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Statewatch, Page 2



Citybeat, Page 3



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Sports, Page 7

New Delhi, Sept 17

The event also saw Tata Electronics signing a deal with Ascendas First Space to develop



Fiscal incentives include 40 per cent capex support for silicon fabs on a pari-passu basis and up to 75 per cent combined Centre and

- **Semicon 2.0 could attract around Rs 4 lakh crore investment and enable nearly Rs 2 lakh crore in semiconductor production.**

Kolkatta, Sept 17

Sources in the city police said a reward of Rs 2.20 crore had been announced for information leading to his capture. The Jharkhand government had announced a reward of Rs 1 crore for his arrest, while the Odisha government had placed a bounty of Rs 1.20 crore on him.

Bengaluru, Sept 17

Against this backdrop, the CBI lodged a complaint against Partha Chatterjee in the special court on Thursday.

Hyderabad, Sept 17

Union Minister for Coal and Mines, G. Kishan Reddy also greeted PM Modi. With an unwavering spirit of seva and devotion to Maa Bharati, your tireless service and vision.

Sanaa, Sept 17

Houthi military spokesperson Yahya Sarea said Saudi F-15 fighter jets operating from the Khamis Mushait air base in southwestern Saudi Arabia carried out strikes on Taiz, Marib and Hajjah provinces. There was no immediate comment from Saudi authorities on the claim,

He also claimed that two formations of Saudi F-15 fighter jets entering airspace over Mocha in western Taiz province were intercepted at around 6:40 p.m. local time using locally manufactured surface-to-air missiles. According to Sarea, the aircraft withdrew before carrying out any attack.

Hyderabad, Sept 17

The draft electoral rolls will be published on November 25, open-

The revision process comes ahead of the upcoming vacancies in the Legislative Council, as the terms of sitting MLCS Surabhi Vani Devi and Teenmar Mallanna draw to a close.

Hyderabad, Sept 17

K.T. Rama Rao was reacting to the Chief Minister's announcement made in the Assembly on Wednesday that an en-

K.T. Rama Rao expressed full faith in the judiciary and demanded

The High Court also said that the lower court could revoke Partha's bail if it found any of the conditions had been violated.

In September 2025, the court imposed several conditions on the defendant, including that he must appear in court for a hearing with a judge once a week. The court also said that the lower court must report back to it if it found any of the conditions to be violated.



He claimed that the family property was earlier located in Konapur and that part of the property was acquired for an irrigation project in the 1930s.



Praja Palana Day Celebrated in Adilabad; Mohammed Ali Shabbir Unfurls National Flag

Munsif News Bureau
Adilabad, Sep 17:

Telangana Praja Palana Day was celebrated with a grand ceremony at the Adilabad Collectorate on Wednesday, with Telangana Government Advisor Mohammed Ali Shabbir attending as the chief guest. The programme began with Mohammed Ali Shabbir receiving the guard of honour from the police contingent before unfurling the national flag. He later paid floral tributes at the Martyrs’ Memorial (Amara Veerula Stupam), honouring those who sacrificed their lives for the nation and the state.

As part of the celebrations, a special programme was organised to promote sports and encourage young talent in the district. Shabbir distributed hockey sticks and a cash incentive of ₹30,000 each to 15 promising hockey players from Adilabad who were selected for the Telangana Hockey Academy. He congratulated the players on their achievement and encouraged them to excel



at the state and national levels.

District Collector Rajarshi Shah, Sub-Collector Pranay Kumar, Additional Collectors R.S. Chitru and S. Rajeshwar, Superintendent of Police Akhil Mahajan, Additional SP Monika, ASP Ritwik Sai Kotte and DSP Jeevan Reddy were among the officials present.

MLA Payal Shanker,

Preethi Reddy's Birthday Banners Spark Dispute Within BRS in Medchal

NSS
Hyderabad, Sep 17:

Birthday flex banners featuring Preethi Reddy, daughter-in-law of former Telangana minister Malla Reddy, have triggered a political dispute in parts of the Medchal Assembly constituency.

BRS activists reportedly tore down banners displayed in Suraram in Quthbullapur and parts of Medchal, objecting to the absence of

photographs of BRS chief K. Chandrashekar Rao, working president K. T. Rama Rao and local party leaders.

The activists also raised slogans against Malla Reddy during the incident.

The controversy comes amid speculation among party workers that Preethi Reddy could be considering joining the BJP. BRS activists reportedly demanded disciplinary action over the conduct of members of Malla Reddy’s family.

‘Modi Vani’ Book Released on PM Modi’s 76th Birthday

NSS
Hyderabad, Sep 17:

A trilingual book, “Modi Vani – Seva, Sankalpam, Vikasita Bharat,” was released at the BJP Telangana office in Nampally on Thursday to mark Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s 76th birthday.

The book was unveiled by Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy, for-

mer Governor Bandaru Dattatreya and BJP Telangana president N. Ramchander Rao.

Compiled by Dr. Vakulabharanam Krishna Mohan Rao, the book features selected statements from Modi’s speeches over the past 12 years in Hindi, Telugu and English, covering governance, social justice, women’s empowerment, youth, farmers and national development.

Congress Government's Welfare Push Transforming Medak: Minister Vivek

NSS
Hyderabad, Sep 17:

Energy and Mines Minister G. Vivek Venkataswamy said Medak district was emerging as a model of development under the Congress government, highlighting the implementation of welfare and development programmes across various sectors.

Speaking at Telangana Praja Palana Day celebrations, the Minister paid tribute to martyrs and freedom fighters and recalled that Hyderabad State was integrated with the Indian Union on September 17, 1948.

According to figures cited by him, women in Medak district benefited from Rs.4.73 crore worth of free bus travel and benefited to the tune of Rs.171.04 crore under the Mahalakshmi scheme.



Under Gruha Jyothi, 1,29,756 consumers received zero-amount electricity bills, involving a subsidy of Rs.113.80 crore. Another Rs.222.69 crore was disbursed to 2,66,674 farmers under Rythu Bharosa.

The Minister said 40,351 poor people benefited from Aarogyasri after the coverage limit was raised to Rs.10 lakh. The government also sanctioned Rs.180 crore for the Medak Medical College building and Rs.26 crore for the Nursing College.

He said 9,682 Indiramma houses had been sanctioned at a cost of Rs.484.10 crore, while Rs.177.08 crore had already been credited to 6,483 beneficiaries.

The district also procured 4,25,305 metric tonnes of paddy from 1,00,344 farmers, with payments of Rs.1,116.06 crore, he said.

The Minister said the government was focusing on education, healthcare, agriculture, employment and women’s welfare to accelerate development in Medak.

CII Summit Focuses on Accelerating Clean Technology Adoption Among Telangana MSMEs



Press Note
Hyderabad, Sep 17:

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) organised a special programme on greening MSMEs as part of the 25th Energy Efficiency Summit 2026 at the Hyderabad International Convention Centre. The programme focused on accelerating the adoption of clean technologies among micro, small and medium enterprises through technology, finance and partnerships.

The event brought together government officials, industry representatives, technology providers, financial institutions and MSMEs to discuss industrial decarbonisation and resource efficiency.

Under the “Greening of MSMEs in Telangana” initiative of the RAMP Programme, Research and Innovation Circle of Hyderabad (RICH), with CII as technical partner, plans to cover around 2,000

clusters and manufacturing sectors. The initiative includes 2,000 Resource Efficient and Cleaner Production assessments to identify opportunities for energy and material efficiency, water conservation, waste reduction, renewable energy adoption and reduction in carbon emissions.

Delivering the keynote address, D Srinivas Naik, Additional Director, Industries Department, Telangana government, said adopting greener technologies was both an environmental and economic necessity for MSMEs. He noted that recent energy audits had demonstrated significant scope for reducing carbon emissions and operational costs. Naik said the Industries Department would support MSMEs through guidance, incentives and faster approvals while encouraging them to work with industry associations and government schemes for greener growth.

Two Chevella Treasury Officials Caught Taking 1 Lakh Bribe

Munsif News Bureau
Hyderabad, Sep 17:

Two officials of the Chevella Divisional Sub-Treasury Office and an alleged middleman were caught by the ACB while accepting a ₹1 lakh bribe.

Sub-Treasury Officer Madiga Laxmaiah and Assistant Treasury Officer Kavali Anuradha allegedly demanded ₹2.50 lakh to process

salary bills and pending post-retirement pension adjustments. Following a complaint, the ACB laid a trap and caught the officials after the complainant handed over ₹1 lakh through alleged middleman Vadde Jangaiah.

The ACB seized the amount, registered a case and produced the three accused before the Nampally Judicial Court.

Jhari Urdu Medium School Teacher Honoured with

MOHD FAYAZ UDDIN
Kaghzanagar, Sep 17:

Mohd. Khaleel Uddin, School Assistant in Biological Science at ZPHS Jhari Urdu Medium School, has been honoured with an Outstanding Service Award in recognition of his dedicated and commendable contribution to the field of education.

The award acknowledges his sincere efforts, commitment to teaching and continuous contribution towards the academic development and overall progress of students. Through his dedicated approach to teaching, he has encouraged students to take greater interest in their studies and strive for better



academic performance.

The recognition also highlights his commitment to providing quality education and supporting the overall development of students. His colleagues, education officials and well-wishers congratulated him on receiving the honour and appreciated his continued efforts in serving students with dedication and sincerity.

The award was described as an encouragement for teachers who work consistently for the betterment of students and contribute towards strengthening government education. The honour is also expected to motivate educators to continue their efforts towards improving the quality of teaching and creating better learning opportunities for students.

Nine-Month Pregnant Woman Saved from Life-Threatening Stroke in Vizag

Press Note
Visakhapatnam, Sep 17:

Doctors at KIMS Seethammadhara successfully treated a nine-month pregnant woman who suffered a life-threatening ischemic stroke, using emergency mechanical thrombectomy to restore blood flow to her brain. She later underwent a Caesarean section and delivered a healthy baby boy.

The woman, from the Visakhapatnam region, was brought to the hospital with sudden weakness on the right side of her body and loss of speech. Medical examinations revealed severe blockage in major blood vessels on the left side of her brain, requiring immediate intervention.

