



Su-30MKI and Rafale Jets Begin Joint Missions

P8



India and Japan explore major energy partnership in Tokyo

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P10

Pooja Hegde shines again with strong comeback



45 T'gana pilgrims charred to death in Saudi

The deceased, including 20 women and 11 children, At least 45 people, including 10 children, were on an Umrah pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia

HYDERABAD

At least 45 Indian Umrah pilgrims, all from Telangana's Hyderabad, were charred to death after a passenger bus carrying devotees from Mecca to Madinah caught fire after colliding with a diesel tanker in Saudi Arabia early on Monday morning.

Immigration officials in Hyderabad confirmed that most of the victims, including 20 women and 11 children, were from the city.

The devastating accident occurred around 1:30 am IST at Al Mufrihat, about 160 km from Madinah, on a wide road prone to high-speed traffic. Most the pilgrims were asleep at the time, worsening the impact of the tragedy. After performing 'Umrah' (mini pilgrimage) in Mecca, the pilgrims left for Medina on Sunday night. When the bus was about 25 km away from Medina, it caught fire after colliding with an oil tanker, according to officials.

Saudi Civil Defence and police rushed to the site soon after the accident. Indian officials and Umrah agency representatives too reached the spot to assist in recovery and coordinate information for families back home, as per official sources.

A pilgrimage that turned into a nightmare

The group of 54 pilgrims had travelled from Hyderabad to Jeddah on November 9 to perform Umrah. After spending a week in Mecca, 46 of them boarded a bus to Medina, scheduled to stay there till November 22. Just 25 km before reaching Medina, their vehicle collided with an oil tanker, resulting in a massive fire and catastrophic loss of life.

Of the 54, four people travelled separately by car to Madina on Sunday, while another four stayed back in Mecca. All of them were supposed to return to Hyderabad on November 23.

Telangana announces Rs 5 lakh compensation

The Telangana government has announced a compensation of Rs 5 lakh each to the kin of Umrah pilgrims from the state who died in Saudi.

The decision was taken at a state cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Monday.

It was also decided to send a government delegation, headed by Minister for Minorities Welfare Mohammed Azharuddin, to Saudi Arabia. The delegation will also include an MLA of All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) and a senior official of the minorities welfare department.

Last rites in Saudi

The meeting has also decided to perform the last rites of the deceased as per their religious traditions in Saudi, and to send at least two kin of each deceased to Saudi.

'16 from Bazarghat of Hyderabad'

Telangana IT Minister D Sri-dhar Babu told reporters that of the victims, at least 16 are from Bazarghat area in Mal-lepalli of Hyderabad. Most of the pilgrims were from Asif Nagar, Jhirra, Mehdiptnam and Toli Chowki areas of Hyderabad.

The Embassy in Riyadh and the Consulate in Jeddah are coordinating with the Saudi Haj and Umrah Ministry, local authorities, and the relevant Umrah operators.



Tragedy at a glance

54

Total pilgrims from Hyderabad

46

Passengers on the ill-fated bus

45

Casualties

1

Survivor

Families worst affected: Musheerabad, Karwan, Nampally

Cause: Collision with diesel tanker, triggering massive fire

Location: 25 km before Medina

Purpose of travel: Umrah pilgrimage

Lone survivor battles for life

A 24-year-old resident of Asifnagar in Hyderabad has reportedly emerged as the sole survivor of the tragic bus accident near Madinah that claimed the lives of 42 Umrah pilgrims early Monday. According to sources, Mohammed Abdul Shoeb remains in critical care at a hospital in Madinah.



Hyderabad-based family loses 18 members of 3 generations, including 9 children

A Hyderabad-based family lost 18 members, including nine children, in a horrific bus accident that claimed the lives of 45 Indian Haj pilgrims near Medina in Saudi Arabia. According to reports, the family, spread across three generations, had travelled for Umrah and was scheduled to return home on Saturday. According to their relative, they had completed the pilgrimage and were on their way back to Medina when tragedy struck late at night.

Families back home grief-stricken

Back home, several families in Hyderabad are struggling to come to terms with the devastating news. One family from Ramnagar, Musheerabad, tragically lost 18 members in the accident. Another family lost five relatives. Emotional scenes unfolded as relatives gathered, desperate for official confirmation. Telangana Minister Mohammad Azharuddin personally met with the grieving families, assuring them that the government would extend full support.



Deeply saddened by the accident in Madinah involving Indian nationals. My thoughts are with the families who have lost their loved ones. I pray for the swift recovery of all those injured. Our Embassy in Riyadh and Consulate in Jeddah are providing all possible assistance. Our officials are also in close contact with Saudi Arabian authorities.

—Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

24x7 control room

Jeddah

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■ +966556122301 (WhatsApp)

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Telangana Bhavan, New Delhi

■ Vandhana, PS to Resident Commissioner: +91 98719 99044

■ Ch. Chakravarthi, PRO: +91 99583 22143

■ Rakshith Nail, Liaison Officer: +91 96437 23157

'Entire family wiped out'

Mohammed Asif said 18 members of his extended family had been killed. "My sister-in-law, brother-in-law, their son, three daughters and their children went for Umrah. They were supposed to return on Saturday.

NIA arrests 2nd aide of Delhi blast perpetrator from Kashmir

NEW DELHI

In another significant breakthrough in the Delhi car bombing case, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Monday said to have arrested another key associate of the terrorist involved in the blast who had allegedly "provided technical support for carrying out terror attacks by modifying drones and attempting to make rockets" ahead of the terror attack.

Jasir Bilal Wani alias Danish, also a Kashmiri resident, was arrested from Srinagar in Jammu and Kashmir by an NIA team that was in the Valley in the case.

In a statement, the NIA said its investigations have revealed that "Jasir had allegedly provided technical support for carrying out terror attacks by modifying drones and attempting to make rockets ahead of the deadly car bomb blast which killed 15 persons and left over 30 persons injured."

As per the NIA, Jasir, a resident of Qazigund in Anantnag district of Jammu and Kashmir, was an active co-conspirator behind the attack and had worked closely with the terrorist, Umar un Nabi, to plan the terror carnage that was executed them at around 7 pm on November 10 near the iconic Red Fort.



Inauguration Today at 10:00 AM

GUESTS OF HONOUR

H.E. Mr. Jan Christian Vestre

Minister of Health and Care Services, Norway

H.E. Ms. Ilse Aigner

President of the Bavarian State Parliament, Germany

H.E. Mr. Rafal Rosinski

Deputy Minister, Digital Affairs, Poland

Lord Mayor Nicholas Reece

Lord Mayor of Melbourne, Australia

TECH SUMMIT HIGHLIGHTS

Business Expo

Awards & Quizzes

Multitrack Conference

Startup Pitches & Product Launches

FUTURE MAKERS CONCLAVE



GLOBAL INNOVATION ALLIANCE PARTNERS



Protecting public property and renouncing violence is a constitutional fundamental duty of every Indian citizen

CMofKarnataka https://dipr.karnataka.gov.in/

karnataka information

QUICK READ

City road-sweeper rental sparks public outrage

Bengaluru

The Karnataka government's plan to rent 46 road-sweeping machines for ₹613 crore in Bengaluru has triggered strong criticism. Residents and opposition leaders said buying similar machines would cost only about ₹37–38 crore, with total expenses including staff likely under ₹100 crore. Union Minister Shobha Karandlaje called the deal “inflated” and urged full transparency. Many social media users mocked the proposal, sharing satirical images questioning the high cost. Citizens wondered whether the government was genuinely cleaning streets or wasting money. The controversy continues as taxpayers demand clarity, while the state government has not yet offered a detailed explanation regarding the expensive rental plan.

KARNATAKA SET TO LAUNCH AFFORDABLE AI COMPUTER ‘KEO’

As India's digital economy continues to grow, there is need for affordable devices that can reach more families and students'

BENGALURU

Karnataka will launch an affordable artificial intelligence (AI) computer named ‘KEO’ at the Bangalore Tech Summit on Tuesday, said IT and BT Minister Priyank Kharge.

Addressing the media, he said the three-day Bangalore Tech Summit 2025 will begin on November 18, and the KEO computer will be one of its major highlights.

Kharge explained that computer access in India is still very low, with fewer than 10% of households owning one. In Karnataka, the number is slightly higher at 15%. He said nearly 60% of Indian students still miss out on online education because they do not have a computer. As India's digital economy continues to grow, he stressed the need for



affordable devices that can reach more families and students.

To bridge this gap, the state is introducing KEO, an AI-powered, low-cost computer. The price will be revealed at the launch. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah will inaugurate the Tech Summit at the Bengaluru International Exhibition Centre. After the

launch, free booking for the KEO computer will open on the Keonext.in website, and deliveries will be made within two months of booking.

The KEO computer comes with several useful features. It is designed to be smart, economical, and open-source. Built on a RISC-V processor and powered by a Linux-based operating system, it supports 4G, Wi-Fi, Ethernet, USB-A, USB-C, HDMI, and an audio jack. It includes tools for learning, programming, and productivity.

A key feature is the built-in on-device AI core, which allows users to run AI tools even without internet access. It also includes an AI agent called Buddha, trained on the Karnataka DSERT curriculum to support students in areas with poor connectivity.

MEET OF TITANS



Chief Minister Siddaramaiah with AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge at his Delhi residence

▸ CH PHOTO

HC quashes Mahesh Shetty Timarodi deportation order



BENGALURU

The Karnataka High Court has quashed the deportation order against Mahesh Shetty Timarodi, linked to the Belthangady student murder case, which had barred him from Dakshina Kannada district for one year.

A bench led by Justice Suraj Govinda Raju heard Timarodi's petition challenging the order issued on September 18 by Puttur Assistant Commissioner Stella Varghese, which had directed his relocation to Manvi taluk in Raichur district. The High Court ruled the deportation order unlawful and directed the Assistant Commissioner to conduct a fresh inquiry within 15 days, issuing a new order with proper reasoning and reference to relevant legal provisions.

Timarodi's lawyer argued that the original order was “illegal and unilateral,” issued abruptly without providing an opportunity to be heard. In contrast, the government's counsel contended that Timarodi's activism in the Belthangady student case and multiple registered cases justified the deportation and that due legal process had been followed.

The case background indicates that over 32 cases were filed against Timarodi across various police stations, with authorities alleging he had caused societal unrest and caste-related tensions in Dakshina Kannada. Following these complaints, the Puttur Assistant Commissioner had ordered his deportation.

The High Court's decision emphasizes adherence to the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness, requiring a fresh inquiry and reasoned order before any further action.

HC seeks response on delayed local elections

The Karnataka High Court has issued a notice to the state government after a petition was filed seeking timely elections for 187 urban local bodies across the state. These include 47 municipal corporations, 91 municipalities, and 49 town panchayats whose terms will end between November and December this year. The petition, filed by the State Election Commission, requested the court to direct the government to release the final reservation notification for the posts of president, vice-president, and ward-wise categories so that elections can be held without delay. A division bench consisting of Chief Justice Vibhu Bakhru and Justice C.M. Poonacha heard the case. The bench issued notices to the Chief Secretary and the Additional Chief Secretary of the Urban Development Department, asking them to file objections. The hearing was then adjourned. During the session, the Election Commission's counsel pointed out that the terms of several urban local bodies were ending soon. He argued that elections must be held within the constitutional timeframe.

The government's counsel informed the court that a separate petition concerning Gram Panchayat elections is scheduled for hearing on December 11. He said the State Election Commission had requested the government to issue reservation notifications for 5,950 Gram Panchayats, whose terms will expire in January next year. The petition also highlighted past delays. The Election Commission had written to the government twice—on January 27 and June 26—seeking the final notification but received no reply. It argued that failing to conduct elections on time violates Article 243 of the Constitution, which mandates timely polls for local bodies.

Report dangerous dry trees: BCCC to public

BENGALURU

The Forest Department has announced that it is actively clearing dry and dangerous trees and branches along roads and government lands within the limits of the Bengaluru Central City Corporation (BCCC).

Officials said this work is being done to prevent accidents, especially during windy weather and unexpected rains. They requested the public to help by reporting any such trees or branches they come across.

People can share information by calling the helpline numbers 1533 or 9480685702. They can also

contact Forest Department officers directly and send photographs and location details through WhatsApp. The department said that quick reporting from citizens will help them remove risky trees fast, keeping neighbourhoods safe.

To make the process easier, the Forest Department has shared the contact numbers of officials based on assembly constituencies. In Zone 1, which includes Shantinagar and C.V. Raman Nagar, people can call Vinay, Sub-Zonal Forest Officer, at 7760933913. In Zone 2, covering Chamarajpet, Chikkapet, and Shivajinagar, the public can contact Shivanna

T.C., Sub-Zonal Forest Officer, at 9164597895. For the Gandhinagar constituency, Narendra Babu N.R., Zonal Forest Officer (In-charge), can be reached at 9480685399.

The Assistant Conservator of Forests of Bangalore Central City Corporation said that officers for every zone are ready to respond quickly. He added that the cooperation of residents is important because they are the first to notice dry or leaning trees near their homes, offices, and streets.

Appeal by BSMC
The Bengaluru South Municipal Corporation (BSMC) has issued a public notice urging residents to report any dry

or dangerous trees and branches found within its limits.

Authorities have requested citizens to call the helpline 1533 or 9480685704 if they notice any dry, weak, or leaning trees that could pose a risk. For issues in Jayanagar, Bengaluru South, and Padmanabhanagar assembly constituencies, residents can contact Harish H.R., Sub-Zonal Officer, at 9743433665. For Bommanahalli and BTM Layout constituencies, the public can reach out to Manjunath K.T., Zonal Forest Officer, at 9900245014. Both officers will coordinate with field teams to inspect and remove dangerous trees as needed.

Bengaluru Residents brace for six-hr outage

BENGALURU

Residents of Bengaluru will face a scheduled six-hour power cut today, November 18, as the Bangalore Electricity Supply Company (BESCOM) carries out essential maintenance work at the 66/11 kV Sobha City substation. The outage, planned from 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM, is aimed at enhancing the safety and reliability of electricity supply across the city.

The power disruption will affect a wide range of localities. Key areas include Sobha City, Chokkanahalli, RK Hegde

Nagar, Ex-Servicemen Layout, Police Quarters, Shabari Nagar, New Shanti Nagar, Kemppegowda Layout, Nagenahalli Village, and Regency Park. Other affected locations are Esther Harmonic Layout, Balaji Layout, Nagenahalli Gym, Slum Bird Area, Bench Royal Wood, Arkavathi Layout, Bellahalli Village, Thirumenahalli Village, Mittaganahalli, and Kogilu Village. Extended parts of RK Hegde Nagar, Arkavathi Layout in Thanisandra, and nearby villages will also experience interruptions during the scheduled hours.

