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Ajit Pawar Panel Faces Sharad Pawar Alliance in Municipal Council Election

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Candidates to Get Only Four Days for Campaigning

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Highest ever 64.66 percent polling in first phase of Bihar assembly elections

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Journalists Liz Mathew, Uzma Athar, V. S. Rajesh among National Excellence Award Winners 2025

Inquiry Ordered into Pune Land Scam Linked to Parth Pawar; Two Officials Suspended

Mumbai, Correspondent
Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has ordered the suspension of the tehsildar and sub-registrar in connection with the alleged Pune land scam involving Parth Pawar, son of Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar. Fadnavis assured that a detailed investigation would be conducted and strict action taken if irregularities are found.



with Parth Pawar. Reports claim that the registration of the land was done by paying only ₹500 in stamp duty, after the transaction was given special concessions.

Fadnavis stated that all

relevant documents have been sought and the matter will be probed thoroughly. "No one will be shielded in this case. Wherever irregularities are found, stern action will follow," he asserted.

Rahul Gandhi's Press Meet a "Lavangi Firecracker", Not a Hydrogen Bomb

Commenting on Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's recent press conference over alleged vote manipulation, Fadnavis mocked Gandhi's claims, calling them a "lavangi firecracker, not a hydrogen bomb." He said that TV news teams who visited the locations cited by Gandhi found

the voters present there, and accused Gandhi of showing morphed images during the press briefing.

Rahul Gandhi Following the Agenda of Foreign Forces: Fadnavis

Fadnavis further alleged that Rahul Gandhi is "walking the path of foreign powers" that seek to destabilize India's democracy. "By questioning the armed forces, undermining constitutional institutions, and spreading distrust against government bodies, Gandhi is echoing the agenda of anti-India elements. This is deeply unfortunate," Fadnavis said.

Supriya Sule's Big Statement on Parth Pawar Land Deal, Is the Chief Minister Creating Trouble? Alliance Parties Giving Documents Against Each Other

PUNE, Correspondent

Baramati MP Supriya Sule commented on the Parth Pawar Koregaon Park land purchase case, stating that there is no way to understand what is currently happening in Maharashtra. She alleged that even the ruling alliance partners are taking stands against each other and providing documents (against their own allies).

Chief Minister Creating Trouble?

When asked if the Chief Minister was creating trouble in the Parth Pawar case, Supriya Sule said, "The possibility cannot be ruled out." She added, "The Chief Minister should answer this because government departments are accountable only to the Chief Minister. The Tehsildar says he never signed (the transaction). So then, how did the transaction take place?"



Parth Pawar Has No Connection:

Regarding Parth Pawar's name being mentioned in the land deal, Supriya Sule asserted that Parth Pawar has no connection to this case. She pointed out the inconsistencies in the government's stance: "The Maharashtra government first said that the land transaction cannot happen. If the transaction cannot happen, then how did a stamp duty payment notice come? There is no consensus even on what the stamp duty amount should be. There appears to be a scam (golmal) in this entire matter."

Sule Cites CM Devendra Fadnavis's Remark:

Sule specifically mentioned that Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis himself has made a statement regarding the Parth Pawar case, and therefore, an answer is expected from him. She highlighted that a Tehsildar and a Talathi have been suspended in this case, but the concerned Tehsildar claims that he did not sign the transaction. "Is this not an injustice to that Tehsildar? Just because the poor don't have a voice, will you simply dismiss them?" Sule questioned.

When asked about the opposition demanding the resignation of Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar in the Parth Pawar land purchase case, Supriya Sule replied that the opposition has the right to demand. "We are people who believe in democracy. We were asked to resign even when we were in power," she concluded.

ED attaches ₹11 cr assets linked to former cricketers Shikhar Dhawan and Suresh Raina

Mumbai, Agency
The Enforcement Directorate has provisionally attached movable and immovable properties valued at Rs 11.14 crore belonging to former Indian cricketers Suresh Raina and Shikhar Dhawan for their alleged involvement in illegal offshore betting platform 1xBet, official sources confirmed here on Thursday.

The attachments were made under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002.

The attachment includes mutual fund investments worth Rs 6.64 crore held in the name of Suresh Raina and an immovable property valued at Rs 4.5 crore held in the name of Shikhar Dhawan. The ED investigation is based on multiple FIRs registered by various State Police agencies against the operators of the illegal betting syndicate.



The investigation has revealed that 1xBet and its surrogate brand 1xBat, 1xBat Sporting lines were engaged in promoting and facilitating illegal online betting and gambling operations across India. Investigations revealed that both Suresh Raina and Shikhar Dhawan knowingly entered into endorsement agreements with foreign entities for the promotion of 1xBet through its surrogates.

These endorsements were made in return for payments routed through foreign entities to conceal the illicit origin of the funds, which are linked to proceeds of crime generated from illegal betting activities.

Congress Fights for Survival as Maharashtra Municipal Elections Intensify Agnipariksha for Both NCP Factions

PUNE, Correspondent

The political contest in Maharashtra has become highly engaging following the announcement of the Municipal Council and Nagar Panchayat elections. The split in the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) has further intensified the struggle for power. The upcoming elections will be a test for both NCP factions, while the Congress party faces an uphill battle to secure its existence.

Key Electoral Battles and Shifting Alliances

Baramati: "Pawar vs. Pawar" Spectacle: All eyes are on the Baramati Municipal Council election, as the Nagaradhyaksha (Mayor) will be directly elected by the public for a five-year term. This setup is expected to create a thrilling "Pawar versus Pawar" contest.

Congress's Existential Crisis: In Purandar and Velhe tehsils, which were

previously Congress strongholds, the party's strength has been significantly diminished. Senior Congress leaders Sanjay Jagtap and Sangram Thopte, along with their supporters, have joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), substantially boosting the BJP's power in these areas. Congress now faces the challenge of struggling to maintain its base.

Shiv Sena's Test: Following the split in the Shiv Sena, both its factions are also working hard to prove their respective strength and dominance in the local bodies.

The Direct Mayor Election: With the Mayor being directly elected by the public, aspiring candidates have ramped up their preparations, fast-tracking the collection of necessary documents while political parties scrutinize potential candidates for each ward. The elections will not only feature the Pawar vs. Pawar

clash but also a battle for prestige among the BJP, Congress, and both Shiv Sena factions.

Uncertainty and Local Equations

In the last Municipal Council elections, political parties mostly contested independently. However, the current political landscape is completely different due to party splits and new alliances. While the BJP continues to attract new leaders, there is uncertainty regarding the extent of local coordination for both the Maha Vikas Aghadi and Maha Yuti alliances.

Independent Contests Loom: With the announcement of elections for 14 Municipal Councils and 3 Nagar Panchayats, the lack of clarity on whether parties will enter into alliances or contest independently has created confusion among aspirants. Some leaders have already started reaching out to voters,

but changes in reservation for several seats have disrupted calculations. The continuous induction of new faces into the BJP has increased the likelihood of veteran party workers being denied tickets, prompting many leaders to prepare for independent contests.

Changing Local Dynamics: In the Daund Municipal Council, the "Nagarik Hit Sanrakshan Mandal and allied parties" led by Premsukh Kadariya has historically held sway. Despite the recent political changes, this local front, which previously included 12 NCP and 2 Shiv Sena corporators, is expected to remain a decisive factor. Similarly, in the Shirur Municipal Council, Prakash Dhariwal's "Vikas Aghadi," which won 18 seats last time, is likely to maintain its dominance despite the presence of the BJP, NCP, Congress, and other parties.

BJP Appoints Murlidhar Mohol to Counter Ajit Pawar in Local Body Elections

PUNE, Correspondent

After Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar politically outmanoeuvred Union Minister of State Murlidhar Mohol in the Maharashtra Olympic Association presidential election, forcing Mohol to withdraw, the BJP has now appointed Mohol as the Election In-charge for the Pune district. This move is seen as a strategic step to challenge Ajit Pawar's dominance in the upcoming local self-government elections in Pune, setting the stage for another Pawar vs. Mohol battle.

The BJP announced its appointments of election in-charges and election heads, with Mohol being named the in-charge for Pune district. The renewed confrontation comes after the two leaders faced off in the Olympic Association election, where Ajit Pawar's political maneuvering led to Mohol's withdrawal and cleared the path for Pawar's presidency. Following that incident and earlier political challenges (like the Jain boarding land issue), there was speculation that Mohol's political weight was diminishing. However, the BJP's decision



to entrust him with the responsibility for local body polls poses a direct challenge to Ajit Pawar.

Ajit Pawar holds significant influence in the rural areas of Pune district. Elections have been announced for Municipal Councils and Nagar Panchayats across the state, including 14 Municipal Councils and three Nagar Panchayats in Pune district. Since many regions were previously controlled by the undivided NCP, and most leaders stayed with Ajit Pawar after the split, his faction currently holds substantial power. The BJP aims to undermine this strength by pitting Mohol against Pawar.

Four More BJP Strategists Appointed to Corner Ajit Pawar:

To counter Ajit Pawar's influence not just in rural areas but also in Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporations, and the Maval and Baramati regions, the BJP has appointed four of Pawar's staunch rivals as Election Heads:

Ganesh Bidkar for Pune City.

MLA Mahesh Landge for Pune-North (Maval) division. Landge is known for openly criticising Ajit Pawar and is tasked with stopping Pawar's NCP (Ajit Pawar) faction, led by MLA Sunil Shelke, in Maval.

MLA Rahul Kul for Pune-South (Baramati) division, aiming to challenge Pawar's influence in Daund, Indapur, and parts of Baramati.

MLA Shankar Jagtap for the Pimpri-Chinchwad division. Jagtap's late brother, MLA Laxman Jagtap, had taken control of the Municipal Corporation from Pawar's faction. Jagtap is now tasked with keeping Ajit Pawar out of power in the Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporation.

Appoint Full-Time Registrar and Dean's First; Start Faculty Recruitment Only Afterwards

Committee submits memorandum to Governor; warns of protest if demands ignored

Pune, Correspondent

The Students' Action Committee has demanded that Savitribai Phule Pune University (SPPU) appoint a full-time registrar and deans before initiating the recruitment of professors. The committee alleged that the recently announced recruitment for 111 teaching posts would only invite corruption in the absence of permanent administrative heads.

Rahul Sasane, the state president of the committee, has submitted a memorandum to the Governor demanding an immediate stay on the recruitment process.

On November 4, the university issued an advertisement for the recruitment of 111 vacancies for associate and assistant professors. However, the

committee claimed that such advertisements are routinely released every few years, but no actual recruitment takes place. Sasane alleged that these announcements are often timed before elections merely to lure candidates with false hopes.

For the past two years, SPPU has been functioning under acting officials as there are no permanent registrar and deans. The committee alleged large-scale financial irregularities during this period — including corruption worth ₹300 crore in the estate department, irregularities in the technology department, and suspicious movements in the university's deposits. It further stated that several inquiries and forensic audits are currently underway.

Despite interviews being conducted for 52 contractual posts recently,

the results have not yet been announced, the committee noted. It also pointed out multiple discrepancies in the implementation of reservation norms in the new advertisement.

Box: Warning of Intense Agitation

If these demands are not met immediately, the Students' Action Committee will launch a strong agitation and, if necessary, take legal action, Sasane warned.

Box: Appeal to Governor

The committee has urged the Governor to first appoint full-time registrar and deans, ensure transparency in the recruitment process, make public the findings of ongoing inquiries and forensic audits, and disclose the status of court petitions related to faculty recruitment.

Raj Thackeray Urges MNS Leaders to Work Seriously Warns Against 'Timepass' in Local Elections

PUNE, Correspondent

Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) President Raj Thackeray, during his Pune visit, held a meeting with party office-bearers and issued strict instructions regarding the preparations for the forthcoming local self-government elections. Thackeray sternly warned the officials, stating that elections should not be fought as a "timepass" (a casual activity).

He further added, "Show your work; I have not come here for timepass."

He directed every office-bearer and worker to start working seriously with the upcoming local elections—beginning with Municipal Council polls, followed by Zilla Parishad and Municipal Corporation elections—in mind. He emphasized that MNS workers must reach every voter

and work diligently on the voter lists. Issuing a stern ultimatum, he said, "If you are not prepared, go join another party." He also assured the officials that he would personally handle the financial aspects related to the candidates, regardless of their economic background. Finally, he ordered the officials to submit the list of booth representatives for their respective wards by the same night.

Agriculture department clarifies Rs 6 credit as interest payment Farmer expresses frustration over negligible bank transfer

Ch. Sambhajinagar, Agency

The state Agriculture department of Maharashtra has issued an official clarification regarding a six-rupee credit transferred to a farmer's bank account, explaining that the amount represented interest payment rather than government compensation for crop damages.

District Superintendent of Agriculture Officer P. R. Deshmukh from Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar clarified today that the amount was neither part of the crop insurance disbursement nor issued under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, but

rather a system-generated interest credit.

The clarification followed complaints by farmer Digambar Sudhakar Tagde from Dawarwadi village in Paithan taluka, who had received the six-rupee deposit while awaiting compensation for extensive crop losses caused by heavy rainfall that devastated farmlands across the region.

Upon discovering the negligible amount, Tagde expressed anger and disappointment, remarking that the payment was "not enough to buy even a cup of tea" and describing it as "a mockery of farmers' suffering."

The matter gained widespread attention after Tagde shared his experience with journalists during Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Uddhav Thackeray's visit to Nandar village in Paithan, where the opposition leader met farmers affected by floods in the Marathwada region.

Despite the department's clarification, Tagde remained dissatisfied, saying that officials should feel ashamed for transferring such meagre sums while thousands of cultivators have been waiting for genuine compensation for more than two months.

700 Traps, 250 Cameras, and ₹1.25 Crore Sanctioned to Control Leopard Menace in Pune District

Pune, Correspondent
In view of the rising leopard attacks and growing fear among residents in Ambegaon, Shirur, and Junnar talukas of Pune district, District Collector Jitendra Dudi has announced a series of urgent measures to tackle the situation. The administration has decided that captured leopards will not be released back into the wild but will instead be permanently relocated to safer areas.

During his visit to Pimparkhed and Jambud villages in Shirur taluka, Dudi assessed the situation and interacted with local villagers. He stated that controlling the increasing leopard population in the region has become a top priority. According to the district administration, there are now around 2,000 leopards across these three talukas, compared to only about 250 in 2017. At least 1,500 leopards will need to be relocated to bring the population under control and



reduce conflicts with humans.

