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LS DEBATES ON ELECTORAL REFORMS

Biggest anti-national act is ‘vote chori’: Rahul Gandhi

Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi accused BJP of “vote chori,” alleging Election Commission capture and unprecedented immunity for the commissioner

NEW DELHI

On Tuesday, December 9, Lok Sabha Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi strongly criticised the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), calling “vote chori” (vote theft) the “biggest anti-national act” and alleging that the party had effectively captured the Election Commission (EC). Gandhi questioned why Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah amended the law to grant what he described as a “gift of immunity” to the election commissioner, a move unprecedented in India’s history.

During a debate on electoral reforms, he asserted that the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) sought to control every institution in the country, including the EC, which triggered protests from the treasury benches. Gandhi further stated that vote theft by the BJP was eroding the nation’s democratic fabric and undermining the principles of modern India.

He challenged the government on its law changes regarding CCTV and election data, arguing that the EC’s directive to destroy recordings after 45 days was less about protecting data and more about facilitating election manipulation.



- Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal said that the implementation of SIR in India is not new, while it has occurred before, it has not been practiced in recent decades. He emphasized that equality is the core principle of SIR.
- Lok Sabha MP Nishikant Dubey claimed Congress has historically compromised ethics for Muslim votes, a practice he says dates back to Nehru’s era.
- Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha adjourned, will resume at 11 a.m. today (December 10, 2025.)

tion. Gandhi cited irregularities in the 2024 Haryana assembly elections, including a Brazilian model’s photo appearing multiple times in the electoral rolls, as evidence of alleged fraud. He also pointed out that the EC had not responded to queries regarding the Haryana, Maharashtra, and Karnataka elections, questioning its impartiality and transparency in managing the electoral process.

EC is implementing NRC, not SIR: Congress MP Jothimani Congress MP from Tamil Nadu S. Jothimani, speaking on electoral reforms in Lok Sabha says the government is implementing NRC and not SIR. “The government wants to disenfranchise hundreds of voters through this exercise,” Ms. Jothimani says.

RS continues discussion on Vande Mataram

NEW DELHI: The division of ‘Vande Mataram’ song for “politics of appeasement” led to the partition of India, Home Minister Amit Shah said in the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday, as he slammed the Opposition for linking the debate on 150 years of the national song with the upcoming West Bengal elections. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge countered accusing BJP leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, of insulting Jawaharlal Nehru, as he said the decision to use only the first two stanzas of ‘Vande Mataram’ as the national song was collectively taken by leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore. As the ruling BJP accused the Congress of ‘dividing’ the song written by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, the Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Kharge said that Congress leaders have always been chanting ‘Vande Mataram’.

BJP leaders, farmers detained during march to Suvarna Soudha

BELAGAVI

On Tuesday, several protesters, including Karnataka BJP president B.Y. Vijayendra, were detained by police while marching with a large group of farmers toward the Suvarna Vidhana Soudha in Belagavi. The protest aimed to highlight the Congress government’s alleged “anti-farmer policies.”

The march was led by Vijayendra, along with Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly R. Ashoka, Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council Chalahadi Narayanaswamy, and several MLAs, MLCs, and senior party leaders. The demonstration began at Malini City Grounds and proceeded toward the legislature amid a heavy police presence. Protesters raised slogans accusing the government of ignoring farmers’ problems and failing to address key agricultural issues.

Vijayendra criticized internal conflicts within the ruling Congress, claiming policy paralysis has left farmers’ concerns unattended. He accused Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar of prioritizing political ambitions over governance, with the Cabinet often in Delhi rather than addressing local agricultural crises. Vijayendra highlighted failures in supporting sugarcane and maize farmers, noting inadequate compensation, delays in opening procurement centers, and forcing farmers to sell produce at distress prices.

Cong leaders slam BJP over farmer protests

BJP should protest against Central govt: DCM

Belagavi

Deputy CM D.K. Shivakumar slammed BJP, saying it should protest against the Modi government instead of Karnataka. “Centre has denied funds for Mahadayi, Mekedatu, Upper Bhadra and Krishna projects, besides hurting farmers on sugarcane and maize,” he said, adding BJP leaders have “no shame.”

HK Patil calls BJP protests as ‘unreasonable’

Belagavi

Minister HK Patil criticised the BJP’s farmer protest, saying the central government caused issues by fixing MRP, FRP, and sugar rates. Speaking in Belagavi, he called the protest “immoral and unreasonable” and affirmed that the state government, led by the CM, fully supports farmers and will seek justice.



I am the real Oppn leader: Yatnal

Belagavi: BJP MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatnal on Tuesday insisted he is “the genuine Opposition leader” in the Assembly. The strong statement came after his protest over being moved from his usual seat — a change he said was unfair to senior legislators. During the session, Congress MLA Ranganath accused BJP of treating Yatnal like an orphan and pledged party solidarity. In response, the Assembly Speaker explained that seat assignments depend on party strength in government — “when in power you’re senior, when out you’re junior” — a system affected Yatnal’s seating. Yatnal rejected this, declaring he is not a political opportunist. He emphasized he didn’t go to the Chief Minister’s residence seeking favour, and challenged that if anyone is truly the Opposition leader, it’s him — not R. Ashoka.



CM unveils world’s second largest Khadi national flag



The tricolor flag is not just a khadi fabric; it is a symbol of India’s pride and self-respect.
—Siddaramaiah, CM



Giant tricolor flag at Suvarna Soudha serves to send a message of patriotism to the next generation.
—Shivakumar, DCM

BELAGAVI

On December 9, 2025, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah unveiled the world’s second-largest Khadi national flag at the steps of Suvarna Soudha, Belagavi. The event witnessed the presence of prominent dignitaries including Legislative Assembly Speaker U.T. Khader, Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, Law and Parlia-

mentary Affairs Minister H.K. Patil, Assembly Deputy Speaker Rudrappa Lamani, Legislative Council Chief Whip Salim Ahmed, Assembly Chief Whip Ashok Pattana, and Chief Secretary Dr. Shalini Rajneesh, along with several MLAs and senior officials. The massive Khadi flag was crafted by Vinod Kumar Revappa Bammanna and his family from Kamalapur, Kalaburagi district.

DGCA cuts IndiGo’s flight schedule by 10 per cent

NEW DELHI

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Tuesday ordered a 10 per cent reduction in IndiGo’s flight schedule, responding to the large-scale disruptions that have affected the airline’s operations since December 1, 2025.

According to the aviation safety regulator, the curtailed schedule will apply across multiple sectors, with the



No airline, regardless of its size, will be allowed to cause inconvenience to passengers due to poor planning or failure to follow regulations

—Ram Mohan Naidu, Civil Aviation Minister

most significant trims on high-demand, high-frequency routes. The DGCA has directed IndiGo to submit a revised operational schedule by 5 pm today (December 10).

IndiGo CEO Pieter El-

bers, in a video message on Tuesday, expressed deep regret for the inconvenience caused to passengers and assured that the airline’s op-

LOC issued against two more owners of Goa nightclub

PANAJI

Goa Police have issued a Look Out Circular (LOC) against two more owners of the fire-hit nightclub—Ajay Gupta and Surinder Kumar Khosla—following Saturday’s tragedy that claimed 25 lives. The action came just hours after the club’s other owners, Saurabh and Gaurav Luthra, fled to Thailand. At a press briefing in Anjuna, Deputy Inspector General of Police Varsha Sharma confirmed that Gupta and Khosla, the latter being a Brit-



ish national, are now under the LOC. She added that police are coordinating with Interpol to bring back the Luthra brothers, who reportedly left for Phuket soon after the incident.

Sharma said efforts to trace the Luthras began immediately after the fire, though they were

not in Goa at the time. She also stated that two Goa government officials—the former Director of Panchayat, Siddhi Halarnkar, and former Goa State Pollution Control Board Member Secretary, Shamila Monteiro—have been called to join the probe.

'ILLEGAL' BEACH SHACK OWNED BY LUTHRA BROTHERS DEMOLISHED

Panaji

The Goa Tourism Department on Tuesday demolished ‘Romeo Lane’, an illegally constructed beach shack at Vagator, owned by brothers Saurabh Luthra and Gaurav Luthra, who also own the club Birch by Romeo Lane. After the fire tragedy, the authorities had sealed the beach shack at Vagator and another property of the Luthras at Assagao.

Microsoft announces \$17.5 bn investment in India

NEW DELHI

Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella on Tuesday announced that the company will invest ₹1,57,235 crore (\$17.5 billion) in India — its largest-ever investment in Asia — to strengthen the infrastructure, skills, and sovereign capabilities needed for India’s AI-driven future. Nadella, who is on a four-day visit to the country, shared on X that he had an inspiring conversation with Prime Minister Narendra Modi about India’s AI potential, and affirmed Microsoft’s commitment to supporting the nation’s ambitions. Responding to Nadella’s post, PM Modi said the world is optimistic about India’s role in artificial intelligence and expressed happiness that Microsoft has chosen India for its biggest Asian investment. He added that India’s youth will use this opportunity to innovate and advance AI for a better planet. Microsoft said the \$17.5 billion investment will be made over four years, from 2026 to 2029, and follows an earlier \$3 billion pledge made in January 2025.

SUPREME COURT BACKS BLOS

SC warns EC to protect BLOs, flags threats could lead to ‘anarchy’

NEW DELHI

On Tuesday, the Supreme Court expressed serious concern over threats faced by Booth Level Officers (BLOs) and other officials engaged in the Special Intensive Revision (SIR 2.0) of electoral rolls in West Bengal and other states. A bench comprising Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi warned the Election Commission (EC) that failing to address these threats could lead to “anarchy.” The court highlighted reports of BLOs being overburdened,

exhausted, and in some cases driven to extreme distress. Justice Bagchi noted that petitioners had alleged that state election commission offices were being gheraoed and that officials faced harassment and intimidation during the SIR process. Senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi, appearing for the EC, informed the bench that state governments are constitutionally obliged to provide protection and coop-

eration, and if they fail, the EC could deploy local police under deputation or, if necessary, central forces. Justice Bagchi clarified that the EC cannot assume control over the police until the official election process begins.

Petitioners, represented by senior advocate V. Giri, sought directions for state police deployment under EC supervision and requested central armed forces be deployed until the SIR process is completed, cit-

ing a spate of violence against BLOs in West Bengal. However, the bench pointed out that apart from a single First Information Report (FIR), there was limited verified evidence of obstruction, and much of the material relied upon was based on historical incidents or media reports. The Supreme Court urged the EC to bring to its notice any specific instances of lack of cooperation or threats to BLOs so that appropriate action could be taken, emphasizing the need to ensure that the SIR process proceeds smoothly without disruptions.

INSIGHTS TO NOTE

- Court cannot treat West Bengal situation as uniquely requiring intervention.
- BLOs face pressure due to house visits and enumeration duties.
- EC has written to states seeking protection for BLOs.
- Bench issued notice, seeking responses on threats across states.

QUICK READ

Seven-storey building catches fire in Jakarta, 20 killed

JAKARTA: A fire at a seven-story office building in Indonesia’s capital, Jakarta, has claimed 20 lives, officials confirmed on Tuesday. The blaze, which erupted around midday on the first floor, quickly spread to upper levels while some employees were having lunch, and others had already left, said Susatyo Purnomo Condro, head of Central Jakarta police. The building houses Terra Drone Indonesia, a provider of aerial survey drones for sectors ranging from mining to agriculture and part of Japan’s Terra Drone Corporation. **More on page 8**

Karnataka HC recalls stay on menstrual leave policy

BENGALURU: The Karnataka High Court on Tuesday withdrew its earlier interim order that had stayed the state government’s granting one day of menstrual leave per month to women aged 18 to 52. Justice Jyoti M initially issued the stay after hearing petitions from the Bangalore Hotels’ Association. However, around 1.30 pm, the judge recalled the decision following a request from Advocate General K. Shashikiran Shetty, who sought time to present the state’s arguments before any stay.

QUICK READ

Garbage spilled on road, GBA imposes Rs 10,000 fine on truck

BENGALURU
A GBA garbage truck has been fined Rs 10,000 for leaking garbage on the road. The fine has been imposed by the officials of the Bangalore North Municipal Corporation. The garbage truck was leaking garbage onto the road during garbage disposal. This was causing a foul smell to the road, which was annoying to motorists and the general public.

Rs 400 crore for development of IT corridor: DCM

BENGALURU
Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar said that the state government has allocated Rs 400 crore for the development of the IT corridor. This has given good news to the IT sector. Sharing a post on X regarding this, he said that the government has allocated Rs 400 crore for the development of the IT corridor. The comprehensive development of Bengaluru is priority. He said that the IT Corridor Outer Ring Road from Silk Board Junction to KR Puram will be developed at a world-class level at a cost of Rs 400 crore.

Geyser gas leak in bathroom, mother and child die

BENGALURU
A mother and her child, who fell ill due to a geyser gas leak in the bathroom, died. The incident took place in Panchsheel Nagar under Govindaraja Nagar limits. It is reported that the mother Chandini (26) and child Yuvi (4) died in the hospital without responding to treatment. The mother and child fell ill after consuming gas that leaked from a geyser while they were taking a bath on Monday afternoon. The mother and child, who were critical, were admitted to Victoria Hospital by their neighbors.

Actor Dharma to undergo a voice test in 'Bangari' case

BENGALURU

Film actor Dharma is facing a voice test trouble in connection with the multi-crore fraud case in the name of Bamul president and former MP from Bangalore Rural Lok Sabha constituency DK Suresh. It was alleged that Dharma had spoken to a gold trader by imitating DK Suresh's voice.

In addition to this, the audios were leaked. The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) officials, who are preparing to examine the authenticity of these audios, are said to have decided to conduct a voice test of Dharma. The CID has requested the court to allow the collection of a voice sample from Dharma in connection with this test. If the court agrees, the actor will face a trial by fire, said top sources.

Actor and friend get a drill: Soon after the court gave the green signal for the investigation into the multi-crore fraud case, actor Dharma and his friend Aishwarya Gowda have been questioned by CID officials. The officials have been questioning both of them separately for four to five days and recording their statements. It is learnt that actor Dharma has denied any wrongdoing.

It was alleged that Aishwarya Gowda had cheated gold trader Vanitha Aital by accepting 14 kg of gold from her, claiming to be the sister

Lokayukta officials raid Ambedkar Devpt Corporation

Discrepancies and misappropriation of funds were noted during recent Lokayukta raids on officials Dr BR Ambedkar Development Corporation

BENGALURU

Lokayukta officials raided the Dr BR Ambedkar Development Corporation on Tuesday following various allegations, including irregularities in loan sanctioning.

