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Bhu Guarantee – Silent Revolution

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Guarantee**
Samarpana
Samavesha

February
14
Saturday
11:00 AM, Haveri

Historic Achievement

Title deeds to families
1,11,000 | **1,00,000**
2023 – May 2025 | After May 2025
1,39,476
More in the pipeline

Reforms at an Unprecedented Pace

Phodi Abhiyana: Full records for 1.9 lakh old land grants

Pauti Khata: Ownership records given for 14,48,536 lands from deceased owner to legal heirs



Digitization Drive:

Over 67 crore
land records digitized



Security: 22.15 crore
properties linked
with Aadhaar



Land Beat Initiative:

96% of government lands
geo-fenced



Kaveri 2.0:

Revolutionizing
property registration



Hon'ble Revenue Minister Shri Krishna Byre Gowda
and Hon'ble Haveri District In-charge Minister
Shri Shivanand Patil at a press conference



Janaseveya Samarpane

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QUICK READ



Police detect 75 cases, recover ₹ 1.79 crore property

BENGALURU

The Bengaluru City North Division police have detected 75 criminal cases, including day and night house-break thefts and vehicle thefts, within their jurisdiction and other police station limits across the city and beyond. In connection with these cases, 83 accused persons have been arrested. Police have recovered stolen property worth approximately Rs 1.79 crore from their possession. The recovered items include 1 kg 879 grams of gold ornaments, 4.58 grams of diamond jewellery, and 1 kg 783 grams of silver articles. Police also seized 54 two-wheelers, two three-wheelers, and one four-wheeler.

Greater Bengaluru Authority plans boating in 10 city lakes

BENGALURU

The Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) is planning to introduce boating facilities in 10 lakes across the city, aiming to boost tourism while generating revenue for lake maintenance and infrastructure. Officials said only pedal boats will be permitted, as motorised boats could harm the fragile lake ecosystem. The identified lakes include Ulsoor, Kagadasapura, Nayandahalli, Sankey, Yelahanka, Rachenahalli, Vengal, Rampura, Begur and Madiwala. A senior GBA official said the tourism department will implement the project in collaboration with the Karnataka Tank Conservation and Development Authority.

1.7kg charas hidden in candy packets seized at Bengaluru airport

BENGALURU

Customs officials at Kempegowda International Airport seized 1.7 kg of hashish, commonly known as charas, from a passenger arriving from Bangkok. During a detailed inspection of his baggage, officers found suspicious candy and sweet packets. On opening the boxes, they discovered charas concealed inside the packets in a bid to evade detection. The seized contraband is estimated to be worth around Rs 4.2 lakh in the illegal market. The passenger was immediately taken into custody and later arrested under the provisions of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985. Further investigation is underway.

Cabinet decides to relocate Bangalore Race Course to Kunigal

Historic Turf Club to move; city land retained as green space

BENGALURU

In a major policy decision, the State Cabinet approved the relocation of the Bangalore Race Course from Race Course Road to Kunigal in Tumakuru district. The existing race course land in Bengaluru will be retained primarily as a lung space, preserving much-needed green cover in the heart of the city.

Briefing reporters after the meeting, Minister H.K. Patil said the Cabinet has cleared the proposal to lease 110 acres and 20 guntas of land at Kunigal Stud Farm, which falls under the Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services Department, to the Bangalore Turf Club for 29 years. The annual lease amount will be fixed at 2.5 percent of the guidance value, with effect



from December 15, 2020. The lease also includes an option for a further extension of 29 years.

However, five acres in Block-A of the Kunigal Stud Farm — comprising a guest house, helipad, swimming pool and connecting roads —

will be retained by the department and excluded from the lease agreement.

Regarding the present race course property in Bengaluru, the Minister said that except for the four-acre area housing the heritage building and clubhouse, the remaining land

will be preserved as lung space in line with the Public Works Department's recommendations.

The Cabinet also addressed financial concerns related to the Turf Club's lease. Since the lease expired on January 1, 2010, rent had not been revised due to pending court cases, resulting in financial losses to the government. Following audit and Public Accounts Committee objections, the Bangalore Turf Club has now been directed to clear outstanding dues to the Public Works Department after adjusting rent already paid, calculated from the lease expiry date until settlement.

The decision marks a significant shift in land use planning while aiming to balance heritage, revenue and environmental priorities.

Kelachandra Skill Development Centre empowers youth towards self-reliance: Suja KJ George

BENGALURU

The initiatives undertaken by Energy Minister KJ George through the Kelachandra Skill Development Centre to equip youth with employable skills and promote self-reliance are highly commendable, said Suja KJ George, Managing Trustee of the Kelachandra Foundation.

She was speaking after distributing certificates to candidates who completed three-month skill development courses at the Kelachandra Skill Development Centre in Jeevanahalli. Describing the centre as a visionary project of KJ George and Rana George, she said it has been playing a key role in empowering the youth community in Sarvagnanagar constituency.

Suja KJ George noted that the Kelachandra Foundation's centres not only provide skill training but also extend services in sports, education and healthcare. "It gives me immense happiness to see society benefiting from these initiatives. Our family is equally happy as the people of the constituency are making progress," she said.

Encouraging the trainees,

she said their hard work during the training period would yield positive results in the future. By acquiring skills and staying focused, youth can become financially independent and avoid social evils such as drug addiction, she added.

Highlighting the Foundation's contribution to healthcare, she said over 38,000 free dialysis sessions have been conducted since 2014. More than 1.1 lakh consultations for diabetes and hypertension have been provided, while over 1.20 lakh citizens have availed laboratory and free medicine facilities. Around 30,000 registered outpatients have benefited, and community health workers have visited more than 80,000 homes to help families access healthcare, pension and welfare schemes.

Addressing the gathering, KJ George said the Foundation is implementing programmes in health, education and skill development to transform Sarvagnanagar into a model constituency. Distribution of certificates to trained youth marks a strong foundation for their future, he added.

Meat sale banned in Bengaluru for Mahashivratri

BENGALURU

The Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) has issued a notification prohibiting animal slaughter and the sale of meat in slaughterhouses under its jurisdiction on the occasion of Mahashivratri. The ban will be enforced across Bengaluru on February 15.

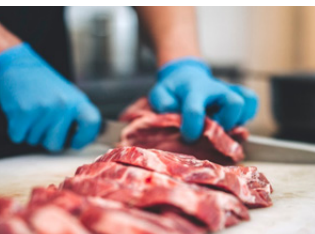
Officials said the decision was taken in view of the religious significance of the festival, which is observed with devotion by lakhs of devotees in the city. Slaughterhouses and meat shops operating within GBA limits have been directed to remain closed for the day.

Mahashivratri, known as the "Great Night of Shiva,"



holds deep spiritual importance in Hindu tradition. The festival symbolises spiritual awakening and the triumph of light over darkness and ignorance. It also commemorates the divine marriage of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati, revered as the union of Shiva and Shakti — representing power, harmony and togetherness.

According to mythology, Lord Shiva is believed to have



arrived at Goddess Parvati's abode on their wedding night accompanied by a unique procession of gods, goddesses, sages and celestial beings. The sacred union is celebrated annually with fasting, night-long prayers and special rituals at temples across the country.

Authorities have appealed to citizens and traders to cooperate with the temporary ban and ensure peaceful observance of the festival.

one lakh women associated with SHGs across the State.

Patil said the government is also extending scholarships to children of workers employed in coffee estates and large plantations in Kodagu district. He welcomed the growing trend of coffee growers branding their own produce and showcasing it at the festival. At the 'Kala Loka' outlet set up by the Industries Department at Kempegowda International Airport, coffee is being marketed alongside more than 45 other GI-tagged

products from Karnataka with distinctive branding and packaging. Karnataka, the largest coffee producer in India, cultivates coffee over 2.2 lakh hectares. Nearly 75 per cent of the country's production comes from Hassan, Kodagu and Chikkamagaluru districts. The festival brought together growers, processors, exporters, roasters, café owners, equipment manufacturers and consumers under one roof. Patil visited several stalls, interacted with exhibitors and purchased select coffee products.

Weekly phone-in programme continues for civic grievances

BENGALURU

With the aim of ensuring prompt resolution of public grievances and improving civic services, the Bengaluru North City Corporation conducted its weekly Phone-In programme on Friday between 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. at the Commissioner's Office Hall on Amruthahalli Main Road, Byatarayanapura.

During the session, complaints were received directly from residents across various wards. Officials reviewed each grievance and issued necessary instructions to the concerned departments to ensure speedy redressal.

Since the launch of the initiative on September 26, a total of 1,112 complaints have been registered over 20 weeks. Of these, 791 complaints have been addressed, while 69 complaints falling outside the North City Corporation's jurisdiction were forwarded to the respective municipal bodies and departments. Strict directions have now been issued to expedite action on the remaining 218 pending complaints.

In Friday's programme alone, 50 calls were received, leading to the registration of 65 complaints. All issues were examined on the spot, and officials were instructed

An opportunity for citizens to express their grievances and get quick remedial measures

to respond without delay.

Road-related grievances accounted for the highest number, with 27 complaints focusing on poor maintenance and unsafe conditions. Authorities were directed to prioritise quality repairs and ensure safe commuting facilities.

Fifteen complaints were related to solid waste collection and management. Departments concerned were instructed to maintain timely garbage collection in all wards, adopt scientific disposal methods, and address lapses promptly.

Six complaints regarding malfunctioning streetlights were also recorded. Officials have been directed to strengthen maintenance mechanisms to ensure proper illumination across the corporation limits.

Box: The Phone-In programme, designed to provide direct solutions to citizens' issues and monitor development works, will continue regularly every Friday to ensure transparency, accountability and responsive governance.

Lokayukta raids four officials; High Court enhances accident compensation



BENGALURU

Sleuths of the Karnataka Lokayukta conducted simultaneous raids at 29 locations across Bengaluru, Davanagere and Dharwad in connection with alleged disproportionate assets cases against four government officials. The searches covered residences, offices and properties linked to their relatives.

In Bengaluru, raids were carried out at premises associated with HM Janardhan, superintendent engineer with the Karnataka Residential Educational Institutions Society (KREIS), and Purushotham Das Hegde, chief engineer and project director of the Karnataka State Highway Development Project (KSHDP).

In Davanagere, properties linked to RH Arjun, Assistant Executive Engineer (Civil) with BESCOM, were searched. In Dharwad, sleuths raided premises belonging to Somalingappa Fakkirappa Siddanagoudar, survey supervisor at the Assistant Director of Land Records (ADLR) office.

Officials said assets unearthed during the raids included gold, silver, cash, residential sites, houses, agricultural land, vehicles and other valuables. The value of assets

allegedly found includes Rs 11.3 crore linked to Purushotham, Rs 4.4 crore to Janardhan, about Rs 2.2 crore to Arjun and Rs 1.8 crore to Somalingappa. Further investigation is underway.

In a separate development, the Karnataka High Court enhanced compensation to the family of a driver who died in a road accident in Tirupati district of Andhra Pradesh in August 2022.

The Motor Accident Claims Tribunal had earlier awarded Rs 18.1 lakh to the family of P Ramesh, attributing 40% contributory negligence to him. Challenging the order, his family sought higher compensation.

Justice P Sree Sudha observed that the tractor involved in the accident was parked in the middle of a national highway at 12.30 am without indicators or warning signals. Holding that negligence lay with the tractor driver and not the deceased, the court set aside the finding of contributory negligence.

Based on the notional income chart of the Karnataka State Legal Services Authority, the court recalculated Ramesh's income at Rs 15,500 per month and awarded Rs 24.93 lakh with 6% interest to his family.

Beyond the classroom, city schools help students beat exam stress

BENGALURU

With exam season returning, schools across the city are stepping beyond textbooks to help students manage stress, anxiety and academic pressure. Institutions are introducing structured mentoring, therapy sessions and recreational activities to ensure students remain emotionally balanced during board and annual examinations.

At Delhi Public School East, a structured mentor-teacher programme was introduced, mapping each mentor to just two students. The initiative focused on those struggling with academ-

ic pressure, emotional fatigue or disengagement while preparing for board exams. Principal Manila Carvalho said the programme continued even during study holidays, when students usually lack regular academic or emotional support. Scheduled check-ins and one-on-one mentoring helped track progress, bridge learning gaps and provide reassurance during peak anxiety.

Meanwhile, New Baldwin International School, Mandur adopted sound healing therapy to calm students. In this technique, students lie down in a closed room while soothing sounds are played, cio-emotional learning sessions.

EMPOWERING WOMEN

2,500 coffee kiosks to be set up: MB Patil

BENGALURU

The State government has sanctioned Rs 25 crore to establish 2,500 'Akka Cafe' coffee kiosks across Karnataka, aimed at empowering women and strengthening the coffee value chain, said Industries Minister M.B. Patil. The kiosks will be operated by women trained under Self-Help Groups (SHGs), generating employment and promoting entrepreneurship.

He was speaking after inaugurating the India International



al Coffee Festival organised by the Specialty Coffee Association of India (SCAI) at Palace Grounds. The Coffee Board of India, in collabora-

tion with the National Rural Livelihood Mission-Karnataka, is providing training in coffee brewing, café management and entrepreneurship to



BNP Secures Historic Landslide Election Victory

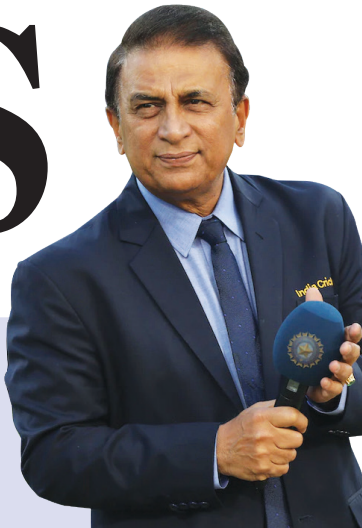
P10



India Integrates AI to Transform Public Health Delivery

P11

P12 Gavaskar expects Kuldeep to replace Arshdeep against Pak



LS Adjourned Till Mar 9 Amid Oppn Protests

The Opposition insisted that Hardeep Puri step down as a minister pending a thorough explanation

NEW DELHI

Lok Sabha was adjourned till March 9 on Friday after Opposition MPs protested over Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri's alleged links to Jeffrey Epstein. The Opposition demanded that Puri step down and provide a full explanation regarding emails reportedly exchanged with the convicted American financier.