To facilitate the operation, a fund of ₹1.25 crore has been sanctioned for the Forest Department. The administration will procure 700 cages, 250 tracking cameras, and additional vehicles for use in the affected areas. Orders have been given to make 200 cages available within ten days and all 700 within twenty days. The collector has also directed that purchases be made directly without a tender process in order to speed up implementation.

Officials have been instructed to ensure that captured leopards are not

released again in nearby areas. The relocation process will take place in phases, with teams aiming to trap and transfer between 10 and 100 leopards each week. The district administration believes this approach will help curb the growing threat to villagers.

Farmers in the region say that the surge in the leopard population is closely linked to the widespread cultivation of adsali sugarcane, a crop that remains in fields for over eighteen months. The tall and dense sugarcane provides an ideal hiding and breeding ground for leopards, allowing them to live close to human settlements.

Over the past two years, ten people have lost their lives in leopard attacks in Jambudgaon and Pimparkhed areas. Most of the victims were sugarcane cutters or farmers attacked while working in fields or collecting fodder. The villages have since been living in constant fear,

especially during the harvesting season.

To prevent further incidents, residents have been urged not to let children and elderly people venture out alone and to avoid visiting fields at night. The administration has decided to provide continuous electricity supply to agricultural feeders in the morning so that farmers do not have to work after dark. The Forest Department has also been asked to conduct workshops to improve coordination and communication with local communities.

A special team of leopard-catching experts from Chandrapur will soon arrive to assist in the relocation efforts. Each affected village will also form a local committee to help forest officials track movements and report sightings. District Collector Dudi emphasized that the leopard population must be brought under control urgently to ensure the safety of residents in these rural areas.

Senior Leaders' Prestige at Stake in Indapur Municipal Council Elections Bharne, Patil, and Garatkar in Key Contest



PUNE, Correspondent
The upcoming Indapur Municipal Council elections are poised to be a significant political battle, with the prestige of several key leaders riding on the outcome. These leaders include State Agriculture Minister Dattatray Bharne, former Minister Harshvardhan Patil, Pradeep Garatkar (District President of the Nationalist Congress Party – Ajit Pawar faction), and Praveen Mane of the Sonai Group, who has joined the BJP. The Municipal Council, which previously had 17 corporators and a Mayor, has increased its number of corporator seats by three under the new ward structure.

of his family will contest the election.

Former Minister Harshvardhan Patil is currently maintaining a quiet stance, which is being widely discussed as the "calm before the storm." Praveen Mane, of the Sonai Group and now with the BJP, is seen as playing a vital role and has started conducting interviews for BJP aspirants.

The contest is also affected by former Deputy Mayor Bharat Shah, whose decision on whether to contest on a party symbol or as an independent is still awaited. Furthermore, Prof. Krishna Tate, husband of former Mayor Alka Tate, will be contesting through the 'Indapur City Civil Struggle Committee.' The presence of all these political figures is expected to make the Indapur Municipal Council election highly competitive, especially since the Mayor's post is for the General category, attracting many contenders.

Ajit Pawar Panel Faces Sharad Pawar Alliance in Municipal Council Election

BARAMATI, Correspondent : The Baramati Municipal Council elections have been announced, and they mark the first time the election is being held following the split in the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP). This year, a fierce contest is expected between the panel led by Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar's NCP faction and the alliance formed by Sharad Pawar's NCP faction and a local front. For the last 25 years, the Baramati Municipal Council has been governed under the leadership of Ajit Pawar, who took over the responsibility from Sharad Pawar. In the 2016 elections, a united NCP won a dominant 35 out of 39 seats. This time, the battle is internal and intense. Ajit Pawar's faction holds significant power in Baramati, and names like his son, Jay Pawar, along with others such as Kiran Gujar and Jaysing Deshmukh, are being considered for the Mayor's post, with the final decision resting with Ajit Pawar. On the other side, Sharad Pawar's NCP faction, which retains some strength in Baramati, is expected to form a local alliance potentially including the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi (VBA). This alliance is poised to make the elections competitive across some of the 20 wards. The election will select 20 ward corporators and the Mayor will be directly elected by the public.

Gaja Marne Gang's Sharp Shooter Sunil Bansode Arrested Gang Wars Reignite in Pune

PUNE, Correspondent
Gang wars have once again flared up in Pune, highlighted by two brutal murders in the last three days. The first was the shooting of rickshaw driver Ganesh Kale, which has been linked to the Andekar gang. The second, a brutal daylight murder by cleaver of a person named Mayank Kharade on the busy Bajirao Road, is linked to the Maya gang, with three arrests already made in that case.

Amidst this resurgence of gang violence, the Pune Police dealt a significant blow to the

notorious Gaja Marne gang by arresting its sharp shooter, Sunil Bansode, late on November 4th. Bansode had been absconding for a long time and is wanted in connection with serious cases, including those filed under the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA).

The Kothrud police, acting on confidential information,



raided the Warje Malwadi area and successfully apprehended Bansode. His arrest is considered a major success for the Pune Police, who are now investigating whether he was involved in any recent incidents or was planning any major activity in the city.

Gaja Marne himself was previously arrested for assaulting a worker of Union Minister Murlidhar Mohol on Shiv Jayanti and has been sent to the district jail in Sangli. The continued activity of gangs like Andekar, Maya, and Marne suggests that the gang war in Pune is escalating.

Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) Announces Strict Regulations for Building Demolition

PUNE, Correspondent
The Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) has introduced a new policy and set of regulations for the demolition of old buildings, aiming to address the significant public nuisance caused by dust, noise, and traffic issues during these activities.

The need for these rules arose because proper safety measures and trained personnel are often neglected when old structures and bungalows in the central peth areas and suburbs are torn down to make way for new, towering constructions. The article notes that a majority of redevelopment and demolition work is often carried out by an alliance of political figures, individuals with criminal tendencies, and builders, making ordinary citizens hesitant to file complaints despite the inconvenience.

Following a request and persistent follow-up from MNS General Secretary Hemant Sambhus in July, the PMC's Construction Department prepared the new policy, which has now been approved



by Municipal Commissioner Naval Kishore Ram. Compliance with these regulations is now mandatory for granting permission for new construction on the demolished site.

Key Regulations for Building Demolition:

- Safety Barrier:** Erect protective metal sheets (patra) with a height of 25 feet around the demolition site boundary.
- Security:** Appoint a full-time security guard at the site
- Neighboring Structures:** If a demolition poses a risk to an adjacent building, that building must be vacated.

Dust Control: Implement measures to prevent dust, such as regular water spraying and installing a sprinkler system.

Environmental Care: Ensure precautions are taken to prevent harm to the environment.

Mandatory Notification: Provide written information about the commencement of demolition work to the neighboring societies, Police, and Fire Brigade.

Traffic and Transportation: Cover all debris and materials being transported with green cloth to prevent scattering.

Documentation: Submit photographs of the demolition work to the PMC.

Final Certification: A Structural Engineer must submit a certificate confirming that the demolition was completed correctly from a technical and safety perspective.

Hemant Sambhus of the MNS has called for strict enforcement of these new regulations and urged the Commissioner to personally monitor their implementation to ensure the safety and convenience of citizens.

I Do Live Streams from Farmers' Fields, Some Do Facebook Live from Home Eknath Shinde Retorts to Critics

PUNE, Correspondent
Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde took a dig at Uddhav Thackeray, stating that although some people today call him 'Bhakaas Mantri' (Minister of Ruin), he personally stepped out onto the streets and worked during his tenure as Chief Minister. Shinde emphasized, "I started as a simple Shakha Pramukh (branch head) and became the Chief Minister of Maharashtra. This was possible because of the strength of my workers." He remarked, "Some people did Facebook Live sitting at home, whereas I do live streams from the fences of farmers' fields."

Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde was speaking at a rally held on Thursday, November 6, in Chakan (Taluka Khed) on the

occasion of former Zilla Parishad member Atul Deshmukh joining the party. Present at the event were Deputy Chairperson of the Legislative Council Neelam Gorhe, MP Shirang Barne, former Minister Vijaybapu Shitware, MLA Sharad Sonawane, District Chief Bhagwan Pokharkar, Irfan Sayyed, Nitin Gore, Jyoti Argade, Manisha Gore, Vijay Shinde, Prakash Wadekar, Vikas Thakur, Rohidas Gadade, Sachin Kale, Sulabha Ubale, and hundreds of other workers.

Shinde highlighted that his government implemented numerous welfare schemes, including a ₹32,000 crore grant for farmers, the 'Ladki Bahin Yojana' (Dear Sister Scheme), 'concessions in ST buses', and loan waivers. He claimed that the people of Maharashtra placed

their trust in his government, resulting in a victory in 60 out of 80 seats.

Addressing women's issues, he stated that the 'Ladki Bahin Yojana' is a sensitive scheme of his government. He clarified that though some rumours are being spread, the 'Ladki Bahin Yojana' will not be stopped. The government remains committed to women's empowerment.

Speaking about the increasing traffic congestion in the Chakan area, Shinde acknowledged that the problem has escalated due to industrial growth. He announced that ₹5,000 crores have been sanctioned to resolve this issue. The tendering process has commenced, and the actual work on the Talegaon - Chakan - Shikrapur Highway will start soon.

Pune Traffic Police Launches Major Initiative to Ease Congestion at Five Hotspots

PUNE, Correspondent
Pune City's Traffic Police have begun taking concrete steps to address the rising traffic pressure in the city. Identifying five of the most heavily congested areas, plans are now being implemented in collaboration with the Public Works Department (PWD) and other departments to streamline traffic flow. These identified hotspots include Mundhwa Chowk, Navale Bridge, Mumba Devi Chowk, ABC Farm Chowk, and Sancheti Bridge.



curb frequent congestion and accidents at Navale Bridge, work has started on junction improvement and traffic segregation. This will establish separate lanes for heavy and light vehicles, enhancing the traffic flow.

At Mumba Devi Chowk, divider realignment and road improvement work is underway, which will facilitate easier maneuvering at turns and reduce the possibility of accidents. Road widening and divider alignment work is also in progress at ABC Farm Chowk. This area connects Wanawadi and Hadapsar and experiences heavy traffic during peak hours. Meanwhile, work has commenced on a plan to remove

the bottleneck and widen the bridge at Sancheti Bridge, which will make traffic moving towards Jangli Maharaj Road and Shivaji Nagar smoother. The Traffic Department stated that these steps will not be limited to identification alone, but solid improvements will be visible soon. Officials are conducting regular reviews to maintain the momentum of the work. Citizens have also been appealed to adhere to traffic rules and offer their cooperation. Through these efforts, it is expected that the congestion problem at these five major Pune traffic hotspots will significantly decrease in the coming months, providing relief to commuters.

Contractor Disappears After Submitting Fake FDR for Multi-Crore PMC Work

PUNE, Correspondent
A shocking case has come to light at the Pune Municipal Corporation's (PMC) Yerawada Zonal Office, where a contractor secured work by submitting fake Fixed Deposit Receipts (FDRs) worth lakhs of rupees during the development work tender process. Despite the serious fraud being exposed three months ago, no legal action has been taken against the concerned contractor, nor has he been blacklisted. The role of the officials in this matter is also considered suspicious, with accusations that the case was suppressed under a policy of "you stay quiet, and I'll stay quiet."

Taking serious note of the entire episode, the Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb

Officials Under Scrutiny

Thackeray) party submitted a memorandum to the PMC Commissioner and the Assistant Commissioner of the Yerawada Zonal Office, demanding strict action against the contractor as well as the guilty officials.

For the tenders for development works at the Yerawada Zonal Office, it was mandatory for the contractor to submit an 'FDR' and bank guarantee. However, the contractor attached coloured photocopies of old and fake FDRs from a nationalized bank with the tender documents. A citizen brought this matter to the attention of the then Deputy Engineer. When Yerawada Zonal Office officials corresponded with the concerned bank to verify the authenticity

of the FDRs, the bank confirmed them to be bogus (fake).

As soon as the matter surfaced, officials immediately halted the contractor's work. The contractor has since disappeared after realizing that he had cheated the Municipal Corporation and the bank by submitting fake FDRs. The Shiv Sena has directly questioned why the officials suppressed the matter for three months despite the need to file a criminal case against the individual involved in such serious fraud. They asked whether the officers protected the contractor and demanded a rigorous investigation into the roles of the Junior Engineer, Deputy Engineer, and Ward Officer. Shiv Sena (UBT) worker Shashikant Satote has specifically called for a thorough inquiry.

Protest by Teachers' Committee Against Kolhapur Municipal Corporation Demonstration over non-payment of Seventh Pay Commission arrears

Kolhapur, Correspondent
Teachers and non-teaching staff under the Kolhapur Municipal Corporation's Education Committee staged a protest in front of the civic headquarters on Monday (Nov 3) demanding payment of pending arrears under the Seventh Pay Commission. While other departments of the Corporation received a Diwali installment from the arrears, Education Committee employees and pensioners were denied the payment, leaving them to celebrate the festival without any financial assistance.

Normally, employees receive a festive advance during Diwali, but this year, even that

amount was not released. Despite repeated letters and follow-ups by the Teachers' Committee, no payment was made, sparking widespread anger among teachers, non-teaching staff, and pensioners. The protest was organized to highlight this neglect and to demand immediate disbursement of arrears under both the Sixth and Seventh Pay Commissions, pending pension payments, and gratuity dues.

Among those present were Uttam Kumbhar, Farook Dabir, Vasant Adke, Subhash Dhadwad, Nayana Badkas, Rajshree Pol, Umar Jamadar, Kuldeep Jathar, Nivedita

Mane, Jayashree Kamble, Manohar Sargar, Sandeep Sutar, Santosh Ayre, Rajendra Kore, Shivaji Bhosale, Laxman Powar, and Rajendra Genjge, along with numerous serving and retired teachers.

Inset: Employees deliberately sidelined

Teachers allege that the municipal administration is deliberately sidelining Education Committee employees. They point out that while teachers are working hard to save schools and guide students for scholarship and competitive exams, the administration continues to ignore their legitimate demands.

Candidates to Get Only Four Days for Campaigning

Municipal Council Elections: Objections Could Further Shorten Campaign Period

Pune, Correspondent

The Maharashtra State Election Commission has announced the schedule for the Municipal Council and Nagar Panchayat elections, giving candidates a very limited window for campaigning. According to the schedule, in areas where no objections have been raised, candidates will be allowed to withdraw their nominations until November 21, while in areas where objections have been filed, the withdrawal deadline is November 25. This means that, in most cases, candidates will have only four days to campaign.