Sources said that a raid was conducted at the corporation's office in Vasanthnagar, under the leadership of Lokayukta SP Shivaprakash and important documents are being examined.

Ambedkar Development Corporation used to provide loans of Rs. 1 lakh to Rs. 5 lakh to the backward classes on a subsidized basis. However, the corporation officials were accused of misappropriating more than Rs. 10 crore through various irregularities including creating fake docu-



ments and fake candidates to sanction loans. It is learnt that a team of 10 officers raided the premises in the early hours of today and is examining the documents.

Separate news, Lokayukta raids homes of 10 employees:

Lokayukta officials who recently (November 25) raided 47 places belonging to 10 employees working in various government departments on charges of disproportionate assets, discovered properties worth crores of rupees.

Site Allotment Delay by BDA Causes Loan Problems

BENGALURU

Due to decades of delay, the Bengaluru Development Authority (BDA) has plunged the residents of the ambitious Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Layout (NPKL) project into a serious financial crisis. Due to the non-handover of the plots on time, the residents are facing a difficult situation due to their age to get loans from banks for house construction. Several residents have expressed their grievances to BDA Commissioner Major Manivannan via Twitter.

Thousands of plot owners, who were in their forties when the plots were allotted, were unable to build houses as the BDA took nearly nine years to complete the infrastructure development. Generally, nationalized banks refuse to provide loans to those above the age of 55 for housing construction. As a result, many senior plot owners are now unable to get loans. Many plot owners



are now close to retirement age. They are already retired. Even though the interest rates on loans are low, getting bank loans is a big challenge for these senior citizens. Retirees are inevitably forced to take loans from NBFCs at high interest rates. Banks are not only citing age but also legal complications of the layout as reasons for denying loans. Major banks, including HDFC, have pointed out that the banks have listed Kempegowda Layout as a non-RERA compliant and incomplete layout. In addition,

BDA Commissioner Major Manivannan, who has acknowledged this serious problem, has instructed his team to discuss this with the banks and find a solution. There has also been a demand that the BDA should immediately abolish the penalty for plot owners who are unable to get loans.

tion, bank officials have also mentioned that land acquisition issues are still pending in the layout.

The Greater Bengaluru Development Authority has now planned the Kempegowda Layout in 4040 acres, but despite the passage of decades, development work has been completed in only 2,800 acres. The land acquisition process for about 1,200 acres is still pending. After the Arkavati Layout, the NPKL also remains incomplete, which is a cause for concern for the site owners.



Indigo effect: Rates of five-star hotels in city increase by 40-60 percent

BENGALURU

Due to the disruption to Indigo flights, the rates of five-star hotels in Bengaluru have increased by 40 to 60 percent.

For the past one week, IndiGo flights have been cancelled and traffic has been disrupted across the country. It is also doubtful that IndiGo flights will return to normal for some time. Therefore, tourists waiting for alternative flights are staying in local hotels, and demand for star hotels has increased.

Almost all five-star hotels have increased their daily rates by 40 to 60 percent in the last four to five days.



Bengaluru North City Corporation Commissioner inspects various locations

BENGALURU

Commissioner of Bengaluru North City Corporation, Pommala Sunil Kumar visited and inspected various locations within the city corporation limits and issued necessary instructions. At the Hebbal Skywalk area, near the Military Bus Stop, garbage was being dumped indiscriminately. The Commissioner instructed that marshals patrol the area from 4.30 AM onwards to prevent garbage disposal at the spot. Noticing the absence of litter bins in the area, he directed officials to coordinate with the nearby Aster Hospital and ensure that litter bins are in-

stalled promptly. Subsequently, the Commissioner inspected government land within the city corporation limits to identify a suitable location for constructing a shelter/compound for street dogs, as per the directions of the Supreme Court. He instructed the Executive Engineers present at the site to take the required actions. On this occasion, Joint Commissioners Mohammed Naem Momin and Pallavi, Assistant General Manager of Byatarayanapura Division, Executive Engineers of Yelahanka Division, the Chief Veterinary Officers of the Animal Husbandry Department, and other staff were present.

Cong wrests Town Cooperative Bank after 10 years from BJP

BENGALURU

The Congress party has wrested the power in Hosakote Town Cooperative Bank after a decade. Elections were held on February 9. Results were with-held due to technical ditches of allowing ineligible voters to participate in the election process, and was challenged in court. The Court in its order on November 24 gave a final decision to announce the results setting aside the arguments of including voters who were ineligible to cast their votes due to not following the stipulated conditions as per bye-laws of the bank. The Returning Officer N Venkatesh announced the results on Tuesday at the bank premises.

Out of the 13, Congress has successfully bagged 8 and BJP got 5 seats. Winners from Congress included S Manjunath, K Kiran, Akbar Pasha, GU Vishnu, N Nagaraj, S Murali, HS Gopal, M Sarajamma. Winners from BJP were A Afsar, K Kiran Kumar, B Nagaraju, N Balachandran, B Venkataakshamma.

Former MP BN Bache Gowda, MLA Sharath Bache Gowda, entrepreneur BV Byre Gowda, BMR-DA President N Keshavamurthy, former President Vijayakumar, leaders BV Rajashekara Gowda, HM Subbaraju, have congratulated the winners from Congress.



Prepare a Master Plan for Devpt of Kasturinagar: Rao

BENGALURU

Chief Commissioner of Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) Maheshwar Rao has instructed officials to prepare a Master Plan for the comprehensive development of the Kasturinagar area.

During his inspection visit to Kasturinagar located within the limits of the Bengaluru Central and East City Corporations, he directed officials to prepare a detailed Master Plan covering overall infrastructure development, including roads, footpaths, and parks.

Reviewing the unhygienic conditions at the waste transfer unit and dry waste collection center located under the flyover, he expressed dissatisfaction and instructed officials to carry out immediate cleaning and ensure continuous maintenance of cleanliness.

Upon noticing construction



debris, discarded sofas, and other waste dumped under the flyover, he ordered their immediate removal and instructed that the area be developed for public use.

Observing silt accumulation in the stormwater drain that connects to Benniganahalli Lake, resulting in blockage of water flow, he directed officials to immediately undertake desilting and restore smooth water flow. He also instructed that an RCC retaining wall be constructed along the storm

water drain adjacent to the flyover service road.

To prevent illegal dumping of waste under the flyover, he directed BSWML to install CCTV cameras and strengthen monitoring. He also instructed officials to take strict action against those found dumping waste. A Safal Daily Fresh center currently stands on land belonging to the BDA, but is no longer in use. He instructed officials to write to BDA seeking transfer of this land to the City Corporation. He also di-

rected that the adjoining private property be acquired through TDR. The Railway Department must complete the ongoing track-related and other civil works near Benniganahalli Lake within the stipulated timelines. He instructed them to ensure no damage occurs to the lake and to construct the culvert ensuring proper water flow. Other Key Directions Issued During the Inspection were, redesign Vivekananda Park and develop the junction to improve smooth vehicular movement, expedite completion of the Railway Department's underpass works, initiate development works for Benniganahalli Lake and clear encroachments, remove unauthorised structures on the footpath of Kasturinagar 1st Main Road, repurpose the dry waste collection center in Kasturinagar for use as the ward office.

ANGER AGAINST GOVERNMENT

80,000 BPL cards cancelled in city; people struggling

BENGALURU

80 thousand BPL cards are being revised in the city, changing from BPL to APL. Women are crying because the cards have been deleted. They are wandering to the food department every day because they are not getting rice. BPL cards are being revised in Bengaluru based on own house, tax payment, three acres of land as income source. The central govern-

ment has deleted about 80 thousand cards across Bengaluru. For the last three to four months, 80 thousand cards have not been getting rice. Cardholders who were deleted due to not getting rice are visiting the Food Department in Rajajinagar. Hundreds of women holding BPL cards have expressed their frustration that the officials are not listening to them even after explaining that they do not pay taxes, do not have land,



do not have their own house. Residents from many areas including Vijayanagar, Sunk-

adakatte, Laggere, Kamakshi Palya, Agrahara Dasarahalli are coming forward to pro-

vide clarifications along with documents by holding up the cards. Only the officials are behaving irresponsibly. People have demanded that the government immediately intervene and return the deleted cards.

The Food Department is saying that they are shifting from BPL card to APL based on proper evidence, information and documents. However, people have vented their anger against the government.

QUICK READ



Father of journalist Mahantesh Kurabet passes away

BELAGAVI

Demanna Mallappa Kurabet, father of Asianet Suvanna News reporter Mahantesh Kurabet, passed away on Tuesday afternoon at the age of 72. A resident of Ramatirtha Nagar, Belagavi, he originally hailed from Muragoda village in Savadatti taluk. The deceased had a long career in the state intelligence service. Last rites will be performed at Sadashiva Nagar crematorium, Belagavi, at 8 p.m. on Tuesday. He is survived by his wife, two sons, and numerous relatives. Family and friends have expressed their condolences and remembered him for his dedicated public service and contribution to the community.

Pedestrian critically injured in Kundgol accident

KUNDGOL

A pedestrian was critically injured when a speeding bike hit him on the Hubballi-Lakshmeshwara state highway. CCTV footage of the accident shows the moment of collision, sparking public concern. The injured man, identified as Manjunath Dyamanagowda Dharani, is receiving treatment at KIMS Hospital in Hubballi. Police at Kundgol rural station have yet to complete their investigation. Authorities are expected to take necessary action following the incident. Residents have urged drivers to exercise caution on the busy highway to prevent similar accidents in the future.

Koppal staff to attend Co-Operative Management training

KOPPAL

The Koppal District Co-operative Societies office has invited applications for the Diploma in Co-operative Management training. The training, organized by the Karnataka Institute of Cooperative Management, Kalaburgi, will be available to staff from the Co-operative Department, Co-operative Societies, Institutions, and Co-operative Banks. The six-month program, offered both through regular and distance education, will begin in January 2026. Officials said interested candidates can contact the institute at Adarsh Nagar, Sedam Road, Kalaburgi, or call 08472-245340 for details. The program aims to enhance skills and knowledge in co-operative management.

Kittur Karnataka demands ten-thousand crore grant

Farmers demand better compensation for crop losses, more procurement centers, and support after low maize and sugarcane market prices

HUBBALLI

The people of Kittur Karnataka are urging the state government to release a special grant of Rs 10,000 crore during the ongoing Winter Session. This demand comes after heavy rains caused severe damage to crops and homes in the Kittur and Kalyana Karnataka regions. Many farmers and residents have yet to receive full compensation for their losses.

Under the previous government led by B.S. Yediyurappa, Rs 5 lakh was promised to families who lost their homes, but crop losses remain largely uncompensated.

Farmers are pressing for better support, especially for maize and sugarcane crops. While the maize harvest has been good, market prices



have dropped, creating financial distress. Farmers are demanding the government open more procurement centres across the state to stabilize prices.

Irrigation projects remain a critical concern. Plans to raise the Alamatti Dam and build a parallel dam on the Tungabhadra have been discussed

for years, but no progress has been made. Rs 200 crore has been allocated for flood control along the Bennehalla river, yet work has not begun. Farmers are calling on local representatives to press the government to start the second phase of these projects without delay. Development issues in Hubballi-Dharwad

also remain pressing. Roads remain unpaved, flyover construction continues slowly, and water and irrigation systems need improvement.

Residents hope these issues are addressed in the Winter Session, alongside demands for a separate state, which the government has been urged to consider carefully.

Officials and local leaders say that timely allocation of funds and faster project implementation could ease agrarian distress, improve urban infrastructure, and stabilize livelihoods for thousands of people in Kittur Karnataka. With the Winter Session underway, the state government is under growing pressure to act on these long-standing demands.



Protests intensify inside and outside Suvarna Soudha

BELAGAVI

The winter session entered its second day with the government facing strong pressure—not only inside the Assembly but also outside the Suvarna Soudha, where eight different organizations staged protests. As opposition leaders shouted slogans indoors, the voices of protesters echoed outside, creating a tense atmosphere for the government. Teachers' groups were among the first to gather. Members of the Karnataka State Secondary School Teachers' Association, Karnataka State High School Teachers' Association, and High School Hindi Teachers' Association demanded better protection of teachers' rights and improvements in the education system.

Teachers' groups, including Karnataka State Secondary, High School, and Hindi Teachers' Associations, demanded stronger protection of teachers' rights and significant improvements in the state's education system.

culture Act. Farmers from Vijayapura urged the government to speed up pending irrigation projects, emphasizing that agriculture cannot survive without proper water supply. Another farmers' group demanded that the state officially declare December 23 as Farmers' Day. Contract employees joined the protest with strong emotions. Workers who have been serving various government departments through internal and external contracts for nearly 20 years opposed the government's decision to lay off contract staff. They demanded that existing contract workers be made permanent and that the move to remove them be withdrawn immediately.

The State Gram Panchayat Members' Mahasangha protested seeking the release of the fifteenth financial package and early announcement of Gram Panchayat elections. Agriculture Minister Chaluvaraya Swamy visited the protest site, spoke directly with the groups, walked from tent to tent, and assured that their demands would be considered. With eight protests taking place on a single day, the government now faces pressure from all sides. As the winter session continues, the response to these demands remains to be seen.



Minister Hebbalkar promises to fix child protection schemes

BELAGAVI

Women and Child Development Minister Lakshmi Hebbalkar has promised to remove hurdles in implementing the Child Protection Directorate's schemes. The minister held a meeting with officers at Suvarna Vidhana Soudha to discuss problems in running child welfare programs effectively. She listened carefully to the concerns raised and assured that steps would be taken to improve service delivery.

During the meeting, CITU President Varalakshmi pointed out gaps in the way some child protection and department schemes were being executed. In response, Minister Hebbalkar directed officials to immediately address these shortcomings to ensure programs reach the intended beneficiaries without delays or obstacles. The minister also announced that a separate session would soon be held with Finance Department officials to resolve funding issues that affect the smooth operation of these schemes. "We are committed to ensuring every child and woman receives the support they deserve," she said.

Several key officials and dignitaries attended the meeting, including Sangamesh Babaleswar, President of Bal Vikas Academy; Dr. Shamla Iqbal, Principal Secretary of the Women and Child Development Department; Dr. Sneha, Director of the Children's Directorate; Mahesh Babu, Director of the Women and Child Development Department.

Hattiholi called Yathindra Siddaramaiah's remarks unnecessary, noting senior leaders remain committed to respecting the high command's final decision

DKS favored for CM post: MLC

BELAGAVI

In Belagavi, MLC Chennaraj Hattiholi expressed strong support for D.K. Shivakumar to become Karnataka's next Chief Minister. Speaking to the media, Hattiholi said, "It is the wish of the people of Karnataka that Shivakumar should become the chief minister, and I believe he will get a chance in the coming days."