The protests began in the Parliament complex early in the day, with MPs raising slogans and disrupting proceedings. Earlier, the House was adjourned till noon due to the demonstration on the final day of the first phase of the Budget session. Hardeep Puri had on Wednesday denied any wrongdoing, saying he met Epstein on "a few occasions" but had no connection to the crimes Epstein was convicted of. The minister also criticized Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for "passing innuendo" against him.

Amid the uproar, the Con-



RAJYA SABHA ADJOURNED TILL MARCH 9 FOR BUDGET

Rajya Sabha proceedings were adjourned on Friday until March 9 as Parliament began a three-week recess to allow standing committees to scrutinize Budget proposals. The Upper House met for Zero Hour at 11 am and concluded at 1 pm after Question Hour. Lok Sabha proceedings were also adjourned till the same date. The first part of the Budget Session began on January 28 with President Droupadi Murmu's address. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented the Union Budget 2026-27 on February 1. Committees will now examine allocations to various central ministries during the recess.

gress party responded strongly to a substantive motion moved by BJP MP Nishikant Dubey against Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi. The matter intensified tensions in the House, prompting repeat adjournments.

During Friday's session, the House also observed a minute of silence in memory of former Haridwar MP Bhagwan-das Rathore, who recently passed away.

After a Congress Parliam-entary Party meeting, MP

Hibi Eden told reporters that the party would continue raising issues of national importance, including farmers' concerns and India's trade negotiations, such as the India-US trade deal, without being intimidated.

The adjournment comes amid growing scrutiny of ministers' conduct and allegations of improper associations, with the Opposition pressing for accountability and transparency. The House is set to resume on March 9.

SHIVAKUMAR SAYS HOPE WILL DECIDE LEADERSHIP OUTCOME

BENGALURU

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, returning from New Delhi after meeting the Congress high command, said on Friday that he lives with "hope and confidence" and believes that efforts eventually bear fruit. His remarks come amid reports of a possible leadership transition in the state.

Shivakumar told reporters, "I always live with hope and confidence. There will always be fruit for the effort, whether it is for you, for me, or for anyone else. Where there is effort, there is fruit; where there is devotion, there is God." Asked if results could come soon, he smiled, adding, "Let's talk about that some other time."

Reports suggested both Shivakumar and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah might be summoned to New Delhi around February 17 to discuss a possible change in leadership. Responding, he said, "I don't

know. Let's see. Time will answer everything."

During his visit, Shivakumar met senior Congress leaders including Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi, and AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge. Earlier, he had said that patience would be necessary and the central leadership would decide on the chief ministerial issue in the state's interest.

The speculation over leadership has grown since the Congress government completed half of its five-year term on November 20, 2025, and is linked to an alleged power-sharing arrangement between Shivakumar and Siddaramaiah during the 2023 formation of the government. On queries about a reported foreign tour by some legislators to Australia and New Zealand amid the ongoing tussle, Shivakumar said he was unaware and would inquire. He added that the high command has not sought any details about the trip.



Dam Safety a Shared National Responsibility, Says Siddaramaiah

BENGALURU

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Friday stressed the urgent need for systematic safety checks, modernisation, and risk-based management of India's dams, pointing out that nearly 70 per cent are over 25 years old. Speaking at the two-day International Dam Safety Conference at the Indian Institute of Science, he said, "Water does not recognise political boundaries, nor should safety standards," calling for cooperative federalism in water governance. Siddaramaiah highlighted that India has 6,628 dams, ranking third globally, while Karnataka has 231 dams, ranking sixth nationally. He emphasized that dam safety is a shared national responsibility, citing risks from ageing infrastructure, seismic



Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, DCM DK Shivakumar, World Bank Vice President (South Asia) Johannes Zutt, Prof. Toshio Koike, Union Minister Raj Bhushan Choudhary, and others at the International Conference on Dam Safety (ICDS) 2026, at Tata Auditorium in the city. ▶ CH PHOTO

threats, climate extremes, and reservoir sedimentation. He also noted that digitalisation brings cybersecurity risks that must be addressed as part of core infrastructure security.

The CM urged governments to go beyond compliance, institutionalising risk-informed

decisions, periodic inspections, safety audits, and emergency action plans. He called on academic institutions to collaborate on multidisciplinary research, and financial institutions to support long-term modernisation instead of short-term repairs.

RBI bans harassment over loan recovery

NEW DELHI: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is taking a strong stand against harassment by loan recovery agents. From July 1, 2026, strict guidelines will come into effect to protect borrowers from bullying and mistreatment.

Borrowers who miss EMI payments often face aggressive recovery tactics. Recovery agents earn commissions based on the amount collected, which sometimes leads to abusive or threatening behavior. The new rules aim to change that, ensuring borrowers are treated with respect and dignity.

HAMPI REVELRY BEGINS



Chief Minister Siddaramaiah inaugurated the historic Hampi Utsav on Friday. District in-charge Minister Zameer Ahmed Khan, Ministers Shivraj Tangadagi and Byrathi Suresh, "Hat-trick Hero" Shivarajkumar, Member of Parliament Tukaram, along with MLAs and leaders from Ballari and Vijayanagara districts, and the Chairman of the Guarantee Implementation Authority and former minister H. M. Revanna, were also present. ▶ CH PHOTO

PARAMESHWARA PLEA

Parameshwara slams public talk of leadership change

BENGALURU

Karnataka Home Minister G. Parameshwara on Friday urged Congress leaders to immediately stop public discussions about a possible change in the state leadership. Speaking to reporters, he said the party's energy should focus on governance and development, rather than internal politics. Parameshwara noted that the party high command, led by AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge, had already called for silence on the issue. "De-

spite clear instructions, leaders and legislators are commenting on the leadership matter. This is not appropriate. Enough is enough," he said.

The senior Congress leader stressed that the high command knows when and how to act. He said he would also communicate with them to ensure the speculation ends. "People are watching us, and their expectations

are different. We must focus on development," he added. Internal tensions have resurfaced with reports that both CM Siddaramaiah and Deputy CM D. K. Shivakumar could be in contention for leadership roles. The situation intensified as Siddaramaiah's son, MLC Yathindra, insisted his father would complete the full five-year term, while Shivakumar's supporters



B'desh's BNP claims landslide win in 1st election since uprising

DHAKA

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) claimed a decisive victory in the 13th parliamentary elections, ending the 18-month rule of the Muhammad Yunus-led interim government. Party sources said BNP secured over 151 seats out of 300, enough to form the next government, though the Election Commission (EC) has yet to officially announce results.

Tarique Rahman, son of former prime minister Khaleda Zia, is set to become Bangladesh's first male prime minister in 35 years. After returning from self-exile in December 2025, Rahman asked party leaders and activists to offer prayers nationwide instead of holding public rallies.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated Rahman on his "decisive victory" and expressed eagerness to collaborate for regional development. The US Embassy in Dhaka also praised the election as successful and recognized BNP's win as historic, not-

■ Political Lineage
Tarique Rahman is the eldest son of former Bangladeshi president Ziaur Rahman and former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, placing him at the center of Bangladesh's major political rivalry between the BNP and Awami League.

■ Exile in London
Rahman has lived in self-imposed exile since 2008, directing BNP strategy from London due to security concerns and alleged political persecution.

■ Leader without Parliamentary Experience
Despite leading the BNP, he has never served as a member of Bangladesh's Parliament, making him a national leader with authority derived from party control rather than elected office.



ing its role in advancing prosperity and security.

The elections, conducted alongside a referendum on the 84-point July National Charter, were largely peaceful, though sporadic incidents occurred. BNP's main contest was against Jamaat-e-Islami and its allies, who alleged result manipulation in several constituencies and raised concerns over delays by returning officers. The National Citizen Party also claimed discrepancies in Dhaka constituencies.

TN women receive ₹5k grant

CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Friday credited ₹5,000 each to the bank accounts of 1.31 crore women heads of families under the Kalaigarn Magalir Urimai Thittam (KMUT) scheme. The payment includes ₹1,000 for February, ₹2,000 in advance for March and April, and a special summer assistance of ₹2,000.

Mr. Stalin, who is also DMK president, announced that if his party is re-elected in the upcoming Assembly elections, the monthly grant for beneficiaries will increase to ₹2,000 under the "Dravidian 2.0" model of governance. He said the advance disbursement was necessary due to attempts by some groups to delay the grant during the election period.

Hampi Utsav-2026 begins with vibrant display

KALABURAGI

Hampi Utsav, a three-day cultural extravaganza, began on Friday at the Hampi, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in Vijayanagara district, drawing participants from across the region. The opening day blended culture with rural tradition, highlighted by a grand exhibition of over 170 bullock pairs organised by the district administration and the Department of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services.

Held near the Hampi World Heritage Area Management Authority office at Kamalapur, the event showcased indigenous breeds such as Hallikar, Malnad Gidda, Ongole, Amrit Mahal and Kilari. A panel of veterinary experts evaluated the animals on breed purity, strength and overall health, with winners to be announced later.

At Matanga Hill grounds, fruit and flower shows featured floral replicas of iconic monuments like the Badavi Shivalinga and Sasivekalu Ganesha. The 'Suggi Sambhrama' harvest festival and agricultural expo displayed indigenous seeds, organic produce, sericulture and modern farming technologies, including drones.



QUICK READ

B.Ed sixth round admission process announced
Gadag

Candidates selected in the sixth round of the two-year B.Ed course for 2025-26 are advised to complete admission formalities immediately. Those willing to join the allotted colleges must print the fee challan using their user ID and password, pay the prescribed amount at any State Bank of India branch, and submit the original challan along with required documents to the District Education and Training Institute on Kalasapur Road, Gadag. The Principal said admission letters will be issued after verification. For details, visit www.schooleducation.kar.nic.in or contact the DIET nodal officer.

Nukkud drama raises awareness on child marriage
Koppal

To highlight the harms of child marriage, a 30-minute Nukkud drama was organized by Ankur Media Agency on Thursday at Koppal Central Bus Stand and Government High School, Kushtagi. As part of the Child Marriage Free India campaign, 105 locations across 100 districts are conducting such street plays to educate the public about the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act-2006 and Karnataka Amendment-2016. Following the District Collector's instructions, the performance successfully informed students and local residents about the legal ban and social consequences of child marriage. The District Child Protection Officers said these activities aim to protect children and prevent early marriages.

Gadag to celebrate Chhatrapati Shivaji Jayanti
Gadag

Gadag District will celebrate Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Jayanti on February 19 at 11 am in the District Administration Auditorium Hall. The event is organized by the Gadag District Administration, Zilla Panchayat, and Kannada and Culture Department. Dignitaries include Legislative Council Speaker Basavaraj Horatti and Minister Dr. Shivaraj S. Thangadagi. The program will be inaugurated by District In-charge Minister Dr. H.K. Patil. Chief guests include former Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai, MLA G.S. Patil, and other state legislators. Senior Advocate Radha Sudhirsamha Ra. Ghorpade will deliver a lecture. Deputy Commissioner C.N. Sridhar and senior officials will welcome attendees to the celebration.

Thousands gain security through landmark land titles

Krishna Byre Gowda said the government aims to regularize land and provide title deeds to 2.2 lakh families

GADAG

The Karnataka government has completed one thousand days of what it calls meaningful service, with a strong focus on helping poor and ordinary families, said Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda. He said the aim of the government is to ensure dignity, stability, and legal security for people who have lived for decades without land ownership documents.

Speaking at a press conference held at the city IB, the minister said officials of the Revenue Department have worked tirelessly since the government came to power. He noted that officers went door to door, treating people's problems as their own respon-



sibility. According to him, public service has been treated as a duty, not a formality.

Krishna Byre Gowda explained that thousands of families were living in uncertainty because they lacked title deeds for their houses. To address this long pending issue, the government identified 6,500 revenue villages and began a large scale effort to regularize land ownership.

The overall target is to distribute land title deeds to 2.20 lakh families across the state.

As part of this initiative, 1,06,000 families will receive official land title deeds during the Sadhana Samavesha program being held tomorrow in Haveri. The minister said this program represents a major milestone in the Revenue Department's work and reflects the government's commit-

ment to social justice.

He added that land ownership gives poor families a sense of safety and opens doors for housing loans, welfare schemes, and a better future for their children. The government, he said, will continue such people focused programs in the coming days.

The press conference was attended by Deputy Commissioner C.N. Sridhar, Superintendent of Police Rohan Jagadish, Additional Deputy Commissioner Dr. Duragesh K.R., Sub Divisional Officer Gangappa M., Tahsildar Srinivas Murthy, and other senior Revenue Department officials, who assured full support for smooth implementation of the program.

Over 275 Karnataka medical students face uncertainty under Rule 7.7, disqualifying those failing MBBS first-year exams within four attempts

MP seeks relief for MBBS students' futures

DAVANAGERE

Davanagere Member of Parliament Dr. Prabha Mallikarjun has urged the Union Government to relax the four-attempt limit for the MBBS First Professional Year examination, citing concern for students' futures. On Friday, she submitted a request to Union Health Minister Jagat Prakash Nadda in New Delhi, asking for an additional attempt or re-evaluation.

