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Russia-Ukraine talks in Geneva end with no breakthrough

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AI will drive India's next decade of growth: Pichai

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INDIA CAN BE FULL-STACK AI NATION: PICHA

Google unveils India-US subsea cable initiative, USD 30 mn AI science challenge, new skilling push; India can be AI ‘User-Builder-Shaper’

NEW DELHI

Google CEO Sundar Pichai on Wednesday said India has a rare opportunity to emerge as a “full-stack” player in artificial intelligence (AI) -- not only as a massive user base but also as a builder and shaper of the technology. “I think India is in a unique position at this moment. It has a chance to play a big role in all three --as a user, as a builder and as a shaper of AI,” he said. “The country is poised for an “extraordinary trajectory” in AI”, he said and emphasised Google’s commitment to partnering in the country’s AI transformation. “AI is the biggest platform shift of our lifetime,” Pichai said, highlighting its potential to transform sectors ranging from healthcare to agriculture. Speaking at the India AI Impact Summit 2026, he noted that India’s diversity, language ecosystem, and robust digital public infrastructure



make it a “powerful foundation for innovation” and a blueprint for democratizing AI globally. AI must be built on inclusivity He emphasised that AI adoption must prioritise trust, safety and inclusivity. “AI systems must work across multiple Indian languages

and adapt to local contexts, ensuring real-world benefits,” he said. India-America Connect initiative announced He also announced the India-America Connect Initiative, a project to deploy new subsea cable routes to enhance AI connectivity between the United States, In-

What Pichai says

- India can be a global leader in AI development
- India's investment in research and tech will shape its AI future
- AI could transform India's education, healthcare, and startups

dia, and several locations across the Southern Hemisphere. “Google has full-stack connectivity in India, and I have never been more excited about the future we are building together,” he added.

AI Hub and infra boost worth USD 15 bn Pichai further referred to Google’s earlier announcement of a USD 15 billion AI hub in India, which will house gigawatt-scale compute capacity and an international subsea cable gateway, bringing jobs and advanced AI infrastructure to the country.

Large-scale skilling and education initiatives He also unveiled ambitious skilling programmes, including a Google AI Professional Certificate Programme in English and Hindi, targeting students and early-career professionals. Google unveiled ambitious skilling programmes which will help the youth for the AI-driven future. These will further include a Google AI Professional Certificate Programme in English and Hindi. It will further be designed for students and early-career professionals. The company will also collaborate with ‘Karma Yogi Bharat’ to support over 20 million public servants with AI tools. Additionally, partnerships with Atal Tinkering Labs aim to introduce generative AI tools in 10,000 schools. Google further announced a USD 30 million AI for Science Impact Challenge to accelerate global research. More on page 11

India shaping up to take AI leadership role: Sunak

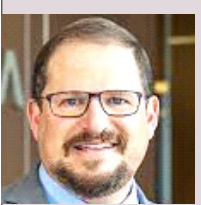
Former British prime minister Rishi Sunak on Wednesday said India is well positioned to take leadership role in Artificial Intelligence (AI). Speaking at the NDTV AI Summit 2026 at ITC Maurya in New Delhi, Sunak said, “India has recognised that leadership in technology doesn’t depend on inventing it. It depends on how effectively you deploy it. By focusing on mass adoption, supported by deep talent pool in India, strong public infrastructure, and public that’s very supportive of the technology, India is well positioned to take leadership role in AI.” He said AI is going to change the labour market and as a result, some jobs will be lost. “I think AI is going to change the labour market.

Some jobs will be lost; I think many more will be re-designed. I think history shows us that societies flourish when we manage that transition well,” the former UK PM said. The scale of AI’s runaway growth is such that companies are investing 20 times more than the entire Manhattan Project, he said while drawing comparison between the investment on AI and the historic project that led to the building of atomic weapons. The Manhattan Project in 1945 cost approximately \$2.2 billion dollars, equivalent to over \$30 billion dollars today, adjusted for inflation, he said. He further said the AI debate has moved from tech to strategy.



India will leapfrog in AI like it did with mobile internet: Qualcomm CEO

India leapfrogged in mobile internet, pivoted smartphone revolution, and the same is going to be the case with AI, said Qualcomm CEO and President Cristiano Amon. Speaking to the media on the sidelines of India AI Impact Summit 2026, Amon said the opportunity for India to be in the leadership position is real, and the time for India is now to bring disruption in AI technology. “India was very good at leapfrogging to the mobile internet. I think as the smartphone revolution happened in India, as mobile broadband happened in India, India leapfrogged into the future of the internet. I think the same is going to be true for AI, especially as AI is now going to be everywhere,” he added.



WHEN ‘AI’ CONNECTS FRIENDS...



French President Emmanuel Macron on Wednesday shared an AI-generated picture of himself with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in celebration of India-France friendship. “When friends connect, innovation follows. Ready for The AI Impact Summit!” Macron posted on X, referring to the ongoing India AI Impact Summit 2026 in New Delhi.

Chinese Robodog row: Galgotias University exits AI Summit expo, tenders apology

NEW DELHI

Galgotias University, facing fire from all quarters, including people at large for roughly twenty-four hours, was sent packing on Wednesday evening from the AI Summit Expo, over the fiasco and national embarrassment it brought for itself as well as the nation over the Chinese robot dog. The controversy emanated at the AI Summit Expo on Tuesday, over the portrayal of a Chinese robotic dog as the varsity’s pavilion, with one of its professors explaining its AI-enabled features and describing robodog as a ‘landmark innovation’ by the varsity students. The university, initially reluctant to express regret, issued a public apology, stating that it was “apologising profusely” over the irresponsible and misleading conduct at the Expo. “We at Galgotias University, wish to apologise profusely for the confusion created at the recent AI Summit. One of our representatives, manning the pavilion, was ill-informed. She was not aware of the technical origins of the product and in her enthusiasm of being on camera, gave factually incorrect information even though she was not authorised to speak to the press,” it stated.

Even tech is copy-paste: Siddu slams Centre on Robodog row

Amid the Galgotias University’s Robodog controversy, Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah launched a scathing attack on the ruling BJP government, accusing them of ‘copy-paste’. In an X post on Wednesday, he said, “First, they copied UPA Schemes and Congress guarantees and rebranded them as their own grand vision. Now, even technology is copy-paste.” “The Modi government does not believe in ‘Make in India,’ instead, “they believe in ‘Fake in India,” he alleged. He said the incident has brought “international embarrassment” to the country on such a prominent platform as the AI Impact Summit.



Maha scraps 5% Muslim quota in jobs, education

MUMBAI

Maharashtra government’s Social Justice Department on Tuesday issued a Government Resolution (GR) cancelling its 2014 order that had granted a 5% reservation to the Muslim community in educational institutions and government and semi-government jobs-- a provision that had already been legally invalidated over a decade ago. The reservation was introduced in July 2014 through an ordinance, classifying Muslims under the Special Backward Class-A (SBC-A) category. However, the policy was challenged in the Bombay High Court, which stayed its implementation in November 2014. As the ordinance was not enacted into law by the state legislature within the stipulated deadline of December 2014, it lapsed automatically. The Supreme Court later set aside the quota while deciding a Special Leave Petition, rendering the provision inoperative. Despite the lapse of the ordinance and the top court’s order, the state had not formal-



ly rescinded the resolution until now. With the latest order, the government declared all decisions and communications linked to the Muslim quota void. It implies that no admissions or recruitment can be made under the 5% reservation, and no caste certificate will be issued under the SBC-A category. Opposition terms move ‘anti-minority’ Mumbai Congress president Varsha Gaikwad termed the decision as “harmful to democracy” and said it would push the Muslim community away from the mainstream. “Instead of strengthening the process, the government has cancelled earlier procedures citing interim stay orders of the High Court and lapse of the ordinance. On one hand, the BJP speaks of ‘Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas’ (development for all), and on the other hand it blocks the path to securing necessary documents for reservation,” she said. She also sought to know the stands of ruling allies Shiv Sena and NCP in this decision.

ECI sets March 16 date for biennial RS polls

NEW DELHI

The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Wednesday announced the schedule for holding biennial elections to 37 Rajya Sabha seats across 10 states, which are falling vacant on different dates in April. Polling will be held on March 16. The seats becoming vacant are represented by members from Maharashtra, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Telangana. As per the schedule, the election process will begin with the issue of notification on February 26. The last date for filing nominations is

March 5, with scrutiny scheduled for March 6. Candidates will be allowed to withdraw their nominations until March 9. Voting will take place on March 16, with counting of votes at 5 pm on the same day, the ECI said, adding that the entire election process will conclude by March 20. The Commission also specified that only integrated violet colour sketch pens of a pre fixed specification, provided by the Returning Officer, are to be used for marking preferences on ballot papers. The ECI, in the press note, said, “No other pen shall be used for marking preferences in the above said elections.”

LS POLL SCHEDULE
■ 37 seats in 10 states (Maharashtra, TN, WB, Bihar, Odisha, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Telangana and HP)
■ Notification: Feb 26
■ Last date to file nominations: March 5
■ Scrutiny of nominations: March 6
■ Deadline to withdraw nominations: March 9
■ Polling: from 9 am to 4 pm on March 16
■ Counting: March 16
■ Entire process will complete by March 20

US deploys 50+ fighter jets to Middle East amid tentions

TEHRAN

The United States military is steadily building its air and naval assets near Iran, even as Tehran officials agreed to return to negotiating with a new proposal in two weeks. Over 50 US fighter jets, including F-35s, F-22s, and F-16s, have moved to West Asia over the last 24 hours, according to the American publication Axios. This comes even as US officials said Washington and Tehran “made progress in nuclear talks” in Geneva on Tuesday. They, however, stressed that “there are still a lot of details to discuss,” suggest-

ing there are still chances of an imminent military clash. Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi said discussions were more “constructive” than the first round held in Muscat earlier this month, claiming that the two sides had agreed on the “guiding principles” for a potential deal over Iran’s nuclear programme. US military buildup near Iran The US-Iran negotiations came as the Trump administration amassed heavy military forces near Iran for possible attack amid Washington’s increasing pressure on Tehran over its nuclear plans.

SC JUNKS HC ORDER

‘Grabbing breasts, pulling pyjama string attempt to rape’

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has ruled that grabbing of breasts and pulling the pyjama string amount to “attempt to rape”, setting aside a controversial Allahabad High Court order which said these were only “preparation to commit rape.” A bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joy-malya Bagchi and NV Anjaria said the impugned order was liable to be set aside on account of the “patently erroneous

application of the settled principles of criminal jurisprudence.” The court passed the order on February 10 on a suo moti plea in which it had taken cognisance of the Allahabad High Court order, which stated that mere grabbing of the breasts and pulling the string of a pyjama did not amount to the offence of rape. While setting aside the HC judge-

ment, the top court restored the original stringent charge of attempt to rape against two accused under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. “The facts alleged being so, we cannot agree with the finding of the High Court that the allegations only amount to preparation, but not an attempt, towards the com-

mission of the offence of rape,” SC observed. “The attempt made by the accused persons appears clearly and inevitably leads us to conclude that, prima facie, a case for invoking the provisions of attempt to commit rape has been made out by the complainant and the prosecution. The impugned judgement, thus, is liable to be set aside on account of the patently erroneous application of the settled principles of criminal jurisprudence,” the bench said. The

apex court said a bare perusal of these allegations leaves no “modicum of doubt” that the case sought to be made out is that the accused persons proceeded with a pre-determined intent to commit an offence under Section 376 (rape) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). “The impugned judgement dated March 17, 2025, is set aside, and the original summons order dated June 23, 2023, passed by the Special Judge (POCSO), Kasganj, is restored,” the bench said.



QUICK READ

One Remanded, Second Gets Anticipatory Bail in Areca Nut Theft

Puttur

Kadaba police have arrested one of two suspects in an areca nut theft case registered on the complaint of Satish, aged 36 and resident of Alankaru village in Kadaba taluk. The case, numbered 11/2026 and filed under Section 303(2) BNS at Kadaba Police Station on January 25, 2026, involved two persons stealing areca nuts from a plantation and fleeing the spot. During the course of investigation, the first accused, Jayanth M., aged 28 and hailing from Kayimana village in Kadaba taluk, was taken into custody. He was produced before the court, which ordered his remand to judicial custody. The second accused, Lingappa, aged 36 and from Kaniyuru village in Kadaba taluk, obtained anticipatory bail from the court. Officers have also recovered the entire quantity of areca nuts that were stolen in the incident.

Brand-New Scooter Guttied by Sudden Flames

Udupi

A scooter parked in the courtyard of a house in Panjimaru Palame near Shirva suddenly caught fire and burned down completely on the afternoon of February 17, Tuesday. The vehicle belonged to a resident of Palame who had bought the brand-new Honda Dio scooter from Mangaluru only a month earlier. Flames appeared without any warning while the scooter stood stationary, spreading within moments and reducing the entire machine to ashes. Officers from the Shirva police station arrived at the location soon after and conducted a detailed inspection of the scene. This fresh incident comes shortly after another vehicle fire in the same vicinity. On the night of February 9, a Maruti Dzire car traveling from Mangaluru to Shirva erupted into flames right in the middle of the road. With the scooter now completely destroyed, the Shirva area has seen two vehicles fall victim to fire within the span of a week.

Ramadan Fasting to Commence on Feb 19 in M'luru and Udupi Districts

Mangaluru/Udupi

Dakshina Kannada District Qazi Alhaj Twaka Ahmad Musliyar has directed that the sacred month of Ramadan fasting will begin on Thursday, February 19, following the absence of any confirmed information on the sighting of the first crescent moon on Tuesday. S.M. Rashid Haji, treasurer of Mangaluru's Zeenath Baksh Centre Juma Masjid and Eidgah Masjid, conveyed this official directive on behalf of the Qazi. Sources indicate that the same fasting schedule is also expected to be followed across Udupi district. Ullal Qazi A.P. Abubakkar Musliyar has confirmed that Ramadan will commence from Thursday, according to a formal release issued by Ullal Darga President B.G. Haneef Haji.

Lone Bull Elephant Ravages Areca Groves

SHIVAMOGGA

Persistent elephant trouble has once again struck agricultural fields across Puradalu village in Shivamogga. A single bull elephant broke into several private plantations late on Tuesday night and caused extensive damage to both areca nut and coconut crops.

The incident occurred around 10 pm near the Beluru area within the village. The animal forced its way into the holdings of four local cultivators and went on a destructive spree, felling trees at will.

D. Gummabailu Siddappa reportedly lost more than 20 areca palms along with several coconut trees. Hunasemaki Annappa saw over 12 areca trees destroyed. Gantemane Murthy counted at least five of his areca palms snapped off, and Kidadumbe Vishwanath suffered the loss of more than 10 areca trees.

Growers have openly



A solitary tusker continues its unchecked raids on Puradalu village farms, snapping dozens of valuable areca palms and coconut trees while frustrated growers accuse forest officials of total inaction despite repeated warnings.

voiced strong resentment toward the forest department. They have repeatedly submitted requests for concrete steps to stop the wild elephant's repeated visits, yet no preventive measures have reportedly been taken.

The community earlier gathered in front of the Deputy Conservator of Forests office, staged a protest, and

handed over a formal petition seeking effective control of the animal raids. Despite those efforts, the problem has only continued.

Affected residents now call on the forest department to act immediately and bring the ongoing elephant nuisance under control before further damage occurs to their livelihoods.

Free Bridge Course, Competitive Exam Coaching Launched

CHIKKAMAGALURU

A city-based pre-university institution has partnered with a private academic training body to offer free bridge courses and competitive exam coaching for science students, aiming to strengthen foundational learning and career readiness.

The initiative will be implemented at TMS Pre-University College in collaboration with Lakshya Academy of Science. College authorities said experienced faculty drawn from various places will handle the training, supported by a team of energetic in-house lecturers to ensure quality instruction.

