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LULA'S VICTORY IN BRAZIL BUCKS A REGIONAL SHIFT TO THE RIGHT
Brazil's leftist President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva was re-elected against all expectations on Sunday, beating his rival Flavio Bolsonaro

A CLEAR VICTORY OF DEMOCRACY: EU CHIEF

Lula's dramatic comeback meant Brazil had not followed Argentina, Chile, Colombia and Peru, all backed by US President Donald Trump, in swinging to the right. Official data showed he won 51.8 per cent of the votes against Flavio Bolsonaro's 48.2 per cent, with Lula bagging 4.4 million more votes. EU chief Ursula von der Leyen hailed it as a 'victory of democracy' | **P9**

SERBIA STUNNER: STUDENT MOVEMENT WINS

■ In a historic change of government, Serbia's populist strongman Aleksandar Vucic (pic left) conceded defeat to a grassroots movement of univ students who led protests for almost two years
■ Serbia's popular student movement grew out of anger at Vucic since 16 people were killed in 2024 at a train station in Novi Sad

14-year

LONG AUTHORITARIAN REIGN OF SERBIA'S VUCIC ENDED ON SUNDAY

All SIR decisions unanimous, says EC affidavit in SC

Poll commission reiterates Form 6 was not amended, declaration is separate document

SUCHITRA KALYAN MOHANTY @ New Delhi

DAYS ahead of the INDIA bloc's rally against alleged poll irregularities, the Election Commission of India told the Supreme Court that all its orders on the controversial Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls were unanimous decisions of the full commission.

In its counter affidavit, the ECI said the plea against the Chief Election Commissioner based on a single news report is not maintainable. It also told the bench that Form 6 had not been amended, adding unmapped voters need not attend hearings. The court is expected to hear the batch of pleas on Tuesday.

The ECI asserted that all three SIR orders — issued in June 2025, October 2025 and May 2026 — were unanimous. "The notes, queries or suggestions recorded by the CEC or Election Commissioners while a file is under process do not constitute decisions of the Commission," it said. The EC said files move from one Election Commissioner to the other and then to the CEC. In urgent cases, electronic approvals are obtained and later recorded on physical files, it said.

The EC said a July 28 work allocation order was issued by an additional secretary on deputation and both poll commissioners wrote to the Cabinet Secretary about it the next day. On their joint direction on July 30, the order was not implemented. On the charge that Form 6 was altered without statutory approval, the EC claimed it was not amended as the declaration required under SIR was a separate document.

While admitting the online display could be read as an amendment, the ECI said, from October 21, the online application would be split into Form 6 and separate declaration, mirroring the physical form.

Unmapped voters need not attend hearings, the ECI said, stating that Booth Level Officers will collect documents from their homes, with hearings restricted to exceptional cases and preferably held online. On ECINet centralisation, it said no name can be added/deleted except by an order of the Electoral Registration Officer.

Response to Goa case

ECI said that of the 97 voters described by media as "left out" in Goa, 88 had already been enrolled, six were abroad, and three had Portuguese passports



Notes, queries or suggestions recorded by the CEC or Election Commissioners while file is under process do not constitute ECI's decisions

EC's affidavit

On Bengal appeals

In West Bengal, appeals against inclusion of voters were filed by officers under the CEO based on earlier SC orders and weren't brought to ECI's notice, it claimed

Digital publishers challenge privacy law in SC

SUCHITRA KALYAN MOHANTY @ New Delhi

TWENTY-one digital news publishers—including NDTV and Network18—have knocked the doors of the Supreme Court to challenge the Digital Personal Data Protection Act (DPDP Act), arguing that the law would cripple investigative journalism and expose sources.

The petitioner, Digital News Publishers Association (DNPA), has challenged several

provisions of the Act, citing their potential impact on journalism. *The New Indian Express* is a member of DNPA.

A bench headed by Chief Justice Surya Kant will hear the matter on Tuesday, the cause list on the Supreme Court website showed. According to *Reuters*, the 698-page plea was filed on October 6.

