

## Khamenei mourns Iran minister's death

Iran's Supreme Leader Khamenei mourns Intelligence Minister Khatib's killing, urging officials to reinforce security and resilience as US-Israeli strikes continue targeting top Iranian leadership

### TEHRAN

In Tehran, Iran's Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei expressed condolences over the killing of Intelligence Minister Esmail Khatib, addressing President Masoud Pezeshkian and urging officials to intensify efforts to safeguard national security. Iranian state media reported that Khamenei emphasised the need for resilience, stating that the loss of key figures must be offset through stronger commitment by officials within sensitive institutions.

The statement followed reports by the Israel Defense Forces claiming responsibility for Khatib's death in a targeted

### Iran vows stability after strikes

In Tehran, Iran's Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei expressed condolences over the killing of Intelligence Minister Esmail Khatib, urging officials to strengthen security and compensate for the loss of key figures. Israel claimed responsibility, linking Khatib to the Mahsa Amini protests crackdown and intelligence operations abroad. President Masoud Pezeshkian condemned the attacks as cowardly, promising continuity. Other senior officials, including IRGC spokesperson Ali Mohammad Naeini, were also killed. Iran asserts its political system remains robust despite escalating leadership losses and regional tensions.

strike in Tehran. Israeli authorities alleged that Khatib had played a significant role in suppressing protests during the Mahsa Amini protests and was involved in intelligence opera-

tions against Israeli and American interests. Iran has not independently verified all aspects of these claims but confirmed the minister's death. Further compounding ten-



sions, Iranian media also reported the killing of Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps spokesperson Ali Mohammad Naeini in joint US-Israeli strikes. These developments

come amid a series of high-profile assassinations targeting Iran's leadership following the death of Ali Khamenei in late February. Other senior figures, including Ali Larijani and Gholamreza Soleimani, have also reportedly been killed in recent strikes.

President Pezeshkian condemned the attacks as "cowardly," expressing grief over the loss of key officials while asserting that their mission would continue. Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi maintained that Iran's political system remains robust, stressing that institutional strength ensures continuity despite the loss of individual leaders.

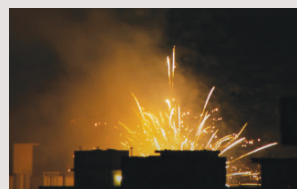
## IDF Strikes Syria Following Attacks On Druze

### TEL AVIV

The Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) confirmed overnight strikes in southern Syria targeting a command centre and military equipment in response to attacks on Druze civilians in the As-Suwayda region. The IDF, in a post on X, stated it "will not tolerate harm to the Druze people" and will continue to act for their protection, closely monitoring developments and responding according to political directives.

The strikes focused on Syrian regime military camps and infrastructure linked to recent aggression against the Druze community. Israeli media, including the Jerusalem Post, reported that Syrian internal security forces were hit with mortar shells, followed by the mobilisation of heavily armed groups from the National Guard Druze paramilitary force in As-Suwayda.

The Druze are an ethnoreligious minority living mainly in Syria and Lebanon, with around 104,000 in Israel, including approximately 18,000 in the Golan Heights. In Israel, the com-



The IDF struck Syrian military targets overnight in southern Syria after Druze civilians were attacked, pledging ongoing protection

munity holds a prominent position, with members in political, public, and military roles. According to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, minorities in Syria face abductions, sexual violence, and arbitrary detention, highlighting their vulnerability.

The IDF's action underscores Israel's commitment to protecting the Druze amid rising regional tensions in West Asia and the Gulf, following targeted killings of Iranian officials. The operation demonstrates Israel's readiness to act decisively to safeguard minority communities and maintain strategic vigilance in southern Syria.

## By-elections to two Assembly Constituencies: Surjewala holds meeting with CM, DyCM



### BENGALURU

AICC General Secretary Ran-deep Singh Surjewala held discussions on Friday in Bengaluru with Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar who is also KPCC President, about the candidates for the by-elections to Davangere and Bagalkot Assembly Constituencies.

They were closeted in the

CM's house and had a detailed discussion about the candidates for the two Assembly constituencies.

Later, at the KPCC office in Bengaluru with Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar and members of the ticket selection committee regarding the selection of party candidates for the by-elections to the Davanagere and Bagalkot Assembly constituencies, in

the presence of Surjewala.

AICC Secretaries Abhishek Dutt and Gopinath Palaniswamy, Ministers Eshwar Khandre, Zameer Ahmed Khan, Krishna Byre Gowda, Sharan Prakash Patil, Rahim Khan, Madhu Bangarappa, R.B. Thimmapur, KPCC Working President and Rajya Sabha member G.C. Chandrashekar, and others were present.

## List of candidates sent to high command: KPCC Prez

### BENGALURU

Deputy Chief Minister and KPCC President D.K. Shivakumaran said the list of candidates for the by-elections to two Assembly Constituencies, Davangere and Bagalkot has been sent to the high command which will take a final call in this regard.

Talking to reporters after the meeting, he said the commit-

tee concerned had a detailed discussion with AICC General Secretary Ranjit Singh Surjewala about the candidates for two Assembly Constituencies. There is a consensus among the leaders and all of them would work for the victory of the candidates to be announced for the two Assembly segments. All of them have agreed to work united to retain those two seats at any cost.

## TEWARI PRAISES INDIA'S WEST ASIA APPROACH

### NEW DELHI

Congress MP Manish Tewari praised the Union government's handling of the ongoing US-Israel-Iran conflict, stating India is taking the right approach by maintaining strategic balance. He emphasized that the conflict is not India's war, and a cautious, measured response safeguards national interests while avoiding direct involvement.

Tewari said multiple con-

flicts are unfolding in West Asia, and India has historically been a marginal player in the broader Middle East dynamics. "It's important to understand that there is not one war happening in West Asia. What is happening between Israel and Iran, with the United States taking a side, is not just about the Middle East dy-

namic alone," he noted.

He highlighted India's strategic autonomy, stressing that protecting the nation's energy security, including crude oil, natural gas, and fertilizers, is critical for both energy and food security. With a large diaspora of nearly 48 million people, India must navigate complex geo-



political pressures carefully. Tewari concluded that India's measured stance—favoring dialogue, restraint, and diplomacy—is prudent and helps protect national interests amid a volatile regional environment. The remarks contrast with Congress leader Rahul Gandhi questioning India's silence on the assassination of a foreign head of state, reflecting ongoing political debate over the government's policy in West Asia.

## NHRC Extends Bus Safety Compliance Deadline



### BENGALURU

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has extended the deadline for implementing mandatory passenger safety measures in public transport vehicles across Karnataka to March 31, 2026. The extension applies to all regular buses, sleeper coaches, and All India Tourist buses registered in the State, as per Case No. 1834/90/0/2025, following the earlier order issued on January 5, 2026.

The Transport and Road Safety Department stated that the extension allows operators additional time to install safety systems in line with recommendations from the Central Institute of Road Transport (CIRT) and

guidelines under Automotive Industry Standards AIS-052 and AIS-119. After March 31, strict enforcement will begin, with legal action against non-compliant operators. A final deadline for full compliance across all passenger buses is set for June 18, 2026.

Passenger safety has been a growing concern in India following multiple bus accidents. Rule 125-C of the Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989, mandates emergency exits, fire safety systems, improved seating, and structural integrity. The NHRC emphasised that safety is a fundamental right and directed the State to ensure timely compliance, aiming to reduce fatalities and improve overall commuter safety standards.

## Eid-ul-Fitr Celebrated in K'taka Today

### BENGALURU

Eid-ul-Fitr will be celebrated across Karnataka on Saturday, March 21, 2026, following an official announcement by the Markaz-e-Ruet-e-Hilal Committee, Karnataka. The decision was taken during the monthly meeting of the Central Moon Committee of Karnataka, held on Thursday, March 19 (29th of Ramadan), after Maghrib prayers at the Karnataka State Board of Aulad office, Darul Awqaf, Cunningham Road, Bengaluru.

The meeting was presided over by Mufti Iftikhar Ahmed Qasmi, Hon'ble Member of Majlis-e-Imarat, Imarat-e-Sharia, Karnataka, and a member of the Markaz-e-Ruet-e-Hilal Committee. After deliberations, the committee confirmed that the crescent moon marking the start of Shawwal 1447 Hijri was not sighted in Bengaluru or other key locations across India, including Delhi, Phulwari Sharief in Patna, and Hyderabad.

### HIGH COURT COMFORT

## Advocates seek relaxed summer dress code Karnataka

### BENGALURU

With temperatures soaring unusually early this year, the Advocates' Association, Bengaluru has urged the High Court of Karnataka to relax mandatory dress code rules for lawyers across the State. In a representation submitted to Chief Justice Justice Vibhu Bakhru, the Bar Association, Bengaluru President Vivek Subba Reddy highlighted that Karnataka is already experiencing intense summer conditions from the second week of March—earlier than the typical onset between the third and last weeks of the month. Citing the prevailing heat-



wave-like conditions, the Association has requested exemption from wearing coats in all trial courts across Karnataka. It has proposed that the relaxation come into effect immediately, preferably from March 18, or at the latest from March 23, when courts reopen after the Ugadi festival. The representation further noted that the situation is equally challenging in High Court benches at Bengaluru, Dhar-

wad and Kalaburagi. Lawyers have found it "unbearable" to adhere to the traditional requirement of wearing gowns under the current weather conditions. Accordingly, the Association has sought exemption from wearing gowns in High Court benches as well. The proposed relaxation, the Association suggested, may remain in force until June 15, by which time the monsoon is expected to set in fully and bring relief from the heat. The Association has also requested the Chief Justice to direct the court registry to issue necessary notifications at the earliest in view of the health and comfort of advocates.

## Veterinarian doc dies in Hippopotamus Attack in Shivamogga Zoo

### SHIVAMOGGA

A veterinarian, Dr. Sameeksha Reddy, who had gone to examine a pregnant hippopotamus at the Tyavarekoppa Tiger and Lion Safari in Shivamogga, was suddenly attacked by the animal. She was admitted to Max Super Speciality Hospital in Shivamogga, where she underwent surgery, but succumbed to her injuries at around 6:30 am on March 20 despite treatment.

Dr. Sameeksha Reddy, 27, a native of Bengaluru, had recently been selected as a Veterinarian Officer and was undergoing training under the zoo's veterinary team. On March 19 at around 10:30 pm, she had visited the zoo hospital to provide follow-up treatment to a Sun Conure bird. Later, at about 11:45 pm, while checking the temperature of a pregnant hippopotamus using a thermal camera, the animal suddenly attacked her, according to the Deputy Conservator of Forests and Executive Director of the Tiger and Lion Safari.