According to organisers, the programme is designed to help students transition smoothly into higher-level science learning while preparing them for competitive entrance examinations. Infrastructure and academic arrangements have been up-

graded to support focused learning and structured mentoring.

As part of the programme, free bridge training classes for students who have completed First PUC in the science stream will begin on the 23rd of this month. The bridge course aims to reinforce conceptual clarity in core science subjects and prepare students for the academic demands of Second PUC.

Officials added that once the Second PUC board examinations conclude, intensive coaching will be conducted for national and state-level competitive examinations such as CET, NEET and JEE. The coaching will focus on problem-solving skills, exam strategies and time management to improve student performance.

College representatives said the move reflects a broader commitment to accessible, high-quality edu-

cation, especially for students aspiring to careers in engineering and medicine. By offering the programme free of cost, the institution hopes to remove financial barriers and encourage meritorious students to pursue competitive pathways.

Parents and students have been invited to contact the academy's help desk for enrolment and further details. Administrators expressed confidence that the integrated coaching model will enhance academic confidence and provide structured guidance during a crucial stage of student development.

Education observers noted that such bridge programmes are increasingly important in helping students adjust to syllabus intensity while aligning classroom learning with entrance exam requirements. Authorities said the initiative is expected to benefit a large number of science aspirants in and around Chikkamagaluru.

Fourth Arrest in Malpe Shipyard Navy Secrets Leak Case

UDUPI

Udupi police have arrested another accused in the sensitive case involving unauthorised sharing of Indian Navy-related confidential information from Malpe Cochin Shipyard workers to Pakistan for illegal monetary gains. With this arrest, the number of persons detained in the case has gone up to four.

The latest accused is Alif Islam, aged 21, originally from West Bengal and presently residing in Marayu village of Idukki district in Kerala.

Earlier, Gujarat native Hirendra Kumar was arrested on December 21, 2025, while Rohit and Santri from Uttar Pradesh were taken into custody on November 21, 2025.

All the accused are alleged to have passed on secret lists containing Indian Navy ship numbers and other classified details to Pakistan through WhatsApp and Facebook in return for unlawful benefits. The case was originally registered at Malpe Police Station.

Continuing the probe, police arrested the fifth accused, Alif Islam, on February 16. He was produced before the court, which ordered his judicial remand.

Alif Islam is listed as the fifth accused in the case. There is suspicion that the arrested accused Alif Islam may be a Bangladeshi citizen. Once his nationality is confirmed, further legal proceedings will be initiated accordingly.

MP Pushes for Rapid NH 169 Land Takeover

UDUPI

Member of Parliament Kota Srinivas Poojari has instructed senior officers to complete the land acquisition process for National Highway 169 passing through Karkala at the earliest and to determine compensation for landowners through proper scientific valuation based on current market conditions.

The directions were issued at a special review meeting held on Tuesday inside the District Collector's conference hall at Manipal. The session examined progress on highway works and compensation payments for properties coming under the Karkala assembly constituency limits, specifically in Karkala, Bajagoli and Mala areas.

Local residents along the corridor have lived in their houses and cultivated their agricultural fields for many years, yet they must now part with these holdings to allow the road development project to proceed. Poojari told officials that timely and fair com-

Lawmaker directs officials to finish acquisition swiftly and fix compensation at realistic market rates so affected families in Karkala, Bajagoli and Mala can rebuild their lives without delay.

penation matching present market rates would help these families reshape their future and urged them to treat this matter with utmost seriousness.

He also called for all national highway projects across the district to be taken up on priority and finished quickly. The MP specifically asked authorities to fast-track land acquisition formalities for the section from Malpe to Karavali Junction and wrap them up without delay so actual highway construction can begin.

District Collector Swaroopa T.K. addressed the participants and directed concerned departments to conduct accurate surveys of every house, agricultural plot and other as-

sets falling under acquisition, then fix compensation strictly according to real-time market values.

Karkala MLA Sunil Kumar, who attended the meeting, stressed that owners of acquired houses or farmland must receive the highest possible compensation amounts. He noted that landowners along NH 169A in the neighbouring district have already been paid significantly higher sums.

This variation in compensation for the same road has created confusion and uncertainty among property holders, and he asked officials to settle all payments exactly as provided under the law.

Additional District Collector Abid Gadyal, Divisional Forest Officer Ruthren P., Additional Superintendent of Police Sudhakar Nayak, Assistant Commissioner Rashmi, district-level implementation officers, tahsildars, National Highways Authority engineers and contractors were among those present at the meeting.

Tight Security, Student-Friendly Measures for II PUC Exams

UDUPI

Authorities in Udupi district have rolled out an extensive preparedness plan to ensure the smooth and fair conduct of the II PUC examinations beginning February 28, with Deputy Commissioner Swaroopa T. K. stressing that student safety, transparency and exam integrity will be top priorities.

Reviewing arrangements at a preparatory meeting in Manipal office, the DC said the examination represents a crucial academic turning point for thousands of students and must be conducted in a calm, systematic and error-free environment. Officials were instructed to create a fear-free atmosphere and strictly enforce all examination guidelines.

A total of 17,181 candidates will appear for the examinations across 29 centres in the district. The figure includes 16,657 fresh candidates, 383 private candidates, 135 repeaters and six students in the improvement category. Exams will be held from 10 am to 1 pm on scheduled dates.

Entry into examination halls will be permitted only on production of valid hall tickets. The district adminis-



tration has imposed a strict ban on mobile phones, smart watches and all electronic gadgets inside centres.

The DC warned that spreading misinformation about question paper leaks or circulating fake papers on social media constitutes a punishable offence, and police have been instructed to act firmly against offenders.

To maintain order, prohibitory restrictions will be enforced within a 200-metre radius of all centres during exam hours. Photocopy shops, cyber cafés and computer centres nearby must remain closed to prevent misuse. Special three-member committees have been formed to oversee secure transportation of question papers under police escort using GPS-enabled vehicles. Storage and distribution will be monitored round the clock

through CCTV surveillance at the treasury.

Officials have been directed to ensure that all centres are equipped with CCTV cameras and essential amenities, including proper seating, lighting, fans and drinking water. Webcasting arrangements and uninterrupted power supply are also being prioritised.

Medical teams will be stationed at examination venues, while additional police deployment will be arranged at sensitive centres. Transport support will be coordinated with Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation to facilitate student travel.

DDPU Maruthi and senior district officials were present at the meeting, which focused on inter-departmental coordination to deliver a secure and student-friendly examination process.

Legal Awareness Essential to Ensure Equal Justice: Judge Rajeshwari Hegde

CHIKKAMAGALURU

Legal awareness is critical to ensuring that every citizen receives equal justice guaranteed under the Constitution, Principal District and Sessions Judge and District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) chairperson Rajeshwari N Hegde said on Wednesday.

She was speaking after inaugurating a four-day training programme for para-legal volunteers at the Abdul Nazeer Sab Hall of the Zilla Panchayat in Chikkamagaluru. The programme has been organised jointly by the Karnataka State Legal Services Authority, Outlaw India Foundation, the District Legal Services Authority and the District Advocates' Association.

Highlighting the rural composition of the country, Judge Hegde said a large section of people remain unaware of the legal entitlements available to them. Although the Constitution promises equal justice, lack of education and awareness prevents many from accessing remedies, she noted. Para-legal volunteers therefore



play a crucial role in acting as a bridge between the public and the legal system.

Explaining with examples, she said that in emergencies such as road accidents, victims are entitled to compensation and legal remedies, but awareness is key to asserting such rights. To ensure that justice reaches all sections of society, legal services authorities were constituted under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, she added.

Judge Hegde described LokAdalats as an effective platform for resolving disputes amicably and reducing court burden. She urged volunteers to guide citizens toward such forums and provide basic legal counseling. Free legal aid is available to persons with annual incomes below ₹3 lakh, as well as Scheduled Castes,

Scheduled Tribes, women, children and other vulnerable groups, she said.

She emphasised that volunteers must actively identify those in need and connect them with the District Legal Services Authority. The four-day training will cover various laws and procedures through expert sessions, she added, stressing that the programme should translate into tangible benefits for the public rather than remain a formality.

District Advocates' Association president D. B. Sujendra presided over the function. Senior Civil Judge and DLSA Member Secretary V. Hanumanthappa, judges Kulkarni and Prakash, trainers K. Vandana and S. Tushita from Outlaw India Foundation, and para-legal volunteers were present.

QUICK READ



Woman Dies After Auto-Rickshaw Flips

Bantwal
A tragic road accident in Bantwal claimed the life of a woman on Tuesday when her auto-rickshaw overturned following a chain of collisions at Kadegoli. Vishalakshi, aged 45 and a resident of Mangaluru, was travelling from Mangaluru towards a Kalladka temple along with her sister and the sister's two children. At Kadegoli junction a bike rider coming from the opposite direction suddenly crossed into their path. The rickshaw struck the bike head-on, immediately lost control, crashed into the rear of another rickshaw that stood stationary ahead, and flipped over. Vishalakshi sustained fatal injuries in the impact while the other three passengers and the rickshaw driver escaped with only minor wounds and remained out of any danger. Bantwal traffic sub-inspector Adarsh reached the accident spot shortly afterwards, examined the scene in detail and formally registered a case to investigate the circumstances leading to the fatality.

₹15,000 Stolen from Auto Rickshaw Parked Near Hospital

Mangaluru
An auto rickshaw driver lost ₹15,000 in cash from his parked vehicle near Highland Hospital in Mangaluru city, according to a complaint lodged with Pandeshwar Police Station. The complainant, Mohammad Riyaz, parked his auto rickshaw outside the hospital premises around 4:30 p.m. on February 13 and went inside for some work. When he returned to the vehicle at approximately 6:45 p.m., he found the dashboard compartment open and the money kept inside completely missing. Pandeshwar Police have registered the theft complaint based on his statement.

Two Locals Arrested for Cricket Betting via Mobile App

Mangaluru
Kankanady Town Police arrested two men from the locality for participating in cricket betting through a mobile application on a public road near Padil. The accused individuals are Preetesh and Ranjith, both residents of the area. Acting on precise information received from informants, a team from Kankanady Town Police Station conducted a raid at the spot around 11:25 a.m. on Monday and took the two suspects into custody on the spot. Police have seized the assets used in the offence and obtained court permission to retain them for further investigation. A formal case stands registered against the accused under relevant sections.

Parents of Student Urge Home Minister to Speed Up Murder Probe

Bereaved family meets Dr. Parameshwara seeking swift justice in the tragic killing of ninth-grader Sumant.

BELTHANGADY

The grieving parents of Sumant, a ninth-standard pupil at Gerukatte High School, personally appealed to Home Minister Dr. G. Parameshwara for urgent action in the ongoing investigation into their son's

murder.

The body of the young boy from Odilnala village in Sambolya area of Belthangady taluk was discovered in a pond inside a garden while he was on his way to the temple.

Led by KPCC General Secretary Rakshit Shivaram,

the family submitted a memorandum to the minister demanding that the accused be traced quickly and justice delivered without further delay, as the inquiry has been moving at a slow pace.

After receiving the plea, Dr. Parameshwara obtained a detailed update on the case

from Dakshina Kannada Superintendent of Police Arun Kumar and West Zone IGP Amit Singh. He immediately directed the officers to intensify the investigation efforts. The minister also offered words of comfort to the heartbroken parents during the meeting.

The 1,650 sqft outpost features a holding cell, workstations, and a landside control room, providing round-the-clock presence at a key access point and improving emergency readiness.

New Dedicated Police Outpost Opens at Mangaluru International Airport

MANGALURU

Karnataka Home Minister Dr. G Parameshwara formally inaugurated a new police outpost at Mangaluru International Airport on 18 February, marking a significant step toward bolstering security at the coastal aviation hub.

Positioned right next to the airport's exit toll gate, the strategically placed facility ensures a constant police presence at one of the busiest passenger exit points, allowing for immediate intervention in any security or law-and-order situation.

The two-storey building spans 1,650 square feet and has been specially designed for efficient operations. The ground floor includes a holding cell, two dedicated workstation rooms, and an office for on-the-spot enquiries, documentation, and swift action.

The upper floor houses a



lounge area and a fully equipped landside control room to monitor vehicular traffic and public spaces outside the terminal.

With passenger numbers steadily increasing and airport operations growing more complex, the new outpost addresses the critical need for stronger oversight on the landside. It works in tandem with the existing police check post at the entry toll gate, creating comprehensive coverage of both arrival and departure zones while acting as a strong



deterrent against potential threats.

The inclusion of an on-site holding facility and operational workspaces means faster decision-making and reduced dependence on external police infrastructure during emergencies. The control room will further enable real-time surveillance and smoother information exchange between multiple agencies.

The development is expected to foster closer collaboration among airport manage-

ment, the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) Airport Security Group unit, and Mangaluru City Police, leading to more coordinated preparedness and quicker response protocols.

The inauguration reflects the Karnataka government's continued focus on upgrading security infrastructure at key public facilities to meet evolving demands, ensuring a safer and more secure experience for passengers, staff, and the surrounding community.

Srinivas University Chancellor Dr. C.A. A. Raghavendra Rao Passes Away at 89

MANGALURU

Mangaluru lost one of its most respected education pioneers with the demise of Dr. C.A. A. Raghavendra Rao, the 89-year-old Chancellor of Srinivas University and founder-chairman of the renowned Srinivas Group of Institutions. He passed away late Tuesday night.

Family sources confirmed that the mortal remains would lie in state for public homage from 11 a.m. on Wednesday at the Srinivas College campus in Mukka. The final rites, accompanied by traditional religious ceremonies, was scheduled to take place in the afternoon following the public viewing.

Dr. Raghavendra Rao is survived by his wife Vijayalakshmi Rao, son C.A. Srinivas Rao (who serves as



Founder-chairman of Srinivas Group of Institutions breathed his last on Tuesday night; public viewing and last rites scheduled for Wednesday.

Pro-Chancellor of Srinivas University), daughter Padmini Rao, along with a vast circle of relatives, close associates, and numerous students who benefited from his guidance and vision.

Conducive Atmosphere for Development Prevails in Mangaluru, Says Home Minister Dr.Parameshwara

MANGALURU

Home Minister Dr. G. Parameshwara affirmed that Mangaluru now enjoys a peaceful and development-friendly environment following effective police measures. He stated that criminal incidents have come under firm control, with law and order fully restored.

Police are responding promptly to every tip-off regarding drugs, while officers regularly visit schools and colleges to raise awareness and conduct checks during examinations.

Speaking to the media on Tuesday after a meeting with police officials, the minister highlighted that chain murders have been successfully curbed. Citizens have responded positively to the government's appeals, actively contributing to the establishment of peace. He added that no instances of unethical policing exist, as confirmed by the force itself, and the government views Mangaluru as a priority for various development initiatives.

When questioned about Home Minister Priyank Kharge's recent remark suggesting that communal clashes in the coastal region remain unchecked, Dr. Parameshwara replied that he relies solely on official police information for his statements. He acknowledged past periods of unrest but stressed that the situation has undergone a complete transformation for the better. He expressed

Crime under control, peace restored, drug tips acted on swiftly; series of murders halted and communal tensions eased, minister tells media after police meet.

unfamiliarity with the perspective from which his colleague made the comment.

On the Dharmasthala SIT probe, the minister explained that the Special Investigation Team must first submit its final report to the government. Only after cabinet review will the findings be made public.

Regarding the suspicious death of boy Sumant in Belthangady, Dr. Parameshwara noted that the case remains under active investigation. Police are withholding certain details at this stage to protect the probe's integrity.

Asked about giving preference to locals in police recruitment, he pointed out that even when constable positions are advertised, applications from the coastal belt tend to be low in number. He assured that suitable action would be taken whenever sufficient applications arrive from the region.

On demands to permit traditional cockfighting in coastal areas, the minister countered by asking whether law can be set aside simply because something qualifies as tradition. He questioned if customs alone justify bypassing enacted legislation.