The DPDP Act, also known as the privacy law, was enacted in 2023 while the rules to implement it (DPDP Rules, 2025)



STORM SURGE

AP on high alert as Cyclone Arnab nears coast, threatens heavy rain

USHA PERI @ Visakhapatnam

POTENTIALLY one of the strongest cyclones to affect the Andhra Pradesh coast in the last 8-10 years, Cyclone Arnab is inching closer to the coast, bringing the threat of strong winds and heavy rainfall.

The system is likely to intensify into a very severe cyclonic storm on Tuesday before crossing the Andhra Pradesh and Yanam coasts on Wednesday morning. In its latest alert, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) issued a red-message cyclone warning for the Andhra Pradesh and adjoining south Odisha coasts, cautioning that the storm is likely to intensify further and cross the Andhra Pradesh and Yanam coasts on October 28.

As the cyclone approaches, the State government has released ₹27 crore to 20 districts to undertake relief and emergency response measures. Educational institutions in Visakhapatnam, Anakapalli



Fishing boats return to Visakhapatnam Harbour on Monday as Cyclone Arnab brings rough sea conditions to the coast | **6 SATYANARAYANA**

and Alluri Sitharama Raju districts have also been declared closed on October 27 and 28 as a precautionary measure.

According to the IMD, the cyclonic storm was centred over the west-central and adjoining east-central Bay of Bengal at 11.30 am on Monday. It was moving westwards at a speed of 13 kmph during the preceding six hours and lay about 580 km east-southeast of Visakhapatnam, 660 km east-southeast of Kaki-

nada, 760 km east-southeast of Machilipatnam and 830 km east-southeast of Bapatla. It was also located about 550 km southeast of Gopalpur in Odisha.

It is likely to further intensify into a very severe cyclonic storm on Tuesday. Thereafter, it is expected to move northwestwards and cross the Andhra Pradesh and Yanam coasts between Bapatla and Visakhapatnam, close to Yanam, by the forenoon of October 28. **P4**

Govt green light to pure ethanol flex-fuel cars

PARVEZ SULTAN @ New Delhi

THE ministry of road transport and highway on Monday notified amendments to the Central Motor Vehicles Rules, allowing flex-fuel vehicles that can run on up to E100 — nearly 100% ethanol. According to the ministry officials, fuel beyond E20 (20% ethanol-blended petrol) and up to E100 is intended only for vehicles designed and certified to use and will not be applicable for other vehicles. Vehicles that use E20 or normal fuel can't use E85 or E100 fuel.

The ministry also changed certain vehicle classification thresholds, fuel specifications, and technical references used in emission-related tables and testing provisions. Additionally, it raised the vehicle weight limit to 3,500 kg from the previous threshold of 3,000 kg for light petrol and diesel vehicles affected by these changes.

E100 usually contains around 93-95% ethanol, 5-7% petrol, and additives. "A vehicle's compatibility with E10 or E20 alone does not establish suitability for E85. This notification does not require owners of existing vehicles to switch to E85 or modify their vehicles either at



Maruti first off the block

In June, Maruti Suzuki India launched Wagon R Flex Fuel capable of running on ethanol-petrol blends from E20 to E100. Others, including Toyota Motor, Tata Motors, and Hyundai Motor, are also developing flex-fuel vehicles for the Indian market

present or in the future. Motorists should check the fuel compatibility sticker on their vehicle and follow the manufacturer's guidance in the owner's manual while opting for the fuel choice at the fuel station," said ministry officials.

In Brazil, vehicles are optimised to run on any blend from E20-E25 up to E100. Nearly all new light vehicles and several bikes there have flex-fuel engines. Other countries with flex-fuel vehicles are the US, Canada and some in Europe.



CENTRE CLEARS DEFENCE BUY WORTH ₹2.12 LAKH CR

India on Monday cleared procurement of a range of military platforms and weapon systems including light multi-role helicopters, long-range Kamikaze drones and radars | **P7**

Six-year-old girl raped, murdered in Prakasam; villagers thrash accused

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Ongole

A six-year-old girl was allegedly raped and murdered at Chadalawada village in Naguluppalapadu mandal of Prakasam district on Sunday night, triggering public outrage and protests demanding justice for the victim.

