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Ranya's gold smuggling empire spreads from Africa to Dubai to India: ED

NEW DELHI

Kannada actor Ranya Rao, the step-daughter of a senior Karnataka IPS officer, ran a Rs 102 crore gold smuggling racket from Africa to Dubai to India, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) said.

The federal investigation agency during probe found that the smuggling operation was part of an organised international network that sourced gold from Africa.

The agency in its chargesheet has named Bellari-based gold dealer Tarun Konduru, the actor's alleged associate. Rao and her associates smuggled 127.28 kg of gold valued at Rs 102.55 crore into India between March 2024 and March 2025. The smuggled gold was later sold in the domestic market through a network of handlers and jewellers.

The agency stated that the accused had established Dubai-based Veera Diamonds Trading LLC in 2023 and attempted to source gold directly from suppliers in

African nations including Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania.

But once, the actress got duped by Rs 2 crore by an Uganda agent who did not deliver the gold as promised, she shifted base to Dubai, the agency said. Later, the accused started buying gold from African dealers in Deira Gold Souk, Dubai's largest gold market. The agency found that majority of gold in Dubai's market originates from African mines.

"Rao carried large sums of cash to the market to procure the gold while Konduru used to file fraudulent customs declarations claiming that the gold was being shipped from Dubai to a third country, such as Switzerland or Thailand," the official said.

Rao was arrested in March 2025 after returning from Dubai at Bengaluru airport. Upon her arrest, officials seized 14.2kg worth over Rs 12.56 crore which was concealed on her body.



8,931...

PM MODI BECOMES INDIA'S LONGEST-SERVING HEAD OF GOVT

**Gujarat
Chief Minister**
October 7, 2001 -
May 21, 2014
(3 consecutive
terms)

**Prime Minister of India
(Incumbent)**

First term:
May 26, 2014 – May 2019

Second term:
May 2019 – June 2024

Third term:
June 9, 2024 – Present



BORN
17-09-1950
Vadnagar, Gujarat

14TH PM OF INDIA

MOST FOLLOWED GLOBAL LEADER

Instagram: **100+ million**
YouTube: **30+ million**

TOPS GLOBAL DECORATIONS

29+ civilian honors and state decorations from various nations since 2014.

UNIQUE RECOGNITION

First recipient of **Medal of the Knesset** (Israel)

SPECIAL ACCOLADES

- 2018** Champions of the Earth Award by UN Seoul Peace Prize
- 2019** Global Goalkeepers Award
- 2021** Philip Kotler Presidential Award
- 2021** Global Energy & Environ Leadership Award
- 2024** Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Global Peace Award for Minority Upliftment

KEY RECORDS & MILESTONES

Longest-serving head of government: Combined tenure as Gujarat CM and PM exceeds 8,931 days, surpassing former Sikkim CM Pawan Kumar Chamling.

Second longest-serving Prime Minister: On July 25, 2025, he surpassed Indira Gandhi's 4,077 days to become the second-longest-serving PM in an uninterrupted tenure, behind only Jawaharlal Nehru.

Non-Congress milestone: First non-Congress leader to complete two full terms and secure a third consecutive term with a majority.

Political longevity: Only leader to win six consecutive elections (3 as Gujarat CM, 3 as PM).

FIRST PRIME MINISTER BORN AFTER INDIA'S INDEPENDENCE IN 1947.

...edging past ex-Sikkim CM Pawan Chamling's 8,930

The milestone draws congratulations from across the political spectrum

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has achieved a historic milestone by becoming the longest-serving head of government in India, surpassing the record previously held by former Sikkim Chief Minister Pawan Kumar Chamling.

On Sunday, 22 March 2026, PM Modi completed 8,931 days in office as head of government, edging past Chamling's mark of 8,930 days. This cumulative tenure combines Modi's more than 13 years as Chief Minister of Gujarat from 7 October 2001

to 21 May 2014 with his ongoing service as Prime Minister of India since 26 May 2014.

Chamling, who led Sikkim from 12 December 1994 to 26 May 2019 under the Sikkim Democratic Front, held the previous record for the longest tenure as a chief minister in India, spanning over 24 years. His uninterrupted service in that role had stood as the benchmark for longevity in Indian executive leadership.

Modi's journey began in

Gujarat, where he secured four consecutive election victories in 2001 (by-election), 2002, 2007, and 2012, establishing himself as the state's longest-serving chief minister at the time. He transitioned to national leadership in 2014, winning the Lok Sabha elections and becoming Prime Minister. He was re-elected in 2019 and again in 2024, securing a rare third consecutive term for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA).

The milestone has drawn congratulations from across the political spectrum, with senior BJP leaders highlighting Modi's dedication to public service. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh described it as a "historic milestone" rooted in "service, hard work and unwavering commitment."

Home Minister Amit Shah said that it is a milestone rooted in service, hard work and unwavering commitment. He called it a rare legacy built on unprecedented trust and unparalleled Seva.

CPI(M)-BJP nexus will not work in Kerala: KC

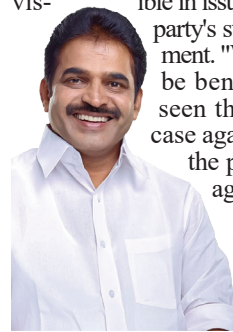
KOCHI

Congress leader K C Venugopal on Sunday alleged that a CPI(M)-BJP nexus is evident in the ongoing election, asserting that such an understanding would not succeed in Kerala this time.

Addressing the media, the AICC leader reiterated the party's promise of free Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) bus travel for women if the UDF comes to power in the state. "CPI(M) and LDF know very well that people's sentiments are against them and are applying their last trick. CPI(M)-BJP friendship is not new in Kerala," he said. He claimed that signs of this relationship were visible in issues such as PM-SHRI and the Left party's stance towards the central government.

"When a bridge is laid, there should be benefits to both sides. We have seen the postponement in the Lavlin case against the CM. We have also seen the pace of investigations by central agencies in Kerala," he said.

He alleged that the same connection was reflected in the candidate lists of the CPI(M) and the BJP, claiming that both parties had entered into a deal.



‘Iran can reach deep into Europe’: Netanyahu calls for global action



JERUSALEM

Iran now has the capability to strike deep into Europe, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Sunday, as he visited the site of a missile strike in the southern city of Arad.

He urged world leaders to join the Israeli-US military campaign against Iran, citing Tehran's recent missile launch targeting the UK-US military base at Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean.

Netanyahu said Iran had fired an intercontinental ballistic missile toward Diego Garcia and warned that its range puts European capitals within reach.

"They fired an intercontinental ballistic missile on Diego Garcia. That's 4,000 kilometers. I've been warning all the time. They have now the capacity to reach deep into Europe. They al-

ready have fired on European countries, Cyprus," he said, adding that Iran is "putting everyone in their sights."

He accused Iran of targeting civilian areas and religious sites in recent attacks and said the country is also disrupting global energy flows through the Strait of Hormuz. "They fired on Jerusalem right next to the holy sites of the three monotheistic faiths, the Western Wall, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, and the Al-Aqsa Mosque. And by dint of a miracle, again, none of them were hurt, but they were targeting the holy sites of the three major monotheistic religions."

Netanyahu called on world leaders to join the United States and Israel in confronting Iran, saying the threat goes beyond the region and "is for the security of the entire world."

WILL FULLY SHUT HORMUZ IF US TARGETS POWER PLANTS: IRAN

TEHRAN

Iran's military on Sunday warned it could completely shut the strategic Strait of Hormuz if US President Donald Trump targets the country's power plants.

Trump had given Iran 48 hours

to reopen the strait, which has been largely closed since the war began on February 28 following US-Israeli strikes on Iran.

The Khatam Al-Anbiya operational command, quoted by state TV, said Iran would also target Israel's power plants, energy, and ICT infrastructure, as

well as facilities in countries hosting US bases or companies with US shareholders. The strait, a vital passage for 20% of the world's oil and LNG, is operating at roughly 5% of pre-war traffic, according to analytics firm Kpler. Some friendly-country vessels have been

allowed through, but Iran has attacked others for ignoring warnings.

Iranian lawmakers are reportedly considering tolls on shipping, with Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf warning traffic "will not return to its pre-war status."

2 vessels with LPG arrive at Mangaluru port

MANGALURU: Providing relief for households and oil corporations in India amid supply disruptions due to the ongoing West Asia conflict, two cargo ship carrying LPG and crude oil have arrived at New Mangalore Port. Amid supply disruptions caused by the ongoing West Asia conflict, two cargo ship carrying LPG and crude oil arrived at New Mangalore Port, much to the relief of both households and oil companies in the country. As per sources, the vessel 'Pyxis Pioneer' carrying 16,715 MT of LPG arrived at New Mangalore Port from Port of Nederland, Texas, on Sunday morning. The cargo was received by Sea Lord Containers, a subsidiary of Aegis Logistics which has a LPG terminal with a storage capacity of 82,000 metric tons at Mangalore Port. Meanwhile, another vessel 'Aqua Titan' with 96,100 MT of crude oil arrived from Primorsk in Russia on Saturday night. The shipment was received at SPM at the New Mangalore Port anchorage by the Mangalore Refinery & Petrochemicals Limited (MRPL). This comes after the US issued a temporary general license on Thursday, allowing the sale of Russian crude oil already stranded at sea in an effort to stabilise global fuel prices amid West Asia conflict.



QUICK READ

Tata Ace collides with a parked Canter, 3 killed

CH NEWS, BENGALURU
Three people died on the spot after a Tata Ace collided with a stationary Canter on the Medahalli flyover in KR Puram. The deceased have been identified as Manikantha, Suresh and Srinivas, residents of Whitefield. The Canter vehicle, which was carrying potatoes from Kolar to Bengaluru, had a puncture on the flyover. The driver was changing the tire. At this time, a Tata Ace hit it from behind. As a result, three people died on the spot. The front of the vehicle was damaged in the impact of the collision and the bodies were mutilated. KR Puram Traffic Police visited the spot and conducted an investigation. The bodies have been sent to KR Puram Government Hospital. Apparently, the driver of the vehicle was negligent. This is being investigated, said DCP Nemagowda, North Division.

Cholan orders removal of unauthorised flex, banners

CH NEWS, BENGALURU
Bengaluru Central City Corporation (BCCC) Commissioner Rajendra Cholan has instructed the officials and staff of the city corporation to remove unauthorised banners and flexes during Ugadi and Ramzan. Unauthorised installation of flexes/banners will affect the beauty of the city. The commissioner had instructed the public to remove the roads as they would not only obstruct public traffic but also cause inconvenience to the public due to heavy rains and winds. Executive Engineers, Assistant Executive Engineers, Cleaning Staff, of the respective divisions participated in the work of removing the flex/banners.

Temple uses firewood for cooking amid LPG crunch

CH NEWS, BENGALURU
Due to the shortage of gas for cooking at a temple under the Hindu Religious Endowments Department in Nelamangala taluk, arrangements have been made for Annadasoha by bringing in tons of firewood to ensure that thousands of devotees coming from various parts of the state do not face any problems. The staff has resorted to firewood for the Annadasoha and has arranged for cooking on a wood stove for the thousands of devotees who come every day. Speaking at the time, the temple's kitchen staff said that they are using wood for cooking due to the lack of gas on time. They appealed to the government to ensure that the shortage of gas cylinders is avoided soon and help to serve the devotees.

1L passengers, Rs 5.7 cr revenue: ‘Divya Darshan’ drives devotion in B’luru

The service blends devotion with comfort while encouraging more people to explore B’luru's spiritual landscape

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Every weekend, Bengaluru transforms into a hub for spiritual exploration as thousands of devotees seek convenient ways to visit the city's temples. To meet this demand, Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) launched the one-day Divya Darshan tour in March 2024, offering families a hassle-free and well-organised way to cover multiple temples and spiritual centres in a single day. With air-conditioned buses, scheduled departures on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays, and carefully planned routes across the city. The tour begins at Kempegowda bus station at 8.30am

and concludes by 6pm. It covers several prominent temples and spiritual centres, including Sri Gali Anjaneya Swamy Temple, Sri Rajarajeshwari Temple, Shringagiri Sri Shannukha Swamy Temple, Sri Devi Karumari-amma Temple, Omkar Hills Temple, ISKCON Vaikunta Hill Temple, the Art of Living Foundation and Banashankari temple. Ticket fares are Rs 450 for adults and Rs 350 for children. Since its launch on March 8, 2024, Divya Darshan services operated by BMTC central zone ferried 1.1 lakh passengers across 3,165 trips, covering 454km and generating Rs 5.7 crore in revenue. Among all routes, DD4 saw the highest ridership



after the first service, with over 14,000 passengers using it. The service covers about 175km and operated 551 trips so far, covering prominent temples in the city like Gali Anjaneya, ISKCON, Banashankari temple, and others. BMTC officials said the services became a popular

choice for devotees and families seeking a convenient and organised way to explore Bengaluru's temples and spiritual centres in a single day. The weekend schedule and AC comfort were major draws, and plans are under way to expand the one-day packages to cover additional

destinations in and around the city. A BMTC spokesperson said, the response has been very good. This is an innovative step in city public transport, and because of the overwhelming interest, the corporation is planning to extend services to nearby temples around Bengaluru, to give people more options. Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy, who also holds Hindu religious institutions and charitable endowments portfolio, said, the service has helped thousands of families spend time together while visiting multiple temples within the city and on the outskirts. We have also covered temples of historical significance, and the initiative has been well-received by the public.



Commercial LPG crunch hits Shraddha, Vaikuntha Samaradhana ceremonies

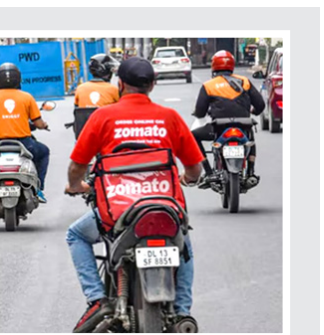
CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The shortage of commercial LPG cylinders has started affecting not only hospitality and transport but also other sectors. Due to the unavailability of LPG cylinders in Bengaluru, Shraddha and Vaikuntha programmes and other Vedic rituals are being cancelled or postponed. Shraddha is performed on the 11th day after death and Vaikuntha is performed on death anniversaries. The shortage of cylinders has had such an impact that the Vedic Dharma Sahayya Sabha, an organization dedicated to performing Vedic rituals and posthumous ceremonies for the Brahmin community, has put up a sign outside its Malleswaram office stating that it cannot conduct posthumous ceremonies due to disruptions in the supply of LPG cylinders. We have stopped taking new bookings since March 11 due to non-availability of commercial LPG cylinders. Regarding pre-bookings, we are requesting families to limit the number of people attending. We have also cancelled some pre-bookings, said Ganesh, a staff member at Vedic Dharma Sahayya Sabha. Food needs to be prepared for at least 10 people for the Shraddha ceremony and the number is decided based on how many people the family invites for the Tithi. The congregation conducts 5-6 post-mortem ceremonies every day and requires 2-3 LPG cylinders every day. But due to cylinder shortage, we are not getting one cylinder per week, said another staff member. Another congregation in JP Nagar is also facing this problem, although it has not yet reached the point of stopping these practices. We are somehow managing the situation. We are asking families holding ceremonies to limit the number of people present so that we can arrange food without any problems. If the situation continues like this, we will have to stop these ceremonies as well, said a staff member there.

46k migrant workers registered in Karnataka

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Karnataka continues to draw migrant workers from across India, reflecting its strong economic growth and expanding infrastructure sector. According to the state labour department, 46,393 migrant workers from more than 30 states and union territories are registered with various welfare boards. Workers from West Bengal form the largest group (10,730) in the construction sector, followed by Bihar (9,489) and Jharkhand (6,021). Uttar Pradesh (3,845) and Odisha (3,508) are the two other states in the top five. At the other end of the spectrum, only one worker each has been registered from Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu and Lakshadweep, while five workers are from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. A significant number of these workers are employed in Bengaluru's construction industry, contributing to major infrastructure and real estate projects such as Metro expansion, road development, and large residential and commercial complexes. In addition, 10,475 gig workers registered to avail social security benefits. Of these, 1,316 workers are from other states. These migrant workers are employed as bike-taxi riders or as food delivery executives. While these numbers pertain only to those registered with the labour department, the actual numbers are much higher. Most of the workers from outside are concentrated in Bengaluru, a labour department official said. The department stated that no comprehensive survey was conducted so far to assess migrant workers employed across various sectors in the state, and therefore the exact number of migrant workers remains unavailable.