Hattiholi emphasized that both Shivakumar and senior party leader Siddaramaiah remain committed to the high command's decision regarding the chief ministerial post. "We will abide by any decision taken by the high command," he said, stressing the importance of following party guidelines.

Highlighting Shivakumar's loyalty and dedication, Hattiholi said the party president is ready to take up any responsibility entrusted to him. "Shivakumar has stated that he is prepared to serve as CM anywhere, but it is the people's wish across the state that he leads," Hattiholi added.



Responding to recent remarks by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's son and MLA Yathindra Siddaramaiah, Hattiholi described them as unnecessary. He explained that such statements were unwarranted since both senior leaders have already committed to respecting the high command's final decision. As speculation grows over Karnataka's political leadership, Hattiholi's remarks underline the support within the party for Shivakumar, while reaffirming loyalty to the party's top decision-making body. The coming days are expected to bring clarity on who will assume the state's top post.

Navalgund celebrates Constitution Awareness And Human Rights

NAVALGUND

Navalgund witnessed Constitution Awareness and Human Rights Day celebrations at the Government First Grade College, where chief guest Isabella Xavier emphasized the importance of adopting the values of the Constitution in daily life. Xavier said that following these principles would benefit all communities and strengthen society. He praised Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, highlighting his lifelong struggle for the rights of the oppressed and his role in framing India's Constitution. "Ambedkar's life is an inspiration to all of us," Xavier added, urging students and citizens to uphold justice, equality, and freedom in their lives. The program was presided over by Principal Dr. M.B. Bagadi, who encouraged participants to study and understand the Constitution

deeply. He remarked that those who respect its values can become responsible citizens and contribute meaningfully to the nation. Bagadi also called Dr. Ambedkar's dedication to social justice a role model for everyone.

Several students and dignitaries attended the event, including Naveen Marigowdar, Savitha Chikkannavar, Nagarathna Kuradikar, and Santosh Hubballi. The gathering featured speeches and discussions emphasizing human rights, equality, and the responsibilities of citizens in upholding democratic values. The celebration aimed to create awareness about the Constitution, inspire youth to respect its principles, and encourage the protection of human rights across the community, reinforcing the message that everyone has a role in building a just and fair society.



Gadag Deputy Commissioner reviews Patrika Bhavan infrastructure plans

GADAG

Deputy Commissioner C.N. Sridhar visited Patrika Bhavan near Mulgund Naka on Tuesday and assured journalists that minor infrastructure gaps would be addressed in collaboration with the Municipal Corporation and other departments. Responding to demands from the District Working Journalists Association, Sridhar praised Patrika Bhavan as a model facility compared to other districts. He instructed officials from the Municipal Corporation and Nirmithi Kendra to provide infrastructure improvements according to the

journalists' requirements. Senior journalist Jagadish Kulkarni said the association plans to give Patrika Bhavan a high-tech upgrade. The proposal includes building a hall on the first floor and lodging rooms on the second floor for visiting journalists from taluks and neighboring districts. The association requested funding for several development works, including a borewell, a UPS, a covered outdoor area, an office room for association leaders, and a renovated entrance gate. Kanip District President Raju Hebbali emphasized the urgency of these improvements for the

Press House. During the visit, Deputy Commissioner Sridhar was felicitated with a portrait of the District Administration Building. State executive member Arunkumar Hiremath, treasurer Ramanna Vaggi, district executive members Manju Patara, Santosh Konnur, and photographer Vinayak Choudapur were also present, along with other journalists and office bearers.

The visit highlights a focused effort to modernize Patrika Bhavan, ensuring it meets the professional and accommodation needs of journalists while setting a benchmark for similar facilities across the district.

Leaders Back Dharwad Job Seekers' Protest

DHARWAD

Several organizations and leaders have expressed their support for the upcoming protest in Dharwad demanding the filling of vacant posts in central and state government departments. Janadolan Mahagathbandhan, Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sena, Gulbarga University B.Ed Students Struggle Committee, and the All India Democratic Youth Organisation will join the dharna on December 10 (today), said Janadolan Mahagathbandhan state convener Ugra Narasimha Gowda at a press conference on Tuesday.



Gowda accused the government of trying to suppress the students' agitation, which seeks the fulfillment of their constitutional rights and legitimate demands. He claimed that authorities are using police actions to restrict the protesters' rights. Farmer leader Shankar Ambali also criticized the government's approach, saying that the strategy aims to intimidate the participants. "We are ready to support the students. It is not right for the police to behave

like the British," Ambali said. Several other farmer leaders, including Sharanappa Udbal and Jagannath SH, joined the press meet to show their solidarity with the students. They emphasized that peaceful protests are a democratic right and pledged to support the movement until the demands are addressed.

The protest is expected to draw participants from different districts as groups push for speedy recruitment in government positions. Organizers hope the demonstration will urge authorities to respect the students' rights and act on their longstanding demands.

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for all purposes.
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dated: 09/12/2025 before
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QUICK READ



Koppal Hosts Walk-In Job Drive

KOPPAL

A walk-in interview will be held on December 12 from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the District Employment Exchange Center in the District Administration Building. Applicants with SSLC, PUC, ITI, or other degrees, including B.E in Electrical, Mechanical, and E&C, and M.Sc in Mathematics, can attend. Men and women aged 18 to 32 must bring three copies of their certificates, Aadhaar, a résumé, and two photos. Officials said the event aims to support unemployed youth. For details, candidates may contact the District Employment Exchange Center. The team will guide them through job opportunities available in Koppal.

B.Ed Admission 2025: Second seat allotment open

GADAG

Candidates seeking admission to the 2025 B.Ed. program can now participate in the second and final seat allocation. Those who missed the first allotment or opted for the next round can select colleges based on the updated seat matrix published online. The option entry period runs from December 8 to 10. Earlier, candidates attended District Nodal Centers from November 25 to December 5 to collect admission letters for their first allotment. Officials advised students to complete their entries promptly. For guidance, candidates may contact B.F. Aravatagi, Nodal Officer at DIET Gadag, at 9482176932.

NSS inspires students to build future India

GAMANAGATTI

The annual special camp of the National Service Scheme (NSS) is underway at Government Model Primary School on December 25-26. Speaking at the event, PSI Mallikarjun Hosur encouraged students to embrace service, develop communication and writing skills, and prepare for competitive exams. He highlighted programs like Digital India and Skill India as opportunities to contribute to nation-building. Principal Dr. Rajashekarappa urged students to shape their futures and actively participate in society. NSS Programme Officer Dr. Tejaswini Aralikatti, professors, volunteers, and local villagers also attended, supporting the mission to inspire youth toward a responsible and skilled India.

MP Prabha Mallikarjun seeks details on unused CSR funds

Dr. Mallikarjun sought detailed year-wise data on unspent CSR funds, expenditures, transfers, supported schemes, state distributions, and reports

DAVANAGERE

MP Dr. Prabha Mallikarjun has sought detailed information from the Ministry of Corporate Affairs about unutilised Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds in the country. The Ministry has responded to his queries, clarifying how unspent CSR money is managed and distributed.

Dr. Mallikarjun asked about the steps taken by the government to ensure fair use of CSR funds, including unspent amounts from 2022, 2023, and 2024. He requested year-wise details of unutilised funds, how

much was transferred to the Unspent CSR Account, total CSR expenditure since 2020, government schemes supported through CSR contributions, and the state-wise distribution of funds.

In response, the Ministry said that under the Companies Act, 2013, unspent CSR amounts from ongoing projects must be transferred to the Unspent CSR Account within 30

days. These funds should be used within three years. If they remain unspent after three years, the money must be moved to the Schedule VII Fund within 30 days. For

Madhu G. Madegowda reported black-headed worm infestations across multiple Karnataka districts, warned of declining coconut yields, and urged immediate government action before the survey's completion.

non-ongoing projects, the CSR amount must be transferred to the Schedule VII Fund within six months.

The Ministry added that planning, implementing, and evaluating CSR projects is the responsibility of the CSR Committee. "The government does not direct CSR spending

for any constituency or region," the Ministry noted.

Dr. Mallikarjun was also informed that all CSR-related information submitted to MCA21 is publicly accessible at www.csr.gov.in, allowing citizens to track projects and fund usage.

The MP's request highlights growing concerns about accountability and transparency in the use of CSR funds, ensuring that money meant for social development benefits communities across the country. Officials said the government encourages responsible CSR practices but leaves the details of execution and distribution to corporate committees.

Survey on black-headed worm to resume

BELAGAVI

Mines, Earth Sciences, and Horticulture Minister S. S. Mallikarjuna has announced that the survey of black-headed worms affecting coconut crops will resume from January and efforts will be made to complete it quickly. The survey aims to assess damage and find solutions to protect farmers' yields.

Legislative Council member Madhu G. Madegowda pointed out that black-headed worms have been reported in districts including Mysore, Tumkur, Hassan, Mandya, Bangalore South, Chikmagalur, Chitradurga, Chamara-janagar, and Davangere. He expressed concern over falling coconut production and requested urgent measures even before the survey concludes.

Minister Mallikarjuna ex-

plained that the scientific survey, originally planned for completion by July 2025, was delayed due to heavy rains and other challenges. Conducting the survey requires funding, and an estimated Rs. 1.94 crore has been proposed to the Finance Department for approval.

The minister added that damage caused by black-headed worms and whiteflies is likely to increase from January to May due to higher temperatures. Surveyors have been assigned across affected areas, and each taluk will receive an honorarium of Rs. 10. It is estimated that black-headed worms have affected 62,044 hectares, while whiteflies have damaged 3,24,259 hectares.

Mallikarjuna also noted that following the Chief Minister's suggestion and local representatives' requests.



Koppal officials urge clean fuel, clean air

KOPPAL

Koppal Regional Transport Officer Prabhuswamy Hiremath has urged people to keep their vehicles in good condition and use clean, unadulterated fuel to help reduce air pollution. He spoke at the closing ceremony of the Air Pollution Control Awareness Month held at the Regional Transport Office.

Hiremath said that the smoke released from vehicles is a major cause of air pollution. Harmful gases like carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, hydrocarbons, nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide and tiny dust particles can seriously affect human health. He added that vehicles emitting heavy smoke should not be used and people should choose environment-friendly options whenever possible.

He explained that regular vehicle maintenance is important to control emissions. Vehicles should be checked every six months, and parts like air filters and spark plugs must be kept clean. He also warned against using adulterated fuel or low-quality engine oil, as



they can damage engines and increase pollution.

Throughout November, the Regional Transport Department organized several programs across Koppal to spread awareness about air pollution. Students took part in essay and painting contests to learn more about protecting the environment.

Amar from the Air Pollution Control Board spoke about different kinds of pollution, their harmful effects, and ways to reduce them. Umesh Itagi from the School Education and Literacy Department also shared methods to prevent air pollution.

Children from Shantiniketan Public School who won the competitions were honored at the event. Senior officials, staff members and the public were present during the program.

Belagavi marchers will wear black and carry Chennamma's flag, vowing yearly protests until their community gains 2A reservation

Lingayats plan protest on reservation delay

HAVERI

The Panchamasali Lingayat community has announced that December 10 (today) will be observed as the "Day of Atrocities Against Lingayats." Basavajaya Mrityunjaya Sri of Kudalasangama Panchamasali Peeth said the day marks government inaction and alleged mistreatment of their community.

A silent march is planned in Belagavi, starting at 10 am from Gandhi Bhavan. Participants will tie black cloth on their left arm and mouth while carrying Chennamma's flag. "Just like the farmers of Nargund celebrate the Nargund Rebellion, we will remember this day every year until our community receives 2A reservation," said Mrityunjaya Sri.

He highlighted the ongoing struggle of Panchamasalis, Gowda Lingayats, Malegoudas, and Dhiksha Lingayats across Karnataka. For the past five years, they have demanded education and employment rights as per the constitution. "Our fight is fair and not



against any party or leader," he added.

The community has a history of protests, including hunger strikes and massive rallies in Bengaluru. "When the Suvarna Soudha opened, we were the first to raise our demands. Ministers met us and a subcommittee was formed, but promises remain unfulfilled," Mrityunjaya Sri said.

He alleged that the latest government ignored their requests, forcing Panchamasalis to protest outside Suvarna Soudha on December 10, 2024. During the protest, police allegedly carried out violent actions without warning, leaving many injured. "Thou-

sands lost limbs, hundreds are fighting for life. This is the first such atrocity after independence," he said.

Prasannanandpuri of Rajanahalli Valmiki Peetha also expressed the community's desire to see Dalit leadership in the state, emphasizing representation for 151 backward communities. He mentioned hopes for political opportunities for leaders like Satish Jarkiholi and stressed that action against ongoing injustices must be taken soon.

The Panchamasali community vows to continue observing the day annually, demanding justice and reservation until their constitutional rights are fully realized.

Koppal marks World Human Rights Day today

KOPPAL

Koppal will host a special program to celebrate World Human Rights Day on Wednesday, December 10, at 9:30 am at Sahitya Bhavan in Koppal city. The event is organized jointly by the District Administration, Zilla Panchayat, and District Legal Services Authority, Koppal.

The program will be inaugurated by the Principal District and Sessions Judge and Chairman of the District Legal Services Authority, Chandra Shekhar C., along with Deputy Commissioner Dr. Suresh B. Itnal. The ceremony will also feature several distinguished guests from the district. Chief Guests will include Zilla Panchayat Chief Executive Officer Varnit Negi, District Superintendent of Police Dr. Ram L. Arasiddi, Additional District and Sessions Judge and POC SO Court Judge Kumar D.K., Senior Civil Judge and Member Secretary of the District Legal Services Authority Mahantesh Dargada, and Senior Civil Judge and Koppal CJM Malakari Ramappa Wodeyar.

Koppal Cultural competitions set for December

KOPPAL

Koppal District Administration, Zilla Panchayat, and the Kannada and Culture Department will host cultural competitions at Sahitya Bhavan on December 11 and 12 at 10:30 am. The events are part of the Kala Pratibhotsava program for 2025-26, aimed at promoting local art, culture, and talent.

Minister for Welfare of Backward Classes and Kannada and Culture Department, Thangadgi Shivaraj Sangappa, who is also the Minister in-charge of Koppal District, will inaugurate the program. The function will be presided over by Koppal MLA K. Raghavendra Hitnal, with Chief Whip of the Opposition Doddanagouda Hanumagouda Patil and Yelaburga MLA Basavaraja Rayareddy in attendance.

