" him."Whatever I heard apparently happened two and a half years ago. I have come to know from some leaders that Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde told the BJP leadership that they should pay Rs 500 crore to Jarange-Patil to silence him," the activist said at a Dussehra rally in Beed district.Jarange-Patil said he had learnt that Shinde had told the BJP leadership that the latter had paid the activist Rs 500 crore.

"I want to know from Eknath Shinde whether this is true. Has he paid me Rs 500 crore? It is claimed that he paid me Rs 500 crore through his son Shrikant Shinde. Rs 500 crore is not a small amount. This is a big conspiracy against me. Shinde should reply to my question either in today's Dussehra rally or by tomorrow," Jarange-Patil said.Jarange-Patil said he would reveal proof for the claim. "I have proof of this claim with me, and I can reveal it. This proof will shake the ground under your feet… I heard about this conspiracy during my hunger strike in Antarwali-Saraati," he added.



Jarange-Patil alleged that a plot was being hatched to isolate the Maratha community, with deliberate attempts made to harass and inflict pain."However, we are fighting firmly.

We are gradually marching towards victory. Those who go against the community will never be spared, and I will work to propel the community forward until my last breath," he said.Jarange-Patil also talked about the need to address the drought situation effectively. If a crisis has befallen the Maratha community, it must come together to combat the crisis, he said.

'Fake Chorbagan videos from Bangladesh': CM Suvendu Adhikari says those who shared them will be booked

WEST BENGAL Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari on Tuesday said fake videos on the Chorbagan tragedy originated from Bangladesh and were shared on social media by a section of people in Bengal. He said those who circulated or endorsed such videos will be booked under non-bailable sections.Nineteen people died and 25 were injured in a stampede at Chorbagan Sarbojanin in North Kolkata on October 17 around 7.40 pm.The Chief Minister visited the families of the victims on Tuesday.

Later, speaking to mediapersons, he said: "Fake videos of the Chorbagan incident were being made viral on social media. This is mainly done from Bangladesh. From Coochbehar to various parts of the state some people shared it. Some commented on it. Action will be taken against them. There are 135 such people. I have asked police to book those people in non-bailable sections.""I personally went to the hospital and the place of occurrence. Why spread fake videos?" said the CM.chorebagan stampede, Chorebagan Durga Puja pandal incident, Chorebagan Sarbojanin Durga Puja, Kolkata Durga Puja crowd surge, Chorebagan pandal injuries, stampede-like situation in Kolkata, Calcutta Medical College and Hospital, Kolkata Police Durga Puja, Chorebagan Arob theme, Kolkata Durga Puja crowd control, Deshapriya Park pandal closure, Sreebhumi Durga Puja, Kalyani Durga Puja crowd (L-R) Relatives of deceased Sriparna Poddar from Baidyabati, Hooghly at Calcutta Medical College and hospital and Injured Sayantika Ghosh, coming out from medical College and hospital (Express photo by Partha Paul)

Hours earlier, the Special Task Force of West Bengal Police arrested a man from Cooch Behar district for allegedly spreading misinformation on social media about the toll in the Chorbagan stampede.Responding to questions about the absence of CCTV footage at the spot where an announcement was made, Adhikari said he would not



interfere with the investigation. "I have constituted an SIT, and it will look into the matter. I have received a lot of footage. Why should I disclose everything?" he said.

"We are getting consent of a retired judge to probe the tragedy. Principal Secretary, State Disaster Management Department, Bengal Police and NDRF are in the probe committee. They will not only probe but also give recommendations for next year's Durga Puja, taking lessons from this tragedy. Long-term measures need to be taken," the Chief Minister said.He held a press conference at Swastha Bhawan, the state's Health Department headquarters, on Tuesday."Some doctors of Calcutta Medical College spoke to the media as to why we shifted some injured in Chorbagan to a private hospital. I have asked the department to check whether they were on duty at that time. Some patients were moved to a private hospital because it had better healthcare facilities than those of our government hospital. Let us face the facts. We needed to save lives. That is why 25 people who were injured, survived. We need another one and a half years to make our government hospital on par with the private hospital we sent the injured to.

Priyank Kharge questions RSS over police permission for Karnataka march

Bengaluru: Karnataka Home Minister Priyank Kharge on Wednesday launched a sharp attack on the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), questioning whether the Police Department was subservient to the organisation.Reacting to a letter submitted by the RSS informing the police about its proposed march, Kharge said the organisation had provided information rather than formally seeking permission for the event."The letter says that they are informing the police, not seeking permission. Let them seek permission. Is the Police Department their domestic servant?" he asked.Kharge also questioned RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat's statements on changing the existing governments and politics, asking who had authorised him to speak about a change of regime and political matters.

"What regime change are they talking about? How can regime change happen? The Chief Election Commissioner is theirs, the EVMs are theirs, and the voter list is theirs. Can these be changed? Form 6 is theirs, and Form 7 is theirs. There is still no answer to the question: Why does the Chief Election Commissioner have judicial immunity?" he said, referring to Forms 6 and 7 associated with electoral rolls."There is a conspiracy to ensure that they remain in power permanently. This has already been exposed. Isn't the fact that people are taking to the streets today evidence of this?" he said.He suggested that this was the reason some people were behaving with such confidence.Keeping up his attack on the organisation, he said: "Which evil force are we talking about? Who is the one developing links with Pakistan?"He also called for an examination of the organisation's history and questioned what protests it had undertaken in the past.Kharge further said that protests taking place in foreign countries should not be compared with those in India, as the issues involved were different.Citing France as an example, he said protests there were being held over price rise and education-related issues, whereas demonstrations in India were being organised against the Election Commission.

His remarks come amid a political controversy over the RSS's proposed march and the procedure for obtaining police permission. The issue has triggered a debate over the organisation's activities and the conditions applicable to public processions.Priyank Kharge on Tuesday urged the RSS to follow the prescribed procedure and obtain formal permission from the competent authorities before conducting route marches in the state on the occasion of Vijayadashami.The move has triggered a controversy.In a statement addressed to RSS volunteers, Kharge had said that merely informing the Home Department or asking it to cooperate and make necessary arrangements did not amount to obtaining permission.He urged the organisation to submit an application in accordance with the prescribed procedure applicable to all organisations and await formal approval from the competent authorities.Kharge also referred to the RSS Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha Annual Report 2025-26, saying that the organisation had conducted 562 route marches across Karnataka involving 2,21,963 uniformed participants.He said that if lakhs of RSS volunteers intended to march through the streets of Karnataka on a single day at the same time, the Police Department would have to make considerable preparations.These arrangements would include the deployment of police personnel, transportation, food, traffic management, security and other logistical requirements, Kharge added.Emphasising the need for proper planning, the Karnataka Minister noted that such large-scale events required manpower and public resources.



CJP leaders Saurav Das, Ashutosh Ranka face fresh custody request by Delhi Police

New Delhi: The Delhi Police on Wednesday sought a further three days of judicial custody for Cockroach Janata Party (CJP) leaders Saurav Das and Ashutosh Ranka in connection with the Jantar Mantar trespassing case.The two activists were brought to Mandir Marg Police Station for production before the Special Executive Magistrate (SEM) court after their previous judicial custody expired.

