



Debate sparks over combined bills in Parliament

P7



'Voice of India carries lot of weight bilaterally'

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Sundeep Kishan marks sixteen years in films



30-YEAR JOURNEY TO REALITY?

NARI SHAKTI SET FOR CRUCIAL TEST

The demand for 33% reservation for women in legislative bodies has a long and complex history spanning nearly three decades. From political debates and repeated delays to dramatic developments in Parliament, the journey has been anything but easy.

The Women's Reservation Bill finally became law in 2023 after overcoming hurdles like "quota within quota" debates and intense political confrontations.

Now, during the special Parliament sessions, steps are being taken towards implementing women's reservation in legislative bodies across India.

Voting on passage of Bills to take place at 4 pm on April 17



India is the mother of democracy. In this journey of development, we have been given a sacred opportunity to add a new dimension. We are fortunate that we have got the chance to include half of the country's population in the decision-making process of nation-building.

—Narendra Modi, Prime Minister



I extend my heartfelt appreciation for the initiative for historic implementation of the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhinyam. This landmark constitutional amendment represents a transformative step in strengthening India's democratic framework by ensuring greater representation and participation of women in legislative bodies.

—Pratibha Devisingh Patil, India's first woman President



The Centre should immediately implement the law providing 33 per cent reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies, but the process of delimitation or redrawing of constituencies should be kept on hold for now as it is a matter of national importance requiring wider consultation and discussion.

—Uddhav Thackeray, Maharashtra ex-CM

Govt tables 3 bills to tweak women quota law, set up delimitation panel

NEW DELHI

The Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill to tweak the women's reservation law was introduced in the Lok Sabha on Thursday, after a division of votes.

Two ordinary bills, the Delimitation Bill and the Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill, were also introduced as the Parliament commenced a three-day special sitting. The Bill was tabled with 251 members supporting it and 185 members voting against the introduction. The voting on the passage of the Bills will be done at 4 p.m. on Friday (April 17).

Union Minister for Law and Justice Arjun Ram Meghwal initiated the debate by presenting the proposed Constitution (One Hundred and Thirty-First Amendment) Bill, 2026. He also tabled the Delimitation Bill, 2026, setting the stage for discussions on implementing a one-third reservation for women in legislative bodies.

The draft proposals envisage increasing the strength of the LS to up to 850 seats from the present 543, following a delimitation exercise based on the last published census, while also expanding state Assemblies to accommodate reservation for women.

The Bill seeks to extend the women's reservation framework to Union Territories, including Delhi, Puducherry and Jammu and Kashmir.

After the bills were introduced, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla approved a 15-18 hour discussion on all three. Voting is set to take place at 4 pm on Friday.

'Karnataka to get 42 seats: Shah

NEW DELHI: Home Minister Amit Shah addressed fear over delimitation and it affecting the representation of southern states in the Lok Sabha. "A narrative is being created and confusion is being spread that these three bills, the Constitutional Amendment Bill and the two related laws on delimitation and changes in election procedures, will reduce the representation of southern states in the LS and cause them significant loss. The bill before the House is now the property of the House," he said.

...explains 850-seat formula to Oppn

- Karnataka has 28 seats, which is about 5.15% of the total representation of 543 seats in the LS. After delimitation, this would increase to 42. "In a House of 816 members, its share will be around 5.14%. So, there will be no real loss to Karnataka."

- For Andhra Pradesh, which has a 25 seats (4.60%), the number of seats post delimitation will increase to 38 (about 4.75%).

- Telangana has 17 seats (3.13%) in the current House and it will go up to 26, and its share will rise to about 3.18%.

- The seats in Tamil Nadu will increase from 39 to 59 (go up from 7.18% to 7.23%), about 3.18% rise.

- Kerala's seats in the Lok Sabha will go up from the current 20 to 30, with share being nearly unchanged at 3.67% from the existing 3.68%.

Overall, Shah said the number of Lok Sabha seats in the five southern states will go up from the present 129 to 195 while the percentage of power will increase from 23.76% to 23.87 or almost 24%.

LOK SABHA SEAT BREAK-UP

Proposed LS strength	850	56%
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Women's quota	272	33%
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Seat share	States 815, UTs 35
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NDA IN TIGHT SPOT

The numbers in Parliament indicate that the Union Government could be in a tight spot if the Opposition stands together. A constitution amendment bill requires a two-thirds majority in terms of the members present and voting in each house of Parliament.

LOK SABHA

Maximum strength	550
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Effective strength	541
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Two-thirds mark	360
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NDA's strength	293
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Falls short of	67
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RAJYA SABHA

Maximum strength	250
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Current strength	245
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Magic number	163
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NDA's strength	142
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Falls short of	21
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No state will suffer due to women's quota: Meghwal

NEW DELHI

Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal said the strength of the Lok Sabha will increase to 815, of which 272 seats will be reserved for women and neither men nor any state will suffer any loss due to the implementation of this quota.

In his introductory remarks on the three bills moved to amend the women's quota law and set up a delimitation commission, Meghwal said 272 seats out of 815 in the House is the simple formula of reserving 33% seats for women. There will be reservation for women belonging to SC and ST categories within the women's quota in the Lok Sabha as well as state assemblies, he added.



The issue is very simple. The government has a plan to redelimit the constituency and increase the number of seats in areas where the ruling party is strong. They are using women's reservation as an excuse to bring about that change by trying to amend the constitutional amendments that they had already brought in 2023.

—Shashi Tharoor, Congress leader



BJP has made 'nari' into a 'nara'. How many MLAs or MPs of BJP are women?" By pushing for an early delimitation in the name of implementing the women's reservation law, the government is trying to delay the Census.

—Akhilesh Yadav, SP chief



In 2023, when this law was passed, the Congress supported it and today also, the Congress is strongly in support of women's reservation. But the truth is that the debate is not on women's reservation. The bill that the government has brought has changed the direction of the debate.

—Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, Congress MP

Don't give it political colour: PM



NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi while addressing the Lok Sabha during a debate on the proposed amendment to the women's reservation law, termed it a "historic moment" in India's democratic journey and urging lawmakers not to politicise the issue.

Speaking amid a charged debate over the Centre's move to tweak the quota framework, Modi said India's development cannot be measured by infrastructure alone, but must also reflect the participation of women in policymaking.

"In India's development journey, MPs have got an opportunity to make women part of

decision-making," he said, stressing that including women in governance is essential to building a developed nation.

The PM also cautioned against giving the issue a political colour, asserting that women's reservation in legislatures should be seen as a national priority rather than a partisan matter. "There is no need to politicise women's reservation," he said.

Adding a personal note, Modi said, "I come from a most backward community, but it is my responsibility to take everyone along," underscoring the need for inclusive policymaking.

He said the bill should have been implemented 25-30 years ago. "The need was that 25-30 years ago, when this idea first emerged, we should have implemented it right then," he said.

Israel, Lebanon agree to 10-day ceasefire: Trump

WASHINGTON

Israel and Lebanon have agreed to a 10-day ceasefire starting later Thursday, President Donald Trump said.

The truce is scheduled to begin at 5 pm Eastern, Trump said.

The president announced the pause in fighting on social media, saying it followed "excellent" conversations with Lebanese President Joseph Aoun and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Lebanon and Israel held their first direct diplomatic talks in decades on Tuesday in Washington after more than a month of war between Israel and the Iran-backed Hezbollah militant group. Trump said he has directed Vice President JD Vance others to work with Israel and Lebanon to "achieve a Lasting PEACE."



'Locked and loaded, ready to strike infra'



Washington: US Secretary of Defence Pete Hegseth on Thursday threatened Iran with consequences if they do not agree to a peace deal. He warned that the US is "locked and loaded" and prepared to strike Iran's energy infrastructure. "If Iran chooses poorly, they will have a blockade and bombs dropping on infrastructure, power and energy," "Message to Iran is we are watching you. We know what military assets you are moving out," he added.

Israel's war with Iran cost \$11.5 billion

According to a report by the Times of Israel, the war with Iran has cost 35 billion shekels (\$11.5 billion) from Israel's budget. Israel's Finance Minister has warned of significant economic damage and a rise in government spending.

Iran schools to go virtual from April 21

Iran will move all schools to virtual learning beginning April 21, according to the country's Ministry of Education. A ministry spokesperson said the shift applies to all educational levels across the country and will remain in effect until further notice, as reported by Tasnim News Agency. The decision covers primary, secondary, and higher education institutions, marking a full transition to remote instruction.

8 K'taka pilgrims killed as car collides with tanker in Kurnool

KURNOOL

Eight pilgrims from Karnataka were killed in a road accident in Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh on Thursday.

The mishap occurred near Chilakaladona village in Mantralayam mandal when a Bolero vehicle, carrying devotees to the Sri Guru Raghavendra Swamy temple in Mantralayam, collided with a ready-mix tanker lorry.

Five people died on the spot, while three others suc-



cumbed to injuries during treatment. About 10 passengers, who sustained injuries,

have been admitted to the Yemmiganur Government Hospital.

IMD SOUNDS ALERT

Scorching heat bakes K'tala, Kalaburagi tops 'hot' list

BENGALURU

Large parts of Karnataka are reeling under intense heat, with several regions recording temperatures well above typical April levels.

The India Meteorological Department has flagged persistent hot conditions across the state, particularly in the Kalyana Karnataka region, indicating continued heatwave conditions. Coastal and northern districts including Dakshina Kannada, Udupi, Uttara Kannada, Gadag, Haveri, Dharwad, and Belagavi are also under warnings for hot and humid weather.

These widespread alerts reflect the scale of heat stress affecting Karnataka, with both inland and coastal regions ex-

periences nearing 36°C and expected to rise further.

Heat wave alerts across Karnataka

The IMD has issued orange and yellow alerts for several parts of the state, particularly in the Kalyana Karnataka region, indicating continued heatwave conditions. Coastal and northern districts including Dakshina Kannada, Udupi, Uttara Kannada, Gadag, Haveri, Dharwad, and Belagavi are also under warnings for hot and humid weather.

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periences difficult conditions.

Weak monsoon outlook raises bigger concerns

Amid the ongoing heatwave, the IMD has also projected a challenging southwest monsoon for 2026. According to its long-range forecast, India is likely to receive about 92% of the long period average rainfall, placing the season in the "below normal" category. Within this broader outlook, Karnataka is expected to receive weaker-than-normal rainfall between June and September. This has raised concerns about drought risk and water availability across the state.

Water security, agri at risk

Experts warn that a weak monsoon could worsen the existing water stress, particularly in Bengaluru, which depends heavily on Cauvery river water and groundwater recharge through rainfall. Reservoir levels have already dropped after prolonged heat and limited inflows. The agriculture sector is also vulnerable, especially in rain-fed areas of North Interior Karnataka where crops such as paddy, maize, pulses, and oilseeds depend on timely monsoon rains. Any delay or uneven distribution of rainfall could disrupt sowing cycles and reduce yields.



QUICK READ

Opposition welcomes CBI probe into Hebbal land scam**BENGALURU**

Opposition leaders have welcomed the High Court's order directing a CBI probe into the Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Board's acquisition and transfer of prime Hebbal land to a non-existent private entity, which the court termed a "monumental fraud." BJP MLA Suresh Kumar said the Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation had sought the land for a multi-modal transit hub and was ready to pay compensation, but despite repeated appeals to the Chief Minister and Industries Minister, the state government failed to act and cancel the transfer. He said the court's ruling has now exposed blatant wrongdoing. Union Minister Shobha Karandlaje said the quashing of the 55-acre land transfer is a major victory for the public, adding that the CBI investigation is likely to uncover further irregularities in the case.

Man held for lewd comments at girl in Koramangala**BENGALURU**

City police have arrested a 47-year-old man for allegedly passing lewd comments at an 18-year-old girl in Koramangala. The accused, identified as Sarvesh, a resident of Koramangala and a private company employee, reportedly made inappropriate remarks as the girl was walking past his car. According to police, he continued despite her objections. Following discussions with her family, the girl filed a complaint with Koramangala police, leading to his arrest. The accused claimed he was in an inebriated state and mistook the girl for his daughter, police said.

Meeting held to discuss key civic and agricultural issues**BENGALURU**

A high-level meeting was held on Thursday at the Vidhana Soudha conference hall under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to review key issues across the state. The meeting was attended by district in-charge Ministers, district in-charge Secretaries, Deputy Commissioners and Zilla anchayat Chief Executive Officers. Discussions focused on drinking water supply in rural and urban areas, availability of cattle fodder, prevailing weather conditions.

K'taka plans corporate-style appraisal system

Karnataka may soon shift to KPI-based evaluations, linking performance with promotions.

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**

The Karnataka government is considering a major overhaul of its employee appraisal system, with a proposal to move from seniority-based evaluations to a corporate-style, performance-driven model. The Karnataka State Policy and Planning Commission (KSP-PC) has put forward the Karnataka Performance-Driven Governance and Civil Services Accountability Bill, 2026, aimed at bringing measurable accountability while retaining constitutional safeguards under Articles 309 to

311. If implemented, the reform could significantly reshape the state's administrative culture by linking promotions, postings and career progression to clearly defined outcomes, real-time data and citizen feedback. The proposal recommends annual performance contracts for Group A and B officers, assigning 30–40 percent weightage to Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) such as file disposal timelines, grievance redressal efficiency and project delivery. Citizen feedback is expected to account for at least 20 percent of the overall eval-

uation.

To reduce political interference, the Commission has suggested fixing minimum tenures of two to three years for key posts and introducing a transparent, digitally monitored transfer system. According to Mohandas Hegde, a member of the Commission, "Respect for bureaucracy must come from performance, not privilege. What is not measured cannot be governed." In its blueprint titled From Salary-Driven to Performance-Driven Governance, the panel has argued that the existing system, heav-

ily reliant on seniority and tenure, has not delivered optimal efficiency. It notes that a conventional 9 am to 5 pm work culture continues to dominate, with limited linkage between performance and career advancement. The Commission has also proposed establishing a Karnataka Civil Services Accountability Authority to audit performance, monitor delays and oversee disciplinary proceedings. A deemed approval mechanism has been suggested to ensure time-bound clearances in governance processes.

Bengaluru records 98.9% pass in CBSE Class 10 exams

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Bengaluru region has recorded an impressive 98.9 percent pass rate in the CBSE Class 10 examinations, matching last year's performance but slipping to the third position among all regions.

Thiruvananthapuram and Vijayawada retained the top spot with an outstanding 99.8 percent pass rate, while Chennai secured the second position with 99.6 percent. Nationally, the overall pass percentage stood at 93.7 percent, marking a marginal increase of 0.04 percent from the previous year. CBSE officials said the results reflect students' readiness for competency-based assessments. Girls once again outperformed boys, with a pass percentage of around 95 percent compared to 93 percent among boys. This year also marks a significant change, with CBSE introducing two board examinations for Class 10 students for the first time. As a result, the results were announced earlier than usual, with the next round of exams scheduled for May. Students were required to appear for at least three subjects in the first

**Bengaluru region matches last year's result, but slips to third place**

phase, which is considered the main examination. A notable 9 percent of students—around 2.21 lakh—scored 90 percent and above, while 2.2 percent (55,368 students) secured more than 95 percent marks. The board reiterated that it will not release a merit list or classify students into divisions. Instead, merit certificates will be awarded to the top 0.1 percent scorers in each subject. Schools across Bengaluru reported several outstanding performances, though mathematics emerged as a challenging subject for many. Jayanti Nair, Principal of National Public School, Banashankari, said the maths paper was lengthy and difficult,

which likely affected scores. Echoing this, Meetal Archit, Principal of Nagarjuna Vidyarniketan, noted improved performance in science and social sciences compared to last year, but relatively lower scores in mathematics. Many students, she added, are keen to reappear in the next exam to improve their marks in the subject. Gear International School also reported better overall performance compared to the previous year. Among states, Kerala topped with 99.9 percent pass rate, followed by Tamil Nadu (99.8 percent), Karnataka (98.9 percent), Maharashtra (98.4 percent) and Punjab (98.1 percent). In the Bengaluru region, 1,01,660 students appeared for the exam, of whom 1,00,554 passed, while 1,087 students (1.07 percent) were placed in the compartment category.

Bengaluru temperature likely to touch 38°C, IMD issues heat alerts

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Bengaluru is bracing for a further rise in temperatures, with the India Meteorological Department (IMD) predicting that the mercury could touch 38°C in the coming days as summer intensifies across Karnataka.

The city recorded a maximum temperature of 35.8°C on Wednesday, slightly lower than Tuesday's 36.6°C, which was the hottest day of 2026 so far. However, meteorologists say this dip is temporary, with temperatures expected to hover between 36°C and 37°C over the next couple of days before climbing higher.

According to IMD scientist C.S. Patil, dry weather conditions are likely to persist in Bengaluru, with only isolated thundershowers expected in a few areas. These brief spells are unlikely to provide significant relief from the prevailing heat.

Across the state, temperatures have been soaring well above normal levels. Parts of Kalaburagi district have re-



corded extreme heat, with Aurad B touching 45°C, while Chincholi and Afzalpur recorded around 44°C. Kalaburagi city itself registered 42.1°C, and temperatures are expected to cross the 45°C mark in the coming days.

In response to the rising heat, the MET department has issued orange and yellow heatwave alerts for the Kalyana Karnataka region for the next two days. District authorities have also stepped in with advisories. Kalaburagi Deputy Commissioner Fauzia Tannum has urged residents to avoid stepping out between 11:30 am and 5 pm for

non-essential activities and to stay well hydrated.

Meanwhile, coastal and northern districts including Dakshina Kannada, Udupi, Uttara Kannada, Gadag, Haveri, Dharwad and Belagavi have been placed under a yellow alert for hot and humid conditions.

With temperatures rising 3°C to 4°C above normal in several regions, authorities have advised citizens across the state to take precautions, limit outdoor exposure during peak hours, and ensure adequate hydration as Karnataka faces an intense summer spell.