Chief guests for the event include Koppal MP K. Rajashekar Basavaraj Hitnal, Gangavathi MLA G. Janardhana Reddy, Legislative Council members Shashil G. Namoshi, Dr. Chandrashekar B. Patil, Sharanagouda Anadanagouda Patil Bayyapura, and Hemalatha Nayaka. Other dignitaries include Tungabhadra Project Chairman Hasanasa Nabisaba Dotihal, Koppal City Council Chairman Ammad Patel S.M. Patel, Urban Development Authority Chairman Srinivas Gupta, and District Level Guarantee Schemes Authority Chairman Reddy Srinivas.

Special invitees include Krishnabhagya Jal Nigam Managing Director K.P. Mohan Raj, Deputy Commissioner Dr. Suresh B. Itnal, Zilla Panchayat CEO Varnit Negi and others.

Kundgol Taluk Panchayat meetings lose focus

KUNDGOL

The Taluk Panchayat in Kundgol recently held both its general body meeting and the KDP meeting on the same platform, but the sessions failed to focus on development work, officials said. The meetings were conducted under the leadership of Administrator Shivaputrappa H and Taluk Panchayat Executive Officer Jagadish Kammar, with officials from 19 departments present.

The general body meeting started as planned, but before departmental reports could be reviewed, a banner announcing the KDP meeting was displayed, diverting attention. The sessions quickly became gen-



eral discussions, with little progress reported on the development work expected from the departments.

Notably, KRIDL officials missed the general body meeting but were present at the KDP meeting. The KDP meeting, which is supposed to be held once every three months, also lost significance as KDP MLA MR Patil was absent due to the winter session. Administrators were reportedly recovering from illness, which may have affected proceedings.

Gadag gears up for Kala Pratibotsava-2025

GADAG

Gadag is set to celebrate its annual cultural showcase, Kala Pratibotsava-2025, on December 10 and 11 at the District Kannada Sahitya Bhavan, Pasira Layout, opposite the District Administration Building. The program, beginning at 10 a.m. each day, is organized in collaboration with the District Administration, Zilla Panchayat, and the Kannada and Culture Department.

The event will be inaugurated by Dr. H.K. Patil, Karnataka's Law, Justice, Human Rights, Parliamentary Affairs, Legislation, and Tourism Minister, who also serves as Gadag District In-charge. Attending the event will be prominent state leaders, including Karnataka Legislative Council Speaker Basavaraj Horatti, Kannada and Culture Minister Shivaraj S. Thangadagi, and former Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai, who will serve as chief guest.

Other dignitaries expected include Legislative Council members, local MLAs, and officials from Karnataka Mineral Development Corporation, Urban Development Authority, and district-level gov-

The event will be inaugurated by Dr. H.K. Patil, Karnataka's Law, Justice, Human Rights, Parliamentary Affairs, Legislation, and Tourism Minister, who also serves as Gadag District In-charge.

ernance bodies. Special invitees include senior secretaries and directors from the Kannada and Culture Department, the Planning and Statistical Department, law enforcement officials, and representatives from Karnataka's Janapada and Banjara Academies.

Assistant Director of the Kannada and Culture Department, Dr. Basavaraj V.H. Bellary, welcomed participants and attendees, highlighting the event as a platform to showcase local talent and preserve Karnataka's rich cultural heritage. The festival promises a mix of performances, competitions, and exhibitions celebrating music, dance, literature, and traditional arts.

Residents and visitors are encouraged to attend and witness the vibrant display of Karnataka's artistic talent over the two-day celebration.



COMMUNITY CELEBRATES GROWTH

Donor renovates Jainapur Gram Panchayat building

CHIKKODI

Jainapur village in Chikkodi taluk has a new Gram Panchayat building, built at a cost of Rs 60 lakh thanks to the generosity of Praveen Dodda, owner of Wind Power. The inauguration ceremony highlighted the donor's contribution to the village's development and drew praise from local leaders and residents.

Panchamashivalingeswara Swamiji of Nidasosi expressed happiness at the new building and encouraged the Gram Panchayat members to



focus on the development of schools and the overall progress of Jainapur. He urged making the village a model

example for others.

Sampana Swamiji of Charamurthy Mutt lauded Praveen Dodda, noting that

building the Gram Panchayat hall at his own expense reflects his generous nature. Shivaprasad Swamiji also praised the initiative, saying that the village, where residents work diligently like honeybees, deserved such a magnificent facility.

Former Gram Panchayat president Suresh Gharabude shared that earlier there was no proper space for meetings. He and other members approached Praveen Dodda, whose support made the construction possible. On behalf of the village, he thanked

the donor for his contribution.

During the event, Dundappa Kelaginamani, Praveen Dodda, and the Panchayat Development Officer were felicitated. The inauguration was attended by Gram Panchayat president Sujatha Solabannavar, vice-president Avvakka Joge, other Panchayat members, and local dignitaries, including APMC representatives and business leaders. The ceremony celebrated both the completion of the building and the vision for a brighter future for Jainapur.

QUICK READ



Police in J&K's Doda arrest madrasa teacher for raping minor

Jammu

Police in Jammu and Kashmir's Doda district said on Tuesday that they have arrested a madrasa teacher for allegedly raping a minor. A police spokesperson said, A madrasa teacher was arrested for allegedly raping a minor in Jammu and Kashmir's Doda district. The accused, identified as Nasir Majeed of Challer village, was arrested within three hours of receiving the complaint regarding the alleged incident at Madrasa Dar-ul-Quran in the Gandoh area. An FIR has been registered under relevant sections of the BNS and the POCSO Act.

Gujarat's 'Gaam No Nirdhar, Sahkaare Sakar' campaign gathers steam

Ahmedabad

Gujarat's Kheda district is witnessing enthusiastic community participation in its innovative nutrition initiative, Gaam No Nirdhar, Sahkaare Sakar, launched on November 14 to combat child malnutrition through collective action. Spearheaded by District Collector Amit Prakash Yadav and supported by Amul Dairy, the campaign encourages dairy farmers to voluntarily donate small quantities of milk each day for undernourished children enrolled in anganwadis. Awareness meetings have already been held with milk cooperatives in Matar, Nadiad, Vaso, Mahemdavad and Kathlal, where local MLAs and Amul officials have urged villagers to strengthen the drive.

TN govt fast-tracks welfare schemes, appointments

Chennai

With the Assembly election on the horizon, the Tamil Nadu government has put its administrative machinery into overdrive, prioritising the rollout of flagship welfare schemes and the filling of long-pending vacancies across departments. The renewed push covers everything from the re-start of the free laptop distribution scheme for students to the expansion of the Kalaigarn Mahalir Urimai Thogai assistance for women, besides expedited recruitment at the grassroots level. Chief Minister M. K. Stalin is set to formally kick-start the fresh phase of free laptop distribution to college students, officials said.

Decomposed body of elderly man recovered from locked house

KOLKATA

The horror of the Robinson Street incident has returned in Kolkata, with a daughter found sitting in a locked room alongside her father's decomposed body. Her mother was also present, police said. The incident occurred in Kabsa's Bosepukur area, and locals helped the police recover the body from the residence.

The deceased has been identified as 64-year-old Sumit Sen. His body has been sent for autopsy, and it is not yet clear when or how he died. Preliminary investigations suggest that all three family members had long-term mental health issues. Sumit lived with his wife, Archana Sen, and daughter, Sampriti Sen, on the first floor of their Bosepukur home. He had worked in a private organisation, and since retirement, neighbours often looked after the family, as they rarely left the house.

For three days, the family was not seen outside, raising suspicion. Relatives contacted Sampriti, who insisted her parents were fine, but they did not respond over the phone. When neighbours visited, the door was locked from the inside, and no one answered repeated knocks.

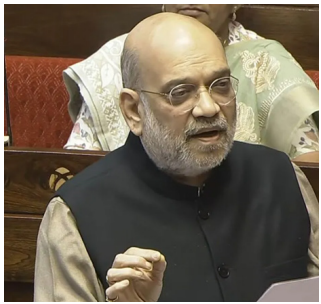
Amit Shah slams opposition linking Vande Mataram to elections

Amit Shah criticised Opposition leaders for politicising the 150-year Vande Mataram commemoration, asserting the national song transcends regional boundaries.

NEW DELHI

Home Affairs Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday launched a sharp attack on the Opposition for connecting the Rajya Sabha discussion commemorating 150 years of 'Vande Mataram' to the upcoming West Bengal Assembly elections, stating firmly that the national song belongs to the entire nation and not to any single state.

Initiating the discussion in the Upper House, Shah said, This great House has come together to reflect on the spirit of Vande Mataram, to honour its glory, and to keep it eternally alive. Through this



discussion, especially for our country's children, adolescents, youth and future generations, they must understand Vande Mataram's contribution to our freedom struggle, the patriotism embodied in its composition, and the spirit of dedication to the nation and

its culture.

He added that such understanding would inspire younger generations to contribute to building a great India.

Responding to criticism from some Opposition members, Shah noted, Some members raised questions in the Lok Sabha yesterday, asking why there is a need for the discussion on Vande Mataram. The need for discussion on Vande Mataram, the need for dedication towards Vande Mataram, was important back then; it is needed now, and it will always be significant for the formation of great India,

which we have envisioned for 2047.

Shah also condemned attempts to link the event to the upcoming West Bengal elections, saying, Some people think that because elections are approaching in Bengal, that is why Vande Mataram is being discussed; they want to diminish the glory of Vande Mataram by linking it to the Bengal elections. He stressed that although composer Bankim Chandra Chatterjee hailed from Bengal and Anandamath, the novel where the song first appeared, originated there, Vande Mataram's reach expanded far beyond the region.

BJP legislators clashed with Treasury benches demanding action against IAS officer Tukaram Munde, prompting a brief Assembly adjournment.

Maharashtra Assembly adjourns amid BJP demands against Munde

NAGPUR

The Maharashtra Legislative Assembly was adjourned for ten minutes on Tuesday after BJP legislators raised serious allegations against senior IAS officer Tukaram Munde, triggering heated exchanges between the Treasury and Opposition benches.

BJP MLA Krishna Khopade, who initiated the discussion, alleged that Munde had issued cheques worth ₹20 crore in 2020 without the required authorisation. He further claimed that two supporters of the officer had threatened him, warning him against speaking out. I have filed a police complaint at Sitabardi police station and informed the police commissioner, as well as the offices of Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and Speaker Rahul Narwekar, Khopade said. He added that Munde had been transferred 24 times in 20 years, calling for a detailed inquiry into the officer's conduct.

Supporting the allegations,



BJP legislator Pravin Datke told the House that Munde had cancelled the leave of a woman employee who had delivered a baby just five days earlier. He also said that several of Munde's decisions had been overturned by the Urban Development Department. There should be a thorough investigation, Datke asserted.

Responding to the charges, Minister Girish Mahajan informed the Assembly that the concerned legislators had already discussed the matter with Chief Minister Fadnavis. The Chief Minister has taken

the issue seriously, and appropriate action will follow, he said.

Despite the minister's assurance, protests from the Treasury benches intensified, prompting Deputy Speaker Anna Bansode to adjourn the proceedings for ten minutes. After the House reconvened, Khopade and Datke reiterated their demand for swift action against the IAS officer. The issue is expected to continue dominating the Assembly's discussions as legislators seek clarity on the allegations and the government's next steps.

Supreme Court notice to ECI on plea seeking SIR instead of 'Special Revision' of electoral rolls

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday issued notice to the Election Commission of India (ECI) on a writ petition challenging the poll panel's decision to conduct only a Special Revision of the electoral rolls in Assam, instead of undertaking a more rigorous Special Intensive Revision (SIR) ahead of the 2026 Assembly elections.

A bench of Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi sought the ECI's response and posted the matter for further hearing next Tuesday.

The petition, filed by senior

advocate and former Gauhati High Court Bar Association President Mrinal Kumar Choudhury, argued that Assam has been singled out for a diluted revision exercise, even though the ECI had earlier informed the apex court that SIR would be conducted pan-India.

Appearing for the petitioner, senior advocate Vijay Hansaria termed the ECI's approach arbitrary and discriminatory.

Assam has been singled out. Nothing is required in Assam. No document required, Hansaria submitted, referring to the fact that under the Special Revision process,



electors are not required to furnish any proof of citizenship, age or residence, unlike in an SIR where electors must submit supporting documents along with their enumeration forms.

The senior counsel relied on the Supreme Court's ob-

servations in multiple judgments, including the Constitution Bench verdict in In Re: Section 6A of the Citizenship Act, which recognised large-scale demographic changes in Assam due to infiltration.

He pressed for an immediate stay on the ongoing revision process in Assam. However, the CJI-led bench remarked that the ECI might have adopted a different approach for Assam because of the special laws applicable in the state, the constitution of foreigners' tribunals, etc.

They might have done it so. Might be, said the apex court, declining to pass interim orders without hearing the ECI.

REVANTH PRAISES SONIA

Revanth Reddy Calls Sonia Gandhi Fountainhead of Telangana's Success on Her 79th Birthday

HYDERABAD

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Tuesday hailed Congress Parliamentary Party (CPP) leader Sonia Gandhi as the fountainhead for the success of Telangana, emphasising that she remains the guiding force behind the state's ambitious long-term vision.

Extending his greetings on the occasion of her 79th birthday, Reddy said Sonia Gandhi's most significant contribution was granting separate statehood to Telangana after

decades of public struggle. She is the fountainhead for the success of Telangana and continues to serve as an inspiring and guiding force for achieving all our goals and the ambitious vision – Telangana Rising 2047, he said. The Chief Minister added that he prayed for her continued guidance so the government may serve the people of Telangana better every day, in every way.

Deputy Chief Minister Malu Bhatti Vikramarka also conveyed his wishes, stating that Sonia Gandhi breathed



life into the dreams of four and a half crore Telangana people. He said the political resolve and inspiration she

Special Roll Observers Tasked with Detecting Deliberate Errors in WB Voter List Revision

KOLKATA

The five additional special roll observers appointed for the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in West Bengal will focus primarily on identifying deliberate data entry errors during the second stage of the revision, which begins after the publication of the draft voters' list on December 16.

According to officials in the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) office, West Bengal, the observers have been tasked not only with detecting specific intentional errors but also with identifying individuals within the system responsible for such lapses. They will subsequently recommend disciplinary action against those found culpable.

Sources said that the second phase of the SIR will also include a performance evaluation of Booth-Level Officers (BLOs), Electoral Registration Officers (EROs), and Assistant Electoral Registration Officers (AEROs), based on their effectiveness during the first stage of the revision.

The second stage will involve filing of claims and objections, along with a notice phase that includes issuance, hearing, verification, and decisions on enumeration forms. These activities will be conducted concurrently by EROs. Once this phase concludes, the third and final stage—publication of the final elec-



Five special observers will oversee West Bengal's voter list revision, targeting deliberate data errors before crucial Assembly elections.

toral roll—will take place on February 14. The Election Commission of India (ECI) is expected to announce the dates for the high-stakes West Bengal Assembly elections shortly thereafter.

