



Iran succession sparks oil price surge, global supply fears

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3,200 MSMEs in Ahmedabad receive ₹62.83 cr interest subsidy

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Suryakumar Yadav Calls T20 Win Wonderful Journey



MOJTABA SUCCEEDS SLAIN FATHER AS IRAN'S SUPREME LEADER

The choice signals hardliners firmly in charge; loyalists take to the streets in support of new leader

TEHRAN

Iran on Monday named Mojtaba Khamenei to succeed his slain father, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, as supreme leader on Monday, signalling that hardliners remain firmly in charge and appearing to close off any path to a swift end to war in the Middle East.

As per a statement by the Assembly of Experts, an 88-member clerical body tasked with selecting the supreme leader, Mojtaba was bestowed with the power of leading the war-torn nation and given the title of Supreme Leader on March 8.

"Mojtaba Khamenei (56) is appointed and introduced as the third leader of the sacred system of the Islamic Republic of Iran, based on the decisive vote of the respected representatives of the Assembly of Experts," the clerical body stated.

It said that the institution "did not hesitate for a minute" in choosing a new leader, despite "the brutal aggression of the criminal America and the evil Zionist regime".

Mojtaba, a mid-ranking cleric with close ties to the powerful Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), had long been viewed by elements of Iran's ruling establishment as a potential successor to his father, who was killed in the



In Mojtaba's honour: Iran fires 3 deadliest missiles painted with 'Panic in Israel'

After Mojtaba formally took charge as new supreme leader, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps marked the transition by firing its three deadliest missiles, signalling a ruthless show of loyalty and strength. In footage, one of the missiles was seen bearing the slogan "At your service, Mojtaba" and "Panic in Israel". Tension gripped parts of Israel as these missiles flew in massive waves shortly after Mojtaba's elevation, with sirens blaring and residents scrambling into shelters. Khamenei Jr's rise and Iran's decision to escalate the war on multiple fronts.

US-Israel air strike on Iran on February 28. IRGC pledged allegiance on Sunday to the country's new supreme leader.

"The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps... is ready for complete obedience and self-sacrifice in carrying out the divine commands of the Guardian Jurist of the time, His Eminence Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei", the Guards said in a statement.

Born on September 8, 1969 in Mashhad, Mojtaba is the second son of the late supreme leader Khamenei. While the 56-year-old Shiite cleric has largely kept a low profile and has never held public office, he is known to have considerable clout within Iran's complex power structure, particularly the IRGC. He is seen as a continuation of his father's legacy and hardline rule.

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'Iran sought nod for 3 ships to dock in Indian ports'

NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar amid tensions in the Indian Ocean region following sinking of an Iranian warship by the US last week said on Monday that Iran had sought India's permission for three of its ships to dock at Indian ports and the approval was granted the next day.

Jaishankar in a statement while speaking in Parliament said that one Iranian vessel, IRIS LAVAN, docked in Kochi on March 4.

He said, "The Iranian side has requested permission on February 28 for three ships in the region to dock at our ports. This was accorded on March 1. IRIS LAVAN actually docked on March 4 in Kochi. The crew is currently in Indian naval facilities."

"We believe that this was the right thing to do and the Iranian foreign minister has expressed his country's thanks for the humane gesture," he said.



Oil tops \$100/barrel for first time since 2022

DUBAI

The global benchmark oil price has climbed above \$100 a barrel for the first time since 2022 as the escalating conflict involving Iran, Israel and the US continues to unsettle global markets for the straight 10th day.

The sharp rise in oil prices comes as G7 finance ministers convene an emergency meeting to discuss the economic consequences of the Middle East tension and its growing risks to global energy supplies.

The surge in prices reflects mounting fears that the war could significantly disrupt energy flows from the Middle East, particularly shipments passing through the Strait of Hormuz, a vital route that carries about a fifth of the world's oil supply.



Brent crude crossed the \$100 threshold on Monday, marking the first time the benchmark has reached that level since 2022, when energy markets were shaken by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

US President Donald Trump described oil price surge as "short term" and a "very small price to pay" for world peace. UK Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer said, "The longer the war goes on, the more likely the potential for an impact on our economy" - and that he's working to minimise the effects on UK businesses.

Petrol, diesel price hike unlikely unless crude breaches \$130: Govt

New Delhi: The adverse effects of the West Asian conflict can be felt in many parts of the world as the war has left the price of oil soaring in its wake. However, the government of India has laid common man's fears to rest and assured there are no plans to raise the retail prices for gasoline and diesel as of now. As per government sources, India is not planning to release oil reserves in coordination with the International Energy Agency. "Unless crude oil prices breach \$130, petrol-diesel prices are unlikely to increase. The government expects crude oil prices to be hover around \$100 per barrel," they stated. They reassured that there is no problem of shortage of petrol and diesel at any pump in the country and they have also accelerated crude sourcing from routes outside the Strait of Hormuz. Moreover, India has enough stock of Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) and is a producer and exporter of ATF (Aviation Turbine Fuel). "India is better placed than other countries. Many countries have approached India for taking stock," the sources said. "In a bid to stop hoarding and black marketing, LPG booking period has been increased from 21 to 25 days. There were instances where people who were earlier booking LPG cylinders in 55 Days has started booking LPG cylinders in 15 days," sources said. The government has reportedly ordered refineries to boost LPG output and give priority to domestic LPG over commercial connections. Moreover, countries like Algeria, Australia, Canada, Norway have approached to sell LPG.

IN A NUTSHELL

- Petrol and diesel prices in India are unlikely to rise unless global crude oil prices cross \$130 per barrel.
- There is no fuel shortage and India has adequate petrol, diesel and ATF stocks, say officials.
- LPG booking intervals have been increased to 25 days to prevent hoarding and ensure a stable domestic supply.
- Domestic LPG to be prioritised; Iran sought permission to dock 3 ships in Indian ports.

- Iran names Khamenei's successor: Iran's ruling clerics have appointed slain leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's son, Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei, as the country's new supreme leader, defying threats from Israel and the US.
- China opposes targeting of new supreme leader: China stated it opposes any targeting of Iran's new supreme leader, Mojtaba Khamenei, after the Israeli military threatened to target any successor to his slain father, Ali Khamenei.
- Gulf countries report fresh attacks: Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Kuwait all reported new attacks. Saudi reported two deaths from a "projectile" attack.



Israel launches 'wide-scale' strikes across Tehran

JERUSALEM

As Iran's Assembly of Experts officially appointed Mojtaba Khamenei as the country's third Supreme Leader, the Israeli military on Monday launched a "wide-scale" strikes on Tehran, Isfahan and southern Iran. "The IDF has just begun a wide-scale wave of strikes against the infrastructure of the Iranian terror regime across Tehran, Isfahan, and southern Iran," the military said in a statement.

Amid the strikes, thousands of people gathered at Tehran's Enghelab Square to pledge allegiance to Mojtaba.

Tensions across the region has intensified as several countries reported intercept-

ing Iranian missiles. Turkey and the United Arab Emirates said they successfully intercepted missiles launched by Iran, while Qatar also confirmed an interception.

Israel said it was carrying out fresh military strikes on three areas in Iran.

New wave of Iranian missiles, drones target Gulf nations Iranian missiles and drones continue to target Gulf, with Bahrain's state oil company declaring force majeure on Monday for its shipments after its refinery caught fire in an Iranian attack. Gulf airspace has been shut and oil production and supply disrupted after Iran targeted US assets in Gulf countries in retaliatory attacks.

QUICK READ

'Won't rejoin BJP...my JCB Party will romp home'

NEW DELHI: Expelled BJP MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatnal on Monday ruled out rejoining the saffron party as long as what he termed a "corrupt family" continues to lead the party in Karnataka. Former union minister also announced that his yet-to-be-launched JCB Party will come to power in the state, and he will become the next chief minister. Speaking to reporters, he said he had not come to the national capital to meet BJP leaders.

A staunch critic of former Yediyurappa, he alleged that the BJP leadership in Karnataka was centered around the Yediyurappa family.

After Birla, Gyanesh? Oppn for CEC's removal

NEW DELHI: The I.N.D.I.A bloc is planning to submit an impeachment notice against Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar in Parliament in the next few days, as the Trinamool Congress is upping the ante against the poll body chief over Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. The prime mover of the notice is Trinamool Congress whose supremo and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee is on a protest from March 6 against the deletion of voters from electoral rolls after the contentious SIR. Upping the ante, TMC MPs also submitted notices.

SUCCESSION SIGNAL

DKS marks 6 years as KPCC chief, bats for fresh face

BENGALURU

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Tuesday completed six years in office as the president of Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC).

Reflecting on his tenure, Shivakumar said, "Six years is enough for me," emphasizing the need for a fresh face to lead the party in Karnataka and new ideas within the party.

In response to queries about surpassing the 10-year KPCC tenure of Home Minister Dr G Parameshwara, he said, "In order to make way

for fresh faces, it is important to relinquish the post." On his next role, he remained non-committal, saying, "Will let you know."

Shivakumar, a veteran Congress leader, stressed the importance of generational change, noting that he, Parameshwara, HK Patil, and Ramalinga Reddy became ministers after their first MLA term. "We are seniors now. Let new leaders emerge," he said.

Shivakumar is hosting a dinner for his party legislators on Tuesday to mark his six-year tenure, which began in 2020 amid the COVID-19



pandemic, replacing Dinesh Gundu Rao. Despite signalling his exit as KPCC chief, he has assured that he will remain active in the "frontline leadership" of the party.

Delhi riots case: Sharjeel gets 10-day interim bail

NEW DELHI

A Delhi court granted 10-day interim bail to Sharjeel Imam in Delhi riots case. The Supreme Court had earlier this month granted bail to five accused in the riots case in relation to a larger conspiracy case but denied the same to Sharjeel Imam and Umar Khalid.

Additional Sessions Judge Sameer Bajpai was hearing the interim bail application filed by Imam, seeking relief for six weeks to attend the marriage scheduled this month.

In an order, the court grant-

ed interim bail from March 20 to 30. Imam is an accused in the case pertaining to the February 2020 riots in northeast Delhi that left 53 people dead and more than 700 injured. The violence erupted during the widespread protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC).

The Supreme Court, however, denied relief to activists Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam, saying all the accused in the case did not stand on the same footing.

tapping and political monitoring, he said he was unaware of the same, pointing out that the issue had been addressed by the Chief Minister and Home Minister. Reaffirming his bond with Siddaramaiah, Shivakumar described their relationship as "milk and honey", and reiterated that he knows how to fight but never for power within the party.

Shivakumar's remarks signal his intention to step aside gracefully, ensuring opportunities for younger leaders while consolidating his image as a disciplined and pragmatic party veteran.

QUICK READ



Iran war: 9 flights to and from B'loru cancelled

CH NEWS, BENGALURU
The Iran-Israel War has intensified again, and restrictions have been imposed on Middle Eastern airspace. As a result, 9 flights scheduled to arrive at Bengaluru and 10 flights scheduled to depart have been cancelled. Some flights have been cancelled at Bangalore Kempegowda Airport. Flights to Abu Dhabi, Riyadh, Jeddah, Dammam, Dubai, Doha routes have been cancelled. Flights have been cancelled due to airspace restrictions and security reasons. Airport authorities have advised passengers to check their flight schedules. This is likely to cause temporary disruption to passengers travelling to the Middle East.

Woman found dead under mysterious circumstances

CH NEWS, BENGALURU
The body of 27-year-old housewife Supritha was found under suspicious circumstances in Hennur police station limits. The incident came to light last night. Supritha (27) was married to Kiran Kumar five years ago. While Supritha stays at home as a housewife, her husband Kiran Kumar works in the sales team of a private firm. Supritha's family has claimed that she committed suicide by hanging herself. However, the Hennur police suspect it to be a suicide and there is no clarity on the incident at the moment. The police have registered a case and are investigating.



MLA Basavaraj Shivaganga's PA ends life

CH NEWS, BENGALURU
The incident of suicide of Channagiri MLA Basavaraj Shivaganga's PA took place at a lodge near Upparpete in the city and came to light late. The deceased has been identified as Shivakumar, a native of Davanagere, and was working as a PA to Channagiri MLA Basavaraj Shivaganga. The deceased Shivakumar Mai had incurred a lot of debt. He had been fired from his job a few days ago. It is learnt that he committed suicide in a lodge on February 17 after making a video call to his wife, saying that he had had enough of life and was going to die. The Upparpete police have filed a case.

Min wants to promote local sale of Mysore silk sarees

Venkatesh was replying to MLA TS Srivatsa, who raised the issue of simplifying the sales, production and marketing of Mysore silk sarees

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Efforts are underway to enhance the production of high-quality Mysore silk sarees in response to the growing demand, said Minister K Venkatesh. There is a strategy to cease the online sale of silk sarees and instead promote local sales, he added.

During the question and answer session on Mysore silk sarees in the assembly on Monday, MLA TS Srivatsa raised the issue of simplifying the sale, production and sales of silk sarees. Responding to this, Venkatesh said, "There is huge demand for Mysore silk sarees as 300-400 sarees are being produced daily. Quality sarees are prepared with care. Efforts are being made to increase the production of sarees."

Srivatsa mentioned that individuals begin lining up as early as 3 am to purchase sarees. These sarees are sold as seconds, which come with a discount. Consequently, people



form queues, he stated.

"Women tend to avoid purchasing sarees that are flawed. As a result, high-quality sarees are being meticulously woven on looms. The demand for these quality sarees is substantial. There is also interest from other states. Given the demand from both neighbouring states and international markets, we will suspend our online service. Our priority will be to satisfy local demand first," he explained.

In the past three years, the Karnataka Silk Industries Corporation (KSIC) has produced a total of 310,667 sarees. Of this total, 309,659 sarees have been sold. The corporation reported profits of Rs 46.75 crore for the fiscal year 2022-23, Rs 73.40 crore for 2023-24, and Rs 101.15 crore for 2024-25, he disclosed.

Meanwhile, raising the issue of the closure of the T Narasipur silk yarn manufacturing unit, Opposition leader R Ashoka said, the government's decision to shut down this facility is inappropriate. The government intends to construct a stadium in that location. Ashok urged the government to reconsider its decision. Minister Byrathi Suresh supported this stance.

In response, Venkatesh remarked that the Chief Minister had been misled into believing that there was available land for a stadium at that site. Subsequently, he became aware of the truth. The government has resolved to abandon the proposal to utilize that land. Currently, that land is not for sale. He emphasized that the KSIC unit in T Narasipur will remain operational and will not be closed. A stadium will not be established there.

