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BENGALURU I CHENNAI I HYDERABAD I VIJAYAWADA I KOCHI

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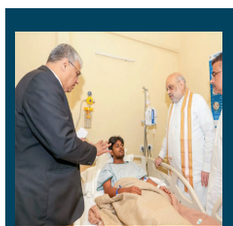
OM NAMO VENKATESAYA

17-10-2026



Total pilgrims : 83,806
Tonsures : 34,449
Hundi kanukalu : 3.17 CR
Laddu sale... 4.73Lac
Annaprasadam.. 2.41Lac
Ashwini hospital..8,353
Present Situation on 18-10-2026: Waiting Compartments..Outside line at Krishna teja guest house.

Approx. Darsan Time for Sarvadarshanam (with out SSD Tokens)...12 H.rs



Nation News

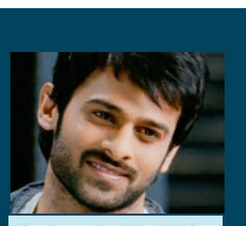
Amit Shah visits injured victims of Kolkata Durga Puja stampede

FRANCE ROCKED BY VIOLENT PROTESTS, 1,800 ARRESTED



World News

PRABHAS' SPIRIT LOCKS DIWALI 2027 RELEASE



CINEMA PAGE

SCAN FOR E-PAPER

INBRIEF

US BACKS $80 MILLION DRUG SUPPLY PROJECT

Washington, Oct 18 : The US Department of War announced an $80 million conditional loan commitment to biotechnology company Antheia to expand domestic production of essential pharmaceutical ingredients, as the Trump administration seeks to reduce American dependence on overseas suppliers of critical medicines. The financing, offered through the department's Office of Strategic Capital (OSC), is intended to help the company establish manufacturing operations in the United States for key starting materials and active pharmaceutical ingredients used in generic medicines.

TOP-10 FIRMS ADD RS 3.65 LAC CRORE IN MARKET VALUE

Mumbai, Oct 18 : The combined market capitalisation of nine of India's 10 most-valued companies surged by Rs 3.65 lakh crore last week, with Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Bharti Airtel and Infosys emerging as the biggest gainers as benchmark equity indices rallied sharply. The upbeat sentiment on Dalal Street came as the Sensex climbed 2,256.94 points, or 3.11 per cent, during the week, while the Nifty advanced 625.7 points, or 2.77 per cent.

Among the top-10 valued firms, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) emerged as the biggest wealth creator. The company's market capitalisation jumped by Rs 1,08,542.63 crore to Rs 8,91,134.96 crore. Telecom major Bharti Airtel followed closely, with its valuation rising by Rs 61,406.53 crore to Rs 11,88,815.45 crore. Infosys also posted a strong gain, adding Rs 55,893.05 crore and taking its market value to Rs 4,71,409.41 crore.

CJP alleges delay in release of Das, Ranka; 4 sureties rejected

Das and Ranka were sent to five days of judicial custody on October 14 after they entered Jantar Mantar, which had been denotified as a designated protest site



New Delhi: The bail hearing of Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) leaders Saurav Das and Ashutosh Ranka was "delayed" on Sunday, October 18, as the Special Executive Magistrate (SEM) did not arrive at the scheduled time, activist Ratna Singh said, alleging that four sureties had been rejected on "vague" grounds. Das and Ranka were sent to five days of judicial custody on October 14 after they entered Jantar Mantar, which had been denotified as a designated protest site, by scaling its locked gates. The CJP leaders maintained that they had unfurled the national flag and raised slogans. In a post on X, Singh said she had been at the police station since 11 am, while the hearing was scheduled for noon. She said the Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP/SEM) had not arrived at the Mandir Marg police station by 4.42 pm.

"This is really concerning. They have rejected 4 sureties till now on vague reasons. They have made people who have FIRs against them for being part of protest as people having criminal antecedents (sic)," Singh alleged. In another post, Singh said, "Unfurling the Indian National Flag is not a crime, and the boys should not remain in custody due to procedural delays." Questioning the functioning of the SEM courts in the national capital, Singh said higher courts had asked authorities to follow the hierarchy and alleged an "absolute misuse of power". On Saturday, the CJP said in a post on X that it had consulted senior advocate Kapil Sibal and warned of legal action if Das and Ranka were not released by Sunday.

"If Ashu and Saurav are not released by tomorrow, we will pursue legal action against all those who deliberately ensured that they continue to be in illegal custody, especially when they have not committed nor charged with any offence," the outfit had said.

Bathukamma celebrations

TELANGANA GOVT CELEBRATES SADDULA BATHUKAMMA GRANDLY AT TANK BUND



Hyderabad: The Telangana government organised grand celebrations of Saddula Bathukamma, the concluding day of the nine-day floral festival, at Tank Bund in Hyderabad on Sunday. Around 1,000 Bathukammas were taken in a procession from the Martyrs' Memorial to Tank Bund, where women participated in traditional dances and festivities, celebrating Telangana's rich cultural heritage.Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla and his wife Janaki, Ministers Jupally Krishna Rao and Seethakka, film actors Vijay Deverakonda and Rashmika Mandanna, and several other dignitaries attended the celebrations.Around 700 folk artists showcased traditional art forms, including Perini, Gussadi, Oggu Dolu and Dappu, adding colour and cultural vibrancy to the event.

T'gana Guv, CM greet women on Bathukamma

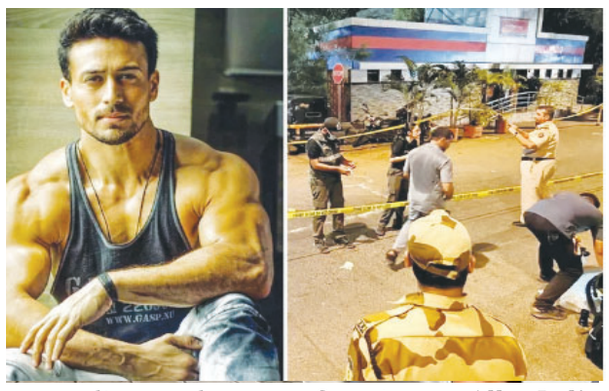
Hyderabad, Oct 18 : Telangana Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla and Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy greeted women of Telangana on the occasion of Saddula Bathukamma on



Sunday. Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla extended his greetings to the people on the occasion of Saddula Bathukamma, terming it a symbol of the grandeur of Telangana's culture and traditions, the worship of nature, and the women's self-respect.

Tiger Shroff attacked with gunshots, escapes unharmed, driver injured

MUMBAI ■ (TSIT)



Bollywood actor Tiger Shroff had a narrow escaped on Sunday after three motorcycle-borne men opened fire at his car in the Juhu area of Mumbai. According to the police, while Tiger did not suffer any injury in the attack, the driver of the 'Baaghi' actor was injured in the incident. Details about the severity of the injury have not been revealed till now.

Within hours of the incident, the Lawrence Bishnoi gang shared a post on social media, taking responsibility for the attack. The Mumbai Police have informed that they have formed 15 special teams to investigate the firing incident. Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis also called the Mumbai Police Commissioner to inquire about the incident.

The CM has directed the Police Commissioner to immediately investigate the matter and take strict action against those responsible. National Secretary, All India Congress Committee, Sachin M. Sawant expressed his concern through a tweet that read, "The news of a shooting at actor Tiger Shroff's car is utterly shocking.

> According to the police, while Tiger did not suffer any injury in the attack, the driver of the 'Baaghi' actor was injured in the incident. Details about the severity of the injury have not been revealed till now.

What's exactly going on in Mumbai? The murder of Baba Siddique, a shooting at Salman Khan's house, threats to numerous actors and producers... Law and order in Mumbai has gone completely haywire. It's not just a lack of law and order; it's as if utter chaos has taken hold. The Chief Minister has proven to be a total failure!" MP and President of the Mumbai Regional Congress Committee, Prof. Varsha Eknath Gaikwad also shared that "Mumbai's law and order in shambles!" She further asked the authorities to take necessary action to ensure the safety of Mumbaikars.

"First, a shootout outside Salman Khan's house, then the murder of Baba Siddiqui, and now news of a shooting targeting actor Tiger Shroff! In Mumbai, the country's financial capital, if such incidents keep happening one after another, then whose responsibility is it exactly to ensure the safety of Mumbaikars? Reports indicate that another person was injured in the shooting on Tiger Shroff. The reason behind the shooting is still unclear, and the police are searching for the culprits. Do criminals still fear the law?," she shared. -

Govt caps trade margins on 137 anti-cancer drugs at 30 pc of MRP

NEW DELHI ■ (TSIT)



The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) has capped trade margins on 137 non-scheduled anti-cancer drugs at 30 per cent of the maximum retail price (MRP), a move expected to reduce prices of several cancer medicines by up to 70 per cent and improve affordability for patients, according to an official statement.

The intervention -- carried out under the Department of Pharmaceuticals in the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers -- is part of the regulator's Trade Margin Rationalisation (TMR) exercise aimed at curbing excessive margins across the distribution chain.

All manufacturers will be required to inform NPPA of their revised prices within 7 days of publication of the Gazette notification.The revised prices will become effective from November 9, 2026. Manufacturers will be required to display the price lists on their website and widely disseminate to all retailers and hospitals.

All the retailers and hospitals will charge reduced prices effective November 9, 2026 and display the revised prices in their pharmacies. Hospitals shall also prominently display revised prices on their websites.

Consumers can use the Pharma Sahi Daam app and NPPA website to check revised prices of drugs. By making anti-cancer drugs more affordable and accessible, this initiative will help ease the financial burden on patients and their families and support the broader public-health objective of equitable access to cancer treatment.

The statement said that 137 identified non-scheduled anti-cancer drugs include Immunotherapy drugs used for treating over 20 type of cancers, Denosumab used by breast and prostate cancer patients, Pegfilgrastim which is used to prevent neutropenia in cancer patients and Bevacizumab, which is the approved drug to treat colon, ovary and cervical cancer.With this notification, MRP of widely used anti-cancer drugs such as Pembrolizumab, Durvalumab and Osimertinib is expected become more accessible for cancer patients.

Jagan demands deployment of Central forces for local body polls in Andhra

VIJAYAWADA ■ (TSIT)



> Jagan alleged that the entire system, from the SEC to the police under the direction of CM Naidu were obstructing the process of nominations as he was " scared of defeat"

Former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister and YSR Congress Party president Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on Sunday demanded deployment of Central forces in the state to ensure free and fair local body elections. Accusing the ruling coalition of unleashing a reign of terror to stop YSRCP candidates from filing nominations, he urged the State Election Commission (SEC) to intervene and provide security to candidates coming to nomination centres to file their papers.

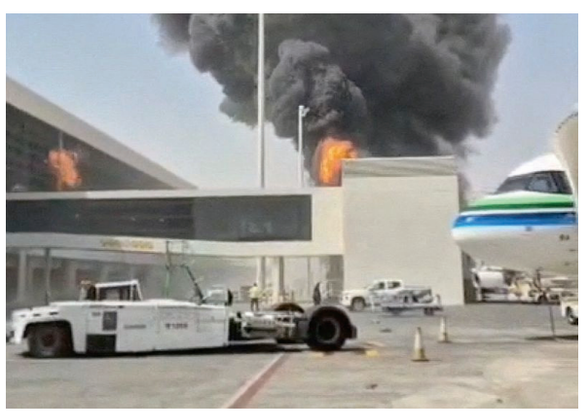
He alleged that the entire system, from the SEC to the police under the direction of Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu were obstructing the process of nominations as he was "scared of defeat". Jagan Mohan Reddy, who earlier called on State Election Commissioner Anil Chandra Punetha, told him that if candidates are not allowed to file their nominations, the reputation of the Commission and its officials would be at stake.

"If the SEC becomes a party to such undemocratic practices by allowing nominations to be obstructed, it would be an unprecedented incident in history.

We urged the SEC not to be part of such practices," he said. He requested the SEC to ensure that every candidate who wishes to file a nomination is allowed to do so through an online system or at a centralised location at the SEC office in Amaravati.

India issues fresh advisory, asks its nationals in Saudi Arabia to take 'due precautions'

DUBAI ■ (TSIT)



India on Sunday issued a fresh advisory for its nationals in Saudi Arabia, asking them to take "due precautions" amid heightened security concerns following strikes by Iran-backed Houthi rebels.

The Indian Embassy in Riyadh advised the Indian Community "to take due precautions under the prevailing situation," in a social media post on Sunday."In case of an aerial attack, immediately proceed to the nearest safe place (inside a building or an interior room away from windows), and refrain from filming, publishing, or sharing any information, photos, or videos related to the ongoing events," the Indian mission said.