More than 275 medical students in Karnataka are facing uncertainty because of the strict four-attempt cap set under Rule 7.7 of the Graduate Medical Education Regula-



tions, 2019. As per this rule, students who fail to clear the MBBS first-year exam within four attempts are disqualified from continuing their medical education.

Dr. Mallikarjun said this rule is unfair, especially for students affected by the

Covid-19 pandemic. She explained that online classes during that period were not effective, exams were frequently postponed, and students faced mental stress and confusion. Because of these challenges, many could not prepare well and failed the exams. Disqualifying them permanently, she said, is inhuman and harsh.

She pointed out that several affected students have approached the courts. While the Karnataka High Court has ordered re-evaluation in some cases, universities have reportedly refused to carry it out. This has added to the students' distress and confusion.

Dr. Mallikarjun noted that the Karnataka Minister for Medical Education and the university's Pro-Chancellor have also written to the National Medical Commission, seeking a solution. They have requested a review of Rule 7.7 in the interest of students.

Urging the Centre to act with compassion, the MP demanded that the rule be reconsidered and that students be given one more chance or a proper re-evaluation. She said saving the careers of young medical students is essential for both families and the country's healthcare system.

Illegal stone mining drains Yadgiri government revenue

YADGIRI

Illegal stone mining is continuing openly in parts of Yadgiri district, causing massive loss to government revenue. For several years, white stone has been extracted without permits or tax payments, leading to losses running into billions of rupees for the state exchequer.

In Shirawala and Anabi villages of Shahapura taluk, illegal traders are digging deep underground and mining stone on a large scale. Heavy machines like JCBs are being used right next to public roads, creating serious danger to commuters and local residents.

Despite the risky operations, officials responsible for monitoring mining activity have allegedly remained silent. Hundreds of vehicles carrying illegally mined stone move on these roads every day. Residents fear accidents, as deep pits lie close to busy routes without safety measures or warning signs.

Sources said lakhs of rupees are earned daily through this illegal trade. The stones are transported to different areas, including Kalaburagi and Yadgiri towns, and are widely used for house construction and other building works.

The unchecked mining has not only damaged public safety but also caused severe harm to the environment. Underground digging has weakened the land, increasing the risk of road collapse and long-term ecological damage in nearby villages.

Speaking on the issue, Tehsildar Siddharudha said the administration is aware of the illegal activity. He assured that action will be taken against those involved after proper verification.

Local citizens have demanded immediate raids, strict penalties, and accountability of officials. They urged the district administration to stop illegal mining at once and protect public money, natural resources, and human lives from further loss and danger. Authorities promised swift action.

Two arrested for assaulting civic worker

DAVANAGERE

Two men have been arrested in Davanagere for allegedly assaulting a civic worker during garbage collection in Ward No. 4, Mehebbub Nagar. The accused, identified as Ajju and Noor, were taken into custody by the Azad Nagar police following a complaint filed by the injured worker, Karibasappa.

According to the complaint, the incident occurred when a woman handed over mixed waste, including dry garbage, wet garbage, and diapers. Karibasappa reportedly asked her to separate the waste as per municipal rules that require segregation of green and dry garbage. This led to an argument, after which three people allegedly attacked him and tore his T-shirt.

Speaking to the media, Karibasappa said, "We follow the rule of separating dry and wet waste. They gave us



mixed garbage and assaulted us when we asked them to separate it."

Police Inspector Vasanth of Azad Nagar police station confirmed that a case has been registered and both accused have been arrested.

Before the arrests, angry civic workers staged a protest in front of the police station, bringing a garbage truck with them. They refused to leave until action was taken against the accused. Authorities later assured strict legal action in the matter.

Land scheme approved for SC ST families

DAVANAGERE

Karnataka Minister Satish Jarakiholi announced that the state government has approved a scheme to allot land to people belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. He said government land available in different places will be developed and converted into residential sites for eligible families.

Speaking to the media at Harihara in Davanagere district, the minister said the decision would help many poor families get their own land. He explained that wherever government land is available, basic facilities will be created and plots will be distributed under the scheme.

Minister Jarakiholi also spoke about the upcoming state budget. He said Chief Minister Siddaramaiah will present the budget on March 6. According to him, the government expects a good budget that will support development across Karnataka. He added that every year the budget size usually increases by Rs 10,000 to Rs 20,000 crore, which helps fund welfare and development works.

Responding to questions about the Durga Utsav issue, the minister said the matter has already been brought to the notice of the Chief Minister and clarity will be given at the right time. He assured that there is no confusion regard-



Minister Jarakiholi said Chief Minister Siddaramaiah will present the March 6 budget, expected to support Karnataka's development, with annual increases funding welfare and development projects

ing government decisions.

On the Shakti Yojana, Satish Jarakiholi clarified that the government has decided to provide free smart cards to women beneficiaries. He said the scheme is aimed at supporting women and making welfare delivery easier.

However, the minister declined to comment on remarks made by a Legislative Council member regarding foreign trips by Congress MLAs and speculation about leadership changes. He said he did not wish to respond to such statements.

The announcement on land allotment has raised hope among SC and ST communities, as owning land is seen as a major step towards security, dignity, and long-term social progress in the state.

Running government tough with CM change talk: MLA Pattan


KOPPAL

Senior Congress MLA Ashok Pattan has said that it is difficult to run the state government if questions are raised about leadership, even when Siddaramaiah is the Chief Minister. Speaking to the media in Koppal, Pattan said repeated discussions about a change in leadership only create confusion and affect governance.

He said many leaders and party workers believe there will be no change of Chief Minister at present. Siddaramaiah himself has said that he will resign if the party high command asks him to do so. However, according to Pattan, the high command has not given any such instruction. "The Chief Minister is continuing because there is no order from the party leadership," he said.

Pattan added that unnecessary rumours are being spread as if there is a fight between

Siddaramaiah and D. K. Shivakumar. He said both leaders are working together and there is no open conflict between them. He also mentioned that first-time MLA Iqbal Hussain may lack political maturity and is seen as close to Shivakumar, which has led to some misunderstandings.

Clarifying his stand, Pattan said he respects DK Shivakumar and would be happy if he becomes Chief Minister in the future. However, he said the feeling among many MLAs and also Rahul Gandhi is that Siddaramaiah should continue as he has given stable governance for the past two and a half years.

He further said leadership claims can be discussed later. "There are many leaders waiting for 2028. Whoever is lucky at that time will get the opportunity," Pattan said, adding that the focus should now remain on governance and public welfare.

YUVANIDHI EMPOWERS YOUTH

Third skeleton found at Tekkalakote excavation site

BALLARI

Archaeologists at the Tekkalakote Excavation Site made a surprising discovery while completing their excavation. A small pot uncovered at a third site revealed a human skull at its base, marking the finding of a third skeleton.

Earlier, two skeletons had been carefully excavated and preserved. During the final operation, experts noted parts of a shoulder still attached to the rock, indicating that more work may be needed. Namita S. Sugandhi, co-director of the excavation team, mentioned that with some team members leaving for academic commitments in the U.S., future researchers could continue the excavation to fully remove the skeleton.

Dr. R. Shejeshwar said the newly found skeleton will be sent for carbon dating to accurately determine its age. The earlier skeletons are estimated to be between 3,000 and 5,000 years old. The district authorities are also considering declaring Tekkalakote, including the nearby 'Budidibba' area, as a protected prehistoric site.

The excavation team included researchers from multiple institutions: Pranjal Dubey from IISER Mohali, Ashoka V. Abakari from Madhya Pradesh, and Dr. Kavya from Harisingh University, Gujarat,

working under the guidance of Maharaja Sayajirao University, Vadodara.

Officials emphasized that all antiquities from the site will be carefully preserved for further study. The discovery adds important evidence about prehistoric settlements in the region and is expected to provide valuable insights into early human life in Karnataka.



Yuvanidhi scheme brings new hope for youth

GADAG

The state government has introduced the Yuvanidhi scheme to support educated youth during the difficult period of job search. The scheme aims to give financial security, build confidence, and help young people focus on their future without stress. Many graduates and diploma holders struggle after completing studies due to lack of income. Yuvanidhi was designed to address this challenge in a simple and practical way.

Under the scheme, graduates who remain unemployed for six months after finishing their studies receive Rs. 3,000 per month, while diploma holders get Rs. 1,500 per month. The money is sent di-



Youth Fund

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For graduates

For diploma graduates

rectly to bank accounts through the DBT system, ensuring transparency and timely support. This assistance allows youth to prepare for competitive exams, attend skill training, and search for suitable jobs without pressure on their families.

To be eligible, applicants must be residents of the state and must have completed a

degree or diploma from a recognized institution. Registration is easy and can be done online through government portals or service centers. Only those registered as unemployed can apply, making the process fair and focused.

Beyond financial help, Yuvanidhi offers emotional strength. It reduces anxiety, restores hope, and motivates

youth to plan careers with clarity. Since its launch, the scheme has created positive energy among young people and strengthened the state's human resources.

Speaking about the scheme, H.K. Patil said the time after education is very sensitive for youth, and government support is essential to protect their confidence and dreams.

In Gadag district alone, 6,356 applications were received between January 2024 and September 2025. Rs. 15.30 crore has already reached 4,048 beneficiaries, while remaining eligible candidates will be covered in phases. The scheme reflects the government's strong commitment to youth empowerment and inclusive growth.

QUICK READ

Landowners must submit consent by February 20

Koppal
The District Manager of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Development Corporation has asked landowners under the land ownership scheme to submit consent letters by February 20. This applies to proposals for the years 2020-21 and 2021-22 under Karnataka Adijambava and Bhovi Development Corporations. Landowners or beneficiaries wishing to sell or purchase selected land must personally visit the district office, submit a stamped Rs.100 consent letter, and provide all necessary land and personal documents to Room No. 109, District Administration Building, Koppal, by 4 pm. Late submissions will lead to cancellation of proposals and selections, with no appeals entertained.

Bus services likely disrupted in Gadag

Gadag
Public transport services in Gadag district may face disruption on February 14 due to a shortage of buses. Around 250 vehicles from the division are being deployed on an ad hoc basis for the land guarantee dedication ceremony in Haveri, which will be attended by the Chief Minister. As a result, regular bus services across various routes within the district could be reduced for the day. Divisional Controller P.Y. Gadedda has requested public passengers, as well as school and college students, to cooperate and make necessary travel arrangements in advance to avoid inconvenience.

Fake 'Kisan Tractor' scheme alert issued

Gadag
The Agriculture Department has warned farmers about fake social media advertisements claiming a 50% subsidy under a "Kisan Tractor" scheme. Joint Director of Agriculture Chetana Patil said the videos and posts circulating on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube are completely false. Fraudsters are creating fake links that look like official government websites to collect personal information and money from farmers. Authorities have urged farmers not to pay any registration fees, avoid clicking suspicious APK links, and verify details only through official sources. Farmers are advised to stay alert and report such scams immediately.

PROTECT YOUNG CHILDREN

Training held to stop child marriage cases

GADAG
A capacity-building training programme on the Child Marriage Prohibition Act, 2006 and the POCSO Act, 2012 was organised in Gadag to strengthen efforts to prevent child marriages and protect children. The programme was jointly arranged by the District Administration, Zilla Panchayat, Directorate of Child Protection, Bengaluru, District Legal Services Authority, Women and Child Development Department, District Police Department and the District Child Protection Unit. The training was held for officers of various departments and organisers of mass marriages, with the aim of creating awareness about legal responsibilities and strict action against child marriage. The programme was inaugurated by C.S. Shivanagoudra, Member Secretary of the District Legal Services Authority, Gadag. He stated that Gadag district ranks sixth in child marriage cases and warned that ignorance of the law will not be accepted. He said child marriage cases are increasing

Training urged to strengthen cooperative societies growth

Govind Gowda V.H. Patil stressed training on cooperative laws, computer systems, and KCC Bank's plans to expand services

GADAG
One day special training on cooperative law and computerization was held for office bearers of primary agricultural cooperative societies of Shirahatti and Lakshmeshwara taluks, highlighting the need for modern skills to strengthen the cooperative sector. The program was jointly organized by the Co-operation Department, Karnataka State Cooperative Federation, Gadag District Cooperative Union, and KCC Bank Ltd. at Kala Bhavan in Shirahatti. Inaugurating the program, Govind Gowda V.H. Patil, Director of KCC Bank, said training on cooperative laws and computer systems is essential for the healthy growth of cooperative societies. He said laws change from time to



time and office bearers must clearly understand them to run societies smoothly and transparently. He added that KCC Bank plans to open new branches to improve credit access, increase deposits, support rural self reliance, and create jobs for youth. He explained that computerization, ERP systems, and multi service centers are helping strengthen rural economies. Cooperative societies,

wini health scheme will conclude by March 2026 and members should be made aware to benefit from it. Presiding over the program, Sunita Shidram, Chief Executive Officer of KCC Bank, said 539 PACS under the bank are being computerized, with most audits already completed. She said ERP software is user friendly, supports regional languages, and helps manage all society activities efficiently. Experts delivered sessions on recent amendments to the Cooperative Act, duties of office bearers, and the need for ethical leadership. Officials, trainers, and cooperative representatives from Gadag district actively participated, making the program informative and useful for strengthening cooperative institutions.