Additionally, R Ashok asserted that the wages of the employees at KSIC are inadequate. They are generating substantial profits, and he suggested that 1% of those profits should be allocated to the workers. They have reported a profit of Rs 99 crore; he proposed that Rs 1 crore should be distributed among the employees, he stated.



Paperless land surveys by end of year as services go online

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

In a major push for transparency and efficiency, the Survey, Settlement and Land Records (SSLR) wing of the revenue department has decided to fully digitise its operations, allowing citizens to apply online for land surveys, generate sketches and identify property boundaries without having to visit any government office. Officials said the department plans to complete the digitisation process by the end of 2026.

Once rolled out, applicants can submit survey requests, track their status, and download official documents from anywhere. The move is expected to reduce delays, get rid of middlemen and curb corruption, said Venkat Raja, SSLR Commissioner.

At present, the department receives between one lakh and 1.2 lakh survey applications every month from citizens and government departments.

The department has already scanned survey documents, some of which date back to the British era. However,

The implementation of new technology will avoid exploitation of farmers by middlemen and delay in getting the required documents.

ever, several old records, akarbands and land extent measurements, are not in a readable format.

Many entries, especially numerical details, are recorded in Marathi and other languages. As part of the drive, these records will be converted into accessible digital formats. Accurate land measurements will be extracted from original footnotes, key survey documents that record physical measurements and property boundaries.

"The data will then be integrated into geospatial digital revenue maps to improve precision. We are using rover equipment to conduct digital surveys to speed up the process and fix boundaries more accurately," he said.

"We are also creating a Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN) for every property to prevent future disputes," he added.

Airline offers ₹1K for dented bag, passenger sues and wins ₹ 17K

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

A 28-year-old Bengalurean experienced a similar issue, but he decided to fight back. A year and a half on, the consumer forum has concluded that the airline was negligent and ordered compensation and litigation costs.

Saurabh Raperia, a resident of Old Airport Road and a member of Air India's frequent flyer programme, travelled from Delhi to Bengaluru on September 8, 2024, with a fragile tag placed on his checked-in trolley bag. On arrival at Kempegowda International Airport, when he went to collect his bag, he found a significant dent on it. He approached the airline's baggage service counter to lodge a complaint, but the executives allegedly refused to accept it or issue a Property Irregularity Report (PIR), instead asking him to raise the issue via email.

Later that day, he posted about the incident on X. Air India



dia responded seeking his ticket details, baggage tag number, and a damage complaint number. He shared the available information, noting that no complaint number was issued as the staff had refused to register his grievance. On Sept 9, 2024, he formally emailed the airline seeking compensation. Two days later, Air India offered Rs 500, which was later revised to Rs 1,000 after he termed it inadequate.

On December 10, 2024, Raperia filed a complaint with the consumer commission. Air India denied the allegations, contending that there was no deficiency in service or unfair trade practice, and

sought dismissal of the complaint. The Commission said, the opposite party has taken a defence that, as per its carriage policy, if a passenger leaves the baggage delivery area without reporting damage, the baggage is deemed to have been received in good condition. This defence cannot be accepted in the present case, as the complainant has clearly established that he attempted to report the damage at the airport itself but was prevented from doing so by the airline's own staff. A service provider cannot rely on an international policy when its own officials have obstructed compliance with it. Citing settled law, the commission noted that once damage to checked-in baggage is established, the burden shifts to the airline to prove absence of negligence. No such evidence was produced by Air India. The commission, on Feb 17, 2026, directed Air India to pay Rs 7,000 in damages and Rs 10,000 as litigation costs.

Illegal mortgage on apt land leaves buyers worried

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Illegal mortgaging of land used for apartment projects is emerging as a growing concern, exposing homebuyers to prolonged legal disputes and financial uncertainty.

In one such case on Anekal-Chandapura Road, residents of an apartment complex with 384 flats have spent years battling to secure ownership rights, after the land and several flats were allegedly mortgaged by the developer without the knowledge of buyers. Under property laws, once apartments are sold, the land and common areas are meant to be transferred to a co-operative society or an association of apartment owners. Fearing that the apartments could be auctioned, the homeowners approached the debt recovery tribunal challenging the mortgage executed under the SARFAESI (Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest) Act.

HC denies bail to contractor in recruitment exam fraud

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Terming him a habitual offender, the Kalaburagi bench of Karnataka high court has denied bail to RD Patil, also known as Rudragouda, the alleged mastermind behind several recruitment examination fraud cases.

Patil was arrested in November 2023 by a special team of criminal investigation department (CID) led by Raghavendra K Hegde, superintendent of police with the financial intelligence unit. The arrest was made under the Karnataka Control of Organised Crime Act (KCOCA).

He is currently in judicial custody at Mysuru Central Prison. The CID arrested Patil in connection with alleged malpractices in the First Division Assistant (FDA) And Second Division Assistant (SDA) recruitment examinations conducted by the Karnataka Examinations Authority.

According to the chargesheet, Patil, a Class I civil contractor from Kalaburagi, supplied electronic devices such as Bluetooth devices and walkie-talkies to candidates to help them cheat in the examinations. Investigators also accused him of organising similar scams in multiple recruitment tests.

B'loru to revive municipal bonds, targets ₹1K cr

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) is preparing to revive municipal bonds as a financing tool for city infrastructure, with plans to mobilise about Rs 1,000 crore in the initial phase. Bengaluru also has historical precedent in this area.

The erstwhile Bangalore Municipal Corporation (BMC) was among the first urban bodies in India to issue municipal bonds in 1997.

Officials say the renewed push is intended to revive that model while aligning the city with broader reforms in urban finance. Confirming the plan, additional chief secretary, UDD, Tushar Girinath told that GBA was working towards



preparing Bengaluru's five city corporations to access financial markets.

The initial aim is to raise Rs 1,000 crore through the municipal bonds. The initiative is aimed not only at raising funds but also at improving the financial systems and transparency of municipalities. Before issuing bonds, civic bodies must undergo credit rating assessments

and document their assets, revenue streams, and financial health, Tushar Girinath said.

The basic plan to leverage the instrument found a mention in the Karnataka State Budget 2026-27, where Chief Minister Siddaramaiah announced that corporations under the GBA framework would mobilise resources for development works by issuing

municipal bonds based on their balance sheets.

We will have to put our assets and revenue streams up for assessment. Once we get a proper credit rating, we can float bonds and expect a better response from investors, Tushar Girinath said. To prepare for the bond issuance, the state government is working with intermediaries and financial institutions, including the Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO), to compile documentation and establish the required financial processes.

Authorities stressed that the broader goal is to make municipal corporations financially credible institutions that can access multiple funding sources.

5 city corporations identify 498 feeding spots for stray dogs in B'loru city

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The five city corporations have identified 498 feeding spots for street dogs in an effort to strike a balance between animal welfare and public safety, making these locations the only official spaces within city limits to feed strays.

In the long run, the city corporations plan to establish at least 2-3 feeding zones per ward. With a total of 369 wards, the total feeding zones could exceed 700. Those

feeding stray dogs should provide food strictly at the marked spots and ensure the area is cleaned afterwards. No bowls or plates will be provided at the sites, citizens must feed the dogs and leave the place hygienic.

The move has sparked a debate. With limited staff to monitor feeding points, critics argue the responsibility appears to rest largely on citizens rather than the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA).

Questions have also been raised about practical chal-



lenges: should feeders wait until the dogs eat, could stale

food be dumped at the feeding spots, and whether irregu-

lar feeding could trigger territorial conflicts or behavioural changes among stray packs. According to officials, 'feeding point' signboards will be installed at the approved sites. The initiative follows Supreme Court and Animal Welfare Board of India guidelines to promote structured feeding, reduce dog aggression, and support sterilisation and vaccination drives.

With these feeding spots, BBMP's plan to feed the stray dogs regularly has been revoked, sources added. Bengaluru North and South corporations plan to increase the number of feeding zones. An official from South city corporation said the current spots are based on the old ward system and would be expanded for better accessibility. An animal husbandry official said, here, the responsibility lies mostly on the public. We are understaffed to monitor every feeding zone.

North City Commissioner Pommala Sunil Kumar said, seventy spots are definitely not sufficient for my corporation; we will increase the number soon. In the meantime, animal activist Sujaya Jagadeesh said multiple spots are necessary as packs of dogs would not share common feeding spots because of their territorial nature.

GBA should ensure the allocated feeding spots are clean, away from rubbish and human disturbance, reflecting respect for these living creatures. GBA must prioritise humane and practical solutions and not do things arbitrarily.



QUICK READ

Power outage scheduled in Honnavar, Bhatkal

Karwar
HESCOM has announced a power outage in Honnavar and Bhatkal taluks on March 11 and 12 due to urgent replacement of jumpers at four locations on the 110 KV line. Electricity will be suspended from 1:30 pm to 4 pm on both days. Consumers in the affected areas are advised to plan accordingly and cooperate during the maintenance work. The KPTCL official urged the public to be cautious and ensure safety of electrical appliances during the outage. This preventive work aims to maintain a stable power supply in the region.



Girls' Hostel hosts International Women's Day

Koppal
The Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Post-Matric Girls' Hostel celebrated International Women's Day 2026 with support from the National Integrated Medical Association Women's Unit, Koppal, and Ayushman Arogya Mandir, Kamanur. The program focused on personal hygiene and health awareness for hostel girls, along with health check-ups. Dr. Kasturi Karamudi, President of the Women's Unit, inaugurated the event and spoke on cleanliness and health maintenance. Doctors Bhagyashree Gaya, Kavita Hatti, Rudrakshi Devara Gudi, and Uma Patil also addressed the students. Hostel warden Jahanara Jalihala and numerous students actively participated in the event, making it a successful celebration.

Disability, senior citizen service organizations must register

KARWAR

The District Disability and Senior Citizen Empowerment Department has directed all organizations running activities for the disabled and senior citizens to register on the Seva Sindhu Online portal. Centers such as special schools, physiotherapy centers, training centers, residential facilities, and others working for persons with disabilities must register under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. Similarly, organizations serving senior citizens must register under the Senior Citizens Protection Act, 2007. Officials warned that failure to register could lead to legal action under the respective acts. Voluntary organizations running schools for mentally challenged children must also register under the National Trust Act to participate in schemes like Niramaya, and renewals for the 2026-27 cycle are required. For assistance or further details, organizations can contact the Department of Empowerment of Disabled and Senior Citizens, Gopura Niwas, Linganayak Wada Road, Karwar, at 08382-200758, said District Officer Raghavendra G. Bhatta.

Doctors and Health Staff to Begin Strike from March 11

HUBBALLI

Doctors and healthcare staff of the Health and Medical Education Department in Dharwad district have announced a strike starting March 11 to press for their long-pending demands, with an indefinite strike scheduled to begin on March 16 if their concerns are not addressed. Devidas Shantikar, President of the Dharwad district unit of the State Health and Medical Education Department Employees Association, told reporters that during the first phase of the strike from March 11 to 15, doctors in

Banjara community opposes internal reservation in state

Venkatesh Pandurang Pammara said internal reservation debates ignored Scheduled Caste B and C groups in recent university and BDA recruitments

HUBBALLI

Leaders of the Banjara community have opposed the proposal for internal reservation among Scheduled Castes and urged the State government to continue recruitment based on the old reservation system. They said the present move has created confusion and injustice for several communities. Addressing the media, Banjara Samaj youth leader Venkatesh Pandurang Pammara said that in the name of internal reservation, several Scheduled Caste groups are being ignored in recent recruitments. He pointed out that in recruitments conducted by University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences and the Bangalore



Development Authority, no posts were reportedly allotted to Scheduled Caste category B and C groups. He said this situation has affected communities such as Banjara, Bhovi, Korama, Korach, Bhajantri and Dombar, which already face social and economic difficulties. Many

students from these groups are struggling to get jobs as recruitment processes have been delayed. Pammara welcomed the government's recent announcement that recruitment and educational admissions may continue under the earlier reservation system. He de-

manded that new recruitment notifications be issued immediately so that eligible candidates can get opportunities without further delay. He also said the total reservation should remain within the 50 percent limit and should follow constitutional guidelines. According to him, 15 percent reservation should be given to Scheduled Castes and 3 percent to Scheduled Tribes, as per earlier provisions. The Banjara community has also demanded that the government consult community leaders before taking any decision on internal reservation. They warned that implementing such policies while the matter is pending in court could lead to legal complications and further confusion in society.

The four-kilometre Halaga-Macche stretch will divert heavy Goa-Hubballi traffic from Belagavi, easing congestion near major highways and landmarks

Belagavi bypass road work nearing completion

BELAGAVI

Work on parts of the Halaga-Macche bypass road in Belagavi will be completed by the end of this month, said BJP Member of Parliament Jagadish Shettar after reviewing the progress of infrastructure projects in the district. Speaking to reporters after a meeting with officials from the district administration, National Highways Authority of India, Railways and the airport authorities, Shettar said the entire 13.33-kilometre bypass road project is expected to be completed by the end of this year. The four-kilometre Halaga-Macche stretch connects the Pune-Bengaluru National Highway near Suvama Soudha with the Belagavi-Goa National Highway near Visvesvaraya Technological University. Once completed, the bypass is expected to reduce traffic congestion in the city by diverting heavy vehicles travelling between Goa and Hubballi away from Belagavi's main roads. Officials informed the MP that work on the service road



related to the bypass project is likely to be completed by April. They also said that the six-lane Belagavi-Sankeshwar highway project is now in the final stages of completion. Progress is also being made on the proposed Belagavi-Hungund-Raichur highway project. Officials said that most of the land acquisition for the 43.8-kilometre Phase-1 stretch has already been completed. Regarding the Belagavi-Kittur-Dharwad railway line project, Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Roshan said the first phase of land acquisition covering about 1,200 acres has been completed. The State government has

sanctioned ₹50 crores as compensation for farmers who lost their land. After the process is completed, tenders for railway construction will be invited. Officials also sought permission to change traffic routes near the railway crossing at Tilakwadi to facilitate the construction of a second lane of the railway overbridge. Shettar added that development work at Belagavi Airport has been delayed as the Indian Air Force has not yet handed over the required land. He said he would raise the issue with the central authorities to speed up the process.