Meanwhile, officials reported a major improvement in voter roll accuracy. As of Monday afternoon, the number of polling booths identified as having no deceased voters, no duplicate entries, and no shifted voters dropped dramatically to just two, compared to the alarming 2,208 booths reported on the evening of December 1. The sharp correction reflects intensified scrutiny and corrective measures initiated during the revision process. Separately, the ECI has decided to withdraw its proposal to set up polling booths inside large housing complexes with multiple high-rise towers.

Delhi Crime Branch busts factory producing counterfeit oil filters of top auto brands



NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police Crime Branch has busted a factory allegedly involved in manufacturing counterfeit oil filters of well-known automotive brands, including Bosch, Tata and JCB, the Delhi Police said on Tuesday. The operation, led by the ARSC unit of the Crime Branch, resulted in the recovery of 1,917 duplicate oil filters along with dyes, printing equipment and branded packaging material.

According to Delhi Police, the raid was conducted on December 4 in the Anand Parbat Industrial Area after a specific tip-off was received by SI Imran Khan about the ongoing manufacture of duplicate auto parts. A team comprising SIs Imran Khan, Devi Dayal and Gurmeet, along with other staff, and led by Inspectors Mangesh Tyagi and Robin Tyagi, carried out the operation under the supervision of ACP Sanjay Kumar Nagpal.

Police said factory owner Manmeet Singh, a resident of Delhi, was apprehended from the spot. The raid was conducted in the presence of authorised representatives of Tata Motors, Bosch Ltd and JCB India.

A total 1917 duplicate Oil Filters of Bosch, Tata & JCB Brand and 05 Dyes of Tata brand, 04 Dyes of JCB brand, 01 Dye Printing Machine, JCB stickers, holograms and card boxes were seized from the factory, the police said in its press note.

In this regard, a case under Sections u/s 63/65 Copyright Act & 103/104 Trademark Act, P.S.Crime Branch, Delhi, was registered, and investigation was taken up accordingly. Sections 318(4)/336 (3) of BNS pertaining to cheating and forgery were also added in the case, it said.

Police said the investigation now focusses on identifying the supply chain and other individuals who may be involved in the illegal manufacturing activity.

QUICK READ

Failed military coup rocks Benin, leader flees

COTONOU

A short-lived military coup shook Benin early Monday, leaving casualties before government forces regained control. Around 5 a.m., soldiers calling themselves the Committee for Refoundation seized the national TV station, claiming to remove President Patrice Talon. The uprising, led by Lt. Col. Pascal Tigri, was quickly crushed with help from Nigerian and Ivorian forces. Several arrests were made, hostages released, and armored vehicles disabled. Calm returned to Cotonou by Monday afternoon.

India, Canada restart intelligence sharing and cooperation

OTTAWA

India and Canada have resumed intelligence sharing and security cooperation after tensions over past allegations involving Indian agents. Indian National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and his Canadian counterpart Nathalie Drouin have established direct communication channels to rebuild trust. The two countries are enhancing law enforcement dialogue, with agencies like India's NIA and Canada's RCMP holding ongoing virtual discussions on gangs, terrorism, and weapons movement. Officials said the focus is on safer streets in Canada and stronger collaboration.

Over 1,500 Afghans forcibly returned from neighbors

KABUL

Over 1,500 Afghan refugees were forcibly sent back from Pakistan and Iran, officials said on Tuesday. The High Commission for Addressing Migrants' Issues reported that 320 families, totaling 1,579 people, returned through border points in Helmand, Nimroz, Kandahar, Nangarhar, and Herat. Of these, 521 families were escorted to their home areas, while 306 received humanitarian aid, and 397 SIM cards were distributed. UNHCR data shows Pakistan arrested over 100,000 Afghans this year, a record rise. Humanitarian groups urged that returns be voluntary, warning of housing and employment challenges for families at the border.

Deadly Jakarta fire claims twenty lives, authorities say

Continued from page 1

At least 20 people were killed Tuesday afternoon in a fire that engulfed a seven-storey office building in central Jakarta, police reported. The blaze began when a battery on the first floor exploded, rapidly spreading flames and smoke to upper levels.

Central Jakarta police chief Susatyo Purnomo Condro told reporters that of the victims, five were men and 15 were women, including a pregnant woman. Most of the deceased appeared to have died from asphyxiation rather than burns. Their bodies were taken to a police hospital for autopsy.

Firefighters are still searching the building for any addi-



Firefighters continue searching for trapped victims, focusing on cooling the building amid intense heat, thick smoke, and recovery efforts

tional victims who may be trapped.

Condro said crews were focused on cooling the structure, as intense heat and thick smoke persisted across several floors. Authorities are also working to

identify the victims recovered so far.

Deadly fires are unfortunately not uncommon in Indonesia. In 2023, an explosion at a nickel-processing plant in eastern Indonesia killed 12 people and injured 39 others. Fire safety challenges, combined with rapid urban

growth, have made high-rise fires a recurring risk in the capital.

Officials have urged the public to remain cautious and have vowed a thorough investigation into the cause and circumstances of the fire. Emergency responders continue to assess the building

for structural safety before resuming full operations.

The Jakarta community has expressed grief over the tragic incident, with authorities promising to support the victims' families and prevent similar accidents in the future.



Cambodia-Thailand border clashes leave six dead

PHNOM PENH

The civilian death toll in the ongoing Cambodia-Thailand border conflict has risen to six, after two more Cambodian civilians were killed early Tuesday, the Cambodian Defence Ministry confirmed. The ministry said Thai forces continued to fire on Cambodian positions and civilians along national roads, causing the latest casualties.

Since early Tuesday, Thai troops have targeted Cambodia's Preah Vihear, Oddar Meanchey, and Pursat provinces. The renewed violence comes less than two months after the two countries signed a joint peace declaration. Both sides have blamed each other for starting the clashes, which include artillery fire, air strikes, and small arms fire, forcing local residents to evacuate affected areas.

On Monday, the Thai Army reported deploying fighter jets after attacks from Cambodian forces left two Thai soldiers dead and four wounded. Meanwhile, Cambodia said its forces did not return fire and were attacked repeatedly, including at Tamoan Thom temple, 5 Makara, and Chomka Chek areas in Preah Vihear province. Cambodian officials said Thai troops had carried out provocative actions over several days, including an in-

Thai Air Force launched operations to reduce Cambodia's military capacity and protect civilians, while Cambodia monitors the situation, respecting agreements and pursuing peaceful resolutions under international law.

cident in Prorlean Thmar on Sunday.

Thai Air Force spokesperson Jackkrit Thammavichai stated that air operations were launched to reduce Cambodia's military capacity and protect civilians. Cambodian Defence Ministry spokesperson Lt. Gen. Maly Socheata said her country continues to monitor the situation carefully and respects previous agreements while seeking peaceful resolutions under international law.

Cambodia has informed the ASEAN Observer Team about the incidents and plans to request an investigation. Both nations remain on high alert as the conflict continues to escalate along the contested border, raising fears of further casualties.

The tense standoff underscores ongoing border disputes in the region and the challenge of maintaining peace despite recent diplomatic efforts.

Hemachandra highlighted India's support for Sri Lanka, providing emergency supplies, technical aid, rescue teams, and relief for flood-hit communities

India's aid strengthens SL recovery

COLOMBO

Sri Lanka has expressed heartfelt thanks to India for sending swift and much-needed help as the country continues to cope with the destruction left by Cyclone Ditwah. The Indian Naval Ship Gharial reached Trincomalee carrying 700 tonnes of food, clothes, and other essential supplies from Tamil Nadu. Deputy Foreign Minister Arun Hemachandra received the cargo and praised India's timely support under Operation Sagar Bandhu.

Hemachandra said India's government, military, and people have stood firmly with Sri Lanka throughout this difficult period. He noted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's guidance had ensured not only emergency supplies but also technical help, rescue teams, and disaster experts. India's High Commission in Colombo added that the shipment would bring direct relief to communities facing severe shortages after days of flooding and landslides.

Operation Sagar Bandhu



began on November 28, soon after the cyclone hit. Cyclone Ditwah has caused widespread damage across the island, triggering massive floods, landslides, and heavy loss of life. According to the Disaster Management Centre, 627 people have died and 190 remain missing. More than 21 lakh people have been affected, while over 7 lakh families are still struggling to rebuild their lives after losing homes, farms, and belongings.

Many religious sites have also been damaged. Officials reported that more than 760 Buddhist temples, Hindu Kovils, churches, and mosques have been either partly or completely destroyed.

India's support continues on several fronts. The Indian Army's Engineering Task Force is repairing key roads and building a Bailey bridge in Kilinochchi, using parts flown in by the Indian Air Force. India has also set up a field hospital near Kandy, offering surgeries, trauma care, and urgent medical treatment to affected families.

United Nation urges protection of civilians amid Congo conflict

KINSHASA

The United Nations has called on all parties in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to respect international humanitarian law and protect civilians amid escalating violence in the country's eastern regions. Bruno Lemarquis, the UN humanitarian coordinator in the DRC, warned that the use of explosive weapons in populated areas and attacks on schools and other civilian infrastructure must stop immediately.

President Felix Tshisekedi said Monday that rebels from the March 23 Movement (M23) launched an offensive against the Armed Forces of the DRC in South Kivu Province. Recent clashes have occurred in territories including Uvira, Walungu, Mwenga, Shabunda, Kabare, Fizi, and Kalehe, involving heavy weaponry and shelling in densely populated areas.



The escalating violence has claimed at least 74 lives and displaced over 200,000 people since December 2, according to UN statistics. South Kivu already hosted 1.2 million internally displaced persons before the latest fighting. Security conditions in eastern DRC have worsened sharply since January, with the M23 intensifying attacks in North and South Kivu, causing many civilian casualties and widespread displacement.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported that

food security in the region is rapidly deteriorating. Road blockages have sharply increased the prices of basic staples, with sugar costs rising sixfold and cassava flour more than tripling since January. Burundi's National Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons urged immediate support in food, health, water, sanitation, and hygiene.

OCHA emphasized the need for all parties to uphold their obligations under international law and allow safe humanitarian access to deliver lifesaving aid.

Strong quake shakes Japan; fears of bigger tremor



TOKYO

At least 30 people were injured after a strong 7.5-magnitude earthquake struck off the eastern coast of Japan late Monday night, sending tsunami waves up to 70 centimetres high along parts of the Pacific coast. Officials said the quake hit at 11:15 p.m. near Aomori Prefecture at a depth of 54 kilometres, shaking large areas and prompting urgent warnings. Japan's Meteorological Agency cautioned that another quake of equal or stronger magnitude could hit the same region in the coming days. The agency noted that the quake occurred along the trench near Hokkaido and north-eastern Japan, an area

known for powerful seismic activity as the Pacific Plate moves under the main island of Honshu. The initial estimate of 7.6 magnitude was later revised to 7.5, and authorities briefly warned of possible tsunami waves up to 3 metres. Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi urged residents to stay alert and closely follow updates from local officials throughout the week. She advised people to secure furniture and prepare for the possibility of more strong shaking. The highest tsunami wave recorded was 70 centimetres in Iwate Prefecture, and the warning was reduced to an advisory about three and a half hours later before being fully lifted at 6:20 a.m. Tuesday.

SU DO KU

Brain-Bender: Can You Solve It?

3		8		1	2		6	
	5		8		7		1	3
	7	4		3	6	2		8
6		9		8		1		2
	1		3		4	8		
4		2	1		9		7	
9		1	4		3	6		7
7				9		5		
8	6		2		1		3	9

8	7	9	3	6	2	5	1	4
6	3	1	5	8	4	2	7	9
5	2	4	9	1	7	6	8	3
1	8	7	2	3	6	9	4	5
9	5	6	4	7	8	3	2	1
2	4	3	1	5	9	7	6	8
4	1	5	6	2	3	8	9	7
3	6	8	7	9	1	4	5	2
7	9	2	8	4	5	1	3	6

Solutions to Yesterday's puzzle

Fill a 9x9 grid with numbers so that each row, column and 3x3 section contain all of the digits between 1 and 9.

TRAUMA MEETS RELIEF

Freed Nigerian students return amid ongoing captivity

MINNA

A group of 100 schoolchildren abducted last month from St. Mary's Catholic School in Papiri, Niger State, were released over the weekend and welcomed at a government ceremony on late Monday. Many of the children appeared relieved but visibly shaken after weeks in captivity.

At least 303 students, along with 12 teachers, were seized when gunmen attacked the school on November 21. Fifty children escaped shortly after the abduction, but at least 150

students and the teachers remain in captivity. Details surrounding the release of the 100 children have not been made public, and authorities did not confirm whether any ransom was paid.

The freed children arrived in buses escorted by military trucks and were received at the Niger Government House in Minna by officials, who hugged and posed for photos with them. Most of the students, aged between 10 and 17, wore casual clothing, including soccer jerseys and slippers, and were reportedly



held in Abuja prior to their release. Niger State Governor Mohammed Bago said health experts would examine the children before reuniting them with their families. "We hope

to recover the remaining students who are still in captivity," he said, urging continued prayers for their safe return.

President Bola Tinubu praised security agencies for

their work, promising that all abducted students and other kidnapped Nigerians would be rescued. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack, but local armed gangs targeting schools and travelers for ransom are suspected.

The incident follows a spate of mass abductions across northern Nigeria, including recent attacks in Kebbi and Kwara states. Parents and authorities continue to hope for the safe return of all missing children as the country grapples with its ongoing security crisis.

QUICK READ

Reinvigorating India's ghost shopping centres can unlock Rs 357 crore

New Delhi
Nearly one-fifth of India's operational shopping centres fall into the category of 'ghost malls' and reinvigorating just 15 such centres with 4.8 million square feet space can unlock Rs 357 crore in annual rentals, a report said on Tuesday. These 'ghost malls' are assets marked by high vacancies, weak tenant curation, ageing infrastructure and declining relevance. Across 365 shopping centres, 74 have been classified as ghost assets, representing 15.5 mn sq ft of dormant retail potential. Within this pool, 15 centres with a combined area of 4.8 mn sq ft have been identified as high-potential assets that could deliver as much as Rs 357 crore.

Production of heavy engineering equipment cross Rs 5.69 lakh crore

Mumbai
The production of heavy engineering equipment and various sub sectors of the capital goods sector increased from Rs 2,66,672 crore in 2020-21 to Rs 5,69,900 crore in 2024-25, the Parliament was informed on Tuesday. Heavy electrical equipment saw a total production worth Rs 3,64,706 crore in 2024-25, up from Rs 167,706 crore in 2020-21, Minister of State for Heavy Industries Bhupathiraju Srinivasa Varma, informed the Lok Sabha. While earthmoving and mining machinery saw production worth Rs 80,750 crore in 2024-25 -- up from Rs 29,021 crore in 202-21, printing machinery saw production of Rs 29,716 crore in 2024-25, compared to Rs 10,058 crore in 2020-21, he noted.

