

Opposition Seeks SC Intervention Over Reported ECI Differences

New Delhi, Sept 23 (GNS): Opposition parties on Wednesday criticised Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar and the BJP-led Central government, alleging that the electoral process had been "undermined" and seeking the Supreme Court's intervention following a media report claiming that two Election Commissioners had "objected on record" to several decisions taken by the poll panel without their knowledge. The Election Commission of India (ECI) has denied the report.

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav accused the ECI of attempting to "weaken" democracy and questioned the impartiality of the constitutional body. CPI-M General Secretary M.A. Baby sought the resig-



nation of CEC Gyanesh Kumar, while AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal also demanded his resignation and called for cancellation of polls held in recent years.

Trinamool Congress MP Saugata Roy criticised the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, claiming that genuine voters were being removed. He said objections reportedly raised by Election Commissioners regarding the exercise

should be taken seriously. PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti alleged that voters were being added and deleted from electoral rolls according to the BJP's interests.

Congress leader and former Uttarakhand Chief Minister Harish Rawat similarly claimed that voters were being added or removed based on their political affiliations.

Rawat alleged that Opposition supporters were being targeted through deletions,

while supporters of those in power were being added to the rolls. He said the situation had raised concerns about the electoral system and democracy.

Congress leader T. S. Singh Deo also questioned the functioning of the Election Commission, while party leader Sandeep Dikshit alleged that the CEC was functioning in an authoritarian manner and claimed that the electoral process had

been undermined.

Samajwadi Party MP Rajeev Kumar Rai and Purnia MP Pappu Yadav also criticised the Election Commission, with Yadav urging the Supreme Court to intervene and take action against the poll panel. Congress leader and former Maharashtra Chief Minister Prithviraj Chavan appealed to the Supreme Court to take suo motu cognisance of the matter and said all Election Commissioners should be called before the court.

Shiv Sena-UBT MP Sanjay Raut alleged that Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi had acted to protect democracy, while making several allegations against CEC Gyanesh Kumar and questioning changes related to electoral forms.

Prez Murmu stresses inner peace amid global tensions

Vadodara, Sept 23 (GNS): President Droupadi Murmu on Wednesday stressed the need for meditation, introspection, compassion and positive thinking amid growing stress, violence, intolerance and social divisions across the world, saying inner transformation is essential for creating peace and harmony. Addressing a programme of the Brahma Kumaris organisation in Vadodara, President Murmu said the world is passing through a difficult phase, with unrest prevailing in several regions.

In such circumstances, she added, efforts aimed at strengthening the inner self had acquired greater significance. "In the present global scenario, challenges such as stress, anxiety, violence, intolerance and social divisions are widespread. There



is an atmosphere of unrest in many regions. In such circumstances, initiatives that promote meditation, introspection, compassion and positive thinking become important," she said. The President was speaking at an event marking the Brahma Kumaris' 90-year spiritual journey and the launch of its 2026 national theme, "Spiritual Awakening for World Renewal".

She also inaugurated the Brahma Kumaris Global

Spiritual Palace Retreat Centre in Vadodara and virtually launched the national initiative "Awakening Inner Strength for Nation Building" from Nadiad.

Murmu said that development could not be viewed only through the prism of economic growth and called for greater emphasis on human development. "Today, there is a need not only for economic development but also for human development," she said, adding that education should develop not only intelligence but also wisdom and discernment. She said that society needed progress that remained sensitive towards nature and a form of strength that enabled people to exercise control over themselves rather than seek to control others.

Owaisi questions legality of EC decisions amid reports over SIR

Hyderabad, Sept 23 (GNS): Amid reports of internal differences in the Election Commission over the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise, All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimen (AIMIM) president Asaduddin Owaisi on Wednesday, September 23, questioned the legality of the poll panel's decisions if a majority of its members were unaware of the decisions taken in its name.

The EC enjoyed the trust of the largest proportion of India "once upon a time", but has seen a continuous decline, he claimed.

"If a majority of the Election Commission is itself in the dark on decisions taken in its name, then what is the legality of its decisions?" he



asked in a post on X.

"In the past year, it has been seen how the SIR has perpetuated a crisis in which poorest of the poor are harassed and denied the dignity of being citizen. The poor are reduced to their documents," he alleged.

"The question used to be 'who will watch the watchdogs.' Now, it's 'Is there even a watchdog?' he said.

Mamata Banerjee demands arrest of CEC Gyanesh Kumar

Kolkata, Sept 23 (GNS): Former West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday demanded that Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar be impeached and arrested immediately, alleging that he conducted assembly polls in several states after deleting names of genuine voters through the special intensive revision (SIR) exercise.

Banerjee went live on Facebook in the afternoon and demanded the CEC's arrest. Referring to reported differences within the top brass of the Election Commission of India (ECI), she claimed the "ill-deeds" of the CEC had now been exposed. According to her, by resorting to



electronic voting machine (EVM) hijacking, voter list manipulation, and administrative interference, the CEC helped the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) win assembly elections in several states, including West Bengal earlier this year.

"Now, I demand that fresh voting should be conducted according to the old voter lists. Gyanesh Kumar has been exposed," Banerjee said in her social media message.

'Pursue alternative remedies': SC declines to entertain PIL on removal of hateful social media content

New Delhi, Sept 23 (GNS): The Supreme Court on Wednesday refused to entertain a public interest litigation (PIL) seeking directions to social media platforms to identify, prevent, remove, or block unlawful, provocative, hateful, abusive and misleading digital content, including fake news and statements allegedly capable of threatening public order and communal harmony.

A Bench of Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V. Mohana declined to entertain the plea filed by Hitendra Kumar Parsotambhai Gadhiya and granted him liberty to pursue alternative remedies.

"You can pursue your alternative remedies," the CJI-



led Bench told the petitioner's counsel, declining to tag the plea with another pending matter concerning social media content.

The PIL, filed through advocate Barun Kumar Sinha, had sought directions to the Centre, Delhi government, and major social media platforms, including YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, X, and WhatsApp, to take effective

steps against unlawful digital content in accordance with the Information Technology Act, 2000 and the Rules framed thereunder.

The petitioner had sought directions for identification, prevention, removal and/or blocking of content described in the plea as "unlawful, provocative, hateful, abusive, derogatory, misleading and objectionable digital content", including fake news, incendiary speeches, and anti-national slogans. The plea also sought appropriate action against persons responsible for creating, uploading, circulating and disseminating content not protected by law, while stressing that any regulatory action must remain consistent with the

fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution and the reasonable restrictions under Article 19(2).