Led by Dr. Venkatesh Pothula, Chief Consultant, Neuro and Vascular Intervention, the medical team performed an emergency mechanical thrombectomy to remove the blood clot. Special precautions were taken to mini-



mise radiation exposure to the foetus, and complete restoration of blood flow was achieved. As the patient was in the final stage of pregnancy, doctors closely monitored both the mother and baby throughout the procedure and recovery. Once her neurological condition stabilised, the obstetric team, led by Consultant Gynaecologist Dr. Pavani Manikya Palepu, planned the delivery. A Caesarean section was subsequently performed, resulting in the birth of a healthy baby boy.

Consultant Neurologist Dr. Raja Kumar P. said rapid identification of the blocked vessel and im-

mediate thrombectomy were critical in the case. He said medication, blood pressure, circulation and neurological status had to be carefully managed while ensuring continuous monitoring of the foetus.

The doctors stressed that stroke symptoms during pregnancy require immediate medical attention and should not be delayed because of the pregnancy. They said pregnancy alone should not be considered an absolute barrier to emergency mechanical thrombectomy and that timely multidisciplinary treatment can help protect both mother and baby.

Minister Assures Prompt Action on Sirpur Paper Mills Workers' Issues

MOHD FAYAZ UDDIN
Kaghzanagar, Sep 17:

Telangana Minister for Energy and Mines Gaddam Vivek Venkataswamy has assured representatives of Sirpur Paper Mills (SPM) workers’ unions that the government will take necessary steps to address their long-pending issues.

The Minister held a meeting with representatives of 10 workers’ unions at the State Secretariat on Wednesday. MLC Dande Vittal, Sirpur MLA Dr Palvai Harish Babu and other public representatives also attended the meeting.

During the discussions, MLC Dande Vittal raised several concerns of SPM workers, including the conduct of workers’ union elections, pending legal



matters, canteen facilities, establishment of an ESI hospital and an ATC, and protection of Labour Welfare Centre lands.

Responding to the representations, Minister Vivek assured that the process for conducting union elections would be initiated. He directed officials to issue notices and take action according to the rules regarding alleged violations of canteen regulations.

The Minister also said proposals for establishing an ESI hospital and ATC would be examined. He instructed officials to remove encroachments from Labour Welfare Centre lands and erect fencing to protect the properties.

The workers’ union representatives welcomed the assurances and urged the authorities to implement the proposed measures at the earliest.

VP Radhakrishnan calls for equal rights, dignity to strengthen national unity

NSS
Hyderabad, Sep 17:

Political integration can unite territories, but constitutional democracy is what brings citizens together, Vice-President C. P. Radhakrishnan stated on Thursday.

Emphasising that national unity cannot be sustained by geography alone, he stressed the need to reinforce unity through equal rights, equal dignity, and equal opportunity for all.

Speaking as the Chief Guest at the 79th Hyderabad Liberation Day celebrations held at the Parade Grounds in Secunderabad, the Vice-President remarked that Bharat's unity does not demand uniformity among its citizens.

He noted that while Indians speak different languages, follow diverse traditions, practice different faiths, and hold varied political views, they remain bound together by the Constitution and the fundamental principle that sovereignty ultimately resides with the people.

Reflecting on the significance of the occasion, Radhakrishnan stated that Hyderabad Liberation Day is

not merely the commemoration of a historic milestone, but a enduring reminder of the journey of nation-building and the core values that sustain Bharat.

He urged that the legacy of Hyderabad serve as a constant reminder that integration must lead to genuine inclusion, and that patriotism finds its highest expression in dedicated service to the nation.

Later, the Vice-President inspected the parade and witnessed the impressive March Past and evocative cultural performances at Parade Grounds. The cultural performances portrayed the struggle, valour and sacrifices of the people during the liberation and integration of Hyderabad, paying tribute to the courage and resilience of those who contributed to this historic chapter of India's nation-building journey. Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla, Union Minister for Culture and Tourism Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Union Minister for Coal and Mines G. Kishan Reddy, Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar, Malkajigiri MP Etela Rajender and other dignitaries were present

Future City master plan to be unveiled at Global Summit: Revanth Reddy

NSS
Hyderabad, Sep 17:

Telangana will unveil the comprehensive master plan for its upcoming 'Future City' during the Invest Telangana Global Summit in December 2026, Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy announced on Thursday.

Speaking at the Praja Palana Dinotsavam (People's Governance Day) after unfurling the National Flag at Public Gardens, Nampally, the Chief Minister outlined major global tech commitments driving the mega-project. Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) has pledged ₹70,000 crore to construct India's largest AI data center in Future City, while Amazon has already begun construction on a separate ₹1 lakh crore data center hub.

"We are developing the Future City featuring specialised zones, including the Young India Skills University, a Life Sciences Hub, an EV Park, an AI City, a Health City, and an



Education City," Revanth Reddy said.

The Chief Minister highlighted several key infrastructure projects designed to turn Telangana into an economic powerhouse, including the Regional Ring Road, greenfield expressways, dry ports, and strategic industrial corridors linking Hyderabad with

Nagpur, Bengaluru, and Vijayawada.

To strengthen state-wide transport links, the government has grounded road construction projects worth ₹13,000 crore under the Roads & Buildings Department, along with ₹6,294 crore under the Panchayat Raj Department. The initiative aims to pro-

vide continuous connectivity from rural villages and mandals to district headquarters and the state capital, the Chief Minister said.

Revanth Reddy emphasised that Telangana's per capita income has reached ₹4,18,931 — approximately 91% higher than the national average. "Our primary goal is to ensure development is reflected not just in statistics, but in the everyday lives of our citizens," he noted. Addressing environmental and utility challenges, the Chief Minister acknowledged current rainfall deficits linked to El Niño and the corresponding surge in power demand.

Revanth Reddy assured the public that contingency planning is underway to guarantee uninterrupted drinking water and electricity supplies across the state. Additionally, the government is working to expand workdays under rural employment guarantee schemes to support affected local communities, he added.

Harish files defamation suit against TPCC chief, Whip over black magic remarks

NSS
Hyderabad, Sep 17:

Former Minister and BRS Legislature Party Deputy Floor Leader T. Harish Rao filed a criminal defamation case on Thursday against TPCC President B. Mahesh Kumar Goud and Government Whip Addanki Dayakar for allegedly making defamatory remarks regarding his recent temple visit.

Harish Rao's legal team submitted the complaint before the Special Judicial First Class Magistrate Court for MPs and MLAs in Nampally, seeking action against the two Congress leaders under Section 356 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023. Video evidence and media clips were submitted via pen drives alongside documentary proof.

The controversy stems from Harish Rao's family visit to the Kollur Mookambika Devi Temple in Karnataka last month. While the BRS leader stated the trip was a routine spiritual pilgrimage, he alleged that the Congress leaders falsely accused

him of performing "black magic rituals" to prevent rainfall in Telangana. He claimed these statements were made at Gandhi Bhavan and widely circulated across media and social platforms to malign his personal faith and reputation.

Harish Rao further termed the allegations a deliberate political ploy to divert public attention from critical issues, including the implementation of Congress's six guarantees, irrigation management, drought relief, and farmers' grievances.

The legal action follows unheeded legal notices sent to both leaders last month demanding an unconditional public apology. According to the complaint, Mahesh Kumar Goud refused to accept the notice, while Addanki Dayakar defended his comments in a written reply.

Emphasising his 20-year career as a seven-time MLA and former senior cabinet minister, Harish Rao asserted that he would no longer tolerate personal slander and expressed full confidence in the judicial process.

Ponguleti questions KCR's asset growth, cites 2004 affidavit discrepancies

NSS
Hyderabad, Sep 17:

Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy sparked a fresh political row on Thursday, highlighting discrepancies in former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao's (KCR) election affidavits to accuse the BRS leadership of massive asset accumulation during their decade in power.

Citing KCR's 2004 Karimnagar Lok Sabha election submission, where the BRS chief reported owning zero acres of land, the Minister questioned how the family acquired vast landholdings



over the past two decades.

In a post on 'X', Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy alleged that the Kalvakuntla family amassed wealth at the expense of Telangana movement activists, accusing them of encroaching on government, assigned,

and Dalit-owned lands.

Tagging BRS working president K.T. Rama Rao (KTR), the Minister demanded clarification on whether past election disclosures were falsified or if recent claims regarding ancestral landholdings were misleading

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Targeting Makkah Mukarramah Unacceptable, Holy Mosques Must Be Respected: Osman Al Hajri

Munsif News Bureau
Hyderabad, Sep 17:

Senior Congress leader and Karwan Assembly Constituency in-charge Osman Bin Mohammed Al Hajri has strongly condemned the reported drone attack near Makkah Mukarramah, expressing concern over any attempt to threaten the security and sanctity of the holy city.

Al Hajri said Makkah Mukarramah is the spiritual heart of Muslims across the world and the sacred home of the Holy Kaaba, adding that any attempt to endanger the peace, security or sanctity of the holy city is deeply disturbing and unacceptable.

Referring to the statement issued by the Embassy of India in Riyadh on September 16, Al Hajri said the Government of

India had also expressed deep concern over the reported drone attack and reiterated its condemnation of attacks on the sovereign territory of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

He said the official position of the Government of India underlined the seriousness of the incident and the importance of respecting the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of Saudi Arabia.

Al Hajri emphasised that the sanctity of the Two Holy Mosques must be respected and protected at all times and that sacred places should never be drawn into military conflicts or political disputes. He expressed solidarity with the people and government of Saudi Arabia and appreciated the measures being taken to safeguard Makkah

Mukarramah and the holy sites.

"There can be no compromise on the sanctity and security of the Holy Mosques. Makkah Mukarramah and Madinah Munawwarah hold a unique and sacred place in the hearts of Muslims across the world," he said.

He appealed to the international community to support peace, restraint and stability in the region and ensure that sacred places and civilian populations remain protected from the consequences of armed conflicts.

Al Hajri also prayed to Almighty Allah to protect Makkah Mukarramah, Madinah Munawwarah and all sacred places, and to bless the region and the entire world with lasting peace, security and stability.

Include Nizam's Legacy, Hyderabad's History in Textbooks: Tehreek Muslim Shaban

Munsif News Bureau
Hyderabad, Sep 17:

A public meeting on "Police Action and Remembrance of the Nizam of Deccan," organised by Tehreek Muslim Shaban, was held at Masjid-e-Judi, King Kothi, Hyderabad, on Wednesday.

Addressing the meeting, Tehreek Muslim Shaban and Shari Faisla Board president Mohammed Mushtaq Malik welcomed the Telangana Chief Minister's remarks on the legacy of the Nizam of Hyderabad and urged the state government to include the Nizam's administration, his contributions to Hindu-Muslim harmony in school textbooks.