RERA disposes complaints over Kempegowda Layout project citing lack of documents

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Layout (NKPL) project has once again come under scrutiny, with the Karnataka Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA) disposing of multiple complaints filed by allottees against the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) over delays in handing over units.

Several allottees had approached the authority seeking refunds along with interest, alleging prolonged delays. However, after examining the submissions, the RERA bench observed that the complainants failed to provide essential supporting documents required for adjudication.

The authority noted that

key documents such as sale agreements, construction agreements, payment receipts, and statements of accounts were not submitted. It emphasised that evaluation of such cases requires a detailed examination of contractual terms, payment history, agreed timelines, and any breaches. In the absence of these documents, the authority said it could not determine the extent of delay or the entitlement to relief.

Despite being given multiple opportunities, the complainants did not furnish the required details. The bench observed that merely producing a sale deed without foundational contractual and financial records is insufficient to conclusively decide such

claims.

RERA further stated that in cases involving disputes over principal amounts or interest calculations, parties must first reconcile their claims based on proper documentation. If disagreements persist, they may initiate fresh proceedings in accordance with the law.

The bench, headed by President Rakesh Singh and member Gurijala Ravindranadha Reddy, disposed of the complaints while granting liberty to the allottees to file fresh petitions with complete documentation. The order underscores the importance of maintaining proper records in real estate transactions and highlights procedural requirements for seeking relief before regulatory authorities.

JEE preparation helps students excel in CBSE Class 10 exams

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Early preparation for competitive exams like JEE has played a key role in helping several Bengaluru students achieve top scores in the CBSE Class 10 examinations this year. Kalvi Jayeetha, a student of Sri Chaithanya

Techno School, Hulimavu, secured an impressive 499 out of 500 marks (best of four subjects plus English). She scored a perfect 100 in English, Sanskrit, social science and information technology, along with 99 in science and 95 in mathematics. Kalvi, who began JEE

preparation in Class 8, said the training helped her tackle analytical questions in the board exams with ease. She shifted her focus more towards board exams from mid-September and dedicated five to six hours daily after school from December 2025.

High Court directs implementation of menstrual leave policy without delay

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Karnataka High Court has directed the state government to ensure strict and faithful implementation of its existing policy granting one day of menstrual leave per month to women employees, pending formal enactment of the proposed legislation. Justice M. Nagaprasanna, while disposing of a petition filed by Chandravva Hanamant Gokavi, a hotel worker from Gokak taluk in Belagavi district, emphasised that the state must not delay enforcing the policy cit-

ing legislative processes. The petitioner had sought implementation of the government order issued on November 20, 2025, which provides for menstrual leave for working women. The court observed that concerns regarding equality under Article 14 of the Constitution should not hinder the policy. "Men and women stand equal in the eyes of the law; yet, they are biologically distinct. Recognising such differences, particularly in matters of health, dignity and bodily autonomy, gives substantive meaning to equality," the judge noted.

HC orders marks, not grades, for SSLC third language subjects

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Karnataka High Court has directed the state government to award marks instead of grades for third language subjects, including Hindi, in the SSLC examinations conducted by the Karnataka School Examination and Evaluation Board (KSEAB) from the current academic year itself.

A single-member bench of Justice E.S. Indresh passed the order while disposing of a petition filed by three stu-



dents, including Sahana R Nayak from Chikkamagaluru, who challenged the move to introduce grading for third language subjects. Counsel for

the petitioners argued that the government's decision, announced in March 2026, to replace marks with grades came at a late stage when the

examination process was already underway. Earlier, KSEAB had issued guidelines in October 2024 and October 2025 specifying a 100-mark structure for third language subjects, with 80 marks for the written examination and 20 marks for internal assessment. The petitioners contended that shifting to a grading system could adversely affect students' prospects, especially in competitive examinations and recruitment processes conducted by central agencies such as the UPSC and bank-

ing institutions, where marks, not grades, are considered. They argued that such a change would put Karnataka students at a disadvantage compared to their peers from other states. During the hearing, the court sought clarification from the government on whether any formal notification had been issued regarding the proposed grading system. The government counsel informed the bench that only a draft notification had been prepared and that further details would be obtained.



QUICK READ



Youth clash at Nehru Maidan in Hubballi sparks panic

HUBBALLI
Panic gripped Hubballi after a group of youths clashed over a minor issue at Nehru Maidan, creating fear among the public present at the spot. The sudden scuffle disrupted normal activity in the busy area. According to initial reports, the incident occurred at Nehru Maidan, a well-known public ground in Hubballi, where a group of around six youths got into a heated argument that quickly escalated into a physical altercation. The clash reportedly began over a trivial issue but soon turned aggressive, drawing attention from people nearby. Eyewitnesses stated that the situation became chaotic when one of the youths managed to break free and attempted to escape, while the others chased him through the entrance area of the ground. The commotion caused panic among members of the public, many of whom were present at the location for routine activities.

Dust menace in Hubballi raises health concerns amid flyover work

HUBBALLI
Residents of Hubballi are grappling with severe dust pollution, with ongoing flyover construction near key areas like Chenamma Circle worsening the situation and triggering serious health concerns among the public. The commercial city of Hubballi is currently facing a growing environmental and public health issue as dust continues to blanket several parts of the city. Citizens have expressed frustration over the worsening conditions, stating that dust has become a constant presence in daily life. Despite efforts by municipal authorities to sprinkle water on roads to control the dust, the problem persists unabated. The primary cause of the issue is the ongoing flyover construction work around Chenamma Circle, one of the busiest and most central locations in Hubballi.

Faulty road work in Halyal sparks anger, poses threat to motorists

HUBBALLI
Serious concerns have emerged in Hubballi over alleged negligence by the Public Works Department (PWD), as incomplete road development in Halyal village is reportedly endangering the lives of commuters. Residents of Halyal village have raised strong objections against the poor execution of road development works undertaken by the Public Works Department. The project, reportedly costing around Rs 1.64 crore, has failed to deliver a properly constructed road, leaving villagers frustrated and concerned about safety. According to locals, the road has remained in a hazardous condition for the past four to five months. Instead of a smooth and safe surface, piles of stones and loose gravel have been left scattered across the road, creating a dangerous environment for motorists. With vehicles moving at speed, these stones are often thrown into the air, posing a serious risk of accidents and injuries.

Special worship held for Mafi Sakshi Basavaraja Muthagi at Dharwad Ganapati Temple

A special religious ceremony was held in honor of Mafi Sakshi Basavaraja Muthagi at the Ganapati temple located opposite KCD College in Dharwad

HUBBALLI

The Ganapati temple, situated opposite KCD College, became a center of devotion and spiritual energy as a special puja was conducted for Mafi Sakshi Basavaraja Muthagi. The ceremony began early in the morning with traditional rituals, including Ganapati homa, abhisheka, and chanting of sacred hymns. Priests performed the rituals in accordance with established customs, creating a serene and divine atmosphere in the temple premises.

Devotees from various parts of Dharwad and nearby areas assembled at the temple to take part in the special worship. Many expressed their faith and reverence by offering flowers, coconuts, and prayers, seeking blessings for prosperity, peace, and well-being. The occasion also served as an opportunity for



the community to come together and strengthen spiritual bonds. Organizers of the event ensured smooth arrangements for the devotees, including orderly darshan and distribution of prasada after the completion of rituals. The temple premises were decorated with flowers and lights, adding to the festive and sacred ambiance of the occasion. Mafi Sakshi Basavaraja Muthagi is revered by

followers for spiritual guidance and religious contributions, and such events reflect the deep-rooted devotion people hold in spiritual traditions. The special worship not only highlighted devotion but also reinforced cultural values and unity among the people. Overall, the ceremony concluded on a peaceful note with devotees leaving the temple with a sense of fulfillment and spiritual satisfaction.

Protest at Jubilee Circle in Dharwad: supporters of Vinay Kulkarni detained by Police

DHARWAD

A group of supporters of Vinay Kulkarni gathered at Jubilee Circle, one of the busiest junctions in Dharwad, to stage a protest over issues concerning their leader. The demonstrators raised slogans and expressed their dissatisfaction, drawing the attention of passersby and disrupting the usual flow of activity in the area. As the protest intensified, police personnel quickly reached the spot to assess the situation and prevent any escalation. Considering the potential for disturbance to public order and traffic congestion, the police urged the protesters to disperse peacefully. However, when some individuals continued their demonstration despite warnings, officers took action and



Tension briefly gripped Dharwad after supporters of Vinay Kulkarni staged a protest at the busy Jubilee Circle. Police intervened promptly and detained several protesters to maintain law and order.

detained several of them. Authorities stated that the detentions were carried out as a precautionary measure to ensure public safety and avoid any untoward incidents. A strong police presence was maintained throughout the protest to keep the situation under control. Officials emphasized that such steps are necessary when demonstrations affect public movement and safety. The protest also caused temporary disruption to vehicular traffic around Jubilee Circle, leading to brief delays for commuters. Traffic police worked swiftly to divert vehicles and restore normal movement once the situation was brought under control. Supporters claimed that their protest was aimed at seeking justice and drawing attention to their concerns regarding Vinay Kulkarni. Meanwhile, police reiterated that while peaceful protests are allowed, they must not interfere with public order or safety. The situation eventually stabilized, with no reports of injuries or major incidents. The swift action by the police ensured that normalcy was restored quickly in the area, preventing the protest from escalating further.

In a tragic incident, a soldier of the Border Security Force, Santosh Ramappa Honnappa, passed away on April 15 while on duty in Kolkata. His untimely demise has left his family, village, and the entire region in deep grief.

BSF Jawan Santosh Ramappa Honnappa dies on duty in Kolkata

SHIRUR

Santosh Ramappa Honnappa had dedicated the last fourteen years of his life to serving the nation with unwavering commitment. As a member of the Border Security Force, he was deployed in several sensitive border areas across the country, where he carried out his duties with courage and discipline. Known among his peers as a sincere and hardworking Soldier, Santosh exemplified the values of dedication and patriotism throughout his service. At the time of his passing, Santosh was posted in Kolkata, West Bengal. It was there, while actively serving the nation, that he breathed his last. The exact circumstances surrounding his death have not been detailed, but the loss has deeply impacted both his colleagues in the force and civilians back home. Santosh had been married for about seven years and is survived by his wife and a young child. His sudden demise has left his family devastated, facing an emotional

and irreplaceable loss. Friends, relatives, and villagers have expressed their condolences and extended support to the grieving family during this difficult time. The news of his death has sent shockwaves through his native village and surrounding areas. Residents have described him as a proud son of the soil who brought honor to his community through his service in the armed forces. His sacrifice is being remembered as a symbol of dedication to the nation. Authorities have informed that Santosh's mortal remains are expected to arrive soon in his hometown, Shirur. Arrangements are being made to accord him full state and military honors during his final rites. Local officials, fellow soldiers, and members of the public are expected to gather in large numbers to pay their last respects. The passing of Santosh Ramappa Honnappa stands as a solemn reminder of the sacrifices made by security personnel every day to safeguard the nation.



Santosh Ramappa Honnappa, a Border Security Force jawan, passed away while serving in Kolkata after 14 years of dedicated service. Survived by his wife and child, his death has shocked Shirur. His mortal remains will arrive soon, with full state and military honours planned for his final rites.

New Drishti Eye Centre inaugurated in Chandgad taluka

CHANDGAD

A new Drishti Centre aimed at improving access to eye care services was inaugurated in Chandgad Taluka on Sunday morning by the Joshi-Kodakani Eye Centre. The initiative is expected to benefit residents of rural areas with quality vision care. The inauguration ceremony of the Drishti Centre was held at Kedarnath Complex in Majare Karve Fatane Fata, drawing the presence of several dignitaries, healthcare professionals, and members of the public. The event marked an important step toward strengthening healthcare infrastructure in rural regions.

Vinay Kulkarni convicted in Yogish Gowda case

DHARWAD

A special court in Dharwad has convicted MLA Vinay Kulkarni in the Yogish Gowda murder case, triggering protests by his supporters at Jubilee Circle. The development has intensified political tensions in the region. The conviction of Vinay Kulkarni by a special court marks a significant turning point in the long-standing Yo-

gish Gowda murder case. The verdict has sparked strong reactions, particularly among Kulkarni's supporters, who took to the streets in Dharwad to express their dissent. Soon after the court's decision, supporters gathered at Jubilee Circle, one of the city's busiest locations, and staged a dharna. Protesters raised slogans in favor of Vinay Kulkarni, claiming that he had been falsely implicated in the case.

They alleged that a larger conspiracy was behind the case and accused Union Minister Pralhad Joshi of playing a role in orchestrating it. The protest drew considerable attention from the public and authorities, as demonstrators voiced their anger and demanded justice for their leader. Police personnel were deployed in the area to maintain law and order and to prevent any untoward incidents during the protest.

YOGISH MURDER VERDICT

17 convicted in Yogish Gowda murder case; Security provided to Koravar

DHARWAD

A major development unfolded in Dharwad as a court convicted 17 individuals, including MLA Vinay Kulkarni, in the high-profile murder case of Yogish Gowda. Following the verdict, activist Basavaraj Koravar, who played a key role in demanding justice, has been provided police security. The long-standing murder case of Yogish Gowda reached a crucial milestone after a court delivered its verdict, finding 17 accused guilty. Among those convicted

ed is prominent political figure Vinay Kulkarni, making the judgment particularly significant in Karnataka's political and legal circles. The case had drawn widespread attention over the years due to its complexity and the involvement of influential individuals. Basavaraj Koravar, president of the Janajagruti Sangha, emerged as a central figure in the fight for justice in this case. He had been actively campaigning for the investigation to be handed over to the Central Bureau of Investi-



gation (CBI), ensuring a fair and thorough probe. Koravar consistently pursued the case despite facing challenges and alleged threats, and his efforts

have been widely acknowledged following the court's decision. In light of the verdict, authorities have stepped up se-

curity measures for Koravar. Police protection has been deployed at his residence in Sampigenagar, Dharwad to ensure his safety. Officials stated that the move was precautionary, considering the sensitivity of the case and Koravar's prominent role in it. Reacting to the judgment, Koravar's wife, Sumangala, expressed relief and pride in her husband's perseverance. She stated that his relentless struggle had finally yielded results, despite facing numerous threats along the way. She

also emphasized the need for continued protection for their family, urging the government to ensure safety for those who stand up against wrongdoing. The conviction of all 17 accused marks a significant step in delivering justice in the Yogish Gowda murder case. It also sends a strong message about accountability, regardless of influence or status. Authorities are expected to take further legal steps as per the court's ruling, while the case continues to remain a point of public and political discussion in the state.



QUICK READ



Preliminary meeting held for 43rd Mahalaxmi Fair

BELAGAVI

Deputy Commissioner Mohammed Roshan chaired a preliminary meeting in Kangrali BK village to discuss preparations for the upcoming 43rd Mahalaxmi Fair, a significant local religious and cultural event. In preparation for the 43rd edition of the Mahalaxmi Fair, a preliminary meeting was convened in Kangrali BK village under the leadership of Deputy Commissioner Mohammed Roshan. The meeting focused on planning and organizing the fair, which attracts a large number of devotees and visitors from surrounding regions every year. Officials from various departments, including revenue, police, health, and local administration, participated in the meeting to ensure smooth coordination and execution of the event. Discussions were held on key aspects such as crowd management, traffic regulation, sanitation, drinking water facilities, and safety arrangements.

Snake found under tractor seat in Sambargi village

BAGALKOT

A tense situation unfolded in Athani after a snake was discovered under the seat of a tractor in Sambargi village, creating panic among locals. In a surprising and alarming incident, a snake was found hiding beneath the seat of a tractor in Sambargi village of Athani taluk. The discovery caused fear and commotion among nearby residents and farm workers, who immediately gathered at the spot after learning about the reptile's presence. According to reports, the tractor owner noticed unusual movement near the seat area while preparing to use the vehicle. Upon closer inspection, a snake was spotted coiled under the seat, prompting the owner to step back and alert others in the vicinity. The situation quickly drew attention, with villagers assembling to witness the unexpected sight.

House wall collapse, major tragedy averted

BETAGERI

A potential disaster was narrowly avoided in Gadag after a house wall collapsed in Betageri area, triggering panic among residents but fortunately causing no casualties. In a shocking incident reported from Betageri in Gadag, a portion of a house wall suddenly collapsed, creating fear and confusion in the neighborhood. The incident occurred unexpectedly, raising concerns about the structural safety of old and weakened buildings in the area. According to local sources, the wall gave way due to its deteriorated condition, possibly weakened by age and recent weather conditions. At the time of the collapse, residents were either inside or nearby, but fortunately, no one was directly in the path of the falling structure. This helped avert what could have been a major tragedy.

Government employees skip ID cards at Shirahatti review meeting

Concerns have been raised in Shirahatti after several govt employees attended an official progress review meeting without wearing mandatory identity cards, despite clear govt directives

SHIRAHATTI

A recent progress review meeting held at Samarthya Soudha in Shirahatti town has sparked controversy after it was observed that many government employees present were not wearing their official identity cards. The meeting, conducted on Thursday, saw participation from various departments, but only a handful of employees were found complying with the rule of displaying their ID cards.

The government has issued strict guidelines mandating that all employees must wear their identity cards during

duty hours for the sake of transparency, accountability, and easy identification. However, the situation at this meeting highlighted a clear lapse in adherence to these instructions.

Observers noted that the absence of ID cards not only violates official norms but also raises concerns about discipline and professionalism within government offices.

Identity cards play a crucial role in ensuring security and maintaining order, especially during official gatherings and review meetings where multiple departments are involved. The incident has prompted



calls for disciplinary action against those who failed to comply with the rules.

Officials and members of the public have stressed that

such negligence should not be overlooked, as it sets a poor example and undermines administrative standards.

There is also a growing de-

mand for stricter monitoring and enforcement of rules to ensure that government employees follow established protocols.