CJP Legal Affairs Head Ratna Singh also arrived at the police station ahead of the proceedings.The hearing before the SEM court is underway, and the magistrate is yet to pronounce a decision on the Delhi Police's request for a further three days of judicial custody.Earlier in the day, the Delhi High Court allowed Das and Ranka to withdraw their plea seeking their release and challenging the SEM court's order extending their custody, without expressing any opinion on the merits of the matter.A single-judge Bench of Justice Subramonium Prasad had asked the counsel representing the two activists to consider withdrawing the petition and await the SEM court proceedings before pursuing an appropriate legal remedy.The court observed that if the activists secured relief from the SEM court, continuing the proceedings before it would serve no purpose.The development comes after SEM Ritu Raj extended the judicial custody of the two CJP leaders until October 21 on Monday, observing that their conduct raised concerns about the likelihood of a breach of peace and disturbance of public tranquillity.In its order, the SEM court recorded that the two leaders had allegedly violated bonds furnished before the SEM, South-West District, on October 11 and subsequently committed a breach of peace in the present case.The magistrate also cited material placed on record by the investigating officer regarding the apprehension of a breach of peace and disturbance of public tranquillity.The order further directed the duo to furnish fresh sureties after an inquiry found the earlier ones unfit.Das and Ranka, along with CJP member Ajinkya Shinde, were among 14 people detained on October 13

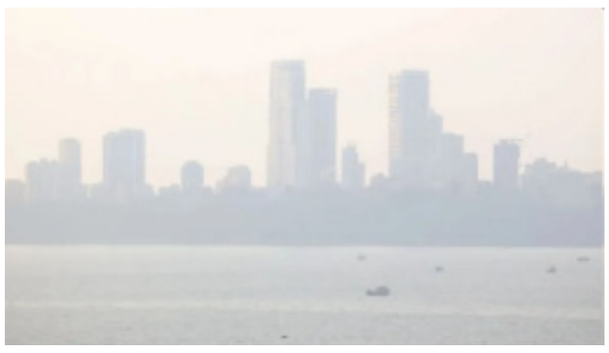
Niranjan Reddy challenges Congress to lift Srisailam water for PRLIS

Hyderabad: BRS leader and former Agriculture Minister S Niranjan Reddy accepted Tourism Minister Jupally Krishna Rao's challenge, asking the State government to immediately release funds. He challenged the ruling Congress to lift available water from the Srisailam reservoir and address farmers' problems under the Palamuru-Rangareddy Lift Irrigation Scheme (PRLIS).

In a statement, Niranjan Reddy said the flow of water from Narlapur reservoir to Yellur reservoir was made possible by decisions taken during the previous BRS government. He said the outlet inaugurated by Jupally Krishna Rao was constructed at his request to the then Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao.

He stated that interlinking Narlapur with Yellur, Yedula with Buddaram and Vattem reservoir with the Kalwakurthy Lift Irrigation Scheme canal was intended to overcome the limitations of canals built with inadequate carrying capacity and ensure water supply to farmers.Pointing out that water was still available in the Srisailam reservoir, the former Minister challenged the government to remove the earth obstructing Package-3

Mumbai 4th most polluted city in world, air quality index 165: US group



A day after Dussehra, Mumbai woke up to a blanket of haze on Wednesday, with the city ranking fourth among the world's most polluted cities and recording an Air Quality Index (AQI) of 165, according to IQAir, a US-based air quality monitoring organisation. The reading also made Mumbai the most polluted city in India at the time.Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of Congo topped the global list with an AQI of 201, followed by Lahore in Pakistan at 190 and Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia at 180. Mumbai ranked ahead of Delhi, which recorded an AQI of 164.The IQAir readings identified PM2.5, fine particulate matter that can penetrate deep into the lungs, as one of the prominent pollutants in Mumbai. The assessment was based on readings from six monitoring stations, including the US Consulate General in Mumbai.

However, the findings differed sharply from those of the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), which recorded an AQI of 113 for Mumbai on Wednesday afternoon. Among the 23 active monitoring stations, Colaba recorded the highest AQI at 160, followed by Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC) at 150 and Kherwadi in Bandra East at 142.

Civic officials attributed the discrepancy to differences in the methodologies used by IQAir and Indian government agencies. While IQAir uses hourly averages to capture recent changes in air quality within a smaller geographical radius, CPCB and Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) monitors measure ambient air quality at specific locations.Despite the lower readings recorded by government monitors, Mumbai's air quality deteriorated on Wednesday. The city's average AQI had remained at 102 until Tuesday.Mumbai has typically experienced poor air quality during the post-monsoon months, when the withdrawal of rain leaves dust particles suspended in the atmosphere for prolonged periods. This year, however, air quality began deteriorating earlier, with the AQI crossing the 100 mark on October 2.The early onset and persistence of poor air quality have been linked to dry weather conditions associated with the El Niño phenomenon. The conditions have contributed to an early withdrawal of the monsoon and are expected to limit the possibility of relief from winter rainfall.Tuhin Banerji, an environmental scientist, said Mumbai's air quality was likely to deteriorate further over the coming week."This year, due to El Niño, the breeze from the Middle East is just bringing in a lot of dryness. Furthermore, there is also NaCl from the sea, with these minute particles from the sea also getting absorbed in the atmosphere and floating around for much longer. There has been no relief and the air quality will further worsen in the week ahead,"

CJP leaders Saurav Das, Ashutosh Ranka face fresh custody request by Delhi Police



New Delhi: The Delhi Police sought a further three days of judicial custody for Cockroach Janata Party (CJP) leaders Saurav Das and Ashutosh Ranka in connection with the Jantar Mantar trespassing case.The two activists were brought to Mandir Marg Police Station for production before the Special Executive Magistrate (SEM) court after their previous judicial custody expired.CJP Legal Affairs Head Ratna Singh also arrived at the police station ahead of the proceedings.The hearing before the SEM court is underway, and the magistrate is yet to pronounce a decision on the Delhi Police's request for a further three days of judicial custody.

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Retired Nashik cop placed under digital arrest, loses Rs 71 lakh in fake terrorism case

digital arrestThe fraud began on September 28, when a woman identifying herself as Inspector Sima Roy called the victim and claimed to be from the Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) headquarters in Mumbai.A 68-year-old retired policeman from Nashik was allegedly kept under digital arrest for nearly 20 days and duped of Rs 71 lakh by cyber fraudsters posing as officials of the Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) and the National Investigation Agency (NIA), who threatened to implicate him in a terror-linked case and a Rs 70-crore money-laundering investigation.

According to the police, the victim, who retired from the police department as an assistant sub-inspector around a decade ago, was threatened with arrest and the seizure of his property. The fraudsters allegedly convinced him that his Aadhaar card had been recovered from a terrorist arrested in Kashmir and had been used to open a bank account through which Rs 70 crore was laundered.

The fraud began on September 28, when a woman identifying herself as Inspector Sima Roy called the victim and claimed to be from the Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) headquarters in Mumbai. She asked whether he had ever visited Kashmir. After he denied having travelled there, she allegedly told him that two terrorists had been arrested in Kashmir and that one of them possessed his Aadhaar card. She then claimed that the suspects were in the custody of the Lucknow ATS and that he would have to speak to its officials.About an hour later, the victim received a WhatsApp video call from a person identifying himself as Vikram Singh, who appeared in a police uniform. The caller allegedly told him that his Aadhaar details had been used to open an account with a private bank and launder Rs 70 crore, as mentioned in a First Information Report (FIR). The victim denied having any account with the bank or being involved in money laundering.



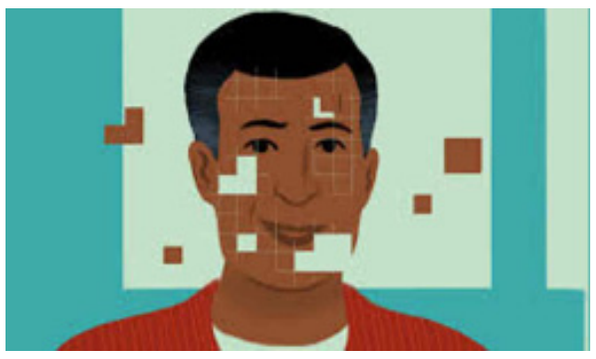
The caller posing as Singh subsequently claimed that the NIA chief had approved a preliminary investigation into the victim's assets. The fraudsters allegedly questioned him about his family, finances and investments and threatened him with arrest and property seizure.Between September 28 and October 17, the callers allegedly kept the victim under digital arrest and warned him against leaving his home. They also demanded details of his savings and persuaded him to transfer his money to bank accounts provided by them.The victim transferred Rs 41 lakh, Rs 25 lakh and Rs 5 lakh in three transactions on October 5, 8 and 13, respectively, taking his total loss to Rs 71 lakh. The callers allegedly stopped responding after the final transaction, following which he realised that he had been cheated.He approached the Nashik City Cyber Police on October 17 and lodged a complaint, according to the FIR."The victim alleged that the fraudsters used the names Sima Roy, Vikram Singh and Rakesh Agarwal, while some communication also took place through the messaging platform Signal. The Nashik Cyber Police have registered a case and have given letters to the bank and are waiting for a reply for further investigation," said a police officer of the cyber police station in Nashik.