Savita Samaj demands protection law for barbers

GADAG

Leaders of the Savita Samaj have urged the State government to ensure safety and dignity for barbers by implementing a law to protect their profession. Speaking at a meeting organised by the Gadag District Savita Samaj, its president Krishna H. Hadapada said barbers play an important role in society by maintaining hygiene and personal grooming. However, many workers in the profession face insecurity and lack of support. He said the government should introduce a "Protection of Professional Dignity Act" to prevent abuse or physical harassment of barbers. Strict legal action should be taken against those who insult or attack people working in this profession, he added. Hadapada also demanded that the government provide free professional health safety kits to barbers. Similar to protective equipment used by doctors, these kits would help barbers protect themselves from infections and health

risks while working closely with customers. He further said special treatment facilities should be provided in government hospitals for barbers who suffer from skin diseases or respiratory problems caused by their profession. Leaders of the community also urged the government to start "Government Friendly Salons" in every taluk headquarters. Under this proposal, barbers working in such salons would receive government support and social security benefits.



Kannadigas cultural conference held in Bicholim Goa

KARWAR

The 16th Cultural Conference of Kannadigas was held at Hirabai Chante Bhavan near Shantadurga Circle in Bicholim, Goa on Monday. The programme was organised by Karmabhoomi Kannada Sangha in collaboration with the Karnataka Border Area Development Authority. The event began with a traditional Poorna Kumbha welcome ceremony at the Shantadurga Temple. Pramod Sawant, Chief Minister of Goa, inaugurated the ceremony. During the programme, Karnataka Border Area Development Authority President Somanna Bevinamarada and Secretary Prakash Mattihalli submitted a request to the Goa Chief Minister seeking permission to construct a Kannada Bhavan in Goa. They said land has already been acquired for the project and reminded the government about its earlier assurance to allow construction. They explained that nearly five lakh Kannadigas are living in Goa and the proposed Kannada Bhavan would serve

Somanna Bevinamarada and Prakash Mattihalli requested the Goa Chief Minister's permission to build a Kannada Bhavan on already acquired land

as a cultural centre for the community. Several religious leaders and dignitaries attended the conference, including Brahmanandacharya Swamiji of Sri Datta Padmanabha Peetha and S. B. Chandrashekar Shivacharya Mahaswamy of Hiremath Hukkeri. The conference was formally inaugurated by Premendra V. Shet, MLA of Mayem and Chairman of the Goa State Horticulture Board. Former MP Anna Saheb Jolle, former Goa Speaker Rajesh Patnekar and several other leaders also attended the event. The cultural programme featured various performances including group dances, folk dances, Bharatanatyam, women's traditional dance and painting displays presented by artists and participants from different regions.



Puttaraja birth anniversary celebrated with music festival

GADAG

The 112th birth anniversary of renowned saint and musician Puttaraja Gawai was celebrated with devotion and cultural programmes at Devagiri village in Gadag district on Monday. The programme was organised jointly by the Ganagandharva Kala Trust, Dr. P. Puttaraja Kavi Gawai Music School, Department of Kannada and Culture and Dr. P. A. Puttaraja Kavi Gawai Ashram. The celebration began with a procession carrying the portrait of Puttaraja Gawai through the village. This was followed by a mass wedding ceremony and a musical festival featuring singers and musicians from different parts of the country. The programme was presided over by Veeranna Hombardi. Several religious leaders including Mahantaprabhu Mahaswami of Shegunisi Viraktamatha and Maheshwara

Shivacharya Mahaswami of Kudala Nanjeshwara Math attended the event and blessed the gathering. During the function, the Sri Guru Puttaraja Award was presented to Hemarajashastri Hiremath of Hediggonda. The Kirtana Sri Award was given to Mahesh Gadaginamath of Koppal, while the Vadya Sri Award was presented to Manjunatha Bhat of Kumta. Each awardee was honoured with a cash prize of ₹5,000. The programme was inaugurated by Basavaraj Shivan-na, MLA, and attended by Salim Ahmed, Member of the Legislative Council, along with other dignitaries. Cultural performances, including a Bharatanatyam dance by Gayatri Hiremath of Dharwad, attracted the audience. Many devotees, local residents and members of various associations from Devagiri and nearby villages participated in the celebration.

STUDENTS MEDIA EMPOWERMENT

MLA promises digital studio for college journalists

GANGAVATHI

Janardhana Reddy, MLA from Gangavathi, has promised to build a digital studio for the journalism department of Sri Kolli Nageshwara Rao Gangagiah Government First Grade College after April. He made the announcement while speaking at the launch of the "Yuvavani" magazine and "College Ranga" publication organised in the college auditorium on Monday. The programme was held under the leadership of the journalism department in association with the Internal Quality As-



urance Cell. Reddy said journalism plays a vital role in society by highlighting social issues and

holding leaders accountable. He described the press as the fourth pillar of democracy and encouraged students to

use journalism as a tool to bring positive change in society. He also assured that arrangements would be made for journalism students to visit the Vidhana Soudha in Bengaluru at his own expense so they can understand the functioning of the State administration. Senior journalist and member of the Karnataka Media Academy K. Ningajja, who attended as chief guest, said journalism education in colleges is becoming more active and students now have many opportunities in the media

field. He also promised to provide books published by the academy to the college library. College Principal Shivaraj Gurikara presided over the programme and appreciated the efforts of the journalism department. He thanked the MLA for assuring support to improve facilities for students. Several faculty members, college development committee members and students attended the event where the magazines were officially released and guests were felicitated.

Opposition MPs protest in Parliament over issues

Opposition leaders warned Gulf tensions could disrupt global oil prices, impacting India's economy, increasing fuel costs, and causing serious social consequences

DAVANAGERE

Members of the opposition staged a protest near the Makar Dwar entrance of the Parliament House of India in New Delhi, raising concerns over international developments and demanding a clear response from the Central government.

Among those who joined the protest was Prabha Mallikarjun, Member of Parliament from Davanagere. The protest was led by Rahul Gandhi, Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha.

Opposition leaders expressed concern about the ongoing conflict and rising tensions in the Gulf region, saying the situation could have serious economic and social impacts. They warned that continued instability



may lead to an increase in global oil prices, which could affect the Indian economy and raise fuel costs in the country.

Leaders also pointed out that a large number of Indi-

ans live and work in Gulf countries. If tensions increase further, they feared that Indian citizens in the region could face difficulties related to safety, employment and travel.

During the protest, opposition MPs accused the Central government of not providing a clear and detailed response regarding the issue. They said the government must explain the steps being taken to protect national interests and ensure the safety of Indians living abroad.

Speaking on the occasion, Prabha Mallikarjun said it is the responsibility of the opposition in a democratic system to question government policies and decisions. He added that raising public issues and offering alternative views are essential for a healthy democracy.

Opposition members also said that attempts to suppress the voice of the opposition would ultimately weaken the voice of the people in the country.

Crackdown begins on illegal resorts near Gokarna

GOKARNA

The taluk administration has started action to clear unauthorized resorts built along the coast in Dubbanasashi village near Gokarna in Kumta taluk of Uttara Kannada district. The resorts were reportedly constructed in violation of Coastal Control Zone rules.

According to officials, Srikrishna, Tahsildar of Kumta, has ordered the removal of 44 illegal resorts located in Dubbanasashi and Nadumaskeri areas along the Arabian Sea coast.

However, the eviction process has been temporarily halted for 16 resorts after their owners obtained a stay order from the Karnataka High Court. Of the remaining 28 resorts, seven owners have agreed to vacate the properties voluntarily.

Officials said the administration will seize and demolish the remaining 21 resorts as per legal procedures. Authorities have begun preparations to carry out the operation soon.

As a precautionary mea-



Prohibitory orders under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita were imposed for 24 hours from March 9 morning in Dubbanasashi, Gangekolla, and Bhavikodla to prevent incidents

sure, prohibitory orders under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita have been imposed for 24 hours starting from the morning of March 9. The restrictions are in place in Dubbanasashi, Gangekolla and Bhavikodla villages to prevent any untoward incidents

during the operation.

Meanwhile, resort owners and workers staged a protest in Dubbanasashi, claiming that the eviction would affect their livelihoods. They urged the government to reconsider the decision and provide relief.

Local MLA Dinakar Shetty visited the protest site and expressed support for the demonstrators. He stated that the resorts should not be vacated immediately and called for discussions with authorities.

Due to the tense situation, heavy police security has been deployed along the Gokarna coast to maintain law and order during the ongoing eviction process.

QUICK READ

Private bus overturns at Alvanki Ghat, five injured

Bhatkal

Five passengers were injured after a private bus overturned at Alvanki Ghat near Gear-soppa in Honnavar taluk of Uttara Kannada district on Sunday night. The bus, belonging to Sri Kumar Travels, was travelling from Bhatkal to Bengaluru via Honnavar around 8.30 pm. Police said the driver reportedly lost control while passing through the ghat section, causing the vehicle to overturn. The injured passengers were immediately shifted to Honnavar Government Hospital for treatment. Police rushed to the spot soon after receiving information and began an investigation. A case has been registered at Honnavar police station.

BSNA service centers open on holidays

Haveri

To help the public pay BSNA telephone bills in March, BSNA customer service centers in Haveri will remain open on all Sundays and holidays this month. Junior officials of the Haveri BSNA office said this step aims to make bill payment convenient for citizens. Residents are advised to visit their nearest service centers during holidays to avoid delays and ensure timely payment. The centers will provide regular services, and officials urged the public to make use of this facility to stay updated on bill payments without any inconvenience.

Officials were warned that mobile phones, calculators, and electronics are banned in exam centres, with supervisors also prohibited from using them

Officials told ensure transparent conduct of SSLC exams

KOPPAL

Suresh B. Itnal, Deputy Commissioner of Koppal district, has directed officials to take all necessary steps to conduct the 2026 SSLC annual examinations in a disciplined and transparent manner without any irregularities.

He issued the instructions during a preliminary meeting organised by the Department of School Education and Literacy at the J.H. Patel Hall of the Koppal Zilla Panchayat on Monday.

The SSLC examinations will be held from March 18 to April 2 across the district. Officials were instructed to strictly follow examination rules and guidelines to ensure the process remains fair and smooth. Adequate seating arrangements, drinking water and toilet facilities must be provided at all examination centres, he said.

Special attention should



also be given to students with disabilities. Arrangements should be made on the ground floor for such students, while visually impaired candidates must be provided separate rooms and approved writing assistants.

Officials were also warned that mobile phones, calculators and other electronic devices are strictly prohibited inside examination centres. Even room supervisors are not allowed to use mobile phones during the examination period.

Somashekar Gowda Patil, Deputy Director of the depart-

ment, said a total of 25,556 candidates have registered for the examinations this year, including 23,001 fresh students.

He added that the examinations will be conducted at 74 centres in the district, including 23 in Gangavathi taluk, 21 in Koppal taluk, 15 in Kushtagi taluk and 14 in Yelaburga taluk.

Necessary arrangements, including secure handling of question papers and seating for students, are being completed to ensure smooth conduct of the examinations across the district.

Steps planned for meaningful Mahavir Jayanti celebration

KOPPAL

Preparations are underway to celebrate Sri Bhagwan Mahavir Jayanti on March 31 in a meaningful manner, said Karnakumara, Assistant Director of the Kannada and Culture Department. He spoke at a preliminary meeting held at Keswan-2 Hall in the Koppal District Commissioner's office on Monday.

The celebration will be organized in collaboration with the District Administration, Zilla Panchayat, and Kannada and Culture Department. A grand procession featuring the portrait of Sri Bhagwan Mahavir will begin at 8:30 am from Sahitya Bhavan and



proceed to the Sri Muni Surat Jain Mandir, encouraging public participation and devotion.

Following the procession, a stage program will be held at MP Palace at 11:30 am. The program will include worship, a special lecture on the life and teachings of Sri Bhagwan Mahavir, and other cultural activities to

promote his message of peace, non-violence, and social harmony.

Karnakumara emphasized that the success of the Jayanti celebrations depends on the cooperation of community leaders, public representatives, and citizens. He urged everyone to actively participate and support the event to make it truly meaningful and inspiring for the entire district.

Officers and staff from various departments, along with community leaders including Mahendra Chopra, attended the meeting to discuss arrangements, logistics, and roles for the upcoming celebrations.

Take care of health during intense summer heat

KOPPAL

With summer heat intensifying across the district, District Health and Family Welfare Officer Dr. T. Lingaraj has urged residents, especially pregnant women, lactating mothers, children, and the elderly, to take necessary precautions to stay healthy.

Dr. Lingaraj advised people to increase water intake and consume fluids like buttermilk, coconut water, and fresh fruit juices. He also recommended eating vegetables and fruits with high water content. Light-colored, loose cotton clothing and breathable footwear are ideal, and precautions like wearing sunglasses, using umbrellas, and carrying towels can help protect against



the sun.

Daily routines should consider local weather reports from radio, television, and newspapers. People working outdoors, such as farmers or laborers, are advised to carry out strenuous tasks before 11 a.m. or after 4 p.m., and

to rest in shaded areas during peak heat. Walking under the sun should always be done in slippers.

Dr. Lingaraj also warned against excessive consumption of tea, coffee, sugary carbonated drinks, and alcohol. In case someone shows symptoms like stuttering, confusion, or fainting, they should be moved to shade, lie down, elevate their legs, and rest. Immediate medical attention should be sought by visiting the nearest health center or calling 108/102 if heat-related health problems occur.

The Health Department emphasized that following these steps can prevent heat-related illnesses and protect the community during the summer season.

KARATE EMPOWERS WOMEN

Karate training encouraged for students' self defense

KOPPAL

Karate is an important sport that everyone should learn for self-defense, and it should be made compulsory in schools and colleges, said Vitthal Jagowdara, Assistant Director of the Youth Empowerment and Sports Department in Koppal.

He was speaking during a karate demonstration and belt distribution programme held at the District Stadium on Gadag Road as part of International Women's Day celebrations. The event was orga-



nized jointly by the Zilla Panchayat, Minority Welfare Department, Youth Empow-

erment and Sports Department, Karate India Organization, and the National Street

Karate Academy. The programme was inaugurated by distributing dragon sticks to students.

Jagowdara said karate training not only strengthens the body but also helps develop a healthy mind. He added that organizing such a programme on International Women's Day is meaningful, as self-defense skills are especially important for young girls and students.

Around 250 students from APJ Abdul Kalam CBSE School in Lingadalli, Morarji Desai Residential School

for Minorities in Talakal, and Hital School participated in the event. The students showcased their karate skills and demonstrated the training they received during the 2025-26 academic year. Belts and certificates were distributed to the participants in recognition of their efforts.

The programme was presided over by Ajmeer Ali, Deputy Commissioner of the Minority Welfare Department. Several guests, trainers, and officials attended and encouraged students to continue learning martial arts.