The fresh advisory came amid heightened security concerns following drone and missile attacks by Yemen's Houthi rebels on Saudi Arabia, including a deadly strike on Riyadh's King Khalid International Airport on October 10.The attack killed an Indian national and injured several others, prompting the Indian Embassy to reiterate its safety advisory.The Indian mission informed that its officials continue to visit hospitals where injured Indian nationals are receiving medical treatment, and are in constant touch with their families and providing necessary assistance. It said Riyadh's international airport remained closed to flight operations.

KOLKATA STAMPEDE:

7 arrested, including Chorbagan Sarbojanin Puja Committee top officials



Kolkata, Oct 18 : Kolkata Police, on Sunday, informed that seven people have been arrested in connection with the tragic stampede at the community Durga Puja Pandal in North Kolkata that claimed 19 lives.

"A total of 14 persons were detained since Saturday night for investigation. Of them, seven have been arrested following their interrogation," said a city police officer.

According to a statement issued by the city police on Sunday morning, the seven arrested persons include Raj Kumar Sewda (48), the secretary of the Chorbagan Sarbojanin Puja Committee, and Santanu Dubey (55), the vice-president of the said committee.

Three persons involved in the crowd-control process at the Puja pandal on Saturday, namely Biplab Mukherjee (48), Pintu Dey (51) and Koushik Saha (53), have also been arrested, the city police statement said. Saha was also involved in checking the VIP passes at the entry gates.

Two persons who were in charge of the private security arrangements at the Puja pandal, namely Suman Chakraborty (30) and Rajesh Pal (29), have also been arrested, as per the city police statement. The police have already started a detailed investigation into the matter by registering a suo motu case. The accused have been slapped with charges of culpable homicide under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) 2023.

Meanwhile, autopsies of the bodies of the 19 people killed in the tragic stampede that started on Sunday morning have begun at the Kolkata Police Morgue in the city. Forensic science experts will arrive at the scene later in the day and will collect samples.

Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari said that a fact-finding committee has been formed to investigate the matter. He said earlier, "CCTV footage has been collected. Action will be taken after examining the CCTV footage. I will go to the hospital to see the injured this morning. The Union Amit Shah, who had cancelled all his puja-related schedules for the day in the city, will also go to the hospital," the Chief Minister said.

The Chief Minister also said that the administration will have to rethink the idea of "theme puja" in the future, considering that these pujas attract enormous footfall. "People's lives come first, not themes. Experience is gained from each incident. We will use the experience we have gained from here in the future," the Chief Minister said.

Amit Shah visits injured victims of Kolkata Durga Puja stampede



Kolkata, Oct 18: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday visited a private hospital in Kolkata and met some of the people injured in the stampede at a community Durga Puja pandal that claimed 19 lives.

Shah enquired about the medical condition of the injured admitted to the hospital and interacted with some of them whose health permitted them to meet him. A total of 14 people were admitted to the private hospital following the incident.

He was accompanied by West Bengal Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari and BJP state president and Rajya Sabha member Samik Bhattacharya.

Shah arrived in Kolkata on Saturday night and had several Durga Puja-related programmes scheduled for Sunday, including a visit to Belur Math, the international headquarters of the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission founded by Swami Vivekananda, in the neighbouring Howrah district. However, following the stampede tragedy, the Union Home Minister cancelled all his scheduled programmes. On Sunday morning, he first visited the iconic Goddess Kali temple at Kalighat in south Kolkata and offered prayers before proceeding to the hospital with Adhikari and Bhattacharya. He is scheduled to return to New Delhi later in the day. Shah also shared a post on social media about his hospital visit.

"I visited the hospital and met with the devotees injured in the accident at the Chorbagan Public Durga Puja pandal in Kolkata and inquired about their well-being. In this difficult time, the West Bengal government stands firmly with every injured person and affected family.

I pray to Mother Durga that all the injured recover swiftly," the Union Home Minister said. Meanwhile, state Health Minister Dr Saradwat Mukherjee said the condition of most of the injured admitted to the private hospital was stable and they were out of danger, although one person's condition remained relatively serious. "Even the person whose condition is a bit serious, I will not use the word 'crisis' for him. I am hopeful that the death toll will not increase further. I am personally monitoring the treatment arrangements of the injured people," Mukherjee said. The minister, himself an acclaimed medical practitioner, said he was closely monitoring the treatment arrangements for the injured.



GLIMPSE OF THE DURGA PUJA FESTIVAL AT ARAMBAGH DURGA PUJA, IN R. K. ASHRAM, IN NEW DELHI.

Four workers killed as chimney collapses at Bengal factory

Kolkata, Oct 18: At least four workers died and another was seriously injured after a chimney under construction collapsed at a private sponge iron factory in Jamuria in West Bengal's West Burdwan district, police said on Sunday.



An investigation has been launched to determine the cause of the collapse and whether prescribed safety norms were followed during the construction work.

The incident triggered anger among a section of residents and workers on the factory premises. According to local sources, protesters also clashed with police personnel, who were trying to bring the situation under control. According to local sources, a chimney was being constructed at Unit 3 of the Shyamsel factory in Jamuria on Saturday night when the structure suddenly collapsed while some workers were engaged in the work. The workers were buried under the rubble, prompting other factory employees to rush to the spot and initiate rescue efforts. Police, fire brigade personnel and rescue teams from the state disaster management force subsequently reached the site and joined the operation.

After a prolonged rescue operation, five workers were pulled out from beneath the debris and rushed to hospital. Doctors declared four of them dead, while the fifth worker, who sustained serious injuries, was admitted to a private hospital in Durgapur for treatment.Two of the deceased have been identified as Sukanta Pal and Balaram Mandal, both residents of Jamuria, according to local sources. Their colleagues said the third deceased worker was a native of Assam. The identity of the fourth victim is yet to be established.

Following the incident, family members of the deceased and injured workers, along with a large number of local residents, gathered outside the factory. The accident has raised questions about the safety arrangements at the factory. Demands have been made for an investigation into whether adequate safety measures were in place to protect workers and whether the chimney was being constructed in accordance with prescribed technical standards. The exact cause of the collapse, however, remains unclear.

Jamuria MLA Bijan Mukherjee and Asansol-Durgapur Police Commissioner Pranab Kumar reached the spot on Saturday night after receiving information about the accident. Mukherjee said an investigation was underway to ascertain the cause of the collapse. He added that authorities would also examine whether any negligence in the safety arrangements had contributed to the accident during the construction work. The MLA said discussions would be held with the factory management regarding financial compensation for the families of the deceased workers and proper medical treatment for the injured worker.

Omar Abdullah seeks strict action over attack on Srinagar-bound bus in Haryana

Srinagar, Oct 18: Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Omar Abdullah has termed the reported attack on a Srinagar-bound passenger bus in Haryana "unfortunate" and urged the Haryana government to take strict action against those responsible. The Chief Minister's Office (CMO), in a post on X, said the incident involving a Jammu and Kashmir-bound bus had been taken up with the Haryana government, expressing concern over the safety and well-being of the passengers.



"The Haryana administration has assured prompt and stringent action in accordance with the law. The J&K Government stands with the affected passengers and is closely monitoring the situation," the CMO said. Abdullah also shared a video clip of the incident on his X handle and called for swift action against the culprits.

"This unfortunate incident should never have taken place. I hope the Haryana government lead by @NayabSainiBJPji & @police_haryana catch the culprits & take action to ensure these things don't happen again," he wrote.

Senior religious leader and Kashmir's chief cleric Mirwaiz Umar Farooq also expressed serious concern over the incident, in which an elderly passenger was reportedly injured.

In a post on X, Mirwaiz said, "Disturbed to learn about the attack on a Kashmir bound bus in Haryana, leaving an elderly passenger injured and others traumatised. Reports of threats against J&K-registered vehicles are causing concern among people."

He urged the authorities to ensure the safety of Kashmiri travellers and take swift and strict legal action against those responsible.

According to reports, a Delhi-Srinagar passenger bus operated by Star World Ventures was attacked with stones and bricks near Kurukshetra in Haryana on the night of October 17-18. The incident left an elderly Kashmiri passenger injured and caused damage to the vehicle.

The attack reportedly occurred around 10.45 pm on Saturday near Divine Star Dhaba in the Kurukshetra-Karnal region along the route.

The Jammu and Kashmir-registered sleeper bus, carrying around 40 passengers from Delhi to Srinagar, was allegedly targeted after a group of men arrived in a car during a stop and abused and assaulted the driver.

The attackers reportedly returned later on motorcycles and pelted the bus with stones and bricks, shattering its window-panes and injuring an elderly passenger.

According to reports, the group returned a third time and allegedly threatened that Jammu and Kashmir-registered vehicles would not be allowed to operate in Haryana.

A brief confrontation followed the incident, during which police temporarily detained some passengers before releasing them. The incident has raised concerns over the safety of Kashmiri passengers travelling through Haryana, with political and religious leaders calling for accountability and measures to prevent similar attacks.

Rajnath Singh to represent India at SCO meeting

New Delhi, Oct 18: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will represent India at the 25th meeting of the Council of Heads of Government (CHG) of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), scheduled to be held in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, on October 19 and 20, the government said on Sunday.



The meeting will focus on strengthening multilateral cooperation among SCO member states, particularly in trade, economy, investment, connectivity, innovation and cultural and humanitarian exchanges, the Defence Ministry said in a statement.India remains actively engaged in various SCO mechanisms and continues to contribute to regional cooperation through initiatives in areas such as startups and innovation, digital public infrastructure and people-to-people exchanges, it said.

The meeting is also expected to review progress in ongoing cooperation initiatives and consider decisions related to the organisation's financial and institutional functioning.The forum will provide an opportunity for India to exchange views with other SCO member states on advancing practical and mutually beneficial cooperation, the ministry added. The previous meeting of the Council of Heads of Government was held in Moscow on November 18 last year, when External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar represented India. The SCO is a major regional organisation focused on economic and security cooperation. It was founded in Shanghai in 2001 by China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

India and Pakistan became permanent members in 2017. Iran and Belarus are among the organisation's other members. In April, Singh attended the SCO defence ministers' meeting in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

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Demand for coastal High Court Bench in Udupi gains momentum at Brahmavar meeting



Brahmavar, Oct 17: A demand for the establishment of a High Court bench for the coastal region in Udupi gained momentum at a demand meeting organised by the Brahmavar Taluk High Court Bench Struggle Committee and the Advocates' Association, following a call by the Udupi District High Court Bench Struggle Committee.

Representatives of various organisations from Brahmavar taluk participated in the meeting and stressed the need to establish the proposed bench at the earliest. They expressed the view that Udupi, being centrally located in the coastal region, would be an ideal location for the bench, benefiting people from all three coastal districts as well as neighbouring regions, including Shivamogga and Chikkamagaluru.

Introducing the meeting, advocate Prem Prasad Shetty, district convener of the High Court Bench Struggle Committee, said the time was right to fulfil the long-standing demand for a separate High Court bench for the coastal region. He referred to the reports of the Justice Jaswant Singh Commission, NITI Aayog and the Law Commission of India, stating that their recommendations on judicial reforms supported the need to improve access to justice.

Mangaluru Junction added to Dasara special train route after passenger outcry



Mangaluru, Oct 17: The South Western Railway has revised the schedule of the Dasara special train operating between Yesvantpur, Madgaon and Bengaluru Cantonment on October 16, adding a halt at Mangaluru Junction following strong protests from passengers.

The earlier schedule of special train No. 06591 included stops at Subrahmanya Road, Kabakaputtur, Bantwal, Surathkal, Mulki, Udupi, Kundapura, Byndoor, Bhatkal, Murdeshwar, Honnavar, Kumta, Gokarna Road, Ankola, Karwar and Canacona before reaching Madgaon. However, both Mangaluru Junction and Mangaluru Central, two important stations for passengers from the coastal city, were omitted from the original schedule. The omission triggered widespread criticism from railway passengers in the Mangaluru region. MP Captain Brijesh Chowta also took up the issue with railway officials, following which the revised schedule was issued. Under the revised timetable, the train will halt at Mangaluru Junction for 30 minutes for watering and locomotive reversal.

Congress leaders protest Kumaraswamy's remarks, seek apology



Bengaluru: KPCC General Secretary S. Manohar and other Congress leaders staged a protest in Bengaluru, condemning Union Minister H. D. Kumaraswamy's alleged derogatory remarks against Congress leaders and demanding a public apology.

The Congress leaders accused Kumaraswamy of indulging in opportunistic politics and said his remarks against senior Congress leaders were unbecoming of a Union Minister and a Member of Parliament.