Committees are formed for smooth arrangements, officers must fulfill duties responsibly, stalls will showcase Pancha Guarantee Schemes, and the program should run without lapses

Gadag hosts grand guarantee festival conference workshop

GADAG
The District Guarantee Implementation Authority Workshop and Festival Conference will be held on February 18 at 11 am at Vivekananda Sabha Bhavan in the city, and the event should be celebrated in a festive and well organized manner, said Chairman B.B. Asuti. He spoke at a preparatory meeting held at the Sub Divisional Officer's office, chaired by Ashok Mandal, Taluk Guarantee Implementation Authority Chairman. Senior leaders including State Guarantee Scheme Authority Chairman H.M. Revanna, Vice Chairman S.R. Patil, and District In charge Minister H.K. Patil are expected to attend. Committees have been formed to ensure smooth arrangements, and officers have been instructed to com-



plete assigned duties responsibly. Stalls displaying Pancha Guarantee Schemes and departmental services will be set up, and the program should be conducted without lapses. Asuti said the district has achieved 99.04 percent progress in guarantee schemes and the event should become a model conference for the state. Ashok Mandal urged officials to ensure large beneficiary participation, maintain cleanliness, arrange seating, drinking water, invi-

tations, banners, food, LED screens, and stage facilities. He also stressed timely delivery of benefits to eligible citizens. Special instructions were given to organize transport and bring Grihalakshmi Yojana beneficiaries in an orderly manner. On February 17, rangoli should be drawn outside beneficiaries' houses and shared with ward details through WhatsApp groups. Taluk committee members and officials attended the meeting and discussed coordination for a successful, disciplined conference. The administration appealed to citizens to participate actively and celebrate the guarantee achievements with unity, pride, and responsibility. Officials expressed confidence that the program will reflect efficient governance and public trust statewide inspiration.



ASHA workers trained on child rights laws

KARATAGI
An awareness program on child rights, child protection laws, and child safety was held for ASHA workers of Karatagi taluk on Friday at the Karatagi Community Health Center auditorium. The program was jointly organized by the District Administration, Zilla Panchayat, Women and Child Development Department, Health and Family Welfare Department, and the District Child Protection Unit, Koppal. Addressing the gathering, District Child Protection Officer Mahantaswamy Poojara said that parents or guardians who are unable or unwilling to care for a child should safely hand over the child to the Child Welfare Committee instead of abandoning the child. He explained that the identity of those who give up a child will be kept confidential, and the committee will ensure proper care and rehabilitation of the child in a family environment. He said adoption is a legal process that gives a child dignity, safety, and equal rights in a new family. Since 2015, with the support of various departments, 65 children in the district have been rescued.

Mahantaswamy Poojara urged guardians unable to care for children to approach the Child Welfare Committee for safe, confidential care

Of these, 44 children were adopted by families within the country and nine by families abroad. He added that some children could not be saved due to lack of timely treatment, while a few were shifted to other districts. Mahantaswamy warned that abandoning an unwanted child is a punishable offence. Illegal adoption is also a serious crime, and those involved can face up to five years of imprisonment and a fine of one lakh rupees under the law. He urged ASHA workers to spread awareness in villages and help create a safe environment for children. Legal Co-Probation Officer Shivleela Vannuru explained the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, while Ravikumar Pawar spoke on the Child Marriage Prohibition Act. Taluk Medical Officer Dr. Gowri Shankar, Community Health Center doctors, staff, and health officials were present and actively participated in the program.

Koppal to celebrate Madiwala Machideva Jayanti on February 16

KOPPAL
The district administration, Zilla Panchayat, Kannada and Culture Department, and Koppal Municipal Corporation will jointly celebrate Sri Madiwala Machideva Jayanti on February 16 at 11 am at Sahitya Bhavan, Koppal. The program will be inaugurated by Thangadgi Shivaraj Sangappa, Minister for Welfare of Backward Classes, Kannada and Culture, and Koppal District In-charge Minister. Doddanagouda Hanumagouda Patil, Chief Whip of the Opposition and Kushtagi MLA, and Basavaraja Rayareddy, Economic Advisor to the Chief Minister and Yelaburga MLA, will also attend. K. Raghavendra Hital, Koppal MLA, will preside over the event. Chief guests include Koppal MP K. Rajashekar Hital, Gangavathi MLA G. Janardhana Reddy, and Legislative Council members Shashil G. Namoshi, Dr. Chandrashekar B. Patil, Sharanagouda Annadanagouda Patil Bayyapura, and Hemalatha Nayaka. Officials such as Hasanasaba Nabisaba Dotihal, Chairman of Tungabhadra Project, Prasanna V. Gadada, Koppal Urban Development Authority Chairman, and Reddy Srinivasa, District Guarantee Scheme Implementation Authority Chairman, will also participate. A special lecture on life skills and motivation will be delivered by J.C. Rajashekar Bellary, member of Ramakrishna Vivekananda Ashram. Key officials including Deputy Commissioner Dr. Suresh B. Itnal, Zilla Panchayat CEO Varnit Negi, and District Superintendent of Police Dr. Ram L. Arasiddi will attend. The program highlights cultural reverence for Machideva's legacy and aims to engage citizens in celebrating Karnataka's rich folklore.

Huge crowds gather for Sriguru Kottureswar Rathotsava festival

VIJAYANAGARA
The Rathotsava of Sri Guru Kottureswara was celebrated with great fervor at Sri Kshetra Kottur in Vijayanagara, drawing massive crowds. More than five lakh devotees from across Karnataka and neighboring states participated in the festival, with lakhs more witnessing the celebrations. During the auspicious Mula Nakshatra, the tallest chariot (tera) was pulled through a sea of devotees. Traditional musical ensembles, including Samala and Nandikolu, filled the air with festive rhythm, adding joy to the occasion. The rituals included circumambulating the palanquin



five times around the chariot, after which Swami was enshrined inside the chariot. The procession then moved to Padagatte Basaveshwara Temple and continued along the Rathbeedi route. The Rathotsava, marked by grandeur and devotion, left a deep impression on attendees, celebrating faith, tradition, and community spirit in Vijayanagara. Devotees expressed their happiness and spiritual fulfillment at participating in the festival.

QUICK READ

Sant Sevalal Jayanti celebration set on February 15

Chitradurga
Chitradurga district will celebrate 'Sant Sri Sevalal Jayanti' on February 15 at 11 am in the Deputy Commissioner's Office Hall. The event is jointly organized by the District Administration, Zilla Panchayat, Kannada and Culture Department, and Municipal Council. Planning and Statistics Minister D. Sudhakar will inaugurate the ceremony, while MLA K.C. Veerendra Pappi will preside. Key dignitaries including MP Govinda M. Karajol, MLAs, Legislative Council members, and heads of various state boards and commissions will attend. The Banjara (Lambani) community leaders and members will participate, with cultural performances by D. Rajanna and his team from Mallurahalli.

Three women sentenced in prostitution case

Chikkaballapur
Three women involved in an illegal prostitution ring in Chikkaballapur city have been sentenced to seven years in prison each by the 1st Additional District and Sessions Court, Judge Kantaraju S.V. The accused had lured young women with false job promises in Bengaluru. Along with imprisonment, fines were imposed: Rs. 7,000 for the first accused, Rs. 10,000 for Lakshminarasamma, and Rs. 15,000 for Sharada. The case investigation was led by District Superintendent of Police Kusal Choukse. Government prosecutor Jihida Banu D. Kannoli successfully presented evidence leading to conviction, confirmed the Women's Police Station inspector.

Hebbal prepares to tackle summer water problem

BENGALURU
Urban Development and Urban Planning Minister and Hebbal MLA Bairati Suresh has said immediate action is being taken to prevent drinking water problems in the Hebbal constituency during the upcoming summer. Speaking after launching multiple development works, the minister highlighted road construction and drainage improvements at key locations including Puneeth Rajkumar Circle in Nagashettyhalli, Anjanamurthy Circle in Lottegoallahalli, Devasandra Circle near Kabaddi Ground, Krishnappa Layout near ISRO, Radhakrishna Temple in CIL Layout, and the road near Anjaneya Swamy Temple in Geddalahalli. Over 25 new borewells have been drilled, and old ones repaired, to ensure adequate water supply. Officials have been directed to fix existing borewells and drill additional ones wherever required. In addition, tanker supply arrangements are ready for any areas that may face shortages. The minister emphasized that precautionary measures this year are expected to prevent drinking water crises altogether. Road development is also underway, with nearly 300 roads being repaired or upgraded. Concrete roads are being constructed in selected locations to enhance durability. The total cost of these works is approximately 100 crore rupees, being executed simultaneously across the constituency. Minister Suresh said that the coordinated efforts of officials and modern infrastructure improvements will ensure residents face minimal inconvenience during summer.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, Peter carlsson, S/O Peter Ebenezer aged about 37 years residing at No 1565, 5th cross, sumathi nagar behind sumathi jain school, Robertsonpet KGF 563122. I state that I have changed my name from Peter carlsson peter ebnezer to Peter carlsson, vide affidavit dated 12/02/2026 Sworn before Thangaraj S, Notary public at KGF court hall.

CH

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Tourists banned from Jogimatti Forest to prevent fires

After last summer's fire, the forest department banned afternoon tourist entry; restrictions remain until March rains encourage new growth

CHITRADURGA
The Jogimatti Wildlife Sanctuary, known as the "Ooty of Karnataka," has been closed to tourists for a month to prevent forest fires. The sanctuary, covering 10,000 hectares and standing 3,803 feet above sea level, is home to leopards, bears, deer, wild boars, porcupines, and over 200 species of birds. It also has lakes, waterfalls, and medicinal plants. Last summer, part of the forest was damaged by fire. To avoid similar incidents, the forest department has banned tourists from entering. Earlier, visitors could come from 6



am to 11 am, but now no entry is allowed in the afternoons. Entry will remain restricted until the rains start in March, when new growth will appear in the forest. The sanctuary is a popular tourist spot because of its natural beauty and wildlife. Aadumalleswar Mini Zoo and Himawat Kedara Waterfalls are special attractions. The forest stretches across Chitradurga, Hiriyur, and Holalkere taluks. Visitors climbing to the hilltop cover 8 km on

gravel roads, enjoying views of animals and greenery along the way. DFO Gopya Naik said only officials, dignitaries, and government representatives are allowed during the closure. He urged people to follow the rules to protect wildlife and prevent accidents. Parking is arranged outside the sanctuary, and the forest roads can be risky during summer. The temporary closure aims to keep the forest safe, protect animals, and avoid mishaps. Tourists are encouraged to plan visits after the rainy season when the sanctuary reopens safely.

Dr. Abhinav highlighted deworming prevents anemia, malnutrition, and weight loss, boosting immunity, school attendance, and learning outcomes

Chitradurga children urged to take deworming pills

CHITRADURGA
District Health Officer Dr. G.P. Renuprasad emphasized the importance of deworming for children while inaugurating the 'National Deworming Day' program at Buddha Nagar Health Center. He said worms can harm both physical and mental development, and taking deworming tablets is crucial for children aged 1 to 19 to grow healthy and strong. Dr. Renuprasad explained that worms are parasites living in the human intestine, spreading through contaminated water, unclean food, and soil. Walking barefoot increases the risk of infection. He urged parents and children to maintain hygiene, wash hands regularly, and ensure proper sanitation. Program organizer Dr. Abhinav highlighted that worm infections can cause anemia, malnutrition, loss of appetite, and weight loss. Regular deworming not only boosts immunity but also improves school attendance and learning outcomes. District Planning Development Officer Dr. Kashi warned that children are more prone to worm infestations due to open defecation and playing barefoot. He advised parents to monitor their children's health closely. The event was attended by Taluk Health Officer Dr. Girish B.V., Medical Officer Dr. Surendra, Health Education Officers, Head Teacher Annapurna, Senior Health Inspector Srinivas, other health inspectors, and ASHA workers. Authorities urged families to ensure children take the deworming tablets as scheduled, reinforcing the goal of building a healthier generation in Chitradurga.



Red Rose exports soar for Valentine's Day

CHIKKABALLAPUR
With Valentine's Day around the corner, red roses are in high demand, bringing smiles to farmers in Chikkaballapur. Lovers across the country and abroad are eagerly buying these flowers to express their feelings, and traders are exporting them at Rs. 20 per rose. Farmers in Chikkaballapur and nearby Kolar districts have been cultivating roses in multiple colors, but red roses remain the most sought-after for Valentine's Day. Among the popular varieties are pink stem, glossy Waiyara, and thornless red Kangulabi, which are being purchased in large quantities by local and international traders. Krishnareddy, a farmer from Anur Hoskote in Chintamani taluk, grows roses on his four-acre farm, cultivating 16 different colors. He said the red roses are particularly in demand during this season, as people gift them to express love on occasions like Rose Day, Propose Day, and Valentine's Day itself. The spike in demand is giving a significant boost to the floriculture business, as roses grown locally are now reaching international markets. Farmers are optimistic about the sales, which not only support their livelihoods but also showcase Chikkaballapur's floriculture globally. With love and roses closely linked, this Valentine's season has become a festive time for both lovers and growers alike.

Maratha Community Food Aid Applications Open

CHITRADURGA
The Karnataka Maratha Community Development Corporation is now accepting applications for the Aahar Vahini (Food Kiosk) Scheme for 2025-26. This initiative supports urban Maratha entrepreneurs in Chitradurga by providing a Rs. 3 lakh subsidy to renovate four-wheeled electric vehicles for food distribution. Remaining costs can be covered via bank loans. To qualify, applicants must be aged 22 to 45, belong to the Maratha community (Category 3-B), and have an annual family income below Rs. 3 lakh. Additionally, a bank account linked to Aadhaar is required. Interested individuals should apply through the Seva Sindhu portal before the March 6, 2026 deadline. For complete details or assistance, candidates may visit the corporation's website or contact the District Manager at the D. Devaraj Urs Backward Classes Development Corporation office. This program aims to boost local livelihoods and promote sustainable business opportunities.