Adani Group to invest over \$75 bn in energy transition space

Dhanbad
Adani Group will invest over \$75 billion in energy transition space over the next five years, said its Chairman Gautam Adani on Tuesday. At the 100th anniversary of the Indian Institute of Technology (Indian School of Mines) Dhanbad, the businessman noted that Adani Group has invested to become one of the world's fastest-growing renewable energy companies. Gautam Adani shared that the global green energy transition is emerging as the largest industry of our time, worth several trillion dollars over the coming decades. It will fuel the rise of electricity-based manufacturing, green steel, green fertilisers, hydrogen ecosystems, and the critical infrastructure.

India recommends AI firms pay creators royalties set by govt panel

MUMBAI
The Centre has proposed a major new framework for AI training that would require all AI companies to obtain a mandatory blanket licence and pay royalties for using copyrighted works created by musicians, authors, news publishers, and other creators. The royalty rates would be set by a government-appointed committee and collected through a single collective body formed by copyright holders. The proposal, outlined in a working paper titled 'One Nation, One License, One Payment: Balancing AI Innovation and Copyright,' rejects voluntary licensing agreements such as the deal between OpenAI and the Associated Press. The paper argues that voluntary deals create high transaction costs, long negotiations, and unequal bargaining power, ultimately disadvantaging small creators and startups while failing to provide broad and reliable access to training data. If adopted, India would become the only country to implement a statutory licensing regime specifically for AI developers. A committee member said the goal is to ensure equitable compensation and prevent large players on either side from dominating royalties. The recommendations also seek to guarantee non-discriminatory access to copyrighted material for AI companies.

RBI guidelines spare 12 bank groups from restructuring, says Crisil Ratings

Revised RBI rules allowing overlapping lending activities within bank groups prevented significant restructuring for major lenders, Crisil Ratings reported Tuesday.

NEW DELHI

The Reserve Bank of India's newly issued guidelines for commercial banks' financial services businesses particularly the provision allowing overlapping lending activities within bank groups have prevented the need for major restructuring by 12 large bank groups, a Crisil Ratings report said on Tuesday. According to the report, the final framework seeks to eliminate regulatory arbitrage by harmonising rules across all entities within a banking group. This alignment is expected to strengthen the financial system structurally while offering institutions greater flexibility in conducting business. Collectively, the 12



bank groups represent about 55 per cent of total sectoral advances. The earlier draft guidelines released in October 2024 had proposed restricting each banking group to a single entity for any specific line of business, prohibiting overlap in lending functions between

a bank and its affiliated entities. Had the draft been implemented without modification, the report notes, several major lenders would have faced significant operational changes. The RBI has, however, retained key elements from the draft, including the extension of upper-layer scale-based

regulations to non-banking financial companies (NBFCs), restrictions on certain categories of loans and advances, and an upper limit of 20 per cent on a bank group's shareholding in an asset reconstruction company (ARC). Crisil Ratings Director Subha Sri Narayanan said that implementing the draft in its original form would have required restructuring across 12 bank groups, with an estimated impact of 2-6 per cent on the consolidated advances of individual banks. However, with the final guidelines permitting bank group entities to maintain overlapping lending businesses, subject to Board approval, there will be no disruption to their operations.

Rural Development Ministry cleared 25 new Tripura road projects to strengthen connectivity and improve access in remote tribal regions.

Centre Approves 25 New Road Projects in Tripura Under PM-JANMAN Scheme

TRIPURA

The Ministry of Rural Development on Tuesday approved 25 new road projects in Tripura under the Road Connectivity component of the PM-JANMAN scheme. The projects span 65.38 kilometres and will be developed at an estimated cost of ₹68.67 crore, marking a significant boost to infrastructure in some of the state's most remote tribal areas. In an official statement, the ministry said, The Ministry of Rural Development has sanctioned 25 road projects mea-



suring 65.38 km length under the Road Connectivity component of PM-JANMAN, with an estimated investment of ₹68.67 crore for Tripura. According to the ministry, the new roads will offer all-weather connectivity to 30 habitations belonging to Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs). The improved road network is ex-

pected to make travel easier and safer year-round, bringing substantial relief to communities that often face isolation during difficult weather conditions. The ministry added that the initiative will enhance connectivity in rural areas, bridging the gap between remote villages and urban centres. By linking isolated habitations to nearby towns, the project aims to strengthen rural mobility and promote more inclusive development. Officials believe that better transport infrastructure will stimulate local economic ac-

tivity, help small-scale trade grow, and generate new employment opportunities for residents of these regions. Improved connectivity is also expected to make essential services more accessible. With upgraded roads, people in tribal and rural areas will find it easier to reach hospitals, schools, and local markets, supporting better health outcomes, improved educational access, and higher income prospects. The government expects the initiative to significantly enhance the quality of life for vulnerable tribal communities across Tripura.

India shows strong hiring growth for Q1 2026

NEW DELHI

Indian employers report an extremely strong job market in India in the first quarter of 2026, with organisations increasingly willing to invest in skills, technology, and talent, a report said on Tuesday. The report by ManpowerGroup India, based on a survey of 3,051 employers across India during October 2025, revealed a Net Employment Outlook (NEO) of 52 per cent, underscoring a strategic shift toward quality over volume. The report noted that a faster-than-expected growth rate of the Indian economy is due to a favourable monsoon that drove rural demand and lower oil prices, minimal impact of the US tariffs, and reforms in the banking sector, which enabled easier access to foreign loans, supporting company growth and job creation. Meanwhile, efforts have been ramped up to internalise the Indian rupee for cross-border trade, aiming to decrease dependence on US dollars, which will ultimately



benefit the economy in the long term. Given these metrics, Indian employers' hiring sentiment looks optimistic for the near term, stated the report. India's hiring outlook is not just strong - it is signaling a new phase of economic confidence and capability-building. What these trends truly reflect is India's transition from volume-led hiring to value creation: organisations are investing in the skills, technologies, and talent architectures that will define their competitiveness over the next decade, said Sandeep Gulati, Managing Director, Manpow-

erGroup India and Middle East. The report noted a demand in sectors such as finance, professional services, manufacturing, and real estate, indicative of employers actively preparing for a more digital, regulated, and innovation-driven economy, Gulati said. As we move into 2026, India will shape its talent market around three fundamentals: critical skills, technological leverage, and purposeful expansion, said Gulati. Further, the report noted that Indian employers in all nine sectors anticipate increasing staffing levels in Q1 2026.

Cement makers set for 2.5-3.5 pc profit boost driven by volume growth

MUMBAI

Cement manufacturers' profitability will rise about 2.5 per cent to 3.5 per cent this fiscal year due to improved realisations driven by higher volumes and premiumisation amid steady selling prices and cost of inputs, a report said on Tuesday. Though the goods and services tax from 28 per cent to 18 per cent is expected to weigh on retail prices, the premiumisation and higher demand will offset the pressure and improve profitability for the manufacturers, the report from Crisil Intelligence said. Cement volumes are seen rising 6.5-7.5 per cent year on year after a 5 per cent growth last fiscal, with a moderate 5 per cent growth in the first half and a projected 8-9 per cent surge in the second half fuelled by pent-up demand and better liquidity. The firm projected that average pan India prices will remain rangebound at Rs



354-359 per 50 kg bag, based on analysis of 14 major manufacturers that account for about 85 per cent of industry revenue. The average pan India cement prices saw a modest 3 per cent on year increase during the first half, Sehul Bhatt, Director, Crisil Intelligence. However, we anticipate the full impact of the GST reform will be realised in the third quarter, leading to a 4-5 per cent decline in retail prices in the second half of the fiscal. Despite subdued pricing, the

industry is poised for higher realisations this fiscal, driven by healthy volume growth, Bhatt added. Excluding GST, cement prices are expected to rise 3-4 per cent on-year in the coming quarter. However, the reduction in GST is expected to lead to a decline in overall prices, it said. The manufacturers saw a 5 per cent increase in realisations in the first half of this fiscal. The momentum is expected to slow in the second half, with realisations growing a modest 0-2 per cent.

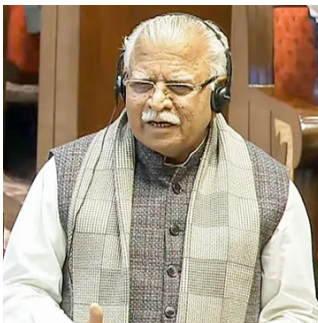
PMAY HOUSES DELIVERED

Centre Hands Over 95.54 Lakh Houses Under PMAY Schemes, Minister Tells Parliament

NEW DELHI

The Centre has handed over 95.54 lakh houses to beneficiaries under the two schemes of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs Manohar Lal told Parliament on Tuesday. Responding to supplementaries in the Rajya Sabha during Question Hour, the minister cited a 2020 nationwide slum survey, which revealed that 6.5 crore people, representing 1.39 crore households, were living in slums across India. He clarified that

land and colonisation fall under State jurisdiction; therefore, policies and programmes for slum rehabilitation rest with individual States and Union Territories. As a result, the Ministry does not maintain centralised data on slum rehabilitation or relocation. In the National Capital Territory of Delhi (NCTD), slum rehabilitation and demolitions are undertaken by land-owning agencies such as the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) and the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB) under relevant laws. Detailing DDA's rehabilita-



tion efforts, the minister stated that as part of its Slum Rehabilitation Programme, the authority conducted demolitions only after ensuring proper rehabilitation of eligible

households. Out of 5,158 households, 3,414 were assessed as eligible for alternative accommodation under DUSIB policy. These eligible families have been provided housing equipped with modern facilities. The minister added that implementing agencies undertake rehabilitation projects based on their respective land management guidelines and the slum rehabilitation frameworks of States and UTs. During rehabilitation and resettlement processes, land-owning and implementing agencies—as well as af-

ected families—may seek assistance under PMAY-Urban (PMAY-U) and PMAY-U 2.0, provided they meet eligibility criteria. The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has been supporting States and UTs by offering central assistance under PMAY-U since June 25, 2015, for constructing homes for eligible urban families, including slum dwellers. Highlighting new reforms, Manohar Lal said the government has revamped its urban housing mission, launching PMAY-U 2.0 'Housing for All' on September 1, 2024.



From Airpocalypse to Clean Air: Beijing's Remarkable Transformation

In January 2013, residents of Beijing woke up to a nightmare. The sky had turned a thick, ashen gray, visibility dropped to mere meters, and the air carried a metallic taste that stung the throat. Fine particulate matter levels reached 22 times the World Health Organization's recommended safe limit. This crisis, dubbed the Airpocalypse, marked a turning point in China's environmental history. Today, just over a decade later, Beijing stands as a testament to what determined government action and public engagement can achieve in combating air pollution.

Conclusion: From Worst to World-Class

Beijing's journey from the Airpocalypse of 2013 to one of the most improved major cities in terms of air quality stands as one of the most significant environmental success stories of the 21st century. The transformation required confronting powerful economic interests, investing billions of dollars, implementing hundreds of policies, and fundamentally changing how millions of people heat their homes, travel to work, and power their industries. The success wasn't inevitable. It required sustained political commitment, public pressure, scientific expertise, regional cooperation, and willingness to prioritize long-term environmental health over short-term economic convenience. Beijing's experience demonstrates that even the most severe air pollution problems can be addressed when governments act decisively and comprehensively. While challenges remain and the work is far from complete, Beijing has proved that transformation is possible. The city that once symbolized the environmental costs of rapid development has become a model for how determined action can restore breathable air.

The Dark Days: 2013 and the Crisis That Changed Everything

The winter of 2013 was Beijing's environmental nadir. At one point in mid-January, the Air Quality Index soared to 993, far beyond levels health officials deemed extremely dangerous. For context, an AQI above 300 is considered hazardous; Beijing's readings were off the charts. Throughout 2013, air pollution levels averaged 100 micrograms per cubic meter, 10 times higher than the World Health Organization's recommended level of 10 micrograms per cubic meter. The crisis wasn't just about uncomfortable days or reduced visibility. The human toll was staggering. Children's hospitals overflowed with patients suffering from respiratory ailments, and researchers estimated that 8,500 premature deaths linked to pollution occurred in four Chinese cities, including Beijing. The severity of the pollution forced residents to take extraordinary measures. Families barricaded themselves indoors with air purifiers running continuously. Those who ventured outside wore elaborate masks that became as essential as clothing. Schools closed, flights were grounded, and the very fabric of daily life was disrupted by the toxic air that enveloped the city. What made this crisis particularly notable was the convergence of multiple factors. Coal burning for winter heating, emissions from five million motor vehicles, industrial pollution from surrounding provinces, and stagnant weather conditions combined to create a perfect storm of contamination.



The Awakening: Public Pressure and Govt Response

The 2013 Airpocalypse catalyzed a fundamental shift in how China approached air pollution. For years, the government had been reluctant to acknowledge the severity of the problem. However, the crisis of 2013 changed everything. Social media platforms buzzed with images of the smog-choked city, and international attention focused on Beijing's environmental catastrophe. A key factor in driving change was transparency. The U.S. Embassy in Beijing had been operating its own pollution monitor and publishing hourly readings on Twitter. Citizens noticed large discrepancies between official Chinese figures and U.S. measurements, which sparked public outcry and demanded accountability. In response, the Chinese government began publishing real-time Air Quality Index data for 74 cities across the country. This transparency was revolutionary. For the first time, citizens could quantify what they were breathing and hold authorities accountable for improvements. The term PM2.5 entered everyday vocabulary, and public awareness of air pollution reached unprecedented levels. The government's response was comprehensive and ambitious. In September 2013, Beijing launched the Clean Air Action Plan 2013-2017, a five-year blueprint that would fundamentally reshape the city's approach to pollution control. The plan set clear targets and mobilized resources on an unprecedented scale.

Regional Coordination: A Collaborative Approach

One crucial lesson from Beijing's experience was that air pollution doesn't respect city boundaries. Pollutants from surrounding provinces, particularly industrialized Hebei, drifted into Beijing, meaning that local measures alone would never be sufficient. Beijing pioneered regional air quality coordination in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region. Air quality work was supported by comprehensive legal standards, strict environmental law enforcement, economic policies, public participation, and coordination on air pollution prevention and control in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region. This collaborative approach ensured that all provinces in the region worked toward common air quality goals.