Malik also demanded that the government institute a "Nizam of Deccan Award" to honour individuals for outstanding contributions



to education, medicine and other public-service sectors.

He said September 17 should be observed as the day of Hyderabad State's integration with the Indian Union rather than merely as "Liberation Day". He alleged that certain communal forces were attempting to distort history and portray Muslim rulers as traitors or outsiders.

Malik said the Nizam's administration had contributed to the development of education, healthcare, irrigation and agriculture in

Hyderabad State, stressing the need to preserve historical records and create awareness among younger generations.

Former Urdu Academy president Mohammed Rahmatullah Khan Niazi, Sunni Ulema Board leader Maulana Shah Hamid Hussain Nazari, Hafiz Abdul Hafeez, Maulvi Ashraf Sharifi and others addressed the gathering. Floral tributes were later offered at the grave of the last Nizam, Mir Osman Ali Khan, followed by Fateha.

Telangana Prajapalana Dinotsavam celebrations at BRAOU

NSS
Hyderabad, Sep 17:

Prof. Ghanta Chakrapani, Vice-Chancellor, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Open University on Thursday hoisted the National Flag on the occasion of Telangana Prajapalana Dinotsavam at the campus.

Prof. Chakrapani said that even after the country gained independence, the people of Hyderabad State did not get freedom, but as a result of the struggles of the people

here at that time, freedom was secured for the people of Hyderabad State. He also explained the developments, new decisions and support provided by the Telangana government at the university over the years.

Dr. L. Vijaya Krishna Reddy, Registrar, Prof. Pushpa Chakrapani, Director Academic, Directors, Deans, Heads of Branches Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff members, and representatives of University Service Associations attended the celebrations.

MANUU Offers B.Tech, B.Ed, MBA and Other Courses at Low Fees

Munsif News Bureau
Hyderabad, Sep 17:

Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MANUU), Hyderabad, offers several higher education and ITI courses at affordable fees, Prof Mustafa Ali Sarwari, PRO and member of the Executive and Academic Council, said.

He was addressing students and staff of Government Junior College, Chanchalguda, during their visit to MANUU under the "Visit Urdu University" programme, organised by the MANUU Alumni Association.

Prof Sarwari said the university offers a one-year ITI Plumbing course for just Rs 60 annually, while the two-year AC Technician and



Refrigeration course also costs Rs 60 per year, which is refunded after completion of the course.

He said the four-year regular B.Tech course costs Rs 1,650 per semester for girls and Rs 5,500 for boys. The two-year B.Ed course costs Rs 5,500 per semester, while the annual fee for MBA is Rs 10,500 and for BA LLB Rs 11,250.

He also highlighted the university's low fees for MCA, MCJ and M.Com courses and urged parents to encourage their children to pursue higher education beyond SSC and Intermediate.

Prof Sarwari said

MANUU, established in 1998, has 1,200 B.Ed seats and has introduced a 10 per cent quota for local Hyderabad students. Under the "Visit Urdu University" programme, the university also provides free bus facilities for school, college and madrasa students visiting the campus. MANUU Alumni Association president Advocate Ejaz Ali Qureshi said the association was working to encourage more Urdu-medium students to pursue higher education at the university. Students later visited various departments, the Instructional Media Centre and the library.



At a Glance

3 held in Rs 3.76-cr digital arrest fraud

IANSTumakuru, Sep. 17

Gujarat Police’s Cyber Centre of Excellence has arrested three alleged members of a cybercrime network linked to a Rs 3.76-crore digital arrest fraud. Their bank accounts were allegedly linked to 29 cybercrime complaints across 13 states.

The accused — Gopal Ram and Nekdin Kathat from Rajasthan, and Deepak from Haryana — allegedly received about Rs 83.11 lakh and operated on commission to divert fraud proceeds.

Police said the accused used bank accounts to receive and transfer money, while one allegedly converted funds into USDT and passed the cryptocurrency to other network members.

Investigators also uncovered a modus operandi targeting people seeking online loans. Victims were allegedly lured with loan offers, made to download the Pushbullet application and then had their phones and bank accounts accessed.

Four mobile phones were seized. Police advised people to verify online loan companies and avoid sharing bank accounts, SIM cards, ATM cards or chequebooks.

‘An affront to womanhood’: SC orders Rs 12 lakh compensation

IANSSNew Delhi, Sep. 17

The Supreme Court on Thursday directed Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) to pay Rs 12 lakh compensation to a woman denied appointment, observing that discrimination against her on gender grounds was an “affront to womanhood”.

A bench of Justices Aravind Kumar and Vipul M. Pancholi questioned IOCL’s claim that she was unsuitable for work involving manual labour, LPG cylinder lifting and night shifts.

The woman was among 49 candidates recommended for jobs at IOCL’s Gudha LPG bottling plant but was rejected after an interview. As she has attained superannuation, the court awarded compensation instead of appointment. The dispute had earlier reached the Punjab and Haryana High Court.

Most-wanted Maoist leader in 3 eastern states arrested from Bengal’s Patashpur

IANSKolkata, Sep. 17

In a major breakthrough against Left-Wing Extremism (LWE), the Special Task Force (STF) of Kolkata Police has arrested senior CPI (Maoist) leader Asim Mandal, alias Akash, Timir and Manoj, who was among the most wanted Maoist leaders operating across West Bengal, Jharkhand and Odisha.

Mandal was apprehended in Patashpur in East Midnapore district during an early morning operation on Thursday, according to West Bengal Police.

Sources in the city police said a reward of Rs 2.20 crore had been announced for information leading to his capture. The Jharkhand government had announced a reward of Rs 1 crore for his arrest, while the Odisha government had placed a bounty of Rs 1.20 crore on him.

His arrest is being viewed as a significant success for security agencies and a major setback to Maoist activities in the tribal and forested regions spread across the three eastern states.



back to Maoist activities in the tribal and forested regions spread across the three eastern states.

Investigators reportedly recovered two bags from his possession containing Maoist literature, booklets and electronic communication equipment.

Police sources said Mandal’s wife, a resident of Patashpur and an alleged CPI (Maoist) activist, was arrested by the STF in 2010 and is currently in judicial custody.

A native of Fulchak village un-

der Chandrakona Police Station in West Midnapore district, Mandal is said to have become involved in Left-Wing extremist activities during his student years in the 1980s. He later joined the People’s War Group and worked extensively in the Sarenga and Goaltor regions of West Bengal, as well as the Gurabanda area of Jharkhand’s East Singhbhum district.

Security agencies’ records show that nearly 55 serious criminal cases are registered

against him across Jharkhand, Odisha and West Bengal. Several cases relate to attacks on security forces and armed encounters in Jharkhand.

Following the formation of CPI (Maoist) in September 2004, he returned to the Jangalmahal region covering parts of Bankura, Purulia and West Midnapore districts and became actively involved in the outfit’s activities. He also played a key role during the Lalgah movement, after which he was entrusted with the responsibility of Secretary of the West Bengal State Committee in 2010. He later held important positions in the Bengal-Jharkhand-Odisha Regional Committee.

According to police sources, the Maoist network in West Bengal suffered a major setback after the November 2011 encounter killing of senior Maoist leader Kishanji. Thereafter, Mandal is said to have gone completely underground and remained elusive for years until his arrest on Thursday.

Petroleum dealers seek MDR exemption on fuel sales

IANSSNew Delhi, Sep. 17

Representatives of the All India Petroleum Dealers Association (AIPDA) on Thursday met senior officials of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas to seek exemption from the merchant discount rate (MDR) on UPI transactions for fuel purchases at petrol pumps.

According to the dealers’ body, the issue was discussed with senior ministry officials as the additional MDR cost could put pressure on dealers’ margins, since retail fuel dealers operate on prescribed commissions.

Under the new UPI framework, transactions above Rs 2,000 for petrol and diesel purchases attract a flat MDR of Rs 5 per transaction. Petroleum dealers said such transactions account for around 30-40 per cent of total purchases across retail outlets in the country.

During the meeting, officials of the Petroleum Ministry explained the rationale behind the introduction of MDR, saying the charge was required to support the development of the next layer of India’s UPI digital infrastructure. “Petroleum dealers have



been at the forefront of adopting digital payments and have worked closely with the government to promote their use across the country,” AIPDA said in a statement.

The association said it would continue discussions with the government to find a solution that addresses the concerns of consumers, dealers and other participants in the UPI ecosystem.

Dealers have been seeking a complete exemption from MDR on fuel retail transactions, citing the nature of their business and the potential impact of additional payment-related costs on their margins. Digital payments have become an important mode of payment at petrol pumps, particularly for higher-value fuel purchases.

The Finance Ministry has clarified that MDR is neither a tax nor a charge collected by the government or the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI). The amount is distributed among participants in the payment ecosystem, including banks and payment application providers, to support the operation and expansion of UPI.

Transactions above Rs 2,000 in essential and thin-margin sectors, including railways, telecommunications, insurance, fuel and agricultural inputs, will attract the flat MDR of Rs 5 per transaction. The government has said the flat charge is intended to provide cost certainty for critical public services and businesses operating on narrow margins.

Calcutta HC Allows Mamata’s Sreerampore Meeting With 1,000-Person Cap

IANSSKolkata, Sep. 17

The Calcutta High Court on Thursday permitted former West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee to hold a public meeting at Sreerampore Court Maidan in Hooghly district on September 26, with a maximum of 1,000 participants.

Justice Saugata Bhattacharya, hearing the matter singly, fixed the meeting time from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. He also directed that no rally or procession be held after the meeting and that the organisers ensure that traffic movement on the nearby Grand Trunk Road was not disrupted.

The Mamata Banerjee-led faction of the Trinamool Congress had sought permission for 2,000 party workers to attend the meeting. The state government opposed the demand, arguing that the Court Maidan



was relatively small and that space needed to be kept vacant in view of Banerjee’s Z-plus security cover.

The government’s counsel submitted that allowing 2,000 people to gather in the remaining space could create a risk of trampling. TMC counsel and party Lok Sabha member Kalyan Banerjee disputed the argument, pointing out that around 50,000 people had recently gathered at the same venue for a programme featuring singer Shreya Ghoshal.

After hearing both sides, Justice Bhattacharya per-

mitted a maximum gathering of 1,000 people.

The case followed an earlier attempt by the Mamata Banerjee-led faction to organise a meeting followed by a rally at Sreerampore on September 11. The issue reached the High Court after complications over police permission.