MAHASHIVRATRI NANDI RITUALS

Grand Nandi Brahmarathotsava draws devotees this year

CHIKKABALLAPUR
The annual Nandi Brahmarathotsava will be held at the Sri Yoga and Bhoga Nandeeshwaraswamy Temple in Nandi village of Chikkaballapur taluk, drawing thousands of devotees during the Mahashivratri period. The temple is a Category A notified institution under the Muzrai Department and the festival is held every year with traditional devotion. This year, the Brahmarathotsava on February 16 will be inaugurated by Higher Education Minister and district in charge Dr. M.C. Sudhakar in the presence of elected representatives, officials, saints, and devotees. A large crowd is expected from Chikkaballapur district, Bengaluru rural, Bengaluru urban, and nearby regions.



Free bus travel for 2nd PUC students

BENGALURU
The Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) has announced that students appearing for the 2nd PUC Annual Examinations 2026 will be allowed to travel free in all city, suburban, regular, and express buses on exam days. This facility will be available from February 28 to March 17, 2026. The decision comes following a request from the Chairman of the Karnataka Board of School Examination and Evaluation, who highlighted that many students are assigned examination centers outside their own institutions. To ensure smooth and safe travel, students need to present their Second PUC Examination Admit Card while boarding. All KSRTC drivers and operators have been instructed to provide full cooperation to the students. Special request stops will be arranged along bus routes near examination centers to make commuting easier. Authorities have also been asked to display this information on notice boards at all bus stations and KSRTC units. The Chief Traffic Manager, S. Rajesh, said that this initiative aims to reduce stress for students and make access to examination centers convenient and timely. Students and parents have welcomed the move, which ensures safe, affordable, and organized travel during the crucial examination period. This free travel facility is part of KSRTC's continuing efforts to support students and facilitate education in the state. Students from remote areas will especially benefit, allowing them to reach their exam centers without worrying about transport costs. Officials have emphasized that this scheme should be strictly followed by all bus staff, ensuring students can travel without any hindrance and return safely after the exams.

Astrologer's advice leads to shocking murder

TUMAKURU
A shocking incident has come to light in Anupanahalli village of Tumakuru taluk, where a woman allegedly killed her mother after believing the words of an astrologer. The deceased has been identified as Pushpalatha (55), a resident of Anupanahalli. She had been staying for a few days at her daughter Suchitra's house in Girinagar near Kyatsandra in Tumakuru city. Two days ago, Suchitra informed relatives that her mother had died and brought the body to Anupanahalli at night for the last rites. However, villagers grew suspicious and alerted Pushpalatha's brothers. After examining the body, they suspected foul play and filed a complaint with the police. During interrogation, police said Suchitra confessed to strangling her mother with a pillow. She allegedly acted after an astrologer told her that her mother was responsible for her father's death through black magic. Pushpalatha's husband, Babu Prasanna, had passed away about one and a half years ago. Police have taken Suchitra into custody and are continuing the investigation. The incident has shocked villagers and raised concerns about blind belief in superstition. Authorities have urged people not to fall prey to such practices, warning that superstition can destroy families and lives.



Vishwanath attacks state govt over development failures

Vishwanath urged making Hunsur a separate district named after D. Devaraj Urs, highlighting his land distribution legacy

HUNSUR

Senior MLC Vishwanath launched a sharp attack on the state government, alleging that it lacks character, health, and commitment to development. Speaking at a press conference at the Journalists' Association office in Hunsur, he said a government without moral strength and concern for public welfare cannot ensure progress.

He sarcastically remarked that the present administration, led by Siddaramaiah, has no character, no health, and even lacks good roads, adding that such leadership is pushing the state backward. He criticised today's politicians



and officials, saying many are more focused on money than meaningful work. According to him, discussions now revolve around bribes and land purchases, not public service.

Vishwanath said he has repeatedly urged the government to declare Hunsur taluk as a separate district and name it after former Chief

Minister D. Devaraj Urs. He recalled that Urs had distributed land to the poor, and said his legacy remains alive. He questioned claims about free rice, stating that both the state and Centre contribute equally.

Rejecting allegations that he stalled development, Vishwanath said he worked sincerely during his tenure and

completed projects within limited time. He also criticised internal power struggles in the ruling party, claiming promises made to the people are being broken. Former City Council President Ganesh Kumaraswamy was present at the conference.

He urged leaders to focus on roads, health, education, and jobs, instead of politics. He warned that people are watching closely and will respond democratically if governance continues to fail. Development, he stressed, must reach villages, farmers, workers, youth, women, and the poor without delay, bias, excuses, corruption, or empty slogans in Karnataka.

Manjanna's sacrifice praised by Arya Vaishya leader

HUNSUR

Karnataka State Arya Vaishya Development Corporation Board Chairman K. V. Ramaprasad has expressed deep gratitude to former MLA H. P. Manjanna for giving him an opportunity by sacrificing a reserved seat in the government.

After visiting the Sai Baba Temple and offering prayers, Ramaprasad spoke to reporters and said Manjanna was the only leader who trusted him and helped him get a place on the corporation board.

He said he would remain thankful throughout his life for this support and recognition. He added that many people want power, but very few are willing to step aside for others.

Ramaprasad said Manjan-

Ramaprasad said Manjanna refused the reserved seat for community representation, reflecting selflessness and commitment, and expressed confidence that taluk residents would support such leaders again

na clearly told him that he did not want the reserved seat and wanted someone from the community to get a chance. He said this decision showed Manjanna's selfless nature and commitment to community growth. He also expressed confidence that the people of the taluk would support such leaders again in the future.

Praising Manjanna further,

Ramaprasad said that even though he is not an MLA now, he still deserves to be one. He said Manjanna worked hard for the development of the taluk and earned respect at the state level through his service and leadership.

On the occasion, leaders of the Arya Vaishya community felicitated Ramaprasad with a memento. State Mahasabha President Ravi Shankar, former District Co-operative Bank Director Naga Prasad, Vasamba Co-operative Society President Rajeshwari, member Sunith, Secretary Ajay Gupta, and several others were present and extended their support. Ramaprasad called upon everyone to work together in the coming days for the progress and welfare of the community.

All adults, including special categories, can participate; committees and Sanjeevini staff must coordinate with companies and educational institutions

District job fair focuses inclusive employment opportunities

MANDYA

Zilla Panchayat Chief Executive Officer K. R. Nandini said the district-level job fair scheduled on February 21 aims to provide employment to all job aspirants, with special focus on the specially-abled. She spoke while presiding over a preparatory meeting at the Zilla Panchayat Mini Hall.

The job fair will be held from 9 am to 5 pm at Mandya University, jointly organized by the Department of Skill Development, Entrepreneurship and Livelihood, Deen Dayal Antyodaya Rural Skill Scheme, District Administration, Zilla Panchayat and the university.

She instructed officials to identify specially-abled candidates in advance and make suitable interview arrangements in a separate special room. She said wide publicity should be given taluk-wise and all elected representatives of the district should be invited as per protocol.

She suggested recording video and audio messages of



people's representatives and sharing them widely on social media and through Swachh Vahini vehicles in both rural and urban areas. Banners and posters should be displayed in educational institutions and crowded places.

Men, women, third gender persons, special category candidates and specially-abled persons above 18 years can participate. Employer registration committees should contact companies from various sectors and collect details of required qualifications. Taluk-level Sanjeevini staff should coordinate with educational insti-

tutions to register candidates. She said unemployed persons from Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, minorities, specially-abled groups, sexual minorities and other special categories must be registered. Candidates should report at the university campus by 9 am on the day.

She directed officials to arrange registration counters, a helpline, separate employer desks, food, drinking water, seating, medical facilities and ambulance services. Candidates must bring Aadhaar cards and qualification score sheets. Meal tokens will be provided to registered participants.

KOLAR

Farmers from several villages and members of Women Self-Help Groups in Kolar district took part in the programme aimed at strengthening financial awareness and agricultural development.

Addressing the gathering, M. Gururajachar, Chief Manager, Bengaluru Regional Office of the Central Bank of India, said farmers are the backbone of the nation, especially in this region where agriculture remains the primary source of livelihood. He noted that initiatives such as the Agri Credit Outreach programme are designed to help farmers enhance productivity and double their income. He urged participants to make full use of such schemes to achieve financial empower-



Central Bank of India organized the Mega Agriculture Credit Outreach program at Doddapet Auditorium in Kolar

ment.

Detailed information was shared on dairy farming, the Kisan Credit Card scheme and opportunities in food pro-

cessing units. Officials also highlighted key Central Government schemes that need to be widely implemented, including Pradhan Mantri Jan

Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY), Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY) and Atal Pension Yojana (APY).

Kolar Branch Head Smt. Subhashini said the Kisan Credit scheme has significantly benefited farmers and stressed the need to establish more food processing units in the region. She added that farmers can approach the bank branch for detailed guidance on agricultural loans.

During the event, loan sanction orders were distributed to beneficiaries. Among those present were Mr. Purushottam, former AGM, RBI; Smt. Vishalakshi from FLCC, Kolar district; Mr. Nataraj K., Secretary, Jeevan Mitra Social Service Society; along with bank officials and staff.

Deputy Commissioner makes surprise Pandavapura Office visit

MANDYA

The Deputy Commissioner of Mandya made an unexpected visit to the Pandavapura Taluk Office to review the functioning of various departments, staff attendance, and the delivery of public services.

During the inspection, he emphasized that all pending files in the e-office must be disposed of within the prescribed time. Officials were instructed to ensure timely issuance of certificates, including income, caste, residence, family tree, and land tenure,

under the Sakala scheme. He warned that delays would result in strict disciplinary action.

Following the inspection, the Deputy Commissioner met with Sub-Divisional Officers and other officials, providing guidance on the speedy delivery of public services

and effective implementation of government schemes. Sub-Divisional Officers, the Tahsildar of Pandavapura, and office staff were present. The visit underlined the administration's focus on accountability, efficiency, and better service for citizens

GOLDEN MASK HANDOVER...



The golden mask of Lord Parameshwar was handed over to Trayambakeshwara Temple authorities for Maha Shivaratri on Sunday. Kept in the Department of Muzrai's custody, devotees can view it only once a year. On Friday, temple priests received the mask under tight police security.

Wild elephant captured after fatal attack

MYSURU

The Forest Department has captured a 35-year-old wild elephant that had created fear in forest villages for nearly two months and allegedly killed a tribal resident named Mada. The elephant had also damaged railway tracks, vehicles, buildings, and farmers' crops in the region.

The animal reportedly came out of the Moleyur forest area in the Bandipur Tiger Reserve in search of food and entered farmland near Mathadakatte in Saraguru taluk. It destroyed standing crops, leading angry farmers and villagers to demand immediate action from forest officials.

Responding to the situation, forest staff tracked the elephant and car-

ried out a special operation. With the help of trained camp elephants including Eklavya, Sugriva, Prashantha, and Ayyappa, officials tranquilized the animal while it was in a farm at Katavalu village. The elephant was later shifted safely to the Rampur camp.

The operation was conducted under the guidance of ACF D. Paramesh and CF Prabhakaran. Anesthesia specialist Dr. Waseem Mirza administered the tranquilizer. Officials said the elephant had an injury to its right eye and minor wounds.

Meanwhile, in a separate incident, forest staff, with support from villagers, successfully drove another elephant back into the forest near Dadadahalli Hadi to prevent further conflict.

EDUCATION EMPOWERS ALL

'Schools teach life like caring mothers always'

MYSURU

Mysuru-Chamarajanagar Legislative Council member Dr. D. Thimmaiah said schools that shape life are like mothers, and giving back to one's school gives true meaning to success. He was speaking as chief guest at the 140th anniversary of the historic H. PBS School and the H.PBS Maha Sangram programme in the city.

Dr. Thimmaiah inaugurated a new kitchen worth ₹5 lakh donated from his MLA fund. He said protecting government schools is urgent today, as they remain rays of hope for poor families. He added that during his tenure he treated education as



sacred work and believed that real taluk development comes from strengthening schools.

Former MLA and school alumnus H. P. Manjunath recalled that the school once had only 19 stu-

dents and faced closure. He said sustained effort, a new committee, repairs, and a ₹11 lakh grant in 2011 helped rebuild it. Today, the school offers classes from LKG to Class 7, including En-

glish education, benefiting many poor children.

Sub-Divisional Officer Kavya Rani said government schools play a key role in producing talented citizens. She urged parents to support schools and guide children to limit mobile phone use.

Taluk Tahsildar Manjunath said government schools are the roots of the nation's future and must be preserved.

Several officials, teachers, SDMC members, parents, and students attended. Speakers agreed that government schools nurture values, discipline, and confidence, and deserve continued public support for inclusive, quality education.

NAME CHANGE

I, **ASMA**, W/o, Mustafa C.M.A, residing at No 633, 2nd Main, 9th Cross, Behind Police Station, Vinobanagara, K.G. Halli, Arabic College, Bengaluru-560045, have changed my name to **ASMA C.M.A**, vide affidavit dated: 13.02.2026, before Notary G.DAYANANDA, Bangalore.

NAME CHANGE

I, **RAHAMATULLA SHARIFF HUSSAIN SHARIEF**, S/o, Husain Sharief, Resident of Hosline Road Ward No 26, Hasan Dist, 573201, have changed my name to **RAHAMATHULLA SHARIEF**, vide affidavit dated: 13.02.2026 before notary B.A. LAKSHMINARAYANA RAO, Bengaluru.