Rajabagh Sawar Dargah Urus celebrated with enthusiasm

KOPPAL

The Urus celebration of the historic Hazrat Rajabagh Sawar Dargah, located near Jawahar Road in Koppal city, was celebrated with great enthusiasm this year, reflecting harmony between communities. The festival began on Saturday with traditional incense rituals and continued throughout Sunday with religious and cultural programs.

Under the leadership of Dargah Management Board Chairman Maula Hussain Jamedar and Secretary Advocate Abdul Gani (Afsar Saab), the event

saw participation from religious teachers, community leaders, and representatives. Special mass prayers were offered during the program, emphasizing devotion, unity, and spiritual significance.

A large number of Hindu and Muslim devotees, including Mujaawar Vardhan Ali Mujaawar, actively participated, making the celebrations vibrant and meaningful. The event successfully fostered communal harmony and showcased the city's rich religious traditions, marking another memorable annual Urus festival at Rajabagh Sawar Dargah.

QUICK READ

Applications open for local grievance committee

Chikkaballapur

The Women and Child Development Department has invited applications for the selection of members of the Local Grievance Redressal Committee at the district level under the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013. As the previous committee's term has ended, eligible candidates from NGOs or social welfare organizations who have worked for women's advancement or prevention of sexual harassment can apply. Interested individuals must submit their proposals, documents, and details by April 6 to the Deputy Director's Office, District Administration Building, Chikkaballapur. For queries, contact 7795520866.

Wife killed over minor dispute

Chikkaballapura

In R. Chokkanahalli village, 25-year-old Varalakshmi was found dead, allegedly murdered and hanged by her husband Gangaraju following a heated argument over a phone call from her friend Shravani's lover. The dispute erupted when Varalakshmi received and responded to the man's call. Gangaraju, furious, warned her against meddling in the affair. Tensions boiled over into violence, culminating in her strangulation and hanging to stage a suicide. Varalakshmi's family accuses Gangaraju, his mother, and father of murder, filing charges at the local police station. An FIR has been registered, with investigations underway to probe the suspicious death. This case highlights rising domestic violence linked to personal interferences.

Subsidy offered for SC/ST mobile canteen training

Chikkaballapura

The Tourism Department is offering a one-month entrepreneurship training program for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes under the SCSP/TSP scheme for 2025-26. Trained candidates will receive a subsidy of ₹5 lakh to run a mobile canteen. The program targets 8 SC and 5 ST participants and will be conducted through state and central government hospitality institutions with accommodation. Applicants must have passed at least 10th class, be aged 20-45, and submit applications by March 13. For details, contact the Assistant Director, Tourism Department, Chikkaballapur at 08156-277041.

Deputy Commissioner orders fair selection for housing

The Deputy Commissioner said 959.11 acres will provide housing sites at 358 locations, with GPS mapping covering 758.14 acres

CHIKKABALLAPURA

G. Prabhu, Deputy Commissioner of Chikkaballapura district, has directed officials to ensure that beneficiaries of government shelter schemes are selected strictly as per rules through Gram Sabhas.

He issued the instructions while presiding over a review meeting on the implementation of the Chief Minister's Rural Shelter Scheme at the District Collector's Office on Monday. The Deputy Commissioner said that 959.11 acres of land have been sanctioned in the district for distribution of housing sites under the scheme. From this land, sites can be developed at 358 locations across the district. A GPS-based map has already



been prepared for 758.14 acres, and officials were instructed to complete further steps quickly to provide plots to eligible beneficiaries.

Prabhu emphasised that Gram Sabhas must be conducted in the presence of local representatives, taluk officials and district level offi-

cers. Proper documentation, photographs and videography should be maintained during the selection process to ensure transparency.

He also directed officials to give priority to applicants who had already submitted applications during the 2018 survey. Beneficiaries should

be selected in the order of their applications without any pressure or influence.

The Deputy Commissioner said plots smaller than 30×40 feet should not be approved. If such smaller plots are created, officials must reject them immediately.

He warned that distributing sites to ineligible persons would damage the credibility of the administration and such lapses would not be tolerated.

Officials were also instructed not to select unsuitable land such as rocky areas, ravines or hill slopes for the housing scheme.

Senior officials including Y. Naveen Bhat, N. Bhaskar and Manjunath attended the meeting along with tahsildars and municipal commissioners.



Chikkaballapur athletes shine at state relay meet

BENGALURU

Athletes from Chikkaballapur district delivered an impressive performance at the state-level athletics meet held at Kanteerava Stadium in Bengaluru on March 7 and 8, winning both gold and silver medals in relay events.

In the 4x400 meter relay race in the under-20 girls' category, athletes from Shidlaghatta taluk — Srinagaraj, Akshayshekhhar, Hatmina, and Noopraholla — secured the gold medal with an outstanding performance.

With this victory, the team has been selected to represent

the state at the national-level relay competition in Chandigarh from March 18 to 20.

Meanwhile, athletes from Chintamani — Gowrishankar, Uttam, Samuel, and Sandeep — won the silver medal in the 4x100 meter relay race.

Officials including District Athletic Association General Secretary Manchanabale Srinivas, Joint Secretary Bhaktaharalli Nagaraj, and member Bharathkumar attended the event. Association President K.V. Naveenkiran congratulated the athletes and wished them success at the national competition.

Swamiji emphasized honoring women, promoting education and equality, citing Vivekananda's message, and recognizing International Women's Day achievements

Women empowerment key for strong and equal society

RAMANAGARA

Women are symbols of strength and motherhood, and empowering them is essential for the progress of society, said Shri Annadaneshwarnath Swamiji of the Adichunchanagiri Ramanagara branch mutt.

He spoke while inaugurating the Ramanagara Taluk Negilayogi Women's Unit at Patel English School in the city on Sunday. During the event, appointment orders were distributed to newly selected office bearers of the women's unit.

Swamiji highlighted the importance of respecting women and ensuring equal opportunities through education and awareness. Referring to the message of Swami Vivekananda, he said women should be honored as divine mothers and empowered to



contribute fully to society. He also noted that International Women's Day, celebrated on March 8, recognizes the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women while promoting gender equality.

He encouraged the Negilayogi Women's Unit to actively raise awareness about women's safety, rights, and empowerment. He said women must come together, organize themselves, and confidently stand up for their

rights. Negilayogi Ramanagara District Unit President Patel C. Raju said the Negilayogi Social Service Trust has been engaged in social service for the past five years. He congratulated the newly appointed members of the women's unit and wished them success in their service activities.

Floral tributes were also offered to the portrait of Savitribai Phule to mark International Women's Day celebrations.

Exams should be celebrated like festivals: Officer

CHITRADURGA

Students should not write exams under pressure but instead face them with enthusiasm just like festivals, said Taluk Panchayat Executive Officer and Taluk Bala Bhavan Committee President Y. Ravikumar.

He was speaking at the inauguration of the "Children's Art Talent" programme held at K.K. National English Secondary School in the city. The event was organized by the State Bala Bhavan Society in collaboration with the Zilla Panchayat, the Women and Child Development Department, and the District and Taluk Bala Bhavan Committees.

Ravikumar explained that annual school examinations come once a year, just like festivals. Therefore, students



should approach them with confidence and excitement instead of fear. He also advised parents not to put unnecessary pressure on their children during exams. "A child's mind is like a flower. It is the duty of parents to nurture it with knowledge and guide it with good values," he said.

District Bala Bhavan Programme Coordinator D. Sree Kumar, while introducing the programme, said the Kalapratibha initiative of the State Bala Bhavan is being

conducted successfully across the district. The programme is organized under the guidance of State Bala Bhavan President B.R. Naidu and Secretary Nischal, along with district officials.

Headmaster Maheshwarappa presided over the function. Certificates and pens were distributed to children who won various competitions during the event.

Teachers and physical education instructors also attended and encouraged the students.

Farmers launch Dharani Satyagraha protest in Tumakuru

TUMAKURU

Farmers under the banner of the Karnataka State Farmers' Association (Green Sene) staged a protest in front of the District Collector's office in Tumakuru on Monday, launching a "Dharani Satyagraha" against what they described as anti-farmer policies of the State government.

Farmers from different parts of the district gathered at the protest site wearing traditional green shawls, a symbol of the farmers' movement. The demonstrators sat on the road in front of the Collector's office, which caused traffic disruption in the area for some time.

During the protest, the

farmers raised several demands related to land rights and protection of agricultural land. They urged the government to grant land ownership rights to farmers who have been cultivating land within city limits for many years.

One of the main issues highlighted during the protest was the recent amendment to the Karnataka Land Reforms Act. Leaders of the farmers' association demanded that the amendment be withdrawn, stating that allowing non-farmers to buy agricultural land could threaten the future of farming and food security.

The farmers also opposed the acquisition of fertile agricultural land for industrial or

non-agricultural purposes. They warned that converting farmland for other uses would severely affect agricultural production and farmers' livelihoods.

Another major demand raised during the protest was a complete ban on mining activities in agricultural zones. Farmers argued that mining damages soil fertility and affects irrigation water sources.

Leaders of the farmers' association said the protest was not political but a struggle to protect agriculture and farmers' livelihoods. They stated that the agitation would continue until the government gives a written assurance to review the policies affecting farmers.

Women's Day celebrated with focus on empowerment

TUMAKURU

"Any contribution to a woman benefits society twice," said Mrs. C. Bhuvaneshwari, President of the Karnataka Women Entrepreneurs Association, while speaking at the International Women's Day celebration held at Sri Siddhartha Technical College.

Organized jointly by the Women's Development Committee and the IQAC Department of the college, the event highlighted the importance of education, empowerment, and opportunity for women. Bhuvaneshwari emphasized that women's

voices have immense power and society must provide them respect, priority, and opportunities rather than just slogans.

Dr. K.B. Lingegowda, Vice Chancellor of SAHE University, said women are actively contributing in every field today, urging initiatives to promote their economic empowerment. Dr. G. Gurushankar, Controller of Examinations, noted that 60 percent of women are employed, and highlighted the historic contributions of leaders like Indira Gandhi and Sudha Murthy.

Dr. Mahantesh A.A. Nada-

katti, Principal of Sri Siddhartha Technical College, praised women for their tireless roles as daughters, students, wives, and mothers, and stressed the importance of higher education for girls. He called upon everyone to raise their voices against inequalities and atrocities faced by women, urging them to move forward courageously to shape a stronger society.

The program was attended by Deans of Examinations Dr. Sum.R and Dr. Divyaprabha, IQAC Coordinator Dr. Raviram.V, Professor Dr. Ashwini S. Shivannavar, and students.

Health staff petition MLA to fill vacancies

HANAGAL

Officials and staff of the Health and Family Welfare Department submitted a petition to MLA Srinivas Mane, urging the government to address their legitimate demands, including filling vacant posts in the department. The petition highlighted that the shortage of staff has made providing quality health services challenging across hospitals and health centers.

The petitioners also demanded an adequate supply of medicines to all hospitals, revision of cadres and recruitment procedures, and regular



publication of seniority lists. They called for timely promotions of officers and employees, opportunities for higher education for serving staff, and corrections in transfer processes. The petition emphasized that meeting these demands is essential for the smooth functioning of the

health department and better service to the public. Responding to the petition, MLA Mane assured that he would bring the concerns to the notice of the government and work toward resolving them.

Present during the petition submission were Taluka Health Officer Dr. Lingaraj

K.G., Karnataka State Employees' Association Taluka President Guranath Gavanikar, Administrative Medical Officers Dr. Akhilesh Malode and Dr. Gagan Malode, along with Basavaraj Didagur, Dr. Shivakumar Shivoor, Gopikrishna Naykar, Prakash Nagarahalli, Jyothi, and other health department officials and employees' association representatives.

The move reflects growing concern among health staff over staffing shortages, career progression, and the need for systemic improvements to strengthen public health services in Hanagal.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, AMSHITH S/o KUMAR R GOWDA, R/o 4-17 Kusuma Geetha, Arjunakodi House, Kompadavu Post Mangaluru, Kompadavu Village, Kompadavu, Dakshina Kannada, Karnataka-574144, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as AMSHITH KUMAR ARJUNAKODI.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, D GAYETHREE W/o CHOWDAREDDY Y, R/o Maddagiri halli, Doddanancherlu, Tirumani, Chikkaballapur, Karnataka-562104, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as GAYATHRI D.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, HEMANT KUMAR GULATI S/o LATE JAMANLAL GULATI R/o Flat 8C, Binny Crescent, No 16, Benson Cross Road, Benson Town, Bangalore North, Bengaluru, Karnataka-560046, have changed the name of my minor daughter ISHA GULATI aged 17 years and she shall hereafter be known as ESHA GULATI.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, LALITHA W/O C MOHAN aged 65 years, R/o FLAT NO 301, 3RD FLOOR, BHUMIKA PINEWOOD APARTMENT, BASAPPA ROAD END, VTC: SHANTHNAGAR, PO: WILSON GARDEN, SUB DISTRICT: BANGALORE SOUTH, DISTRICT: BANGALURU, STATE: KARNATAKA, PIN CODE: 580027, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from LALITHA RANGARAJU TO LALITHA, henceforth, and I shall be known and called as LALITHA, for all purposes, vide affidavit dated 09/MARCH/2026, sworn before Advocate and Notary R VISHWANATH at Bangalore

CHANGE OF NAME

I, SRINATH B K S/o KALLAPPA B R/o Ward No 2, Callon Market Road, Chick Ballapur, Chikkaballapur, Chikkaballapur, Chikkaballapur, Karnataka-562101, have changed the name of my minor son A S VOMAKESH aged 16 years and he shall hereafter be known as VYOMAKESH A.S.

Document Lost

I Am Kalavathi, Ashrehalli, Kandalikere Hobli, Chikkanayakanahalli, Taluk, Tumakuru district, i was lost my release deed (Doc No 2258) At Chikkanayakanahalli city on 9/03/2020 at around 12.00 noon. A complaint has been filed in this regard at Chikkanayakanahalli Police Station (Case No. 2099758/2026) If anyone finds it, please return it to this address or phone number 8088829689.

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QUICK READ

Admissions
open for class 8 at
Vidyashala

Chikkaballapur

Sri Ramakrishna Vidyashala, Yadavagiri, Mysore, is inviting applications for admission to class 8 for the year 2026-27. The entrance exam will be held on April 15 at 10 am. The program targets talented male students from Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and children of parents in unhygienic professions with pre-matric scholarships. Applicants must submit class 6 and 7 SATS marks, caste and income certificates, and other relevant documents by March 25 to the Deputy Director, Social Welfare Department, Chikkaballapur. Exams will be conducted in English or Kannada medium.