The same single-judge bench had earlier permitted Banerjee to hold the meeting at Snanpiri Maidan in Mahesh, Sreerampore. The trustees of the adjacent Jagannath temple challenged that order before a division bench, claiming that the Maidan was private property and that no political programmes were permitted there.

The division bench subsequently referred the matter back to Justice Bhattacharya. The court finally granted conditional permission for the September 26 meeting at Sreerampore Court Maidan.

Kerala faces 28 per cent monsoon rain deficit, Wayanad worst hit

IANSThiruvananthapuram, Sep. 17

Kerala has recorded a 28 per cent deficit in southwest monsoon rainfall from June 1 to September 17, with Wayanad and Idukki among the worst-affected districts, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

Wayanad has recorded the highest rainfall deficit in the state at 54 per cent, while Idukki has registered a deficit of 47 per cent. The shortfall in the two major high-range districts has raised concerns as the southwest monsoon enters its final phase.

Weather officials have attributed the weaker monsoon conditions to the influence of the El Nino phenomenon, which has affected atmospheric and oceanic conditions associated with the southwest monsoon.

The rainfall deficit comes amid high temperatures in several parts of Kerala. Punalur recorded the highest temperature in the state at 37 degrees Celsius on Wednesday, while Thiruvananthapuram city recorded 35.4 degrees Celsius.

Despite the overall rainfall deficit, the IMD

has forecast the possibility of heavy rain at isolated places in the state in the coming days. However, the expected showers may not immediately make up for the accumulated shortfall.

Weather conditions have varied across Kerala, with some areas receiving spells of rain while several other regions remain comparatively dry.

The Weather Department is monitoring the changing conditions, with isolated heavy rainfall expected even as the state continues to face an overall shortage in monsoon rainfall.

Modi’s childhood friend recalls Vadnagar days

IANSMehsana (Gujarat), Sep. 17

Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s childhood friend Daulat Khan Pathan greeted him on his 76th birthday and recalled their years together in Vadnagar.

Pathan said their families were neighbours and they studied and played together at Prema School and B.N. High School. Recalling their childhood poverty, he said they often went to school barefoot and shared two pairs of clothes.

He also recalled joining the RSS with Modi in 1961 after arranging the Rs 1 fee. Modi later worked with the RSS, Jana Sangh and BJP, Pathan said.

PMAY Houses in Bengal to Be Registered in Women’s Names: Suwendu Adhikari

IANSSKolkata, Sep. 17



West Bengal Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari on Thursday announced that houses to be constructed under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) in the state will henceforth be registered in the names of women members of the beneficiary

families.

Speaking at an ‘Annapurna Day’ programme in Salt Lake, Kolkata, organised to mark Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s birthday, Adhikari said a list had been prepared for the construction of more than 50 lakh new houses in West Bengal.

“These houses will be registered in the names of women members of the families. All these houses will be owned by women. Agreements will be made in their names,” he said, describing the move as part of the state government’s commitment to

women’s empowerment.

Adhikari said the government’s objective was not limited to providing financial assistance to women but also included their development and empowerment.

He said a commission had been formed to investigate atrocities against women and asserted that crimes against women would not be taken lightly. He also said the government was taking steps against child marriage and pregnancies involving girls below 18.

The Chief Minister also announced the fourth instalment of the Annapurna

Yojana. He said more than 1.5 crore women had already received the financial assistance, while payments to other eligible beneficiaries would be made during the day. Under the scheme, women will receive Rs 3,000 a month, he said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who addressed the programme virtually, said beneficiaries would not have to pay any “commission” or “cut-money” to receive the assistance in their bank accounts. He said women had played an important role in the state’s transformation following the Assembly election results on May 4.



At a Glance

Fed sets up AI task force

IAN S
Washington, Sep. 17

The US Federal Reserve has set up a task force to study how artificial intelligence could affect the economy and future monetary policy, Chair Kevin Warsh said.

The task force is expected to report by year-end and will examine AI's impact on economic demand and supply. Warsh said decisions on its wider risks and opportunities would remain with other parts of the government.

The announcement followed the Federal Open Market Committee's unanimous decision to raise its benchmark interest rate by 0.25 percentage point to 3.75-4 per cent.

Warsh gave no details about the task force's members or whether its findings would be published.

He said strong domestic spending, productivity and capital investment were supporting the economy. Rising spending by major technology companies was among factors pushing up longer-term Treasury yields.

Pakistan's low conviction rate

IAN S
Islamabad Sep. 17

Pakistan's low conviction rate in child sexual abuse cases is contributing to continued offences, reports said. A Sahil report recorded 1,914 child abuse cases in the first six months of 2026, including 1,015 sexual abuse cases, 558 kidnappings and 101 missing children.

The data, compiled from media reports across Pakistan-administered regions, showed 58 per cent of victims were girls. Acquaintances accounted for 43 per cent of alleged perpetrators, while strangers accounted for 34 per cent.

The European Times reported that prolonged court proceedings, weak investigations and inadequate follow-up often result in few convictions. It said poverty, child labour, early marriage and unsafe environments also increase children's vulnerability.

Pakistan has introduced tougher punishments but has made limited progress in strengthening investigations and survivor protection, the report said.

TRUMP TIES \$5,000 PAYOUT TO REPUBLICAN VICTORY

IAN S
Washington, Sep. 17

President Donald Trump has promised a \$5,000 payment to every adult in the United States if Republicans win both chambers of Congress in the November 3 elections, linking the proposed "Trump dividend" to revenue from tariffs.

Campaigning in North Carolina for Republican Senate candidate Michael Whatley, Trump said the payment would be available to Democrats and Republicans alike. He did not provide details on eligibility, the payment schedule or the legislative mechanism required to deliver the money.

"If the Republicans win the House and Senate, I will issue what we will all call, from now on, the Trump dividend to every adult in America," Trump said. "We'll get \$5,000, and you'll get it."

Trump said tariff revenues would enable his administration to finance the payments, asserting that "tariffs have made us rich". He did not provide revenue estimates or details on the total cost of the proposed programme.

The proposal was



part of a broader appeal for voters to support Republican candidates in the midterm elections. Trump urged supporters to treat the election as though he were personally on the ballot.

"But in this election, I'm asking you to pretend I'm on the ballot just one more time," he said.

Trump also warned that a Democratic victory would threaten his administration's tax and border policies. The remarks were campaign assertions, and he did not provide a response from Democrats.

He pledged to make permanent tax provisions he said would eliminate taxes on tips, overtime and Social Security. "We're gonna make it permanent.

We're gonna put it in law," he said, without detailing the proposed changes or how Congress would enact them.

His other proposals included directing money currently paid to large health insurers to individuals so they could purchase their own coverage, mandatory voter identification and proof of citizenship, an end to cashless bail, and legislation aimed at preventing future presidents from opening the border to illegal immigration.

The \$5,000 proposal would require congressional approval. House Speaker Mike Johnson has said legislative authorisation would be necessary, while estimates cited by the Associated

Press put the potential cost at more than \$1 trillion.

Trump's pledge has also been linked to his earlier proposal for tariff-funded payments. Reuters reported that he first announced the dividend at a Republican convention in Dallas, without providing further details on implementation.

At the North Carolina rally, Trump also praised Whatley's campaign and urged voters to support him. Whatley said his campaign was focused on household finances, public safety and military strength.

Trump also called for lower borrowing costs, saying US interest rates should be 1 per cent or less.

Japan PM Takaichi reshuffles Cabinet, retains key ministers

IAN S
Tokyo, Sep. 17



Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi reshuffled her Cabinet on Thursday, retaining several key ministers and bringing the Japan Innovation Party (JIP), the junior coalition partner of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), into the Cabinet for the first time.

The reshuffle is Takaichi's first since she took office in October 2025. Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara, Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi, Finance Minister Satsuki Katayama and Defence Minister Shinjiro Koizumi retained their posts. Economy, Trade and Industry Minister Ryosei Akazawa was also retained.

Among the new appointments, House of Representatives members Kazuo Yana and Yoshihiro Seki were named agriculture and education ministers, respectively. Both had earlier faced LDP disciplinary action over a political slush fund scandal.

Hiroshi Nakatsuka, a former JIP secretary general, was appointed

ed minister in charge of regulatory reform. He became the first JIP member to join the Cabinet since the party formed a coalition with the LDP in October last year. The move shifts cooperation between the two parties to direct participation in the government.

Former Internal Affairs and Communications Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi was not re-appointed. Hayashi had competed against Takaichi in last year's LDP presidential election. His replacement was closely watched because of his position within the party.

The reshuffle comes as Takaichi's government prepares for a new parliamentary session and seeks to maintain continuity in its economic, foreign and security policies. The government is

also pursuing tax cuts and increased spending while facing concerns over Japan's public debt and rising government bond yields.

On defence and security, the government is preparing revisions to Japan's key security documents. The administration has also been advancing plans to strengthen defence capabilities, including greater use of unmanned systems and development of advanced missile technologies.

The reshuffle is also being viewed in the context of Takaichi's position as LDP president and the party's next leadership contest. Japanese media had reported before the reshuffle that personnel changes could help her consolidate support ahead of the 2027 LDP presidential election.

The new Cabinet was formally launched on Thursday after Emperor Naruhito attested the appointed ministers at the Imperial Palace. The official list confirms Takaichi as Prime Minister, with Motegi, Katayama, Koizumi and Kihara among the ministers retained in their posts.

Nepal to report lost passports to Interpol within 24 hours

IAN S
Kathmandu, Sep. 17

The Nepal government has made it mandatory to report details of lost, stolen or cancelled Nepali passports to Interpol within 24 hours of receiving a notification.

Under the "Procedure on updating details of lost, stolen and cancelled passports with Interpol, 2026", the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the details must be entered in Interpol's Stolen

and Lost Travel Documents database.

The Department of Passports will designate officials to handle such cases, maintain records and coordinate with the Interpol National Central Bureau of Nepal Police in Kathmandu.

The information must include the passport type and number, date of issue and expiry, the date it was lost, stolen or cancelled, and its possible location.

The ministry said the measure aims to ensure timely international sharing of information and prevent the misuse of lost or stolen Nepali passports. Cases involving possible terrorism, organised crime, human trafficking, illegal international travel or other misuse will be prioritised.

Passport holders or authorised representatives must report lost or stolen documents to the Department of Passports.

Those abroad must notify the nearest Nepali diplomatic mission.