Polling for the Municipal Councils will take place on December 2,



and campaigning will conclude on November 30. In constituencies where objections have been received, the

final list of candidates will be published on November 26, followed by the allotment of election symbols on the same day.

According to election officials, objections are typically filed in large numbers in Municipal Council elections, which will likely shorten the effective campaign period even further.

During the previous council elections, most political parties contested independently, but this time, the political landscape has shifted due to splits, defections, and new alliances. With an influx of new entrants in the BJP, and uncertainty over how active the Maha Vikas Aghadi and Mahayuti coalitions will be at the local level, the

contest dynamics remain fluid.

Elections have been declared for 14 Municipal Councils and 3 Nagar Panchayats in the district. However, it is still unclear whether major parties will contest independently or as part of alliances. This uncertainty has created confusion among potential candidates. Some leaders have already launched voter outreach drives during the Dussehra and Diwali period, while changes in reservation categories have disrupted existing political equations.

The steady influx of new faces into the BJP may also result in long-time party members being denied tickets, prompting some leaders to consider contesting as independents.

New Election Expenditure Limits

The State Election Commission has revised the spending limits for candidates as follows:

Municipal Council Category	Expenditure Limit (President)	Expenditure Limit (Member)
Category A (e.g., Baramati)	₹15 lakh	₹5 lakh
Category B	₹11.25 lakh	₹3.5 lakh
Category C	₹7.5 lakh	₹2.5 lakh
Category D	₹6 lakh	₹2.25 lakh

Party Control in Key Councils (Previous Term)

City	Total Seats	Leading Party/Group	Seat Distribution
Baramati	41	NCP	NCP – 40, Independent – 1
Daund	24	NCP	NCP – 12, Nagar Hit Rakshan Mitra – 10, Shiv Sena – 2
Alandi	18	BJP	BJP – 11, Shiv Sena – 5, Independents – 2
Chakan	23	Split	Shiv Sena – 9, NCP – 7, Others – 7
Rajgurunagar	18	BJP/Independents	BJP – 8, Independents – 8, Shiv Sena – 2
Junnar	17	NCP	NCP – 8, Shiv Sena – 5, Local Front – 4
Jejuri	17	Congress	Congress – 12, NCP – 5
Indapur	17	NCP	NCP – 9, Congress – 8
Saswad	17	Janmat Vikas Aghadi	JVA – 13, Shiv Sena – 4
Bhor	17	Congress	Congress – 17
Shirur	22	City Development Front	CDF – 18, BJP – 2, Independent – 1, Lokkranti Aghadi – 1
Lonavala	25	BJP/Congress/SS	BJP – 9, Congress – 6, Shiv Sena – 6, Independents – 4
Talegaon Dabhade	29	BJP	BJP – 14, Local Committee – 12



With just a few days available for campaigning and multiple local equations at play, the upcoming December 2 municipal polls are expected to be highly competitive and unpredictable.

Mumbai Tops List of Happiest Cities in Asia

Beats Beijing and Shanghai

Mumbai, Correspondent

If someone asks what true happiness is, there may never be one right answer — happiness can be found in every moment, from visiting a beautiful place to sipping a cup of coffee at a cozy café. In the latest Time Out 2025 survey of the happiest cities, Mumbai has emerged as the happiest city in Asia, surpassing China's Beijing and Shanghai.

The ranking was based on public opinion, considering factors such as

culture, lifestyle, food, nightlife, and overall quality of life. Mumbai claimed the top spot in Asia and ranked fifth globally in the list of the world's happiest cities.

Globally, Abu Dhabi (UAE) topped the list, followed by Medellín (Colombia) and Cape Town (South Africa).

In Asia, after Mumbai, Beijing and Shanghai took the second and third spots respectively, followed by Chiang Mai (Thailand), Hanoi (Vietnam), Jakarta (Indonesia), Hong Kong, Bangkok

(Thailand), Singapore, and Seoul (South Korea).

According to the Time Out 2025 survey, 94% of Mumbai residents said the city brings them the most happiness, while 89% said they feel happier in Mumbai than in any other city in the world. Additionally, 88% described Mumbai as “a positive city,” and 87% felt that the overall happiness level in Mumbai has increased in recent years.

World's Top 10 Happiest Cities (2025)

1. Abu Dhabi (UAE)
2. Medellín

- (Colombia)
3. Cape Town (South Africa)
4. Mexico City (Mexico)
5. Mumbai (India)
6. Beijing (China)
7. Shanghai (China)
8. Chicago (USA)
9. Seville (Spain)
10. Melbourne (Australia)

- Asia's Top 10 Happiest Cities (2025)
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 10. Seoul (South Korea)

Maharashtra to Establish State Institute of Virology

₹60 Crore Sanctioned for Project

Mumbai, Correspondent

In view of the rising threat of viral diseases, the Maharashtra government has approved the establishment of the Maharashtra Institute of Virology (MIV), modeled on the National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune. The state's Public Health Department has sanctioned ₹60 crore for the proposed institute, which will focus on research, testing, and control of viral infections.

The NIV, set up in 1952 under

the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), has been at the forefront of studying viral and infectious diseases. However, with the increasing workload and emerging viral threats such as Dengue, Chikungunya, and GBA virus, the need for a separate state-level institute was strongly felt.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Maharashtra faced significant delays in testing and diagnosis due to heavy reliance on the NIV. To address these

challenges, the Deputy Director of the State Public Health Laboratory in Pune proposed setting up an independent virology institute.

The new MIV will be equipped with modern laboratory infrastructure, advanced testing facilities, and trained scientific manpower. Officials say the institute will strengthen Maharashtra's capacity for early detection, research, and prevention of viral outbreaks across the state.

Recently, the issue reached Guardian Minister Shambhuraj Desai and Relief and Rehabilitation Minister Makarand Patil, prompting a meeting at the Satara Collector's office. During the meeting, the Forest Department firmly refused to allocate forest land for the authorities prevented encroachers from occupying the area, which had been under repeated threat from unauthorized vendors. The crackdown has been seen as a stern warning to groups that have been allegedly operating under intimidation and political patronage.

For years, 21 stall owners had encroached upon forest land near Venna Lake by setting up unauthorized kiosks and shops. Two years ago, the Forest Department carried out a major eviction drive and reclaimed the land. Despite this, a few vendors have continued to make fresh attempts to reoccupy the area. Their legal petition against the department was also dismissed by the court.

Box: Three-Hour Drama Ends with Eviction

A heated verbal exchange broke out between stall owners, Forest Department officials, and the municipal staff. Mahabaleshwar Police Inspector Bapusahab Sandbhor and his team intervened to defuse tensions and restore order. Realizing that the authorities were firm in their stance, the stallholders eventually withdrew,

ending a three-hour standoff. The dismantled stalls were moved to a nearby roadside area.

The encroachers had attempted to occupy land used by horse owners for their livelihood activities near Venna Lake. Horse operators have demanded that the administration prevent such encroachments, as they directly threaten their means of sustenance. Locals have criticized the “bullying and coercive tactics” of certain stallholders, calling them the main obstacle to a fair rehabilitation process.

Box: Allegations of Political Support to Encroachers

Controversy has grown following allegations that some ministers from ruling coalition parties are encouraging illegal encroachments. This comes despite Revenue Minister Chandrashekhar Bawankule's recent directive to act strictly against such activities. The contrasting positions of coalition partners—BJP on one side, and the Shiv Sena

Textile Waste: A Rapidly Growing Environmental Crisis!

92 million tonnes of textile waste generated annually; only 12% recycled — Need for sustainable fashion, aware consumers, and strong government policies



Pune, Staff Reporter

In today's era of fast fashion, textile waste has emerged as a major environmental challenge. Globally, around 92 million tonnes of textile waste are generated every year. Between 2000 and 2015, global clothing production doubled — yet the average lifespan of garments fell by 36%. The fashion industry is responsible for 10% of global carbon emissions and releases nearly 500,000 tonnes of microfibres into the oceans each year.

According to Inger Andersen, Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), unsustainable fashion fuels a triple planetary crisis — climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. Recycling textile waste can help conserve resources, reduce pollution, and extend the life of fabrics. However, only 12% of clothing is recycled worldwide, while nearly 85% ends up in landfills.

Textile waste is broadly divided into three categories:

♥ **Pre-consumer waste** – leftover material from the production process.

♥ **Post-consumer waste** – discarded garments after use.

♥ **Industrial waste** – generated from large-scale manufacturing. This waste includes both natural fibres like cotton and wool, and synthetic fibres such as polyester. Each type requires a distinct recycling technology, making waste segregation crucial for effective recycling strategies.

1,300 Tonnes of Dry Waste Generated Daily in Pune

The Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) has taken serious note of this issue. The city generates 1,200–1,300 tonnes of dry waste daily, of which 100–125 tonnes comprise textile waste. Since traditional processing methods are inadequate, PMC has decided to set up a dedicated textile waste processing facility at an estimated cost of ₹3–4 crore. This initiative could make Pune a leading city in sustainable waste management in India.

The city-based organisation Poornam EcoVision Foundation has offered a creative solution by repurposing old clothes. In 2024, it collected 18,000 kg of fabric waste, donated 12,000 kg of reusable clothes, and converted the rest into trendy bags, purses, and pouches, generating employment for over 100 women.

Rising Awareness of Recycling

Fortunately, awareness about sustainable fashion and textile recycling is growing. Consumers are increasingly choosing eco-friendly products, and many Indian brands now use recycled fabrics. The government is also promoting the circular economy. Technological innovations have improved the quality of recycled fabrics, creating new investment opportunities in this sector.

This challenge must be viewed as an opportunity — a call to action for consumers, industries, and policymakers alike.

“Fabric upcycling is an inherently creative concept. It allows us to design beautiful products while caring for the environment. When eco-friendly choices become part of our daily habits, we move toward a truly sustainable future.”

- Rama Kanade, Operations Manager, Paripoornam Project, Poornam EcoVision Foundation

Historic Janjira Fort Reopens After a Week-Long Closure Due to Bad Weather

Murud-Janjira, Correspondent

The iconic Janjira Fort, which had been closed for a week owing to rough weather and safety concerns, has finally reopened to tourists. Continuous rainfall and turbulent sea conditions had forced authorities to temporarily shut down access, disappointing many visitors who had to return home empty-handed.

With weather conditions improving since November 4, the Archaeology Department has permitted boat services to resume for tourist visits to the fort. Typically, travel to Janjira Fort remains suspended from June 1 to August 31 during the monsoon, but this year, the prolonged rains kept the fort closed until late October.



The extended closure brought severe financial hardship to the local Janjira Water Transport Association and boat operators, as tourist arrivals dropped sharply. Now, with clear skies and calm seas, boat services from Rajpuri, Dighi, and Khora Bandar have resumed, and tourists are once again flocking to the

historic fort.

Every year, around seven lakh tourists visit Janjira Fort. Post-Diwali, the region's beaches are buzzing with activity once again. Along with the majestic Janjira and Padmadurg forts, tourists are enjoying the scenic coastline and savoring fresh seafood delicacies such as surmai, pomfret, halwa, rawas, shevand, and prawns. According to Naj Muddedin Kadiri, Secretary of the Janjira Water Transport Association, the fort was closed between October 26 and November 4, leaving many long-distance travelers disappointed. However, with the sea now calm and the weather pleasant, visitors are being warmly welcomed back to experience the historic grandeur of Janjira.

Encroachment Attempt at Venna Lake Foiled by Authorities

Forest Department, Civic Body, and Police Act Swiftly; Midnight Operation Prevents Illegal Construction

Mahabaleshwar, Correspondent

An attempt to illegally erect large stalls on open land near the popular tourist spot Venna Lake in Mahabaleshwar was thwarted late Tuesday night by the Forest Department, Municipal Administration, and Police. The timely action of the authorities prevented encroachers from occupying the area, which had been under repeated threat from unauthorized vendors. The crackdown has been seen as a stern warning to groups that have been allegedly operating under intimidation and political patronage.

For years, 21 stall owners had encroached upon forest land near Venna Lake by setting up unauthorized kiosks and shops. Two years ago, the Forest Department carried out a major eviction drive and reclaimed the land. Despite this, a few vendors have continued to make fresh attempts to reoccupy the area. Their legal petition against the department was also dismissed by the court.

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Controversy has grown following allegations that some ministers from ruling coalition parties are encouraging illegal encroachments. This comes despite Revenue Minister Chandrashekhar Bawankule's recent directive to act strictly against such activities. The contrasting positions of coalition partners—BJP on one side, and the Shiv Sena

and NCP factions on the other—have sparked local debate and highlighted apparent rifts within the state government over encroachment policy.

Box: Report Ordered on Actual Rehabilitation Sites

Officials have been directed to submit a detailed report on the rehabilitation process. Acting on the assumption that relocation approval had already been granted, some stallholders tried to exploit the situation by expanding their numbers from 21 to 28 and attempted to install large iron stalls at midnight using cranes.

Forest Range Officer Mahadev Mohite, staff member Sunil Landge, Municipal Administrator Yogesh Patil, Head Clerk Abaji Dhoble, and other officials rushed to the site and promptly demolished the illegal structures. The coordinated effort of the forest, police, and municipal teams successfully prevented a fresh encroachment on Venna Lake's open land.

Highest ever 64.66 percent polling in first phase of Bihar assembly elections

Patna, Agency

A record 64.66 percent polling was registered on Thursday during first phase of Bihar assembly elections, which is highest ever since the first Lok Sabha and Assembly elections in the state. According to Election Commission, 64.66 percent of nearly 3.75 crore electorate, exercised their franchise in 121 constituencies where polling was held for the first phase of Bihar assembly elections. It was highest ever since first Lok Sabha and assembly elections in Bihar since 1951, as per data released by the Election Commission.

In Lok Sabha elections from 1951 to 2024, highest polling of 64.6 percent was recorded in 1998. Similarly, in Assembly Elections since 1951, highest polling of 62.57 percent was recorded in the year 2000. So, 64.66 percent polling in first phase of Bihar assembly elections, surpassed all records of highest polling, Commission pointed out.