### MINISTER CONDOLES DEATH

Forest, Ecology and Environment Minister Eshwar B. Khandre has expressed his condolences over the incident. Calling it a tragic incident, the minister said that the government stands with the bereaved family during this difficult time. "Every life is precious. May God give strength to the family to bear this loss," he prayed. He has instructed officials to provide compensation to the family of the deceased doctor as per norms without delay. He also emphasized that veterinarians in all zoos across the state must strictly follow Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) while treating wild animals.

Further, Khandre has ordered an inquiry into the incident by a team comprising senior veterinarians and forest officials, and directed that a report be submitted within seven days.

QUICK READ

22 men booked for wheelie stunts

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**  
In a special drive, traffic police booked 22 men on charges of performing wheelie stunts to celebrate Shab-e-Qadr in KR Pura limits. They were performing stunts near the junctions of Medahalli and Bhattarahalli, police said. Following a tipoff, a team of cops in plain-clothes was deployed at the junctions. When the riders assembled and started performing stunts, they were detained and their two-wheelers seized.

Ticketless travel in BMTC buses, 2,317 people fined

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**  
2,317 passengers have been fined for travelling without tickets in BMTC buses in the month of December.  
In December, 16,397 trips were inspected. Those travelling without tickets were identified and a fine of Rs 5,08,910 was collected from them. Cases have been registered against 1,445 operators of dereliction of duty.  
BMTC officials said that 229 male passengers were fined Rs 22,900 for sitting in seats reserved for women passengers.

Wife files complaint as husband refuses 'First Night', alleges dowry

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**  
In a shocking case reported from Bengaluru, a married woman has approached the police accusing her husband and his family of harassment, abuse, and denial of the 'first night' even months after their wedding. The incident has come to light from Subramanyapura, where the woman filed a complaint at a women's police station. As per her statement, she was married to Raghavendra, a resident of Gubbalala in the same locality. However, she has alleged that from the very day of the wedding, her husband refused to consummate the marriage and avoided any physical relationship.  
The woman stated that despite entering into marriage with expectations of a normal married life, her husband continuously kept his distance and did not agree to the 'first night', causing her deep mental distress. She has described this behaviour as a form of ongoing psychological harassment.  
Adding to her allegations, the complainant said that even though gold jewellery and valuables were given during the wedding, her husband and his family continued to demand dowry. She has accused multiple family members of subjecting her to both mental and physical abuse.

SETBACK FOR POLICE OFFICER

Panel Confirms DGP Ramachandra Rao Videos Not Doctored

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**

The investigation into sleaze videos purportedly involving suspended DGP Ramachandra Rao has taken a fresh turn, with a special probe committee ruling out claims that the clips were AI-generated. These videos are neither deepfakes nor edited versions, the panel said in its report to the state govt. Following this, the Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms issued a notice to Rao, paving the way for a

Idols, broken pots emerge from desilted Ulsoor lake

Deep desilting of Ulsoor Lake uncovers clay pot fragments, stone sculptures, and heaps of household waste debris

**CH NEWSBENGALURU**

Shards of clay pots and idols raised questions about their archaeological significance. An inspection by the department of archaeology on February 25 said most of the 14 sculptures discovered during the desilting process are modern. Experts said the idols may have been discarded into the lake during renovation or reconstruction of nearby temples. They do not hold significant historical value, according to Bengaluru Central City Corporation.  
One Ganesha idol of 200-year vintage, has been handed over to the department for its likely antiquity value. The Rs 24-crore project aims to increase the lake's depth, improve water storage and raise groundwater table in the neighbourhood. The lake has 15 acres of wetland and the



rest is primary waterbody. The lake was drained out in Jan and desilting started in February. Nearly 10 percent moisture remains in the desilted lakebed. The sight of the partially drained lake triggered reactions online, linking it to Bengaluru's ongoing water concerns.  
Saying the previous desilting was done nearly 30 years ago and bunds needed to be

repaired, Shivajinagar MLA Rizwan Arshad Khan said the desilting was essential to remove decades of sediment accumulation and restore the lake's capacity. The lake requires beautification too, he said.  
Rajendra Cholan, Bengaluru Central City Corporation Commissioner, explained that the project would also help raise groundwater levels in

surrounding areas. Removing the thick silt layer will allow the lake to store fresh rainwater more effectively in the coming seasons, Cholan said.  
We cannot accurately measure the total volume of silt removed because its moisture content varies, an official part of the cleanup explained. As part of beautification, the lake will get a two-level walkway and its bunds will be strengthened. The walkway will provide citizens a safe and convenient path for walking, Cholan said. A bridge linking the lake to a nearby park is under construction. The neighbouring park will be developed with new plant species to enhance greenery and biodiversity. Officials noted the increased water depth could make a part of the lake suitable for training by National Disaster Response Force.

Ex-student steals over Rs 5 lakh gold jewellery from Professor's home

**CH NEWSBENGALURU**

A private college professor has filed a complaint against her former student, who allegedly entered her house in Banasawadi on the pretext of using the restroom and stole gold ornaments worth over Rs 5 lakh. The teacher, Dr Sheela Anthony, caught the accused, identified as Elizabeth, red-handed and recovered her mangalya chain. However, she later found a gold necklace with a ruby pendant missing.

In her complaint, the professor said the woman visited her house on March 11 and introduced herself as a former student. She requested permission to use the restroom, which the complainant allowed. Soon after, she noticed that her cupboard had been opened and a stool was placed nearby. On checking, she found Elizabeth attempting to steal gold ornaments. However, fearing for her safety, she allowed Elizabeth to leave without raising an alarm. In

the following days, Elizabeth reportedly returned to the area multiple times, making inquiries about the professor, raising suspicion. When the complainant later checked her valuables, she found that a gold necklace with a ruby pendant, weighing around 45 grams and worth over Rs 5 lakh, was missing. A senior officer said a case has been registered under BNS Section 305 (theft in a dwelling house, or place of worship, etc.) at Banasawadi police station.

Three injured in gas cylinder explosion

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**

Three persons were seriously injured after a gas cylinder exploded at Chandanahosahalli village in Nelamangala taluk on Thursday. The injured have been identified as Abhinandan, Abhishek and Ram Bachchan and have been admitted to Victoria Hospital in Bengaluru for further treatment.  
Most of the contents of the house were burnt due to the intensity of the explosion. A case has been registered at Dabaspet police station in connection with the incident.

Byte of revenge, sacked youth loots Rs 80 Lakh computer parts with dad

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**

Wearing a burqa and with his face concealed by a dupatta, a 21-year-old gained entry into a shop in HBR Layout and made away with high-value computer components worth Rs 80 lakh. The accused, Hemanth M's partner in crime was his 45-year-old father M Manjunath, a resident of T Channaiah Layout in Nagawara. The father-son duo has landed in the custody of Govindapura police. They fled with 444 RAM units and 279 SSDs from Nitish Computers on the night of March 14. Police recovered the entire haul from Manjunath's grocery shop. According to the complaint filed by shop owner G Raghun, he had shut his store around 1.40am on March 14.



When he returned at 11am the next day, he found the cupboard lock broken and Rs 2.4 lakh in cash missing, along with the electronic items. Govindapura Police Inspector PB Kiran and his team examined CCTV footage installed in the shop, which showed burqa-clad accused opening the shutter using a key and entering the shop at 2am. He first stole cash from the cabin, then took RAMs and hard disks packed in carton boxes, and fled in six minutes.  
He wore gloves in a bid to

prevent leaving fingerprints. Hemanth was arrested in Chanakya Layout, Nagawara, on March 15. He confessed to committing the theft with the help of his father, who was arrested subsequently.  
Hemanth, who had completed his Second year PUC, was working as a technician in Raghun's shop but was sacked a month ago. His younger brother was also employed at the same shop. After gaining experience under Raghun, Hemanth had started his own computer service store. A few years ago, Raghun's financial situation was precarious, and he had lived as a tenant in Manjunath's house. Over time, he improved his circumstances, set up his own shop, bought a plot, and built a home. Given their close relationship, Raghun had even provided jobs to both of Manjunath's sons. However, after being dismissed, Hemanth and Manjunath reportedly turned against Raghun, disregarding his past support, and conspired to steal from him. According to police, Manjunath dropped Hemanth near the shop on their scooter and waited nearby. After stealing the computer components, the duo fled the scene on the same vehicle.  
Hemanth was aware that Raghun used to keep the shop keys in his scooter's storage box. On March 13, he borrowed Raghun's scooter on the pretext of bringing an LPG gas cylinder, got duplicate keys made, and later used them to open the shop shutter, police said.

Apex Association.  
The celebrations will conclude with a traditional banana leaf dinner for about 1,000 residents. But beyond the rituals, the celebration carries a deeper message, said Hunaid Topiwala, Vice-President of Mantri Pinnacle Residents' Association.

Apartment communities are prepping for Ugadi and Ram Navami

**CH NEWS, BENGALOURU**

Community bonds grow stronger with every shared festival. Apartments across the city are celebrating Ugadi, the traditional New Year of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and some parts of Kerala and Tamil Nadu, in a

spirit of joy, cultural pride, and harmony. The festivities will include traditional decorations with mango leaves, rangoli at home entrances, devotional prayers, and the sharing of Ugadi Pachadi, symbolising the many flavours of life and the wisdom to accept them with grace.

Parkwest residents celebrated Ugadi at Club Uno with a series of cultural and festive activities. The event featured Panchanga Shravana, a comedy talk by MS Narasimha Murthy, a cultural quiz, karaoke, and a rangoli competition, said Ajay Kumar TR, president of the Parkwest

'Parabhava year will bring good rains, economic growth'

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**

Explaining the astrological outlook for the year, Somayaji said Parabhava Samvatsara will be an Adhika Masa year with 13 months, and notably no eclipses will occur during the entire year. He clarified though Amavasya continues until 6.42am on March 19, there is no confusion and the entire day will be observed as Ugadi. He predicted that the IT industry will continue to maintain demand, and the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on jobs may not be immediate, though some job losses are possible.

Manufacturing industries are also expected to increase their workforce. Somayaji said good rainfall across the country, including spells of excess rain, is likely and will boost agricultural production. Food grains and oilseeds are expected to record good output. However, sugar industries and sugarcane farmers may face some setbacks and conflicts during the year. According to him, prices of steel, cement, gold, silver and copper are likely to rise, while the share market is expected to gain strength, with several IPOs likely to succeed and the secondary market witnessing growth.