After receiving a report, authorities will verify the holder's identity and passport details, mark the document as "lost" or "stolen" in their system and apply controls to prevent its use.

Nepali diplomatic missions must also verify reports and immediately forward the details to the Department of Passports.

TIBETANS DISTRUST CCP AFTER DECADES OF CHINESE RULE: REPORT

IAN S
Lhasa, Sep. 17



A report in The Tibet Express has claimed that decades of Chinese Communist Party (CCP) rule have failed to win the trust of Tibetans, citing restrictions on culture, language and religious practices.

The report said Tibetans increasingly view Chinese control as imposed rather than voluntary. It alleged that promises of autonomy and respect for Tibetan traditions made after the CCP entered Tibet in 1950 were not sustained.

According to the report, surveillance, checkpoints and digital monitoring have become part of daily life, while Tibetan children are increasingly educated in Mandarin-language boarding schools. It also alleged restrictions on monasteries and displays of the Dalai Lama's images.

Khedroob Thondup, nephew of the Dalai Lama, wrote in The Tibet Express that a free referendum would demonstrate whether Tibetans support

continued Chinese rule. His comments represent his assessment of the situation.

The issue of information access has also drawn international attention following devastating floods that struck Tibet and Nepal on August 26. Reporters Without Borders (RSF) said independent Tibetan and international media outlets had not been allowed to freely access affected areas in Tibet.

RSF said Chinese authorities authorised state media to report from the affected Tibetan areas and warned that restricted access was making it difficult to independently assess the scale of the di-

saster. The organisation described Tibet as a "de facto information black hole" under current media restrictions.

RSF also reported that Tibetan media outlets had cited casualty figures higher than China's official figures, while noting that limited access made independent verification difficult.

The August 26 disaster caused extensive destruction along the Nepal-China border, including Tibet's Gyirong area. Reuters reported that the floods left hundreds dead and many people missing, while rescue operations were complicated by damaged infrastructure and difficult terrain.



Life in Gaza

"Where homes once stood, memories now lie buried beneath the rubble."

EU PROPOSES SOCIAL MEDIA BAN FOR CHILDREN UNDER 13

IAN S
Brussels, Sep. 17

The European Commission on Thursday proposed EU-wide restrictions on children's access to social media, including a ban for those under 13 and a minimum age of 15 to open their own accounts.

Under the proposed EU KIDS Act, children below 13 would be barred from social media. Those aged 13 to 15 could use limited accounts created through a parent or guardian, with screen time capped at one

hour a day.

The proposal would require social media platforms, video-sharing services, online games, AI companions and chatbots used by minors to be "safe by design". Features such as infinite scrolling and push notifications during sleeping hours would be restricted.

Minors' profiles would be private by default, with geolocation, camera and microphone access switched off, Xinhua News Agency reported.

AI companions and chatbots would be disabled by default for minors and barred from simulating relationships that could create emotional dependency.

Online services and app stores would have to introduce age-assurance mechanisms. The Commission said its EU age-verification app would not retain identity documents or biometric data.

Very large online platforms would have to prove their services are safe for

children and submit compliance plans for independent auditing.

Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said the proposal aimed to put parents "back in the driving seat" and require platforms to prove their services were safe by design.

The proposal has been submitted to the European Parliament and the Council of the EU for approval. Fines could reach 6 per cent of a company's worldwide annual turnover.

DR CONGO EBOLA CASES CROSS 7,400 AS OUTBREAK SHIFTS

IAN S
Kinshasa, Sep. 17

The Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is showing a changing pattern, with transmission easing in Ituri but rising rapidly in North Kivu, where treatment capacity is nearing saturation, according to the latest government situation report.

As of Tuesday, the country had reported 7,404 confirmed cases and 3,577 deaths, with a case fatality rate of 48.3

per cent. A total of 1,776 patients have recovered. The outbreak has affected 62 health zones across seven provinces, with Ituri accounting for 77.7 per cent of confirmed cases.

North Kivu is facing acute pressure on treatment facilities, with 373 patients hospitalised and bed occupancy reaching 94.7 per cent, Xinhua News Agency reported.

J e a n - J a c q u e s Muyembe, head of the National Institute of

Biomedical Research, said Ituri had passed its "peak" and entered a "downward slope". However, he said the epidemic curve in North Kivu was still rising and had not reached a plateau.

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said the response was showing encouraging signs in some badly affected areas, particularly Ituri, but warned that the epidemic continued to spread and claim lives.

In North Kivu, weekly

cases nearly doubled over the previous two weeks, rising from about 100 to more than 200. Tedros said the vast affected area meant the situation could not be viewed as a single outbreak, but as multiple outbreaks in different locations.

The current outbreak has become the DRC's largest and deadliest Ebola epidemic and the second-largest globally, after the 2014-2016 epidemic in West Africa. Cases could increase.

Drone Near Mecca: A Dangerous Escalation That Demands Restraint



The reported interception of a Houthi drone near Mecca has added a deeply sensitive dimension to an already dangerous escalation in the Middle East. Saudi Arabia said its air defences intercepted and destroyed a drone south of the holy city on Tuesday evening before it entered Mecca's prohibited airspace. Saudi officials described the incident as an attempt to target the city, while the Houthis have strongly denied targeting Mecca or any other Islamic holy site.

According to Saudi-led coalition spokesperson Major General Turki Al-Maliki, the drone was intercepted at around 6:50 p.m. local time. He described the incident as the second reported attempt to target Mecca, referring

to a ballistic missile incident in July 2017. Saudi Arabia has stressed that the security of Mecca, the Two Holy Mosques and millions of pilgrims is a red line, and has warned of necessary measures against those responsible.

The Houthis, however, have rejected the Saudi account. Their military spokesman Yahya Saree said their targets were Saudi oil facilities and military positions far from the holy places, insisting that Yemen posed no threat to Islamic sacred sites. This conflicting account makes it important that claims surrounding the incident be examined carefully and independently rather than allowing an already volatile situation to become the basis for further escalation.

The significance of the reported incident goes far beyond the immediate military confrontation. Mecca is Islam's holiest city and the birthplace of Prophet Muhammad. Millions of Muslims travel there every year for Hajj and Umrah, while the Kaaba remains the direction of prayer for Muslims across the world. Any military incident in its vicinity therefore carries an exceptional religious and humanitarian sensitivity.

The international reaction reflects that sensitivity. The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, representing 57 member states, condemned the reported attacks and stressed the need to protect the sanctity of holy sites and mosques. Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif

also condemned the reported attempted attack and reaffirmed support for Saudi Arabia.

India, too, has expressed deep concern. Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said New Delhi condemns attacks on Saudi Arabia's sovereign territory and actions that endanger civilian lives and infrastructure. He specifically described the incident near Mecca as particularly concerning because of the city's special significance to Muslims worldwide, while expressing hope for an early restoration of peace and stability in the region.

The incident comes at a particularly dangerous moment for Saudi Arabia and the wider region. Houthi attacks on Saudi

targets have intensified in recent days, while the group has also expanded its control in parts of Yemen near strategically important Red Sea routes. Saudi Arabia has responded with airstrikes against Houthi-held areas of Yemen. The continuing cycle of attack and retaliation risks opening another front in a conflict that is already connected to wider regional tensions.

The security dimension is also closely linked to the global energy market. Recent attacks and disruptions have affected Saudi oil infrastructure and export routes, while the strategic importance of the Red Sea and Bab el-Mandeb has grown as shipping through the Strait of Hormuz remains under severe pressure. Any further deterioration could therefore have consequences far beyond Yemen and Saudi Arabia, affecting energy supplies, shipping and international markets.

For Saudi Arabia, the challenge is particularly delicate. The Kingdom must protect its territory and critical infrastructure while ensuring the safety of millions of pilgrims and residents. At the same time, a military response that expands the conflict could carry wider security, economic and humanitarian costs. The Houthis, for their part, face international scrutiny over attacks on Saudi territory and must address the consequences of any actions that could place civilians or sacred

sites at risk. The reported incident near Mecca should therefore serve as a warning rather than another trigger for escalation. Whatever the competing claims about the drone's intended target, the proximity of military activity to one of Islam's holiest cities makes restraint essential. Sacred places must remain protected from the wider cycle of regional conflict, and civilian populations should not become victims of geopolitical confrontation.

The priority now should be preventing further escalation, establishing the facts surrounding the incident and creating space for diplomacy. Saudi Arabia's security concerns, the safety of pilgrims, Yemen's humanitarian crisis and the wider stability of the Gulf and Red Sea cannot be addressed through an endless cycle of retaliation.

At a time when the Middle East is already facing multiple interconnected conflicts, the reported drone incident near Mecca demonstrates how quickly a regional confrontation can acquire a much wider religious, humanitarian and economic dimension. The international community, particularly countries with influence in the region, should encourage maximum restraint and support diplomatic efforts aimed at restoring peace and stability. The sanctity of Mecca and the safety of those who travel there should remain beyond the reach of military confrontation.

UPI MDR can help make digital payments ecosystem sustainable: Fintech leaders



The introduction of a Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) on Unified Payments Interface (UPI) transactions could provide a sustainable revenue model for the digital payments ecosystem and support its expansion to one billion users over the next decade, fintech industry leaders said on Wednesday.

MobiKwik Co-founder, Executive Director and CFO Upasana Taku said UPI has transformed India's payments landscape over the past decade and played a significant role in expanding access to financial products and services.

However, the rapid growth of UPI has also created a significant cost burden for banks and financial institutions, she said, as transactions currently generate little or no direct revenue despite accounting for a substantial share of their payment portfolios.

"UPI has already transformed the Indian economy, but the ecosystem also needs a sustainable economic model to support its next phase of growth," Taku said in an interaction with IANS.

She noted that around 500-600 million people currently use UPI and that expanding the platform's reach to one billion users over the next 10 years would require a stable source of revenue. According to Taku, the server cost associated with a single UPI transaction is currently around 17-20 paise. In addition to these direct costs, banks and fintech companies have to invest heavily in engineering infrastructure, risk management and cybersecurity to operate and secure the payment ecosystem.

She said government incentives provided to support UPI operations have covered only around 10 per cent of the overall cost, making the introduction of MDR an important step towards improving the financial sustainability of the system.

MobiKwik Co-founder, Managing Director and CEO Bipin Preet Singh also backed the move, saying UPI has helped India build the world's largest real-time payments ecosystem over the past decade.