Honest bus operator
returns lost mobile
phone

Mandya

In a heartwarming act of honesty, Satish B.S., a KSRTC bus operator from the Nagamangala depot, returned a mobile phone lost by a passenger. On Sunday morning, Manjula and her husband N. Shekhar of Haniyambadi village were travelling from Mandya to Adichunchanagiri when Manjula's phone went missing. Despite searching, it was not found. Later, Satish spotted the phone near the bus depot, called the couple, and asked them to collect it at Mandya bus stand. N. Shekhar thanked Satish for his honesty.

Mandya to host
Women's
Sports meet

Mandya The District Administration, Zilla Panchayat, Youth Empowerment and Sports Department, and Mai Bharat Kendra Women and Child Development Department will jointly organize a Women's Sports Meet on March 15, 2026, at Sir M. Visvesvaraya Stadium, Mandya. The event celebrates International Women's Day 2025-26 and aims to encourage women's participation in sports. The meet will feature group competitions like Thoball and Cricket for women above 19 years, and 4x100 m relay for participants aged 19-40 years. Individual competitions include 100 m running, discus throw, shot put, and slow cycle race for ages 19-40, while 100 m running, discus throw, and shot put will be held for women above 40. Winners will receive medals and certificates. Participants can register using the QR code provided, with registration open until 6:00 pm on March 14, 2026.

Temple trust praised for social service work

Bandeppa Khashempur said the temple's long history and beauty result from trust members' efforts and public contributions of time, effort, and funds

BIDAR

The activities of the Biralingeswara Temple Service Committee Trust are socially oriented and are contributing positively to the community, said former minister and senior Janata Dal (Secular) leader Bandeppa Khashempur.

He spoke during a programme held at the Biralingeswara Temple in Kumbardawa area of Bidar on Sunday. The event marked the installation and Kalasarahana of the idols of Sri Biralingeswara, Sri Malingaraya and Sri Mahatma Bommagondeshwara, along with the inauguration of a Sabha Bhavan and Irakara Bhavan in the temple premises.



Addressing the gathering, Bandeppa Khashempur said the temple has a long history and has become more beautiful due to the efforts of the trust members and the cooperation of the public. He noted that people from the community have contributed their time, effort and financial support for the development of

the temple.

He also expressed happiness that groups from different localities, including Itgampalli, have come together to support the temple's activities and development works.

Former Legislative Council chairman Raghunathrao Malkapur said there was no Biralingeswara and Maling-

araya temple earlier in Bidar city, but now the temple has been established for the benefit of devotees. He suggested that regular worship and religious activities should be conducted to further develop the temple.

Malkapur also stressed the importance of education in society and urged people to encourage girls to pursue studies. He said educated women can contribute more effectively to family and community development.

Amrutrao Chinkode, district president of the Guarantee Scheme Implementation Committee, P. S. Itgampalli, executive president of the temple service committee, and several others were present on the occasion.

Mandya Lokayukta to hear public grievances

MANDYA

Officials of the Mandya Lokayukta division will hold a public grievance meeting in Malavalli taluk on March 11 from 11 am to 1:30 pm.

Residents can submit complaints regarding corruption, delays in government work, or issues with officers and employees in government and semi-government offices.

The meeting will be attended by DySP Sunil Kumar, Bataraya Gowda BP, Ravikumar M., Lepaksha Murthy RG, and Police Inspector of the Karnataka Lokayukta.

The public can personally meet the officers at the Malavalli taluk office to raise their concerns, said the Lokayukta Superintendent of Police.

Senior police, including IGP Harsha and SP Suman D. Pannekar, said a hostel assault killed one student; minor in custody

Ballari Hostel Assault: Missing student found

BALLARI

Police have traced and taken into custody the boy who went missing after attacking his classmates and the warden at a private residential school hostel, an incident that led to the death of one student.

Senior police officials, including IGP Harsha and SP Suman D. Pannekar, briefed the media about the case. IGP Harsha explained that on the night of March 7, nine students were staying in the hostel when one of them attacked seven classmates and the warden. One student was critically injured and later died. The minor involved in the assault is currently in police custody and will undergo medical examination and counselling before being presented in court.

SP Pannekar added that after the attack, the student fled



the hostel. A special team was immediately formed, and by checking CCTV footage and visiting multiple locations, the missing student was located and apprehended.

The incident has sparked outrage in Ballari. The Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) organized a protest, demanding action against the residential school administration. Student leader Dileep alleged that the use of drugs may have played a role in the

incident and called for strict measures to prevent such incidents in schools and colleges. Parents of the deceased student demanded justice and questioned the negligence of the school authorities in maintaining student safety.

Police investigations are ongoing, and authorities have emphasized that proper counselling and legal procedures will be followed to ensure justice and prevent further incidents.

Kanakagiri journalists assaulted; Taluk demands action

YALABURGA

The Taluk Karnataka Working Journalists' Association has submitted a petition to the tehsildar condemning the attack on journalists in Kanakagiri town of Koppal district and demanding strict legal action against the perpetrators.

According to Association President Mallu Matarangi, the incident occurred on March 2 around 7 pm when PAPM member Anilukumar Bijjala and the husband of PAPM president T.J. were at a medical store near Kanakagiri Town Panchayat. During an argument involving a local named Ramachandra, journalists Madhusudan, Prahlad Reddy, Srinivasa Pujar, and others who went to the scene were reportedly abused, threatened, and had their mobile phones taken.

Matarangi described the incident as alarming, stating that the attack reflects an attempt by hundreds of people



to suppress the media, creating an environment of fear for journalists. He urged the authorities to ensure strict legal action against those responsible. Honorary President Imamsabha Sankanur also condemned the assault, emphasizing that the police were present at the scene and should have prevented the attack. He called for proactive filing of complaints and accountability for the culprits.

Taluk General Secretary Santosh Bundri, District Executive Members Mahantesh Chalavadi and Sharanu Gumberi, Vice President Chandrasekhara Maradadi, Treasurer Doddabasappa Hakari, and other association office bearers were present during the petition submission.

Women achieving success across all fields: Virupakshaiah

KANAKAGIRI

Women today are proving their ability in every field of life and reaching great heights despite many social and economic challenges, said Virupakshaiah, Shishu Development Scheme Officer.

He was speaking at an International Women's Day programme organised at the Taluk Panchayat office in Kanakagiri on Monday. The event was jointly organised by the Women and Child Development Department, Koppal Taluk Panchayat, the Taluk Guarantee Schemes Implementation Committee and Shishu Development Yojana.

Addressing the gathering, Virupakshaiah said women play a vital role in the family and society. As mothers, sisters and wives, they carry major responsibilities in family life and contribute significantly to the progress of society. However, he noted that women still face several challenges

while taking independent decisions in social, economic and political matters.

He expressed concern that child marriage continues to occur in some rural areas and urged the public to work together to eliminate the practice and support the education and empowerment of girls.

Taluk Panchayat Executive Officer K. Rajasekhara said women are moving forward with confidence and equality. He added that women are making valuable contributions to society by demonstrating their talent in various fields and supporting the country's economic growth. On the occasion, Social Welfare Department officer Hulagappa Chaluvadi, Guarantee Committee chairman Hazrat Hussain, PAP member Hanumanta Basarigadada and committee member Ganappa also shared their views. Vice president Kanthiranga Nayaka, former president Hussainbee Chalmara and members Siddesh K.,

CPI(M) opposes LPG cylinder price hike

KALABURAGI

The recent increase in the prices of domestic and commercial LPG cylinders is a harsh decision that will place an additional burden on common people, said K. Neela, district secretary of Communist Party of India (Marxist) in Kalaburagi.

In a press release issued on Monday, he said the price of domestic LPG cylinders has been increased by ₹60, while commercial cylinders have seen a hike of ₹114.50. He described the move as unfair and said it would severely affect poor families and beneficiaries of the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana.

Neela said the increase would also indirectly affect consumers because businesses that rely on commercial cylinders are likely to pass on the additional cost to the public. As a result, prices of food and other services may rise further, placing greater financial pressure on ordinary citizens.

He added that the hike comes at a time when many middle-class families and workers are already struggling with rising prices and stagnant incomes. According to him, the decision will make



Neela said commercial cylinder cost hikes may raise food and service prices, increasing financial pressure on consumers.

daily life more difficult for people who are already facing economic challenges.

The CPI(M) leader criticised the central government for not reducing taxes on LPG cylinders and alleged that the government's stand reflects an anti-people attitude.

He also said the government's attempt to justify the price hike by citing tensions in West Asia is not convincing. According to him, the explanation is being used to divert attention from the real issue.

Neela urged the government to immediately withdraw the increase in LPG cylinder prices in the interest of the public.

2,900 mule accounts active in Belagavi; Police warns public

BELAGAVI

The Belagavi City Police have issued a warning to the public as cyber fraudsters continue to exploit innocent people's bank accounts for criminal activities. Commissioner of Police Bhushan Borase revealed that 2,900 mule accounts are currently active in the city, used by cyber criminals to transfer illegally obtained money.

These fraudsters specifically target unemployed youths and women, luring them with promises of commission for handling money transfers. Once victims provide their bank account information, the criminals transfer stolen money into these accounts, making the account holders unwitting participants in cybercrime. In one instance, a local

resident opened nine bank accounts for the promise of commission. Fraudsters then transferred ₹80 lakh through these accounts before moving the money elsewhere. Investigations by the Cyber Crime Police Station revealed that such misuse of accounts is widespread. Commissioner Bo-



rase urged citizens to exercise extreme caution, warning that offers of easy money, work-from-home opportunities, or commissions could be traps. He emphasized that anyone providing account details to fraudsters risks becoming an unintentional accomplice in cybercrime. The police are actively tracing all 2,900 mule accounts in Belagavi and have appealed to the public to report any suspicious activity immediately.

Teachers protest question paper policy discrimination



HAVERI

The Karnataka State Secondary School Employees Association (KSSSEA) district unit has strongly condemned the recent policy by DSERT that restricts the distribution of question papers for the upcoming second cumulative examination of classes 6 to 9 only to government high school principals. Aided and unaided schools, which also follow the state government curriculum, are excluded from receiving the papers.

The district unit submitted a petition to the government through Additional District Collector Dr. Nagaraj L.

, demanding that the question papers be sent to all schools without discrimination. The petition highlighted that lakhs of students study in aided and unaided schools, and it is unfair to adopt a stepmotherly approach towards their education. Speaking at the submission

of the petition, District Unit President R.H. Bettellera, Secretary N.N. Kundura, along with members M.B. Ramesh, M.S. K.A. Chanagowada, D.D. Langoti, Malatesh Chaluvadi, Devagappanar, Shobha Jagateri, N.M. Olekara, Basavaraja Patil, S.C. Eli, Suragondara, Ravi V., Sangamesh Paraddi, V.N. Havanur, S.B. Channur, Poojara, and several other teachers emphasized the importance of equal treatment for all students.

The teachers called for immediate corrective action to ensure that students in aided and private schools have access to the same examination materials as government school students.

They urged the authorities to uphold fairness in the education system and prevent any disadvantage to students due to institutional policies.

The petition marks a significant step in advocating equal rights for all school students across the district.

AMBEDKAR HOSTEL PROGRAM

Students urged to balance education with arts

VIJAYAPURA

Students should focus on overall development along with education by actively participating in arts, culture and sports, said Mahesh Potadara, Deputy Director of the Social Welfare Department.

He spoke at the concluding ceremony of an art training programme held at the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Government Pre Matric Girls' Hostel in Vijayapura. The programme was organised by the Department of Kannada and Culture



under the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Sub-scheme.

Potadara said art is a powerful medium that helps students build confidence and

creativity. He encouraged hostel students to take part in activities such as dance, music and sports along with their regular studies. Such activities, he said, help in the all-

round development of young minds. He also thanked Santosh Bhovi, Assistant Director of the Department of Kannada and Culture, for giving the hostel students an opportunity to learn dance. The training programme continued for six months and helped many students discover their hidden talents. Presiding over the programme, B.J. Indy from the Social Welfare Department appreciated the initiative and expressed gratitude to the Department of Kannada and Culture for organising the training for the children.

Member of the Karnataka Lambani Sanskriti Bhasha Academy, R.B. Nayak, said dance is respected across the world and plays an important role in preserving culture. He shared his experiences of giving Lambani dance training to students of Maharani's College in Bengaluru and recalled receiving the Karnataka Rajyotsava Award for his artistic contribution. Academy member Surekha Lamani advised students to continue learning arts along with education and grow confidently in life.

QUICK READ



Mamata accuses BJP of disrupting protest site

Kolkata
West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday alleged that workers of the Bharatiya Janata Party were distributing leaflets at the site of her sit-in protest in Dharmatala, Kolkata. She asked Trinamool Congress workers to catch those involved and hand them over to the police. Banerjee, who has been staging a protest for three days against the SIR exercise, also asked state minister Shashi Panja to file a police complaint. The leaflets reportedly promoted Narendra Modi's March 14 rally in the city. Banerjee accused the BJP of trying to influence the electoral process and claimed those distributing the leaflets fled after being confronted.

4 minors held for assaulting Manipuri woman

New Delhi
Four juveniles were apprehended for allegedly assaulting a Manipuri woman in a park at Malviya Nagar in south Delhi, police said on Monday. The incident occurred on Sunday evening when the woman and her friend were walking near the Saket District Court Complex. Police said the minors passed remarks at the two women. When one of them objected, an argument broke out and the accused allegedly attacked her. The victim suffered minor injuries and was taken to Safdarjung Hospital for treatment. Police teams later conducted raids and apprehended all four minors. Officers said they are in constant contact with the victim and further investigation is underway.

Woman attacked with corrosive substance in hospital

Gurugram
A 24-year-old woman suffered severe burns after a man allegedly threw a corrosive substance on her at Civil Hospital Gurugram on Sunday night, police said. The woman, a resident of Nuh district, had earlier been assaulted by the accused the same day. She had gone to visit her aunt in Subhash Nagar. After the first attack, she was taken to the hospital for treatment. Police said the man followed her to the hospital and threw the corrosive substance, causing serious burns to her face and body. The victim is undergoing treatment, and police have launched a search to trace the accused.

Rahul bats for Parliament debate on West Asia crisis

He said the crisis could lead to major economic problems for India, including higher fuel prices and financial instability

NEW DELHI

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, on Monday said the ongoing conflict in West Asia is a serious issue and must be discussed in Parliament. Speaking to reporters at the Parliament complex, he said the crisis could lead to major economic problems for India, including higher fuel prices and financial instability.

Gandhi said the conflict could cause large financial losses and affect different sectors of the Indian economy.