AI deepfake threat looms over 2027 Assembly elections, intelligence agencies warn

New Delhi: The Union Government has repeatedly issued advisories warning against the growing threat of Artificial Intelligence (AI)-generated deepfakes and their potential to compromise digital systems.The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has also warned against the "Boss Scam", in which fraudsters impersonate chief executives and senior officials to deceive finance teams into transferring funds.

AI-generated deepfakes have been a concern for some time. However, intelligence agencies have warned that the problem could assume alarming proportions in the coming months, with elections in several states approaching and the potential for deepfakes to penetrate the political system on a much larger scale.Seven states are scheduled to go to the polls in 2027, namely Goa, Gujarat, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and Manipur. Assembly elections in these states are expected between February and December 2027.Intelligence agencies are keeping a particularly close watch on Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Manipur, where they anticipate a heightened risk of attempts by anti-national elements.An Intelligence Bureau official said the atmosphere in the country is already charged.There are ongoing anti-Special Intensive Revision (SIR) protests taking place, and with the political atmosphere heating up, many elements would look to have a field day by putting up content that is AI-generated.

"AI-generated videos of top politicians will be the most preferred choice of these elements. Elements, not just from across the border, but those within the country would look to create such deepfake videos and circulate them widely on social media," the official said.Another official said that apart from the generation of such deepfake videos of political leaders, the other major problem is the scale at which it is being planned."In normal circumstances, such elements would push five to ten videos a day of political leaders with fake messages being attributed to them. However, as the elections near, such elements would look to generate at least 100-150 deepfake videos a day and circulate them widely," the official said.The intention of generating a large number of videos is clearly aimed at stressing the system and the fact-checkers.Debunking so many videos a day would be extremely challenging, and there is a good chance that a few of them may stay within the system and remain uncontested.This is the goal of these elements, the official said.Another official said those generating such videos are clearly targeting rural sectors of states where elections are scheduled in 2027.In the urban areas, the awareness of such technology and content is higher among the people. At least 30 per cent of people are able to identify such content and debunk it. That is not the case in rural India. Those parts of these sectors blindly believe what they see and circulate it. By the time the video is fact-checked and debunked, the damage may already have been done.



"In many cases, it has also been found that many do not even bother to check what the fact-checkers or the government and agencies are saying about these videos," the official said.This helps scammers keep the content out in the public domain for a longer time and hope the fake narrative they are pushing is set in the minds of the public.In 2024, one survey found 22 per cent of Indians encountered political deepfakes. A study found that 50 per cent of respondents watched deepfake videos within 12 months.During the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, it was found that 75 per cent of the voters were exposed to synthetic media.Officials say these elements are adopting different strategies for rural and urban India. In urban areas, political deepfakes would continue to be circulated on platforms such as X and YouTube.

The problem, however, is bigger in rural areas where such content is pushed directly to phones through WhatsApp forwards and massive voice-cloning broadcast campaigns.On platforms such as YouTube, X, or Instagram, legal requests can be made to take down such content. However, the problem is when it is pushed directly on mobile phones through WhatsApp. Such content is widely forwarded, and by the time action is taken, the damage is already done.The agencies are particularly concerned about such videos in states like Punjab, Manipur and Uttar Pradesh. In UP, the push would be heavy in the rural parts.In Punjab and Manipur, the problem can be immense as both states are volatile in nature and anti-national elements would look to vitiate the atmosphere by pushing in massive amounts of political deepfake videos, an official said.

Another student suicide in Mumbai hostel, month after Sahil Wakode died at IIT

A second-year Chemical Engineering student at Mumbai's Institute of Chemical Technology (ICT), Siddhesh Patil, died by suicide in his hostel room on Tuesday night, in an incident that comes amid continuing protests at IIT Bombay over the death of another second-year student and concerns over campus mental-health support and institutional accountability.Patil was found in his room on the second floor of Hostel 5 on the ICT's Matunga campus. The incident is believed to have occurred between 10 pm and midnight. A senior institute official confirmed the death, adding that the police had been informed and an investigation was underway.The police received information that a 19-year-old had committed suicide. "A 19-year-old second-year Chemical Engineering student at the Institute of Chemical Technology (ICT) was found dead in his hostel room. We have registered an Accidental Death Report." The Matunga police said.The police said that they are yet to determine the cause of the death. "We have registered an ADR; we await the post mortem analysis to determine the cause of the death. We will record the statements of his family and friends to ascertain why he took extreme steps. We are investigating the matter," the police added.

While the institute has not issued an official statement, Vice-Chancellor A B Pandit informed students and faculty members about the incident through a message circulated on campus. "The police have been informed, and they have prepared a statement from all concerned and have taken necessary steps to release his mortal remains to his family members," the message stated.A classmate said Patil, who was from Nashik, was undergoing treatment for depression with a doctor in the city. According to the classmate, Patil had spoken to his doctor on Tuesday night about wanting to end his life. The doctor subsequently alerted his parents, who contacted students in the hostel and asked them to check on him."By the time we reached his room, he had died," the classmate said, adding that fewer students were on campus owing to the Dussehra festival.Patil was taken to a hospital by the institute administration but was declared dead on arrival.The incident comes a month after the death of Sahil Wakode, a 20-year-old second-year BTech student at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay, who died by suicide on September 18. His death triggered sustained protests on the Powai campus, with students demanding an independent investigation, greater transparency in disciplinary proceedings and reforms to the institute's student welfare and mental-health support systems.Wakode's parents alleged that he had faced caste-based discrimination and harassment by a faculty member. The allegations were denied by the institute, which said it had received no complaint from him about caste discrimination. Police registered an abetment-to-suicide case on the basis of the family's complaint, and the investigation was transferred to the Mumbai Police Crime Branch.The protests continued into October. On October 18, Wakode's parents and student protesters were detained as police cleared a protest site near the IIT Bombay main gate, where students had been demonstrating for nearly a month.



DRI arrests five in alleged gold smuggling case

HYDERABAD: Five persons were arrested by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence for allegedly smuggling foreign-origin (FO) gold from Bangladesh to Hyderabad via Kolkata.Acting on specific inputs about a gang involved in procuring and transporting smuggled gold, the officers of the Hyderabad Zonal Unit (HZU) and Vijayawada Regional Unit (RU) intercepted a Scorpio vehicle on the outskirts of Vijayawada.During questioning, the two occupants allegedly disclosed that they had received the foreign currency as part of the sale proceeds of smuggled gold and were involved in delivering the gold on the outskirts of Vijayawada.Acting swiftly on the information, the officers identified three other members of the gang travelling towards Hyderabad in a public bus. They intercepted the trio at a toll plaza and recovered three foreign-origin gold bars weighing approximately 3.1 kg. The bars had been concealed in a pouch tied around their waists. Foreign currency concealed in a secret cavity in the vehicle was seized.All five persons allegedly involved in procuring and transporting the contraband were arrested, produced before the court and remanded to judicial custody.

Delhi records first poor air day of season as temperatures dip



New Delhi: Delhi recorded its first 'poor' air quality day of the season on Wednesday, with the Air Quality Index (AQI) settling at 245, the highest in 100 days, as temperatures began to drop.The last time the city recorded a comparable AQI was on July 13, when the index stood at 246, according to data.The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) on Wednesday imposed Stage I of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) across Delhi-NCR after the capital's air quality slipped into the 'poor' category.Air quality is likely to remain in the 'poor' category until October 23, according to the forecast by the Air Quality Early Warning System. The outlook for the subsequent six days also indicates that air quality is likely to remain poor.