Solar Architecture Firm Bets Big on India's Green Cities

MANGALURU

Renewable construction specialist MIR Group on Wednesday announced a major push to embed solar technology into India's building ecosystem, presenting its Net Zero Vision 2047 as a framework for sustainable urban growth.

Speaking ahead of the Sustainability & Net Zero Summit 2026, CEO Raffaele Marrazzo said the company's building-integrated photovoltaic systems allow structures to generate their own energy while maintaining design aesthetics. He described the technology as a shift from conventional rooftop solar toward fully integrated energy architecture.

Commercial Director Nitik Ratnakar said India's expanding urban infrastructure offers an opportunity to mainstream solar-enabled construction. MIR's systems, he noted, deliver high conversion efficiency and durability suited to tropical environments.



Central to the strategy is a planned green manufacturing facility in Mangaluru developed in partnership with the regional special economic zone. The unit will produce advanced facade systems, photovoltaic panels, sodium-ion storage solutions, insulation materials and smart construction films aimed at lowering emissions and improving energy efficiency.

Company executives said the project supports India's clean-energy goals while encouraging sustainable building certifications and circular resource use. Industry representatives attending the announcement described the initiative as a model for integrating industrial growth with

environmental responsibility.

The summit will bring together policymakers, architects, developers and technology firms to demonstrate practical pathways for carbon-neutral construction. MIR executives said the platform is intended to accelerate adoption through partnerships, demonstrations and knowledge exchange.

Marrazzo emphasised that future cities must generate and conserve energy simultaneously, calling the initiative a blueprint for climate-responsive urban planning. Ratnakar added that scalable renewable building solutions could significantly reduce lifecycle emissions across the construction sector.

Woman Ends Life by Consuming Acid

BELTHANGADY

A 53-year-old widow from Arla in Kalmanja village under Belthangady taluk died after allegedly drinking acid on February 15.

The deceased, Gulabi, had been living alone in her house since her husband's passing. Her two daughters would visit weekly to check on her well-being and spend time with her.

On February 15 around noon, the daughters arrived at their mother's residence as usual. Upon entering, they discovered Gulabi had gone to the backyard and returned to collapse in the front veranda of the home.

Family members immedi-



ately shifted her to Ujire Hospital for initial treatment. Doctors there referred her for advanced care, and she was being transported to a hospital in Mangaluru when she passed away midway.

Reports indicate that Gulabi consumed acid typically used for processing rubber latex. The exact reason behind her decision to take her own life has not come to light so far.

Dharamasthala Police Station has registered a case in connection with the incident.

Tanush Shetty Demands Impartial Probe into Gun Threat Case After Court Orders FIR

MANGALURU

Social activist Tanush Shetty has urged authorities to conduct a completely fair and unbiased investigation into the incident where businessman Jitendra Kottary and his daughter allegedly threatened him with a firearm.

He made the appeal following a court directive to register an FIR based on his private complaint filed in a Mangaluru court.

Speaking at a press conference in the city, Tanush Shetty explained that police had initially refused to register an FIR despite his first complaint in the matter. However, when Jitendra Kottary lodged a

counter-complaint against him, an FIR was promptly filed, leading to his arrest and imprisonment.

After securing release from jail, he approached the court with a private complaint, prompting the magistrate to order an investigation and registration of an FIR against Kottary and his daughter.

Tanush Shetty stressed the need for police to examine the complete CCTV footage from all relevant locations of the incident, along with medical reports, to ensure the inquiry remains independent and free from prejudice.

Social worker Prasanna Ravi was present during the press meet.

Wild Boar Attacks Forest Worker During Tiger Census

UPPINANGADY

A forest worker engaged in the tiger population survey suffered injuries after a wild boar charged at him in the Muguru section under Uppinangady range on Monday morning.

The second phase of the nationwide All India Tiger Estimation has commenced, and the incident occurred on the very first day of fieldwork in this zone.

Daily-wage employee Sheshappa became the victim when the boar attacked him while he was carrying out census duties. The initial phase of the survey ran from January 5.

Field teams have faced multiple difficulties throughout, including staff shortages, lack of adequate life-protection gear, risks posed by thick forest terrain, and absence of reliable communication equipment—all posing serious challenges to safe and effective operations.

Currently, the second-phase survey covers 18 locations within the Uppinangady range forest area. Range Forest Officer Raghavendra H.P. stated that all personnel received comprehensive precautionary training prior to deployment to minimise risks during the exercise.

QUICK READ

**Man dies in birthday crash near Bengaluru**

BENGALURU
A 65-year-old man was killed in a tragic road accident while returning home after celebrating his birthday with friends. The victim, identified as Pawan, a resident of Thotada Guddadahalli in Bengaluru North, died in a head-on collision between his motorcycle and an Ashok Leyland goods vehicle near Hivarakandapura around 5:45 p.m. Police said both vehicles were allegedly speeding when the crash occurred under the Soladevanahalli traffic police limits. Pawan died on the spot. His body was shifted to Victoria Hospital for post-mortem examination.

Man kills wife over suspicion in Bengaluru

BENGALURU
A 65-year-old man allegedly hacked his wife to death with a machete after suspecting her character in a shocking incident in the city. The victim, Devika (55), was attacked around 12:45 a.m. while she was asleep at their residence. Police said the accused, Kumar, struck her on the neck following repeated arguments over suspicions about her interactions with others. The couple had recently returned from a pilgrimage to Sabarimala, during which Kumar reportedly grew suspicious after seeing his wife speak to a driver. After the attack, Kumar attempted suicide but was stopped by their children. A case has been registered at Govindaranagar police station, and Kumar has been arrested.

Ashoka seeks clarification over alleged B'deshi residents

Opposition leader R. Ashoka urges Congress government's response after fresh claims surface

BENGALURU

Opposition Leader R. Ashoka demanded a clarification from the Congress government, alleging that individuals residing at Kogilu Cross have been proven to be Bangladeshi nationals.

Addressing reporters in the city, Ashoka said that during his earlier visit to Kogilu Cross, it was established that

the occupants were from Bangladesh. He accused the Congress government of initially dismissing the Bharatiya Janata Party's claims and proceeding to announce housing benefits for the residents.

"At that time, the government, listening to Rahul Gandhi, declared that houses would be provided to everyone there. The Housing Minister even went a step further

and promised homes. Now it has been revealed that they are frauds," Ashoka alleged.

He further claimed that Congress leaders had accused the BJP of making baseless allegations, but recent developments had vindicated his party's stand. Ashoka also alleged that the housing announcement was aimed at consolidat-

ing minority votes ahead of elections in Kerala.

The BJP leader asserted that if his party had not raised the issue, land worth ₹300 crore would have been allotted to "Bangladeshi residents." "The BJP's fight has succeeded.

Now the Chief Minister and other Congress leaders must clarify their earlier state-

ments," he said, referring to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah.

Ashoka also levelled fresh allegations related to the alleged ₹3,000 crore MUDA scam, claiming that an official who had assisted the Congress had been rewarded with a prominent post to stall the investigation.

Responding earlier, Housing Minister Zameer Ahmed Khan had stated that, accord-

ing to available information, there were no Bangladeshis in Kogilu Layout. He said houses would be allotted only after thorough verification of documents and strictly to eligible residents of Karnataka.

The controversy has sparked a political exchange, with the opposition pressing for transparency and the government maintaining that due process is being followed.

High Court seeks govt reply on cabinet-rank posts for MLAs

BENGALURU

The Karnataka High Court has directed the State government to clarify its stand on a public interest litigation challenging the grant of cabinet-rank status to 34 MLAs appointed as chairpersons of various corporations and boards, along with eight other legislators given similar status in different posts.

A division bench comprising Chief Justice Vibhu Bakhru and Justice C.M. Poonacha issued notice to the government while hearing the petition and adjourned the matter to March 4.

The PIL was filed by Bengaluru resident Suri Payala, who contended that the appointments violate constitutional provisions. The petition argues that under Article 164(1A) of the Constitution, the size of the Council of Ministers in a State cannot exceed 15% of the total strength of the Legislative Assembly. In Karnataka's 224-member Assembly, this would cap the number of ministers at 34. At present, there



are 33 ministers, including the Chief Minister.

However, the petitioner contends that 34 MLAs have additionally been appointed as heads of corporations and boards and granted cabinet rank, along with salaries, allowances and other facilities. Eight more MLAs have been appointed to posts such as Delhi Special Representative and Political Secretary to the Chief Minister, also with cabinet status.

While the petition does not object to MLAs being appointed to such bodies, it challenges the conferment of cabinet rank and associated benefits, arguing that this effectively expands the size of the executive in violation of

constitutional limits.

The plea also raises concerns under Article 191, which deals with disqualification on grounds of holding an "office of profit." It contends that these posts carry financial benefits — including enhanced pay, official vehicles, fuel, drivers, housing allowances and medical reimbursements — thereby constituting offices of profit that could attract disqualification. The petitioner has sought quashing of government notifications issued on January 26, 2024, appointing 34 MLAs as corporation board presidents, as well as subsequent notifications conferring cabinet-rank status on eight others, and has requested that the appointments be declared unconstitutional.

Chalavadi Narayanaswamy alleges misuse of govt land

BENGALURU

Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Council Chalavadi Narayanaswamy alleged that government land is being illegally allotted for the construction of Congress Bhavans across Karnataka and warned of legal action. Addressing a press con-

ference, he claimed that while the state government has failed to provide houses to the poor and land to the landless, it is facilitating the allotment of public land for party offices. He alleged that in places such as Mudhol, Badami, Chikkaballapur, Tumakuru, Chamaraanagar, Dakshina Kannada and Udupi, civic

amenity sites were allotted at throwaway prices in violation of rules. He also questioned the lack of clarity on plot pricing in Hubballi-Dharwad. Narayanaswamy released details purportedly shared by Urban Development Minister Byrathi Suresh, stating that the sites were sanctioned with Cabinet approval.

Cong MLAs' foreign tour amid power tussle sparks speculation

BENGALURU

Amid intense speculation over a possible leadership change and growing factionalism within the Karnataka Congress, a group of party MLAs has embarked on a foreign tour, triggering fresh political calculations.

Around 21 Congress legislators left the city from Kempegowda International Airport for Australia and New Zealand along with their families. While the first batch departed on Tuesday night, another group is scheduled to fly out soon. The legislators are expected to be abroad for about 13 days and return to Bengaluru on March 3. The timing of the trip has drawn attention as it comes amid heightened discussions about internal power struggles



and possible leadership reshuffles within the state unit. Though the MLAs have described the visit as a personal tour, political observers are closely watching the development, questioning whether the trip carries any strategic undertones.

For the past week, there had been speculation that some legislators were planning to travel abroad to study animal husbandry practices. The proposal reportedly faced resistance and

objections from within the parties and elsewhere. Sources indicate that the party high command had also expressed reservations about such an official visit during a politically sensitive period. Following this, several MLAs clarified that their travel would be strictly personal and not linked to any official study tour.

Among those who reportedly left in the first group were MLAs Puttarangashetty, H D Thammaiah, Hampanagouda

Badarli, Devendrappa, B M Nagaraj and MLC Vasanth Kumar. Foreign visits by legislators are not unprecedented. In previous governments too, MLAs have travelled abroad as part of legislative or departmental study tours. However, what sets this instance apart is the backdrop of internal rumblings within the party, which has amplified public and political scrutiny.

With factional politics making headlines in recent weeks, the overseas trip has inevitably led to varied interpretations. While supporters insist it is a routine personal visit, critics argue that the optics of such travel during a sensitive political phase could fuel further speculation about alignments and loyalties within the ruling party.

Preparations in full swing for GBA polls

BENGALURU

Preparations for the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) elections are gathering momentum, with the Congress witnessing an overwhelming response from ticket aspirants even as it raises concerns over discrepancies in the voter list. Supreme Court has directed that the GBA elections be conducted by June 30, triggering heightened political activity across parties. Elections are scheduled for 369 wards, and aspirants have begun lining up in large numbers. Within the Congress alone, nearly 1,600 individuals reportedly collected application forms, and about 900 aspirants have formally submitted applications seeking party tickets. The high number of contenders for 369 constituencies is expected to make ticket distribution a challenging exercise for the party leadership. Even as it prepares for the polls, the State Congress has approached the Karnataka State Election Commission seeking rectification of alleged errors in the voter list. DCM personally visited the Commission and urged officials to address loopholes.

SSLC and Second PU exam preparation in full swing in schools, colleges

BENGALURU

Preparations for the SSLC and Second Pre-University (PU) examinations are in full swing across Karnataka, with around nine lakh students set to appear for the SSLC exams and 7.1 lakh for the Second PU examinations this year.

The Second PU examinations will begin on February 28, while the SSLC examinations are scheduled from March 18. For the first time, the Department of School Education and Literacy has announced the result dates in advance, with SSLC results likely on April 24 and Second PU results on April 7.

Addressing the media after a high-level review meeting involving officials from multiple departments, School Education and Literacy Minister Madhu Bangarappa said all arrangements were in place. "We are fully prepared for the examinations. Students should attend the exams with confidence and without stress," he said.

Final admit cards for the Second PU examinations have already been issued, while SSLC admit cards will be released in the first week of March. Webcasting of examinations, introduced in 2024, will continue this year under the supervision of district commissioners to ensure transparency and prevent malpractice.

On examination days, a 200-metre radius around examination centres will be declared a restricted zone. X-

rox, cyber and computer centres within this area will remain closed. The minister warned that strict action would be taken against anyone spreading rumours about question paper leaks. "Students are advised to stay away from social media during the examination period," he said.

Exam preparation activities are in full swing in schools, with blueprints, model question papers, question paper banks, previous years' papers with answer keys and centum papers being made available. Parent-teacher meetings are also being held to brief parents about students' academic progress and readiness.

To facilitate smooth travel, students appearing for the examinations will be allowed free bus travel on production of their admit cards. The minister appealed to private bus operators to extend support if required, particularly in the Karavali and Malenadu regions where Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation services are limited. Deputy Commissioners have been instructed to make special travel arrangements for students coming from remote areas.

Addressing concerns over unrecognised schools, the minister said the issue would not arise this year as the deadline for renewal of school recognition has been extended till March 31. Recognition from the previous academic year will be considered for permitting students to appear for the exams.



ALLEN B'luru students achieves 99.99+ Percentile in JEE Main Jan 2026

BENGALURU

National Testing Agency (NTA) has released the result of JEE Main 2026 January session. In the results, three students of ALLEN Bengaluru have scored 99.99+ percentile in JEE Main 2026 January Session results.

Allen Career Institute, Zonal Head, South Zone, Mahesh Yadav, informed that Allen Career Institute Bengaluru has scripted a Landmark triumph in JEE Main 2026 January session results. Three students from ALLEN Bengaluru have scored 99.99+ percentile in JEE Main 2026 January Session results. He announced that Nathan Jais, Sidharth Ramanath and Shiv

Mehra from ALLEN Bengaluru have scored impressive score of 99.9954725 percentile, 99.9952667 and 99.9923275 percentile respectively. Nathan has also scored 100 percentile in Physics and Mathematics.

In a remarkable display of academic brilliance and strategic mentoring, 37 students from ALLEN Bengaluru centre have achieved 99.90+ percentile in JEE Main 2026 January session results. This achievement is a testament to the relentless pursuit of excellence demonstrated by our students, the steadfast encouragement of parents, and the tireless commitment of our faculty", said Mahesh Yadav. ALLEN Bengaluru cele-



Nathan Jais



Shiv Mehra



Sidharth Ramanath

brated the achievement with students, parents and faculty members, marking a proud moment for the city.

On his feat in JEE Main 2026 January Session, Nathan Jais said that, qualifying JEE Main 2026 with a top percentile feels like a dream come true. My journey became structured and focused after joining ALLEN Bengaluru. The disciplined study plan, regular tests, and detailed performance analysis sharpened

my concepts. This success is not just mine, it's a reflection of the right mentorship, strategy, and support system I received.