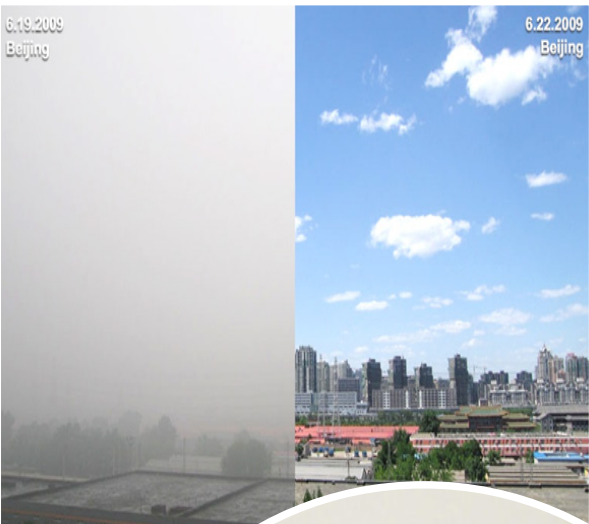
Coal: The Primary Target

Coal combustion was identified as the single largest contributor to Beijing's air pollution, responsible for approximately 50 percent of the city's contamination. The government launched an aggressive campaign to eliminate coal use within the city. Coal-fired power plants and boilers were eliminated, and all gas-fired boilers in the core city area were renovated or dismantled. The transformation extended to residential heating. Traditional coal-burning stoves in homes were replaced with cleaner alternatives, including natural gas and electric heating systems. This transition wasn't just about technology—it required massive infrastructure investment and careful planning to ensure residents could stay warm during Beijing's harsh winters without relying on coal.



Transportation: Greening the Streets

With five million vehicles on the roads, transportation emissions represented another major pollution source. Beijing implemented a comprehensive strategy to reduce vehicle emissions and promote cleaner alternatives. The city introduced strict vehicle emission standards and eliminated more than 2 million high-emission vehicles since 2013. Old, polluting cars were taken off the roads through buyback programs and regulatory measures. New vehicles had to meet increasingly stringent emission standards before they could be registered. Perhaps most dramatically, Beijing embraced electric mobility. The city deployed thousands of electric buses, becoming part of a broader Chinese push toward electric public transportation. By 2025, the government aimed for electric and new energy vehicles to comprise half of all registered vehicles in the city.



Recognition and Lessons for the World

Beijing's transformation hasn't gone unnoticed internationally. The United Nations Environment Programme praised the city's achievements, with one official stating that Beijing's success demonstrates how a large city in a developing country can balance environmental protection and economic growth. The city's approach offers valuable lessons for other cities worldwide struggling with air pollution. First, comprehensive action is essential—addressing just one source of pollution while ignoring others won't produce meaningful results. Second, political will and substantial financial investment are non-negotiable. Third, transparency and public engagement drive accountability and support for difficult policy measures.

The Results: A Remarkable Turnaround

The transformation of Beijing's air quality has been nothing short of remarkable. From 2013 to 2022, the annual average concentrations of major air pollutants decreased significantly: PM2.5 decreased 66.5 percent; SO2 decreased 88.7 percent; NO2 decreased 58.9 percent; and PM10 decreased 50 percent. In concrete terms, in the 12 months to the end of March 2025, average PM2.5 concentrations had fallen to 29.1 micrograms per cubic meter, translating into a 67 percent decline since 2013. The city that once recorded AQI readings of 993 now regularly experiences days with readings below 50, classified as good air quality. The number of days with good air quality reached 290 in 2024, an increase of 114 days compared with 2013 and the highest number on record. This means that residents now breathe clean air on more than three-quarters of the year's days—a dramatic shift from the situation just a decade ago.

Industry: Restructuring and Relocation

Industrial emissions from heavy industries such as steel, cement, and glass manufacturing—particularly from Hebei province surrounding Beijing—contributed significantly to the pollution problem. Addressing this required both local action and regional coordination. Beijing closed nearly 2,000 factories within the city limits, particularly those engaged in heavy, polluting industries. Many factories were relocated to areas outside Beijing, though this strategy drew criticism for simply shifting pollution rather than eliminating it. More importantly, remaining industries were required to adopt cleaner production methods and install pollution control equipment. The government also implemented emergency measures during periods of particularly bad air quality. Construction sites could be shut down, and factories temporarily closed when pollution forecasts indicated hazardous conditions.



Messi, Suarez to Reunite in Mumbai for Charity Fashion Show, Auction

Argentine football icons to walk ramp and auction 2022 World Cup memorabilia

MUMBAI

Lionel Messi will reunite with longtime strike partner Luis Suarez and teammate Rodrigo De Paul in Mumbai on December 14 for a 45-minute philanthropic fashion segment during his ‘G.O.A.T. India Tour 2025’. Organisers have requested Messi to bring select memorabilia from Argentina’s 2022 World Cup triumph for auction, aiming to raise funds for charity.

The Mumbai event, hosted at Wankhede Stadium from 5pm, will feature celebrity models, Bollywood stars including Tiger Shroff and Jackie Shroff, cricketers, and business leaders. A Padel Cup at the Cricket Club of India at 3.30pm will precede the fashion show. Suarez will also perform in a Spanish music segment.



Messi’s India tour spans multiple cities. In Kolkata, security concerns have shifted the unveiling of his 70-foot statue to a virtual ceremony

from his hotel. A 25ft x 20ft mural will also be unveiled during the Durga Puja season, allowing fans to leave personal messages. The Kolkata leg is expected to draw over 70,000 spectators.

Hyderabad will host the

GOAT Cup at Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium, featuring a 7v7 celebrity match, penalty shootouts, a masterclass for scouted youth, and a musical concert. The New Delhi leg includes a meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and felicitations for Minerva Academy’s U-14 and U-15 squads, which won three major European youth titles this year.

This marks Messi’s first India visit since 2011. Organisers confirmed that the tour received final approval in August after meetings with Messi and his father, Jorge, who is also his agent. The India tour combines football, culture, and philanthropy, promising fans a unique experience while supporting charitable causes.

Bellevison, Konkans Dubai to host ‘The Winter Smash 2025’ women’s throwball tournament

UDUPI

Bellevison and Konkans Dubai jointly organizes ‘The Winter Smash 2025’, an exciting women’s throwball tournament set to take place on Sunday, December 14, at 8.30 am. The event will be hosted at the grounds of St Lawrence English Medium School, Moodubelle.

With the tagline ‘Feel the chill, play with thrill’, the tournament aims to bring Roman Catholic women’s teams from across the Udupi and Mangalore dioceses onto one platform to showcase their sporting talent, teamwork, and competitive spirit.

The organizers have announced that participation will be limited to 10 teams, strictly on a first-come, first-served basis. In a gesture promoting community sports, no entry fee will be charged. Each team is required to field 9 players and 3 substitutes, and all matches will follow a league format.

Officials emphasized that teams must strictly adhere to official Throwball rules and respect the umpire’s decisions, which will be final. Wearing a team jersey is mandatory for all participants to ensure uniformity and discipline on the field.

Attractive prizes have

Bellevison & Konkans Dubai
Jointly Organizes

THE WINTER SMASH 2025
“Feel the chill, play with thrill”

WOMEN'S THROWBALL TOURNAMENT

SUNDAY 14th DEC. @ 8:30 AM
GROUND: ST. LAWRENCE ENG. MEDIUM SCHOOL, MOODUBELLE

*This tournament is exclusively for Roman Catholic teams under the Udupi & Mangalore Dioceses.

*Only 10 teams will be allowed to participate, strictly on a first come, first serve basis.

*No entry fees will be charged for participating team

*Each team must consist of 9 players +3 substitutes

*Matches will be conducted in a league format

*The umpire's decision is final and must be respected at all times.

*All teams must strictly follow the official Throwball rules and guidelines

*Wearing the team jersey is mandatory for all players.

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3rd Prizes ₹ 6,000 & Trophy
Player of the Match, Best Attacker & Best Defender: Rs.2,500 each & Trophy

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been announced for the winners. The champions will take home Rs 12,000 and a trophy, while the runners-up will receive Rs 9,000 and a trophy. The third-place team will be awarded Rs 6,000

and a trophy.

Individual excellence will also be recognized with trophies and a cash prize of Rs 2,500 each for player of the match, best attacker, and best defender.

Yves Bissouma Faces Spurs Probe Again Over Nitrous Oxide Incident

LONDON

Tottenham Hotspur midfielder Yves Bissouma is once again under scrutiny after footage emerged showing him inhaling nitrous oxide at a London party, prompting the club to launch a formal internal investigation. The 29-year-old Malian’s latest indiscretion comes nearly a year after a similar incident that led to a one-match suspension for “severe lack of judgment.”

The clip, reportedly filmed in the early hours of November 3, was shared by a woman who attended the party. She allegedly said, “I couldn’t believe what I was seeing. Bissouma was openly inhaling from the balloon even though he had been in trouble before for doing this.”

Adding to concerns, Bissouma has removed all mentions of Tottenham from his Instagram profile, raising alarm among fans already uneasy about his inconsistent tenure at the club. Under UK law, nitrous oxide has been classified as a Class C drug since 2023, making recreational possession illegal. This latest controversy comes on the back of a disrupted season for Bissouma, who was previously dropped for repeated lateness in August and missed further matches due to ankle surgery in October.

Liverpool coach Arne Slot says his bond with Mohamed Salah is not broken

Liverpool Boss Slot Insists Relationship with Salah Remains Intact

MILAN

Liverpool manager Arne Slot has dismissed suggestions that his relationship with star forward Mohamed Salah has collapsed, following the Egypt international’s absence from the squad for the Champions League trip to Inter Milan.

“That’s not the way I feel, but he has the right to feel how he feels,” Slot told supporters. “I haven’t felt that at all.” Salah had trained with the first team earlier but was left out of the Italy trip after publicly stating he felt “thrown under the bus” and claimed his relationship with Slot was over.

The comments came after Salah was benched for the third consecutive Premier League match in a 3-3 draw against Leeds United. Asked if Salah had played his last game for Liverpool, Slot said, “I have no clue. I cannot answer that question at this moment in time.” He added that while Salah can feel however he wishes, he does not have the right to broadcast grievances to the media. Liverpool are enduring a difficult season, sit-



ting ninth in the Premier League with just four wins in 15 matches. In Europe, the Reds are 13th in their Champions League group after a 4-1 defeat at home to PSV Eindhoven. Salah, Liverpool’s all-time leading paid player, has scored four goals in 13 league games this season, a stark drop from his usual prolific form.

Despite the turbulence, Slot emphasized the professional nature of his bond with Salah, who has been instrumental in Liverpool’s two Premier League titles and a Champions League triumph since joining from Roma in 2017. The coach’s remarks suggest he remains committed to managing the situation carefully amid ongoing speculation about Salah’s future at Anfield.

Pooja Tomar Aims to Guide India’s Next Fighters with MMA Academy

NEW DELHI

Pooja Tomar, the first Indian woman to win a UFC fight, is turning her focus from personal milestones to shaping the next generation of fighters. Growing up in Budhana, Uttar Pradesh, she faced limited resources, no mentors, and no training structure, navigating her path into MMA largely alone.

“My only goal right now is to open my own academy so the coming generation gets proper opportunities,” Tomar told. “We didn’t know anything when we started. I can now guide many people so they can achieve things faster.” Her journey, spanning wushu, regional MMA promotions, ONE Championship, and Matrix Fight Night, culminated in her UFC debut in 2023 and a historic win in June 2024. This achievement highlighted both her resilience and the gaps in India’s MMA ecosystem, which she is determined to address.

Tomar plans her academy to offer structured training, nutrition guidance, mental conditioning, and international-standard coaching. Her vision is to create a clear path-

way for young fighters — particularly girls — so they no longer struggle with the uncertainties she faced.

“When I was young, the birth of a girl in my village often brought sadness,” she recalls. “From that time, I wanted to prove that I am no less than any boy. That’s

when my interest in fighting began, and UFC became my dream.”

By sharing her experience and providing proper infrastructure, Tomar hopes to ensure that talent and perseverance are enough for young athletes to reach global stages.



Bruno Fernandes Stars as Manchester United Thrash Wolves 4-1

WOLVERHAMPTON

Bruno Fernandes scored twice and set up another as Manchester United cruised to a 4-1 victory over Wolverhampton Wanderers in a Premier League clash on Monday, lifting United into the top six.

Fernandes opened the scoring in the first half after a Wolves error from Brazilian midfielder Andre, rifling the ball past goalkeeper Sam Johnstone despite losing his footing. Wolves briefly equalized just before halftime when Jean-Ricner Bellegarde converted a volley from David Moller Wolfe’s cross, marking Wolves’ first league goal since October 26.

United regained control early in the second half, with Bryan Mbeumo finishing a swift counter-attack in the 51st minute. Mason Mount then added a third in the 62nd minute, expertly converting a chipped assist from Fernandes. The match was sealed when Fernandes scored a penalty in the 82nd minute to complete his double and the team’s fourth



Two-goal Fernandes inspires dominant United win, moving them into top six

goal. The win moves United to 25 points, level with Chelsea in fifth, while Wolves remain at the bottom with just two points, suffering their eighth consecutive defeat. Wolves coach Rob Edwards admitted frustration: “There’s a nervousness... in big moments we gave the ball back to them. We’re getting punished and must improve, but it won’t be a quick turnaround.”

United’s second-half per-

formance showcased a more ruthless attacking approach after a sluggish first half. Mount reflected, “The onus was on us to put things right with a proper performance. All our focus was on being ruthless, going forward with purpose, and taking our chances. It’s good to push up and get the three points, but we can’t stop now.”

The victory highlighted Fernandes’ influence and United’s ability to dominate even amid a season of inconsistency, while Wolves continue to struggle at the bottom of the table.

Squash Confident as WSF Pushes 2032 Olympic Bid

CHENNAI

World Squash Federation (WSF) president Zena Wooldridge has confirmed that the process to include squash in the 2032 Brisbane Olympics is already underway, building on the sport’s historic inclusion in the 2028 Los Angeles Games. Speaking during the Squash World Cup opening ceremony, Wooldridge expressed confidence that squash’s flexibility and low logistical footprint strengthen its case for Olympic continuity.

“We’ve already started the process for Brisbane 2032,” Wooldridge said, noting that a decision is expected by mid-2026. She highlighted that while Los Angeles offered ideal facilities, Brisbane presents unique challenges, making adaptability crucial. The WSF plans to showcase squash’s versatility, from singles to doubles and glass courts, to fit host constraints. Wooldridge emphasized India’s role in the sport’s growth. “India is a major squash nation, influential as hosts, players, and referees.

Their participation ensures broadcast coverage and supports milestones like the 2030 Ahmedabad Commonwealth Games, which will boost India’s Olympic ambitions.”