Industries such as pharmaceuticals, chemicals and mining, including iron ore, are expected to perform well. Engineering industries, including automotive, components and machinery manufacturing, may see a boost in production and exports. Domestic retail consumption is expected to remain strong, while exports could show mixed results. He said sectors such as hospitality, tourism and real estate are likely to witness a boom. India is also expected to attract higher foreign



Overall, Somayaji said the Parabhava year indicates a bright and promising future for India, with growth expected in sectors such as dairy, animal feed, meat and leather exports.

**Sringeri Sharada Peetham Dharmadhipati Daivajna KN Somayaji said Parabhava Nama Samvatsara, the Hindu New Year beginning on Ugadi on Thursday, indicates a bright and promising future for India.**

eign direct investment, while government monetisation activities may increase. Power production is expected to remain satisfactory and petroleum production and distribution may improve. However, Somayaji cautioned that the year could also witness severe winter, heavy rains and political clashes, with possibilities of communal tensions in parts of northern and western India. Bordering countries may continue to create disturbances, though India is expected to successfully counter them. He also noted the possibility of a major scam involving political leaders or bureaucrats and the demise of a prominent national leader, which could significantly influence national politics.

Engineer by day, gun runner by night, Bhopal man linked to Bengaluru arms supply arrested

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**

Sleuths of the Central Crime Branch (CCB) have arrested a 34-year-old man from Madhya Pradesh for allegedly supplying country-made pistols and live ammunition to a businessman in Bengaluru. The accused, Syed Irfan Hyder Rizwi, a civil engineer and resident of Bhopal, was nabbed following the arrest of two youths earlier this month. In the earlier operation, CCB police had arrested Syed Masood from Jayanagar and Javed Alam, also from Bhopal, after recovering a country-made pistol and live bullets from Masood, who is a businessman. During interrogation, Masood told police that he had purchased the weapon for around Rs 40,000 with Alam's help.  
He claimed he was in a relationship



opposed by the girl's family and had bought the pistol for self-protection after receiving threats. Police said Alam acted as a middleman, facilitating illegal firearm deals. Based on his statement, Rizwi was traced and arrested. According to investigators, Rizwi revealed that he had sourced the weapon from a man in Indore allegedly involved in manufacturing illegal firearms. We will question Rizwi further to gather more details and are working to identify and arrest the manufacturer, a senior police officer said.

BMTC Electric Bus Crashes into Depot After Driver Error

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**

A case of alleged negligence by a BMTC driver led to an unusual accident inside a bus depot in Bengaluru during the early hours of Friday.

The incident took place around 6:40 am at the Peenya 2nd Stage BMTC depot. According to initial information, an electric bus belonging to BMTC moved on its own and crashed into a part of the depot after the driver reportedly parked it without applying the handbrake. The bus, identified with registration number KA51-AK4169, is said to have rolled forward uncontrollably. In its path, it hit four two-wheelers parked within the depot premises, causing visible damage to the vehicles. The situation escalated when the



bus continued moving and eventually rammed into the traffic controller's room located within the depot. The impact caused damage to the structure, raising concerns about safety within depot premises. Officials indicated that the driver had left the bus stationary but failed to secure it properly using the handbrake. This lapse is believed to have resulted in the vehicle moving forward on its own.



LITTLE BIRDS, BIG MESSAGE



MYSURU UNITES FOR WORLD SPARROW DAY

MYSURU

On a bright morning in Bogadi, the gentle flutter of wings and the hopeful chatter of nature lovers filled the air as People for Animals (PFA), Mysuru, celebrated World Sparrow Day with a heartfelt mission — to bring back the tiny companions that once defined everyday life.

Held at the PFA shelter, the awareness programme titled “Save Sparrows” transformed a quiet space into a lively hub of compassion, creativity, and conservation. This year’s theme, “Save Sparrows – A Call to Protect Our Disappearing Urban Companions,” struck a deep emotional chord with participants, reminding them of a time when sparrows

were a constant presence in courtyards, rooftops, and windowills.

**Today, that familiar chirping has faded into an unsettling silence.**

Once an inseparable part of urban life, sparrows are now rapidly disappearing due to shrinking green spaces, pollution, and changing lifestyles. Recognizing this alarming decline, the event aimed to inspire citizens to take small but meaningful steps to restore the fragile balance of urban biodiversity.

As the programme unfolded between 11:30 AM and 1:30 PM, visitors were welcomed into a series of engaging and impactful activities. One of the highlights was the distribution of eco-friendly spar-

row nest boxes, carefully designed to provide safe breeding spaces for the birds within city homes. Families eagerly collected these boxes, many expressing their excitement to “invite sparrows back” into their lives.

Adding to the initiative, water bowls were distributed to help birds and animals cope with the rising urban heat. Volunteers demonstrated how even a simple act like placing a bowl of water on a balcony or terrace could become a lifeline for thirsty creatures struggling in concrete landscapes.

A noted pran healing trainer, B.Vaibhav was the chief guest over the function, and he explained the importance of the sparrows in bal-



ancing the environment.

Blending innovation with awareness, a unique sparrow-themed educational board game drew the attention of children and adults alike. Created by Kokila Ramesh Jain, the game turned learning into an enjoyable experience, teaching participants about

the challenges sparrows face and the importance of protecting them. Laughter, curiosity, and thoughtful discussions filled the space as families gathered around the game, rediscovering their connection with nature.

The programme also included the planting of sap-

lings, symbolizing hope and renewal. Each sapling planted was more than just greenery — it was a promise to create safer habitats and greener surroundings for birds and other urban wildlife.

Speaking on the occasion, Savitha Nagabhushan from People for Animals, Mysuru, emphasized the deeper significance of the initiative. “Sparrows are not just birds; they are indicators of the health of our environment. Their disappearance is a warning we cannot ignore. Through this initiative, we hope to inspire every citizen to take small, compassionate steps because even placing a bowl of water or a nest box can bring life back to our surroundings,” she said.

Her words resonated with the gathering, reinforcing the idea that conservation begins at home and thrives through collective effort.

As the event concluded, participants left not just with nest boxes and saplings, but with a renewed sense of responsibility. The chirping of sparrows may have faded, but in Mysuru, a determined effort has begun to bring it back.

This World Sparrow Day, People for Animals Mysuru didn’t just host an event — they sparked a movement. A movement that calls upon every citizen, student, and nature lover to act with compassion, because saving sparrows is ultimately about preserving the delicate harmony of urban life.

“ Save the Endangered Sparrow Population for Future Generations”

MYSURU

Former Zoo Authority Chairman L.R. Mahadevaswamy urged citizens to protect sparrows, which are on the verge of extinction, and ensure their survival for future generations.

Speaking at a World Sparrow Day celebration organized by the KMPK Trust in front of Maharaja Grounds in the city on Friday, he said that sparrows were rapidly disappearing in recent times. If sparrows survive, they can experience a healthier environment. “ We grew up alongside sparrows, and maintaining ecological balance is very important. Not just sparrows, but many bird species are facing extinction”.

The event was inaugurated by placing water bowls for birds and providing them with food and water.

He pointed out that the increasing use of pesticides in agriculture is toxic and has contributed to the death of



sparrows. Saving sparrows means saving the environment. Humans alone should not survive—we must create conditions where all living beings can thrive.

Mahadevaswamy noted that there are more than 25 species of sparrows, but their population is now declining. “Human activities have become a major threat. The lack of a suitable habitat is a key reason for their decline. It is our responsibility to conserve sparrows for the next genera-

tion,” he said.

Recalling the past, he said sparrows were once commonly seen during childhood, but today they are rarely spotted. Many bird species, including sparrows, are now on the brink of extinction. Feeding birds should not be limited to just one day. It is important to provide water and food to birds every day. People should install water bowls at their homes to support birds. The increasing number of vehicles, more than population

growth, is contributing to environmental degradation and threatening small animals and birds. “Environmental protection is the responsibility of every citizen. Birds and animals often give early signs of climate changes, so we must coexist harmoniously and provide them food and water, especially during harsh summer conditions,” he said.

On the occasion, placards with slogans were displayed to spread awareness, including: “Let us save sparrows for ecological balance”, “Protect animals and birds from the scorching summer heat” and “Create awareness to conserve the disappearing sparrow species”

Among those present were former member Lakshmidevi, BJP Mahila Morcha President Renuka Raj, former corporator Jagadish, KMPK Trust President Vikram Iyengar, anchor Ajay Shastri, S.N. Rajesh, Byrathi Lingaraju, Chakrapani, Suchindra, and others.

FREE HEALTH CHECKUP CAMP HELD

MYSURU

On the occasion of International Women’s Day and the Ugadi festival, a free health checkup camp was organized by New Priyadarshi Hospital and Pranava Charitable Trust for the public at Basavanagudi and Kumbhar Koppalu in Mysuru.

As part of the camp, free blood pressure (BP) and diabetes screenings were conducted, along with doctor consultations for the attend-

ees. Additionally, Sandeep, the Manager of Pranava Charitable Trust, provided information about the financial assistance offered by the Trust to cancer patients. Dr. Nagappa from New Priyadarshi Hospital also educated the public about the HPV vaccine and its importance. The hospital’s Marketing Manager Niranjana, along with staff members Lakshmi and Dimple, were present during the camp.

The camp received a good response from the public.



HEARING IMPAIRED KIDS CELEBRATE BIRTHDAY OF THE INSTITUTE’S FOUNDER

MYSURU

On the birthday of founder of the Institute Wg. Cdr. K K SRINIVASAN, founder’s day was celebrated in Institute of mother and Deaf child run by parents Association of Deaf children. Floral tribute was

paid to him and his vision and dedication with which he started this school was explained to mothers and children. Vijaya Shivanna, Kavitha, Ashwini Patil, Neelu Singh, Shashidara Shetty, Reeta Shetty, Ashwini, Parimala Murthy along with children were present.

Neem and Jaggery Shared to Spread Hindu–Muslim Harmony

MYSURU

Members of the Krishna Raja Yuva Balaga distributed neem and jaggery at Nanjungalige Circle to convey a message of communal harmony on the occasion of Ugadi and Ramzan festivals. As part of the celebration, Hindu members offered neem and jaggery to their Muslim brothers, and both communities exchanged

festival greetings warmly. They also extended greetings to police personnel by distributing neem and jaggery.

Among those present were Basavaraj Basappa, President of KR Bank, G. Raghavendra, Teertha Kumar, S.N. Rajesh, Nasir Pasha, Mohibe Sharif, Munawar Pasha, Ansar Pasha, San Hula, Naveen Kempri, Ravi Nadan, Balaraju, Ananttaraju, and others.