BESCOM has urged residents to plan ahead and take necessary precautions. Essential electronic devices should be fully charged, and sufficient water should be stored in advance. The utility company stressed that this planned outage is a preventive measure to maintain and upgrade the city's power infrastructure, which is crucial to avoid unexpected electrical failures in the future.

While the temporary disruption may cause some inconvenience, BESCOM assures that it will result in improved stability and reliability of electricity supply across the affected areas. Routine maintenance like this reflects the company's commitment to meeting the growing demands of Bengaluru's population and ensuring a safer, uninterrupted power experience for all residents.

Residents are advised to stay informed about updates from BESCOM and follow safety measures during the outage. Once the repairs are completed, smoother power flow and reduced chances of outages are expected, benefiting households, businesses, and essential services throughout the city.

Kalajatha mobile drive spreads awareness on schemes

BENGALURU

The Karnataka government launched the “Kalajatha Exhibition Mobile Vehicle” to raise public awareness about five key guarantee schemes: Annabhagya, Grihalakshmi, Grihaljyothi, Shakti, and Yuvaniidhi Yojana. The mobile unit, equipped with LED screens, showcases short films, street plays, and music performances to educate citizens. The launch was flagged off by R. Byre Gowda, President of Doddajala Gram Panchayat, at the Government Higher Primary School in Doddajala village. Assistant Director Soumya N., local officials, Dharani Cultural Arts Club performers, and residents attended the event.

BENGALURU

Bengaluru is facing rising air pollution, with many parts of the city now showing moderate to poor air quality. To reduce the growing dust and harmful particles in busy areas, the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board has decided to place air purifiers at key junctions. Officials say these machines can help clean the air by removing dust and improving the overall quality in crowded roads.

KSPCB chairman PM Narendraswamy said earlier trials of air purifiers showed good results. He explained that Bengaluru once had clean air and several road junctions featured water fountains. These fountains worked like natural diffusers because the moisture in the air helped ab-



sorb dust. Over the years, many of these fountains were removed, and the city became more dust-heavy, leading to the situation people see today.

The board has now asked the Central Pollution Control Board for permission to install purifiers at the city's busiest points. This request comes as the fine particulate

matter known as PM2.5 has increased. These particles can enter the lungs and may cause breathing problems and other health issues.

On Monday, Bengaluru recorded an AQI of 112, which falls under the moderate category. One station showed poor air quality, reaching 215. Other locations such as Hebbal, Jayanagar, Jigani, and Silk Board also recorded moderate levels. Only four out of twelve stations listed on the Sameer app showed satisfactory air.

Some residents have compared the current situation with Delhi and believe illegal garbage burning is adding to the pollution. Many citizens are now calling for stronger steps to stop such activities and improve air quality across the city.

WHEN TRADITION MEETS FLAVOUR

‘Kadlekai Parishe’ off to a flavourful start at Basavanagudi

BENGALURU

The annual Basavanagudi Kadlekai Parishe (Peanut Festival) has begun, with Muzrai Minister Ramalinga Reddy officially launching the five-day celebration at the iconic Doddabasavanna Temple. The festival will continue until Friday, November 21.

The launch ceremony saw the minister feeding peanuts to Doddabasavanna and offering peanut plants to five bulls in the temple premises. Speaking to the media, Reddy highlighted the festival's rich history,



which dates back 500 years to the Kempegowda era. He also stressed environmental responsibility, urging shopkeepers to avoid using plastic during the fair.

This year, duty-free shops have been allowed to operate, and roads around the temple have been lit and decorated with vibrant floral arrangements. “Last year, the festival attracted 4–5 lakh visitors. This year, we expect an additional two lakh people,” the minister said. He added that the event aims to encourage people to visit not just the fair but also

the surrounding temples.

Basavanagudi MLA Ravi Subrahmanya, Bangalore South MP Tejaswi Surya, MLA Uday Garudachar, and several other dignitaries attended the opening ceremony. The event is supported by the GBA, with significant contributions from the Muzrai department, ensuring a well-organized and lively festival for devotees and visitors alike. The Basavanagudi Peanut Festival continues to be one of Bengaluru's most anticipated cultural events, combining tradition, local flavor, and community spirit.

QUICK READ

Online application invited for sports awards

Gadag

The Empowerment and Sports Department has invited applications online for various awards and incentive schemes such as Eklavya Award, Lifetime Achievement Award, Karnataka Sports Ratna Award, Karnataka Sports Patron Award, Goal-Olympic Medal, Cash Award, Educational Fee Reimbursement, Sports Scholarship from eligible sportspersons and others. Eligible sportspersons can mandatorily submit applications through the official website <https://sevasindhu.karnataka.gov.in> by December 3.

Cultural competitions on the occasion of World Disabled Day

Gadag

Sports and cultural competitions for persons with disabilities, marking World Disabled Day 2025-26, will be held on November 24 at 9 a.m. at the KH Patil District Stadium. Individuals with physical disabilities, intellectual disabilities, hearing impairments, and blindness or visual impairment are eligible to take part in the events. Those interested in participating are required to register their names with the respective taluk-level officers by November 20, according to the release.

Post-matric scholarship application deadline extended

Gadag

The last date for online application for Post-Matric Scholarship, Post-Matric Eligibility Scholarship for Nomads/Semi-Nomads, Vidyasiri Meal and Accommodation Assistance and Fee Reimbursement Programs for Backward Classes students studying in post-matric courses other than PUC in the year 2025-26 and Category-1 Nomad/Semi-Nomad students has been extended till November 25. The web address to apply online is: <https://ssp.post-matric.karnataka.gov.in>. For more information, the District Backward Classes Welfare Department can be contacted.



Another blackbuck dies at zoo, death toll climbs to 31

BELAGAVI

Two more blackbucks have died at the Rani Channamma Zoo, raising the total number of deaths to 31.

Veterinarians suspect a bacterial infection may be affecting the animals. The disease, typically seen in cattle like cows and buffaloes, is believed to have spread to the blackbucks, causing rapid fatalities. Officials fear that the remaining blackbucks are also at serious risk.

The sudden disappearance of blackbucks—once a major attraction for visitors from Belagavi, nearby districts, and even Maharashtra—has sparked widespread concern. Eight blackbucks died on November 13 alone. Allegations

IIIT-Dharwad to have Centre of excellence in quantum AI

Karnataka has chosen IIIT-Dharwad to host its first quantum AI and computing Centre of Excellence outside Bengaluru

DHARWAD

The Indian Institute of Information Technology, Dharwad (IIIT-Dharwad) has been chosen by the Karnataka government to host a Centre of Excellence (CoE) in quantum AI and computing — the first of its kind to be set up outside Bengaluru. Announcing the development, Director Prof. Mahadev Prasanna said the government has approved ₹18 crore for establishing an advanced quantum research laboratory on the campus to support cutting-edge work in a field expected to reshape several major industries.

Prof. Prasanna noted that IT & BT Minister Priyank Kharge, during his visit last year, was impressed with the institute's infrastructure. After further discussions with the Chief Minister, Deputy Chief Minister and Science and Technology Minister N.S.



Boseraju, the project received approval under the Local Economy Accelerator Programme (LEAP). He added that the CoE complements the Union government's National Quantum Mission and expressed confidence that IIIT-Dharwad could become one of India's leading quantum computing institutes within five years.

The centre will emphasise

both research and large-scale talent development. It will offer a two-year minor programme in Quantum AI and Computing for engineering students from IIIT-Dharwad and other North Karnataka institutions. A six-month certificate course for science graduates and a one-month intensive training programme for working professionals are also planned. The goal is to

develop quantum-based solutions in sectors such as healthcare, finance, cyber security, mobility and materials science, while training at least 1,000 specialists.

LEAP representative Venkatesh Deshpande said the government has allocated ₹1,000 crore in the current budget to strengthen the IT-BT ecosystem beyond Bengaluru, focusing on cities including Hubballi-Dharwad, Belagavi, Shivamogga, Mysuru and Mangaluru.

Prof. Ashwath Babu explained that quantum computing can solve complex, real-time problems far more efficiently than conventional systems.

He added that IIIT-Dharwad students are already working on notable projects such as a reusable carbon-emission filter for vehicles and a model for accurate breast cancer detection.



‘Celebrate World Disabled Day in a systematic manner’

GADAG

Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Dr KR Duragesh said that steps should be taken to celebrate World Disabled Day in a systematic and meaningful manner on December 3 at 11 am in the auditorium hall of the city's District Administration Building.

He spoke while presiding over a preparatory meeting held at the city's Zilla Panchayat Video Conference Hall on the occasion of World Disabled Day.

District Disabled Persons and Senior Citizens Empowerment Welfare Officer K Mahantesh said that on the occasion of World Disabled Persons Day, sports and cultural competitions will be organized at the KH Patil District Stadium in the city on November 24 at 9.00 am. All preparations have been made for the World Disabled Persons Day. And disabled persons who have excelled in various fields at the state, interstate, national levels will be honoured. Prizes will be distributed to the winners of the sports and cultural competitions on World Disabled Persons Day. Interested disabled persons who have excelled in various fields should

“It should be ensured that there are no loopholes in the World Disabled Day programme. Steps should be taken to print the invitation letter as per etiquette,” said Additional Deputy Commissioner Dr KR Duragesh

submit their proposals to the District Disabled Persons and Senior Citizens Empowerment Welfare Officer's Office, Gadag by November 26.

The meeting was attended by Padmavati, Deputy Director, Women and Child Development Department, RS Burudi, Deputy Director, Public Education Department, Sharanu Gogeri, Assistant Director, Youth Empowerment and Sports Department, members of the Disabled Government Employees' Association, District Unit, heads of voluntary organizations/associations working in the field of the disabled in the district, all the multi-purpose rehabilitation workers in the district, officers of various departments, disabled people and department staff.

KBA hosts month-long cultural events to encourage children

DHARWAD

An array of cultural events including dance, music, acrobatic skills, drama, drawing, painting and folk music, among others, by the kids captivated the audience at the Makkala Habba, organised by the Karnataka Balvikas Academy (KBA). As part of the Children's Day celebration, the KBA will organise month-long cultural events with an aim to provide a plat-

form for the students, thereby helping them to scale up at national level.

The event evoked a good response with over 300 children giving a performance. Speaking as the chief guest, Deputy Commissioner Divya Prabhu stated that wherever children are present, every day and every moment carries a festive atmosphere. KBA has come up with children-centric programmes, thereby facilitating them to

showcase their skills, she added.

Presiding over the programme, Karnataka Balvikas Academy Chairman Sangamesh Babalashwar said the Academy has always been striving to bring the children of the State into the social mainstream. A state-of-the-art, fully equipped children's studio has been set up at the Academy's central office, and it will be inaugurated in a few days, Sangamesh informed.

Farmer dies after falling into rotavator while plowing

DAVANAGERE

A tragic incident occurred in Diddigi village of Jagalur taluk, where a farmer lost his life after falling into a tractor's rotavator.

The victim has been identified as 30-year-old Narappa from the same village. According to reports, Narappa was plowing his field using a tractor fitted with a rotavator. While seated next to the driver, he accidentally slipped and fell to the ground.

The rotavator blades ran over him, causing fatal injuries. The tractor was stopped immediately, but Narappa had already died on the spot.

The sudden loss of the family's primary breadwinner has left his relatives devastated. Former Jagalur MLA HP Rajesh visited the site, reviewed the situation, and offered condolences to the grieving family. Bili-chodu police have registered a case and conducted an inspection of the accident site.

State-level oriental awareness competition

GADAG

The Department of Archaeology, Museums and Heritage, in collaboration with the Deputy Directors of the School Education Department, is organizing the State-Level Oriental Awareness Competition to promote heritage awareness among high school students of government and aided schools across 35 educational dis-

tricts. The initiative, announced in the state budget, aims to educate students about preserving tangible, intangible, and natural heritage and passing it on to future generations.

As part of this effort, the Department has been conducting essay, speech, quiz, and painting competitions at the taluk, district, and state levels.

This year's State-Level

Oriental Awareness Competition and Prize Distribution Ceremony will be held on November 25 at Mahatma Gandhi Rural Development and Panchayat Raj University, Gangotri Campus, Nagavi. Four separate competitions will take place at the venue on the same day.

Ministers, MLAs, invited dignitaries, district administration officials, district-level winners from all 35 educa-

tional districts, School Education Department representatives, teachers, parents, and staff from the Archaeology Department will participate.

Additionally, an educational tour to the Lakkundi heritage area has been arranged for students, nodal officers, coordinators, and departmental staff on November 24, according to a release from the Department of Archaeology, Museums and Heritage.

Terdal women seek action after threats over public road access

BAGALKOT

Women of the Channadasa community in Ward No. 13 of Terdal town have approached the local police station, seeking strict legal action after allegedly being threatened and abused. The residents, who earn their livelihood through daily-wage work, said they have been using an inner road connecting to Kudachi Road for generations. However, Aruna Bend Dharappa Savalgi has reportedly started claiming the area as her personal property and has been preventing them from using the route.

Ward members Shetteppa

Sunagara, Yellappa Bodhennavar, Santosh Akkenavar, Jamnavva Sunagara, Thayavva Akkenavar and Hanamantha Immadenna alleged that the women were subjected to threats, verbal abuse and indecent behaviour. They pointed out that the boundary had already been officially marked as per orders of the sub-divisional officer, yet they were still being obstructed from even passing through the area.

Residents said this harassment has been ongoing for several days. They further alleged that despite municipal funds being sanctioned for road development.

CHAIRMAN ACTS TOUGH

Rangaswamy warns of action over blackbuck deaths

BELAGAVI

Karnataka Zoo Authority Chairman K. Rangaswamy has stated that strict action will be taken against the staff of Rani Channamma Mini Zoo if ongoing investigations confirm negligence in the deaths of 31 blackbucks. Speaking to the media after inspecting the zoo on Monday, he said preliminary findings already suggest lapses on the part of doctors and staff responsible for animal care.

Rangaswamy emphasized that endangered species like



blackbucks are housed in zoos to protect and increase their population, making the large number of deaths completely unacceptable. While zoo offi-

cials have indicated that a bacterial infection might have caused the deaths, he noted that a conclusive statement will only be made after re-

ceiving the full internal examination and laboratory reports.

He pointed out that the zoo's medical team is expected to conduct regular health monitoring of the animals, but evidence suggests that such supervision was inadequate. Karnataka Zoo Authority Member Secretary Sunil Panwar also visited the zoo on Sunday and is preparing a separate report on the incident.

Rangaswamy added that once both reports are received, he will bring the findings to the attention of Chief

Minister Siddaramaiah and Forest and Environment Minister Eshwar Khandre. If the reports indicate negligence or misconduct, necessary disciplinary action will be recommended.