Senior authorities have been urged to take appropriate action against the concerned staff and to reinforce the importance of adhering to government orders.

The episode serves as a reminder of the need for accountability and discipline in public service, emphasizing that even basic rules like wearing identity cards must be taken seriously to maintain professionalism in government functioning.

House burglary accused arrested in Kudligi; Cash recovered

KUDLIGI

Police in Kudligi have arrested a man accused of multiple house burglaries and recovered ₹1.9 lakh in cash from his possession, bringing relief to residents of Mangapur village. In a significant breakthrough, the Kanahosahalli police have arrested a 32-year-old man identified as Nazir Shafi in connection with a series of house burglaries reported in Mangapur village under Kudligi taluk. The arrest comes after months of investigation into theft cases that had caused concern among local residents.

According to police officials, two separate burglary cases were registered earlier this year, one in January and another in December. In both instances, the accused allegedly targeted houses when the occupants were away, making off with substantial amounts of cash. The thefts included ₹1,45,000 from the residence of Basavaraj and ₹55,000 from the house of Guru Basavaraj, both located in Mangapur village.

Following sustained efforts and investigation, the Kanahosahalli police managed to track down and apprehend the accused. During the arrest, officials recovered a total of ₹1,90,000 in cash, believed to be linked to the stolen amounts. The recovery has been seen as a major success for the police, as it helps return the stolen property to the victims and restores confidence among the public.

A case has been registered against Nazir Shafi at the Kanahosahalli police station, and further investigation is underway to determine whether he is involved in other similar crimes in the region. Police are also probing his background and possible connections to wider theft networks.

Local residents have welcomed the swift action taken by the police and expressed relief at the arrest. Authorities have advised citizens to remain vigilant and take necessary precautions, such as securing their homes and informing neighbors when leaving for extended periods.

The case highlights the importance of timely police intervention and community awareness in preventing and solving property-related crimes.

Ambedkar portrait incident in Veerapur sparks outrage

KUKNOOR

An incident reported from Veerapur village in Kuknoor taluk has led to widespread anger after locals alleged that the portrait of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, along with images of several other respected personalities, was insulted. The issue quickly escalated, drawing attention from nearby areas and raising concerns over public sentiments and communal harmony.

According to initial reports, villagers noticed that the portrait of Dr. Ambedkar had been either mishandled, displaced, or placed in an inappropriate manner. This act was perceived as disrespectful by members of the community, especially those who deeply revere Ambedkar for his contributions to social justice and the Indian Constitution. In addition to Ambedkar's portrait, photographs of other prominent figures were also reportedly treated in a similar manner, further intensifying the outrage.

As news of the incident spread, a large number of villagers gathered at the site and demanded immediate action against those responsible. Protesters raised slogans and called upon authorities to take strict measures to prevent



Tension gripped Kuknoor after an alleged disrespect involving the portrait of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in Veerapur village triggered strong reactions among residents and community leaders.

such incidents in the future. Community leaders emphasized that such acts not only hurt sentiments but also have the potential to disturb peace if not addressed swiftly and sensitively. Local police and administrative officials were alerted and reached the spot to assess the situation. Authorities have assured the public that a thorough investigation will be conducted to identify those involved and

determine whether the act was intentional or accidental. Security measures were also tightened in the area to prevent any escalation of tensions. Leaders and elders in the village have appealed for calm, urging residents not to take the law into their own hands. They stressed the importance of maintaining unity and allowing the authorities to handle the situation through legal means.

The incident highlights the deep respect people hold for national icons like Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and the sensitivity surrounding such matters. It also underscores the need for awareness and responsibility in handling symbols of public reverence. Authorities continue to monitor the situation closely to ensure peace and stability in the region.

Illegal ration rice seized in Vijayanagar district; Vehicle confiscated

VIJAYANAGAR

In a crackdown on illegal storage and transportation of essential commodities, police in Hospet of Vijayanagar district seized a large quantity of ration rice and registered a case under relevant laws.

Acting on credible information from local residents, authorities conducted a raid in Hospet city, where ration rice was allegedly being illegally stored and prepared for transportation. The operation was carried out within the jurisdiction of the Hospet Nagar police station, near the FSL School on Sandur Road.

Officials revealed that the tip-off indicated suspicious activity involving the illegal collection of ration rice, which is meant for distribution to eligible beneficiaries under government schemes. Based on this information, the Food Inspector of Hospet, along with personnel from the Layout Police Station, conducted a joint raid at the location. During the operation, authorities seized a total of 1,368 kilograms of ration rice stored in 36

bags. The rice was found loaded in a four-wheeler goods vehicle, suggesting that it was being prepared for transportation, possibly for unauthorized sale or distribution. The estimated value of the seized rice is around ₹30,944.

In addition to the rice, the vehicle used for transporting the goods was also confiscated by the police. Officials stated that strict action has been taken to prevent the misuse of essential commodities meant for public welfare. A case has been registered under the Essential Commodities Act at the Layout Police Station, and further investigation is underway to identify those involved in the illegal activity.

Police authorities have emphasized that such actions will continue in order to curb the illegal collection, storage, and transportation of ration supplies. They also urged the public to report any suspicious activities related to essential commodities to help maintain transparency and ensure that benefits reach the rightful recipients.

Strong remarks were made in Koppal as the protest against Baldota entered its 167th day, with Legislative Council member H. Vishwanath warning of serious consequences if action is not taken.

Remove Baldota or Koppal will turn into a Graveyard: MLC H. Vishwanath

KOPPAL

The ongoing protest in Koppal against Baldota has intensified as it reached its 167th day, drawing attention from political leaders and the public alike. Speaking during the agitation, MLC H. Vishwanath issued a strong warning, stating that if Baldota is not removed, Koppal could turn into a graveyard, highlighting the severity of the situation and the concerns raised by the protesters.

The protest, which has been sustained for several months, reflects the growing dissatisfaction among local residents over issues linked to Baldota operations.

Protesters have been demanding immediate action, alleging that the situation is affecting the environment, public health, and livelihoods in the region.

H. Vishwanath criticized the silence of elected representatives, stating that public representatives should step

forward and address the concerns of the people instead of remaining inactive. He further remarked that if leaders fail to respond to the needs of the public, they should reconsider their positions, indicating a strong dissatisfaction with the current response from authorities. The agitation has seen participation from various groups, including local

residents, activists, and community leaders, who have consistently voiced their demands. Demonstrators claim that prolonged inaction by the authorities has only worsened the situation, forcing them to continue their protest for over five months.

The remarks by Vishwanath have added political weight to the issue, bringing renewed focus on the demands of the protesters.



BALLARI ENCROACHMENT DRIVE

Encroachment Clearance Drive Conducted Across Ballari City

BALLARI

The Ballari City Municipal Corporation carried out a major eviction drive in Ballari, targeting illegal encroachments in several parts of the city to restore public spaces and ensure smooth movement.

In a significant civic action, the Ballari City Municipal Corporation launched an extensive eviction operation across multiple localities in the city. The drive was aimed at removing unauthorized

structures and encroachments that had occupied roads, footpaths, and public areas, causing inconvenience to residents and commuters.

Municipal officials, along with enforcement teams, conducted the operation in a coordinated manner, clearing roadside encroachments, temporary sheds, and illegal extensions of shops.

The action was taken following repeated complaints from the public regarding obstruction of pedestrian pathways and traffic congestion in



busy areas.

Authorities stated that prior notices had been issued to encroachers, giving them suffi-

cient time to voluntarily remove the illegal structures. However, as many failed to comply, the corporation pro-

ceeded with the eviction drive using necessary equipment and manpower.

The operation saw the participation of officials from various departments, including revenue, engineering, and health wings. Police personnel were also deployed to maintain law and order during the drive and to prevent any untoward incidents.

Residents have largely welcomed the move, stating that encroachments had made daily commuting difficult and unsafe. Clearing these ob-

structions is expected to improve traffic flow and provide better access for pedestrians.

Officials emphasized that such drives will continue in the future to ensure that public spaces are not misused.

They also warned that strict action will be taken against those who attempt to re-encroach after the clearance.

The civic body reiterated its commitment to maintaining order and cleanliness in the city, urging citizens to cooperate and follow regulations for the greater public good.



QUICK READ

Kannada Book Awards applications now open

Chikkaballapura
Kannada Book Authority has invited applications for the Kannada Book Elegance Awards 2025 for works published in Kannada, focusing on printing, cover design and overall quality. Publishers, printers and artists must send two copies of their books with full details including author, publisher, year of publication and cover artist information to Kannada Bhavan, J C Road, Bengaluru before May 11 2026. Submitted books will not be returned and late entries will not be considered. Application forms are available on website kpp.karnataka.gov. in and applicants can contact Administrator K B Kiran Singh Kannada Book Authority J C Road office. Late applications after deadline will not be accepted under any circumstances strictly enforced.

Basaveshwara Jayanti celebrations set for April 20

Chitradurga
The Jagajyoti Sri Basaveshwara Jayanti will be celebrated on April 20 at 3 pm at Sri Neelakantheshwara Community Bhavan in Chitradurga city. The programme is organised by the district administration, Zilla Panchayat, Kannada and Culture Department and Municipal Council. Minister D Sudhakar will inaugurate the event. Several MLAs, MPs and other public representatives will attend, while MLA K C Virendra Pappi will preside over the ceremony. A special lecture will be delivered by Prof H Lingappa. Cultural songs will also be performed. Later, a grand procession will begin at 4.30 pm from Neelakantheshwara Temple and pass through major city circles before returning to the temple.

MLA orders fast completion of Jagjivan Ram Bhavan

Chitradurga MLA Veerendra Pappy inspected stalled Babu Jagjivan Ram Bhavan, directing completion within four months with assured funds

CHITRADURGA

Chitradurga MLA K.C. Veerendra Pappy visited the under-construction Dr. Babu Jagjivan Ram Bhavan near the Zilla Panchayat on April 15 and inspected the stalled work. During the visit, he directed officials to complete the remaining construction within four months and assured that funds would be released soon for the pending works.

The MLA expressed regret that the community hall, which is important for the Dalit community, has remained incomplete for several years despite being planned as a major facility in the city. He said that he will discuss the matter with concerned de-



partment officials and use MLA grant funds to speed up the work. He added that priority will be given to complete the building and hand it over for public use without further delay. According to officials, the construction of the Bha-

van began in 2018 with an estimated cost of Rs 9.90 crore. However, changes in the building plan and lack of sufficient funds delayed the project. Officials requested additional allocation to finish the remaining work.

During the inspection, the MLA reviewed the site condition and instructed that all pending development works must be completed in a time bound manner. He also said that the government and local representatives must ensure that community buildings meant for social welfare are not left unfinished.

He assured Dalit leaders and organisations that their demand to complete the Bhavan, which has been pending for nearly eight years, will be fulfilled soon. Officials of the Social Welfare Department and community leaders accompanied him during the inspection visit and discussed the remaining works in detail at the site



Dealers meet focuses on fertilizer management

CHIKKABALLAPURA

A meeting of fertilizer and farm implement dealers was held at the Chikkaballapura Taluk Panchayat auditorium to discuss fertilizer supply management for the 2026–27 agricultural season. The meeting focused on balanced use of fertilizers, awareness about alternative nutrients, and proper distribution practices. Assistant Director of Agriculture C. Muniraja addressed the gathering and gave detailed instructions on ensuring transparent and timely fertilizer distribution during the upcoming monsoon season.

He said that stock details must be displayed on notice boards accessible to the public and farmers should be issued proper receipts during every purchase. He also instructed dealers to collect farmer details through Aadhaar-based POS machines and submit monthly stock and distribution reports to the department by the 5th of every month.

Officials were told to ensure fertilizers like DAP and urea are sold strictly as per crop requirement and not stored unnecessarily by farmers or traders. He warned that creating artificial scarcity or selling fertilizers at higher prices will lead to legal action

Chikkaballapura meeting stressed transparent fertilizer supply, Aadhaar-based sales, monthly reporting, receipts, and awareness on balanced nutrient use for 2026–27 season

under the Fertilizers Control Order and Essential Commodities Act. The use of K-Kisan software was highlighted to monitor distribution and prevent misuse, along with mandatory Farmer Identification Numbers for all transactions. Assistant Director SM Mohan also spoke and stressed the importance of maintaining proper records for fertilizers, pesticides, and seeds. He said strict monitoring will be carried out to prevent black marketing and unauthorized sales.

Dealers were also advised to follow government guidelines for storage, distribution, and record keeping.

Agriculture department officials and fertilizer, pesticide, and seed dealers from across the taluk participated in the meeting and discussed effective implementation measures for the upcoming agricultural season in Chikkaballapura district.

Chitradurga ADC warned action against fake disability certificates and misuse of government benefits, ordering strict verification

Action ordered on fake disability certificates

CHITRADURGA

Additional District Collector B.T. Kumaraswamy has warned that strict criminal action will be taken against doctors issuing fake disability certificates and individuals misusing them to obtain government benefits. He was speaking while chairing the district-level committee meeting for persons with disabilities held at the Deputy Commissioner's office in Chitradurga on Thursday.

He said that using false certificates to claim reservations and government facilities is against constitutional principles and such fraud will not be tolerated. He directed officials to verify doubtful cases through expert medical boards and re-examine bene-

ficiaries if complaints are received in writing. If irregularities are confirmed, action will be taken without exception.

The officer expressed concern over delays in issuing UDID cards and hearing disability certificates at the district hospital. He instructed hospital authorities to prioritize persons with disabilities and complete medical verification within the prescribed time. He also asked for a report every 15 days on card issuance and uploads.

Kumaraswamy stressed that government benefits meant for persons with disabilities must reach genuine beneficiaries. He warned officials against negligence and said disciplinary action will be taken if they fail to respond



properly. He also instructed Panchayat officials to display information on the 5% grant allocation for disability welfare schemes in all local bodies.

During the meeting, complaints were raised about delays in pensions and Aadhaar corrections. The Deputy Collector directed officials to resolve such issues within a

week and avoid involvement of middlemen. He also warned Gram One centres against charging more than the fixed Rs.50 fee for KSRTC bus pass applications and said licenses of violators would be cancelled.

Officials from health, education, and disability welfare departments attended the meeting.

Fiza Mall hosts grand Kids Summer Festival

MANGALURU

Fiza by Nexus Malls in Mangaluru will host The Summer Kids Festival 2026 from April 18 to May 24 creating a month long fun and learning space for children. The festival is designed to mix creativity learning and entertainment with zones for discovery art STEM and eco learning activities. Children will take part in hands on sessions workshops and performances instead of only watching events.

The program includes Little Chef contests author sessions planetarium shows Mother Day celebrations and junior entrepreneur flea market activities organized across four themed weeks. Organizers said the aim is to build creativity confidence and real world



skills among school students. Experts and trainers will guide the sessions making learning interactive and enjoyable. Families are expected to visit and experience different activity zones throughout the festival period. The event positions Fiza by Nexus as a key summer destination for Mangaluru residents and visitors promoting education and entertainment together in a lively environment for children and parents alike. Entry is free and open for all families daily.

C. Krishniah Chetty Group showcases 157-year legacy in Davanagere

DAVANAGERE

The C. Krishniah Chetty Group of Jewellers, one of India's oldest and most reputed jewellery brands, has brought its 157-year legacy to Davanagere with an exclusive five-day exhibition showcasing fine craftsmanship and heritage-inspired designs.

The exhibition is being held from April 16 to April 20, 2026, at Southern Star, 1st Floor, Parvathi Pearl Hall, Davanagere. The event was inaugurated by Smt. Rekha Ganesh and industrialist S. S. Ganesh, marking the beginning of a showcase focused on tradition, artistry and modern luxury.

The brand is presenting a wide range of jewellery collections featuring gold ornaments, diamonds and rare gemstones such as emeralds, rubies, amethysts, pearls, citrine and turquoise. Organisers said each piece reflects a blend of classical elegance and contemporary design suit-



ed for different tastes.

Speaking at the inauguration, Smt. Rekha Ganesh and S. S. Ganesh said the exhibition reflects not just jewellery but stories, emotions and craftsmanship passed through generations. They said Davanagere residents will appreciate the quality and detailing of the collections on display.

Store head Sreehari said the group has always focused on jewellery that carries meaning along with beauty. He added that the exhibition is an opportunity to connect with customers in Davanagere and introduce them to new sustainable designs, including the

brand's lab-grown diamond range under crash. club.

He said the lab-grown diamond collection offers an ethical and environmentally conscious alternative without compromising on brilliance or quality. The company said the collection represents a blend of science, design and sustainability. The exhibition also offers exclusive discounts and personalised consultations for visitors. Organisers said the event aims to provide an immersive experience of heritage, innovation and luxury, and strengthen long-term customer relationships in the region.

Ambedkar's vision key to building equal society

HUNSUR

The 135th birth anniversary of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was observed at Hanagoddu Government First Grade College in Hunsur taluk with floral tributes and discussions on his contributions to society and the Constitution.

Resource person Professor Purushottam D. said that Ambedkar played a crucial role in building an equal society in a country marked by inequality. He noted that through continuous struggle, Ambedkar ensured constitutional rights that enabled every citizen to access education, social dignity and economic opportunity.

He highlighted that Ambedkar's vision challenged oppressive social systems and

promoted equality as a foundation for national progress.

The programme was presided over by Dr. D. Ravi, who said that untouchability still exists in society and must be eradicated completely. He stressed that humanity is the highest religion and called for the removal of inequality and discrimination in all forms. He added that education is the only way to achieve true social progress.

Faculty members from various departments including Economics, Commerce, Kannada, English, History and Political Science participated in the programme. Librarian Srinivas, Dr. Theertha Prasad, Mahadev Prasad, Ramesh, Naveen Kumar, and other staff members were present.

PEACEFUL ELECTION OUTCOME

VSSN leadership elected unopposed in Magadi

MAGADI

In a peaceful and unanimous election at Mathikere in Magadi taluk, the VSSN cooperative society elected new office bearers with Congress support. M.R. Vekateshaiah was elected unopposed as President, while Shantamma was chosen as Vice President.