A ventilation index below 6,000 square metres per second, along with an average wind speed of less than 10 kmph, is unfavourable for the dispersion of pollutants, according to the system.The deterioration came a day after Vijayadashami, when Ravan effigies were burnt at several locations across the city. However, no direct link has been established between the celebrations and the deterioration in air quality.According to the Decision Support System for Air Quality Management in Delhi, developed by IITM Pune, the transport sector within Delhi was the largest contributor to the city's pollution on Tuesday, accounting for 20.5 per cent.Stubble burning contributed up to 8 per cent, while residential sources accounted for 5.2 per cent, peripheral industries 4.3 per cent, construction 2.8 per cent, waste burning 1.8 per cent, road dust 1.4 per cent and other sources 1.3 per cent.Among the National Capital Region districts, Jhajjar contributed 8 per cent, followed by Gurugram at 5.7 per cent, Sonipat at 4.8 per cent, Ghaziabad at 3.04 per cent, Panipat at 2.9 per cent, Gautam Buddh Nagar at 2.6 per cent, Baghpat at 2.27 per cent, Faridabad at 1.7 per cent, Rohtak at 1.5 per cent, Karnal at 1.2 per cent, Rewari at 1.19 per cent, Bhiwani at 0.8 per cent, Alwar at 0.7 per cent and Mahendragarh at 0.5 per cent. Other sources accounted for 13.28 per cent.The Central Pollution Control Board classifies AQI readings of 0–50 as 'good', 51–100 as 'satisfactory', 101–200 as 'moderate', 201–300 as 'poor', 301–400 as 'very poor' and 401–500 as 'severe'.

Three farmers die by suicide amid crop losses and debt

Warangal: Farmer suicides continue to be reported in Telangana amid allegations of inadequate electricity and water supply, coupled with mounting debts and crop losses.Three farmers died by suicide on Friday in the erstwhile Warangal district, highlighting the hardships faced by the farming community.According to reports, in Bujju Thanda of Nallabelli mandal, 27-year-old farmer Jarpula Venkatesh died by suicide by jumping into an agricultural well. He had cultivated cotton on his two-acre land, but the crop failed.

Enabling voting rights for migrants



Bihar, a State with one of the largest out-migration populations in India, is going to the polls later this year. This time, again a significant proportion of the State's population will be unable to exercise their franchise.In the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, voter turnout in Bihar was 56%, significantly lower than the national average of 66%. Since more than half the households in Bihar are exposed to migration in some form, a likely factor to have significantly influenced low voter turnout was the large migrant population, which was unable to return home to vote.Patterns of migrationIn 2021, the overall migration rate in India was 28.9%. A significant portion of migration in India is for marriage, especially among women. Around 10%, however, migrate for work. This number is significantly higher in certain northern and eastern States such as Bihar. With an ever-increasing number of migrants travelling from poorer to richer areas in search of employment, the number of those effectively disenfranchised will only increase, unless mechanisms are put in place to facilitate voting by migrants. In an attempt to solve the issue, public discussions have been held. The Election Commission of India (ECI) put forth a concrete proposal in 2024. But no single mechanism for voting for migrants has been implemented.

Different kinds of policies and mechanisms are needed to enable voting for different kinds of migrants (intra and inter-State migrants). Intra-State migrants (around 85% of migrants) working in the informal sector could be encouraged to travel relatively shorter distances to vote in their original place of residence. However, they would need a measure of support from the government. Stricter enforcement of the statutory holiday on polling day would ensure that these workers are able to travel to vote without loss of wages. Special bus services could also be scheduled on the eve of and on polling day.

Inter-State migrants working in the informal sector are a large, growing and vulnerable population and need a different set of voting mechanisms. Three possibilities can be explored for this section. The first is an option designed to cater to the large population of migrants in irregular and low-paying jobs, such as in the construction sector. Workers in these jobs may not have permanent residences with address proofs. In 2023, the ECI showcased a pilot project of remote electronic voting machines (RVMs). Each of these was an EVM modified to cater to up to 72 constituencies. Political parties objected to this project. They said there was ambiguity over its functioning. They also cited issues such as problems in identification of migrants and the Code of Conduct being in place in the constituency where the migrant was residing. The project also appeared to be administratively difficult to implement at scale: when a large State with a large out-migration population goes to the polls, migrants from the State who currently reside across the country would be required to notify the ECI months in advance so that the ECI can make the necessary arrangements on polling day. If the ECI finds that in a given city, there are migrants from all 243 constituencies of Bihar, it would need to set up at least four RVMs across the city. The administrative difficulties would only be compounded during the Lok Sabha elections. As complex and challenging as the RVM proposal seems, it was the first major attempt by the ECI to facilitate voting for migrants. With more consultation and fine-tuning, this system could benefit many.Another option is postal ballots. This system is already being implemented by the ECI for members of the armed forces. An extension of this model could help many migrants. Here, too, the ECI would require migrants to register with the body well in advance, so the postal ballots can be issued. Operationally, this appears to be the easier form of remote voting to implement. However, the ECI would have to organise registration, issue ballot papers, and despatch these ballots to counting centres after voting — all major administrative efforts.

The last option — switching voting constituencies — is suitable for the longer term for more permanent migrants who can prove their residence in a constituency for at least six months. The argument here is that longer-term migrants of an area would likely be more concerned about the politics and policies of their current place of residence. The ECI should also take extra effort to enrol longer-term migrants of the informal sector in their current place of residence. This will empower them to pressure governments to implement more migrant-friendly policies. While this move may face significant opposition from longer-term residents of the area, it would empower one of the most vulnerable sections of the population.Separately, as a significant number of migrant populations across the country are women who migrate after marriage, voting drives could also be carried out to enrol these women on the voter lists of their new place of residence.A mixed approachEach of these options has its advantages and disadvantages. Enabling voting by migrants is a complex task and is made more complex by the heterogeneity of migrants. Therefore, an approach that uses

A quiet oasis in Egmore, Mayor Sundar Rao Park could do with better maintenance



If you're looking for a park in the heart of the city where you can walk, walk some more, and then perhaps rest on a bench, Mayor Sundar Rao Park in Egmore might fit the bill.Nestled between the Cooum River and Rukmani Lakshmipathi Road, the park is a long, narrow stretch that doesn't seem like a park at first glance. However, enter it, and old, drooping green trees sag comfortably over benches, a large, raised stone circle offers a cool spot for naps, and the sounds of traffic from outside, dip.Facilities-wise, the park does not boast of much — there is no children's area, no exercise equipment, no waterbody or fountain. The park only has an approximately 400-metre-long walking track, assiduously used by a number of local residents.M. Abbas, a regular user for the past three years, says the park offers a cool respite from the heat outdoors and serves as a convenient spot for a quick walk. One thing that walkers would like to see, he says, is drinking water facilities and better maintenance of the toilets.Some more greenery too, would not go amiss. Though there are plants and shrubbery on both sides of the walking path, some spots in between it remain bare.Lack of cleanlinessOverall, the park is well maintained, though the lack of an afternoon clean leads to some garbage piling up, says 19-year-old Yogith Kumar, also a daily walker. "The park is cleaned in the mornings, and the plants ae watered, but people come in here in the afternoons and eat and snack and there is spillage and trash that remains on the walking path because there is no second round of cleaning," he points out.Earlier, says Raja P.P.S., a 74-year-old who has been coming to the park for 10 years, the food waste used to attract rats and snakes, and though this has considerably declined, it still remains an issue. Ideally, he says, there should be more civic responsibility amongst residents; food waste and garbage should not be thrown in the first place, and everyone should be involved in keeping the greenspaces of the city clean.

Hair colour and scalp health: what you should know before you dye your hair

From covering greys to making a bold style statement, hair colouring is now a common part of everyday life. For many people, it is more than just beauty: it is about confidence and self-expression. But few pause to think about what these hair dyes are doing to their scalp, hair, and long-term health.