He pointed out that the infrastructure is largely supported by banks and financial institutions, which incur significant operational and technology costs.

"Introducing UPI MDR can strengthen the long-term sustainability of the ecosystem," Singh said.

The fintech executives said a sustainable revenue framework would be important for maintaining investments in technology, cybersecurity and risk management as UPI usage continues to expand across the country.

India approaches Q3 FY27 from position of relative macroeconomic resilience: Report

India approaches Q3 FY27 from a position of relative macroeconomic resilience, despite a more challenging external environment characterised by geopolitical tensions, volatile commodity prices and uneven monsoon conditions, a report showed on Wednesday.

India's macroeconomic fundamentals nevertheless continue to provide an important buffer against external shocks, according to the Dun & Bradstreet 'Economic Observer: Q3 FY27 Review'.

The latest GDP release points to a firm start to the fiscal year, with real GDP expanding by 7.8 per cent in Q1 FY27, compared with 6.9 per cent in Q1 FY26, while nominal GDP growth stood at 10.3 per cent.

The upturn was supported by stronger production-side activity, investment momentum and resilient services-sector performance, even as the RBI's FY2026-27 growth projection of 6.7 per cent implies some moderation over the rest of the year, said the review.

Economic activity during Q1 FY2026-27 was firmly investment-led, with Gross Fixed Capital Formation growing by

11.9 per cent at constant prices, nearly double the 5.8 per cent growth recorded in Q1 FY2025-26.

Industrial production accelerated from 4.9 per cent in April 2026 to 7.3 per cent in June 2026, supported by manufacturing and capital goods, while construction and services activity also remained strong.

High-frequency indicators continued to point to resilient domestic demand, with GST collections, digital payments and electricity consumption holding up, and labour market conditions remaining broadly stable as the unemployment rate eased to 5.1% in Jul 2026.

Foreign exchange reserves remained sizeable, while strong services exports and remittance inflows continued to support external stability.

Going into Q3 FY27, the key macroeconomic risks are likely to arise from food inflation, adverse monsoon outcomes, elevated energy prices and persistent geopolitical uncertainty.

However, strong domestic demand, sustained public capital expenditure and healthy balance-sheet conditions should continue to support economic growth, the report noted.

8th Pay Commission begins discussions in Chandigarh

The eighth Central Pay Commission is set to begin a three-day visit to Chandigarh on Wednesday, as part of its consultations on pay and pension-related matters.

The commission will hold meetings with civil service unions, pensioner groups and representatives of the regional administration till Friday.

The discussions are expected to focus on pay conditions and submissions from public sector stakeholders in northern India.

The eighth Central Pay Commission is led by former Supreme Court Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai while its members include Pankaj Jain, a former IAS officer serving as Member-Secretary, and Pulak Ghosh, a tenured Professor of Finance and a member of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister.

Representatives from Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Chandigarh are expected to submit their views on the pay and pension revision during the commission's meetings.

Employee associations, pensioner groups and other stakeholder bodies, including those representing railway and defence personnel, will put forward their views before the panel.

The feedback gathered during these consultations will form part of the inputs considered while framing its recommendations.

The commission's work could have a bearing on the financial interests of more than one crore employees and pensioners.

The affected population includes around 50 lakh Central government employees and about 65 lakh pensioners, covering defence and railway personnel as well as retirees.

Employee representatives are seeking a higher fitment factor, which would raise the base used to calculate salaries under the next pay revision. Unions are also calling for changes to the Dearness Allowance (DA) framework, including more frequent revisions and a possible merger with basic pay after a specified threshold is reached.

Several submissions seek a review of house rent allowance (HRA), transport allowances and hardship-related payments, with demands for higher rates that take account rising costs in cities and difficult postings. Pensioner organisations are seeking stronger safeguards for retirement income, enhanced family pension provisions and better healthcare support after retirement.

Employee bodies are also raising concerns over promotion structures, service conditions and the competitiveness of government compensation as part of efforts to sustain workforce morale and recruitment.

UPI Users Won't Be Charged, New MDR Framework to Fund Ecosystem: PhonePe CEO



The new Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) framework for UPI transactions will not impose any charges on customers and the move is necessary to make India's digital payments ecosystem financially sustainable, PhonePe CEO Sameer Nigam said on Wednesday.

In an interview with IANS, the PhonePe CEO clarified that customers will continue to use UPI without any charges, while small merchants with an annual turnover of less than Rs 1 lakh will also remain outside the MDR regime.

"No, there are no fees for customers on UPI at all. Customers have never been charged for using UPI, nor will they be charged in the future," Nigam said.

For larger shops, 96 per cent of the transactions, which are all below Rs 2,000, there will be no charge, according to him. He added that merchants,

and not customers, would pay a 0.4 per cent MDR on transactions above Rs 2,000.

He said the revenue generated through MDR would help fund investments by companies and banks that form the UPI ecosystem.

"The industry spends about Rs 10,000 crore to Rs 12,000 crore a year minimum on just keeping UPI infrastructure alive," Nigam told IANS.

Apart from infrastructure, the sector incurs costs related to KYC, cybersecurity, risk and fraud mitigation, merchant chargebacks and capital expenditure, he added.

"We needed a way to get that revenue back into the industry so that UPI grows in a sustainable manner," Nigam said.

Asked whether consumers should be concerned about charges, Nigam said there would be no additional cost for them, either

for person-to-person or person-to-merchant transactions.

"There is no charge for the customer. Person-to-person is also free, person-to-merchant is also free," he said, adding that merchants paying MDR would not be allowed to pass the charge on to customers.

Nigam also said he expected India's digital payments market to continue growing rapidly despite the introduction of the MDR framework.

According to Nigam, UPI had around 20 crore users by 2020, while the number has now risen to around 50-55 crore.

He said the new revenue model could also help private companies in the fintech sector invest more in marketing, innovation and research and development.

"It is very important that businesses be able to make fair money," Nigam said.

Gold, Silver Miners' Stocks May Outshine Metals: Report

Gold and silver mining stocks may offer investors a more attractive way to participate in the current precious-metals rally than the metals themselves, a report by Rational Equity Asset Management said on Wednesday.

The report said miners are generating double-digit free cash flow yields even with flat metal prices, supported by stronger balance sheets, healthy cash generation and limited new supply. Mining equities also remain below their decade-average valuations, creating potential for them to outperform bullion.

For Indian investors, who traditionally invest in physical gold and ETFs, mining equities offer additional benefits such as capital appreciation, dividends and buybacks. The report noted that global precious-metal gains combined with rupee movements can further boost INR-denominated returns.

According to the report, Rs 1 lakh invested in 24-karat physical gold at the 2023 breakout would have grown to Rs 2.30 lakh, compared with Rs 2.53 lakh in Indian gold ETFs and Rs 3.77 lakh in global gold mining equities (GDX, INR-converted).



570 PLAYERS TAKE PART IN TELANGANA STATE RANKING TABLE TENNIS TOURNAMENT

Hyderabad, Sep. 17:

The sixth Table Tennis for Life Telangana State Ranking Table Tennis Tournament began at Lal Bahadur Shastri Stadium here on Thursday, with 570 players competing across various age categories. Organised by Former Table Tennis Players under the auspices of the Telangana State Table Tennis Association (TSTTA), the three-day tournament will conclude on September 19.

The tournament was inaugurated by A. Narsimha Reddy, former Chairman of the Bar Council of Telangana State. P. Prakash Raju, Mentor, TSTTA, was the Guest of Honour.

TSTTA President K.K. Maheswari, Sports Authority of Telangana Deputy Director Ravinder, TSTTA General Secretary Nagender Reddy and other officials were present.

On the opening day, qualifying matches were held in the Under-17 Boys, Under-13 Boys and



In Group 1, Isaac Pranav beat K Dhairtya 3-0 and Ranadheer 3-0, while Dhairtya defeated Ranadheer 3-0.

In Group 2, Virat M defeated Dheeraj Kumar and Neelameghan 3-0 each. Dheeraj beat Neelameghan 3-2.

In Group 3, Virat Sagar beat Laishram 3-2 and P Jwalith 3-0. Jwalith defeated Laishram 3-1.

In Group 4, Chandras beat Sri Ranga 3-0 and Karthikeya 3-1. Sri Ranga defeated Karthikeya 3-2.

In Group 5, Manohar beat Jatin Jairam 3-1 and Juhit 3-2, while Juhit defeated Jatin 3-0.

In Group 6, Mannava

Chetan beat Srineer Reddy 3-0 and Gaurav 3-1. Srineer defeated Gaurav 3-1.

In Group 7, Suhaan beat Aarman and Vedansh 3-0, while Vedansh defeated Aarman 3-0.

Under-13 Boys

In Group 1, V Srikara received a walkover from Shreysh and beat Jishnu 3-0.

In Group 2, Siddharth beat Himanshu 3-1 and Smaran Reddy 3-0, while Himanshu defeated Smaran 3-1.

In Group 3, Sambhav beat Anoop 3-0.

In Group 4, Jatin defeated Harshith and Gowtam 3-0, while Gowtam beat Harshith 3-0.

In Group 5, Bavyansh

defeated Ajith and Hitesh 3-0.

In Group 6, Nivaan beat Dhavent 3-0 and Keshava 3-2.

Under-15 Girls

In Group 1, Jain Myra beat Kaashvi and Aaradhyia 3-0, while Aaradhyia defeated Kaashvi 3-0.

In Group 2, Jaslyn beat Siri Keerthana and Adwitha 3-0. Siri Keerthana defeated Adwitha 3-0.

In Group 3, Spoorthi defeated Dhruvi and Tanvi 3-0, while Dhruvi beat Tanvi 3-1.

In Group 4, Adhira Chetan beat Ananya 3-0 and Rasmeet 3-1. Rasmeet defeated Ananya 3-0.

In Group 5, Rithika beat Smita 3-2 and Pranavi 3-0, while Smita defeated Pranavi 3-0.

The organisers said the tournament aims to promote competitive table tennis, encourage emerging talent and provide players with an opportunity to compete at the state level.

ABHISHEK SHARMA'S 108: A RECORD - BREAKING T20I BLITZ

New Delhi, Sep. 17:

India's star batter Abhishek Sharma ripped up the record books with a stunning knock in the third and final T20I of the series against Afghanistan at the Arun Jaitley Stadium here on Thursday.

Abhishek put on a power-hitting masterclass, smashing a 30-ball hundred and breaking the long-standing record for the fastest T20I century by an Indian. The previous record was held by former captain Rohit Sharma, who scored a 35-ball hundred against Sri Lanka in Indore in 2017.