Manohar said Kumaraswamy had no moral authority to criticise Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and should reflect on his own political conduct before targeting Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar and Minister Priyank Kharge.

The protesters alleged that Kumaraswamy's political decisions were driven by considerations of power and personal interests rather than public service. They said leaders holding public office should exercise restraint in their statements and uphold the dignity of democratic institutions.

The Congress leaders also referred to the controversy surrounding an alleged sting operation, questioning Kumaraswamy's political conduct and public credibility.

They demanded that the Union Minister apologise to Congress leaders in Karnataka for his remarks, stating that political differences should not lead to personal attacks or the use of derogatory language.

The leaders warned that criticism of political opponents must remain within the bounds of democratic decency and called on Kumaraswamy to maintain greater responsibility in his public statements.

KPCC General Secretary S. Manohar was joined by Congress leaders A. Anand, G. Prakash, Puttaraju, Lakshminarayana, Murali and Kishore, among others, at the protest.

KASSIA Urges Karnataka Government to Simplify Environmental Compliance and Strengthen Support for MSMEs



Bengaluru: The Karnataka Small Scale Industries Association (KASSIA) has urged the Government of Karnataka to introduce practical, transparent and MSME-friendly environmental compliance measures while maintaining the State's commitment to environmental protection and sustainable industrial development. In a memorandum addressed to Ramalinga Reddy, Minister for Forest, Ecology and Environment, KASSIA President Ninganna S. Biradar has submitted a series of recommendations aimed at addressing the regulatory, financial and operational challenges faced by Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

KASSIA has constituted an Environment and Ecology Panel comprising environmental engineers, technical experts and experienced industrialists to examine compliance-related challenges and formulate recommendations that support environmental sustainability alongside industrial growth.

Key Recommendations

Simplification of Environmental Clearances: KASSIA has requested the State Government to implement applicable Central Government reforms to simplify environmental compliance, reduce repetitive documentation and provide greater clarity and continuity in Consent to Operate (CTO) requirements, subject to applicable conditions.

Common Effluent Treatment Plants (CETPs):

Highlighting the challenges faced by industries in clusters such as Peenya and Doddaballapur, KASSIA has urged the Government to expedite the development of common effluent treatment infrastructure. It has specifically requested reconsideration of the proposed CETP at Peenya Urban Eco Park and a review of the earlier Rs.10 crore allocation reportedly withdrawn from the project. The association has also recommended a sustainable pay-and-use model and independent third-party performance audits.

Rationalisation of Consent Fees:

KASSIA has sought a more scientific and equitable method of calculating consent fees, taking into account the actual pollution potential and operational characteristics of industrial units rather than relying excessively on land, building and rental values. It has also recommended concessional fee structures for nano, micro and small enterprises.

Instalment-Based Payments and Financial Assistance:

Recognising the financial constraints faced by smaller industrial units, KASSIA has recommended reduced consent fees for eligible enterprises, structured instalment payment options and the examination of financial assistance for necessary environmental compliance investments.

Simplified Approval and Transfer Procedures:

The association has proposed an integrated approval system, including simplified procedures for eligible cases involving changes in ownership or relocation within the same industrial area, wherever legally permissible. It has also sought clearly defined timelines and accountability for processing

Karnataka will see coalition rule after 2028 elections, says H.D. Kumaraswamy



Hassan : Union Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy has predicted that Karnataka will have a coalition government after the 2028 Assembly elections, while launching a fresh attack on the Congress government and questioning its handling of recent political controversies.

Addressing reporters in Hassan, Kumaraswamy said Chief Minister Siddaramaiah had played a crucial role in keeping the Congress politically relevant in Karnataka. He said he had fought several political battles against Siddaramaiah but wondered why developments were now unfolding that could weaken the chief minister."If Siddaramaiah were not there, the Congress would have disappeared long ago. I have fought major political battles with him. But what is happening now to finish him politically?" Kumaraswamy asked.

He warned the ruling party against assuming that it could continue in power indefinitely. According to him, the political situation would become clearer over the coming year.

"Can you remain in power all the time? Let one year pass, and you will know what happens," he said.

Kumaraswamy also referred to the Hasanamba temple, saying he would speak more about the issue when he visited the temple after it opened. He said Siddaramaiah's silence on the recent developments was surprising.

Kumaraswamy questioned the handling of an alleged sting operation that has become a subject of political debate. He said the person who claimed to have conducted the operation should be investigated. "When the person himself says that he conducted the sting operation, what more evidence is required to initiate an investigation?" he asked.

He alleged that a woman party worker had been questioned and pressured to make statements involving Siddaramaiah. Kumaraswamy also questioned why the individual allegedly behind the sting operation had not been questioned effectively.

He claimed that several police officers had also been targeted through sting operations. Referring to statements attributed to senior Congress leader K.N. Rajanna about sting operations involving political leaders, he alleged that the party's senior leaders were being silenced.

PMI conducts mushroom cultivation training for inmates of Mangaluru District Jail



Mangaluru, Oct 17: Prison Ministry India (PMI), in collaboration with the Skill Development Department, government of Karnataka, organised a three-day training programme on mushroom cultivation for inmates of Mangaluru District Jail from October 14 to 16. The initiative aimed to equip inmates with practical skills that could support their rehabilitation, self-reliance and reintegration into society after their release.

Panduranga and his team from Kasaragod served as resource persons for the training programme, providing the participants with practical knowledge and guidance in mushroom cultivation. Around 23 inmates participated in the course and gained valuable insights into the techniques and possibilities of mushroom farming as a potential livelihood opportunity.

The valedictory programme was held on October 16, during which certificates were distributed to the inmates who successfully attended the training. Fr Stifan Perera, OCD, spiritual director of Prison Ministry India, Mangaluru unit, presided over the occasion in the presence of jail superintendent Sharana Basappa, assistant superintendent Siddappa Patil, PMI coordinator Donald Coutinho, secretary Sr Jyotsna AC, assistant coordinator Lawrence Crasta, joint secretary John Pais, Sr Lidwin, Gladys Coelho and prison counsellor Denis.

Addressing the gathering, Fr Stifan Perera highlighted the importance of skill development in the reformation and rehabilitation of prisoners. He explained that Prison Ministry India is committed to the release, reformation, rehabilitation, reintegration and restoration of prisoners. "Training programmes such as mushroom cultivation help inmates use their time constructively while in prison. More importantly, the skills they acquire can become a source of livelihood after their release, enabling them to earn an honest living and reintegrate into society with dignity and confidence," he said. Jail superintendent Sharana Basappa appreciated Prison Ministry India for regularly organising such beneficial training programmes for inmates. He encouraged the participants to put their newly acquired knowledge into practice and make the best use of the opportunities provided to them. He also expressed his gratitude to PMI and the resource persons for their valuable contribution towards the welfare and rehabilitation of prisoners.

Lawrence Crasta, assistant coordinator of PMI, coordinated the programme.

Three Indian para athletes selected for Asian Para Games 2026



Bengaluru: Three para athletes supported by CBM India Trust have been selected to represent India at the Asian Para Games 2026, scheduled from October 18 to 24 in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan. The athletes are Mohammad Shams Aalam Shaikh in para swimming, Savita V Ajjanakatti in para table tennis and Sujith MS in para athletics.

Savita, from Karnataka's Belagavi district, has won medals at state, national and international competitions. In 2025-26, she secured eight medals five golds, one silver and two bronzes. She recently won bronze in the women's singles Class 8 event at the ITTF World Para Future Aktobe 2026 in Kazakhstan. Ranked 18th globally in Sport Class 8, she will compete in women's singles, women's doubles and mixed doubles.

Shams has previously held world no 1 rankings in the men's 100m butterfly S5 and 50m breaststroke SB4 categories. He completed a 13-km open-water swim in the Ganga in November 2024 and won bronze at the Para Swim Open Falkenberg in May 2026. The upcoming competition will mark his third consecutive appearance at the Asian Para Games.

Parole absconder serving life term caught after eight years in Bengaluru



Bengaluru, : A life convict who had remained on the run for eight years after being released on parole has been arrested by Parappana Agrahara police. Narasimha Reddy, 56, a native of Pavagada, was traced to a hospital in his home region following fresh information received by investigators.

Reddy was convicted in connection with a 2013 murder and robbery in Pavagada. According to the case, he and his associates entered a house, killed the occupants and stole gold ornaments. A domestic worker, Rama, and several other suspects were arrested in connection with the crime. After the trial, the court awarded life imprisonment to those convicted. Police also found it difficult to obtain leads through family events. He reportedly did not attend his daughter's recent wedding, further complicating efforts to establish his whereabouts.

The investigation gained momentum after police received information that he had visited a hospital in Kannampalli, his native place. Officers immediately reached the hospital and arrested him.

In 2018, Reddy secured parole citing his mother's illness. However, he did not return to prison after the authorised period and allegedly disappeared. His prolonged absence triggered a search by Parappana Agrahara police.The hunt proved difficult, with police reportedly travelling to Andhra Pradesh and adopting disguises to gather leads. Officers spent several days posing as vegetable sellers and daily-wage workers while attempting to identify his location, but the operation initially yielded no result.

Police later issued a lookout notice and announced a reward of Rs 1 lakh for information leading to his arrest.

Reddy allegedly took extensive precautions to avoid being traced. He reportedly did not use a mobile phone or carry an Aadhaar card and had changed his name to Srinivasa Reddy.

Police also found it difficult to obtain leads through family events. He reportedly did not attend his daughter's recent wedding, further complicating efforts to establish his whereabouts.

The investigation gained momentum after police received information that he had visited a hospital in Kannampalli, his native place. Officers immediately reached the hospital and arrested him.

EDITORIAL

Dr. Priyanka 'Saurabh' honored for her contribution to literature, education and women empowerment

Hisar. Dr. Priyanka 'Saurabh', a political science lecturer in the Haryana Education Department, was honored for her outstanding contribution in the fields of education, literature, journalism, and women's empowerment. She was awarded this honor by Shiksha Sagar Foundation India. More than 150 teachers from across the country were honored at the Teachers' Honors Ceremony held at the Geeta Gyan Kendra in Kurukshetra. The program was presided over by the Director of Basic Education, Haryana Education Department.

Due to unavoidable circumstances, Dr. Priyanka 'Saurabh' was unable to attend the ceremony at Geeta Gyan Kendra, Kurukshetra. Event coordinator Sushila Jangra visited her home and had her grandfather, Mailal Ubba, present the award to her. Through this initiative, the organizers expressed their respect for Dr. Priyanka 'Saurabh's' educational and social contributions.

Dr. Priyanka "Saurabh," a PhD in Political Science, is active in the fields of literature and journalism, as well as teaching. Thousands of her articles, editorials, and opinion pieces have been published in national and international newspapers and magazines. As a poet, writer, freelance journalist, and columnist, she writes extensively on women's empowerment, girls' education, women's identity, social justice, democratic values, and contemporary social issues. Under her guidance and teaching, many students have demonstrated their talent by scoring over 100 marks in the field of education. She places special emphasis on fostering students' intellectual development, logical thinking, self-confidence, and social sensitivity. She believes that the purpose of education is not just to achieve good exam results, but also to develop students into aware and responsible citizens.

Dr. Priyanka Saurabh's published literary works include "Termite-ridden Roses," "From the Stove to the Moon," "Smile of Silence," "Life Peeping from the Window," "Dialogue with Fairies," "Children's World," "On the Sands of Time," "Nirbhayen," "Fearless," and "Aanchal's Silence." She has also contributed to the editing of the Haryanvi short story collection "Mhari Mati, Mhare Akhar." Her works express various aspects of social anomalies, human sensibilities, women's lives, and the changing social environment.

In the fields of literature and social concerns, she has received numerous honors, including the IPS Manumukt 'Manav' Award, the Nari Ratna Award, the Powerful Women of Haryana Award, the Vishwa Hindi Sahitya Ratna Award, the Super Woman Award, the Global Super Woman Award, the Mahila Ratna Samman, the Narada Award for Citizen Journalism, and the Sahityanchaal National Award. She has also received international honorary doctorates. Dr. Priyanka 'Saurabh's' work establishes a meaningful bridge between literature, journalism, education, and women's empowerment. Her writings strive to raise awareness about the rights of women and girls, social equality, and quality education. Her active commitment to bringing positive change to society through teaching and literature underscores her multifaceted contributions.

WHEN CHILDREN TURN AWAY:

WHY KERALA'S SENIOR CITIZENS BILL MATTERS

By Binish Thomas

There is something deeply unsettling about a society that teaches children to respect their parents, celebrates the sacrifices of grandparents and speaks endlessly about family values, yet leaves some of its oldest citizens struggling for safety, care and dignity. For decades, the Indian family has been regarded as the first line of protection for the elderly. Parents sacrifice their time and resources to educate their children, build homes and secure their families' futures, hoping for companionship and support in old age. But what happens when that promise breaks down and older people face neglect, abuse, financial exploitation or abandonment by the very people they once protected?