NAME CHANGE

I, **ABDUL SAMAD ALERA MOIDU**, S/o, Alera Ummer Moidu, Resident of No 197, Chinivada Hudikeri Hobali Begur Virajapete Tallur Virajpet Dist, 571216, have changed my name to **ALEERA ABDUL SAMAD**, vide affidavit dated: 13.02.2026 before notary B.A. LAKSHMINARAYANA RAO, Bengaluru.

CH CLASSIFIEDS

To place a classified ad contact: **080-41209042**

BENGALURU NORTH CITY CORPORATION
Office of the Executive Engineer, Pulikeshinagar Division,
Robertson Road, Bangalore.

No: EE/(PN)/TEND/PR/09/ 2025-26

Date:13-02-2026

SHORT TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Through GOK Karnataka Public Procurement Portal only-Single Cover System)

Tenders on item rate basis are invited by the undersigned on behalf of the Commissioner BNCC for the works mentioned below from the registered contractors of equivalent registration with CPWD / KPWD / Railways / MES or any State Government Organizations.

The Tender Document can be downloaded from the GOK KPPP Website <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in> on payment of prescribed fee noted against each item of work (non-refundable) in the form of e-Payment through KPPP Platform. The Tenderer should accompany a copy of the valid contractor Registration and shall be submitted through KPP Portal. (Standard Tender Document KW2).

Sl. No	Name of the Work/Est Cost (in Lakhs)/EMD in Rupees/Category.
For General Category Works	
1	Annual Maintenance of Ward and Desilting of Drains in ward no 72, D.J. Halli for the year 2025-26 (Deposit Contribution to Roshannagar Multistoried Individual houses). Estimate Cost : Rs.30.00 Lakhs , EMD Rs.60,000/- .
2	Construction of New Culverts in ward Dubai Layout in ward no 48(71) Muneshwaranagar (2nd Call). Estimate Cost : Rs.10.00 Lakhs , EMD Rs.25,000/- .
For SC Category Works	
1	Annual Maintenance of Ward and Desilting of Drains in ward no 73, S.K. Garden for the year 2025-26 (Deposit Contribution to Roshannagar Multistoried Individual houses). Estimate Cost : Rs.30.00 Lakhs , EMD Rs.30,000/- .
2	Improvements to road & drain in Anwar Layout 1st Main and Surrounding in ward no 31(70) Kushalanagar for the year 2025-26 Estimate Cost : Rs.40.00 Lakhs , EMD Rs.40,000/- .
3	Improvements to Drain & construction from Hindu Burial Ground Entrance to Ashrama Layout Entrance in ward no 71(48) Muneshwaranagar for the year 2025-26 (2nd Call). Estimate Cost : Rs.40.00 Lakhs , EMD Rs.40,000/- .
For ST Category Works	
1	Improvements to roads and drains at Muttumariyamma temple and Surrounding in ward no 48(71) Muneshwaranagar for the year 2025-26 (2nd Call). Estimate Cost : Rs.20.00 Lakhs , EMD Rs.25,000/- .

Calendar of events: (1) Tender Documents may be downloaded from KPPP portal : **20.02.2026**, (2) Pre-Bid Meeting will be held on: **25-02-2026 at 15:00 Hrs** noon in the office of the Executive Engineer, Pulikeshinagar Division, Robertson Road, Frazer Town, Bangalore-560 005. (3) Last Date & Time for Receipts of tenders : **05-03-2026 up to 16:00 hours**. (4) Date of Opening of Financial Bid : **06-03-2026 after 16:30 hours**.

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Pulikeshinagar Division, Zone-1
Bengaluru North City Corporation

Rotten Meat Trade: MLAs Demand Crackdown

Lawmakers seek strict action, property attachment, stronger enforcement.

JAMMU

Several legislators in Jammu and Kashmir on Friday demanded stringent action against those involved in the illegal trade of rotten meat, including the attachment of properties to deter offenders. The issue was raised in the Assembly amid growing public concern over food safety and rising health risks.

Members of the Jammu & Kashmir National Conference (NC), including MLAs Mubarak Gul, Mir Saifullah, Pirzada Farooq Ahmad Shah, and Hasnain Masoodi, pressed for strict enforcement and preventive measures while raising questions related to food adulteration and the sale of spoiled meat. They



voiced serious concern over increasing health complications and alleged that the consumption of contaminated food could be contributing to the rise in cancer cases and frequent disease outbreaks.

Mubarak Gul urged authorities to track down individuals engaged in the illegal trade and attach their properties as a strong deterrent. He stressed that exemplary punishment would send a clear message

and prevent recurrence of such activities.

Pirzada Farooq Ahmad Shah called for the establishment of slaughterhouses in every Municipal Committee to ensure hygienic meat processing and better regulatory oversight. He also sought a half-hour discussion in the House to deliberate comprehensively on the matter.

Other members emphasized the urgent need to strengthen manpower within enforcement agencies, improve inspection mechanisms, and introduce stricter monitoring systems to prevent similar incidents in the future.

Responding to the concerns, Health Minister Sakina Itoo acknowledged the shortage of staff in the department, admit-

ting that manpower deficiency remains a significant challenge. She informed the House that the recruitment process to fill vacant posts has already been initiated, underlining that public health concerns cannot be taken lightly.

However, the minister clarified that under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, Food Safety Officers are not empowered to make arrests. Their authority includes inspecting premises, collecting food samples, issuing improvement notices, suspending or cancelling licences, launching prosecutions, and filing complaints in courts. Arrest powers, she noted, rest solely with the police under the provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code.



Radha Devi Saraogi Passes Away, Leaders Mourn Loss

PATNA

Radha Devi Saraogi, mother of Bihar BJP President Sanjay Saraogi, passed away on Friday at the age of 72 after a brief illness. She had been undergoing treatment at P. D. Hinduja Hospital in Mumbai, where she breathed her last.

Known for her deep religious faith and active involvement in social work, Radha Devi Saraogi was regarded as a compassionate and simple woman who touched many lives through her quiet service and dedication. Her demise has cast a pall of grief over her family, relatives, well-wishers, and members of the political fraternity across Bihar. Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary expressed profound sorrow over her passing. Both leaders personally spoke to the bereaved family over the phone and conveyed their heartfelt condolences during this difficult time. In his condolence message, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar described Radha Devi Saraogi as a kind-hearted and simple woman with a strong inclination towards social service. He prayed for the eternal

Mother of Bihar BJP chief dies at 72.

peace of the departed soul and for strength to the family to bear this irreparable loss. Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary also shared his grief, stating that he was deeply saddened to learn about the demise of the revered mother of the BJP state president. He prayed for the departed soul to attain a place at God's feet and for the bereaved family to find the strength to endure the immense sorrow.

Sanjay Saraogi, who was elected as an MLA from Darbhanga City in the 2025 Bihar Assembly elections, was recently appointed as the state president of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) by the party's top leadership. He is considered an influential leader in the Mithilanchal region and enjoys a strong grassroots presence in the state. Meanwhile, family members are bringing the mortal remains of Radha Devi Saraogi back to Bihar from Mumbai. Her last rites are scheduled to be performed later on Friday in accordance with family traditions.

QUICK READ

Annpurna Devi to spearhead conference on workplace safety

New Delhi

Union Minister for Women and Child Development Annpurna Devi will lead discussions on the creation of safe, dignified and harassment-free workplaces for women across sectors at a national conference beginning here on Saturday, an official said. At the 'National Conference on Safety of Women at Workplace (She-Box)', being organised by the Ministry, Minister Annpurna Devi will administer a National Workplace Safety Pledge, according to an official statement. An international roundtable with UN agencies and multilateral institutions on global best practices in workplace safety will also be held, bringing together around 1,500 participants from more than 100 government and private organisations.

J&K MLAs demand attachment of property penalty

Jammu

Several MLAs on Friday demanded stronger action, including attachment of property, against those involved in the rotten meat trade in J&K. National Conference (NC) MLAs Mubarak Gul, Mir Saifullah, Pirzada Farooq Ahmad Shah, and Hasnain Masoodi demanded strict enforcement, stronger preventive measures and even attachment of properties of those involved in the rotten meat trade as they raised the issue through their questions related to food adulteration and sale of rotten meat. The lawmakers expressed serious concern over rising health issues and alleged that consumption of rotten food could be contributing to increasing cases of cancer and frequent outbreaks of diseases.

India reaffirms commitment to peace, progress, bilateral ties

Modi Congratulates Tarique Rahman On Bangladesh Election Victory

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday held a telephonic conversation with Tarique Rahman, chairman of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), congratulating him on his party's sweeping victory in the Bangladesh parliamentary elections. The BNP-led alliance secured 210 seats, comfortably crossing the majority mark and paving the way for the formation of a new government in Bangladesh.

Following the phone call, PM Modi shared details of the conversation on X, expressing delight at speaking with Rahman and congratulating him on what he described as a remarkable victory. He conveyed India's best wishes and support for Rahman's efforts to fulfil the aspirations of the people of Bangladesh. Emphasising the close relationship between the two countries, Modi reaf-



firmed India's commitment to peace, progress, and prosperity for both nations, highlighting their deep-rooted historical and cultural ties.

Earlier in the day, after election results were announced in Dhaka, the Prime Minister had extended warm congratulations to Rahman for leading the BNP to a decisive mandate. He noted that the outcome reflected the trust reposed by the people of Bangladesh in Rahman's

leadership. Modi also reiterated that India would continue to support a democratic, progressive, and inclusive Bangladesh and expressed his willingness to work together to strengthen multifaceted bilateral relations and advance shared development goals.

Tarique Rahman is set to take oath as the Prime Minister of Bangladesh on Saturday, marking the return of a male prime minister to the country after nearly 35 years. The BNP's landslide win signals a major political shift, while the Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami, often described as a radical outfit, is expected to finish a distant second.

The development is being closely watched in New Delhi, with expectations that the new government in Dhaka will further deepen cooperation in trade, connectivity, security, and regional development.

Modi to kickstart several projects during one-day Assam visit

GUWAHATI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will attend an air show at Moran in upper Assam's Dibrugarh district and inaugurate several key infrastructure and education projects across the state, officials said on Friday. According to the schedule, the Prime Minister will depart from New Delhi early Saturday morning and arrive at Chabua airport at around 7.15 a.m. From Chabua, he will proceed to Moran in Upper Assam, where he is scheduled to attend an air show showcasing advanced aerial manoeuvres.

The air show and inauguration of Emergency Landing Facility (ELF) of aircraft on the national highway at Moran is being seen as a major event, highlighting the growing strategic importance of Upper Assam and the state's expanding role in India's defence and aviation preparedness.

Delhi CM Rekha Gupta, Ministers open 51 new Ayushman Arogya Mandirs

NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Friday led her Cabinet Ministers and BJP legislators in launching 51 new Ayushman Arogya Mandirs across the city, taking the number of these neighbourhood health centres to 370 within one year. Speaking at an event in Chhatarpur constituency, Chief Minister Gupta hit out at the previous Congress government, which was in power for 15 years and the Aam Aadmi Party government, which ruled for 11 years.

They came and went away without really resolving public grievances, but ever since voters have shown trust in the BJP and brought it to power, Delhi has started returning to the development track, she said.

In a message on social me-



dia, she said, Giving momentum to the resolve of Viksit Delhi, today development works worth more than Rs 322 crore were inaugurated for Viksit Chhatarpur Assembly.

She said, Chhatarpur's history is intertwined with the soul of Delhi's history. Every inch of land here bears witness to Delhi's journey of development. But for a long time, previous governments had put the brake on the de-

velopment of this area. In just one year, under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, our government has connected Chhatarpur to the mainstream of development.

Through these projects inaugurated today, extensive work will be undertaken on road construction and repair, strengthening of drains, upgradation of schools, resolution of traffic problems,

and enhancement of basic infrastructure, she said.

This development will make the lives of local people easier and connect the area to new possibilities, she said at an event attended by MP Ramvir Singh Bidhuri, MLA Kartar Singh Tanwar and MCD South Zone Chairman Umed Singh Fogaat.

Meanwhile, Minister of Health and Family Welfare Pankaj Kumar Singh said that more than 14 lakh citizens have availed treatment since the BJP government started opening Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (AAMs).

Launching an AAM at Madipur, which is part of 51 Mandirs launched across the national capital, he said, with the launch of these 51 centres across Delhi, the total number of Ayushman Arogya Mandirs in the city has reached 370.

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The battle for Pala has once again brought internal dynamics within the Kerala Congress (M) into sharp focus, with Minister Roshy Augustine's repeated assertion that party Chairman and Rajya Sabha MP Jose K. Mani will contest from the Assembly seat triggering visible discomfort within sections of the party. For the Mani family, Pala is political legacy.

The late K. M. Mani held the Assembly constituency in an unbroken run from 1967 until his demise in 2019.

Yet, the by-election that followed altered the landscape, with Jose's nominee losing.

In 2021, after aligning his faction with the CPI-M-led LDF, Jose contested from Pala Assembly constituency while serving as a Rajya Sabha member and was defeated again, even as five of his party members won, cementing Kerala Congress (M) as the third-largest ally in the Left front. The arithmetic has since grown more delicate.

The 2019 by-election winner, Mani C. Kappan who had

then enjoyed Left support shifted to the Congress-led UDF.

A second straight defeat for Jose in Pala Assembly seat could prove politically costly, prompting what insiders describe as a calibrated wait-and-watch approach on his candidature.

It is in this context that Roshy's announcement at Adimali during the LDF central region march where he took the microphone to declare Jose as the Pala candidate has assumed significance. Though, Jose later said that a collective decision is pending and termed Roshy's remarks as enthusiastic, sources suggest he has been privately upset over the repeated public assertions. Complicating matters further, Kappan has now gone on record claiming he possesses detailed information about Jose's alleged discussions with leaders of the Congress-led UDF regarding a possible shift. Roshy had earlier publicly dismissed any talk of a front change, even as speculation swirled after the Left's recent electoral setbacks.