Amid tight security arrangements, in the first of the two-phased Bihar assembly elections on 121 seats, sealing the fate of 1,314 candidates, including Bihar Deputy Chief Ministers Samrat Choudhary and Vijay Kumar Sinha besides 15 Ministers and CM face of the Grand Alliance Tejashwi Prasad Yadav.

Besides the two Deputy CMs, the electorate sealed the fate of several heavyweights from the ruling NDA in EVMs, including Vijay Kumar Choudhary, Shravan Kumar, Mangal Pandey, Madan Sahni, Nitin Naveen, Maheshwar Hazari, Sunil Kumar,



Ratnesh Sada, Kedar Prasad Gupta, Surendra Mehta, Sanjay Saraogi, Dr. Sunil Kumar, Jivesh Kumar, Raju Singh, and Krishna Kumar Mantoo.

From the Grand Alliance, key figures include Tejashwi Yadav, Awadh Bihari Choudhary, Ramanand Yadav, Veena Devi, Lalit Kumar Yadav, Vijendra Choudhary, Renu Kushwaha, Khesari Lal Yadav, Alok Mehta, Bhai Virendra, and Anirudh Yadav.

Other prominent independent or smaller party candidates whose fates have been sealed in EVMs include Tej Pratap Yadav, Shivdeep Lande, Anand Mishra, V.K. Ravi, Jayprakash Singh, Pushpam Priya Choudhary, and R.K. Mishra.

In the first phase, JD(U) has fielded candidates in 57 seats, BJP 48, LJP (Ram Vilas) 13, and RLM two. RJD is contesting on 71 seats, Congress 24, CPI(ML) 14, VIP six, CPI five, and CPI(M) three.

The Jan Suraj Party, led by Prashant Kishor, has fielded 118 candidates in this phase.

In the election spanning 121 constituencies across 18 districts, the main contest remained between the ruling NDA and the opposition Mahagathbandhan (Grand Alliance), with the Jan Suraj Party expected to play the role of potential spoiler in key constituencies.

Though polling was largely peaceful, violence erupted in Lakhisarai after a cavalcade

led by Dy CM Vijay Kumar Sinha was allegedly attacked with stones, slippers and cow dung. Sinha, the sitting MLA from Lakhisarai, claimed the attack occurred when he attempted to visit Khorari village, and that stones were pelted at his convoy with "murdabad" slogans raised by RJD supporters.

The Election Commission has sought a report on the incident. Sinha alleged the attackers were RJD supporters who prevented his team from visiting booths in Khorari.

"These are the goons of RJD. The NDA is coming to power, and that's why bulldozers will roll over their arrogance. They did not allow my polling agent to vote," he said.

Among those to cast their votes today were RJD leader and INDIA bloc Chief Minister candidate Tejashwi Yadav, who voted in Patna alongwith his family, including RJD supremo Lalu Prasad.

A total of 3,75,13,302 voters including 1.98 crore men, 1.76 crore women, and 758 third-gender voters were eligible to cast their votes at 45,341 polling stations. There were 5.24 lakh voters aged above 80 years and 6,736 centenarian voters.

In the 2020 Assembly elections, out of these 121 seats, RJD had won 42, BJP 32, JDU 23, Congress eight, CPI(ML) seven, VIP four, CPI and CPI(M) two each, and LJP one seat.

The second phase of the Bihar Assembly elections for 122 seats will be held on November 11. Counting of votes

will be taken up on November 14.

Earlier, union Home Minister and BJP leader Amit Shah urged the people of Bihar to come out in large numbers to vote, saying that every vote is crucial to building a "developed and self-reliant Bihar" and to prevent the "return of jungle raj."

Campaigning for the second phase in Araria, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that an entire generation's future was destroyed by the leaders of the RJD.

Referring to the 15-year rule of Lalu Prasad Yadav and Rabri Devi, he said that from 1990 to 2005, Bihar's development report card showed a big zero.

"During those 15 years of Jungle Raj, the RJD destroyed the future of an entire generation."

On the contrary, Modi said, under the NDA government, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar worked hard to bring Bihar out of Jungle Raj. After the formation of the double-engine government in 2014, Bihar's development gained new momentum.

Defence Minister and senior BJP leader Rajnath Singh, campaigning in East Champaran, said that under the NDA government Bihar has accelerated its steps towards becoming a developed state.

"Prime Minister Modi has said that by 2047, we will make India a developed India, and until Bihar becomes a developed Bihar, the dream of a developed India cannot be realised either," he said.

Bandi Sanjay vows to go ahead with Borabanda rally Targets Congress & BRS in fiery speech

Hyderabad, Agency

Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar addressed a BJP campaign meeting in Borabanda on Thursday night as part of the Jubilee Hills by-election campaign, asserting that the event would be held despite police cancelling permission earlier in the day.

During his address, Bandi Sanjay launched a scathing attack on the Congress and BRS parties, accusing them of corruption and misuse.

He criticised BRS working president K T Rama Rao and Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, and demanded a detailed probe into the death of former MLA Maganti Gopinath.

He said the Jubilee Hills by-election should serve as

a public verdict against both ruling and opposition parties for their failures.

The minister also made strong remarks urging voters to support the BJP, stating that the party would bring development and accountability to Hyderabad.

He claimed that the Congress government had neglected key public issues and failed to implement its promises.

Bandi Sanjay's speech, marked by sharp attacks on political rivals, has intensified the already heated campaign atmosphere ahead of the Jubilee Hills by-election scheduled for November 11.

Election authorities are closely monitoring the developments following his controversial remarks

100 pc exemption in registration fees and road tax on purchase of EV's in UP till October 2027

Lucknow, Agency

Yogi Adityanath government has taken a major step towards environmental protection and promoting a clean transportation system in Uttar Pradesh.

Minister of State for Transport (Independent Charge) Dayashankar Singh on Thursday announced that the 100 pc exemption in registration fees and road tax on purchase of electric vehicles in the state will be provided until October 2027.

The Transport Minister stated that with the aim of reducing pollution caused by fossil fuel-powered vehicles, the state government implemented the Uttar Pradesh Electric Vehicle Manufacturing and Mobility Policy-2022 in 2022, which was notified on October 14, 2022. The policy aims to promote a clean, sustainable, and environmentally friendly transportation system in the state.

Dayashankar Singh stated that this policy has been amended in a recent meeting of the high-level authorized electric committee. Under the amendment, a provision has been made for the fourth and fifth years of the policy that all pure electric vehicles purchased and registered in the state will receive a 100 per cent exemption in registration fees and road tax.



He stated that, as per the notification issued on November 5, this exemption will apply to pure electric vehicles purchased between October 14, 2025, and October 13, 2027. No road tax or registration fees will be charged on two-wheelers, three-wheelers, four-wheelers, e-buses, and e-goods carriers registered during this period.

The policy also provides that aggregator or fleet operator customers will receive the subsidy on the purchase of up to 10 units of two, three, or four-wheeled vehicles and up to 25 units of e-buses or e-goods carriers.

The Transport Minister stated that the state government's goal is to encourage more people to use electric vehicles, thereby reducing pollution and reducing dependence on fuel imports. He said that in the future, as the availability of fossil fuels decreases, electric vehicles will become the main mode of transportation.

Telangana IAS Officers' Association condemns FATHI remarks against Sridevasena

Hyderabad, Agency

The Telangana IAS Officers' Association today registered its strong protest and condemnation of the recent statements made by the Federation of Associations of Telangana Higher Institutions (FATHI) against A. Sridevasena, the in-charge Secretary of the Higher Education Department.

On Wednesday, FATHI alleged that the officer was 'harassing' and 'threatening' private professional colleges over the fee reimbursement dues issue. The colleges also demanded her transfer from the post as she was misguiding the Chief Minister and other ministers on academic matters.

The IAS Officers'

Association demanded that FATHI withdraw its remarks immediately.

In a resolution, Telangana IAS Officers' Association President K Ramakrishna Rao said, "The public remarks, which personally target the officer and seek to belittle her, undermine not only the dignity of her office but also the broader ethos and integrity of the civil services. Such comments are wholly baseless, unacceptable, and detrimental to the spirit of healthy public discourse."

Civil servants at every level serve the State with dedication, impartiality, and integrity, often in challenging circumstances and at significant personal sacrifice, the Association said.

Voters' anger evident, clear trends in favour of INDIA alliance in first phase: Khera

Patna, Agency

The All India Congress Committee (AICC) Media and Publicity Chairman, Pawan Khera on Thursday claimed that clear trends are emerging in favour of the Grand Alliance after the first phase of the Bihar Assembly elections.

Addressing a press conference, Khera said the widespread anger among voters against the NDA government would be reflected in the results. He stated that in all 121 constituencies where polling took place during the day, BJP legislators, ministers, and deputy chief ministers faced strong public opposition. The faces of the people reflected their anger, and that anger will be seen on the EVMs too, he remarked.

The Congress leader accused the Election Commission of being inactive



or deliberately ignoring irregularities. The people of Bihar have awakened for their rights, but the Election Commission seems to be asleep or pretending to be, Khera said.

He alleged that there were several

incidents throughout the day indicating that the Systematic Identification of Voters (SIR) was a "sham." According to him, former Rajya Sabha MP R.K. Sinha and other BJP functionaries had voted in Delhi elections and were reportedly

seen voting in Bihar too.

"Under the pretext of SIR, the Election Commission is removing names of INDIA bloc supporters and those opposing the BJP-NDA," Khera charged.

Khera further alleged administrative interference in several areas, including Danapur, where boats were stopped to prevent voters from reaching polling stations. Despite such tactics, the people have voted overwhelmingly for change, and no power can stop Tejashwi Yadav from becoming the next Chief Minister, he asserted. He added that men, women, youth, farmers and traders all voted with a sense of resentment against the present government. The voting pattern in the first phase clearly indicates that the INDIA alliance will remain dominant in the next phase as well, Khera concluded.

Priyanka Gandhi slams NDA Govt in Bihar Says free and fair polls will end the regime

Patna, Agency

Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Thursday launched a blistering attack on the ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government alleging that it has failed the youth, women and poor of the state.

Addressing public rallies at various places in Bihar for the second phase of the elections, she asserted that if the elections are conducted freely and fairly, the people of Bihar will show the door to the present government and elect one that truly represents their interests.

Priyanka Gandhi accused the NDA of being indifferent towards the plight of Bihar's people. "The present government has done nothing for the youth. Migration continues because there are no jobs. The leaders in power have no respect for the people of Bihar, who have made immense contributions to the country's development," she said.

The Congress leader also lashed out at the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), alleging that it uses religion as a political tool. "BJP leaders seek votes in the name of religion, not for development. If this election is free and fair, the people of Bihar will throw this government out and bring in one that works for the poor, women,

and youth," she remarked.

Referring to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's recent statement on alleged vote manipulation in Haryana, Priyanka claimed that the BJP had "stolen" an entire government there. "In Haryana, 25 lakh fake votes were found. Such vote theft robs people of their rights and weakens the Constitution for which Mahatma Gandhi fought and for which members of my family sacrificed their lives," she said.

Appealing to the voters, Priyanka urged them to elect a government that stands with the common people. "Build a government in Bihar that works for women, farmers, youth, and the poor and not one that steals votes," she said.

Responding to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remarks on opposition posters, Priyanka took a jibe, saying, "The Prime Minister spends his time measuring photos on opposition posters. Is this what the Prime Minister of the country should be doing? We in the Congress follow the path shown by Mahatma Gandhi, a path inspired by the people of Bihar themselves.

Priyanka urged the electorate to remember Bihar's historic role in India's democratic journey and to stand up for the values of justice and equality.

Caste-based politics cannot drive Bihar's development: Gadkari

Supaul, Agency

union Minister Nitin Gadkari on Thursday urged voters in Bihar to rise above caste and religious lines while voting, asserting that development cannot be achieved through caste-based or communal politics.

Addressing an election rally at Gandhi Maidan in Supaul, he said people must choose candidates from the right party and alliance to ensure progress for both Bihar and the nation.

Gadkari emphasised that voters

should prioritise development-oriented representation over caste identities. If people continue voting based on caste or religion, neither Bihar nor the country will progress, he stated.

Highlighting the achievements of the double engine government, Gadkari said Bihar, once categorised among backward states, has witnessed significant improvements under the NDA rule. "Massive work is being done in the sectors of roads, electricity supply, irrigation, and fair crop pricing for

farmers," he said. "Efforts are underway to strengthen the agricultural economy, which will, in turn, promote industrial growth in the state."

He further noted that the role of farmers is rapidly expanding beyond traditional crop production. Farmers are now playing a vital role in the energy sector, as agricultural residues are increasingly being used to produce energy. In the coming years, this will be a major breakthrough, he added.

Gadkari said research and innovation

are being promoted across the country to enhance farmers' prosperity and strengthen India's export potential. He also underlined that extensive work is being done to create a comprehensive road network in Bihar, with thousands of crores being invested to complete the projects within the next few years. Calling for economic self-reliance, the union Minister said, "India must boost exports and reduce imports. Only then can the country emerge as the world's third-largest economy."

Former BSP MLA Shahnawaz Rana's son arrested in Muzaffarnagar

Muzaffarnagar

Police have arrested Abdul Ahad Rana, son of former BSP MLA Shahnawaz Rana from a wedding ceremony at a banquet hall in the city. According to SP Sanjay Verma, Abdul Ahad was taken into custody based on concrete evidence linking him to multiple criminal cases, including providing a mobile phone to his father inside Muzaffarnagar Jail.

The arrest was made late yesterday night. Shahnawaz Rana, who has been facing several cases related to GST evasion and an attack on a GST team, was arrested earlier and sent to jail. On December 5, 2024, a GST team raided Shahnawaz Rana's 'Rana Steel Factory', during which the team



was allegedly attacked by a mob. Following the incident, police registered a case against Shahnawaz Rana, his son Abdul Ahad, and 200-300 unidentified persons. Three FIRs were lodged in connection with the case concerning large-scale GST evasion, the second for the

attack on the GST team, and a third under the Gangster Act.

While in Muzaffarnagar Jail, a mobile phone was recovered from Shahnawaz Rana on March 5, 2025. Police investigations later revealed that the phone had been supplied to him by his son Abdul Ahad, with the

help of some associates. A fresh case was registered at the Nai Mandi police station against Shahnawaz Rana, Abdul Ahad, and three others. Following this, Shahnawaz Rana was transferred to Chitrakoot Jail.