A meeting of the Karnataka Zoo Authority is scheduled for next week, where officials will discuss measures to improve animal health management in all zoos across the state. The meeting will also focus on determining accountability and proposing corrective steps to prevent such incidents in the future.

QUICK READ

Notorious burglar arrested in Belagavi**Belagavi**

The District Police have apprehended a habitual house thief who had been leading a lavish lifestyle using the money gained from multiple thefts. The arrest was carried out by the Yamakanamaradi Police Station team. The accused has been identified as 37-year-old Suresh Maruti Nayak, a resident of Belagavi city. Police said the operation was initiated following a major burglary reported on October 22 in the Yamakanamaradi Police Station limits. The thief had targeted a locked house while the owners were away in Bengaluru, breaking in during the early hours and escaping with valuables.

Vacant mathematics guest teacher post open**Koppal**

Applications are invited for the vacant post of Guest Teacher of Mathematics in Indira Gandhi Residential School, Karkihalli, in the academic interest of the students. For the post of Guest Teacher of Mathematics, first preference will be given to those who have B.Sc. B.Ed. (CBZ), TET qualification. Interested teachers should submit their applications by November 25. The announcement said that for more information, the principal of the residential school, Kusumakumari, should be contacted on Mob.No.: 8277587634.

Officials to submit departmental demands for annual devt plan

Deputy Commissioner CN Sridhar directs officials to submit departmental demands for preparing the district's annual draft development plan.

GADAG

Deputy Commissioner CN Sridhar has directed officials from various departments to prepare and submit a detailed list of demands and requirements for their respective departments to facilitate the preparation of the district's annual draft development plan. He made these remarks during a progress review meeting held at the Zilla Panchayat hall, where multiple development-related issues were discussed.

The District In-charge Minister, HK Patil, is scheduled to

chair a district planning committee meeting next week. During this meeting, all participating departments will be required to present their submissions for inclusion in the annual draft development plan. Sridhar emphasized that officials should not only account for currently available grants but also provide details of additional funds required for further developmental work, taking into consideration the taluk-wise population distribution.



He instructed that district-level officials should deliberate within their offices on departmental problems, assess funding requirements, and compile comprehensive details for submission. The discussions also covered the draft annual budget for Panchayat Raj programs for 2026-27, the preparation of the district annual draft development plan for the same year from the grassroots level, and a review of progress achieved up to the end of October 2025-26.

Zilla Panchayat Deputy Secretary CR Mundaragi and Chief Planning Officer AA Kambalimatha were present during the meeting.

Sridhar stressed that effective preparation of the report requires proper coordination among all departments to ensure timely sanctioning of funds and successful implementation of planned projects. Officials were urged to work collaboratively to present accurate, well-coordinated proposals to facilitate smooth execution of developmental initiatives in the district.



Badami Public library in neglect: Books damaged

BAGALKOT

The historic public library in Badami town is in a pitiable state, with water-soaked books, dusty shelves, leaking roofs, and broken furniture, raising serious concerns about preservation and functionality. The library, inaugurated by Union Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri in 1960, holds historical significance, with a related picture displayed in its reading room.

Located on Museum Road near the vegetable market, the library comprises four rooms: two for storage, one primarily for book storage, and one reading room. The reading room contains only 12 chairs, forcing large groups of students to sit on the floor while studying. Out of approximately 30,000 books, around 20,000 are placed on the floor, and many are at risk due to leaks during the rainy season. The lack of proper infrastructure has resulted in significant damage to old and rare books.

Badami has six high schools, three undergraduate colleges, three graduate colleges, and a college of education. Students visiting the library for competitive exam preparation find it overcrowded and insufficiently equipped. Citizens and local

Badami public library suffers from water damage and limited seating with thousands of books affected, prompting citizens to urge preservation and digitization efforts

observers are urging public representatives and authorities to restore, preserve, and modernize the library for the benefit of students and youth.

Retired employee Lakshman Hanagi emphasized the need for digitization, as has been done in rural libraries, to make resources more accessible for competitive exams. IAS aspirant Payal Kadam highlighted the importance of books in Kannada, English, and Hindi for exams like KAS, IAS, UPSC, IPS, and IFS.

District library officials have been informed of the library's condition. Librarian Sunil Mudgal confirmed that further action will be taken as per official instructions to address the issues and safeguard the library's resources for students and the community.

This situation underscores the urgent need for intervention to preserve the library's legacy while ensuring functional facilities for educational purposes.

District-level art festival announced; registration open

KOPPAL

The District Administration, Zilla Panchayat, Kannada and Culture Department, School Education and Literacy Department, along with the Pre-University Education Department, have jointly organized a district-level art festival. Interested participants are required to register by November 25, said Karnakumar, Assistant Director of the Koppal Kannada and Culture Department. The festival, named Kalapratibotsava, aims to identify and nurture the artistic talents of children and youth, providing them a platform to showcase their creativity and enhance their skills. The event is scheduled to take place on November 28 and 29 at Sahitya Bhavan, offering various opportunities for young artists to participate and gain recognition for their work.

Cooperation Week celebrations: Divisional level conference today

HAVERI

The 72nd All India Cooperative Week is being observed from November 14 to 20, with a Belgaum Divisional Level Conference scheduled in Haveri on November 18, announced Kallappa Obanna, Joint Registrar of Cooperative Societies for Belgaum Division.

Addressing a press conference, he said the event is themed "Cooperative Institutions as Vehicles for Achieving a Self-Reliant India" and emphasizes "Empowerment of Youth, Women, and Weaker Sections through Cooperative Entrepreneurship." The conference will take place at Rajani Hall, with Chief Minister Siddaramaiah invited to inaugurate the program. Union Minister Pralhad Joshi, State Cooperative Federation President GT Deve Gowda, state ministers, MPs, and MLAs are expected to attend. HY Gaddankeri will deliver a



lecture. Members of 3,754 cooperative societies from Dharwad, Haveri, and Gadag districts will participate.

During the week, special programs are being organized under the State Cooperative Federation's leadership in collaboration with various cooperative organizations. HAVEMUL President Manjanagouda Patil highlighted that reduced NABARD assistance has affected farmers' access to loans and said a petition will be submitted to the central government during the conference.

State Cooperative Federation Director Basavaraj Arabagonda stated that a new

cooperative training hall has been constructed near Haveri Railway Station, to be inaugurated by Minister Shivanand Patil on November 18. KCC Bank Director Kotreshappa Baseganni announced the opening of a DCC Bank regional office in Haveri, where loan applications up to Rs 10 lakh can be processed.

Other dignitaries present included Federation Director Sanjay Hosamath, District Cooperative Union President Shivananda Sangapur, Deputy Registrar Azmat Ullad Khan, Pundalik Kerura of the Federation of Mookani Town Cooperative Banks.

State highway choked with mud, pedestrians struggle

BAGALKOT

State Highway-14 in Badami town is facing severe inconvenience as over half of the road is covered in mud, creating a dusty and unsafe environment. Vehicles moving along the highway kick up dust, which settles on pedestrians, making travel uncomfortable and hazardous.

Sections of the road, including the stretch from Ambedkar Circle to Veerapalikeshi Circle on Gadag Road, the area near the Irrigation Department on Kulageri Road, and the vicinity of the Government High School on Railway Station Road, are coated in red mud.

Being a historic tourist destination, Badami attracts thousands of visitors daily. Residents and tourists have expressed

frustration over the lack of maintenance, pointing out that district Lokayukta officials had previously instructed taluk-level authorities to ensure cleanliness in the area.

Locals report difficulties navigating the muddy roads, and some individuals with dust allergies have required hospital visits. "The municipality must remove the mud and improve the environment to maintain the town's appeal," said SH Vasan, President of Nisarga Balaga, urging immediate action.

Responding to the concerns, Municipal Chief Officer BM Dange assured that the mud covering the state highway would be cleaned and the area made safe and accessible for both residents and tourists.

**DHARWAD**

Members of the Karnataka chapter of the Bharatiya Kisan Sangh staged a protest on Monday, urging the government to establish a support price procurement center for maize and provide compensation for crop losses.

The protesters gathered in front of the District Collector's office, raising slogans against both the central and state governments. They highlighted that the central gov-

Farmers demand maize support price procurement center

ernment has fixed a support price of Rs 2,400 per quintal for maize, while the current market rate remains at Rs 1,600 per quintal. Farmers demanded that the state government set up a procurement center promptly to address the hardships faced by maize growers.

The protest saw the participation of prominent leaders, including Provincial President Vivek More, Gurunath Gowda Araliwanda, SS Patil, Puttaswamy, Siddappa Betageri,

Naganna Beligatti, Guru Beerannavara, Shivananda Kampali, and Gangadhar Dharennavara.

The demonstrators emphasized that without a proper procurement facility, farmers are forced to sell their produce at lower market rates, incurring losses despite the central government's fixed support price. They urged authorities to take immediate action to safeguard farmers' interests and ensure fair compensation for crop damage.

Economics paves the way to success, says Viresh Kummoor

HAVERI

"The economic system serves as a roadmap to success, and meaningful change can be observed by engaging with people's daily activities," said Viresh Kummura, Principal of CG Bella Government First Grade College.

He made the remarks during the inauguration of an economics exhibition and workshop organized by the Economics Department at Gouramma Ankalakoti Government First Grade College in Shiggavi. He emphasized the importance of students understanding the economic system to plan for future prosperity.

Dharwad Karnataka University Teachers' Association President Manjunath Tallura added that success is achievable only when individuals set aside feelings of superiority

or inferiority and approach every task with clear goals and dedication. He stressed that having faith in one's work and moving forward with determination is key to achieving success. Tallura also noted that it is crucial for students to make informed career choices from the early stages of their education.

The program was presided over by Gouramma Ankalakoti Government First Grade College Principal AC Vali. Faculty members from the Economics Department, including Prof. DS Sogalada, Prof. Latha Korpade, Prof. DS Bhat, Prof. KN Rasikara, Prof. Shailaja Huddara, Prof. Suresha Valmiki, Vaishnavi Azura, Prof. Ananda Indura, and others, participated in the event, contributing to the exhibition and workshop activities.

Stray dogs must be reported to town panchayat

GADAG

Heads of private and government schools, hospitals, sports complexes, bus stands, and railway stations in Mulgund Town Panchayat limits are instructed to check their premises for stray dogs, count them, and inform the Health Branch Chief Officer.

To prevent problems caused by stray dogs, institutions must appoint a responsible employee as a nodal officer to assist with relocation and supervise restricting the animals' entry. If dogs are allowed to remain on premises contrary to Supreme Court directions, relocation costs will be recovered from the institution. Legal action will follow in case of non-compliance, stated the Mulgund Town Panchayat Chief Officer.

HUBBALLI

Once a vital water source for residents and livestock in Hubballi, the historic Nagashetty Kopp Lake has now fallen into a state of severe neglect. Once renowned for its beauty, the lake is now choked with filth, garbage, and overgrown vegetation, with no trace of its original charm.

A development project worth ₹2.5 crore had been proposed to beautify the lake, prevent waste water contamination, and improve the surrounding area. MLA Mahesh



Tenginakayi inspected the site on February 18, 2024. However, nearly two years later, the proposed work remains incomplete. A partial boundary wall was erected a year ago, but the lake's restoration

has stalled, leaving it in a dilapidated state.

The lake spans around two acres near the famous Maruti temple in Keshwapur, Nagashetty Kopp. It falls under Hubballi-Dharwad Municipal

Corporation (HDMC) Ward No. 45, a densely populated area. Urbanization and inadequate drainage have caused sewage and waste water to flow into the lake. Over the years, the stagnant water has created a foul stench, exposing approximately 50 nearby families to potential health hazards. Residents complain of skin infections, respiratory problems, and general health issues caused by the polluted water.

For decades, the lake has also served as a bathing spot for livestock, further contaminating the water. Despite re-

peated calls from locals, the HDMC and Hubballi-Dharwad Urban Development Authority (HDUDA) have failed to implement the development plans effectively. The neglected state of the lake highlights ongoing corruption and administrative apathy, leaving both the historic water body and surrounding families at risk.

Local residents urge immediate intervention to clean, restore, and safeguard the lake to prevent further health and environmental crises while preserving its historical significance.

QUICK READ



Human-elephant conflict escalates in Jharkhand

Ranchi

Human-elephant conflict is intensifying across Jharkhand, with five people killed in elephant attacks over the past week and two elephants found dead under mysterious circumstances. In the latest incident, a herd of around 15 elephants entered Kharkanda village in the Jageshwar OP area of Bokaro district and went on a rampage for several hours. The herd trampled 45-year-old Sanjho Devi to death and vandalised 25-30 houses. A car and a tempo parked outside a home were also damaged, and the stored food was eaten.

Kerala HC lambasts Vijayan govt for shielding accused

Kochi

The Kerala High Court on Monday came down heavily on the Pinarayi Vijayan government for refusing to grant sanction to the CBI to prosecute two key accused in the multi-crore Cashew Development Corporation corruption case. The Single Bench asked why the government was protecting the corrupt and warned that it would be compelled to record such an observation in its order if the state government continued its present stance. The criticism was directed at the government's decision to deny prosecution sanction for former Corporation chairman and Congress leader R. Chandrasekharan, and former P.A. Ratheesh.

Self-styled 'Major' among 4 militants arrested in Manipur

Imphal

In a major joint crack-down, security forces have arrested four hardcore militants, including a self-styled 'Major', and seized a huge cache of arms and ammunition, comprising 12 sophisticated weapons, from different districts of Manipur over the last 24 hours, officials said on Monday. Among the arrested is dreaded militant Koijam Ibochouba alias Inao alias Sumo (45), police confirmed. A senior police official said that Koijam Ibochouba is the self-styled 'Major' of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and its sister outfit Revolutionary People's Front (RPF), and he was a wanted insurgent in connection with the 2017 Ambush on Assam Rifles at Sajik Tampak in Chandel district, the official said.

Navy unveils crest of indigenous anti-submarine ship 'Mahe'

NEW DELHI

The Indian Navy has unveiled the crest of Mahe, the first ship of the indigenously designed and built Mahe-class Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW-SWC), ahead of its commissioning in Mumbai on November 24, an official said on Monday.

This marks an important milestone in the ship's journey from design to induction, celebrating India's growing self-reliance in naval shipbuilding and the symbolic identity that binds the ship's heritage, design, and operational role, said the Navy official in a statement.

Named after the coastal town of Mahe on India's western seaboard, the ship reflects India's enduring maritime traditions and coastal spirit.

The ship's crest draws inspiration from the cultural and martial legacy of the region, depicting an 'Urumi' - the flexible sword associated with Kalarippayattu and a symbol of Kerala's martial heritage, rising from the sea, said the statement.