14% of women staff claimed menstrual leave so far: Govt e-data

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Only 13.6% of the 61,049 women government employees have availed menstrual leave so far, according to data from the e-governance department, with officials noting that the figures reflect limited coverage of the digital attendance system. The data pertains to employees in the health and family welfare and education departments, which have onboarded the Karnataka Advanced Attendance Management System (KAAMS) or Kartavya app, to record attendance. As the state works to compile comprehensive data, Women and Child Welfare Minister Laxmi Hebbalkar said, multiple departments have begun implementing the policy already. Karnataka State Government Women's Employees' Association President Roshni Gowda said initial hurdles have eased. At that point, departments would ask for an order copy. However, that is now resolved, she said, referring to early glitches before the Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms (DAPR) issued the order. Association members from Bengaluru and Kumta reported no resistance from colleagues. The 12 days are added to our regular leave, and we apply for it there, said Baby, a union member. T Bhoobalan, CEO of the Centre for e-Governance, said



Officials said the current numbers are not fully representative as KAAMS covers only about 25 percent of the state's 5.5 lakh government workforce.

the provision was enabled on the attendance system soon after the government order in January, but uptake varies. Health and education departments have driven the rollout strongly, with high levels of staff registration, while other departments are gradually adopting it, he said. To address privacy concerns and streamline the applications, the state is integrating menstrual leave into the e-office leave management system. We are redeveloping the e-office platform, and the menstrual leave feature will be incorporated into the existing system in the next couple of months, Bhoobalan said, add-

ing that the move will improve record-keeping as some leave instances currently go unaccounted. The policy has also drawn opposition from sections of the private sector. The Bangalore Hotels' Association has challenged it in court, arguing it could affect productivity and hiring. Women have achieved equality over the years, and introducing such provisions may act as a setback. It could also impact operations, especially during peak business periods, said Veerendra Kamat, Honorary Secretary of the association, noting that women make up about 10-15 percent of the workforce in the sector. On the legal front, Labour Department Secretary Salma Fahim said the Karnataka High Court, during a hearing on March 16, directed authorities not to take any coercive action against employers until further orders.

Free isn't free in quick commerce as ₹30 fee makes customers spend ₹200 instead

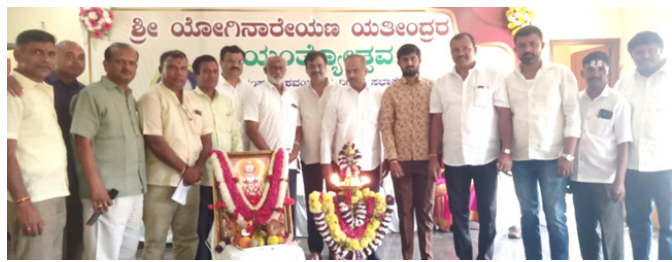
CH NEWS, BENGALURU

For Bengaluru's quick commerce users, the rule is simple, either order for at least Rs 199 or be ready to pay extra. As platforms roll back fee waivers, consumers are now spending more than they originally intended just to avoid delivery charges, effectively turning "free delivery" into a Rs 200 minimum commitment. What was once a spontaneous Rs 50 or Rs 80 order now often gets padded with additional items to cross the free delivery threshold. I just wanted milk and bread worth

Rs 90, but ended up adding snacks to push it to Rs 200, said S Rohan, a 22-year-old engineering student in HSR Layout. Otherwise, with delivery and handling, it becomes too expensive. Platforms like Zepto, Swiggy Instamart and Blinkit have all converged around a Rs 199 free-delivery threshold, while also reintroducing fees for smaller orders. In fact, Zepto joined the bandwagon recently by increasing the free delivery threshold from the earlier Rs 149 to Rs 199. In November last year, free delivery was for shopping up to Rs 99. Swig-

gy's Instamart, Blinkit, and Amazon now charge Rs 30 as delivery fee for orders below the threshold. The result, customers are either paying Rs 20-30 extra per order or consciously spending more than needed. For students and young professionals in Bengaluru, key drivers of the quick commerce boom, the shift is already changing behaviour. We used to order multiple times a day without thinking. Now we plan orders as a group or just wait till we actually need more things, said M Nisha, a student at Christ University. Others say the psychology of spending has

flipped. Earlier, I saved money because I only bought what I needed. Now I'm spending extra just to avoid the Rs 30 fee. Either way, I'm losing money, said Priyanka Rao, a marketing professional in Indiranagar. Industry experts say this was inevitable. The aggressive fee waiver war in late 2025 failed to deliver proportional user growth, pushing companies to recalibrate pricing. With discounts shrinking, the focus has shifted back to sustainability and margins. But for Bengaluru's convenience-first consumers, the change is stark.



Kaivara Tataiah Jayanti celebrated

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Kaivara Tataiah, a great man with social concerns, should be emulated by everyone and work for the progress of the Balija community, said MP PC Mohan. Speaking at the 300th birth anniversary program of Shri Yogi Narayana Yathindra (Kaivara Tataiah) organized by the Balija Sangha of Yeshwantpur constituency at the Dr BR Ambedkar Community Hall, Kengeri, he said that Kaiwara Tataiah Jayanti was previously celebrated only in Kaiwara, and later, when the BJP was in power, he submitted a request to the then Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai that the celebration should be held in the Banquet Hall of the Vidhana Soudha and that a separate corporation board should be established for the Balijiga community. After this, Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai gave his approval, and Kaiwara Tataiah Jayanti is being celebrated everywhere. To encourage the students of the economically backward Balija community,

by giving talent awards to the students who scored high marks, the community should join hands together and work for the progress of the society. Dr Shaktyam Shakti Bala Amma Swamiji of Ramo Halli Navadurga Peeth said that only when everyone in the Balija community, regardless of party affiliation, forgets their differences and works together to progress our society economically, politically and educationally, we can see progress. He said that poor students of the Balija community should be given a helping hand in their education and make their children educated and cooperate in the educational development of the society. In the current era, a situation has arisen where casteism is left at home and people have to come out on the streets to fight to save Hinduism, said BJP State Farm Morcha President M Rudresh. Former BBMP member R Anjanappa, Upendra, Mohan Kumar, J Ramesh, CMC Sarayanarayana, Spot Nagaraj Gerupalya, Mahesh, Lakshman and others were present.

VTU promotes entrepreneurship among female engineering students

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Visvesvaraya Technological University (VTU) launched an initiative to promote entrepreneurship among pre-final-year female engineering students across its affiliated colleges. Around 4,000 students will be trained in entrepreneurial skills, and around 100 of them will be identified to finally build their start-ups. The programme, christened 'She Innovates', is launched under the Visvesvaraya Research and Innovation Foundation



(VRIF) of VTU. A limit of around 80 students per college was set. Thus far, around 3,400 students registered. These students will be trained by various corporate partners, including Wipro, JAN AI, UN

Women, Karnataka Digital Economy Mission (KDEM), and TIE Chapters of Hubballi, Bengaluru, Mangaluru, and Mysuru, in various entrepreneurial skills. They will be equipped with learning and

insight into industry that would help them in their journey as an entrepreneur, said Santosh Ittanagi, Head, Execution and Operations-VRIF. After the three-month training, students will have to take part in a hackathon, where they will be asked to come up with real-world solutions to problems identified in a rural setting. The students can consider this as their final-year internship. The motto of She Innovates is to identify the 100 people who really want to become entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurship is not an easy

journey. Society will discourage you from looking for regular placements and from taking risks. The survival rate is very low. We will be speaking to the families to ensure the selected 100 have the right kind of family atmosphere and support as well, he added. VTU, which has around 80,000 students in a batch, has around half of them as women. We designed this programme to recognise and honour the talent of women by giving them greater priority in the engineering field.

QUICK READ



Dismissed Driver Steals Bus in Yadgir

Yadgir

In a startling incident, a dismissed driver allegedly stole a KKRTC bus from Saidapur bus stand in Yadgir district. Police registered a case against Mahipal Reddy Siddareddy of Rachanalli village. The bus, parked after its trip, was taken while staff were away. CCTV footage around 11:30 pm shows the act. The accused drove it to his village and parked it near a temple. Officials said he was recently dismissed and may have acted under the influence of alcohol. Investigation is ongoing.

LPG Shortage Triggers Rush in Surapura

Yadgir

Panic buying gripped Surapura city as residents rushed to secure domestic LPG cylinders amid a supply shortage. With no fresh stock for two days, a truck carrying 525 cylinders on Sunday drew large crowds. Demand, estimated at around 1,500 cylinders, far exceeded supply, leaving many without fuel. Tensions erupted at the distribution point, with allegations of selective supply and minor scuffles reported. Police were deployed to maintain order, while officials assured steps to improve supply and ease public concerns.

Communal Harmony Celebrated with Ugadi–Eid-ul-Fitr Event

KALABURAGI

A unique celebration promoting communal harmony was held in Kalaburagi city as Ugadi and Eid-ul-Fitr were jointly observed at Jagat Circle on Thursday evening. The event was organized by Souharda Karnataka Vedic in collaboration with various community organizations, bringing together people from different backgrounds to celebrate unity and brotherhood.

Speaking on the occasion, activist K. Neela said that Karnataka has long been a land of harmony and coexistence. “In today’s world, people are increasingly living in fear due to wars and communal conflicts. Global developments that hinder the joyous celebration of festivals are unfortunate. The growing greed for wealth among powerful sections is making life difficult for common people,” she said. Writer Dr. Meenakshi Bali подчеркнула that the region has a rich legacy of Sharanas and Sufi saints. “The coincidence of Ugadi and Eid-ul-Fitr this year is a strong symbol of communal harmony and unity,” she noted.

As part of the celebrations, neem-jaggery drink (bevu-bella panaka), a traditional Ugadi offering symbolizing the blend of life’s experiences, was distributed to hundreds of attendees.

Several prominent personalities and community members participated in the event, including Srisail Dhooli, Ashok Shatakara, Dr. Prabhu Khanapure, Dattatreya Ikhalaki, Mohammed Mukadam, Sajid Ahmed, Lavitra, Ratna, Padmini Kiranagi, Sujatha V., Nagendrappa Auradi, Alia Patel, Ravindra Shabadi, Dr. Jayadevi Gayakwad, Dr. Siddappa, Khaiser Begum, Dr. Parveen Sultana, Dr. Sameena, Kodandaramappa Shivalila, Dr. Jamuna, Sarvesh and Mehboob B., among others. The programme highlighted the spirit of unity in diversity and emphasized the importance of preserving harmony in society.



TENSION PREVAILS

Dalit Youths Allegedly Assaulted for Sitting Near Temple in Yadgir

YADGIRI

Tension gripped Yampad village in Gurmitkal taluk of Yadgir district following an alleged assault on Dalit youths for sitting on a platform in front of a Hanuman temple. According to reports, members of a Scheduled Caste community were attacked by a group of youths from another community while they were sat on the platform near the temple premises. The incident has led to a tense atmosphere in the village. In the assault, Anil Kumar Benalli from Gajarkot village sustained serious head injuries, while two others suffered minor injuries. Videos purportedly showing the attack have surfaced on social media and are being widely circulated.

The incident occurred during a family function at the temple. It is said that Mahantesh, son of Poshappa Meedigadda and Anantamma Meedigadda from M.T. Palli village, had organized a ritual ceremony at the Hanuman temple in Yampad. During the event, Anil Kumar was reportedly sitting on the platform in front of the temple when some individuals objected, allegedly telling him that he was not allowed to sit there and attempted to force him to leave.

When Anil Kumar reportedly questioned the objection and opposed caste-based discrimination, a group of individuals, including Lakshman, Kalappa, Anantappa and Ramesh, allegedly attacked him. The assailants are said to have used sticks and plastic pipes during the assault.

On receiving information about the incident, Superintendent of Police Prithvik Shankar treated the matter seriously and directed immediate action. Police from Gurmitkal station rushed to the spot, brought the situation under control, and have begun an investigation. Authorities have stepped up security in the village to prevent any further escalation. Further details are awaited.



Cong Leaders Project Unity Ahead of By-Election; “Ticket Is Not Personal Property,” Says Umesh Meti

Leaders stress unity, back central leadership, as Congress prepares for tough Bagalkot by-election battle

BAGALKOT

Amid growing political activity ahead of the Bagalkot by-election, Congress leaders in the district have struck a conciliatory and unified tone, emphasizing party discipline over individual aspirations.

Potential candidate Umesh Meti made it clear that the allocation of the party ticket should be left entirely to the leadership. “We have no objection to whoever is given the ticket. It is not our house property. The party can give the ticket to anyone—be it a family member or even a grassroots worker—and we will work wholeheartedly for the party’s victory,” he stated.

Echoing the broader message of unity, Meti referred to guidance from Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, who has emphasized that all party members must stand firmly behind the high command’s decision. “The priority is to strengthen the party. Once the ticket is announced, everyone must work together,” he added.

Similar sentiments were expressed by other prominent leaders, including Mallikarjun Meti and Bayakka Meti. Addressing media persons in front of the Congress office in Bagalkot, they asserted that the party’s decision would be respected without dissent. “We will support whoever is chosen by the party elders. Even if the ticket is given to the last worker in the party, we will cooperate fully and work unitedly for success,” they said, underlining the importance of collective effort over individual ambition.

Their statements come at a time when political observers are closely watching internal dynamics within the Congress ahead of the by-election. By publicly affirming loyalty to the party’s central leadership and downplaying factional interests, local leaders appear keen to project cohesion and avoid internal rifts that could impact electoral prospects.

The Bagalkot by-election is expected to witness intense political competition, and the Congress leadership’s choice of candidate will be crucial.



Meti and Bayakka Meti. Addressing media persons in front of the Congress office in Bagalkot, they asserted that the party’s decision would be respected without dissent. “We will support whoever

Training Camps Essential to Build Strong Party Organisation: B.Y. Vijayendra

KALBURGI

Emphasising the importance of organisational strength, BJP State President and MLA B.Y. Vijayendra said that training camps are crucial for building a strong and active party structure. He urged party workers to actively participate in organisational activities and make effective use of such training to emerge as influential leaders in society.

He was speaking at the Mandal-level meeting of the Deendayal Upadhyaya Prashikshan Maha Abhiyan–2026, organised by the Chittapur (Mandal) constituency at the Hirodeshwar Temple hall in Malagatti village of Shahabad taluk.

Vijayendra stated that BJP’s training programmes are structured initiatives aimed at educating party workers about the party’s ideology, policies, and organisational skills. These programmes play a vital role in strengthening both the party and nation-building efforts. He added that the BJP has carved a distinct identity in the country through its ideology and work.

Several leaders were present on the occasion, including Rural MLA Basavaraj Mattimadu, former MP Dr. Umesh Jadhav, MLC B.G. Patil, former MLAs Dattatreya Patil and Rajkumar Patil, former MLC Amarnath Patil, former KADA Corporation Chairman Sharanappa Talwar, Dharmanna Itaga, Basavaraj Bennur, Shashikala Tengli, and Shobha Bani.

Party functionaries and workers from Chittapur constituency, including Lingareddy Basareddy, Somashekhar Patil, Chandrashekhar Avanti, Nagaraj Hoogar, Sharanu Jyoti, Dr. Mahendra Kori, Siddu Malagatti, Eshwar Mugulana and Veena Narayan, were also present. Mandal President Ravindra Sajjan Shetty welcomed the gathering. District President Ashok Bagali delivered the introductory speech, Nagaraj Bhankalagi compered the programme, and Mallikarjun Itagi proposed the vote of thanks.

Vijayendra said BJP training programmes systematically educate workers on ideology, policies, and organisational skills, strengthening the party and contributing to nation-building, while highlighting the party’s distinct identity shaped by its ideology and work



Calf Killed in Leopard Attack in Devadurga; Fear Grips Villagers

RAICHUR

Panic has spread among residents after a leopard allegedly killed a calf in Arakera town of Devadurga taluk in the early hours of Saturday.

The incident occurred near Tipu Sultan Circle, behind the house of Siddamma Jatagal, where the calf had been tied to a tree.

According to reports, the leopard attacked the calf around 4 am. Hearing the animal’s distress cries, Siddamma stepped outside and noticed the attack. Frightened, she rushed back inside her house and raised an alarm. By the time neighbours arrived, the leopard had already killed the calf and fled after partially devouring it.

Paw marks believed to be of the leopard were found at the scene, further confirming its presence in the area. Although two to three other cattle were tied nearby, they escaped unharmed.

Locals said that leopard sightings and attacks have increased in recent days, with three to four livestock reportedly killed in the surrounding areas. The animal is suspected to be residing in caves located in nearby regions such as Ninganadoddi, Bandegudda and Golugudda.

The repeated incidents have created fear among farmers and agricultural labourers, many of whom are hesitant to venture into fields. Residents have urged forest department officials to take immediate action to prevent further attacks and ensure the safety of both people and livestock. Local resident Shivageni Nayak Gujup has appealed to the authorities to intervene promptly and address the growing threat.



Fill Vacant Librarian Posts Urgently, Association Urges Govt

VIJAYAPUR

The Karnataka State Library Association has urged the state government to immediately fill long-pending vacant librarian posts across various educational and government departments.