Returning Officer Anjan Murthy officially announced the uncontested selection after no other nominations were filed for the posts. Following the declaration, supporters

and local leaders celebrated the outcome by distributing sweets and bursting firecrackers.

Speaking after his election, President M.R. Vekateshaiah said cooperative societies play a vital role in rural development and farmers' welfare. He stressed that strong cooperatives help in providing crop loans, supporting dairy farming, and improving rural livelihoods. He also emphasized transparency and unity for the effective functioning of the association.



Magadi Block Congress President K. Krishnamurthy said that with the support of BDCC Bank Chairman H.N. Ashok, cooperative societies have been strengthened and multi-crore credit facilities are being extended to benefit

farmers.

MLA H.C. Balakrishna was praised by leaders for encouraging financial stability among cooperative institutions in the taluk and supporting farmer-friendly initiatives. Party leaders and members

said the election reflected unity within the society, even as opposition groups raised criticism during earlier cooperative elections. They added that development-oriented leadership would ensure better financial progress for farmers.

Several directors, office bearers, and local leaders attended the event and congratulated the newly elected president and vice president, expressing hope for continued growth and cooperation in the coming years.

QUICK READ

Farmers urged to fence agricultural pits for safety

Chikkaballapura
Agriculture officials have advised farmers to construct wire fencing around agricultural ponds to prevent accidental deaths of people and livestock. Under the Krishibhagya Yojana, many farmers have built farm ponds with government subsidy, but officials warned that lack of safety measures during summer increases the risk of accidents, especially involving children and cattle. Authorities said ponds must be secured with fencing, warning boards and floating safety materials. The scheme offers subsidies of 40 percent for general farmers and 50 percent for ST farmers for fencing work. Farmers have been urged to contact the Agriculture Department for assistance and ensure safety around water structures.

Monthly inspection drive under tobacco control act in Hunsur

Hunsur
As part of enforcement of the Shyavanvaya Kotpa Act 2003, a joint team of taluk officials conducted monthly inspections on shops, hotels, bars, restaurants, grocery stores and roadside dhabas to curb the sale and use of tobacco and narcotic substances. Officials also carried out awareness activities to promote a healthier society. Field Health Education Officer Rajeshwari said penalties were imposed as per rules during the inspection drive. The joint team included officers from health, police and education departments. A total fine of ₹15,200 was collected during the operation, and officials said such checks will continue regularly to ensure compliance and public awareness.

IN THE COURT OF THE CHIEF JUDICIAL MAGISTRATE OF ERODE
MCP No. 49 / 2025
MURUGESAN... PETITIONER -V/s-
Raja Sekar, S/o. Rathnamma, residing at 280, 5th cross, Gowdanpalya, Badamanavartheekaval, Subramanyapura, Bangalore south, Bangalore, Karnataka- 560061...RESPONDENT
NOTICE TO 1st RESPONDENT
The Petitioner Murugesan, S/o. Palanisamy gounder have filed MCP No.49/2025 against you for compensation for the injuries sustained by him in Road Traffic Accident that took place on 01.11.2023.
The above case is posted for your (1st respondent) appearance on 12-05-2026 at 10.30 AM before the Hon'ble Chief Judicial Magistrate, Erode. If you do not appear on 12-05-2026 at 10.30 a.m., the case will be proceeded in your absence, and an ex-parte order will be passed against you.
Advocate For Petitioner: **C.T. PRAVIN**
ERODE, CELL No:80723 31281
Date:16-03-2026

NAME CHANGE

I, NAWAB MOHAMED KALEEMULLA, S/o. Razack
Nawab Resident of No.33, Queens Road, Muniswamy Road, Shivajinagar, Bengaluru-560051, have changed my name to **MOHAMMED KALEEM**, Vide Affidavit Dated: 16.04.2026 before notary R.BASAVARAJA, Bengaluru.

NAME CHANGE

I, CHANNARP YELLA REDDY, S/O CHANNARP RUMA REDDY, resident of No.22, Lingamma Compound, Near Amba Bhavani Temple, Talu Road, Mahanandi Kottam, Ballari - 583101, have changed my name to **CHANNARP YELLA REDDY**, vide affidavit dated: 26.12.2025, before Notary KRISHNA K, Ballari.

CH CLASSIFIEDS

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080-41209042

Public health services reviewed during Raichur inspection

NCST member Jatotu Hussain inspected Raichur RIMS Hospital, ordering better care, cleanliness, facilities, and action report in 15 days

RAICHUR

Member of the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes, Jatotu Hussain, visited Raichur district on Thursday and carried out inspections at key public institutions, including RIMS Hospital and government hostels.

During his visit to RIMS Hospital in the city, he reviewed patient care services and infrastructure facilities. He instructed hospital authorities to ensure high-quality treatment for patients and to clearly display information about available government health services for public awareness. He also emphasized the need to maintain strict cleanliness standards across all hospital wards.

The commission member



visited several hospital wards and interacted directly with patients to hear their grievances. He suggested that air-conditioning facilities be provided in the mother and child care unit to improve patient comfort. He also assured financial assistance from the Commission for arranging accommodation and food for

patient attendants and directed officials to submit an action report within 15 days.

Later, he inspected Scheduled Castes Welfare Department hostels located in Vadavatti and Askihala areas. He reviewed the quality of food, accommodation, and overall facilities provided to students. He stressed that there should

be no compromise in the quality of food supplied to hostel students. He further instructed authorities to implement mandatory biometric attendance for students to ensure transparency and accuracy in records. He warned that discrepancies between manual registers and biometric data should be strictly avoided and corrected immediately.

Officials accompanying the visit included District Scheduled Castes Welfare Officer Sivamanappa, RIMS Hospital medical superintendent Dr. Suryakant, and other senior doctors and hostel wardens.

The visit focused on improving healthcare delivery and educational support systems for Scheduled Tribe and Scheduled Caste communities in the district.

Vijayapura launched free foot-and-mouth vaccination drive April 23–May 22, urging farmers to vaccinate cattle above three months

Free vaccination drive launched for cattle health

VIJAYAPURA

A district-wide free vaccination campaign against foot-and-mouth disease in cattle has been launched in Vijayapura, with officials stating that the programme will continue from April 23 to May 22 as part of the 9th round under the national animal disease control scheme.

District Collector Dr. Audra said the campaign aims to protect livestock health and prevent economic losses faced by farmers and milk producers. He made the remarks while chairing a preliminary meeting at the Col-

lector's office auditorium.

He urged farmers, dairy owners and livestock associations to actively participate and ensure all eligible cattle are vaccinated during the drive. He also advised that animals above three months of age must be covered under the vaccination programme, which is conducted twice a year.

Officials said foot-and-mouth disease affects cattle such as cows, buffaloes and oxen, leading to reduced milk production, delayed reproduction and financial losses for farmers. Free emergency veterinary ambulance services



can be accessed through helpline 1962.

Deputy Director of Animal Husbandry Dr. Revanasiddappa Padara said a total of 268,613 cattle, including over 132,000 cattle and 135,000 buffaloes, are targeted for vaccination in the district. He added that special teams have

been formed to carry out the campaign efficiently.

Authorities said around 7,000 animals will be vaccinated daily, and data will be uploaded through the Bharat Pashudhan app. Officials also confirmed that earlier rounds achieved full coverage success.

Farmers can contact 8277100200 for more information. Brochures and posters for the campaign were released during the meeting attended by district officials and veterinary staff, who stressed the importance of disease prevention for sustainable livestock farming.

Poetry book 'Vine of Desire' released in Vijayapura

VIJAYAPURA

Literature is not just an arrangement of words but a reflection of human emotion and truth, said Rahul Kumar Bhavidoddy, Joint Director of the Horticulture Department. He was speaking at the public release programme of the poetry book Vine of Desire held at the Government Arts Gallery in Vijayapura.

He said poetry expresses the depth of feelings, truth and beauty of life, and appreciated author Sangeeta Teli for her interest in literature alongside her work in soil and fruit conservation. He added that this is her first published book.



Manu Pattara, who also spoke at the event, said the poems in the collection reflect dreams, experiences and the subtle emotions of life, blending imagination with reality. He said the writings carry fragrance like flowers and connect deeply with readers.

Journalist Parasurama Basa-

gi said reading poetry regularly helps improve knowledge and understanding, noting that poems are reflections of human emotions. RS Patil Koochabala appreciated the author's effort in pursuing literature despite work pressure and called it inspiring.

Senior Assistant Director

Basanagowda Patil said the author's involvement in literature alongside horticulture work was commendable and creative.

Author Sangeeta Teli said the book reflects her personal experiences, emotions and observations of nature and human relationships, which inspired her writing.

Officials and guests including Assistant Director Bhagwant Jigajinagi, Deputy Director Arvind Hugara, and others were present at the programme.

The event concluded with appreciation for the author's literary contribution and encouragement for more creative works in the future.

Illegal 'Andar Bahar' gambling racket thrives in rural belt

YADGIR

An alleged large-scale illegal gambling racket involving the popular card game 'Andar Bahar' is reportedly operating openly in parts of Yadgir district, raising serious concerns over law enforcement inaction.

According to local sources, the racket is active in Killanekera village of Yadgir taluk, falling under the jurisdiction

of Saidapur police station. Gambling activities are said to be conducted daily on agricultural land, with transactions reportedly running into lakhs of rupees. Participants from distant towns are believed to be frequenting the spot, where full arrangements are allegedly made for gamblers. The game, involving cards such as ace, king, and queen, is reportedly played in broad daylight without fear of legal con-

sequences. Villagers allege that despite being aware of the ongoing illegal activity, authorities have failed to take stringent action. The silence of the police has raised suspicions among locals, who claim that certain individuals involved in the racket may be receiving protection.

A man identified as Thayappa has been named by residents as a key person linked to organizing the gambling oper-

ations. Allegations have also surfaced that regular payments may be made to ensure the continuation of the racket, though no official confirmation has been provided. The continued operation of such activities has triggered concern among the public, who are urging higher authorities to intervene, conduct a thorough investigation, and take strict action against those involved.



Collector warns action against fertilizer hoarding

VIJAYAPURA

District Collector Dr. Ananda K. has warned that strict legal action will be taken against anyone creating artificial scarcity or selling fertilizers above the prescribed rate in the district.

He issued the warning while chairing a meeting with fertilizer manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers held at the Agricultural Technicians Institute in Vijayapura on Wednesday.

The Collector said all fertilizer sales must be carried out only through Point of Sale (POS) machines and proper records must be maintained. He added that distribution of urea under the K-Kisan scheme should be based on land records, with allocation limited to one bag per acre.

He instructed dealers to ensure accurate stock verification and display current price and availability details clearly at their shops for public awareness.

Officials from the Agriculture Department said the district requires around 1.27 lakh metric tonnes of fertilizers for the monsoon season from April to September 2026. As

Vijayapura DC warned action against fertilizer hoarding and overpricing, mandating POS-based sales, stock display, and regulated urea distribution under K-Kisan scheme

of April 15, a total stock of 64,337 metric tonnes is available, including 16,442 metric tonnes of urea, 9,871 metric tonnes of DAP and 32,466 metric tonnes of complex fertilizers. Authorities said regular monitoring is being carried out through check posts to prevent illegal movement of urea across borders, as Vijayapura is located in an interstate boundary region.

Officials also encouraged farmers and dealers to promote the use of Nano Urea and Nano DAP as alternatives to conventional fertilizers.

The meeting was attended by agriculture officials, fertilizer company representatives, wholesalers and retail dealers, who were instructed to ensure fair distribution and avoid malpractice during the upcoming agricultural season.

“Historic Salt Satyagraha Remembrance” program held at Degree College

VIJAYAPURA

A special program titled “Historic Salt Satyagraha – 1930 Remembrance” was held at the Government First Grade College in Basavana Bagevadi, Vijayapura district, to commemorate the legacy of Mahatma Gandhi and his pivotal role in India's freedom struggle. Speaking on the occasion, Satyajit Shivanand Patil, Director of the State Sugar Factories Cooperative Federation and Karnataka Youth Congress General Secretary, described Mahatma Gandhi as a great leader who led India to freedom from British rule through the powerful weapons of truth and non-violence. He paid floral tribute to Gandhi's portrait and highlighted his enduring influence.

The event featured a range of activities including a quiz competition, interactive discussions, a short film screening, a one-day lecture session, and an exhibition of photographs depicting various phases of Gandhi's life and the freedom movement.

RMGF Founder President Netaji Gandhi, in his address, emphasized that Gandhi's philosophy and moral strength inspired countless

global leaders such as Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King Jr., Dalai Lama, Barack Obama, and Albert Einstein, among others.

He noted that Gandhi's ideals continue to guide humanity even today.

Guest speaker Rudrayya Hiremath, lecturer at Government Women's PU College, Vijayapura, stated that the Salt Satyagraha of 1930 was a milestone in India's independence movement. He also recalled that Rabindranath Tagore honored Gandhi with the title “Mahatma,” while Subhas Chandra Bose referred to him as the “Father of the Nation.” “Presiding over the program, Principal Dr. Neelappa Hosamani remarked that Gandhian principles remain relevant in today's world, especially in times of global conflict. He urged students to adopt Gandhi's values in their daily lives.

Quiz Awards & Photo Exhibition

Winners of the Gandhi-themed quiz competition were awarded books and certificates. An exhibition showcasing 50 photographs highlighted Gandhi's childhood, struggles, role in the freedom movement, and the global admiration he received.

Ancient Narasimha kshetra revered in Vijayapura district

VIJAYAPURA

The Sri Lakshmi Nrisimha Kshetra at Muttagi village in Vijayapura district continues to hold a glorious historical and spiritual significance spanning several centuries. The temple is regarded as one of the prominent Narasimha worship centres among the ten major kshetras in Karnataka, with Basavan Bagevadi also noted among them.

Located about 40 km from Vijayapura city near National Highway 13 and around 3 km from Muttagi Cross, the sacred site is known for its serene at-

mosphere created under an ancient Ashwatha tree, which is believed to be over a thousand years old.

The temple structure reflects traditional stone architecture with carved pillars, a grand entrance gateway, and a stone elephant placed at the entrance. Devotees consider the environment spiritually uplifting and peaceful.

The temple complex includes a sanctum under the sacred tree, a circumambulatory path, a Raja Gopuram, rest areas, and facilities such as a lecture hall, office space, accommodation rooms for devotees,

and drinking water arrangements supported by tube wells.

The Sri Lakshmi Nrisimha Temple Charitable Trust, consisting of fifteen members, manages the temple administration and services. The rituals are conducted by priest Srinivasacharya Ramacharya Joshi and his family, who oversee daily worship and festival arrangements.

Major religious observances such as Sri Rama Navami, Sri Jayatirtha worship, Guru Raghavendra aradhana, Vijayadasa celebrations and Madhva Navami are held annually with devotion.

QUICK READ



Trinamool accuses BJP leaders over poll scheme

KOLKATA
The Trinamool Congress has filed a complaint with the Election Commission of India against Smriti Irani and Suwendu Adhikari, alleging violation of the Model Code of Conduct. The party claimed a new scheme, Matrishakti Bhorsa Card, promises monthly payments of Rs 3,000 to women and is being promoted during the election period. It said forms are being distributed to attract voters. Trinamool called this an unfair attempt to influence voters and demanded strict action. The BJP has not yet responded publicly to the allegations. Officials are reviewing the complaint and may issue notices soon reportedly.

New Bihar CM starts work fast, holds several meetings

PATNA
Samrat Choudhary began work quickly after taking charge as Bihar's new Chief Minister. He held several high level meetings at the Secretariat with top officials to set government priorities. Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Kumar Chaudhary also reviewed his department, while Bijendra Prasad Yadav is set to take charge soon. The new government is currently small, with key leaders handling multiple departments. Choudhary's early actions show a strong focus on governance and fast decision-making. A cabinet expansion is expected soon as Bihar enters a new political phase after Nitish Kumar.

Congress questions delay in women's reservation move

NEW DELHI
Gaurav Gogoi said the Indian National Congress supports women's reservation but opposes linking it with delimitation. Speaking in the Lok Sabha, he questioned the Centre's intent and delay in implementing the policy. Gogoi referred to earlier statements by Amit Shah, asking why progress has slowed. He urged the government to apply reservation immediately to the current 543 seats. The party warned that delays could affect fair representation. Congress also raised concerns about seat increase plans and called for clarity on the government's approach.

New Gecko discovery brings pride to Assam

GUWAHATI
Himanta Biswa Sarma praised the discovery of a new gecko species, *Cyrtodactylus jayadityai*, calling it a proud moment for Assam and the Northeast. He said the finding highlights the region's rich biodiversity and importance in wildlife research. The Chief Minister noted that such discoveries help bring global attention to the unique environment of the area. Experts believe the new species adds to the growing list of rare wildlife found in the region. The announcement has boosted interest in conservation and scientific study across the Northeast region.

Debate sparks over combined bills in Parliament

Government and opposition clashed in the Lok Sabha over the simultaneous debating of three major women's reservation bills.

NEW DELHI

Tempers flared in the Lok Sabha as the government and opposition clashed over how new laws are debated. The argument began when the government moved to discuss three major bills - including a change to the Constitution and a plan for redrawing voting boundaries, all at the exact same time.

Congress leader K.C. Venugopal led the protest, arguing that "clubbing" these different types of laws together is bad practice. He pointed out that changing the Constitution is a very serious matter that requires different voting rules



than regular laws. Venugopal warned that combining them could lead to confusing legal consequences, especially if the main amendment fails to pass. However, Home Minister

Amit Shah stood his ground. He explained that all three bills are part of a single, larger goal - making women's reservation in politics a reality. According to Shah, be-

cause the bills focus on the same subject, it makes perfect sense to talk about them together so the plan can reach its "logical end."