In National results, Nitin Kukreja, CEO of ALLEN Career Institute, stated that ALLEN has once again demonstrated its academic excellence in the results of JEE Main 2026. A total of 12 students across the country have been declared overall 100 percentile scorers, out of

which 8 students are from ALLEN's classroom programs. ALLEN Kota classroom student Kabeer Chhillar secured a perfect score of 300 out of 300 along with 100 percentile.

Meanwhile, classroom course students Arnab Gautam, Shubham Kumar, Bhavesh Patra, Anay Jain, Nimy Purohit, and Chiranjiv Kar have also achieved 100 percentile scores. Shreyas Mishra from Allen Online recorded & Test series course also achieved 100 percentile score. Maintaining the authenticity and transparency of its results, ALLEN has once again got its results validated by one of the country's leading audit firms, EY India.

QUICK READ

Child Welfare Committee meets twice a week

Chikkaballapur

The Child Welfare Committee is actively supporting children facing challenges such as child marriage, child labour, begging, abuse under POCSO, and nutrition needs. The committee provides rehabilitation and guidance to affected children to ensure their safety and well-being. Meetings are held every Friday and Saturday at the Government Girls' Home, Dream City Layout, B. Biraste, Chikkaballapur, under the supervision of the District Child Protection Unit. Officials said the initiative aims to protect vulnerable children and promote proper upbringing, education, and nourishment, while coordinating with authorities for timely interventions and support services.

Life sentence in Geeta Hundekar murder case

Siddapur

The First Additional District and Sessions Court in Siddapur has sentenced Abhijit Ganapathy Madiwala Kondli to life imprisonment for the murder of Geeta Hundekar. The crime occurred on December 23, 2024, at Basavanagali on Soraba Road. Geeta, a pygmy collector at a private bank, was found dead after the accused allegedly broke into her house and hid inside. Following a complaint, Siddapur police arrested him and filed charges. The court also ordered the convict to pay ₹82,000 as compensation to her family, bringing partial relief to the grieving dependents.



Request for ₹ 5,000 cr Bhadra Project

The project will irrigate 2,25,515 hectares, fill 367 tanks, release 2 TMC water, boosting groundwater and aiding drought-prone farmers

CHITRADURGA

Planning and Statistics Minister D. Sudhakar, along with MLAs T. Raghumurthy and B.G. Govindappa, met Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar in Bengaluru to request allocation of ₹5,000 crore in the 2026–27 budget for the Bhadra Upper River Project. They also urged the urgent release of ₹300 crore for pending works to divert water to Gonur Aqueduct.

The project aims to provide micro-irrigation to 2,25,515 hectares in Chitradurga, Chikmagalur, Tumkur, and Davangere districts. It will fill

50% of the capacity of 367 small irrigation tanks and release 2.00 TMC of water to Vani Vilas Sagar, improving groundwater levels and supporting farmers in drought-prone areas.

So far, ₹11,409.55 crore has been spent out of a revised estimate of ₹21,167.93 crore, leaving a funding gap of around ₹10,000 crore. Farmers have protested repeatedly for the project's early completion, highlighting the urgent need for irrigation after decades of struggle.

The Chitradurga branch canal alone will fill 152 lakes, providing water to 3 lakh

acres under micro-irrigation. Compensation for land in Abbinahole village has been resolved, and canal construction has started. Experimental water supply up to Gonur Aqueduct is expected by February 2026 to benefit 90 lakes across five taluks.

Minister Sudhakar and district MLAs stressed that delays in fund release are slowing progress. They requested the Deputy Chief Minister to release ₹300 crore immediately so the pending work can be completed on schedule, ensuring timely water supply and support for farmers in central Karnataka.

AIR Bengaluru invites part-time reporter applications

CHITRADURGA

All India Radio's Bengaluru Centre Regional News Department has announced openings for part-time reporters in Raichur and Chitradurga districts. Interested candidates can apply until 28 February 2026.

Applicants should hold a Postgraduate Diploma or Degree in Journalism, Mass Me-

dia, or any degree with at least two years of media experience. The age limit is 24 to 50 years as of the last date of submission.

Candidates must reside in the district headquarters where they are applying or within 10 km of the center. Proficiency in computers, word processing, and access to necessary equipment for news collection are required.

Experience in electronic media is mandatory.

Applications, along with supporting documents, should be sent to The Deputy Director News Unit, Akashvani, Raj Bhavan Road, Bengaluru 560001, either by registered post or in person before the deadline. For details, candidates can call 080 – 22356344.

Vokkaliga community invited to apply for subsidy

CHITRADURGA

The Karnataka Vokkaliga Communities Development Corporation has announced that online applications are open for subsidy support under the Aahar Vahini (Food Kiosk) Scheme for the year 2025-26. Interested candidates must submit their applications by March 6.

The scheme is designed to help renovate mobile food stalls and four-wheeled electric goods vehicles. Beneficiaries will receive a subsidy of Rs. 3 lakh from the corporation, with the remaining amount available as a loan from banks or financial institutions. This initiative aims to support entrepreneurship and livelihood opportunities among Vokkaliga community members.

Eligible applicants include people from the Vokkaliga, Vakkaliga, Sarp Vokkaliga, Hallikar Vokkaliga, Namdhari Vokkaliga, Gangadkar Vokkaliga, Das Vokkaliga, Reddy Vokkaliga, Marasu Vokkaliga, Gowda, Hallikar, Kunchitiga, Kapu, Heggade,

Kamma, Reddy Gounder, Namdhari Gowda, and Uppini Kulaga/Uttama Kulaga communities listed under backward class category 3A. Applicants must reside in the Chitradurga urban assembly constituency, have an annual family income of up to Rs. 3 lakh, and be aged between 21 and 45 years.

Applicants should have a bank account linked to Aadhaar, and the name on the Aadhaar card should match other official documents, including caste and income certificates.

Applications can be submitted online through the Seva Sindhu portal, Grama One, Bangalore One, or Karnataka One centers.

For more information, applicants can visit the Karnataka Vokkaliga Community Development Corporation website at <https://kvc-dc.karnataka.gov.in/kn/> or contact the office of the District Manager, D. Devaraja Urs Backward Classes Development Corporation, as stated by District Manager Rajagopal.

Ensure Anganwadis work fully for children

CHIKKABALLAPUR

Deputy Commissioner G. Prabhu directed officials to identify and allocate permanent sites for 320 Anganwadis currently running in rented buildings in the district within one month. He presided over the Unified District Level Committee Meeting at the District Collector's Office Hall on Wednesday and reviewed the progress of Anganwadi operations.

He stressed that all 2,014 Anganwadis must function fully to support the development of children and women. Tehsildars, Taluk Panchayat Executive Officers, and Urban Local Body Chiefs were instructed to provide accurate information on rented Anganwadis and complete site allocations promptly. Attendance, discipline, and punctuality are mandatory, along with proper daily distribution of nutritious food. The "Poshan Track" software should be managed efficiently to monitor food and health programs.

Currently, 20 Anganwadi worker and 129 assistant posts are vacant. These positions must be filled within three months to ensure

Prabhu directed all 2,014 Anganwadis to function fully, ensure discipline, accurate data on rented centers, timely site allocation, nutritious meals, and efficient Poshan Track monitoring

smooth operations. Health check-ups for children are mandatory, including vision screening and surgeries for those in need. Glasses and medical treatments should be provided promptly, in coordination with the Health and Education Departments.

Deputy Commissioner Prabhu also instructed officials to ensure effective delivery of schemes like Grihalakshmi

Yojana, Sukanya Samvridhhi Yojana, Bhagyalakshmi Yojana, Matru Vandana Yojana, and Poshan Abhiyan. Measures to prevent child marriage, control POCSO cases, and strengthen internal grievance redressal committees for women were emphasized. Continuous monitoring of health scanning centers and strict legal action against non-compliant centers was mandated.

The meeting was attended by District Health and Family Welfare Officer Dr. Mahesh Kumar, Deputy Directors of School Education and Women & Child Development Departments, officials from Swadhara, Santwana, Sakhi centers, and representatives of NGOs working in women's and child welfare.



Muniswamy alleged Congress denied justice to B. R. Ambedkar, questioning why Gandhi's post-Independence dissolution suggestion wasn't implemented

Muniswamy targets Priyank in leadership row

KOLAR

Former MP S. Muniswamy accused IT and BT Minister Priyank Kharage of trying to gain political mileage from the ongoing leadership tussle between Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar.

Speaking at a press meet at the city's Journalists' House, Muniswamy alleged that Priyank was attacking the RSS and BJP while targeting "Italian Madam" and Rahul Gandhi in an attempt to strengthen his position to become Chief Minister.

He said Priyank had been facing criticism in recent days and was diverting attention by blaming others. Muniswamy



questioned how many IT and BT companies had been brought to the state during Priyank's tenure and challenged him to present a clear report of his achievements. Otherwise, he warned, BJP leaders would visit Chittapur and reveal the development record of his family members.

Muniswamy also said Congress leaders had failed to deliver justice to B. R. Ambedkar. He recalled that Mahatma Gandhi had suggested dissolving the Congress after

Independence and asked why it was not done.

He demanded that Priyank apologise for his remarks about the RSS. He further alleged that senior leader Mallikarjun Kharage had not contributed to Kalaburagi's growth despite decades in power.

Muniswamy claimed law and order had worsened in Kalaburagi, with drug, betting and sand mafias growing unchecked. Several BJP leaders were present.

Land to Be Allotted for 320 Anganwadis in One Month

CHIKKABALLAPUR

Deputy Commissioner G. Prabhu has directed officials to identify and allot land within one month for 320 Anganwadis currently operating from rented buildings in the district. Chairing the Integrated District Level Committee Meeting, he stressed that all 2,014 Anganwadis must function effectively and at full capacity.

Officials were instructed to submit consolidated data within two days on Anganwadis functioning in rented buildings and issue written directions to Tahsildars, Taluk Panchayat Executive Officers, and Urban Local Body heads to complete land identifica-

tion on time. Attendance must not be marked for absent children, and discipline and punctuality must be maintained. Senior officers were told to monitor daily distribution of nutritious food and ensure proper use of the Poshan Track software.

Of the total Anganwadis, 20 Worker posts and 129 Helper posts are vacant. These must be filled within three months. Benefits meant for children and pregnant women should reach them effectively.

Health check-ups for children in Anganwadis and government schools were made mandatory. Vision screening,

distribution of spectacles, and necessary surgeries must be ensured through coordination between the Health, Education, and Women and Child Development Departments.

Officials were also told to strengthen implementation of welfare schemes for women and children, form a district-level committee to prevent workplace harassment, and ensure Internal Complaints Committees function effectively.

Awareness programs to curb POCSO cases and child marriages must be conducted across 27 hoblies, along with strict monitoring of scanning centers.



MLA Sends Back Excess Garbage Trucks

DODDABALLAPURA

Tension rose in Doddaballapura taluk after local MLA Dheeraj Muniraju stopped several garbage trucks near Doddamankanal village on Wednesday. The action came after reports that more waste than permitted was being dumped at the MSGP garbage disposal unit.

For the past 13 years, garbage from Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike has been brought to the MSGP unit. The project had promised scientific waste processing, but villagers say it has turned into a large dumping ground. Over time, heaps of waste have grown like small hills. Residents claim that air, water, and soil in nearby villages have been badly affected. Many locals have been protesting and demanding the unit's closure.

As per rules, only 75 lorries

are allowed to dump waste daily. However, the MLA said he received information that extra trucks were being sent to the site. He stopped the vehicles midway and ordered them to return.

Speaking to the media, Muniraju said a road blockade protest was taking place in Mahadevapura, and some trucks were reportedly diverted to Doddaballapura. He said officials are already struggling to manage around 70 lorries a day and cannot allow more. He also pointed out that some vehicles lacked proper documents and had not paid taxes. The matter has been reported to the Transport Department, and such vehicles are being seized.

The MLA said the fight against the MSGP unit has continued for three years and will go on until a permanent solution is found.

Fire erupts at Belagavi transformer manufacturing plant

BELAGAVI

A fire broke out on Wednesday at the transformer unit of the Hukkeri Power Co-operative Society in Hukkeri town, Belagavi district, causing significant damage. Several transformers inside the plant were completely destroyed, resulting in losses worth lakhs of rupees. Locals quickly alerted the fire brigade, whose prompt response brought the fire under control and prevented damage to nearby buildings. Hukkeri police officials visited the site to inspect the damage and collect details about the incident.

Authorities suspect that a short circuit or a technical malfunction may have caused the blaze, though the exact cause is yet to be confirmed. A formal case has been registered at the local police station, and investigations are ongoing.

The swift action of the fire brigade and local residents is being appreciated, as their efforts prevented the fire from spreading and causing further destruction.

CHIKKABALLAPUR

Deputy Commissioner G. Prabhu said those who achieve equality in their actions and words while working for society's progress are true Sharans, and Madiwala Machayya is the foremost among them. He spoke at the inauguration of the "Madiwala Machidevara Jayanti" program held at the District Kannada Bhavan on Wednesday, organized jointly by the District Administration, Zilla Panchayat, and the Kannada and Culture Department. Floral tributes were paid to Machidevara's portrait.



Machayya, a 12th-century social reformer, emphasized

knowledge as the key to societal progress. His teachings

Sharans teach equality through action and words

on equality, brotherhood, gender justice, and secularism influenced principles that are part of today's Constitution. Deputy Commissioner Prabhu noted that despite legal systems, full equality is still not achieved, and Machayya's efforts to build a fair society remain relevant. He urged children of all communities to focus on education and intelligence to achieve excellence, especially in the era of artificial intelligence.

During the program, Headmaster Devaraju shared insights on Machideva's life. Officials emphasized that the Madiwala community, histor-

ically underprivileged, should receive government jobs and hostels to support students. Students from the community were honored with Pratibha Puraskar awards for their achievements.

The event began with a grand procession from Ambedkar Bhavan to District Kannada Bhavan, featuring folk art performances and flower palanquins. Community leaders, office bearers, and officers from various departments attended, celebrating Machayya's legacy and his message of equality, education, and social progress.

QUICK READ

Applications open for disabled urban workers posts

Mandya

Applications are invited for eligible disabled persons to fill vacant posts of Urban Rehabilitation Workers in Bellur Town Panchayat under the Rural Rehabilitation Scheme for Disabled Persons. Candidates aged 18 to 45, whether SSLC passed or failed, residing within Bellur Town Panchayat limits, can collect application forms from Bhagyamma Vividdoddesha Rehabilitation Workers (In-charge) at the Taluk Panchayat, Nagamangal. Completed applications with supporting documents must be submitted by March 5. For further details, applicants can contact the District Disabled and Senior Citizen Welfare Officer at 7411254522 or 08232-239234. The scheme provides monthly honorarium to selected candidates.

Renukamma Devi Jatra: Nude Ritual Service Prohibited by Authorities

Shivamogga

The Chandragutti village will host the Sri Renukamma Devi Jatra on February 24 and 25. To maintain law and order, District Magistrate Prabhunga Kavalikatti has banned naked service and certain rituals, including religious bathing in the Varada river, offering Mudi, and filling the padligi, under Section 35 of the Karnataka Police Act, 1963. Officials clarified that the order does not affect chariot processions, worship functions, or other traditional rituals of Sri Renukamma Devi. The directive aims to ensure safety and peaceful conduct of the festival for all devotees.

Pancha Guarantee conference draws huge crowds

GADAG

A district-level conference on the state government's Pancha Guarantee schemes attracted large crowds at Swami Vivekananda Sabha Bhavan on Wednesday. The event was inaugurated by H. K. Patil, Gadag district in-charge minister, who opened stalls showcasing various welfare programmes. H. M. Revanna, S. R. Patil and C. N. Sridhar were among the dignitaries present. The conference helped create public awareness and strengthen implementation of the schemes across the district.