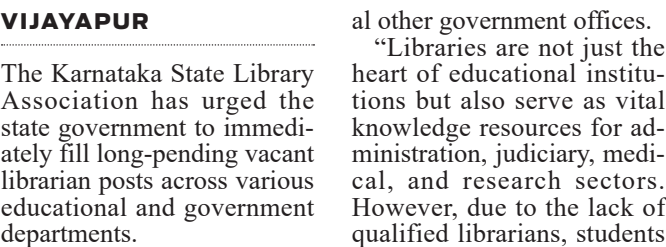
A memorandum addressed to the Chief Minister was submitted through the Deputy Commissioner. Speaking on the occasion, District Library Association President M.K. Biradar said that a large number of sanctioned librarian posts have remained vacant for years in universities, government and aided degree colleges, polytechnics, engineering colleges, and pre-university institutions.

He further pointed out that there is an acute shortage of librarians in public libraries at the state, district, city, and taluk levels, as well as in government medical colleges, Karnataka Public Schools, the High Court, district courts, Vidhana Soudha, the Archaeology Department, and several other government offices.

“Libraries are not just the heart of educational institutions but also serve as vital knowledge resources for administration, judiciary, medical, and research sectors. However, due to the lack of qualified librarians, students are being deprived of proper academic and research guidance,” Biradar said.

He added that the effective use of digital and e-resources has been adversely affected, and institutions in the state are facing setbacks in NAAC and NBA accreditation assessments. The quality of services in public libraries is also declining, while delays in accessing information are impacting administrative and judicial efficiency.

“This is not just about filling posts; it concerns the future of thousands of educated youth. Many qualified candidates, especially from socially and economically backward sections, have been waiting for years after completing higher education,” he said.



QUICK READ

Woman Attacks Husband After Dispute, Both Hospitalised

CHIKKABALLAPUR
According to preliminary reports, the incident involved a couple identified as Munindra and Varsha, who had reportedly been facing ongoing marital issues. Locals stated that frequent arguments between the two had created tension in the household, with disagreements reportedly centered around separation and divorce. On the day of the incident, the couple is said to have had another heated argument. Later, while Munindra was asleep at home, Varsha allegedly attacked him by kicking him in the groin with significant force. The sudden assault caused severe pain and left him injured, prompting immediate concern among family members and neighbors. Sources indicate that the dispute had been intensifying over time, with Varsha allegedly pressuring her husband for a divorce.

Elderly Woman Suffers Severe Burns in Suspected Fire Incident

CHIKKABALLAPUR
The victim, identified as Lakshmi Devamma (65), reportedly suffered 30–40 percent burn injuries in a late-night incident. According to initial reports, she and her family were sleeping under a mosquito net when the incident occurred. The fire was first noticed by neighbors, who detected a strong burning smell in the middle of the night and alerted the family. As family members woke up and rushed outside, they realized that Lakshmi Devamma had sustained significant burns. She was immediately taken to a nearby government hospital in the city, where doctors provided first aid.

President Droupadi Murmu to Visit Siddaganga Mutt for 119th Birth Anniversary Celebrations

TUMKUR
President Droupadi Murmu is set to visit Tumkur on April 1 to attend the 119th birth anniversary celebrations and Guru Vandana programme of Sri Shivakumaraswamiji at the renowned Siddaganga Mutt. In preparation for the President’s visit, a high-level preliminary meeting was held at Siddaganga Mutt near Kyathasandra in Tumkur. The meeting was chaired by the head of the Mutt, Siddalinga Swamiji, and focused on reviewing arrangements and ensuring smooth conduct of the program. Several prominent officials and leaders attended the meeting, including Union Minister V. Somanna, district authorities, and senior police officials. District Commissioner Shubha Kalyan, Tumkur Superintendent of Police Ashok, and MLAs Suresh Gowda and Jyoti Ga-



nesh were also present. Discussions were held regarding security measures, crowd management, and logistical arrangements in view of the President’s high-profile visit. According to the schedule, President Droupadi Murmu will arrive in Bengaluru on March 31 and stay at Raj Bhavan. On April 1, she will travel to Tumkur to participate in the celebrations at Siddaganga Mutt and offer her respects to the revered seer Sri Shivakumaraswamiji, whose contributions to education and

social service are widely recognized. The Guru Vandana programme and birth anniversary celebrations are expected to attract a large number of devotees, dignitaries, and followers from across the state. Authorities are making elaborate arrangements to ensure safety and convenience for attendees. The visit of the President has brought significant attention to Tumkur district, highlighting the enduring legacy of Siddaganga Mutt as a center of spiritual guidance and social service.

BALDOTA PROTEST SUPPORT

Anti-Baldota Protest Enters Day 142, Farmers Support

KOPPAL
The ongoing protest against the Baldota factory near Koppal has reached its 142nd day, with the State Farmers’ Association extending strong support to the protest demanding the relocation of the plant and protection of local communities. The protest, led by a joint action committee comprising the District Bachao Andolana and the Environmental Protection Forum, continues to gain momentum as concerns grow over environmental damage and public health



risks. Demonstrators have been demanding the immediate removal of the Baldota factory located near the municipal area, alleging that it is endangering the lives of near-

ly 50,000 people across 20 affected villages. The protestors have also raised serious concerns about pollution of water sources, particularly the contamination of the Tung-

abhadra River, which they claim has been adversely affected by industrial discharge. Additionally, they have called for the Basapura lake to be freed and made accessible to the public, arguing that industrial activity has restricted its use and harmed the surrounding ecosystem. State Farmers’ Association General Secretary Sharanappa Marali visited the protest site and expressed solidarity with the demonstrators. He emphasized the importance of protecting farmers’ livelihoods and preserving natural re-

sources, urging authorities to take immediate action in response to the demands. Several prominent leaders and activists participated in the protest, including chief coordinator Allamaprabhu Bettadur, along with coordinators Mallikarjun B. Gonal, Manjunath G. Gondabal, and others. Representatives from the farmers’ association, environmental activists, and local leaders such as Ismail Nalaband, Sukhamuniyappa Badiger, B.G. Karigar, Shambhulingappa Harageri, Rajshekhar Elubavi.

Women’s Day Celebrated; Commission Chairperson Nagalakshmi Chaudari

CHIKKABALLAPUR
The event, held in Shidlaghatta, brought together students, faculty members, social workers, and local residents to celebrate the achievements and contributions of women in society. Organized jointly by Manava Bandhutva and a local degree college, the programme focused on creating awareness about women’s rights, empowerment, and the importance of gender equality. Chairperson Nagalakshmi Chaudari, who attended as the chief guest, addressed the gathering and emphasized the need for women to be aware of their legal rights and opportunities available through various government schemes. She highlighted the role of education in empowering women and encouraged students to pursue their goals with confidence and determination. During her speech, she also stressed the importance of building a society based on mutual respect, equality, and human values. She urged young women to actively participate in social and economic activities and contribute to nation-building.



A special programme marking International Women’s Day was organized in Shidlaghatta by Manava Bandhutva and a degree college, with Karnataka State Women’s Commission Chairperson Nagalakshmi Chaudari gracing the occasion.

celebration. Discussions were also held on issues such as women’s safety, education, and self-reliance. Organizers stated that the aim of the event was not only to celebrate Women’s Day but also to inspire and educate participants about the importance of gender equality and social responsibility. They expressed hope that such initiatives would encourage more women to come forward and take leadership roles in various fields. The event concluded with a message of empowerment and unity, reinforcing the idea that collective efforts are essential to achieving a more inclusive and equitable society.

Three Women Killed in Road Accident While En Route to Kashi Pilgrimage



DEVANAHALLI
According to reports, the victims were part of a group traveling in a TT vehicle from Tiptur to board a flight for their pilgrimage to Kashi. The accident took place near Devanahalli, close to Kempegowda International Airport, where the group was heading to catch an early morning flight. The deceased have been identified as Vidyanagar Jayamma (65), Yashodhamma (60), and Ganga (40), all residents of Tiptur. The sudden loss of lives has cast a shadow of grief over their hometown and among family members who were eagerly awaiting the spiritual journey. Officials stated that around 15 other passengers traveling in the same vehicle sustained serious injuries in the accident. The injured were immediately rushed to a private hospital in Devanahalli, where they are currently undergoing treatment. Some of them are reported to be in critical condition. Preliminary information

suggests that the group had departed from Tiptur late at night, aiming to reach the airport in time for a scheduled flight to Kashi early Sunday morning. However, their journey ended in tragedy before they could reach their destination. Police have registered a case and initiated an investigation to determine the exact cause of the accident. Authorities are examining factors such as driver fatigue, road conditions, and possible mechanical issues that may have contributed to the mishap. The incident has once again highlighted the risks associated with long-distance night travel and the importance of road safety measures. Local authorities have urged drivers to exercise caution, especially during early morning hours, to prevent such devastating accidents. The tragedy has deeply affected the community in Tiptur, with many expressing condolences to the bereaved families and praying for the speedy recovery of the injured.

Fraudsters Misuse DC’s Identity to Seek Money via WhatsApp

DEVANAHALLI
A case of impersonation and fraud has come to light in Devanahalli, where unknown individuals allegedly misused the name and photograph of Deputy Commissioner K. N. Anuradha to demand money through WhatsApp. According to officials, the fraudsters created a fake WhatsApp identity using the name and display picture of Deputy Commissioner K.N. Anuradha. They then contacted the principal of Doddari Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Residential School in Nela-mangala taluk, posing as the district magistrate. In the message, the accused reportedly requested an urgent transfer

of ₹50,000, citing personal needs. To make the request appear genuine, they claimed that their net banking services were not functioning and asked the recipient to deposit the money into a Bank of Maharashtra account. However, the school principal grew suspicious of the unusual request and chose not to transfer the amount. Instead, he promptly informed the District Magistrate’s office about the message. Officials confirmed that no money was paid, thereby preventing financial loss. Following the incident, staff from the District Collector’s Office lodged a formal complaint at the Vishwanathapura Police Station.

QUICK READ

Student from Hiremagadur Village Excels in Entrance Exam

KOPPAL

Priya Nagaraj, a sixth-grade student of a government higher primary school in Hiremagadur village, has successfully cleared the Navodaya Vidyalaya entrance examination with outstanding performance. Her achievement has been widely appreciated as a significant milestone, especially considering her rural background and the challenges faced in accessing quality educational resources. Priya's success reflects her dedication, hard work, and determination to excel academically. Teachers and school authorities have praised her consistent efforts and commitment to studies, noting that she has always been a bright and disciplined student.

Student from Kunimellihalli Excels in Navodaya Entrance Exam

HAVERI

Jeevan Ramesh Hulloor, son of a retired soldier Ramesh Hulloor, has made his village proud by excelling in the highly competitive entrance exam for Navodaya Vidyalaya. Currently studying at Kendriya Vidyalaya, Jeevan demonstrated exceptional academic ability and determination, which helped him secure admission to the prestigious institution for Class 6. The Navodaya Vidyalaya system is known for identifying talented students from rural backgrounds and providing them with quality residential education. Jeevan's achievement is considered significant, as the entrance examination is highly competitive and requires strong preparation and dedication.

Mohammed Mohsin: A People-Centric IAS Officer Inspiring Trust and Hope

SRINIVASPUR

While government officials are typically bound by strict rules and protocols, Mohammed Mohsin has distinguished himself by blending empathy, accessibility, and a strong sense of public service into his administrative approach. Known for his simplicity and humility, he has built a reputation across the state as an officer who prioritizes people over procedure without compromising efficiency. Despite holding positions of authority and responsibility, Mohsin has consistently avoided the arrogance often associated with power. He interacts with citizens as an equal, patiently listens to their grievances, and works towards timely solutions.

Annual Day Celebration Highlights Academic Excellence and Holistic Development

The Annual Day celebration at Prasanna Public School was held with great enthusiasm and participation, showcasing the institution's commitment to quality education, character building, and overall student development



BHALKI

The grand event took place at the school premises in the town, where Founder and Chairman Prakash Andre addressed the gathering and emphasized the institution's dedication to providing affordable yet high-quality education. He stated that the school has been consistently working towards nurturing students with strong academic foundations while also focusing on values, discipline, and life skills. He highlighted that despite maintaining minimal fees, the institution strives to

deliver education that meets modern standards and equips students for future challenges. During his speech, he further noted that the school aims to introduce innovative learning methods, advanced skills training, and new opportunities for students in the coming years. The focus, he said, will remain on empowering students with knowledge and confidence so that they can excel in various fields and contribute meaningfully to society. The event was presided over by the school's administrative head, Guruprasad An-

dre, who spoke about the institution's vision of shaping responsible citizens. He emphasized the importance of education in building a strong and progressive nation and reiterated the school's mission to instill both academic excellence and moral values among students. Chief guest Dr. Animesh Anand also addressed the audience and stressed that quality education is not defined by high fees alone. He appreciated the school's efforts in making education accessible while maintaining high standards and encouraged parents

to recognize institutions that focus on genuine learning and student growth. Several dignitaries, including members of the management, faculty, and local representatives, were present on the occasion. The program featured cultural performances, academic recognitions, and speeches that reflected the school's achievements and aspirations. The Annual Day concluded on a positive note, reinforcing the institution's commitment to excellence, inclusivity, and continuous progress in the field of education.

Wall Poster for Bijapur Buddha, Basava, Ambedkar Book Fair Unveiled

VIJAYAPURA

The poster was released by noted thinker Basavaraj Sulibhavi at a preliminary meeting of the book fair sub-committee held at the Sariputra-Bodhidhamma Buddha Vihara in the city. Addressing the gathering, he emphasized the importance of collective responsibility in organizing the event and urged all members to actively contribute towards making the book fair a grand success. The book fair, which is being organized under the banner of the May Literary Forum Vijayapura in collaboration with Dalit and progressive organizations, is scheduled to be held at the Darbar High School ground. The event aims to promote literature and the philosophies of Buddha, Basava, and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, inspiring social awareness and intellectual engagement among the public. Speakers at the meeting highlighted the significance of such literary initiatives in fostering equality, education, and progressive thought. They noted that the book fair would



serve as a platform for readers, writers, and social thinkers to come together and exchange ideas rooted in social justice and human values. Several prominent members and organizers were present on the occasion, including B.H. Nadagiri from the Karnataka State SC/ST Government Employees Coordination Committee, district organizing convener Channu Kattimani from the Dalit Sangharsh Committee, Prabhugouda Patil from the Human Brotherhood Forum, and Rajshekhar Yadahalli. President of the Buddha Vihara Construction Committee. Other key attendees includ-

ed Vice President Shashikant Honavadar, General Secretary Nagaraj Lambu, Director Rajesh Toravi, and organizers such as Anil Hosamani, Yamanna Gunaki, K.M. Kudalgi, Milan Kumar Namadar, Appasaheb Yaranal, Sukhdev Kattimani, Subhash Honkanti, Danesh Avati, Bhimrao Talakeri, Santosh Shahapur, Mahantesh Kattimani, Sangharsh Hosamani, and B.R. Bamasode, among others. The meeting concluded with a strong call for unity and dedication among all stakeholders to ensure that the book fair becomes a meaningful and impactful event for the community.



Leaders Felicitated During Eid-ul-Fitr Prayers

KOPPAL

The Eid-ul-Fitr festival, marking the end of the sacred month of Ramadan in Islam, was celebrated with devotion and unity in Koppal city. A large number of people assembled at the Eidgah ground to offer collective prayers, reflecting the spirit of harmony and togetherness. Several prominent leaders participated in the prayers and were later honored by the Eidgah Committee as a gesture of respect and goodwill. Among those felicitated were Koppal MLA K. Raghavendra Hitnal, Member of Parliament K. Rajasekhar Hitnal, former MP Sanganna Karadi, Koppal Urban Development Authority Chairman Prasanna Gadad, and JD(S) State Council Core Committee member C.V. Chandrashekhara. Other notable attendees included former municipal

council president Amjad Patel, senior advocate S. Asif Ali, City Congress Committee President M. Pasha Cotton, Syed Foundation President Dr. K.M. Syed, Anjuman Committee President M.D. Asif Karkihalli, and Karnataka Muslim Unity District President M.D. Jeelan Killeddar. The Eidgah Committee extended warm greetings and felicitated these leaders in recognition of their participation in the community prayer and their contributions to society. The ceremony highlighted the importance of unity, mutual respect, and communal harmony during festive occasions. The event was organized under the leadership of Eidgah Committee Administrator Ghouse Saab Sardar, along with members of the mosque committee, Panch Committee, and representatives of various organizations.

Union Minister V. Somanna Visits Siddaganga Oil Mill

TUMAKURU

Union Minister V. Somanna visited the Siddaganga Oil Mill in Tumakuru city, where he inspected the traditional oil extraction unit and appreciated the organization's commitment to quality, affordability, and environmentally friendly practices. During his visit to the Siddaganga Oil Mill, the Union Minister closely observed the functioning of the traditional oil extraction process and expressed satisfaction with the operations. He praised the efforts of the owner, Chandan, for his service-oriented approach and dedication to providing high-quality oil to customers at affordable prices. Somanna highlighted that the initiative stands out for its focus on public health by offering pure and safe edible oil. He noted that in an era where consumers are increasingly concerned about the quality of food products, such efforts play a crucial role in promoting healthier lifestyles.