After securing bail on August 24, 2025, in the GST and Gangster Act cases, Shahnawaz Rana returned to Muzaffarnagar. However, police have now arrested his son Abdul Ahad in connection with the same cases and for aiding his father while he was imprisoned. SP Sanjay Verma confirmed that sufficient evidence has been gathered against Abdul Ahad, and he was produced before the court today afternoon. Further action will be taken based on the court's directives.

'Baba' faces backlash after viral video shows him directing removal of woman's oxygen tube

Chandigarh

A self-styled godman from Punjab's Moga district, identified as Baba Shivam Nath, has sparked outrage after a video surfaced online showing him instructing attendants to remove an elderly woman's oxygen tube during a religious gathering.

The viral video shows Baba performing rituals in front of a crowd, claiming he could heal the woman through spiritual means. As part of his so-called "treatment," he directed the woman's family to detach her oxygen support. However, moments later, the woman began gasping for breath, forcing attendants to reconnect the oxygen line.

In the footage, the Baba is heard saying, "Today, I am not being shown the path," apparently admitting that his ritual had failed. He then offered the woman's family certain "remedies" to perform at home, claiming she would either recover or "complete her journey."

According to local sources, Baba Shivam Nath operates from a Dera near the Kotkapura bypass in Moga, where he holds weekly "chowkis"



(spiritual sessions) every Thursday. Videos of these gatherings are regularly uploaded on social media.

A local Shiv Sena leader defending him said the Baba has been "serving people" for nearly nine years and does not charge anyone, accepting only voluntary offerings. However, others in the area recalled previous disputes between the Baba and Nihang groups.

Authorities have yet to announce any formal action. Still, the viral video has reignited the debate over faith healing practices and the potential risks they pose to vulnerable followers in the name of spirituality.

Hearing in defamation case against Rahul Gandhi postponed again

Sultanpur (UP)

The hearing on a defamation case filed against Congress leader and Rae Bareilly MP Rahul Gandhi in the MP-MLA court of Sultanpur district here in Uttar Pradesh was postponed today due to the death of a lawyer.

The next hearing in the case will now be held on November 17. Rahul's counsel, Kashi Prasad Shukla, said that condolence was declared in the court due to the death of a lawyer, which prevented the hearing. This case goes back to 2018.

BJP leader Vijay Mishra, a resident of Hanumanaganj,



Kotwali Dehat, had filed a defamation case against Rahul Gandhi. He alleged that during the 2018 Karnataka elections, Rahul made derogatory remarks against the then BJP president and current Home Minister Amit Shah.

Following Rahul's failure to appear during the five-year court proceedings, the then judge issued a warrant against him in

December 2023. Subsequently, Rahul Gandhi surrendered in court in February 2024.

The special magistrate granted him bail on two sureties of Rs 25,000 each. On July 26, 2024, Rahul recorded his statement in court, pleading his innocence and calling the case a political conspiracy.

The court then directed the plaintiff to present evidence. Witnesses have been presented continuously since then. So far, only one witness has been cross-examined, while the other has begun. Proceedings are frequently delayed due to strikes and the absence of witnesses.

Chandigarh

Echoing Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's allegations of large-scale voter manipulation in Haryana, senior party leader and former Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda on Thursday raised serious concerns over the "inconsistent and inflated" voter turnout figures released by the Election Commission after the October 2024 Haryana Assembly elections.

Speaking at a press conference in Panipat, Hooda said that while the Commission initially reported 61.19% polling on the day of voting, the number was later revised to 65.65%, and eventually 67.9%. "How did the turnout suddenly rise by nearly six percent overnight?" he questioned.

The Leader of Opposition alleged

that around 15 lakh additional votes were shown across the state, roughly 15,000 votes per constituency, and described the issue as "a threat not just to Haryana's democracy but to India's entire electoral integrity."

Hooda's comments came a day after Rahul Gandhi alleged that as many as 25 lakh votes were "stolen" in the Haryana elections. Hooda said Gandhi's revelations had stirred a political debate nationwide and would likely have an impact beyond Haryana, including in Bihar.

Accusing the BJP and the Election Commission of acting in tandem, Hooda remarked, "Whenever questions are raised about the Election Commission, the BJP responds as if it is their spokesperson."

He announced that Congress will hold awareness campaigns at district

headquarters across Haryana to "protect democratic values."

He demanded an impartial probe and called for future elections to be conducted through ballot papers, claiming that "Congress led in 73 seats during ballot paper counting but fell behind after EVM tallies."

"This fight is not just of the Congress," Hooda said, "it's a fight for democracy and the Constitution."

Responding to political attacks from INLD leader Abhay Chautala, Hooda said, "Chautala blames me for everything. Even if his buffalo stops giving milk, he will say Hooda is behind it."

Hooda also criticised the state government over rising input costs for farmers and alleged corruption in paddy procurement.

President Murmu to offer prayers at tirumala temple in Andhra Pradesh on Nov 21

Tirumala

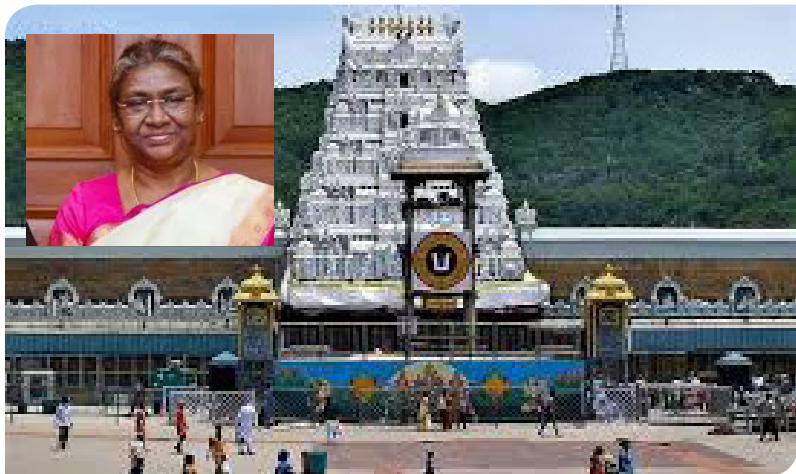
President Droupadi Murmu will offer prayers in the hill shrine of Sri Venkateswara Swamy here on November 21.

During her two-day visit to the pilgrim centre, the President will first offer prayers at Sri Padmavati Ammavaru temple in Tiruchanoor on November 20 and later reach Tirumala, where she will stay overnight.

Following the temple tradition, the President will offer prayers in Sri Varaha Swamy temple on November 21 followed by Sri Venkateswara Swamy.

TTD Additional EO Ch Venkaiah Chowdhary held a review meeting with the officials in Tirumala on Thursday along with the CV & SO Muralikrishna.

He instructed the officials concerned to make necessary arrangements in view of the two day visit of the first citizen of India in a meticulous manner.



Telangana Bhavan to receive 12 citizens repatriated from Myanmar tonight

New Delhi/Hyderabad

Following directions from the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), a special Indian Air Force (IAF) flight carrying 270 Indian nationals repatriated from Myanmar will land at the Hindan Airbase in Uttar Pradesh late on Thursday evening.

Among them, 12 are from Telangana State.

According to official sources, the repatriated citizens will be formally handed over to the respective State Resident Commissioners

by MEA officials on Friday morning.

Officials from Telangana Bhavan, New Delhi, will be present at the airbase to receive the Telangana nationals and ensure arrangements for temporary shelter, food, and safe transportation to Hyderabad, in accordance with the directions of the Government of Telangana.

The rescued individuals were victims of organised cyber fraud networks operating along the Myanmar-Thailand border, where they had been lured

with false promises of high-paying jobs and later forced into illegal online activities.

This operation is part of the Government of India's ongoing efforts to rescue and repatriate Indian citizens trapped in such fraudulent setups.

The Government of Telangana, through its Resident Commissioner's office, has coordinated closely with the MEA and other central agencies to facilitate the safe return and rehabilitation of the repatriated citizens, an official statement said on Thursday.

Journalists Liz Mathew, Uzma Athar, V. S. Rajesh among National Excellence Award Winners 2025

Thiruvananthapuram

The Dr. Mangalam Swaminathan Foundation has announced the eight recipients of its National Excellence Awards for 2025, honouring outstanding contributions to national life across journalism, science reporting, art and culture, social service, and public service.

Senior journalists Liz Mathew of The Indian Express, Uzma Athar of Press Trust of India (PTI), and V. S. Rajesh of Kerala Kaumudi are among this year's awardees. Each award carries a cash prize of Rs 1 lakh along with a memento and a citation.

The Dr. Mangalam Swaminathan National Award for Excellence in Journalism 2025 will be conferred on Liz Mathew, Deputy Editor, The Indian Express, for her extensive and exclusive political reporting, innovative narrative style, and in-depth interviews with distinguished personalities in various fields of national life. Her understanding of the political landscape, impartial journalism, credible sourcing, and honest reporting has been noted as setting a benchmark of excellence.

The Dr. Mangalam Swaminathan National Award for Excellence in Exposing Medical Malpractices 2025 will go to V. S. Rajesh, Chief News Editor of Kerala Kaumudi, for his investigative series exposing the nexus between private hospitals and stent suppliers that led to patients being charged exorbitant rates for



cardiac stents. His reports prompted central government intervention and a nationwide reduction in stent prices, offering relief to patients across India.

The Dr. Mangalam Swaminathan National Award for Excellence in Science Reporting 2025 will be presented to Uzma Athar, Chief Correspondent, Press Trust of India (PTI), New Delhi, for her impactful reportage on environment, climate change, health, science, technology, and socially relevant issues, with the jury commending her rigorous research, ethical approach, and human-centric storytelling.

The Award for Excellence in Art and Culture 2025 has been announced for Sagari Chhabra, author and film director, for her authentic and scholarly documentation of lesser-known but significant contributions to the Indian freedom struggle. Her works spotlighting unsung heroines and

heroes have drawn wide attention for preserving and transmitting enduring ideals of sacrifice and patriotism.

In the field of social service, the "Shri Dattopant Thengadi Seva Samman 2025" will be conferred on Acharya Sri K. R. Manoj, Founder and Director of Aarsha Vidya Samajam, for his work in promoting Yoga Vidya, cultural awareness, and social transformation through spiritual guidance and educational initiatives.

The second "Shri Dattopant Thengadi Seva Samman 2025" has been awarded to Dr. Ashish Gautam, President of Divya Prem Sewa Mission Niyas, Haridwar, for his lifetime commitment to the rehabilitation and welfare of leprosy-affected individuals. Since 1997, he has expanded the mission from providing care to 10 children to running schools, healthcare facilities, and vocational training for over 200 children and families while inspiring youth towards selfless service.

In the Pravasi Bharatiya category, the 2025 award for contribution to national life will be presented to Pambavasan Nair, Chairman and Managing Director of Amad Group of Companies, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, for his philanthropic endeavours focused on housing, education, healthcare, marriage assistance, and livelihood support for the underprivileged. He has also initiated a housing mission to construct 50 homes for economically weaker

families, of which 20 have already been completed and handed over.

A Special Excellence Award in Science Reporting is being given to Biju Pankaj, Associate Editor, Mathrubhumi News, Kerala, for his investigative documentaries and serials on environmental protection. His acclaimed works include documentaries on the loss of biodiversity in the Western Ghats, the plight of the lion-tailed macaque, overuse of pesticides in cardamom plantations, Visham Nirayunna Sugandhagirikal, The Elephants' Heaven, Before It Vanishes, and The Great Indian Hornbill's Symphony of Life.

This is the eighth edition of the National Excellence Awards instituted by the Foundation. Under its Sarvamangalam project, launched on October 12, 2022, by the Governor of Kerala, Shri Arif Mohammad Khan, the Foundation also provides a monthly pension of Rs 2,000 each to 51 families in Kerala affected by political violence.

The Foundation said it received more than a thousand entries from across India in multiple languages across six categories. A panel of experts examined all nominations and selected the eight awardees for the year. For the second year in a row, two special awards have also been included in the Pravasi Bharatiya category to honour Overseas Indians contributing exceptionally to the nation.

SRM University students fall ill, Collector orders inquiry



Guntur

As many as 300 students of SRM deemed to be university fell ill after having food and some of them were admitted to hospital. Though the incident took place on Tuesday and Wednesday it came to the notice of the officials on Thursday.

Sub-Collector Sanjana Sinha confirmed that 300 students of SRM University fell ill with diarrhea. She said that over 6,000 students are pursuing education at the university out of which 300 students fell ill. However, all the students are undergoing treatment and are out of danger.

Guntur District Collector A Thameem Ansariya on Thursday ordered for an inquiry into the incident. Sources said that Collector Thameem Ansariya issued orders constituting a committee comprising district education department Joint Director, District Health and Medical Officer, food safety officer, Mangalagiri sub divisional police officer and district civil supplies' officer to inquiry on the suspected food poison incident.

The officials will also conduct an investigation on whether the drinking water supplied to the SRM was contaminated.

The SRM university sources said that they supply purified drinking water through their own RO water plant. A thorough inquiry would be held on the circumstances which led to the water contaminated over 300 students falling ill and a report would be submitted to the Collector, Sub-collector Sanjana said.

Meanwhile, the SRM students registered their protest in a big way at the university against the management's indifference in providing them food. They alleged that they were served food cooked with stale eggs and vegeta

Trump warns of “loss of sovereignty” in NYC after Mamdani victory

Urges Mayor to be “Respectful of Washington”

Washington

US President Donald Trump today claimed that America “lost a little bit of its sovereignty” following Democrat socialist Zohran Mamdani’s historic victory in the New York City mayoral race.

Speaking at the America Business Forum in Miami, Trump called Mamdani a “communist” and warned that under his leadership, New York could resemble “communist Cuba” or “socialist Venezuela,” prompting residents to flee to Florida.

“On November 5, 2024, the American people claimed our government. We restored our sovereignty. We lost a little bit of sovereignty last night in New York, but we'll take care of it,” Trump said.

He asserted that Mamdani’s



agenda reflects a broader Democratic strategy and criticized Congress for pushing the country toward extreme leftist policies. Trump also took aim at former NYC Mayor Bill de Blasio, calling him “probably the worst mayor in history,” and described Mamdani’s victory speech as “very angry” and “off to a bad start.”

In a separate interview with

Fox News, Trump said he hopes Mamdani succeeds but must be “respectful of Washington” to govern effectively. “I think it’s a very dangerous statement for him to make. He has to be a little bit respectful of Washington, because if he’s not, he doesn’t have a chance of succeeding,” Trump said. He added that Mamdani “should reach out to us” as part of establishing

cooperation.