Karnataka leadership drama pauses, power play takes political breather

SHYAM SUNDAR VATTAM

The simmering leadership tussle in Karnataka has hit a temporary pause, as the Indian National Congress high command shifts its full focus to crucial Assembly elections across five states. For now, the high-stakes battle for the Chief Minister’s chair has been pushed to the backburner, buying time—and perhaps relief—for the incumbent.

At the heart of the political chessboard lies Deputy Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar, whose supporters have been increasingly vocal about elevating him to the top post. The current Chief Minister, Siddaramaiah, continues to hold firm, even as speculation swirls in party corridors.

Shivakumar, popularly known as the “Kanakapura Bande” (boulder of Kanakapura), has made no secret of his ambitions. He has reportedly conveyed his claim to the party leadership multiple times. However, with the Congress leadership in Delhi preoccupied with electoral battles, there is little room for internal reshuffling in Karnataka at this moment.

The party’s central leadership is treading cautiously. A leadership change at this juncture could prove politically risky, as not all MLAs are aligned with Shivakumar’s elevation. Internal divisions could weaken the party’s unity ahead of the 2028 Assembly elections, where anti-incumbency is already looming large. Adding to the complexity is the government’s heavy expenditure—nearly ₹60,000 crore—on its flagship



“five guarantees” scheme. While aimed at consolidating voter support, these welfare measures have not fully assured leaders of electoral success in the next polls. In a strategic move to divert Shivakumar’s attention, the high command assigned him responsibilities in Assam, where the party faces an uphill battle. Though he has made a few visits, the assignment appears more like a political balancing act than a genuine power shift. Similarly, he was tasked with safeguarding Congress MLAs from Odisha amid fears of poaching—an assignment he handled effectively, despite some setbacks during Rajya Sabha cross-voting.

For the Congress, the immediate priority is clear: win electoral ground elsewhere rather than stir internal storms in Karnataka. With the Election Commission of India announcing poll dates, senior leaders are now immersed in campaign mode and are unlikely to revisit Karnataka’s leadership question before early May.

For Siddaramaiah, this lull offers a much-needed breather. But for Shivakumar, the wait could feel like an eternity—over a month of political uncertainty as he eyes the top post. Until the dust settles on the election battlefield, Karnataka’s leadership saga remains in cold storage, its next chapter waiting to unfold.

No power supply today

MYSURU

Due to fourth-quarter maintenance work at the 220/66/11 kV Hootagalli Receiving Station and the 66/11 kV Hebbal, Metagalli, and Udbur power distribution centers, there will be a power disruption on March 21 from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM.

Details of affected areas:

Hootagalli Receiving Station (220/66/11 kV):

Areas around Automotive Axle, roads near Rane (Madras), HT Raket Bensar, Koor-galli Industrial Area, Hootagalli Industrial Area, Old Lunars, Theorems, Spectra Pipes, Varsha Cable, L&T, Wipro Lights, Shriram Engineers, Rajat Battery, RPG Cable, Jimco, Spy, Empro Concrete, Damden Apartments, Hinakal Ashraya Housing Scheme, and nearby localities.

Hebbal Distribution Center (66/11 kV): Hebbal and surrounding areas, Kumbharakoppalu, Toll Gate, Vanivilas Layout, Mahadeshwara Layout, Subhash Nagar, Surya Bakery area, Vijayanagar, Railway Layout, Abhishek Circle, Madegowda Circle, MG Koppalu, Outer Ring Road, Hampi Circle, Sangam Circle, Archaeology Office surroundings, KIADB Industrial Housing Layout, areas around L&T factory, Rane Madras surroundings, and EHT consumers including JK Tyres and Mysore Steels. Metagalli Distribution Center (66/11 kV):

Hebbal Industrial Area, Metagalli, Brindavan Layout, Lokanayaka Nagar, Jayadeva Nagar, BM Sreenagar, Hebbal Outer Ring Road, HPCL Gas Plant surroundings, Hebbal 1st, 2nd and 3rd Stage, Subrahmanya Nagar, Basavanagudi, SBM Bank surroundings, Hebbal Colony, Hebbal Main Road, Lakshmikanta Nagar, Sankranti Circle, Golden Bakery area, KIADB Layout, Mayura Circle, Kaveri Circle, Military Quarters, RBI area, Vikrant Main Plant, Shivamogga Steels surroundings, Belagola Industrial Area, KRS Road, Bhairaveshwara Nagar, Basaveshwara Nagar, Metagalli Industrial Area and nearby regions. Udbur Distribution Center (66/11 kV):

Dhanagalli, Salundi, Kellahalli, Udbur, T. Katur and surrounding areas.

Power supply will also be disrupted for EHT consumers including M/s JK Tyre Main & Radial Plant and M/s Sid-erforce, according to the Executive Engineer of the VV Mohalla Division.

## QUICK READ

## Youth Perform Dangerous Bike Stunts on Chennai Expressway

## Hoskote

According to reports, several youths gathered on the Chennai Expressway and engaged in risky wheeling and stunt riding, putting not only their own lives at risk but also endangering other motorists. Eyewitnesses and videos circulating on social media show the group parking their bikes in the middle of the highway and performing stunts in an unregulated and hazardous manner. The incident is said to have occurred during early morning hours when traffic was still present on the road. Shockingly, the youths were seen performing wheeling from both sides of the highway simultaneously, creating a chaotic and potentially deadly situation for commuters. The reckless stunts disrupted the normal flow of traffic and forced other drivers to slow down or maneuver carefully to avoid accidents.

## Acid Attack: Officials Visit Victims Undergoing Treatment in Davanagere

## Chitradurga

According to official information released on March 20, two women and three children who were injured in the acid attack are currently undergoing treatment at S.S. Hospital in Davanagere. The unfortunate incident occurred on March 19 at around 5:30 pm in Malappanahatti locality of Chitradurga city, leaving the victims with severe injuries. On Friday, Member Secretary of the District Legal Services Authority and Senior Civil Judge M. Vijay visited the hospital to inquire about the condition of the victims. During the visit, he interacted with the medical staff and obtained detailed information regarding the treatment being provided and the current health status of those injured in the attack. Deputy Director of the Women and Child Development Department, K.H. Vijayakumar, was also present during the visit.



## Action Initiated to Dissolve Hullikatte Milk Producers Cooperative Society

## Challakere

According to an official release issued on March 20 by the concerned authorities, action has been taken to dissolve the Hullikatte Milk Producers Cooperative Society functioning in Hullikatte village of Challakere taluk. The move is part of administrative proceedings carried out under relevant cooperative regulations. The Samapana Adhikari (Liquidation Officer) of the cooperative society has stated that individuals who may be affected by the proposed dissolution have been given an opportunity to raise objections. As per the notice, such individuals must submit their objections in writing within seven days from the date of publication of the announcement.

## Man Dies at Huliya Police Station; Villagers Stage Protest

Tension gripped Chikkanayakanahalli after a man reportedly died while in custody at the Huliya Police Station. The incident triggered outrage among local residents, leading to protests by villagers who demanded accountability and a thorough investigation into the circumstances surrounding the death

## CHIKKANAYAKANAHALLI

According to initial reports, the deceased individual was at the Huliya Police Station for reasons that are yet to be officially clarified. News of his death spread rapidly across nearby villages, sparking anger and suspicion among the public. Villagers alleged possible negligence or foul play, though authorities have not confirmed these claims.

Soon after the incident came to light, a large number of residents gathered near the



police station, raising slogans and demanding justice for the deceased. The protest intensified as villagers insisted on immediate action against those responsible, along with a transparent inquiry into the

matter. Many protesters expressed distrust in the preliminary information provided by officials and called for higher authorities to intervene.

Police officials attempted to pacify the crowd, assuring them that a proper investigation would be conducted. Senior officers were reportedly deployed to the spot to bring the situation under control and to engage with community leaders. Authorities also indicated that further details would be shared after a formal inquiry is initiated.

The incident has raised serious concerns about custodial safety and police procedures in the region. Human rights advocates and local leaders have urged the administration to handle the case with sensitivity and ensure that justice is served without delay. As tensions remain high in Chikkanayakanahalli, officials are closely monitoring the situation to prevent any escalation. Further updates are expected as the investigation progresses and more facts come to light.

*A tragic road accident near Durgavara in Challakere claimed the life of a bike rider, sending shockwaves through the local community*

## Bike Rider Killed in Accident Near Durgavara

## CHALLAKERE

According to initial reports, the accident occurred near Durgavara on the outskirts of Challakere. The deceased, who was riding a motorcycle, reportedly lost control of the vehicle or collided with another vehicle under circumstances that are still being investigated. The impact of the accident was severe, leading to fatal injuries.

Local residents who wit-

nessed the incident immediately rushed to the spot and attempted to assist the victim. However, due to the seriousness of the injuries, the bike rider succumbed before he could receive medical attention. Police were soon informed, and a team arrived at the scene to conduct a preliminary inspection.

Authorities have shifted the body to a nearby hospital for post-mortem examination to determine the exact cause

of death. The identity of the deceased is yet to be officially confirmed, and efforts are underway to inform the family members.

Police officials have registered a case and initiated an investigation into the incident. They are examining whether overspeeding, negligent driving, or poor road conditions contributed to the accident.

Eyewitness statements are also being recorded to piece

together the sequence of events leading up to the mishap.

The accident has sparked fresh concerns among residents about road safety measures in the area. Locals have urged authorities to implement stricter traffic regulations and improve road infrastructure to prevent such tragedies in the future. Further details are expected to emerge as the investigation progresses.

## Burglars Break Into Mobile Shop Near Nelamangala Town Police Station

## NEELAMANGALA

In a daring incident, burglars broke into a mobile shop located just a short distance from the Nelamangala Town Police Station, raising serious concerns about security in the area. The theft, carried out under the nose of law enforcement, has shocked local residents and shop owners.

According to preliminary reports, the incident took place late at night when unidentified miscreants targeted a mobile shop situated within close proximity to the Nelamangala Town Police Station.

Despite the presence of a police station nearby, the burglars managed to execute the break-in without immediate detection.

The accused reportedly forced open the shop's shutter or door to gain entry and proceeded to steal several mobile phones, accessories, and possibly cash.

The exact value of the stolen items is yet to be officially confirmed, but initial estimates suggest significant losses for the shop owner.

The incident came to light early in the morning when the shop owner arrived to open

the store and found signs of forced entry. Shocked by the burglary, the owner immediately informed the police, following which a team rushed to the spot and began an investigation.

Police officials have conducted a preliminary inspection of the scene and are collecting evidence, including fingerprints and CCTV footage from nearby establishments.

Authorities believe that the burglars may have conducted prior surveillance before carrying out the crime, given the location's proximity to the

police station.