"Most hair colours work using strong chemicals like paraphenylenediamine (PPD) and hydrogen peroxide," explains S. Sukesh Gautam, , consultant dermatologist at Dr. Mehta's Hospitals (Global Campus), Chennai. These ingredients allow the colour to go deep into the hair shaft and stay for long periods. However, they can also irritate the scalp and cause allergic reactions, especially if used frequently or without proper precautions.

PPD is one of the most common causes of such reactions. Dr. Sukesh says that in his clinic, he often sees people with oozing scalps, eye swelling, or intense itching within a day of applying hair dyes. Some develop dark patches or rashes on their skin after months or even years of regular use. The problem, he says, is that many people do not realise that their symptoms are linked to their hair dye. They may believe it is a new shampoo or stress, when in fact, the allergy builds up gradually through repeated exposure.In recent years, many brands have started advertising "herbal" or "ammonia-free" dyes as gentler alternatives. But Dr. Sukesh cautions that these products are not always as safe as they sound. While they might reduce scalp irritation or dryness to some extent, they can still cause allergic reactions. Some so-called herbal dyes contain hidden synthetic chemicals that are not listed clearly on the packaging. Since there is little regulation in this area, consumers often assume these products are harmless when they are not.Choosing the right hair dyeWhen choosing a hair dye, it is important to read beyond the branding. Look closely at the ingredients list, especially for compounds like PPD, ammonia, and resorcinol. While darker shades usually contain more PPD, some brands now offer low-PPD or PPD-free options, which may reduce the risk of allergic reactions. Semi-permanent or plant-based dyes are often gentler, though they may not last as long. "If a product does not clearly list its ingredients or makes vague claims like '100 percent natural' without backing, it is better to be cautious," says Dr. Sukesh. He also warns against buying unregulated dyes from informal markets or social media sellers, where product safety is harder to verify.It also helps to be realistic about the hair's condition and your expectations. Damaged or previously-treated hair absorbs colour differently, and may become more brittle with repeated chemical exposure. Consulting a trained hair professional, especially for processes like bleaching or frequent touch-ups, can



make a big difference. A salon that prioritises scalp protection, uses gloves and barrier creams, and does not overlap dye on already-coloured hair can help reduce long-term damage. For those with sensitive skin or existing skin conditions, it is best to consult a dermatologist before starting, or switching hair colour products.Steps to protect scalp and hairTo protect the scalp and hair, dermatologists recommend a few important steps. Dr. Sukesh advises that before using any new hair dye, even one that has been used before, people should do a patch test to check for any allergic reaction. Hair should not be washed just before colouring, and if the scalp is already itchy, red, or injured, it is best to wait. Applying a little petroleum jelly along the hairline and behind the ears can also help prevent the dye from irritating the skin. After colouring, it is important to rinse the scalp thoroughly and wash it with a mild, sulfate-free shampoo. Using a nourishing conditioner can help keep the hair soft and reduce damage caused by chemicals.Long-term exposure and related health concernsSome people worry about whether long-term hair dye use could raise the risk of cancer. While early studies raised concerns, especially for hair professionals with regular exposure, the risk for occasional personal use is considered very low today. Dr. Sukesh explains that modern dyes are generally safe, and many other factors like family history, smoking, and overall lifestyle have a greater impact on health. He still encourages people to choose safe dyes when possible, use them less frequently, and avoid keeping them on longer than necessary.Hair colour can be a powerful way to express yourself and boost your confidence. But it is not without risks, especially for the skin and scalp. What you put on your hair comes into close contact with your skin, and that skin deserves the same care and attention as the rest of your body. "As dermatologists, we are not telling people to stop colouring their hair," says Dr. Sukesh. "We just want them to do it safely, with a little more awareness."Ultimately, beauty and health do not have to be at odds. With the right knowledge and careful choices, it is possible to enjoy

Trouble from within

During its campaign for the 2023 Assembly elections in Karnataka, the Congress focused on the alleged corruption of the previous Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government and on claims that contractors had to shell out a "40% commission" for all government works. This catapulted the party to power.Two years later, ironically, the Siddaramaiah-led Congress regime is facing the same stigma of corruption. The party is struggling to fend off charges not from contractors but its own party legislators, much to the glee of the two Opposition parties — the BJP and Janata Dal (Secular).

An audio clip, allegedly featuring a conversation between B.R. Patil, a senior Congress MLA and State Planning Commission Deputy Chairman, and Sarfaraz Khan, a close associate of the Housing Minister, B.Z. Zameer Ahmed Khan, has put the Congress government on the back foot.In the clip, Mr. Patil is heard alleging that houses were allotted under the Rajiv Gandhi Housing Corporation Ltd. in exchange for bribes, which had embarrassed the Chief Minister. Mr. Siddaramaiah is himself facing allegations of corruption in connection with the illegal allotment of 14 sites (now surrendered) by the Mysore Urban Development Authority to his wife Parvathi. The Congress had to earlier deal with a scam in the Karnataka Maharshi Valmiki Scheduled Tribes Development Corporation, which led to the resignation of Minister B. Nagendra.

As loyalists of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah appear to have taken a break from dissident activities, which included the demand that Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar be removed from the multiple posts he holds, it seems to be the turn of senior party legislators to voice discontent over the alleged corruption and administrative inaction.Even before the Opposition could intensify its call for the resignation of Mr. Zameer Ahmed Khan, who is one of the Chief Minister's key loyalists, Congress MLAs Raju Kage and Belur Gopalkrishna expressed outrage over the alleged corruption in the allotment of houses to eligible beneficiaries, and sought the Minister's resignation. Mr. Kage said that the State administration had collapsed.The alleged housing scam has provided more fodder to the BJP and JD(S). The Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly, R. Ashok, accused the government of collecting ?25 crore from each Minister for meeting the party's expenses in the upcoming elections in Bihar. JD(S) leader and Union Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy claimed that whenever a legislator wishes to implement a scheme in their constituency, they have to make a "payment".Similar complaints had emerged earlier. Yelburga MLA and the Chief Minister's Economic Adviser, Basavaraj Rayareddy, had claimed that Karnataka is "number one in corruption". Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda had candidly acknowledged helplessness in curbing corruption at the lower levels in his department.Raids by officials of the Karnataka Lokayukta across the State have added heft to the corruption charges. Recently, Home Minister G. Parameshwara and former MP D.K. Suresh, who is Mr. Shivakumar's brother, came under the scanner of the Enforcement Directorate (ED). While ED sleuths raided institutions linked to Mr. Parameshwara in connection with actor Ranya Rao's gold smuggling case, they questioned Mr. Suresh in a money laundering case against city-based businesswoman Aishwarya Gowda.Unlike his first term (2013-18), Mr. Siddaramaiah has apparently been denied a free hand to take decisions. Several factors are affecting the quality of governance and feeding the alleged corruption — the inept handling of administrative duties owing to factionalism within the party, the existence of multiple centres of power (Chief Minister, Deputy Chief Minister, and the party high command), and the compulsions of implementing the Congress's five guarantees.Already under fire from the Opposition for "halting" developmental work, the government is now facing growing criticism from its ranks for denying funds. Public cynicism that corruption has become "normal" in State politics, irrespective of the party in power, is also growing. If deep-rooted corruption goes unchecked, it will retard the growth of the State and cause more suffering among socially and economically disadvantaged communities.

Gazans burn plastic waste to cook in makeshift shelters

United Nations: Civilians in Gaza face another deadly hazard, alongside hunger, gunfire, and bombardment — burning plastic waste just for cooking, UN humanitarians said.The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in a report on Wednesday stated, "Shelling and bombing across the (Gaza) Strip continue to have a devastating impact on civilians, reportedly killing and injuring scores of people, many of whom were seeking aid." "Partners report that in the absence of fuel, cooking gas, and electricity, people are burning plastic waste."OCHA said that when such fires occur in makeshift shelters or tents, poor ventilation poses tremendous safety and health risks to vulnerable family members, including children and older individuals. The Red Cross Field Hospital in Rafah received a mass casualty influx of 149 cases, as reported by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), on Tuesday.