The petitioner claimed that the circulation of fake messages and provocative statements through social media platforms and SMS had contributed to disruption of public order and communal harmony. The PIL also alleged that social media intermediaries had failed to act in accordance with their statutory obligations under the Information Technology Act and the Rules framed thereunder and had not removed or blocked certain content which amounted to prohibited speech.

One Indian seafarer killed, 19 rescued in attack on vessel off Oman coast

New Delhi, Sept 23 (GNS): One Indian seafarer was killed and 19 others rescued after an attack on the commercial vessel MV Cape Dao off the east coast of Oman, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Wednesday, condemning the attack.

"We condemn the attack on the commercial vessel MV Cape Dao earlier today off the east coast of Oman. Of the 20 Indian seafarers on board, 19 have been rescued, while 1 Indian national tragically lost his life. We offer our deepest condolences to the family of the deceased. Our Embassy in Oman is closely monitoring the situation and coordinating with Omani authorities for the early repatriation of the Indian seafarers. We thank



the Omani authorities for their support," the MEA said in a statement.

The Ministry said the continuing attacks on commercial shipping in the region were deeply worrisome. "We reiterate our call for dialogue and diplomacy to de-escalate tensions and enable the early return of peace to the region. The targeting of commercial shipping, seafarers and civilian in-

frastructure in the region must end, and free and unimpeded navigation and commerce through the international waterways in the region must be restored at the earliest," the statement added.

The Indian Embassy in Muscat said the vessel was attacked while transiting towards India and that it was coordinating with Omani authorities on the safety of all crew on board.

BRICS must have greater say in framing global tax rules: FM Sitharaman

New Delhi, Sept 23 (GNS): Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Wednesday that tax administrations of BRICS countries must strengthen their collective voice in the ongoing renegotiation of international tax rules.

Addressing the inaugural session of the BRICS Tax Heads meeting here, Sitharaman said that BRICS countries are large developing economies and source jurisdictions that have built significant domestic tax capacity from a low base, and their perspective is essential to making these negotiations fair and lasting.

India has proposed two new working groups, one on international taxation and transfer pricing, and the other on revenue statistics, as part of efforts to



build institutional mechanisms that continue beyond India's 2026 chairmanship.

Sitharaman said the two groups are intended to create institutional space for addressing issues faced by BRICS tax administrations.

"Transfer pricing disputes cost developing countries' administrations disproportionately. Revenue frameworks that don't fit our system realities distort how we are seen and how we see ourselves," she

observed. The groups are designed to outlast India's chairmanship, Sitharaman said. China will take over the BRICS chairmanship in 2027. Sitharaman also highlighted that tax administrations are moving from paper-based and relationship-dependent processes to data-driven and digital systems. She added that India's experience with faceless assessment, pre-filled returns, real-time invoice authentication and AI-enabled taxpayer assistance has attracted interest from BRICS partners.

The meeting also considered the institutionalisation of the BRICS Young Tax Professionals Programme as an annual event at the National Academy of Direct Taxes, Nagpur.

India's Ethanol demand likely to reach 17.9 bn litres by FY31

New Delhi, Sept 23 (GNS): India's ethanol industry entered a phase where capacity utilisation, rather than capacity creation through 2030-31 as demand under an E25 blending scenario could reach 17.9 billion litres by FY31 in the base case, a report said on Wednesday. The current installed distillation capacity of 18.25 billion litres is already sufficient to meet demand under the Base and Bear scenarios, the report from Brickwork Ratings said.

The base case translates into utilisation of approximately 98 per cent of the existing 18.25 billion litre capacity. If blending remains at E20, demand is estimated at 14.3 billion litres under the bear

case, implying utilisation of around 78 per cent.

If blending rises to E30, ethanol demand could reach 21.5 billion litres by FY31 under the bull case, taking requirements around 18 per cent above the current installed capacity, the report noted.

An E30 trajectory would therefore mark the point at which the sector moves from utilising existing assets to requiring fresh capacity creation. The ratings agency expects the pace of blending policy to consequently remain the key determinant of incremental capex and sector growth. "The demand outlook is also being reshaped by a structural shift in feedstock. Grain-based routes accounted for 72 per cent.

European Union’s Bet on India

RANBIR SINGH PATHANIA

When European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen spoke in a celebratory tone of India and addressed Prime Minister Narendra Modi as “my friend”, it was not just diplomatic warmth. It was recognition of a strategic shift. India and the European Union – a bloc of 27 nations – have ultimately moved decisively towards a comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (FTA), signalling one of the most quintessential economic realignments of this decade. Let us understand it in the simplest possible terms. A free trade agreement essentially means fewer taxes, fewer barriers, and smoother movement of goods and services between economies. From Indian perspective, this connotes four immediate corollaries. First, Indian companies will be able to export more to Europe because Indian goods become more competitive. From automobiles and engineering goods to pharmaceuticals, textiles and electronics, Indian manufacturing gains access to a large, stable, high-value market. Let us take the case of car import duties – expected to fall from ~70-110% to ~40%, initially, and ultimately as low as ~10%. This opens up India’s auto market to EU players like Audi, VolksWagon, Skoda, BMW, Mercedes, Maserati, etc. Indian customers would now get these luxury brands at cheaper rates.



Second, it makes it easier for Indian professionals and companies (IT, fintech, healthcare, consultants, etc.) to work and do business in Europe. Professionals can move more easily as contract workers, independent experts, company transferees, and business visitors. Indian exports will increase, tariffs will reduce, and foreign investment will rise. It opens doors to a huge EU market (worth about \$27 trillion). Third, Indian consumers benefit as European products enter India at more affordable prices, improving quality and choice. Fourth, sensitive sectors like agriculture and dairy products are largely excluded for now. This protects domestic farmers and avoids politically sensitive disruptions. In short, India produces more, sells more, earns more – and grows faster. Moreso, India

will get imports at a relatively cheaper rates due to lesser/nil excise duties and allied taxes/tariffs. European Union had earlier withdrawn GSP tariff benefits for India. This FTA helps restore long-term tariff advantages for Indian exporters. Why This Is Bigger Than One Agreement The agreement has been rightly called as ‘mother deal of all trade deals’. The India-EU FTA is not a standalone event. It is part of a deliberate and consistent trade strategy. India’s trade blitz is methodical. India has already concluded a trade agreement with the United Kingdom. Negotiations with multiple partners across West Asia and the Indo-Pacific are progressing steadily. Washington’s mini-deal on minerals and defence (November 2025) hints at a full-fledged US pact soon. Moreso, USA has itself confirmed that an