He noted that the impact is already visible in the stock market and warned that the situation could worsen if the crisis continues. According to him, the developments in West Asia are important for the



country and Parliament should discuss them without delay.

His remarks came during a sharp political exchange between the ruling National Democratic Alliance and the Opposition Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance over the demand for a debate on the issue. The rul-

ing alliance criticised the Opposition for pushing the discussion when a debate on a no-confidence motion against Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla had already been scheduled.

Gandhi also referred to the interim trade agreement between India and the United States and suggested that it

could further affect the country's economy. He questioned why the government was reluctant to discuss the West Asia situation first, saying that rising fuel prices and economic challenges directly affect citizens.

Meanwhile, Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal criticised Gandhi and the Indian National Congress for disruptions in Parliament. He called Gandhi a "failed Leader of Opposition" and alleged that the party had become directionless under his leadership.

Leaders from the ruling side also accused the Opposition of wasting Parliament's time by creating disturbances while demanding an immediate debate on the West Asia conflict.



Jaishankar meets Doval, Chauhan amid Mideast crisis

NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar held a meeting with National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and Chief of Defence Staff Anil Chauhan in Parliament on Monday to review the ongoing conflict in West Asia and its possible impact on India.

Earlier, Jaishankar addressed the Rajya Sabha and informed members that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is personally monitoring the fast-changing situation in the region. He said the government has issued advisories to Indian citizens living in Iran and other affected areas, stressing that the safety of Indians abroad remains the top priority.

Jaishankar said different ministries are working together to respond quickly to the crisis. He added that the Embassy of India in Tehran is fully operational and helping Indian students and workers. According to him, several students have already been moved to safer places because of the rising tensions.

The minister also said efforts are underway to help Indians who are currently stranded in countries such as Qatar and Jordan so that they can return home safely.

India reviews the West Asia situation as the government monitors developments, ensures safety of citizens abroad and discusses security concerns with top defence and national security officials

Providing details about the impact of maritime disruptions, Jaishankar told the House that two Indian merchant sailors have lost their lives and one sailor is still missing. He said the conflict has become a major concern for India as the region is close to the country and plays an important role in India's economy.

The minister pointed out that nearly one crore Indians live and work in Gulf countries, while thousands are in Iran for study and employment. He also warned that West Asia is crucial for India's energy security because it supplies large amounts of oil and gas.

Jaishankar said increasing tensions could disturb supply chains and worsen regional instability. He repeated that India supports dialogue and diplomacy to reduce tensions and restore peace.

CBI summons Vijay again in Karur stampede case

NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation has summoned Vijay for further questioning on March 10 in connection with the Karur stampede case. Officials said the agency recently gathered new material that requires additional clarification from the actor-turned-politician. A fresh notice has been issued asking him to appear before investigators for another round of questioning. Vijay, who heads the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam, had earlier been questioned at the CBI headquarters on January 12 and January 19 as part of the investigation. The case relates to a stampede that occurred on September 27, 2025 during a rally addressed by Vijay in Karur. The tragic incident claimed the lives of 41 people and left more than 60 others injured. Following directions from the Supreme Court of India, the CBI took over the probe from a Special Investigation Team (SIT). The court had ordered the agency to conduct an independent investigation into the incident.

In October last year, the apex court also asked the CBI director to appoint a senior officer to lead the investigation. Additionally, it set up a supervisory panel headed by former Supreme Court judge Ajay Rastogi to monitor the progress of the case. A bench of Justices J. K. Maheshwari and N. V. Anjaria had observed that the incident left a deep impact across the country and raised serious concerns about public safety. The court said restoring public confidence in the investigation process is essential. It emphasised that the probe must remain impartial, independent and transparent, especially considering the families who lost their loved ones in the tragedy.

SC dismisses 5 frivolous PILs filed by lawyer

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court of India on Monday dismissed five Public Interest Litigations filed by a lawyer, calling them frivolous and lacking proper legal basis. The court strongly criticised the petitions and questioned the lawyer about filing such cases.

A bench led by Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymaya Bagchi reprimanded advocate Sachin Gupta, who had filed the petitions. The Chief Justice asked the lawyer whether he prepared such petitions late at night, pointing out that they were vague and poorly drafted. One of the petitions requested the court to order a scientific study to examine

whether onion and garlic contain "tamasic" or negative energy. The plea referred to the dietary traditions of the Jain community, which avoids onion, garlic and root vegetables because they are believed to carry negative energy. The bench questioned the purpose of the petition and asked why it would raise issues that might hurt the sentiments of the Jain community. In response, the petitioner argued that the matter was a public issue and even mentioned a divorce case in Gujarat that allegedly involved the use of onions in food. The court expressed strong displeasure and warned the lawyer not to file

such petitions again. The bench said it would take strict action if similar petitions were submitted in the future.

Apart from this petition, four other PILs filed by the lawyer were also dismissed. These included pleas seeking regulation of harmful content in alcohol and tobacco products, mandatory registration of properties, and guidelines for declaring classical languages.

The court said the petitions showed a lack of careful thinking and had no clear legal foundation. The Chief Justice added that heavy penalties could have been imposed if the petitioner had not been a lawyer.

PARTIES SEEK 2-PHASE POLLS IN BENGAL

KOLKATA

Representatives of several political parties in West Bengal met the full bench of the Election Commission of India on Monday and suggested that the upcoming assembly elections be held in a maximum of two phases.

The meeting was attended by Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar along with Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi. West Bengal Chief Electoral Officer Manoj Agarwal and other senior officials were also present. The

meeting took place at a hotel in New Town near Kolkata.

Leaders from major parties including the Trinamool Congress, Bharatiya Janata Party, Communist Party of India (Marxist), Indian National Congress, Aam Aadmi Party, National People's Party and All India Forward Bloc attended the discussion.

According to officials, several parties recommended that the election should be held in one or two phases and assured the commission of their support to maintain peace during polling.

Party representatives also



requested the commission to take strict action against anti-social elements and prevent voter intimidation. They stressed the need for strong security arrangements, including the deployment of

adequate numbers of Central Armed Police Forces to prevent violence and ensure safe voting. Some parties raised concerns about the possible use of crude bombs, illegal firearms, money power and

muscle power during the elections. During the meeting, the Chief Election Commissioner assured the parties that the commission would take all necessary steps to conduct free, fair and transparent elections in the state. He said the commission follows the law strictly and has zero tolerance for violence during elections. Kumar also said the Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls was carried out in a transparent manner. He added that Forms 6, 7 and 8 can still be submitted for inclusion, deletion or correction of voter details.

ECI ignored concerns over SIR: TMC

KOLKATA

The Trinamool Congress on Monday claimed that its concerns about the SIR exercise were not addressed during a meeting with the full bench of the Election Commission of India. State minister Chandrima Bhattacharya said the party delegation was told that the matter would be decided by the Supreme Court of India since the TMC has already approached the court. The meet-

ing was attended by Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar along with Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi. West Bengal Chief Electoral Officer Manoj Agarwal was also present. The discussion with political parties was held at a hotel in New Town near Kolkata. Speaking to reporters after the meeting, Bhattacharya said the

commission repeatedly stated that the matter was sub judice whenever the TMC raised the issue of the SIR exercise. She questioned why the meeting was called if the commission was not ready to hear the party's concerns.

Bhattacharya said the party had approached the court to protect people's rights and insisted that raising the issue was necessary.

AKHILESH SEEKS DEBATE ON WAR IMPACT



LUCKNOW

Akhilesh Yadav on Monday said Parliament should discuss India's position and the safety of citizens amid the ongoing conflict in the Middle East.

The Samajwadi Party president said the current situation has created conditions similar to wartime and requires urgent discussion on national security, foreign policy and the protection of Indians living or travelling abroad.

In a post on X, Yadav said when the Budget Session of Parliament of India went into recess, the country was facing different issues. However, the conflict in West Asia has now created new concerns that need immediate attention.

He said Parliament should debate India's official stand on the conflict and review the country's foreign policy decisions. Yadav also raised con-

cerns about decisions related to essential resources such as oil, claiming that India has moved from independent decision-making to following directions from the United States. The former Uttar Pradesh chief minister said questions related to India's sovereignty and self-reliance should also be discussed in the present situation. According to him, these matters directly affect the country's future and require serious debate in the House. Yadav also stressed that the safety of Indian citizens working or travelling in regions affected by the conflict must be ensured. He called on the government to take steps to bring them back safely.

He also mentioned journalists and media personnel who had travelled abroad with Prime Minister Narendra Modi but were unable to return after the war began.

India sends rice aid to drought-hit Malawi

NEW DELHI

India has sent a humanitarian shipment of 1,000 metric tons of rice to Malawi to help the African nation deal with food shortages caused by drought linked to the El Nino weather phenomenon. The rice consignment was shipped from Nhava Sheva Port and is meant to provide immediate relief to people facing food scarcity due to severe drought and crop failures. The assistance highlights India's continued support to developing countries and its commitment to cooperation among nations



of the Global South.

Sharing the information on social media, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Rand-

hir Jaiswal said the shipment aims to strengthen the India-Malawi partnership in food security. He said the move

reflects India's efforts to support partner countries and promote South-South cooperation during difficult times.

The El Nino climate pattern has disrupted rainfall in several parts of southern Africa, including Malawi, leading to poor agricultural output and growing food insecurity. Malawi is a landlocked country in southeastern Africa and depends heavily on agriculture for both food supply and economic stability.

Due to prolonged dry spells linked to El Nino, the production of maize, the country's main staple crop, has been

badly affected. As a result, millions of people are facing the risk of food shortages.

El Nino occurs in the tropical Pacific Ocean when sea surface temperatures become warmer than usual. This change weakens trade winds and affects weather conditions across the world. While some regions receive heavy rainfall and floods, others face drought and dry conditions.

Scientists closely monitor El Nino because it can influence global temperatures, agriculture, fisheries and weather systems such as monsoons and hurricanes.

QUICK READ

Swiss prosecutors expand probe into Crans-Montana Ski Bar fire

Geneva

According to a legal document seen by Reuters, Crans-Montana Mayor Nicolas Feraud has been named as a defendant and summoned for questioning on April 13. The investigation centres on potential criminal negligence linked to the deadly fire that tore through the Le Constellation bar on January 1. The fire claimed the lives of 41 people, most of them teenagers who were celebrating the New Year at the popular ski resort venue. The tragedy shocked Switzerland and prompted a nationwide review of safety standards at entertainment venues and tourist facilities. Feraud, who is in his 50s, did not immediately respond to requests for comment regarding his inclusion in the investigation.

Sydney court weighs protecting suspect family

Sydney

The request was made on Monday during a hearing in a Sydney court concerning 24-year-old Naveed Akram, who has been charged in connection with one of Australia's deadliest mass shootings in decades. Authorities allege that Akram opened fire during a Jewish Hanukkah celebration at Bondi Beach on December 14, killing 15 people and injuring several others. According to police investigators, the attack shocked the nation and sparked a major counterterrorism response.

Govts push tougher age checks on social media for kids

SAN FRANCISCO

For years, child safety advocates urged technology companies to take stronger steps to prevent minors from accessing harmful content or creating accounts on platforms meant for adults.

However, many tech firms maintained that implementing reliable age verification systems would be impractical and potentially compromise user privacy.

That stance is now facing increasing pressure from governments worldwide. Policymakers are introducing new regulations requiring platforms to verify the age of users before allowing access to certain online services. These measures aim to prevent children from being exposed to harmful content or interacting with poten-

SU DO KU

Brain-Bender: Can You Solve It?

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3	4	2	6	1	7	8	9	5
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Solutions to Yesterday's puzzle

IRAN SUCCESSION SPARKS OIL PRICE SURGE

Mojtaba's elevation to the country's most powerful position appears to shut down hopes for a swift diplomatic resolution to the conflict currently destabilizing the Middle East.

Continued from page 1

Mojtaba Khamenei (56), a Shi'ite cleric known for his strong ties to Iran's security establishment, has emerged as the successor to his father.

Analysts say the decision reflects the continued dominance of hardline factions within Iran's political and military leadership. His elevation to the country's most powerful position appears to shut down hopes for a swift diplomatic resolution to the conflict currently destabilizing the Middle East.

Leadership transition intensifies global economic uncertainty

The leadership transition has also intensified global economic uncertainty. The conflict has already disrupted international energy supplies, creating one of the most severe shocks to global oil markets in recent history. Following the announcement of Mojtaba Khamenei's appointment, oil prices surged sharply while global stock markets recorded steep de-



clines, reflecting fears that the war could drag on and further strain energy supplies.

Mojtaba Khamenei is believed to enjoy significant support from Iran's powerful security forces and the extensive business networks connected to them.

However, his leadership has been strongly rejected by the United States. U.S. President Donald Trump has declared the new leader unacceptable and has reiterated

demands for Iran's unconditional surrender, further deepening tensions between the two countries. Despite the growing international pressure, Iranian state media broadcast images of large crowds gathering in several cities to show support for the new Supreme Leader. Demonstrators were seen waving Iranian flags and carrying portraits of both Mojtaba Khamenei and his father, Ali Khamenei.

In the central city of Isfahan, state television reported the sound of explosions from nearby airstrikes even as loyalists assembled in the historic Imam Square. Crowds gathered beneath a stage displaying portraits of the late leader and his successor, chanting religious slogans and expressing defiance. Meanwhile in Tehran, mourners attending public gatherings were heard singing slogans praising the Khamenei leadership, reflecting a mix of grief, nationalism, and support for the newly appointed Supreme Leader as the country braces for an uncertain future.

Oil output, exports knocked by Iran conflict as prices rise

SINGAPORE

The growing instability in the Middle East has sparked serious concerns among global policymakers, with many nations scrambling to prevent the sharp rise in energy prices from triggering wider economic shocks.

Oil markets reacted strongly to the escalating conflict, with prices jumping dramatically after major producers reduced output while Tehran signalled that hardline leadership would continue to steer the country's political direction.

Amid rising fears of supply shortages, finance ministers from the Group of Seven (G7) nations are expected to discuss the possibility of a coordinated release of emergency oil reserves.

According to a French government source, the issue will be taken up during a meeting scheduled for Monday as member nations explore ways to stabilize global energy markets and calm investors.

The potential release of strategic oil reserves is seen as one of the few immediate measures available to governments to counter the rapid surge in prices. Such coordinated actions have been used in the past during global crises to increase supply and prevent extreme volatility in energy markets.