The 'Urumi' signifies agility, precision, and lethal grace, reflecting the ship's ability to operate swiftly and strike decisively in the littorals.

DEFENCE CONCLAVE

Manipur witnesses remarkable decline in violence: Army Chief

'The security situation in Manipur has significantly improved, with violence declining and public trust gradually returning'

NEW DELHI

Chief of the Army Staff, General Upendra Dwivedi, on Monday highlighted a dramatic shift in the security scenario of Manipur, stating that the northeastern state has seen a sharp reduction in violent incidents since early 2025.

Speaking at the Chanakya Defence Conclave 2025, he noted that the improvements have been particularly visible after President's Rule was imposed in February this year.

Reflecting on the unrest that broke out in May 2023, General Dwivedi spoke with personal emotion, recalling his own years serving in Manipur.

When the incidents happened in May 2023, they caused me deep personal pain, because I have worked in Manipur myself. It hurt me to see such a beautiful state, which felt like heaven to me, in such a condition, he said. The Army Chief pointed out that the political and administrative shift brought about by President's Rule has helped restore faith among people. What has changed is that people's mutual trust, as well as their trust in the government, has started to improve. There has been significant improvement since then, he added. General Dwivedi also credited Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visit to the state in September 2025 for further stabilizing conditions. When P M Modi visited, that too helped

change things on the ground. If the situation continues to improve, the President will also be visiting soon, he noted. Comparing the current conditions with those during peak unrest, the Army Chief said the contrast is stark. In 2023, the police were also troubled, and people were anxious. The standards of 2023 and today have completely changed. Highlighting operational achievements, he stated that weapon recoveries have doubled, rising from about 200 per month in 2023-24 to nearly 400 now.



Delhi car blast probe links jailed west Bengal man to militant network

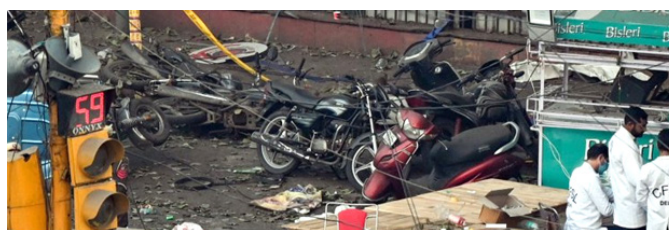
KOLKATA

The investigation into the recent car bomb blast in Delhi — which claimed 12 lives and left several others injured — has taken a new turn, with the name of Sabir Ahmed emerging as a key figure in the case. Ahmed, a resident of Palashipara in Nadia district of West Bengal, is currently in judicial custody on drug trafficking charges.

Despite being behind bars, he is now suspected of engaging in anti-national activities through covert communication channels.

Sources in the investigative agencies revealed that the terror plot has clear militant links.

The breakthrough reportedly came after the interrogation of Dr. Shaheen Shahid, an Al-Falah University physician arrested for suspected involvement in the attack. Investigators learned that the conspiracy was coordinated through multiple online social



groups, where Shahid acted as a mentor. Sabir Ahmed, despite being incarcerated, was allegedly active in one such group, promoting anti-India propaganda and encouraging extremist activities.

In a related development, the Special Task Force and Palashipara police detained Ahmed's brother, Faizal Ahmed, from Bara Naldaha area on November 12.

Authorities have not confirmed whether Faizal has been formally arrested.

A source claimed that Sabir may have managed to influence the Delhi blast plot from inside prison — a possibility now under intense investigation. However, police officials remain cautious. The STF

took Sabir's brother a few days ago. However, we do not have any information about Sabir's involvement in the blasts, said Uttam Ghosh, Additional Superintendent of Police (Rural), Krishnanagar Police District.

Meanwhile, the National Investigation Agency (NIA), in collaboration with West Bengal Police, has also arrested another suspect — MBBS student Nisar Alam of Al-Falah University. Alam was detained in Dalkhola, North Dinajpur, after authorities tracked his mobile location.

The probe continues, with investigators now examining how a jailed man could allegedly contribute to a deadly terror conspiracy.



Bengal Guv summons Kolkata cops, CRPF

KOLKATA

West Bengal Governor, C.V. Ananda Bose had summoned the bomb squad of the Kolkata Police and Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) for thorough and joint search operations within the premises of Raj Bhavan in Central Kolkata amid the recent allegations by a Trinamool Congress four-time Lok Sabha member that arms and ammunition were being distributed from Governor House premises to BJP-backed goons.

It has also been decided that the joint search and combing operations by the city police will also be telecast live by the office of the Governor. According to a statement issued by the office of the Governor on Monday afternoon, the Honourable Governor is cutting short his ongoing outstation tour and returning to Kolkata later in the day. On the instructions of Honourable Governor, a Joint Combing Operation will be carried out for the entire Raj Bhavan building and its precincts. The Joint Combing Operation will be led by Honourable Governor himself and will be conducted by the following: Kolkata Police, Raj Bhavan Police outpost, CRPF Bomb Squad and Dog Squad, the statement issued by the office of the Governor read.

As per the statement, the disaster management and civil defence departments will also participate in the joint search and combing operations. The entire combing operation will be LIVE. Members of the media and civil society will also be present throughout the combing operation, the statement from the Governor's House read. Earlier, the Office of the Governor had also directed the Kolkata Police to start an investigation into the allegations made.



Centre clears ₹7,712 cr investment under ECMS

NEW DELHI

The Central government has cleared a major new tranche of investment proposals under the Electronics Component Manufacturing Scheme (ECMS), with a total commitment of ₹7,712 crore, senior IT Ministry officials confirmed on Monday.

The announcement was made by IT Secretary S. Krishnan, who said that 17 applications were approved from 249 submissions during the latest round.

In a significant milestone, this tranche includes the first-ever approved project from Jammu and Kashmir. Other approved proposals are spread across Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, reflecting the government's aim to expand manufacturing capacity across multiple regions.

Among the 17 selected companies, Aequus Consumer Products Private Limited stands out with the largest individual commitment of ₹1,500 crore and an expected production output of ₹7,669 crore. Other major names include TE Connectivity India, which will invest ₹612 crore, and Jabil Circuit with ₹957 crore. Additional approvals were granted to Secure Circuits, Zetfab, Zetchem with ₹55 crore, Micropack with ₹54 crore, Uno Minda with ₹264 crore, AT&S India, HI-Q, Infopower Technologies, Syrma Mobility with ₹250 crore, and Meena Electrotech from Jammu and Kashmir committing ₹111 crore.

Speaking on the occasion, Krishnan emphasized the government's strategic goal of strengthening India's position in the global supply chain. The basic objective is to deepen the value chain in India. The world is looking at diversification of value chains, and India is a key player in that, he said.

Union IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw also addressed the event, outlining three critical priorities for sustainable growth in electronics manufacturing: developing strong design capabilities, ensuring six sigma quality standards, and fostering a globally competitive domestic supplier ecosystem.



Bengal STF seizes ₹5 crore cash from car in New Town

KOLKATA

The Special Task Force (STF) of the West Bengal Police on Monday seized cash amounting to Rs 5 crore from a car near Akanksha Crossing in New Town and arrested two persons, including the vehicle's owner. The seizure was made following a tip-off from a confidential source.

Two people, including the owner of the car, have been arrested in connection with the incident, police said, adding that an investigation is underway.

Police said that the money was being brought from the New Town area. Sources said Bengal STF is searching for the source of the money.

The recovery of such a large amount of money while checking the car has raised concerns, especially ahead of next year's state Assembly polls.

According to police, the recovery of such huge cash has raised eyebrows, especially in the backdrop of the Special Intensive Revision

(SIR) exercise of West Bengal's electoral rolls by the Election Commission.

The police are investigating where this money came from, where it was being taken, and what the purpose was.

Cash worth Rs 5 crore has been recovered from a car after conducting a raid. The cash has been seized. Two people have been arrested. An investigation has started to find out the source of the money, said a police official. Last week, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) recovered large sums from the residence of a businessman in the Taratala area during searches connected to the municipal recruitment scam. Earlier this month, ED teams carried out raids at around 10 locations across the city, including Salt Lake and Beliaghata. ED sleuths searched the house of a businessman in the Taratala area in connection with the municipal recruitment corruption case. Investigators recovered a huge amount of money from the house then too.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP JOURNEY

'Mission Mangalam' brings transformative impact

AHMEDABAD

The Gujarat government's flagship women empowerment initiative, Mission Mangalam, continues to demonstrate its transformative impact on economic independence and grassroots entrepreneurship.

Among its most inspiring success stories is the women-run 'Mangalam Canteen' at Gandhinagar Metro Station, Sector-1 — now a thriving model of self-reliance and collective progress.

Mission Mangalam focuses on strengthening self-help



groups (SHGs) by ensuring their access to banking services, credit facilities, and livelihood training. The initiative is anchored by the Gujarat Livelihood Promotion Company (GLPC), which plays a key role in facilitating

loans, skilling and market linkages. The scheme has empowered thousands of women across rural and urban areas, helping them transition from financial vulnerability to entrepreneurship.

Among the beneficiaries

are Pushpa Parmar from Dehgam taluka and Vaishali Rathod from Kalol, whose journeys reflect the vision of an Atmanirbhar Gujarat and the ethos of Har Ghar Swadeshi. Pushpa, a member of the 'Jai Chamunda' Sakhi Mandal formed under Mission Mangalam, received an initial bank-linked loan of ₹1 lakh, followed by a second loan of ₹4 lakh. With guidance from GLPC, she and Vaishali made a bold decision — to open a canteen at the Gandhinagar Metro Station. The result was Mangalam Canteen, which now earns over ₹6 lakh annu-

ally. Its steady growth has not only provided financial stability but also bolstered social confidence and dignity for the women running it. Their success highlights how targeted support and structured credit access can enable women from modest backgrounds to become job creators and role models.

As Mission Mangalam expands, stories like these strengthen Gujarat's commitment to inclusive development, demonstrating the powerful ripple effect of women-led entrepreneurship on families and communities.

QUICK READ



Journalists swap newsrooms for ballot boxes

Thiruvananthapuram
A quiet but noticeable shift is unfolding in Thiruvananthapuram's political arena, where an increasing number of journalists are stepping out of newsrooms and straight into electoral politics. The Thiruvananthapuram Corporation has long been a springboard for bigger political roles -- several of its former councillors have risen to become MLAs and Ministers. Education Minister V. Sivankutty once served as Mayor, while the current Food Minister G. R. Anil began his political journey as a councillor here. This year, two well-known journalists both former office-bearers of the prestigious Trivandrum Press Club are contesting the civic polls, each running as an independent despite their long association with the CPI(M).

Kisan Sangh to launch stir against land pooling policy
Ujjain
The Rashtriya Swayam-sevak Sangh (RSS)-affiliated Bharatiya Kisan Sangh (BKS) is set to hold a fresh round of protest to oppose the land pooling policy in Ujjain on Tuesday. According to Bharat Singh, Madhya Pradesh BKS Convenor, more than 2,000 farmers from Ujjain and adjoining districts of Malwa-Nimar region will be participating in the protest to raise their grievances. Farmers from 18 districts, including from Ujjain, will gather at the Bhumi Mata Mandir at 9 a.m. on Wednesday. Later they will march towards District Collector's office and will hold a protest until the Madhya Pradesh government takes back its land pooling scheme, Singh told media persons.

Punjab farmers yet to get relief for crop loss: BJP
Chandigarh
Punjab BJP spokesperson Pritpal Singh Baliawal on Monday wrote a letter to Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann, drawing attention to the severe negligence faced by flood-hit farmers of Sahnewal in Ludhiana district, who have still not received their promised compensation. Baliawal highlighted that villages such as Sasarali, Boothgarh Banjara and Sasarali Colony suffered massive destruction during the recent floods caused by the overflowing Sutlej river.

Gujarat govt hosts CM fellowship youth workshop

AHMEDABAD
A one-day workshop for the Chief Minister's Fellowship cohort was held in Gujarat's Gandhinagar on Monday, with Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel emphasising that the synergy between the domain expertise of senior bureaucrats and the fresh ideas of CM Fellows programme can significantly enhance public welfare and strengthen ease of doing business across the state.
Addressing 24 CM Fellows working across various state departments, Chief Minister Patel said the state government aims not merely

Will work with states to resolve governance challenges: HM

The Union Home Minister led the 32nd Northern Zonal Council meeting, prioritizing cooperative federalism and collaborative governance

FARIDABAD

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday chaired the 32nd meeting of the Northern Zonal Council, reaffirming the Centre's commitment to working jointly with states to resolve key governance challenges.
The session opened with a solemn tribute to the victims of the Delhi blast on November 10, underscoring the Council's sensitivity to national tragedies and security concerns.
Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta was among the key attendees. Sharing her thoughts on social platform X, she highlighted Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of co-operative federalism as a cornerstone of nation-building.



The Northern Zonal Council is an extremely effective and result-oriented platform that brings that very idea to life on the ground, she stated.
CM Gupta emphasized that the Council fosters open and constructive dialogue between the Centre and states, enabling collaborative solutions on complex and interconnected issues. She noted that many challenges -- especially

those related to law and order, development, and public welfare -- can only be resolved through collective participation.
The agenda of the meeting reflected its growing relevance. Discussions featured several urgent national issues, including the faster investigation and disposal of cases involving sexual offences against women and children,

along with the expansion of Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs) to ensure timely justice.
The Council also reviewed progress on strengthening rural banking access, particularly ensuring brick-and-mortar facilities in every designated village. Other key focus areas included the implementation of the Emergency Response Support System (ERSS-112), improved nutrition and health outcomes, education, electricity supply, urban development, and reinforcement of cooperative systems.
The Northern Zonal Council includes the states and Union Territories of Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Delhi, Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, and Chandigarh.

ED begins restitution of ₹55.85 cr assets in Varron bank fraud case

MUMBAI

The Directorate of Enforcement (ED), Mumbai Zonal Office, has started the process of restituting three immovable properties valued at ₹55.85 crore in connection with a ₹694 crore bank loan fraud case linked to Varron Aluminium Pvt. Ltd.
An official statement released on Monday confirmed that these properties were previously attached under Section 5 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). The ED stated that Varron Aluminium and associated entities had fraudulently siphoned off bank funds for personal enrichment. The valuation of the seized properties is based on a 2021 assessment referenced from the State Bank of India's reports.
The money laundering investigation stems from FIRs registered by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), accusing the company of



cheating Bank of India and State Bank of India of ₹293.74 crore and ₹401.25 crore respectively. According to the chargesheet, a ₹300 crore Manual Letter of Credit issued by Canara Bank in favour of group company VACPL was discounted without proper verification by Bank of India -- a key step in the fraudulent scheme.
As per ED findings, Varron Aluminium and its allies repeatedly opened new Letters of Credit (LCs) to repay old ones, thus masking their liabilities and inflating their financial statements. Shell entities and circular credit transactions were integral to the

operation, allowing the company to present an artificially healthy financial profile while diverting funds.
So far, the ED has traced proceeds of crime worth ₹179.27 crore, issuing two attachment orders to secure these assets. Under Section 8(8) of the PMLA, attached or confiscated properties must be restored to rightful owners or victims once confirmed as proceeds of crime but not culpably held.
The restitution process marks a critical step in returning losses to affected banks as the investigation continues into one of India's significant financial fraud cases.