The recently turned 26-year-old also set the record for the fastest century by a batter from a full-member nation and the fastest century against a full-member nation. Zimbabwe's Sikandar Raza and New Zealand's Finn Allen had jointly held the former record with 33-ball hundreds, while Allen held the latter record after his 33-ball century against South Africa in the 2026 T20

World Cup semi-final.

Abhishek broke several other records before being dismissed for 108 off 34 balls. He now holds the record for the most runs by an individual in the first six overs of a men's T20I.

He smashed 76 off 22 balls in the powerplay, surpassing Portugal's Kuldeep Gholiya, who scored 74 off 25 balls against Malta in 2023.

Abhishek also extended his record for the most T20I fifties scored in 20 balls or fewer, registering his sixth such fifty. He reached the milestone off just 16 balls.

With 10 centuries in T20 cricket, Abhishek has equalled India great Virat Kohli's tally. He needs one more century to become India's leading century-maker in the shortest format.

The left-hander hit 11 sixes in the innings, taking his series tally to 22. He has equalled his own record for most sixes in a T20I series for India, matching the 22 he smashed against England in 2025.



PRITHVI SHAW, AKRITI AGARWAL CALL OFF ENGAGEMENT, SAY THEIR PATHS HAVE CHANGED



Prithvi Shaw and Akriti Agarwal Call Off Engagement, Confirm Break-Up

Indian cricketer Prithvi Shaw and actress Akriti Agarwal have ended their relationship months after getting engaged. Akriti confirmed their separation in a social media post on Tuesday, putting an end to speculation surrounding the couple's relationship.

In her statement, Akriti said the decision was taken mutually after both realised that their goals and outlook towards the future were different. She

said they continue to have immense love and respect for each other but understood that their paths were now different.

Akriti also requested people to respect their privacy during the difficult period and refrain from spreading false information about their personal lives.

The couple had reportedly travelled to Tokyo around two months ago. However, Akriti later removed their travel vlogs from social media, leading to speculation that all was not well between them. Her latest statement

has now confirmed that the couple had decided to part ways.

Shaw and Akriti had got engaged in May this year in a ceremony that attracted considerable attention on social media. Shaw had shared pictures from the engagement and described Akriti as his "perfect innings". The couple was also seen together at the wedding of Arjun Tendulkar following their engagement.

The break-up comes at a challenging time for Shaw professionally as well, with the young opener currently away

DOUBLES EVENTS INDIA'S BRIGHTEST MEDAL HOPES IN TABLE TENNIS: NEHA AGGARWAL

Mumbai, Sep. 17:

Former India paddler Neha Aggarwal Sharma believes the country's table tennis contingent has the experience and temperament to improve its modest Asian Games record, with mixed doubles, men's doubles and women's doubles offering strong medal opportunities at Aichi-Nagoya.

Olympians Sreeja Akula and G Sathiyam will lead India's 10-member squad, with table tennis events scheduled from September 20 to 28 at Sky Hall Toyota in Aichi Prefecture, Japan. The men's team also includes Harmeet Desai, Manav Thakkar, Manush Shah and Payas Jain, while Ankur Bhattacharjee and Ronit Bhanja are reserves.

Neha said the men's team has considerable experience, with Sathiyam, Harmeet, Manav and Manush having featured at the previous Asian Games and other major international events.



On the women's side, Neha acknowledged that India would miss Manika Batra but backed Sreeja, who recently won a WTT Feeder title. She also praised Diya Chitale, Yashaswini Ghorpade and 17-year-old Asian Games debutant Syndrela Das for their maturity and ability to handle pressure.

"The era of Sharath is past us. These young folks have a lot on their shoulders, but I genuinely believe they can come back with medals, especially in mixed doubles. We do have bright chances in mixed doubles and men's and women's doubles," Neha told IANS in an interview facilitated by Sony Sports Network.

India has won only three Asian Games table tennis medals, all bronze. At Hangzhou 2023, Sutirtha Mukherjee and Ayhika Mukherjee won the women's doubles bronze, while Manav Thakkar and Manush Shah narrowly lost their men's doubles quarterfinal.

Neha said Indian players now have substantial international exposure, competing in around 15-16 tournaments a year. She added that adapting to different tables and playing conditions in Japan should not be a major concern for experienced paddlers.

"I hope so, too. I'll be the happiest. We really, really need to start winning at the Asian level now," she said.

Himesh Reshammiya to return as judge on 'Indian Idol' Season 17

Mumbai, Sep. 17:

Music composer and singer Himesh Reshammiya is set to return as a judge on the upcoming 17th season of the popular singing reality show 'Indian Idol'.

Sources close to the development told IANS that Himesh will soon begin shooting for the new season. His return marks another stint on the show, having previously served on its judging panel.

Known for his distinctive voice and musical style, Himesh has worked as a composer, playback singer and television mentor. He began his career as a film music composer in the late 1990s, with Pyaar Kiya To Darna Kya among his early credits. He went on to compose music for several successful Hindi films before gaining wider recognition as a playback singer.

His songs from films such as Tere Naam and



Aashiq Banaya Aapne established him as a prominent musical figure in the 2000s. He also made his mark as a solo artiste with his 2006 album Aap Kaa Surroor, which became one of the commercially successful Indian pop albums of its time.

'Indian Idol', based on the international Idol format, debuted on Indian television in 2004. The show has provided a platform for aspiring singers across the country and helped launch the careers of artistes including Abhijeet Sawant, Neha Kakkar and Monali Thakur.

The show airs on Sony Entertainment

Zimbabwe Cricket Chairman Appointed ICC Deputy Chairperson Ahead of 2027 World Cup

New Delhi, Sep. 17:

Zimbabwe Cricket Chairman Tavengwa Mukuhani has been appointed as the new Deputy Chairperson of the International Cricket Council (ICC), giving the African cricket nation a significant representation at the global governing body ahead of the 2027 ODI World Cup.

Mukuhani, who has extensive experience in cricket administration, has been chosen to take over the position vacated by Imran Khwaja. The ICC announced his appointment on Thursday, describing his experience in Zimbabwean

cricket and his understanding of the African region as valuable assets for the role.

Khwaja, who had served as an Associate Director for around two decades, completed his term in July this year. He also lost a recent election in Singapore cricket administration and stepped down from the ICC Deputy Chairperson position last week. Following his departure, Mukuhani was selected to fill the vacancy.

The appointment is particularly significant for Zimbabwe as the country is preparing to co-host the 2027 ICC Men's ODI

World Cup. The tournament will be jointly hosted by South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia, with the mega event scheduled to be played during October and November next year.

The ICC said Mukuhani's long-standing experience in Zimbabwe Cricket and his knowledge of the region would add value to his responsibilities as Deputy Chairperson. The global cricket body also highlighted the importance of the upcoming World Cup for the development and expansion of cricket across Africa.

The 2027 World Cup

will be the first men's ODI World Cup to be staged in Africa in 24 years. The ICC said the tournament provides an important opportunity to strengthen cricket in the continent and expand the sport's reach among African nations.

For Zimbabwe, hosting matches in the tournament represents another important milestone in its cricketing journey. The country has played a significant role in African cricket and will now have its Cricket Board chairman occupying a senior administrative position within the ICC at a time when preparations for the global event are gathering momentum.

Messi Scores 100th Goal for Inter Miami, Claims 49th Career Trophy

New Delhi, Sep. 17:

Lionel Messi reached another remarkable milestone on Wednesday, scoring his 100th goal for Inter Miami and helping the club beat Cruz Azul 2-0 in the Campeones Cup final.

Messi opened the scoring in the 24th minute with a brilliant header. After receiving a pass from Luis Suarez, the Argentine star calmly directed the ball into the net to give Inter Miami the lead.

The goal was Messi's 100th for Inter Miami in his 115th appearance for the club. The 39-year-old joined the MLS side in 2023 after leaving Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) and has since played

a key role in the club's rise. Since his arrival, Inter Miami have won four trophies.

The Campeones Cup triumph also took Messi's career trophy tally to 49, including titles won with both his clubs and the Argentina national team. His collection includes the FIFA World Cup, Copa America and numerous domestic and international club honours.

Messi had recently taken a short break from football following the death of his father. However, after returning to action, the veteran forward has continued to make an impact and entertain supporters with his goals and performances.



Messi now stands alone at the top of the list of footballers with the most career trophies. Former Brazil international Dani Alves is second with 43 trophies, followed by Brazil's Marquinhos with 42 and Spain legend Andres Iniesta with 40. Most Career Trophies

**Lionel Messi (Argentina) – 49
Dani Alves (Brazil) – 43
Marquinhos (Brazil) – 42
Andres Iniesta (Spain) – 40**

Muzaffarnagar E-Rickshaw Driver Takes His 3-Wheeler To Spiti, His Challenging Journey Goes Viral



A man from Uttar Pradesh did something that no one ever expected or thought of. He turned an ordinary e-rickshaw into a mountain vehicle and drove it from Manali to Himachal Pradesh's Spiti Valley. He documented the challenging journey and later shared it on Instagram through a series of videos.

Sumit Kumar Prajapati from Muzaffarnagar began sharing his trip online in August, where he posted about the difficult roads he crossed, people he met during the journey and the challenges he faced while taking the three-wheeler into the Himalayas. His journey has now garnered millions of views.

He Began His Journey From Manali According to his Instagram posts, Sumit travelled to Manali with friends, while his e-rickshaw was transported there separately on a truck. On August 19, he began the next leg of the trip from Manali towards Spiti. He drove the vehicle himself during the adventurous journey.

The idea reportedly came up when Sumit's friends planned a trip to Spiti by car. When the question arose about how he would travel without a car, he decided to take his e-rickshaw instead. He Kept A Generator For Power Backup One of the biggest challenges was keeping the electric vehicle charged during the long mountain journey. Sumit showed his followers how he charged the e-rickshaw at places where he stayed overnight. He also carried a generator as a backup in case he could not find a charging point.

As he travelled deeper into the valley, Sumit encountered rocky and steep stretches of road. In several videos, he can be seen carefully navigating the difficult terrain while speaking to locals and other travellers.

People Stopped To Take Pictures And Chat With Him His unusual choice of vehicle also became a talking point among tourists. People he met along the route were surprised to see an e-rickshaw travelling through the mountainous region, with some stopping to record videos and speak to him. Sumit initially travelled alone but later began carrying passengers after followers suggested that he should let tourists experience the journey with him.