The incident has triggered concern among local traders, who have expressed fear over rising theft cases in the area. Many have questioned how such a crime could occur so close to a police station and have demanded increased night patrolling and better security measures.

Police have registered a case and launched a search for the accused. Efforts are underway to identify and apprehend those involved in the burglary. Further updates are expected as the investigation progresses.

## Villagers Protest Against Rash Driving of Private Company Buses

## BAIRADENAHALLI

Residents of Bairadenahalli staged a protest against the reckless movement of private company buses, alleging that the vehicles were being driven in a dangerous and uncontrolled manner. The villagers blocked the buses and demanded immediate action to ensure road safety in their area.

According to local sources, the protest erupted after repeated complaints about private company buses being driven rashly through Bairadenahalli village. Villagers alleged that the bus drivers were overspeeding, ignoring traffic norms, and posing a serious threat to pedestrians, schoolchildren, and other motorists.



On the day of the protest, a large number of villagers gathered on the main road and stopped several private buses from proceeding further. The protesters raised slogans against the bus operators and demanded stricter enforcement of traffic rules. They expressed frustration over the lack of response from authorities despite multiple earlier complaints.

Residents stated that the situation had become increasingly dangerous, with several near-miss incidents reported in recent days. Parents, in particular, voiced concern for the safety of children who use the same roads to commute to school. Elderly residents also highlighted the risks posed by the speeding buses in narrow village lanes.

The protest caused tempo-

rary disruption to traffic, as buses were halted for a significant period. Police officials later arrived at the scene and held discussions with the protesters to calm the situation. Authorities assured the villagers that necessary action would be taken against drivers found violating traffic rules.

Officials also indicated that measures such as increased monitoring, stricter checks, and possible penalties for negligent driving would be implemented. The bus operators have been warned to ensure that their drivers adhere to safety norms and avoid reckless behavior.

The protest reflects growing concerns over road safety in rural areas, where heavy vehicles often pass through narrow roads.

## CHALLAKERE GAMBLING RAID

## Police Raid Gambling Den in Challakere, ₹85,390 Seized

## CHALLAKERE

According to official sources, the raid took place in a suspected location within Challakere where several individuals had allegedly gathered to participate in gambling. Acting swiftly on a tip-off, a team of police personnel conducted the operation and caught the accused red-handed while they were engaged in betting activities.

During the raid, the police seized ₹85,390 in cash, which



is believed to have been used for gambling purposes. In addition to the cash, officers also confiscated playing cards and other materials associated with the illegal activity. Several individuals present at the scene were detained for questioning, and cases have been registered against them under relevant legal provisions.

Police officials stated that illegal gambling not only violates the law but also has wider social consequences, including financial instability and disputes

among families. They emphasized that such activities can lead to addiction and other criminal behavior if left unchecked.

The operation is part of an ongoing effort by the Challakere police to crack down on unlawful practices and maintain public order. Authorities have warned that strict action will be taken against anyone found involved in similar activities. They also encouraged citizens to cooperate with law enforcement by providing information about illegal opera-

tions in their localities. Further investigation is currently underway to determine whether the detained individuals are part of a larger network involved in organized gambling. Police are also examining whether such activities have been recurring in the area.

The raid sends a strong message that law enforcement agencies are vigilant and committed to taking action against illegal activities to ensure safety and discipline within the community.

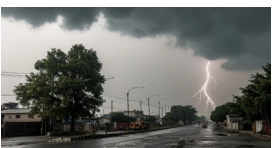


QUICK READ



Hoax Gas Bomb Threat Email At Press Club

**MUMBAI**  
The Mumbai Press Club received a hoax email on Friday claiming gas bombs were planted inside and would explode at 1 pm. Police and security agencies quickly rushed to the spot and carried out a detailed search. Teams from the Bomb Detection and Disposal Squad and dog squads checked the entire building but found nothing suspicious. The sender, who identified as Neerja Ajmal Khan, also made political claims. Cyber teams have begun an investigation to trace the source of the email.



Thunderstorms And Rain Lash Madhya Pradesh Districts

**BHOPAL**  
Scattered but intense rain hit parts of Madhya Pradesh on Friday, bringing thunderstorms and lightning across several districts. The India Meteorological Department issued a yellow alert warning of gusty winds up to 50 kmph in areas like Bhopal, Indore, and Gwalior. Light to moderate rain is expected to continue over the next few days. Farmers have been advised to avoid outdoor work during storms. The showers brought relief from heat but caused minor waterlogging and traffic disruptions.

INDIA EVACUATES CITIZENS FROM IRAN AMID RISING TENSIONS

NEW DELHI

India is continuing its evacuation efforts as citizens stranded in Iran steadily return home through neighbouring countries.

The Ministry of External Affairs on Friday said that more Indians have been evacuated using land routes via Armenia and Azerbaijan, with the operation still in progress. MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal confirmed that 913

Indian nationals have crossed into these neighbouring countries with assistance from Indian embassies, and many of them have already safely reached India.

He also informed that all 284 Indian pilgrims who were earlier stranded in Iran have now returned home. The MEA control room has received only a small number of requests for help, mostly concerning Indians working aboard merchant ships.

Additional Secretary Aseem R Mahajan said that six Indian nationals have died, while one person is still missing amid the ongoing tensions in West Asia.

Indian missions in Saudi Arabia, Oman, Iraq and United Arab Emirates are actively coordinating with local authorities to trace the missing individual and facilitate the return of mortal remains of the deceased.

Officials further noted that

travel conditions across the Gulf region are gradually improving, with an increase in the number of flights operating. Since February 28, nearly three lakh passengers have successfully returned to India from the region, reflecting steady progress in evacuation and travel arrangements.

India is continuing its evacuation efforts as citizens stranded in Iran steadily return home through neighbouring countries



PM Modi Congratulates Thailand PM, Seeks Stronger Ties

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday congratulated Anutin Charnvirakul on his election as Thailand's Prime Minister and expressed his readiness to work closely with him. He said India and Thailand will continue to deepen their strategic partnership and expand cooperation in various areas. In his message, Modi highlighted the long-standing historical and cultural ties between India and Thailand. He noted that both nations share a rich civilisational heritage and strong people-to-people connections. He added that the two countries remain committed to working together for peace, progress, and prosperity for their citizens. Charnvirakul, a prominent leader of the Bhumjaithai Party, secured the Prime Minister's post after winning a clear majority in the House of Representatives. He received 293 votes, defeating his opponent Natthaphong Ruengpanyawut, who managed 119 votes. After his victory, Charnvirakul assured members of Parliament that he would work with all political parties to ensure the country's development and focus on public welfare. He emphasised the importance of unity and cooperation in addressing national challenges and advancing growth.

Jaishankar Meets Bangladesh Envoy To Boost Ties

NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar met Riaz Hamidullah in New Delhi on Friday to review and strengthen bilateral relations between India and Bangladesh. The discussion focused on enhancing cooperation and building closer ties across key sectors.

The Ministry of External Affairs stated that India continues to assist neighbouring countries, including Bangladesh, in meeting their energy requirements while also managing its domestic needs. MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said India has received requests for energy supplies from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Maldives and other nations, and has been providing diesel to Bangladesh since 2007 through various channels. He noted that while India is continuing its support, it is



also taking into account its refining capacity and fuel availability. At the same time, supply of LPG remains a concern due to disruptions linked to the West Asia situation. The government is prioritising domestic consumers before addressing commercial demand.

Earlier, India's High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Pranay Verma, held discussions with leaders of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party government to boost cooperation. Talks focused on areas such as

rural development, local governance, and economic progress.

Both countries agreed to deepen engagement in sectors like agriculture, cooperatives, and grassroots empowerment. Officials also underlined the importance of strong people-to-people connections and shared history, especially the bonds formed during the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War, reaffirming their commitment to mutual respect and continued cooperation.

6 Indians Dead, Flights Resume Amid Gulf Crisis Situation

NEW DELHI

Six Indian nationals have lost their lives and one person is still missing following separate incidents in the Gulf region, even as evacuation efforts continue.

The Ministry of External Affairs on Friday said the incidents are linked to the ongoing situation in West Asia. Additional Secretary Aseem R Mahajan said Indian missions in Saudi Arabia, Oman, Iraq and United Arab Emirates are in constant touch with local authorities to locate the missing individual and facilitate the return of mortal remains of those who died.

He added that the travel situation in the Gulf region is gradually improving, with flight operations increasing. Since February 28, nearly three lakh passengers have returned to India from the region.

From the UAE, around 90



flights are expected to operate, while limited flight services are also continuing from Oman and Saudi Arabia. With the partial reopening of airspace in Qatar, some commercial flights have resumed.

However, airspace in Kuwait and Bahrain remains closed. To assist stranded passengers, special flights are being arranged from Saudi Arabia to India.

Officials said these steps are being taken to ensure the safe and smooth return of Indian nationals despite ongoing disruptions in the region.

President Murmu Visits Vrindavan, Offers Prayers At Samadhi Site

VRINDAVAN

President Droupadi Murmu on Friday visited the sacred samadhi site of Neem Karoli Baba in Vrindavan and of-

fered prayers. Anandiben Patel accompanied her during the visit.

According to officials, the President offered darshan and performed prayers with devo-

tion at the sacred site. Earlier in the day, she also met saint Premanand Maharaj at Shri Hit Radha Keli Kunj Ashram in Vrindavan.

On Thursday, the President

visited the Ram Janmbhoomi Temple in Ayodhya, where she offered prayers to Ram Lalla and took part in rituals, including aarti and puja at various places within the tem-

ple complex.

She described her visit to Ayodhya as a deeply spiritual experience and said it was a privilege to be present on the first day of Navratri. She

highlighted the importance of events such as the temple's construction, the consecration of Ram Lalla, and other milestones as significant moments in India's cultural history.

POWER MEET

Energy Security, Reforms Discussed At Power Meet



NEW DELHI

Government reviews energy security, reforms, and future plans at ministerial meeting during Bharat Electricity Summit 2026.

As the Bharat Electricity Summit 2026 entered its second day on Friday, a national power ministers' meeting was held under the chairmanship of Union Power Minister Manohar Lal Khattar to discuss energy security, reforms, and future growth strategies.

The minister said the summit would help achieve the vision of "Viksit Bharat 2047" and underlined the role of the power sector in economic growth and infrastructure development. He noted that India's installed power capacity has crossed 520 GW, with improvements in distribution companies, smart metering, and reduced power shortages.