India-US trade agreement is on the horizon. Taken together, these agreements quietly push the fear and stigma of arbitrary tariffs and protectionism into the background. India is no longer knocking on the doors of global markets – it is helping design the doors. Why Europe Needs India – And Why India Is Ready Europe today faces slowing growth, ageing populations, energy transitions and supply-chain vulnerabilities. India offers exactly what Europe needs – a young, vibrant workforce, a fast-growing consumer market, and a reliable democratic partner rooted deep its institutional strength and simple labour laws. India, in return, gains technology, capital, investment confidence and long-term market access – without surrendering strategic autonomy. This is the defining difference between the India of the past and the India of today. From 1991 to 2047: A New Economic Chapter The reforms of 1991 opened India to the world. The current phase pitches and projects India as a rule-shaper rather than a rule-taker. Non-alignment has ultimately evolved into strategic autonomy. Hesitation has given way to confidence. Economic engagement is now in sync with national interest. With a clear national vision of India@2047, trade agreements are no longer just commercial documents. They are instruments of economic and strategic power. Da-

vos and the Contrast of Global Moods At Davos, we saw contrasting global approaches. One pole was for aggressive economic nationalism and transactional politics. Another was for moral leadership and multilateral idealism. India charted a ‘road not taken’ – grassrootslevel work without rhetoric. By leveraging its leadership of the Global South, its G20 legacy and its economic momentum, India demonstrated that quiet confidence now carries greater weight than loud declarations. Liberalisation cracked open our economy. Now, “Viksit Bharat @2047” turns trade into strategic steel. What This Means for the Common Indian Trade agreements are not abstract diplomacy. They touch everyday lives. They mean more jobs, stronger manufacturing, globally respected Indian services, better products at competitive prices, and sustained economic growth. The Larger Than Life Pictue This moment may well be remembered as the second great economic turning point after 1991. India is no longer merely integrating with the global economy. It is helping reshape it on its own terms. Europe’s bet on India is not symbolic. It is strategic. We’re no longer the next big thing- we are the thing. Ready, resilient, rising. And India, confident in its economic strength and strategic autonomy, is ready for the role it has long prepared for.

Jammu and Kashmir’s tourism industry

Jammu and Kashmir’s tourism industry ideally, should remain the backbone of the economy of Jammu and Kashmir. This is because, the industry brings immense economic benefits to citizens of Jammu and Kashmir who are employed in this industry. Also, the industry brings enormous economic benefits to citizens of Jammu and Kashmir who are employed in the other sectors of the economy of Jammu and Kashmir. If 2025 was marred by the Pahalgam terror attack and the India-Pakistan military conflict, winter adventure sports promises Kashmir some turnaround Year 2025-battered by the Pahalgam terror attack and the India-Pakistan military conflict-marked a huge downfall for Jammu and Kashmir’s tourism, which employs nearly a million people. But the Omar Abdullah government is striving to put the setback behind in the new year. Leveraging the world famous ski-slopes of Gulmarg and the new Sonamarg tunnel, which has opened the region’s glacier-studded slopes to visitors for full-fledged winter sports, the chief minister has embarked upon an ambitious adventure-tourism push to revive the ailing industry. The Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI) held its 17th convention in Kashmir on December 17-20. Presiding over the inaugural function at the Sher-I-Kashmir International Convention Centre on the banks of Srinagar’s Dal Lake, CM Abdullah announced J&K’s formal dive into adventure tourism. “Jammu Kashmir is not just about skiing, it’s also about white-water rafting, trekking and mountaineering. We’ve recently trained a batch of instructors and pilots for paragliding. We don’t have anything in the hot-air-ballooning category, but we made a small start today and will possibly take it further,” Omar Abdullah said on December 17 after taking a maiden balloon ride in Srinagar’s skies, comparing the experience to a “Mount Everest Summit”. Over 150 ATOAI members, spearheading adventurism across the country, landed in Srinagar to weigh Kashmir on its thrill offerings. The harshest 40-day winter period, Chilai Kalaan, kicked in on December 21, as members spread to various destinations-51 went to Gulmarg, 25 to Pahalgam and 15 to Sonamarg. “We believe Jammu and Kashmir is the adventure destination of India, and we want to work with the government here to get more adventure tourists in. We’ve done a B2B (business to business) session with local adventure businesses. Adventure operators from around India have met local operators here and we’re trying to forge a bond,” said Ajit Bajaj, president of ATOAI, at a media conference in Srinagar. J&K’s tourism industry plunged into crisis in the aftermath of the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack and India’s Operation Sindoor against terror infra in Pakistan. After the terror attack, the lieutenant governor had ordered the closure of 48 tourist destinations in J&K. While 36 have reopened, the rest remain closed. As the war clouds abated last year, Abdullah undertook a pan-India promotional campaign to woo tourists back to Kashmir. However, the industry failed to get any significant traction. The largely-empty shikaras on Dal Lake and deserted hotels were a constant reminder of the tourism distress for the better part of 2025.