'India-US trade deal likely to be signed soon'

NEW DELHI

India and the US are nearing closure of their talks for signing the first tranche of the proposed Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA), Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal indicated on Monday. Agrawal told journalists that the two countries have been holding regular virtual rounds of talks on the BTA. Although no formal deadlines can be set on the issue, the first stage of the trade talks is progressing swiftly, he added. US President Donald Trump sent positive signals on strengthening U.S.-India relations last week, raising fresh hopes that a bilateral trade agreement between the world's two largest democracies could be signed soon. Trump told reporters at the White House on Thursday that his talks with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi were going great and that a visit to Delhi could take place next year. Earlier on Monday, Trump said that he plans to lower tariffs imposed on India at some point, indicating that a breakthrough in the trade talks could come soon. I think we're pretty close to doing a deal (with India) that's good for everybody, Trump said, in answer to a question from the media, at the ceremony for swearing in Sergio Gor as the new US Ambassador to India.

WB Chief Minister up in arms against Centre's Gorkhaland appointment

KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has once again raised strong objections to the Union government's decision to appoint former Deputy National Security Advisor and ex-BSF Director General Pankaj Kumar Singh as the interlocutor for tripartite talks on a permanent political solution to the Gorkhaland issue.
In a fresh letter addressed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday, Banerjee reiterated that the move undermines the state government's role and concerns.
This marks Banerjee's second communication to the Prime Minister on the matter. Her first letter, dated October 18, 2025, had urged the Centre to reconsider and revoke the appointment, stressing that a sensitive issue like Gorkhaland required mutual consultation, not unilateral action.

In her latest letter, the Chief Minister accused the Union Ministry of Home Affairs of bypassing her objections and proceeding with the interlocutor's office. It is a grave concern that, without any prior

communication in response to my letter and despite your kind intervention, the office of the interlocutor... has already started functioning. This is really shocking, she wrote. Banerjee described the Centre's action as a unilateral and arbitrary step that ignored the state's position. She argued that appointing a retired IPS officer to mediate the long-standing demands for a separate Gorkhaland involving Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Kurseong, and parts of the Terai and Dooars could further complicate matters instead of fostering trust. The ongoing demand for Gorkhaland, a separate state carved out of northern West Bengal has witnessed decades of political volatility, protests, and multiple negotiation attempts. The state government maintains that any dialogue should be inclusive, involving local stakeholders and respecting federal principles.
With the interlocutor's office already operational as of November 10, tensions between the state and Centre are once again on display, setting the stage for renewed political friction over the sensitive hill issue.



India-UK joint drill 'Ajeya Warrior 25' begins in Rajasthan

JAIPUR

The eighth edition of the India-UK Joint Military Training Exercise AJEYA WARRIOR-25 commenced on Monday at the Foreign Training Node, Mahajan Field Firing Ranges in Rajasthan. Scheduled from 17 to 30 November 2025, the 14-day exercise underscores the growing defence cooperation and interoperability between the Indian Army and the British Army. A total of 240 personnel, with equal representation from both armies, are participating in the exercise.
The Indian Army contingent comprises troops from the esteemed Sikh Regiment, renowned for its operational excellence and professionalism.
The exercise is being conducted under a United Nations mandate, with a primary focus on honing joint capability in counter-terrorism operations in semi-urban terrain.

Over the next two weeks, the participating troops will undergo an intensive and immersive training curriculum.
Key activities include joint mission planning at the Brigade level, integrated tactical drills, simulation-based scenarios, and company-level field training exercises designed to replicate realistic counter-terror contingencies.
These modules aim to strengthen interoperability, enhance tactical proficiency, and develop coordinated responses for complex operational challenges.
Special emphasis will be laid on sharing best practices, refining Standard Operating Procedures, and improving operational synergy for peacekeeping and counter-terror missions.
Instituted in 2011 and held biennially, AJEYA WARRIOR has grown into a flagship engagement between the Indian and British Armies.

Rajasthan is my Karma Bhoomi: New Chief Secy

JAIPUR

V. Srinivas has assumed charge as the new Chief Secretary of Rajasthan at the Secretariat on Monday as the outgoing Chief Secretary Sudhansh Pant handed over the charge to him. Before assuming charge as Chief Secretary, V. Srinivas and Sudhansh Pant performed puja with chanting of mantras at the Ganesh Temple at the entry gate of the Secretariat's main building. The Chief Sec-

retary warmly embraced Sudhansh Pant upon taking charge of the office. Speaking to the media after assuming charge as Chief Secretary, V. Srinivas said, I express my gratitude to Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma, who believed in my efficiency and gave me such a significant responsibility. I also want to express my gratitude to the Prime Minister for entrusting me with the responsibility of the Department of Administrative Reforms and

Public Grievances in the Government of India for many years. Rajasthan is my karmabhoomi (workplace). I came here at the age of 22.
I have held several positions. I had a probationary period in Nagaur, followed by a subdivisional officer in Bhilwara. After that, I came as a secretary, serving in the Planning Department, Finance Department, Health Department, and Science and Technology Department.

Ganga rejuvenation: NMCG embraces AI, advanced research

NEW DELHI

The 67th Executive Committee (EC) meeting of the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG), held on Monday, marked a strategic shift towards science-led river rejuvenation, with a focused emphasis on artificial intelligence tools and advanced research systems. Officials said the meeting identified pollution abatement and data-backed research as central pillars in the ongoing effort to restore the Ganga's ecological health.
Chaired by NMCG Director-General Rajeev Kumar Mital, the session saw experts



backing a host of pivotal scientific initiatives. These include Digital Twin technology for the Ganga, high-resolution SONAR-based riverbed mapping, real-time hydrological modelling, and glacier monitoring -- all aimed at deepening understanding of the river

basin and enabling precision planning.
A key approval was granted to a ₹3.98 crore research project titled Glaciers and Glacier Melt Runoff Changes and Their Linkage to the Hydro-climatic and Topographic Context in the Upper Ganga

Basin. To be conducted by the National Institute of Hydrology in Roorkee, this study will examine glacier retreat, evolving snow cover patterns, and resulting shifts in meltwater contributions to the river system. The findings are expected to support long-term water security and climate resilience plans.
Further research efforts include studies on Himalayan Ganga headstream glaciers, managed aquifer recharge in paleochannel zones, and the development of a historic geospatial river database -- providing the scientific backbone for sustainable river basin management.

The meeting was attended by senior officials including Gaurav Masaldan, Joint Secretary & Financial Adviser (Ministry of Water Resources), Nalin Srivastava, Deputy Director General (NMCG), and executive directors across administrative, technical, project, and finance divisions. Project directors from Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal were also present.
The new research-led roadmap underscores the NMCG's commitment to combining innovation, environmental science, and technology -- ensuring the future of the Ganga is shaped by actionable data, not just declarations.

QUICK READ

Protests against Constitutional Amendment grow

Islamabad

Activists from the Pakistan Awami Tehreek (PAT) political party and its women wing Sindhiyani Tehreek (ST) continue to protest against the 27th Constitutional Amendment, corporate farming, new canals on the Indus River, honour killings and the exploitation of the resources of Sindh province, local media reported on Monday. The party organised a march that began at Jail Road and ended at the local press club, where various leaders addressed the participants, Pakistan's leading daily Dawn reported. PAT President Vasand Thari, Noor Ahmed Katiar, Lal Jarwar, Dr. Rasool Bux Khaskheli, Abdul Qadir Ranto, and others led the march.

Disability rights advocate Alice Wong dies at 51

SAN FRANCISCO

Alice Wong, a prominent disability rights activist and acclaimed author, has died at 51. Wong passed away at a San Francisco hospital due to an infection, her close friend Sandy Ho confirmed. A trailblazer in disability justice, Wong amplified the voices of people with disabilities through her writing, advocacy and the influential Disability Visibility Project. Born to Hong Kong immigrants and living with muscular dystrophy, she used a powered wheelchair and breathing device throughout her life. Wong's memoir Year of the Tiger and her broader body of work celebrated autonomy, community living and authentic storytelling within marginalized disability communities.

Trump warns of harsh US sanctions on nations trading with Russia

Washington

US President Donald Trump issued one of his strongest warnings yet against countries maintaining economic ties with Russia, declaring that any nation "doing business with Russia will be very severely sanctioned." His remarks come as the administration and Republican lawmakers accelerate efforts to impose sweeping penalties on Moscow over its war in Ukraine. Trump said he supported congressional efforts to introduce tough new measures. "They're passing legislation... very tough sanctioning... on any country doing business with Russia.

SU DO KU

Brain-Bender: Can You Solve It?

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Solutions to Yesterday's puzzle

Su-30MKI and Rafale Jets Begin Joint Missions

Indo-French air forces begin Exercise Garuda 25, boosting interoperability, strategic coordination, and defence cooperation

PARIS

The skies over France roared on Monday as Indian Air Force (IAF) Su-30MKI fighters and French Air and Space Force Rafale aircraft took flight together, marking the start of coordinated aerial missions under the bilateral Exercise Garuda 25. The 8th edition of the air exercise is being held at Mont-de-Marsan Air Base in France from November 16 to 27.

In a statement shared on X, the Indian Air Force wrote,

Exercise Garuda takes off. Indian Air Force Su-30MKI and French Air and Space Force Rafale aircraft soared into the skies, commencing coordinated missions as part of the bilateral air exercise. The engagement reinforces strong interoperability and deep defence cooperation between the two Air Forces.

Exercise Garuda has long been a key pillar of India-France defence ties, offering both nations' air forces an opportunity to improve combat readiness, tactical coordi-



nation, and mutual understanding of operational procedures. This year's edition focuses on enhancing interoperability, sharing best practices, and deepening strategic cooperation.

The IAF has deployed its Su-30MKI multirole fighter jets for the exercise, supported by the C-17 Globemaster III for strategic airlift operations during induction and de-induction phases. Additionally, the IL-78 air-to-air refuelling aircraft is extending the operational range and en-

duration of participating fighters, enabling longer and more complex mission profiles.

The Ministry of Defence emphasized that such exercises not only build operational synergy but also reinforce India's commitment to strengthening global defence partnerships. The presence of Indian aircraft in French airspace highlights the growing trust and technological alignment between the two nations, especially as both operate Rafale fighters.

S Korea Proposes Military Talks with N Korea to Redefine Border Line

SEOUL

South Korea on Monday formally proposed military talks with North Korea to address escalating concerns over repeated incursions and rising tensions along the inter-Korean border. The move comes after multiple incidents in which armed North Korean soldiers crossed the Military Demarcation Line (MDL) while working near the border, including land clearing and mine-laying operations within buffer zones.

This marks Seoul's first official dialogue offer since President Lee Jae Myung assumed office in June, pledging to restore communication channels with Pyongyang and ease cross-border tensions. Our military officially suggests holding inter-Korean talks between military authorities to discuss how to establish the Military Demarcation Line, to prevent accidental clashes and ease military tensions, said Kim Hong-cheol, South Korea's Deputy Minister for National Defence Policy.

Kim expressed hope that Pyongyang would respond



South Korea seeks military dialogue with North Korea to clarify border lines and prevent clashes along the tense DMZ.

swiftly and constructively to the proposal, which aims to reduce tensions and rebuild military trust. He added that Seoul is flexible regarding the talks' format, including venue and schedule.

Since April 2023, North Korea has deployed troops near the MDL inside the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ) to plant mines, install anti-tank barriers, and reinforce barbed wire fencing. Kim Jong-un

has previously declared that South Korea is no longer a partner but a hostile state, deepening the security rift.

North Korean soldiers have crossed the border around 10 times this year, including an incident in October when two armed soldiers briefly crossed the line while attempting to pursue a defector. South Korean forces have responded by broadcasting warnings and firing warning shots in several cases.

One key issue is the deterioration of MDL markers—installed in 1953 after the Korean War armistice. Of the roughly 1,300 original boundary posts, only about one-sixth remain clearly identifiable.

Sheikh Hasina gets death penalty for 'crimes against humanity'

Tribunal rigged, ruling biased: Hasina

New Delhi: Ex-Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina responded fiercely after being sentenced to death, in absentia, by that country's International Crimes Tribunal for "crimes against humanity". The verdict revealed "the brazen and murderous intent of extremist figures in an unelected government", she said. Hasina also denied all charges and criticised the court for not giving her Awami League Party and herself a "fair chance to defend themselves". She also accused the tribunal and its members of bias.

DHAKA

Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal (ICT-BD) on Monday sentenced deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina to death after finding her guilty of alleged crimes against humanity over her government's violent crackdown on student-led protests last year that led to the fall of her Awami League government.

The 78-year-old fugitive politician was on trial in absentia for being the "mastermind and principal architect" behind last year's suppression of mass demonstrations, in which some 1,400 people were killed.

The three-member also delivered its judgment against two of Hasina's aides. It sentenced former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan to death for his involvement in the use of deadly force against protesters. Both Hasina and Khan fled to India last year. A third suspect, former police chief Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun, was sentenced to five years in prison after becoming



a state witness against Hasina and pleading guilty.

The former Bangladesh prime minister was "found guilty on three counts" of preventing justice, ordering the killing of protesters and failing to take measures to stop punitive killings.

"We have decided to inflict her with only one sentence -- that is, sentence of death," judge Golam Mortuza Mozumder read to the packed court in Dhaka. The tribunal, however, spared Al-Mamun from the death penalty after he became a state witness.

45 Umrah pilgrims from T'gana charred to death Saudi

Tour operators, authorities under scrutiny

Two Hyderabad-based travel operators, Flyzone and Al Makkah Haj and Umrah, arranged the travel for the pilgrims. Officials are verifying whether adequate safety measures and coordination were maintained throughout the journey. The Telangana State Haj Committee, although not involved with private operators, has extended support to the victims' families.



Saddened by the tragic accident involving a bus carrying Indian pilgrims in Saudi Arabia. My condolences to the families who have lost their loved ones. The Indian government is closely coordinating with Saudi authorities to provide all necessary support to the affected families in this hour of grief and ensure that the injured receive proper care.