Mamdani, 34, became the first Muslim mayor of New York City and its youngest leader in over a century, defeating former Governor Andrew Cuomo and Republican Curtis Sliwa with just over 50 pc of the vote. In his victory speech, Mamdani emphasized leadership by immigrants and vowed to tackle corruption, hold exploitative landlords accountable, and dismantle structures that allowed billionaires, including Trump, to evade taxes. Trump had previously threatened to withhold federal funding from New York City under Mamdani’s leadership. In October, the White House froze billions of dollars earmarked for city transportation projects, reflecting ongoing tensions over the new mayor’s socialist-leaning policies.

45 million year old Snakehead fish skull discovered in Subathu

Solan, Agency

A remarkably well preserved snakehead fish skull, dating back 45 million years to the Eocene epoch has been discovered from the Subathu Formation near in Himachal Pradesh, by Dr. Ritesh Arya, founder of the Tethys Fossil Museum.

The fossil has been identified by Prof. Rajeev Patnaik, Geology Department, Panjab University, Chandigarh, and hailed as a landmark discovery by Prof. Ashok Sahni, eminent paleontologist and Emeritus Scientist, now based in Lucknow.

Dr. Arya discovered the fossil in a small stream cutting through the Subathu Formation - sedimentary rocks that record the final stages of squeezing of the Tethys Sea and early stages of India’s collision with the landmass after it drifted from the Africa and was part of Gondwana land .

“Finding a freshwater fish in marine Subathu sediments reinforces our understanding that these layers were formed in a shallow marine environment during the Eocene. It also provides a glimpse into the transitional ecosystems that existed during India’s northward drift and events which preceded the squeezing of the Tethys



and evolution of continental conditions,” said Dr. Arya.

Prof. Patnaik noted, “I have earlier found similar snakehead fish fossils from the Siwalik sediments of Saketi, but those are much younger- around 3 million years old- and clearly freshwater. This new find from Subathu is remarkable because it represents the early ancestors of the group in a marine setting.”

Prof. Sahni, who has extensively studied Eocene faunas from the Subathu Basin, remarked, “Though snakehead-like fish have been reported earlier from the Subathu sediments, this specimen stands out for its exceptional preservation and anatomical detail. It opens new insights into the early evolutionary history of this group.”

This discovery adds to Dr. Arya’s long list of significant fossil finds, which include whales, oysters, molluscs, and shark remains from the same



formation - some of which were featured in the Doordarshan science series Surbhi. Dr. Arya has been exploring and collecting fossils from the Kasauli-Subathu region since 1988, during his Geology studies at Panjab University.

The fossil skull will be housed at the Tethys Fossil Museum, located at Dangyari, 5 km from Dharampur on the Subathu road. To celebrate the discovery, the museum will hold a special exhibition and public event, showcasing the find along with other fossils that tell the story of India’s geological and biological journey through time.

“Such discoveries strengthen the case for declaring Kasauli and its surroundings as a Geopark,” said Dr. Arya. “This will not only help preserve these invaluable fossils but also promote geotourism and public awareness of India’s deep-time heritage.”

Pak ATC issues non-bailable arrest warrant for ex-PM Imran Khan's sister

Rawalpindi, Nov 6 (UNI) The Rawalpindi branch of Pakistan’s Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) issued a non-bailable arrest warrant on Thursday for Aleema Khan, the sister of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder and former Prime Minister Imran Khan, marking the eighth consecutive warrant due to her repeated failure to appear before the court despite multiple summons.

As per local media reports, the case, lodged at Sadiqabad police station, stems from allegations levied by authorities in Islamabad that Khan was a participant in the May 9, 2023, riots by PTI activists and supporters, after her brother was arrested.

The anti-government protests, following the ex-PM’s arrest led to widespread chaos, resulting in massive violence by PTI workers, who attacked police personnel, attacked multiple military installations and engaged in arson, and vandalism.

Following an extensive state-led crackdown against PTI members and supporters, hundreds were left badly injured, and resulted in the deaths of over 47 protesters nationwide.



During Thursday’s hearing, ATC judge Amjad Ali Shah directed the Capital Development Authority (CDA) Chairman and Islamabad Commissioner Muhammad Ali Randhawa to submit details of Aleema Khan’s properties.

The court also ordered Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) Chairperson Akif Saeed to provide records of any firms or shares registered under her name.

Due to her continued non-compliance, the court had earlier taken punitive measures.

On Oct 24, it instructed the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) to block her Computerised National Identity Card (CNIC), the Director

General of Passports to block her passport, and the State Bank of Pakistan Governor to freeze all her bank accounts.

Judge Shah stated that her persistent absence amounted to obstruction of judicial proceedings.

As per Pakistani media, over 12 of Aleema Khan’s accounts have been frozen, including her accounts in Bank Alfalah and MCB, with a substantial PKR 124 million (\$438,000) held in one MCB account.

The court also issued arrest warrants for the UBL Head Office Manager in Karachi and Habib Metro Bank Manager Syed Mansoor Hussain for failing to submit reports despite repeated notices, while contempt of court notices were served to Soneri Bank and the Bank of Punjab for similar non-compliance.

While Aleema Khan has consistently denied any wrongdoing, claiming that all the cases against her are politically motivated, the prosecution accused her of mocking the legal process by ignoring the judicial summons. The hearing has been adjourned until November 10.

Over 50 flights disrupted as Typhoon Kalmaegi affects 8 airports in Vietnam

Hanoi : Eight airports and more than 50 flights in Vietnam have been affected as Typhoon Kalmaegi moves toward the country’s central and southern regions, local daily Cong An Nhan Dan reported on Thursday.

Airports expected to be directly impacted include Da Nang, Phu Bai, Lien Khuong, Chu Lai, Phu Cat, Tuy Hoa, Pleiku and Buon Ma Thuot, according to the Civil Aviation Authority of Vietnam.

The authority has ordered round-the-clock monitoring and strict compliance with typhoon response procedures.

The Airports Corporation of Vietnam has been instructed to coordinate with relevant agencies



to inspect airport infrastructure and communication systems and promptly detect and repair any damage.

National flag carrier Vietnam Airlines announced that more than 50 flights scheduled for Thursday and Friday have been affected due to flight adjustments made to ensure operational safety, Vietnam News Agency reported.

Ecuador's president declares new state of emergency in 7 regions

Quito
Ecuadorian President Daniel Noboa has declared a new 60-day state of emergency in five coastal provinces and three municipalities in the central provinces of Cotopaxi and Bolivar, to quell “grave internal unrest” sparked by extreme violence from organized crime.

The decree, signed Tuesday and effective Wednesday, allows security forces to enter and search homes without a warrant and suspends the right to private communication and correspondence in the provinces of Manabi, Guayas, Santa Elena, Los Rios and El Oro, all located in the coastal region. The measure also extends to the municipalities of La Mana in Cotopaxi, and Las Naves and Echeandia in Bolivar in a bid to strengthen security and restore public order in areas hardest hit by violent crime.

Slovakia proposes creating EU fund

Bratislava

Slovakia is proposing the creation of a fund in the European union to compensate European farmers for damages from agricultural imports from Ukraine, Slovak Agriculture Minister Richard Takac said. “I am proposing, and I am working on this with my colleagues, the creation of a special fund for countries bordering Ukraine, whose farmers would receive compensation in the event of a threat caused by the import of these goods. This is a problem, but it is a problem primarily for countries bordering Ukraine,” Takac said at a press

conference yesterday.

At the end of November 2023, the Slovak government expanded the embargo on agricultural products from Ukraine from four to 14 items, including not only wheat, corn, rapeseed, and sunflower seeds, but also honey, soybeans, barley, flour, bran, cane sugar, and beet sugar.

Takac said that the ban on agricultural imports from Ukraine would remain in effect in Slovakia until a solution was found at the EU level. Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico explained the ban as protecting the country’s national interests.

NATO chief urges member-nations to boost military production

Bucharest

NATO chief Mark Rutte urged members of the multi-state military bloc to boost their military spending and ramp up production of security infrastructure, warning them to be ready for a prolonged standoff with hostile nations such as Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea.

He alleged these nations were challenging “global rules,” and defying international norms.

Speaking at the bloc’s Industry Forum in Bucharest on Thursday, Rutte said that the bloc’s rearmament drive has gained increased albeit steady momentum, as arms producers have ramped up their production, adding there was “more cash on the table and even more will flow” for strengthening NATO’s military capabilities.



The NATO Secretary-General, calling the ongoing conflict between Moscow and Kyiv an enduring threat to the alliance, claimed that “the danger posed by Russia will not end when this war does.” It will continue to remain a destabilising force in the foreseeable future, for both Europe and the world, he said.

He claimed that Moscow was

preparing for “long-term confrontation with the West” by increasing its “defence-industrial collaboration to unprecedented levels,” through cooperation with China, North Korea, and Iran as per RT.

Russia, has long blasted the Western allegations as farcical, stating that it has neither any interest in waging a military campaign against Europe, nor does it hold any hostile intentions towards NATO.

Dismissing the allegations, the Kremlin called it sheer propaganda used by Western governments to justify their vast increases in defence budgets, and hide their own failures from the public, by instilling fear of “a Russian threat.”

Russian officials have also argued that NATO’s deepening involvement in Ukraine significantly escalated the conflict that began in 2022.

During his speech, Rutte emphasised that NATO’s renewed defence posture must go beyond financial commitments.

While acknowledging the alliance’s collective pledge to increase defence spending to 5% of GDP by 2035, he said that cash alone cannot provide security. “We need the capabilities. We need the equipment, real firepower, and of course, the most advanced tech,” he said.

He called on the bloc’s defence contractors to expand production lines and accelerate delivery schedules, describing industrial capacity as central to NATO’s readiness strategy. Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova reacting to Rutte’s comments, asked him to clarify what he meant by “global rules” and to publish the “full list” of said rules on NATO’s website.

Israeli military releases declassified intel files revealing Hamas' deep ties with Iran, UNWRA, Al Jazeera

Jerusalem

The Israeli military has released a series of declassified intelligence files, containing evidence of Hamas’s links to Iran, UNWRA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency), and the Qatar-based media outlet Al Jazeera, as well as its deliberate actions to “deepen civilian suffering in Gaza.”

The multiple documents posted by the IDF on its website includes a whole array of files, pictures, internal lists, and memos, showcasing the vast and multiple networks used by Hamas for both its military, and political operations.

One set of documents, contains a roster of overlapping personnel lists, featuring matching names and ID numbers of individuals appearing in both the UNWRA’s employee files, as well as in the roster of the terror group’s Izzadin al-Qassam Brigade.

Those listed include teachers, principals, medical workers, and counsellors, some of whom were shown on Hamas documents as receiving salaries from UNWRA.

This connection, as per IDF officials underscores how Hamas has been using the UN wing’s facilities for conducting military operations.

The Israeli military also shared excerpts from a training manual titled ‘Basics of Military Engineering Level Three – Obstacles,’ which lays particular emphasis on conducting combat operations within populated areas, explicitly instructing al-Qassam fighters to use civilian buildings as defensive cover, describing them as “the best obstacle to defend the resistance.”

A separate file has identified UNWRA schools as designated meeting points for the South Khan Yunis Battalion in 2020, further lending credence to the IDF’s claims that Hamas was using civilians as meat shields.

The military also published images of Ashraf Mahd, UNWRA’s Gaza operations director, alleging that he “indoctrinates his children and younger generations with Hamas ideology.”

The IDF also presented documents

allegedly showing direct links between Al Jazeera, Hamas, and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, including personnel lists from training programs, internal phone directories, and salary records for operatives.

Over 15 journalists of the Qatar based media agency were named in the documents, as either active collaborators or otherwise direct members working for several Gaza-based terror groups — the most notable being Ismail al-Ghoul, identified as a Nukhba commando who took part in the October 7 massacre, which killed 1200 people, kickstarting the two-year-long war.

According to the IDF, the files show that Hamas actively dictated Al Jazeera’s coverage from inside Gaza. In 2022, after a failed Islamic Jihad rocket launch in Jabaliya killed several civilians, the terror group had allegedly ordered the network to hide the truth and avoid criticising them.

Similarly, another memo instructed journalists to “support the resistance” and to steer clear of reporting any operational

failures.

By 2023, the partnership had become more direct: one Hamas document described the creation of an “Al Jazeera Phone,” a secure line meant to allow the terror group to communicate with the broadcaster.

The trove also includes what the IDF described as a battle memo penned by former Hamas commander Yahya Sinwar, outlining both military strategy and propaganda goals.

Sinwar – slain in 2024 by the IDF – had allegedly called for the use of psychological warfare by releasing graphic footages of point-blank executions, and the destruction of Israeli tanks — to “ignite emotions” across the West Bank and “strike fear in the hearts of the enemy.”

Further documents uncovered in Gaza provide details of Iran’s logistical, and financial support of the group, which included payments to families of “martyrs” and plans for military training and weapons development.

The IDF said Hamas sought to formalise

a four-party alliance with Tehran, Hezbollah, and Syria, for conducting a two-point war against Israel by coordinating both political propaganda and military strategies in a “war to liberate Jerusalem.”

One set of materials, titled ‘Hamas–Humanitarian Aid Intelligence Resources,’ allegedly showed that Hamas hoarded humanitarian supplies underground while the Gazans above ground faced starvation, to lend credence to their claims of ‘civilians’ suffering’.

The IDF said photos recovered from tunnels depict fighters storing food and aid alongside weapons, including sacks of flour, canned goods, and fresh produce — items it claims were stolen from international relief shipments.