Countries heavily dependent on Middle



Eastern oil have already begun implementing domestic measures. In South Korea, which imports nearly 70 percent of its oil from the region, President Lee Jae Myung announced that the government would introduce a cap on fuel prices — the first such move in nearly three decades. The decision is aimed at protecting consumers and businesses from sudden spikes in energy costs.

Speaking at an emergency government meeting, Lee warned citizens against panic buying and emphasized the seriousness of the situation. He described the ongoing crisis as a significant burden on South Korea's economy, noting that the country relies heavily on global trade and energy imports from the Middle East.

Hezbollah clashes with Israeli forces in Lebanon

JERUSALEM

According to Hezbollah, the confrontation took place during an Israeli airborne operation in eastern Lebanon. The group claimed its fighters engaged Israeli troops during the raid, marking what could be the second such military operation in the area in recent days. The statement suggests that the conflict between the two sides is intensifying beyond routine cross-border exchanges. The Israeli military did not immediately confirm



the incident. When contacted regarding Hezbollah's claims, an Israeli military spokesperson said there was no immediate comment on the reported clash. Lebanon became directly involved in the expanding regional conflict after Hezbollah launched attacks against

Israel earlier this month. The group said its actions were intended to avenge the killing of Iran's former Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei, whose death triggered widespread tensions across the Middle East. Hezbollah, which was founded in 1982 by Iran's Revolutionary Guards, has long been one of Tehran's most powerful allies in the region. Meanwhile, Israeli forces continued their aerial campaign against Hezbollah positions on Monday. Airstrikes targeted Hezbollah-controlled southern sub-

urbs of Beirut, sending thick plumes of smoke rising over parts of the Lebanese capital. Residents reported hearing multiple explosions as Israeli aircraft carried out the strikes.

The Israeli military also issued renewed warnings urging residents in the targeted areas to evacuate for their safety. In addition, Israeli authorities announced that they would take action against Al-Qard Al-Hassan, a financial institution linked to Hezbollah that Israel accuses of helping finance the group's operations.

Calls grow in UK to cancel King Charles' planned US visit after Trump remarks

LONDON

Ed Davey, leader of the Liberal Democrats, said on Monday that the British government should reconsider the proposed April visit by King Charles to the United States.

Davey argued that the visit would place the British monarch — who serves as the country's ceremonial head of state — in the middle of an increasingly tense political dispute between London and Washington.

His comments come after repeated criticisms of Prime Minister Keir Starmer by President Trump. The U.S. leader had accused Starmer of damaging the long-standing Special Relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom after Britain initially blocked the U.S. from using British military bases for strikes against Iran.



Trump reportedly remarked that Starmer was not Winston Churchill and claimed the British prime minister had helped ruin the historic alliance between the two countries. The remarks intensified diplomatic friction at a time when tensions are already high due to ongoing conflicts in the Middle East.

The dispute follows another controversy earlier this year when Trump suggested that

European forces had largely avoided frontline combat during the Afghanistan war. The statement prompted a rare public rebuke from Starmer, who described the comments as frankly appalling.

He noted that such remarks were deeply offensive to the families of the 457 British service personnel who lost their lives during the two-decade conflict in Afghanistan.

Blast damages Synagogue in Belgium's Liege in 'anti-Semitic' attack

LIEGE

The explosion occurred at around 4 a.m. local time (0300 GMT), sending shockwaves through the neighbourhood and shattering windows at the synagogue as well as in a building across the street.

According to Belgian public broadcaster RTBF, the force of the blast blew out several windows and caused structural damage to the targeted site.

Belgian Interior Minister Bernard Quintin strongly condemned the incident, describing it as a despicable antisemitic act aimed directly at the Jewish community in Belgium. Authorities are treating the blast as a deliberate attack and have begun an investigation to determine those responsible.

Quintin also announced that security measures around Jewish institutions and other potentially vulnerable sites across the country would be



strengthened in response to the incident. Police and security services are expected to increase patrols and surveillance to prevent further attacks.

Leaders of Belgium's Jewish community expressed deep concern and shock following the explosion. Eitan Bergman, Vice-President of the Coordinating Committee of Jewish Organisations in Belgium (CCOJB), said the attack had shaken members of the community, particularly because

Liege is home to a relatively small but closely connected Jewish population.

Bergman noted that the synagogue plays an important role in the local Jewish community, serving as a place of worship and gathering for residents. Liege is home to a very small but vibrant Jewish community where I personally grew up, he said, adding that the incident

has left community members feeling saddened, worried and deeply shocked.

'India second-largest arms importer after Ukraine; Pak relies heavily on China'

Continued from page 1

Over the past decade, India has also diversified its defence procurement sources, gradually reducing dependence on Russia while increasing purchases from Western partners such as France, Israel and the United States.

"Russia's share of Indian arms imports fell from 70% in 2011-15 to 51% in 2016-20, and further to 40 per cent in 2021-25," SIPRI said.

China-Pakistan arms nexus sharpens India's security concerns

According to SIPRI, India's continued procurement of foreign military hardware is largely shaped by its security competition with China and Pakistan.

"India was the world's second-largest recipient of major arms in 2021-25 with an 8.2% share of total global arms imports. Its arms im-

ports are driven by tensions with both China and Pakistan. These tensions have regularly led to armed conflict, as they did briefly between India and Pakistan in May 2025, with both sides using imported major arms," the report said.

Pakistan emerged as the fifth-largest importer of major arms worldwide during 2021-25, rising sharply from 10th place in 2016-20. Its arms acquisitions increased by 66% between the two periods and accounted for 4.2% of global imports.

China continued to dominate as Pakistan's principal defence supplier, providing 80% of the weapons it imported in 2021-25, up from 73% in the previous five-year period.

SIPRI also noted that although China exported major weapons systems to 47 countries during this period, a significant share was concentrated in Pakistan.

NATO launches Arctic military drills amid rising tensions over Greenland

HARSTAD

The Cold Response exercise, scheduled to run from March 9 to March 19, is designed to strengthen NATO's ability to defend its members in the European Arctic. The strategic region has gained increasing attention due to its proximity to Russia and the growing geopolitical competition for influence in the Arctic.

The drills are being conducted mainly in northern Norway and Finland, both of which share borders with Russia and play a critical role in NATO's northern defence strategy. This year's exercise will involve approximately 25,000 troops from around 14 participating nations, including the United States and Denmark. Officials said the exercise will focus not only on traditional military operations but also on the role civilians play in supporting defence efforts during crises. This includes coordination between military forces, local authorities, and civilian infrastructure to maintain supply chains and emergency services during potential conflicts. Cold Response is now integrated into NATO's broader Arctic Sentry mission, an initiative aimed at strengthening the alliance's presence and operational readiness in the polar region. The mission was launched partly to ease ten-



sions sparked by renewed political debate over Greenland's strategic importance. U.S. President Donald Trump has repeatedly argued that the United States needs control of Greenland to counter potential threats from Russia and China in the Arctic. According to Trump, the island's strategic location and natural resources make it crucial for future security and military positioning. However, both Denmark and Greenland's government have firmly rejected the idea of any U.S. takeover. Leaders in Copenhagen and Nuuk have reiterated that Greenland is not for sale and remains an autonomous territory within the Kingdom of Denmark. Despite the political disagreements, both Denmark and the United States are participating in the Cold Response drills alongside other NATO allies. The United States is expected to deploy around 4,000 troops for the exercise.



Clashes Erupt at Ibrox as Celtic Beat Rangers in Scottish Cup Quarter-Final

Violence broke out at Ibrox Stadium in Glasgow after Celtic defeated Rangers in the Scottish Cup quarter-final, triggering chaotic scenes involving rival supporters

GLASGOW

The highly anticipated clash between Scotland's biggest football rivals, Celtic and Rangers, ended in dramatic fashion as Celtic secured a 4-2 victory in a penalty shootout after the match finished goalless during regular time. The intense encounter was played in front of nearly 50,000 spectators at Rangers' home ground, Ibrox Stadium, in Glasgow.

However, the match was overshadowed by ugly scenes that unfolded immediately after the final whistle. Supporters from both sides rushed onto the pitch, with several

fans throwing flares and other objects across the field. Some individuals were seen covering their faces as tensions escalated between rival groups.

Police officers and stadium stewards quickly moved in to form a barrier between the opposing fans in an attempt to prevent further clashes. Meanwhile, players from both teams hurried off the pitch as security personnel worked to regain control of the situation.

Authorities later confirmed that several individuals were arrested following the incident. Police Scotland strongly condemned the disorder, describing the behaviour as unacceptable and dangerous.

Chief Superintendent Kate Stephen issued a statement on the official Police Scotland website criticising the disturbances. She described the scenes as shameful and confirmed that both officers and members of the public had been injured during the confrontation. Officers and members of the public have been injured in this despicable display and I want to express my thanks to all officers and staff deployed, Stephen said.

She added that investigations were already underway and that police would work closely with both football clubs and the Scottish Football Association to determine

the circumstances surrounding the incident.

A number of arrests have already been made, and Police Scotland will now work with both clubs and the Scottish Football Association to carry out a robust investigation following the scenes on the pitch at the conclusion of the match, she said.

The latest clash highlights ongoing concerns surrounding fan behaviour during the fiercely contested Old Firm derby, one of football's most intense rivalries. Authorities are expected to review security arrangements and take further action following the investigation.

Iraq Coach Graham Arnold Seeks Postponement of World Cup Playoff Amid Travel Disruptions

TEHRAN

The Iraqi team is scheduled to face either Bolivia national football team or Suriname national football team in Monterrey, Mexico, on March 31 in a high-stakes inter-confederation playoff. However, ongoing travel restrictions and airport closures in parts of the Middle East have raised serious concerns about whether players and staff will be able to travel in time for the fixture.

Coach Graham Arnold said the current situation could prevent several key players from joining the squad if travel routes remain disrupted. He warned that assembling a team consisting only of players based outside

Iraq would significantly weaken the side ahead of one of the most important matches in the nation's football history.

It wouldn't be our best team and we need our best team available for the



country's biggest game in 40 years, Arnold told the Australian Associated Press from his home in the United Arab Emirates.

The Australian coach emphasised the emotional significance of the match for Iraqi fans and the country's football community. Iraq has not qualified for the FIFA World Cup since 1986, and the upcoming playoff represents a rare opportunity to return to the global tournament.

The Iraqi people are so passionate about the game of football that it is insane. The fact that they haven't qualified for 40 years is probably the main reason I

took this job, Arnold said.

He added that the team management is currently exploring possible alternatives to overcome the travel challenges. With airports affected by regional instability, officials are working to identify alternative routes or solutions that would allow the full squad to reach Mexico in time for the match.

The Iraqi football federation is expected to remain in discussions with international football authorities regarding the situation. Arnold expressed hope that a practical solution, including a possible postponement of the playoff if necessary, could be reached to ensure fair competition and allow Iraq to field its strongest team in the decisive encounter.

Italy's Simone Ferrari Ruled Out of Six Nations Finale Against Wales with Neck Injury

ITALY

Ferrari, a key member of Italy's forward pack, sustained the injury during Italy's landmark 23-18 victory over England at the Stadio Olimpico in Rome on Saturday. The 31-year-old prop started the match but was forced to leave the field in the 51st minute due to the neck problem.

The tighthead prop has been an important figure for Italy throughout this year's Six Nations campaign, starting all four matches played so far. His presence in the front row has been central to Italy's strong scrummaging performances during the tournament.

Italy's victory over England marked a historic milestone for the national side, as it was the first time they had defeated England in the Six Nations. The win followed another impressive result earlier in the championship, when Italy secured a victory over Scotland in their opening match.

Ferrari's absence will be a setback for Italy as they prepare for their final fixture of the tournament. The coaching staff are expected to choose between Muhamed Hasa and Mirco Spagnolo as a replacement for the injured prop.

Italy will travel to Cardiff on Saturday for the decisive encounter against Wales, with the team aiming to achieve another historic milestone by winning three matches in a single Six Nations campaign for the first time.

Travis Kelce Considering 14th NFL Season, Open to Playing for Another Team

KANSAS CITY

Kelce, who will turn 37 in October, has been one of the most accomplished tight ends in NFL history. Since being drafted by the Kansas City Chiefs in the third round of the 2013 NFL Draft, he has become a cornerstone of the team's offence and a key contributor to their sustained success.

Over the course of his career, Kelce has been selected to 11 Pro Bowls and earned four first-team All-Pro honours, cementing his reputation as one of the league's most dominant players at his position. However, the veteran has been carefully considering his future in the league and has reportedly debated retirement during each of the past two offseasons.

A new factor has emerged this year as Kelce becomes an unrestricted free agent after completing a two-year contract extension worth \$34.25 million. With the deal now expired, his representatives are expected to explore discussions with multiple teams regarding potential opportunities for the upcoming season.

The Kansas City Chiefs, meanwhile, are adopting a patient approach as they await Kelce's decision. The franchise is currently managing salary-cap constraints and has indicated that it is prepared for either outcome — whether Kelce decides to retire or return for

another season.

Chiefs general manager Brett Veach said the team has been planning for both possibilities while maintaining open communication with the player and his representatives.

We've kind of prepared for either scenario, Veach said at the NFL Scouting Combine on February 24. We're trying to position ourselves that either way, we have a plan moving forward.

Veach also confirmed that he planned to meet with Kelce's representatives after the combine to discuss the situation further. While acknowledging the need to establish a clear timeline and deadline for a decision, he described the discussions with Kelce's camp as positive.

As one of the most respected veterans in the league, Kelce's next move will be closely watched by teams and fans alike.

Whether he continues his career with Kansas City or explores opportunities elsewhere, his decision is expected to have significant implications for the upcoming NFL season.



LUKA DONČIĆ

Scores 35 as Lakers Beat Knicks 110-97 Despite LeBron's Absence

LOS ANGELES

The Lakers maintained control throughout the contest, producing a wire-to-wire victory over the Knicks even in the absence of their star forward LeBron James. The veteran sat out the game after also missing Friday's win over the Indiana Pacers, marking the first time this season he has missed consecutive games. Earlier in the campaign, James had been sidelined for the first 14 games due to sciatica affecting his back and leg.

In his absence, Luka Dončić stepped up to lead the Lakers' offence with an impressive 35-point display. The guard played a pivotal role in the third quarter, where he scored 14 points and helped the Lakers pull away from their opponents.

The Lakers entered the second half with a modest advantage before dominating the third quarter. Dončić spearheaded a strong offensive push as Los Angeles outscored New York 34-20 in the period. His scoring burst came during a decisive 20-8 run over the final seven minutes of the quarter, transform-

Luka Doncic delivered a standout performance with 35 points as the Los Angeles Lakers secured a 110-97 victory over the New York Knicks

ing a 68-61 lead into a commanding 88-69 advantage heading into the final period.