"All responsive patients reported they were wounded while on their way to an aid distribution site," the ICRC said. "Sixteen people were declared dead on arrival, and three more died of their wounds shortly after. The vast majority of patients reportedly suffered gunshot injuries."The casualties among food-seeking Gazans usually occur at distribution centers of the non-UN, US-operated, and Israeli-approved militarised Gaza Humanitarian Foundation. The ICRC reported that it had to activate its mass casualty procedures 20 times since May 27, adding, "The scale and frequency of these incidents is an alarming testament to the intolerable dangers civilians face as they attempt to access assistance."The UN Population Fund reported that 80 percent of critical care units, including those used for childbirth, are at a risk of shutting down, when there is a daily average of 130 births in Gaza. The humanitarian office said that community kitchens were able to prepare more than 200,000 meals every day this week. However, compared with the over 1 million meals distributed daily at the end of April, it represents a reduction of about 80 percent, a trickle offered to people on the brink of famine."To facilitate the orderly distribution of aid, supplies must be channeled daily through multiple crossings and land routes simultaneously, thereby ensuring people that the flow of essential support is steady, sufficient, and reliable," the Office said.OCHA also reported that the world body and its partners attempted to coordinate 15 humanitarian movements inside Gaza on Tuesday, but only four were fully facilitated by the Israeli authorities. Seven other attempts were denied outright, preventing teams from trucking water, retrieving broken trucks, or repairing roads.According to the Office, three other missions were initially approved, which later impeded on the ground, although one was ultimately accomplished on Wednesday. Another mission had to be canceled by the organisers. OCHA said tens of thousands of students were unable to sit for this year's general secondary

'Space travel alters worldview, Earth belongs to everyone,' says Rakesh Sharma as Shubhanshu Shukla's Axiom-4 mission makes history for India

Astronaut Rakesh Sharma, the first Indian to journey into space in 1984, said that space travel alters the mindset of humans, making them see the world from a perspective where "this planet belongs to everyone" and is not the sole preserve of anyone.He shared his thoughts in a recorded podcast shared by the Ministry of Defence on the day India returned to space after 41 years, as Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla from India and three other astronauts set forth on a landmark space odyssey on Wednesday (June 25, 2025).Mr. Sharma had spent eight days in orbit in the erstwhile Soviet Union's Salyut-7 space station in 1984.The Axiom-4 crew, Pilot Shubhanshu Shukla of India, Mission Specialist Tibor Kapu of Hungary, Commander Peggy Whitson of the U.S., and Mission Specialist Slawosz Uznanski-Wisniewski of Poland, react as they greet their family members before their mission to the International Space Station, in Cape Canaveral, Florida, U.S., June 24, 2025.The Axiom-4 crew, Pilot Shubhanshu Shukla of India, Mission Specialist Tibor Kapu of Hungary, Commander Peggy Whitson of the U.S., and Mission Specialist Slawosz Uznanski-Wisniewski of Poland, react as they greet their family members before their mission to the International Space Station, in Cape Canaveral, Florida, U.S., June 24, 2025. | Photo Credit: ReutersMr. Shukla scripted history by embarking on a space travel mission, along with three others from the U.S., Poland, and Hungary, to the International Space Station as part of a commercial mission by Axiom Space.Sharma recollects historic flightIn the podcast released Wednesday night, Mr. Sharma, who had famously said, 'Sare Jehan Se Acha...' during his time in the orbit, said he was a test pilot in the Indian Air Force when the selection happened.He later retired as wing commander from the IAF."Because I was a test pilot when the selection happened.. that time, I was young, I was fit, and I had the qualification, so I was lucky enough to have been chosen. Then, after selection, we moved to Star City, just outside Moscow, for our training.Qualified cheer: The Hindu editorial on Shubhanshu Shukla, Axiom-4 mission "The training went on for 18 months, which culminated in the Indo-Soviet spaceflight in 1984. It was an eight-day mission, and we carried out experiments which were designed by Indian scientists," he said.Mr. Sharma recalled that the entire training and communication with crew members and mission control while they were in orbit was in Russian."We had to learn the language before we started training, and that was not easy because of the paucity of time. So, we took about two months to learn the language," he said.Different eraWhile the Indo-Soviet spaceflight took place in an analogue era when very few owned a television, the Axiom-4 mission lift-off was watched by people on TV screens and mobile phones live across the globe.After multiple delays, Elon Musk's SpaceX launch vehicle with Crew Dragon spacecraft atop a Falcon-9 rocket blasted off from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida at 12:01 pm (IST) carrying mission pilot Shukla, former NASA astronaut Commander Peggy Whitson and mission specialists Tibor Kapu of Hungary and Slawosz Uznanski-Wisniewski of Poland."Kamaal ki ride thi (It was an amazing ride)," Mr. Shukla said 10 minutes after the Dragon spacecraft was placed in orbit around the Earth at an altitude of 200 km as part of the Axiom Mission 4(Ax-4).In the podcast, Mr. Sharma, when asked how he felt watching the world and India from space, exclaimed, "Oh dear! Beautiful." "In our country, we got everything: we got a long coastline, we got the ghats section, we got plains, we got tropical forests, we got mountains, Himalayas. It's a beautiful sight, different colours, different textures," he said.Mr. Sharma said in space, days and nights are very unusual, as sunrises and sunsets happen at an interval of just 45 minutes.Mental impactHe said while space travel technology has changed, "as humans, we haven't changed much"."The mental impact will always be there because humans will be able to get a different perspective. It does kind of alter the world view... (shows) the vast place in universe," the veteran astronaut said.It changes the mindset, he emphasised.The IAF, in a post on X, said Mr. Shukla has set forth on a landmark space mission, carrying the pride of the nation beyond Earth.It also said, "This is a dèjà-vu moment for India, 41 years after the mission of Sqn Ldr Rakesh Sharma, who first carried ou

Plastic pellets found on Kerala coast after shipwreck pose serious environmental impact, warn experts



Tiny plastic pellets (nurdles) found on beaches in Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala following the sinking of the container vessel MSC ELSA3 could have serious implications for the marine and coastal ecosystems and humans, warn experts.While not inherently toxic, the pellets remain a dangerous pollutant. Their short- and long-term impacts include habitat contamination and their breaking up into micro and nano plastics and entering the food chain, according to A. Biju Kumar, Senior Professor, Marine Monitoring Lab, Department of Aquatic Biology and Fisheries, University of Kerala.

The 'nurdle spill' on Kerala's coast is a wake-up call for India's coastal management, shipping safety, and marine conservation, Dr. Biju Kumar said on Wednesday (May 28, 2025) after conducting field verifications at the Varkala and Kochu Veli beaches in Thiruvananthapuram."While the crew of the MSC ELSA3 were safely rescued, the ocean remains at risk," he said, describing this as the first major incident of plastic nurdle landings in India caused by a shipwreck.

Classified as primary microplastics, these pellets and are between from 1 mm to 5 mm in diameter. They constitute a major component in the global plastic chain.

According to Dr. Biju Kumar, the pellets found in Kochu Veli are mostly low-density polyethylene (LDPE) and high-density polyethylene (HDPE). They are the most commonly used material for manufacturing products such as plastic bags and films, flexible tubing, coatings for paper cartons and cables, detergent bottles, hard plastic containers, pipes and crates. They are also used in packaging material, household goods, electronics and automotive parts and medical equipment. LDPE is quite difficult to recycle, he said. Every year, millions of tonnes of these tiny pellets are transported across the globe.The Liberian-flagged MSC ELSA3 had capsized and sunk in the Arabian Sea off Kochi over the last weekend (May 24 and May 25). Its cargo consisted of 643 containers, including 13 laden with hazardous cargo. Several of the containers washed ashore in the coastal districts of Kerala in the days that followed, triggering concern.For Thiruvananthapuram, the immediate response should include manual beach clean-ups and using specialised equipment such as floating booms, nets and sifting tools for containing the spread of the nurdles and collection, according to Dr. Biju Kumar.Other measures include advising local communities not to handle such plastic pellets. Additionally, the shipping company should be held accountable for the spill and made to finance the clean-up, he said.Following the shipwreck off Kochi, the Kerala government had placed the nine coastal districts of Kerala on alert. It had also announced plans to constitute two separate rapid response teams under the Factories and Boilers department and the State Pollution Control Board in the nine districts for handling oil spills and containers that wash ashore.