Chikkaballapur distributes Anganwadi appointments, benefits

CHIKKABALLAPUR

The Chikkaballapur District Administration, in coordination with the Zilla Panchayat and Women and Child Development Department, will distribute appointment orders and departmental benefits to newly appointed Anganwadi workers and helpers on 19 February at 10 am at Kannada Bhavan. The program will be inaugurated by Higher Education and District In-charge Minister Dr. M.C. Sudhakar. The event will be chaired by MLA P.E. Pradeep Eshwar and attended by Women and Child Development Minister Lakshmi R. Hebbalkar, MPs Dr. K. Sudhakar and M. Mallesh Babu, and other dignitaries including MLAs S.N. Subbareddy, B.N. Ravikumar, and K.H. Puttaswamy Gowda. Heads of state corporations, departmental secretaries, and officials from various government departments will also participate. The program aims to formally welcome the new Anganwadi staff, provide them with essential benefits, and strengthen the district's efforts in early childhood development. Local representatives, office bearers, and citizens are expected to attend in large numbers.

Anti-drug committees mandatory in educational institutions

The Deputy Commissioner urged strict action against drug transport and ganja cultivation, directing coordinated enforcement and strengthened forest monitoring

KOPPAL

Deputy Commissioner Suresh B. Itnal has directed officials to form anti-drug committees in all schools, colleges and universities across Koppal district. He issued the instruction while chairing the Narco Co-ordination Centre (NCORD) meeting at the District Collectorate Hall on Wednesday. He said awareness is the strongest weapon against addiction and students must be educated about the harmful effects of drugs. Marathons and public awareness drives should be organized under the Drug-Free Campaign to spread the message widely. Dr. Itnal also instructed



health officials to keep at least 50 drug detection kits in every district and taluk hospital. The district hospital should have additional kits to handle emergencies.

He questioned the Excise Department about inspections of resorts and warned that strict action must be taken if drugs are found. More cases should be registered wherever

necessary. Resorts, roadside eateries, hotels and homestays must be inspected regularly.

The Deputy Commissioner stressed that the transport, sale and use of drugs must be treated seriously. Police, forest, transport and excise officials should act immediately when cases are detected. He also noted complaints about ganja cultivation between regular crops and directed the Forest Department to strengthen field monitoring.

District Superintendent of Police Ram L. Arasiddi and other senior officials from health, education, forest and transport departments attended the meeting and assured cooperation.



Cleanliness and safety key at fairs, warn officials

CHIKKABALLAPUR

Authorities have urged the public to maintain cleanliness, safety, and law and order during fairs while promoting awareness about health, education, and social reforms. Fairs, they said, should also discourage superstitions and encourage responsible behavior among visitors.

District Health and Family Welfare Officer Dr. Mahesh Kumar highlighted the importance of hygiene during fairs, especially in the summer. Eating outside food under the sun can cause dehydration, vomiting, diarrhea, and food poisoning. He advised consuming fruits, buttermilk, lemonade, and water to stay hydrated, while avoiding oily, high-protein, or junk food. Street food, open food, and cut fruits may carry bacterial infections, posing health risks.

Dr. Kumar also warned against the use of plastics in fairs, which harm the environment, animals, and human health. Plastic pollution reduces soil fertility, contaminates water, and releases toxic gases when burned, causing

Dr. Kumar warned plastics at fairs harm environment and health, pollute soil and water, release toxins, threaten aquatic life, and cause serious illnesses

respiratory illnesses. Aquatic life is threatened, while microplastics enter the human food chain. Using hot food containers made of plastic may release harmful chemicals like phthalates and bisphenol-A, leading to cancer, hormonal imbalance, asthma, and neurological issues.

Plastic bags also clog drains, causing floods and spreading epidemics during rains. Authorities recommended cloth or paper bags as eco-friendly alternatives. Dr. Kumar emphasized that banning plastic and promoting sustainable materials is everyone's responsibility to create a healthy environment.

For further guidance, citizens can contact the nearest government hospital or the free health helpline 104.

Madivala Machideva Development Corporation: Applications Invited

BALLARI

The Karnataka Madivala Machideva Development Corporation has invited applications through the Seva Sindhu portal for eligible candidates under the Food Vehicle (Food Kiosk) Scheme for the year 2025-26. Under the scheme, portable snack stalls will be set up by modifying four-wheeler EV goods vehicles as required and distributed to beneficiaries. A subsidy of Rs. 3 lakh will be released by the Corporation towards vehicle purchase. The remaining amount may be availed as a loan from banks or financial institutions.

Applicants must belong to Backward Class Category 2A in Ballari Urban Constituency, specifically from the Madivala community and its sub-castes such as Agasa, Chakla, Dhobi, Madivala, Mannan, Parith, Rajaka, Sakala, Vannan, Velluthedan, and Sakalavadu. The last date to apply is March 6.

The annual family income must be within Rs. 3,00,000. The applicant's age should be between 21 and 45 years.

Applicants must have an Aadhaar-linked active bank account. The applicant's name as per Aadhaar card (including titles such as Shri/Smt/

Kumari etc.) must match with other documents such as caste certificate, income certificate, and bank passbook.

Those who have availed benefits under any Corporation scheme, as well as their family members, are not eligible to apply again.

For more information, contact the District Manager, Karnataka Madivala Machideva Development Corporation (Ltd.), District Administrative Building, B Block, 2nd Floor, Room No. 53, Anantapur Road, Ballari, or phone: 08392-267038, according to District Manager Bhavikatte.

Doctor who served villages for decades

NAREGAL

In a time when rural areas had very few medical facilities, Gajananan Krishnarao Kale chose to dedicate his life to the health of villagers. For over four decades, he has served people in and around Naregal in Gadag district with commitment and compassion.

Born on February 22, 1950, in Naregal, he was inspired by his parents, especially his father Dr. Krishnarao Kale, who practiced medicine locally. After completing his MBBS from Mahadevappa Rampure Medical College in Kalaburagi, he returned to serve his hometown. In 1978, he started a small hospital, travelling by



bus to Hubballi to bring medicines. Over time, his clinic grew into a well-equipped hospital, upgraded with modern facilities in 2011.

Known for his humane approach, Dr. Kale built close bonds with patients. He offered not only treatment but also emotional support. His

honesty and dedication earned him deep respect across rural communities.

Apart from medicine, he briefly entered public life in 1985 and contributed to local development, including housing plots for the poor and school infrastructure. He later stepped away from politics but remained active in social and religious service.

He also supported education through Annadaneshwar Educational Institution, helping a small school grow to over 800 students.

On his 75th birth anniversary, family and well-wishers will honor him with a special program, celebrating a life devoted to service and humanity.

Illegal Sandalwood Transportation: Two Arrested

BALLARI

Forest officials of Sandur North and South ranges conducted a joint operation and arrested two persons on Monday for illegally transporting sandalwood.

The arrested accused are Lokesh Naik and Kiran Kumar H.K., residents of Sushilnagar village. A total of 110 kg of sandalwood pieces and a Mahindra Morazzo vehicle used for transportation have been seized.

With the cooperation of the Forest, Revenue, and Police Departments of Andhra Pradesh, a raid was conducted at M/s Nishat Fragrance Factory located at Rolla village in Sri Sathya Sai district, Andhra Pradesh. Approximately 179 kg of illegally stored sandal-

wood was seized from the factory and handed over to the Penukonda FRO.

The successful operation was carried out under the guidance of Dr. K.N. Basavaraj, Deputy Conservator of Forests, Ballari Division, and ACF Sharan Kumar.

The operation was led by Sandur North RFO B.S. Manjunath and Sandur South RFO Syed Dada Kalandar. DRFOs Tippeteswamy, Mahesh, Honnurawamy, Sridhar, and Beat Forester Raghavendra, along with staff members, were part of the team.

A three-day operation was conducted, and so far cases have been registered against a total of seven accused. Investigation is in progress, stated Dr. K.N. Basavaraj in a press release.



CLASSIFIEDS

To place a classified ad contact: 080-41209042

IN THE COURT OF HONOURABLE ADDITIONAL DISTRICT COURT, HOSUR I.A.No.1/2025 in O.S.49/2025

Petitioners/Plaintiffs
1. Prabhakar Reddy.
3. Renuka.
babu

2. Umadevi
4. Suresh

Vs

Respondents/Defendants No.4 to 16

1. Akkaiyamma
2. Sarojamma
3. Hemavathi
4. Neelamma W/o Balakrishna
5. Lingarathna
6. Harsha Yadav
7. Bheemaraju
8. Lingaraju
9. Sathyanarayana
10. Rajalakshmi
11. Pushpalatha
12. Anand
13. Manjunath

All are children's of Late.B.N.Ramaiah, hindu, aged about 60 years, residing at Door No: 17/2, S.K. Lane, Mavalli, (Shanubhga Krishnappa Layout), Bangalore Karnataka state 560004.

NOTICE

Please take notice that the above petitioner/ plaintiff have filed a Suit before the Honorable Additional District sessions Judge at Hosur praying for Partition and for other reliefs against you, as Respondent/Defendant. The above suit is posted to 01.04.2026. You are hereby called upon to appear by person or with the help of the pleader and file the objections if any before the Honorable Court on the said date at about 10.00 A.M., and state your objections, failing which, the court may proceed to pass adverse orders against you, which may note.

// By Order of the Court // S. BALAJI., B.Com, M.A., LL.B., ADVOCATE & NOTARY PUBLIC HOSUR-635 109.

NAME CHANGE

I, ZAKIR ALI MOHAMED HAKIM ZAN, S/o Mohamed Hakim Zan, resident of No E 11/3, 1st Cross, Chinnappa Layout, Near Kanti Sweets, Kamanahalli, Bengaluru-560084, have changed my name to MOHAMMED ZAKEER ALI, vide affidavit dated: 18.02.2026, before Notary G.DAYANANDA, Bangalore.

NAME CHANGE

I, AFSARI PARVEEN, resident of Samads Naaz Heritage, Flat No TF 302, 3rd Floor, HBR Layout, 1st Stage, 3rd Block, Bengaluru-560043, have changed my name to APSARI PARVEEN, vide affidavit dated: 18.02.2026, before Notary G.DAYANANDA, Bangalore.

NAME CHANGE

I, AYSHA MAHJABEEN, W/o Asif Pasha, resident of No 428, Noorani Masjid Road, Ilyas Nagar, JP Nagar, Bengaluru-560078, have changed my name to AYSHA MEHJABEEN M, vide affidavit dated: 18.02.2026, before Notary G.DAYANANDA, Bangalore.

NAME CHANGE

I, HAJIRA KHATOON, W/o. Rahamathali Khan, Resident of No. 84/2, 8th Main Road, 3rd Block, Jayanagar, Bengaluru -560011, Karnataka, have changed my name to HAJIRA KHANAM, vide affidavit dated: 17.02.2026 before notary MEER HASSAN, Bengaluru.

NAME CHANGE

I, HASINA BANU, aged 58 years wife of Shoukath pasha Residing at no 3554, vp Bore , Hunsur town Mysore district 571105 Karnataka, Have changed my name to HASEENA BHANU(my new name)Vide affidavit date 14/2/2026 before notary H. Dinesh Hunsur.

NAME CHANGE

I, ASIF PASHA AMEER BASHA, S/o Ameer Pasha, resident of No 428, Noorani Masjid Road, Ilyas Nagar, JP Nagar, Bengaluru-560078, have changed my name to ASIF PASHA, vide affidavit dated: 18.02.2026, before Notary G.DAYANANDA, Bangalore.

NAME CHANGE

I, LAKSHMI VEERABRAHMAIAH, W/o. Late Veera Brahmaiah, Resident of Flat No. 314, B Block, D S Max Sista Nest, Banashankari 5th Stage, Bengaluru -560061, Karnataka, have changed my name to M LAKSHMI, vide affidavit dated: 17.02.2026 before notary MEER HASSAN, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, MRINALINI BARUAH D/o NRIPEN DUTTA BARUAH, R/o No 904, 3rd A Cross, 1st Block, HRBR Layout, Kalyananagar, Bengaluru, Karnataka-560043, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as MRINALINI BARRUAH.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, DEEPAK MOHANKA S/o GOVIND MOHANKA R/o Flat No A-2101, Candeur Signature, Varthur Gunjur Main Road, Gunjur Village, Varthur, Gunjur, Bengaluru, Karnataka-560087, have changed the name of my minor son HARSH MOHANKA aged 16 years and he shall hereafter be known as TANUJ MOHANKA.

NAME CHANGE

I, RAGASHREE BALASUBRAMANYA, W/o. Balasubramanya Brahma, Resident of No. 967, Dhwani 2nd Block, Sir M Vishweshwaraiah Layout, Kengeri, Bengaluru -560060, Kamataka, have changed my name to RAGASHREE BHAT, vide affidavit dated: 17.02.2026 before notary MEER HASSAN, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, SANJANA F JAIN D/o FULCHAND D JAIN, W/o DARSHAN MAHENDRAKUMAR BAFNA, R/o 12/13, 2nd Floor, S K Lane, Kumbharapet, Bangalore North, Bagalore City, Bangalore, Karnataka - 560002, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as BHAVNA DARSHAN BAFNA.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, VENKATAMMA W/o VENKATESHAPPA, R/o 64, Dyavasandra, Jigani, Anekal, Bengaluru, Karnataka-560105, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as CHINNAVENKATAMMA.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, SHANKAR ASHOK SHINDE S/o NANESH K THANKUR, R/o No - 154 / 5 , Muskaan Residency, 1st A Main, 8th Block, Kormangala, VI Block, Bengaluru, Karnataka-560095, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as SHANKAR THACKUR.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Raghu, MY Original registered sale deed dated 04-10-2004 in respect of the property bearing Sy No.681/1 measuring 0.15 guntas and Sy No.678/1 measuring 0.14 guntas and SY No.677/1 measuring 0.05 guntas alienation order No.ALNCR:245/2002-03, out of this measuring East to West 28 feet and North to South 29 feet property site No.12 the said property situated at Maddur Village, Maddur Taluk, Mandya District as document No.MDR1-1-03223-2004-05, CD No.MDRD9, was lost on dated 18-02-2026 in Maddur in this connection filed the complaint before the consent Police Station in this connection endorsement issued on 18-02-2026 if any one trace please intimates me or said Police within 7 days. By M.Guruprasad, Advocate, No.2, M.Lingaiah Building, V.V.Road, Mandya-571401. Mob:9242221603.

Date: 19 th February 2026	Place: KARNATAKA	Sd/- Authorised Officer Manappuram Home Finance Ltd
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QUICK READ

**Mini gun factory busted in Bihar's Bhagalpur, five arrested****PATNA**

In a joint operation, the Kolkata Police STF, Bihar STF and Madhusudanpur Police Station have unearthed an active illegal improvised firearms manufacturing unit in Rahamatbagh village in Bihar's Bhagalpur district. The raid was conducted at the residence of Md. Nasir Ansari, son of Md. Gaju Salahuddin Ansari. The accused had been operating the illegal arms unit on the ground floor of his house under the guise of a spinning mill. During the operation, five people, including one co-owner and four skilled arms manufacturers, were arrested.

Pandemonium in Odisha assembly over paddy procurement issue**Bhubaneswar**

The Odisha Assembly on Wednesday witnessed a massive uproar from members of both the opposition Biju Janata Dal (BJD) and the Congress over alleged mismanagement in paddy procurement across the state. As soon as the proceedings commenced, BJD members holding banners reached near Speaker Surama Padhy's podium and began raising anti-government slogans over the chaos at mandis in the state. In a unique form of protest, some BJD legislators placed paddy and paddy bags on the reporters' table inside the House. Congress members also raised anti-government slogans inside the House over issues concerning farmers.

India shows robust optimism, trust for AI unlike West: Sunak**New Delhi**

When it comes to AI, India shows robust optimism and trust, while Western countries are anxious about the emerging technology, former British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said on Wednesday. Sunak cautioned that bridging this gap requires targeted governance efforts. I think closing that confidence gap is as much a policy task as it is a technical one, he said during a fireside chat with Meta's Chief AI Officer Alexandr Wang at the ongoing 'India AI Impact Summit 2026' here. Across the world, we're seeing different attitudes towards AI. In countries like India, there's enormous optimism and trust, and in Western countries, we're seeing that anxiety is still the dominant feeling towards AI, he told the gathering.