—Rajnath Singh, Defence Minister



My sincere condolences to the bereaved families. Pray for the speedy recovery of those injured. The Embassy in Riyadh and the Consulate in Jeddah are providing full support to Indian nationals and their families.

—Dr S Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister



Continued from page 1

Repatriation of bodies: Priority for officials

Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi has urged the Ministry of External Affairs for immediate repatriation of the bodies, calling it the "top priority."

He confirmed speaking to both the Deputy Chief of Mission and the Consul General to expedite formalities.



At least 1 family member of victims to be sent to Saudi: Min

Hyderabad: Telangana Minister for Public Enterprises and Minority Welfare, Mohammed Azharuddin, on Monday said the government will ensure that at least one family member of the victims is sent to Saudi Arabia. Azar said he is monitoring the situation and the government will ensure that at least one member is sent. "I have received information that the bodies have been charred beyond recognition. A DNA test is also likely to be conducted to identify the victims," he said. The government has issued a helpline number, besides opening a control room at Haj House to provide information to families of the victims, the Minister said.

Risk of transport

Transporting worshippers around Saudi Arabia's holy sites has frequently proven dangerous, particularly during the Hajj, when roads can be chaotic with buses creating interminable traffic jams. Millions of people from across the world visit Saudi Arabia for the Umrah pilgrimage, which happens outside of the Hajj period. There have been numerous incidents during the Hajj, the Muslim pilgrimage to the cities of Mecca and Medina, that have caused loss of life.

Major accidents

- **November 17, 2025:** A bus transporting Indian Hajj pilgrims from Mecca to Medina collided with an oil tanker about 25 km from Medina, resulting 45 fatalities.
- **March 2023:** A bus ferrying pilgrims to the holy city of Mecca burst into flames after ramming a bridge due to a brake failure near Medina, killing 20 people of different nationalities and injuring more than two dozen others.
- **October 2019:** Some 35 foreigners were killed and four others injured when a bus collided with another heavy vehicle near Medina.
- **2015:** A stampede near the Jamarat area in Mecca killed 14 Indian pilgrims, including a volunteer.
- **2008:** Seven people, including one Indian, were killed when a bus collided with a fuel tanker near Riyadh. The victims were on their way home from Medina with a Bahraini tour group.

INDIA UAE DEFENCE

Minister Seth Holds Bilateral Talks at Dubai Air Show 2025

DUBAI

Minister of State for Defence Sanjay Seth met his UAE counterpart Mohammed Mubarak Al Mazrouei on Monday, reinforcing India's commitment to expanding defence cooperation with the United Arab Emirates. The meeting took place on the sidelines of the Dubai Air Show 2025, where both leaders underlined stronger engagement through institutional frameworks, defence exhibitions, and enhanced training collaboration.

Raksha Rajya Mantri Shri Sanjay Seth held a bilateral



meeting with his UAE counterpart Mohammed Mubarak Al Mazrouei, on the sidelines of the Dubai Air Show 2025, the Defence Ministry announced in a post on X. He underlined stronger engagement through institutional

mechanisms, defence exhibitions, training cooperation and encouraged exploring joint research, co-development and co-production for deeper defence ties.

As part of his engagements, Seth inaugurated the BRAH-

MOS stall at the exhibition and interacted with 15 iDEX winners showcasing next-generation aerospace and defence innovations inside the Vista Startup Zone. The BRAH-MOS supersonic cruise missile drew significant attention, noted for its deployment versatility across ships, submarines, mobile platforms, and aircraft, and its precision capability against both land and maritime targets.

The Indian Consulate in Dubai highlighted the missile's presence as a major attraction, underscoring India's growing indigenous defence capabilities. Earlier, the min-

ister also inaugurated the India Pavilion, which features indigenous fighter jet technologies, advanced startups, and aerospace innovation under the national vision of achieving self-reliance in defence manufacturing.

Sanjay Seth is leading a high-level Indian delegation comprising senior officials from the Defence Ministry, Defence Production, External Affairs, and the Armed Forces. The visit marks a continued effort to foster strategic partnerships and expand defence industrial cooperation between India and the UAE.

QUICK READ



Truckers strike halt coal movement from CCL mines

Chatra
Road transportation of coal from Central Coalfields Limited's (CCL) Amrapali and Chandragupta projects in Jharkhand's Chatra district has remained suspended for seven consecutive days, as truck operators continue an indefinite strike protesting alleged police extortion. The strike, which began on November 12, has brought coal movement to a standstill, causing substantial daily revenue losses to CCL and the state exchequer. Officials warn that if the deadlock persists, several NTPC-run thermal power plants could face imminent fuel shortages. Transporters allege that police personnel stationed along the Tandwa-Simaria road, particularly in the Khadhaiya area, demand between Rs 5,000 and Rs 10,000 from each truck.

India's labour force participation rate rises in Oct

New Delhi
Increasing trend in overall Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) for persons of age 15 years and above, indicating an increase in employment, continued for the fourth month in a row to touch 6-month high level of 55.4 per cent in October, according to a statement issued by the Ministry of Statistics on Monday. Participation of female in labour force observed consistent increase for the past four months for persons aged 15 years and above. This sustained growth in rural female participation signals strengthening economic inclusion in the economy.

Your export crisis is self-inflicted: World Bank warns Pak

New Delhi
The World Bank has issued a strong advisory to Pakistan, warning that the country's export crisis is no longer a temporary problem but the result of deep, long-standing structural flaws. In its latest assessment, the Bank says Pakistan's weak exports are caused by inconsistent policies, distorted markets and a constant failure to reform, according to a report by The News International. It urges the government to adopt a market-based exchange rate, cut high energy and input costs, and overhaul trade agreements that have brought little benefit. According to the report, Pakistan's export performance has sharply declined over the decades.

EPFO is ensuring PF services to all with speed: Dr Mansukh

NEW DELHI
The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has transformed from manual processes to seamless digital platforms, ensuring that provident fund services reach every worker -- formal or gig, urban or rural -- with equal speed and dignity, Union Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya said on Monday. He highlighted that EPFO has long served as a pillar of financial security for crores of workers across the country. The minister observed that in the past year, EPFO has un-

India and Japan explore major energy partnership in Tokyo

India and Japan are strengthening energy cooperation through new investments and policy-driven growth in the Indo-Pacific region

NEW DELHI

Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas, Hardeep Singh Puri, held a high-level roundtable with Japan's leading industry representatives in Tokyo on Monday, focusing on expanding Indo-Japanese collaboration across the entire energy value chain. The discussion emphasized the shared goal of securing energy stability and supporting sustainable growth in the Indo-Pacific, a region critical to the global economy. Puri highlighted that India's expanding energy infrastructure, driven by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, presents unprecedented opportunities for international partnerships. India is currently



opening investment avenues worth more than \$500 billion across key segments such as exploration and production (E&P), liquefied natural gas (LNG), city gas distribution, hydrogen, new fuels, and shipping. This vast scale of development is backed by a young workforce, structural reforms, and a business environment that encourages global participation. He noted that Japan's cutting-edge technology and leadership in green innovation perfectly align with India's growth-focused approach and the vision to Make in India for the World. The minister also underscored India's liberalized policies, including 100 per cent foreign direct investment (FDI), transparent bidding processes, and year-round exploration licensing, which together create a predictable and investor-friendly business environment. India's six major oil

and gas public sector undertakings (PSUs) recorded combined revenues of approximately \$315 billion in FY 2024-25, accounting for around 8 per cent of the nation's GDP. Puri described this scale as evidence of India's role as a global energy anchor and a reliable partner for Japanese investors and technology providers. Earlier this month, Puri reiterated that India is charting its own energy path from the sands of Rajasthan to the sea depths of the KG Basin. With 1 million sq km of offshore area now open for exploration and 99 per cent of 'No-Go' areas cleared, India is accelerating its search for new energy reserves and technological advancement through international collaboration.

Piyush Goyal launches new innovation initiative to strengthen deep-tech, promote sustainability, and accelerate circular economy solutions in plastics

Goyal launches 'Startup Search Initiative' to boost sustainability

NEW DELHI

Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Monday reaffirmed the government's dedication to fostering India's deep-tech ecosystem, easing business operations, reducing regulatory burdens, and encouraging innovation. He was speaking at the launch of the 'Startup Search Initiative,' a joint effort by IIM Calcutta Innovation Park (IIMCIP) and PlastIndia Foundation, designed to support pioneering startups in the plastics sector.

The launch event, held simultaneously in New Delhi, Kolkata, and Mumbai, marked a major step toward advancing India's sustainability and innovation goals. Goyal emphasized the importance of technology and entrepreneurship in reshaping the plastics industry, particularly

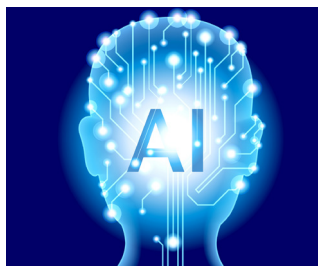
in achieving India's vision of 100 per cent reuse and recycling of plastic waste.

The government is committed to strengthening India's deep-tech ecosystem, enhancing ease of doing business, reducing compliance burden, and promoting innovation and entrepreneurship, Goyal said. He expressed confidence that this initiative would accelerate the transition of the plastics industry toward environmentally responsible and circular practices, in alignment with global sustainability benchmarks.

The Startup Search Initiative aims to identify high-potential innovators and connect them with investors, industry experts, and funding opportunities. The program will prioritize startups working in areas such as plastic waste recycling, alternative materials, circular economy models, and energy-efficient processes.

Selected startups will also gain the opportunity to present their solutions at PLASTINDIA 2026, one of the largest plastics exhibitions in the country, scheduled for next February in New Delhi under the theme Bharat Next. This platform is expected to provide innovators a global stage to showcase cutting-edge technologies and sustainable strategies.

Ravish Kamath, President of PlastIndia Foundation, noted that partnering with IIM Calcutta would enable the identification of innovative solutions through a nationwide startup challenge. The initiative, he said, represents a crucial step toward supporting both environmental goals and industrial transformation in India's plastics sector.



By 2027, AI will create more jobs than it destroys: Report

HYDERABAD

Artificial intelligence is expected to transform the global workforce in the coming years as by 2027 AI will create more jobs than it eliminates, a new report said on Monday. The data compiled by Gartner suggests that the impact will be more positive than many fear -- marking a shift from concerns about job losses to a focus on workforce transformation.

The insights were shared at the Gartner IT Symposium/Xpo 2025, taking place in Kochi, where analysts addressed over 1,100 CIOs and IT leaders. Gartner said that while AI will automate many low-complexity tasks, it will also open doors to new roles and entirely new skill sets. The report stressed that the real challenge is not just AI readiness but human readiness -- ensuring employees have the ability and mindset to work effectively with AI.

Gartner's July 2025 survey of more than 700 CIOs showed that by 2030, IT work will be deeply integrated with AI. IOs expect that no IT task will be done entirely by humans, 75 per cent will involve humans working with AI, and 25 per cent will be handled by AI alone. Analysts noted that few organisations are currently preparing their workforce for this shift. Arun Chandrasekaran, Distinguished VP Analyst at Gartner, said companies should begin reshaping their workforces now. He explained that instead of job cuts, organisations should limit new hiring in routine roles and shift existing talent toward emerging.

Air India resumes Delhi-Shanghai flights after 6 years

NEW DELHI

Air India on Monday announced the resumption of non-stop flights between New Delhi and Shanghai starting February 1, 2026, marking the airline's long-awaited return to mainland China after nearly six years. The move follows recent diplomatic breakthroughs between India and China, enabling air links that were suspended in early 2020 due to the pandemic. Subject to regulatory approvals, the airline also intends to launch non-stop flights between Mumbai and Shanghai in 2026, further expanding its international network.

The Delhi-Shanghai route will operate four times a week using Air India's Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner, which offers 18 flat-bed seats in Business Class and 238 seats in Economy Class. Shanghai becomes the 48th international destination served by the Air India group, which continues to fly more international passengers than any other Indian carrier.

Campbell Wilson, Air India's CEO & Managing Director, described the reinstated service as a symbol of renewed connectivity between two historic nations. The resumption of our Delhi-Shanghai services is more than a

Air India restores direct Delhi-Shanghai flights, strengthening India-China connectivity for business, education, healthcare, and cultural exchanges.

route launch. It is a bridge between two great, ancient civilisations and modern economic powerhouses, he said. Wilson added that the flights would support opportunities across sectors including business, trade, healthcare, education, and culture, backed by Air India's signature Indian hospitality.

Air India first began flying nonstop to mainland China in October 2000. The reinstated service is expected to significantly enhance bilateral movement, especially in fast-growing sectors like pharmaceuticals, technology, and higher education. Bookings for the Delhi-Shanghai service are now open across all channels, the airline confirmed.

Meanwhile, IndiGo has also expanded its China operations, launching daily non-stop flights between Delhi and Guangzhou. IndiGo CEO Pieter Elbers said the new route strengthens the airline's footprint in China after the successful revival of its Kolkata-Guangzhou service.



Adani Foundation, Adani Electricity celebrate Children's Day

NEW DELHI

The Adani Foundation, supported by Adani Electricity, recently celebrated Children's Day with over one lakh students from schools in Mumbai. Under Project 'Uththan', Adani Foundation and Adani Electricity celebrated the day under the theme 'Bachpan Ka Utsav' on November 14, across 25 wards, 900+ schools, and over one lakh students in Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) schools in Mumbai, according to an official statement. As per the theme 'Bachpan Ka Utsav', schools came alive with joyful learning experiences: fun games hour, talent shows with songs, dance, and mimicry, and a special 'teachers as students' role play where teachers and principals became learners for a day.

Children also enjoyed drawing, painting, brain teasers, thumb painting, and relay games. The celebrations boosted confidence, enabled teamwork, and fostered emotional bonding among students, reflecting the National Ed-

ucation Policy's (NEP) 2020 vision of play-based, activity-oriented learning in the foundational years. Project Uththan is a flagship education initiative of the Adani Foundation, implemented in partnership with Adani Electricity Mumbai Limited (AEML). The project aims to strengthen foundational learning outcomes and improve the overall quality of education in BMC schools. Launched with the vision of enabling every child to learn with confidence, joy, and curiosity, Project Uththan focuses on enhancing foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) skills. It also provides experiential and activity-based learning opportunities; supports teachers through capacity-building and modern pedagogical tools; creates a positive, inclusive, and engaging school environment; and aligns classroom practices with the objectives of the NEP 2020. Project Uththan operates across 25 wards of Mumbai, covering more than 900 BMC schools and reaching more than 1 lakh students annually.