Minister H.K. Patil Inaugurates Additional Rooms at Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Boys Hostel

GADAG

The inauguration ceremony was held on Sunday at the Welfare Township in Gadag-Betageri, where the hostel is located. Addressing the gathering, Minister Dr. H.K. Patil emphasized the government's commitment to strengthening educational infrastructure and ensuring better living conditions for students, particularly those from underprivileged backgrounds. He stated that the addition of new rooms would help accommodate more students and provide them with a comfortable and supportive environment to pursue their education. The minister highlighted that access to quality education is closely linked to

proper residential facilities, and such initiatives are essential for empowering students and enabling academic success. Dr. Patil further noted that the government is taking continuous steps to enhance hostel facilities across the state, ensuring that students from rural and economically weaker sections are not deprived of opportunities due to lack of accommodation. He reiterated that improving infrastructure in educational institutions remains a top priority. The hostel, named after Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, serves as an important residential facility for students pursuing post-matric education in the region. The newly added rooms are expected to ease



the demand for space and create a more conducive learning atmosphere. Officials from the district administration, representatives from the social welfare department, and local leaders were present during the inauguration. They appreciated the initiative and expressed

confidence that the improved facilities would benefit a large number of students in the coming years. The event concluded with a renewed focus on expanding educational support systems and ensuring inclusive growth through better infrastructure and access to resources.

VILLAGE COMMUNITY HALLS

‘Community Halls to Be Built in All Villages of Constituency’

BIDAR

Member of the Legislative Assembly Prabhu Chavan has announced plans to construct community halls in all villages and hamlets of his constituency, aiming to strengthen social infrastructure and promote inclusive development. Speaking at a community event held in a village within the constituency, MLA Prabhu Chavan stated that building community halls in every village, especially in settlements of marginalized communities, has been a long-standing vision. He noted that during his visits to various villages, residents had repeatedly expressed the need



for such facilities to host social, cultural, and community programs. He emphasized that since assuming office, he has consistently submitted proposals to the government to make this vision a reality. With positive responses now being received, he expressed confidence that the construction of well-designed community halls across all villages will soon begin. He also informed that instructions have already been given to concerned officials to identify suitable land and expedite the process.

Prabhu Chavan also spoke about his commitment to the development of marginalized communities, stating that he has been actively working towards their upliftment through various government schemes. He pointed out that earlier many villages lacked basic amenities, but signifi-

cant improvements have been made under initiatives related to rural development, including roads, drainage systems, and electrification. He further mentioned that educational development remains a priority, with efforts being made to establish schools and provide quality education to all. Special attention is being given to ensuring access to education for economically weaker sections by setting up residential schools and improving existing facilities. Several local leaders, community representatives, and residents from different villages attended the program and expressed their support for the initiative.

IN THE COURT OF THE ADDL CIVIL JUDGE, AND JMFC AT DODDABALLAPURA
C.Ms. No.748/2025

Petitioner: Sree. Nagappa K W/o Gare krishnappa, Aged about 48 years, R/rt: Kesthuru Village, Kasaba Hobali, Doddaballapur taluk, Bangalore Rural District
And : Respondent: The Thalasidhar Doddaballapur

NOTICE THROUGH PUBLICATION

Whereas the above named petitioner has filed the petition to seek death certificate of her mother namely Kempamma W/o Late Gare krishnappa, who died on 27/05/2003

Any person having objections regarding issuance of death certificate of Kempamma W/o Late Gare krishnappa can file the necessary objections before the Hon'ble Court.

The above petition is posted on 27. 4.2026 for your objections it is here by called upon the general public to there any objections nor claims in respect of issuance of death certificate of Kempamma W/o Late Gare krishnappa, they can appear before this aforesaid date and 11.00 am before the Hon'ble court on the same day if the general public has nor come up with any objections the court will decided the Petition in your absence

Given under my hand and seal of this court on this day 18.3.2026 Hon'ble 1st Additional Civil Judge Court, Doddaballapura.

By order of the Honble court
Shirasthedar
The Hon'ble 1st Addl civil judge at Doddaballapura
Sri. Jagannath K, Advocate, JK advocate and associates, Office at: 28 and 27,2nd floor, PLD bank building, Taluk office circle, Doddaballapura

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Document Lost

This is to inform to General public that my client **Sri.Ramachandra S** S/o Late.T Srinivasa, Residing at Ajjavara Village, Ajjavara Gramapanchayath, Nandi Hobali, Chikkaballapura Taluk, Chikkaballapura District, I am the Owner of the Below said Property,while Sale Deed for taken Digital copy have lost following Documents of property pertaining to below Mentioned property Situated at Ajjavara Village, Ajjavara Gramapanchayth, Nandi Hobali, Chikkaballapura Taluk, Chikkaballapura District, had published the factum of lost of her Original Regd Sale Deed.Dated:- 01-03-2012, Regd Sale Deed, Executed By K.V.Mohan s/o Late, D.N.Venkateshappa, and T.Srinivas s/o Late, Thimmaiah, and his Son S.Ramachandra and Venkatakrishnappa s/o Late, Thimmaiah, and his wife Parvathamma and their Childrens 1] Shilpa, and Kishorkumar and and Kiran, In Favour of Sri, Keshavappa s/o Chikkadasappa,In regd as Book No.1,Volume No.CKB-1-04666/2011-12,in CDNO,CXBD 74,In regd before of the SRO Chikkaballapura, police complaint have been filed with regards to loss of the above said Document vide complaint in NCR NO. Lost Report **no.2119058/2026**, DATED:- 22-03-2026, and complaint dated:- 22-03-2026, by respective person,if anybody finds these Document please inform within 7 Days in Below mentioned Address.
Place:-Chinthamani, Date:-22-03-2026.

K.S.HARISH KUMAR
ADVOCATE
Office: NEAR KISHORE SCHOOL, ABOVE APPOLO PHARMACY, BESIDE SANTHOSHI MATHA TEMPLE, BANGALORE MAIN ROAD CHINTHAMANI, MOB:-9980110692

Document Lost

This is to inform to General public that my client **Smt.Radha N** W/o Venkatashiva, Residing at Situated at 427/9,#T,2nd Cross,Bagepalli Town and Taluk, Chikkaballapura District, I am the Owner of the Below said Property,while Sale Deed for taken Digital copy have lost following Documents of property pertaining to below Mentioned property Situated at Situated at 427/9,#T,2nd Cross,Bagepalli Town and Taluk, Chikkaballapura District, had published the factum of lost of her Original Regd Sale Deed.Dated:-22-07-1989, and 08-04-2015,In regd as Book No.1,Volume No.615, in Pages 74-76, IN Document No.469/1989-90, In regd before of the SRO Bagepalli, and Regd Sale Deed, In regd as Book No.1,Volume No.BGP-1-00069/2015-16, in CDNO. BGGP 78, In regd before of the SRO Bagepalli, in Respect of Property bearing Shinganyakanadinne village, E-Swathu no.152800102501020823,House list no.620, in Measuring 16.764 Meters, North To south 8.2296 Meters,police complaint have been filed with regards to loss of the above said Document vide complaint in NCR NO. Lost Report **no.2119191/2026**, DATED:- 22-03-2026, and complaint dated:- 22-03-2026, by respective person,if anybody finds these Document please inform within 7 Days in Below mentioned Address.
Place:-Chinthamani, Date:-22-03-2026.

K.S.HARISH KUMAR
ADVOCATE
Office: NEAR KISHORE SCHOOL, ABOVE APPOLO PHARMACY, BESIDE SANTHOSHI MATHA TEMPLE, BANGALORE MAIN ROAD CHINTHAMANI, MOB:-9980110692

QUICK READ

Woman killed, seven injured in ropeway accident

MAHASAMUND
A 28-year-old woman died and seven others were injured when a ropeway trolley coming down from Khallari Mata Temple in Mahasamund district crashed after its cable snapped around 10 am. The group was returning after offering prayers during the Navratri festival at Khallari village under Bagbahra area. The deceased was identified as Ayushi Satkar from Raipur. The injured were taken to a nearby hospital. Officials have started an inquiry into the cause.

Telangana releases Rs 9,000 cr Rythu Bharosa aid

HYDERABAD
The Telangana government has allocated Rs 9,000 crore under the Rythu Bharosa scheme to support farmers' cultivation on up to 1.50 acres. Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy released the first instalment of Rs 3,590 crore at a public meeting in Siddipet's Narmeta, with funds to be credited to farmers' accounts on Monday. The second instalment of Rs 2,650 crore will be released within 20 days, followed by Rs 2,760 crore later. The scheme provides Rs 12,000 per acre annually and benefits nearly 70 lakh farmers, with continued focus on welfare and crop diversification.

Leaders hail PM Modi's historic milestone

NEW DELHI
Telugu Desam Party president and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu congratulated Prime Minister Narendra Modi on becoming India's longest-serving head of government with 8,931 days in office, praising his visionary leadership and commitment to Viksit Bharat 2047. Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh also lauded Modi's decades of service, citing development gains, welfare initiatives and India's rising global stature.

Hospital integration to expand medical seats in Delhi

Delhi government plans hospital integration to improve healthcare and increase medical education seats significantly

NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Sunday said that integrating major government hospitals will strengthen healthcare services and significantly expand medical education opportunities in the capital.

She said the initiative is expected to lead to a major rise in MBBS and postgraduate (PG) seats, helping more students pursue medical studies and specialist training.

As part of the plan, the Delhi government will merge Guru Teg Bahadur Hospital (GTB), Delhi State Cancer Institute (DSCI), and Rajiv Gandhi Super Speciality Hospital (RGSSH) into a single autonomous institution. This



new structure will function on the lines of the AIIMS model, ensuring better coordination, improved infrastructure, and efficient use of resources.

The government is also working to upgrade the Institute of Human Behaviour and Allied Sciences (IHBAS) into a second National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosci-

ences (NIMHANS-2), focusing on advanced mental health care and research.

The Chief Minister said the main aim of the integration is to increase postgraduate medical seats so that more doctors can receive specialist training. She added that this will also improve the overall quality of healthcare services in Delhi.

Raut's book claims pressure on Dhankhar, ED misuse

MUMBAI

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut has made several strong claims in his book 'Unlikely Paradise', alleging political pressure and misuse of investigative agencies against senior leaders.

He claims former Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar resigned in 2025 after pressure from the Enforcement Directorate (ED) linked to his independent political stand against the Modi government.

According to the book, there were rumours that Dhankhar and his wife sold their Jaipur property and sent part of the money abroad. It further alleges that investigative agencies prepared a file against him. Raut claims that when Dhankhar's political differences with the government increased, the ED reportedly confronted him with the file, leading to pressure to resign. His initial refusal, the book says, resulted in further scrutiny.

The book also makes allegations about former Chief Election Commissioner Ashok Lavasa. It claims he faced raids and summons after taking a dissenting stand on alleged electoral violations



involving Prime Minister Na-Sanjay Raut's book alleges political pressure on Jagdeep Dhankhar, misuse of agencies, and claims involving past leaders and major political controversies in India.

rendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah. It further states that Lavasa resisted pressure to remain silent, which allegedly led to action against him and later his resignation in 2020.

Raut's book also refers to political developments during the UPA era. It claims there were discussions about possible legal action against then

Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi over the post-Godhra riots, but Sharad Pawar opposed the move, saying an elected chief minister should not be jailed.

It further alleges that Sharad Pawar and Shiv Sena founder Bal Thackeray helped Amit Shah secure bail in earlier legal cases, despite opposition from the CBI.

The book also claims Shah once sought Thackeray's help to approach a judge during a difficult legal phase, which it says influenced his political journey.

The book ends with criticism of shifting political loyalties and what it calls "ungrateful" behaviour in later years.

Officials warned rising youth tobacco use causes serious health issues, educating the public and shopkeepers during raids

Traditional medicine gaining global recognition: VP

PUNE

Vice President C.P. Radhakrishnan on Sunday said that India's traditional systems of medicine have received renewed global recognition under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He made the remarks while addressing the 81st Foundation Day celebrations of Nisargopachar Ashram at Uruli Kanchan in Pune.

He said AYUSH institutions are playing a key role in promoting preventive and holistic healthcare in the country. These systems are

also contributing to the growth of medical and wellness tourism, he added.

The Vice President stressed that yoga and naturopathy are not alternatives but strong complements to modern medical science. He described India's traditional wellness practices as valuable gifts to the world.

He highlighted that India's development journey towards a Viksit Bharat must also focus on building a Swasth Bharat. Institutions like Nisargopachar Ashram, he said, are important in achieving this goal by promoting natural and bal-

anced living.

He urged people to follow a healthy lifestyle that includes proper nutrition, regular exercise, mental well-being, and harmony with nature. He also warned about the rising burden of lifestyle diseases and said the Ashram's message is more relevant today than ever. Health, he said, is not just the absence of disease but complete physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. In today's fast-paced world, people often chase material success, but true happiness comes from peace, balance, and harmony, he added.



Tea wage hike plan sparks industry concern

KOLKATA

The All India Trinamool Congress (TMC) pledge to raise the daily wage of tea garden workers to Rs 300 has drawn a cautious response from industry stakeholders in West Bengal, who have warned that any wage revision must consider the financial stress of the tea sector.

In its election manifesto for the West Bengal Assembly polls, the ruling party promised to increase the minimum daily wage of tea workers from Rs 250 to Rs 300. It

also announced extension of tax exemption on agricultural income from green tea leaves till 2027 and continuation of welfare schemes like 'Chaa Sundari' housing for plantation workers.

Industry representatives said wage decisions in the tea sector are traditionally taken through a consultative system involving the government, employers, and trade unions. Tea Association of India (TAI) Secretary General P.K. Bhattacharjee said wages are fixed by the Minimum Wages Advisory Board after considering industry

capacity, market conditions, and other factors.

He said all stakeholders must be consulted before implementing any revision. Officials from the Darjeeling tea industry also expressed concern, saying several gardens are already under financial strain due to rising production costs, low global prices, and competition from cheaper imported tea.

A Darjeeling official said 7-8 tea gardens shut due to cheap tea dumping from Nepal, warning more closures under rising costs.

SUPPLY EASE

Govt speeds up city gas projects, raises LPG supply

NEW DELHI

The government has taken steps to ease pressure on gas supply by speeding up city gas projects and increasing commercial LPG allocation.

Officials said the move comes amid a challenging global and geopolitical situation affecting energy availability.

To improve distribution and reduce dependence on liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), the government has pushed faster expansion of piped natural gas (PNG) networks. The Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation (PESO) has directed its offices to clear City Gas Distribution (CGD) applications within 10 days, ensuring quicker approvals and faster rollout of gas infrastructure. Commercial LPG users in urban



areas, including cities and towns, have also been encouraged to shift to PNG as part of a long-term plan to stabilise supply and improve efficiency.

Officials clarified that domestic LPG supply across the country remains stable. There are no shortages at distributorships, and deliveries are continuing normally. Most supplies are being delivered

through the Delivery Authentication Code (DAC) system, while panic bookings have reduced.

On the commercial side, LPG allocation has been steadily increased. After an earlier 20 per cent restoration of supply, the government announced an additional 10 per cent allocation linked to PNG expansion reforms on March 18. Another 20 per cent increase was approved on March 21, bringing total commercial LPG availability to 50 per cent.

Priority sectors like hotels, restaurants, canteens, food units, and community kitchens are getting LPG support, along with 5 kg cylinders for migrant workers. Hospitals and educational institutions receive nearly half the supply. About 15,440 tonnes were lifted in eight days, with supply stable despite global uncertainties.