“The documents expose Hamas terrorists hoarding humanitarian aid and carelessly handling weapons,” the IDF said in a statement, adding that despite ongoing aid deliveries to Gaza, “much of it never reaches civilians.”

of the day
quote

India's MSME space is marred by several structural and persistent challenges, including limited access to formal credit, outdated technology, regulatory complexity and infrastructure bottlenecks

RUMKI MAJUMDAR |
DELOITTE INDIA ECONOMIST



Employers who embed lifelong learning, inclusive cultures, and flexible policies will not just attract and retain Gen Z talent -- they will build resilient, future-ready businesses

VISWANATH PS | CEO, RANDSTAD INDIA



Going ahead, markets are likely to remain range-bound with a positive bias as investors monitor global developments, foreign fund flows... Resilient domestic fundamentals continue to offer support, even as external uncertainties may cap near-term upside

SIDDHARTHA KHEMKA | HEAD OF RESEARCH, MOTILAL OSWAL FINANCIAL SERVICES LTD


SHORT TAKES
Maruti Suzuki sales

New Delhi: Maruti Suzuki India, Wednesday said it has crossed 3 crore cumulative sales mark in the domestic market. The country's largest carmaker said it crossed its first 1 crore cumulative sales milestone in 28 years 2 months, and the next one crore units were sold in 7 years and 5 months. The next one crore units in the domestic market were sold in a record time of 6 years 4 months, the company said in a statement. Among the 3 crore units sold in India, Alto emerged as the most popular model, with over 47 lakh units sold, followed by the Wagon R with around 34 lakh units, and the Swift with over 32 lakh units, it stated.

Mitsubishi minority stake

New Delhi: Japan's Mitsubishi Corporation has acquired a minority stake in KIS Group's Indonesia operations, marking its entry into the global biogas business, KIS Group said, Wednesday. KIS Group, plans to invest about USD 1 billion in renewable gas and biofuel projects across Southeast Asia and India by 2030, it said in a press statement. Without giving financial details as well as the percentage of stake acquired, KIS said that with Mitsubishi's backing, it aims to expand to North and South America and Europe within five years.

BEML profit drops 6%

New Delhi: State-owned BEML, Wednesday reported a 5.8 per cent decline in consolidated profit to Rs 48.03 crore in the quarter ended September 30, 2025, on account of lower income. The company had posted a consolidated profit of Rs 51.03 crore in the year-ago period. Its consolidated income during the July-September period fell to Rs 846.13 crore against Rs 874.70 crore in the year-ago period. BEML serves core sectors like defence, rail and mining. It operates under three major verticals defence and aerospace, mining and construction and rail and metro.

Embassy REIT posts rise in NOI

New Delhi: Embassy Office Parks REIT, Wednesday reported a 15 per cent increase in its net operating income (NOI) to Rs 927 crore for the second quarter of this fiscal year. Its revenue from operations rose 13 per cent year-on-year to Rs 1,124 crore during the July-September quarter, according to a regulatory filing. The Board declared a distribution of Rs 617 crore, or Rs 6.51 per unit, to unit holders for the second quarter of this fiscal.

US SANCTION IMPACT

India to cut Russian oil imports

Agency

New Delhi, Nov 5: India is set to reduce its direct imports of Russian crude from late November, following new US sanctions on Rosneft and Lukoil, effective November 21.

Indian refiners accounting for more than half of the country's import of Russian crude oil, which is turned into fuels like petrol and diesel in refineries, are expected to comply with the latest sanctions on Moscow's two largest oil exporters, analysts said.

This, according to maritime intelligence firm Kpler, will trigger a sharp decline in Russian arrivals in December, with gradual recovery projected through early 2026 via intermediaries and alternative trading routes.

Top importer Reliance Industries Ltd, which has a long-term supply contract with Rosneft, will stop taking Russian oil. Two other state-controlled refiners have said they are stopping Russian oil imports. Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd and HPCL-Mittal Energy Ltd, a joint venture of



steel tycoon Lakshmi Mittal's Mittal Energy and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL), have announced plans to suspend future imports.

The three accounted for more than half of the 1.8 million barrels of Russian crude oil imported in the first half of 2025.

However, Nayara Energy's Vadinar refinery, partially owned by Rosneft and already under EU sanctions, is likely to maintain its Russian crude intake.

According to Sumit Ritolia, Lead Research Analyst (Refining & Modelling) at Kpler, Russia remained India's top crude supplier in October, followed

by Iraq and Saudi Arabia. Russian shipments to India reached 1.6-1.8 million barrels per day (mbd) before the sanctions, with declines observed post-October 21 as refiners avoided potential US OFAC exposure.

Analysts say Russian barrels are unlikely to disappear entirely, but future imports will rely on more complex logistics and trading arrangements.

To offset reduced Russian flows, Indian refiners are increasing procurement from the Middle East, Latin America, West Africa, Canada, and the United States. US crude imports hit 5,68,000 barrels per day (kbd) in October, the

highest since March 2021, driven by economics and arbitrage opportunities rather than sanctions. Flows are expected to normalise to 250-350 kbd in December and January.

In contrast, Nayara Energy's 400 kbd Vadinar refinery is unlikely to alter its current procurement pattern, as it is already almost entirely reliant on Russian crude.

"To offset reduced direct Russian inflows, Indian refiners are expected to increase procurement from the Middle East, Brazil, Latin America, West Africa, Canada, and the United States," he said.

"However, higher freight costs could limit the scale of substitution by eroding arbitrage opportunities."

Overall, refiners are likely to broaden their import baskets, with higher inflows from Latin America (Brazil, Argentina, Colombia, Guyana), the United States, West Africa, and the Middle East.

While near-term Russian imports may dip starting in December, Russian barrels will continue reaching India through intermediaries, he said.

BIZ BUZZ
MGM Minerals gives advanced ambulance to Rourkela Police

BHUBANESWAR: An advanced ambulance equipped with modern medical facilities was handed over to Rourkela



Police today by MGM Minerals Limited from its Patabeda Iron Mines located in Kolda block of Sundargarh district. The ambulance was presented to the police by Satyajit Panda, AGM (Mines) of MGM Minerals Limited, in a ceremony held at the premises of the Rourkela Reserve Police Office. The state-of-the-art ambulance will be used for the welfare and emergency needs of police personnel. Panda informed that the ambulance was provided to the Rourkela Police as part of MGM Minerals Limited's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative.



Jaibaba Automobiles, Luis Road, celebrated the ever highest festive sale of Royal Enfield bikes, in presence of RE state head Narendra Shaw(RBM), MR Talib Rasul (ASM), Madhav Lodha (DP), Harshit Lodha (DP) and the entire Jaibaba team.

UCO Bank hosts MSME & Agriculture carnival

BHUBANESWAR:

UCO Bank, Zonal Office Bhubaneswar, organised the Resources, MSME & Agriculture Carnival at the Guru Kelu charan Mohapatra Odissi Research Centre Auditorium, celebrating financial inclusion and enterprise development. The event brought together MSME and agriculture customers, Self-Help Group (SHG) members, and Bank Mitras. The occasion was graced by Goutam Patra, Chief General Manager (Business Development for Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh & Telangana) and Convenor, SLBC Odisha; and Prasenjit Roy, DGM, Agriculture & Rural Business Department, UCO Bank Head Office, Kolkata. Welcoming the dignitaries, Bhagwat Singh Bhakuni, Deputy General Manager and Zonal Head, Bhubaneswar, highlighted the zone's performance during the first half of the financial year. "SHGs can be developed into social enterprises, cooperatives, and brands of local products," he said, emphasizing the potential of grassroots entrepreneurship. Addressing the gathering, Goutam Patra reaffirmed the bank's commitment to inclusive growth. "UCO Bank is deeply invested in uplifting citizens, particularly women MSME entrepreneurs, by financing SHGs to enhance confidence, decision-making, and social standing," he noted. Prasenjit Roy underscored the critical role of public sector banks in nation-building. "Through credit facilitation, digital banking, and financial literacy, we empower businesses and farmers with timely credit and modern solutions. Innovation and adaptability will shape the future," he remarked. The carnival also showcased success stories from MSMEs and SHGs, while Ramachandra Dash, AGM & Resources Head, introduced special offerings for women customers, including UCO Aparajita, UCO Jayalaxmi, and UCO Sanchayika under the exclusive Pink Basket initiative.



10th edition of TechnoVIT begins

Agency

Chennai, Nov 5: The 10th annual edition of TechnoVIT, the flagship global technology festival of VIT Chennai, commenced, Friday, drawing participation from over 10,000 students across India and 10 foreign nations including Thailand, Poland, Australia, and Taiwan.

Racha Aribarg, Consul-General, Royal Thai Consulate-General, Chennai, inaugurated the three-day event as Chief Guest. Urging youth to harness technology for social good, he said, "The world over, there is a serious issue of digital divide – a gap of knowledge between young and the elderly. Spend time with elders, or they will be left behind, unable to use technology in their daily lives."

G V Selvam, Vice President, VIT, who presided over the event, highlighted India's growing self-reliance in education and innovation. "There's a per-

Chinese pipe imports surge two-fold in FY25


Agency

New Delhi, Nov 5: Imports of seamless pipes and tubes from China have increased by more than two-fold annually to 4.97 lakh metric tonnes in FY25, according to domestic manufacturers' body STMAI.

The country had imported 2.44 lakh metric tonnes of seamless pipes and tubes from China in the preceding financial year.

Imports in FY23 were 1.47 lakh tonnes as against the total shipment of 82,528 metric tonnes in the fiscal year 2021-22, the industry data showed.

Seamless Tube Manufacturers' Association of India (STMAI) President Shiv Kumar Singhal said that imports of Chinese pipes have increased nearly five-fold in the last fiscal year compared to that of FY22.

"Chinese pipe imports have increased exponentially over time...despite strong support from the Indian government through various safeguard measures aimed at protecting the domestic seamless pipe industry. These efforts have proven largely ineffective in curbing imports from China," Singhal explained.

Chinese players are dumping seamless pipes into Indian market, and evading taxes and duties through over-invoicing at Indian customs, the industry body said.

"Chinese importers are re-

portedly declaring inflated invoice values at the time of customs clearance, while subsequently selling the same products in the Indian market at significantly lower prices than those of domestic manufacturers. This practice undermines fair trade and puts Indian producers at a serious disadvantage," Singhal explained.

China is not only harming the Indian economy by flooding the market with cheap pipes, but also raising serious security concerns by supplying sub-standard materials to critical sectors such as thermal power, nuclear power and oil and gas.

"These practices suggest a strategic attempt to infiltrate and potentially compromise key components of India's future energy and infrastructure landscape. Such developments warrant urgent attention, as they may pose long-term risks to India's economic sovereignty and national security," he said.

The minimum import price of seamless pipes is Rs 85,000 per tonne and the market selling price of Chinese pipes in Indian markets in small quantities is 70,000 per tonne, resulting in under-utilisation of the indigenous capacity due to large scale dumping, he explained.

This has also resulted in loss of employment opportunities, Singhal said.



Racha Aribarg, Consul-General, Royal Thai Consulate-General, Chennai, and GV Selvam, Vice President, VIT, Prince Jayakumar D, Executive Vice President, HCLTech also present at the event.

ception that Indian education is theoretical, but TechnoVIT'25 proves otherwise. Our students are applying their knowledge to create solutions that benefit society," he said.

Guest of Honour, Prince Jayakumar D, Executive Vice President, HCLTech, spoke on emerging technologies, stating, "If India became the IT services capital in the past three

decades, in the next, it will be the innovation capital."

The fest features over 150 technical events and 40 workshops, with a total prize pool of Rs10 lakh. Highlights include Robo Race, Robo Sumo, Robo Tug of War, and Rotor Rush.

Senior officials including T Thyagarajan, K Sathiyarayanan, and P K Manoharan attended the inauguration.

Time for India to have a comprehensive gold policy: SBI study

Agency

New Delhi, Nov 5: As gold prices soar to new heights, a study, Wednesday made a case for a comprehensive policy for the yellow metal as India is one of the world's largest bullion markets, influenced by a cultural affinity for the shiny metal and investment demand.

Gold price has been reaching new heights driven by geo-political tensions, economic uncertainty, and a weakening US dollar, said the report titled 'Coming Of (A Turbulent) Age: The Great Global Gold Rush' by the State Bank of India's Economic Research Department.

The year-to-date price has increased by over 50 per cent in 2025. The price came down to below \$4,000 per ounce for a few days in October, but again moved above \$4,000/oz in November.

The report noted that the domestic supply of gold is only a fraction of the total gold supply in India, with imports contributing around 86 per cent of the total supply in 2024 as per the World Gold Council estimate.

India is one of the largest gold markets, influenced by cultural affinity for shiny metal, investment demand and other economic factors, including a hedge against inflation and a safe-haven asset, it noted.

"Cherished by households, cheered by investors, hoarded by central banks and fettered by speculators, the recent chequered journey of the shiny metal has been straight out of a story book, but also cautions as a fear gauge of the tempest waiting on the sidelines. Time for India to have a dedicated long-term gold policy that supports localisation," the report said.

SBI study said China has a



national policy on gold, which has a specific purpose. It has a comprehensive approach to reshaping how gold is traded, stored, valued, and used in international commerce. It represents a coordinated approach to addressing several economic and geopolitical priorities simultaneously.

On India's gold policy till

now, it said, "if one were to take an objective view of the policy discussions on gold since 1978, one finds that the major thrust has been to wean away the masses from physical gold. They were therefore only short-term in horizon".

"The time has now come to conceive a comprehensive policy on gold, and for such it

is important that one defines what gold is (commodity or money) and how gold is perceived by its ultimate consumer," the report said.

There is also a need to have greater debate on evolving a comprehensive policy on gold, say a gold-backed pension scheme, that will integrate with broader financial sector reforms and with currency convertibility on capital account, it added.

According to the report, policy tools as Sovereign Gold Bonds (SGBs) aimed to provide an alternative to holding physical gold and reduce its imports, have led to an increase in government debt. Capital loss alone for the outstanding SGB units accounts for Rs 93,284 crore.

Further, increased returns of gold as an asset class have led to huge inflows in gold ETFs. In FY25 (Apr-Sep), inflows in gold

ETF jumped 2.7 times, and in FY26, it increased 2.6 times. The net asset under management of Gold ETF increased to Rs 901.36 billion as on Sep'25, representing a 165 per cent rise year-on-year (yoy).

In terms of reserve change, RBI's gold reserves have increased by USD 25 billion in FY25 and USD 27 billion in FY26 so far till October 10, 2025, mainly due to valuation increase.

Mining of gold in India is limited, thereby increasing its reliance on imports. Gold mined during FY25 was 1,627 kg. The study said that the recent discoveries of new gold mines in various districts of Odisha, Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh and Kurnool district in Andhra Pradesh could help ease the pressure on imports and are positive for the country's current account balance.

PM meets victorious Women in Blue



Recalling their earlier meeting with Modi after the 2017 World Cup, captain Harmanpreet Kaur said the team had then come without a trophy, hopefully they will achieve success and get to meet him more often

Agency

New Delhi, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday met the triumphant Indian women's cricket team at his residence and lauded the players for their "remarkable resilience and comeback" in the World Cup after enduring a tough phase marked by three consecutive defeats.