According to police, the accused, Ajjam Ananda Rao alias Anand Babu alias Anand (25), allegedly took the girl, who was sleeping outside her house, after midnight on Sunday, sexually assaulted her and killed her. He reportedly placed her body on a chair outside the

Victim's relatives stage protest

The victim's family members and relatives staged a road blockade on NH-213, demanding justice. Ongole DSP R Srinivasa Rao and other officials brought the situation under control

house in the early hours of Monday and fled. The girl was staying with her grandmother while her parents worked as daily wage labourers in Hyderabad.

Angry villagers later traced the accused, thrashed him and handed him over to the police. The victim's family members and relatives staged a road blockade on NH-213, demanding justice. Ongole DSP R Srinivasa Rao and other police officials intervened, pacified the protesters and brought the situation under control.

District SP Harshavardhan Raju and Collector P Rajababu visited the Ongole Government General Hospital mortuary on Monday and examined the girl's body. They also spoke to doctors and officials to gather details about the incident. **P4**

Tech can't replace human touch in healthcare: VP

S GURU SRIKANTH @ Vijayawada

ASSERTING that technological progress must be strictly guided by scientific validation, patient safety, data privacy and ethical responsibility, Vice-President CP Radhakrishnan on Monday stressed that technology can never replace the compassion and human connection central to the doctor-patient relationship.

Addressing the Ruby Jubilee Anniversary celebrations of Dr NTR University of Health Sciences in Vijayawada, the Vice-President urged premier medical institutions to balance cutting-edge digital innova-



tions with core human-centred care, while calling upon young scholars to lead the next frontier of global medical research.

Highlighting the historic milestone, the Vice-President commended the institution for completing four decades of stellar service to medical education and public welfare.

The university stands as a monumental embodiment of the visionary ideals of legendary former CM NTR, whose public service and leadership extended far beyond regional frontiers

CP Radhakrishnan, Vice-Pres

He noted that the university stands as a monumental embodiment of the visionary ideals of legendary former Chief Minister Dr Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao, whose public service and leadership extended far beyond regional frontiers to serve the broader national interest.

Drawing attention to the

massive expansion of medical education infrastructure across the country under the leadership of PM Modi, the Vice-President shared key national statistics detailing a surge in capacities.

The total number of medical colleges in India has more than doubled from 387 prior to 2014 to 846 at present. Concurrently, undergraduate MBBS seats have expanded by an exceptional 172 percent — surging from approximately 51,000 to over 1.4 lakh — while postgraduate medical seats have witnessed a 177 percent growth, scaling from around 31,000 to more than 86,000 nationwide. **P4**



CAPITAL CONUNDRUM

Morning walkers navigate a blanket of haze and smog at Vijay Chowk in New Delhi on Monday. The city is beginning to record a dip in air quality | **SAYANTAN GHOSH**

EXPRESS READ

CB-CID takes over Class 11 student suicide case

Coimbatore: The six-day protest demanding the arrest of teachers in connection with the suicide of Class 11 student A Akilan due to alleged caste discrimination ended on Monday, after the case was transferred to the CB-CID for probe from the Coimbatore city police

'Tired of this': SC on TN govt's delay in riot aid case

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday criticised the Tamil Nadu government for dragging its feet on paying compensation for property and business losses suffered during a communal riot in 1996 in Thoothukudi. "So tired of this matter, I think I will carry this through my demitting the office," Justice Bhatti remarked

Rahul acquitted in defamation case related to Amit Shah

NAMITA BAIJPAI @ Lucknow

A special MP/MLA court in UP's Sultanpur on Monday acquitted Congress MP and Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi of all charges in a criminal defamation case of 2018 related to his alleged remarks against Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

Rahul appeared in person before the court of Additional Civil Judge Shubham Verma for the pronouncement of the verdict. Defence counsel Kashi Prasad Shukla confirmed the acquittal.

The case dates back to May 8, 2018, when Rahul allegedly made objectionable remarks against Shah at a political rally in Bengaluru during the Karnataka Assembly elections. He allegedly referred to Shah as a "murder accused".

Vijay Mishra, then BJP district vice-president and ex-chairman of Sultanpur District Cooperative Bank, filed the defamation complaint against Rahul on August 4, 2018.

Rahul, who secured bail in 2023, said his intention was not to defame anyone. Mishra said he will study the order and file an appeal against it.