Kerala has now placed this question at the centre of a proposed law. The Keralam Senior Citizens' (Care and Protection of Rights) Bill, 2026, introduced in the state Assembly by Chief Minister V. D. Satheesan on October 13, seeks to establish a comprehensive framework for protecting older people. It proposes to regulate elderly-care institutions, strengthen safeguards against abuse, improve access to healthcare and digital services, and recognise the right of senior citizens to live with dignity and independence. The bill has been referred to a select committee for further consideration and is not yet law. Nevertheless, its introduction raises a question that extends beyond Kerala: is India prepared for a future in which elderly care can no longer depend entirely on family goodwill?

Kerala's ageing population makes this issue particularly urgent. Longer life expectancy, lower birth rates and the migration of younger generations have changed household structures across the state. Many older people now spend long periods alone while their children live elsewhere for work or education. Distance does not necessarily mean abandonment, as thousands of families continue to care for elderly parents from afar. However, distance can make it harder to identify neglect, arrange medical assistance or intervene when problems arise.

Some older people are widowed, have no close relatives, live with disabilities or require continuous care. For them, the absence of a reliable support system can turn an ordinary health problem into a crisis.

A modern elderly-care system must support both family-based care and professional services while recognising older people as individuals with rights, preferences and the capacity to make decisions about their own lives. One of the central ideas behind Kerala's proposed legislation is that senior citizens should be able to remain in their own homes for as long as possible with appropriate support, while institutional care should be available when necessary.

ABUSE BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

Elder abuse is not always visible. It may involve physical violence, humiliation, emotional intimidation, financial exploitation, denial of food or medication, and neglect of basic needs. Financial abuse deserves particular attention because an older person's property, savings or pension can become a source of conflict within a family. Those who depend on relatives for everyday assistance may find it difficult to report mistreatment or challenge decisions made on their behalf.

The proposed bill seeks to establish clearer accountability for such conduct. It provides for penalties of up to three years' imprisonment and a fine of ?50,000 for specified offences involving abuse or abandonment. It also proposes safeguards against the unauthorised possession of residents' property and the operation of care centres without registration. Under specified circumstances, registered medical practitioners and senior citizen care centres would be required to report suspected abuse or exploitation within 48 hours. Such a provision could help ensure that warning signs, including unexplained injuries or indications of neglect, are not ignored.

WHO IS WATCHING THOSE ENTRUSTED WITH ELDERLY CARE?

As demand for professional elderly care grows, ensuring that caregivers are competent and trustworthy becomes increasingly important. Families often employ caregivers to assist older relatives with bathing, mobility, medication, feeding and other daily activities, but they may have limited means of verifying their qualifications, backgrounds or training.

Kerala's proposed bill seeks to address this gap through the registration and regulation of care centres and a certification framework for caregivers. It envisages prescribed training, police verification and a searchable register of certified caregivers. These safeguards are particularly important for people who are bedridden, living with dementia or unable to communicate mistreatment easily. However, regulation must extend beyond paperwork. Care homes need adequate staffing, hygiene standards, medical support, complaint procedures and regular inspections. Caregivers also require proper training, fair remuneration and safe working conditions.

An elderly-care system cannot function effectively if its workers are undertrained, underpaid or left without support. Protecting senior citizens and safeguarding those who care for them should be complementary objectives. The real test will be whether the proposed framework leads to meaningful oversight rather than becoming another system of registrations and certificates.

THE NEXT THREAT MAY ARRIVE THROUGH A SMARTPHONE

The vulnerabilities of older people are not confined to homes and care centres. They increasingly extend into the digital world, where fraudsters exploit fear, trust and unfamiliarity with technology through fake calls, fraudulent investment schemes, impersonation, phishing messages and other forms of cybercrime. The growing use of artificial intelligence also creates new opportunities for impersonation and deception.An older person who loses life savings to a digital scam may suffer more than financial hardship. Such a loss can undermine independence, increase dependence on relatives and leave victims feeling ashamed or reluctant to report the crime. The proposed bill recognises the need for better protection against cyber fraud. It also envisages more accessible digital services, including government portals that are easier to use, while retaining non-digital alternatives for people who cannot comfortably navigate online systems.This is important because digital inclusion should not become digital exclusion. Banking, healthcare and public services may increasingly move online, but senior citizens should not be forced to depend on others simply to access their own entitlements.

DIGNITY MEANS HAVING A CHOICE

One of the most difficult aspects of ageing is the loss of control that can accompany physical frailty or illness. Decisions about housing, medical treatment, finances and everyday routines may gradually shift from the individual to relatives or caregivers. While such a transition may sometimes be necessary, it should not erase the older person's preferences.

The proposed bill includes provisions relating to living wills, which allow people to record their wishes concerning medical treatment in specified future circumstances. It also envisages improved access to geriatric healthcare, specialised care for conditions such as dementia and Parkinson's disease, and more age-friendly public spaces and services.

These proposals point towards a broader understanding of elderly welfare. It is not enough to keep an older person alive or provide a place to sleep. Care must also preserve autonomy, comfort and human dignity wherever possible.

A LAW IS ONLY AS STRONG AS ITS IMPLEMENTATION

Kerala's proposed bill is an important step towards recognising elderly care as a public responsibility rather than merely a private family matter. However, legislation alone cannot resolve every problem associated with ageing. Protection units must have trained personnel and adequate resources. Complaints must not disappear into bureaucratic procedures, care facilities must face genuine scrutiny, and older people living alone or in remote areas must be able to access services without excessive difficulty. Families also need practical support before a caregiving crisis develops into neglect.

Economic security is another major concern. Many senior citizens depend on modest pensions, savings or financial support from relatives. Healthcare costs, inflation and long-term care expenses can rapidly erode their financial independence. Rights on paper cannot substitute for affordable services and reliable social-security support. The state must therefore look beyond punishment and invest in prevention, counselling, community-based care, financial assistance and accessible healthcare.

THE MEASURE OF A SOCIETY

A parent's contribution to a family does not lose its value when that parent grows old, falls ill or can no longer earn an income. Yet older people are too often treated as burdens precisely when they need patience, companionship and care the most. Kerala's proposed legislation cannot, by itself, restore broken relationships or guarantee that every child will fulfil every family obligation.

THE PATH TO CHANGE OF POWER IS NOT THROUGH MOBOCRACY, BUT THROUGH PUBLIC OPINION AND DEMOCRACY

SAURABH VARSHNEY

India is not only the world's largest democracy, but also a country known for diversity, tolerance, peace, and democratic values. Here, the people have the right to change power, and this right is the greatest strength of Indian democracy. However, when examples like those in Bangladesh are cited regarding power change in the country, or when calls for "regime change" are made, this issue requires serious consideration. In a vast and mature democracy like India, the path to power change should be through constitutional mechanisms, public opinion, and peaceful movements, not through mob pressure or anarchy.

In recent times, the opposition in India has been accused of attempting a regime change along the lines of Bangladesh. The debate about 'regime change' has also surfaced in the context of senior advocate Prashant Bhushan. Such statements and accusations must be evaluated beyond political accusations and counter-accusations. It is important to understand the true meaning of a person's statement in its full context. It would not be appropriate to draw final conclusions about the intentions of an individual or the entire opposition based solely on a single word. Nevertheless, if regime change means removing the government or destabilizing the system by bypassing the constitutional process, such thinking is certainly worrying for a healthy democracy. There are differences in the political, social, and constitutional circumstances of India and Bangladesh. In India, regular elections, an independent judiciary, an Election Commission, Parliament, state legislatures, and constitutional institutions are established means of power transfer. The strength of these institutions ensures the stability of democracy. It is neither necessary nor consistent with the fundamental spirit of Indian democracy to imagine political developments in another country being replicated in India.

India is characterized by a tradition of peace, tolerance, and dialogue. Here, power is not the permanent property of any individual, party, or organization. Governments come and go, but the country and its constitutional system remain supreme. Therefore, creating conditions that increase social tension, violence, or institutional instability for the sake of achieving any political objective is not in the national interest.

There is a clear distinction between democracy and mobocracy. In a democracy, the public's voice is heard, dissent is respected, and decisions are made in accordance with law and constitutional procedures. In contrast, mobocracy can lead to a tendency to impose decisions through sheer numbers and pressure. If crowds are gathered on the streets to overthrow a government, to pressure constitutional institutions, or to disrupt law and order, it can undermine democratic traditions. However, this does not mean that the public should not have the right to protest or oppose the government. Peaceful protests, sit-ins, demonstrations, public meetings, and public awareness are vital components of democracy. When the public is dissatisfied with a policy, decision, or form of governance, they have every right to raise their voice. It is essential that protests remain peaceful, democratic, and within constitutional framework.

The most significant feature of Indian democracy is that the final decision rests with the people. If the public is dissatisfied with a government, they have the right to change it by casting their votes in elections. This is the most effective and legitimate means of democracy. The popularity of a government should be judged not by slogans, social media campaigns, or crowd size, but by broad public opinion and the electoral process.

If a government's policies are anti-people, do not meet public expectations, or serious shortcomings in governance are evident, the opposition has a responsibility to raise these issues before the public. It should present alternative policies, demand accountability from the government, and seek public support through democratic means. If the public agrees with the opposition's views, they can entrust it with power in elections. This is neither unusual nor destabilizing; it is the natural process of democracy.

Similarly, if the public re-elects the current government, all political parties have a responsibility to respect that mandate. In a democracy, simply accepting the outcome of one's own choice and rejecting a disfavored mandate cannot be justified.

Whenever protests arise in the country regarding a serious public issue, their objective should be to convey the voice of the people to the government and bring about reforms in the system. Peaceful public movements on issues such as unemployment, inflation, corruption, farmers' problems, education, health, and civil rights can hold governments accountable. Such movements do not weaken democracy, but rather strengthen it, provided they are conducted without violence and anarchy.

The opposition's job is not only to oppose the ruling party, but also to present a responsible alternative. Similarly, the ruling party should address the public's problems rather than cower in the face of criticism. In a democracy, it is wrong to consider dissent as anti-national, but dissent cannot be used to support violence or damage to the constitutional system.

India's democratic strength lies in its people, its Constitution, and its institutions.

KOLKATA DURGA PUJA STAMPEDE:

Suvendu Adhikari's First Major Challenge As Chief Minister

Jayanta Ghosal



Five months after Suvendu Adhikari became Chief Minister of West Bengal, he is facing his first major challenge in the state. The tragedy at the Chorbagan Durga Puja pandal in North Kolkata has raised serious questions about crowd management, public safety, and the administration's preparedness for one of Bengal's biggest annual festivals.

The incident was a major fiasco. Almost immediately, questions arose about what preventive measures had been taken to control the crowds. Crowd management is crucial during Durga Puja, when thousands of people visit pandals across Kolkata and other parts of West Bengal. The scale of this tragedy has made it particularly distressing. According to reports, at least 19 people died, and 25 others were injured in the stampede at Chorbagan on the evening of October 17, the first of the two Saptami days in the 2026 Durga Puja calendar. The immediate question being asked is: who is responsible? This is especially significant during the present Durga Puja celebrations because the new government had taken a particular interest in the festival and had initiated changes in the way several puja committees were managed. Some committees previously associated with Trinamool Congress leaders and ministers were sidelined or reorganised, while new teams associated with the BJP came to the forefront.

BJP'S PUJA PUSH

Coincidentally, Union Home Minister Amit Shah was in Kolkata at the same time. His schedule had included a visit to Palermath, as well as visits to and inaugurations of several Durga Puja pandals, including Shobhabazar Rajbari. The broader political objective was to connect with the Bengali cultural identity and the social traditions associated with Durga Puja. However, another incident had occurred the previous day involving a book stall organised by the CPI(M). There was a bulldozer operation, and footage circulated showing people trying to handle or retrieve books. The precise circumstances surrounding that incident require clarification, but it had already become a matter of political controversy. Following the Chorbagan stampede, Suvendu Adhikari spoke to Amit Shah, who cancelled his scheduled programmes and expressed his grief over the incident. Prime Minister Narendra Modi also announced compensation, as did the state government. Adhikari also went to the hospital, met the families of the victims, and blamed the tragedy on the callousness of the organisers.

He appealed to Durga Puja organisers across Kolkata to take all necessary precautions to ensure public safety. He described the incident as painful and extremely heartbreaking. He said that he had spoken to a sitting judge and would arrange for an inquiry into the incident. This was one of the first steps announced in response to the tragedy.