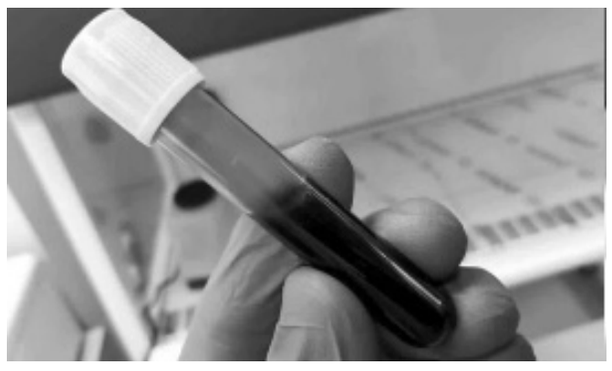
States told to cut sugar, salt in food items



Hyderabad: The Women and Child Development Ministry has recently issued an advisory, based on a technical report from the National Institute of Nutrition (NIN), to all States to reduce refined sugar, salt, preservatives, colours and artificial flavours in take-home rations and hot cooked meals provided to beneficiaries.The Union Ministry observed that a recent analysis of contents of take-home rations and hot cooked meals provided to beneficiaries in multiple Indian States revealed higher proportions of refined sugar, salt and preservatives.This goes against the purpose of providing such supplementary nutrition, which is to reduce malnutrition in children and anemia in women.

The Women and Child Development Ministry has urged the States to adhere to the advisory while implementing take-home rations and hot cooked meals."Refined sugar should not be used. Only jaggery should be used for sweetening, if needed. Inclusion of added jaggery should be restricted to less than 5 percent of total energy to avoid excessive intake of discretionary calories," the advisory said.Use of foods high in fat, salt and sugar (HFSS) should be avoided by all age and gender groups. The use of salt should be limited. States must also consider designing Take-Home Rations recipes without adding salt and sugar so that the beneficiaries may use the same as per their taste/preference, the advisory said.The States must also reduce the number of sweet recipes served in morning snacks and hot cooked meals, and ensure the ingredients used for production of supplementary nutrition are safe and comply with all applicable provisions of Food Safety and Standards Regulations, 2011, it said.The foods for infant nutrition i.e. foods intended for 2 year-old children should be free from artificial preservatives, added colours, flavours and other synthetic ingredients and should comply with the food safety regulations. Only emulsifiers which are permitted under the FSSAI are permitted, the advisory added.Highlighting the dietary guidelines issued by Hyderabad-based NIN, the Women and Child Development Ministry said that there should not be added sugar for children under 2 years of age. In both adults and children, the WHO recommends reducing the intake of free sugars.

No more needles, as AI-tech based solutions deliver instant blood test results in minutes



Hyderabad: Imagine getting blood tests results in minutes on your cell phone, instead of waiting half a day in private laboratories or one full day in state-run labs. And what if you don't even need a needle to get those blood work reports?That's exactly what the newborn babies, mothers and even care givers at Niloufer Hospital experienced recently, when a unique initiative, Amruth Swasth Bharat, was launched by Hyderabad-based health tech startup Quick Vitals.

Initially launched at Niloufer Hospital and tested on first batch of children, the initiative is expected to expand to other parts of the country. To get their blood reports, all the patient has to do is to sit in front of a light source and wait for the results.The Amruth Swasth Bharat is based on Photoplethysmography (PPG), an emerging technology that detects changes in blood volume within our skin's tiny blood vessels. It operates by shining light from an LED onto the skin and then measuring the amount of light absorbed or reflected. As blood absorbs more light than surrounding tissues, variations in light absorption indicate changes in blood flow caused by the beating heart.

Until recently, PPG sensors were primarily used by smart watches (using green light) to track heart rate and oxygen saturation. However, companies like Quick Vitals have successfully integrated AI with PPG sensors, thus expanding their diagnostic capabilities.The AI deep learning algorithms can now analyze the subtle and complex patterns within PPG signals to derive much wider range of health parameters such as Heamoglobin A1c, stress levels, blood pressure, in addition to heart rate, respiration rate and Oxygen saturation (SpO2)."The technology is definitely promising and has the potential to be a boon for healthcare sector. Still, there is a lot of validation of the tests results have to be done. I will try to understand the results in more detail in the coming weeks," says newly appointed Superintendent, Niloufer Hospital, Dr G Vijay Kumar on Tuesday.Founder of Quick Virals, Harish Bisam said that Amruth Sewasth Bharat fully supports contactless spot checks through camera-based devices like smart phones. The new testing method is expected to be rolled-out in other States, especially Maharashtra in the coming months.

Man dies as motorcycle crashes into parked lorry near Majeedpur

Hyderabad: A young man was killed and his friend seriously injured after their motorcycle rammed into a parked lorry near the Bawarchi Hotel at Majeedpur on the outskirts on Friday early hours.The victim Naveen, a native of Mancherial, died on the spot in the impact. His friend Siddu, who hails from Kukatpally, suffered serious injuries.

Circadian rhythms: how your body's internal clock regulates your health



Awake all night? Taken a flight across time zones? Each of these events makes us tired, grumpy and out-of-sorts. A short nap may not be enough to catch up on either sleep or a sense of wellness, because the biological rhythm of the body has been disrupted. There are many biological rhythms in nature, one rhythm familiar to all, is the seasonal flowering of plants. Another such rhythm is the 24-hour-cycle circadian rhythm. The word 'circadian' is derived from the Latin words circa which means 'about' and dies meaning day. The earth's day-night cycle directly impacts the biological clock of all living organisms, including plants and microorganisms.

How were circadian rhythms discovered?

The French astronomer Jean Jacques d'Ortous de Mairan was the first to observe circadian rhythms in the Mimosa plant. He observed that the plant unfurled its leaves in the morning and closed them in the evening. This behaviour continued despite the plant being kept in the dark, and was the first demonstration that the behaviour of leaves could continue, independent of light input. The molecules that control circadian rhythms were discovered in the 1960s through Ronald J. Konopka's elegant work with Seymour Benzer. He discovered the period or per gene, whose variants either shortened, lengthened or abrogated the 24-hour circadian rhythm of the fruit fly, Drosophila. This showed that the period gene was a component of the 24-hour clock, and not its output. In the 1980s and 1990s, Jeffrey Hall, Michael Rosbash, and Michael Young built on Konopka's work identifying: (i) the cycling expression of the period gene that was entrained by light, (ii) light-sensitive genes like timeless and cryptochromes, that act along with the period and (iii) feedback regulation that led to the cycling of the period protein. This pioneering research laid the foundations of understanding how the central 24-hour circadian clock operated in the fruit fly brain. Their work was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physiology (Medicine) in 2017. Joseph Takahashi's work in mice showed that central clock genes in this organism were similar to those identified in fruit flies, and these genes showed similar light-dependent feedback regulation. Such experiments revealed the existence of an evolutionarily conserved ancient mechanism to tie light input from the natural rotation of the earth to cycling molecules in the brain. A 3-D model of the hormone melatonin that assists sleep and is sometimes used as a sleep aid to help with jet lagA 3-D model of the hormone melatonin that assists sleep and is sometimes used as a sleep aid to help with jet lag | Photo Credit: Getty Images

How do circadian rhythms work?