MANAPPURAM HOME FINANCE LIMITED		FORMERLY MANAPPURAM HOME FINANCE PVT LTD		
Regd. Office: 8/596 A, Padmaprabha Building, Near Sreerama Swami Temple, Cherpu - Thriprayar Road, Thriprayar, Thrissur, Kerala 680567 Phone No.: 0487-3520504, Website: www.manappuramhomefin.com				
DEMAND NOTICE				
Whereas the Authorized Officer of Manappuram Home Finance Ltd., having our registered office at 8/596 A, Padmaprabha Building, Near Sreerama Swami Temple, Cherpu - Thriprayar Road, Thriprayar, Thrissur, Kerala 680567 and branches at various places in India (hereinafter referred to as "MAHOFIN") is a Company registered under the Companies Act, 1956 and a Financial Institution within the meaning of sub-clause (iv) of clause (m) of sub-section (1) of Section 2 of the Securitization and Reconstruction of financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (hereinafter referred to as the Act) read with Notification No. S.O. 3466 (E) dated 18th December, 2015 issued by the Govt. of India, Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance, New Delhi, inter alia carrying on business of advancing loans for construction and / or purchase of dwelling units and whereas the Borrower / Co-Borrowers as mentioned in Column No. 2 of the below mentioned chart obtained loan from MAHOFIN and whereas MAHOFIN being the secured creditor under the SARFAESI Act, and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(2) of the said Act read with Rule 2 of the security interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued under the said Act calling upon the Borrowers / Co-Borrowers as mentioned herein below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notices with further interest thereon within 60 days from the date of notice, but the notices could not be served upon some of them for various reasons. That in addition thereto for the purposes of information of the said borrowers enumerated below, the said borrowers are being informed by way of this public notice.				
Sr. No.	Name Of The Borrower/ Co-Borrower/Len/Branch	Description Of Secured Asset In Respect Of Which Interest Has Been Created	Repay Date	Date Of Notice Sent At Outstanding Amount
1	Salma Banu, Mohamed Ateeq, Abdul Salam. MHL0051061755/ Shimoga	All That The Piece or Parcel of Site Along With Structure Standing There On Being Bearing Site/Property No. 17, E-Property No. 152400104200900058, Measuring East-West: 12.192 Meter X North-South: 18.288 Meter, Total 222.97 Sq. Meter, Including 11.48 Sq. Meter House, Situated At Guddanaralake Village, Kommaranahalli Village Panchayath, Bhadravathi Taluk, Shivamogga District, Karnataka, Pin: 577301, East-Road, West-Site No. 28, South-Site No. 18, North-Site No., Road	12-02-2026	16-02-2026 & Rs.381067/-
2	Murugesha R, Ravi Ms, Shanmutha R. NLPAR09032277/ Tumkur	All That Piece And Parcel of The Residential Building Bearing Grama Panchayath Khattha No.370/106 108 And E-Khattha No.1519020160000049 Measuring East To West: 10.1 Mtrs And North To South: 20 Mtrs Is Situated At Muthuran Village, Budhikote Hobli, Bangarpet Taluk, Kolara District, Karnataka, Pin: 563129, East-Vacant Site Belongs To Seethappa., West-Road., South-House Belongs To Venkateshappa., North-Property Belongs To Venkateshappa And Munishahappa.	14-02-2026	16-02-2026 & Rs.817165/-
3	Puttaswamy D, Manjula G, Lingappa D. CP0900003/ Mysore	All That Piece And Parcel of The Property Bearing Belakavadi Gramapanchayathi Khattha No. 1570/87/A And As Per Form No. 9 And 11 A Unique No. 152100303500101663, Situated At Belakavadi, Malavalli Taluk, Mandya, Karnataka, Pin: 571417 Measuring East To West 6.096 Meters And North To South: 16.76 Meters. East-House of Shivamma, West-House of Mallamma, South-House of Kalluru Siddiah, North-Road.	15-02-2026	18-02-2026 & Rs.260911/-
4	Manjunayaka D, Devamma D, Sowmya D. NHL0900028703/ Vivekananda Circle	All That Piece And Parcel of The Property Bearing No. 25-522-343, Unique No. 4355/59, Situated At Ward No.8, Mettukoppa Road, Left Side, H. D. Kote Town And Taluk, Mysuru District, Karnataka, Pin: 571114 Measuring East To West 12.19 Meters, And North To South: 9.14 Meters, Total Measuring: 111.41 Meters. East-Vacant Site, West-Road, South-Site No. 58, North-Road	18-02-2026	19-02-2026 & Rs.416010/-
Notice, is therefore given to the Borrowers / Co-Borrowers, as mentioned herein above, calling upon them to make payment of the total outstanding amount as shown herein above, against the respective Borrower / Co-Borrower, within 60 days of publication of this notice. Failure to make payment of the total outstanding amount together with further interest by the respective Borrower/ Co-Borrower, MAHOFIN shall be constrained to take u/s 13(4) for enforcement of security interest upon properties as described above, steps are also being taken for service of notice in other manners as prescribed under the Act and the rules made hereunder. You are put to notice that the said mortgage can be redeemed upon payment of the entire amount due together with costs, charges and expenses incurred by MAHOFIN at any time before the date of publication of notice for public auction or private treaty for transfer by way of sale, as detailed in Section 13(8) of the SARFAESI Act.				
Take note that in terms of S-13 (13) of the SARFAESI Act, you are hereby restrained from transferring and/or dealing with the Secured Properties in any manner by way of sale, lease or in any other manner.				
Date: 23 rd March 2026 Place: KARNATAKA		Sd/- Authorised Officer Manappuram Home Finance Ltd		

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QUICK READ



DRI seizes banned electronics items at Mumbai port

Mumbai

The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) has seized over 11,000 banned walkie-talkies and second-hand hard disk drives worth Rs 9.25 crore at Nhava Sheva Port. Acting on a tip-off, officials found the items hidden among other electronic goods in a consignment imported from China. The shipment, valued at Rs 30.25 crore, was seized for misdeclaration. Two Mumbai-based importers, a father and son, were arrested under the Customs Act. Authorities said the devices were blacklisted and the HDDs required prior approval, which was not obtained.

4 hurt as ULFA(I) militants attacks Assam commando camp

Tinsukia

At least four security personnel were injured after militants of ULFA(I) attacked an Assam Police commando camp in Jagun area early Sunday. The assault, carried out around 2.30 am, involved rocket-propelled grenades, five of which exploded, followed by a brief gunfight. The attackers, suspected to be a seven-member group, fled towards Arunachal Pradesh. The injured were taken to Assam Medical College and Hospital and are stable. The attack comes ahead of the state assembly elections on April 9.

KSU moves HC over NDA candidate's communal remarks

Kochi

The Kerala Students Union has approached the Kerala High Court against BJP-led NDA candidate B Gopalakrishnan over alleged communal remarks during campaigning in Guruvayur. The complaint cites a video where he reportedly said the constituency had not elected a Hindu MLA for nearly 50 years and accused major fronts of ignoring the community. He also allegedly made remarks about Guruvayur, a prominent pilgrimage centre, which KSU termed divisive and sought legal action over.

AIADMK accuses DMK of favouring family interests

CHENNAI

AIADMK leader Kovai Sathyan on Sunday accused the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) of pressuring its alliance partners to prioritise the interests of Chief Minister M K Stalin's family over public welfare. He claimed that several allies were being forced to compromise their party identity and work for the ruling family's political benefit instead of focusing on public service. Sathyan said some alliance parties have themselves expressed dissatisfaction, alleging that they are being pushed to support the ruling family's political prospects. He added that such pressure is weakening the independence and relevance of smaller parties within the coalition.

He further rejected claims that the alliance is built on shared ideology, calling it misleading. According to him, there is growing frustration among partners, and some may consider exiting the alliance due to rising internal tensions.

Modi becomes India's longest-serving leader ever

This achievement highlights Modi's long and continuous presence in public office at both the state and national levels

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi created history on Sunday by becoming the longest-serving head of government in India, surpassing former Sikkim Chief Minister Pawan Kumar Chamling.

With a total of 8,931 days in office, including his tenure as Chief Minister of Gujarat and later as Prime Minister, Modi edged past Chamling's record of 8,930 days, setting a new benchmark in Indian politics.

This achievement highlights Modi's long and continuous presence in public office at both the state and national levels. Born in Vadnagar in Gujarat, Modi began his political journey with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh be-



fore rising through the ranks of the Bharatiya Janata Party. He became the Chief Minister of Gujarat in 2001 and held the position for more than a decade, making him the state's longest-serving Chief

Minister.

In 2014, Modi assumed office as Prime Minister of India and has since remained a dominant figure in national politics. Under his leadership, his party secured three con-

secutive victories in the Lok Sabha elections in 2014, 2019, and 2024. These back-to-back wins have strengthened his image as one of the most influential and enduring leaders in the country's political landscape.

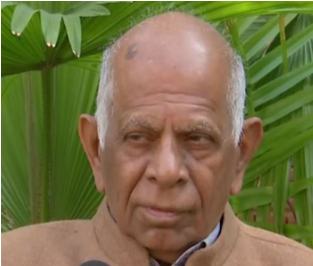
In July 2025, Narendra Modi surpassed Indira Gandhi to become the second-longest-serving Prime Minister in consecutive terms, while Jawaharlal Nehru still holds the record for the longest uninterrupted tenure. Modi is also the first Prime Minister born after Independence and the first non-Congress leader to complete two full terms and return with clear majorities, highlighting his strong public support and lasting political influence.

US, Israel started war, and not Iran: Ex-diplomat

NEW DELHI

Former diplomat K P Fabian said rising tensions in West Asia are being closely watched, with Iran, Israel, and the United States at the centre of global attention. He stated that Iran's actions, including diplomatic statements on the Strait of Hormuz, reflect a careful and strategic approach rather than aggression.

Fabian noted that Iran had recently said the Strait of Hormuz remains open to all ships, including those linked to the US and Israel, describing it as part of its diplomatic messaging. He also referred to the visit of Japan's Prime Minister to the United States and said discussions helped ease tensions, including the



reported release of detained Japanese nationals.

He pointed out that international nuclear monitoring agencies, including the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), reported no abnormal radiation levels after recent attacks on nuclear-related sites, suggesting no immediate nuclear threat.

Referring to past global conflicts like the 1956 Suez crisis, Fabian said history

BJP slams ex-diplomat over terror remarks

MUMBAI

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Sunday strongly criticised former Pakistani diplomat Abdul Basit for his recent remarks against India, saying they reflect that Pakistan "cannot survive without terrorism".

Basit, former High Commissioner of Pakistan to India, had said in an interview with a Pakistani channel that if Pakistan comes under attack from the United States, it should consider striking Indian cities like Mumbai and New Delhi as a "default response".

Reacting sharply, BJP National Spokesperson Tuhin Sinha said the comments show Pakistan's continued support for terror-related thinking and claimed the country is disturbed by India's strong responses in recent years. He said such statements reflect a "loss of balance" and frustration within Pakistan's establishment.

Sinha called Pakistan a "terrorist state" and alleged that extremist thinking is deeply rooted in its system. He also referred to past statements by Pakistani leaders,



claiming they have repeatedly made threats against India and its infrastructure.

He further cited earlier incidents, including reported strikes in the region, to argue that Pakistan continues to engage in hostile actions against neighbouring countries. According to him, such behaviour shows that Pakistan has not changed its approach despite international criticism.

The BJP spokesperson said India's stronger security and diplomatic measures have weakened Pakistan's terror support and clarified its stand on cross-border threats. He criticised earlier governments for weak responses, praised the current firm approach, and warned that India will strongly respond to any threat to its security and sovereignty.

AAP TO CONTEST GUJARAT POLLS ALONE

AHMEDABAD

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) will contest the upcoming local self-government elections in Gujarat without forming any alliance and will soon release its first list of candidates, state president Isudan Gadhvi said on Sunday. He confirmed that the party will follow its independent electoral strategy and move forward on its own strength. Addressing a press conference in Ahmedabad, Gadhvi said the party has decided to contest all local polls independently. He added that AAP aims to be among the first parties to announce its candidates in the state.

According to him, meetings of the party's screening committee have been held over the past three days, where senior leaders discussed candidate selection and election planning. The first list of candidates is expected to be released shortly.

Gadhvi said discussions are also underway for a second list of candidates, which will be finalised during the Gujarat visit of AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal. He added that the second list is likely to be announced by March 28–29.

SIT probes Nashik astrologer rape case

MUMBAI

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Sunday said that the alleged rape case involving Nashik-based astrologer Ashok Kharat is being taken very seriously and is under active investigation by a Special Investigation Team (SIT). He said the matter is being closely monitored at the highest level of the state administration.

Fadnavis said the Special Investigation Team has already been formed and is working along with the Nashik Police Commissioner. He also confirmed that the Maharashtra Police Director General has been directed to supervise the probe to ensure a fair and thorough investigation. According to him, the government is treating the case with utmost seriousness due to its sensitive nature and the involvement of multiple victims.

The Chief Minister said efforts are being made to encourage more victims to come forward and share their complaints with the police. He added that some women have already begun responding to the investigation. He clearly stated that strict action will be taken and no accused will be spared if found guilty.

Fadnavis also warned



Maharashtra CM says SIT is probing Nashik astrologer rape case seriously, urges victims to come forward, warns against politicising sensitive matter

against attempts to politicise the issue. He said that anyone with evidence should submit it directly to the police instead of using the matter for political criticism or public statements. He stressed that such sensitive cases should be handled through proper legal channels.

Rejecting allegations of selective action, he said the government is focused only on justice for victims, stressing that crimes against women are serious and unacceptable. Astrologer Ashok Kharat has been arrested for allegedly sexually assaulting a woman between 2022 and 2025 under spiritual pretext. He is in custody till March 24 as probe continues.

West Asia crisis hits India's urea output



NEW DELHI

Urea production in India has been severely affected as gas supplies from West Asia decline amid escalating tensions in the region. Several fertiliser plants are now operating at nearly half their normal capacity due to disruptions in liquefied natural gas (LNG) flows through the Strait of Hormuz, industry sources said.

According to reports, India's major LNG receiving terminal operated by Petronet LNG Ltd has declared force majeure after upstream suppliers were unable to deliver contracted cargoes. This has reduced gas availability to state-run suppliers including GAIL (India) Ltd, Indian Oil Corporation Ltd, and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd, which supply fertiliser plants across the country.

Industry officials said gas supply has fallen to around 60–65% of normal levels, and in some units effective availability is even lower. As a result, urea production has dropped by nearly 50%, while energy consumption

has increased by about 40% due to inefficient operations at reduced load.

Officials explained that large ammonia-urea plants are not designed to operate with frequent load changes. Running under such unstable conditions leads to higher fuel use and lower output, causing financial losses for producers.

The situation has been worsened by poor coordination in gas scheduling. Fertiliser units reportedly receive sudden instructions on gas usage, forcing them to make abrupt operational changes. Experts warned that such fluctuations increase risks of equipment failure and safety hazards.

Adding to the pressure, revised pricing mechanisms for long-term LNG supplies have created financial uncertainty for fertiliser companies already facing production losses.

India, one of the world's largest urea consumers, may face supply pressure ahead of the upcoming kharif season, though current stocks remain higher than last year, according to data.

MILK ADULTERATION

Death toll in toxic milk case touches 17

KAKINADA

The death toll in a suspected milk adulteration incident in Andhra Pradesh's East Godavari district has increased to 16, officials said on Sunday. Three others are still undergoing treatment in hospitals as investigations continue into the cause of the contamination.

The case was first reported from Lalacheruvu and nearby areas under Rajamahendravaram after several people fell seriously ill in mid-February. Victims suffered severe symp-



toms such as vomiting, stomach pain, and sudden kidney failure after consuming con-

taminated milk. According to officials, laboratory tests confirmed that the deaths were

caused by multi-organ failure triggered by acute renal failure. The milk was found to be mixed with ethylene glycol, a highly toxic chemical commonly used in industrial products. The outbreak came to light on February 22 when residents from Chowdeswaranagar and Swaroopnagar began reporting symptoms linked to kidney damage. This prompted immediate medical and public health investigations in the region.

Authorities traced the suspected source to a dairy unit in

Narasapuram village under Korukonda mandal. Following this, supply from the unit was immediately stopped to prevent further distribution of the contaminated milk.

Between February 16 and March 21, 20 people were hospitalised, of whom 16 died, three are under treatment, and one has recovered. Several patients needed dialysis and ventilator support. Health teams ran surveys of over 300 residents. Police detained the supplier, and investigations and testing are ongoing.



QUICK READ

Severe foods force mass evacuations in Oahu

Oahu

More than 5,500 people have been evacuated as Hawaii's Oahu faces its worst flooding in over 20 years. Heavy rain and storms are expected to continue through the weekend, with risks spreading to Maui County. Governor Josh Green warned of more rainfall and urged caution, noting saturated ground could worsen flooding. Over 230 rescues have been carried out, while a 120-year-old dam remains at risk.

2 killed in train-bus collision in Comilla

Dhaka

At least 12 people were killed and 20 injured early Sunday after a train rammed into a bus at a level crossing in Comilla. The accident occurred around 3 a.m. on the busy Dhaka-Chittagong route when the train hit the bus while it was crossing the tracks. The impact dragged the vehicle nearly a kilometre, trapping passengers inside. Rescue teams, including army and fire personnel, rushed to the spot and shifted the injured to hospital. Train services were disrupted for hours. Authorities have launched an investigation into the incident.

Secret routes help return Ukrainian kids home

A secret volunteer network is helping bring back Ukrainian children taken to Russian-controlled areas during the war

KYIV

A hidden network of volunteers in Ukraine is quietly working to bring back children who were deported or moved to Russia and occupied regions. The effort, described as an “underground railroad,” relies on secret routes, careful planning and risky travel to



return children safely, as no formal agreement exists between the two countries for their return.

One such case is 19-year-old Rostyslav Lavrov, who managed to escape from Russian-controlled territory. He said he acted normally to avoid suspicion and carried nothing to pass checkpoints safely. His

journey highlights the risks many children face while trying to return home.