The second major issue concerns the police investigation. Why should the police make definitive statements before examining the available footage? The CCTV recordings must be studied carefully. They should establish who was present, including whether the Police Commissioner was at the site, who was responsible for particular arrangements, and what happened at each stage of the incident. The footage will be important in reconstructing the sequence of events and determining responsibility.

WHAT WENT WRONG AT CHORBAGAN?

The central issue is the management of the enormous crowds that gather at popular Durga Puja pandals. Chorbagan is situated in an area of Kolkata known for its narrow lanes. Managing large numbers of visitors in such a location requires careful planning, adequate police deployment, clear entry and exit routes, trained volunteers, and readily available emergency services.

World Bank Group mobilises USD 36 bn in India in four years



New Delhi: The World Bank Group has helped mobilise USD 36 billion in private capital for development in India over the past four years, including USD 9.6 billion for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), as it steps up efforts to spur private sector-led growth and job creation. Private capital mobilisation by the Group rose nearly five-fold to USD 14.5 billion in fiscal 2026 from about USD 3 billion in fiscal 2022, Manuel Reyes-Retana, IFC's division director for South Asia, said.

The increase reflects growing investor interest in development-linked investments, with guarantees from the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) helping reduce investment risks and attract private funding, he said. Institutional investors are increasingly drawn to such instruments because they are familiar with the World Bank Group's underwriting standards and governance practices, Reyes-Retana said.

"We are seeing a positive response from private sector investors and growing momentum in this area. Investors across the world, including in India, are increasingly looking to diversify their investment instruments and assets," he told PTI. Private capital mobilisation involves attracting investment from private investors to finance development projects and supplement public funding. It enables development projects to tap private investment alongside public funding, with guarantees and other risk-sharing mechanisms helping make investments more attractive to investors.

The World Bank Group has also supported initiatives to improve access to finance for India's MSMEs, which play a key role in employment and economic activity but often face constraints in obtaining affordable credit.

Under the USD 436 million Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) programme, the World Bank supported reforms to the Trade Receivables Discounting System (TReDS), a digital platform that allows businesses to raise funds against unpaid invoices rather than wait for buyers to pay. The initiative has helped more than 250,000 MSMEs gain faster access to capital, while 30 non-banking financial companies have joined the platform, expanding the pool of lenders, the World Bank Group said. Credit guarantees for women-owned businesses rose to 18 per cent from 14 per cent over two years, mobilising more than USD 1 billion, it said. India's first Green MSME Guarantee Fund has benefited more than 4,000 MSMEs and supported USD 40 million in investments in green and circular-economy activities.

The efforts form part of the World Bank Group's broader partnership with India to promote job-rich, private sector-led growth and support the country's ambition to become an upper-middle-income economy over the next decade. Under its Country Partnership Framework for fiscal 2026-31, the Group is focusing on inclusive and sustainable growth in support of India's Viksit Bharat vision for 2047.

SBI CARD AND ETERNAL LAUNCH CO-BRANDED 'ETERNAL SBI CARD'



New Delhi, October 2026: SBI Card, India's largest pure-play credit card issuer, and Eternal Limited (formerly known as Zomato Limited) today announced launch & 'early access' for the Eternal SBI Card, a co-branded credit card designed for customers across Eternal and its affiliates. The card is among the first in the category to offer instant discounts across multiple brands within one ecosystem, bringing greater value to customers' everyday purchases while also extending benefits beyond the Eternal group brands. Customers can now request early access through the Zomato, Blinkit, and District apps to receive an invitation to apply when the card becomes available from 22 October 2026, in a phase-wise manner.

Cardholders get a 10% instant discount on transactions on Zomato, District, and Blinkit (only on products under the category of electronics and beauty) and a 5% instant discount on purchases under all other categories (subject to certain excluded categories mentioned below) on Blinkit. These discounts shall be subject to a combined cap of ?2000 per month across purchases made through all the aforementioned platforms. Additionally, there is a 10% instant discount on Bistro and a 1+1 offer on the purchase of movie tickets through District (all discounts on Eternal brands are over and above existing platform offers). With the Eternal SBI Card, customers can also earn 5% cashback, up to ?1,000 a month, on spends with Apollo 24|7, ixigo, Uber, and Urban Company. The Eternal SBI Card comes with the cashback auto-credit facility, which allows automatic credit of entitled cashback against eligible transactions directly to the SBI Card account on statement generation. Salila Pande, Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer, SBI Card, said, "SBI Card has always strived to bring products for its customers that are customised as per their diverse lifestyle and preferences, offering maximum value and enhanced experience. Launch of the Eternal SBI Card in strategic alliance with Eternal reflects this commitment. Designed around customer's every day spending needs, the card brings together compelling cashback benefits, convenience, and value across a wide range of categories. The launch will bolster our retail co-brand credit card portfolio." Akshant Goyal, Chief Financial Officer, Eternal, said, "Get more out of every day' is the core belief the Eternal SBI Card is built on. There's a strong opportunity to create more value around the high-frequency transactions that are already a part of our customers' lives. With Zomato, Blinkit and District at the centre, the card brings together these every day spends in one ecosystem, while extending value beyond it."

Beyond the core value offered, the co-branded credit card offers cashbacks and rewards on certain spends outside Eternal's ecosystem. Cardholders get a 6-month complimentary Zomato Gold membership as a welcome benefit on payment of the Rs. 499 joining fee.

GMR Aero Technic MoU to bring Canadian STCs to Indian operators



Hyderabad: GMR Aero Technic, the maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) arm of the GMR group, has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Canadian firm Corporation Logic Air Inc for aircraft modification, engineering and certification work.

The two companies will offer turnkey modification packages that can be carried out during scheduled maintenance, aircraft redelivery and transition checks, the company said in a release on Friday, October 16.

They will also look at validating and adapting Logic Air's Supplemental Type Certificates (STC) and modification data for Indian and overseas operators, with a focus on the Middle East and Asia-Pacific. The tie-up will start with navigation and operational upgrades for Boeing 737NG aircraft. It will also cover engine indication upgrades for ATR and Dash 8 aircraft, Dash 8 Q400 modifications, cabin electrical and structural work, freighter conversions and component obsolescence support. Training is part of the agreement too.

The partners will jointly approach airlines, lessors and cargo operators. Commercial terms will be finalised separately for each project, the release said.

L&T Finance Reports Record Rs. 975 Crore Q2 Profit, Up 33% YoY; Loan Book Surpasses Rs.1.36 Lakh Crore

L&T Finance Ltd. (LTF) records highest ever consolidated Profit After Tax (PAT) of Rs. 975 Crore for the second quarter ended September 30, 2026 (Q2FY27), up 33% Year-on-Year (YoY), while also achieving its highest ever consolidated book of Rs. 1,36,635 Crore, up 28% YoY

Robust Q2FY27 Retail Disbursements at Rs. 24,027 Crore, up 27% YoY, reflecting continued business momentum

Improving asset quality, lower credit costs and higher Return on Assets reinforce the Company's focus on profitable, risk-calibrated growth

Accelerates technology deployment to evolve into an AI-native lender

L&T Finance Ltd. (LTF), one of the leading Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) in India has recorded consolidated Profit After Tax (PAT) of Rs. 975 Crore, up 33% Year-on-Year for the second quarter ended September 30, 2026. During the quarter, LTF achieved a milestone of highest-ever consolidated book of Rs. 1,36,635 Crore, up 28% Year-on-Year. The retail book size during the quarter reached Rs. 1,34,600 Crore, up 29% YoY. The Company has recorded robust retail disbursement of Rs. 24,027 Crore for the second quarter ended September 30, 2026, up 27% YoY, reflecting continued business momentum. Improving asset quality, lowering credit costs, and higher Return on Assets reinforce the Company's focus on profitable, risk-calibrated growth. Concurrently, the Company has accelerated technology deployment to evolve into an AI-native lender. L&T Finance continues to advance its Lakshya 2031 ambition of becoming a risk-first, technology-first and

AI-native retail financial services institution. The Company is embedding intelligence across customer acquisition, underwriting, portfolio management, servicing and cross-selling. In Q2FY27, the Company's flagship PLANET app reinforced its status as a core digital engine for the Company - surpassing 2.7 crore downloads. The application now services 94% of the total service requests generated by its customers, and has driven collections of Rs. 2,168 Crore during the quarter, coupled with a business generating of Rs. 5,934 Crore in business.

Further strengthening its rural reach, PLANET app introduced a dedicated rural interface with a clear, intuitive and clutter-free UI, offering multilingual capabilities, including Hindi. This enables rural customers to navigate the app more easily, access services in a familiar language and complete transactions with greater convenience and confidence. The Company's Partner PLANET app has emerged as a dedicated digital platform designed to strengthen engagement with its dealer network by bringing key business information, retail performance insights and operational services onto a single interface. The platform enables dealers to access business metrics, monitor retail performance, manage Trade Advance requirements and track operational requests, enhancing transparency, convenience, and efficiency across the dealer ecosystem. Commenting on the financial results Mr. Sudipta Roy, Managing Director & CEO, LTF, said, "Q2FY27 has been yet another strong quarter for L&T Finance with strong delivery across all business parameters, laying a solid foundation for our Lakshya 2031 journey with a sustained business momentum. These outcomes reflect the strength of our diversified retail franchise, the discipline of our execution and our continued focus on delivering sustainable, risk-calibrated growth.

UPGRADE YOUR KITCHEN THIS FESTIVE SEASON:

Big Savings on Gas Stoves, Air Fryers and Dinner Sets at Instamart's Quick India Movement Sale

October 2026: With Dussehra around the corner and Diwali following, households are preparing for festive cooking, family meals and gatherings at home. For those looking to refresh their kitchens without stretching their budgets, Instamart's Quick India Movement Sale (QIM) offers a range of everyday home and kitchen essentials from participating brands and sellers.

Currently live on the Swiggy and Instamart apps, the sale features offers ranging from cookware for festive recipes to appliances that make everyday cooking easier and serveware for family gatherings.

HERE ARE SOME OPTIONS TO EXPLORE.

EVERYDAY COOKWARE STARTING AT 299

Whether preparing festive snacks or daily meals, cookware is a useful addition to any kitchen.

Bergner Earth Black Non-Stick Concave Tawa (26 cm): An induction-compatible tawa for everyday cooking, available at 299 against an MRP of 1,035.

Tramontina Stella Kadhai (24 cm): A ceramic non-stick kadhai for preparing a variety of dishes, available at 1,299 against an MRP of 1,995.

Bergner Sorrento Stainless Steel Pressure Cooker (3L): An induction-compatible pressure cooker for everyday meal preparation, available at 999 against an MRP of 2,335.

KITCHEN APPLIANCES FOR EVERYDAY NEEDS

For households looking to make everyday food preparation more convenient, mixer grinders and gas stoves are practical kitchen essentials.

Lifelong 2-Burner Manual Ignition Gas Stove: A two-burner option for everyday cooking, available at 999 against an MRP of 5,000.

Philips HL7505 Mixer Grinder (500W): A mixer grinder for routine grinding and blending, available at 1,899 against an MRP of 3,695.

Bosch TrueMixx MG4413C4GI Mixer Grinder (750W, 3 Jars): Featuring three jars and adjustable speed settings, available at 2,499 against an MRP of 6,250.

Philips Air Fryer NA120/00 (4.2L, 1500W): An option for preparing snacks and everyday dishes at home, available at 4,699 against an MRP of 5,995. Philips HD4934/00 Induction Cooktop: Available at 2479 against an MRP of 4495

DINNER SETS FOR FESTIVE GATHERINGS STARTING AT 799

From serving sweets to sharing festive meals, a few dining essentials can help households get ready for guests.

La Opala Novo Opalware Dinner Set (21 Pieces): A dinner set for everyday meals and festive gatherings, available at 799 against an MRP of 3,295.

Cello Sapphire Insulated Serving Casserole (1.5L): Designed to help keep food warm while serving, available at 199 against an MRP of 804.

STORAGE ESSENTIALS

With festive cooking often involving snacks, ingredients and advance preparations, storage and serving products can come in handy.

Tupperware Tup Celebration Essential Storage Container Set (290 ml): A compact storage option for everyday kitchen use, available at 349 against an MRP of 999.

Tupperware Tup Celebration Glassware Snack Set (305 ml): Suitable for serving snacks and small portions, available at 199 against an MRP of 599.

Shoppers can explore these products and more from participating brands and sellers on Instamart through the Swiggy app during the QIM Sale, running until October 18. Offers and product availability may vary by location.

T&C apply. Offers are on select products and in select locations, while stocks last. All product prices, offers and promotions are provided by participating sellers and brand partners on the Instamart platform. Prices and availability may vary by location.