IMEI TAMPERING PENALTIES

Govt warns mobile industries against IMEI tampering

MUMBAI

The Government of India on Monday issued a stern advisory to mobile handset manufacturers, importers, brand owners, and resellers, stressing strict adherence to mandatory International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) registration and warning of serious legal action against any form of IMEI tampering. The caution comes from the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), which reiterated that the recently enacted Telecommunications Act, 2023 introduces stringent pro-



visions to protect telecom security and curb the circulation of counterfeit and tampered devices. According to the DoT, Section 42(3)(c) of the Act explicitly prohibits tampering with telecommunica-

tion identifiers, including IMEI numbers. Further, Section 42(3)(f) makes it an offence to willfully possess any device—such as mobile phones, modems, modules, or SIM boxes—knowing that it

carries unauthorized or altered identifiers. Violators face harsh penalties, including imprisonment for up to three years, fines reaching ₹50 lakh, or both. The offences are classified as cognizable and non-bailable under Section 42(7), meaning arrests can be made without a warrant. Those aiding or abetting such crimes are subject to the same punishment under Section 42(6). To strengthen digital security, the Telecom Cyber Security Rules, 2024 mandate that all manufacturers register IMEI numbers of every device—whether for

sale, testing, research, or development—on the Device Setu (ICDR) portal before their first commercial use. Importers must do the same before bringing any IMEI-bearing equipment into the country. The government emphasized that telecommunication devices form the backbone of India's rapidly expanding digital ecosystem. Ensuring secure, authentic, and traceable IMEI records is essential not just for consumer safety, but also for national security, crime prevention, and maintaining trust in India's telecom infrastructure.



Kajol wishes for a longer weekend day

Bollywood star Kajol once again made her fans smile with a light-hearted post on Instagram. Known for her funny and relatable thoughts, she joked that there should be an extra day between Sunday and Monday. In her Instagram story, she shared a note that read, “There should be a day between Sunday and Monday called ‘Hang on a second’.” Many fans instantly agreed with her wish for a little more time before the busy week starts. Kajol often posts cheerful and quirky messages on social media, along with warm moments from her family life. Recently, on Children’s Day, she shared photos of her kids, Nysa and Yug, and wrote a humorous message about parenting. She said raising children can be a lot of work, but also the most rewarding feeling, adding jokingly that kids should “shrink after 8 pm.”

Her husband, actor Ajay Devgn, also shared his Children’s Day greetings with a sweet picture of their children on a boat trip. He wrote that sometimes he wonders whether he’s their father or they are his, showing his playful bond with them.

On the work front, Kajol is currently hosting her talk show Two Much With Kajol and Twinkle. She will soon be seen in the upcoming film Maharagni: Queen of Queens, directed by Charan Tej Uppalapati and featuring a strong ensemble cast. The release date will be announced later.

Tom Cruise’s emotional Oscar speech

Tom Cruise delivered an emotional and heartfelt speech as he accepted his Honorary Oscar at the Governors Awards. The award was presented to him by filmmaker Alejandro G. Iñárritu, who is directing Cruise in an upcoming film set for release in October 2026.

Cruise began by thanking the thousands of people who work behind the scenes in the film industry — writers, crew members, artists, and technicians — acknowledging their hard

work and dedication. His voice softened as he explained why he has stayed committed to cinema for more than 40 years.

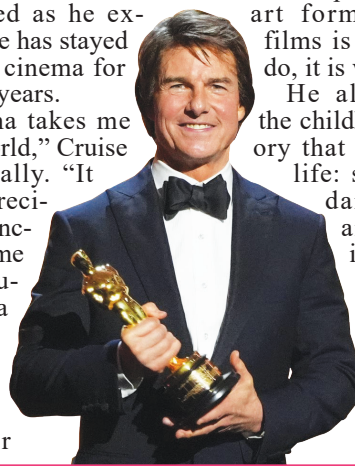
“The cinema takes me around the world,” Cruise said emotionally. “It helps me appreciate our differences and shows me our shared humanity. In a theatre, we laugh together, we feel together, we hope together

— that is the power of this art form. Making films is not what I do, it is who I am.”

He also shared the childhood memory that shaped his life: sitting in a dark theatre and watching a single beam of light fill the screen with endless possibilities. That mo-

ment, he said, “opened my imagination far beyond the boundaries of my life,” and he has been chasing that magic ever since.

Cruise, who already had four Oscar nominations, finally joined the league of Hollywood legends with this honour. The evening also celebrated Debbie Allen, Wynn Thomas, and Dolly Parton. Stars like Jennifer Lawrence, Leonardo DiCaprio, Sydney Sweeney and Dwayne Johnson attended the warm, star-studded event.



Dhruv’s Bison roars onto OTT soon

Dhruv Vikram’s film Bison Kaalamaadan, directed by Mari Selvaraj, is set to make its digital debut after a mixed theatrical journey. The movie released on October 17, 2025, and while it performed well in Tamil Nadu, the response in the Telugu states was fairly average. Still, the film managed to gain attention for its unique storytelling and strong performances.

Now, Bison is gearing up for a much wider reach. Netflix has officially announced that the film will start streaming on November 21, 2025. Unlike its theatrical release, which was largely limited to Tamil and Telugu, the OTT launch will include Hindi, Kannada, and Malayalam versions as well. This multilingual release is expected to help the film connect with a bigger and more diverse audience.



POOJA HEGDE shines again with strong comeback

Pooja Hegde, who faced a tough phase in her career over the last two years, says 2025 has finally brought her the success and confidence she was waiting for. With no releases in 2024 and a box-office failure in 2023, many felt her career had slowed down. But this year proved to be a turning point. Pooja appeared with Suriya in Retro. Although the film didn’t do well commercially, her special song in Rajinikanth’s Coolie became a huge hit.

The track went viral and kept her trending for months, helping her regain popularity and industry attention. In total, she had three releases in 2025 and is now preparing for the release of Vijay’s Jana Nayakudu in January 2026. She also has two more projects lined up, including a Telugu film currently being shot. With a packed schedule once again, Pooja has stepped firmly back into the spotlight. Looking back at her journey, Pooja said the year has been creatively refreshing. “It has been a very satisfying year from a creative point of view, with the kind of reception and love I received for my performances, especially my role in Retro. And the Monica song turning into a rage added to that. It has been creatively fulfilling,” she told Travel + Leisure Magazine.



RASHA THADANI begins exciting Telugu journey

Rasha Thadani, daughter of Bollywood actress Raveena Tandon, is set to make her debut in Telugu cinema. After receiving widespread attention for her expressive performance in the song “Uyi Amma” from her Bollywood debut Azaad, she quickly became a popular face online. Now, she is ready to take her first step into the South Indian film industry. Rasha has signed her first Telugu film opposite Jaya Krishna Ghattamaneni, grandson of legendary actor Krishna and nephew of superstar Mahesh Babu. She will be seen as the main female lead, and the collaboration has already created excitement among fans.

The film is presented by Ashwini Dutt of Vyjayanthi Movies and produced by P. Kiran under the Chandamama Kathalu banner, with director Ajay Bhupathi leading the project. Said to be an intense love drama set against rugged hill landscapes, the movie promises strong emotions and striking visuals. Regular shooting begins later this month, with the title to be announced soon.



Balakrishna’s new song set for grand launch

The excitement around Akhanda 2 is growing fast as actor Nandamuri Balakrishna teams up once again with director Boyapati Sreenu. After the first film became a massive hit, fans have been eagerly waiting to see what the sequel brings. The team has already released the teaser and the first song, and now all eyes are on the second single, “Jajikaya Jajikaya.”

This new track is said to be a romantic dance number featuring a younger-looking Balakrishna alongside actress Samyuktha. Fans are especially curious because the first single received a mixed response. The makers seem confident, though, and are planning a special launch event.

The song will be unveiled at the famous Jagadamba Theatre in Vizag at 5 PM on November 18. A good crowd is expected, and the makers hope the song will create strong buzz ahead of the film’s release. Whether it lives up to expectations will be known once the crowd reactions start pouring in.

Aadi Pinisetty plays the villain in this 14 Reels Plus production, while Thaman is composing the music. The movie is set to hit theatres on December 5, 2025. It will release in multiple languages, and a 3D version is also planned, adding more excitement among fans who are waiting to experience Akhanda 2 in a bigger way.



Nora Fatehi slams rumours linking her to raves

Actor Nora Fatehi has strongly denied reports linking her to drug-fuelled rave parties allegedly connected to underworld figure Dawood Ibrahim. Calling the claims “lies,” she said she was being used as an “easy target” once again.

Nora reacted on Instagram Stories on Sunday, saying she does not attend parties at all. “I’m constantly on flights. I’m a workaholic with no personal life. On my off days, I’m at home, on a beach in Dubai, or with my school friends,” she wrote. She added that she spends all her time working on her dreams and has no connection to the people mentioned in the reports.

The actor urged fans not to trust the rumours. “Don’t believe anything you read! My name is an easy target. You tried to destroy me with lies once before and it didn’t work,” she said, recalling how she stayed silent when earlier attempts were made to smear her reputation.

Nora ended her note by warning against using her name or image for unrelated controversies. “Please refrain from using my name and image in situations that have absolutely nothing to do with me. This will come with a heavy price!” she wrote.



Sinner Retains ATP Finals Crown with Win over Rival Alcaraz

Sinner capped a dramatic year by defeating Alcaraz to defend his ATP Finals title

TURIN

Jannik Sinner retained his ATP Finals crown, overcoming great rival Carlos Alcaraz 7-6 (7/4), 7-5 in a gripping championship match that electrified Turin. The Italian star, buoyed by a roaring home crowd, closed his season with another milestone, adding the prestigious year-ending title to his Australian Open and Wimbledon triumphs.

The 24-year-old's victory also marked a powerful comeback from his three-month ban earlier in the year, imposed despite WADA accepting that his clostebol contamination had been accidental. With Sunday's result, Sinner extended his astonishing in-



door hard-court winning streak to 31 matches, dating back to the 2023 final he lost to Novak Djokovic at the same venue.

Four more wins would draw him level with Djokovic's 35-match run, still well behind John McEnroe's all-

time record of 47, but the form Sinner displayed this week suggests he is far from finished.

Both finalists had marched into the showdown, but the title clash demanded far more grit. The opening set stayed on serve until a tense tie-

break in which Sinner seized control with a deft lob before sealing it with a booming serve.

The second set began poorly for Sinner, who gifted Alcaraz a break with consecutive double faults—his first lost service game of the tournament. But he rallied, breaking back in the sixth game as the arena erupted once more.

Alcaraz, equally relentless, pushed Sinner deep into rallies, yet the Italian refused to yield. The contest ended with Alcaraz sending a backhand wide on championship point, prompting Sinner to collapse in elation before celebrating with his family in the stands. It was the finale Turin had hoped for—and the champion Italy had dreamed of witnessing again.

Haaland Inspires Norway to 4-1 Win Over Italy, Secures WC Spot

MILAN

Norway booked their place at the 2026 FIFA World Cup after a commanding 4-1 victory over Italy at a drenched San Siro, ending a 28-year absence from football's biggest stage. Erling Haaland, who has scored 16 goals in qualifying, struck twice in quick succession in the 78th and 79th minutes to seal the win and cap a perfect campaign with 24 points from eight Group I matches.

Italy had initially taken the lead through Pio Esposito in the 11th minute, but Antonio Nusa's thunderous equaliser in the 63rd minute shifted momentum decisively to Norway. Jorgen Strand Larsen added a brilliant solo goal in stoppage time to complete the rout. Coach Stale Solbakken hailed his team's dominant campaign but remained cautious about their World Cup prospects. Italy, six points behind Norway, must now navigate the playoffs in March.

Harbhajan Singh says overly bowler-friendly home pitches are harming India's cricketing growth

'They've Completely Destroyed Test Cricket': Harbhajan Singh

NEW DELHI

Former India off-spinner Harbhajan Singh has launched a sharp critique of underprepared and excessively bowler-dominated home pitches, calling them a "destruction of Test cricket" after India's 30-run defeat to South Africa on a treacherous Eden Gardens surface. The match ended inside three days, with India collapsing while chasing just 124 in the opening Test of the two-match series.

Speaking on his YouTube channel, Singh said such pitches prevent genuine player development and create a misleading sense of progress. "They have completely de-

stroyed Test cricket. Rest in peace, Test cricket," he said, stressing that this trend has persisted for several years.

He argued that India's continued success at home has masked the underlying issue. "No one talks about it because the team is winning, someone is taking wickets, someone is becoming great by taking those wickets. So everyone feels everything is going well. But this practice has been going on for many years, and I feel it is the wrong way of playing."

Harbhajan, who took 13 wickets at the same venue during India's iconic 2001 victory over Australia, said that

turning tracks do little to help either batsmen or bowlers evolve. "You are just going around in circles like an ox tied to a mill. You are winning, but there is no real benefit. As a cricketer, you are not growing."

He added that drastically spin-friendly conditions make even competent batsmen appear inadequate. "What difference remains between a capable bowler and a capable batsman if the conditions are so favourable that people are getting out because of the pitch, not because of skill?"

Calling for introspection, Singh urged administrators and curators to rethink pitch preparation to preserve the integrity of Test cricket and ensure balanced contests. India and South Africa will now head to Guwahati for the second and final Test starting November 22.



Bezzecchi Wins Valencia GP, Gives Aprilia MotoGP Victories

VALENCIA

Marco Bezzecchi powered to victory at the Valencia Grand Prix, delivering a commanding lights-to-flag performance to secure Aprilia's first consecutive MotoGP wins. The Italian repeated his heroics from last weekend's Portuguese GP, celebrating with a cheeky knee-down tribute to his bike after crossing the line.

Raul Fernandez of Trackhouse completed an Aprilia one-two finish, while Fabio Di Giannantonio of VR46 Racing overtook KTM's Pedro Aco-



ta late in the race to maintain Ducati's podium streak. The season finale marked MotoGP's return to Circuit Ricardo Tormo after 2024's cancellation due to devastating floods in the region.

Bezzecchi admitted Fernandez made the win challenging: "He was super-fast, getting closer lap by lap, so it was tough. But very happy with the team's work." Drama unfolded in the warm-up lap as Franco Morbidelli collided with Aleix Espargaro, fracturing his hand and retiring before the race started.

Polesitter Bezzecchi had a flawless start, while Ducati's

Francesco Bagnaia crashed early, ending a disappointing season with five consecutive retirements. Former champion Jorge Martin, returning after injury, was withdrawn mid-race as a precaution.

As the laps progressed, Di Giannantonio executed a late move on Acosta to claim third, showcasing superb tyre management and racecraft. "After half the race I got my rhythm again, saved the tyres, and fought hard for third. It was amazing," he said.

With this win, Bezzecchi closes the season on a high, while Aprilia looks poised to carry momentum into 2026 testing. The Italian's 2025 campaign now includes back-to-back victories, highlighting his dominance on the final two rounds of the championship.