Assam rolls out school provincialisation portal

The PMS portal will streamline, monitor and process applications from non-provincialised venture schools and colleges, along with their teaching and non-teaching staff

GUWAHATI

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Wednesday launched the Provincialisation Management System (PMS) portal, describing it as a decisive and transparent initiative to resolve the long-pending issue of provincialisation of venture educational institutions and their staff.

The digital platform was unveiled at Lok Sewa Bhawan as part of the government's broader governance reform and welfare agenda.

The PMS portal will streamline, monitor and process applications from non-provincialised venture schools and colleges, along with their teaching and non-teaching employees, under the Assam Education (Provincialisation of Services of Teachers and Re-Organisation of Educational Institutions) Act, 2017, amended in 2025. The Chief Minister said the system establishes a centralised database of



venture institutions and associated manpower, aiming to eliminate ambiguity and alleged irregularities that have historically affected the provincialisation process.

Recalling his tenure as Education Minister, Sarma highlighted that more than 50,000 teachers across primary, secondary and collegiate levels have been provincialised in phases since 2011 under the BJP-led government. He described the PMS rollout as the third and most comprehensive phase, covering venture LP, UP/ME, high schools, higher secondary schools and degree colleges.

Hyderabad targets to achieve net zero by 2034: CM Reddy

**HYDERABAD**

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy said on Wednesday that Hyderabad aims to achieve Net Zero by 2034 and will soon undertake a city-wide carbon footprint audit. He also announced that within the next five years, there will be almost no industry or factory within the urban area.

Speaking at the Mumbai Climate Week, the Chief Minister outlined Telangana's long-term development vision, linking economic growth with environmental sustainability.

According to Chief Minister's Office (CMO) here, he reiterated Telangana's ambition to grow from a 200-billion-dollar state GDP to a one-trillion-dollar economy by 2034 and a three-trillion-dollar economy by 2047. He described Telangana's strategic framework structured into three zones - CURE, PURE, and RARE.

Hyderabad has been declared the Core Urban Region Economy (CURE) within the 160-kilometer Outer Ring Road. The PURE Zone, located between the Outer Ring Road and the 360-kilometer Regional Ring Road, has been

dedicated to manufacturing and positioned as a major hub powered by green energy, aimed at providing a China +1 alternative, he said.

Referring to the combined impact of Covid and climate change, the Chief Minister stated that both have changed the approach of governments, describing the present situation as a climate emergency. He emphasised that growth, investments, and job creation must continue alongside sustainability.

He stated that in Hyderabad, taxes on electric vehicles have been removed, resulting in high EV adoption, while discussions are underway with EV firms for manufacturing investments.

Over 200,000 auto-rickshaws are being retrofitted toward green alternatives, over 3,500 RTC buses are being replaced with electric buses, and the Hyderabad Metro is being expanded from 71 kilometers to over 200 kilometers. Industries are being progressively shifted from the core urban region to peri-urban zones. Emphasising that power or energy is the real currency of any economy, the Chief Minister said development is measured by power generation and consumption.

In a politically significant move, Sarma acknowledged that not all applicants may meet eligibility norms. To address this, the government has introduced a 'Gurudakshina' scheme in the Vote-on-Account Budget presented on February 17, offering a financial package to those whose services cannot be provincialised. Additionally, a preferential marking system will be implemented to help such individuals compete for other government positions.

The Chief Minister clarified that only institutions established before January 1, 2006, would qualify. Applicants must provide recognition certificates, land records, academic performance data and staff credentials. He urged all stakeholders to cooperate, reiterating the government's commitment to safeguarding the future of venture institution employees while ensuring adherence to legal and administrative standards.

RS biennial polls: Mahayuti set to win six seats, one by MVA

MUMBAI

The Election Commission of India on Wednesday announced the schedule for the biennial elections to 37 vacant Rajya Sabha seats, which includes seven from Maharashtra. The ruling coalition, Mahayuti, is set to secure six seats, whereas the Maha Vikas Aghadi is expected to obtain one seat, reflecting their respective strengths in the state Assembly. The polling is scheduled for March 16, and the deadline for filing nominations is from February 26 to March 5. The seven Rajya Sabha members from Maharashtra whose terms are set to expire on April 2 are Sharad Pawar, Fauzia Khan (NCP-SP), Dr Bhagwat Kishanrao Karad, Dhairyasheel Patil (BJP), Ramdas Athavale (RPI chief), Priyanka Vikram Chaturvedi (Shiv Sena UBT) and Rajani Patil (Congress).

Mamata announces UN FAO recognition for 'Matir Srishti'

KOLKATA

Mamata Banerjee announced that the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations has awarded an international certificate to West Bengal's 'Matir Srishti' programme. Launched in 2020 in the dry Paschimanchal districts, the initiative integrates land development, irrigation expansion, and panchayat-level implementation to transform barren, mono-crop land into fertile, multi-crop fields. It supports horticulture and veg-

Federalism needs a structural reset: Stalin

CHENNAI

Chief Minister MK Stalin on Wednesday tabled Part I of the report of the High-Level Committee on Union-State Relations in the state Assembly, reiterating the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam government's long-standing demand for greater state autonomy and a strengthened federal framework.

He described the move as a historic step towards redefining Centre-State relations.

The committee, chaired by retired Supreme Court judge Kurian Joseph, with former bureaucrats K. Ashok Vardhan Shetty and M. Naganathan as members, recently submitted its findings to the Chief Minister. Presenting the report in the House, Stalin said the initiative seeks to ensure that state governments are vested with necessary constitutional powers. Today is the day we take the initiative to amend the Constitution to ensure that state governments are vested with all necessary powers. If we cannot do it, who else can? he asked, drawing strong support from ruling party legislators.

Stalin alleged that the BJP-led Union government was centralising authority and exercising power in an autocratic manner, compelling states to depend excessively on the



Centre. He argued that several subjects originally under the State List were being shifted to the Concurrent List, thereby diluting constitutional provisions meant to safeguard state rights.

In a pointed remark, the Chief Minister said, To put it simply, we have now belled the cat, signalling what he termed a bold attempt to address long-standing federal concerns. He also expressed dissatisfaction over fiscal devolution, claiming that economically developed states were receiving a reduced share of central funds despite contributing significantly to national revenue.

Calling for bipartisan support across the country, Stalin urged political parties to adopt state autonomy as a guiding principle. He emphasised that a balanced federal structure would enable all languages, cultures and communities to flourish with dignity while preserving the spirit of cooperative federalism enshrined in the Constitution.

Haryana clears Rs 402cr solar-powered micro irrigation projects

CHANDIGARH

In a significant step towards sustainable agriculture and scientific water management, the State-Level Sanctioning Committee (SLSC), chaired by Haryana Chief Secretary Anurag Rastogi, on Wednesday approved four community-based solar-powered integrated micro irrigation projects under the Micro Irrigation and Command Area Development Authority (MICADA).

With a total outlay of Rs 402.41 crore, the projects will be implemented across 61 canal outlets spanning 20 blocks in Bhiwani, Jhajjar, Kurukshetra and Mahendragarh districts. The initiative is scheduled for completion between 2026-27 and 2028-29 and aims to bring 11,040 hectares of culturable command area under advanced micro-irriga-

tion systems. Nearly 8,926 farmers across 94 villages are expected to benefit from the scheme.

District-wise allocation includes Rs 95.78 crore for Bhiwani, Rs 114.68 crore for Jhajjar, Rs 77.17 crore for Kurukshetra and Rs 114.78 crore for Mahendragarh. Officials said the targeted investment reflects a strategic focus on strengthening irrigation infrastructure in water-stressed regions of the state. The projects have a benefit-cost ratio ranging from 1.21:1 to 1.65:1, underscoring their economic viability and long-term gains through improved water efficiency and enhanced crop productivity.

By promoting drip and sprinkler irrigation systems within canal command areas, the initiative seeks to reduce transmission and distribution

MLCs protest after students barred from exam over late arrival

PATNA

Proceedings of the Bihar Legislative Council began on Wednesday amid strong protests by members over students being denied entry to the board examination centres due to late arrival.

Raising the issue in the House, opposition members questioned the government's handling of the situation.

MLC Sanjeev Kumar Singh said that students should not be barred from appearing in examinations if they arrive late due to transportation or traffic-related problems. He stressed that the Bihar School Examination Board must take into account the psychological impact on students who prepare for years for the matriculation examination but are denied entry at the last moment.

This is a serious matter of concern and needs immediate attention, he said. Participating in the discussion, BJP MLC Nawal Kishor Yadav pointed out that students are often sent from one place to another without clear information. He said neither students nor their families can anticipate where traffic congestion may occur.

Despite arrangements, traffic jams are unavoidable in many areas.

IT'S TIME FOR CORRECTION

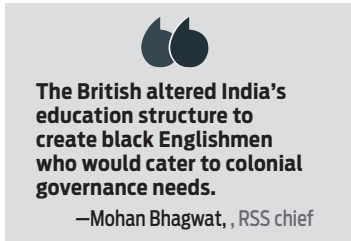
Colonial edu system not ideal for nation: Bhagwat

LUCKNOW

RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat on Wednesday said Western colonial powers had tampered with India's traditional education system to serve their administrative interests, replacing it with a framework designed to produce a class of intermediaries.

Addressing a research scholars' dialogue programme at the Malviya Auditorium of the University of Lucknow, Bhagwat said the British altered India's education structure to create black Englishmen who would cater to colonial governance needs.

He asserted that the distortions inflicted during colonial



rule must now be corrected. Stressing that education and healthcare are fundamental necessities, Bhagwat said they should not be treated as commercial enterprises. Education and health must be accessible to all, he remarked, calling for systems that prioritise inclusivity over profit.

Bhagwat reiterated that the

RSS works toward building a prosperous and united nation focused on social cohesion rather than political power or popularity. He invited critics and scholars to understand the organisation from within instead of forming opinions solely through external narratives. According to him, the core objective of the RSS is to unite Hindu society and

strengthen national character.

Highlighting the importance of research, Bhagwat urged scholars to pursue their work with authenticity and dedication to the nation. Truthful facts must be brought to light. Ignorance prevents us from understanding India, he said, alleging that negative propaganda had often shaped perceptions about the Sangh.

He called for objective academic inquiry to counter misinformation.

On globalisation, Bhagwat observed that it has increasingly become associated with commercialisation and materialism, trends he described as harmful. Referring to the

Indian philosophical concept of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam — the world as one family — he said India advocates collective well-being rather than consumerism.

He further stated that if India aspires to global leadership, it must be strong across all sectors. The world respects truth only when it is backed by power, he said. Emphasising dharma as an eternal principle guiding life and harmony, Bhagwat also urged citizens to adopt environmentally responsible practices such as tree plantation, water conservation and reducing single-use plastics while embracing sustainable technological development.

MUMBAI

UK-based businessman Vijay Mallya on Wednesday informed the Bombay High Court that he is not in a position to specify when he would return to India. He cited restrictions imposed by courts in England that he said prevented him from leaving the country.

The matter was heard by a Bench comprising Chief Justice Shree Chandrashekar and Justice Gautam Ankhad, in connection with two petitions filed by Mallya. One petition challenges his designation as a Fugitive Economic Offender under the Fugitive Economic Offenders Act (FEOA), while the other contests a court order formally declaring him a fugitive.

Senior advocate Amit Desai, appearing for Mallya, referred to Supreme Court judgments where writ petitions were heard even in the absence of petitioners. He submitted that extradition proceedings against Mallya are ongoing in the UK and that his client is aware of them but is unable to leave English jurisdiction due to binding court orders.

The Chief Justice, however, questioned Mallya's intent to appear before the court, observing that he appeared to be relying on UK

court orders without clarifying whether those orders had been challenged. The Bench indicated that such reliance could not be treated as a blanket justification.

The court directed Solicitor General Tushar Mehta to file a response to Mallya's affidavit. It also asked Desai to submit a detailed affidavit placing on record all statements made during the hearing so that the Union of India could respond accordingly.

Granting three weeks' time for further proceedings, the Bench noted that the petitions have been pending since 2019 and remarked that no sincere efforts appeared to have been made for their early disposal. The matter is now scheduled for a hearing on March 11.

According to the Finance Ministry, Mallya -- former promoter of Kingfisher Airlines -- is among 15 individuals declared Fugitive Economic Offenders as of October 31, 2025, allegedly causing losses of thousands of crores of rupees to Indian banks.

Earlier, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) submitted before the court that Mallya had filed affidavits disputing banks' claims and was attempting to turn money laundering proceedings into recovery litigation.



QUICK READ

Top officers become entrepreneurs under institutional patronage

Islamabad
Pakistan Army suffered heavy casualties during counterinsurgency operations along the volatile Afghanistan-Pakistan border in the post-9/11 period, battling Al-Qaeda and Taliban insurgents. It was stated that during the height of these operations, some Pakistani army officers privately expressed dissatisfaction over pay disparities, according to a recent report. The 'India Narrative' report stated that when US officials voiced displeasure over what they described as the Pakistani army's disappointing performance, certain officers complained that insurgent groups were compensating their fighters better than the Pakistani government paid its own soldiers.

Extreme heat pushing Australia's farms, wildlife to limits: Study

Canberra
Australia's record-breaking heatwave in late January, with inland temperatures reaching 50 degrees Celsius, has inflicted severe damage on agriculture and wildlife, scientists warn. Thousands of flying foxes died in the state of South Australia, while mango growers in the state of Western Australia reported fruit boiled on trees, according to an article published on The Conversation website on Wednesday. These increasingly extreme heatwaves now threaten crops, livestock, wildlife and ecosystems, said the article by Owen Atkin, director of the Agri-food Innovation Institute, Australian National University (ANU), and ANU ecology professor Adrienne Nicotra, with two co-authors.

India-Nepal sign updated mutual legal assistance agreement

Kathmandu
India and Nepal have signed an updated Agreement on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters in Kathmandu, enabling the competent authorities of the two countries to cooperate in criminal investigations and legal proceedings. After years of negotiations, the agreement which was initially agreed upon at a home secretary-level meeting in New Delhi in July last year was signed, formalising co-operation to tackle financial and non-financial crimes as well as terrorism.

SU DO KU

Brain-Bender: Can You Solve It?

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

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

Solutions to Yesterday's puzzle

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

Russia-Ukraine talks end with no breakthrough

US-mediated peace talks in Switzerland took place as Trump suggested it was up to Ukraine & Zelenskiy to ensure talks were successful

GENEVA
Peace negotiations between Ukraine and Russia concluded abruptly in Geneva on Wednesday after lasting only around two hours, casting fresh uncertainty over diplomatic efforts to end the four-year-long conflict. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy described the discussions as difficult and accused Moscow of intentionally delaying progress toward a final agreement.
The talks, mediated by the United States and held in Switzerland, were seen as a renewed attempt to revive stalled diplomatic channels. However, tensions reportedly surfaced early during the first day of negotiations. Writing on X shortly after the session concluded, Zelenskiy stated that Russia appeared to be dragging out discussions that, in his view, could already have reached a concluding phase. His remarks suggested frustration within the Ukrainian delegation over what it perceives as a lack of genuine commitment from Moscow to finalize terms for peace.