ABOUT INSTAMART

Launched in August 2020, Instamart is a quick commerce platform offering groceries, daily essentials and a growing range of products across categories. Instamart is available across 130+ cities, with an assortment of 50,000+ products.

Jawa Yezdi Motorcycles is making festive buying more accessible than ever



Mumbai October 2026: Jawa Yezdi Motorcycles is making it easier for customers to bring home their favourite motorcycle this festive season with a range of attractive financing solutions designed to make ownership more accessible. As part of its festive offers, Jawa Yezdi Motorcycles is helping more riders take the step from aspiration to ownership through a range of flexible financing solutions. Customers can avail financing solutions with up to 100% funding and zero down payment, helping reduce the upfront commitment required to start their ownership journey. Flexible repayment options, including tenure of up to 72 months and interest rates starting at 5.99%, have been designed to make ownership more convenient and accessible for a wider set of riders. The festive financing programme also includes instant approval processes, enabling a quicker and more seamless purchase experience. Eligible customers can benefit from Buy Now Pay Later option, giving them added flexibility during the festive season, while selected schemes offer no hypothecation benefits, while Mahindra Group employees can avail exclusive ownership benefits under specially curated programmes designed for them. for greater convenience. Together, these solutions provide riders with multiple ways to make their aspiration of owning a Jawa, Yezdi or BSA motorcycle a reality. Anupam Thareja, Co-founder, Classic Legends, said, "For many riders, owning a Jawa, Yezdi or BSA is more than just bringing home a motorcycle, it is about becoming part of a distinctive motorcycling culture.

FRANCE ROCKED BY VIOLENT PROTESTS, 1,800 ARRESTED



France awoke to scenes of widespread damage on Sunday after a day of riots and demonstrations, with shopfronts shattered, burnt out cars, charred bikes, and piles of glass and debris on the pavements of Paris. Police arrested about 1,800 people on Saturday as some 550,000 demonstrators took to the streets for protests that were largely peaceful. They were demonstrating against rising fuel prices, the cost of living and deteriorating public services, including schools. Groups of rioters, some dressed in black and wearing masks and balaclavas, also came out in Paris, Marseille and other towns and cities, with some setting fire to cars and buildings. Widespread looting took place across the cities of Paris, Marseille and Lille, as well as other areas. In Paris, protesters clashed with riot police, who turned tear gas and water cannon on the crowds. During the day, some groups lit fires in the street and torched vehicles. At least one restaurant was gutted by fire, and the BBC saw fighting breaking out among some of the groups. Riot police were seen charging at one crowd in central Paris and hitting several people with batons. "It's like we had a war," Paris resident Mehmet Ozeden told news agency AFP. Another resident, Anita GrasIt, said it was "terrifying" to see groups of young people "smashing everything, with total impunity". The looters were "proudly carrying supermarket baskets filled with goods and laughing about their thefts", Maryse, a woman living nearby who gave only her first name, told the BBC. Further south in Marseille, protesters broke into the city hall by using a metal fence as a battering ram. In Lille, a McDonalds was set on fire, police said, and an Apple store in the city was broken into and looted. More than 500 police officers, gendarmes and firefighters were injured in the unrest on Saturday, France's interior ministry said. Around 1,500 shops and retailers were also damaged in the disturbances, the Retail and Trade Federation said. On Sunday morning in Paris, residents surveyed the aftermath, which included the smashed glass frontages of designer stores including Ralph Lauren, Gucci and Versace. Shopkeepers were out early with brooms, picking up large shards of glass as they began the clean-up. Rubbish trucks worked their way down some of the larger streets to clear some of the debris. Many shops were daubed with graffiti, some reading "tax the rich" and "eat the rich." The BBC visited a clothes shop close to the Place de la République which had been ransacked, with piles of clothes and furniture scattered across the shop floor. The shop's distraught owner told the BBC he saw looters on the CCTV who were in the shop for just over an hour and a half, and that during that time he saw no police in the process. The owner - who asked not to be identified - told the BBC he did not believe any of those who robbed the shop were genuine protesters against school conditions or the cost of living. He said the looters were taking advantage of the demonstrations. Close to the Place de la République, a BBC reporter visited the Good Vibes bakery, whose glass front was completely shattered, and the Nicolas wine store, where every bottle was either stolen or smashed, leaving smell of alcohol lingering in the street. CCTV footage shown on France's Channel 2 shows groups of teenagers, mostly wearing masks, in a shop selling mobile phones helping themselves to items from the shelves. Student protests in France have seen hundreds of thousands take to the streets since they began late last month. Protesters have been demanding additional investment in their schools, criticising the lack of teachers and staff, overcrowded classrooms and run-down buildings. France's Interior Minister Laurent Nuñez said that while demonstrating was a fundamental right, there were "outrages" committed by "several thousand far-left individuals" who were determined to target public buildings and confront the police. Later, they were joined by "delinquents who looted and ransacked numerous businesses in several cities in France", he said. In the city of Lyon, Mayor Grégory Doucet said the burning of the city's tourist office was "a tragedy", telling French outlet BFMTV that "it breaks our hearts because it's a very iconic, well-known historic building". Local police said "hostile individuals" prevented firefighters from safely tackling the blaze. Fire crews also battled a fire at Limoges town hall, which caused part of the building to collapse. Local officials said the town hall was "largely lost." "A wild horde" had "deliberately" set fire to the 143-year-old building, said Maurice Barate, the prefect for the Haute-Vienne department. Elsewhere, a young man "had his hand blown off" by a small explosive in Saint-Étienne, the south-eastern city's Mayor Régis Juanico said on social media. "Such a tragedy should never have happened," he said. France's interior ministry said Saturday's protests involved "targeted acts of violence" from "hooded individuals" in places, including parts of the capital and also in Marseille, Rennes, Toulouse, and the western city of Angers.

SEVERAL DEAD OR INJURED IN MAJOR FIRE AT CANADA MILITARY BASE



Several people have been killed or injured as a result of a large fire near a Canadian military base in Alberta, the nation's military has said. The Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) said the full extent of the incident was being assessed and that details of casualties and injuries would not be made public until that was complete. Canadian TV network Global News reported that at least seven were killed and dozens more injured when a gas line or gas well was hit during a live-fire training exercise, citing unnamed military sources. Canadian Forces Base Wainwright, where the fire broke out at about 16:00 local time (22:00 GMT) on Saturday, is one of the country's busiest military training bases. On Sunday morning, a defence department spokeswoman told the BBC that investigations were ongoing but "at this time, there are no indications that it was the result of any terrorist activity." Defence Minister David McGuinty earlier said the CAF and local authorities were managing the fire, describing the situation as "very, very active and delicate". Canada's Prime Minister Mark Carney said his "thoughts are with all the brave women and men affected". The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) said Royal Alexandra Hospital in Edmonton had declared a code orange, a disaster response protocol for responding to a high-casualty incident. Warren Thirsk, an emergency department doctor there, told the broadcaster that the number of patients would otherwise "overwhelm" Edmonton's healthcare facilities. "It is more patients than any of us want to count right now. It's a disaster. It's a one in every 15 to 25-year disaster." After the fire erupted on Saturday, it "spread rapidly due to high winds" and tore through the fences of the base, the Municipal District of Wainwright said. The region experienced gusts of up to 100km/h (62mph), though local officials indicated fire crews had contained the blaze. McGuinty told reporters he "cannot recall an incident like this in recent memory". Local authorities have urged residents to avoid the area and give all emergency vehicles right of way. The mayor of the nearby town of Wainwright, Bruce Pugh, said it was a "heavy day" for his community. "We have neighbours who are either serving or former members of the Canadian Armed Forces. We're integrated, our kids play in the same hockey teams, attend the same schools," he told CBC. While details on the impact of the fire remain unclear, Pugh said he believed this would come to be the area's largest-ever mass casualty event. Gen Jennie Carignan, chief of Canada's defence staff, said it was a "profoundly difficult moment" for the CAF. Neighbouring provinces have mobilised in support. Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe said he had deployed resources to Alberta and was "ready to provide more if required", while British Columbia Premier David Eby said his government had offered "all possible assistance". Wainwright is the main base used by the Canadian military for live-fire training exercises, according to CBC, with about 690 military personnel and 300 civilian workers on-site on a typical day.

A WAVE OF HOMEMADE, SYNTHETIC DRUGS SWEEPS US AND DEEPENS CRISIS



The few grains of fentanyl sit in the silver foil as a straw, held between Mike's lips, hovers above, with a cigarette lighter below. The 48-year-old army veteran is crouched low in an alleyway in Columbus, Ohio's Linden neighbourhood. "This drug will damn near make you do anything, unfortunately," he says. The hit he's smoking cost three or four dollars. "You can snort too much and you can't take it back. Kind of like a gunshot. Can't call the bullet back," he says. He burns the foil and inhales. As the opioid takes hold, he grips the fence behind him. He sways as a low moan comes from deep in his throat - he could be humming a tune. We've spent a few days with Mike - he's been our guide through the neighbourhood's back streets. Everyone seems to know him and he's regarded fondly. He helps out at a local pawn shop and gas station, and that's how he feeds his 20-year-old opioid addiction. Synthetic opioids are more powerful and in plentiful supply, and they have transformed the drugs landscape. Fentanyl, which is entirely man-made, is 50 to 100 times more powerful than heroin, which is cultivated from poppies. It is now often cut with synthetic tranquillisers, which make reviving overdose victims more difficult.

TRUMP WAIVES SEVERAL RUSSIA SANCTIONS AS ROW WITH ZELENSKY INTENSIFIES



Donald Trump has blocked numerous sanctions on Russia two days before they were due to take effect, as a row with his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelensky deepens. The sanctions were passed by the US Congress and signed into law by the US president in September. But Trump issued an executive order on Friday night saying that suspending some was in the US national interest, prompting a backlash from US lawmakers. Zelensky said it was unfortunate the US has decided to "completely disregard" the sanctions. Russian envoy Kirill Dmitriev said Trump's order was "an important and truly historic moment", and that the sanctions would have inflicted "serious damage" on the US and global market. Relations between Washington and Kyiv frayed after the US struck a controversial deal to import Russian diesel last week. Ukraine has accused the Trump administration of withdrawing key military support. Since then, Ukraine's president declared it was nice to be among "real leaders" while addressing an EU summit, after Trump said Zelensky was "more difficult to deal with" than Russian President Vladimir Putin. The sanctions suspension seemed to add further fuel to the fire. Zelensky said on Saturday morning that the sanctions "could have helped enormously" and that the law was "supposed to impose truly effective pressure on Russia to bring this war to an end". He pointed to Russian overnight attacks on 15 Ukrainian energy facilities that had caused power cuts in several regions and said: "Russia is trying to cause a blackout in Ukraine – right before winter." Zelensky said it was "important that everyone in America also sees what is really happening" on the ground. The new US sanctions law took aim at Russia's economy by giving Trump broad powers to levy tariffs of up to 100% on imports from the top five purchasers of Russian oil and gas – most significantly China and India. It also included sanctions against senior Russian figures, including Putin, as well as Russian financial institutions and Moscow's so-called "shadow fleet" of vessels used to circumvent existing embargoes. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said that the suspension would consist of a 60-day pause to allow for the Trump administration to analyse the impact they might have on the US and global economy. The suspension drew criticism from US politicians from both main parties. Democrats including the Virginia Congressman Don Beyer criticised the move, accusing Trump of capitulating to Moscow and turning his back on Kyiv and Zelensky. A handful of Republicans also came out against the move. Texas Senator Ted Cruz, a Trump ally, called waiving the sanctions a mistake, telling Fox News that there were other ways to address fuel prices, while the state's other Senatory John Cornyn called the move "reckless". North Carolina Senator Thom Tillis called it "beyond irresponsible", arguing that Trump could bring energy prices down by ending the Iran war instead of "doing a solid" for Putin.

EUROPEAN DIPLOMATS ATTACKED BY ISRAELI SETTLERS IN WEST BANK



A delegation of European diplomats has been attacked by masked Israeli settlers in the occupied West Bank. Belgium condemned the assault on its consul general and the other envoys, while France decried the attack as "appalling". Both called for Israel to bring those responsible to justice. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) also condemned what they called "the severe act of violence" and said they were investigating. But the office of the Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu cast doubt on what happened, suggesting it was part of a "co-ordinated campaign to smear Israel". The attack came only a day after a number of Palestinians and Heidi Levine, a Washington Post photographer, were injured in a separate assault by settlers in another village in the West Bank. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said the attack on Levine was "disturbing" and "not a good look". It was also condemned by the US ambassador to Israel, Mike Huckabee, who called it a "despicable act of terror carried out by masked cowards". A staunch ally of Israel, Huckabee said the assailants must face "prosecution to the fullest extent of the law".