Reflecting on her five-year tenure, Wooldridge credited collaborative efforts with PSA, US Squash, and Squash Australia for strengthening governance and modernizing

championships. She also outlined expansion plans in Africa, leveraging Olympic solidarity funding to develop players, coaches, and referees, with a focus on training more female coaches and players.

On engaging with the newly elected IOC president Kirsty Coventry, Wooldridge noted, “We hope to meet in the first quarter of next year. With her reviewing existing sports and disciplines, it may become easier for squash to secure its place.” Wooldridge concluded that squash’s combination of global growth, governance improvements, and flexible competition formats positions it strongly to remain an Olympic sport beyond 2028, as the WSF works steadily to secure Brisbane inclusion.



Isack Hadjar Kicks Off Red Bull Career with First 2026 Test Laps

ABU DHABI

Isack Hadjar officially began his Red Bull Racing career on Tuesday, taking part in post-season testing in Abu Dhabi. The 21-year-old Frenchman, promoted from Red Bull’s junior program after a breakout rookie F1 season, took the RB mule car equipped with 2026-spec adaptations for its first spin. Pirelli used the outing to gather early data for next year’s tyres. Though Hadjar has previously appeared in three F1 sessions during the 2023 and 2024 seasons, this marked his first full outing as a senior Red Bull driver. His rookie year included consistent performances, highlighted by a maiden podium finish at the Dutch Grand Prix alongside future teammate Max Verstappen. That result, coupled with his overall promise, cemented his place as a natural choice for the 2026 lineup following Yuki Tsunoda’s struggles.

Mohammed Shami Signals National Comeback with Four-Wicket Blast in SMAT

NEW DELHI

India pacer Mohammed Shami sent a clear message to the national selectors with a scintillating four-wicket haul against Haryana in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy (SMAT) 2025–26. The Bengal fast bowler returned figures of 4/30 in four overs, helping restrict Haryana to 191/9 in their 20 overs.

This was Shami’s third consecutive performance taking three or more wickets in the tournament. He had earlier claimed 4/13 against Services and 3/24 versus Puducherry. His consistent show has propelled him to the third spot among the tournament’s highest wicket-takers, highlighting his sustained domestic dominance despite being overlooked by India’s selectors.

Shami has

amassed 16 wickets in seven matches, averaging 14.93 with an economy rate of 8.90. His best figures of 4/13 reflect a bowler in top form, both physically and technically. Yet, the 33-year-old remains sidelined, having last represented India in the Champions Trophy 2025, with his last Test outing coming during the World Test Championship final 2023, where India fell short against Australia.

Selectors had previously cited fitness concerns for his omission from the England tour. However, Shami has been active in domestic cricket, including the Duleep Trophy and Ranji Trophy, taking 20 wickets in four Ranji matches, demonstrating both fitness and form.

Despite Bengal losing their second successive match in the tournament, Shami’s performances underline his readiness for international duties. His ongoing excellence in domestic cricket reinforces calls for his reintegration into India’s pace attack. Shami’s determination and consistent displays are hard to ignore, and he continues to push for the opportunity to return to the national team.





IPL 2026 Auction List Finalised with 350 Players

A star-studded pool of 350 players headlines the high-stakes IPL 2026 auction

MUMBAI

The Indian Premier League on Tuesday confirmed a final shortlist of 350 players, including 240 Indians and 110 overseas cricketers, for the 2026 auction scheduled in Abu Dhabi on December 16. Among the notable inclusions is South Africa's wicketkeeper-batter Quinton de Kock, a late entrant to the pool after reversing his ODI retirement. He will enter the auction at a base price of ₹1 crore.

The initial registration of 1,390 players was trimmed to 1,005, before being finalised at 350 competing for 77 available slots across the 10 franchises in the league's 19th edition.

Australia's former captain Steve Smith, returning to the IPL fold after last appearing in 2021, is listed with a ₹2 crore base price. The first set of auction names also includes Mumbai batters Prithvi Shaw and Sarfaraz Khan, each placed at a ₹75 lakh base price.

Several high-profile overseas stars feature in the top bracket at ₹2 crore, including Australia's Cameron Green and Jake Fraser-McGurk, New Zealand's Devon Conway, and South Africa's David Miller. India all-rounder Venkatesh Iyer, released by Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR), has also set his base price at ₹2 crore.

Among the franchises, KKR enter the auction with the largest purse of ₹64.3 crore, giving them significant room for rebuilding. Chennai Super Kings follow with ₹43.4 crore, while Sunrisers Hyderabad hold the third-largest purse at ₹25.5 crore.

With a heavily stacked roster of capped and emerging talent, the 2026 auction promises fierce bidding, strategic manoeuvring, and potential blockbuster signings as teams aim to reshape their squads for another thrilling IPL season.

IPL 2026 Auction: Sarfaraz Khan, Prithvi Shaw Named in Opening Set

MUMBAI

The build-up to the IPL 2026 Player Auction, scheduled for December 16 in Abu Dhabi, gathered momentum on Tuesday with Sarfaraz Khan and Prithvi Shaw featuring prominently in the opening set of players released by the league. The pair, who went unsold in last year's mega auction, headline the capped batters' group this time with a base price of ₹75 lakh each.

Sarfaraz, despite an encouraging start to his Test career, did not attract any bids in the previous auction. Shaw, dropped by Mumbai midway through the last domestic season, revived his fortunes after moving to Maharashtra, where consistency and improved fitness helped restore his reputation. Their inclusion in the first set signals renewed interest ahead of a highly competitive auction.

They are grouped alongside top overseas names such as Devon Conway, Jake Fraser-McGurk, Cameron Green, and David Miller, each listed at the ₹2 crore base price. Notably, Green—usually classified as an all-rounder—has been listed only as a batter this year. The IPL authorities released the final list of 350 players on Tuesday morning, comprising 240 Indians and 110 overseas cricketers, from whom a maximum of 77 signings can be made. The auction pool features 40 players in the highest base price bracket of ₹2 crore, while 227 uncapped domestic players have set their base price at ₹30 lakh, the lowest available tier.

The second set of players includes Venkatesh Iyer (₹2 crore), the high-profile all-rounder released by Kolkata Knight Riders, along with Deepak Hooda (₹75 lakh) and five prominent overseas all-rounders. With major names, intriguing comeback stories and limited slots, the 2026 auction promises intense bidding wars and strategic gambles from all ten franchises.



Tiger Woods Sparks Career-Change Buzz with Cameo

NASSAU

A surprise stint behind the microphone by Tiger Woods at the Hero World Challenge has ignited speculation that the 15-time major champion may be eyeing a new path in sports broadcasting. Woods, 49, who has spent much of the past decade battling injuries in his effort to stay competitive, stunned viewers when he joined the Golf Channel commentary booth for an impromptu segment with fellow professional Kevin Kisner.

The cameo, filled with jokes and easy banter, showcased a relaxed and humorous side of Woods rarely seen during his peak playing years. Clips of the exchange quickly went viral, with fans calling him "comedy gold" and praising his potential as an "awesome broadcaster."

The moment has prompted widespread speculation about whether Woods is quietly preparing for a media career once his playing days wind down.

THERE IS NO OTHER PLAYER LIKE HARDIK PANDYA IN INDIAN T20 TEAM: BANGAR

NEW DELHI

Former India batting coach Sanjay Bangar has lauded Hardik Pandya as a once-in-a-generation all-rounder, insisting that no player in India's current T20 setup matches his dual-impact presence. Pandya, recovering from a quadricep injury suffered during the Asia Cup, is set to return for the five-match ODI series against South Africa beginning Tuesday in Cuttack.

Bangar stressed that Pandya's skill set places him in a category of his own. Comparing him with global all-rounders like Ben Stokes and drawing parallels with Ravindra Jadeja's irreplaceability in longer formats, Bangar said Pandya could command a place either as a pure batter or a frontline seamer. "To be that kind of all-rounder, you must earn your place with both bat and ball. There is no other player like Hardik Pandya in the Indian team," he said.

On workload management, Bangar suggested Pandya should feature in at least the first three matches against South Africa to assess his physical readiness. He cautioned against drawing conclusions about playing six or seven T20Is before the World Cup, noting the gap in intensity between domestic tournaments like the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy (SMAT) and international cricket. A fully fit Pandya, he added, provides India with their ideal team balance, particularly with the available spin options.

Before his India return, Pandya struck an unbeaten 77 off 42 balls for Baroda in SMAT and bowled four overs at full throttle. India skipper Shubman Gill also returns after a neck spasm. Bangar believes Gill's growth as Test captain has strengthened his mindset across formats, making him a solid T20I top-order option.

India regroup after semifinal loss, eyeing podium finish today

Heartbroken India Target Bronze as Junior WC Campaign Nears End

CHENNAI

The dream of reclaiming the FIH Men's Junior World Cup may have slipped away, but hosts India will aim to salvage pride and secure a podium finish when they face Argentina in the bronze medal match today. India, champions last in 2016 in Lucknow, suffered a heavy 1-5 defeat to seven-time winners Germany in the semifinals, leaving the young side heartbroken and determined to make amends at home. Argentina, two-time champions in 2005 and 2021, were edged out 1-2 by Spain in a closely contested semifinal and arrive with their own sense of urgency. Known for their physicality and disciplined structure, the South American side is expected to test India across all departments.

India's semifinal performance raised concerns, with the team visibly wilting under pressure. Defensive lapses, mispasses, and soft goals proved costly, while the forwards—who excelled in the pool stages—struggled to convert opportunities. Players such as Dilraj Singh, Arshdeep Singh, Sourabh Anand Kushwaha, Gurjot Singh, and Ajeet Yadav created chances but failed to break Germany's resistance.

Head coach P.R. Sreejesh admitted the team fell short tactically, saying the inability to execute plans and conceding easy goals hurt their title hopes. He stressed the need for collective responsibility: solid defending first, followed by efficient attacking play.

Skipper Rohit leads a defence that must dramatically improve to contain Argentina's forwards. The midfield—featuring Rosan Khujur, Ankit Pal, Manmeet Singh, Adrohit Ekka, and Thounaojam Ingalemba Luwang—will need greater cohesion to feed the attack effectively.

Penalty corners remain India's persistent weakness. Despite Anmol Ekka scoring from a set piece against Germany, the usually reliable Rohit has struggled to make an impact with drag-flicks this tournament.



'We Don't Want to Change a Lot Now,' Says Suryakumar Yadav

CUTTACK

India captain Suryakumar Yadav has emphasised that the team will resist major changes to its core structure as preparations intensify for the 2026 ICC Men's T20 World Cup, to be played at home in two months. Speaking ahead of the limited-overs assignments against South Africa and New Zealand, Suryakumar said the focus is now firmly on sharpening existing plans rather than altering combinations.

He explained that India's World Cup groundwork began immediately after the conclusion of the 2024 edition. "When we give exams in school, not everyone studies in the last four days. We study for a year or two. Our preparation is the same," he said. "We don't want to change a lot now. The only thing we'll work on is the type of cricket we want to play."

India will play 10 T20Is before the World Cup, offering valuable opportunities for refinement. Asked about the ongoing debate regarding Sanju Samson and Jitesh Sharma for a place in the XI, Suryakumar said the team values versatility. "We gave Sanju opportunities and he was ready to bat anywhere. Both are in the scheme of things. It's always good to have players who can open or bat lower. It's a good headache to have."

He also welcomed Hardik Pandya's return to full fitness, highlighting the balance the all-rounder brings. "As you saw in the Asia Cup, when he bowled with the new ball, it opened many options for us. His experience will count a lot."

With tosses proving decisive in the ongoing ODI series, Suryakumar joked that he might follow K.L. Rahul's superstition and try using his left hand at the toss, adding a light-hearted note to India's otherwise focused preparations.



Hazlewood Ruled Out of Ashes; Cummins Set for Australia Return

BRISBANE

Australia's Ashes campaign suffered a significant setback on Tuesday with pace bowler Josh Hazlewood officially ruled out of the remainder of the five-match series due to hamstring and Achilles injuries. Hazlewood, who missed Australia's commanding eight-wicket wins in Perth and Brisbane, had initially been expected to return later in the contest.

Coach Andrew McDonald confirmed that the veteran seamer will now shift focus to regaining fitness ahead of the Twenty20 World Cup early next year. "He'll be out of the series and his preparation will shift toward the World Cup, which is an incredibly important campaign for us," McDonald said, calling the development "really flat" for the team after unexpected setbacks hampered Hazlewood's recovery. A pillar of Australia's attack for nearly a decade, his absence leaves a sizeable void.

In more encouraging news for Australia, skipper Pat Cummins is set to return for the third Test in Adelaide starting December 17. Cummins, who missed the first two Tests while recovering from a back problem, has steadily increased his training workload at Allan Border Field during the second Test. According to McDonald, Cummins appears physically and technically prepared, with selectors expected to reinstate him as captain when the squad is announced on Wednesday. Vice-captain Steve Smith has been leading the side in his absence.

Praggnanandhaa Readies for 2026 Candidates, Cites 'Extremely Strong' Field

NEW DELHI

Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa has secured his place in the 2026 Candidates Tournament, becoming the sole Indian representative in next year's men's event. He earned the berth after a stellar performance at the London Chess Classic, finishing joint-first with Velimir Ivic and Ameet K Ghosi before settling in third after tie-breaks. The victory also saw him top the FIDE Circuit 2025 with 115.17 points, comfortably ahead of Dutch GM Anish Giri, who has already qualified for the Candidates.

Praggnanandhaa acknowledged the challenging nature of the tournament. "Any Candidates will be a tough tournament. If someone is there, that means they've shown what it takes. It will be difficult for everyone," he said. He described the upcoming line-up as "extremely strong," noting that the rating levels are similar to last year, with virtually no player who could be considered an easy target.

The 20-year-old GM also reflected on preparation constraints. "Assuming I make it, there will be a short time to prepare. Not long time to prepare like camps or something. I'll just try to rest and see how to prepare," he explained.

Praggnanandhaa enters the Candidates on the back of a highly successful year. He won the Tata Chess Masters, defeating fellow Indian GMD Gukesh in a tie-breaker, clinched the Grand Chess Tour Superbet Chess Classic Romania, and took the 2nd UzChess Cup 2025 in blitz tiebreaks. Despite a disappointing campaign at this year's World Cup, he remains India's only male representative in the Candidates.

Meanwhile, Indian women's grandmasters Divya Deshmukh, Koneru Humpy, and R Vaishali will compete at the Women's Candidates, continuing India's strong presence in international chess. Praggnanandhaa now shifts focus to rest and strategic preparation, aware that the 2026 Candidates will test even the world's elite players.