A 'master' clock called the suprachiasmatic nucleus (SCN) is present in the brain and consists of both neurons and supporting glial cells. This master clock drives several peripheral clocks in the heart, liver, spleen, skin, skeletal muscles, lungs, gastrointestinal tract, etc. The SCN integrates several sensory inputs called zeitgebers which mean 'time givers'. Zeitgebers for the circadian clock include light, food, noise, stress, social environment and temperature. Among these, light is the strongest zeitgeber. The process of synchronisation of the circadian clock in response to external cues is called 'entrainment'. Light is sensed by the photosensitive retinal ganglion cells and transmits information to the SCN, which in turn synchronises the peripheral clocks of the body. Exposure to light at dawn advances and entrains the clock and at dusk delays the clock. This entrainment releases hormones, such as cortisol to help us wake up and stay alert (activity rhythm) and suppresses melatonin, the hormone that assists sleep and is sometimes used as a sleep aid to help with jet lag. Aside from these 'activity rhythms', these released molecules control feeding, blood pressure and body temperature. The clock's impact on wellness

The circadian rhythm sets up physiological rhythms with consequences on wellness. For instance, in the afternoon our reaction times are the fastest. By late evening, cardiovascular strength, blood pressure and body temperature are at their peak. As the sun sets and it becomes dark outside, the pineal gland in the brain releases melatonin. Watching television or working on electronic devices during this time, exposes us to blue light from screens, which has similar effects as the sunlight during the day. This blue light interferes with the action of melatonin and delays not only the onset of sleep, but also disrupts our circadian rhythm. Many other factors can also disrupt the circadian rhythm. The most common ones include traveling across time zones, shift work, age, medications, food intake and its timing, and neurological disorders. For healthy individuals, exposure in the morning to sunlight outdoors provides the strongest light input to reset and entrain the circadian clock. Food is another zeitgeber that impacts circadian rhythms, eventually controlling metabolism. However, controlling the quality and size of our meals alone is insufficient; the timing of meals is equally important for most living organisms. Researchers have shown that fruit flies fed at the wrong time laid fewer eggs. Mice fed during their "rest period", were more prone to diabetes and obesity and showed cognitive impairment. Similarly, in humans, the mistiming of food can affect health. The timing of our meals directly affects the secondary clocks in organs such as the liver, pancreas and gastrointestinal tract. The genes that control the secondary clocks show rhythmic expressions, meaning the levels of proteins they produce also rise and fall in a 24-hour cycle. Genes linked to sugar (glucose), protein and fat metabolism also show stereotypical oscillations in synchrony with circadian rhythms. Even short delays in mealtimes can alter the expression of some genes that provide feedback to circadian rhythms. Two hormones are key to regulating our appetite: ghrelin and leptin. Ghrelin levels increase during hunger and fall with food intake, while leptin has the opposite effect– it is low when we are hungry, and surges when we feel full, reducing food intake. Thus, ghrelin levels peak and leptin levels are low just before our regular mealtimes. Disruptions in circadian rhythms, typically due to shift-work or sleep deprivation, also perturb the rhythmic release of ghrelin. Food types and meal timings affect circadian activity and physiological rhythms. Morning fasting affects the metabolism of subsequent meals and affects physical activity and nocturnal feeding. High fat and alcohol consumption disrupt circadian rhythms. Glucose metabolism is directly related to sleep patterns. Shorter sleep durations or disrupted sleep cause a spike in fasting blood glucose and reduce insulin sensitivity. The response of tissues to insulin (sensitivity) is critical to maintaining blood glucose levels. Lack of sufficient sleep and disrupted circadian rhythms can lead to poor regulation of food intake, as well as conditions such as diabetes and weight gain.

Exercise is not as strong a zeitgeber as light, but, like food, it is a non-photic zeitgeber, and can potentially delay or advance circadian rhythms. Thus, exercise is an additional input to reset disrupted rhythms. Apart from the mode and intensity of exercise, its timing has an equally beneficial effect on the circadian rhythm through the modulation of clock genes. A study has shown that 45 minutes of aerobic exercise in the evening, as opposed to the morning helps reduce blood pressure in people with hypertension. Another study has shown that evening walks are better at reducing low-density lipoprotein, also known as the 'bad cholesterol', and fibrinogen – elevated levels of which can clot blood, creating blockages in blood vessels. Overall, the mode and timing of exercise helps alleviate the risk of cardiovascular diseases. A combination of exercise and its timing can help maintain a good circadian rhythm, which benefits health.

Circadian rhythm also affects the metabolism of drugs in the liver, thus medications are ingested along with our meals or at bedtime. The time of the day also determines how vulnerable we are to infections and how well we respond to vaccines. In other words, our immune responses also oscillate with circadian rhythms. Cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) are the leading causes of death across the world. A mainstay of delaying CVD is treating elevated cholesterol through statins, a class of cholesterol-reducing drugs. Statins are usually prescribed to be taken in the evening for two main reasons. First, cholesterol biosynthesis in the liver peaks during the night controlled by the peripheral liver circadian clock. Second, most statins have a short half-life. This means half of the drug is eliminated from the bloodstream within a few hours. Taking statins in the evening thus synchronises the effectiveness of the drug during peak periods of cholesterol biosynthesis.

We spend around a third of the day sleeping. Sleep is essential for several processes such as tissue growth, repair and regeneration, elimination of metabolic waste products from the central nervous system etc. It is not just the duration: the time of day that a person sleeps is also important for health. Whether in adults or in children, timely and adequate sleep is essential for a healthy body and mind. While adults need 7-8 hours of sleep, adolescents require more sleep, approximately 8-10 hours. An undisturbed circadian rhythm is important to promote wakefulness and alertness during the day and rest through sleep during the night. However, several global studies report shorter durations or disturbed sleep among adolescents. Chronotype, a person's natural inclination with regard to the time of day when they prefer to sleep or when they are most alert or energetic, is important to account for, in how societies function. 'Larks' naturally wake up early and are active in the morning while 'owls' wake up later, or are active during the later part of the day. Likewise, teenagers normally experience a delayed onset of sleep due to an approximately two-hour shift in their circadian rhythms. This shift is driven by hormonal changes during their growing years. Thus, teenagers sleep late but have to wake up early, around 6 a.m. or 7 a.m., as schools often begin early in the morning. This delayed sleep phase leaves teenagers with fewer hours to sleep and causes major disturbances to their circadian rhythms. This disruption is often exacerbated by access to social stimulation from the internet/messaging, blue light from electronic devices and poor sleep hygiene. Such disturbances lead to difficulties in waking up, daytime sleepiness, an inability to stay attentive, absenteeism, poor school performance etc. It may also lead to anxiety and depression and can worsen the mental health of teenagers. Researchers and experts hence recommend school timings be rescheduled so that classes start later for adolescents in synchrony with their natural circadian rhythms. This will ensure they do not compromise on their sleep duration and quality, thereby promoting good mental and physical health. There is increasing evidence that shows that a delay in school start timings helps teenagers have better sleep quality and better educational outcomes.

Sensex falls 450 points, Nifty drops 182 as weak global cues weigh on markets

Mumbai: Domestic equity benchmarks opened lower on Friday and extended losses in early trade, tracking weak global cues and profit-booking after the sharp November rally.Sensex declined about 450 points or 0.55 per cent to 81,457.74 in early deals, while Nifty fell 182 points or 0.71 per cent to 25,117.Earlier, the Sensex opened at 81,833.78, down 77.23 points or 0.09 per cent, while the 50-scrip basket started the session at 25,209.85, down 89.50 points or 0.35 per cent.Sectoral indices were also largely in the red zone, in which Nifty Realty led the fall, down over 1 per cent.Meanwhile, Nifty Chemicals, Nifty Auto and Nifty Cement declined by up to 1 per cent. Nifty Oil & Gas, Nifty Private Bank, Nifty Consumer Durables and Nifty PSU Bank also traded lower.On the other hand, healthcare and pharmaceuticals shares were trading higher. Nifty Pharma, Nifty Healthcare and Nifty 500 Healthcare surged up to 0.39 per cent.However, the selling came after Nifty's spectacular 9.7 per cent rally so far in November.

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