In 2024, Jammu and Kashmir had recorded its highest-ever tourist footfall, with 23.5 million visitors, including Amarnath Yatra and Vaishno Devi pilgrims. But in the first half of 2025, the numbers halved to 753,000 tourists as against 1.56 million during the corresponding period in 2024. Tourism is a key sector for J&K’s economy, after agriculture and horticulture, contributing over 7 per cent to its economy. In Budget 2025-26, Omar Abdullah allocated Rs 390 crore to tourism. It’s no secret that the chief minister himself is an avid adventure sports lover and Gulmarg’s ski slopes are his winter-favourite. The JSW Group has been roped in to modernise Gulmarg’s ski slopes, and Abdullah’s effort is seen behind it. “This advantage and focus pushes ultimate energy through the ladders of the tourism department. This year (2026), we’ll take night skiing to a different level with bright lights, facilities and affordability,” said Tahir Mohiuddin, assistant director of tourism in Gulmarg. In early January, the CM inaugurated a 14-day integrated ski training course at the newly-conceived Skiing Training Institute that, according to Mohiuddin, will offer aspiring skiers hands-on training on skiing essentials. Amidst these efforts, the elephant in the room is climate change, which is stripping Kashmir Valley’s mountains and plains of timely snow for years now. The winters are turning harsher but without significant snowfall, which is essential for replenishing vital glaciers for the region’s long-term water security. Vanishing snow will hurt Gulmarg’s ski slopes as well. The CM has hinted at introducing artificial snow, tapping the destination’s ‘below zero ambient temperature’. “I can’t sell Gulmarg as a destination for skiing if I don’t have snow. I can’t sell glaciers for destinations of ice-climbing or mountaineering if those glaciers are going to melt. Unfortunately, we see those glaciers receding in front of our eyes,” Abdullah has said. Meanwhile, industry leaders are upbeat about the takeaways from the ATOAI convention. “This is going to have a great impact. Tourists have started returning to Kashmir and most hotels in Gulmarg have remained booked since December 20,,” said Faiz Bakshi, general secretary, Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry.Kashmir Local Events The government is also looking to diversify the tourism calendar so that Jammu and Kashmir attracts visitors beyond the traditional summer and snowfall seasons. Adventure activities such as trekking, rafting, paragliding, mountaineering and skiing are being promoted as part of efforts to create year-round tourism opportunities and increase local employment. The improved connectivity to Sonamarg is expected to further support winter tourism in the region. The opening of the Sonamarg tunnel has made the destination more accessible during the winter months, allowing visitors and adventure-tourism operators to explore new possibilities in the upper reaches of Kashmir. Local businesses are also expected to benefit from the renewed focus on adventure tourism. Hotels, transport operators, guides, equipment suppliers, restaurants, handicraft sellers and other service providers depend heavily on tourist activity, making a revival in visitor numbers important for the wider local economy. Tourism officials and industry representatives have stressed the need for better infrastructure, trained personnel and safety standards as new adventure activities are introduced. Greater collaboration between government agencies, local operators and national adventure-tourism companies could help develop professional services while ensuring the safety of visitors. At the same time, the sector faces challenges from weather uncertainty, security concerns and changing tourist preferences. Sustaining the recovery will therefore require continued investment in infrastructure, promotion, skill development and environmental protection, while ensuring that Kashmir’s natural landscapes remain preserved for future generations.

Why digital detox is good for the planet

AVAY SHUKLA

If you ask me, this WhatsApp (WA) texting is getting quite out of hand. I’m no social spark, my social skills being on par with a grizzly just emerging from a four-month hibernation, but even I find about 20-25 new messages on my phone when I wake up every morning. During the course of the day, there will be about another 30 or so. Of this, only about five will convey anything meaningful, the rest will be rubbish — generic religious greetings, homilies on how to live well, quotations from unheard-of sages, all kinds of fake news, RIP messages. Some of these I find intriguing. Take the RIPs. What’s the point of sending a RIP message on a group chat if a member or relative/ friend of one has passed on? How does that console the affected family? Would it not make more sense if the message were sent directly to the family of the deceased? Is the intention of the messaging to make a public display of your concern or to show genuine sympathy or grief? If the former, wouldn’t it be better to take out a two-column insert in a newspaper? Then come the pro-forma greetings — Happy Republic Day! Happy New Year! Happy Women’s Day! Happy Ganesh Chaturthi! Now, apart from the fact that there is little happiness attached to any of these occasions nowadays, not one of these



messages is usually composed by the sender — all of them are “forwards”! These are “pass through” wishes, second-hand greetings; this alone says a lot about their sincerity or genuineness. And what’s the ruddy point of all this, considering that your cup of happiness is already overflowing since every blessed day of the year is “Happy something or the other”? Even the “news” or informational items are usually “forwards”; rarely does the sender verify their authenticity or give his own views, and one doesn’t have a clue why it has been sent. Not only is this intellectual laziness at its worst, it also assumes that you are an ignoramus who has no idea of what is going on in the world and therefore needs to be reminded every half-hour. I usually delete all such messages without even reading them. In ad-

dition, I have on my WA groups a mental list of such serial offenders and delete their messages without even looking at them. So, you may well ask, why am I getting so riled up about all this? Because, dear reader, there’s an environmental cost to this digital diarrhoea. The Internet contributes more to global pollution leves than the aviation sector — 3.7 per cent, as against the latter’s 3 per cent. Globally, 150 billion WA messages are texted every day (this is in addition to 300 billion emails). Every WA (or email) message generates 0.3 to 0.7 gm of CO2; attached pictures, video or audio increase this to 17 gm (this is the result of the energy needed to power your device, servers, and the data centres that store the data). Not much to bother about, you might say. But

do the math to understand my angst. India has about 800 million WA users; assuming each user sends just 20 messages a day, the daily total comes to 16 billion messages. Assume again that each message contributes 0.5 gm of CO2, the daily emission is 10 gram per user. Extrapolating this for 800 million users, the pollution contribution by WhatsApp comes to 8,000 tonnes per day or 2,920,000 tonnes per annum. The contributions of Gmail, Netflix, YouTube are in addition, and much higher. The latest to join the polluting bandwagon is AI, whose data centres consume humungous amounts of power (and water): the AI chatbot ChatGPT’s emissions per month are equivalent to 260 flights from New York to London! The digital carbon footprint, currently almost 4 per cent of total

emissions, is expected to double in the next five years. As in the other areas of consumption, we must be more responsible and incorporate digital, or data, hygiene in our use of the Internet. Apart from putting a stop to unnecessary texting, experts advise that we should clear out our old and dated stored messages, photos and videos regularly, avoid sending attachments unnecessarily, unsubscribe from unwanted newsletters, compress documents before sending them, stop this pernicious and fashionable practice of “binge-watching”. Try and spend one day in a week without sending any messages. We need to practice digital detoxing on a regular basis. If not, stop complaining about the AQI: a country gets the leaders — and AQI — it deserves.

India signs eight free trade agreements in four years, unlocking global opportunities for talent and trade: Piyush Goyal

New Delhi, Sept 23 (GNS): Union Minister for Communications and Development of the Northeastern Region, Shri Jyotiraditya Scindia, today informed the Rajya Sabha about the significant progress and future roadmap of the Department of Telecommunications in providing connectivity to Gram Panchayats (GPs), underlining that BharatNet has evolved into the backbone of India's digital transformation.

Replying to a question in the House, the Union Minister said that the government's vision is to provide world-class, fast, and reliable broadband connectiv-

ity to every citizen, enabling transformative change in education, healthcare, governance, business, and employment. BharatNet, he said, is no longer just a connectivity project but a national digital infrastructure empowering both rural and urban India.