Dončić finished the night shooting 11 of 25 from the field and added two three-pointers during the crucial third-quarter surge. His ability to control the tempo and deliver key baskets helped the Lakers build a comfortable cushion.

However, the Lakers experi-

enced some struggles in the fourth quarter after taking their large lead into the final period. The team went cold offensively, missing 10 consecutive shots as the Knicks attempted to reduce the deficit.

The scoring drought finally ended when Dončić banked in a layup to extend the Lakers' lead to 104-91 with just over two minutes remaining. The Slovenian star then sealed the victory by knocking down another three-pointer with 65 seconds left on the clock.

Despite the late-game lull, the Lakers' strong performance in the earlier quarters proved enough to secure a convincing win, with Dončić's leadership and scoring proving decisive in guiding the team past the Knicks.



The Buffalo Sabres staged a dramatic comeback to defeat the Tampa Bay Lightning 8-7 in a high-scoring NHL clash, with Josh Doan netting the decisive power-play goal in the closing stages

Sabres Edge Lightning 8-7 in Thriller; Penguins Rally to Beat Bruins in Overtime

BUFFALO

In one of the most dramatic games of the season, Buffalo overcame two separate two-goal deficits and survived a chaotic third period to secure the narrow victory. The Sabres initially appeared in control after building a 4-1 lead, but Tampa Bay mounted an impressive comeback by scoring five unanswered goals, turning the game on its head with a 6-4 advantage early in the final period.

The momentum continued to swing as both teams traded goals before Buffalo launched a late surge. The Sabres scored three goals in just 4 minutes and 40 seconds to reclaim the lead and ultimately seal the win. Josh Doan's second power-play goal proved decisive in capping the frantic contest.

Buffalo received strong offensive contributions throughout the lineup. Alex Tuch and Jason Zucker each scored twice, while Sam Carrick and Rasmus Dahlin also found the net. Bowen Byram provided key support with three assists, and Tage Thompson delivered an outstanding playmaking performance with four assists,



extending his points streak to 11 games with six goals and nine assists during that span.

Despite the loss, Tampa Bay produced a strong attacking display. Nikita Kucherov led the Lightning with two goals and an assist, while J.J. Moser contributed a goal and two assists. Goals also came from Corey Perry, Zemgus Girgensons, Brayden Point and Brandon Hagel, while Darren Raddysh recorded three assists.

In another thrilling NHL contest, the Pittsburgh Penguins defeated the Boston Bruins 5-4 in overtime after staging a remarkable come-

back from a 3-0 deficit.

Tommy Novak scored the winning goal just 17 seconds into overtime. The decisive moment came after Egor Chinakhov forced a turnover, drove toward the net and battled for possession, allowing Novak to charge down the slot and bury the loose puck.

Anthony Mantha played a crucial role in the comeback by scoring twice in the third period, while Chinakhov and Connor Dewar also added goals for Pittsburgh. Novak finished the game with a goal and an assist as the Penguins completed a dramatic turnaround victory.

Coco Gauff Retires Hurt from Indian Wells Clash Against Alex Eala

CALIFORNIA

The unexpected retirement marked only the second time in Coco Gauff's professional career that she has been forced to withdraw from a match. The 21-year-old American, considered one of the favourites to win the title in California, took a medical timeout before the final game of the contest.

Despite the treatment, Gauff decided she could not continue and approached Alex Eala at the net to concede the match. She apologized to her opponent while acknowledging the strong performance from the Filipino player.

I'm sorry. You were playing great, Gauff told Eala as the two shared a brief embrace following the withdrawal.

The early exit came as

a surprise given Gauff's recent dominance over Eala. Just three weeks earlier, the American had defeated the same opponent convincingly in the quarter-finals of the Dubai tournament with a 6-0, 6-2 scoreline.

Following the match, Gauff explained that the pain in her arm was sudden and intense, describing the experience as alarming.

It felt like a firework was going off inside of my arm, and then my whole arm felt like it was on fire, she said while speaking to reporters after the match.

The two-time major champion added that doctors suspect the issue could be related to a nerve problem, though further tests are needed to determine the exact cause.

We're going to figure out what it is tomorrow, but based on the feeling, I'm being told



that it's probably something nerve-related, Gauff said.

She admitted that the unusual sensation left her worried, noting that she had never experienced anything similar before.

Never felt a sensation like this before, she added, describing the situation as scary.

Gauff's only previous retirement from a professional match occurred in 2022 during a tournament in Cincinnati.

Jaipur Polo Team Wins SMS Gold Vase, Secures Ninth Title of the Season

The Jaipur Polo Team continued its impressive run this season as it clinched the prestigious SMS Gold Vase title with a narrow 6–5.5 victory over Krishna Polo in a thrilling final

JAIPUR

The final proved to be a fiercely competitive encounter, with both teams exchanging momentum across the chukkers. Jaipur Polo began the match on a strong note, applying early attacking pressure to take a 2–1.5 lead at the end of the first chukker. However, Krishna Polo quickly responded in the second chukker, with Kr. Vishal Singh Rathore spearheading the comeback. His efforts helped Krishna Polo edge ahead to a narrow 3.5–3 lead at halftime.

Jaipur Polo regained control in the third chukker as they improved possession and capitalised on scoring opportunities. Leading from the front, HH Maharaja Sawai Padmanabh Singh delivered clinical finishes that helped Jaipur move ahead 5–3.5, shifting the momentum firmly in their favour.

Krishna Polo mounted a strong challenge in the final chukker, with goals from Kr.

ts

Royal Gems & Arts Jaipur

RPC

Vishal Singh Rathore and Rk. Sidhant Singh bringing the contest to a tense finish. Despite the pressure, Jaipur maintained their defensive discipline and composure in the closing stages, successfully managing the game to seal a 6–5.5 victory and lift the coveted SMS Gold Vase trophy.

Earlier in the semi-final clash against RPC, Jaipur Polo staged a remarkable comeback after falling behind early

in the match. RPC dominated the first chukker and built a commanding 3.5–1 lead. Jaipur gradually fought back in the second chukker with goals from Br. Harshodya Singh and Yogendra Singh, narrowing the gap and trailing 4.5–4 at halftime.

The point in the chukker when Jaipur strength-

ened its defence and took control of possession. Goals from Kr. Divyamaan Singh Dujod and HH Maharaja Sawai Padmanabh Singh helped Jaipur take a narrow 5–4.5 lead.

Carrying this momentum into the final chukker, Jaipur extended their advantage to 8–5.5, confirming their place in the final. For Jaipur, Br. Harshodya Singh and Yogendra Singh scored two goals each, while Kr. Divyamaan Singh Dujod added one goal.

INDIA T20 TRIUMPH

Suryakumar Yadav Calls T20 Win Wonderful Journey

AHMEDABAD

Reflecting on India's World Cup campaign, Suryakumar Yadav acknowledged that the tournament did not begin exactly as the team had hoped, but praised the squad's resilience and unity in overcoming early challenges.

Obviously, it has been a wonderful journey in the last one month. Though it didn't start the way we wanted it to start, but then it's part of the sport. Throughout the journey till today, it has been very special. And collectively as a team, what we've achieved, I think it's right in front of you. So very happy with that, Surya said while addressing the media at the post-match press conference.

Looking ahead, the Indian skipper made it clear that the team is already setting its sights on future milestones. He emphasised that winning an Olympic gold medal when cricket returns to the Games in Los Angeles in 2028 is a major objective, along with aiming for another T20 World Cup title.

Very happy with that. And as you rightly said, definitely the next goal is the Olympics Olympic Gold and also the 2028 World Cup. Don't forget, he added.



In the final, India produced a dominant all-round performance to overpower New Zealand. Batting first, India posted a massive 255 for 5, the highest total ever recorded in a T20 World Cup final. The innings was powered by a blistering knock from Sanju Samson, who smashed 89 runs off just 46 balls. He was well supported by Ishan Kishan, who scored 54, and Abhishek Sharma, who contributed a rapid 52.

Samson and Sharma laid a solid foundation with a 98-run opening partnership, setting the tone for India's big total. Later, Shivam Dube added a quick cameo in the closing overs to help the team cross the 250-run mark.

New Zealand, chasing a daunting target, struggled against India's disciplined bowling attack. Jasprit Bumrah spearheaded the bowling effort with an outstanding spell of 4 wickets for 15 runs, while Axar Patel chipped in with 3 for 27 to dismantle the top order. Although Tim Seifert fought hard with a valiant 52, wickets continued to fall at regular intervals as India maintained relentless pressure. The New Zealand innings eventually folded for 159 in 19 overs, handing India a commanding 96-run victory.

You performed when it mattered the most – Virat Kohli hails Sanju Samson

MUMBAI

Legendary cricketer Virat Kohli on Sunday heaped praises on India's wicketkeeper-batter Sanju Samson for his phenomenal performance in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup triumph, for which he was adjudged the Player of the Tournament.

Samson, who came into the playing XI as a replacement player as the top-order was not producing the desired runs because of Abhishek Sharma's poor run of scores, struck half-centuries in three successive matches as India fought back from the brink of elimination to clinch a historic third title in the T20 World Cup. India also became the first nation to win back-



to-back titles and to triumph on home soil.

And Samson played a key role in the historic triumph, and Virat Kohli highlighted

Kerala Government to Honour Sanju Samson After India's T20 World Cup Triumph

Fresh from playing a decisive role in India's T20 World Cup triumph, Kerala's star cricketer Sanju Samson is set to receive a grand public reception from the Kerala Government led by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan.

Gautam Gambhir Dedicates India's T20 WC Triumph to Dravid, Laxman, Agarkar

AHMEDABAD

Addressing the media at the post-match press conference following India's title-winning performance, Gambhir said the trophy belonged not just to the current squad but also to those who helped build the team's strong foundation over the years.

First of all, I think I should dedicate this trophy to Rahul Bhai first and then Laxman Bhai because what Rahul Bhai has done to keep Indian cricket in such a good shape, I have to thank him for everything what he's done during his tenure, Gambhir said.

Rahul Dravid, who previously served as India's head coach, played a key role in shaping the current generation of players and establishing a stable structure within the team. Gambhir acknowledged that the systems put in place during Dravid's tenure helped ensure continuity and consistency in the national side.

Gambhir also praised VVS Laxman, who currently heads the BCCI's Centre of Excellence (CoE), highlighting his contribution in nurturing players and maintaining a steady pipeline of talent for the national team.

VVS Laxman for unconditionally doing so much for



‘Not every inspiring sporting story ends with a trophy’: Bindra hails Lakshya

NEW DELHI

Even in defeat, Lakshya Sen has captured admiration across the sporting world, earning praise from Olympic gold medallist Abhinav Bindra for his resilience at the All England Open 2026.

Sen went down 21-15, 22-20 to Lin Chun-Yi of Chinese Taipei in the men's singles final, settling for a silver medal. Despite the loss, Bindra highlighted the qualities Sen displayed on the court.

Not every inspiring sporting story ends with a trophy. Over the last few days, Lakshya Sen has shown India what courage, resilience and belief truly look like, Bindra wrote on X.

Bindra's tribute underscored that Sen's journey was about more than the scoreline. His run to another All England final, through extraordinary wins and immense physical pain, has been about far more than a result, he said, praising the 24-year-old for his grit and determination.



The Olympic champion also emphasised the lesson Sen provides to the next generation of Indian athletes: He has reminded young India that greatness lies not only in winning, but in the honesty of effort, the dignity of the fight and the strength to keep believing.

Concluding his post, Bindra expressed his personal pride in Sen, saying, I am Proud of you, @lakshya_sen. Very, very proud.

Sen spent

over five hours on court in the earlier rounds and faced a tough challenge against the lightning-fast Lin. He started slowly in the first game, struggling with the depth of his lifts and tosses, allowing Lin to seize control and take the opening game.

In the second game, Sen raised his tempo, winning six consecutive points from 3-4 to lead 9-4. However, Lin gradually clawed back, engaging Sen in long rallies and ultimately converting his second match point to clinch the title. Lin became the first men's singles player from Chinese Taipei to win the prestigious tournament.

This marked Sen's second All England final appearance after 2022, highlighting his skill, determination, and resilience despite falling just short of the trophy.

AHMEDABAD

Sanju Samson emerged as one of the key performers in India's commanding victory in the T20 World Cup final on Sunday. His dazzling knock in the title clash played a crucial role in anchoring India's imposing total, a fearless innings that has been widely hailed as one of the defining moments of the tournament.

Samson's explosive batting not only helped secure India's emphatic victory but also cemented his place among the country's World Cup heroes. Cricket fans across the country, especially in Kerala, celebrated the performance that showcased the wicketkeeper-batsman's composure and attacking flair on the biggest stage.

Announcing the felicitation, Education Minister V. Sivankutty said the Kerala Government intends to celebrate Samson's achievement in a fitting manner,



recognising the pride he has brought to the state through his remarkable performance.

The state is proud of Sanju Samson's contribution to India's historic victory. His performance has inspired thousands of young cricketers in Kerala, the minister said.

Sivankutty, who also hails from the state capital Thiruvananthapuram, noted that Samson's journey from a local cricket enthusiast to an international star has become a source of motivation for aspiring athletes across the state.

Sanju Samson grew up in a modest coastal neighbourhood near the Trivandrum International Airport in Thiruvananthapuram, where he first developed his passion for cricket while playing on local grounds. His talent soon became evident as he progressed through age-group cricket and domestic tournaments.

Congratulations to ICC and my friend Jay Shah for another wonderfully organised T20 WC: Infantino

NEW DELHI

The ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 concluded on a high note with India securing a historic victory in the final, capping off an exciting tournament that drew widespread global attention. Following the conclusion of the tournament, FIFA President Gianni Infantino extended his congratulations to ICC chairman Jay Shah, acknowledging the successful staging of the event and its significance for international sport.

Infantino commended the ICC leadership for organising a tournament that showcased the growing popularity and competitiveness of cricket on the world stage. In his message, he recognised the efforts of the ICC and its leadership in delivering a high-quality global event that captivated fans and demonstrated the sport's expanding global reach.

The tournament saw teams from across the cricketing world compete in an intense month-long contest that featured thrilling matches, standout performances and record-breaking moments. India's eventual triumph in the final added a historic chapter to the nation's cricketing legacy and highlighted the team's dominance in the shortest format of the game.

Under the leadership of ICC chairman Jay Shah, the governing body has worked to expand cricket's global footprint and strengthen international competitions.