To support his case, Shah reminded the House that this has happened before. He cited the 2023 Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam Amendment Bill 2026, the Jana Sena Party leader declared that the "Nari Shakti" (woman power) movement has moved beyond being a simple campaign catchphrase to become a legal reality.

The new bill aims to secure a historic 33 percent reservation for women in legislative bodies across the country. Kalyan noted that his party has supported this goal since 2019, believing that true national progress only happens when women have an equal seat at the table of governance. "When a woman rises, the nation rises," he shared on social media, emphasizing that these reservations are not new gifts but the resto-

Empowerment is more than a slogan: Pawan Kalyan

AMARAVATI

Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan hailed a new era for women in Indian politics.

Following the introduction of the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam Amendment Bill 2026, the Jana Sena Party leader declared that the "Nari Shakti" (woman power) movement has moved beyond being a simple campaign catchphrase to become a legal reality.

The new bill aims to secure a historic 33 percent reservation for women in legislative bodies across the country. Kalyan noted that his party has supported this goal since 2019, believing that true national progress only happens when women have an equal seat at the table of governance. "When a woman rises, the nation rises," he shared on social media, emphasizing that these reservations are not new gifts but the resto-

ration of rights that women have always deserved.

To illustrate this "rising power," Kalyan pointed to several modern Indian icons who are currently dominating their fields. He specifically congratulated chess prodigy R. Vaishali for her recent historic win in Cyprus, which made her the first Indian woman to challenge for the World Chess Championship. He also listed other inspirations, including space scientist Ritu Karidhal, Olympic champion P.V. Sindhu, and President Droupadi Murmu.

Kalyan reminded citizens that this journey began with the "founding mothers" of the Indian Constitution, such as Durgabai Deshmukh and Rajkumari Amrit Kaur. By passing this bill, he believes India is finally fulfilling the vision of equality those pioneers dreamed of, ensuring that whenever talent meets opportunity, Indian women will be there to lead the way.

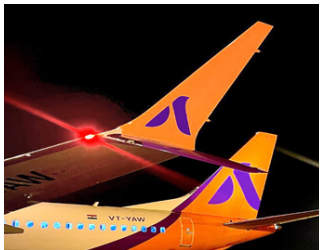


New Akasa Air flights connect Gwalior to hubs

NEW DELHI

Travelers in the Gwalior-Chambal region have reason to celebrate as connectivity to India's biggest cities is about to get a major boost. Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia announced that Akasa Air will soon launch regular flight services connecting Gwalior with both Delhi and Bengaluru.

Operating from the Rajmata Vijayaraje Scindia Airport, the airline will offer a route linking Gwalior - Delhi - Bengaluru and a return flight. Minister Scindia shared the news on social media, noting that these flights are a "concrete shape" of the government's promise to bring modern air facilities to the area. He believes these faster travel options will create fresh momentum for local trade, education, and jobs.



Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia announced that Akasa Air will launch direct Gwalior flights to Delhi and Bengaluru, boosting regional connectivity despite new airline fuel surcharges.

While the new flights offer better access, passengers should keep an eye on ticket prices. Last month, Akasa Air joined competitors like Air India and IndiGo in adding a fuel surcharge. This extra fee, ranging from ₹199 to ₹1,300, was introduced due to rising global fuel costs. However, the surcharge only applies to newer bookings made after mid March.

The expansion is part of a

larger plan to turn Gwalior into a better connected hub. For business travelers and students who previously faced long train journeys or layovers, these direct links to the national capital and India's "Silicon Valley" represent a significant win. As the airline prepares to take off, local leaders are confident that this move will help propel Gwalior's development to new heights.



BJP scores early victory with 700 unopposed wins

BHAVNAGAR

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has claimed a massive early lead in Gujarat's 2026 local elections. State President Jagdish Vishwakarma announced that roughly 700 party candidates have already been declared winners before a single vote has been cast.

Following the April 15 deadline for withdrawing nominations, the BJP found itself uncontested in hundreds of seats across municipalities and panchayats. Vishwakarma attributed this sweep to the public's trust in the party's "politics of development" and a strong organizational network that reaches even the smallest villages.

During campaign stops in Gariyadhar and Palitana, the state president took sharp aim at the opposition. He argued that the Congress party lacks both "vision and mission," claiming they failed to even field viable candidates in many areas. Vishwakarma contrasted today's Gujarat with the past, reminding voters of times when women walked kilometers for water and electricity was a luxury. He noted that under current leadership, tap water and solar energy have become household standards.

The BJP leader also highlighted the success of Direct Benefit Transfers and health schemes like Ayushman Bharat, which provide up to ₹10 lakh in medical support. As the state prepares for the remaining polls on April 26, Vishwakarma urged a massive turnout to formalize what he described as a wave of support for the party's long-term welfare initiatives.

SECURITY AGENCIES ARE INVESTIGATING A "WHITE COLLAR" RADICALIZATION TREND AFTER SENIOR IT PROFESSIONALS ALLEGEDLY RECRUITED STAFF FOR EXTREMIST GROUPS.

Nashik police uncover shocking tech workplace plot

NASHIK

Security agencies are sounding the alarm over a new and dangerous trend in radicalization following a breakthrough case at a major IT firm.

Investigators have discovered that instead of remote camps, extremist groups are now allegedly using professional workplaces to recruit and influence young professionals.

In the "Nashik Case," police found that senior employees at an IT office used their positions of power to target junior workers. Between 2021 and 2026, a group of team leaders and an HR manager allegedly worked together to radicalize and forcibly convert

vulnerable staff members. This shift from "street violence" to "white collar modules" has deeply concerned national security experts.

The methods used in this case bear a chilling resemblance to the "Vision 2047" document from the Popular Front of India (PFI), a group banned in 2022. That document detailed a long term plan to establish Islamic rule in India by its 100th year of independence. The plan specifically mentioned creating secret cells within the IT sector to attract the "educated class" to their cause.

Currently, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) is taking over the probe to see if this is hap-



pening in other cities. While several team leaders are in custody, a key HR manager named Nida Khan is currently missing. Officials believe she holds the secret to other hidden networks operating across the country.

This case serves as a stark reminder that modern threats can hide behind the polished glass of corporate offices just as easily as in the shadows of the forest.

'CLEAR AS DAYLIGHT'

Court rejects Amritpal's plea over prison stay

CHANDIGARH

The Punjab and Haryana High Court has officially dismissed a legal challenge from Amritpal Singh, the Member of Parliament for Khadoor Sahib. Singh had asked the court to cancel his latest detention order under the National Security Act (NSA), but judges ruled that the government's decision must stand.

Chief Justice Sheel Nagu stated clearly that the detention order is "immune" from the court's power to change it. This means the legal system will not interfere with the government's choice to keep



him in custody for national security reasons. Singh, who has been held since April 2023, argued that his long stay in prison was unfair and went against his basic constitutional rights.

The self-styled preacher

was arrested three years ago following a high profile police chase and a violent clash at a police station.

Even though he won a seat in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections from behind bars, he remains locked away in an

Assam jail. He was recently allowed a very brief four day release just to take his official oath as a lawmaker in Delhi before being sent back to his cell.

Lawyers for Singh pointed out that he has been held for a long time without new evidence, comparing his situation to other jailed leaders.

However, the High Court followed the path set by the Supreme Court, which previously refused to step in.

This ruling confirms that for now, the MP will remain in the Dibrugarh Central Jail while his supporters and legal team weigh their next move.

Government of Karnataka

CRAWFORD GENERAL HOSPITAL,

SAKALESHAPURA - 573 134

email:crawfordhospital@gmail.com

phone:08173-243098

ಸಂ:ಕ್ರಾಸಾಆಸ್ಪ:ಡಯಲ್:70:2025-26 ದಿನಾಂಕ:15.04.2026

Re-TENDER NOTIFICATION

Re-Tenders are invited for the supply of Ready food (Diet) to the Crawford general Hospital, Sakaleshapura through e-procurement portal. More details are available in www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in. Last date for submission of Tender is 28.04.2026 Approx.Amount Rs.65,00,000.00 EMD: Rs.162500

sd/- Administrative Medical Officer,

Crawford General Hospital, Sakaleshapura.

ಪಾಸಾಸಂಖ್ಯೆ/ಪ್ರಸನ್ನ/ಪಾಸಸ/42/ಕೆಎಸ್ಎಂಎಂ/2026-27

(An Autonomous Institute of Government of Karnataka)

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE MEDICAL

COLLEGE & RESEARCH INSTITUTE, BENGALURU

No.SABVMCR/IE-TENDER/MANIFOLD/13/2025-26 Dated:16.04.2026

TENDER NOTIFICATION

e-tenders is invited from interested eligible firms in accordance with KTPP act 1999 and 2000 act for notification of Tender for Operation & Maintenance of Medical Gas Pipeline and Manifold Systems to Affiliated Hospitals of SABVMCRI.

1) Date of Commencement of Download of Tender Document from eProcurement website <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in/> from 16.04.2026. 2) Date of Online Queries: 22.04.2026 at 5:30 pm. 3) Last Date and Time for uploading of e-tender in e-procurement portal: 30.04.2026 upto 5:30 pm. 4) Date and Time of Online Opening of Technical Bids (Single Cover System): 02.05.2026 at 10:30 am.

For more details pertaining this tender, contact the Director and Dean / Assistant Administrator of the Institute during Office Hours.

sd/- Director Cum Dean,

Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Medical

College & Research Institute,

Bengaluru

DIPR/CP/207/CCL/2026-27

Karnataka Housing Board

3rd Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G. Road, Bengaluru - 560009.

TENDER NOTIFICATION

(Through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal only)

Karnataka Housing Board invite tenders from the eligible Pre qualified contractors & willing to Pre qualify in Karnataka Housing Board through Karnataka public procurement portal for the below mentioned works.

Proposed Construction of Minority Welfare Department Morarji Desai Residential School – 1st phase

Sl.No.	Name of the work
1	Keroor (H), Bhalki and Mamdapur, Bidar North, Bidar District. Work Indent No. KHB/2026-27/BD/ WORK_INDENT 739 & IFT No.05/2026-27 Date: 09.04.2026. Amount Put to Tender: Rs.24,31,77,389/-.
2	Hanumasagara Village, Badami Taluk, Timmapura Village, Mudhol Taluk, and Savalagi Village, Jamakhandi Taluk, Bagalakote District. Work Indent No. KHB/2026-27/BD/ WORK_INDENT 740 & IFT No.06/2026-27 Date: 10.04.2026. Amount Put to Tender: Rs.36,47,75,054/-.
3	Sulla, Village, Navalagunda Taluk, Dharwad District and Timmapura Village, Dharwad Rural Taluk, Dharwad District. Work Indent No. KHB/2026-27/BD/WORK_INDENT 741 & IFT No.07/2026-27 Date: 10.04.2026. Amount Put to Tender: Rs.24,31,32,614/-.
4	Shegunasi Village, Babaleshwara Taluk, Vijayapura District and Ukkali Village, Basavanabagewadi Taluk, Vijayapura District. Work Indent No. KHB/2026-27/BD/WORK_INDENT 742 & IFT No.08/2026-27 Date: 10.04.2026. Amount Put to Tender: Rs.24,31,87,091/-.
5	Hirebagewadi , Belagavi District. Work Indent No. KHB/2026-27/BD/WORK_INDENT 743 & IFT No.09/ 2026-27 Date: 10.04.2026. Amount Put to Tender: Rs.12,16,90,956/-.
6	Byndoor, Udupi District. Work Indent No. KHB/2026-27/BD/WORK_INDENT 744 & IFT No.10/2026-27 Date: 10.04.2026 . Amount Put to Tender: Rs.12,13,06,118/-.

Last date for submission of bid: 27.04.2026 upto 4.00 PM

For further information, contact below mentioned office address: Executive Engineer, Karnataka Housing Board, Cauvery Bhavan, Bengaluru. Telephone No:080-22273511, Website: <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>

sd/- Executive Engineer,

Karnataka Housing Board, Bengaluru

DIPR/CP/195/AKAR/2026-27

QUICK READ

Couple uses art to bridge religious harmony

PURBA MEDINIPUR

A Muslim couple in West Bengal is preserving the traditional art of Patachitra by depicting stories from Hindu mythology through paintings and songs. Kalpana Chitrakar and Noordin Chitrakar present tales from the Ramayan and Krishna Leela while singing "Pater Gaan". They say art has no religion and promotes unity and humanity. The couple also spreads awareness on social issues through their work. Award winning artists, they urge the government to support and promote this heritage art, and encourage young people to learn it for future generations and preserve India's rich cultural traditions.

Bomb threat emails trigger panic in Chandigarh

CHANDIGARH

Multiple schools, two Air India flights, and the Chandigarh Secretariat received bomb threat emails, causing panic and swift police action. Several schools, including St Soldier International School, Ryan International School, and Delhi Public School, were among those targeted. Chandigarh Police carried out searches across campuses and said no suspicious items have been found so far. Security has been tightened while investigations continue. Authorities are also checking links with earlier threat emails received in the city. Officials urged the public to remain calm as probe teams work to trace the source of the messages.

ITIs get high tech boost for jobs

NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta announced that four Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) in the capital will soon open world class labs. This big move aims to give students better skills so they can find high paying jobs in modern industries. By updating old equipment and building new spaces, the government wants to make sure every student learns on the same machines used by big companies. At ITI Jahangirpuri, a new Power Electronics Lab will teach students about solar energy and industrial robots. Over 480 students will learn how to

fix smart energy systems and modern electrical controls. Meanwhile, ITI Jail Road is getting a major upgrade to its welding lab. Instead of just old tools, students will use simulators and plasma cutters to practice precision work safely. Technology is also coming to ITI Arab Ki Sarai, where students will use Virtual Reality (VR) headsets. These tools let them practice painting cars or welding in a digital world before trying the real thing. They will also learn to repair advanced car features like airbags and smart brakes. Finally, a special Electric Vehicle (EV) Lab will open at Mayur Vihar.

Government of Karnataka

Public Works Department

Office of the Executive Engineer,

Mysuru Division, Mysuru.

E-mail: eepwdmys21@gmail.com

Phone No. & Fax No. 0821-2420810

IFT No. 36/2025-26/2nd Call Dt.13.04.2026

ITEM WISE SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION

On behalf of the Governor of Karnataka, Executive Engineer, Public Works Department has published item wise Tender notification for **Widening of bridge work at ch 6.95 km (near Kalluru village) KRS connecting D Salundi (SH-33) via Undavadi-kalluru-Ratnahalli-Elwala (NH-275) Nagawala-Doddamaragowdanahalli -Beerihundi-Mulluru-Devagahalli-Dhanagalli in Mysore taluk** work approved under H/A:5054-80-190-0-01-132 **KRDCL-Capital Expenses** with KW-4 Conditions & Regulations with Two cover systems. The **Minimum Amount Put to Tender is Rs.121.03 Lakhs and EMD amount is Rs.2.00 Lakhs**. Pre bid Meeting will be held in the undersigned office at **11.00 A.M on 16.04.2026**. Tenders shall be Submitted in KPP-Portal (<https://kpp.karnataka.gov.in>) from **13.04.2026 to 21.04.2026** **with 17.00 PM**. Period for completion 05 months (including monsoon) Only eligible KPWD Contractor Registered in the KPP-Portal shall participate. More details can be obtained from the office of the under Signed during office hours. Any amendments or modifications in tender notification will be published in KPP-Portal Only.

Sd/- Executive Engineer,

Public Work Department, Mysuru Division, Mysuru

DIPRDDMYS/63/KSMCA/48/2026-27

Gujarat powers ahead with huge economic lead

CM Bhupendra Patel launched the GATE Expo, highlighting Gujarat's 8.3% contribution to India's GDP and its leading roles in manufacturing

GANDHINAGAR

Gujarat continues to be a massive engine for India's growth, now making up 8.3 percent of the entire country's economy. Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel shared these impressive figures while opening a major three day trade event called the GATE Expo in Gandhinagar.

The state is hitting well above its weight in several areas. Along with its share of the national wealth, Gujarat produces 18 percent of India's factory goods and handles a staggering 31 percent of all products sent to other coun-

tries. The Chief Minister credited this success to a "development model" that blends long-standing traditions with modern business spirit. The new expo showcases

the future of the state across 18,000 square meters of space. While it covers 16 different areas including cars, green energy, and medicine, there is a special spotlight on

high-tech fields like Artificial Intelligence and online safety. Over 600 companies have set up booths to show off their latest work to an expected crowd of 50,000 visitors.

"Gujarat is becoming a global gateway," Patel told the crowd. He highlighted that the state is the first in India to create a specific road-map for the year 2047. This plan focuses on "earning well and living well." By leading the way in new industries like electric cars and microchips, the state aims to help the local community grow while making products that the whole world wants to buy.

A dangerous forest fire near the Pauri-Srinagar road in Uttarakhand is threatening villages and reducing visibility for travelers.

Forest fire erupts along busy Uttarakhand road

PAURI GARHWAL

As summer heat intensifies, a dangerous forest fire has broken out along the Pauri-Srinagar road in Uttarakhand.

The blaze is currently spreading near the highway, creating thick smoke that has significantly lowered visibility for drivers and pedestrians. Locals are now calling for urgent help as the flames move closer to nearby villages.

Residents report that these fires have become a grim yearly tradition during the dry season, destroying valuable timber and medicinal plants. Beyond the environmental damage, the fire is a direct threat to local wildlife. Ashish Godiyal, a resident who attempted to fight the flames himself near Sainik Dhaba, warned that the destruction of

the forest leaves animals without food or shelter, forcing them into dangerous contact with human settlements.

The weather outlook remains a concern. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) predicts that temperatures across the state will rise by another 1 to 3 degrees Celsius over the next few days. While some very light rain or snow is possible in high-altitude areas like Uttarkashi and

Chamoli, most of the state is expected to stay dry and hot.