Oil facilities hit in deadly overnight attack on St Petersburg

ANTI-GOVERNMENT PROTESTERS BATTLE WITH POLICE IN ALBANIA



Demonstrators and riot police fought pitched battles in the centre of Tirana on Saturday for the fifth day in a row. Masked protesters, many of them high school and university students, hurled rocks and petrol bombs at riot police trying to defend the education ministry, one of the focal points of the protests. The police responded with water cannon and volleys of tear gas, sending the crowds scattering. There are also reports that rubber bullets were used for the first time. Protests which began in the summer have grown into a wider anti-government movement, with calls for the prime minister to resign following corruption allegations linked to his administration. Many of the protesters in central Tirana wore gas masks or face masks, while volunteers handed out syringes of saline eyewash to reduce the pain from the tear gas which billows down the street. The constant boom of petrol bombs could be heard exploding on Saturday. During the afternoon, the focus of the protests shifted to the office of Prime Minister Edi Rama on the city's main boulevard. Here the crowds swelled to far larger numbers than on previous days. Riot police faced a steady hail of cobble stones and fireworks, and responded with barrage after barrage of tear gas, some of the canisters landing far back in the crowds, causing panic. Incensed by the gas, the crowds waited for it to clear, then renewed their attacks. Black smoke from a burning vehicle and the sirens of police cars and ambulances split the afternoon. As dusk fell, police special forces arrived to reinforce the riot police. Many people have been injured on both sides, 80 people have been charged with disorder so far, and hundreds more have been arrested, or are under investigation. The centre of the Tirana looks increasingly like a war zone, scattered with broken glass and burnt debris. George, a 19-year-old medical student who works as an electrician to fund his studies, stood near the burnt-out education ministry building, a scarf wrapped round his face and goggles covering his eyes. He is one of the thousands who have taken part in the increasingly intense protests which began in early June.

Jaqueline Amorim Accepts UFC Suspension After Contaminated Supplement Findings



Jacqueline Amorim, the UFC's women's strawweight, has received a six-month suspension. Low-level quantities of ostarine were discovered in two out-of-competition samples. The UFC's Combat Sports Anti-Doping programme (CSAD) said the evidence emphasised that the contamination was due to a supplement rather than intentional use.

UFC STAR JASMINE JASUDAVICIUS HIT WITH $10,000 FINE OVER BIZARRE FIGHT CONTROVERSY



Canadian flyweight Jasmine Jasudavicius stated that she was fined $10,000 after her April win over Karine Silva. Officials believed she had a nicotine product in her mouth. The 37-year-old insists it was only peppermint chewing gum. However, the Manitoba Combative Sports Commission still imposed its maximum penalty for an unauthorised foreign object. Jasudavicius returns to the Octagon on Saturday as the co-main event at UFC Edmonton. She faces former title challenger Erin Blanchfield at Rogers Place. A win could push the home favourite closer to a shot at the women's flyweight title. Jasudavicius explains the controversial Winnipeg UFC incident The incident occurred during Jasmine Jasudavicius' unanimous-decision win over Brazil's Karine Silva at UFC Winnipeg on April 18. The broadcasting cameras seemed to catch an object in her mouth. This led to online speculation that she was chewing tobacco or a nicotine pouch. Jasudavicius denied using any stimulant. She told Full Send MMA that "I got frickin fined that last frickin' card; I got fined because everyone thought I had a (nicotine pouch) in my mouth. I had gum; they charged me frickin' $10,000." She said. "I told them, 'Hey, it fell out on the mat; go and get it. That's the evidence, peppermint gum." Jasudavicius was fined despite officials failing to identify the mystery object The Manitoba commission's letter reportedly described the situation as an "unauthorised foreign object" being present during competition. Officials could not confirm what the object was or whether it offered any performance advantage. This is why Jasudavicius' win was not overturned. Still, the commission treated it as a safety violation and issued the maximum fine. Jasudavicius said they deducted the amount from her bank account. This left her frustrated with what she saw as an excessive punishment.

Babar Azam Achieves Major Milestone, But Virat Kohli's World Record Remains Untouched



Veteran batter Babar Azam achieved a significant milestone as he became Pakistan's fifth cricketer to complete 16000 runs in international cricket during the ongoing ODI tri-series on Sunday. Babar became Pakistan's third fastest player to reach the milestone during the first ODI of the tri-series against Sri Lanka at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium, with England being the other side. He took just 399 innings to complete 16000 runs across the three formats, being third fastest for the Men in Green behind Mohammad Yousuf (388 innings) and Javed Miandad (398 innings). He is just the fifth Pakistan player to get to the mark. Apart from him, Miandad and Yousuf, Inzamam-ul-Haq and Younis Khan have also made more than 16000 runs across the three formats. The former white-ball skipper Babar got to the milestone against Sri Lanka. Coming into the match, he needed only seven runs to reach the mark, and he got there pretty quickly in his innings. Notably, India's Virat Kohli is the fastest batter to complete 16,000 international runs, having achieved the milestone in his 350th innings. After Pakistan were sent in by Sri Lanka, Babar was out to bat at No.3 when Saim Ayub was caught at mid-off in the third over of the innings, bowled by Dilshan Madushanka. Babar opened his account with a beautiful drive off Asitha Fernando before another drive through the off-side brought him three runs. It was enough for him to reach 16000 runs in international cricket, but he wasn't done, though. The recently turned 32-year-old unleashed a few more good-looking strokes as he made 45 from 57 balls before he was dismissed by Eshan Malinga.

'Kill Shreyas Iyer, Marry Abhishek Sharma, Hook Up With Shubman Gill': Anaya Bangar's Clear Take



A video of Anaya Bangar, the daughter of former India cricketer Sanjay Bangar, is going viral on social media. It is from a recent interview in which Anaya was asked to play 'Kill, marry, hookup' with Indian cricketers Shubman Gill, Abhishek Sharma and Shreyas Iyer as the options. "Kill Shreyas Iyer, marry Abhishek Sharma and hook up with Shubman Gill," responded Anaya in Krishnank Atrey's YouTube channel. Anaya played age-group men's cricket for Mumbai before undergoing a gender-affirming surgery in March this year, completing a transition process that began in 2022. Anaya, who is planning to move to Australia to resume her cricketing career after undergoing gender-affirming surgery, urged the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) earlier this month to take a leaf out of Cricket Australia's playbook by introducing a pathway to enable transgender players to compete in women's cricket. "If BCCI can follow what Australia has done, that would be a wonderful thing," Anaya told Hindustan Times. On facing online abuse after undergoing gender-affirming surgery, Anaya added: "They haven't experienced what I have." CA's landmark verdict on transgender cricketers raised eyebrows, with South Africa all-rounder Marizanne Kapp criticising the decision. "Absolutely ridiculous, this should NOT be allowed!" Kapp said while tagging the official handle of the WBBL. Without taking offence to Kapp's comments slamming CA's decision, Anaya countered the Proteas star's remarks, saying the path had been cleared only after undergoing extensive testing. "I think I understand the place where she's coming from. To counter the point about the unfair advantage aspect: there has been testing done by the Manchester University Institute of Sport.

Yuzvendra Chahal Reveals Battle With Alcohol Addiction: "Crossed All Limits After Divorce"



Indian cricketer Yuzvendra Chahal, who recently retired from first-class cricket, has revealed that he battled alcohol addiction to the point where he had to check into a rehabilitation centre. One of the most successful bowlers in IPL history, Chahal has faced several personal challenges, including alcohol addiction and divorce. "After last year of county cricket... It (alcohol addiction) crossed all limits, so I checked into a rehab centre and stayed there for 26 days. Now, I know how to handle it," Chahal told former India opener Aakash Chopra on a podcast. "That decision made a massive difference to my personal life. My maturity increased. My emotions are balanced now. Last IPL, my body felt like I was 30 years old again -- doing gym work, fielding drills and training properly," he said. He said his family and friends helped him navigate the difficult phase of his life. "My best friend and family were there," the 36-year-old leg-spinner said. Chahal said his alcohol problems began around 2011, when he entered the IPL, and worsened after his divorce. However, he added that he is now in a much happier place after overcoming his addiction. "Initially, I was young. There were parties. In 2011, I played my first IPL. (South African cricketer) AB de Villiers once told me, 'Balance is key in life.' It sounds easy, but it is not. "Things got excessive after my divorce, and my mental state was not that great. I realised that if I continued down that path, I would ruin the very thing I love most -- cricket. So I put an end to it, and now I am in a much happier and better space," Chahal said. Speaking about the turmoil in his personal life, Chahal said being a public figure often gives people a free pass to comment on his private affairs. "When you are a public figure, everything happening in your life becomes an invitation for people to comment. I felt bad, and there were a lot of difficulties," he said. "I spoke to Anirudh sir (Chaudhry, former BCCI treasurer) and requested a break, and he was very supportive.

SENT HOME, STRIPPED OF CAPTAINCY:

PAKISTAN STAR SMASHES STATEMENT CENTURY VS SRI LANKA



Former Pakistan captain Salman Ali Agha smashed a century to power Pakistan to 305/8 against Sri Lanka in their ODI tri-series opener in Rawalpindi. Agha, who was recently stripped of the T20I captaincy, slammed 107 off just 90 balls to lead Pakistan's charge in an otherwise disappointing batting display. Salman was replaced as Pakistan's T20I captain by Sahibzada Farhan earlier this month after the opening batter led the side to a silver medal at the Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya. Before losing his place in the T20I side, Agha returned to Pakistan's domestic circuit, where he scored a triple century as well as 145 for Hyderabad Kingsmen Academy in the President's Trophy Grade-I tournament. This was his fourth ODI century since the start of 2025, making him the only Pakistan batter to hit multiple tons in that period. The 32-year-old had a miserable last three months. He was sent home ahead of the third Test in England in August after leading the team in the first match. Agha hit two consecutive boundaries off pacer Asitha Fernando to com-



Brighton's Diego Gomez Scores Stunning Halfway-Line Goal

Diego Gomez did a Beckham. Collecting the ball near the halfway line, the Brighton midfielder advanced just into Crystal Palace's half before launching a stunning strike over goalkeeper Walter Benitez and into the net in the seventh minute of Sunday's Premier League match at the Amex Stadium. The Paraguay international's audacious effort drew comparisons with David Beckham's famous long-range goal for Manchester United against Wimbledon on the opening day of the 1996-97 Premier League season. That strike remains one of the most iconic goals in English football and helped propel Beckham into the global spotlight.



Alejandro Davidovich Fokina Rallies Past Rafael Jodar To Win First Masters 1000 Crown In Shanghai