He stressed the need for better coordination between the Centre and states to ensure affordable and efficient power generation, transmission, and distribution. Highlighting global uncertain-

ties, he emphasised strengthening energy security, increasing per capita consumption, and accelerating the shift to renewable energy. He also pointed to nuclear power as a clean energy option.

The meeting was co-chaired by Shripad Naik and attended by senior officials, including Pankaj Agarwal and Santosh Kumar Sarangi, along with state and Union Territory energy ministers. Naik highlighted the growing role of technology and artificial intelligence, especially in smart metering. He said nearly half of India's installed capacity now comes from non-fossil fuel sources and referred to the draft National Electricity Policy as a guide for long-term growth.

The Ministry of Power also released two reports for FY25 — Consumer Service Ratings of Discoms and Distribution Utilities Ranking. These reports assess utilities based on service quality, transparency, and financial and operational performance, covering 66 power distribution companies across the country.

Rs 25 Lakh Cash Seized From Car Near Kolkata

**KOLKATA:** Police have recovered Rs 25 lakh in cash from a car in New Town during election-related checking, raising fresh concerns. The Kolkata Police on Friday seized the money during "naka" checking near City Centre-II in New Town, located on the outskirts of Kolkata. The driver, identified as Suresh Thakur, was taken into custody after he failed to give a clear explanation about the source of the cash. According to officials, the driver appeared uneasy when police asked him to open the vehicle's boot. After checking, officers found a bag containing bundles of Rs 500 notes. As he could not provide valid documents or details, the police confiscated the cash and arrested him. Investigators are now questioning the accused to trace the origin of the money and identify the intended recipient. Officials said this is the third major cash seizure reported in the state within a week.

National Health Mission

District Health & Family Welfare Society® Hassan

District Health & Family Welfare Office Beside Hassanamba Indoor Stadium, Salagame road, Hassan

Email: dhohassan@gmail.com Ph: 08172-246575, NO: DHFW-HSN/XVFC-FR4/NHM-UHC/03/2025-26

Date: 20.03.2026

Short Term - Tender Notification (Through E-Procurement)

Online short term tender is invited under KTPP Act 1999 and rule 2000 made there under in Two Covers bid system from the intending and eligible Organisations/firms/Manufacturers for Supply Of Drugs From XVFC Funds (FR-4) to Sub Centres- Ayushman Arogya Kendra in Hassan District Under Universal Health Programme (UHC). Bid No: DHFWS/2025- 26/IND2368, Date 18/03/2026. Drugs as specified in E-Tender Document Total EMD of Rs.1,16,760/- . The detailed Tender Document may be downloaded from web site http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in for information. The bids shall be submitted online before Date: 26/03/2026, 5:00 PM. The Technical bid will be opened online at Date: 27/03/2026 5.30PM. For any further clarifications contact the above office in working hours.

Sd/- District Health and Family Welfare Officer, Hassan

ವಾಸಾಸಂಇ/ಒಸಸಿ/ವಾಸಸ/1212/ಕೆಎಸ್ಎಂಸಿಎ/2025-26

Office of the Deputy Commissioner, Chikkamagaluru District, Chikkamagaluru.

District Urban Development Cell, Chikkamagaluru

E-Mail:- ka.chikkamagaluru.dudc@gmail.com Tel: 08262-239010

No.: DUDC/Works/CR/01/2025-26 Date: 17.03.2026

E-Procurement Re-Tender Notice

Re Tender is invited through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal from eligible class contractors registered in PWD for implementation of below mentioned works under Chief Minister's Infrastructure Development Scheme for the year 2025-26. Interested contractors can submit Tenders subject to

| Sl. No. | Indent No.                             | Approx. Amount (Rs. in lakhs) | Reservation | E.M.D. Amount (in Rs.) |
|---------|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------|------------------------|
| 1       | DMA/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT53155/CALL-2 | 100.00                        | S.C         | 42,350.00              |
| 2       | DMA/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT53153/CALL-2 | 100.00                        | S.T         | 42,350.00              |
| 3       | DMA/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT53161/CALL-2 | 100.00                        | S.C         | 42,375.00              |
| 4       | DMA/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT53163/CALL-2 | 100.00                        | Category-2A | 42,350.00              |

Cost of Tender Form as per e-procurement, Time Period: 06 Months (Excluding Rainy Season)

(1) Last date for submission of Tender in e-procurement portal: 02.04.2026 up to 17.30 Hrs. (2) Date of opening Technical Bid: 04.04.2026 at 11.00 Hrs. (3) Date of opening Financial Bid: 06.04.2026 at 11.00 Hrs.

Further information can be contacted during office hours and in https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in For any reason, if there are changes, they will be published only in e-portal. Will not be published in newspapers. Contractors should view in KPP Portal.

Sd/- Executive Engineer, District Urban Development Cell, Chikkamagaluru.

DIPR/ckm/ksmca/25-26/1972039

ನಗರಸಭೆ ಕಾರ್ಯಾಲಯ

ಚಿಕ್ಕಬಳ್ಳಾಪುರ

ಮೆಲ್ ಸೈಟ್: www.chikkaballapurcity.gov.in, ಇ-ಮೇಲ್: itstaff\_ ulb\_ chikkaballapur@yahoo.co.in, ದೂರವಾಣಿ: 08156-275557, ಪ್ಯಾಕ್ಸ್: 08156-274742

ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: ನ.ಸ.ಚಿ/ಕಾ.ಸು/ಆರ್/ಬೆಂ-32/2025-26 ದಿನಾಂಕ : 10.03.2026

ಇ-ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್ಮೆಂಟ್ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ

ಪೌರಾಯುಕ್ತರು, ನಗರಸಭೆ, ಚಿಕ್ಕಬಳ್ಳಾಪುರ ರವರು ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಪಾರದರ್ಶಕತೆ ಅಧಿನಿಯಮ 2000ರಂತೆ 2025-26ನೇ ಸಾಲಿನ ನಗರಸಭಾ ನಿಧಿಯಲ್ಲಿ, 2025-26ನೇ ಸಾಲಿನ 15ನೇ ಹಣಕಾಸು ಮತ್ತು ಡೆಲ್ಟಾ ಯೋಜನೆಗಳ ಅಡಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಈ ಕೆಳಕಂಡ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳನ್ನು ನಿರ್ವಹಿಸಲು ಅರ್ಹ ನೋಂದಾಯಿತ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರಿಂದ/ ಸರಬರಾಜುದಾರರಿಂದ ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ಗಳು (ಇ-ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್ಮೆಂಟ್-2.0) ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಮೆಲ್ ಸೈಟ್ <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in> ಮೂಲಕ ಅರ್ಜಿಯನ್ನು ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲು ಈ ಮೂಲಕ ಕೋರಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಸ್ವೀಕೃತಿ ಮತ್ತು ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿನಾಂಕಗಳ ಇ-ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್ಮೆಂಟ್ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್‌ನಂತೆ ಇರುತ್ತದೆ. ಒಂದು ವೇಳೆ ಮೇಲೆ ಸೂಚಿಸಲಾಗಿರುವ ದಿನಗಳು ಸಾರ್ವಜನಿಕ ರಜಾ ದಿನಗಳನ್ನಾಗಿ ಘೋಷಿಸಲ್ಪಟ್ಟರೆ ಮುಂದಿನ ಕೆಲಸದ ದಿನಗಳನ್ನು ಪರಿಗಣಿಸಲಾಗುವುದು.ಇಂಥಂಟ್ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ ವಿವರ (1) DMA/2025-26/IND5138/CALL-2 (2) DMA/2025-26/IND5139/ CALL-2 (3) DMA/2025-26/IND5140/CALL-2 (4) DMA/2025-26/ IND5980/CALL-2 (5) DMA/2025-26/IND5983/CALL-2 (6) DMA/ 2025-26/ IND5981/CALL-2 (7) DMA/2025-26/IND5708/CALL- 2 (8) DMA/2024-25/OW/WORK\_INDENT36014/CALL-3

ಸಹ/- ಪೌರಾಯುಕ್ತರು, ನಗರಸಭೆ, ಚಿಕ್ಕಬಳ್ಳಾಪುರ

ವಾಸಾಸಂಇ/ಚಿಕ್ಕಬಳ್ಳಾಪುರ/ಆರ್.ಒ.ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ:502/ಕೆಎಸ್ಎಂಸಿಎ/2025-26

BENGALURU SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT LIMITED

Office of the Deputy General Manager-3, 1st Floor, BBMP Building, Thimmaiah Road, Vasanth Nagar, Bengaluru-560052.

No.DGM-3/BSWML/TEND/23/2025-26/CALL-2 Date: 18.03.2026

INVITATION FOR SHORT TERM TENDER (IFT)

(Only Through GOK KPP Portal only)

The Tender documents can be downloaded from the Karnataka Public Procurement Portal Website (<https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>) on payment of prescribed fee noted against each item of work (non-refundable) in the form of e-Payment through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal. The Bidder shall submit the bid through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal.

| SL. NO | Name of the Work                                                                                                     | Estimated amount Rs.in lakhs | EMD (in Rupees) | Stipulated Period of Service Contract |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1      | Loading and Transportation of LVP/SUP/ MLP Generated in Bengaluru Central City Corporation area to cement industries | 499.50                       | 7,49,250.00     | 06 Months                             |
| 2      | Loading and Transportation of LVP/SUP/MLP Generated in Bengaluru West City Corporation area to cement industries     | 499.50                       | 7,49,250.00     | 06 Months                             |
| 3      | Loading and Transportation of LVP/SUP/MLP Generated in Bengaluru South City Corporation area to cement industries    | 499.50                       | 7,49,250.00     | 06 Months                             |

Calendar of Events: (1) Last date to upload pre-bid queries: 23.03.2026 upto 15.00 Hrs. in KPP Portal. (2) Pre bid meeting: 24.03.2026 at 15.00 Hrs at the office of CE & CGM-2 (Tech), BSWML, Thimmaiah Road, Vasanthanagar, Bangalore (3) Last date for submission of the bids 27.03.2026 upto 16.00 Hrs (4) Date of opening of Technical bid on: 30.03.2026 at 16.30 Hrs (5) Date of opening of Financial bids to be notified to technically qualified bidders.

Sd/- Deputy General Manager-3, BSWML.

DIPR/CP/6366/SSC/2025-26

QUICK READ

Russian drones damage two foreign ships in Odesa

Kyiv  
Russian drones struck two foreign-flagged commercial ships in Ukraine's Odesa region, Governor Oleh Kiper said on Friday. The vessels, flying the flags of Palau and Barbados, were docked and loaded with grain at the time of the attack. Two people were injured in the overnight strike. Authorities also reported damage to a grain silo and nearby administrative buildings, highlighting continued risks to vital export infrastructure in the region.