CEO Urges Parents To Not Send Children To 'Rich School If You Aren't Rich'



"Indian parents, don't send your kids to a rich school if you're not rich," a Gurugram-based CEO's blunt warning to parents about choosing schools for their kids has caught the attention on social media. He argued that parents should not stretch their finances simply to send their children to the most expensive school.

Jasveer Singh, co-founder and CEO of Knot Dating, shared a post on X, where he stressed that the "right school" is not necessarily always the wealthiest one. He said that parents often focus on the quality of education and facilities, while overlooking the social environment their children experience every day. "Kids Compare Themselves

With Other Kids" "You don't need to become poorer to feel poor, you only need to change your comparison group. A great school means nothing if your child feels poor every single day," he said. "Parents compare schools. Kids compare themselves with other kids. That's the part parents completely miss."

He pointed out that children naturally compare themselves with their classmates, particularly when there are visible differences in family incomes. Cars, clothes, shoes, lunch boxes, phones, birthday parties, pocket money and school trips can all become markers of social status. "You're Paying Lakhs To Make Your Child Feel Poor"

He said, "The parent thinks, I gave my child more than I could afford. The child thinks, My parents gave me less than everyone around me. Both can experience the exact same childhood and remember it completely differently. You're paying lakhs to make your child feel poor every day, your expensive school destroying your child's confidence."

Singh argued that children may not always openly tell their parents that they feel different from their classmates and begin to avoid parties or school activities by giving excuses. "The hiding becomes excuse-making, child feels inferior," he explained. "The parent may think the child is becoming introverted. In reality, the child may simply be protecting himself from situations he cannot afford. Education is not about school fees or fancy infrastructure. It's about building confidence, exploring yourself and uplifting yourself," he said at the end.

Internet Agrees With His Opinion His post has since caught the attention of thousands of viewers, with many agreeing to the observations that he made. "Absolutely spot on. I've put my daughter in a very grounded

school and I'm genuinely happy with the decision. It's not that I couldn't afford a more expensive school. But keeping up with the lifestyle around them takes so much energy. In a grounded school, kids can just be kids," said a user.

Another quipped, "The inferiority complex developed in those schools is real."

"This was the story of my own schooling and it took me years as an adult to forgive my parents for putting me through a rich kids' school while we weren't rich. Damaged my self-confidence, impacted my career, made me resentful. I did not make that same mistake with my own child," someone said while sharing their own experience.

"The hidden cost of an expensive school isn't always the fees, it can be the comparison culture your child grows up in," a different person commented.

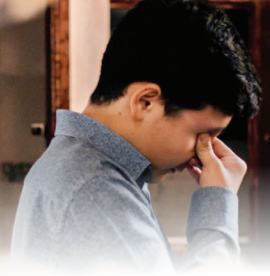
- "Kids Compare Themselves With Other Kids"
- "You're Paying Lakhs To Make Your Child Feel Poor"
- Internet Agrees With His Opinion

US Firm Allegedly Fires Entire Indian Team Over 5-Minute Call: '80 Employees, All Gone'

What began as an ordinary shift for 80 employees ended with a five-minute call that changed everything. An Indian customer service team working for a US financial firm was allegedly told during their shift that their jobs were being terminated, leaving employees shocked and worried about what comes next. This comes amid large-scale layoffs by renowned companies like Oracle and Adidas.

An employee at the organisation shared their ordeal on Reddit. In the post titled "Laid off over a Google Meet", the individual, who claimed to be part of the customer support team working for a US bank, said that they were asked to join a late-evening call on Google Meet where they were informed that the entire Indian customer service team's jobs had been terminated.

Entire Indian Customer Service Team Was Fired "I was a part of the customer support team until yesterday for a US Bank. They asked us to work from home yesterday due to operational reasons,"



the employee wrote, "I was doing a 6.30 pm shift, and at 9.30 pm they just invited us on a Google Meet and told us the entire Indian Customer service team has been fired!"

The employee further added, "All 80 employees! All gone... 80 families affected just with a 5min call." The person expressed frustration over the sudden nature of the decision and uncertainty about finding another job, writing, "I feel bad that we work for these corporates who can throw us anytime and regret that I used to work hard at my job. Also, Idk how will I get a new job! This is petty."

"Awful Time To Be In Corporate" The post has since garnered the attention of social media users, with several expressing their

sympathy for the affected workers and questioning the manner in which such a large number of employees were informed about their job termination.

"I am sorry for your loss, and sorry for all of us whose livelihoods have depended upon large multinational organisations. 21,000 people were laid off via e-mail from Oracle back in March. Not even a phone call. I worked for a large US Bank for 13 years and was laid off with 999 others on January 14th. (At least I was told over a Zoom call 1-1 with my boss.) It is just an awful time to be in the corporate world right now," said a user.

Another quipped, "At least you got a meeting about it. One of my jobs. I didn't get anything, no one would answer the phone, no emails, just your work laptop locked. turned out they cut out all the contractors and didn't tell a soul."

"That is just horrible. Corporations are so heartless. Wish all the best in finding a new job," an individual commented.

No One Wants To Marry Into This Mirzapur Village — Here's The Bizarre Reason

In a village in Uttar Pradesh's Mirzapur district, getting married has become difficult for a reason that has little to do with the wedding itself. Villagers say prospective families turn away after hearing the name of the village, fearing the difficult journey they would have to make to reach it.

The reason is a road that villagers say has remained in poor condition for decades.

The road connecting Danti and Gaura Visen villages in Mirzapur has not been properly constructed, according to residents, despite repeated demands over the years. The lack of a motorable road has affected almost every aspect of daily life, from children travelling to school to families trying to take patients to medical facilities.

Now, frustrated by years of waiting, residents have staged a sit-in protest, demanding that the road be constructed.

A Two-Kilometre Journey That Feels Like 200

The distance between Kharanja Falls and Danti is around two kilometres. But for residents, those two kilometres can feel much longer because of the route's condition.

The road is described by villagers as rocky and difficult to navigate, making regular travel a challenge. During the monsoon, conditions worsen, forcing residents to navigate the poor stretch of road in difficult conditions.

For villagers, what should be a short



journey can become a major ordeal.

The road problem has also affected access to essential services. Students travelling to school face difficulties, while transporting sick or injured residents becomes particularly challenging.

'No One Wants To Give Their Daughter To This Village'

Villagers say the road problem has now begun affecting marriages. Dheeraj Maurya, a resident, said the road had remained in poor condition for years despite repeated demands for repairs. "We have been demanding that the road be repaired, but nothing has happened. That is why we are now staging a sit-in protest," he said.

According to Maurya, the condition of the road has created such difficulties that young people in the village are struggling to find marriage partners. "No one wants to give their daughter in marriage to this village," he said, adding that people who hear about the difficult road often turn back.

The issue has therefore become more than just a problem of transportation. Residents say the lack of a proper road is beginning to affect the social and personal lives of families in the village.

Activists Release Stray Dogs Inside Panchayat Office After Being Fed Up By Rising Bite Cases



A protest over the growing stray-dog menace in Maharashtra's Nashik district took an unexpected turn when activists brought dogs straight into the office of the Niphad Nagar Panchayat. The incident came into light almost a month after a similar protest took place in Madhya Pradesh when a man dressed in a giant dog costume raised concerns over stray dog menace. This time, Yuva Sena district chief Vikram Randhava led the protest, alleging that the civic administration had failed to take effective measures to control the rising number of stray dogs in Niphad town and nearby areas. As part of the protest, he released four to five stray dogs inside the office of the Chief Officer Dhiraj Bhamre. A video of the incident has been circulating on social media, showing the dogs being brought into the office in small sacks before being released on a table. The animals appeared unsettled as they moved around the room. The protestors also placed garlands made of currency notes on Bhamre's table as a mark of protest against the functioning of the civic body. As per the activists, the stray dog population has increased significantly in Niphad and surrounding areas so much so that it has been causing problems for children, senior citizens, women and motorists. They claimed that several residents had been bitten and alleged that repeated complaints to the Nagar Panchayat had failed to address their concerns.

Man trapped in steel grill, beaten by locals who suspected theft

A man suspected of attempting to steal from a locked bungalow in Gujarat's Surat was beaten by locals after he got trapped in the house's steel grill.

A video of the incident has gone viral on social media as it prompted police to investigate

the matter.

The short clip shows the unidentified man stuck between the steel bars of the bungalow, struggling to free himself as people gathered around him and attacked him with sticks.

Locals suspected him of entering the bungalow with the intention of stealing. However, police officials have not yet established whether the man intended to commit theft or confirmed the circumstances that led to him getting trapped.

Police Inspector Mahipal Singh Solanki said the video was approximately 15 days old

and had surfaced on social media only two or three days before the investigation began.

The bungalow belongs to Kishore Bhai, whose family has been living in the United States for several years. Police contacted the owner, who said no theft had taken place at the property and that no locks had been broken. He also said he had not filed a complaint.

Police officials said that the house had remained locked for a long time, and preliminary investigations suggested that the man had taken advantage of the property's vacant status to enter it. However, officers have not yet



confirmed his identity or motive.

Police are now working to identify the man seen in the video and establish the circumstances surrounding the incident.

Man Reveals Rs 50,000 Mumbai Rent On Rs1 Lakh Salary

Chartered accountant and content creator Kushal Lodha has shared how he once spent half of his monthly salary on rent while living in Mumbai. He said he earned ₹1 lakh a month and paid ₹50,000 for a home in Lower Parel.

For Lodha, the high rent was not simply a housing expense. He believed the area he lived in had a direct effect on his mindset, goals and the way he worked. He said the decision was worth it even though people around him questioned it.

Lodha Paid ₹50,000 In Monthly Rent "When I earned Rs. 1 lakh a month, I moved to Lower Parel and paid Rs. 50,000

in rent," Lodha said in his X post. He said people found it difficult to understand why he was willing to spend such a large part of his income on rent.

Some even called him "mad" for the decision. According to Lodha, however, living in Lower Parel placed him in an environment that changed the way he looked at his career and work. He felt the people, lifestyle and opportunities around him encouraged him to think bigger.

"Everyone called me mad for spending 50% of my salary on rent. But that environment completely changed the way I thought and worked," he said.

Lodha said the amount he paid each month should not only be viewed as money spent on a house. For him, the surroundings were also important because they could influence his ambitions.