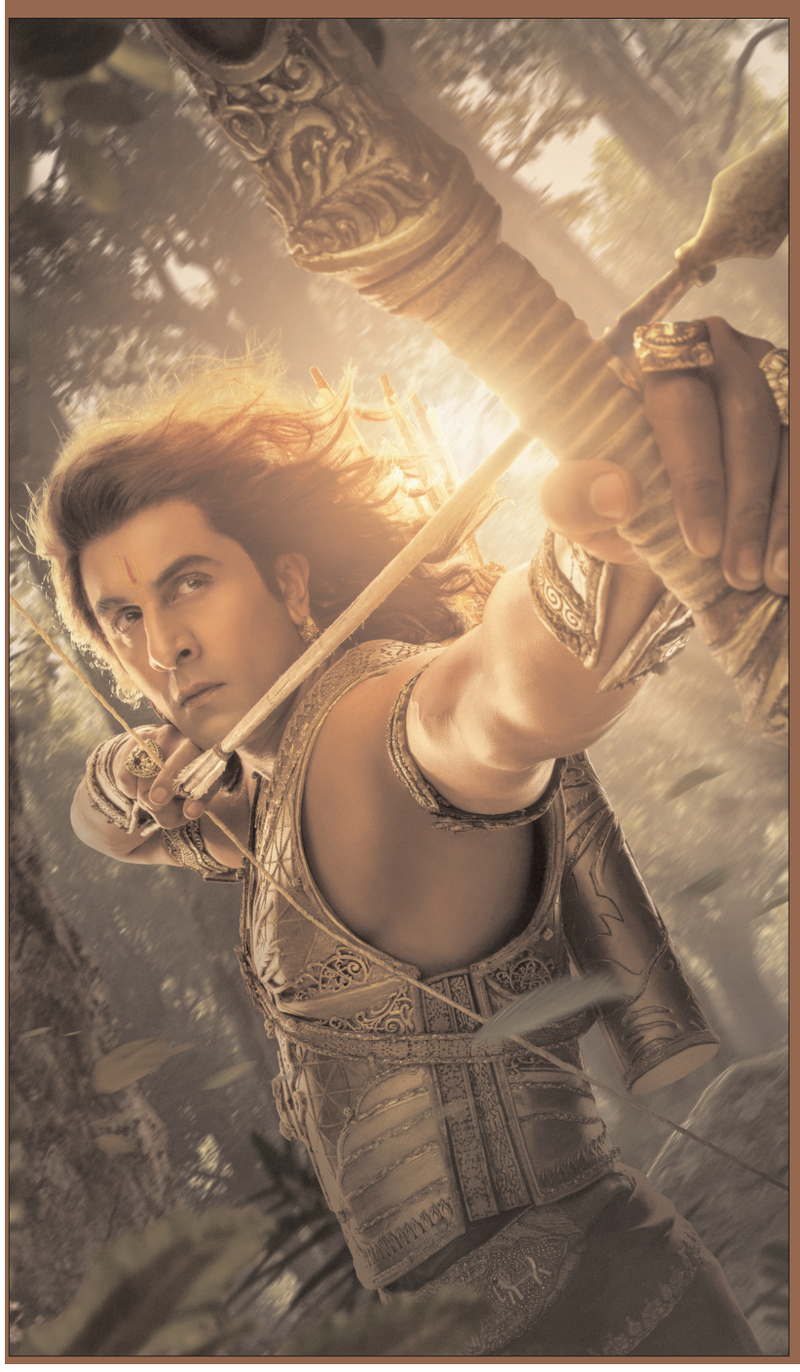
Alejandro Davidovich Fokina earned the biggest title of his career on Sunday, rallying past compatriot Rafael Jodar to win the Shanghai Masters crown. The 27-year-old Spaniard was trailing by a set and a break at 1-6, 2-3 before fighting back to secure a 1-6, 7-6 (5), 6-4 victory inside the Qizhong Forest Sports City Arena and claim his maiden ATP Masters 1000 title. En route to the final, Davidovich Fokina saved a match point against Frances Tiafoe in the third round and also recovered from a set down to defeat both Hubert Hurkacz and Alexander Zverev. With the two-hour, 28-minute victory, Davidovich Fokina claimed the third ATP Tour title of his career and by far the biggest. Having lost his first five tour-level finals, including his only previous Masters 1000 final at Monte Carlo in 2022, he has now won his last three finals following title runs in Mallorca and Chengdu earlier this year. Both players were attempting to win their maiden ATP Masters 1000 title. Jodar was appearing in his first Masters 1000 final, while Davidovich Fokina was contesting his second after finishing runner-up at the Monte Carlo Masters in 2022. After lifting the trophy, Davidovich Fokina collected the winner's prize of USD 1,151,380, while runner-up Jodar earned USD 612,340. The Spaniard will now head into the European indoor season carrying a 10-match winning streak.

"THERE'S DEFINITELY A REASON":

Dana White Breaks Silence On UFC Cutting 16-0 Farid Basharat

UFC CEO Dana White has offered a pointed but vague explanation for the promotion's decision not to re-sign undefeated Farid Basharat. The Afghan-British fighter left the UFC with a perfect 16-0 professional record and seven straight Octagon wins. Yet he was not offered a new contract after completing his previous deal. Basharat confirmed his departure on October 15, saying he had not been offered either a new contract or an opponent since his last fight. He also rejected any suggestion that he had turned down bouts. He called the situation disappointing and said the UFC was "heading in a different direction" from the organisation he grew up admiring. Dana White addresses Farid Basharat's departure Speaking after UFC Edmonton, Dana White was asked why a fighter with such a record had been allowed to leave. He avoided giving a direct answer but highlighted that the decision was about more than just results. "Yeah, I think that when guys' contracts are up, I mean, this isn't the first time this has happened," White said. . Which could be turning down fights or whatever the reasoning is." He then added, "If you're 16-0 with seven wins in the UFC and don't get re-signed, there's definitely a reason." The remark suggested there may be an unknown issue behind Basharat's exit. However, White did not specify it. Farid Basharat's undefeated UFC run ends in a shocking exit Farid Basharat secured his UFC contract through Dana White's Contender Series in 2022 and went 7-0 in the promotion in 2023. Some of his victories include defeating Chris Gutierrez, Taylor Lapilus, Jean Matsumoto, and Da'Mon Blackshear; however, six out of his seven UFC victories have been by decision.

RANBIR-YASH'S RAMAYANA TO PREMIERE AT LA'S ACADEMY MUSEUM



Ranbir Kapoor, Yash's Ramayana Set for Historic World Premiere at Academy Museum, Los Angeles

Ramayana, starring Ranbir Kapoor, Rocking Star Yash and Sai Pallavi, will hold its world premiere at the David Geffen Theatre of the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures in Los Angeles on the evening of October 27, 2026.

The invite-only premiere will host leading Hollywood figures, filmmakers, international press and prominent members of the film industry.

The Academy Museum is dedicated to the history, art and science of filmmaking, and has hosted several global events and Oscar-related celebrations over the years.

For Ramayana, the premiere is a significant moment as the makers introduce their Indian epic to an international audience.

The screening will be in 3D, before a full-capacity audience of 945 guests. With the premiere coinciding with Deepavali, the makers are also bringing the festive spirit of India to Los Angeles. Guests have been requested to arrive in traditional Indian festive attire for the red carpet. Directed by Nitesh Tiwari, Ramayana is produced by Namit Malhotra's Prime Focus Studios in collaboration with DNEG and Yash's Monster Mind Creations. The music is composed by Hans Zimmer and A R Rehman. The film is envisioned as a two-part cinematic epic. The first part releases worldwide on November 5, 2026, and the second part follows during Diwali 2027. Ramayana will release in Hindi, Telugu , Kannada, Tamil and Malayalam, and will also have an IMAX release. Sony Pictures will handle global distribution outside India.

PRABHAS' SPIRIT LOCKS DIWALI 2027 RELEASE



Rebel Star Prabhas, Sandeep Reddy Vanga, Bhadrakali Pictures, T-Series Films' Spirit Locks Diwali 2027 Release On October 29, 202 Rebel Star Prabhas and blockbuster filmmaker Sandeep Reddy Vanga are gearing up for a massive cinematic spectacle with Spirit, which has now locked its theatrical release date. The highly anticipated action drama will arrive in cinemas worldwide on October 29, 2027, coinciding with the Diwali festive season, setting the stage for one of the biggest releases of the year. The makers announced the date through a striking new release poster that presents Prabhas in an intense, stylish and mysterious avatar. Sporting a black cap, dark sunglasses and a thick beard, the actor appears in a close-up profile shot, with dramatic lighting accentuating his rugged appearance. The predominantly black-and-white visual creates a striking contrast with the film's bold red title lettering. Spirit brings together two formidable forces known for their larger-than-life cinematic appeal. Sandeep Reddy Vanga, who established a strong box-office track record with his first three films, is expected to explore another intense and uncompromising narrative with Prabhas at the forefront. The collaboration has generated considerable curiosity, with audiences eager to discover the character and world the filmmaker has envisioned for the pan-Indian star. Triptii Dimri plays the female lead, while Vivek Oberoi essays a pivotal role. The film is being mounted on an ambitious scale on a massive canvas by Pranay Reddy Vanga and Bhushan Kumar under the banners of Bhadrakali Pictures and T-Series Films. With its powerful combination of star appeal, the director's distinctive storytelling approach and a festive release window, the project is shaping up to be a major theatrical attraction. Spirit is planned for a multilingual release, targeting audiences across India and select international markets.

The film will have a global release in eight languages, including a few foreign languages, underlining the makers' ambition to take the Prabhas–Sandeep Reddy Vanga collaboration to a wider global audience.

KHUSHI KAPOOR FLAUNTS TONED ABS IN MALDIVES



Khushi Kapoor's Maldives vacation pictures are amazing, and she looks like she is enjoying every second. She goes from a floating breakfast to a jet ski ride, snorkelling, a beach cocktail and a lounge over clear water.

The main attention goes to her toned abs in the pink bikini, flat and well defined, showing how fit she looks. She keeps the styling simple with wet waves, small sunglasses and a wide smile that stays bright in every frame.

The leopard print swimsuit and beige knit mini dress add more beach looks to the set.

Next, she will be seen in Mom 2, the sequel to her late mother Sridevi's film Mom, where she plays Keerti alongside Karishma Tanna.

Chandrahas Kotla's New Film Launched with a Grand Pooja Ceremony Under Kurra Productions

Presented by K. Raghavendra Reddy and produced by Dinesh Kurra, the yet-to-be-titled film will be directed by Chendu Muddu.

A new film starring Chandrahas Kotla as the lead actor was grandly launched with a traditional pooja ceremony under the Kurra Productions banner. Presented by K. Raghavendra Reddy and produced by Dinesh Kurra, the film marks Production No. 3 for Kurra Productions. The yet-to-be-titled project will be directed by Chendu Muddu. The film's launch ceremony was held at the Sai Baba Temple in Film Nagar, Hyderabad, in the presence of distinguished guests. Dr. N. Satyanarayana, former Chairman of Telangana



RERA, sounded the clapboard for the muhurtham shot. Gangaraju Kakarla, Rangarao Vemulapalli, Siraj SM, and Madhusudhan handed over the script, while Srinivas Goud, head of Deepa Arts, switched on the camera. The film's title is yet to be finalised. Shiva Reddy SV will handle the cinematography, while D. Venkata Prabhu will take charge of editing. Maruthi Raja is composing the music for the project. With Chandrahas Kotla in the lead role, the film is gearing up to bring together an exciting team of talent. Further details about the cast and the film's storyline are expected to be announced in due course.

Crazy Kalyanam Is Winning Audience Rewards and Will Also Earn Awards, Says 'Navarasa Raya' Dr. Naresh Vijay Krishna at the Success Meet

'Crazy Kalyanam', starring 'Navarasa Ray' Dr. Naresh Vijay Krishna, Anupama Parameswaran, Tharun Bhascker and Akhil Uddemari of 'Raju Weds Rambai' fame, has emerged as a successful entertainer, winning appreciation from audiences across sections. Produced by passionate producer Boosam Jagan Mohan Reddy under the Arrow Cinemas banner as Production No. 2, the film is directed by Badrappa Gajula. Following its grand worldwide theatrical release and the encouraging response from audiences, the makers organised a grand success meet in Hyderabad.



'Amma Kanakadurga': Thaman S Brings Devotion to Music as Kanaka Durga Launches Its First Single in Vijayawada

Released during Navratri, the devotional song marks the beginning of the musical journey of Birla Studios and Temple Town Pictures' upcoming film, with Zee Music Company bringing the composition to audiences

On the auspicious occasion of Navratri, Birla Studios and Temple Town Pictures have unveiled 'Amma Kanakadurga', the first song from their upcoming devotional drama Kanaka Durga, in Vijayawada.

Composed by Thaman S and written by lyricist Sira Sri, the song celebrates the divine grace, strength and spiritual significance of Goddess Kanaka Durga, bringing the film's central theme of faith into focus through music.

The launch in Vijayawada



carries a significance beyond the occasion. Home to the revered Sri Kanaka Durga Amma Varu temple, the city holds a deep spiritual connection with the Goddess and welcomes lakhs of devotees, particularly during Navratri and Bhavani Deeksha. Unveiling the song here places the composition within the living tradition of devotion that inspires it, connecting the film's musical beginning with the faith of the people.

For Thaman S, the composition is deeply personal. A devoted follower of Goddess Kanaka Durga who regularly visits Vijayawada for her darshan, the composer brings an intimate sense of faith to the song. Through its melody and lyrics, 'Amma Kanakadurga' seeks to capture the emotion of a devotee's prayer, creating a musical expression of reverence that extends beyond the film to the wider devotional landscape. Produced by Birla Studios and Temple Town Pictures, Kanaka Durga stars Allari Naresh and Kajal Choudhary. Directed by Pradeep Maddali and written by BVS Ravi, the film brings together faith, action and emotion in a story rooted in the spiritual significance of the Goddess. The first single introduces audiences to this world through its devotional core.

The film's association with the traditions of Bhavani Deeksha also informed Allari Naresh's preparation for his role. During filming, the actor followed a disciplined lifestyle, abstaining from non-vegetarian food and footwear in keeping with practices associated with the observance.

The song was unveiled at a special event in Vijayawada attended by the cast and crew. With 'Amma Kanakadurga', the film begins its promotional journey by placing devotion and music at the forefront of its connection with audiences. 'Amma Kanakadurga' is now available on Zee Music Company's YouTube channel and leading streaming platforms.

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