The Prime Minister also referred to the trolling the players had faced on social media after the early setbacks and praised them for showing exemplary mental strength to bounce back and script history.

Recalling their earlier meeting with Modi after the 2017 World Cup, captain Harmanpreet Kaur said the team had then come without a trophy, hopefully they will achieve success and get to meet him more often.

Vice-captain Smriti Mandhana said the Prime Minister's

words were a huge source of motivation.

The Harmanpreet-led side arrived in the national capital Tuesday evening for the meeting, two days after scripting a defining moment for Indian women's cricket by winning its maiden global title — the 50-over World Cup — with a 52-run victory over South Africa in the final in Navi Mumbai.

During the interaction, Player of the Tournament Deepti Sharma told Modi she had been waiting to meet him since 2017, recalling how he had then urged them to keep working hard to achieve their dream.

When the Prime Minister mentioned her "Jai Shri Ram" Instagram bio and the tattoo of Lord Hanuman on her arm, Deepti smiled and said they gave her strength.

Harmanpreet asked Modi how he manages to stay in the present at all times. The Prime Minister replied that it had

Mandhana, Kaur get WC trophy inked

India's vice-captain Smriti Mandhana got a tattoo of the World Cup trophy on her forearm, with '2025' inked just below it, denoting the year of the team's historic victory. Team India defeated South Africa by 52 runs in the final of the ODI World Cup Sunday night to win their maiden ICC trophy and to be crowned the new World Champions. Smriti joined skipper Harmanpreet Kaur, as the Indian skipper also got a tattoo of the trophy on her arm. She also has '52' and '2025' inked around it, with the former denoting the margin of victory. She shared a picture of the same on her Instagram handle and captioned it, writing, "Forever etched in my skin and my heart. Waited for you since Day 1 and now I will see you every morning and be grateful."

become a part of his life and a habit over time.

He also recalled some memorable moments from the team's journey, including Harleen Deol's spectacular catch against England in 2021, about which he had posted on social media.

The Prime Minister fondly referred to Harmanpreet pocketing the ball after the World Cup final. She said she was lucky that the ball came to her.

In a lighter vein, Modi also spoke about Amanjot Kaur's juggling catch in the final. While catching, you must have been seeing the ball, but after catching it, you must have been seeing the trophy, he joked.

Kranti Gaud told the Prime Minister that her brother is a big fan of his, to which he extended an open invitation to

meet him.

Modi urged the players to promote the Fit India message, especially among girls across the country. He expressed concern over the growing problem of obesity and emphasised the importance of fitness and physical activity.

The players will now disperse to their respective hometowns. Shafali Verma, however, will head to Nagaland to lead the North Zone side in the upcoming Inter-Zonal T20 meet.

India's World Cup triumph marked a watershed moment for women's cricket in the country, bringing to fruition years of toil and near-misses, as Harmanpreet's side overcame formidable South Africa to become only the fourth team to lift the ODI title.

'Embracing Odisha's hockey heritage to empower talent'

Pascal Kina brings over two decades of experience to Vedanta Kalinga Lancers as Technical and Strategy coach in the new Hero Hockey India League season

Agency

You've coached across several continents with both men's and women's teams. How do you plan to bring that diverse international experience to the Vedanta Kalinga Lancers setup?

Well, like I said, I've coached a lot of teams — more men's teams, though I did work with a national women's team for six years. Over the years, I've learned that each environment teaches you new tactics, discipline, or team dynamics. I watched all the Kalinga Lancers' games last year, my son Antoine Kina was playing for them. I could clearly see a few areas where we can make real improvement but I wouldn't say it's easy. With the new players we've brought in, we now have the opportunity to address those areas and strengthen it. I'll bring all my experience and knowledge to the team.

The Kalinga Lancers have emphasised building a strong local identity rooted in Odisha's hockey culture. How do you plan to integrate local talent into your overall strategy?

That's something I'm very mindful of. When I was asked if I could arrive early, I immediately said yes. I think it's important to spend time with the Indian players and understand them better. I already know the Belgian and Australian boys quite well, but to build a real team dynamic, I need to connect with the local players too. I want every player, whether Indian or overseas, to feel equally important. Odisha has such a rich hockey culture, and I'm excited to learn from it and help the local talent thrive

within our setup.

Having recently guided Gantoise HC to significant success in Europe, what key lessons from club-level triumphs do you intend to apply in the Hero Hockey India League?

At club level, especially with Gantoise, the biggest lesson was about structure and discipline, both on and off the pitch. Creating a professional environment where every player knows their role and feels valued makes a massive difference. That's my aim here. It's not just about individual skill; it's about creating a strong system.

Working alongside Head Coach Jay Stacy, how do you envision the partnership shaping the team's tactical and technical direction this season?

I'm really looking forward to working with Jay. He's got tremendous experience, both as a player and as a coach, and importantly, he already knows the Indian hockey ecosystem well, having been involved in the league before. Our combination is a good mix, his experience, my experience, and our shared understanding of international hockey cultures. It helps in managing diverse playing styles and personalities. At the end of the day, we both know the importance of creating a cohesive

unit where Indian and foreign players gel seamlessly.

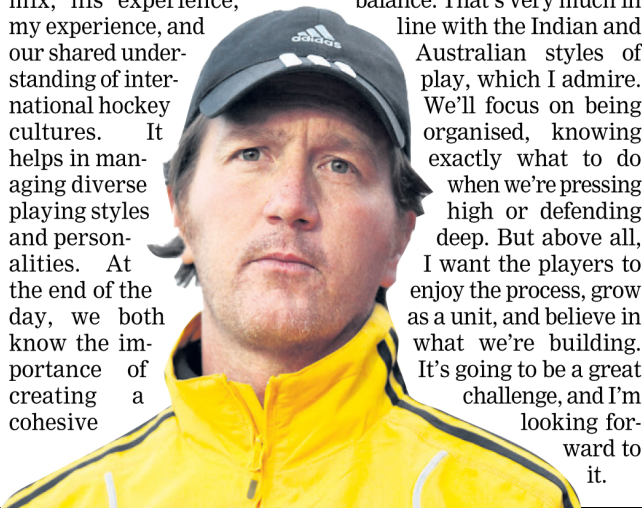
Talk us through the team composition for the new season.

I and Jay, we already have a few clear ideas. Players like Antoine and the Australian group give us great control in the midfield, while we have some exceptional Indian strikers who bring speed and creativity up front. It's a balanced squad, a blend of experience, flair, and potential. The best part is that this time, players will arrive well before the tournament begins, giving us enough time to use that period to assess player combinations through training matches and tactical drills, adjusting our plans based on our opponents. Flexibility will be the key.

As someone who has worked with both emerging and elite teams, what excites you most about this new coaching chapter in India's premier hockey league?

This is my first time coaching in India, and I'm genuinely excited. The energy around hockey here is incredible, and the league provides a fantastic platform to work with both top-level international stars and talented young Indian players. My coaching philosophy is simple, hockey should be vertical, fast, and attacking, but with structure and balance. That's very much in

line with the Indian and Australian styles of play, which I admire. We'll focus on being organised, knowing exactly what to do when we're pressing high or defending deep. But above all, I want the players to enjoy the process, grow as a unit, and believe in what we're building. It's going to be a great challenge, and I'm looking forward to it.



SHORT TAKES

Chhetri dropped

New Delhi: Indian football team head coach Khalid Jamil announced 23 probables for the Asian Cup qualifiers match against Bangladesh with talismanic striker Sunil Chhetri's name missing. The game is scheduled to be held in Dhaka November 18. India are already out of contention for a berth in the main tournament to be held in Saudi Arabia in 2027 after losing their previous match against Singapore (1-2) in Margao last month. It is not known if Chhetri's name will be included later and his exclusion is not a surprise since he had come out of retirement to help India qualify for Asian Cup.

Haria, Gupta lose

Doha: India's Dhvaja Haria and Paras Gupta, who were one win away from making the final stage, suffered narrow defeats in the first stage of the IBSF World Snooker Championships here. Impressive in his two previous wins, Haria called the shots for the better part of the last-16 meeting against Thor Chuan Leong Tuesday night. However, the 32-year-old frittered away a 3-1 advantage and lost 3-4 to the Malaysian.

Bayern, Liverpool win

London: Bayern Munich and Liverpool won the blockbuster matchups in the Champions League. Micky van de Ven from Tottenham might have already scored the competition's goal of the season. With a 2-1 win at defending champion Paris Saint-Germain, Bayern made it 16 straight victories in all competitions. Real Madrid came unstuck at Anfield for the second straight season, losing 1-0 to Liverpool.

Virat Kohli turns 37

New Delhi: India batting stalwart Virat Kohli turned 37 Wednesday, and his India teammates extended heartfelt wishes to celebrate the special day of one of the most iconic cricketers of the modern era. Kohli, who announced his retirement from Tests and T20Is to concentrate on the 50-over format, has won nearly every ICC tournament, except the World Test Championship.

Time for Gill to up the ante

INDIA LOOK FAVOURITES VS AUSTRALIA

The series is locked at 1-1 after three games

Agency

Carrara (Gold Coast), Shubman Gill will be looking to turn the tables with a big knock after what has been an underwhelming tour when a confident India aim to go one up against a depleted Australia in the fourth T20 International here Thursday.

The series is locked at 1-1 after three games and the absence of Josh Hazlewood in the previous game did make a difference to Australia's defence of a standard total of 186.

Going into the fourth game, there won't be any Travis Head for Australia as the opener is set to play Sheffield Shield to prepare for the Ashes.

With two pillars of the rival



team unavailable, this is the best chance for India to go 2-1 up before the final game at the Gabba and wrap up a series win.

In the last game, India finally did look to get their combination right within their ambit of having an all-rounder at No 8.

However, what will slightly

bother the Indian team management is skipper Shubman Gill's form in the series as he has now played six games without a half-century.

The sequence of scores since the start of the ODI series reads 10, 9, 24, 37 not out, 5, and 15. The only time he looked in good nick was at Canberra when he stitched a nice little stand with skipper Suryakumar Yadav.

Gill has been troubled by fuller deliveries with a hint of movement and throughout the better part, he hasn't exactly looked in the regal touch which has made him the player that he is.

At the other end, Abhishek Sharma has done his reputation no harm as the world's No 1 T20 batter with a fine half-century and two quick starts in the series. However Gill, who will have to switch on to the red ball mode in a week's time, will certainly get a lot of confidence if he gets some runs irrespective of the format he is playing.

Diptayan sees biggest win of career, ousts Nepomniachtchi

Agency

Panjim, Grandmaster Diptayan Ghosh caused the biggest upset of the World Chess Cup by ousting former world championship challenger Ian Nepomniachtchi of Russia with a win in the second game of the second round here Wednesday.

In what was simply a one sided affair, Ghosh did not give any chance to Nepomniachtchi who was rather erratic with his white pieces. The opening gave Ghosh an unclear position early and Nepomniachtchi missed a simple tactic early in the middle game which cost him a pawn.

"This is certainly the biggest victory of my chess career, beating Nepo in a match," said Ghosh after his win. Earlier, Grandmaster P Harikrishna became the first Indian to advance to the third round, crushing Russian Arseniy Nesterov.

INDIA VS SOUTH AFRICA TEST

Shami ignored again; fit-again Pant returns

Agency

New Delhi, Star wicketkeeper-batter Rishabh Pant Wednesday made a much-anticipated return to India's Test squad for the upcoming two-match home series against South Africa but the selectors chose to ignore pacer Mohammed Shami yet again, putting a question mark over the senior pacer's career.

Pant expectedly made a comeback to international cricket after recovering from a foot fracture, sustained during the fourth Test against England in Manchester in July. He was forced out of the following series against the West Indies.

The 26-year-old impact batter recently captained India A to win over South Africa A in a four-day game in Bangalore, scoring 90 in the second innings in a chase of 275.

He replaced N Jagadeesan in the 15-man squad and will be deputy to Shubman Gill.

Is Shami's India career over? However Shami, who did quite well in three recent Ranji Trophy matches for Bengal, yet again did not find a place in Test squad.

The 35-year-old premier pacer, who once made a lethal combination with Jasprit Bumrah, guided Bengal to successive wins over Uttarakhand and Gujarat with his skill set. He bowled 93 overs, across three matches, albeit in short spells and accounted for 15-plus scalps.

However, it seems that the selectors are unsure if Shami's body can withstand the vigours of Test cricket that requires long bowling spells.

Since India are not playing Test cricket for at least six months after the South Africa series, it seems that the Indian team door has been shut on Shami, who has 462 wickets to his name across formats. He last played a Test match in 2023 and competed in ODIs and T20Is this year.

India's pace attack features Bumrah and Siraj, while the spin department will once again rely on veteran Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav and all-rounder Washington Sundar.

The first Test will be played in Kolkata from November 14, followed by the second in Guwahati from November 22.



A WIN, A NEW HOME, TEARS

Djoko marks Greece's comeback with triumph

The first top-tier tournament held in Greece in over three decades

Agency

Athens, Novak Djokovic battled through a tough opening set before pulling away to defeat Chile's Alejandro Tabilo 7-6 (3), 6-1 at the Hellenic Championship, the first top-tier tournament held in Greece in more than 30 years.

Both players held their serve under pressure in the first set until Djokovic edged out the tiebreaker. The momentum shifted in the second set, where the top seed broke Tabilo twice



and completed the match in just over 90 minutes.

Djokovic's win secured him a spot in the quarterfinals at the ATP 250 event, as elite-level tennis returned to Greece for the first time since 1994. Telekom Center crowd in Athens offered constant support for

the 38-year-old Serb, who moved with his family to Athens earlier this year.

Djokovic had lost his past two encounters with the 28-year-old Tabilo and told the crowd: "I'm thrilled to get through tonight. I played against Tabilo and I've never won against him, so I was

It feels really like home playing in Athens. More than recognition for my tennis achievements, I felt that people here approached me in a friendly and humane way, and that touched my heart

NOVAK DJOKOVIC

more under tension before the match than I would be before some others."

Djokovic was brought to tears while watching a tribute video for Croatian tennis great Nikola Pilic, who died earlier this year. Djokovic had trained at Pilic's academy as a teenager. "He was more than just a mentor and a coach to me," Djokovic told the crowd. "He was part of my family — to me and my brothers."