The Union Minister stated that under BharatNet-1 and BharatNet-2, a target was set to connect more than 2.22 lakh Gram Panchayats across the country. So far, around 2.15 lakh Gram Panchayats—i.e., nearly 97%—have been connected, with close to 7 lakh kilometers of optical fiber cable laid nation-

wide. This has significantly strengthened e-governance, digital payments, online education, telemedicine, and local entrepreneurship in rural India. Scindia highlighted that the government approved the Amended BharatNet Scheme during late 2023 and 2024, marking the world's largest capital expenditure broadband program, with a total outlay of 1.40 lakh crore (approximately USD 16 billion). The scheme aims to extend broadband connectivity not only to Gram Panchayats but also beyond to nearly 6.5 lakh villages.

Key features include upgrading network archi-



ture from linear to ring topology to ensure 100% redundancy, connecting around 47,000 additional Gram Panchayats, and providing up to 25 Mbps broadband connectivity directly to households. The network is also being modernized

through a shift from GPON to MPLS technology, alongside the establishment of State-level Network Operating Centres (S-NOC) and a Central Network Operating Centre (C-NOC) for 24x7 monitoring. These changes will increase the reliability,

speed, and continuity of the network manifold, thereby minimizing any disruption to digital services. The Union Minister informed the House that the Government has launched the BharatNet Udyami (Entrepreneur) Model to link rural connectivity with employment and entrepreneurship. Under this model, so far 7,570 BNUs have been selected, and the remaining more than 380,000 villages will be connected through a demand-driven model. Capital and operational subsidies will be provided to BNUs to support last-mile connectivity, creating new self-employment op-

portunities and strengthening local digital service delivery. Scindia said the government aims to provide 1.5 crore Fiber-to-the-Home (FTTH) connections across the country through BharatNet, of which over 14 lakh connections have already been delivered till now. As network expansion continues, fiber connectivity will reach every household, opening new opportunities in education, healthcare, agriculture, start-ups, and e-commerce, especially in rural areas.

Responding to a Gujarat-specific query, the Union Minister said the state has successfully achieved 100%

of its BharatNet-2 targets, covering 14,320 Gram Panchayats under the state-led program of Phase-I and Phase-II. Under the Amended BharatNet Scheme, further upgrades are underway for 14,294 Gram Panchayats, including ring topology conversion for 26 GPs, new fiber laying in more than 30,000 villages, and connecting 3,895 villages on a demand-based model. A total investment of approximately 5,691 crore has been earmarked for this. In this regard, a quadripartite agreement between the Government of Gujarat & GFGNL with Digital Bharat Nidhi & BSNL has been signed.

India AI impact summit receives phenomenal global response, India's AI ecosystem developing in a systematic nanner: Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw

New Delhi, Sept 23 (GNS): The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India, today held a high-level press conference ahead of the India AI Impact Summit 2026, chaired by Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw, Minister for Electronics & Information Technology. The event was also attended by Shri Jitin Prasada, Minister of State for Electronics & IT; Shri Ajay Sood, Principal Scientific

Adviser to the Government of India and other senior MeitY officials. The press conference outlined key developments, confirmed global participation, and previewed the India AI Impact Summit's anticipated outcomes as India prepares to host the first-ever global AI summit in the Global South from February 16–20, 2026, at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi.

Addressing the audience, Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw said that the India AI Impact Summit has received a phenomenal response from across the world and is shaping up to be the biggest AI summit so far globally. He referred to the recent interactions of Prime Minister Narendra Modi with industry leaders, developers and innovators working across the AI value chain, including models, applications and infrastructure, noting

that these engagements reflected the systematic progress of India's AI ecosystem and a strong focus on deployment-led solutions. The Minister stated that leading IT companies have developed more than 200

focused, sector-specific AI models, which are proposed to be launched during the AI Impact Summit. He further said that investments worth nearly USD 70 billion are already flowing into the AI infrastructure layer, with the potential to double by the conclusion of the Summit, and that AI talent development will be scaled up by extending AI infrastructure and industry-finalised curri-

cula to 500 universities, creating a strong talent pipeline for the sector.

A Compendium featuring reflections from around 60 leading industry experts on the future of AI and its role in driving inclusive growth, innovation, and societal impact, titled "The Impact Agenda: Leadership Reflections" was also launched by Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw.

The conference drew attention to the milestones achieved in the lead up to the Summit and outlined what was to be expected during the landmark convening of industry, governments, academia, and civil society. Shri S. Krishnan highlighted that

hybrid meetings of all seven thematic Working Groups .

anchored around the Sutras of People, Planet and Progress have successfully concluded, with their core deliverables now at an advanced stage of finalisation. In parallel, all seven Regional AI Impact Conferences held across Meghalaya, Gujarat, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Kerala have concluded, firmly grounding national AI priorities in regional strengths, use cases, and governance contexts. The Summit's deeply participatory model is also reflected in the successful completion of nearly 480+

Pre-Summit events across India and globally, including 83 international engagements across 30 countries, with further activities scheduled through February 10, 2026.

Addressing the gathering, Shri S. Krishnan, Secretary (MeitY) said that the central objective of the India AI Impact Summit is to advance the democratisation of technology, particularly artificial intelligence, to ensure that its benefits reach a wide cross-section of society. He noted that as the first global AI summit being hosted in the Global South, the Summit places emphasis on aligning approaches to AI

New Assembly, Sports Hub, Wetland Rejuvenation to Drive Assam's Growth: Sonowal

New Delhi, Sept 23 (GNS): The Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW) Sarbananda Sarbananda Sonowal joined Union Home Minister & Minister of Cooperation, Amit Shah and Chief Minister, Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma to lay the foundation stones of multiple infrastructure projects in Dibrugarh, a decisive move towards transforming Dibrugarh into becoming the second capital of Assam. The ground-breaking and inauguration of 5 projects is projected to be completed with a total cost of 1,715 crore.

Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurated and laid the foundation stones for several landmark initiatives which included construction of a new Assam Legislative Assembly building and MLA residential complex, development of a world-class multi-purpose sports complex, establishment of a wildlife health and research institute, and large-scale rejuvenation of ponds and wetlands across the Dibrugarh region. The initiatives are aimed at furthering the good governance under PM Narendra Modi in decentralising administrative functions, strengthening governance infrastructure and accelerating regional development in upper Assam.