SUMMARY

Zelenskiy criticises US pressure for Ukraine concessions

Says progress made but positions differ

Russia says further talks will be held soon

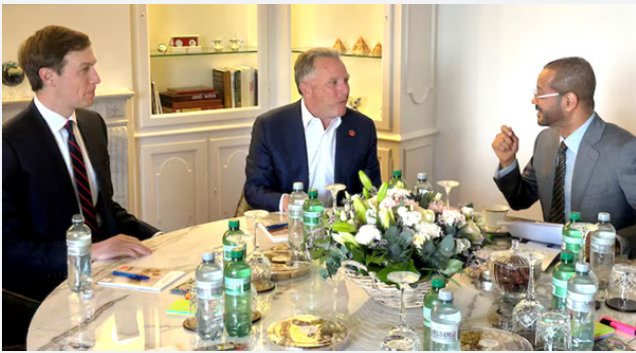


The diplomatic initiative comes amid increasing involvement from U.S. President Donald Trump, who has in recent days indicated that responsibility for the success of the negotiations rests significantly with Ukraine and its leadership. Trump's comments have added a new dimension to the peace process, signaling Washington's expectation that Kyiv take proactive steps to secure an agreement.
Minutes after Zelenskiy's public statement, Russia's state news agency RIA confirmed that the Geneva session had ended. Russia's chief negotiator, Vladimir Medinsky, spoke briefly to reporters in the hotel lobby

where the talks were conducted. He stated that further rounds of negotiations would take place soon but did not provide a specific timeline.
A Ukrainian official also confirmed the conclusion of the talks, noting that they lasted approximately two hours. While both sides indicated that dialogue would continue, Wednesday's abrupt ending underscored the fragile and complex nature of the negotiations. With no immediate breakthrough achieved, the path toward ending the prolonged conflict remains uncertain, as diplomatic efforts face mounting challenges and deep-seated mistrust between the two nations.

TRUMP ENVOYS JUGGLE DUAL HIGH-STAKES NEGOTIATIONS

WASHINGTON
Even for a U.S. president long associated with high-profile deal-making, President Donald Trump's decision to assign his trusted envoys to handle two complex international negotiations in a single day has raised eyebrows across diplomatic circles. In Geneva, U.S. special envoy Steve Witkoff and Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner were tasked with shuttling between discussions on the Iranian nuclear standoff and efforts to advance peace talks related to Russia's war in Ukraine.
The back-to-back diplomatic engagements have left many foreign policy observers questioning whether the administration's representatives may be overstretched. Both negotiations are widely regarded as among the most



intricate and politically sensitive issues currently facing Washington. The Iranian nuclear file involves delicate questions about sanctions relief, uranium enrichment limits, and international inspections, while the Ukraine conflict centers on territorial sovereignty, security guarantees, and a fragile ceasefire process.
Experts argue that each crisis alone demands sustained focus, technical ex-

pertise, and careful coordination with allies. Attempting to manage both simultaneously, particularly within the tight timeframe of a single day, risks diluting attention and reducing the likelihood of tangible progress. Critics suggest that shuttle diplomacy of this scale requires a broader diplomatic infrastructure rather than reliance on a small circle of trusted aides.

Lagarde may quit ECB early to let Macron shape successor

FRANKFURT
President of the European Central Bank, Christine Lagarde, is reportedly considering leaving her post before the end of her term, according to a report published Wednesday by the Financial Times.
The move, if confirmed, could influence the selection of her successor ahead of France's 2027 presidential election.
Lagarde's current mandate at the Frankfurt-based central bank runs until October 2027. However, concerns have emerged in political and financial circles that a potential victory by France's far-right in the spring 2027 presidential race could complicate the appointment process for the next ECB president. The head of the ECB plays a crucial role in steering monetary policy for the euro zone, making the succession decision highly significant for Europe's economic stability.
As per agencies, which cited a person familiar with the matter, Lagarde has not finalized the timing of any early departure. Nevertheless, she is reportedly keen for outgoing French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz to play central roles in determining her successor. Macron, constitutionally barred from seeking a third consecutive term, is expected to leave office in 2027, potentially narrowing the window



for his influence over key European appointments.
The prospect of leadership change at the ECB comes at a delicate moment for the euro zone economy, which continues to navigate inflation pressures, interest rate adjustments, and geopolitical uncertainties. Any perception of political maneuvering around the succession process could draw scrutiny from member states and financial markets alike.
Responding to the report, an ECB spokesperson emphasized that no decision has been made. President Lagarde is totally focused on her mission and has not taken any decision regarding the end of her term, the spokesperson said. While the ECB has officially dismissed suggestions of an imminent move, the report has intensified speculation in Brussels and other European capitals about the future leadership of one of the world's most influential central banks.

Ivory Coast weighs Cocoa farm price cut

IVORY COAST
Ivory Coast is considering reducing the guaranteed farm gate price paid to its cocoa farmers in a move that could mirror neighboring Ghana, according to two senior government sources who spoke to Reuters.
The discussions come as the world's largest cocoa-producing nations grapple with a deepening crisis driven by volatile global prices and market uncertainty.
Officials in Abidjan said the government is evaluating all available options as it seeks to stabilize the sector, which forms the backbone of the country's economy and supports millions of livelihoods. Ivory Coast and Ghana together account for more than 60% of global cocoa production, giving their pricing decisions significant influence over the international chocolate supply chain.
Ghana has already moved to reduce its farm gate price by 28.6% for the remainder of the 2025/2026 main crop season. The decision was taken in coordination with Ivorian authorities as both nations respond to sharply falling global cocoa prices. The price cuts are intended to reflect market realities and prevent large-scale smuggling of cocoa beans across borders, which can occur when significant



price disparities exist between the two countries.
The potential adjustment in Ivory Coast underscores the scale of the challenges facing cocoa producers. After a period of record-high prices fueled by supply shortages and adverse weather, markets have seen a steep correction. Governments must now balance protecting farmer incomes with maintaining fi-

Iran-US agree on nuke guiding principles

TEHRAN
Iran and the United States have reached an understanding on key guiding principles in renewed talks aimed at resolving their long-running nuclear dispute, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said. However, he emphasized that the breakthrough does not signal that a final agreement is imminent.
Speaking to Iranian media after discussions concluded in Geneva, Araqchi described the negotiations as substantive, noting that multiple proposals had been exchanged and seriously



debated. Different ideas have been presented, these ideas have been seriously discussed, ultimately we've been able to reach a general agreement on some guiding principles, he said. Despite this progress, he cautioned that significant work remains before a comprehensive deal can be finalized.
The diplomatic developments had an immediate impact on global energy markets. Oil futures fell following Araqchi's remarks, with the benchmark Brent crude contract dropping more than 1%. The market reaction

reflected easing fears of a potential military confrontation in the Middle East, particularly as Washington has deployed additional naval forces to the region in recent weeks to increase pressure on Tehran.
A U.S. official familiar with the negotiations said that while progress had been made, substantial differences persist. The official, who declined to be identified, indicated that Iran is expected to submit detailed proposals within the next two weeks aimed at narrowing remaining gaps in the talks. Progress was made, but there are still a lot of details to discuss, the official stated.

Kremlin denies secret nuclear tests with China

MOSCOW
The Kremlin on Wednesday firmly denied allegations that either Russia or China had conducted secret nuclear tests, dismissing recent accusations from the United States. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov stated that both Moscow and Beijing have refrained from carrying out any undisclosed nuclear detonations.
The remarks came after Washington accused China earlier this month of conducting a covert nuclear test in 2020.
The allegation was made in the context of renewed U.S. calls for a broader arms control agreement that would include not only Russia but also China. The United States has argued that future global security frameworks must incorporate Beijing, given its growing military capabilities and expanding nuclear arsenal.
Responding to the claims, Peskov told reporters that references to supposed secret tests were unfounded. We've heard many references to certain tests.
Both the Russian Federation and China have been mentioned in this regard. Neither the Russian Federation nor China has conducted any nuclear tests, he said.
China has also denied the U.S. accusations, maintaining that it adheres to international obligations concerning nuclear activities. Both Russia and China have historically criticized what they describe as Washington's attempts to reshape arms control mechanisms in ways that serve U.S. strategic interests.
The exchange highlights renewed tensions among major powers over nuclear transparency and arms control.

THE NORDIC CO-OPERATION

Nordic region seeks deeper ties with Greenland

NUUK
Nordic government ministers are set to convene in Denmark on Wednesday to consider granting equal status to Greenland and two other autonomous territories within a key regional forum.
The move comes amid heightened geopolitical tensions following U.S. President Donald Trump's renewed push to assert control over the strategically significant Arctic island.
Denmark, along with its European partners, has firmly rejected Trump's insistence that Copenhagen should transfer Greenland to the United States. In response to the diplomatic friction, talks were initiated last month involving Denmark's capital, Greenland's authorities in Nuuk, and Washington in an effort to defuse tensions and maintain stability in the Arctic region. Wednesday's discussions will center on updating



the Helsinki Treaty, originally adopted in 1962 by Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Iceland and Norway. The treaty established the framework for political, economic and cultural cooperation among Nordic nations. Proposed revisions would grant full participatory rights to Denmark's autonomous territories of Greenland and Faroe Islands, as well as Finland's self-governing region of Åland.
For decades, these territories have sought equal footing within the Nordic Council

framework but have been excluded from high-level meetings addressing security and foreign policy issues, including discussions related to the war in Ukraine. Frustration over this exclusion led Greenland's government in 2024 to boycott certain Nordic cooperation formats, underscoring growing demands for recognition and influence.
Denmark's Minister for Nordic Cooperation, Morten Dahlin, described the potential treaty revision as a landmark development. In a state-

Historical context of Helsinki Treaty

The autonomous regions have for decades sought equal status in the Nordic forum, but were kept out of meetings focusing on security and related matters such as the war in Ukraine, leading Greenland's government in 2024 to boycott the format.

ment, he said modernizing the agreement would represent a historic step and help future-proof Nordic collaboration in a rapidly evolving geopolitical landscape.
Observers note that granting equal status could strengthen regional unity at a time when Arctic security and sovereignty have gained increased international attention.



MBAPPE Demands Ban After Alleged Racist Slur at Lisbon Clash

Vinicius incident sparks anti-racism protocol halt during tense playoff

LISBON

Kylian Mbappe has called for Benfica winger Gianluca Prestianni to be banned from the UEFA Champions League following allegations that the Argentine directed a racist slur at Vinicius Junior during Real Madrid's 1-0 win in the playoff first leg.

The incident occurred shortly after Vinicius curled home the decisive goal at the Estadio da Luz. Television footage showed Prestianni

covering his mouth with his shirt before making a comment that Vinicius and nearby teammates interpreted as racist. Referee Francois Letexier halted the match for 11 minutes after activating FIFA's anti-racism protocol.

Footage appeared to capture Mbappe confronting Prestianni, angrily calling him "a bloody racist." The atmosphere turned hostile when play resumed, with Vinicius and Mbappe loudly booed by sections of the home crowd.

Despite rising tensions, the match concluded without further interruption.

Mbappe said he heard the alleged remark more than once and was ready to walk off the pitch before Vinicius persuaded him to continue. "We cannot accept that there is a player in Europe's top competition who behaves like this. He doesn't deserve to play in the Champions League anymore," Mbappe said. Prestianni denied the accusation in a social media

post, insisting Vinicius had misheard him and stating he "was never racist with anyone." He added that he regretted the threats he had received following the incident.

Vinicius later expressed frustration online, writing that "racists are, above all, cowards." The Brazilian has previously been subjected to repeated racist abuse in Spain.

Real Madrid and Benfica will meet again for the second leg at the Santiago Bernabeu next week.

Twins ace López likely out for season with UCL tear

FORT MYERS

Pablo López, the ace right-hander for the Minnesota Twins, is facing a major elbow injury that appears likely to end his 2026 season before it begins. The club announced that López has suffered a "significant tear" in the ulnar collateral ligament (UCL) of his right elbow and will probably need reconstructive Tommy John surgery.

General manager Jeremy Zoll told reporters at spring training that López ended a bullpen session early yesterday after experiencing soreness in his throwing elbow, prompting an MRI that revealed the ligament damage. A second medical opinion is expected this week, but the current outlook points to the type of surgery that typically sidelines pitchers for a year or more.

López, who turns 30 on March 7, has been Minnesota's Opening Day starter in each of the past three seasons and was slated to pitch for his native Venezuela in the World Baseball Classic next month. He posted a 5-4 record with a 2.74 ERA over 14 starts last season while battling multiple injuries. "It's definitely a blow," Zoll said, acknowledging the setback for both López and the Twins' rotation depth.

Without their most dependable starter, Minnesota will turn to fellow right-hander Joe Ryan as the new ace.



Dembélé limps off as PSG edge Monaco in thriller

MONACO

Ousmane Dembélé's injury troubles resurfaced as he was forced off in the first half of Paris Saint-Germain's dramatic 3-2 victory over AS Monaco in their UEFA Champions League playoff first leg.

Dembélé, who had been doubtful due to a leg problem, lasted just 26 minutes at the Stade Louis II. Television footage showed the Ballon d'Or winner rubbing the back of his left calf before pulling down his sock, raising immediate concerns. He was replaced by Désiré Doué, whose inspired performance turned the game on its head.

Despite trailing 2-0 when Dembélé exited, PSG mounted a spirited comeback. Doué struck twice and played a key role in the equaliser, helping the visitors take a slender ad-

vantage into next week's return leg in Paris. Right back Achraf Hakimi also found the net after goalkeeper Philipp Köhn parried Doué's effort into his path.

Coach Luis Enrique insisted no risk was taken in starting Dembélé. "He trained normally. He took a knock in the first 15 minutes and then couldn't run. We'll have to see if there's an injury," he said.

Doué's first goal came moments after Vitinha had his penalty saved, and he later sealed the win with a composed finish from a pass by Warren Zaïre-Emery. Monaco's night worsened when midfielder Aleksandr Golovin was sent off for a clumsy challenge. While PSG celebrated a crucial away win, Dembélé's fitness remains a pressing concern ahead of the decisive second leg.



Woods hints at Masters return, weighs Ryder Cup captaincy

LOS ANGELES

Tiger Woods has opened the door to a possible return at the Masters in April and confirmed he is considering serving as U.S. captain for the 2027 Ryder Cup, even as he continues to battle significant physical setbacks.

Speaking at Riviera Country Club, where he is host of the Genesis Invitational, Woods said he would not rule out competing at Masters Tournament this year.

"I'm trying. Put it that way," said Woods, who recently turned 50. "The disc replacement has been one thing. I've had a fused back and now a disc replacement, so it's challenging."

The 15-time major champion has played sparingly in recent seasons following a 2021 car crash that severely injured his right leg, along with subsequent Achilles and back surgeries.

While he reiterated he would not use a golf cart on the PGA Tour, he acknowledged that competing on the Champions Tour — now that he is eligible — remains an option.

Beyond his playing future, Woods' schedule is increasingly occupied off the course. As chair of the PGA Tour's Future Competitions Committee, he is helping shape a revamped calendar expected to roll out fully by 2028.

Woods also revealed he has been approached about captaining the United States at the Ryder Cup in Ireland in 2027.

"They've asked me for my input," Woods said. "I haven't made my decision yet. I'm trying to figure out if I can do Team USA justice with my time."

Though he is not competing this week at Riviera, Woods said his competitive drive remains intact — and Augusta National is not yet off the table.

CARLOS ALCARAZ battles past Rinderknech to advance in Doha

DOHA

Carlos Alcaraz made a winning return to the tour following his Australian Open triumph, defeating France's Arthur Rinderknech 6-4, 7-6(7/5) in the opening round of the Qatar Open.

The world number one,

who recently

became the youngest

man to complete a

career Grand Slam

with his victory in

Melbourne, was

pushed hard by the

30th-ranked

Rinderknech in a

contest that tested

his compo-

sure. Alcaraz secured the first set

with a crucial break in the fifth

game but faced stern resistance in the second.

Serving to force a tie-break, the

Spaniard had to save two break

points before holding firm. In the

en - suing tie-break, he produced a

stunning forehand winner down the

line on match point to seal victory.

"It was really difficult. Arthur is a dan-

gerous player. Nobody wants to face him in the

first round," Alcaraz said. "I'm happy that I stayed

calm and positive and played great tennis in the key

moments."