The Forest Department has been urged to deploy teams immediately to prevent the fire from reaching residential areas. For now, travelers are advised to use extreme caution on the Pauri-Srinagar route, as shifting winds can suddenly push smoke and fire onto the roadway, making driving conditions unpredictable and hazardous.

DMK protests over delimitation plan in TN

TIRUCHIRAPPALLI

Workers of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam staged a protest in Tiruchirappalli against the Centre's proposed delimitation exercise. They raised black flags and opposed the plan, saying it could reduce the state's political rights. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. K. Stalin also launched a state-wide protest campaign, including symbolic demonstrations. The opposition argues that the proposed changes may affect representation in Parliament and state assemblies. DMK leaders claimed the move threatens federal balance and urged unity across Tamil Nadu. Police monitored the protests as tensions rose over the issue across the region.

Reliance distances itself from jailed former executives

NEW DELHI

Anil Ambani's Reliance Group issued a firm statement, clarifying that two former high ranking officials arrested in a fraud probe have not been with the company for years.

The announcement comes after the Enforcement Directorate (ED) detained Amitabh Jhunjhunwala and Amit Bapna as part of a massive money laundering investigation.

The company stated that Jhunjhunwala and Bapna cut ties with the group in late 2019. During their time with Reliance, Jhunjhunwala served as Group Managing Director, while Bapna was the Chief Financial Officer of Reliance Capital. Both men are now being questioned over their roles in alleged banking frauds involving the group's home and commercial finance branches.

Investigators claim these executives were key decision makers during a period of significant financial misconduct. The arrests are part of a wider

Reliance Group clarified that two former executives arrested in a fraud probe left the company years before their detention.

crackdown on Anil Ambani's business empire. Earlier this month, the CBI filed a new case against RCom and Ambani himself, alleging they cheated the Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) of India out of \$[₹]3,750\$ crore. LIC claims it was tricked into buying bonds based on false promises about the company's financial health. This legal storm has reached the highest levels of the judiciary. The Supreme Court recently called for a "fair and time bound" investigation, urging different government agencies to work together to uncover the truth. As the probe deepens, Reliance continues to insist that the actions of these former employees do not reflect the current state of its ongoing businesses.

Kejriwal challenges judge over conflict of interest

NEW DELHI

Former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal appeared personally before the Delhi High Court to file a new affidavit in the ongoing excise policy case.

The AAP leader is calling for Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma to step down from the case, citing a perceived conflict of interest.

The core of Kejriwal's argument centers on the judge's family members. The affidavit points out that the judge's children are currently on the legal panel for the Central Government.

Since the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is a central agency, Kejriwal argues this creates a "reasonable apprehension" of bias.

He clarified that he isn't accusing the judge of actual wrongdoing, but rather that in a politically sensitive case, fairness must be visible

to the public.

During the hearing, Kejriwal also raised concerns about a previous session where he was allegedly unable to respond to government arguments because he had left the courtroom early with permission.

He claimed this limited his right to a fair hearing.

The Solicitor General, representing the CBI, strongly opposed the request.

He labeled the plea "frivolous" and warned that allowing such requests could let powerful people "pick and choose" their judges.

Justice Sharma noted this was the first time she had faced a recusal request and stated she had "learned a lot" about the legal rules surrounding such moves.

The High Court has now reserved its final order on whether the judge will continue to hear the case.

NEW DEHRADUN BUILDINGS BLEND TRADITION WITH TECH

DEHRADUN

Uttarakhand's top leaders gathered to kick off a major building project aimed at making government services easier for everyone to reach. Governor Gurmit Singh and Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami laid the foundation stones for four new multi-purpose buildings at the Lok Bhawan campus in Dehradun.

These aren't just typical offices. The first building will act as a health hub, offering three types of care under one roof like Ayurvedic, Homoeopathic, and Allopathic treatments. Other buildings will house a new cafeteria, an information center, and offices for the Public Works and Horticulture departments. By putting

these services in one spot, the government hopes to save citizens from traveling all over the city.

One of the most striking parts of the plan is the design. Every structure will be built using traditional hill architecture. This choice is meant to celebrate the local culture and support local craftsmen who know these ancient styles best. While the outside will look traditional, the inside will feature modern technology to

speed up administrative work. Governor Singh noted that these integrated facilities will help the government run more smoothly, saving both time and resources. Chief Minister Dhami added that the project is a big step toward "good governance," making sure high-quality service is just one stop away for every resident. Construction is expected to begin shortly, marking a new chapter for the capital's central campus.

RAPID DELIVERY BARRIER

BIG BRANDS STRUGGLE WITH 10 MINUTE DELIVERY

NEW DELHI

India's famous household brands are facing an unexpected hurdle. For decades, companies making everything from soap to snacks mastered the art of reaching millions of tiny neighborhood "kirana" stores. However, a new challenge has emerged as they are struggling to get those same products into the high speed world of quick commerce.

Platforms like Blinkit, Zepeto, and Swiggy Instamart operate through "dark stores" a

small, local warehouses designed for ultra-fast delivery. While big brands have the manufacturing power and millions of loyal customers, their old-school supply chains are hitting a wall. The problem isn't a lack of items or interest, it is a fundamental clash between two different eras of business.

Traditional distribution was built for stability and massive scale, often taking days or weeks to move goods through various wholesalers. In contrast, quick commerce de-

mands split second inventory updates and instant restocking to meet ten minute delivery

promises. This "compatibility gap" means that even though a brand is famous nationwide,

it might be missing from the app when a local customer tries to order it.

Experts say this mismatch is forcing a total rethink of how products move across the country. To survive the speed driven retail revolution, legacy companies must modernize their logistics to fit into these 2,000 odd dark stores as efficiently as they once filled 10 million corner shops. For shoppers, this transition will eventually determine whether their favorite brands are just a click and ten minutes away.

QUICK READ

US-Lebanon-Israel talks set for Thursday amid US mediation push

Washington

US President Donald Trump said on Wednesday that Israel and Lebanon will hold talks on Thursday, calling it an effort to create “breathing room” between the two sides after decades of limited contact. The announcement follows US-hosted discussions in Washington where Israel pushed for Hezbollah’s disarmament, while Lebanon demanded a ceasefire and relief from a worsening humanitarian crisis. According to the US State Department, both sides agreed to begin direct negotiations at a mutually agreed time and venue, marking the most significant high-level engagement since 1993. Washington clarified that a ceasefire in Lebanon is not part of its negotiations with Iran, though officials said Trump would welcome an end to hostilities as part of a broader peace deal. US mediation, led by Secretary of State Marco Rubio, is focused on confidence-building measures aimed at reducing tensions and creating space for a durable regional settlement.

Ecuador bus crash leaves multiple dead and injured

Quito

At least 11 people were killed and 22 others injured when an interprovincial bus veered off the Cuenca–Molleturo road in southern Ecuador and plunged into a river near the El Chorro bridge in Cuenca canton, authorities said. The vehicle broke through guardrails before falling into the shallow river and later caught fire, burning completely, according to local fire officials. Rescue teams, including firefighters, the Red Cross and health services, rushed to the scene to retrieve victims and assist the injured, several of whom are in critical condition. Cuenca Fire Chief Sixto Heras said some bodies were found inside the bus while others were recovered from the river. The cause of the crash is under investigation. Authorities have closed the road as recovery operations continue and warned the death toll may rise amid ongoing searches.

IMF warns of rising global fiscal strain

Global economy faces renewed pressure as conflict, debt, and inflation risks intensify worldwide

WASHINGTON

The International Monetary Fund has warned that the global economy is once again under significant strain due to escalating conflict in the Middle East, combined with already high debt levels and shrinking fiscal space in many countries.

The institution cautioned that governments may find it increasingly difficult to respond effectively to new economic shocks without worsening long-term financial risks.

Rodrigo Valdes, Director of the IMF’s Fiscal Affairs Department, said the world economy is being tested by the consequences of renewed war-related disruptions. He noted that public finances in many countries are already stretched, limiting their ability to introduce large-scale support measures. According to him, policymakers must avoid broad fiscal stimulus even as energy and food prices rise, because such actions could intensify inflationary pressures and complicate monetary policy efforts.

The IMF instead recommended that governments focus on targeted and temporary assistance aimed at protecting vulnerable households. Officials stressed that maintaining market-based price signals is



essential to ensure efficient resource allocation during supply shocks. The Fund also warned that widespread energy subsidies are particularly problematic, describing them as expensive, inefficient, and difficult to reverse once implemented. Such measures can also distort global markets and create unintended spillover effects across economies.

Valdes emphasized that responding to supply-driven shocks with demand stimulation can worsen inflation rather than ease it. He argued that allowing prices to reflect scarcity is crucial to stabilizing markets. Deputy Director Era Dabla-Norris added that governments today have significantly less fiscal flexibility compared to the pandemic period, largely due to elevated debt levels and tighter financing conditions.

The IMF observed that although countries have introduced a mix of tax reductions, subsidies, and price controls, current responses remain more restrained than during

earlier global energy shocks. However, it warned that poorly designed policies could still create substantial long-term fiscal burdens.

Looking ahead, the IMF highlighted deteriorating medium-term debt trends. Global public debt is projected to reach 99 percent of global output by 2028, with even higher levels possible under severe scenarios involving financial volatility and geopolitical fragmentation. Rising interest rates and shorter debt maturities are further increasing vulnerability to market shifts, making borrowing conditions more sensitive to investor sentiment.

The institution urged governments to begin rebuilding fiscal buffers once economic conditions stabilize. It also called on low-income countries to strengthen domestic revenue systems as external support declines. Additionally, the IMF pointed to emerging challenges from artificial intelligence, noting its potential to improve efficiency in public services while also reshaping labor markets and increasing inequality risks.

Overall, the IMF emphasized that policymakers must carefully balance short-term crisis management with long-term fiscal sustainability in an increasingly uncertain global environment.

US clarifies Iran-Lebanon peace talks

WASHINGTON

The United States has clarified that discussions regarding a possible ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon are not connected to its ongoing negotiations with Iran, even as it continues diplomatic efforts aimed at reducing tensions along Israel’s northern frontier.

A senior administration official stated that Washington has not requested any truce in Lebanon and emphasized that such a step is not included in the separate peace negotiations with Iran. However, the official added that President Donald Trump would welcome an end to hostilities in Lebanon if it emerged as part of a broader peace agreement between Israel and Lebanon.

The clarification follows rare direct talks between Israel and Lebanon held at the State Department, hosted by Secretary of State Marco Rubio, marking the first such engagement in several years and signaling a cautious diplomatic opening.

US officials described those discussions as an initial step toward reducing tensions and potentially creating conditions for a more comprehensive agreement in the future.

Another senior official said the United States is pursuing a calibrated approach, emphasizing



Washington separates Iran talks from Israel Lebanon ceasefire discussions

sizing that it seeks durable peace rather than forcing an immediate ceasefire. The focus, the official noted, is on building confidence between both sides so that meaningful negotiations can develop over time.

Officials stressed that both governments must build political momentum and establish trust mechanisms that can support future understandings without collapsing under immediate pressure.

Reports have indicated that Israel is considering a short-term ceasefire in Lebanon that could temporarily pause its ongoing conflict with Hezbollah, a group backed by Iran. Some accounts suggest the proposed truce could last approximately one week, though discussions remain fluid and uncertain.

It is still unclear whether Hezbollah would agree to any temporary suspension of hos-

tilities, and officials caution that political and military calculations on both sides remain complex.

US officials reiterated that Washington is not linking negotiations between the United States and Iran with the separate peace process between Israel and Lebanon, underscoring its intention to keep diplomatic tracks distinct.

This separation reflects concerns in Washington that overlapping conflicts in the region could complicate progress if handled as a single negotiation framework.

The Lebanon front has remained highly unstable since Israel began a military campaign earlier this year following rocket fire from Hezbollah, leading to significant displacement of civilians and raising fears of wider regional escalation.

Washington’s current diplomatic approach is focused on incremental progress rather than rapid resolution, with officials arguing that carefully built trust is more likely to produce lasting stability.

The renewed diplomatic engagement also coincides with ongoing US efforts to maintain a fragile truce with Iran, as regional flashpoints such as Lebanon continue to pose risks to broader stability if not managed carefully.

US expects Iran conflict relief within weeks

WASHINGTON

US Energy Secretary Chris Wright has expressed confidence that the ongoing conflict involving Iran will ease within a matter of weeks, assuring that its broader economic impact will remain limited, particularly in global energy markets. Speaking at a Wall Street Journal policy discussion, Wright said the United States believes the situation is unlikely to develop into a prolonged economic disruption despite temporary fluctuations in fuel prices.

He stated that the US economy entered the crisis from a position of strength, allowing it to absorb external shocks more effectively than in previous periods. According to Wright, current gasoline prices remain manageable when compared to recent historical peaks, noting that prices were significantly higher only a few years ago. He emphasized that domestic economic momentum, supported by strong investment activity and a resilient manufacturing base, continues to provide stability even amid geopolitical tensions.

To address potential sup-



ply pressures, the United States has coordinated with international partners on a large-scale strategic oil reserve release valued at approximately 400 million dollars. Wright explained that this measure is intended to stabilize global energy markets by ensuring consistent supply flows rather than increasing total production volume. He also noted that the effects of this release will take several months to fully materialize, but suggested that the conflict is expected to conclude before its impact is completely felt.

Wright highlighted the strength of American energy production, describing the United States as the world’s largest producer and exporter of oil and natural gas. This position, he said, enables Washington to support allied nations facing supply shortages by increasing exports and encouraging higher domestic output.

On global supply shifts, Wright indicated that Iranian oil exports could decline sharply if regional restrictions persist, potentially removing significant volumes from international markets. At the same time, he pointed to rising production in Venezuela, which has increased by roughly one quarter in recent months, helping to offset global demand growth.

He further noted that liquefied natural gas exports from the United States continue to expand rapidly, especially toward Europe and Asia, where prices remain significantly higher than domestic levels. Wright described American natural gas reserves as exceptionally large and capable of supporting long-term export growth.

Despite ongoing uncertainty, analysts note that disruptions in the Gulf region could still affect global import-dependent economies, including India, which relies heavily on crude oil imports. However, diversified global supply sources and increased production from multiple regions are expected to reduce the severity of potential price shocks in international markets.

Iran reaffirms firm stance on nuke enrichment rights

TEHRAN

Iran has reiterated that it will not compromise on its nuclear enrichment rights, with the country’s Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baqaei stating that Tehran’s entitlement to peaceful nuclear energy is firmly grounded in international law and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), according to state media reports on Thursday.

Speaking at a press conference in Tehran, Baqaei dismissed what he described as unfounded speculation circulating in Western media regarding Iran’s nuclear enrichment programme. He stressed that Iran’s legitimate rights, as recognised under international law, are not subject to negotiation or external pressure.

Baqaei underlined that the right to peaceful nuclear enrichment is neither a privilege granted by any external power nor a con-

cession that can be withdrawn in times of political tension or conflict. He further emphasized that as long as Iran remains a signatory to the NPT, it is entitled to fully benefit from all provisions outlined in the treaty, including the peaceful use of nuclear technology.

Addressing reports of alleged enrichment-related discussions during recent Iran-United States negotiations held in Pakistan, Baqaei clarified that any potential agreement would first require the establishment of a comprehensive and structured framework. He noted that until broader terms are agreed upon, detailed discussions on sensitive issues, particularly those related to conflict and security between Iran and the United States, would be premature.

In another part of his briefing, Baqaei rejected claims that Iran had re-

duced or stopped its support for what he referred to as legitimate resistance in Lebanon. He asserted that Iran has consistently supported such movements and stated that ending the conflict in Lebanon was a key element of a ceasefire understanding discussed during talks held in Islamabad. He further alleged that the opposing side, referring to Israel, did not comply with the ceasefire terms from the beginning.

According to Baqaei, Iran remains committed to its position and continues to pursue the matter through diplomatic channels. He also stated that under any agreement framework, if one party fails to meet its obligations, the other retains the right to proportionately adjust its commitments. He dismissed as completely false any claims suggesting that Iran has abandoned its stated commitments regarding Lebanon.

Kim Jong Un oversees artillery contest

SEOUL

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has overseen an artillery firing contest held on the birth anniversary of state founder Kim Il-sung, according to North Korean state media reports published on Thursday. The event marks a significant military demonstration conducted on one of the country’s most important national holidays, known as the Day of the Sun.

According to the Korean Central News Agency, Kim Jong-un observed an artillery firing contest involving subunits of the Korean People’s Army operating under large combined formations in the western region. The drills were organized on April 15, the anniversary of Kim Il-sung’s birth. The agency described the exercises as a display of high precision and readiness, highlighting what it called “militant marksmanship” and a “full war posture”



demonstrated by participating units.

The report stated that the top-performing unit was the artillery subunit of the Capital City Defence Corps, followed by a unit from the Fourth Corps of the Korean People’s Army. Officials said the competition was designed to evaluate operational capability and strengthen overall combat effectiveness across artillery forces.

Kim Jong-un reportedly ex-

pressed satisfaction with the outcomes of the firing contest, describing it as a meaningful event held on an important national holiday. He emphasized that improving artillery capabilities remains central to military success, stating that artillery strength is a decisive factor not only in battles but also in broader operational outcomes. He also urged continued modernization efforts in line with a new five-year defense develop-

ment plan and called for enhanced combat readiness across all artillery units.

The North Korean leader further instructed the military to focus intensively on training to ensure full combat preparedness, linking these efforts to the long-standing vision of the country’s founding leadership to build a powerful armed force.

Analysts from South Korea’s unification ministry interpreted Kim’s public inspec-

tion of the drills as a demonstration of military strength intended to reinforce internal unity and project confidence in defense capabilities. They noted that such appearances on major national holidays may serve both strategic messaging and domestic consolidation purposes.

Meanwhile, state media reported that senior government and party officials visited the Kumsusan Palace of the Sun, where the embalmed bodies of former leaders Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il lie in state. However, Kim Jong-un did not personally visit the mausoleum, instead sending a floral tribute.