Speaking on the occasion, Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal said, "Today is a historic day for Dibrugarh. As Honourable Home Minister Amit Shah ji laid the

foundation stones for multiple projects, the projects reflected the transformative development agenda pursued under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the development of Dibrugarh, upper Assam and the whole of Northeast. Over the past decade, Assam has witnessed unprecedented transformation under the visionary leadership of PM Modi ji, where people's aspirations have been translated into outcomes through good governance."

Sarbananda Sonowal said infrastructure projects such as the new Legislative Assembly complex, MLA residences, international-standard sports facilities, wildlife research institutions and wetland rejuvenation initiatives would provide new momentum to Dibrugarh while reinforcing Assam's overall growth trajectory. To strengthen administrative capacity, Home Minister Amit Shah laid the foundation stone of the new Assam Legislative Assembly building at Dibrugarh. The project, estimated at 284 crore, is expected to play a pivotal role in operationalising the city as Assam's second capital.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurated the Assam Wetlands Restoration and Rejuvenation Project under the National Disaster Mitigation Fund at Khanikar Parade Ground. The programme marked a significant step in strengthening Assam's long-term

New CSIR-NIO Facility to Strengthen Marine Science, Energy Security: Dr Jitendra

New Delhi, Sept 23 (GNS): Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology and Earth Sciences, Dr Jitendra Singh, today inaugurated the Shore-Based Laboratory of CSIR-National Institute of Oceanography (NIO), Regional Centre, Visakhapatnam, describing it as a clear demonstration of the "double engine government effect", where seamless coordination between the Centre and the State accelerates development.

Addressing the gathering in the presence of Andhra Pradesh Home Minister Smt. Anita Vangalapudi, Member of Parliament Shri M. Sriharat, MLA Shri G. Srinivasa Rao, Director CSIR-NIO Prof. Sunil Kumar Singh, Dr V.V.S.S. Sarma, and Director

General, CSIR Dr Kalaiselvi, Dr Jitendra Singh said that although the foundation for the project was laid years ago, substantial progress and completion happened within the last 8–10 months following the coming together of the Central and State governments on the same page.

The Minister noted that the land for the project had been transferred by the State Government at a nominal cost in the early 2000s, and its present value has multiplied many times due to rapid development in the area. He said the Government of India, on behalf of CSIR and the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, who is the President of CSIR, is dedicating this 32-crore shore-based facility to the nation.

Highlighting the strategic importance of the facility, Dr Jitendra Singh said India has a coastline of nearly 11,000–12,000 km, of which over 1,000 km lies along Andhra Pradesh, making it a natural hub for the maritime economy and the Blue Economy vision of the Prime Minister. He said the Eastern Coastal Margin of India is geologically diverse and holds significant potential for hydrocarbons, seabed minerals, oil and natural gas, largely due to heavy sediment deposits from the Himalayan River systems.

The Minister said the Visakhapatnam coast represents a versatile marine resource base that can significantly contribute to India's energy security as well as the Blue Economy, and the newly

inaugurated CSIR-NIO facility will act as a key scientific backbone for this effort.

Dr Jitendra Singh highlighted that CSIR-NIO is already working in close collaboration with ONGC, Oil India and other stakeholders, and is actively supporting sectors such as pharmaceuticals, ports, thermal power projects and fisheries. He said the Centre's work in identifying potential fishing zones, seaweed cultivation for fisherfolk, and prediction of harmful algal blooms benefits both livelihoods and public health, as marine bio-resources are increasingly used in medicine and healthcare.

Emphasising the Government's integrated approach, the Minister said India's marine development now brings together Central and

State governments, public and private sectors, research institutions, and startups. He invited industry and entrepreneurs to become active partners, stating that a robust ecosystem of technical and financial support is already in place for startups and innovators in the marine and coastal domain.

Dr Jitendra Singh said the Visakhapatnam Centre will also emerge as a major hub for capacity building and skill training, nurturing young scientists, researchers, startups, and future entrepreneurs for India's expanding marine sector.

The Minister expressed special appreciation for Chief Minister Shri N. Chandrababu Naidu, stating that due to his personal intervention, long-pending coastal

and environmental clearances that had remained unresolved for nearly a decade were cleared within six months, ensuring that not a single day was lost in execution. He said the project required multiple clearances due to its coastal location, all of which were fast-tracked through effective Centre-State coordination.

Dr Jitendra Singh also referred to the Prime Minister's special focus on Andhra Pradesh and the new capital Amaravati, announcing that a quantum technology facility will be set up there shortly. He noted that this was his third visit to Visakhapatnam in the last 7–8 months, reflecting the State Government's proactive engagement in science-led development.

Over 5 cr mothers and children monitored through U-WIN platform for timely health interventions: Nadda

New Delhi, Sept 23 (GNS): Union Minister for Health & Family Welfare and Chemicals & Fertilizers, Shri Jagat Prakash Nadda, today addressed the Foundation Day Programme of the National Commission for Women (NCW), reaffirming the Government of India's steadfast resolve to promote women's health, safety, dignity, and holistic empowerment.

Delivering the Keynote address, Shri J.P. Nadda, Union Minister for Health & Family Welfare and Chemicals & Fertilizers, underscored the Government's vision of women-led development, emphasizing that the empowerment of women is central to India's inclusive growth and social transformation. He also stated

that, the 34-year journey of the Commission reflects how institutions earn recognition not merely through legislation, but through their commitment, sensitivity, and sustained action in addressing complex issues related to women.

Highlighting the paradigm shift in India's healthcare policy under the leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, the Union Health Minister said that the country has moved from a predominantly curative approach to a comprehensive preventive and promotive healthcare model. He noted that the National Health Policy, 2017 laid the foundation for integrated healthcare covering preventive, promotive, curative,

palliative, and rehabilitative services. To deliver this vision, over 1.81 lakh Ayushman Arogya Mandirs have been established across the country to serve more than 1.4 billion citizens, with special focus on maternal and reproductive healthcare, which remains central among the twelve comprehensive healthcare service packages.

The Union Health Minister further informed that from the time a woman conceives until the child attains the age of 16 years, the Government ensures continuous healthcare monitoring, primarily through the dedicated efforts of ASHA workers. Through the U-WIN digital platform, a cohort of over 2.5 crore preg-

nant women and 2.5 crore children is currently being tracked to ensure timely immunization, antenatal care, and essential health interventions. Between 2016 and 2024, more than 7.5 crore antenatal check-ups have been conducted, while institutional deliveries have increased by 89 percent over the past decade, significantly improving maternal and child health outcomes. He also highlighted the pivotal role of ASHA workers in ensuring free drugs, diagnostics, and timely transportation to healthcare facilities.