Alcaraz will next face another

Frenchman, 60th-ranked Valentin

Royer, as he looks to improve on last year's quarter-final finish in

Doha. Elsewhere, Russian star Andrey Rublev advanced with a

straight-sets win over Jesper De Jong. Seventh seed Karen Khachanov

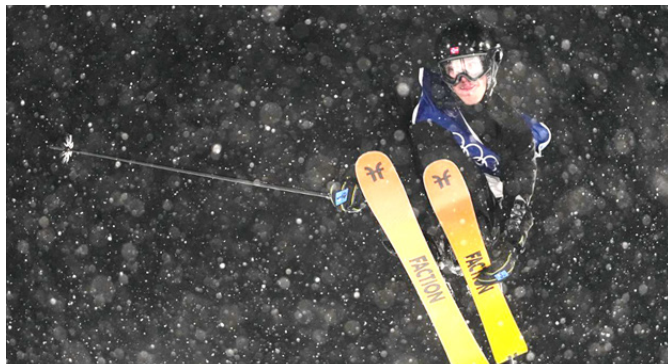
battled past Shintaro Mochizuki, while Stefanos Tsitsipas

set up a clash with 2023 champion Daniil Medvedev.

Alcaraz's chief rival Jannik Sinner

sits on the opposite side of the draw, raising the prospect of another

blockbuster showdown later in the tournament.



Frostad wins big air gold in Olympic thriller for ages

LIVIGNO, ITALY

Tormod Frostad delivered a groundbreaking performance to win Olympic men's big air gold, edging American Mac Forehand in what athletes called one of the greatest finals ever staged at the 2026 Winter Olympics. Frostad clinched victory by executing a daring and innovative "nose butter" variation on all three of his jumps, finishing with 195.50 points to Forehand's 193.25 in a contest where scores neared the 200-point maximum.

The 23-year-old Norwegian led much of the 12-man final before Forehand surged ahead with a spectacular penultimate jump, flipping the standings and piling pressure onto Frostad's final run. Facing the most critical leap of his career, Frostad responded with a flawlessly

executed trick that earned a decisive 98.50 from the judges.

"Yeah, I didn't really care because I was already super happy," Frostad said. "I could ski the last run with joy and just deliver a fun trick."

While Forehand showcased high-difficulty spins and flips — including a maneuver he had never previously landed — Frostad pushed the sport's progression in a different direction. Instead of launching backward off the ramp, he spun forward, defying convention and introducing a variation rarely, if ever, seen in big air competition. American Konnor Ralph attempted the first triple-cork 2160 — six full spins — in Olympic big air history, landing it to finish fifth, just behind teammate Troy Podnigal. Defending champion Birk Ruud placed eighth after two crashes.

Koenen claims record eighth Summit League weekly honor

FARGO

Avery Koenen added another accolade to her remarkable season, earning her eighth Summit League Peak Performer of the Week award and setting a new conference single-season record.

The Summit League announced the honor after Koenen powered North Dakota State Bison to a dominant 87-51 victory over in-state rival North Dakota Fighting Hawks last week.

With the recognition, Koenen surpassed former Oral Roberts Golden Eagles standout Kevi Luper, who held the previous mark with seven weekly awards during the 2009-10 season.

In the lone game of the week, Koenen delivered one of her finest performances of the year. The junior forward poured in a season-high 29

points while grabbing a game-best 13 rebounds. She also recorded a career-high four blocks, showcasing her impact on both ends of the floor. The outing marked her 17th double-double of the season, tying her for third-most nationally.

Koenen's consistency has fueled one of the most impressive campaigns in program history. The Bison improved to 23-2 overall and remain unbeaten at 12-0 in league play. North Dakota State is riding a 21-game winning streak, positioning itself as a clear favorite heading into the postseason.

Her dominance has become a weekly storyline across the conference, with Koenen emerging as both a scoring force and defensive anchor. As the regular season winds down, the Bison will look to extend their streak when they host St. Thomas on Thursday evening at 7 p.m.

Lochner steers Germany to dominant Olympic two-man bobsled sweep

CORTINA D'AMPEZZO

Johannes Lochner led a commanding German sweep of the Olympic two-man bobsled medals, capturing gold at the 2026 Winter Olympics in what he called the penultimate race of his international career.

Teaming with Georg Fleischnauer, Lochner completed the four-run competition in 3 minutes, 39.70 seconds — sealing victory by a massive 1.34-second margin, the largest in Olympic two-man bobsledding in 46 years.

It marked Lochner's third career Olympic medal and his first gold.

Germany's dominance was emphatic. Francesco Friedrich, a double gold medalist in both two- and four-man at the previous two Winter Games, partnered with Alexander Schuller to claim silver



in 3:41.04. Adam Ammour and Alexander Schaller secured bronze in 3:41.52, completing the podium sweep.

The result underscored Germany's extraordinary season. Of the 24 medals available in two-man bobsled across the World Cup circuit and these Olympics, German sleds captured 23 — includ-

ing every Olympic medal on offer.

For the United States, opening ceremony flagbearer Frank Del Duca and brakeman Josh Williamson finished fourth in 3:41.96.

The result matched the second-best American two-man Olympic finish in seven decades, trailing only the silver won by Steven Holcomb and Steven Langton in 2014.

Romania's Mihai Tentea and George Iordache placed fifth, equaling their nation's best Olympic two-man showing since 1972.

Germany also swept the podium at the 2022 Beijing Games and has now won 34 of 35 major two-man races — spanning World Cups, world championships and Olympics — in this four-year cycle, cementing its status as the sport's undisputed powerhouse.

Liu surges into medal contention as US teammates falter

MILAN

Alysa Liu positioned herself squarely in the hunt for Olympic gold, delivering a poised and powerful short program at the 2026 Winter Olympics while her U.S. teammates stumbled.

The reigning world champion executed the most difficult combination attempted in the women's field — a triple lutz-triple loop — to finish just two points behind Japan's leader Ami Nakai. Liu sits third overall, directly behind two-time world champion Kaori Sakamoto heading into Thursday's free skate. "I felt super grounded and connected with my program on another level," Liu said after a performance buoyed by the presence of family members in the crowd.



Plans won't change despite mini-collapses: Kotak

India to persist with aggressive approach despite recent batting stumbles

AHMEDABAD

India batting coach Sitanshu Kotak has made it clear that the defending champions will not deviate from their aggressive blueprint in the ongoing ICC Men's T20 World Cup, despite a few stop-start performances in the league stage. India have experienced brief collapses in multiple matches. Against the USA in Mumbai, they slipped from 45/2 to 77/6. In Delhi versus Namibia, a strong platform of 205/5 turned into 205/9 in the death overs. Even in the high-voltage clash against Pakistan in Colombo, momentum dipped after Ishan Kishan's dismissal, with Tilak



Varma and Hardik Pandya falling in quick succession. However, Kotak backed the batters to stay fearless ahead of their final league fixture against the Netherlands at the Narendra Modi Stadium. "Playing aggressive cricket is important. But because of a couple of failures, plans won't change. Plans change according to the situation," Kotak

said. "It doesn't matter whether someone has scored runs in the last two innings or not. What the team needs in those conditions is more important." He cited skipper Suryakumar Yadav's measured knock against the USA as an example of situational awareness within an attacking framework. Kotak also defended Tilak Varma, who managed 25 off 24 balls against Pakistan, stating that the left-hander executed the team's plan to consolidate after an early wicket. "Sometimes if a couple of boundaries don't come,

people see it differently. But we were focused on partnerships," he said. Looking ahead, Kotak stressed that India will not treat the Netherlands clash lightly, especially with a crucial game against South Africa and potentially the final scheduled in Ahmedabad. "Momentum is important. We will play with the same intent," he added.



PACERS FIRE UP INDIA WOMEN FOR SERIES PUSH

CANBERRA

Buoyed by a clinical bowling show in the rain-curtailed opener, Harmanpreet Kaur's India will look to seal the three-match T20I series against Australia when the sides clash in the second game here on Thursday.



ery spell from seamer Arundhati Reddy, whose four-wicket burst dismantled the Australian line-up and restricted the hosts to 133 after they failed to bat out their 20

overs. Fellow pacer Renuka Singh complemented her brilliantly with two tight wickets, giving India a rare pace-driven edge in conditions that demanded discipline. Traditionally reliant on spin through Deepti Sharma and Shree Charani, India would be heartened by the six wickets shared by their quicks — a significant boost ahead of the Women's T20 World Cup in England later this year. With rain

India eye unassailable lead after commanding rain-hit series opener.

in Sydney forcing a result via the Duckworth-Lewis system, only openers Smriti Mandhana and Shafali Verma spent meaningful time at the crease. However, given the core group's recent match exposure in the Women's Premier League, the think tank remains confident about the batting unit's readiness. Jemimah Ro-

drigues, who has tormented Australia in the past, adds solidity in the middle order. Australia, under new skipper Sophie Molineux, will be desperate to bounce back and level the series. Their star-studded top order featuring Beth Mooney, Ellyse Perry and Ashleigh Gardner faltered badly in the opener, with six batters dismissed for single digits. For India, clinching the T20I rubber against the world's most successful side would not only provide momentum but also serve as an ideal dress rehearsal ahead of the global showpiece later this year.

J&K storm into maiden Ranji Trophy final



KALYANI

Jammu and Kashmir created history by entering the Ranji Trophy final for the first time in 67 years, defeating two-time champions Bengal cricket team by six wickets on day four of the semifinal on Wednesday. Chasing a modest 126 at the Bengal Cricket Academy Ground, J&K completed the task in 34.4 overs. Vanshaj Sharma remained unbeaten on 43, while Abdul Samad chipped in with an unconquered 30 as the duo stitched a crucial 55-run partnership to guide the visitors home. The foundation for the victory was laid by pace spearhead Auqib Nabi, who claimed nine wickets in the match to dismantle Bengal's batting across both innings. Bengal, after posting 328 in their first innings, were bundled out for just 99 in 25.1 overs in the second, setting up a manageable target. Jammu and Kashmir, who made their debut in the Ranji

Trophy in the 1959-60 season, had rarely been considered title contenders. Their previous best came in 2013-14 when they reached the knock-out stage after over a decade. This time, however, they went a step further to script an unprecedented chapter in their cricketing journey. Chief Minister Omar Abdullah congratulated the team, praising the players, coaches and support staff for their dedication and collective effort. "On my behalf, and on behalf of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, I extend heartfelt congratulations. I hope the day is not far when we will see players from J&K playing a very important role in the national team," he said. Calling it a triumph of teamwork, Abdullah added that the achievement would inspire young sportspersons across the Union Territory and reaffirmed the government's commitment to strengthening sports infrastructure and nurturing emerging talent.

Pakistan hockey captain blasts PHF after Australia tour fiasco

LAHORE

Pakistan hockey captain Shakeel Ammad Butt has sharply criticised the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) following what he described as a humiliating and chaotic tour of Australia during the FIH Pro League. Speaking to reporters upon arrival at Lahore airport, Butt alleged gross mismanagement by federation officials, claiming players were left stranded and without proper accommodation during the tour. "We can't work with this current management. When players have to clean the kitchen and wash dishes before going to play a match, what result do you expect from us?" an angry Butt said. According to the captain,

the team waited 13-14 hours at Sydney airport before travelling to Canberra. Matters worsened when the squad reached their hotel, only to be informed that no advance payment had been made and no booking existed in their name. The players reportedly spent hours roaming the streets before alternative arrangements were made. "What was pathetic was that accommodation was arranged for only 10 days when we had to stay 13 days. We had to move into a cheaper residence after that," Butt added. The controversy deepened after the state-run Pakistan Sports Board confirmed it had released over 10 million rupees to the PHF for the team's hotel expenses.

Tough road for Associates, says Scotland CEO Lindblade

MUMBAI

The packed international cricket calendar has made it "really tough" for Associate nations to secure meaningful exposure against established sides, Cricket Scotland chief executive Trudy Lindblade said, urging greater unity among emerging members. Scotland were not part of the original 20-team roster for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup but earned a late entry after Bangladesh declined to tour India. Placed in Group C, the Scots finished third with one win from four matches, bowing out after a defeat to Nepal. Lindblade stressed that limited access to regular fixtures remains a key hurdle. "It is really tough because that crowded

schedule is making it harder for us to get more content. We need to work collectively," she said, highlighting the need for a consolidated front among Associate members within the International Cricket Council structure. While matches against heavyweights such as England cricket team and Australia national

cricket team are valuable, Lindblade said a broader mix of competitive fixtures would better aid development. "You don't always have to play the England and Australia of the world. A

variety of opposition helps improve our cricket," she noted.

She also pointed to new opportunities, including the upcoming European T20 Premier League, where Scotland are founding partners alongside Ireland and the Netherlands. The league, she said, represents an exciting step in strengthening Europe's cricketing footprint. On Scotland's late inclusion in the World Cup, Lindblade rejected suggestions of unfairness. "I wouldn't say it's unfair. I'd take it as an opportunity," she said, adding that the team embraced the challenge with a fearless mindset. "We showed the might and fight of Scotland," she said, expressing pride in the team's spirited campaign.

Associate nations seek regular fixtures, united push for global growth.



Ravindra rediscovers touch as New Zealand enter Super 8s

CHENNAI

Rachin Ravindra admitted that chasing runs too hard only complicates matters as he returned to form with a composed unbeaten 59 to guide New Zealand national cricket team into the Super 8s of the T20 World Cup with a win over Canada on Tuesday. After an underwhelming start to the tournament across India and Sri Lanka — including illness in Mumbai and a string of low scores — the left-hander found his rhythm at the right time. His mea-

sured knock, anchored by a crucial partnership with Glenn Phillips, ensured New Zealand chased down the target comfortably. "It obviously means a lot. You always want to score runs in T20, but it's a fickle game. The more you try to search for runs, the worse it gets," Ravindra said. "It's about playing with freedom and putting the team first." Ravindra, who shot to prominence during the 2023 ODI World Cup in India, acknowledged that adapting to the shortest format remains a learning curve. "I'm still young in my career and learning every day. T20 is evolving, and some days are different," he said. He revealed that giving himself a little more time at the crease and not obsessing over strike rate helped him regain fluency. "I trusted my positions and knew the strike rate would take care of itself. Having GP at the other end took pressure off me," he added. The 26-year-old also spoke about the challenge of switching between formats and contributing with the ball when required, learning from skipper Mitchell Santner. With momentum on their side, New Zealand now look poised to carry this confidence into the Super 8 stage.



ITF W100: Sahaja rallies to storm into second round



BENGALURU

Sahaja Yamalapalli mounted a spirited comeback to overcome higher-ranked Dayeon Back of Korea in the opening round of the KPB Trust ITF Women's Open W100 at the SM Krishna Tennis Stadium. In a contest that mirrored her first-round battle at the same venue last year, India's top-ranked women's singles player battled fluctuations in form before sealing a 6-2,

1-6, 6-2 victory in two hours and 18 minutes. Ranked 416 in the world, Sahaja started brightly against the 306th-ranked Korean, striking cleanly from the baseline and holding serve comfortably to pocket the opening set. However, her rhythm deserted her in the second as unforced errors crept in and Back's relentless retrieving forced longer rallies. The Korean capitalised to level the match. With the decider finely

poised at 2-2, Sahaja rediscovered her intensity. Her forehand regained its sting and her serve found extra bite, allowing her to reel off four consecutive games and close out the match emphatically. "Yeah, it started off well. In the second, I was fighting but I wasn't feeling the ball very well. Maybe I was being too passive," Sahaja said after the match. "I regrouped in the third and that helped. Physically, I feel much

better than I did in previous tournaments." In an all-Indian clash, wild card Vaishnavi Adkar defeated Shruti Ahlawat 6-1, 7-6(6) to progress. Meanwhile, Russia's Erika Andreeva advanced after Argentina's Nicole Fossa Huergo retired early in the second set following a tight opening tie-break. The prestigious W100 event continues this week in Cubbon Park, drawing strong international participation.