The operation is led by Mykola Kuleba, founder of the charity Save Ukraine. He said the group created these secret efforts due to the lack of official systems to bring children back. Volunteers say they are trying to stop forced assimila-

tion and protect the children's identity.

By February, more than 1,100 children had been returned through such informal efforts. However, challenges remain, especially when dealing with legal systems and international rules. Human rights groups say over 1.6 million children still live in Rus-

sian-controlled areas, where they may face pressure to follow Russian systems. Ukraine's Bring Kids Back UA programme is also working with global partners to support rescue and reintegration efforts. As the war continues, volunteers stress that saving these children and reuniting families remains a top priority.

Iranian missiles hit Arad, Dimona

ARAD

More than 100 people, including children, were injured after missile strikes hit southern Israeli towns, causing damage and panic. Ballistic missiles fired by Iran struck the towns of Arad and Dimona in southern Israel, leaving over 100 people injured and damaging residential areas. Israeli officials strongly condemned the attack, calling it a deliberate strike on civilians. Rescue teams worked through the night to assist the injured and clear debris from damaged buildings. Hospitals treated victims for shrapnel wounds, fractures and shock, with some reported to be in serious condition. Emergency services were stretched as fires broke out in residential neighbourhoods following the impact.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu described the situation as serious and said Israel would respond firmly to ensure its security. Local leaders also highlighted the fear and trauma faced by residents and stressed the need for restoring safety.

Nearly 200 injured as Iran strikes Israel

JERUSALEM

Nearly 200 people were injured after missile strikes launched by Iran hit southern regions of Israel, including the cities of Dimona and Arad. Local reports said at least two ballistic missiles managed to get past Israel's air defence systems, causing significant damage and a large number of casualties.

Health officials confirmed that 11 people sustained serious injuries. Among them were a 12-year-old boy wounded by shrapnel in Dimona and a five-year-old girl injured in a separate strike. Most of the other victims suffered minor wounds or trauma while rushing to shelters during the attacks. Soroka Medical Center treated about 175 injured individuals, while emergency service Magen David Adom reported multiple cases of light injuries and anxiety.

In response, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Israeli military chief Eyal Zamir stated that Israel would continue its military actions against threats on all fronts. The Israel Defence Forces later confirmed that its air force carried out strikes targeting key infrastructure in Tehran.

The incident is part of ongoing tensions between the two nations, with repeated exchanges increasing fears of further escalation. Officials noted that many injuries were caused by flying debris or occurred as people hurried to take cover. Visuals from the affected areas showed damaged buildings and fires following the strikes.

Authorities are still assessing the overall impact of the attack, while emergency teams remain on high alert to respond to any further developments or possible additional strikes.



HORMUZ RISK RAISES PAK ECONOMIC CONCERNS

ISLAMABAD

A new report warns Pakistan's economy could face serious trouble if oil supply through the Strait of Hormuz is disrupted.

A recent study by the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics has highlighted major risks to Pakistan's economy if there is any disruption in the Strait of Hormuz. The report says even small disturbances in this key oil route could trigger rising inflation, currency pressure, and wider economic instability.

The study explains that Pakistan depends heavily on imported energy, making it vulnerable to global supply shocks. Around 20 million barrels of oil pass daily through the Strait of Hormuz, making it one of the world's most important oil transit points. Any geopolitical tension or disruption in this region could quickly increase global oil prices.

For Pakistan, where energy imports account for over

22 percent of total imports, such a situation could have serious consequences. The report notes that higher oil prices would increase not only fuel costs but also transport charges, insurance rates, and other related expenses. These factors together would push up overall prices for consumers.

The study uses different scenarios to show that even a small disruption could push inflation close to 9 percent in a short period. In more severe cases, inflation may rise beyond 12 percent. It also warns that higher import costs could weaken the country's financial position, putting pressure on the local currency and increasing economic instability. The report highlights high-speed diesel as a key factor, as it is widely used in transport, farming, and food supply. Any rise in diesel prices could directly increase food costs and daily expenses, turning an external shock into a major domestic economic crisis.

PoK health workers step up stir

MUZAFFARABAD

Health workers in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) have stepped up their protest after nearly a month of demonstrations, accusing authorities of failing to respond to their long-pending demands. Speaking at a rally in Muzaffarabad, protest leaders Sajid Nadeem and Maqsood Hussain Shah expressed frustration over the continued silence of the government.

The workers said they have been protesting for over 25 days and have repeatedly submitted their demands, but no clear action has been taken. They stressed that their demands are fair and important, especially considering their key role in providing essential healthcare services. Many workers, they said, are working long hours, sometimes up to 24-hour shifts, to keep services running.

Despite their efforts, the protesters claimed they have not received basic benefits such as health and risk allowances. They also highlighted that several female workers



have been denied benefits under the MNCS programme, adding to their concerns.

The leaders urged the government to address their issues in the same way it had earlier resolved concerns raised by doctors. They said quick action is needed so workers can return to their normal lives with dignity.

While emergency services are still being maintained, the protesters warned that continued inaction could force them to take stronger steps. They added that this arrangement may not last if their demands remain ignored. The group has also submitted revised proposals, hoping authorities will respond soon.

Pakistan army faces criticism over sectarian remarks

WASHINGTON DC

Fresh criticism has emerged against Pakistan's military after remarks linked to Army Chief Asim Munir sparked controversy and allegations of deepening sectarian divisions. Sange Seng, President of the Institute for Gilgit-Baltistan Studies, strongly condemned the reported comments, claiming they targeted Shia Muslims and suggested they prove loyalty or leave the country. He said such statements reflect rising intolerance and raise concerns about the country's internal unity.

Seng also accused the Pakistan Army of focusing on strategic and financial interests instead of public welfare. He alleged that the military has supported militant groups in the past for geopolitical reasons, while citizens continue to face instability and violence. Referring to the situation in Pakistan-occupied Gilgit-Baltistan (PoGB), he claimed the region has been under long-term control and that local people are increasingly demanding more rights and autonomy. He urged both Shia and Sunni communities to remain united in protecting their identity, resources, and political rights. He further criticised Pakistan's foreign policy, alleging that its approach towards countries like Iran changes based on strategic and financial interests, which can weaken trust among communities. Seng also reiterated that PoGB does not have full constitutional status within Pakistan and called for greater international attention to the region. He encouraged people to focus on unity and strengthen cultural and social ties with neighbouring areas like Ladakh.

operation is important to maintain stability and ensure secure navigation. However, Mousavi added that the Strait would be closed to countries considered hostile to Iran. He also blamed ongoing tensions involving the United States and Israel for the current situation in the region.

HORMUZ OPEN EXCEPT FOR ENEMIES: IRAN

LONDON

Iran has said the Strait of Hormuz will remain open for most vessels, but warned restrictions could apply to its enemies. Ali Mousavi, Iran's representative to the International Maritime Organization, said foreign ships can pass through the Strait of Hormuz if they coordinate with Tehran for safety. He stressed that co-

operation is important to maintain stability and ensure secure navigation. However, Mousavi added that the Strait would be closed to countries considered hostile to Iran. He also blamed ongoing tensions involving the United States and Israel for the current situation in the region.

In response, US President Donald Trump issued a strong warning, saying Washington



could target Iran's energy infrastructure if the Strait is not fully reopened within 48

hours. The warning comes as global oil prices rise due to concerns over disruptions in the key shipping route.

The Strait of Hormuz is a crucial passage through which about 20 per cent of the world's oil supply moves. Any restriction in this route can affect global energy markets and trade. Tensions have increased further due to attacks on energy facilities and ships in the

region. While Iran has taken a firm stance, its diplomats have also suggested they are open to dialogue and cooperation to ensure maritime safety.

At the same time, Iran's UN envoy Amir Saïd Iravani said Tehran does not plan to fully close the Strait but will act to protect its national interests. The situation remains tense as both sides signal readiness for further action.



Kumaran visit highlights India-Cambodia cultural ties

CAMBODIA

MEA Secretary (East) P. Kumaran visited Angkor Wat during his official trip, highlighting the strong cultural and historical ties between India and Cambodia. The visit reflected the long-standing connection between the two nations, rooted in shared civilisational heritage and people-to-people links.

According to MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal, the visit also recognised India's important role in preserving Angkor Wat, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the world's largest ancient temple complex. India was the first country to support its restoration between 1986 and 1993.

Built in the 12th century by Suryavarman II, Angkor Wat was originally a Hindu temple and later became a major Buddhist site. Its architecture and carvings reflect strong Indian influence, including



stories from Hindu epics and Sanskrit inscriptions, showing deep cultural exchange between the regions.

India's restoration work was carried out by the Archaeological Survey of India after years of damage caused by conflict in Cambodia. The effort helped preserve the temple and strengthened goodwill between the two countries. India has also supported conservation work at

other sites like Ta Prohm and Preah Vihear.

Kumaran's visit follows ongoing high-level engagements and reflects efforts to expand cooperation in culture, tourism, education and trade. It also highlights India's Act East Policy, which focuses on stronger ties with Southeast Asia. The visit shows that shared heritage continues to play a key role in strengthening India-Cambodia relations.

SU DO KU

Brain-Bender: Can You Solve It?

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

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

Fill a 9x9 grid with numbers so that each row, column and 3x3 section contain all of the digits between 1 and 9.

Solutions to Thursday's puzzle

QUICK READ



Govt to auction 19 strategic mineral blocks

NEW DELHI

The government will launch the seventh round of auctions for 19 critical and strategic mineral blocks on March 23, Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy announced on Sunday. The move aims to strengthen India's mineral security and support clean energy growth. Rising global demand for minerals like lithium and rare earth elements has made supply chains challenging. After six successful rounds awarding 46 blocks, the new tranche includes minerals vital for energy, fertilisers, and technology. The auctions will be held online through a transparent two-stage bidding process.

Iran war: PM Modi reviews oil, gas situation

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will chair a high-level meeting on Sunday evening to review the oil, gas, power and fertiliser sectors amid the ongoing West Asia situation, sources said. Senior ministers will attend the meeting, which will focus on ensuring uninterrupted supply, smooth logistics and stable distribution of petroleum products across the country. The government is closely monitoring global developments and taking proactive steps to safeguard energy security while protecting the interests of consumers and industries.

Global supply chains hit hard by West Asia war

NEW DELHI

Global supply chains are facing a "hard lockdown" as the West Asia conflict intensifies, said Anindya Banerjee of Kotak Securities. He noted that managing crude oil, CNG and LPG supplies has become a key concern for India amid disruptions at the Strait of Hormuz. Banerjee said India is using its strong diplomatic ties to secure energy supplies from countries like Saudi Arabia, the US and Russia, despite global tensions. He added that India is among the few nations able to engage with multiple sides and ensure continued supply. Reports suggest several Russian oil shipments are currently on their way to India. The ongoing conflict involving Israel, the United States and Iran has created uncertainty in global trade.

Hormuz closure hits India's fertilizer supply chain

Closure of the Strait of Hormuz may raise costs and disrupt supplies for India's fertilizer sector, though current stocks are sufficient for short-term agricultural needs

NEW DELHI

The effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz is expected to create major cost and logistics challenges for India's fertilizer sector Capital. However, the industry currently has enough supplies to meet near-term demand, especially as it enters a relatively low-demand period before the Kharif season begins in mid-May. The report said the issue is not an immediate shortage but a supply chain disruption that could increase input costs. The Di-Ammonium Phosphate (DAP) segment is likely to be the most affected due to its heavy dependence on imports. India relies on Middle Eastern suppliers, particularly Saudi Arabia, making shipments vulnerable to disruptions in the Strait.



The situation is worsened by changes in global trade, as China has reduced fertilizer exports to secure its domestic supply. This forces India to depend on distant markets like Morocco and Jordan, increasing costs. For urea, the main concern is limited gas availability rather than finished imports, as LNG supply issues may reduce plant output. India will need about 18 million tonnes of urea by August 2026, with a shortfall of nearly 2 million tonnes to be met through imports. Overall, the sector may face higher costs, tighter supplies and pressure on subsidies if the disruption continues.

Union Minister Piyush Goyal held multiple meetings to strengthen trade, investment and global partnerships across key sectors. with Harry Theoharis to explore ways to enhance cooperation between India and Greece. The meeting covered areas such as trade, investment, tourism and maritime connectivity, underlining the growing partnership between the two nations and the potential for further collaboration in multiple sectors. Additionally, the minister interacted with Aadit Palicha of Zepto, focusing on innovation-driven growth, youth skill development and strengthening supply chains. The discussion also highlighted the importance of integrating farmers into modern supply networks to improve market access and value realisation. These engagements underline the government's focus on fostering entrepreneurship, innovation and inclusive economic development.



Goyal holds key talks to boost global trade

NEW DELHI

Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Saturday held a virtual meeting with Marcelo Ebrard, Mexico's Economy Secretary, to strengthen economic relations between India and Mexico. The discussions centred on expanding bilateral trade, increasing investment flows and promoting closer industry collaboration to unlock new business opportunities for both countries. The interaction reflects ongoing efforts to deepen engagement with key global partners and diversify economic ties. In a separate meeting, Goyal met Patrik Jonsson from Eli Lilly and Company, where he highlighted India's strong economic growth and the company's expanding presence in the country. The talks also focused on boosting investments and further strengthening the 'Make in India for the world' initiative, aimed at positioning India as a global manufacturing and export hub. Goyal also held discussions

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Tomato price crash hits TN farmers hard

CHENNAI

Tomato farmers across Tamil Nadu are facing a severe crisis as prices have dropped sharply, making it difficult to recover even basic cultivation costs. In several districts, growers have stopped harvesting and are leaving ripe tomatoes in the fields due to very low market rates. The sudden fall in prices is mainly due to excess supply, with large quantities arriving from different growing regions at the same time. This has led to a steep decline in wholesale prices during the peak harvest season, disrupting farmers' expected income. In key areas like Dindigul, tomato prices have fallen to single digits per kilogram. Farmers said a 14-kg box now sells for just Rs 100 to Rs 150, compared to Rs 400 to Rs 600 a few weeks ago. At the same time, labour



costs remain high, with daily wages around Rs 400, adding to their burden. Farmers say the cost of harvesting, packing and transporting tomatoes is higher than the current market price. With harvesting costs around Rs 80 per box, many are choosing not to pluck the crop to avoid further losses. Those who expanded cultivation expecting stable prices are now under heavy financial stress. In Dharmapuri, prices have slightly improved to Rs 13-15 per kilogram after a drop in arrivals due to recent rains. However, farmers say the market is still unstable. A similar situation is seen in Tiruchy, especially in Marungapuri, where harvesting has also been stopped. Experts suggest better storage, supply management and price support systems to prevent such losses in future.

Govt tweaks credit scheme to boost MSME growth



NEW DELHI

The Central Government has modified the Mutual Credit Guarantee Scheme (MCGS-MSME) to strengthen manufacturing and export capabilities of micro, small and medium enterprises, in line with the Budget 2025-26 roadmap. The Ministry of Finance said the changes aim to improve access to credit for purchasing plant and machinery and make the scheme more flexible based on industry feedback. Under the revised rules, the scheme now also covers MSMEs in the service sector. The minimum investment requirement in machinery has been

reduced to 60 per cent of total project cost from 75 per cent earlier, allowing businesses greater flexibility in using funds. The guarantee period has been fixed at 10 years to ensure long-term financial support. To ease financial pressure, the 5 per cent upfront contribution will now be refundable. Businesses will receive 1 per cent back each year starting from the fourth year, provided the loan account remains in good standing. Special benefits have been introduced for export-oriented MSMEs. Eligible firms must have at least 25 per cent of their turnover from exports over the past three years.

India emerging as global hub for affordable healthcare

NEW DELHI

Union Minister Jitendra Singh said India is steadily transforming into a strong pharmaceutical and medical technology hub, marking a major shift towards self-reliant healthcare growth. He noted that this progress will play an important role in boosting the country's GDP in the coming years. Speaking at a healthcare summit in New Delhi, Singh highlighted that India's healthcare system is moving from import dependence to domestic innovation and manufacturing. He said the country is now focusing on global quality standards and better integration between research and industry. Over the past decade, India has reduced its reliance on imported medical devices and drugs. Earlier, many essential items like implants, advanced medicines and equipment were sourced from abroad, making treatment costly. Today, India is producing its own antibiotics, vaccines and



advanced therapies, improving affordability and access. He pointed out that the COVID-19 pandemic marked a turning point, with India supplying vaccines to many countries and strengthening its global position. The sector is now also advancing in areas like gene therapy and treatment for diseases such as sickle cell anaemia. Singh added that Indian products now meet global standards, supported by improved regulatory systems and faster approvals. Indigenous devices like stents and ventilators are becoming more reliable and affordable. He also highlighted initiatives like the Promotion of Research and Innovation in Pharma-MedTech (PRIP) scheme and the MedTech Mitra platform, which aim to boost innovation and simplify approvals. With continued collaboration between industry, academia and government, India aims to expand its global presence in healthcare.