Shri Nadda also noted with satisfaction that India's Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) has declined sharply from 130 per lakh live births in 2014–15 to 88

per lakh live births, marking a faster reduction than the global average. Emphasizing the preventive dimension of healthcare, he said that Ayushman Arogya Mandirs are playing a transformative role in early screening and detection of diseases. As of Today, over 40 crore individuals have been screened for hypertension, leading to 6.8 crore diagnoses, while 40 crore have been screened for diabetes, resulting in 4.6 crore diagnoses. Similarly, 33.8 crore oral cancer screenings have identified over two lakh cases, 8.5 crore cervical cancer screenings have led to 90,000 diagnoses, and 15.8 crore breast cancer screenings have resulted in 75,800 detections, enabling early treatment and im-

proved survival outcomes. Addressing mental healthcare, the Union Minister highlighted the significance of Tele-MANAS, which provides round-the-clock mental health counselling in 20 languages, ensuring accessible, stigma-free support for women across diverse socio-cultural settings.

Furthermore, Union Health Minister highlighted that last year the Government launched the 'Swastha Nari, Sashakt Parivaar Abhiyaan', which witnessed an overwhelming participation of over 11 crore women across the country. Under the campaign, large-scale screening for non-communicable diseases (NCDs), tuberculosis, leprosy, and other health conditions was

conducted, reflecting the Government's proactive approach towards preventive and promotive healthcare. He noted that such targeted interventions are instrumental in early detection, timely treatment, and improved health outcomes for women.

In his concluding remarks, Shri Nadda affirmed that under the visionary leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, women-centric governance would continue to remain at the forefront of national policy-making. He called upon all stakeholders to renew their resolve for sustained reforms, stronger implementation, and accelerated progress to ensure better outcomes for women and to build a more inclusive, equi-

table, and empowered India.

The Foundation Day Programme witnessed the release of several important publications and the launch of key initiatives, reflecting the National Commission for Women's comprehensive approach towards awareness generation, capacity building, and women's empowerment. These included the release of "Jagriti", the monthly magazine of the National Commission for Women (NCW), aimed at promoting awareness on women-centric laws, rights, government initiatives, and inspirational success stories, and the Handbook on the "Maternity Benefit Act" (English & Hindi Versions), designed to enhance understanding and ensure effective implementation.

Telangana holds first SC/ST vigilance panel meet



Hyderabad, Sept 23 (GNS): A state-level high-level vigilance and monitoring committee meeting regarding the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, was held under the chairmanship of CM A. Revanth Reddy—the first such meeting since the formation of Telangana. This is the first state-level high-level meeting since the one held in undivided Andhra Pradesh on February 11, 2013.

The government views atrocities against SCs and STs from a humanitarian perspective; measures are being taken to ensure victims receive prompt justice, compensation, and reha-

bilitation. A total of 7,563 cases of atrocities against SCs and STs have been registered from 2023 to date – Minister Adluri Laxman Kumar. Officials were directed to release victim compensation immediately via the 'Green Channel' without linking it to budget constraints. The CM personally sought details from officials regarding registered cases, investigations, trials, case resolutions, financial assistance provided to victims, and rehabilitation efforts.

A review was conducted on the functioning of special courts and mobile courts, as well as legal awareness programs. "What Dalits desire

is self-respect, equality, and security" – Minister Adluri Laxman Kumar. The Minister questioned why the BRS government failed to convene the state-level SC/ST vigilance and monitoring committee meeting over the past ten years. The Minister criticized the previous government for not paying adequate attention to issues concerning attacks, sexual assaults, and harassment against Dalits. The Minister expressed deep anguish over a recent incident concerning the self-respect of Dalits. He stated that a decision was made during the meeting to take strict action regarding this incident.

Smooth Ganesh Procession Assured



Falaknuma News State Bureau M.A.Samad Hyderabad, Sept 23 Urban MLA Dhanpal Suryanarayana Gupta directed officials to ensure that the historic Ganesh Shobha Yatra in Nizamabad is conducted smoothly without any hindrances, with all departments working in close coordination. The MLA, along with officials and public representatives, inspected the procession route on Wednesday from Dubba Crossroads through Lalitha Mahal, Gandhi Gunj, Nehru Park, Gandhi Chowk, Pawan Talkies, Gajulpet, Peddabazar and Gol Hanuman to Vinayakula Baavi.

Speaking on the occasion, Dhanpal Suryanarayana

Gupta said the Ganesh procession in Nizamabad holds special significance and has been conducted on Anantha Chaturdashi for nearly a century. This year, the grand procession will be held on September 25 with Lord Ganesha being taken in a specially decorated chariot.

He said arrangements were being coordinated by the Electricity, Municipal Corporation, Public Health and Police departments to ensure a safe and hassle-free procession. Officials reviewed arrangements for lighting, filling potholes, laying BT roads wherever necessary and providing essential facilities at Vinayakula Baavi. The MLA appealed to Ganesh mandap organisers

to conduct the procession peacefully and with devotion, while extending full co-operation to the authorities.

Mayor Kooragayala Uma Rani, Municipal Commissioner S. Dilip Kumar, Public Health EE Tirupati, BJP corporators Nagolla Lakshminarayana, Pasunuri Ramu, Jagadish Kulkarni, Bantu Preethi Praveen, Prasanna Srinivas and Jyothi Murali, along with leaders Pancharreddy Shyam, Srinivas, Maravar Krishna and Mahila Morcha president Vanitha were present.

This version is suitable for a newspaper report, with the route, departmental coordination and September 25 procession details clearly highlighted.

Dy CM Bhatti Directs Officials to Ensure Grand Invest Telangana Summit



Hyderabad, Sept 23 (GNS): Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka directed officials to undertake the preparations for the 'Invest Telangana Global Summit-2026', scheduled to be held from December 7 to 9, 2026, in a highly prestigious and comprehensive manner, with the objective of attracting large-scale investments to Telangana.