This absence marks the fourth consecutive year he has not attended the mausoleum on the founder’s birth anniversary, a trend analysts suggest may reflect a broader effort to strengthen his independent leadership identity and shift symbolic focus toward the current administration.

SU DO KU

Brain-Bender: Can You Solve It?

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

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

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.





Kohli Breaks Six-Hitting Record in RCB's Win Over LSG

Virat Kohli delivered a record-breaking performance to guide Royal Challengers Bengaluru to a crucial win in IPL 2026

BENGALURU

Virat Kohli added another milestone to his illustrious career as Royal Challengers Bengaluru defeated Lucknow Super Giants by five wickets in IPL 2026. Kohli scored a steady 49 off 34 balls, anchoring the chase at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium. While the knock itself was measured, it proved pivotal in securing victory and also helped him script history in the tournament. During the innings,

Kohli surpassed KL Rahul to become the Indian opener with the most sixes in IPL history. He now has 185 sixes, edging past Rahul's 184. In the overall standings, Kohli sits third behind Chris Gayle (326) and David Warner (210). Among Indian players, Rohit Sharma is third on the list with 148 sixes, followed by Shikhar Dhawan and Shubman Gill. Despite not being at peak fitness, Kohli showcased grit and determination. He revealed after the match that he had been dealing with a sore knee and was unwell in the days leading up to the game. The batter was also seen practising with his left knee

strapped before the match. "Much better than the last game. I'm still not 100%, but I was happy with my intensity," Kohli said, reflecting on his performance. His innings, which included six fours and a six, took his tally to 228 runs in the tournament at an average of 57, earning him the Orange Cap. Kohli, however, admitted he would have liked to stay till the end and finish the chase himself. Even so, his composed knock once again highlighted his consistency and ability to deliver under pressure, playing a key role in RCB's growing momentum this season.

IPL 2026

MI Sign Krish Bhagat as Injury Replacement

MUMBAI

Mumbai Indians on Thursday announced the inclusion of Krish Bhagat as a replacement for injured all-rounder Atharva Ankolekar for the rest of the Indian Premier League 2026 season. The 21-year-old from Punjab is a right-handed batter and a right-arm pacer, offering versatility with both ball and bat. Bhagat's inclusion is expected to bolster Mumbai Indians' bowling resources while also providing useful lower-order batting options. Bhagat is no stranger to the Mumbai Indians setup. He has been part of the franchise's trials over the past two years and featured in the DY Patil T20 Cup 2026 representing Reliance. His consistent presence in the team's pre-season camps this year as a support bowler allowed him to closely work with the main squad and coaching staff. The franchise, in an official statement, highlighted Bhagat's steady progress and

commitment. "Krish has consistently impressed the coaching staff with his dedication, work ethic, and the quality he brings to every session and practice games that he played for Mumbai Indians," the statement said. It further noted that his growth, both in domestic cricket and during training sessions with the franchise this season, earned him the opportunity to step into the main squad. The injury to Ankolekar, a promising

all-rounder, has come as a setback for Mumbai Indians, but the team appears confident that Bhagat can rise to the occasion. His familiarity with the squad environment and training systems is expected to ease the transition. As the tournament progresses into a crucial phase, Mumbai Indians will look to integrate Bhagat effectively and maintain their competitive edge in IPL 2026.



Mumbai Indians add fresh depth to their squad for the remainder of IPL 2026

Shreyas Iyer's calm leadership and reassuring words have given youngster Nehal Wadhara the confidence to rediscover his rhythm amid a lean patch

'Play Without Pressure': Shreyas Iyer Backs Wadhara to Find Form

MUMBAI

Punjab Kings captain Shreyas Iyer has offered a simple yet powerful mantra to young batter Nehal Wadhara—play without pressure—as the team looks to get the best out of the struggling left-hander in IPL 2026. Wadhara, who has managed just 27 runs in three innings so far, was seen in deep conversation with his skipper ahead of Punjab Kings' clash against Mumbai Indians. Keen to regain his form, the youngster sought guidance from Iyer, known for his composed approach both on and off the field. The advice he received was straightforward but impactful. "He told me to play without



any pressure and said that, as captain, it's his job to take the pressure," Wadhara revealed. The reassurance reflects Iyer's leadership style—one that absorbs expectations and allows players the freedom to perform.

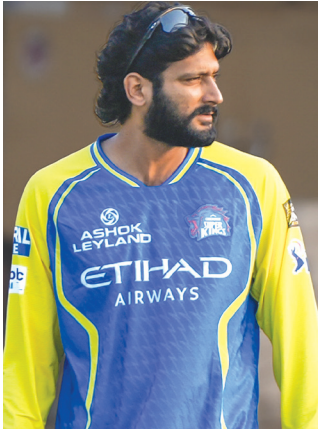
Wadhara noted that such words go a long way in boosting a player's confidence. "It's a big thing for a captain to say this—that you just play your game and not worry about the results. He's there to handle the pressure and take

the team over the line," he said, highlighting the trust within the dressing room. Beyond Iyer's influence, Wadhara also credited head coach Ricky Ponting for fostering a positive environment within the squad. According to him, Ponting's approach focuses on encouragement rather than criticism, ensuring players remain fearless even after failures. "He always speaks positively. Even if a player gets out, he focuses on the positives. There are no negative words, and that gives players confidence," Wadhara said. This supportive setup has created a culture where players are free to express themselves without fear of setbacks.

CSK Suffer Setback as Khaleel Ahmed Ruled Out of IPL 2026

NEW DELHI

Chennai Super Kings have suffered a major setback after left-arm pacer Khaleel Ahmed was ruled out of the ongoing IPL 2026 season with a quadriceps injury. Khaleel, who had featured in all five matches for CSK so far, reported pain in his right hip during their April 14 clash against Kolkata Knight Riders. Subsequent medical evaluation confirmed a grade 2 tear, which is expected to keep him out of action for at least 10 to 12 weeks. The 27-year-old had emerged as one of CSK's most consistent performers in the early phase of the tournament, delivering crucial breakthroughs and maintaining control during key phases of the game. His absence leaves a noticeable gap in the team's pace attack, especially given his ability to swing the



new ball and contain runs in the powerplay. A source within the IPL confirmed the extent of the injury, stating that the rehabilitation process would be lengthy, effectively ruling him out for the rest of the season. The development comes at a critical juncture as CSK look to build momentum and secure a strong position on the

points table. Khaleel's international experience, which includes 11 One Day Internationals and 18 T20 Internationals for India, had added depth and reliability to the CSK bowling unit. His last appearance for the national side came in July 2024, but his performances in the IPL had continued to underline his value in the shortest format. The franchise is now expected to explore replacement options to reinforce their squad, though finding a like-for-like replacement may prove challenging. Team management will also need to reshuffle their bowling combinations to compensate for the loss. With the tournament entering a decisive phase, CSK will hope their remaining bowlers can step up and maintain competitiveness despite the setback.

Gujarat Titans Strengthen Fan Connect with Player-Led Engagement Drive

AHMEDABAD

Gujarat Titans have taken a significant step in deepening their connection with supporters through a vibrant, community-driven fan engagement event in Ahmedabad, reinforcing their fan-first philosophy in IPL 2026. The franchise hosted an interactive session, where star players Sai Sudharsan, Washington Sundar, Glenn Phillips and Kagiso Rabada engaged directly with fans. The event featured a mix of fun challenges, informal conversations, and interactive activities aimed at creating a more personal and memorable experience for attendees. Fans were given rare access to interact closely with their favourite players, participate in games, and experience the Gujarat Titans ecosystem beyond the matchday atmo-



sphere. The initiative highlighted the franchise's commitment to making fans an integral part of their journey rather than just spectators. This engagement is part of a broader strategy adopted by Gujarat Titans to build meaningful, year-round connections with their fan base. Over the past few seasons, the franchise has consistently organised on-ground activations

and community outreach programmes to ensure that fan interaction extends well beyond the stadium. By prioritising accessibility and immersive experiences, Gujarat Titans have positioned themselves as one of the most fan-centric teams in the IPL. Their approach focuses on fostering emotional connections, giving supporters a sense of belonging and

involvement in the team's growth. Further underlining this commitment, the franchise recently issued a ticketing advisory for their rescheduled fixture against Chennai Super Kings. The match, originally set for April 26, will now be played on May 21 at the Narendra Modi Stadium. Fans who had already purchased tickets were offered the flexibility to either retain them for the new date or opt for a full refund, ensuring a seamless and fan-friendly experience. With two consecutive wins boosting their momentum, Gujarat Titans are now set to face Kolkata Knight Riders in Ahmedabad. As they continue to perform on the field, their off-field initiatives are equally strengthening their bond with fans, setting a benchmark for engagement in the league.

India Has a Doping Problem but Sincere Efforts On: WADA Chief Banka

NEW DELHI

World Anti-Doping Agency president Witold Banka on Thursday said India continues to face a "serious doping problem," but stressed that there are visible and sincere efforts underway to address it, including stronger enforcement and international cooperation. Speaking after a series of high-level meetings with Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, National Anti-Doping Agency officials, and sports authorities, CBI representatives, Banka said he was leaving India with "optimism" about future reforms. India has been placed at the top of the WADA list of doping offenders for three consecutive years, recording the highest positivity rate among major sporting na-



tions. Despite this, Banka acknowledged that the country is actively working to improve its anti-doping ecosystem as it prepares for major global sporting ambitions, including the 2030 Commonwealth Games bid and a potential Olympic hosting bid in 2036. "The biggest producer of performance-enhancing drugs and steroids is in India. There is a serious problem and nobody is blind to it," Banka said, adding that progress depends on sustained enforcement and cooperation.

He highlighted international efforts such as INTERPOL-backed "Operation Upstream," which has led to 250 raids, seizure of nearly 90 tonnes of performance-enhancing drugs, and the dismantling of 88 illegal laboratories across 20 countries. According to Banka, India's National Anti-Doping Agency National Anti-Doping Agency India has increased testing from around 4,000 samples in 2019 to nearly 8,000 in 2025. However, he noted that this still lags behind countries like China, which conducts over 15,000 tests annually. He cautioned that higher positivity rates should not be misinterpreted as failure. "If the numbers go down drastically, I would be suspicious. This is not about numbers, it is about process and surveillance," he said.

Infantino Says Iran Will "For Sure" Play in World Cup Despite War

NEW YORK

FIFA president Gianni Infantino has said that Iran national football team will "for sure" participate in the upcoming World Cup, despite the ongoing war involving the United States and Israel and heightened geopolitical tensions. Infantino emphasized that Iran has already qualified on sporting merit and therefore deserves to compete. He acknowledged that the situation remains sensitive but insisted that football should remain above political disputes.

"The Iranian team is coming for sure, yes," Infantino said. "We hope that by then the situation will be peaceful. But Iran has to come. They represent their people. They have qualified. The players want to play." Iran's participation had been in doubt following military escalations and airstrikes involving the United States and Israel, which raised concerns over travel, security, and diplomatic restrictions. However, Infantino reiterated his belief that sport can act

as a bridge even during periods of conflict. "I went to see them in Antalya two weeks ago," he added. "They are actually quite a good team and they really want to play. And they should play. Sports should be outside politics." The FIFA chief also admitted that complete separation of sport and politics is not always possible, but stressed the organisation's commitment to ensuring participation. "We don't live on the moon, we live on planet Earth," he said.

Messi Faces \$7 Million Lawsuit over Alleged Contract Breach in Florida Friendly

MIAMI

Lionel Messi is facing a lawsuit from a Miami-based event promoter who alleges that the global football icon violated a \$7 million contract by failing to appear in a scheduled exhibition match in Florida last year. The lawsuit has been filed by Vid Music Group in a Miami-Dade circuit court against both Messi and the Argentine Football Association, according to court records. The promoter claims fraud and breach of contract, stating it paid for

exclusive rights to organise Argentina's friendlies against Venezuela and Puerto Rico in October 2025. As per the agreement, Messi was expected to play at least 30 minutes in each match unless injured or unavailable due to legitimate reasons. However, the complaint alleges that the 38-year-old did not feature in Argentina's 1-0 win over Venezuela on October 10, instead watching the game from a suite at the Hard Rock Stadium in Miami. The filing further argues

that Messi's absence had a significant financial impact on ticket sales, broadcast revenue, and sponsorship deals, as his participation was central to the commercial value of the fixtures. Fans reportedly paid premium prices with the expectation of seeing the Argentine star in action. Interestingly, Messi featured in a club match for Inter Miami CF the following day, where he scored twice in a Major League Soccer fixture, and later played in Argentina's friendly against Puerto Rico on October 14.



QUICK READ

Gujarat
showcases growth
at Tech Expo

Gandhinagar
Gujarat contributes 8.3 per cent to India's GDP, 18 per cent to industrial output, and 31 per cent to exports, Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel said while inaugurating the Gujarat Advanced Technology and Economy Expo (GATE) 2026. The three-day event, organised by GCCL, highlights over 16 sectors including automobiles, renewable energy, IT, and pharmaceuticals, with a focus on AI and cyber-security. Patel said the expo, themed 'Gujarat Vision - Global Ambition', will help MSMEs and startups expand globally. He credited Gujarat's growth to a balanced model of industry, trade, and culture. With over 600 exhibitors and thousands of visitors, the event is expected to boost innovation and strengthen the state's industrial ecosystem while supporting India's 'Make in India' vision.

India-Austria
ties set for
innovation boost

New Delhi
Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday expressed confidence that India-Austria relations will become more innovation-driven and future-ready after talks with Austrian Chancellor Christian Stocker. The leaders discussed expanding cooperation in innovation, infrastructure, and sustainability while boosting trade and investment ties. Modi highlighted opportunities in sectors such as defence, semiconductors, startups, and emerging technologies. He noted that Stocker's visit—the first by an Austrian Chancellor in over four decades—marks a significant step in bilateral relations. Stocker described the visit as the beginning of a new chapter in the long-standing friendship between the two nations, emphasising the importance of reliable partnerships amid global uncertainties. The visit aims to strengthen cooperation across trade, investment, and advanced technologies.

New flights
to boost Gwalior
connectivity

Madhya Pradesh
Union Communications Minister Jyotiraditya M. Scindia on Thursday announced that Akasa Air will soon begin regular flight services connecting Gwalior with Delhi and Bengaluru from the Rajmata Vijayaraje Scindia Airport. The new routes—Gwalior-Delhi-Bengaluru and the return leg—are expected to significantly enhance regional connectivity, offering faster and more reliable travel options. Scindia said the initiative will boost trade, industry, education, and employment opportunities in the Gwalior-Chambal region. He expressed confidence that improved air connectivity will drive overall development. Meanwhile, Akasa Air has introduced a fuel surcharge ranging from Rs 199 to Rs 1,300 on flights from March 15, citing rising aviation turbine fuel prices amid geopolitical tensions in the Middle East.

'Voice of India carries lot of weight bilaterally'

India's global influence gets recognition as Austrian Chancellor Christian Stocker says its voice matters in shaping international decisions.

NEW DELHI

Austrian Chancellor Christian Stocker on Thursday praised India's growing global influence, stating that the country's voice carries significant weight both bilaterally and in international forums. Addressing a joint press conference with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi, Stocker emphasised that both leaders support resolving conflicts through dialogue and negotiations rather than force. Highlighting the importance of a rules-based global order, Stocker said the world is currently experiencing geopolitical shifts, evolving alli-



ances, and increasingly complex conflicts. In such times, he stressed that stability, trust, and dependable partnerships are essential. He described India as a reliable partner that shares fundamental democratic values with Austria, adding that such cooperation is crucial for ensuring global peace and security. Stocker also lauded India's

robust economic growth, noting its annual growth rate of around seven per cent and calling it one of the most dynamic global markets. He said Austrian companies are set to benefit from India's expanding economy, particularly in sectors such as technology, renewable energy, infrastructure, and automotive industries. The Chancellor underlined the significance of the proposed India-European Union Free Trade Agreement, stating that it would reduce trade barriers and open new opportunities for investment and exports. He termed the agreement particularly important amid current global

uncertainties. Calling his visit a milestone, Stocker noted that it marks the first visit by an Austrian Chancellor to India in over four decades. He highlighted the presence of a high-level business delegation accompanying him, aimed at boosting economic cooperation. Stocker further announced plans to deepen collaboration in security and defence through strategic dialogue. He emphasised that global challenges like terrorism require collective international efforts, reinforcing the need for stronger India-Austria cooperation across multiple sectors.

PM Modi flags
innovation push
in India-Aus ties

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday announced a significant expansion of ties between India and Austria, highlighting cooperation in critical sectors such as defence, semiconductors, quantum technologies, and biotechnology. The announcement came during a joint press conference with visiting Austrian Chancellor Christian Stocker, marking a renewed phase in bilateral relations. Emphasising the complementary strengths of both nations, Modi stated that Austria's technological expertise combined with India's scale and speed would help build reliable global technology and supply chains. He noted that the partnership aims to contribute not only to both countries but also to global stability in critical industries. The Prime Minister praised Austria's longstanding contributions to India's infrastructure and engineering sectors. He pointed to projects such as metro systems and tunnel construction as examples of successful collaboration, adding that Austrian companies have played a key role in areas like green energy and urban development. Modi described Chancellor Stocker's visit as a major step forward in boosting trade and investment ties. He welcomed the Austrian leader's decision to bring a large business delegation, saying it reflected a strong commitment to deepening economic engagement.



He also noted that the visit would inject new momentum into cooperation across emerging and high-tech sectors. Welcoming Stocker warmly, Modi highlighted the symbolic importance of India being his first destination outside Europe. He called the visit, which comes after a gap of four decades, a turning point in bilateral relations. He also linked the development to broader progress in India-European ties, particularly following recent trade agreements. In addition, Modi announced initiatives to promote mobility and people-to-people exchanges. These include increased opportunities in the nursing sector under an existing migration agreement, as well as a new Working Holiday Programme aimed at encouraging youth exchange. He also stressed the importance of strengthening joint research and startup collaboration. Addressing global challenges, Modi called for reforms in international institutions and reiterated that military conflict cannot resolve ongoing crises. He underlined India and Austria's shared commitment to peace, stability, and the fight against terrorism in an increasingly uncertain global environment.