Qatar support helps Indian return after stroke

DOHA  
An Indian national stranded in Qatar due to tensions was safely repatriated after medical treatment and coordinated support.Parminder, who was travelling to Canada, was left stranded in Qatar amid ongoing geopolitical tensions. During his stay, he suffered a brain stroke and was admitted to Hamad Medical Corporation in Doha. After receiving treatment, he was discharged and returned home safely with assistance from multiple agencies. Officials said the repatriation was made possible through joint efforts by the Indian Embassy and community organisations.

Russia urges ceasefire, criticises US Israel Gulf actions

Russia has urged an immediate halt to fighting in the Persian Gulf, warning of rising regional instability

MOSCOW

Russia has expressed deep concern over the ongoing conflict in the Persian Gulf, calling for an immediate end to hostilities. In a statement, the Russian Foreign Ministry described the situation as unprovoked aggression by the United States and Israel against Iran. It warned that continued fighting could worsen damage to energy facilities and other key infrastructure across Iran and



neighbouring Arab countries. Moscow stressed that stopping military actions by Washington and Tel Aviv is essential for any progress toward peace. It said an immediate ceasefire would be the

first step to reduce tensions and prevent further escalation in the region.Russia also offered to work with global and regional partners to find a diplomatic solution. It said countries like China and Turkiye could help support peace efforts through dialogue and cooperation. The ministry highlighted the need for long-term stability based on mutual respect and balanced interests of all nations involved.

The statement also referred to a proposal by Oman's Foreign Minister, Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, which called for inclusive regional dialogue. Russia said the proposal matches its own vision of building a security framework in the Middle East based on cooperation and trust.

The conflict began on February 28 with a joint US-Israeli air campaign and has since expanded across the region. Increasing military activity and attacks on energy hubs have raised fears of a wider global crisis.



Netanyahu denies death rumours amid online conspiracy claims

JERUSALEM

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has dismissed rumours about his death, but speculation continues to spread widely on social media platforms.

The claims persisted even after Netanyahu addressed them during a press briefing on Thursday. Speaking in English, he said, "I'm alive, and you're all witnesses," while rejecting the rumours as fake news. He then provided updates on ongoing military operations, marking his second press conference since the conflict with Iran began on February 28.

The rumours first gained attention after his March 12 televised address, when some users alleged the video was created using artificial intelligence. They pointed to visual

details such as an extra finger and unusual movements. Even after the latest press conference, similar claims resurfaced, with edited clips circulating online.Some users highlighted visuals like his shirt appearing from inside his sleeves, calling it proof of manipulation. Others questioned background elements such as curtain movements. However, a full review of the official broadcast shows these moments were natural and not unusual.

Balochistan Disappearances Raise Concerns

BALOCHISTAN

Reports of enforced disappearances in Pakistan have resurfaced, raising fresh concerns over accountability and transparency in Balochistan, five previously missing individuals have returned, while two new cases involving students have heightened worries. Among those released is Fatima from Panjgur, who was reportedly detained in January and later freed.

China urges pause in West Asia conflict

BEIJING

China has called for an immediate halt to the ongoing West Asia conflict, warning of serious global economic consequences as the crisis enters its 21st day.Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said the situation is rapidly worsening and affecting not just the region but the entire world. He noted that the conflict is damaging key sectors such as energy, finance, trade and shipping, which are vital to global stability.

China stressed that military

action is not a solution and may only deepen tensions. Lin said past experiences show that armed conflict leads to more hostility rather than peace. He urged all parties involved to immediately "press the pause button" on military operations to prevent further escalation.

Beijing also reaffirmed its commitment to diplomatic efforts. It said China is ready to work with other countries to help bring about a ceasefire and restore peace in the region at the earliest.

The conflict began on February 28 with a joint US-Israeli offensive against Iran and has since expanded across multiple fronts. The situation intensified after the death of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, following which his son Mojtaba Khamenei took over leadership.

Rising tensions have put pressure on major global energy routes, especially the Strait of Hormuz. Disruptions in oil and gas supplies and shipping activities are raising concerns about long-term economic stability worldwide.

Digital cooperation drives inclusive growth at UNHRC forum

GENEVA

Experts at the United Nations Human Rights Council highlighted digital cooperation as a key driver of inclusive global development and human rights.

At a side event during the council's 61st session, discussions focused on how

digital innovation and global partnerships can support development across regions. The event was organised by the Global Institute for Water, Environment and Health.

Speakers stressed that access to digital tools is now essential for economic growth and human rights. Technologies such as artificial

intelligence, cloud computing and digital public infrastructure were identified as important in improving healthcare, education and financial inclusion, especially in developing countries.

India's digital platforms in health and finance were presented as successful examples of large-scale innovation

benefiting millions. Experts said such models can be adapted by other nations to speed up development.

Participants noted that digital transformation could help achieve nearly 70 per cent of the Sustainable Development Goals while also supporting climate action.

BUSINESS

Government Notifies Income Tax Rules 2026 For Compliance

Government introduces new Income Tax Rules 2026 to strengthen compliance, transparency, and simplify procedures nationwide

NEW DELHI

The Centre has notified the Income Tax Rules, 2026, which will take effect from April 1, 2026, bringing major changes to direct tax systems. The rules are framed under the Income-tax Act, 2025 and replace older procedures with updated compliance frameworks and reporting standards.Dividend-related norms have been tightened. Companies must now maintain proper share registers, hold general meetings, and ensure dividend



payments are made only within India. Stock exchanges will also face stricter rules, including maintaining audit trails for seven years, preventing deletion of records, and submitting monthly reports on revised transactions to improve transparency.The rules

clarify capital gains classification, especially in cases like debenture conversions, offshore restructuring, and income disclosure schemes. A new framework for zero coupon bonds has been introduced, requiring applications three months before issuance, ratings from two agencies, and clear timelines for fund use.Tax authorities have been given wider powers for cross-border taxation. They can estimate non-resident income using global profit ratios or reasonable methods.

For digital businesses, significant economic presence is defined as transactions of Rs 2 crore or 3 lakh users.The rules also standardise valuation methods for listed and unlisted shares, foreign entities, and partnerships. A clear formula has been set to calculate income linked to Indian assets in offshore deals.Further, expense exemptions will follow a simplified capped method, while housing benefits will depend on factors like city, salary, and ownership status.



Tata Steel Opens Scrap Based Furnace

MUMBAI

Tata Steel on Friday commissioned its first scrap-based Electric Arc Furnace (EAF) at Hi-Tech Valley in Ludhiana, marking an important move towards greener steel production. The facility, developed with an investment of ₹3,200 crore, has an annual capacity of 0.75 million tonnes and is designed to keep carbon emissions below 0.3 tonnes per tonne of steel.

The project aligns with the company's long-term goal of achieving net zero emissions by 2045. The plant will operate using nearly 50 per cent renewable energy and rely entirely on steel scrap as raw material, with around 40 per cent sourced from its recycling unit in Rohtak, Haryana.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by Bhagwant Singh Mann, along with Chairman N Chandrasekaran and CEO T V Narendran.

The new plant will manu-

**Tata Steel launches India's first scrap-based electric furnace in Ludhiana, boosting green steel production and supporting its long-term net zero emissions goal**

facture construction-grade steel under the Tata Tiscon brand, helping the company expand its footprint in the construction sector. Officials highlighted that the project reflects Tata Steel's focus on adopting low-carbon technologies and promoting a circular economy.In addition to industrial growth, the company has also contributed to local development over the past three years through initiatives such as skill training for youth, livelihood support for women, installation of solar-powered streetlights, promotion of sustainable farming practices, and scholarship programs, benefiting communities around the plant.

Retail Office Demand Pushes NCR Rentals Higher

DELHI-NCR

Retail rents across Delhi-NCR are rising steadily as demand from both retailers and office workers strengthens, according to recent market studies. The shift is driven not just by higher rents, but by growing willingness among brands to pay for prime locations supported by strong consumer

footfall.

A report by Cushman & Wakefield showed that retail rents on key high streets increased between 2 and 14 per cent in 2025. Areas like Khan Market saw around 8 per cent growth, while Gurugram's Galleria Market recorded nearly 14 per cent rise.Experts say the recovery in office markets is playing a major role.

QUICK READ

SIP Helps Reduce Timing Risk In Small Caps

NEW DELHI

Small cap funds offer high long-term growth potential but come with higher volatility. These funds invest in emerging companies, making them sensitive to market trends and economic changes. As a result, entry timing can impact short-term returns, especially with lump sum investments. A Systematic Investment Plan (SIP) helps reduce this risk by spreading investments over time. As per Securities and Exchange Board of India norms, small cap funds invest at least 65% in companies ranked 251st and below.

Nuvama Launches Financial Literacy Drive For Students

BENGALURU

Nuvama Wealth Management has partnered with the National Finance Olympiad to roll out a financial education program for government school students. The initiative, fully funded under CSR, will teach students from Classes 6 to 12 about money management, banking, savings, investments, and fraud prevention. In its first phase, the program will cover 26,000 students across Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Gujarat. Launched around the International Day of Happiness, the initiative aims to build financial awareness and help students make informed decisions for a secure future.

Reliance Jio Leads Subscriber Growth In Telecom Sector

NEW DELHI

Reliance Jio continued to record strong subscriber additions and maintained its leadership in the home broadband segment. The report said the telecom industry showed steady recovery in January 2026, with net wireless subscriber additions rising to 2.4 million. This marks an increase from 1.5 million in December 2025, 0.9 million in November, and 0.4 million in October.

In addition stood at 1.6 million in January, slightly lower than 1.8 million in December. Its active subscriber base, measured through Visitor Location Register (VLR), remained stable at 98.3 per cent.

In the home broadband segment, including fibre and 5G services, Jio continued to see strong growth, adding 0.78 million subscribers in January. This was mainly driven by the expansion of Jio AirFiber services. In the 5G fixed wireless access segment, the company added 0.25 million users and held a leading market share of 70.9 per cent.

As per Telecom Regulatory Authority of India data, Jio remained the largest telecom provider with 503.57 million wireless subscribers.



WEST ASIA CRISIS POSES RISK TO ENERGY MARKETS

NEW DELHI

The ongoing West Asia crisis has not yet caused a major market correction, but risks may rise if disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz continue.

The report said markets have remained largely stable despite rising geopolitical tensions in the region. A key reason for this resilience is the continued flow of energy supplies through the Strait of Hormuz, which is crucial for Asian countries. Around 85 per cent of energy shipments through the route are meant for Asia, with China, India, and South Asia accounting for nearly 60 per cent of the total.