Govt withdraws domestic airfare caps

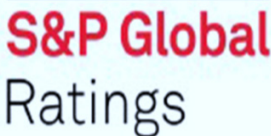
NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Civil Aviation has decided to remove temporary fare caps on domestic flights from March 23, ending a price-control system introduced earlier to manage sharp fare increases. The caps were imposed in December 2025 following major flight disruptions by IndiGo, which had led to a surge in ticket prices and reduced flight availability. The move aimed to protect passengers and ensure affordability during a period of limited capacity. According to the Ministry, the situation has now stabilised, with flight operations returning to normal and capacity being restored across the aviation sector. As a result, airlines will once again be free to set ticket prices based on market demand and supply. However, the government has advised airlines to maintain pricing discipline.

Dubai property market may slow, no crash likely

NEW DELHI

A report by S&P Global Ratings said Dubai's residential real estate market may slow due to the ongoing West Asia conflict, but a major crash like the 2008 financial crisis is unlikely in the short term. The report noted that the United Arab Emirates, especially Dubai, is sensitive to geopolitical tensions because its property market depends heavily on foreign investors and expatriates. The conflict has already made investors cautious, leading to fewer property transactions and slower market activity. If the situation continues, both housing demand and prices could weaken further. However, S&P said a sharp collapse is unlikely if the intense phase of the conflict lasts only a few weeks. A longer conflict, though, could increase risks and lead to a more noticeable price correction. The report highlighted that luxury and high-end housing



segments may be hit the hardest, as wealthy investors could delay or rethink their investments. Apartment prices are also expected to fall more than villa prices due to a higher supply of new units. Despite these challenges, supportive government policies may help stabilise the market. Measures like long-term residency options, including the Golden Visa, are expected to encourage people to stay and invest. Stronger financial positions of developers and stricter regulations are also likely to help the sector handle short-term pressure. However, if the conflict continues for a longer period, it could weaken investor confidence and impact overall market stability.

HORMUZ DISRUPTION MAY HIT AUTO SECTOR SUPPLY CHAIN



NEW DELHI

A disruption in the Strait of Hormuz could seriously affect India's automobile sector, mainly due to a shortage of technical grade urea. The report warned that supply issues may disrupt logistics and cargo movement across the country. India imports around 50-60 per cent of its technical grade urea from hubs like Egypt and Dubai. This material is essential for making diesel exhaust fluid (DEF), which helps reduce pollution in modern diesel vehicles. Under BS-VI norms, vehicles cannot run if DEF levels are exhausted, raising concerns

of large-scale disruptions. Industry body Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers has alerted the government about falling urea reserves, warning that supplies may not be available beyond early April 2026. A prolonged shortage could immobilise a large number of trucks and buses, affecting transport and supply chains nationwide. The report also highlighted rising costs for tyre manufacturers due to higher crude oil prices, which impact raw materials like synthetic rubber and carbon black. Natural rubber prices are also increasing, adding pressure on companies.

OUTREACH WITH INDUSTRIALISTS

MP secures Rs 5,055 crore investment commitments

BHOPAL

Mohan Yadav said Madhya Pradesh has secured investment proposals worth Rs 5,055 crore during an outreach event with industrialists in Jaipur. The investments are expected to create over 3,530 jobs across multiple sectors. The Chief Minister said the strong response reflects growing interest among Rajasthan-based entrepreneurs in expanding operations in Madhya Pradesh. The event was part of the state's wider



campaign to attract investments by showcasing its business-friendly policies

and infrastructure. During the session, CM Yadav held one-on-one meet-

ings with industry leaders and highlighted the state's advantages, including its central location, skilled workforce, reliable power supply, and strengths in sectors such as renewable energy, manufacturing, textiles, pharmaceuticals and logistics. He expressed confidence that more investors from Rajasthan would invest in Madhya Pradesh, contributing to economic growth. He also linked the state's industrial push to India's goal of becoming a \$5 trillion econo-

my, positioning Madhya Pradesh as a key growth driver. Industrialists appreciated the transparent approach and supportive environment, with many showing interest in setting up or expanding units. Officials said such outreach programmes help build investor confidence, speed up approvals and attract more investments. The government plans to continue similar events across the country to boost investments and strengthen Madhya Pradesh's position as a major industrial hub.



The Most Advanced War Weapons in the World



1. Hypersonic Missiles: Speed Beyond Imagination

Perhaps the single most transformative development in modern weaponry is the hypersonic missile. Defined as a weapon capable of traveling at Mach 5 or above — five times the speed of sound, or roughly 6,100 kilometers per hour — hypersonic missiles have fundamentally upended traditional missile defense strategies. Unlike ballistic missiles, which follow predictable arcing trajectories through space, hypersonic glide vehicles (HGVs) and hypersonic cruise missiles maneuver at extreme speeds within the atmosphere, making them extraordinarily difficult to track and intercept.

Russia's Avangard hypersonic glide vehicle, which entered service in 2019, is one of the most celebrated and feared weapons of this class. Carried atop an intercontinental ballistic missile, the Avangard can travel at speeds reportedly exceeding Mach 20 and maneuver unpredictably to evade interception. China's DF-17 missile, publicly revealed in 2019, carries a hypersonic glide vehicle capable of targeting aircraft carriers and forward military bases throughout the Pacific region. The United States, not to be outdone, has accelerated several hypersonic programs including the ARRW (Air-Launched Rapid Response Weapon) and the Conventional Prompt Strike system for the Navy, both of which are in advanced development phases as of the mid-2020s.

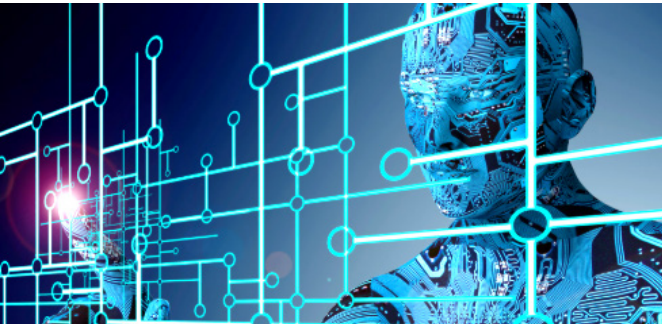
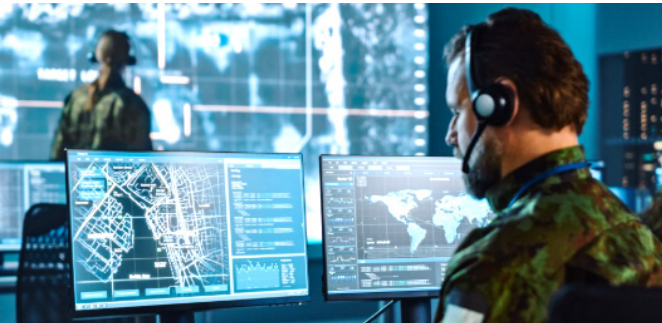
What makes hypersonic weapons so strategically significant is not merely their speed, but the collapse of response time they impose on adversaries. Traditional missile defense systems rely on tracking a projectile's trajectory and calculating an intercept path a process that requires several minutes at minimum. A hypersonic missile traveling at Mach 10 within the atmosphere compresses that window to mere seconds, potentially rendering entire generations of air defense infrastructure obsolete.



5. Nuclear Submarines and the Underwater Domain

The AUKUS agreement signed between the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia in 2021 made global headlines by committing to provide Australia with nuclear-powered attack submarines, representing one of the most significant transfers of sensitive military technology in decades. Meanwhile, Russia's Belgorod submarine, the world's longest nuclear submarine, is specifically designed to carry the Poseidon nuclear-armed autonomous underwater vehicle a weapon capable of traveling intercontinental distances underwater before detonating near a coastal city.

CONCLUSION



The weapons described in this article represent only the publicly known surface of a much deeper technological competition playing out behind classification barriers. From hypersonic glide vehicles that compress strategic warning times to seconds, to laser weapons that offer near-infinite magazines, to AI-guided autonomous systems that can operate in denied communications environments, the character of warfare is being transformed at a pace that challenges both military planners and international law frameworks. What is clear is that the nations investing most heavily in these technologies the United States, China, Russia, and a select group of technologically advanced allies are shaping the military balance of the coming decades. The strategic stability of the international system will depend in large part on whether

diplomatic frameworks can keep pace with technological development, establishing norms and limits around the most destabilizing capabilities before they trigger the conflicts they are designed to deter. The history of warfare suggests that technology alone never determines outcomes. Leadership, doctrine, logistics, morale, and political will remain decisive. But in an era when a single hypersonic missile can defeat a multi-billion-dollar warship, when a swarm of cheap drones can overwhelm a sophisticated air defense system, and when a line of code can disable a nation's infrastructure, the weapons themselves have never mattered more. Understanding them is no longer just the concern of generals and defense ministers it is essential knowledge for anyone seeking to comprehend the world we live in.

2. Directed Energy Weapons: The Rise of the Laser

For decades, directed energy weapons (DEWs) specifically high-energy lasers existed primarily in the realm of Hollywood blockbusters and theoretical white papers. That is no longer the case. Laser weapons are now operational on military platforms across multiple branches of the United States armed forces, and their capabilities are advancing rapidly. The U.S. Navy's Solid-State Laser: Technology Maturation Laser Weapon System Demonstrator (SSL-TMLS) and the more operationally mature High Energy Laser with Integrated Optical-dazzler and Surveillance (HELIOS) system have been deployed on destroyers and amphibious assault ships. These systems are capable of disabling enemy drones, small boats, and surveillance aircraft at the speed of light literally. With a cost-per-shot measured in dollars rather than the thousands or millions associated with kinetic missiles, laser weapons offer an asymmetric cost advantage that defense planners find compelling.

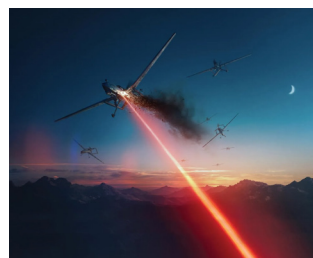
Israel's Iron Beam system, developed by Rafael Advanced Defense Systems, represents another major leap. Designed as a complement to the Iron Dome anti-missile



system, Iron Beam uses a high-powered laser to intercept rockets, mortars, and drones at minimal cost. The system entered operational testing in the early 2020s and is expected to be a cornerstone of Israel's layered air defense architecture. Meanwhile, China and Russia are both pursuing their own DEW programs, with Russia claiming to have deployed the Peresvet laser weapon system operationally since 2019.

Throughout human history, nations have raced to develop superior weapons capable of defending their territories and projecting power across the globe. In the 21st century, this arms race has entered an era defined not by brute force alone, but by precision, speed, stealth, and artificial intelligence. From hypersonic missiles that outrun radar systems to autonomous drones

guided by machine learning algorithms, the world's most powerful militaries are deploying technologies that were once the stuff of science fiction. This article explores the most advanced war weapons currently operational or in advanced development around the world, examining how they work, which nations possess them, and what their implications are for the future of warfare.



3. Autonomous Drones and AI-Powered Combat Systems



The battlefield of the future and increasingly of the present is populated by unmanned systems operating with varying degrees of autonomy. The war in Ukraine dramatically demonstrated the power of drone warfare, with both sides deploying thousands of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) for reconnaissance, precision strikes, and electronic warfare. But the most advanced military programs are pushing well beyond remote-controlled drones into genuinely autonomous systems guided by artificial intelligence.

The United States Air Force's secretive XQ-58A Valkyrie is a low-cost autonomous combat drone designed to fly alongside and even protect manned fighter jets. Known as a 'loyal wingman,' the Valkyrie can conduct electronic warfare, suppress enemy air defenses, and carry munitions, all while being directed by a human pilot in an accompanying aircraft. Australia's Boeing MQ-28 Ghost Bat operates on a similar concept and represents a major investment in collaborative combat air power.

On the naval front, the United States is developing the Medium Unmanned Surface Vehicle (MUSV) and the Large Unmanned Surface Vehicle (LUSV) autonomous warships capable of operating for extended periods without a crew. These vessels can serve as missile carriers, mine sweepers, or intelligence platforms, extending the reach of the fleet without putting sailors at risk. The ethical debates around fully autonomous lethal systems often called 'killer robots' by critics remain fierce, but the technological development continues apace.



6. Cyber and Electronic Warfare Capabilities



Modern warfare is no longer confined to the physical domain. The electromagnetic spectrum and cyberspace have become contested battlefields where military advantage is won and lost. Advanced nations maintain sophisticated cyber warfare capabilities capable of disabling power grids, financial systems, air traffic control networks, and military command systems. The 2010 Stuxnet attack, widely attributed to the United States and Israel, demonstrated that malicious code could physically destroy industrial machinery in that case, centrifuges at Iran's nuclear enrichment facility. Electronic warfare (EW) systems, which jam, spoof, and exploit the electromagnetic emissions of enemy platforms, are increasingly central to military operations. The United States EA-18G Growler remains the world's most capable dedicated electronic attack aircraft, capable of disabling enemy radar and communications networks over a wide area. Russia and China have made significant investments in electronic warfare, fielding systems that can disrupt GPS signals, jam communications, and defeat precision-guided munitions by corrupting their navigation data.

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Asian Legends League Season Two Trophy Unveiled

RUDRAPUR

The Asian Legends League unveiled its official trophy on Sunday, marking the start of preparations for its second season, which will begin on June 2.

The ceremony was attended by several well-known cricketers, including Thisara Perera, Asghar Afghan, Rishi Dhawan and Angelo Perera, adding importance to the event.

Speaking on the occasion, Thisara Perera said the previous season was a great experience and expressed excitement for the upcoming edition. He highlighted the competitive nature of the league and the strong support from



fans as key reasons for its success.

Rishi Dhawan also praised the support from fans, especially in India, saying it motivates players to perform bet-

ter. He added that his team will aim to give their best and compete for the title this season.

League director Neeraj Kukreja said the tournament

aims to bring together experienced cricketers from across Asia on one platform. He added that the response from players and fans has been encouraging and promised a competitive and entertaining tournament.

The second season will feature six teams, including Indian Royals, Sri Lankan Lions, Afghanistan Pathans, Asian Stars, Pakistan Panthers and Bangladesh Tigers. However, teams from Gulf countries will not take part due to the ongoing war situation in the region.

The organisers expect the tournament to attract strong interest from cricket fans across Asia.



NRAI Coaching Course Concludes Successfully In Jamshedpur

JAMSHEDPUR

The National Rifle Association of India successfully concluded its seven-day National Coaches Course in Jamshedpur, aimed at strengthening grassroots coaching and improving shooting standards in the country.

The programme, organised in partnership with the Jharkhand State Rifle Association, saw participation from 33 coaches representing five states, including a large group from Jharkhand. The course focused on providing a complete learning experience by combining technical training

with sports science and practical coaching skills.

Technical sessions were led by Olympian Sanjeev Rajput and coach Vidya Jadav. They trained participants in areas such as shooting techniques, weapon handling, error correction, and competition preparation.

Sports science formed an important part of the course. Experts conducted sessions on mental strength, nutrition, fitness, and body mechanics. Coaches were trained in areas like managing stress, improving confidence, proper diet, and maintaining physical balance and endurance. Commu-

nication skills were also taught to help coaches build better relationships with athletes.

The course ended with an examination to test the knowledge of participants. In the next phase, coaches will work on field projects with athletes and submit their reports within two months.

Officials said the second phase will also be held in Jamshedpur, after which successful participants will receive official certification. The initiative aims to develop skilled coaches and improve the overall performance of shooting sports in India.



Durant Enters NBA Top Five Scoring List

HOUSTON

Kevin Durant climbed to fifth place on the NBA's all-time scoring list as the Houston Rockets edged past the Miami Heat 123-122 in a thrilling finish. Durant scored 27 points in the game, taking his career total to 32,294 and moving past legendary player Michael Jordan. The match was decided at the buzzer when Amen Thompson tipped in a missed shot to seal victory for Houston.

Thompson delivered an impressive performance with 24 points and 18 rebounds, while Reed Sheppard and Alperen Sengun also recorded double-doubles. For Miami, Bam Adebayo led with

32 points and 21 rebounds, but the team fell short in the final moments.

In another close game, the Los Angeles Lakers defeated the Orlando Magic 105-104, with Luka Doncic scoring 33 points. LeBron James also made history by becoming the player with the most regular-season appearances.

Elsewhere, the Los Angeles Clippers beat the Dallas Mavericks in overtime, while the Oklahoma City Thunder extended their winning streak with a dominant victory over the Washington Wizards. The Charlotte Hornets, Cleveland Cavaliers, and San Antonio Spurs also secured wins in their respective matches, highlighting an action-packed day in the NBA.