JUDICIAL COMPLAINT MECHANISM

Govt Reaffirms In-House Mechanism For Judicial Complaints

NEW DELHI

The Union government on Friday reiterated that complaints against judges of the higher judiciary are addressed through an in-house mechanism evolved by the judiciary itself, underscoring the constitutional principle of judicial independence. The clarification came in response to a query raised in the Lok Sabha.

Replying on behalf of the government, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Law and Justice Arjun Ram Meghwal stated that the independence of the judiciary is firmly enshrined in the Constitution of India. He explained that

complaints received against judges and Chief Justices of High Courts are handled internally by the judiciary, in accordance with established procedures.

In a written statement laid on the table of the Lok Sabha, Meghwal said that grievances against members of the higher judiciary are examined under the in-house mechanism, with the Chief Justice of India (CJI) and Chief Justices of High Courts empowered to deal with such matters. As per the procedure, the CJI is competent to receive complaints against judges of the Supreme Court and Chief Justices of High Courts, while Chief Jus-



tices of High Courts are authorised to examine complaints against judges serving in their respective High Courts.

The minister further noted that on May 7, 1997, the Supreme Court of India adopted two key resolutions — The

Restatement of Values of Judicial Life and the In-house Procedure. These were intended to lay down standards of judicial conduct and provide remedial measures in cases where judges fail to adhere to accepted ethical norms.

Complaints received through the Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS) or via any other mode are forwarded to the CJI or the respective Chief Justices of High Courts for appropriate action.

Sharing data provided by the Supreme Court, Meghwal informed the House that the number of complaints received in the office of the CJI against sitting judges over the past decade has fluctuated. The figures stood at 729 in 2016, 682 in 2017, 717 in 2018, 1,037 in 2019, 518 in 2020, 686 in 2021, 1,012 in 2022, 977 in 2023, 1,170 in 2024 and 1,102 in 2025.

QUICK READ

Carney to Attend Vigil After Deadly Tumbler Ridge Shooting

Toronto
Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney will attend a vigil on Friday in the small community of Tumbler Ridge, where nine people were killed in one of the deadliest mass shootings in the country's recent history, his office confirmed. According to police, 18-year-old Jesse Van Rootselaar, who had reportedly struggled with mental health issues, began the attack on Tuesday by killing her mother and stepbrother. Authorities said she then went to a local school, where she fatally shot a teacher and five young students. The tragedy has deeply shaken the tight-knit northern British Columbia community, where residents are grappling with grief and disbelief. Tumbler Ridge, known for its remote location and small population, is not accustomed to such violence, making the scale of the attack particularly devastating.

Over 91 per cent buildings in Sindh lack fire safety arrangements

Islamabad
An inspection of buildings conducted by the Sindh government committee has revealed that 91.3 per cent of the buildings in province lacked fire safety arrangements, Pakistani media reported on Friday. The government has decided to seal high-risk buildings which were found by the committee in violation of fire safety laws in Sindh. The committee was set up after the fire incident in Karachi's Gul Plaza which claimed lives of nearly 80 people, injured hundreds and caused financial loss for thousands of people, Pakistan's leading daily 'The Express Tribune' reported.

U.S. Deploys Second Aircraft Carrier to Middle East

WASHINGTON
The United States is sending a second aircraft carrier to the Middle East as tensions with Iran intensify, U.S. media reported. The move marks a significant escalation in Washington's military posture in a region already marked by instability. The USS Gerald R. Ford, one of the Navy's most advanced aircraft carriers, will deploy from the Caribbean with its escort ships, according to The New York Times, citing U.S. officials. The carrier strike group is expected to

strengthen American naval presence and act as a deterrent amid rising friction with Tehran. The White House and the Pentagon did not immediately comment. Such deployments typically signal heightened readiness and send a strategic message to adversaries. Aircraft carriers are key to U.S. power projection, supporting air operations, maritime security and allied forces. The Middle East has seen recurring tensions with Iran, including maritime incidents and proxy conflicts, underscoring the fragile security situation.

SU DO KU

Brain-Bender: Can You Solve It?

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

Solutions to Yesterday's puzzle

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) secured a sweeping victory in Friday's parliamentary elections, marking a dramatic political comeback after nearly two decades out of power. The result is set to reshape the country's governance and economic direction, as party leader Tarique Rahman prepares to assume the role of prime minister at a critical moment in the nation's history. According to the Election Commission, the BNP and its allies won at least 212 of the 299 contested seats in the Jatiya Sangsad, also known as the House of the Nation. The opposition Jamaat-e-Islami and its allies secured 77 seats, consolidating a strong parliamentary presence. The vote has been widely described as Bangladesh's first genuinely

Afghanistan minister slams neighbouring nations

KABUL
Afghanistan's Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock Ataullah Omari has slammed neighbouring nations for their policy of deporting Afghan refugees, saying that host nations have deported refugees breaching humanitarian principles, human rights and refugee rights, local media reported on Friday. He stated that more than 4.5 million Afghan refugees have returned to Afghanistan from various nations since the start of the expulsion process, Afghanistan-based media outlet. He said, Our brothers were forcibly expelled from their homes. They were hosted for nearly 40 years, but in the end, they were deported by force and in violation of humanitarian principles.

BNP Secures Historic Landslide Election Victory

Bangladesh's opposition party wins decisively, reshaping political landscape



DHAKA
competitive election in years, reflecting a renewed democratic engagement among citizens. Rahman, 60, is the son of former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and assassinated former President Ziaur Rahman. His political ascent comes at a time when Bangladesh is recovering from prolonged unrest and economic instability that followed the collapse of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's government in 2024. In the months since that collapse, an interim administration led by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus has overseen the country's transition. However, the political uncertainty and disruptions significantly affected key sectors, particularly the vital garment industry, which remains a

backbone of Bangladesh's export economy. Rahman faces immediate and formidable challenges. Restoring political stability will be crucial to ensuring public confidence in democratic institutions. Equally pressing is the need to revive investor trust, which weakened during months of turmoil. Rebuilding industries, stabilizing markets, and addressing economic disruptions will test the new administration's policy direction and leadership capabilities. Despite clear trends in favor of the BNP for more than 12 hours, Rahman has yet to publicly comment on the outcome. The BNP has urged supporters to refrain from large-scale celebrations and instead offer special prayers, signaling a measured approach as the party prepares to transition into governance.

Election victory paves way for stable Thai government

Bhumjaithai and Pheu Thai Unite to Form Coalition

BANGKOK

Thailand's political landscape shifted significantly after the Bhumjaithai Party secured a decisive victory in Sunday's general election. Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul confirmed on Friday that his party will join hands with the third-place Pheu Thai Party to form a coalition government, strengthening its hold on parliament. According to calculations based on election commission data, Bhumjaithai secured 193 seats in the 500-member House of Representatives, marking a surprise landslide win. The reformist People's Party followed with 118 seats, while Pheu Thai claimed 74 seats. The combined strength of Bhumjaithai and Pheu Thai ensures a comfortable parliamentary majority, potentially



ushering in a more stable phase of governance after years of political turbulence. Pheu Thai's influence remains significant, bolstered by the backing of former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra, who remains imprisoned but continues to wield considerable political clout. His party's decision to support Anutin signals a pragmatic alliance aimed at consolidating power and preventing prolonged coalition negotiations. Addressing reporters after discussions with Pheu Thai leaders, Anutin emphasized cooperation and national in-

terest. We will work together as a government and manage the country so we can do good things for the country, he said, projecting confidence in the coalition's ability to govern effectively. The alliance is expected to provide legislative stability, enabling the new government to advance policy priorities and address economic and social challenges. Observers note that while ideological differences exist among coalition partners, the broad majority in parliament reduces the likelihood of immediate political deadlock. As Thailand moves forward under this new coalition framework, attention will turn to how effectively the partnership translates electoral strength into cohesive governance and long-term political stability.

North Korea to Hold Ninth Party Congress This Month

PYONGYANG

North Korea is set to convene its Ninth Party Congress later this month, a pivotal political event designed to reinforce leader Kim Jong Un's authority and project his image as both a benevolent domestic figure and commander of a formidable military power. The once-every-five-year congress is one of the most significant events in the country's political calendar, shaping national priorities for years to come. In the lead-up to the congress, Kim has conducted high-profile visits to a range of military and economic sites across the isolated state. These include a cruise missile launch facility and a large-scale greenhouse farm, underscoring efforts to showcase advancements in both

defense capabilities and food production. The tours are widely seen as part of a broader campaign to highlight achievements under his leadership ahead of the gathering. The congress, expected to open on an undisclosed date in late February, will assess the outcomes of the current five-year development strategy and set new goals. At the previous congress in 2021, Kim openly acknowledged that the earlier economic plan had failed in almost every sector. He then called for increased investment in heavy industry while also strengthening agriculture and light industry to boost the supply of consumer goods. Observers say the upcoming congress comes at a critical juncture, both domestically and internationally. Eco-

nom challenges persist under continued sanctions and limited trade, while geopolitical tensions remain elevated. Rachel Minyoung Lee, a senior fellow at the Stimson Center's Korea Program and 38 North, noted that the multi-day event will provide valuable insights into Kim's domestic and foreign policy direction for the next five years. The congress is expected not only to review past shortcomings but also to signal how North Korea intends to navigate economic pressures and external diplomatic dynamics. As anticipation builds, the Ninth Party Congress stands as a key moment for Pyongyang, offering clues about the regime's strategic trajectory and reinforcing Kim's consolidated grip on power.

Marco Rubio Calls Transatlantic Alliance at Critical Crossroads

WASHINGTON



Secretary highlights evolving geopolitics before key Munich security gathering

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio has warned that relations between the United States and Europe are at a defining moment as global politics undergo rapid and profound change. Speaking ahead of the annual Munich Security Conference, Rubio acknowledged the uncertainty shaping the transatlantic partnership but adopted a notably warmer and more reassuring tone compared to the tensions seen a year earlier. At last year's Munich gathering, U.S. Vice President JD Vance openly criticized European allies, triggering diplomatic confrontations and raising concerns that Washington was prepared to rethink — or even dismantle — parts of the international order it had long championed. The remarks unsettled European leaders, many of whom began reassessing their strategic dependence on the United States. Since then, Washington's partners have sought to strike a delicate balance: preserving the foundations of the transatlantic alliance while carving out a more independent course in security, trade, and foreign policy. This recalibration comes amid mounting global pressures, including Russian invasion of Ukraine and significant disruptions in global trade systems that have tested economic resilience on both sides of the Atlantic. Rubio emphasized that the pace of global change leaves little room for complacency. I think it's at a defining moment ... the world is changing very fast right in front of us,

he said before departing for Munich. He acknowledged that the geopolitical landscape of today differs fundamentally from that of previous decades. The Old World is gone, Rubio remarked, suggesting that governments must rethink their roles and responsibilities in a new strategic era. Despite recognizing these shifts, Rubio reaffirmed the deep-rooted ties binding the United States and Europe. He stressed that the two remain closely interconnected and that their futures will continue to be linked. His comments appear aimed at reassuring allies that, while policy debates may continue, the fundamental partnership remains intact. Rubio's appearance also carries political implications at home, as he is viewed as a potential rival to Vance in the 2028 U.S. presidential race. Yet in Munich, the central message was one of dialogue and recalibration — a call for renewed discussions about what the future of the transatlantic alliance should look like in an increasingly complex world.

Far-Right Linked Union Targets Mercedes Plant Workers Vote

FRANKFURT

Zentrum challenges mainstream unions at key German auto factory. On a dark February morning at Mercedes-Benz's vast Untertuerkheim plant in Germany, workers arriving for the early shift were greeted not by managers, but by activists from Zentrum. The group, a self-styled union affiliated with the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD), is seeking to reshape representation at one of Europe's most iconic automotive sites. Handing out pamphlets emblazoned with the word Game-changer, Zentrum activists are campaigning ahead of elections to the factory's works council. The works council system in Germany plays a powerful role in representing employee interests within companies, particularly in large industrial firms such as Mercedes-Benz. Control or influence within such councils can shape workplace policies, negotiations over layoffs, and strategic decisions affecting thousands of workers. Zentrum claims that mainstream unions have failed to



adequately protect the automotive sector from sweeping job cuts and structural changes. Germany's auto industry is undergoing a profound transformation as manufacturers transition toward electric vehicles and digital technologies. This shift has led to restructuring plans and fears of workforce reductions across several major firms. The AfD-linked group argues that traditional labor representatives have been too closely aligned with corporate management or political elites, leaving workers vulnerable amid industrial change. By positioning itself as an alternative voice, Zentrum is attempting to tap into anxieties among factory employees concerned about job security and the future of Germany's manufacturing base. Critics, however, warn that the growing presence of politically affiliated unions could inject broader ideological battles into workplace representation. The involvement of a group tied to the AfD — a party known for its nationalist and anti-establishment positions — signals a new dimension in labor politics within Germany's flagship industries.

ODESA PORT STRIKE

Russian Strikes Kill 3 Brothers, Hit Key Odesa Port

MOSCOW



Three Ukrainian brothers, including an eight-year-old child, were killed near the eastern front line in renewed violence linked to the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine, Ukrainian officials said on Friday. The attack, which occurred in the Donetsk region, also left their mother and grandmother injured, according to local prosecutors. Two of the brothers were 19 years old. In a separate assault, a Russian drone strike targeted one of Ukraine's critical Black

Sea ports near Odesa, killing one person and injuring six others. The ports in and around Odesa are vital maritime export hubs, forming the backbone of Ukraine's for-

eign trade and sustaining its wartime economy. Despite repeated attacks, these ports have continued to function, underscoring their strategic importance.