The report noted that Iran allowing selective passage of ships has helped ease immediate supply concerns and prevented panic in global markets. However, it warned that the situation remains uncertain, especially for energy-importing countries like India.

Jefferies highlighted that any prolonged disruption or closure of the Strait could have serious economic consequences. Since economic growth is closely linked to energy consumption, supply disruptions could directly impact growth in major Asian economies.

The report also pointed out that investors have recently treated geopolitical tensions as temporary setbacks, often seeing them as opportunities to invest rather than reasons to exit markets.

While current conditions suggest short-term stability, the report stressed that risks could increase sharply if tensions escalate further or lead to a sustained blockade. Such a scenario may push up oil prices, increase inflation, and slow economic growth across Asia, including India.

# STAR BOWLER KEY TO B'LURU TITLE DEFENSE

RCB's title defense faces uncertainty as Josh Hazlewood's injury sidelines the star pacer for the IPL 2026 start

## NEW DELHI

As the cricket world gears up for the new season, former captain Faf du Plessis has sent a clear message: Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) needs Josh Hazlewood to succeed. With the 2026 tournament fast approaching, fans are anxious about the fitness of the Australian star.

Hazlewood was a hero during RCB's winning run last year, but a stubborn hamstring injury has kept him off the field since November. The 35-year-old even missed the recent T20 World Cup because his recovery is taking

longer than expected. Cricket Australia is currently managing his workload, and he is confirmed to miss the first few matches this season.

Du Plessis explained that Hazlewood is irreplaceable because he performs under pressure. Whether it is taking early wickets or bowling the difficult final overs, his absence leaves a "massive hole" in the lineup. The former skipper noted that the team's success usually goes hand in hand with having the big Aussie available to lead the attack.

Playing at Bengaluru's home ground is notoriously tough for bowlers because

the pitch favors batsmen so much. Du Plessis pointed out that experience is the only way to survive there. He also mentioned that having a top-tier spinner, like Krunal Pandya, is the secret ingredient RCB needs to stay on top.

RCB will begin defending their hard-earned title on March 28 against Sunrisers Hyderabad. All eyes remain on the training camp, hoping Hazlewood returns to help the team keep their crown.



# India hosts Kazakhstan in major hockey push

## NEW DELHI

India is proving its role as a leader in world hockey by hosting the Kazakhstan men's team for a special training camp. The visiting side has spent the last ten days at the Sports Authority of India center in Sonapat, Haryana, sharpening their skills before the high-stakes Asian Games Qualifiers.

The camp has given the Kazakh players a chance to use world-class turf and test themselves against tough local teams. For a team ranked 55th in the world, this experience is about more than just practice; it is about build-



ing the confidence needed to compete with Asia's best. Coach Olga Urmanova noted that the friendly matches have already helped her players grow and adapt to a faster style of play. Kazakhstan is on a steady rise, having recently finished fourth in the AHF Cup. Now, they face a challenging path to the Asian Games, with matches lined up against teams like Oman, Thailand, and Indonesia. They hope this intensive stint in India will be the secret to securing their spot in the main event in Japan.

Hockey India officials believe these exchange programs do more than just im-

**India hosts Kazakhstan's men's hockey team for a training camp, boosting skills, confidence, and international ties ahead of the Asian Games Qualifiers in Japan**

prove gameplay. By opening their doors to neighboring nations, they are strengthening international ties and inspiring a new generation of players. As the qualifiers approach, fans are eager to see if this "Made in India" preparation helps Kazakhstan make its mark on the global stage.

India's U20 women's football team arrives in Thailand, aiming for Asian Cup success and a World Cup 2026 berth

## Indian young tigresses chasing World Cup dream

## BANGKOK

India's Under-20 women's football team has touched down in Thailand, carrying the hopes of a nation as they prepare for the AFC U20 Women's Asian Cup. This marks a historic return for the "Young Tigresses," who have qualified for this prestigious continental tournament for the first time in twenty years.

The 24-player squad arrived in Bangkok to begin a two-week acclimatization period. Adjusting to the local heat and humidity will be vital before they face a challenging Group C. Their journey kicks off against powerhouse Japan on April 2, followed by high-stakes matches against Australia and Chinese Taipei.

The stakes could not be higher. This tournament



serves as the official gateway to the FIFA U20 Women's World Cup 2026 in Poland. To book their ticket to the world stage, India must finish among the top four teams in the competition. It is a steep mountain to climb, but the team comes prepared.

Under head coach Joakim Alexandersson, the squad has undergone intensive training camps in Bengaluru, Kolkata, and even Sweden. Alexandersson believes the international

exposure gained during their European tour has given the players the tactical edge needed to compete with Asia's elite.

While the coach must soon trim the roster to a final 23-member squad, the current group shows a strong, balanced mix of talent across all positions. For these young athletes, the next few weeks represent a golden opportunity to prove that Indian women's football belongs on the global map.

## India to host historic world athletics event

## NEW DELHI

In a landmark moment for Indian sports, World Athletics has officially announced that India will host the 2028 World Athletics Indoor Championships. The prestigious event is set to take place in Odisha from March 3 to 5, marking the very first time a global indoor track and field championship will be held on Indian soil.

The decision was finalized during a high-level council meeting in Torun, where sports leaders mapped out the future of international athletics. Alongside India's selection, Astana was named as the host for the 2030 edition. World Athletics President Sebastian Coe praised the move, noting that bringing such elite competitions to emerging markets like India is key to growing the sport globally.

Odisha has fast become India's sporting capital, having successfully hosted the Asian Athletics Championships and invested heavily in world-class infrastructure. Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi hailed the announcement as a proud moment for the nation, believing it will inspire a new generation of local athletes to dream of Olympic glory.

The global spotlight won't just be on India; the council also selected Hefei, China, to host the 2028 Race Walking Team Championships. Experts view these choices as a strategic shift toward expanding the reach of athletics across Asia. For India, this championship represents more than just a three-day meet—it is a massive leap forward in its journey to becoming a premier destination for the world's greatest sporting spectacles.



## Mooney shines as Australia takes series lead

## KINGSTOWN

Australia's women's cricket team launched their Caribbean tour with a commanding 43-run victory over the West Indies. The win gives the world champions a 1-0 lead in the three-match T20 international series, proving once again why they are the team to beat on the global stage.

Batting first, the visitors put up a formidable total of 164 for 6. The star of the show was Beth Mooney, who played a brilliant, calculated innings of 79 runs off just 55 balls. Her knock, filled with seven boundaries and two powerful sixes, anchored the Australian effort. Veteran all-rounder Ellyse Perry provided steady support with a brisk 36, ensuring the scoreboard kept ticking over despite some clever bowling from Deandra Dottin, who claimed three wickets.

The chase proved too steep for the home side. West Indies struggled to find their rhythm as the required run rate climbed steadily. While opener Qiana Joseph fought hard for her 45 runs, the rest of the



batting lineup crumbled under pressure. Australia's Alana King led a disciplined bowling attack, taking three key wickets to keep the Windies restricted to 121 for 6 by the end of their 20 overs.

Mooney was deservedly named Player of the Match for her batting masterclass. The two teams will meet again at the same venue on March 22. West Indies will need a much stronger batting performance if they hope to level the series and keep their hopes alive against a dominant Australian side.

## Ronnie O'Sullivan makes history with record 153

## YUSHAN

Snooker legend Ronnie O'Sullivan has once again rewritten the record books, crafting the highest break in professional history. The 50-year-old seven-time world champion stunned the crowd at the World Open by scoring a massive 153 in his quarterfinal match against Ryan Day. Known as "The Rocket," O'Sullivan surpassed the previous record of 148 held by Jamie Burnett for over 20 years. While a "perfect" break is typically 147, O'Sullivan took advantage of a "free ball" after a foul by his opponent. This allowed him to pot an extra ball before clearing the 15 reds and all the colors. He finished just two points shy of the theoretical 155 maximum, an almost impossible feat in pro play. The historic moment came in the very first frame and set the tone for a dominant 5-0 victory. After the match, a beaming O'Sullivan took to social media to thank his fans, calling it a "pretty cool moment" in his long career.

## Indian football scores major global technical win

## NEW DELHI

In a major boost for the sport, the All India Football Federation (AIFF) has been awarded the prestigious "Triple-A" Certificate by the Asian Football Confederation (AFC). This top-tier recognition, announced at the AFC Technical Summit, places India among an elite group of just 12 nations recognized for their

world-class football development systems. The "Triple-A" standard stands for Analysis, Advice, and Accreditation. To earn it, India's football structure underwent a rigorous review by experts, including AFC Technical Director Andy Roxburgh. The evaluation covered everything from grassroots programs and youth academies to the growth of women's football and futsal.

This certificate proves that India's coaching and training methods now meet the highest international standards.

One of the most exciting benefits of this achievement is the "global passport" it gives to Indian coaches. Thanks to a partnership between the AFC and UEFA, coaching licenses earned in India will now be officially recognized by European football associations.

## Rain halts thrilling Indian open Polo match

## NEW DELHI

A sudden downpour stole the spotlight at the Indian Open Polo Championship, forcing a high-stakes match to end without a result. The clash between Jindal Panther and Jaipur Optimus Achievers was cut short at the historic Jaipur

Polo grounds, leaving nearly 1,000 rain-soaked fans wanting more.

The game started with explosive energy despite the gray skies. Jaipur Optimus Achievers took an early lead, thanks to sharp goals from Alejo Aramburu and Sawai Padmanabh Singh.

While Jindal Panther struggled initially, they mounted a spirited comeback in the third chukker, slicing through the defense to close the scoring gap.

The momentum swung back and forth as the match progressed. Sawai Padmanabh Singh continued to

dazzle the crowd, firing in two more goals during the fourth chukker to keep the Achievers ahead. However, as the fifth chukker wrapped up, the weather took a turn for the worse. The heavy rain transformed the prestigious field into a slippery hazard.

For the safety of both the elite athletes and their horses, officials made the difficult call to stop the play before the final round. Team owner Naveen Jindal explained that while the competition is fierce, protecting the welfare of the animals and players is the top priority.



side of the game. He stressed that the modern IPL environment has become too stressful, urging his teammates to rediscover the "childlike joy" of playing. "If you don't enjoy yourself, you can't give your best," Pant remarked, highlighting the importance of a relaxed dressing room where players treat the sport as a passion rather than just

work. On a personal level, Pant confirmed he is in a "good space" both physically and mentally after recovering from a side strain. As he prepares to lead LSG in their season opener against Delhi Capitals on April 1 at the Ekana Stadium, his message is clear: hard work and a happy heart are the keys to the trophy.