"This is a historic occasion that will take Telangana's fu-

ture and economic growth to new heights. Every official must actively participate and work with commitment to make the Invest Telangana Global Summit-2026 a grand success," the Deputy Chief Minister said. He directed officials to ensure meticulous preparations for the global summit, which is being organised with the objective of transforming Telangana into a leading global investment destination. A preparatory meeting

was held at the State Secretariat on Wednesday under the chairmanship of Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka. State Ministers Duddu Sridhar Babu, Uttam Kumar Reddy, Azharuddin and Adluri Laxman, along with Chief Secretary Sanjay Jaju and several senior officials, attended the meeting. During the meeting, the Deputy Chief Minister finalised a detailed action plan covering arrangements, publicity and roadshows.

Speaking on the occasion, Bhatti Vikramarka said this would be the second global summit being organised after the formation of the Praja Palana government, and called for laying a strong foundation for the state's comprehensive development through the summit. He said the government was moving forward with the ambitious goal of transforming Telangana into a \$3 trillion economy by 2047. Around 10 special commit-

tees of senior officials have been constituted to oversee the summit arrangements, with each committee headed by a senior officer, he said. The Deputy Chief Minister made it clear that there should be no delay in the preparation of plans, budget estimates or the approval process. Along with the officials' committees, Executive Councils have also been constituted, with the concerned Ministers appointed as their chairpersons.

Governor Shukla calls for mass movement against drug abuse

Hyderabad, Sep 23 (UNI) Telangana Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla has called for a mass movement against drug abuse in the State, stressing that the campaign to protect youth and students from narcotics should begin at home and involve families, educational institutions and communities.

Since assuming charge as Governor of Telangana on March 11, 2026, Shukla has been focusing on expanding the 'Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan' as a people's movement across the State.

He has conducted aware-

ness and sensitisation programmes in Hyderabad, Nizamabad, Hanamkonda, Warangal and Asifabad and reviewed anti-drug measures with district officials. The Governor has emphasised the need to strengthen awareness programmes in educational institutions.

During his meeting with Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy in April, he proposed administering an anti-drug pledge to students and introducing a declaration at the time of admission for students to stay away from narcotics. In June, at a gathering of students at L.B. Stadium in Hyderabad, the

Governor, in the presence of the Chief Minister and Ministers, administered the anti-drug pledge and called upon students, parents, teachers, citizens and officials to work collectively towards a drug-free Telangana.

He said the campaign should move beyond awareness programmes and become a people's movement beginning from homes, villages and panchayats. He urged parents to watch for behavioural changes in children and advised students to stay away from harmful influences and report information about drugs to authorities.

KTR urges SC to take cognisance of concerns surrounding Election Commission

Hyderabad, Sept 23 (Patriotic Views): BRS Working President KT Rama Rao on Wednesday urged the Supreme Court to take suo motu cognisance of the concerns surrounding the functioning of the Election Commission of India. Addressing a press conference, he warned that the ECI is facing a severe crisis of confidence.

Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) leader emphasised that as a constitutional body, the ECI must remain above suspicion. He stated that no agency other than the Supreme Court holds

the credibility to conduct an impartial investigation.

"ECI is a constitutional body. We cannot believe any other agency to investigate other than the Supreme Court of India. The Supreme Court needs to take cognisance of what former Election Commissioners are saying and launch a suo motu inquiry into the matter. Hopefully, some answers will come out, and the truth will prevail," said KTR, as Rama Rao is popularly known.

Recalling his earlier engagement with the commission, he shared that he

had led a party delegation to New Delhi to meet with three Election Commissioners to raise serious apprehensions regarding the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process. He noted that concerns were formally submitted during the Bihar elections as well, pressing the poll body to address rumours, clarify ambiguities, and bring complete transparency to the revision process. He said that, despite these representations highlighted that serious doubts and questions continue to persist regarding the ECI's impartiality.

HC rejects challenge, Nizam palace suit to continue

Falaknuma News State Bureau M.A.Samad Hyderabad, Sept 23

The Telangana High Court has dismissed a challenge seeking to halt the partition proceedings initiated by Nawab Mir Najaf Ali Khan, grandson of His Exalted Highness Nawab Mir Osman Ali Khan Bahadur, the VII Nizam of Hyderabad, observing that the revision petition was "devoid of merit."

The order came in Civil Revision Petition No. 1742 of 2026, filed by Azmet Jah and Shekhar Jah through their General Power of Attorney holders, Mohammed Abul Faiz Khan and Mohammed Fateh Faiz Bin Jung. The petition questioned the order of the XI Additional Chief Judge, City Civil Court, Hyderabad, which had rejected their application in I.A. No. 79 of 2024 seeking outright rejection of the plaint in O.S. No. 404 of 2021.

The High Court, while declining to interfere, clarified the limited nature of its supervisory jurisdiction under Article 227 of the Constitution. The Court observed that such jurisdiction cannot be exercised as an appellate forum and is intended for cases involving jurisdictional error or findings so contrary to law as to warrant exceptional intervention.

In examining the pre-



liminary objections, the Court recorded that Nawab Najaf Ali Khan had prima facie been able to establish that he had a share in the properties forming part of the suit schedule. The Court further held that the issue concerning court fee could appropriately be considered during the trial after the parties place their evidence before the court. It consequently found no strong case for interference at the present stage.

The partition suit involves some of the most prominent properties associated with the legacy of the VII Nizam. Nawab Najaf Ali Khan has sought partition and separate possession of Falaknuma Palace, Chowmohalla Palace, Purani Haveli, King Kothi Palace, and Harewood and Cedars Bungalow in Tamil Nadu. The proceedings also include a prayer seeking a declaration that the sale deed relating to King Kothi/Nazri Bagh is void and illegal.



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Death toll in Telangana hospital fire rises to five

Hyderabad, Sept 23 (Patriotic Views): With two infants succumbing to burn injuries, the death toll in devastating fire at the Special Newborn Care Unit (SNCU) ward of Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) in Telangana's Adilabad town, has risen to five. One newborn died while undergoing treatment at RIMS and the other succumbed while being shifted to Nirmal town. Earlier, three infants had died in the incident that occurred Monday midnight after an air-conditioner in the reception area of the SNCU burst into flames.

A fire tender was rushed to the hospital and the

blaze was brought under control. About 25 infants were rescued by the attendants of the patients and hospital staff. A five-day preterm baby died immediately in the incident while another preterm baby of four days succumbed four hours later. The third infant, a two-day-old girl who was born prematurely at 28 weeks, died while being shifted to another hospital.

Health Minister C. Damodar Raja Narasimha, who visited RIMS and inspected the fire incident site, expressed grief over the deaths and conveyed his condolences to the bereaved families.



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