Deputy Prime Minister Oleksiy Kuleba said Russia launched massive strikes on port and railway infrastructure, highlighting the scale of the latest offensive. He reported damage to business facilities, fertilizer warehouses, and vehicles, including freight wagons. The attack also sparked a fire, adding to the destruction of essential infrastructure. The Ukrainian Sea Ports Authority did not disclose the exact port targeted, stating only that it was one of the three major facilities around Odesa. Despite the damage,

operations continued, reflecting Ukraine's efforts to maintain export flows under constant threat. Moscow has recently intensified strikes on Ukraine's energy and port infrastructure, aiming to weaken the country's economy and logistics network. At the same time, Kyiv has responded by targeting Russian oil facilities, escalating the tit-for-tat attacks. These developments come as U.S.-led diplomatic efforts to bring the war to an end remain stalled, prolonging uncertainty and hardship for civilians.

QUICK READ



New CPI series to make poverty estimates, policy responses more accurate: CEA

New Delhi
As India launched the Consumer Price Index (CPI) series with 2024 as the base year, Chief Economic Advisor (CEA) V. Anantha Nageswaran has said the change better reflects household spending patterns, makes poverty estimates more accurate, adding that the new findings reveal income growth and productivity gains. The new CPI series found rising service consumption, as the share of food in domestic budgets declined and more accurate data will help fiscal and monetary policy makers formulate better responses to evolving economic conditions, Nageswaran said.

Reliance Industries likely to get licence from US for Venezuelan oil

Mumbai
The United States has issued a general licence to India's Reliance Industries Ltd that will allow the refiner to buy Venezuelan oil directly without violating sanctions, two sources familiar with the matter said. Following the US capture of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro earlier this month, US officials said Washington would ease sanctions imposed on Venezuela's energy industry to facilitate a \$2 billion oil supply deal between Caracas and Washington and an ambitious \$100 billion reconstruction plan for the country's oil industry. A general licence authorises the purchase, exportation, and sale of Venezuelan-origin oil.

US Inflation Steady as Fed Weighs Rate Outlook

WASHINGTON
U.S. consumer prices likely maintained a steady pace of increase in January as businesses adjusted prices at the start of the year, economists said, potentially giving the Federal Reserve room to keep interest rates unchanged for the time being. The anticipated rise in inflation comes as the labor market shows signs of stabilization. The upcoming Consumer Price Index (CPI) report from the U.S. Department of Labor is expected to show that inflationary pressures remain persistent, though not accelerating sharply. Analysts suggest that part of the January price movement reflects routine annual adjustments by businesses, alongside the ongoing pass-through effects of trade policies.

BJP and Congress Clash Over Farmers and US Trade Deal

Privilege motion row deepens amid allegations of misinformation

NEW DELHI

A sharp political confrontation broke out on Friday as the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Indian National Congress clashed over alleged remarks related to farmers and a proposed trade understanding with the United States. The exchange escalated into a dispute over a privilege motion, with both sides accusing each other of spreading misinformation.

Union Minister Giriraj Singh dismissed the Opposition's allegations as baseless. What farmers' issue? Lies, just like Rafale, are spreading confusion among people, he said, accusing Congress leaders of deliberately misleading



the public. Referring to statements made by Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal, Singh asserted that there would be no compromise on farmers' interests. He further alleged that the

Opposition was attempting to incite unrest. They want to create confusion in the country; they want to incite a civil war in the nation, Singh claimed, adding that those raising the issue should face not only a privilege motion but possibly legal action as well. He emphasized that no joint statement had been signed yet and that discussions with the U.S. were still in the question-and-answer phase.

Responding strongly, Congress MP Pramod Tiwari termed the privilege motion politically motivated. He argued that anyone familiar with parliamentary procedure would find the proposal hollow and designed purely for

publicity. Defending Lok Sabha Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi, Tiwari stated that Gandhi can neither be intimidated nor threatened and remains committed to standing up for farmers and labourers.

Congress MP Rajeev Shukla echoed similar sentiments, insisting the party would continue opposing the proposed U.S. trade arrangement. He alleged that India's interests had been compromised in the deal.

The heated exchange highlights escalating political tensions as debates over farmers' welfare and international trade negotiations take centre stage in Parliament, with both sides digging in ahead of further discussions.



INDIA, ISRAEL DEEPEN AI AND CLIMATE TECH PARTNERSHIP

NEW DELHI

India and Israel are strengthening cooperation in artificial intelligence (AI), climate innovation and digital transformation, with a clear focus on solving real-world challenges such as resilient agriculture, future-ready skills, and responsible AI applications. An official statement on Friday highlighted the growing strategic alignment between the two countries in emerging technologies.

The Embassy of Israel in New Delhi announced the arrival of a high-level Israeli delegation for the upcoming India AI Impact Summit 2026. The delegation is led by Ilan Fluss, former Ambassador and EDTs Policy Coordinator at Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and includes senior government officials, technology leaders, researchers and policy experts.

The discussions will centre on AI for climate adaptation, precision agriculture, digital public infrastructure, workforce transformation and ethical governance of emerging technologies. Both sides aim to deepen collaboration in AI, deep tech, ESG investment, digital governance and responsible innovation.

At a time when artificial intelligence is reshaping the global order, India and Israel

High-level Israeli delegation to attend India AI Impact Summit

have a joint responsibility to lead with innovation guided by ethics, Fluss said, emphasizing that technological progress must align with human values. He described the Summit as symbolising a new chapter in bilateral relations, where co-creation in AI and digital public goods can serve as a bridge between the two societies and a model for global cooperation.

Maya Sherman, Innovation Attaché at the Embassy, underlined the shared vision of people-centric technology. She said the Impact Summit reflects deep trust between the two innovation ecosystems and a commitment to inclusive, ethical and socially grounded technological development.

In the lead-up to the Summit, the Embassy organised side events connecting Israeli and Indian stakeholders across academia, industry and government. During the main sessions at Bharat Mandapam, the Embassy will collaborate with institutions such as Indian Institute of Technology Ropar, Dhirubhai Ambani University and tech policy think-tank The Dialogue.

Unified strategy bridges specialist gaps and scales proactive care nationwide

India Integrates AI to Transform Public Health Delivery

NEW DELHI

India has fundamentally restructured its public health delivery system by embedding artificial intelligence into a unified national strategy, according to an official statement released on Friday. By integrating AI-enabled tools across major health programmes, the government aims to address specialist shortages, strengthen early detection, and scale preventive care across the country.

AI tools have been deployed within the National TB Elimination Programme, the National Diabetic Retinopathy Screening Programme, and the Media Disease Surveillance System. These technologies empower non-specialist healthcare workers to conduct advanced screenings, resulting in a reported 27 percent decline in adverse tuberculosis outcomes and the generation of over 4,500 outbreak alerts.

The transformation is further reinforced through e-Sanjeevani, which has facilitated more than 282 million consultations using AI-assisted differential diagnosis. Additionally, the Udy-



ogYantra AI System is being used to monitor malnutrition, creating a data-driven framework for targeted interventions. This growing ecosystem now spans infectious disease management, cancer screening, modernisation of traditional Ayurvedic medicine, and the National One Health Programme. Officials say AI-enabled systems are improving early detection, enhancing clinical decision support, and expanding access to remote care, particularly in underserved areas. In a major global outreach effort, India will host the Global South's first international AI summit in New Delhi from February 16-20. The event is expected to bring together global leaders, policymakers, innovators, and technology firms to discuss AI

policy, research, industry collaboration, and public engagement. The push gained further momentum in March 2024 when the Union Cabinet, chaired by Narendra Modi, approved the national-level IndiaAI Mission with a budget outlay of Rs 10,371.92 crore. One of its core pillars, the IndiaAI Application Development Initiative, focuses on developing and scaling impactful AI solutions to address national challenges, including healthcare delivery. According to the government, the AI-enabled healthcare ecosystem is not only bridging service gaps but also enhancing the quality, affordability, and accessibility of medical services positioning India as a leader in AI-driven public health innovation.

PRECIOUS METALS SURGE 1-2 PC OVER VALUE BUYING AT SUPPORT LEVELS

MUMBAI

Gold and silver prices surged on Friday as investors took to value buying after prices moderated due to huge declines in the previous session. MCX gold April futures gained 1.08 per cent to Rs 1,54,480 per 10 grams on an intra-day basis. Meanwhile, MCX silver March futures added 2.59 per cent to Rs 2,42,564 per kg. Gold has recovered post the January end collapse and is well on its way to what we believe should be \$6,000 per ounce levels by CY26 end, said Sandip Raichura, CEO of Retail Broking and Distribution and

Director, PL Capital.

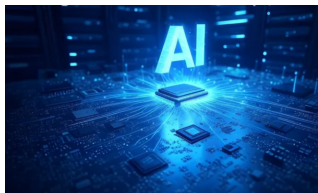
Though US President Donald Trump approved a trade deal with India and hinted at a potential one with Brazil reducing the trade related uncertainties, higher inflation and emerging split between the Northwest and the rest of the world sustain reserve bank buying of gold, the analyst said. Gold has support at Rs 1,54,000 per 10 grams while silver on MCX has support at Rs 2,42,000 per kg, a market participant said. The broader uptrend remains intact, and the recent pullback appears to be healthy profit booking rather than structural weakness, market watchers said.

COMEX Gold is trading near the \$4,850-\$5,100 zone after a sharp correction from recent highs above \$5,500-\$5,600. The broader uptrend remains intact, with the recent pullback reflecting profit booking and healthy price digestion, analysts said. Meanwhile, COMEX Silver is currently trading near the \$73-\$847 zone after a sharp correction from record highs above \$121. The dollar index surged to 97 on Friday, up 0.03 per cent from 96.93 in the previous session. Investors remain keen on US inflation data due later on Friday for more monetary policy cues on the US Fed's interest rate trajectory.

Most white-collar jobs to be automated in 12-18 months: Microsoft AI Chief

NEW DELHI

Chief of artificial intelligence at Microsoft, Mustafa Suleyman, has warned that most white collar roles that rely on computers could be automated within the next 12 to 18 months. He informed that the company is building a professional grade AGI, that could automate majority of works done by lawyers, accountants, project managers and marketers. In an interview with the Financial Times, Suleyman said Microsoft is racing to develop professional grade AGI, AI systems capable of performing nearly everything a human professional can do. He said the current shift in AI landscape would go beyond incremental productivity gains to produce structural displacement across knowledge based professions. White-collar work, where you're sitting down at a computer, either being a lawyer or an accountant or a project manager or a marketing person, most of those tasks will be fully automated by an AI within the next 12 to 18 months, the report quoted Suleyman as saying. He described Microsoft's strategy to capture a larger share of the enterprise market by automating routine and repeatable tasks such as document drafting, data analysis and project coordination that currently require skilled employees. He informed about Microsoft's plans to increase AI model productions to reduce reliance on OpenAI, following a revised agreement between the two companies.



Further, he said creating a new model will be as simple as making a podcast or writing a blog, adding that institutions and individuals could design AI tailored to their specific needs. US tech giant Oracle plans to cut 20,000 to 30,000 jobs to expand its AI data centre capacity, while Amazon recently announced lay off 16,000 employees as part of its AI restructure plan.

Centre approves development projects for 10 roads, 16 bridges in Assam

NEW DELHI

In a major effort to enhance infrastructure in Assam, the Centre on Friday announced the approval of ten road and 16 bridge development projects. Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari announced the approval of Rs 617.98 crore for 10 road development projects in Assam under the Central Road Infrastructure Fund (CRIF) Scheme, along with an additional Rs 129.74 crore sanctioned for 16 bridge projects under the CRIF Setu Bandhan Scheme.

In a post on X, Gadkari said the projects will play a crucial role in enhancing regional

connectivity, improving transportation efficiency and reducing travel time across Assam. He emphasised that robust road and bridge infrastructure is central to the Centre's vision of inclusive development and seamless connectivity, particularly in strategically and economically important regions like the Northeast. According to officials, the sanctioned road projects will focus on upgrading and improving key stretches that serve as vital links between districts, markets and industrial hubs.

The bridge projects under the Setu Bandhan Scheme are aimed at replacing old and weak structures.

RBI Seeks Public Feedback on Revised Lead Bank Scheme

MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday issued a draft circular proposing revised guidelines for the Lead Bank Scheme and invited public comments until March 6, 2026. The move is aimed at streamlining operational aspects of the long-running financial inclusion framework.

RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra had earlier announced in the Statement on Developmental and Regulatory Policies on February 6 that updated guidelines for the scheme



would be released shortly. The revised framework seeks to fine-tune the objectives of the Lead Bank Scheme, clarify the structure and member-

ship of various coordination forums, and clearly define the roles and responsibilities of key functionaries. According to the central bank's state-

ment, the draft also proposes measures to strengthen the functioning of the State Level Bankers' Committees (SLBCs) and Lead District Manager offices. These bodies play a critical role in coordinating banking and development activities at the state and district levels. The Lead Bank Scheme was originally introduced by the RBI in December 1969 to enhance the flow of institutional credit to priority sectors and promote rural development. Under the scheme, a designated bank in each district is assigned the

responsibility of acting as the lead bank. This bank coordinates efforts among credit institutions and government agencies to improve financial inclusion, branch expansion, deposit mobilisation, and lending to priority sectors.

The scheme was last comprehensively reviewed in 2009 by a High-Level Committee of the RBI. After consultations with stakeholders including state governments, banks, development institutions, academicians, NGOs and microfinance institutions, the committee concluded.