Indians Must Risk Losing to Succeed: Freddie Spencer

COIMBATORE

Three-time MotoGP world champion Freddie Spencer believes India's aspiring motorcycle racers must be willing to "risk losing" if they hope to succeed on the global stage. Speaking after the conclusion of the JK Tyre-powered Continental GT650 Cup at Coimbatore's Kari Motor Speedway, Spencer said Indian riders often hesitate during crucial selection stages, limiting their growth.

Spencer, who dominated the sport in the 1980s and now works closely with Royal Enfield's racing programme, stressed that effort and resilience are essential. "You have to make the effort to try. You must accept that success requires pushing beyond what you think is pos-



sible," he said. Spencer has been mentoring Indian riders through the Royal Enfield Track School for four years.

India's presence in MotoGP remains minimal, with only S. Sarath Kumar and K.Y. Ahamed having made brief appearances. Spencer believes reinstating the Indian Grand Prix could spark wider interest. Recalling the 2023 event, he praised the Buddh International Circuit and said global visibility could inspire local participation. "A championship at that level reaches the general public and creates interest in racing locally," he noted.

Despite the challenges, Spencer is upbeat about emerging talent. "These riders have the potential to compete abroad. Royal Enfield's support gives them a pathway," he said.

In the national racing championship on Sunday, Bengaluru's Dhruv Goswami clinched the LGB Formula 4 title after winning both weekend races, overturning a deficit to beat leader Diljith T.S. Provisional winners were announced across categories, including Levitas Cup, Novice Cup and the RE Continental GT Cup, where Anish Shetty and Bryan Nicholas took top honours.

Spencer's message, however, remained clear: India can rise in global racing—but only if its riders dare to chase greatness fearlessly.

Rory McIlroy Loses Playoff to Fitzpatrick, Secures Seventh Race to Dubai

DUBAI

Rory McIlroy's spectacular 2025 season concluded with drama at the World Tour Championship as he lost a playoff to Matt Fitzpatrick but secured his seventh Race to Dubai title, making him the European Tour's season-long No. 1.

McIlroy eagled the 18th hole in regulation to force a playoff but dove into a creek on the first extra hole, handing Fitzpatrick the victory. Fitzpatrick, winning his third season-ending title, chipped to three feet and converted the par putt to triumph at Jumeirah Golf Estates.

Despite the setback, McIlroy's season was remarkable: a Masters win completing his career Grand Slam, triumphs at The Players Championship, Irish Open, and a pivotal role in Team Europe's Ryder Cup success. His seventh Race to Dubai title places him ahead of the late Seve Ballesteros and just behind Colin Montgomerie's record.

The final round featured nine players sharing or contesting the lead, with Fitzpatrick birdieing three of his last five holes to overtake McIlroy, Tommy Fleetwood, and Ludvig Åberg. McIlroy, waiting on the 18th fairway, executed a clutch eagle putt, thrilling the crowd but ultimately falling short in the playoff.

Fitzpatrick reflected on his season turnaround: "To finish the year strong, after a slow start, and contribute at the Ryder Cup, feels incredible. I didn't hit one bad shot today." McIlroy remains focused on surpassing Montgomerie's record in future seasons, confident that more milestones await. The Race to Dubai also secured PGA Tour cards for top performers including Marco Penge, Laurie Canter, Kristoffer Reitan, and Neergaard-Petersen, highlighting a competitive and memorable season finale.

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BARCELONA

Barcelona Weigh Renaming Camp Nou after Lionel Messi: Report



Barcelona are reportedly considering the ultimate tribute to Lionel Messi — renaming the iconic Camp Nou after the club's greatest legend. Barcelona are exploring the possibility of permanently incorporating Lionel Messi's name into their stadium, with "Spotify Camp Nou Leo Messi" emerging as the leading option, according to reports. The idea

has gained momentum following Messi's recent visit to the under-renovation ground, where he toured redevelopment works and revived discussions about a proper farewell in Blaugrana colours. Club officials see the proposal as a long-overdue gesture to honour Messi while he is still active and to heal the wounds of his emotional 2021 exit.

ABUJA

Nigeria coach accuses DR Congo of using 'voodoo' magic after shoot-out loss



Nigeria head coach Eric Chelle has sparked controversy after accusing DR Congo of using "voodoo" during their dramatic penalty shoot-out win in the 2026 FIFA World Cup qualifier. The match finished 1-1 before DR Congo triumphed 4-3 on penalties, ending Nigeria's World Cup hopes and sending Congo to the intercontinental play-offs. Viral videos online show Chelle confronting DR Congo staff moments before the decisive kick, gesturing angrily and picking up a water bottle before being restrained by Nigeria's assistants. After Congo converted the winning penalty, Chelle again charged towards their dugout but was held back.

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BELLEAIR, FLORIDA

Linn Grant cruises to second LPGA crown at The Annika



Sweden's Linn Grant sealed her second LPGA title with a dominant three-shot victory at The Annika, closing with a spotless 5-under 65 despite a final-hole bogey that ended a remarkable run of 52 bogey-free holes. Grant finished at 19-under 261, earning another trophy from tournament host Annika Sorenstam, who praised her com-

manding performance. Jennifer Kupcho briefly tied for the lead with an opening birdie, but Grant quickly regained control and never looked back, stretching her advantage with key birdies on the front nine. Kupcho also carded a 65 to finish runner-up. Mexico's Gaby Lopez surged to third with a late birdie run.

Satwik-Chirag Lead India's Charge at Australian Open

SYDNEY

With India's singles shuttlers still struggling to string together consistent performances, all eyes will once again be on the country's premier men's doubles pair, Satwik-sairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, as the Australian Open Super 500 begins on Tuesday. The top-seeded duo, looking for their first title of the season, has been the standout force in an otherwise uneven year for Indian badminton.

The Asian Games and Commonwealth Games champions have delivered some of India's biggest results in 2025, including a second World Championships bronze and runner-up finishes at both the Hong Kong Super 500 and the China Masters Super 750. Once ranked world No.1 for 18 weeks, Satwik and Chirag had slipped to No.27 in May but staged a strong resurgence to reclaim the No.3 spot. They open their campaign against Chang Ko-Chi and Po Li-Wei of Chinese Taipei.

In singles, Lakshya Sen and HS Prannoy will look to rediscover the rhythm that has eluded them for much of the season. Lakshya, who endured a dip after his near-podium finish at the Paris Olympics, showed encouraging signs with a final appearance at the Hong Kong Open and a semifinal run in Japan last week. Seeded seventh in Sydney, he faces Su Li Yang of Chinese Taipei in the opening round.

Prannoy, returning from injury, aims to regain full flow after a second-round exit in Kumamoto. A former runner-up at the Australian Open, the 33-year-old meets Canada's Brian Yang. Veteran Kidambi Srikanth takes on fifth seed Lin Chun-Yi, while Ayush Shetty faces Malaysia's Justin Hoh. Kiran George meets sixth seed Kenta Nishimoto, and Tharun Manneppalli plays Magnus Johannessen. In women's singles, Aakarshi Kashyap is India's sole representative and faces a tough opener against Olympic champion An Se Young.

Sangakkara Returns as Rajasthan Royals Head Coach for IPL 2026

The coaching reshuffle comes amid significant changes in the squad

NEW DELHI

Rajasthan Royals on Monday confirmed the return of Sri Lankan great Kumar Sangakkara as their head coach for the 2026 Indian Premier League season, marking a renewed phase for the franchise after a disappointing 2025 campaign. Sangakkara, who has served as the team's Director of Cricket since 2021, previously held the head coach role from 2021 to 2024 and now steps back into the position following Rahul Dravid's exit.

Dravid's second stint with the Royals came to an abrupt close in August despite signing a multi-year contract. His departure followed a "structural review" of the team's underwhelming performance in the 2025 season, where they finished ninth with just four wins from 14 matches. The management's decision to reinstate Sangakkara reflects a move toward stability and continuity as they attempt to rebuild.

The coaching reshuffle comes amid significant changes in the squad. The Royals recently traded long-time wicketkeeper-batter and former captain Sanju Samson to Chennai Super Kings, receiving Ravindra Jadeja and Sam Curran in a high-profile exchange. The trade marks one of the most notable off-season moves ahead of the 2026 tournament, signaling a bold overhaul of the Royals' core group.

Ahead of the mini auction scheduled for December 16 in Abu Dhabi, Rajasthan also released seven players, including overseas names Maheesh Theekshana, Wanindu Hasaranga and Fazalhaq Farooqi. Domestic players Akash Madhwal, Ashok Sharma, Kumar Kartikeya Singh and Kunal Rathore were also let go as the franchise opens space for fresh talent.

With Sangakkara at the helm again, the Royals are aiming to revive their fortunes and craft a more competitive unit for the upcoming season. His dual role as Director of Cricket and head coach is expected to provide strategic cohesion as the team navigates its major transition.

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Ind, Pak Blind Women Cricketers Showcase True Spirit of the Game

KATUNAYAKE

Blind women from India and Pakistan set aside months of political and sporting hostility, sharing warm handshakes and compliments during their Women's Blind T20 World Cup encounter in neutral Sri Lanka. The gesture, simple yet powerful, stood in stark contrast to recent tensions between the two cricketing nations, whose sighted men's and women's teams have avoided handshakes in high-profile tournaments this year.

The match, played at the Free Trade Zone grounds in Katunayake, saw both squads arrive together on the same bus and later greet one another with enthusiasm despite expectations that they would follow the frosty precedent set by their mainstream counterparts. India's blind players, initially expected to mirror the no-handshake stance, surprised many by warmly greeting the Pakistani side at the end of the match. Compliments were exchanged freely, and the spirit of cricket prevailed.

On the field, India cruised

to an eight-wicket win, chasing down Pakistan's 135 for eight in just 10.2 overs.

Pakistan captain Nimra Rafique congratulated India on their dominant performance, while Indian skipper T.C. Deepika commended Pakistan's effort. Though neither team was allowed to speak to the media post-match, their actions told a larger story.

Despite a sparse crowd, the game was telecast live on Sri Lanka's national broadcaster, with visually impaired officials following commentary online.

Blind women cricketers from India and Pakistan share rare goodwill amid tense relations.

usually impaired girls, encouraging more young women with disabilities to pursue sport and education. Pakistan coach Tahir Mehmood Butt echoed the sentiment, applauding the platform the tournament offers.

With teams from Australia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and the US also competing, the event highlights the growing momentum of women's blind cricket. The final will be played next Sunday in Colombo.

Haaland Fires Norway Past Italy to Seal First World Cup Berth Since 1998

MILAN

Norway ended a 28-year wait for World Cup football with a commanding 4-1 victory over Italy at a rain-soaked San Siro, securing qualification for the 2026 finals in the United States, Canada and Mexico. Erling Haaland delivered yet another decisive performance, scoring twice in the 78th and 79th minutes to seal top spot in Group I with a perfect record of eight wins from eight.

With Italy needing a scarcely believable nine-goal win to



overtake Norway, Ståle Solbakken's side arrived in Milan virtually assured of progress. But the visitors stamped their authority in emphatic fashion before a crowd of 70,000, completing a campaign that produced 24 points and show-

cased a team transformed by its prolific centre-forward. Haaland, hailed by Solbakken as a "goal machine," extended his astonishing qualifying tally to 16 goals, underlining his status as one of the stars to watch in North America next summer.

Portugal Seal 2026 Wc Berth with 9-1 Rout of Armenia

PORTO

Portugal stormed into the 2026 World Cup with an emphatic 9-1 victory over Armenia, delivering one of their most dominant qualifying performances despite the absence of suspended captain Cristiano Ronaldo. Hat-tricks from Bruno Fernandes and Joao Neves powered Roberto Martinez's side to the top of Group F and into their seventh consecutive World Cup finals.

After a draw against Hungary and a shock defeat to Ireland earlier in the win-



dow, Portugal needed a convincing response and delivered immediately at the Estádio do Dragão. Renato Veiga opened the scoring in the seventh minute, heading in after Armenia goalkeeper Henri Avagyan parried Fernandes's curling free-kick

onto the post. Armenia equalised moments later through captain Eduard Spertsyan, but the visitors' joy was short-lived as Portugal shifted gears.

Goncalo Ramos intercepted a back pass and restored the lead before Neves

smashed home Portugal's third from the edge of the box. The Paris Saint-Germain midfielder doubled his tally with a stunning free-kick into the top corner as Portugal surged toward an insurmountable advantage. Fernandes added a penalty in first-half stoppage time, sending Portugal into the break 5-1 ahead.

The Manchester United playmaker continued his orchestration in the second half, scoring twice more to complete his hat-trick—his 28th international goal making him Portugal's sixth-highest scorer of all time.

BENGALURU

Billie Jean King Cup 2025: Dutch Outclass India in Playoff Tie



India ended their Billie Jean King Cup playoff weekend with a 0-2 defeat to the Netherlands, losing both singles matches in straight sets at the SM Krishna Tennis Stadium. Shrivalli Bhamidipaty fell 2-6, 4-6 to Anouk Koevermans, while Sahaja Yamalapalli went down 2-6, 3-6 to Dutch No. 1 Suzan Lamens, disappointing a strong turnout of home

supporters. With Slovenia already having sealed the group, the tie held no bearing on qualification, but India nevertheless finished bottom of Group G. Despite brief moments of resistance, the ranking gap proved decisive. Shrivalli, ranked 381, and Sahaja, 309, struggled to sustain pressure against their higher-ranked opponents.

GOA

FIDE World Cup: Harikrishna Crashes Out in Fifth-Round Tie-Break



Pentala Harikrishna bowed out of the FIDE World Chess Cup after losing to 26-year-old Jose Martinez Alcantara in the second set of tie-breaks of the fifth round at Resort Rio. After both classical games and the first rapid set ended in draws, the faster formats favoured speed-chess specialist Martinez, who clinched the first game of the

second rapid set before holding Harikrishna to a draw. In other key results, former World Rapid Champion Daniil Dubov, who had eliminated R Praggnanandhaa earlier, was knocked out by American GM Sam Shankland. Andrey Esipenko also advanced, while Alexander Donchenko survived a tense battle to reach the last eight.

KOLKATA

'Bring Legends to Train Your Coaches,' Matthauss Tells Indian Football



German World Cup-winner Lothar Matthauss has urged India to overhaul its football development system by inviting legendary players and elite coaches to train local coaches. Speaking at a promotional event in Kolkata, Matthauss said India cannot afford to stay absent from the World Cup while smaller nations like Cape Verde

qualify. Matthauss stressed that strong coaching is the foundation of strong players and advised India to begin at the school level by creating a unified system involving the federation, government, clubs and academics. He also highlighted India's struggles — from the lack of a successor to Sunil Chhetri to uncertainty around the domestic league.