Di Giannantonio Takes Pole in Dramatic Brazil Qualifying

GOIANIA

Fabio Di Giannantonio secured pole position in a dramatic qualifying session at the MotoGP Brazilian Grand Prix, despite crashing during a lap that could have made him even faster. Riding for Pertamina Enduro VR46 Racing Team, Di Giannantonio clocked a best time of 1:17.410 to finish ahead of Marco Bezzecchi, who qualified second. Marc Marquez took third place after also suffering a crash during the session.

The qualifying saw multiple incidents, with several top riders losing control on the track. Francesco Bagnaia and championship leader Pedro Acosta both crashed early in Q2, affecting their positions on the grid. French rider Fabio Quartararo impressed with a strong lap to finish fourth, leading the second row. Jorge Martin also showed pace but crashed late in the session, limiting his chances to improve.

Welbeck Double Hurts Liverpool, Everton Beat Chelsea

BRIGHTON

Danny Welbeck scored twice as Brighton & Hove Albion defeated Liverpool 2-1, dealing a major blow to the champions' hopes of qualifying for the Champions League.

Liverpool remained fifth in the table after managing just one point from their last three matches. Welbeck opened the scoring early with a header before Liverpool equalised through Milos Kerkez. However, Welbeck struck again soon after halftime to seal the win for Brighton.

In another match, Everton defeated Chelsea 3-0 to boost their chances of European qualification. Beto scored twice, while Iliman Ndiaye added a third goal to complete



a dominant performance. The result marked Chelsea's fourth straight defeat across competitions.

Elsewhere, Fulham came from behind to beat Burnley 3-1, moving up the table while leaving their opponents struggling near the bottom.

Brentford missed a chance to improve their position after playing out a goalless draw against Leeds United in a dull contest. With the season nearing its final stages, the race for European spots remains intense, while teams at the bottom continue to fight for survival.

Mendes Stars as PSG Thrash Nice Away

NICE

Paris Saint-Germain returned to the top of Ligue 1 with a dominant 4-0 victory over OGC Nice on Saturday.

Nuno Mendes played a key role, scoring a first-half penalty and assisting another goal. PSG now have 60 points from 26 matches, moving ahead of their closest rivals while also having a game in hand.

After missing early chances, PSG finally took the lead just before halftime when a



handball by Nice defender Morgan Sanson was confirmed through VAR. Mendes calmly converted the penalty to open the scoring.

Soon after the break, Mendes made an impressive run into the box and set up Desire Doue, who scored with a powerful shot to double the

lead. Nice's situation worsened when Youssouf Ndayishimiye was sent off following a reckless challenge, leaving the home side with 10 players. PSG continued their dominance, with young player Dro Fernandez scoring his first senior goal. Warren Zaire-Emery added a late fourth to complete the convincing win.

The victory strengthens PSG's position in the title race, while Nice remain close to the relegation zone after another disappointing result.

National Para Athletics Championship 2026: Suchitra Parida disappointed despite gold, eyes Asian Games success

BHUBANESWAR

Suchitra Parida expressed mixed emotions after winning gold in the women's javelin throw F56 event at the 24th National Para Athletics Championship, admitting she fell short of her personal expectations.

Despite topping the podium, Parida said she was aiming to break her own record this year. "I am happy, but there is a lingering sense of disappointment. My throw last year was 18.29m, and I wanted to better it. This time, it was 17.80m," she said, attributing the dip in performance to weight gain affecting her speed.

Looking ahead, Parida remains optimistic



about improving her form before the Asian Games trials scheduled in June or July. She revealed that she has already touched 19.60m in practice and is confident of regaining peak fitness in the coming months. "My main goal is to win a medal at the Asian Games," she added.

The championship, held at the Kalinga Stadium, concluded with host state Odisha securing 17 medals, including five golds.

Haryana emerged as the overall champions with an impressive haul of 95 medals, followed by Tamil Nadu (51) and Gujarat (30).

Among other stand-out performers, Chirag Tyagi from Uttar Pradesh clinched double gold in the 100m T12 and 400m T12 events. He expressed confidence in breaking the Asian record this season, crediting a balanced approach between athlete effort and coaching support. The event saw participation from 1,460 para-athletes representing 28 states, along with teams from the Border Security Force and Services Sports Control Board, competing across 145 medal events.

Kane Scores Again as Bayern near Title

BERLIN

Harry Kane continued his excellent form as Bayern Munich defeated Union Berlin 4-0 to move closer to another Bundesliga title.

Kane scored his 31st league goal of the season in the second half, keeping Bayern firmly on track for the championship. The club is now nine points clear at the top and aiming to secure its 13th title in the last 14 years.

Serge Gnabry scored twice, while Michael Olise added another goal in a dominant display. Bayern's total goals this season have reached 97, putting them close to breaking their long-standing record.

Coach Vincent Kompany praised the team's form and said they are in the right position as they prepare for a crucial Champions League clash against Real Madrid.

In another match, Borussia Dortmund came from behind to beat Hamburger SV 3-2, keeping their hopes alive in second place.

Elsewhere, Werder Bremen boosted their survival chances with a win over VfL Wolfsburg, while other matches ended in draws.

With only a few matches remaining, Bayern Munich are now strong favourites to win the Bundesliga title once again.



NATIONAL TABLE TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIPS 2026: MANAV THAKKAR, YASHASWINI GHORPADE WIN MAIDEN SINGLES TITLES

INDORE

Manav Thakkar and Yashaswini Ghorpade were crowned new national champions after clinching their maiden men's and women's singles titles at the 87th National Table Tennis Championships.

Top seed Thakkar delivered a dominant performance in the men's singles final, defeating Jeet Chandra 4-1 (11-2, 11-4, 6-11, 11-9, 11-3). He raced through the opening games, briefly lost momentum in the third, but quickly regained control to seal the title in style.

In the women's singles final, eighth seed Ghorpade edged past Syndrela Das in a gripping seven-game contest. She won 4-3 (11-6, 12-14, 11-5, 9-11, 13-11, 6-11, 11-8), showing composure in the decider to secure her first na-

tional crown. The mixed doubles title was claimed by Ankur Bhattacharjee and Suhana Saini, who defeated Aniket Bose and Sampriti Roy 3-2 in a closely fought final.

In men's doubles, Jeet Chandra bounced back from his singles loss to partner Anirban Ghosh to victory, beating Ronit Bhanja and Preyesh Raj Suresh 3-2. The women's doubles crown went to Olympian Sutritha Mukherjee and Kausani Nath, who overcame Avisha Karmakar and Nandini Saha 3-1 in the final.

Meanwhile, Divyanshi Bhowmik was awarded the D Vishwa Trophy for her impressive run to the quarter-finals. The tournament showcased a strong mix of emerging and established talent on India's domestic table tennis circuit.

KOHLI DISMISSES CHARTERED FLIGHT RUMOURS AS FAKE

NEW DELHI

India batting star Virat Kohli has dismissed reports claiming he demanded chartered flight access during the Indian Premier League 2026, calling them completely false.

The rumours, shared by an Instagram account, suggested that Kohli had asked Royal Challengers Bengaluru management for special travel arrangements between India and London. It also claimed he wanted to fly to the UK during breaks of more than three days between matches.

Kohli reacted strongly to the claims by sharing a screenshot of the post on his Insta-

gram story along with laughing emojis, clearly rejecting the report. The original post was later deleted, and the account stated that it faced technical issues after Kohli's reaction.

Meanwhile, Kohli has been focused on preparing for the upcoming IPL season. During the team's first training session, he addressed players and encouraged them to stay committed and give their best efforts. He reminded them that the competition will be tougher this season and stressed the importance of staying ahead from the beginning.

Head coach Andy Flower also welcomed new players to the squad before Kohli delivered his motivational message. The former India captain urged teammates not to waste practice time and to give full effort throughout the tournament.

Kohli, one of the highest run-scorers in IPL history, is expected to play a key role for Royal Challengers Bengaluru this season.

Rumours claimed Kohli sought special travel to London during breaks; he dismissed them with laughter, prompting deletion and technical issue claims



Shanaka joins Rajasthan Royals in IPL switch

NEW DELHI

In another setback for the Pakistan Super League, Sri Lanka captain Dasun Shanaka is set to join Rajasthan Royals as a replacement for injured England all-rounder Sam Curran in the upcoming Indian Premier League.

Shanaka's move continues the trend of players switching from PSL to IPL. Earlier, Zimbabwe pacer Blessing Muzarabani left his PSL contract to join Kolkata Knight Riders as a replacement for Bangladesh pacer Mustafizur Rahman.

According to team sources, Shanaka's signing is nearly complete, with only paperwork formalities remaining. He is expected to join the Rajasthan Royals squad in Guwahati soon. The team will start its campaign against Chennai Super Kings at the venue during the opening phase of the tournament.

Shanaka, who went unsold in the IPL mini-auction last year, was earlier picked by PSL franchise Lahore Qalandars. Under his leadership, Sri Lanka had a mixed run in the recent T20 World Cup, where he scored important runs and contributed with the ball.

The Rajasthan Royals coaching staff includes former Sri Lanka captain Kumar Sangakkara as head coach and former India batting coach Vikram Rathour as assistant coach.

Shanaka's inclusion is expected to strengthen the Royals squad as they prepare for the new IPL season.

Amelia Kerr sets record with consistent scores

WELLINGTON

Amelia Kerr created history by recording the most consecutive 30-plus scores in T20 Internationals, as New Zealand Women defeated South Africa Women to take an unbeatable lead in their five-match series.

Kerr scored 31 runs off 29 balls and also took 1 wicket for 32 runs in her four overs, helping restrict South Africa to 159 for six. New Zealand comfortably chased the target, winning by six wickets with nine balls remaining and taking a 3-1 lead in the series.

With this performance, the

25-year-old achieved her 10th straight score of 30 or more in T20Is, setting a new world record in both men's and women's cricket. She went past the previous record of nine, jointly held by Chamari Athapaththu and Rebecca Blake.

Kerr's remarkable run has continued across different series. Her consistent performances include several strong scores against teams like Australia, Zimbabwe, and South Africa. During this period, she has scored 554 runs in 10 innings at an impressive strike rate while also taking 12 wickets, proving her value as a reliable all-rounder.



Pant set to bat three in IPL

NEW DELHI

Rishabh Pant is set to bat at number three for Lucknow Super Giants in the upcoming Indian Premier League season, which could prove crucial for his career.

Pant, who was bought for a record Rs 27 crore in the 2025 mega auction, will be under pressure to deliver both as captain and a top-order batter. After a disappointing previous season, his performance this year could determine his future in India's T20 plans.

The 28-year-old has mainly played as a Test regular and remains a backup wicketkeeper in ODIs. However, he lost his place in the T20 side after India's World Cup win in 2024 and now faces strong competition from players like Sanju Samson and Ishan Kishan.

Team management believes Pant's game is best suited for number three. The top order is expected to feature Aiden

Markram, Mitchell Marsh, and Pant, while players like Nicholas Pooran will bat in flexible middle-order roles.

Lucknow Super Giants have been training in Chennai and Lucknow ahead of their opening match against Delhi Capitals on April 1.

The team aims to improve after last season, especially in bowling, which was weakened by injuries.

Former South Africa captain Faf du Plessis said Pant is among the players under the most pressure this season. A strong performance could help Pant regain his place in India's T20 squad.



Gauff fights back to enter Miami fourth round

MIAMI

Coco Gauff produced a strong comeback to defeat fellow American Alycia Parks and move into the fourth round of the Miami Open.

Gauff lost the opening set but quickly regained control to win the match 2-6, 6-0, 6-1 in one hour and 50 minutes. The victory marked her fourth appearance in the last 16 at the Miami event as she continues her search for a first quarterfinal finish here.

The

match began with Gauff taking an early 2-0 lead, but Parks responded strongly, winning six consecutive games to take the first set. However, Gauff made key adjustments in her game and dominated the rest of the match, winning 12 of the next 13 games.

After the match, Gauff said it was a tough contest, as Parks played aggressively. She added that improving her returns and choosing the right moments to attack helped her turn the match around.

This win adds to Gauff's strong record of coming back after losing the first set. Since the start of 2025, she has recorded 11 such wins, placing her among the top players in this category.

Gauff will next face Sorana Cirstea, who defeated Elise Mertens in straight sets. Gauff had earlier beaten Cirstea in their only previous meeting at the 2022 Australian Open.

She will now aim to continue her winning run and reach the quarterfinals.



Forest Guards lead fit India cycling event

NEW DELHI

A large number of forest guards cycling together near India Gate became the main attraction at the 66th edition of Fit India Sundays on Cycle held in the national capital on Sunday. The event began at Major Dhyani Chand National Stadium with a grand flag-off, featuring patriotic music by an army band and the blowing of conch shells.

Organised with support from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and the Ministry of Jal Shakti, the event promoted both fitness and environmen-

tal awareness. Over 750 participants joined this special "Guardians of Nature" edition, which marked World Forest Day and World Water Day. People of all age groups took part in activities like yoga, Zumba, and rope skipping before the cycling race began.

Several dignitaries were honoured, including P. Viswakannan, Chief Conservator of Forests, along with representatives from public sector organisations. Their contributions highlighted the importance of teamwork in promoting health and conservation.

The event also recognised athletes such as Arjuna Award-winning shooter Shilpi Bisht and cyclist Rahul Pradhan, who inspired participants with their presence. In the races, winners from different categories were awarded, showing strong participation from across sectors.

The cycling event was held at more than 5,000 locations across India, turning it into a nationwide movement. Launched in December 2024, the initiative continues to encourage people to adopt fitness as a daily habit while supporting environmental protection.

PSL matches to be held without spectators

NEW DELHI

The Pakistan Super League will begin as scheduled on March 26 but will be played without spectators due to the ongoing Middle East situation. Pakistan Cricket Board chief Mohsin Naqvi announced the decision after discussions with franchises and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

To conserve fuel and other resources, the matches will be held only in Lahore and Karachi. Other venues, including Peshawar, Multan, Rawalpindi, and Faisalabad, have been removed from the schedule. Naqvi said the move was necessary as fuel is being strictly regulated by the government during the crisis.

He also apologised to fans, especially those in Peshawar,



who were set to host PSL matches for the first time. The opening ceremony has been cancelled to reduce expenses further. A revised match schedule is expected soon.

Naqvi assured that most international players would arrive shortly for the tournament. Earlier reports suggested that some foreign players faced travel issues due to tensions in the Gulf region. However, he expressed confi-

dence in their participation. He also warned that strict action would be taken against players who fail to honour their PSL contracts and instead choose to play in the Indian Premier League. Some players have already switched leagues.

To balance the losses from empty stadiums, franchises will be given financial compensation. Despite challenges, officials are determined to conduct the tournament smoothly.



India U20 Women show big improvement ahead

NEW DELHI

The India U20 women's football team has shown major improvement in recent months, according to head coach Joakim Alexandersson, who believes the side is ready to compete strongly in the upcoming AFC U20 Women's Asian Cup in Thailand.

The team, known as the Young Tigresses, has already reached Bangkok well before the tournament and will begin their Group C campaign against Japan on April 2. They will then face Australia and Chinese Taipei in the group stage.

Alexandersson said the team has improved in all areas since qualifying for the tournament last year. He highlighted better passing, stronger defence, and clearer attacking play as key positives. Communication among players, especially goalkeepers, has also improved significantly.

Despite being placed in a tough group, the coach expressed confidence in his players. He said Japan and Australia are strong teams but stressed that India should respect them without fear. He added that the team aims to play with confidence, maintain possession, and perform with freedom on the field.

India's preparation included practice matches against Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, helping the team adapt to different styles of play. The coach noted that while the team may not be physically strong compared to others, it has worked on tactical discipline and defensive strength.

The squad arrived in Bangkok 13 days early to adjust to conditions and began training on March 21. Alexandersson said commitment, discipline, and belief will be key as the team aims to perform well and compete for a place in the next stage.

Chopra backs Delhi Capitals for IPL Title

NEW DELHI

Former India opener Aakash Chopra has expressed confidence in Delhi Capitals, calling their 2026 squad a strong unit and backing them to win their first Indian Premier League title.

Delhi Capitals are among the few teams yet to win the IPL despite playing every season since 2008. Chopra said consistency and stability are key to success, pointing out that successful teams maintain a settled core over time. He noted that Delhi have improved in this area since 2019, regularly reaching the playoffs and even making the final in 2020.

Chopra praised the franchise's auction strategy, saying the current squad looks balanced with backups in almost every position. However, he highlighted a concern in the spin department, stating there are no proper replacements for Axar Patel and Kuldeep Yadav. He added that players of their quality are difficult to replace across the country.

Former India cricketer Irfan Pathan also shared his views, saying Delhi had earlier struggled with identifying and retaining talent. He recalled that players like AB de Villiers and Andre Russell were let go despite their potential. Pathan further highlighted how leadership and planning have helped teams improve. He cited better decision-making and squad depth as key reasons behind recent progress.