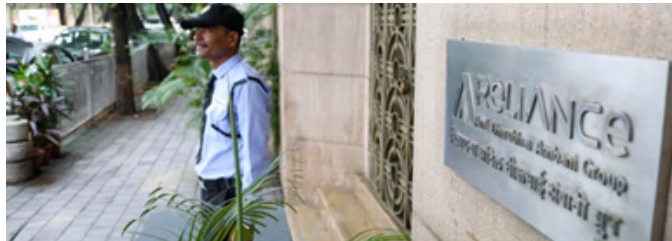
Investigators allege public funds were routed through shell companies, turning over ₹11,000 cr into NPAs

ED arrests Anil Ambani aides in ₹40K cr fraud probe

NEW DELHI

The Reliance Group, led by Anil Ambani, announced on Thursday that two of its former senior executives, Amitabh Jhunjhunwala and Amit Bapna, are no longer associated with the company following their recent arrest by the Enforcement Directorate in connection with a money laundering investigation. According to the group, Jhunjhunwala stepped down in December 2019, while Bapna left in September 2019. The company clarified that both individuals have had no involvement with its operations or subsidiaries, including Reliance Infrastructure Limited and Reliance Power Limited, since their departure. The Enforcement Directorate took action against the duo as part of an ongoing probe into alleged financial irregular-

ities involving Reliance Home Finance Limited and Reliance Commercial Finance Limited. The investigation has been initiated under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, based on multiple cases registered earlier by the Central Bureau of Investigation. During their tenure, Jhunjhunwala held key leadership roles, including Group Managing Director of Reliance Group and Vice Chairman of Reliance Capital Limited. Bapna served as Chief Financial Officer of Reliance Capital Limited and also held a directorial position at Reliance Home Finance Limited. Authorities allege that Jhunjhunwala was among the primary decision-makers overseeing operations at the financial entities under scrutiny. The developments come amid a broader investigation into alleged large-scale finan-



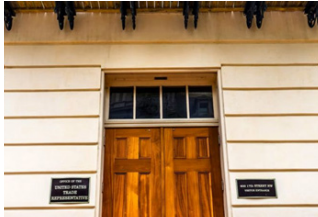
cial fraud involving Reliance Communications Limited and other group entities. Earlier this month, the Central Bureau of Investigation registered a case accusing the company, along with Anil Ambani and unidentified individuals, of causing a financial loss of approximately Rs 3,750 crore to the Life Insurance Corporation of India. The complaint alleges that the insurance corporation was misled into investing Rs 4,500 crore in non-convertible debentures based on false assurances about the company's

financial health and asset security. The investigation into these claims is currently ongoing. Additionally, multiple cases have been filed against Reliance Communications and its officials for alleged fraud involving several banks. The Supreme Court has recently emphasized the importance of a transparent, coordinated, and time-bound investigation, urging agencies like the Enforcement Directorate and the Central Bureau of Investigation to work jointly to uncover the truth.

South Korea submits formal
opinion on US trade probes

SEOUL

The government of South Korea has submitted a formal opinion letter to the United States Trade Representative in response to ongoing investigations into what Washington describes as unfair trade practices involving several countries, including South Korea, according to officials on Thursday. The inquiry focuses on issues such as structural excess production in key industries and allegations related to forced labor concerns in global supply chains. The letter was submitted by the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy to the office of the United States Trade Representative ahead of upcoming public hearings scheduled for next month. In its submission, the South Korean government emphasized that its industrial system operates on market economy principles and highlighted ongoing policy efforts to address global oversupply challenges in sectors such as petrochemicals and steel. Officials further stated



that South Korea continues to strengthen its legal and institutional framework to eliminate forced labor. These measures, they noted, are aligned with domestic laws as well as international standards established under International Labour Organization conventions, which prohibit forced labor in all forms. The United States Trade Representative recently initiated multiple investigations under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974. These probes are aimed at examining structural overcapacity in global production systems and assessing whether trading partners have failed to prevent imports linked to forced labor practices. The move is widely seen as part of broader efforts by Washington to reassess trade measures previously applied to several economies.

Meanwhile, financial markets in South Korea showed strong performance. The national stock index, known as the Korea Composite Stock Price Index, rose for a third consecutive trading session. It closed above the 6,200-point level for the first time in several weeks, reflecting renewed investor optimism driven by easing geopolitical tensions and expectations of further diplomatic engagement in global conflicts. The index recorded a gain of 134.66 points, equivalent to 2.21 percent, finishing at 6,226.05 points. Market analysts noted that this marks a significant milestone, as the index had not closed above the 6,200 threshold since late February. The currency market also showed strength, with the South Korean currency appreciating against the United States dollar. Officials and analysts continue to monitor developments closely as trade discussions between the two countries progress, with both sides expected to engage further during the upcoming hearings.

FIU-India, PFRDA sign MoU to combat
money laundering, financial crimes

NEW DELHI

In a significant move to curb money laundering and financial crimes, Financial Intelligence Unit-India has signed two separate Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with Securities and Exchange Board of India and Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority, the Ministry of Finance announced on Thursday. The agreements are aimed at enhancing information sharing and improving coordination among key financial regulators in the country. The initiative marks an important step toward strengthening collaborative intelligence-sharing mechanisms to combat money laundering and the financing of terrorism. According to the Ministry, the MoUs will enable the agencies to share relevant intelligence and data from their respective databases, ensuring a more integrated approach to identifying and addressing financial irregularities. Under the agreements, regulated entities will follow structured procedures for reporting suspicious transactions to FIU-IND in accordance with the Prevention of



Money Laundering Rules. The framework also emphasizes alignment with international standards, including the Egmont Principles of Information Exchange, thereby facilitating smoother cooperation with global financial intelligence units. The collaboration is expected to significantly boost Anti-Money Laundering and Combating Financing of Terrorism capabilities across the financial sector. Both SEBI and PFRDA will work closely with FIU-IND to conduct outreach and training programmes for regulated entities. These initiatives will focus on improving awareness, strengthening compliance, and equipping institutions with the tools needed to detect and report suspicious financial activities effectively. Additionally, the cooperation framework includes assessing risks related to money

laundering and terror financing across various financial sub-sectors. It also involves identifying red-flag indicators for suspicious transactions and ensuring stricter supervision and compliance with the Prevention of Money Laundering Act and associated guidelines. To maintain regular coordination, the MoUs provide for designated nodal officers and quarterly meetings to discuss key issues and exchange critical information. The agreements were signed by Amit Mohan Govil, Director of FIU-IND, along with Sandip Pradhan, Whole Time Member of SEBI, and Randip Singh Jagpal, Whole Time Member of PFRDA. The signing ceremony with PFRDA took place in the presence of its Chairperson, Sivasubramanian Ramann. FIU-IND serves as the national agency responsible for analyzing and disseminating information related to suspicious financial transactions, while SEBI regulates the securities market and PFRDA oversees the pension sector, ensuring transparency, growth, and protection of investor interests.

TRADE DEFICIT NARROWS

India's trade gap shrinks in March, swells in FY26

NEW DELHI

India's external sector demonstrated notable resilience in March 2026 as the country's goods trade deficit narrowed significantly to 21 billion dollars, according to a report released on Thursday. The decline was primarily driven by a steep reduction in precious metal imports alongside a steady rebound in exports. The report highlighted that India's total imports dropped by approximately 6 percent on a month on month basis, settling at 59.6 billion dollars.



In contrast, exports registered a 6 percent increase, reaching 38.9 billion dollars during the same period. This improvement reflects a gradual strengthening of external de-

mand and adaptive trade strategies. A key factor supporting the overall balance was the continued strength of the services sector. Net services exports

climbed to 18.2 billion dollars in March, contributing significantly to offsetting the goods trade deficit. Over the fiscal year 2026, services exports recorded a healthy growth of 13 percent, underlining their critical role in stabilizing India's external accounts. The reduction in the trade deficit was largely attributed to a sharp fall in imports of precious metals. Gold import values plunged by 59 percent, while silver imports declined by 63 percent on a monthly basis. This contraction substantially eased pressure on

the import bill. Oil trade dynamics also played an important role. Oil imports declined by around 6 percent month on month despite rising global prices, mainly due to a significant drop in volumes. Disruptions linked to the Strait of Hormuz led to an estimated 35 to 40 percent reduction in crude import volumes. On the export side, oil shipments surged by about 51 percent to 5.2 billion dollars, marking the highest level since May 2025, supported by elevated global prices for refined products.

However, geopolitical tensions impacted trade with key partners. Exports to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates fell sharply, contributing to a 22 percent decline in gems and jewellery exports. Looking ahead, the report projected a current account deficit of around 1.7 percent of gross domestic product for fiscal 2027 under baseline conditions. While services exports remain strong, potential global economic headwinds could pose challenges if geopolitical uncertainties persist.

Jana Nayagan targets April release despite leaks

The road to the big screen is clearing for Thalapaty Vijay's highly anticipated action thriller, Jana Nayagan. Despite a recent controversy involving leaked footage appearing on a local TV channel, the filmmakers are moving full steam ahead with a global release strategy.

The production team, led by director H. Vinoth, is currently preparing the film for the Censor Board. Experts expect the movie to receive a U/A certificate shortly, which would be the final green light needed for theaters. Once certified, the team plans to launch a massive promotional campaign, including a grand audio launch to showcase Anirudh Ravichander's soundtrack.

To finalize the rollout, producers are meeting with major distributors and theater owners across Tamil Nadu this week. The primary goal is to secure an April 24 release date in India to capitalize on the start of the busy summer holiday season. A wider international release is also being planned for April 30. This timing is strategic, aiming to fill seats as schools close for the break.

Expectations for the film are at an all-time high, especially following Vijay's recent move into politics. Fans have flocked to social media to show their loyalty, promising to ignore pirated clips and wait for the full theatrical experience.



Yash claims new movie 'Toxic' has depth



Kannada superstar Yash took the global stage at CinemaCon 2026 to share exciting details about his upcoming film, Toxic. While it might look like a standard action movie at first glance, Yash promises that it is something much more meaningful. He describes it as a layered story that explores the

deep psychology of a "dark character" in a very unique way. Interestingly, Yash revealed that the film was shot in English alongside other languages to reach a global audience. He worked closely with director Geetu Mohandas, who he says has given the gangster genre a fresh, artistic twist. According to Yash, the movie is not just about fights and power, it focuses on interesting aspects of human life that everyone can relate to. He believes the film will leave a lasting impact on how the audience thinks.

The project features a star-studded female cast, including Nayanthara, Kiara Advani, and Huma Qureshi. Yash noted that Indian cinema is changing, with stories now crossing regional borders to connect people through different languages and cultures. For him, Toxic is the perfect example of an Indian story designed for the entire world to enjoy. Fans do not have to wait much longer to see this psychological drama, as it is set to hit theaters everywhere on June 4.



SRK Cameo Rumoured In Allu Arjun Raaka

Reports suggest a major on-screen collaboration could be in the works, as Shah Rukh Khan is likely to make a cameo appearance in Raaka, an upcoming big-budget film starring Allu Arjun and Deepika Padukone, directed by Atlee. If confirmed, the project would bring together some of the biggest names in Indian cinema, creating significant excitement among fans.

According to a source quoted by India Today, Shah Rukh Khan has already agreed to play a brief role in the film, largely due to his strong professional bond with Atlee. Their earlier collaboration in Jawan was a massive success, and this reported cameo could further strengthen that association. However, there has been no official confirmation so far, and a response from the actor's team is still awaited.

Interestingly, Allu Arjun was earlier expected to appear in Jawan in a cameo role but had to opt out due to scheduling conflicts with Pushpa: The Rule. In that context, Raaka could serve as a crossover platform between the two stars.

The film also marks the first full collaboration between Allu Arjun and Atlee. Backed by Sun Pictures, Raaka is being developed as a large-scale pan-India entertainer with a strong focus on sci-fi action and visual spectacle. Reports indicate that the production involves extensive VFX work, with multiple international studios contributing.

While details about the storyline and release timeline remain undisclosed, the film's scale, star power, and the possibility of Shah Rukh Khan's cameo have already made it one of the most anticipated projects.

HATHAWAY AND JOHNSON STAR IN DARK THRILLER

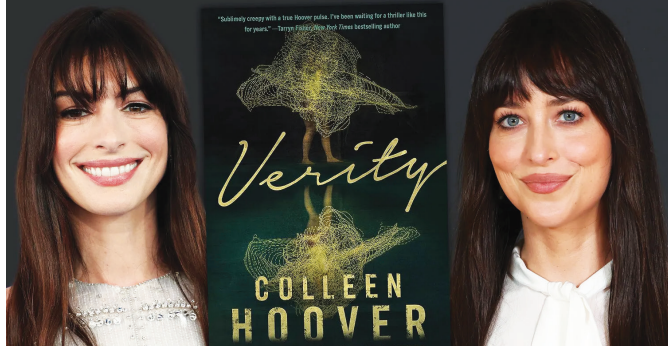
Amazon MGM Studios has pulled back the curtain on its highly anticipated movie, Verity. Based on the famous book by Colleen Hoover, the first trailer was shown today at CinemaCon. The film is a psychological thriller that promises to be dark, tense, and full of secrets.

The story follows a struggling writer named Lowen, played by Dakota Johnson.

She is hired to finish a successful book series for another author, Verity Crawford, played by Anne Hathaway. Verity has been left unable to speak or move after a terrible accident. When Lowen arrives at the eerie Crawford home to start working, she is immediately unsettled by the strange atmosphere and Verity's condition.

Josh Hartnett plays Verity's husband, Jeremy. He

welcomes Lowen into their home, but the trailer hints that things are not as they seem. While searching through Verity's office, Lowen finds a hidden, unfinished manuscript. This secret writing may hold chilling truths about what really happened to the family. As Lowen digs deeper, she finds herself caught in a



dangerous web of lies and attraction.

Directed by Michael Showalter, the film aims to bring the book's "unsettling" energy to life. With a strong cast and a plot full of twists, Verity is already one of the most talked-about movies of the year. Fans of the novel do not have long to wait, as the movie is set to hit theaters everywhere on October 2.

SUNDEEP KISHAN marks sixteen years in films

It is a big day for Telugu star Sundeep Kishan. As he celebrates sixteen years in the movie industry, fans received a special gift. The first look at his new film, Power Peta, was finally revealed. This political drama promises to be a wild ride filled with grit and heart.

The new poster is already grabbing attention online. It features a dark, moody design with a blood-stained chessboard. Next to the broken game pieces lies a single red rose. The creators shared a chilling message, every move has a cost, and this game is played with love and blood. It suggests a story where power and personal feelings collide in dangerous ways.

Director Krishna Chaitanya is leading the project. He is joined by a talented team, including famous music composer Mani Sharma. The producers, Vijay Chilla and Shashi Devireddy, aim to create a gritty world where honor and ambition meet.

Sundeep shared the poster on his social media with an emotional note. He looked back on his long journey in cinema, thanking his fans for their constant support. He described his career as a mix of "love, blood, and grit." For him, Power Peta represents a bold new chapter and a creative leap forward.

With its intense visuals and strong cast, the movie is becoming a hot topic. Fans are eager to see how this story of sacrifice and strategy unfolds on the big screen. It is clear that Sundeep is ready to make his next sixteen years even more memorable.



TWO VILLAGE DRAMAS LEAD QUIET WEEKEND BOX OFFICE

Summer is usually the busiest time for Telugu cinema, but the box office is surprisingly calm this week. With no major superstars on the schedule, six small films are fighting for attention. While most are arriving without any noise, two local village stories have managed to capture the public's interest.



The clear frontrunner is Paapam Pratap, a comedy-drama starring Thiruveer. Set in 1998 along the Godavari River, it tells the

funny story of a man whose wife leaves him just days after their wedding. Close behind is Thimmarajupalli TV, a unique suspense drama about a village losing its only television set in 1996. These nostalgic, rustic themes seem to be the only things getting audiences excited.

Meanwhile, other releases are struggling. Pallichattambi, a Malayalam action film, and Mr. X, a high-budget spy movie, have almost zero promotion in Telugu. Even Bollywood's Bhoot Bangla, starring Akshay Kumar, has failed to create a spark here. Finally, Naga Shaurya's long-delayed project, Bad Boy Karthik, is slipping into theaters almost unnoticed.

Without big marketing budgets, these films must rely entirely on "word of mouth." If the morning shows for the village dramas receive positive reviews, they could become surprise hits. For the others, the silence from the audience is deafening. This weekend, it seems the simple stories of rural India are much more powerful than big-budget action or dubbed stars.

ANISHMA ANILKUMAR heads home for Vishu

After years of busy movie sets and traveling, actress Anishma Anilkumar is finally heading home for the holidays. The popular star, known for her role in "Marana-mass," recently finished filming in Tirunelveli and is flying back to Kerala to celebrate Vishu with her family.

For Anishma, this trip is very special because she has spent the last three years away from home during the festival. She grew up in Thiruvananthapuram and now lives in Kochi, but her heart remains with the simple traditions of her childhood. She shared that being with her parents and grandparents is the best part of the season.

The actress says her holiday will follow a familiar routine. She plans to wake up early to see the "Vishu kani," a traditional arrangement of auspicious items, before visiting a local temple with her loved ones. Of course, no celebration is complete without food. Anishma admitted she is most excited about eating a proper home-cooked "sadhya" feast after months of eating on film sets. Beyond the food and gifts, Anishma believes the festival carries a beautiful message for everyone. She feels that Vishu is truly about hope and the positive belief that the coming year will be better than the last.

